



- 'Prez Xi not to attend G20 Summit; Premier Li Qiang to head delegation'
- Turkey's prez meets Putin; aims to revive wartime Ukraine grain export deal
- Congress to hold 'padyatras' in 722 districts on September 7
- 'Did oppn INDIA bloc's meeting in Mumbai decide on targeting Sanatan Dharma'

# Assam government keen on complete withdrawal of AFPSA from state

CM Himanta meets Shah, discusses withdrawal of AFPSA

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday met union home minister Amit Shah at his residence in New Delhi to discuss the roadmap for complete withdrawal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFPSA), 1958 from the state.

Sarma said that his government will take further steps based on the suggestions of the home minister.

"I met Hon'ble Union Home Minister @AmitShah ji at his residence today to discuss the roadmap for the complete withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act from Assam. The Government of Assam will take further steps based on the suggestions of Hon'ble Home Minister," he wrote on the microblogging site X.

The controversial AFPSA accords armed forces personnel operating in disturbed areas with sweeping powers to search, arrest



and open fire if they deem it necessary for "the maintenance of public order".

An area or district is notified as a disturbed area under the AFPSA to facilitate the operations of the armed forces.

Many organizations have termed the particular Act "draconian" particularly due to the extensive pow-

ers bestowed on the armed forces and have been demanding its annulment.

The disturbed area notification has been in force in entire Assam since 1990 and has been first extended for a long period by the central government, and now by the state government.

The disturbed area tag, imposed

under the AFPSA, was removed from the entire state of Assam, except nine districts and one sub-division of one district, from April 1 last year. Now, it has been limited to only eight districts in the north-eastern state.

It is applicable now in Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts.

Hoisting the tricolour on the 77th Independence Day in Guwahati last month, the Chief Minister said his government is committed to taking necessary steps to withdraw AFPSA from the entire state by the end of this year.

"I want to assure the people of Assam that by the end of this year, we will take fruitful steps to withdraw the AFPSA from every district. That will be an 'amritmoy' (good) time for Assam's history and we are eagerly waiting for that day," he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Tension prevails after fresh firing in Bishnupur

**IMPHAL, Sept 4:** Tension sparked at Pompikhong and Chadonpokpi villages in Bishnupur district of Manipur after a fresh attack by armed miscreants who descended from the hill on Sunday night.

The village volunteers guarding the villages retaliated, resulting in heavy exchange of fire for some hours. No casualty was reported till the time of filing this report.

Local reports said that the armed miscreants opened fire several rounds of guns towards the settlement areas Pompikhong and Chadonpokpi villages under the Kumbi Police Station of Bishnupur district last night.

Following the fresh firing, the villagers fled and took shelter at roadsides a few meters away from the foothill, the reports also said.

According to the villagers, after a lull, suspected Kuki militants opened fire on the two settlement areas last night around 7 pm.

Initially, the village volunteers or the security forces deployed in the fringe areas did not return the firing. The villagers alleged that the village volunteers guarding the villages (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Meghalaya government HNLC's top leaders to be present in peace talks



**SHILLONG, Sept 4:** Meghalaya deputy Chief Minister-in-charge Home (Police), Prestone Tynsong on Monday said the government had already communicated to the proscribed Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) that it wanted the outfit's chairman Bobby Marwein and its general secretary Sainkupar Nongtraw to be present in the next round of peace talks.

Speaking to reporters, Tynsong said that the ball is now in the HNLC's court and the government is waiting for them to proceed further with the ongoing peace talks. "We are waiting for them

(HNLC). We have already communicated to them. So the ball is now in their court," he said.

On the second round of peace talks, Tynsong said, "That is why the government is waiting for them to reply and fix the date and we would like also the chairman or the (general) secretary be present in during the next talks."

"As far as HNLC talks are concerned I would like to assure and request them, especially their senior leaders to come forward as we are waiting for them for further talks, which we would like to have," he added. His statement also (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## NRB sanctions over ₹ 2.23 crore to NSRLM

HT Bureau

**DIMAPUR, Sept 4:** The Nagaland Rural Bank (NRB) has sanctioned over ₹ 2.23 crore to the Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission (NSRLM) for the purpose of supporting the self-help groups (SHGs) in Nagaland.

The cheque was handed over to NSRLM director and joint secretary to the state government Intimienla by Governor La Ganesan at a felicitation programme of the SHGs, promoted by NSRLM, at Dr Imkongliba Ao hall at Raj Bhavan in Kohima on Monday. The governor also distributed sanction letters to the SHGs.

The NRB organised the felicitation programme to commemorate the 77th Independence Day.

In his address, Ganesan thanked the NRB for organizing the event and continuing the wonderful tradition of serving our society in a unique and impactful way. He added that it is heartening (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Doctors express concern over health of ethnic strife victims

**IMPHAL, Sept 4:** As thousands of Meiteis and Kukis are in relief camps in violence-torn Manipur, a group of doctors that visited the state has expressed concerns about the issue of nutrition and mental health situation of the inmates.

A team of doctors from the Indian Doctors For Peace and Development visited a relief camp each in the Meitei and Kuki areas.

The team included Arun Mitra, Shakeel, Ravindranath and Rajani, who were in Manipur from September 1 to 3. They visited a relief camp in the Khumanlankpak sports hostel in Imphal and the IIT relief camp in Kangpokpi district in the hill area. There are 334 such relief camps in Manipur currently. The doctors met the inmates at these relief camps as well as the nodal officers of the district administration. They said the displaced people in the hill areas have been cut off (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## 3744.905 kg of Burmese areca nuts recovered in Karbi Anglong

HT Bureau

**BOKAJAN, Sept 4:** The police on Monday recovered 3744.905 kg of Burmese dry areca nuts from a truck plying on national highway 39 in Karbi Anglong police.

Based on specific inputs, the police intercepted the truck bearing the registration number 'AS-01PC-8349' on NH 39 under the Khatkhathi Police Station. The truck was taken to the police station and a thorough check was conducted, during which 3744.905 kg of Burmese dry areca nuts were recovered. The areca nuts were hidden in a secret chamber behind the driver's cabin. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## IPS officer, DSP of Assam police arrested in extortion case

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** An Indian Police Service (IPS) officer and a deputy superintendent of police (DSP) were arrested on Monday in connection with an extortion case in Assam's Bajali district, taking the total number of apprehended people to nine.

Director General of Police GP Singh had, on September 1, written on X that the case was registered after receiving a complaint of demand for money by some personnel of Bajali district in the first week of August.

The then-superintendent of police (SP) of Bajali was arrested by the criminal investigation department (CID), which is currently probing the case, while a search operation was also conducted in his residence on Sunday night, official sources said.



The DSP, who was named in the original FIR lodged by the CID last week, was also arrested.

With the latest arrests, the number of accused persons held in the case has gone up to nine.

Among those already in custody are an additional superintendent of police (ASP), her husband, and four other policemen, all posted in Bajali district. One civilian was also held (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Tripura bypolls to take place today

**AGARTALA, Sept 4:** The stage is set for the bypolls to Dhanpur and Boxanagar assembly seats in Tripura's Sepahijala district, which will witness a straight fight between the ruling BJP and opposition CPI(M) on September 5.

All polling booths will be manned by central paramilitary forces, while Tripura State Rifles personnel will be deployed outside them to maintain strict security, an official said.

Dhanpur assembly constituency has 59 booths and Boxanagar has 51.

"All necessary arrangements have been made for conducting free, fair and peaceful elections," additional chief electoral officer UG Mog told PTL.

The international border has been sealed to prevent any intrusion from Bangladesh as both constituencies share a boundary with the neighbouring country, a senior police officer said, adding that there will be adequate security to ensure peaceful voting.

BJP's Tafajjal Hussain, who unsuccessfully contested the last assembly election from Boxanagar, is set to take on CPI(M) nominee Mizan Hussain.

The Boxanagar assembly segment has 66 per cent minority voters of a total of 43,087 electors.

In the last assembly elections held in February this year, the CPI(M) managed to retain the seat.

The Dhanpur assembly constituency, once considered a stronghold of the Left, will witness a fight between BJP's Bindu Debnath and Kaushik Debnath of CPI(M). There are 50,346 eligible voters.

The BJP won the seat for the first time in the poll held seven months ago.

The Congress and the Tripra Motha did not field their candidates in the two seats for the bypolls.

The bypoll to the Boxanagar constituency was necessitated due to the death of CPI(M) (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Assam flood situation improves, 79,067 affected

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** The flood situation in Assam improved on Monday with no fresh area getting inundated and the number of affected people dipping to nearly 79,067, an official bulletin said.

This year's death toll in floods remained unchanged at 18 as no fresh fatality was reported.

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin said 79,060 people were still affected by the deluge in the eight districts Darrang, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Golaghat, Kamrup, Kamrup (Metro), Morigaon and Nagaon.

The number of affected people was 1.22 lakh in seven districts on Sunday.

Darrang remained the worst-hit with 47,063 affected, followed by 27,837 in Golaghat. 20 revenue circles and 351 villages in these districts are currently reeling under

flood waters.

Six relief camps were operational, sheltering 1,321 people. Another nine relief distribution centres were also functional.

Altogether 8,807.50 hectares of cropland remained submerged in flood waters. A

total of 75,657 animals comprising of 50,331 big animals, 17,557 small animals and 7,769 poultry have been affected in the past 24 hours.

The Brahmaputra continued to flow above the danger level in Dhubri.

Meanwhile, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel are engaged in relief operation in Darrang and Nagaon districts, where 14

boats have been pressed into service to ferry people from submerged areas into safer grounds. There is however, no report of any damage to embankments or any other infrastructure in (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



## Assam Governor greets teachers on eve of Teachers' Day

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria greeted the teaching fraternity of the state on the eve of Teachers' Day on Monday. Gulab Chand Kataria said, "Teachers are the real nation builders, as they infuse the young minds with strong values and inspire them to lead a life of respect and integrity. I salute the entire teaching fraternity across the nation who has been exceptionally dedicated in nurturing young minds and spreading the joys of education in society. On the occasion of Teachers' Day I pay my deep sense of gratitude to the selfless service of all teachers." The Governor also took the occasion pay his deepest tribute to former Indian President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. His birth anniversary is celebrated as Teachers' Day every year.

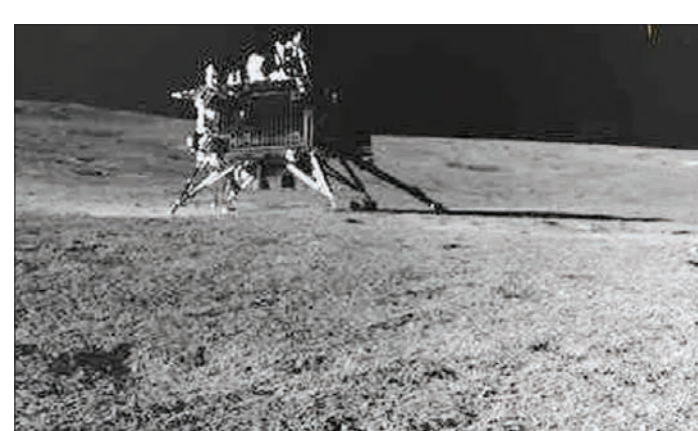
## Both Vikram lander and Pragyan to be awakened on September 22 Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander goes on sleep mode after hop test

**BENGALURU, Sept 4:** The Vikram lander has gone into sleep mode after its payloads were switched off on Monday after a successful hop test. During the hop test the Vikram lander was elevated and then soft landed again on the moon.

The hop test will help scientists in future moon missions where samples could be brought back to earth and more importantly help the human missions being planned, ISRO added.

The space agency said Vikram Lander has been set into sleep mode around 8 am Monday. Payloads have been switched off while lander receivers are kept on.

Before going into sleep mode, in-situ experiments by ChaSTE, RAMBHA-LP and ILSA payloads on lander were performed at the



new location. The data collected was received on earth.

ISRO sources said that the payloads and ramp of the lander were folded back before performing the hop test.

Further, it was elevated by firing its engines and making it hop once on the lunar surface.

"On command it (Vikram lander) fired the engines, elevated itself by about 40 cm as expected and

landed safely at a distance of 30 to 40 cm away," ISRO said in an update on X.

"Vikram soft-landed on the moon, again! Vikram Lander exceeded its mission objectives," ISRO added.

After the successful hop test, Vikram and Pragyan payloads are now in a power-off mode until the south pole of the lunar surface is back in the range of the sun again. ISRO said that Vikram will fall asleep next to Pragyan once the solar power is depleted and the battery is drained. The space agency said it was "hoping for their (Vikram and Pragyan's) awakening, around September 22, 2023."

Scientists at ISRO said that after the Chandrayaan-3 mission landed on the lunar surface on August 23, Vikram and (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## KERUF demands implementation of Karbi Peace Accord's clauses

HT Bureau

**DIPHU, Sept 4:** The Karbi Ex-Revolutionary United Forum (KERUF) on Monday demanded that the state and central governments implement the clauses of the second historic Karbi Peace Accord that was signed on September 4, 2021.

The KERUF highlighted its demand during the first annual general meeting of (KERUF)-cum-commemoration of the second historic Karbi Peace Accord (MoS-2021) that was held at the Joysing Doloi Auditorium at Diphu on Monday.

KERUF is a common platform of six former armed organizations the Karbi Longri & NC Liberation Front (KLNLFF), United People's

Liberation Army (UPLA), People's Democratic Council of Karbi Longri (PDCK) and three factions of Karbi Liberation Tigers (KPLT) that have signed a memorandum of settlement (MoS) with the central and state governments in 2021.

In the two-day gathering discussion on various issues that need to be tackled with the central and state government was held. The matters relating to withdrawal of cases, release of ex-gratia to next of kin of

deceased cadres and stipend to be given to each cadre and the slow response by the government on implementation of the clauses of the MoS were discussed. On September 4, 2021 a peace agreement had been signed (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)





## Sensex, Nifty rise for 2<sup>nd</sup> day on encouraging macro data, firm global trend

**MUMBAI, Sept 4:** Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rallied for the second straight session on Monday following encouraging domestic macroeconomic data amid a firm trend in global markets.

Fresh foreign fund inflows and intense buying in IT and commodity stocks also bolstered sentiment, traders said.

The BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 240.98 points or 0.37 per cent to settle at 65,628.14. During the day, it jumped 296.75 points or 0.45 per cent to 65,683.91.

The Nifty rose 93.50 points or 0.48 per cent to end at 19,528.80.

"Recent domestic macroeconomic data have portrayed a positive picture for the domestic markets, allowing them to maintain their momentum. Despite profit-booking in Nifty Auto after reaching an all-time high, the market regained its footing with robust buying in IT stocks."

"The increase in the US unemployment rate has solidified expectations of a pause in rate hikes, and positive global cues have further boosted market sentiment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Wipro was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 4.34 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, NTPC, Infosys, Power Grid, Tata Consultancy Services and State Bank of India.

Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC,



Axis Bank, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.96 per cent, and smallcap index gained 0.84 per cent.

Among the indices, metal jumped 2.72 per cent, commodities climbed 1.94 per cent, utilities rallied 1.91 per cent, IT gained 1.74 per cent, power (1.55 per cent), tech (1.51 per cent) and services (0.59 per cent).

FMCG and consumer durables were the laggards.

"Global Stocks were higher on Monday following a report that signalled the US jobs market, while still healthy, shows some signs of cooling, raising hopes for an easing of interest rate hikes."

"Announcement of fresh stimulus measures from China - cutting

down-payment requirements for first and second-time home buyers and lowered rates on existing mortgages also helped sentiments," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended with gains.

European markets were trading in the green in early deals. US markets ended mostly in the positive territory on Friday.

American markets are shut on Monday due to the Labour Day holiday.

Manufacturing activities in India gained momentum in August as new orders and output increased at the quickest rates in nearly three years, according to a survey released on Friday.

GST collections grew by 11 per

cent to over ₹ 1.59 lakh crore in August on the back of improved compliance and reduced evasion, with experts forecasting higher mop-up to continue in the upcoming festive season.

Domestic passenger vehicle sales hit a record in August, led by highest-ever monthly dispatches from Maruti Suzuki on the back of festive demand and the continued strong offtake of SUVs.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.09 per cent to USD 88.64 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were buyers on Friday as they bought equities worth ₹ 487.94 crore, according to exchange data.

"The daily momentum indicator has a positive crossover which is a buy signal. We believe that the Nifty is in the process of retracing the fall it has witnessed from 19,992 to 19,223 and hence the pullback is likely to last over the next few trading sessions."

"On the upside we expect the Nifty to target levels of 19,650. In terms of levels, Crucial support zone is placed at 19,420 - 19,360 and immediate hurdle is placed at 19,650-19,700," Jatin Gedia - Technical Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

The BSE barometer had on Friday ended higher by 555.75 points or 0.86 per cent at 65,387.16. The Nifty had spurted by 181.50 points or 0.94 per cent to settle at 19,435.30. (PTI)

## NEW REGULATION CAN RAISE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PRICES BY 10-12%: ICRA

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** Implementation of multiple proposed regulatory specifications can push up commercial vehicle prices by 10-12 per cent, ratings agency ICRA said on Monday.

In its report on the Indian commercial vehicle industry, ICRA said the domestic automotive industry is undergoing rapid transformations, with increased focus by the government on implementing emission norms, safety systems and other standards that will bring the country at par with other major automotive markets.

"Within the Indian automotive industry, the commercial vehicle (CV) sector has been the focus, given that CVs account for the major part of vehicular emissions in the country," it said, adding mandatory standards towards driver comfort and safety can help improve the driving conditions and road safety to a large extent.

Accordingly, ICRA said there have been multiple regulatory interventions in the recent past, with the industry adopting stringent emission standards in a relatively short span of time, as well as driver safety and comfort standards such as advanced braking systems



(ABS), speed limiting devices (SLD) and blowers in cabins, with a view to reducing vehicular emissions and improving road safety and driver comfort.

"While these proposed changes can result in a potential cumulative increase of 10-12 per cent in vehicle prices as they get implemented, the benefits in terms of vehicle safety, driver comfort, export potential to developed markets, among others, are expected to outweigh the same," ICRA said.

The ratings agency pointed out that there are multiple proposed regulatory changes on the anvil such as the mandatory fitment of air-conditioners (ACs) in driver

cabins which has already been announced with effect from January 1, 2025.

"In addition, other standards like blind spot information systems, advanced emergency braking systems, roll over protection systems, driver alert systems etc. are proposed to improve road safety and minimise the occurrence as well as impact of road accidents," it added.

Other regulations like mandatory fitment of fire detection, alarm and suppression systems have also been introduced for select segments like school buses and inter-city buses with effect from October 1, 2023, ICRA said. (PTI)

## Flipkart aims to create over 100,000 seasonal jobs ahead of festive season

**MUMBAI, Sept 4:** Homegrown e-commerce marketplace Flipkart on Monday said it is looking to create more than 1 lakh seasonal job opportunities across its supply chain to cater to demand during the festive season. The seasonal jobs, both direct and indirect, will include those for local kirana delivery partners and women. Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) will also be employed to create a diverse supply chain talent, the company said in a statement.

Ahead of the festive season, Flipkart expects to generate over 1,00,000 new job opportunities across its supply chain, including fulfilment centres, sortation centres and delivery hubs, it said.

"The Big Billion Days (TBBDD) is about scale, innovating for India, and impacting the ecosystem. It allows millions of new customers to experience the goodness of e-commerce, many of them for the first time," Flipkart Group Senior Vice President and Head of Supply Chain, Customer Experience and ReCommerce, Hemant Badri said.

TBBDD is the Flipkart sale time during which it offers discounts on products of top brands. "The complexity and scale during TBBDD require us to scale up for capacity, storage, placement, sorting, packaging, human resources, training, delivery, and the entire supply chain, and this scale is always unprecedented," Badri said.

According to him, this year, the company plans to deliver more than 40 per cent of shipments through its kirana delivery programme. (PTI)

## India's power consumption grows by over 16 pc to 151.66 billion units in August

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** The country's power consumption grew by over 16 per cent to 151.66 billion units in August this year compared to that of the same month last year mainly due to increase usage of cooling appliances during sultry weather.

In the year-to-date period, power consumption stood at 130.39 billion units (BU), higher than 127.88 BU in August 2021, according to the government data. The peak power demand met, which is the highest supply in a day, rose to 236.59 GW in August 2023. The peak power supply stood at 195.22

GW in August 2022 and 196.72 GW in August 2021.

The power ministry had estimated the country's electricity demand to touch 229 GW during the summer season. The demand did not reach the projected level in April-July this year due to unseasonal rains. The peak supply, however, touched a new high of 223.29 GW in June and remained at 208.95 GW in July.

Industry experts said that power consumption was affected in March, April, May and June this year due to widespread rains in the country. (PTI)

## Gold rises ₹100; silver remains flat



**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** Gold rose by ₹ 100 to ₹ 60,450 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday amid jump in precious metal prices globally, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had settled at ₹ 60,350 per 10 gram in the previous trade.

However, silver remained flat at ₹ 77,000 per kg.

"Gold rose on Monday, with spot gold in the Delhi markets trading at ₹ 60,450/10 gram, up by ₹ 100, taking positive cues from overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In MCX, gold prices also exhibited a sideways trend, closely following Comex.

The absence of significant data can support prices, combined with the weakness of the rupee due to the surge in crude oil prices, providing support to gold prices in MCX, said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities.

In the international markets, gold was trading higher at USD 1,945 per ounce while silver was marginally down at USD 24.17 per ounce. "Gold price firmed, buoyed by hopes that the Federal Reserve would take a pause from interest rate hikes this year after US data showed a jump in unemployment rate, but bullion held below last session's one-month highs on a strong dollar and yields," said Navneet Damani, senior vice-president of commodity research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services. (PTI)

## Rupee falls 11 paise to close at 82.73 against US dollar

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** The rupee depreciated by 11 paise to close at 82.73 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, weighed down by a surge in crude oil prices and strength of the American currency in the overseas market.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.71 against the US dollar and moved in a range of 82.67 to 82.77 in the day trade.

The rupee finally settled at 82.73 (provisional) against the US dollar, down 11 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 82.62 against the dollar.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on positive US dollar and rising global crude oil prices. However, rise in risk appetite in global markets on rising expectations of a no rate hike by Fed in its September FOMC may support rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Choudhary further said that "USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹ 82.40 to ₹ 83."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell marginally by 0.14 per cent to 104.08.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.16 per cent to USD 88.69 per barrel. (PTI)

## ICICI Prudential Life Insurance introduces ICICI Pru GIFT Pro

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has unveiled a groundbreaking income plan, ICICI Pru GIFT Pro, offering customers the choice of receiving either an increasing year-on-year income or a steady regular income. This non-participating savings product also includes a life cover component, ensuring financial security for the family.

ICICI Pru GIFT Pro empowers customers to tailor the product to their specific requirements, with options for income benefits and premium payment terms, among other flexible features.

In addition to assured long-term income, ICICI Pru GIFT Pro provides the option to receive a lump sum benefit. Customers can choose any amount, up to 100% of the premiums paid, as a lump sum benefit and select when they want to receive it.

This feature allows customers to plan for significant life milestones, such as home ownership, leaving a legacy for loved ones, or building a substantial retirement fund.

This feature-rich product also guarantees that the nominee will continue to receive the income in the event of the policyholder's demise during the income period. ICICI Pru GIFT Pro offers customers the flexibility to address both short and long-term income



needs effectively. ICICI Pru GIFT Pro offers a range of premium payment terms, spanning from 5 to 12 years, enabling customers to save according to their convenience and timeline. Starting from the 8th year onwards, customers can begin receiving income for up to 30 years.

