

6
WORLD

8
NATION

- Russia has turned food, energy and even children into weapons: Zelenskyy
- UK PM signals plan to backtrack on some climate goals
- Cong backs 'nari shakti' bill but quota should be effective immediately: Sonia
- Irani slams oppn over demand for 'immediate' implementation of quota

## Suicide in NIT-Silchar: Protesting students move President Murmu

**SILCHAR, Sept 20:** Protesting students of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in Assam's Silchar have written to President Droupadi Murmu seeking her help to resolve the escalating crisis in the premier institute.

The students have been demanding the resignation of the dean of academics for his alleged role in the suicide of a third-year student recently. The letter sent by the NIT Silchar Students Fraternity to the President on Tuesday and made available to the media on Wednesday stated that they are writing to her with "an increasing sense of urgency and desperation as the situation in our institution has escalated to an alarming level, necessitating your immediate intervention to avert further harm".

The students alleged that the actions and attitude of the institute's administration has 'plunged the campus into a state of chaos, causing widespread distress among the student body which demands your urgent attention'.

The students alleged that Koj Buker, hailing from Arunachal Pradesh, had died by suicide due to

### Dean removed amid protests

**SILCHAR, Sept 20:** NIT-Silchar dean (academics) BK Roy, against whom students of the institute had levelled harassment charges leading to the suicide of a third-year student, has been temporarily removed from his post. NIT Registrar KL Baishnab told PTI on Wednesday that Roy has been replaced by Dr Lalit Kumar Saikia until further orders.

Appealing to students to stop their protests and return to the classrooms, he said their demands can be resolved through discussions. "If the image of NIT-Silchar is tarnished, then the future of students will also be affected. Therefore, we appeal to students to return to their classes," Baishnab said. The students had launched a hunger strike since Sunday demanding the removal of the dean (academics) alleging he had a past record of harassing students and was primarily responsible for the death of the third-year electrical engineering student. Baishnab said the authorities are continuously engaging in discussions with the students and counselling them about their studies and future. He said the NIT is an autonomous body and any changes regarding academic matters, attendance, grading and (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

the constant pressure from the dean of academics, BK Roy, while director Dilip Kumar Baidya failed to take necessary action.

"We want to kindly put some issues for your consideration so that there are no further such incidents. We are putting forward some legitimate demands for your consideration," the letter said.

The students demanded that the

institute's administration must apologise for their delayed response to the suicide incident despite being informed by students besides releasing an official clarification to counter false claims in local newspapers, which wrongly reported the deceased as a drug addict. "The institute administration should refrain from spreading such misinformation about (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## SC to examine Section 6A of Citizenship Act

Assam illegal immigrants: Common index to be prepared ahead of Oct 17 hearing

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will commence hearing on October 17 to examine the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act relating to illegal immigrants in Assam.

Section 6A in the Citizenship Act was inserted as a special provision to deal with the citizenship of people covered by the Assam Accord.

The provision provides that those who have come to Assam on or after January 1, 1966 but before March 25, 1971 from specified territories, including Bangladesh, as per the Citizenship Act amended in 1985, and since then are residents of Assam. They must register themselves under Section 18 for citizenship.

As a result, the provision fixes March 25, 1971 as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to Bangladesh migrants in Assam.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud noted that nodal counsels have prepared a common compilation in the matter. However, com-



mon compilation needs to be streamlined.

"A common index shall be prepared. The soft copy of common compilation shall be prepared by October. Written submissions shall be filed by October 10," the bench also comprising Justices AS Bopanna, MM Sundresh, JB Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra said.

The top court said the title of the proceedings shall be, "In Re: Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955." The top court on December 13 had asked the counsel for the

contesting parties to decide the issues for adjudication in a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act relating to illegal immigrants in Assam.

The counsel would segregate the cases which fall for decision before this court into distinct categories and the order in which the arguments are to be made, the bench had said, adding we will keep it for directions.

The bench had directed the apex court registry to provide scanned

soft copies of the complete set of pleadings filed on the issue.

As many as 17 petitions, including the one filed by Assam Public Works in 2009, are pending on the issue in the apex court.

Prior to this, the Constitution bench had directed the parties to file joint compilations consisting of written submissions; precedents; and any other documentary material on which reliance will be placed at the time of hearing.

A common index shall be prepared in three separate volumes of the above compilations, it had said.

Under the Assam Accord signed by the All Assam Students Union, Assam government and the Government of India on August 15, 1985 to detect and deport the foreigners, Section 6A was inserted to the Citizenship Act to grant citizenship to people who have migrated to Assam. A Guwahati-based NGO challenged section 6A in 2012, terming it arbitrary, discriminatory and unconstitutional claiming it provides different dates for regularising illegal migrants in Assam. (PTI)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Allegations refuted

**DONGKAMUKAM:** Mongal Bey, chairman of Rongkhang Lamps Ltd. in West Karbi Anglong, has refuted allegations of rice theft. In a press conference held at his office, Bey explained that rice distribution is now based on fingerprint authentication rather than traditional quota systems. Possessing a ration card alone is insufficient without fingerprint verification, eliminating the possibility of rice theft. Bey also appealed to NGOs and other organizations not to solicit donations from Rongkhang Lamps. It should be noted that allegations of rice theft had arisen, involving 17 dealers. Bey also announced that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Rongkhang Lamps will take place on Sept 29, 2023.

#### New border haats

**SHILLONG:** The Indian government has given its approval for two out of the 18 new border haats proposed by the Meghalaya state government. This announcement was made by Meghalaya's deputy chief minister, Sniawbhalang Dhar, who oversees commerce and industries, during a session of the Meghalaya Assembly. Dhar also mentioned that the proposed border haat at Haat Thangngi in Umniuh Tmar, East Khasi Hills, is still awaiting approval from the government of India.

#### Ganesh puja celebrated

**HOWRAGHAT:** Sri Sri Ganesh Puja is being celebrated in Dighalipar, Howraghat, Karbi Anglong, and across the nation. This three-day program began on Monday evening and culminated with the puja on Tuesday. The celebrations included rituals like puspajali and an evening cultural program. Raju Dey, president of the Sri Sri Ganesh Puja Parishad Committee, and Gobind Nath, secretary, extended their warm wishes to the people on this auspicious occasion.

## LS nod to women's reservation bill with near unanimity

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a bill granting reservation to women on one-third seats in Lok Sabha and state assemblies with near unanimity amid demands from the opposition to extend similar benefits to Other Backward Classes and immediate implementation of the measure before the elections next year.

After a spirited eight-hour debate in which 60 members participated, the Lok Sabha passed the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill, with 454 members voting in favour and two against it. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present during the voting on the bill.

The bill was passed as per the provisions of Article 368 (2) of the Constitution relating to the passage of constitutional amendment bills

which requires support of the majority of the total membership of the House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting. A few amendments moved by the government relating to the numbering of the Constitution amendment bill were also cleared by the House. When the proposed legislation goes to Rajya Sabha for its consideration, it will be called the Constitution (106th Amendment) Bill, officials said.

Setting the tone of the debate, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi made a strong pitch for bringing OBC women in the ambit of the proposed law and asserting that any delay in bringing the reservation into effect would be "gross injustice" to women.

## Speaker expunges allegations against Conrad from Assembly records

**HT Bureau**  
**SHILLONG, Sept 20:** Meghalaya Assembly Speaker Thomas A Sangma on Wednesday expunged the statement made by opposition AITC leader and former chief minister Mukul Sangma

alleging chief minister Conrad K Sangma of having a close association with a 'drug kingpin' from Mizoram from the proceedings of the House as they are in violation of the rules.

Referring to the relevant rules, Thomas said, "Therefore, I in exercise of the rules expunge the statement made by Mukul Sangma from the proceedings (of the House) as they are in violation of the rules."

"Therefore, the speech made by Mukul Sangma on the matter

against the chief minister will not be part of the proceedings and I hereby expunge it from the proceedings of the House on September 19," he added. Reminding that the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly is known in the entire country as a very disciplined House, the Speaker said, "So let us not engage in calling names and making allegations without substantiated evidence."

The ruling of the Speaker came after deputy chief minister in-charge parliamentary affairs Prestone Tynsong requested that Mukul's statement be expunged. Tynsong requested the members from Sangsok to refrain from such a reference based on a 'photograph'.

Defending (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Congress policies responsible for Manipur crisis: Himanta

**JODHPUR, Sept 20:** Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday accused the Congress of causing trouble in all eight north-eastern states during its rule and blamed its policies for the Manipur crisis. Sarma, who arrived in Jodhpur for the BJP's Parivartan Sankalp Yatra, also questioned the Congress and the opposition INDIA bloc's silence on the leaders of an alliance-member party's remarks on Sanatan Dharma. He claimed the silence was an endorsement of the remarks.