Amit Palta, chief distribution officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, commented, "We are delighted to introduce ICICI Pru GIFT Pro, a long-term savings product with built-in flexibilities that enable customers to customize the product to suit their specific needs, thus helping them better prepare for and achieve life goals. Furthermore, the life cover component in the product ensures financial security for the family. ICICI Pru GIFT Pro has been designed to empower customers to receive income based on their financial requirements."

Importantly, the product also allows customers to decide the tim-

ing and amount of lump sum funds they require to fulfill their financial goals. ICICI Prudential Life has established a 4D framework with customers at the center, offering 'diversified product propositions' as one of its pillars. Alongside continuous engagement with our customers to understand their needs, one of our ongoing initiatives is to reimagine life insurance products beyond traditional constraints. Today's customers have access to a wide range of products and services that promise hyper-customization. Even in financial services, customers seek assurance that the financial product they trust will be tailor-made to their specific requirements and not just a one-size-fits-all plan.

Another key insight from our customer engagement was the need for benefits that could provide some protection against inflation. This is why, in ICICI Pru GIFT Pro, we provide customers with the choice of receiving either increasing income every year or a constant income, both for up to 30 years. This feature-packed product offers customers a comprehensive long-term financial savings solution. We believe it strikes the perfect balance between financial protection and income, with maximum flexibility to customize the plan according to individual needs."

## India's DPI a force whose time has come, nothing can stop it: MoS IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** India's call for global cooperation and equitable growth for all, alongside its showcase of transformative digitisation have resonated with the world, Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar has said, exuding confidence that G20 presidency of India underpins strong messages that will leave an indelible mark.

In an interview with PTI ahead of G20 Leaders' Summit scheduled in New Delhi for September 9-10, Chandrasekhar termed India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) a force whose time has come and added that nothing can stop it.

He said the Indian approach on DPI smashes old normal, which was about big tech companies dominating the space, and paves the way for new normal, one that is open source, nimble, consumer-driven, and 'non-intermediated'.

"When over 1 billion Indians are using it, who can resist it?," Chandrasekhar said.

The Minister of State for Electronics and IT was referring to the country's payment, identity and other population-scale platforms which have captured attention of many nations with several MoUs already signed.

India is developing its DPI as a core utility for every citizen.

Chandrasekhar pointed out that India's message, in its capacity as current president of the G20 grouping of the world's biggest economies, has been about accel-

erated, inclusive and resilient growth for all.

With New Delhi drawing global attention to cooperation for common good, and global macroeconomic stability, India's approach and beliefs will resonate way beyond its G20 presidency, the minister affirmed.

"Our message from day one has been that the world is one family, that there is a need for more and more global cooperation to achieve our common good and common goals of sustainable planet, of prosperous, developing world for all countries and people. So I think that message will resonate long after the G20. The message that this is an era for responsible countries to show responsible rule of law...that will also resonate way beyond the G20 presidency of India," Chandrasekhar pointed out.

India has highlighted that power of technology, innovation, and bright, young minds all around the world will shape the global future.

"So I think India's presidency will certainly give a lot of permanent messages and learnings to the countries of the world beyond the G20 presidency, and it will certainly be one of the more defining Presidencies of the G20 in the recent years," he said.

While the world went through two 'black swan events' over last 3-4 years, India has emerged as a "bright spot" with its economy expanding and "chugging at full



speed", Chandrasekhar noted.

"We hope that global recovery stabilises, that the US and other Western economies that are today slowing down or showing signs of weakness get back, because in a lot of way these are consumption markets...Currently India is a bright spot in the world...but we would also like the rest of the world to pick up and shrug off whatever problems...and get back to building an economy, global trade, economic growth, that is fair, sustained, equitable and allows many of small countries that have, in a sense, not been able to participate in economic growth also to participate," he said.

Asked if he is confident about a Joint Communiqué or 'Leaders Declaration' being agreed on at the G20 Summit in India given the di-

vergent views and differences (deadlock over the Ukraine war) that are emerging, the minister declined to make specific observations.

"I certainly don't want to venture an opinion on that...but I can tell you from my interactions, that the Indian message and India's view of the future of our world, as espoused beautifully by our Prime Minister is gaining a lot of traction and India as a statesman on the world stage, its position has been sealed by this presidency of the G20," he said.

India, the minister said, has demonstrated responsible presidency, placing world interest ahead of any self interest.

"And I think this is an example of responsible conduct that all big countries must espouse to...some

countries practice it, some countries don't. Those who practice it are the ones that are being respected by the world, in the future. Those who don't practice it are the ones who will not be," he said.

Chandrasekhar said the Indian presidency of G20 has "certainly left a very indelible mark in many, many ways".

Citing the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (One Earth-One Family-One Future) slogan, Chandrasekhar said the world is now recognising the need for more sustainability, with conversations revolving around the ways for nations and people to move towards shared future and prosperity.

Alongside this, India's thrust on DPIs, the one Future Alliance, innovation, and young minds have been deeply appreciated by countries of the Global South, that long felt a gap in digitisation and technology.

"India putting forth this narrative about DPI, has seen a great deal of resonance, especially among those countries of the Global South, who have long felt that digitisation and technology were only for the rich countries," Chandrasekhar said.

India, through its DPIs and one Future Alliance, has demonstrated that there is a reasonable and realistic opportunity for every country, big or small, to also embrace a powerful digitisation journey, he said. (PTI)

## Škoda Auto India unveils festive variants of Kushaq and Slavia with special offers



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** Škoda Auto India, renowned for producing the safest and highest-rated crash-tested cars in the country, has introduced two new variants for the festive season: the Kushaq Onyx Plus and the Slavia Ambition Plus. Both variants come with exclusive festive pricing, appealing exchange benefits, and special corporate plans, all for a limited time.

The Kushaq Onyx Plus boasts brand-new R16 Grus alloys and a Window Chrome Garnish. The front grille ribs and rear trunk garnish now feature a chrome finish. The Onyx Plus variant is equipped with the 1.0 TSI engine paired with a manual transmission. It's priced at ₹ 11.59 lakh and is exclusively available in Candy White and Carbon Steel colors.

The Slavia Ambition Plus is enhanced with a Chrome Package for the front grille, lower door, and trunk garnish. The car comes with a built-in dashcam and is offered in all existing color options. Similar to the Kushaq Onyx Plus, the Slavia Ambition Plus is exclusively available with the 1.0 TSI engine, and customers can choose between a 6-speed manual and automatic transmission. The Slavia Ambition Plus is available at a special festive price of ₹ 12.49 lakh.

Based on the made-for-India, ready-for-the-world MQB-A0-IN platform, the Kushaq and Slavia are part of Škoda Auto India's India 2.0 project. They played a pivotal role in the company's successful year in 2022. Both cars have earned a full 5-star rating in the Global New Car Assessment Programme (GNCAP) for both adult and child safety.

This achievement sets them apart as the only made-in-India platform to achieve this rating, and it was done under GNCAP's stringent test protocols. Škoda Auto India now boasts a 100% fleet of crash-tested cars rated 5-stars for both adults and children, including the Kodiaq luxury 4x4 with a similar score under Euro NCAP.



# Congress will be proven 'anti-Hindu' if doesn't snap ties with DMK: Himanta

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that if the Congress does not distance itself from DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's controversial remarks on Sanatan Dharma, it will 'confirm' public's perception that the party is 'anti-Hindu'. He also questioned the grand old party's stance on its leader Karti Chidambaram defending the DMK leader's statements.

"I do not want to condemn the statement by the Tamil Nadu minister because he has exposed himself," Sarma said, claiming that remarks on similar lines were also made by Karti Chidambaram and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

DMK youth wing secretary and Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare minister Udhayanidhi Stalin had alleged on Saturday that Sanatan Dharma is against equality and social justice, and had likened it to coronavirus, malaria, fever caused by dengue virus and mosquitoes.

His remarks led to a furore on social



media with BJP's IT department in-charge Amit Malviya stating the DMK leader has called for "genocide" of 80 per cent popu-

lation who follow Sanatan Dharma. Udhayanidhi rubbished the genocidal claim and said his speech was a pointer to

social evils.

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram defended Stalin's remarks saying that the BJP likening it to a "genocidal call" is like giving it a "mischievous spin".

Sarma maintained that the question is now whether the Congress will remain in alliance with the DMK and take action against Chidambaram.

"This is a test for Rahul Gandhi. He has to make a decision whether he respects Sanatan Dharma or not," the BJP leader said. "If Gandhi does not snap ties with DMK or expel Chidambaram, then it will be confirmed that these people (Congress) are anti-Hindu, they do not like Sanatan Dharma, they do not like the Hindu religion," Sarma added.

Refraining from making any statement on Hinduism as a religion, he said, "I don't want to join that debate. It was here from 5,000 years ago and will be there till the sun and moon are there." (PTI)

## Minor found dead in Dibrugarh, gangrape and murder suspected

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIBRUGARH, Sept 4:** The body of a 17-year-old girl was discovered at the residence of Moni Rajwar in Dhekeri Gaon, Banipur area, Dibrugarh, eastern Assam, on Sunday night. The minor girl was found hanging in her room from the ceiling fan, but when the police arrived at the scene, her body was lying on the bed.

There are suspicions that the minor girl was subjected to sexual assault and murder. In connection with the case, the police arrested four individuals: Biswajit Bakti, Kishore Bauri, Rohit Rabi Das alias Naga, and Lohit Deka.

Dibrugarh additional SP (HQ) Papori Chetia stated, "We discovered the body of the minor at the residence of Moni Rajwar, where the girl had been living for three months. The girl is originally from Makum, Tinsukia. We have sent

the body for a post-mortem, and until that is completed, we cannot confirm anything."

"We have initiated our investigation and apprehended four individuals in connection with the case. Among the four, one is a minor. We have sent all four for a medical examination," Chetia mentioned.

She further added, "When our police team arrived at the scene, they found the body lying on the bed. She was hanging from the ceiling fan. We have gathered all the evidence from the scene and launched an investigation. At this stage, we cannot make any definitive statements as the investigation is in its preliminary phase."

A case numbered 472/2023 under Sections 302/376 D IPC was filed at Dibrugarh police station.

## Tragic drowning incident claims lives of three youths

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAON, Sept 4:** In a tragic turn of events, three young individuals from Ouguri in the Bhurbandha Block, namely Dipjyoti Bora (18), Tanmoy Medhi (18), and Pallab Deka (18), lost their lives today while attempting to cool off from the scorching heat. The trio had ventured to Dighalipather in Doloisuba, located approximately 3 km from Morigaon town, with the intention of swimming. Sadly, their day took a tragic turn when they encountered a watery grave after jumping into the deep pond at Dighalipather. The three deceased youths were students at Bhurbandha College. Pulin Kakoty, a reporter from Bhurbandha, shared insights into the incident, revealing that these three HS final year students from Bhurbandha College had a routine of going for an evening walk together after returning from college. Unfortunately, on Monday, they decided to swim in the pond, which they had never done before, and tragedy struck when they drowned.

## Protest held at Rajabari Tea Estate over delayed wages

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, Sept 4:** In a two-hour demonstration program organised by the All Tea Tribes Students Association (ATTSA), Rajabari sub-branch, in collaboration with the All Tea Tribes Women Association (ATTWA), Rajabari sub-branch, and the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha, Rajabari Branch, labourers, employees, and community members gathered at Rajabari Tea Estate to protest against irregular wage payments. The demonstrators voiced their concerns over the inconsistent payment of wages to labourers and employees at Rajabari Tea Estate, which is currently under lease and managed by DK Enterprise. They demanded that the wages be disbursed promptly to ensure the financial stability of the estate's workers.

## Tezpur unit ABSU's new committee takes charge

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Sept 4:** The newly formed committee of the Tezpur Unit of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) officially took charge in a ceremony held at the old Baan stage in Tezpur. ABSU president Dipen Boro, adviser Khwngkhra Swrgiary, secretary Birdao Boro, public relations secretary Rajesh Basumatary, education secretary Sumawar Basumatary, Sonitpur district president Jeet Swrgiary, secretary Enosh Muchahary, and Rupyoti Boro, among others, were present at the event.

The new committee members were administered the oath of office by district president Jeet Swrgiary. Dipen Boro addressed the new committee and encouraged them to work diligently, emphasising the organisation's ideology and the development of Boro culture, language, heritage, and Boro medium education. Adviser Khwngkhra Swrgiary also stressed the importance of discipline within the organisation during his speech.



Unit of ABSU, consisting of 27 members, was formed on August 13, with Ron Narzary as president and Mandip Goyari as the general secretary.

## LGBRIMH Tezpur conducts workshop on dementia

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Sept 4:** The department of Geriatric Mental Health at LGB Regional Institute of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), Tezpur, organised a workshop titled 'Dementia: Early Identification and Basic Management' for medical officers in Sonitpur district. This workshop coincided with the commencement of World Alzheimer's Month and aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of medical officers in the early identification, basic management, and referral requirements for individuals with dementia. The workshop was inaugurated by Professor Dr SK Deuri, the director of LGBRIMH. Also in attendance were Dr Dwipen Mahanta, president of the Indian Medical Association in Tezpur, and other faculty members from the institute. Medical officers from various hospitals in Sonitpur district participated in the workshop. The joint director of Health Services for Sonitpur district also expressed his support and best wishes for the event. The workshop featured Dr Kangan Pathak, head of the department of Psychiatry, Dr Subhashish Nath, associate professor and in-charge of the department of Geriatric Mental Health, and Dr Vijay Gogoi, associate professor of Psychiatry, among other resource persons.

## Express train services extended from Silchar to Rangiya

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** In a move aimed at enhancing passenger convenience, the services of the tri-weekly Train no 15612/15611 (Silchar - Guwahati - Silchar) Express have been extended up to Rangiya in both directions on Monday. To mark this extension, Bhuvaneshwar Kalita, MP (Rajya Sabha); Dilip Saikia, MP (Lok Sabha); and Bhabesh Kalita, MLA/Rangiya, flagged off the inaugural run of the train from Rangiya Railway Station. The extension of this train service is expected to benefit passengers who frequently travel from Cachar to lower Assam for various purposes. Additionally, residents of the Cachar area will have the convenience of traveling to the north bank of the Brahmaputra via Rangiya Junction, a significant interchange point for train passengers. As part of this extension, Train no 15611

## Renowned Tezpur professor and social activist, Nalini Kumar Sarma, passes away

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Sept 4:** Tezpur is mourning the loss of distinguished social worker and retired professor of Darrang College, Nalini Kumar Sarma, who passed away on Sunday night at a private hospital in Guwahati. He was 90 years old and had been suffering from age-related ailments. Nalini Kumar Sarma dedicated his services to the Department of Chemistry at Darrang College from 1967 to 1995, where he was not only a brilliant teacher but also a noted educationist. Born on October 10, 1934, Sarma began his educational journey at Tezpur Government Higher Secondary School. His profound love for literature led him to edit the school magazine, "Safura", in 1950. After graduating from Cotton College, he pursued his post-graduation in Chemistry at Gauhati University. His teaching career began at Tezpur Government Girls Multipurpose



Higher Secondary School, and later, he joined Darrang College.

During the 1950s, he was inspired to develop his literary career as a writer and poet through his close association with luminaries like Kalaguru Bishnuruprasad Rabha, the famous litterateur Dandinath Kalita, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, and many others. In 2015, he published a collection of his poems titled "Jilgoni". Sarma was a founding secretary and honorary principal of the College of Teacher's Education,

Tezpur. He also served as the founding president of Sankardeva Sishu Niketan, Tezpur, and was closely associated with Asomiya Bhasa Unnati Sadhini Sabha, Baan Theatre, Sahitya Sabha, and several other organizations. His passing is deeply mourned by various organizations and individuals, including Dr. Polashmani Saikia, Principal of Darrang College, Dr. Khageswar Borkakati, President of Darrang College Governing Body, Dr. Dharmendra Sarma, President of Darrang College Alumni Association, Pallab Lochan Das, MP of Tezpur, Prithiraj Rabha, MLA of Tezpur, Brindaban Goswami, former MLA of Tezpur, Dr. Abani Kumar Sarma, retired Principal of Darrang College, and many others. Nalini Kumar Sarma is survived by his wife, two sons, daughters-in-law, and numerous grieving relatives. His contributions to education and literature have left an indelible mark on Tezpur and beyond.



3 drug peddlers arrested

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Sept 4:** In a recent operation led by town inspector Navajyoti Das, a Sivasagar police team arrested three drug peddlers in Bhatiapur. The authorities recovered 79 grams of narcotics, containers, and a scooter from the possession of the apprehended individuals.

## Guwahati Airport receives ISO-10002: 2018 certification for quality management

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 4:** Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA) has earned ISO 10002:2018 certification, a prestigious global recognition for its quality management system in airport operations, management, and development. This certification is a testament to the airport's dedication to implementing industry best practices in managing quality and furthering its operational and developmental aspects.

A spokesperson for Guwahati airport expressed pride in achieving this esteemed ISO certification, highlighting that it demonstrates the reliability of its quality management system. The spokesperson commended the entire team for their collaborative efforts in attaining this significant milestone and ensuring that the airport adheres to industry standards and best practices.

## Sonitpur District College Employees Association holds executive meeting and felicitation ceremony

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 4:** The undivided Sonitpur District College Employees Association convened an executive meeting at Tyagbir Hem Baruah College in Jamugurihat. The meeting, presided over by Kukil Bharali, the president of the Association and senior assistant of LOKD College, aimed to address several key issues.

Ananta Barthakur, the senior assistant of Biswanath College and general secretary of the association, provided an overview of the meeting's objectives. Dr Ajit Hazarika, principal of THB College, extended a warm welcome, and invited guests included Tulshi Saikia, vice president, and Chittaranjan Kakati, working president of All Assam College Employees Association.

Among the topics discussed were concerns about the post-retirement benefits of NPS employees, pending recruitment of Grade III and IV employees, and the non-implementation of time scale benefit proposals submitted by colleges across the state. The meeting also featured a felicitation for Mukut Bhuyan, a retired senior assistant of THB College.

In the second session, a special meeting was organised by the Employees Association of THB College to honour the retired senior assistant. Bhoben Basumatary, president of THB College Employees Association, chaired the meeting, while Amilan Jyoti Kalita, secretary of the College Employees Association, moderated the event. Dr Bipul Kr Bora, president of the Governing Body of the college, Dr Ajit Hazarika, principal, and Dr Anju Chhetri were the guests of honour. The retired senior assistant was felicitated with a citation, xori, gamosa, and cheleng chador by the college's employee association office bearers.

This extended train route will include stops at Changsari, Kamakhya, Guwahati, Chaparmukh Jn., Hojai, Lumding Jn., New Hailong, Badarpur Jn., and Katahal stations. The train will consist of 14 coaches, offering AC 2-tier, AC 3-tier, sleeper class, and second-class seating options for passengers. Details regarding the train's stoppages and timings can be found on the IRCTC website, as well as in various newspapers and social media platforms of NF Railway. Passengers are advised to verify these details before embarking on their journeys.



(Rangiya - Silchar) Express will depart from Rangiya at 15:45 hours on every Monday, Thursday & Saturday starting from September 4, and arrive in Silchar at 04:40 hours on the

following day. In the return direction, Train no 15612 (Silchar - Rangiya) Express will depart from Silchar at 22:15 hours on every Wednesday, Friday & Sunday starting from September 6, 2023, and reach Rangiya at 10:30 hours on the next day.

This extended train route will include stops at Changsari, Kamakhya, Guwahati, Chaparmukh Jn., Hojai, Lumding Jn., New Hailong, Badarpur Jn., and Katahal stations. The train will consist of 14 coaches, offering AC 2-tier, AC 3-tier, sleeper class, and second-class seating options for passengers.

Details regarding the train's stoppages and timings can be found on the IRCTC website, as well as in various newspapers and social media platforms of NF Railway. Passengers are advised to verify these details before embarking on their journeys.

## LOST

I lost my original Registration Certificate bearing Registration No. 162912 with Code No. 213204 of 2017-18 of Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC), while traveling between Harem and Tika. Any finder may kindly contact the address and mobile numbers mentioned below.

Serlota Timungpi, D/o Harsing Timung, Langchingbar, West Karbi Anglong district. PO.- Tika, PS.- Baithalangso. Pin Code: 782450 Contact No. 60039-01672/9678-808568.

## NAME CORRECTION

I, TALEB ALI, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the below mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my actual and correct name is TALEB ALI. But my name has been recorded in my Passport vide Passport No K1154893, Issue date 14/12/2012 and Expiry date 13/12/2022 as Mohammad Taleb Ali in place of TALEB ALI. That Mohammad Taleb Ali and TALEB ALI is the same and one person. It is corrected by NOTARY Mangaldai on 28/08/2023.

Sd/- TALEB ALI S/O Masiruddin Seikh Village- Barjhar Bagicha P/O Bhakatpara P/O Dhula Dist. UDALGURI (BTR) (Assam)

## NAME CHANGE

I, Sri Jiban Bardalai, s/o Late Bidya Dhar Bordoloi, VIII - Domal, PO- Domal, Dist - Mangaon, State- Assam, PIN-782 105 hereby declared that. I have changed my name from Sri Jiban Bardalai to Jiban Bordoloi vide affidavit before the Notary Govt of Assam as published vide IN-AS51985344609129V dated 31 Aug 2023, wherein declared that Sri Japan Bardalai and Jiban Bordoloi pertain to one and the same person.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Capital is that part of wealth which is devoted to obtaining further wealth. -Alfred Marshall

## Navigating economic crossroads

The robust GDP growth experienced in the first quarter of the current fiscal year offers a ray of hope, yet we must not overlook the intriguing nuances hidden within the detailed figures. The quarterly growth has surged to an impressive 7.8%, a remarkable feat for a large economy like India's. However, we must exercise caution, as a single strong quarter does not guarantee sustained prosperity for the entire year. In an increasingly troubled world, any adverse global development could significantly impact India's economic trajectory. Consider, for instance, the ongoing Ukraine conflict. Escalation of hostilities in the Black Sea area may disrupt grain exports from both Russia and Ukraine, potentially devastating poorer nations dependent on these vital imports. Additionally, any further chokehold on Russia's oil exports could send shockwaves through global oil markets, causing prices to soar and squeezing resources worldwide. Meanwhile, China's economic landscape appears to be entangled with each move made by its authorities. As the Chinese Communist Party tightens its grip, the economy seems to stagnate. Crackdowns on Chinese technology companies have stifled innovation and dampened investment sentiment, leading some global companies to withdraw from China.

This presents an opportunity for India, with some foreign investments seeking refuge within its borders. However, India's ability to capitalize on this situation is somewhat constrained by its sluggish manufacturing sector. The latest figures reveal manufacturing growth at a lackluster 4.7%, slower than the 6.1% achieved in the previous fiscal year. Despite policy efforts such as the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, India requires nothing less than a manufacturing revolution. Critics argue that while the PLI scheme has shown some success, the level of value addition remains modest. However, it is worth noting that higher production driven by imported inputs can also stimulate manufacturing activity, much like China's early industrialization. Nevertheless, India must substantially increase its manufacturing output to achieve ambitious development goals, including the aspiration to become a \$5 trillion economy. Manufacturing's performance also serves as a litmus test for the effectiveness and implementation of policies on the ground, particularly regarding land allocation for industry. Fortunately, some state governments have adopted a more proactive stance, recognizing the importance of pragmatic approaches to land acquisition.

Another critical challenge lies in India's heavy reliance on domestic demand to fuel its economy, accounting for approximately 35% of national income. In stark contrast, the United States relies on domestic consumption for over 60% of its economic activity, with additional growth drivers stemming from its high-tech industry and global corporations. India's timid exports, constituting just 21% of GDP, underscore the need for growth in this sector. Furthermore, imports have declined from 27% in the previous fiscal year to 23.8% currently, signaling a diminishing external sector leverage. This shift challenges India, as the external sector was a pivotal growth driver for many Southeast Asian economies during their rapid expansion. Ultimately, these challenges are interconnected, and India's exports cannot flourish without a genuine manufacturing renaissance. In light of India's remarkable feat in moon landing, the nation must harness its technical prowess and apply it to more humble manufacturing endeavors. This presents a critical test for both industry and government, demanding immediate and concerted efforts to chart a path to sustainable and inclusive economic growth. In these uncertain times, navigating this economic crossroads will require strategic vision, innovative policy, and a steadfast commitment to manufacturing excellence.

## Learning and teachers' students relations

By: Anjali Adhikari

Learning is a lifelong process. A teacher plays a prominent role in a child's personality development as well as in shaping a child into a complete being. Our teachers are our friend, philosopher and guide and we consider our teachers next to our parents. Learning doesn't necessarily mean only bookish knowledge, but it also includes physical, mental and spiritual learning and our teachers help us to acquire such knowledge. A teacher is the only person who holds our hand and takes us to a world of enlightenment. Therefore a teacher is highly esteemed by students. A teacher is an epitome of knowledge, and therefore teachers should be unbiased socially aware as teachers are the creators of a beautiful and a stable society.

Over the time, it is observed that in earlier days teachers were more respected, as students used to pay obeisance whenever they came across their teachers. They are mentions of several examples in our Indian mythology and philosophy to highlight students' teachers' relations. Students used to follow their teachers more dedicatedly which is seen missing nowadays, rather students are now seen as disrespectful and scornful towards their teachers.

However, it is to be mentioned that, both teachers and students are equally responsible for such degradation. As it has been observed that some teachers only impart academic knowledge as part of the profession and they lack consideration of imparting moral knowledge to their students. Also, it is important to maintain the teachers' students' gap as teachers sometimes become over friendly just to be in their students' good books.

Moreover, the world turning into a commercial hub is another



reason for such degradation. Many qualities define a positive relationship and pave ways on how to create powerful student teacher relationships. These can be seen to include good communication, a safe learning environment and mutual respect, a positive and patient attitude, student equality and timely praise. Just as, teachers treat their students as their own children therefore they too accepting respect in return is not wrong. When teachers are treated respectfully, they feel more encouraged. But students nowadays don't care to show respect towards their teachers. In this regard, I believe, parents too should take some lead so as to teach their children to be respectfully towards their students. It is observed that parents sometimes involved in criticising teachers in front of their children, which puts a negative impact on their children's minds.

Therefore it is prerogative to create a healthy learning relationship between the teachers and the world students, so as to create a healthy and a balanced society.

Today on this auspicious occasion of teachers' day I would like to salute and thanks all of my teachers and I wishing all the Teachers' "A Very Happy Teachers' Day" and my gratefulness to all my teachers' for enlightening me and encouraging me all through. (The author is a Lecturer who can be reached at [anjaliadhikari757@gmail.com](mailto:anjaliadhikari757@gmail.com))

# Mamata's Opposition to caste census is not helping INDIA alliance

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's refusal to accept Nitish Kumar as the convener of the opposition I.N.D.I.A. bloc, while also expressing aggressive hostility to a caste census, has not gone down well among the backward caste people as well as Dalit and OBC leaders of Bihar and Jharkhand. Notwithstanding their political allegiance, even a section of the backward caste leaders belonging to the BJP feel that this stand of Mamata was aimed at undermining the stature of Nitish within I.N.D.I.A. and effectively humiliate him.

The ruling Mahagathbandhan leaders in Bihar strongly nurse the view that this statement from Mamata would severely damage the electoral prospects of I.N.D.I.A., not only in Bihar and Jharkhand, but also in Uttar Pradesh, and to some extent, even in Bengal. In Bihar, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar are viewed as the two sides of the backward caste politics. This news has even raised the political aspirations of the backward castes in eastern UP and in Bengal. Sources say the backward caste Biharis of Bengal, who at one stage were seeking solace in emergence of BJP as their voice, have not taken kindly to this remark by Mamata Banerjee.

JD(U) and RJD leaders argue that the emergence of I.N.D.I.A. as a serious challenger to Narendra Modi primarily owed to Nitish's untiring efforts to bring all the opposition parties and their leaders on board a common platform. No other opposition leader had ventured to take on this daunting initiative. The I.N.D.I.A. leaders are yet to unearth the real reason for Mamata putting her foot down and forcing others to fall in line. Her rigid stance has in fact surprised everybody. Just before the session started, it was widely expected that Nitish would be chosen as the convener of the coordinating committee of I.N.D.I.A. But it was Mamata's opposition that made the I.N.D.I.A. leaders retreat. The RJD, JD(U) and even some academics chose to Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party have already questioned the firebrand West Bengal CM's objection to caste-based census. They argue if she did not find

virtue in the caste-based census, launched by Nitish, she should have opposed it in the beginning itself. Even Supreme Court on August 19 had observed that it cannot restrain the Bihar government from publishing the cumulative data or findings of the Bihar caste survey, unless there is a prima facie case to show violation of any constitutional right or lack of competence on the part of the state government. Leaders in RJD, JD(U) rank claim that Mamata's objection to the caste-based census would simply strengthen BJP's case, which has been resorting to all sort of machinations to foil the move. They emphasise that Mamata being a senior politician should

### DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Arun Srivastava

5.2% Rajputs, 14.4% Yadav, 4% Kurmi, 8% Kushwaha, 17% Muslims, 2% Kayastha, 6% Baniya, 3% Teli, 2% Mushahar and 4% Dusadh. In Jharkhand, the OBC count is 46%, while Dalits (SCs) stand at 12%, Tribals (STs) 26% and General 16%. A caste-based census has the potential to delink the OBCs from the BJP. There are 40 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar. In the 2014 general elections, BJP had won 17 seats (23.58 per cent vote), JD(U) had bagged 16 (with 21.81 per cent vote share), LJP got 6 (7.86 per cent), RJD nil (but 15.36 percent of votes) and INC got 1 seat in the Lok Sabha.

There are 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Jharkhand. BJP had won 11 seats, while AJSU party had 1, JMM 1, and INC 1. BJP has been trying to woo non-tribals as well as the tribals who haven't converted to Christianity. However, with Hemant Soren emerging as the adivasi face, the BJP is finding it tough to expand, or indeed retain its foothold. Who will emerge as the winner in the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP or the Congress-JMM-RJD alliance, will depend on how the tribal versus non-tribal narrative plays out in the state.

While OBCs constitute 46.1 per cent of the Jharkhand population, Scheduled Tribes (STs) constitute 26.2 per cent. Whichever party manages to get a sizeable chunk of OBC and ST votes will be the winner. The BJP had introduced a new liberal domicile policy in 2016 with the aim of winning the non-tribals and OBCs, those migrated from Bihar and UP. It mandated that those who have lived and worked in Jharkhand for 30 years, and have

acquired immovable properties, will automatically become residents of the state.

Mandal-based parties have been at the forefront of the campaign, and have often sought to counter the BJP's increasing popularity among the Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by strengthening the demand for a caste-based census. Mamata, with her one ill-conceived statement, has endangered the support base of the Mandal-based parties. The BJP has already been reaching out to its core support base the message that INDIA parties do not have consensus on this key issue. The JD(U), RJD and Congress leaders are scared of their upper caste supporters shifting their allegiance to BJP. In fact, Tejashwi had undertaken much hard work to bring the Rajputs into his party's fold.

Mamata's obtrusive stance has also badly affected the morale of the backward caste, especially Kurmi leaders of Purvanchal, eastern UP. They were just about to float the idea to field the "Convener of the I.N.D.I.A." as their candidate from Fulphur, the constituency once represented by Jawaharlal Nehru. He was to be presented as the unifying factor before the electorates of the state. By objecting to Nitish becoming the Convener, Mamata had indirectly helped BJP. Some of the backward caste leaders have also questioned the political knowledge of the caste equations and their broader implications on the social and economic features of the country. It is a proven fact that a scientific counting of caste groups secured by a caste-based census would not only help governments to reimagine their social justice plank but also broaden the scope of development goals.

Mamata should have seen how

the BJP has been using the caste chemistry to win over the backward castes and Dalit votes from her own party in West Bengal. Upper-caste Hindu voters are in a dominant position in Bihar and Jharkhand. A small shift in the percentage of votes would ensure the victory of BJP in these two states. On the ground, the Mahagathbandhan governments in Bihar and Jharkhand, led by Nitish and Hemant Soren appear, to be in a commanding position, but a contradictory statement of this nature would simply reinforce the peoples' perception that the claim of opposition unity is simply an eyewash and farce. The emergence of Mandal-based parties as forces driven by ideals of social justice prevented the growth of the BJP. In Bihar and Jharkhand, the BJP could emerge on political scene by exploiting the Fodder Scam. The BJP patriarch LK Advani had used CBI to consolidate the BJP in Bihar and Jharkhand.

The Mumbai meet of the I.N.D.I.A. constituted three committees, but none of them have a convener. It is not clear which leader from among the committee leaders would convene the meetings and coordinate with the state parties. In Bihar, the Congress will ultimately be the worst sufferer. It has no independent support base. The entire lot has shifted to BJP.

After the Mamata episode, the state RJD and JD(U) are feeling hurt that instead of clearly telling her off that the collective decision would not be changed to keep her in good humour, the Congress leadership decided to follow her unreasonable diktat. The I.N.D.I.A. leaders nurse the view that the Mumbai meet proved to be a waste of time. Most shared the view that no other leader enjoyed greater support for the key assignment than Nitish. The JD(U) leader after parting ties with the BJP undertook the mammoth task of bringing the secular parties together after aligning with the RJD and the Congress. The next meeting of I.N.D.I.A. will be held in Delhi in October. By that time, it would be too late to salvage the situation. Unfortunately, Mamata's stance does not reflect the need for flexibility and compromise, which almost all the I.N.D.I.A. leaders mentioned in their speeches. (IPA Service)

## The role of teachers in shaping India's future

By: Dipak Kurmi

Ancient India gained global recognition and respect thanks to the intellectual brilliance of its scholars, philosophers, and inquisitive minds. Their unwavering dedication to unraveling the mysteries of the universe and nature attracted seekers of knowledge from distant lands to renowned institutions like Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, and Vallabhi. The further they delved into their explorations, the more captivated they became, fueling their relentless pursuit of wisdom.

Throughout history, the quest for knowledge in ancient India faced challenges due to various historical events. However, its resilience ensured its survival even in trying times. In essence, the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and truth, often referred to as knowledge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragya), and truth (Satya) in Indian thought, was regarded as the ultimate human aspiration. Consequently, education in ancient India aimed not only at imparting essential knowledge and skills for a good life but also at facilitating the complete realization and liberation of the self.

In the midst of the materialistic frenzy sparked by liberalization, privatization, and globalization, the profound value of ancient Indian knowledge has often been overshadowed. India, too, feels the impact of this shift and recognizes that many of humanity's challenges stem from the relentless exploitation of natural resources. There's a growing awareness that a change in our approach is imperative. In 2020, India made a decision to embrace its rich heritage of timeless wisdom as a guiding principle for its education policy. It acknowledges that edu-

cation must be deeply rooted in a culture devoted to acquiring new knowledge and should awaken people to the alarming environmental destruction happening around us.

Those in power often discuss global issues like pollution, climate change, access to clean water, population growth, and human rights, but too often, it ends with the talk. Indians are familiar with an ancient concept called 'Aparigraha,' championed by Mahatma Gandhi, which emphasizes that the world has enough resources to meet everyone's needs but not their greed. It's a challenging idea, but it's necessary because there's no alternative. The teacher, education, can lead the way. We need to open new chapters in every field, focusing on multidisciplinary aspects of human knowledge.

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the future. It's their duty to guide each student, starting as someone unaware and inexperienced, into a well-rounded individual. This process not only influences future generations but also fosters citizens devoted to their nation and its people, all while being aware of their global responsibilities as international citizens.

Dr. S Radhakrishnan, a legendary teacher, was one of the brightest minds of the 20th century. He possessed unparalleled knowledge in both Eastern and Western philosophy and had profound insights into the concept of humanity. India commemorates his birthday on September 5th each year, honoring his greatness and the numerous contributions he made. However, it's essential that we not only remember his philosophy and guiding principles for teachers but also put them into practical use rather than letting them gather dust on library shelves.

Dr. Radhakrishnan emphasizes that universities should focus on nurturing freedom of thought and the liberty of the mind, rather than protecting privilege or demanding conformity. True excellence lies in intellectual and spiritual greatness, not in upholding privilege. It also means encouraging individuality, allowing each person to develop their own beliefs.

In today's world, schools cannot be fertile grounds for new ideas unless teachers are well-prepared and determined to support each student's expression, whether in music, sports, math, art, creativity, or any other form. Teacher education institutions (TEIs) play a crucial role in this by teaching how to foster quality, ideas, innovations, and imagination in schools and universities. They help educators learn, internalize, and apply these principles.

We take pride in ancient India for its culture's universality and its recognition of the fundamental unity of humanity amidst apparent diversity. Academic institutions should ask themselves if they operate with the confidence, conviction, determination, and passion necessary to earn credibility. Have we, as academics, settled for being less original, aspiring to lower ambitions, and conforming to outdated norms?

The most fitting tribute to Dr. Radhakrishnan and the rich Indian teaching tradition is to honor and regard teachers as the architects of not just a student's future but also of society, communities, and the nation as a whole. To accomplish this, provide them with top-notch teacher training institutions and lifelong learning opportunities, allowing them to constantly adapt and evolve. (The writer can be reached at [dipaknewslive@gmail.com](mailto:dipaknewslive@gmail.com))

## High inflationary pressure on economy has emerged as major issue for 2024 polls

By Harihar Swarup

The most significant political development this year is not the formation of the Indian Development Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), a congregation of forces opposed to the BJP. It isn't the tentative alliance that BJP is seeking to build with its older and newer partners. And it's the G20 summit, which is much a diplomatic event as a political one to symbolize India's success in the domain of international politics under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The most important is persistent inflationary pressures on the national economy.

The BJP is fully aware of the political implications of inflation. From 1998 state assembly elections, where high onion prices cost the party its government in Delhi, to 2013-14, the link between politics and prices is very crucial, food prices comprise a substantial element of inflation basket, is quite clear to the party's managers. Indeed, in his Independence Day address from the ramparts of Red Fort, even PM pushed forward a narrative of progress and achievement, Modi sneaked in a brief segment on inflation where he acknowledged the problem.

He attributed it to the global climate, with pandemic and then the Ukraine war destabilizing markets. "Today the world is facing the crisis of inflation. We import some goods from around the world. Unfortunately, we also import inflation." But then, recognizing this is a wide spread concern—Modi was delivering his speech on a day after data showed that headline "consumer price index had jumped from 4.9 per cent in June to 7.4 per cent in July—he said that India had tried its best to control inflation. "Compared to the past, we have also some success, but should not be complacent with that things are better than that in the world. I have to take more steps in this direction to minimize the burden of inflation of countrymen. And we will continue to take that step."

Inflation has coincided with what economists believe has been a K-shaped recovery of the economy after the pandemic; the terms refers to the phenomena where corporate have

seen profit-led growth and the upper middle classes and segments of the middle -- classes and segments of the middle-class have done reasonably well but, simultaneously, there has been a dip in the incomes and living standard of a much greater segment of the population -- the poor in rural and urban areas, small farmers, labour in the informal sector, and lower middle classes.

Thus, even as major structural issues that have haunted the economy for decades, of persistent unemployment and a manufacturing sector that doesn't have the base and capacity to accommodate the millions who join the work force remains.

Supplement this with one more factor. In a recent piece for Indian Express, the Economist Jean Dreze convincingly argued that the real wages of male agricultural labourers, non-agriculturalist labourers and construction workers grew at less than 1 per cent between 2014-15 and 2021-22; he pointed out to a recent data suggest that in 2022-23, the growth rate of real wages for the first group was just 0.2 per cent and that the other two actually saw a decline.

It is in this backdrop that the 2024 campaign will hinge on a variable that neither surveys by pollsters nor reports by journalists have yet seen have yet been to unravel. Are the poor in India disillusioned? Or are they angry? Or the poor in India disillusioned? Or they hopeful? And more importantly, do they blame somebody for this?

But while the Opposition may bank on precisely on this juncture in the political economy to assume that voter is angry and, therefore, its prospects are better in the next elections, recent political and electoral history has shown that it will be committing a grave mistake in underestimating the BJP for four reasons.

One, the party has robust feedback channel and is aware of the ground realities. As the PM's speech indicated, both economic data from the top as well as organizational feedback from the ground have already equipped the party leadership with the information on prices and how these are affecting the lives of to address the gaps and vulnerability. (IPA Service)



# Medical myths: All about COPD

By: Tim Newman

**C**OPD is an umbrella term for a collection of progressive respiratory conditions, all of which cause breathing difficulties. Two of the most common forms of COPD are chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The most prevalent symptoms of COPD are shortness of breath and a cough. Over time, even everyday activities, such as getting dressed, can become challenging.

In this article, we cover some of the most common myths associated with COPD. To ensure we provide accurate information, we have recruited two experts. Dr. Neil Schachter is a professor of medicine — pulmonary, critical care, environmental medicine, and public health — at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. He is also medical director of pulmonary rehabilitation at the Mount Sinai Health System. Dr. Shahryar Yadegar is a critical care medicine specialist, pulmonologist, and medical director of the ICU at Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center, CA.

**1. COPD is rare**  
According to the World Health Organization (WHO), COPD caused 3.23 million deaths in 2019, making it the third leading cause of death worldwide. Dr. Schachter explained that in the United States, COPD “is the fourth leading cause of death.

More than 16 million Americans are diagnosed.” Additionally, as Dr. Yadegar told Medical News Today, “millions more people may be undiagnosed.”

The American Lung Association (ALA) recommends that anyone who is “experiencing COPD symptoms — chronic cough, shortness of breath, frequent respiratory infections, significant mucus production (also called phlegm or sputum), and/or wheezing — speak with [a] doctor about obtaining a breathing test called ‘spirometry,’ which can help diagnose COPD.”

**2. Only smokers develop COPD**

It is true that smoking tobacco is the leading cause of COPD, but as Dr. Schachter told MNT, “There are many other risk factors that contribute to the development of the disease, including air pollution, work-related pollution, infection, and some forms of asthma.” Extending this further, Dr. Yadegar told us: “Approximately 10–20% of COPD patients never smoked. Some of these never-smokers include significant secondhand smoke exposure; genetic predisposition, primarily through alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency; or substantial exposure to air pollution.”

Alpha-1 antitrypsin is an enzyme that protects the body from an immune attack. Some people have a mutation in the gene that codes for this enzyme; this causes alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.

Deficiency of alpha-1 antitrypsin increases the risk of developing COPD and other conditions that affect a range of bodily systems.

**3. Only older adults develop COPD**

COPD is certainly more common in older adults than in younger people, but younger people are not immune to the condition. For instance, in the U.S., between 2007 and 2009, COPD affected 2% of males and 4.1% of females aged 24–44 years. Similarly, the condition affected 2% of males and 3% of females aged 18–24 years.

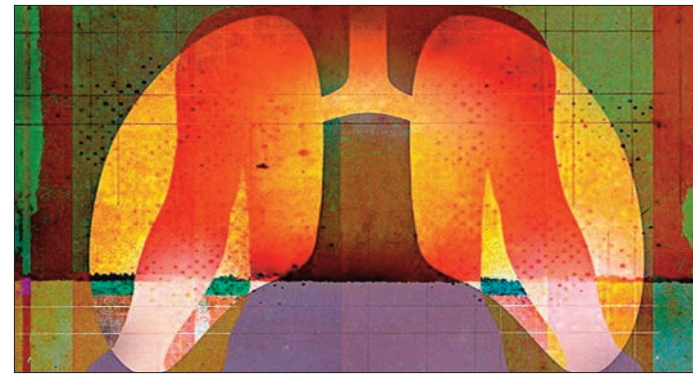
Dr. Schachter told us that a “significant proportion of those individuals diagnosed before the age of 50” have a hereditary form of the disease that causes a deficiency of alpha-1 antitrypsin.

**4. COPD only affects the lungs**

“False,” said Dr. Schachter. “COPD coexists with many comorbidities, including heart disease, lung cancer, hypertension, osteoporosis, and diabetes. The association may be due to common causative factors, as well as ‘systemic inflammation.’”

In other words, some of these conditions share risk factors, which makes them more likely to occur with COPD. For instance, smoking is a risk factor for both COPD and heart disease.

At the same time, health experts associate COPD with systemic inflammation, which can



also independently increase the risk of other conditions.

**5. People with COPD cannot exercise**

According to Dr. Yadegar, “Without proper guidance, patients with COPD may have difficulty completing physical exercises.” However, he also explained that doctors recommend people with COPD do exercise, as it can help “increase their breathing capacity and improve their daily symptoms.”

“Pulmonary rehabilitation programs typically offer guided breathing techniques in conjunction with physical exercise in order to maximize better patient outcomes,” he continued.

In a nutshell, Dr. Schachter told us that “exercise is therapeutic for COPD, reducing the number of exacerbations and improving quality of life.”

The ALA notes: “You might feel like it is not safe or even possible to exercise, but the right

amount and type of exercise has many benefits. Be sure to ask your doctor before you start or make changes to your exercise routine.”

**6. There are no treatments for COPD**

This, thankfully, is a myth. “There are numerous therapies and strategies that improve the course of the disease,” Dr. Schachter told MNT, “including medications, rehabilitation, diet, and vaccines that protect against respiratory infections that accelerate the course of the disease.”

Dr. Yadegar said, “With a spectrum of presentations, patients may benefit from inhaled bronchodilators, anticholinergics, corticosteroids, and supplemental oxygen.” These, he said, can be tailored uniquely to each person.

“Certain patients may also benefit from alpha-1 antitrypsin augmentation or even lung transplants,” he added.

**7. COPD is the same as**

**asthma**

“While both diseases are considered obstructive lung diseases, there are several differences between COPD and asthma,” Dr. Yadegar explained.

“Asthma most commonly begins in childhood, where it is frequently associated with allergies and problems of inflammation. COPD usually begins in the 60s and is associated with smoking. There is, however, an overlap syndrome, which has features of both.” — Dr. Neil Schachter

Dr. Yadegar dove into the details: “COPD is a disease of the alveoli, mostly [...] a result of elasticity loss induced primarily by smoking. Asthma is a disease of the airways, primarily [...] a result of chronic airway inflammation.”

“While clinical symptoms may overlap between the two diseases,” he continued, “treatments vary in order to best help patients in the short and long term.”

**8. Body weight does not affect COPD**

This is not true. Dr. Schachter told us that carrying excess body weight can increase the disability associated with COPD. Conversely, if people have a body weight that is below moderate, it can be “a sign of emphysema and also indicates a poor prognosis.”

**9. If you have COPD, there is no point quitting smoking**

This is another myth. As Dr. Schachter told MNT, “It is never too late to quit.”

He explained that “smoking accelerates the loss of lung function that accompanies COPD.” He also said that smoking tobacco can promote exacerbations of the symptoms.

**10. Shortness of breath is the only symptom of COPD**

“Shortness of breath is a major presenting symptom but hardly the only one,” according to Dr. Schachter. “Cough, excess phlegm production, respiratory infections, and all the symptoms of the comorbidities are often signs of progressing COPD.” Other symptoms can include sleep problems, anxiety, depression, pain, and cognitive decline.

**11. A healthy diet cannot help with COPD**

As a matter of fact, a healthy diet can make a difference for people living with COPD. Dr. Schachter told MNT that a healthy diet promotes “general health and can protect against exacerbations of COPD itself and its comorbidities.”

For example, a 2020 meta-analysis of eight observational studies investigated the role of diet in COPD. The authors conclude that “healthy dietary patterns are associated with a lower prevalence of COPD, while unhealthy dietary patterns are not.”

Similarly, the data generated in another review suggest that “a higher intake of fruits, probably dietary fiber, and fish reduce the risk of COPD.” (Courtesy: *Medical News Today*)

## Lauding Lise Meitner, who said ‘no’ to the atomic bomb

By: Olivia Campbell

**T**he film Oppenheimer which tells the story of the Manhattan Project’s development of the atomic bomb, has made quite a splash this summer, with audiences and critics alike hailing it as a riveting slice of scientific history. But it also has some viewers asking: Where are the women? In the film, Lilli Hornig is the only woman scientist named and portrayed working on the project, though she was not the only one involved. Charlotte Serber, shown as project leader J. Robert Oppenheimer’s secretary, actually did far more. Some scholars argue that physicist Lise Meitner, co-discoverer of nuclear fission, should have been included.

As a biographer of historical women scientists, I should be the first in line to decry the erasure or minimisation of women’s contributions. But should women be written into stories merely for the sake of representation, without first considering the context and the person? Is this what they would have wanted?

In Meitner’s case, the answer is “no.” Her discovery may have been crucial to creating the atomic bomb, but she wanted nothing to do with it nor wanted to be depicted in films about it. And I believe Meitner’s refusal to participate in the weaponisation of her work on moral grounds makes her more worthy of commemoration than Oppenheimer. She chose humanity over notoriety.

According to Ruth Lewin Sime’s detailed biography, Lise Meitner: A Life in Physics, Meitner was likely the first female professor in Germany and the head of physics at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Chemistry in Berlin. In 1934, she became so intrigued by Italian physicist Enrico Fermi’s bombardment elements with newly discovered particles called neutrons that she decided to do some tests of her own. After performing a few ex-

periments, Meitner could tell that something exciting lay on the other side of her digging. She also knew she’d need an interdisciplinary team to properly conduct the research and interpret the results, so she recruited her chemist colleague Otto Hahn and later his assistant Fritz Strassmann.

Little did she comprehend that they were on the cusp of upending the principles of nuclear physics. Over the next four years, Meitner and her team spent their days irradiating various elements with neutrons and identifying the decay products. Meitner would use physics to explain the nuclear processes, and Hahn would conduct chemical analyses. In late 1938, Hahn and Strassmann discovered that neutron-bombarded uranium-235 samples seemed to contain barium — a much lighter element than expected, which the pair could not explain.

Meitner was headed toward the zenith of her career. But she had Jewish ancestry, so while making scientific history, she was also desperately searching for a way to make it out of Nazi Germany alive. With the help of a vast network of colleagues, she fled to Sweden in the summer of 1938. Meitner continued collaborating with colleagues via telephone, letters, and secret meetings for several months after her covert escape, but she would never move back to Germany.

In December 1938, Hahn wrote to Meitner about the puzzling barium results. This led Meitner and her nephew, nuclear physicist Otto Robert Frisch, into a discussion in which they calculated that bombarding uranium with neutrons could split the uranium atom’s nucleus in half, releasing 200 million electron volts of energy. Meitner and Frisch published their results in the scientific journal *Nature* on February 11, 1939, proposing the process should be called “fission,” named after the biological term used to describe cell division. But Hahn and Strassmann published their own analysis in the

journal *Naturwissenschaften* on January 6. (And Hahn alone was awarded the 1944 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the discovery of nuclear fission.)

Within a few short months of the papers, dozens of physicists had confirmed the process: uranium-235 atoms absorbed loose neutrons, causing them to become unstable and split. The process, some thought, might prompt a chain reaction. If so, the fission of just one pound of uranium-235 would release the same amount of explosive energy as roughly 8,000 tons of TNT.

The potential practical applications were many, but Meitner refused to be a part of the weaponisation of her work. She’d experienced the horrors of war up close during her stint as a nurse at a military hospital near the Russian front in World War I and didn’t want to be involved in the creation of something that would bring pain, suffering, and death.

Few scientists refused to help their side create weapons during the war, yet when Meitner was invited to work on the Manhattan Project, she responded, “I will have nothing to do with a bomb.” When Meitner heard the news of the bombing of Hiroshima, she went for a five-hour walk. What had her science wrought? Rumours flew about her role in the project, despite her clear lack of participation. The *Stockholm Expressen* newspaper surmised that the bomb had been invented because a Jewish scientist escaped Germany and passed her secrets along to the Allies. *Time* magazine proclaimed Meitner a “pioneer contributor to the atomic bomb.” But she knew nothing of its creation and deplored this sensationalised, largely false publicity.

In January 1946, Meitner travelled to the US to present lectures and teach classes at several universities across the country, as well as visit old friends and family who had immigrated there when fleeing the Nazis. At

the airport in New York, she was met with a horde of photographers and reporters. At a Women’s National Press Club banquet where she was awarded “Woman of the Year,” Meitner sat next to President Harry Truman.

When discussing the bomb, both agreed they wished for it never to be used again. And yes, there were movie offers. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer asked Meitner to approve of her depiction in the script for *The Beginning or the End*, a film about the development and use of the atomic bomb. Meitner wrote to Frisch that the script was “nonsense from the first word to the last” and that she “answered that it was against my innermost convictions to be shown in a film, and pointed out the errors in their story.” Oppenheimer, on the other hand, approved of the use of his likeness in the movie, apparently welcoming of the media attention.

MGM hoped a bigger payday might persuade Meitner to reconsider. In response, she gave three friends power of attorney and advised them to sue MGM on her behalf if any woman scientist appeared in the film. Meitner continued to refuse permission to use her name in films and plays.

Despite her work being corrupted to create death, Meitner never lost sight of the good that could come of the pursuit of scientific knowledge. “Science makes people reach selflessly for truth and objectivity,” she asserted in 1953. “It teaches people to accept reality, with wonder and admiration, not to mention the deep joy and awe that the natural order of things brings to the true scientist.” History loves to laud the Oppenheims; the ones who push the envelope, who puzzle through conundrums in the face of challenges, and who say “yes.” Saying “no” — choosing not to participate — is much less cinematic. But in this case, I think a moral objection is much more worth celebrating. (Courtesy: *The Wire*)

## With a 50% success rate, space missions remain a risky business

By: Gail Iles

**I**n 2019, India attempted to land a spacecraft on the Moon — and ended up painting a kilometres-long streak of debris on its barren surface. Now the Indian Space Research Organisation has returned in triumph, with the Chandrayaan-3 lander successfully touching down near the south pole of Earth’s rocky neighbour.

India’s success came just days after a spectacular Russian failure, when the Luna 25 mission tried to land nearby and “ceased to exist as a result of a collision with the lunar surface.”

These twin missions remind us that, close to 60 years after the first successful “soft landing” on the Moon, spaceflight is still difficult and dangerous. Moon missions in particular are still a coin flip, and we have seen several high-profile failures in recent years. Why were these missions unsuccessful and why did they fail? Is there a secret to the success of countries and agencies who have achieved a space mission triumph?

**An exclusive club**

The Moon is the only celestial location humans have visited (so far). It makes sense to go there first: it’s the closest planetary body to us, at a distance of around 400,000 kilometres. Yet only four countries have achieved successful “soft landings” — landings which the spacecraft survives — on the lunar surface.

The USSR was the first. The Luna 9 mission safely touched down on the Moon almost 60 years ago, in February 1966.

The United States followed suit a few months later, in June 1966, with the Surveyor 1 mission. China was the next country to join the club, with the Chang’e 3 mission in 2013. And now India too has arrived, with Chandrayaan-3. Missions from Japan, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Russia, the European Space Agency, Luxembourg, South Korea and Italy have also had some measure of lunar success with fly-bys, orbiters and impacts (whether intentional or not).

**Crashes not uncommon**

On August 19, 2023, the Russian space agency Roscosmos announced that “communication with the Luna 25 spacecraft was interrupted”, after an impulse command was sent to the spacecraft to lower its orbit around the Moon. Attempts to contact the spacecraft on August 20 were unsuccessful, leading Roscosmos to determine Luna 25 had crashed. Despite more than 60 years of spaceflight experience extending from the USSR to modern Russia, this mission failed. We don’t know exactly what happened — but the current situation in Russia, where resources are stretched thin and tensions are high due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, may well have been a factor.

The Luna 25 failure recalled two high-profile lunar crashes in 2019. In April that year, the Israeli Beresheet lander crashed-landed after a gyroscope failed during the braking procedure, and the ground control crew was unable to reset the component due to a loss of communications. It was later reported a capsule containing micro-

scopic creatures called tardigrades, in a dormant “cryptobiotic” state, may have survived the crash.

And in September, India sent its own Vikram lander down to the surface of the Moon — but it did not survive the landing. NASA later released an image taken by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter showing the site of the Vikram lander’s impact. Debris was scattered over almost two dozen locations spanning several kilometres.

**Space is still risky**

Space missions are a risky business. Just over 50% of lunar missions succeed. Even small satellite missions to Earth’s orbit don’t have a perfect track record, with a success rate somewhere between 40% and 70%.

We could compare uncrewed with crewed missions: around 98% of the latter are successful, because people are more invested in people. Ground staff working to support a crewed mission will be more focused, management will invest more resources, and delays will be accepted to prioritise the safety of the crew. We could talk about the details of why so many uncrewed missions fail. We could talk about technological difficulties, lack of experience, and even the political landscapes of individual countries.

But perhaps it’s better to step back from the details of individual missions and look at averages, to see the overall picture more clearly.

**The big picture**

Rocket launches and space launches are not very common in the scheme

of things. There are around 1.5 billion cars in the world, and perhaps 40,000 aeroplanes. By contrast, there have been fewer than 20,000 space launches in all of history. Plenty of things still go wrong with cars, and problems occur even in the better-regulated world of planes, from loose rivets to computers overriding pilot inputs. And we have more than a century of experience with these vehicles, in every country on the planet. So perhaps it’s unrealistic to expect spaceflight — whether it’s the launch stage of rockets, or the even rarer stage of trying to land on an alien world — to have ironed out all its problems. We are still very much in the early, pioneering days of space exploration.

**Monumental challenges remain**

If humanity is ever to create a fully fledged space-faring civilisation, we must overcome monumental challenges. To make long-duration, long-distance space travel possible, there are a huge number of problems to be solved. Some of them seem within the realm of the possible, such as better radiation shielding, self-sustaining ecosystems, autonomous robots, extracting air and water from raw resources, and zero-gravity manufacturing. Others are still speculative hopes, such as faster-than-light travel, instantaneous communication, and artificial gravity.

Progress will be little by little, small step by slightly larger step. Engineers and space enthusiasts will keep putting their brainpower, time and energy into space missions, and they will gradually become more reliable. And maybe one day we’ll see a time when going for a ride in your spacecraft is as safe as getting in your car. (Courtesy: *Scroll.in*)



## Combatting ageism: Listening to voices of all ages

By: Manika Gupta

**A**ge, like sex, religion, language, nationality, race, etc. is something that adds to the diversity of the world. People of different ages often bring different valuable perspectives. However, just like other differences, unfair discrimination based on age, or ageism is a significant obstacle to a fair, inclusive, and progressive world. Ageism affects all ages but there are ways all of us can combat it. Before we discuss some age specific aspects, it is important to stress on individuality and intersectionality. Regardless of a person’s age, they are a human being, just like all of us. No sweeping generalisations can be made based on a person’s age about their thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. Other factors such as gender, economic status, disability, race, etc., combine, overlap, and crosscut to shape a person’s life and experience, along with their own individual, unique characteristics.

To understand and resolve age-specific challenges faced by different people, we can look at the three major age groups that make up a population: children (less than 18 years old), young and middle-aged persons (between 18 to 60 years old), elder persons (greater than 60 years old). It is common to refer to the young and middle-aged group as productive population while the other two are referred to as dependent population due to the different levels of participation in the workforce. However, it is important to remember that almost anyone can contribute positively to the world, regardless of age.

**Children (<18 years old)**

Mariah Montessori once said, “Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.” Children have been actively participating in solving the problems of the world by infusing fresh ideas and energy into the existing landscape, in their present and not just

their future. And yet, children continue to face many serious problems in today’s world. With lack of voting rights, political representation, financial and emotional independence, they are in an especially vulnerable position.

Child marriage, poverty, lack of access to basic facilities, child labour and crimes against children such as physical and sexual abuse are some of the issues robbing children around the world of a happy and healthy childhood. Poor parenting also forms a significant obstacle in their lives. Systematically studying and rectifying these issues and ensuring some form of political representation for them through strong independent institutions, and policy changes can go a long way in improving the lives of children. A great deal of introspection is also required on the part of the family unit with a thorough examination of familial relations, practices, and traditions, along with treating children as active collaborators in this process.

**Young And Middle-Aged People (18-60 years old)**

This group has the key demographic that is generally considered more economically powerful compared to other age groups. It has the greatest number of active people in the workforce, and yet younger people of many nations report facing severe ageism. There is a low level of confidence in the abilities of younger people and many of them feel as though their voices are often dismissed due to perceived lack of knowledge and experience. However, history shows us the invaluable contribution of the youth to the world. In present times, we see them as change-makers, activists, innovators, and steady contributors to a country’s development.

A ‘generation gap’ is reportedly felt by members of this age group, which is a difference between the opinions of people from one generation and another. However, these differences exist within a single generation as well and can be overcome with effective communication and understanding.

Shedding ageist attitudes, and adopting intergenerational unity are huge steps in the right direction.

**Elder Persons (>60 years old)**

According to the Global Report on Ageism, 1 in 2 people worldwide are ageist against older people. Older people experience a myriad of problems like natural issues associated with ageing such as physical weakness, illness and deterioration, societal neglect, and financial insecurity.

After a lifetime of service to the development of a nation, it is imperative that senior citizens be taken care of. Also, due to their experience and knowledge gathered over a long period, they are still assets to the world and must be given opportunities to contribute. Policy changes and creating all-age friendly public spaces are ways to ensure inclusive development which does not leave behind the elderly. 2021-2030 has been identified as the decade of healthy ageing and gathering and disseminating reliable information about the aspects of ageing is vital for its success.

Keeping these age groups in mind, we need to take a braided approach of these three streams to combat ageism and age-specific issues. According to the Global Report on Ageism, India is among the countries that account for the highest prevalence of ageism. People of all age groups need to come together to change this unfortunate reality.

According to the report, the three evidence-based strategies we can adopt to do this include policy and law changes, educational and awareness activities, and intergenerational interventions: activities that foster interactions and cooperation between different age groups. This will be a profitable activity for the world, as creating a world for people of all ages, creates a world where all of them can work towards realizing important sustainable development goals. Further, combating ageism can also be helpful in combating other forms of discrimination which will create a positive impact on the lives of all people, regardless of age. (Courtesy: *Youth Ki Awaaz*)



Premier Li is expected to travel to India after attending the East Asia summit in Jakarta

# Prez Xi not to attend G20 Summit; Premier Li Qiang to head delegation: Foreign Ministry

**BEIJING, Sept 4:** Chinese President Xi Jinping will not attend the G20 Summit in New Delhi this week and the delegation will be led by Premier Li Qiang, the foreign ministry announced here on Monday.

At the invitation of the government of the Republic of India, Premier of the State Council Li Qiang will attend the 18th G20 Summit to be held in New Delhi, India on September 9 and 10, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said in a brief statement.

Mao did not provide any reason for President Xi's absence from the high-profile conclave hosted by India for the first time.

China looks forward to the G20 New Delhi Summit reaching a consensus on tackling challenges in the economy and development, conveying confidence to the outside world and promoting shared prosperity and growth, Mao told reporters at a regular ministry briefing here.

President Xi is also skipping the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian

Nations) and East Asia summits in Jakarta this week.

Premier Li will be representing China at the ASEAN Summit in Indonesia.

At the invitation of President Joko Widodo of Indonesia, the current ASEAN chair, Premier of the State Council Li will attend the 26th China-ASEAN Summit, the 26th ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit to be held in Jakarta, Indonesia from September 5 to 8, and pay an official visit to Indonesia, another Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin announced on September 1.

Now, Premier Li is expected to travel to India after attending the East Asia summit in Jakarta. In 2021, Chinese President Xi did not travel to Italy to participate in the G20 summit due to China's COVID-19 restrictions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has already conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi his decision not to attend the summit in person as he has to focus on the "spe-



cial military operation" in Ukraine.

The Russian president had skipped the Bali summit of G20 in November last year as well.

US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are among the G20 leaders who have already confirmed their partic-

ipation in the G20 Summit.

Meanwhile, US President Biden has said he is "disappointed" that his Chinese counterpart Xi plans to skip the upcoming G20 summit in India.

"I am disappointed... but I am going to get to see him," Biden told reporters on Sunday but did not say when that meeting may take place.

Xi and Biden last met at the G20 summit in Indonesia last year.

US-China relations remain tense despite a flurry of diplomatic visits from Wash-

ington this year to Beijing to revive dialogue and avoid a confrontation.

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 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. (PTI)

## Turkey's president meets Putin and aims to revive the wartime Ukraine grain export deal

**ANKARA, Sept 4:** Talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan began on Monday with the Turkish leader seeking to persuade Russia to revive an agreement that allowed Ukraine to export grain and other commodities from three Black Sea ports.

Putin in July refused to extend the agreement, which was brokered by Turkey and the United Nations a year earlier.

Russia complained that a parallel deal promising to remove obstacles to Russian exports of food and fertilizer hadn't been honored. It said restrictions on shipping and insurance hampered its agricultural trade even though it has shipped record amounts of wheat since last year.

Opening the talks, Putin said he was open to discussing the grain deal, among other issues. Ukraine President Zelenskyy says defense minister Oleksii Reznikov will be replaced this week. The two leaders met in Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi, where the Russian president has a residence. A lot is riding on the talks for the world food supply. The meeting takes place against a backdrop of more than 18 months of war and Ukraine's recent counteroffensive.

In the latest development, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday that Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov would be replaced this week. The job requires "new approaches," Zelenskyy said, without elaborating. Reznikov on Monday published a photo of his resignation letter.

Since Putin withdrew from the grain initiative, Erdogan has repeatedly pledged to renew arrangements that helped avoid a food crisis in parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Ukraine and Russia are major suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other goods that developing nations rely on.

"My gut feeling is that Putin recognizes the leverage he has by using food as an economic weapon, and thus will fight for all he can get in terms of concessions on his wish-list," said Tim Benton, a food security expert at the Chatham House think tank.

Those may include Russia's grains, or fer-



tilizer exports, or wider issues, he said.

Data from the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul, which organized the Ukraine shipments, shows that 57% of the grain from Ukraine went to developing nations, with the top destination being China, which received nearly a quarter of the food.

Russia has repeatedly attacked the Odesa region, Ukraine's main Black Sea port area. On Monday, the Ukrainian air force said it intercepted 23 of 32 drones that targeted the Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk regions, but did not specify damage caused by the drones that got through. The Turkish president has maintained close ties to Putin during the 18-month war in Ukraine. Turkey hasn't joined Western sanctions against Russia following its invasion, emerging as a main trading partner and logistical hub for Russia's overseas trade.

NATO member Turkey, however, has also supported Ukraine, sending arms, meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and backing Kyiv's bid to join NATO.

Erdogan angered Moscow in July when he allowed five Ukrainian commanders to return home. The soldiers had been captured by Russia and handed over to Turkey on condition they remain there for the duration of the war.

Putin and Erdogan — authoritarian leaders who have both been in power for more than two decades — are said to have a close rapport, fostered in the wake of a failed coup against Erdogan in 2016 when Putin was the first major leader to offer his support. (AP)

## Zelenskyy says defense minister Oleksii Reznikov will be replaced this week

**KYIV, Sept 4:** Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that defense minister Oleksii Reznikov will be replaced this week with Rustem Umerov, a Crimean Tatar lawmaker.

Zelenskyy made the announcement on his official Telegram account, writing that new leadership was needed after Reznikov went through "more than 550 days of full-scale war."

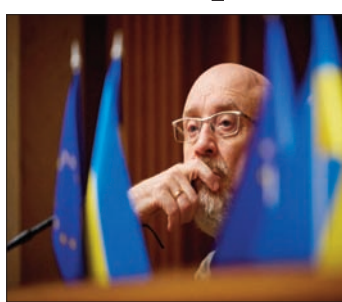
Later in his nightly address, Zelenskyy said he believes "that the Ministry needs new approaches and different formats of interaction both with the military and with society."

"The Verkhovna Rada (parliament) of Ukraine is well acquainted with this person, and Umerov does not require additional introductions. I expect support for this candidacy from parliament," the president told the nation.

Umerov, 41, a politician with the opposition Holos party, has served as head of the State Property Fund of Ukraine since September 2022. He was involved in the exchange of prisoners of war, political prisoners, children and civilians, as well as the evacuation of civilians from occupied territories. Umerov was also part of the Ukrainian delegation in negotiations with Russia over the U.N.-backed grain deal.

Reznikov's removal comes after a scandal around the Ministry of Defense's procurement of military jackets.

In August, Ukrainian investigative journalists reported that the materials were purchased at a price three times higher than normal and that in-



stead of winter jackets, summer ones were ordered. In the customs documents from the supplier, the jackets were priced at \$29 per unit, but the Ministry of Defense paid \$86 per unit. Reznikov denied the allegations during a news conference last week.

U.S. President Joe Biden told reporters in Delaware on Sunday that he was aware Zelenskyy had replaced his defense chief. Asked if he had any comment, Biden said, "Not publicly." The U.S. Department of Defense also declined to comment.

Zelenskyy's announcement came after two people were hospitalized following a 3½-hour Russian drone barrage on a port in Ukraine's Odesa region on Sunday, officials said.

The attack on the Reni seaport comes a day before Russian President Vladimir Putin is due to meet with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss the resumption of food shipments from Ukraine under a Black Sea grain agreement that Moscow broke off from in July.

Russian forces fired 25 Iranian-made Shahed drones along the Danube River in the early hours of

Sunday, 22 of which were shot down by air defenses, the Ukrainian air force said on Telegram. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, described the assault as part of a Russian drive "to provoke a food crisis and hunger in the world."

Russia's Defense Ministry said in a statement that the attack was aimed at fuel storage facilities used to supply military equipment.

Putin and Erdogan's long-awaited meeting is due to take place in Sochi on Russia's southwest coast on Monday.

Turkish officials have confirmed that the pair will discuss renewing the Black Sea grain initiative, which the Kremlin pulled out of six weeks ago. The deal — brokered by the United Nations and Turkey in July 2022 — had allowed nearly 33 million metric tons (36 million tons) of grain and other commodities to leave three Ukrainian ports safely despite Russia's war.

However, Russia broke away from the agreement after claiming that a parallel deal promising to remove obstacles to Russian exports of food and fertilizer hadn't been honored. Moscow complained that restrictions on shipping and insurance hampered its agricultural trade, even though it has shipped record amounts of wheat since last year. The Sochi summit follows talks between the Russian and Turkish foreign ministers on Thursday, during which Russia handed over a list of actions that the West would have to take in order for Ukraine's Black Sea exports to resume. (AP)

## Clashes erupt in Sweden's 3rd largest city after another Quran burned

**STOCKHOLM, Sept 4:** Clashes erupted in an immigrant neighbourhood in Sweden's third largest city after an anti-Muslim protester set fire to the Quran, police said on Monday.

Police in Malmo said they were pelted with rocks and dozens of cars were set on fire, including in an underground garage, describing the events that started Sunday and lasted overnight as "a violent riot."

The clashes started after an anti-Islam activist Salwan Momika on Sunday burned a copy of the Quran and an angry mob tried to stop him while police, some of them helmeted, detained several people. At least three people have been detained, police said.

Early Monday, an angry crowd of mainly young people also set fire to tires and debris and some were seen throwing electric scooters, bicycles and barriers in Malmo's Rosengard neighbourhood, which has seen similar clashes in the past. There were several banners relating to the Quran burning.

"I understand that a public gathering like this arouses strong emotions, but we cannot tolerate disturbances and violent expressions like those we saw on Sunday afternoon," senior police officer Petra Stenkula said.

The Quran burnings have sparked angry protests in Muslim countries, attacks on Swedish diplomatic missions and threats from Islamic extremists. Muslim leaders in Sweden have called on the government to find ways to stop the Quran burnings. Sweden dropped its last blasphemy laws in the 1970s and the government has said it has no intention to reintroduce them.

However, the government has announced an inquiry into legal possibilities for enabling police to reject permits for demonstrations over national security concerns. (AP)

## 1st Africa Climate Summit opens as hard-hit continent of 1.3 billion demands more say and financing

**NAIROBI, Sept 4:** The first African Climate Summit is opening as heads of state and others assert a stronger voice on a global issue that affects the continent of 1.3 billion people the most, even as they contribute to it the least.

Kenyan President William Ruto's government and the African Union launched the ministerial session on Monday while more than a dozen heads of state begin to arrive determined to wield more global influence and bring in far more financing and support. The first speakers included youth, who demanded a bigger voice in the process.

"For a very long time we have looked at this as a problem. There are immense opportunities as well," Ruto said of the climate crisis, speaking of multibillion-dollar economic possibilities, new financial structures, Africa's huge mineral wealth and the ideal of shared prosperity. "We are not here to catalog grievances." And yet there is some frustration on the continent about being asked to develop in cleaner ways than the world's richest countries, which have long produced most of the emissions that endanger climate, and to do it while much of the support that has been pledged hasn't appeared.

"This is our time," Mithika Mwenda with the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance told the gathering, asserting that the annual flow of climate assistance to the continent is about USD 16 billion, a tenth or less of what is needed and a "fraction" of the budget of some polluting companies. "We need to immediately see the delivery of the USD 100 billion pledged (by rich countries annually to developing ones in climate finance)," said Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. More than USD 83 billion in climate financing was given to poorer countries in 2020, a 4 per cent increase from the previous year but still short of the goal set in 2009.

"We have an abundance of clean, renewable energy and it's vital that we use this to power our future

prosperity. But to unlock it, Africa needs funding from countries that have got rich off our suffering," Mohamed Adow with the Power Shift Africa said ahead of the summit. Outside attendees to the summit include the US government's climate envoy, John Kerry, and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who has said he will address finance as one of "the burning injustices of the climate crisis." Ruto's video welcome released before the summit was heavy on tree-planting but didn't mention his administration's decision this year to lift a yearslong ban on commercial logging, which alarmed environmental watchdogs. The decision has been challenged in court, while the government says only mature trees in state-run plantations would be harvested.

"When a country is holding a conference like we are, we should be leading by example," said Isaac Kalua, a local environmentalist.

Kenya derives 93 per cent of its power from renewables and has banned single-use plastic bags, but it struggles with some other climate-friendly adaptations. Trees were chopped down to make way for the expressway that some summit attendees travelled from the airport, and bags of informally made charcoal are found on some Nairobi street corners.

Ruto made his way to Monday's events in a small electric car, a contrast to the usual government convoys, on streets cleared of the sometimes poorly maintained buses and vans belching smoke.

Elsewhere, nearly 600 million Africans lack access to electricity despite the vast potential for solar and other renewable power.

Other challenges for the African continent include simply being able to forecast and monitor the weather in order to avert thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in damages that, like climate change itself, have effects far beyond the continent.

"When the apocalypse happens, it will happen for all of us," Ruto warned. (AP)

## Sudan's top gen heads to South Sudan for talks with its prez on the war

**CAIRO, Sept 4:** Sudan's top military general is headed to South Sudan to talk with its president on his second trip abroad since the war in his country started earlier this year.

Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, chairman of the ruling Sovereign Council, will discuss the conflict in Sudan with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, according to a statement from the council.

In April, simmering tensions between the military, led by Burhan, and the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, exploded into open fighting in the capital and elsewhere.

The conflict has turned Khartoum into an urban battlefield, with the RSF controlling vast swaths of the city. The military command, where Burhan has purportedly been stationed since April, has been one of the epicenters of the conflict.

In his trip to Juba, Burhan is accompanied by acting Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq and Gen. Ahmed Ibrahim Mufadel, head of the General Intelligence Authority, and other military officers, according to the Sovereign Council.

The Sudanese leader met with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi of Egypt last week in the Egyptian coastal city of el-Alamein. It was his first trip abroad since the war. Both Egypt and South Sudan are neighbours to Sudan. (AP)

## Southeast Asian leaders are besieged by thorny issues as they hold an ASEAN summit without Biden

**JAKARTA, Sept 4:** Southeast Asian leaders led by Indonesian host President Joko Widodo are gathering in their final summit this year, besieged by divisive issues with no solutions in sight: Myanmar's deadly civil strife, new flare-ups in the disputed South China Sea, and the longstanding United States-China rivalry.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings will open on Tuesday in the Indonesian capital Jakarta under tight security.

The absence of US President Joe Biden, who typically attends, adds to the already sombre backdrop of the 10-state bloc's traditional show of unity and group handshakes.

ASEAN foreign ministers gathered Monday ahead of the leaders' summit. Mohammad Mahfud, Indonesia's coordinating minister in charge of political, legal and security affairs, told the region's top diplomats that their "community's strength is being challenged by one crisis after another."

A lack of progress in efforts to resolve the Myanmar crisis "left a negative mark on ASEAN," he said and warned that accelerating geopolitical tension and rivalries "could lead to open conflict that our region will be forced to face."

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said a five-point plan crafted by the leaders in 2021 to help bring Myanmar back to normalcy will be reviewed.



After discussions Tuesday, the ASEAN heads of state would meet Asian and Western counterparts from Wednesday to Thursday, providing a wider venue that the US and China, and their allies, have used for wide-ranging talks on free trade, climate change and global security. It has also become a battleground for their rivalries.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang was set to join the meetings, including the 18-member East Asia Summit. There, he would meet US Vice President Kamala Harris — who will fly in lieu of Biden — and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

While skipping ASEAN, Biden will fly to Asia for the G20 summit in India, then visit Vietnam to elevate ties. Washington says Biden was not relegating the bloc to a lower rung of geopolitical priorities and cited the US president's effort to deepen America's engagement with the region.



## The guild has criticised one-sided reporting by some media outlets

# Manipur govt files FIR against Editor Guild members for allegedly provoking clashes in Manipur

**IMPHAL, Sept 4:** Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Monday said that a police case has been filed on the basis of a complaint against the president and three members of the Editors Guild of India (EGI) for a report critiquing media coverage out of Manipur, and accused them of trying to "provoke clashes" in the state.

The Editors Guild in a report published Saturday had slammed the internet ban in the state as being detrimental to media reporting, criticised what it termed as one-sided reporting by some media outlets and claimed there were indications that the state leadership "had turned partisan" during the conflict period.

The Press Club of India joined a number of bodies in condemning the filing of the case against the EGI fact finding team and termed it as "a strong arm tactic by the state government which amounts to intimidation of the apex media body of the country". Singh claimed at a press conference here that at a time when many have been killed and left homeless, the EGI published a "totally one-sided" report without understanding the complexity of the crisis faced by Manipur, the background and the history of the state.

"The state government has filed an FIR against the members of the Editors Guild who are trying to create more clashes in the state of Manipur," Singh told a press conference.

The initial complaint, a copy of which

is with PTI, was filed by a Ngangom Sarat Singh, a retired engineer who had worked for the state government.

Besides EGI president Seema Mustafa, those who were booked were senior journalists - Seema Guha, Bharat Bhushan and Sanjay Kapoor - who visited the state between August 7 and 10 to study media reporting on the ethnic violence.

"They are anti-state, anti-national and anti-establishment (people) who came to pour venom. Had I known it before, would not have allowed them to enter," the chief minister claimed.

The EGI in its report published on Saturday said it received several representations that the media in Manipur was playing a partisan role in the ongoing ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Chin communities.

"There are clear indications that the leadership of the state became partisan during the conflict. It should have avoided taking sides in the ethnic conflict but it failed to do its duty as a democratic government which should have represented the entire state," the report said.

In normal circumstances, the EGI said, reports filed by journalists are cross-checked and monitored by their editors or chiefs of bureaus from the local administration, police and security forces, but this was not possible during the conflict.

"The internet ban made matters worse. Communication blockade by the govern-



ment had a deleterious effect on journalism as it directly impacted the ability of journalists to communicate with each other, their editors and their sources. It also impacted the media because local news gathered without any communication links was not sufficient to give a balanced view of the situation," the report said.

It said with the internet suspended, and communication and transport in disarray, the media had to rely almost entirely on the narrative of the state government.

The EGI pointed out that members of

the state leadership labelled sections of the Kuki-Zo tribals as "illegal immigrants" and "foreigners" without any reliable data or evidence.

"This despite the fact that the decadal census from 1901 to 2011 has not shown any unusual growth of the non-Naga (the other minority tribal community) tribal population," the report said.

The fact that there was a military coup in Myanmar which led to an inflow of about 40,000 refugees to Mizoram and reportedly about 4,000 to Manipur "was

used to brand all Kuki-Zo as illegal immigrants".

"This was presented as pressure on resources but was also a war for political space, with the politicians using the fear of the outsiders to consolidate its political position," it said.

The Editors' Guild members were booked under various sections of the IPC including 153A (promoting enmity between two communities), 200 (using false declaration as true), 298 (deliberate intent to wound religious feelings), and under provisions of the Information Technology Act and Press Council Act.

"...I also give a warning to the members of the Editors Guild, if you want to do something, please come to the spot, see the ground reality, meet the representatives of all communities, all victims and publish what you found. Otherwise, meeting some sections of the people only and coming to a conclusion - that's a disservice and is condemnable," Singh said.

The claim that eviction was carried against one community only is "not true", he said adding that the drive began in 2015 and 413 houses have been vacated "for the welfare of the general public".

Of the 413 houses, Singh said, 59 belonged to the Kukis, 143 to Meiteis, 137 to Manipuri Muslims, 38 to Nagas and 36 to Nepalis.

The chief minister wondered why nobody spoke anything about "the mother"

who gave clothes to the women, who were paraded naked, and sent them home.

Singh alleged that none has been saying anything about similar incidents in Rajasthan and West Bengal.

He said the process of collecting biometric details of identified illegal immigrants in the state is continuing.

"The Centre had asked us to complete the process by September but we have sought an extension of one year as we have to find out more villages," Singh said.

He rued that the EGI's report came when investigations are being carried out by several committees constituted by the Supreme Court and the central government.

Singh said an FIR has been registered against Kuki Inpi Manipur leader K Haokip for allegedly declaring that no Meiteis can enter the India-Myanmar border town of Moreh till there is a political solution. All Manipur Working Journalists Union and Editors Guild Manipur also criticised the EGI for its "allegations based on hearsay".

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), an apex Kuki body, however slammed the Biren Singh government and said it is "aghast at the legal threat" issued against the Editors' Guild of India (EGI), "the conscience keeper for the (media) industry" and condemned filing of an FIR against it. (PTI)

## Three bills introduced in Arunachal Assembly on first day of monsoon session



**ITANAGAR, Sept 4:** A bill aimed at constituting an authority to oversee the development work in the airport area here was introduced by Arunachal Town Planning minister Kamlung Mosang on the first day of the monsoon session of the state Assembly on Monday.

The Arunachal Pradesh Airport Area, Planning and Development Authority Bill 2023 was among the three bills presented in the House during the day.

"With the recent construction of Holongi Donyi Polo Airport, a new chapter in air communications has begun in the state. Tourists from within India and overseas are expected to arrive in the state for which development of the airport, along with the adjoining areas as per international standard is of utmost importance. For the orderly planning and development it is required to be regulated by a dedicated team of manpower," the statement of bill read. Chief minister Pema Khandu, who holds the portfolio of law, legislative and justice, introduced the Arunachal Pradesh Court Fees Bill 2023.

According to the statement of the bill, the court fee act, 1870, which is a pre-independence and pre-Constitution law extended to Arunachal Pradesh by virtue of its extension clause is followed by all courts in the state as per Assam Court Fees (Amendment) Act, 1972, since the state does not have high court of its own.

The statement added that the bill is being placed as the union law and justice ministry on March 6 this year directed all the states to enact their own state acts on court fees as the

Court Fees Act, 1870, is being proposed to be repealed by the central government.

Deputy chief minister Chowna Mein moved the Arunachal Pradesh Goods and Services Tax Bill 2023 in its amended form, which when passed will enable administration of taxation under GST in a better and efficient manner.

Mein, who is also the minister in-charge of finance, planning and investment, presented the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report on social, economic, general and revenue sector for 2021-22.

After the House convened for the day it paid tributes to former ministers of the state. Kardu Taipodia, Neelam Taram and Chow Tewa Mein who died in May this year.

Taipodia, who was member of the Gegong Apang cabinet, died on May 4 this year after a prolonged illness.

Taram who died on May 5 was a two-time home minister in Apang's cabinet and had also served as the Congress Legislative Party leader, besides being the leader of opposition too.

Tewa Mein, who died on May 15, had served as the horticulture minister and later as the PHE and WS ministry. He was also the protom speaker of the Assembly several times.

Chief minister Pema Khandu joined the House in paying respect to the three leaders and announced that some of structures or institutions would be named after them keeping in view their contributions for the socio-economic development of the state.

The house later observed two-minute silence as a mark of respect to the departed souls. (PTI)

## MPCC reacts strongly to former CM's comment on state assembly

**IMPHAL, Sept 4:** Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) on strongly reacted to a recent statement of former chief minister Radhabinod Kojiam on the recently concluded brief state Assembly as "political drama".

In a recent interview broadcasted to a local TV channel, the former chief minister blamed the Congress for the adjournment of the Assembly session without discussing the prevailing crisis in the state while terming it as political drama.

His remark amounted to misleading the people, said MPCC vice president and senior spokesperson Harehsvar Goshwami who addressed the media in Congress Bhavan here today.

"It is fortunate that a veteran politician who was not only elected at least five times in the state Assembly but also the chief minister of the state for three and a half months and knows very well the rules of procedure and conduct of business of the state Assembly made such a comment," the Congress leader said.

He also alleged that right from



summoning the session of the 4th session of the Manipur Legislative Assembly session on August 29, the state government had not only violated the Constitution but also rules of procedure and conduct of the business.

The MPCC leader said the session was summoned without following the rules of procedure and conduct of the business and adjourned sine-die without discussing the ongoing crisis after nearly around 11 minutes.

The opposition Congress had clar-

ified the protest by the party MLAs in the house. They had protested when the house refused to discuss the prevailing crisis in the state, he claimed.

Goshwami reiterated that the government had put the opposition members at dark without disclosing the details of the business to be taken up in the one day session.

Even as the opposition members proposed some agendas related to the prevailing crisis in the state well ahead of the scheduled Assembly session, none of the agenda was taken up, he added.

Besides, no agenda related to the crisis unfolding in the state was included in the list of businesses proposed by the government, the MPCC leader also said.

Except obituary reference and presentation of report of the business, no other agenda was included in the business of the house of the session, he said. It is a well-known fact that the house cannot take up any agenda which is not included in the list of business of the house, he added. (NNN)

## Drug peddler in police net in East Jaintia Hills



**SHILLONG, Sept 4:** One alleged drug supplier was arrested along with illegal contraband in East Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya recently.

Acting on credible source information, one Lalungmanga was detained at Kongong while he was traveling from Aizawl via Silchar towards Khliehriat in a tourist Sumo, police said.

During the ensuing search, 10 black packets of illegal contraband weighing 10.16 kg were found from his suitcase, the police also said.

Preliminary test was conducted which showed positive for Crystal Meth (mescaline). A case under NDPS Act has been registered with the Khliehriat police station under relevant sections of law and investigation is on to trace backward and forward linkages. (NNN)

## Strife torn Manipur lies 'forgotten' by Centre: Cong

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** The Congress on Monday attacked the Centre over its handling of the situation in Manipur, alleging that four months after ethnic violence broke out, the state lies "forgotten" by the Modi government.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that in the last four months, the world has witnessed "how the prime minister (Narendra Modi) has failed Manipur during its worst crisis".

In a post on X, Ramesh alleged that "while the prime minister and his drum-beaters are obsessed with G20, four months after ethnic violence broke out on May 3rd, Manipur lies

forgotten by the Modi government".

The chief minister (N Biren Singh) has ensured that the Manipuri society is more divided today than ever before, he said.

"The Union home minister (Amit Shah) has failed to put an end to the violence and ensure the recovery of arms and ammunition. Instead, many more armed groups have entered the conflict," Ramesh said.

The prime minister "refuses" to visit Manipur, or lead an all-party delegation, or initiate any credible peace process, he said. "Has he even met his own colleague from Manipur in the cabinet," the Congress general secretary asked.

"In the midst of a humanitarian tragedy, there is a complete and total breakdown of the Constitutional machinery and trust between communities in Manipur," he alleged.

His remarks come after the Manipur government shifted the last of 10 Kuki families comprising 24 members from Imphal's New Lambulane area where they had been living for decades and did not move elsewhere even after the ethnic violence broke out in the north-eastern state four months ago.

These families were taken to the Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district on the northern side of the Imphal Valley early on Saturday, as they had become "vulnerable targets", an

official said.

The Kuki families alleged that they were forcibly evicted from their residences in the New Lambulane area to Motbung.

More than 160 people lost their lives and several hundreds were injured since the ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur in early May after a Tribal Solidarity March was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Nagas and Kukis constitute little over 40 per cent and reside in the hill districts. (PTI)

## Manipur appoints retired Army officer who led operations in Myanmar

### The appointment of Col (retired) Nectar Sanjenbam for five years followed union home minister Amit Shah's statement

**IMPHAL, Sept 4:** The Manipur government has appointed a retired decorated Army officer who was in charge of the operation to destroy militant camps in Myanmar eight years ago, as the senior superintendent of police (combat), a post created for him, officials said on Monday.

The appointment of Col (retired) Nectar Sanjenbam for five years followed union home minister Amit Shah statement last month that Kuki people started entering Manipur from Myanmar illegally following a military crackdown on militants.

An organisation of the Meitei, one of the warring communities in the northeastern state, have also asserted that the four-month-long strife is a manifestation of the tension over deforestation, illegal opium poppy cultivation and change in demography in certain areas of the state mainly caused by illegal immigrants from Myanmar.

It is alleged that arms are being supplied to militants from Myanmar to Manipur.

"The Governor of Manipur is pleased to appoint Col (retired) Nectar Sanjenbam as senior superintendent



of police (Combat) in Manipur police department on a fixed tenure basis for a period of five years with immediate effect," the state home department said in an order.

He had led the operations against militants in Myanmar in June 2015, days after their attack in Manipur's Chandel district left 18 Army person-

nel dead. "Significant casualties" have been inflicted on them, the Army had said.

It appears that the government wants to use the retired Colonel's experience in counter-militancy operations in Myanmar to address the situation in Manipur where more than 160 people were killed in the ethnic

violence since early May.

Col Sanjenbam who retired prematurely last year was awarded the Kirti Chakra gallantry award for his role in the operation inside Myanmar.

Speaking during the debate on the no-confidence motion in Lok Sabha on August 10, Home Minister Shah said problems started in Manipur with the influx of Kuki refugees from neighbouring Myanmar after the military rulers there started a crackdown against militants in 2021.

The Kuki refugees started settling down in the jungles in the Manipur valley, raising fears of a demographic change in the region, Shah said.

More than 160 people lost their lives and several hundreds were injured since the ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3, after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals — Nagas and Kukis — constitute little over 40 per cent and reside in the hill districts. (PTI)

## Nagaland docs postings to be limited to 3 years



**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Sept 4:** The Nagaland government has planned to reshuffle and rationalise doctors and medical officers of the state with transfers and postings limited to three years, following a similar pattern to the administration and police department.

Disclosing this at a review meeting of Dimapur district hospital, health and family welfare minister P Paiwang Konyak underlined the need for medical practitioners to be willing to serve anywhere in the state, according to an official report on Monday.

Konyak also said he would not entertain transfer and posting-related letters.

The minister also announced plans to convert the Dimapur district hospital into a referral hospital. This transformation is aimed at

catering to the healthcare needs of other district hospitals in the state besides Dimapur district.

Konyak assured improvements in infrastructure, manpower and other essential areas of the hospital. He also assured appointment of top doctors and super specialists in the hospital in the near future.

Acknowledging the dedication of doctors and medical staff of Dimapur district hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic, Konyak assured the posting of a forensic expert and the strengthening of manpower as a priority in the hospital.

The review meeting was attended by medical officials, doctors from the directorate of health and family welfare and Dimapur deputy commissioner Sachin Jaiswal.



# Bharat Jodo Yatra's first anniversary: Cong to hold 'padyatras' in 722 districts on Sept 7

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** The Congress on Monday announced that it will hold 'padyatras' in 722 districts on September 7 evening to commemorate the launch of Bharat Jodo Yatra last year and take the "mohabbat ki dukaan (shop to spread love)" message to the people.

Addressing a press conference alongside senior leader Jairam Ramesh, Congress general secretary in-charge K C Venugopal said, "Bharat Jodo Yatra had an electrifying effect all over in India on our cadre."

He said that all those who believe in democracy and the values of this country are also very much enthused by the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

"Commemorating the Bharat Jodo Yatra on its first anniversary, we are launching 722 Bharat Jodo Yatras in each of the districts," Venugopal said.

Between 5 pm and 6 pm on September 7, foot marches led by party leaders, Congress Working Committee members, CLP leaders, Pradesh Congress Committee chiefs, state in-charges, MLAs and MPs will be held across the country, he said.

In a post on microblogging site X, he said the Bharat Jodo Yatra was a historic event that changed the course of Indian history.

"To celebrate the anniversary of the monumental feat accomplished by Rahul Gandhi ji and thousands of Congress workers, we



will be holding a Bharat Jodo Yatra in every district on September 7. Each yatra will culminate in a Bharat Jodo Rally in the district," he said.

Venugopal said 722 districts of India will once again be reminded of the message of "Nafrat ke bazaar mein mohabbat ki dukaan (setting a shop to spread love in the market of hate)".

Rahul Gandhi launched the yatra on September 7, 2022, in Kanyakumari. It ended on

January 30 this year as Gandhi capped his ambitious 145-day journey in Srinagar.

"I have not done this (yatra) for myself or the Congress but for the people of the country. Our aim is to stand against the ideology that wants to destroy the foundation of this country," Gandhi had said at the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Srinagar at a rally marking the grand finale of the cross-country march.

During the course of the yatra, Gandhi ad-

ressed 12 public meetings, more than 100 street corner meetings and 13 press conferences. He had over 275 planned walking interactions and more than 100 sitting interactions.

Several experts had said a big take away from the yatra for the Congress had been Gandhi's image transformation -- from a reluctant and part-time politician to one who is mature and taken seriously by opponents.

With over 4,000 kilometres under his belt, Gandhi had managed to catch the attention of his supporters as well as detractors. The march saw participation from a cross-section of society, including film and TV celebrities such as Kamal Haasan, Pooja Bhatt, Riya Sen, Swara Bhasker, Rashami Desai, Akanksha Puri and Amol Palekar.

Besides, writers and military veterans, including former Army chief Gen (Retd) Deepak Kapoor and ex-Navy chief Admiral (Retd) L Ramdas, and noted people such as former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and ex-finance secretary Arvind Mayaram had also participated in the yatra.

Opposition leaders such as National Conference's Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, PDP's Mehbooba Mufti, Shiv Sena's Aaditya Thackeray, Priyanka Chaturvedi and Sanjay Raut and NCP's Supriya Sule, had also walked alongside Gandhi at various points in time during the march. (PTI)

## Did oppn INDIA bloc's meeting in Mumbai decide on targeting Sanatan Dharma: BJP leaders

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** The BJP on Monday intensified its attack on the opposition over DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's remarks on Sanatan Dharma, asking the Congress if the INDIA bloc had met in Mumbai to target the religion and stressed that they should not play with Hindu sentiments.

What he has said is shocking and shameful, former Union minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said, noting that the son of Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin has repeated his remarks.

He has been ably assisted by Congress MP Karti Chidambaram, whose father and former finance minister P Chidambaram is facing trial in a corruption case, he said.

"Why are opposition leaders like Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banerjee silent? Are you playing with Hindu sentiments for votes? They should know that hundreds of years of Islamic rule could not exterminate Sanatan Dharma and British imperialism could not dilute it," Prasad told reporters.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is a declared Sanatani, he added.

Law minister Arjun Ram Megh-

wal hit out at opposition parties and asked the Congress if the INDIA bloc had met in Mumbai to finalise its agenda against Sanatan Dharma and how to finish it off across the country.

"Is this your 'mohabbat ki dukaan' (shop to spread love)," he asked and accused Congress leader K C Venugopal of spewing venom against the religion. Another Union minister Prahlad Patel alleged that the attack on Sanatan Dharma was part of the conspiracy decided on during the opposition parties' meeting in Mumbai.

The silence of those who get themselves photographed in temples, be it Rahul Gandhi or Arvind Kejriwal, is telling, he said.

In his address at a meeting of Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers and Artists Association in Chennai on Saturday, state youth welfare minister Udhayanidhi Stalin alleged that 'Sanatan Dharma' is against equality and social justice, and that it should be eradicated.

Likening Sanatan Dharma to coronavirus, malaria and fever caused by dengue virus and mosquitoes, Udhayanidhi said such things should not be opposed but destroyed. (PTI)

## Pro-Pak slogan: SC asks NC leader Mohd Akbar Lone to file affidavit saying he owes allegiance to Constitution

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** The Supreme Court Monday asked National Conference leader Mohd Akbar Lone to file an affidavit swearing allegiance to the Constitution of India and accepting the country's sovereignty, after the 'Pakistan zindabad' slogan that he allegedly raised in the Jammu & Kashmir assembly in 2018 kicked up a massive row.

Lone, the lead petitioner challenging the abrogation of Article 370 that accorded special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, will file the affidavit by Tuesday, senior advocate Kapil Sibal told a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud. The senior lawyer said he will not represent Lone if he does not file the affidavit as sought by the bench.

"He is an MP of Lok Sabha. He is citizen of India and sworn to his office by the Constitution. He accepts the sovereignty of India," Sibal said.

Earlier in the day, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that the central government wanted Lone to apologise for raising 'Pakistan zindabad' (long live Pakistan) slogan in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in 2018. Lone has to state that he owes allegiance to the Constitution and apologises for raising the slogan on the floor of the House, the law officer said.

On September 1, a Kashmiri Pandit group had questioned in the top court the credentials of Lone, claiming he was a supporter of secessionist forces.

An intervention application in the apex court has been filed by an NGO 'Roots in Kashmir', which claims to be a group of Kashmiri Pandit youths, seeking to bring some additional documents and facts on record in the matter. It alleged that Lone is known as "a supporter of secessionist forces operating in J-K, who support Pakistan." (PTI)

## Uttarakhand: Straight contest likely in Bageshwar assembly bypoll



**DEHRADUN, Sept 4:** Five candidates are in the fray in the bypoll to Uttarakhand's Bageshwar assembly seat on Tuesday, with the main contest likely between the BJP and the Congress.

The bypoll was necessitated following the death of sitting BJP MLA and cabinet minister Chandan Ram Das in April this year.

Das had been winning the seat for four consecutive polls since 2007. The seat has witnessed straight contests between traditional rivals BJP and Congress in successive elections since the creation of the state in 2000.

There are five candidates in the fray but the main contest in the constituency is likely to remain between the ruling BJP and the main opposition Congress, poll observers feel.

The BJP has fielded the late MLA's wife Parvati Das from the seat hoping to capitalise on sympathy votes to retain the seat while the Con-

gress has pitted Basant Kumar against her.

Kumar had contested the 2022 assembly polls from Bageshwar as an Aam Aadmi Party candidate. He quit the AAP to join the Congress just few days before being fielded by the latter from the seat.

Apart from the BJP and Congress, the Samajwadi Party, the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal and the Uttarakhand Parivartan Party have also thrown their hat in the ring. Both the BJP and Congress tried to woo the voters during the nearly fortnight long campaigning which ended on Sunday, holding road shows public meetings and door-to-door campaigns.

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami addressed a public meeting in Kafigair to garner support for the BJP nominee on the last day of campaigning on Sunday.

Describing Chandan Ram Das as an MLA who worked tirelessly for the development of

Bageshwar constituency, the chief minister said voting for his wife will be a fitting tribute to the departed leader.

Dhami, who also held well-attended road shows in Garud and Bageshwar along with the party candidate and BJP MP from Almora Ajay Tamta, said he was confident the lotus will bloom once again in the land of Baba Bagnath referring to the famous Shiva temple in the district.

The BJP has sought to woo the electorate with the promise of all round development of the constituency under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"I am confident that the people will once again link the bogey of Bageshwar with the double engine government," Dhami said addressing a rally.

Congress heavyweights like Harish Rawat, PCC president Karan Mahara and Leader of Opposition in the state assembly Yashpal Arya also toured the entire constituency seeking votes for the party candidate to regain lost ground.

Party leaders have asked people to teach the BJP a lesson for its "failure" to control rising inflation, unemployment and ensure safety of women.

There are 1,18,225 voters in Bageshwar assembly constituency spread over 188 polling stations.

Besides Parvati Das and Basant Kumar, Bhagwati Prasad of the Samajwadi Party, Arjun Dev from Uttarakhand Kranti Dal and Bhagwat Kohli of Uttarakhand Parivartan Party are also contesting the bypoll. (PTI)

## Maratha outfits stage protest against Jalna lathi-charge

**PUNE, Sept 4:** Different Maratha outfits on Monday staged a protest in Baramati city in Pune district of Maharashtra against the police lathi-charge on quota protesters in Jalna and demanded that deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar quit the Shiv Sena-BJP government.

In Pune city, opposition Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (Sharad Pawar group), and Congress took to the streets in Kothrud area and warned the government not to test the patience of the Maratha community.

In Baramati, members of Maratha outfits raised slogans asking local NCP MLA and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar to quit the government. Slogans were also raised against BJP leader and another Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, who handles the Home Department.

"Fadnavis, who is deputy chief minister in the Eknath Shinde-led government, has failed to make any efforts for Maratha reservation over the last year. Do not test the patience of Marathas," said Ankush

Kakade, who belongs to the Sharad Pawar-led faction of the Nationalist Congress Party, during the agitation in Pune city.

He alleged police had received orders to suppress the agitation of Marathas in Jalna district from the state government.

Local leaders of Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) also joined the agitation.

Police baton charged and lobbed tear gas shells to disperse a violent mob in Antarwali Sarathi village in Jalna district on Friday after protesters allegedly refused to let authorities shift a man on hunger strike for Maratha quota to hospital.

Several persons, including 40 police personnel, were injured and more than 15 state transport buses were set ablaze in violence.

Reservation in jobs and education provided by the Maharashtra government to the Maratha community in 2018 when Fadnavis was chief minister was quashed by the Supreme Court in May 2021, citing the 50 per cent ceiling on total reservations among other grounds. (PTI)

## Bengal min crosses sword with Guv, calls his appointment of interim VCs 'dictatorial'

**KOLKATA, Sept 4:** A day after West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose appointed interim vice-chancellors of seven state universities, education minister Bratya Basu, in a strong reaction on Monday, accused the Raj Bhavan of acting in a "dictatorial manner" and claimed that the move could "destroy" the university system.

The minister also said the governor's move was "violation of the bill passed by the state assembly, concerning the roles and functions of the governor as the chancellor of varsities and the state government".

The governor, in his capacity as the chancellor of state-run universities, had on Sunday night appointed interim vice-chancellors for seven varieties, including the prestigious Presidency University, MAKAUT and the University of Burdwan.

"The governor's recent action is aimed at bankrupting the higher education system. He is destroying the statutes of respective state universities. Such appointments have been made without consulting anybody. He is acting in a dictatorial manner," Basu said while addressing a press conference here.

"The governor, who is the chancellor of state universities as per law, cannot violate and cross the boundary. We will not remain silent spectators to such an action by the governor," he said.

A group of educationists, including former vice-chancellors of state universities, described the action by the governor to appoint interim VCs in several varieties as "adventurous and illegal".

The Educationists Forum also said such appointments "will not do any good to the higher education system of the state".



"The governor becomes overactive whenever he hold press meets and talk about the situation in state universities where no VCs are at the helm. He is not acting as per statutes. His action is adventurous and illegal," former VC of North Bengal University and spokesperson of the forum Om Prakash Mishra told PTI. Mishra also alleged that the "governor continues to persist in his adventurous and illegal activities to dismantle higher education system, management and leadership".

Prof Raj Kumar Kothari has been appointed Interim VC of West Bengal State University, while Justice Subhrakamal Mukherjee, who currently holds interim charge of Rabindra Bharati University, will also be Interim VC of Presidency University.

Prof Debabrata Basu has been appointed Interim VC of Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, while

Prof Tapan Chanda was appointed Interim VC of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology.

Prof Gautam Chakraborty has been given charge of University of Burdwan, and Prof Indrajit Lahiri will take charge as Interim VC of Netaji Subhas Open University. Prof Shyam Sundar Dana was appointed Interim VC of West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences. Sources said interim vice-chancellors of nine other universities have also been finalised and appointment letters "will be issued soon".

The governor took the decision to "mitigate the problems faced by students", they said.

The criteria for selection of the interim vice-chancellors were eligibility, suitability, competence, willingness and desirability, the sources added.

The education minister had, last week, said the government wanted to have a discussion with the governor but if "he continues in this way, we will take legal action".

The minister was then referring to the governor's earlier statement that he would administer the roles of VCs of the 16 universities lying headless after the expiry of the term of permanent VCs there.

Reacting to the appointment of VCs, CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakraborty alleged that the governor was "appointing those as interim VCs, who have links with RSS and do not have the requisite 10-year experience. He is appointing non-academic persons as interim VCs."

However, senior BJP leader Rahul Sinha said the governor has done the "right thing" as he cannot allow the uncertainty, arising out of the absence of VCs, to continue and see the students suffer". (PTI)

## Flight attendant found dead with throat slit in Mumbai apartment; building's housekeeping staffer arrested

**MUMBAI, Sept 4:** A 24-year-old woman flight attendant has been found dead with her throat slit in an apartment in Mumbai following which police have arrested the residential society's housekeeping staffer on the charge of murder, an official said on Monday.

The deceased, identified as Rupal Ogrey, hailed from Chhattisgarh and came to Mumbai in April for training with the Air India, the official said.

She was found dead late Sunday night in a flat at N G Complex on Krishanlal Marwah Marg in Marol area of suburban Andheri, he said.

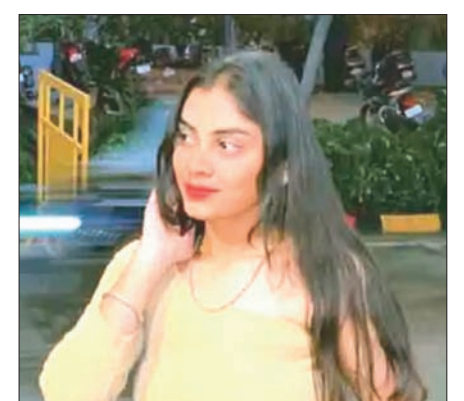
The police have arrested a 40-year-old man, identified as Vikram Athwal, who was doing housekeeping work for the last one year in the residential society where the woman lived, under Indian Penal Code Section 302 (murder), an official from Powai police station said.

After allegedly killing the woman, the accused went to his residence at Tunga village in Powai area from where the police picked him up, he said.

The police were investigating if the accused committed any sexual assault on the woman, the official said.

"We have sent the body for post-mortem and are waiting for the medical report," he said.

During the probe, the police found the



woman resided in the flat along with her sister and the latter's boyfriend, but the duo left for their native place eight days back. After the woman did not pick up calls from her family members, they rang up their local friends in Mumbai and asked them to go to her flat.

When the family's local friends went there, they found the flat locked from inside and there was no response to the doorbell.

Later, they contacted the Powai police and with their help opened the flat using a duplicate key, the official said.

The woman was found lying with her throat slit. She was immediately rushed to Rajawadi Hospital where she was declared dead before admission, the police said. (PTI)

## WHO releases document on Gujarat traditional medicine summit

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** The World Health Organization (WHO) has released the outcome document of first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023 in the form of 'Gujarat Declaration'.

The declaration reaffirmed global commitments towards indigenous knowledge, biodiversity and traditional, complementary and integrative medicine, an Ayush ministry statement said.

The WHO underlined that the application of rigorous scientific methods is needed to better understand, assess, and where appropriate, apply more holistic, context-specific, complex and personalised approaches for health and well-being for all.

The body in the statement reiterated that India

as host of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat has an important role in scaling up WHO's capacities to support member states and stakeholders in taking forward the summit action agenda and other relevant priorities.

The action points of the two-day WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023 held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat are based on the evidence, discussions and outcomes presented at the Summit, the statement said.

Deliberations were done on varied topics like health and well-being of people and the planet, research and evidence, universal health coverage, primary health care and health systems, data and routine information systems, digital health frontiers, biodiversity and sustainability, human



rights, equity and ethics, the statement said.

Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had at the summit said, "Gujarat declaration is testimony of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's commitment to promote our ancient knowledge of traditional medicine system. Through collaborative efforts and sustainable

practices, we can ensure a healthier future for generations to come."

WHO Director Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, during the summit, had said that "Gujarat Declaration" will serve as a catalyst in harnessing the potential of traditional medicine through the lens of science and will focus on the integration of traditional medicines in national health systems.

The Gujarat declaration talks about scaling up efforts to further implement evidence-based TCIM (Traditional Complementary Integrative Medicine) interventions and approaches in support of the goal of universal health coverage and all health-related sustainable development goals.

The highlight of the summit was how to enable the development and application of digital health

technologies, and artificial intelligence (AI) in particular, to advance digital health resources on TCIM for people's health and well-being, the statement said. The summit advocates fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biodiversity resources, related genetic material, and indigenous knowledges.

Fully recognise, respect and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as provided in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Incorporate ethical methods and processes in TCIM research and practice.

The First global summit on Traditional Medicine was organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and co-hosted by the ministry of ayush, from August 17-18, 2023, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. (PTI)



# Udhayanidhi row: Cong says it respects all religions, others free to express their views

*We are respecting everybody's beliefs: Congress*

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** Amid different voices within the Congress and INDIA bloc on DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's remarks against Sanatan Dharma, the principal opposition party on Monday said it respects all religions and stressed that others also have the freedom to express their views.

The Congress' reaction came as the BJP questioned the silence of its leaders on the issue and accused the opposition bloc of being against the Hindu religion. Union Minister Anurag Thakur alleged that INDIA alliance was stooping to "politics of polarisation".

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said while the Congress' stand is clear, every other political party has the freedom to express its own view.

"Actually, our view is very clear - 'Sarvadharm Sambhav' (equal respect to all religions) is the Congress ideology. But, you have to understand that every political party has its own freedom to tell their views," he said.

"We are respecting everybody's beliefs," the Congress leader said.

Asked about the issue, Karnataka minister and Congress leader Priyanka Kharge said any religion that does not give equal rights is not a religion and "is as good as a disease".

"Any religion that does not promote equality, any religion that doesn't ensure that you have the dignity of being a human being is not a religion, according to me. So it is as good as a disease," Priyanka, who is the son of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, said.

Congress leader and former Union minister Karan Singh, however, termed the DMK leader's statement as "preposterous" and "most unfortunate".

"Thiru Udhayanidhi's preposterous statement that Sanatan Dharma should be eradicated is most unfortunate. Crores of people in this country follow, to a lesser or greater extent the tenets of Sanatan Dharma."



"Besides, the greatest Sanatan Dharma temples in the world are in Tamil Nadu - in Thanjavur, in Srirangam, in Thiruvannamalai, in Chidambaram, in Madurai, in Suchindram, in Rameshwaram and many more," Singh said in a statement.

"It is shocking that a responsible politician should make this kind of a totally unacceptable statement. I have the highest regard for the magnificent Tamil culture but I take strong objection to the statement made by Thiru Udhayanidhi," he said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi attacked the BJP, accusing it of showing "fake concern" over Sanatan Dharma for its politics and termed it as hypocrisy.

"Sanatan Dharma stands for eternal truth - the way to live life - the conscience & being. Sanatanis have long withstood attacks by invaders to end their identity yet they have not just survived but thrived."

"The country's bedrock, which is linked to Sanatan Dharma, has been of inclusiveness of all faiths and identities. Anyone making derogatory comments against it is ignorant of what it stands for," she said on X.

"Also, the fake concern shown by BJP over Sanatan Dharma for their politics exposes their sick hypocrisy while they are brutally lathi charging sanatanis who are fighting for their rights in Maharashtra, they lathi-charged warkaris," she said.

Alleging that Sanatan Dharma is against equality and social justice, DMK youth wing secretary and Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin had said it should be eradicated.

"BJP is doing marketing of the word 'Sanatan'. They are playing with the sentiments of the people in the name of religion," Samajwadi Party leader Swamy Prasad Maurya said on the furore over the DMK leader's remarks.

"BJP's own allies have disrespected Lord Ram and Lord Hanuman, they are nobody to distribute certificates of either nationalism or devotion," Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi alleged.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders demanded that the DMK leader apologise for his comments.

The party on Monday intensified its attack on the issue, asking the Congress if the INDIA bloc had met in Mumbai to target the religion and stressed that they should not play with Hindu sentiments.

Udhayanidhi Stalin had likened Sanatan Dharma to coronavirus, malaria and dengue and had said such things should not be opposed but destroyed.

He referred to Sanatan Dharma as 'Sanatanam' in his address in Tamil at a meet of the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers and Artists Association here on Saturday.

"What is Sanatanam? The very name is only from Sanskrit. Sanatan is against equality and social justice and nothing else," he said.

"They are misinterpreting the speech made by Udhayanidhi Stalin because he is the last person to do that and we don't believe in genocide," DMK leader RS Bharathi said.

Union Minister and BJP leader Shobha Karandlaje demanded that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin should immediately sack Udhayanidhi.

Karandlaje told reporters, "chief minister Stalin's son talking like this...we felt very sad. Our country is connected to religion and temples."

"He (Udhayanidhi) holds a responsible position and his father is chief minister... What is he speaking? What does he think?" (PTI)

## We are by your side; if one road closes, others waiting for you: Kota DC writes to coaching students

**KOTA (RAJ) Sept 4:** Amid the rising number of suicides by NEET and JEE aspirants in this coaching hub, district collector OP Bunkar wrote a letter to encourage them and assured that he and his team were by their side. In the inspirational letter he penned down on Sunday, Bunkar asked students not to get defeated by failure, saying, "If one road closes, other roads are open and waiting for you."

"I and my team are with you," he said, adding, "You are not alone in the city. I am here (main houna), doors of my office and home are always open for every student. Don't hesitate. Learn to share the stress. Whatever kind of fear or stress you have, do share it with me."

The collector directed coaching institutes, hostels, and paying guests to put up his letter on their display boards. Over 2.5 lakh students move to Kota annually to prepare for competitive exams such as the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) for engineering and the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical colleges. The year 2023 has seen the highest number of student suicides - 22 so far -- with two ending their lives in a gap of a few hours on August 27. Last year, the figure was 15. A packed schedule, cut-throat competition, constant pressure to do better, the burden of parents' expectations and homesickness are the common struggles of the students here. In his letter, the Kota collector expressed concern over the suicide incidents and urged students not to get disheartened over failures. Referring to the students who recently allegedly died by suicide here, Bunkar wrote, "You have gone, but before going, you should have thought what would happen to your parents who were committed to fulfilling your dreams by willingly sacrificing whatever they had."

"You all became members of my family on the very first day you reached this city to fulfil your dreams and I am constantly in an effort to care for you and to provide you a happy environment here," the collector wrote to the students Bunkar, in his letter, also recollected the joyous time he spent during interaction with some students.

"All of you work very hard to attain your target," the collector said, adding, "If one road is closed, sev-



eral other roads are open and waiting for you."

"With a little fall in ranking in a test, you take yourself broken down, sink into tension and pack yourself in a room and continue to think that nothing could happen now," Bunkar pointed out to the students, while adding that "failure is the first step to success" and none of their failures was a parameter to decide their personality. The collector exhorted the students to explore the city and visit the nature parks and recreation centres for relaxation.

"Just once come out and see what is not there in my city, the beautiful riverfront, rising waves of River Chambal, fascinating gardens and groves; every circle is eager to welcome you," the collector urged the students. He also advised students to take some time out to meet friends and for other fun activities so that they feel refreshed. Bunkar also mentioned in the letter the initiatives taken for the students to release them from stress and to address their concerns. He also called upon students to explore their potential as there were several avenues to a bright future. Concluding his letter to students with an inspirational note, the Kota DC said, "Dear students, you are strong, have got a lot to live life. You have the courage to move on ahead surmounting every weakness and difficulty. Believe it, nobody can defeat you until you yourself succumb to defeat."

After a rise in student suicides here in 2016, the then collector of Kota Ravi Kumar Surpur wrote an emotional letter to parents of coaching students asking them not to burden their wards with their expectations and dreams. (PTI)

## Goal of world peace can be achieved through path shown by Mahatma Gandhi: Prez

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** President Droupadi Murmu on Monday emphasised that the goal of world peace can be achieved through the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi as she unveiled a 12-foot statue of the Father of the Nation on the Gandhi Darshan premises at Rajghat. Murmu also inaugurated the Gandhi Vatika where statues of Gandhi in different postures have been installed at Gandhi Darshan, close to the Rajghat memorial.

"Gandhiji considered the whole world as a family," she said, adding that India is trying to promote global brotherhood, cooperation and peace and is leading the G20. The President also expressed hope that foreigners participating in the G20 Summit will visit Gandhi Darshan and learn about Gandhi.

Gandhi is an invaluable gift, she said and added that his values and ideals gave a new direction to the world.

"From South Africa's former president Nelson Mandela to (US) civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr to former US president Barack Obama accepted that Mahatma Gandhi's path of non-violence is the path of global development," she said during her address.

Murmu said the Gandhi statues at Gandhi Vatika will inspire the visitors, especially children.

"The ideals and values of Babu (Mahatma Gandhi) are eternal. The goal of world peace can be achieved even now by following the path shown by him," said the president. She also urged everyone to make efforts so that every citizen, especially the youngsters and the children, read as much as possible about Gandhi and imbibe his ideals, adding the role of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti and other such institutions become very important in this regard. (PTI)

## Technology and teachers coming together can make students 'terminators', says Pradhan

**NEW DELHI, Sept 4:** Technology and teachers coming together can make students "terminators", union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Monday.

The minister made the comment at the launch of a three-year "Education to Entrepreneurship: Empowering a Generation of Students, Educators and Entrepreneurs" partnership between the Union Ministry of Education, the Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Meta. Three letters of intent were exchanged between Meta and the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the Central Board of Secondary Education.

"India has inherent strengths of democracy, diversity and demography. The convergence of technology with these inherent strengths can go a long way in value creation for the society and economy. Technology and teachers coming together could make our students 'terminators'," Pradhan said. He cited examples of many



youngsters from tier 2 and 3 cities making a mark in their respective fields by harnessing the power of technology.

The minister said a new curriculum is being developed that is in tune with the requirements of the 21st century, guided by the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.

"NEP has a special focus on entrepreneurship development and today's initiatives launched is a significant step towards the same," he added.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship signed memorandums of understanding with Meta for entrepreneurship development across the country.

According to officials, under this three-year partnership, a million entrepreneurs will get access to digital marketing skills. Budding and existing entrepreneurs will be trained in digital marketing skills using Meta platforms Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram in seven regional languages to begin with.

Further, a two-year AVGC-XR-AI diploma course will be introduced for students across AICTE-affiliated colleges. About 100,000 students and 20,000 educators will be trained in AR, VR, AI and XR technologies.

This partnership will empower students, educators and entrepreneurs across India and help equip them with the skills and tools necessary to thrive in the technology-driven world of the 21st century and in the sunrise sectors of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, they said. (PTI)

*Contd. from Page 1...*

## Assam government keen on

Since the beginning of its application in Assam more than three decades ago, the extension of the AFSPA was recommended 62 times, Sarma said. "The northeast region is now free from terrorism. In the last three years, four peace accords have been signed with rebels of Assam and around 8,000 rebels from different banned outfits have surrendered their arms and joined the mainstream," he had further said. (PTI)

## Tension prevails after fresh firing

did not return the firing on the advice of the security forces. However, villagers, particularly women and children had to flee from their homes as the armed miscreants intensified their attacks on the settlement areas around 9 pm. However, a heavy exchange of fire ensued when the village volunteers retaliated. (NNN)

## Meghalaya government HNLC's top

came a day after the HNLC had expressed strong protest against the summon notice issued to its general secretary Sankupur Nongtraw despite the ongoing peace talks. The outfit had also demanded the government to consider general amnesty to all its leaders, failing which they may have to withdraw from the entire negotiations. Tynsong however, clarified that the summon notice was not issued by the government but it is just a normal process of the court.

He said that the judiciary and the executive are already separated.

On the outfit's demand for a general amnesty, the deputy Chief Minister said, "In the first round of peace talks we have discussed all these (issues related to amnesty). We also said that we want to talk to top leaders, not just the vice chairman. If they are serious, both the state government and the central government are also very serious. We are ready for further talks in the days to come." (NNN)

## Tripura bypolls to take

MLA Samsul Haque. Union Minister Pratima Bhoomik's resignation as the MLA of Dhanpur necessitated the by-election to that seat. Tripura BJP chief spokesperson Subrata Chakraborty said the ruling party is confident of winning both seats with a big margin as its "support base has increased substantially since 2018".

However, former Tripura Chief Minister and veteran CPI(M) leader Manik Sarkar said the BJP's vote share in the state has "reduced from 51 per cent in 2018 to 39 per cent in the last assembly elections".

The saffron party's seat count has also slipped from 46 to 33 during the period, he added. (PTI)

## IPS officer, DSP of Assam police

in the case. Those arrested in the extortion case were being interrogated by the top police officers, the official said. The arrests were made in connection with the CID case registered on August 31 initially against seven police personnel of Bajali, including the DSP and two sub-inspectors.

The now-arrested Bajali SP was transferred out of the district immediately after the complaint was lodged. Though the directorate of vigilance and anti-corruption unit could not succeed in laying a trap, the case was filed after it was found to be "prima facie true", the DGP had said last week.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said that the DGP has been given full authority to act against any personnel found to be abusing the public in any manner. (PTI)

## Assam flood situation improves,

these districts in the last 24 hours, as per the ASDMA bulletin. Meanwhile, erosion was reported in Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Dhubri, Sonitpur, South Salmara and Tinsukia districts, it added. (PTI)

## KERUF demands implementation

with the central and state government for permanent peace and development of the region. The United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) had signed an MoS in 2011.

The former PDCK leader Kongkat Teron said, "It was under the initiative of 'Team Karbi Anglong' (Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council - KAAC authority) that the MoS was signed. But even after two years of its signing, the central and state governments are taking no initiative for proper implementation of the clauses of the agreement." About the withdrawal of pending cases, he said the government has withdrawn 60 cases and 17 cases are to be withdrawn.

The former publicity secretary of KLNLF and spokesperson, KERUF, Willingson Phangocho said, "The central and state government is delaying the implementation of MoS-2. They should be serious enough to implement the clauses that were in the MoS. The KERUF will pursue with the present government for the implementation of the accord."

In the open session, MP Horensing Bey urged them to continue pressuring the central and state governments to fully implement MoS-2. Bey himself was also the former general secretary of the erstwhile armed group the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) which signed an MoS with the central government in 2011.

Bey said, "On November 26, 2011 the UPDS has signed a peace accord with central government. We are waiting for the 125th amendment of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution as it cannot be done without amendment of the constitution." Bey said signing the MoS is not the ultimate fulfillment. The autonomous state is a constitutional provision and must be pursued with the central government.

Superintendent of Police, Karbi Anglong, Sanjib Kumar Saikia, said with the signing of MoS peace has been restored in the two hill districts of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong. Many former cadres have joined the mainstream and are now involved in economic activities.

He asked the former armed leaders to adhere to the principles of the MoS and extend support to the government for taking up social development and bridging equality in society.

## NRB sanctions over ₹ 2.23 crore

to witness the bank's dedication towards fostering self-reliance and empowerment among the citizens of Nagaland through its support to SHGs, facilitated by the NSRLM. "This initiative not only reflects the bank's visionary approach but also aligns perfectly with the spirit of national development and prosperity," he said.

He said such collaborations foster a sense of community and shared responsibility. He added that the support of the central government, Nagaland government and the State Bank of India in sponsoring and nurturing this bank is a testament to the power of collaboration and collective progress.

Extending his best wishes to the SHGs that have been supported through this initiative, Ganesan commended their determination and perseverance, saying he had no doubt that their efforts will yield positive results not just for themselves but for the entire state.

NSRLM director Imtimienla spoke about how a handful of rural women, who came together to form SHGs in 2013 is today a vibrant 15,900 SHGs managed by 1.30 lakh rural women. She said many of them have become first-generation rural entrepreneurs, while many youth who were given residential skill development are currently employed in various companies across the country.

## Doctors express concern over

from Imphal amid the ethnic strife and that access to healthcare in such areas is difficult. "Those in the hills have to travel all the way to Kohima or Dimapur, which is 150 km away in Nagaland, or to Guwahati in Assam, around 450 km away, as Kukis and Meiteis are not entering each other's areas, and advanced medical facilities are available only in Imphal," Mitra said.

The Kangpokpi district hospital has neither an operation theatre nor a blood storage facility, according to a report prepared by the team. Manipur is also facing an acute shortage of specialists, other doctors and health workers. Most of the specialists and doctors and all the medical college hospitals of the northeastern state are located in Imphal district and Churachandpur, which is violence hit.

Shakeel said the food supplied to the camps is limited to pulses, rice and potatoes, and no green or leafy vegetables are being provided.

The report quoted inmates and a nodal officer of a relief camp in the Imphal valley, who said green or leafy vegetables, eggs, meat and fish have never been supplied in the ration, though local communities did arrange some vegetables. Another nodal officer in a relief camp in the hills said they get one egg every two weeks, but green vegetables are not supplied.

The doctors recommended that oral supplements for vitamin A be provided to the inmates of these camps and urged the government to conduct vaccination drives, including against measles.

They said the camps are overcrowded, the availability of water is low and while sanitary napkins are available, the supply is not sufficient. The doctors said above all, the stress and mental trauma being faced by the inmates is the biggest challenge, especially since psychological counselling is not available at the camps.

Problems are also being faced by the patients of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, especially in the hill areas. (PTI)

## 3744.905 kg of Burmese areca nuts

The police arrested driver and helper of the truck. They were identified as Md Mohidul Islam, son of Late Nazim Uddin, and Md Abdul Rahim, son of Md Abul Hussain. While Islam is a resident of Molohu part II in Morigaon district, Rahim is a resident of Sshukatipta Habi, in Morigaon district.

## Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander goes

Pragyan performed all their planned experiments within one lunar day or approximately 14 earth days and finally after a hop test, have been put to sleep mode.

The temperatures could go up to -200 degree celsius on the lunar surface soon. The payloads may not be able to withstand extreme temperatures while they are still powered on.

Therefore, the payloads have been switched off and will be powered on only after conditions are conducive for them to work again, an ISRO source said.

Elaborating on the experiment, ISRO's update said the importance of the experiment is to help in future missions where samples from the moon's surface can be brought back to earth for further analysis.

The hop test can also help in the human missions as it confirmed ISRO's ability to 'kick-start' the lander once again days after touching down on the lunar surface.

ISRO scientists said that after the Vikram lander carrying the Pragyan rover landed on the moon, various experiments were conducted and the hop test was the latest.

It was not announced earlier but it is one of the tests that helped the Chandrayaan mission exceed its objectives, ISRO said.

The agency also released images of the lunar surface taken before and after the hop test.

If all systems are go when the payloads are switched on after 18 days, they will be undertaking the same experiments conducted in the past few days on the lunar surface. This cycle will be repeated every 10 to 14 days until the pay loads are able to function on the lunar surface, an ISRO source added. According to a senior ISRO scientist, the hop test showed that even after 14 days, its engines can be fired again. (PTI)





## 'Perfect Days' by Wim Wenders is Japan's pick for international feature category Oscar

**LOS ANGELES, Sept 4:** German filmmaker Wim Wenders' drama "Perfect Days", which follows the daily routine of middle-aged man who cleans toilets in Tokyo, is Japan's entry for the 2024 Oscars in the best international feature category. The movie garnered great reviews at Cannes earlier this year.

The film's lead star Koji Yakusho, best known for his roles in "13 Assassins" and "Shall We Dance?", won best actor honour at Cannes for his role in the movie, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Japanese filmmaker, THR noted. Produced by Master Mind Limited (Japan) and Spoon Inc. (Japan) in collaboration with Wenders Images (Germany), the film is an official Japan-Germany co-production. "Perfect Days" is also set to open the 2024 Tokyo International Film Festival in

October, where the German filmmaker will serve as the president of the main competition jury. Wenders is one of the most influential directors in world cinema with movies such as "The State of Things", "Paris, Texas", "Faraway, So Close!" and "The Million Dollar Hotel". (PTI)

## 'Jawan' my most enjoyable project: dialogue writer Sumit Arora on SRK-starrer

**MUMBAI, Sept 4:** Writer Sumit Arora says penning Hindi dialogues for director Atlee's "Jawan" was fun as he had to come up with lines that justified the "stardom and stature" of its lead star, Shah Rukh Khan.

Meerut-born Arora is having a moment with back-to-back successes of streaming shows "Dahaad" and "Guns & Gulaabs". "Jawan", set to release this Friday, is his next high profile project. Asked whether "Jawan" was his toughest gig yet given the anticipation surrounding the movie, Arora told PTI, "It was the most enjoyable project."

"You have to keep in mind that the lines will be delivered by Mr Shah Rukh Khan so you have to keep lines that will justify his stardom and stature, his personality and character," the writer added.

Arora said he has been a fan of how Atlee, known for Tamil blockbusters "Mersal" and "Bigil", makes "mass films".

"Jawan" is Atlee's Hindi debut. "I had met Atlee when he was thinking of making his first Hindi film. At that point, the idea was to work together, there was no story then. When he had the draft of the screenplay ready, he reached out to me. Nobody makes mass films like he does. I was happy to be part of this journey with him," the writer said.

Arora, who grew up on a steady diet of Hindi literature thanks to

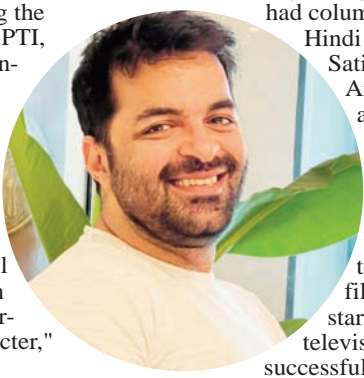
his mother, counts icons such as Harishankar Parsai, Sharad Joshi, Ravindranatha Tyagi, Shrilal Shukla and Manohar Shyam Joshi as major inspiration behind him choosing writing as a career.

"I studied in a Hindi medium school. I didn't know how to speak in English. My mother gave me the habit of reading from an early age. I used to read stories from (magazines) 'Nandan', then I graduated to literary magazines like 'Hans', 'Gyanodaya', and others. By the age of 17 and 18, I had columns published in Hindi newspapers.

Satire was my forte," Arora, a Hindi literature graduate, said recalling his formative years.

In 2006, Arora moved to Mumbai with a desire to work in Hindi films as a writer. He started writing for television and after a successful stint with shows like "Chhona Hai Aasmaan", "Dill Mill Gayye" and "24", he started getting opportunities in movies.

"Stree", a horror-comedy in 2018, was his first major theatrical hit. Then came the OTT boom, giving Arora a chance to establish himself further with "The Family Man" and "Dahaad". "Dahaad", a show created by Reema Kagti and Zoya Akhtar and revolving around a cat and mouse like chase between a cop and a serial killer, helped Arora showcase his literary influences. (PTI)



## JEETU JOSEPH'S NEXT A HINDI THRILLER-DRAMA FEATURE, JUNGLEE PICTURES AND CLOUD 9 PICTURES TO PRODUCE



**MUMBAI, Sept 4:** "Drishyam" filmmaker Jeetu Joseph's next directorial venture will be a Hindi thriller-drama movie, to be backed by Junglee Pictures in association with Cloud 9 Pictures.

According to the makers, the film is based on true events and showcases a

"heroic story of courage and unity".

The story revolves around a valiant, sharp, and quick-witted law enforcement officer who embarks on a journey to fight for truth and bring justice in a high stakes case at international level.

Joseph, the writer-director of the origi-

nal Malayalam blockbuster franchise "Drishyam", said he is excited about his next Hindi project.

"After receiving so much love and appreciation for the 'Drishyam' franchise, I am humbled and thrilled to embark on a new journey with this powerhouse team. For my upcoming film in Hindi cinema, I was searching for a story with a strong narrative that has underlying nuances which the audience would relate to at large.

"This script fits perfectly in every aspect as it will resonate with the pulse of every Indian. I am pleased to have a platform with these two acclaimed production houses like Junglee Pictures and Cloud 9 Pictures to showcase this film," the director said in a statement. Joseph's last Hindi directorial was 2019's "The Body", starring Emraan Hashmi and Rishi Kapoor.

Amrita Pandey, CEO Jun-

glee Pictures, said they are so thrilled to partner with Joseph.

"We couldn't be more excited to partner with Jeethu Joseph, who is a maestro of suspense and intricate storytelling for such a gripping story that will leave the audience feeling inspired and uplifted," she added.

The screenplay for the yet-to-be-titled film is penned by Jairaj Padmanabhan.

Meenu Arora, Founder & CEO of Cloud 9 Pictures, said the film's subject aligns with their goal of creating cinema that "captivates and connects". "We are thrilled to collaborate with Junglee Pictures and Jeethu to bring this incredible story to screen. Jairaj Padmanabhan's screenplay beautifully aligns with our collective goal of creating cinema that captivates and profoundly connects, leaving a lasting impression on viewers," Arora said. (PTI)

## Akshay Oberoi to feature in a romantic-drama 'Tu Chahiye'

**MUMBAI, Sept 4:** Actor Akshay Oberoi on Monday announced his next film, a romantic drama titled "Tu Chahiye".

Known for films like "Pizza", "Gurgaon", "Thar" and web series "Illegal", the 38-year-old actor said he is thrilled about playing a romantic hero who is not quintessential. "I'm excited to do an out-to-out romantic love story. It's refreshing to see a love story being made during a time when such few films are being made. It's also been a while since I've made one

myself. I am really enjoying the character written for me.

"It's deeply layered, challenging and has a variety of shades with a very unique character arch. He is not your quintessential romantic hero and that's what makes it challenging, yet exciting," Oberoi said in a statement.

In the movie, he is paired opposite television actor Ashnoor Kaur. "Shoorveer" fame Aadil Khan is also part of the project. (PTI)



## 'Bambai Meri Jaan' a gut-wrenching story with complex characters, say Kay Kay Menon

**MUMBAI, Sept 4:** Actor Kay Kay Menon on Monday said his character in the upcoming series "Bambai Meri Jaan" is of a "multi-layered and complex" cop torn between professional duties and personal commitments.

Produced by Excel Media and Entertainment, the 10-part show is created by Shujaat Saudagar and Rensil D'Silva. Saudagar has also directed the series from a story by S Hussain Zaidi.

Set in the post-independence era, the story chronicles the life and rise of a young man, Dara Kadri (Avinash Tiwary), torn between his father's law en-

forcement legacy (Menon) and his own journey into the heart of organised crime. Menon said Shujaat and Rensil's clear vision for the character of Ismail Kadri made the process of playing the role easy for him.

"My character Ismail Kadri is multi-layered and complex. He is an honest cop and a doting father who isn't perfect. On one hand, he is deeply committed to cleaning the city of Bambai of all crime, on the other, to save his family, he is forced to become a pawn to the city's crime syndicate. Even as Ismail fights against all odds not to give in to the evil sur-



rounding him, he sees his own flesh and blood rising as the city's new gang lord.

"Shujaat and Rensil's vision for this character was so clear and precise that it was easy for me to essay this role.

Thank you, Prime Video and Excel Entertainment, Rensil and Shujaat, for making me a part of such a gut-wrenching story," Menon said in a statement following the trailer launch of the series.

"Bambai Meri Jaan" is backed by Excel Media and Entertainment's Ritesh Sidhwani, Kassim Jagmagia and Farhan Akhtar.

Tiwary said when he first read the script he was awestruck and hesitant at the same time.

"The character I play in 'Bambai Meri Jaan' is something that very few

actors get an opportunity to sink their teeth into, this early in their career. The way I saw it, there are villains and then there is Dara, a dynamic young man who believes that honest hard work won't get you money and power.

"As a director, Shujaat's creativity, attention to detail, and his ability to inspire and motivate each one of us to give our best, really enabled me to bring Dara's character to life the way he and Rensil had envisioned while writing the script. I am looking forward to reactions from viewers from India and around the world," the actor said.

Prime members in India and across 240 countries and territories worldwide will be able to stream all the 10 episodes of "Bambai Meri Jaan" from September 14. (PTI)



NEPAL'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL MATCH AGAINST INDIA

# Asia Cup: Indian bowlers flatter to deceive as Nepal score 230

**PALLEKELE (SRI LANKA) Sept 4:** Fearless Nepal batsmen exploited a well below par effort by Indian bowlers to the hilt to post a competitive 230 in their Asia Cup match here on Monday.

Aasif Sheikh (58 off 97 balls), Kushal Bhurtel (38 off 25 balls) and Sompal Kami (48 off 55 balls) were impressive while tackling a pedigreed Indian attack after they were asked to bat first.

Nepal who were bundled out for 104 by Pakistan in their opening match, went off the blocks in a cracking style, reaching 65 for 1 in the first 10 overs.

Bhurtel was the engine room of their initial charge in their first international match against India. However, India will regret the two reprieves they gave to Bhurtel. Shreyas Iyer dropped Bhurtel on 1 off Shami in the very first over. A little later Ishan Kishan spilled a chance behind the stumps off the same bowler when the batter was on 7.

Bhurtel was in no mood to look a gift horse in its mouth and took on Indian bowlers bravely.

The Nepal opener slammed pacer Mohammed Siraj over square leg for a six, and followed it with another maximum off Shardul Thakur over fine leg.

But Thakur brought India the first breakthrough soon when he induced an edge from Bhurtel and this time Kishan did not commit any mistake.

Ravindra Jadeja (3/40 in 10



overs) joined the act with three wickets between the 16th and 21st overs to reduce Nepal to 101 for 4. The left-arm spinner dismissed captain Rohit Paudel, Kushal Malla and Bhim Sharki to slow down Nepal's progress.

Sheikh, however, kept his end

going with a pragmatic approach amid multiple rain interruptions.

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav (0/34 in 10 overs) was expected to pose a big threat to the Nepal batsmen. But Sheikh played him well, reading his googlies and the only time he

looked in trouble was when the Indian bowled the deliveries that skidded away from him.

However, Siraj ended Sheikh's stay with a delivery that climbed on him which he jabbed uppishly to Kohli.

Dipendra Airee and Kami

played some daring shots and added 50 runs for the seventh wicket as Jasprit Bumrah-less Indian bowlers and fielders struggled for a cohesive outing. Nepal will be hoping that India can at least be stretched when their turn comes to bowl. (PTI)

## Bangladesh keep themselves alive with 89-run win over Afghanistan

**LAHORE, Sept 4:** Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Najmul Hossain Shanto delivered when it mattered the most by hitting centuries as Bangladesh registered an emphatic 89-run win over Afghanistan to keep themselves alive in the Asia Cup here on Sunday.

While Miraz amassed 112 runs off 119 deliveries, Shanto picked up where he left off in the previous game, with a 105-ball 104 to take Bangladesh to a commanding 334 for 5 after opting to bat.

Bangladesh bowlers, led by Taskin Ahmed (4/44 in 8.3 overs) and Shoriful Islam (3/36 in 9 overs), then joined the party as they struck at regular intervals to bowl out Afghanistan for 245 in 44.3 overs despite the best efforts of Ibrahim Zardani (75 off 74) and Hashmatullah Shahidi (51).

After the victory, Bangladesh were in second spot in Group B, while Afghanistan need to win their final game against Sri Lanka



for a chance to progress in the Super Four stage.

Chasing 335, Afghanistan struggled to maintain the required run rate which kept on increasing as Bangladesh bowlers bowled dot balls to building pressure on their opponents.

Afghanistan did not have the best of starts as the big-hitting Rahmanullah Gurbaz (1) was trapped leg before by Shoriful

Islam in the second over. But Zardani and Rahmat Shah (33) batted intelligently to help Afghanistan recover from the early blow.

They took their side from 1/1 to 79/2 but just when they looked to make inroads, Taskin bowled a back of length delivery and just as Rahmat tried to slog it, the ball crashed into the top of off-stump. At the halfway mark,

Afghanistan needed nine runs per over to win. They tried to up the ante with Zardani hitting Miraz for a four, followed by a six over deep midwicket to collect 14 runs from the over.

But the Bangladesh bowlers were right on their mark on the night. Hasan Mahmud (1/61) accounted for the dangerous Zardani, which led to a mini batting collapse.

Najibullah Zadran (17), Shahidi, Gulabdin Naib (15), Mohammad Nabi (3) and Karim Janat (1) departed within the space of six overs.

Earlier, after an underwhelming batting display in their tournament opener, the Bangladesh batting unit gave a good account of itself.

Afghanistan bowlers were guilty of leading runs, especially left-arm medium pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi (0/53 in 6 overs), as skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi struggled to find answers. (PTI)

## Indian men's TT team assured of bronze medal at Asian Championships

**PYEONGCHANG (SOUTH KOREA), Sept 4:** The Indian men's table tennis team assured itself of at least a bronze medal in the Asian Championships with a 3-0 win over Singapore in the quarterfinals here on Monday. The opening singles between veteran Sharath Kamal and Isaac Quek went down to the wire with the 41-year-old Indian prevailing 11-1, 10-12, 11-8, 11-13, 14-12.

The seasoned G Sathiyam then

blanked Yew En Koen Pang 11-6, 11-8, 12-10 to give India a 2-0 lead in the last eight clash.

India's highest-ranked player at 61, Harneet Desai, sealed the tie by outplaying Zhe Yu Clarence Chew 11-9, 11-4, 11-6.

Third seeds India play either Iran or Chinese Taipei in the semifinals. The men's team finished with a bronze in the previous edition in Doha two years ago. After a long time, Sharath and Sathiyam

find themselves out of the top-100 in the singles rankings and would be looking to make amends in the individual events here.

The revised points system and not playing enough tournaments have contributed to their steep drop in the rankings.

In the women's quarterfinals, fifth seeds India suffered a 0-3 loss against Japan on Monday.

World number eight Mima Ito got past Ayhika Mukherjee in the

opening singles without much difficulty, winning 11-7, 15-13, 11-8.

Indian star and world number 36 Manika Batra took a game off seventh ranked Hina Hayata before going down 7-11, 9-11, 11-9, 3-11.

Suthirtha Mukherjee also did well to win the opening game against 14th ranked Miu Hirano before the Japanese found her rhythm for a 7-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-5 victory. (PTI)

### Switzerland Tourism felicitates Neeraj Chopra



**ZURICH, Sept 4:** Switzerland Tourism felicitated their 'Friendship Ambassador' Olympic and World champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra for his achievements. The 25-year-old Chopra became only the third javelin thrower in history to hold both the Olympic and World Championships crowns after winning the worlds title in Budapest with a throw of 88.17m last month.

"We are honoured and delighted to celebrate India's sports legend Neeraj Chopra. Neeraj is paving the way and inspiring an entire generation. For us at Switzerland Tourism, we are extremely happy with our association with Neeraj as our 'Friendship Ambassador' in India."

"We heartily congratulate him on his world championship and wish him the best for his future endeavours," Pascal Prinz, Head of global partnerships at Switzerland Tourism, said in a media release. Chopra has been enjoying the adventurous, sporty and scenic outdoors of Switzerland. He shared his Swiss experiences of popular adventure sports like skydiving, canyon jumping and jetboating in Interlaken, paragliding, and helicopter tour over the Zermatt landscape. (PTI)

## BCCI officials in Pakistan: Cricket and politics shouldn't be mixed, urges Shukla as Ashraf hopes for 'better relations'

**AMRITSAR/LAHORE, Sept 4:** For the first time in 17 years, two senior BCCI office-bearers -- president Roger Binny and vice-president Rajeev Shukla -- travelled to Pakistan and reached Lahore on Monday after crossing the Attari-Wagah border, honouring the PCB's invitation to watch Asia Cup there.

While seasoned politician Shukla urged people "not to mix politics with cricket", a beaming PCB supremo Zaka Ashraf hoped that the acceptance of invitation by the BCCI was a welcome step towards improving the relations between the two cricket boards. It was the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) management committee head Ashraf, who received the BCCI brass at the Wagah border and took them to Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

The duo will watch a couple of Super Four Games on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The last time an Indian cricket team travelled to Pakistan was back in 2008 for the Asia Cup. Pakistan last hosted India for a bilateral series in 2006. Their cricket team last visited India for a bilateral white-ball series in 2012. The BCCI had refused to send its team to Pakistan for the Asia Cup, which led to a bi-nation 'Hybrid Model' arrangement. But in a heartening gesture, the BCCI approved former Test player Binny and Congressman Shukla's participation in a dinner hosted by the Governor of Punjab province of Pakistan. "Pakistan is the host of Asia Cup. The visit by this delegation is purely cricketing and there is no politics involved. It is

a two-day visit and the Governor of Punjab is hosting us for dinner and all three teams Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan will be present. We shouldn't mix cricket with politics," Shukla told mediapersons. Shukla, who has been with the Indian cricket board for more than two decades, was a part of BCCI delegation that came for the historic 'Friendship Series' back in 2004.

Asked about the chances of resumption of bilateral cricketing contests, the Rajya Sabha MP said: "The decision with regards to bilateral series is taken by the Indian government and we would follow whatever the government suggests."

PCB chairman Ashraf conducted an impromptu press conference with Binny and Shukla by his side. "I thank both Mr

Binny and Mr Shukla from the core of my heart for accepting our invitation. We invited and they responded and if they reciprocate by inviting us to their country, we will also accept it with all warmth. Inshallah, we will grow together," Ashraf said.

Binny recollected his last visit to Pakistan which incidentally was more than 16 years ago when he was a part of the Asian Cricket Council.

"My last visit of Pakistan was in 2006 when I was a part of Asian Cricket Council. Pakistan's hospitality has been very, very good and we were treated very well," said Binny.

Sources in the PCB informed that Ashraf on Sunday had a telephonic discussion with ACC chairman Jay Shah, requesting him to consider moving some

matches of the ongoing Asia Cup to Pakistan and India's games to Dubai in order to salvage a rain-hit tourney.

The marquee India vs Pakistan game was called off after one innings due to heavy downpour and Asian Cricket Council is already looking at alternate venues. Ashraf apparently proposed to Shah that the Indian team can play all its matches in Dubai, including the final (if they qualify) but a few Super Four matches involving other teams can be shifted to Pakistan.

However, it has been reliably learnt that Shah has politely declined the offer, informing Ashraf that the ACC was already considering moving some matches from Colombo to Pallekele, Dambulla or Hambantota. (PTI)

## Swiatek's US Open title defense and stay at No. 1 end with a loss to Jelena Ostapenko



**NEW YORK, Sept 4:** Iga Swiatek arrived at the U.S. Open as its reigning champion, as the winner at three of the past six Grand Slam tournaments and as the owner of the No. 1 ranking for nearly 1 1/2 years.

None of that mattered on Sunday night against Jelena Ostapenko, whose powerful style disrupts Swiatek's rhythm — and beats her every time. Swiatek's title defense at Flushing Meadows ended in the fourth round with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 loss to 2017 French Open champion Ostapenko in the fourth round at Arthur Ashe Stadium. The result also means Swiatek's stay at atop the WTA will end next week, when current No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka will rise to the top spot for the first time.

"There are some sad emotions" about falling from No. 1, Swiatek acknowledged, while also saying of her reign atop women's tennis: "It was pretty exhausting."

Not long after being assured of losing her grip on that perch, the 22-year-old from Poland already was thinking ahead to returning there.

"For sure when I'm going to be, next time, in the same situation, I'm going to do some stuff differently," Swiatek said, "because it was a little bit stressful, and it shouldn't be."

She also sounded mystified about what happened out there Sunday. "I'm just surprised that my level changed so drastically, because usually when I play bad, I play bad at the beginning, then I kind of catch up or just problem solve. This time it was

totally the opposite," Swiatek said. "I don't really know what happened with my game. I felt no control suddenly." The 20th-seeded Ostapenko, a 26-year-old from Latvia, offered a theory.

"The main thing is that she doesn't really like to play against big hitters. ... She likes to have some time," said Ostapenko, who accumulated 31 winners to 18 for Swiatek. "When I play fast, aggressive and powerful, she's a little bit in trouble."

Ostapenko also finished with just 20 unforced errors — quite an improvement from the 80 she had in her second-round victory last week.

When a reporter mentioned Sunday's total, Ostapenko smiled and said, "Not bad."

In truth, this was not necessarily a huge surprise, based on their previous matchups: Ostapenko improved to 4-0 against Swiatek over their careers. No other player owns four victories against the woman who has led the WTA rankings since April 2022.

After getting off to a terrific start to the second set, which she led 4-1, Ostapenko wavered for a bit. That allowed Swiatek to get a break back and pull to 4-3. But that was only a blip. With Swiatek having trouble serving — perhaps owing to all of the squeaking Ostapenko's shoes did as she moved around during the ball toss while waiting to return — the contest quickly tilted in one direction. Ostapenko reeled off seven consecutive games to go up 5-0 in the third set. (AP)

## Coco Gauff is the 1st US teen since Serena Williams to reach consecutive US Open quarterfinals

**NEW YORK, Sept 4:** Coco Gauff is the first American teen since Serena Williams more than two decades ago to reach the U.S. Open quarterfinals two years in a row, so the 19-year-old from Florida knows her way out of trouble on a tennis court.

As the second set slipped away against Caroline Wozniacki in the fourth round Sunday at Arthur Ashe Stadium, Gauff needed a chance to think things through after handing over a break with a pair of double-faults and a stumble that left her doing the splits.

So Gauff turned in the direction of the near-constant chatter coming from Brad Gilbert, one of her two coaches sitting in a front-row seat, and said, "Please stop." A couple of minutes later, Gauff said, "Stop talking."

That was while Wozniacki was grabbing four consecutive games to go up a break in the third set. And then, just as the match seemed to be slipping away thanks in part to a slew of unforced errors, Gauff straightened out her strokes and pulled away. She collected the last six games for a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 victory over Wozniacki, the 33-year-old mother of two who recently came out of retirement.

"I was getting frustrated. It wasn't really directed at him. It was just that I needed to reset," the sixth-seeded Gauff said. "In that moment, I just didn't want to hear anything. I just wanted to

think about what I was doing."

Her next opponent will be defending champion Iga Swiatek or No. 20 seed Jelena Ostapenko. The top-seeded Swiatek was scheduled to face Ostapenko on Sunday night, after 23-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic picked up a 6-2, 7-5, 6-4 victory over qualifier Borna Gojo.

Djokovic faces No. 9 Taylor Fritz of the U.S. on Tuesday. It'll be Djokovic's 13th quarterfinal at Flushing Meadows, and Fritz's first.

Gauff, whose best showing at a major was reaching the final at the 2022 French Open before losing to Swiatek, has now won 15 of her past 16 matches.

That run follows a first-round exit at Wimbledon in July and includes the two biggest titles of her career, at the DC Open and in Cincinnati. It also coincides with the additions of Pere Riba as her full-time coach and Gilbert in a role that's been described as a temporary consultant.

TV microphones have been picking up Gilbert repeatedly offering his thoughts to Gauff during matches over the past week.

Against Wozniacki, the 2018 Australian Open champion and twice the runner-up in New York, Gauff was trying to find the right balance between being the aggressor (what she wanted) and not going for too much (what Gilbert wanted). (AP)



# Battle for Super 4 spot: Afghanistan aim for massive victory over Sri Lanka

LAHORE, Sept 4: Afghanistan will need to up their game with the ball when they face a skillful Sri Lanka in the battle of a Super4 spot in the Asia Cup here on Tuesday.

Afghanistan not only find themselves in a must-win situation after the loss to Bangladesh but they also need a victory with a massive margin to finish in the top two of Group B.

Their run-rate is in the negative following the defeat here on Sunday night while Sri Lanka, who beat Bangladesh in their opening game, are in the positive with a NRR of 0.951.

Having put 300 plus against Afghanistan, Bangladesh have a much superior run rate and are all but through to the next stage.

The Sri Lanka-Afghanistan fixture will be the second one at the Gaddafi Stadium and is expected to be a run feast.

In the absence of express fast bowlers, Afghanistan rely heavily on the spin duo of Rashid Khan and Mujeeb Zadran. Rashid went wicketless on Sunday and his team would be hoping he that he comes up with a match-winning effort against Sri Lankans.

Besides being ordinary in the



pace department, Afghanistan's fielding also left a lot to be desired. The recent form of openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran is one big positive for the side.

Sri Lanka, on the other hand, will hope that their top-order fires after the failure against Bangladesh.

In the absence of three injured pacers, the young Matheesha

Pathirana embraced the responsibility with four wickets in the opener and the slinging operator will be expected to make life tougher for the Afghanistan batters.

Mystery spinner Maheesha

Theekshana delivered with the new ball against Bangladesh and will be tasked to do the same against Shahidi and Co.

"We need to improve in all the departments. Our bowling was not good enough, and neither was our fielding. Lahore is near our country, so the fans were waiting for this game. Hopefully, they will come and support us again in the next game," said Shahidi after the loss on Sunday night.

**Squads:**  
Afghanistan: Hashmatullah Shahidi (captain), Ibrahim Zadran, Ikram Alikhil, Najibullah Zadran, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Riaz Hassan, Gulbadin Naib, Karim Janat, Mohammad Nabi, Rahmat Shah, Rashid Khan, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Abdul Rahman, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Mohammad Saleem, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad.

Sri Lanka: Dasun Shanaka (captain), Pathum Nissanka, Dimuth Karunaratne, Kusal Janith Perera, Kusal Mendis, Charith Asalanka, Dananjaya de Silva, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Mahesh Theekshana, Dunieth Wellalage, Matheesha Pathirana, Kasun Rajitha, Dushan Hemantha, Binura Fernando and Pramod Madushan.

Match starts 3 PM IST. (PTI)

# Maxwell could skip ODI series against India due to ankle injury



MELBOURNE, Sept 4: Star Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell may skip this month's ODI series against India as he takes a cautious approach in the run up to the World Cup after his ankle flared up.

Maxwell was ruled out of the just-concluded T20I series against South Africa after he experienced soreness in his left ankle, the same foot he had injured last year.

"I still want to play some part of that India series. But I'm not feeling any pressure on it," Maxwell was quoted as saying by ESPN-Cricinfo.

Australia are scheduled to travel to India for a three-match ODI series starting in Mohali on September 22, ahead of the World Cup.

"The selectors and the staff have been brilliant with me as well. They don't want to put too much pressure on me to sort of set that date because they know they've got a bit of extra time before the World Cup.

"So instead of rushing it and probably putting myself a week or two behind, being able to give myself extra time and make sure we get through the whole tournament," he added.

All teams need to submit their 15-member squads to the ICC by September 5 while changes can be made till September 27.

The 34-year-old, who still carries a metal plate in his left leg after fracturing his fibula in a freak birthday-party accident last November, was forced to fly home from South Africa early as his the

ankle flared up after the team's first training session.

"I don't think I could have predicted how sore I was going to be once I got to South Africa. But it was one of those things. Even when I went to train that day, I still felt fine. There was nothing wrong.

"Something just got impinged. I think one of the tendons around my ankle was a little bit inflamed, there's a bit of swelling, so it kept on catching which meant it just gave me a bit of pain.

"Hopefully, the cortisone takes care of that and I can get back up and running to where I was just before I went to South Africa," he added.

The Cricket Australia medical team adopted a conservative approach by sending Maxwell home given the World Cup showpiece event is only weeks away.

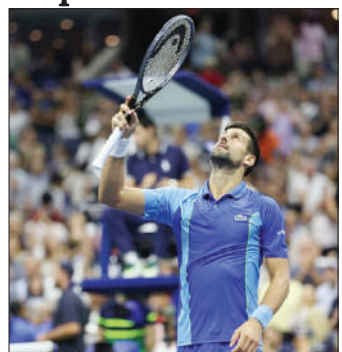
"We've probably just got to be a bit smarter going forward. Making sure that my preparation is a bit more managed, I think leading into a flight like that.

"I'm already back in the gym, so I'll probably get back into full training probably this week, so it won't be a long turnaround. It's just knowing that I'm not over the hurdle of the original injury yet," said Maxwell.

After the ODI series against India, Australia will play Netherlands and Pakistan in the World Cup warm matches on September 30 and October 3 respectively.

Australia open their campaign against hosts India in Chennai on October 8. (PTI)

## Novak Djokovic reaches US Open quarterfinals



NEW YORK, Sept 4: Novak Djokovic did not encounter any of the sort of trouble he did in his previous match, eliminating qualifier Borna Gojo 6-2, 7-5, 6-4 to reach the U.S. Open quarterfinals.

Djokovic — who has won three of his men's record 23 Grand Slam titles at Flushing Meadows — needed to come back from a two-set deficit in the third round before eventually winning in five against Laslo Djere.

This time, Djokovic played far more cleanly and was in control throughout. He finished with only 12 unforced errors, while Gojo made 40.

"Just glad to get through in straight sets," said the second-seeded Djokovic, who already is assured of replacing Carlos Alcaraz at No. 1 in the ATP rankings next week.

Djokovic won five of the big-serving Gojo's 15 service games while only getting broken once himself.

Next up for Djokovic will be a matchup against No. 9 seed Taylor Fritz, a 25-year-old from California, who is the only remaining player in the men's bracket to not have dropped a set so far.

Djokovic owns a 7-0 head-to-head career record against Fritz.

"I'm not going to talk about what he needs to do to have a chance against me. I'm sure he's going to try to figure that out with his coach," Djokovic said. "I'm going to get ready, obviously, for that match as any other match, doing my analytics, watching the last match we had against each other."

Their matchup on Tuesday will be Djokovic's 13th quarterfinal in New York and Fritz's first.

"I need to play within myself and trust that if I'm playing well, then that's going to be enough, and I don't need to kind of do anything extra," said Fritz, who defeated Swiss qualifier Dominic Stricker 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-4 earlier Sunday.

Fritz is one of three American men who won fourth-round matches, along with No. 10 Frances Tiafoe and unseeded Ben Shelton. It is the first time a trio of men from the United States made it to the quarterfinals at Flushing Meadows since 2005, when Andre Agassi, James Blake and Robby Ginepri did it.

"That's amazing, obviously, for the (U.S. Tennis Association), for the U.S. Open, as well," Djokovic said. "All of the guys — Fritz, Shelton and Tiafoe — (use a) big serve, just very aggressive play."

The winner of Djokovic vs. Fritz will take on the winner of Tiafoe vs. Shelton in the semifinals. (AP)

## 'Himalaya Putras': Gutsy Nepal cricket team battle odds for their moment of glory

PALEKELE (Sri Lanka), Sept 4: The Nepal cricketers seemed a bit startled as a handful of fans, journalists and camerapersons jostled for their time after the net session at the indoor facility here.

They were even coy. At home or even during the Associates tournaments, buzz of this magnitude has been unfamiliar to Nepalese cricketers. But they are now playing the Asia Cup 2023, standing alongside the big boys — India and Pakistan in Group A.

"It is a surreal experience for us. I can now feel how cricketers from India and Pakistan are being followed by fans and media," Nepal captain Rohit Paudel told PTI.

They earned that chance to rub shoulders with the powerhouses after their win in the ACC Premier Cup earlier this year, beating UAE in the final.

But the flashlights on players from the Himalayan nation is not blinding enough to make them forget about the rough roads they had to traverse to reach this point.

"We don't have too many facilities back at home. We need to come to Kathmandu from our

villages to do proper cricket training. It is tough, but we had to do that to be in touch ahead of matches," said GC Pratish, a bowling all-rounder from Pyuthan village of Nepal.

Sandeep Lamichhane is the only player in Nepal who has some exposure to top level, professional cricket for a sustained period.

The leg-spinner has been part of Delhi Capitals in the IPL, besides appearing in various other leagues like CPL, BBL, PSL etc.

Lamichhane has seen the hard work the Nepalese players had to put in to climb the ladder from close quarters.

"Everybody now sees that we are playing in the Asia Cup. But hardly anyone knows the hardships we had to go through to reach here. Most of these players are living outside Kathmandu as far as in Far West and Central Nepal.

"They need to come to the city to train, live in rented houses, away from family. It is tough on them. But they are aware of the need to make sacrifices to write a story for themselves. It is the love of cricket that drives them," he said.

However, enthusiasm can only drive a team this much.


Lamichhane underlined the need for more fund flow into Nepal cricket to maintain the strides they have already taken.

"Many of these players are associated with the Army or Police clubs, giving them a chance to train in off-seasons. Some are under contract with Nepal Cricket Association too," said Lamichhane.

Binod Kumar, who is accompanying the team as manager, noted that Nepal needs to improve its domestic cricket circuit to keep the supply line of players intact.

"Sadly, our domestic structure is not good. It mainly revolves around three departmental teams — Nepal Police, Nepal Army, Nepal Armed Forces — and a 7-team provisional tournament. "It runs for 2 to 3 months as we don't have proper stadiums but we do have some grounds. But we are working with ACC and ICC to mobilize the resources. We are also reaching out to corporates and promoters for funds," said Binod.

Nepal head coach Monty Desai is aware of the issues surrounding an upcoming cricketing nation like Nepal. (PTI)



অসম চৰকাৰ

# শিক্ষক দিবস

২০২৩






“শিক্ষাৰ লক্ষ্য শাৰীৰিক, বৌদ্ধিক, ৰাজনৈতিক অথবা অৰ্থনৈতিক মানুহ সৃষ্টি কৰা নহয়; ইয়াৰ উদ্দেশ্য হ'ল নৈতিক আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক তথা এক সম্পূৰ্ণ মানুহ সৃষ্টি কৰাহে।”

ড° সৰ্বপল্লী ৰাধাকৃষ্ণন

মহান শিক্ষাবিদ তথা ভাৰতৰ প্ৰাক্তন ৰাষ্ট্ৰপতি ড° সৰ্বপল্লী ৰাধাকৃষ্ণনদেৱৰ পৰিৱৰ্তিত পালন কৰা শিক্ষক দিবসৰ শুভ ক্ষণত মহান দাৰ্শনিকগৰাকীলৈ যাচিহোঁ গভীৰ শ্ৰদ্ধাঞ্জলি আৰু মানৱ সম্পদ গঢ়াৰ গধুৰ দায়িত্ব পালন কৰা শিক্ষক সমাজলৈ আন্তৰিক কৃতজ্ঞতা তথা শ্ৰদ্ধা নিবেদন কৰিহোঁ।

৫ ছেপ্টেম্বৰ ২০২৩

ড° হিমন্ত বিশ্ব শৰ্মা  
মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী, অসম

তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত Connect with us     @diprassam  dipr.assam.gov.in

৫ অসম বাৰ্তা ছবিস্ক্ৰাইব কৰিবলৈ ৮২৮৭৯১২১৫৮ ত Assam লিখি ৱাটছএপ কৰক

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