Speaking to reporters after arriving in Jodhpur, Sarma said, "When the Congress was in power, all eight states of the northeast were disturbed. Today, there is peace in seven states," Sarma said.

He further added, "The policies of the Congress (government) are responsible for the condition of Manipur today."

More than 175 people have been



killed and several hundreds injured since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status.

Sarma also hit out at the INDIA bloc and the Congress over DMK leaders' comments on Sanatan Dharma. "Despite repeated state-

ments by INDIA (bloc) members against Sanatan Dharma, the Congress has maintained silence. Even Rahul Gandhi has not issued any statement to distance himself from the criticism of Sanatan Dharma. This clearly suggests that he is with them," the senior BJP leader said. Likening Sanatan Dharma to coronavirus, malaria and fever caused by dengue virus and mosquitoes, Udhayanidhi Stalin - the son of Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin - said such things should not be opposed but destroyed.

Sarma further said that "your head is severed if you speak against Islam, even in an academic debate, but there is continuous criticism of Sanatan Dharma by members of the INDIA alliance". The Assam chief minister said, "Even I don't wish (for) anybody to speak against Islam but, in spite of the statements against (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Yellow alert for state till Sept 24

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a Yellow alert for Assam and other parts of the northeastern region of India, forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall until September 24.

This Yellow alert signifies the possibility of heavy rainfall along with thunder and lightning in several districts of Assam.

Guwahati, the largest city in Assam, experienced heavy rainfall on Tuesday and Wednesday, resulting in waterlogging and traffic congestion in various areas.

According to a special bulletin issued by the IMD on September 19, a Low-Pressure Area formed in the northwest Bay of Bengal off the West Bengal-Odisha coasts. This weather system, along with associated cyclonic circulation, is expected to move west-northwestwards across North Odisha and South Jharkhand over the next two days. As a result, fairly widespread to widespread rainfall (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## AU gets new chancellor

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Arup Raha has been appointed as the chancellor of Assam University (AU) by President Droupadi Murmu. He will hold this position for a five-year term, effective from September 15. This appointment was made in accordance with Statute 1 of the Assam University Act, 1989. Air Chief Marshal Raha, aged 69, takes over from noted poet, lyricist, and filmmaker Gulzar.

In this role, Air Chief Marshal Raha will carry out the powers and functions outlined in the Act and statute of Assam University. The appointment followed a letter from the director of the Department of Higher Education of the Union Ministry (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

India has suffered two poaching losses in 2023 so far, one each in KNP and Manas National Park

## Greater one-horned rhinos thriving in India, Nepal despite poaching threat: Report

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** The greater one-horned rhino population in India and Nepal continues to grow on the back of strong protection, wildlife crime law enforcement and habitat expansion, according to a new report.

The State of the Rhino Report, 2023, by US-based International Rhino Foundation (IRF) comes ahead of World Rhino Day, an annual global celebration of the five rhino species and their conservation on September 22.

According to the report, the two most significant factors causing rhino populations to decline are poaching and habitat loss but climate change is also increasingly impacting many facets of their survival. "Poaching still threatens all



five rhino species - black, white, greater one-horned, Sumatran and Javan - and has increased in several regions that had not previously been targeted," it states.

However, the report pointed to some bright spots.

Greater one-horned rhinos continue to thrive due to strong protection and enforcement and, though

the governments of India and Nepal did not conduct an official census this year, the authorities believe the population is growing, the foundation said.

India, Bhutan and Nepal work together to implement a trans-boundary management strategy for the greater one-horned rhino. Thanks to this collaboration and strict government protection and management, the greater one-horned rhino population has steadily increased over the last century and grown about 20 per cent over the past decade, it said.

According to estimates, India is home to 3,262 rhinos. The black rhino population is increasing despite constant poaching pressure, the IRF said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## India to host conclave of Army chiefs of Indo-Pacific region

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** The Indian Army will host a two-day conference of Army chiefs of the Indo-Pacific nations next week with an aim to evolve a common strategy to ensure peace, prosperity and stability against the backdrop of growing global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region.

Fifteen Army chiefs and delegations from 22 countries will attend the event to be held in Delhi on September 26 and 27, officials said. The US Army is co-hosting the conference.

The Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conclave (IPACC) will deliberate on the role of military diplomacy in mitigating various crises, ways to enhance collaboration among the armed forces of the region and boosting interoperability. An exhibition of India's indigenously developed weapons, military systems and platforms is also being organised on the sidelines of the event.

Alongside the 13th edition of the IPACC, the Indian Army is also hosting the 47th Indo Pacific Armies Management Seminar (IPAMS) and the Senior Enlisted Leaders Forum (SELF).

Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen M V Suchindra Kumar said the event will provide a unique opportunity to build common perspectives towards a shared vision

and that it will help strengthen friendships through the formidable and indelible "soldierly bond".

The IPACC, instituted as a biennial event in 1999, is attended by Army chiefs of countries of the Indo-Pacific region, to discuss issues of mutual interest.

"The current edition of this conclave is very special, as it will witness participation of a full spectrum of military ranks, from Army chiefs to non-commissioned officers from 22 nationalities, and their spouses," Lt Gen Kumar told reporters.

"Fifteen Army chiefs and delegations from 22 countries will attend this event in Delhi. I take this opportunity to thank the US Army, especially US Army Pacific, who are our co-hosts," he said.

The Indo-Pacific Armies Management Seminar (IPAMS), held annually, is one of the largest conferences for the land forces in the region which is organised annually by US Army Pacific, along with a co-host country.

In his remarks, the Vice Chief of Army Staff also underlined the importance of land forces to ensure the vision of a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific that he asserted must be based on a rules-based international order. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



# Sensex tanks 796 pts, Nifty closes below 20K on selling in HDFC Bank, RIL

**MUMBAI, Sept 20:** Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Wednesday due to selling in index heavyweights in tandem with weak global trends ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision.

Falling for the second day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 796 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 66,800.84. During the day, it tanked 868.7 points or 1.28 per cent to 66,728.14.

The NSE Nifty declined 231.90 points or 1.15 per cent to end below the 20,000 mark at 19,901.40.

US bond yields surging to 16-year high levels and fears of high crude oil prices fueling commodity inflation also hit the investor sentiment, according to analysts.

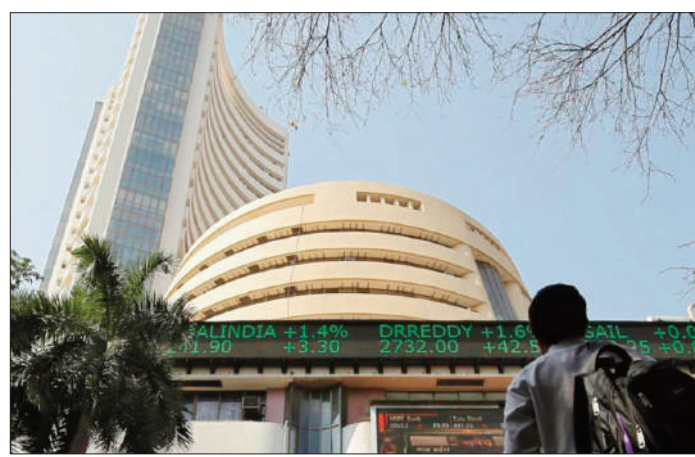
Fresh foreign fund outflows and caution ahead of a host of interest rate decisions from global central

banks also added to the overall bearish trend. Besides the US Fed meeting, the BoE (Bank of England) and the BoJ (Bank of Japan) are also scheduled to meet this week.

Among the Sensex firms, HDFC Bank emerged as the biggest loser, falling 4 per cent. JSW Steel, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement, Maruti, Tata Steel, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel and Larsen & Toubro were the other major laggards. Power Grid, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, Axis Bank, NTPC, ITC and Infosys were among the gainers.

"The domestic markets remained under pressure due to rising US bond yields and a stronger greenback. Concerns reigned over upcoming FED policy, interest rate trajectory and rising oil prices.

"Bank Nifty underperformed today due to rising cost of funds and reduction in deposits leading



to moderation in net yield," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge fell by 0.51 per cent and midcap index declined 0.33 per cent. Among the indices, financial

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

European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended in negative territory on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude fell 1.23 per cent to USD 93.18 a barrel even as supply concerns remain due to production cuts announced by Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 1,236.51 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Snapping its 11-day rally, the BSE benchmark fell 241.79 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 67,596.84 on Monday. The broader Nifty declined 59.05 points or 0.29 per cent to end at 20,133.30. Equity markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi. (PTI)

services fell by 1.39 per cent, commodities dropped 1.39 per cent, metal (1.25 per cent), realty (1.20 per cent), bankex (1.05 per cent), telecommunication (0.95 per cent) and oil & gas (0.68 per cent).

Utilities and power were the gainers.

## BookMyShow cancels Punjabi-Canadian singer Shubh's show, to refund tickets

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** BookMyShow on Wednesday cancelled Punjabi-Canadian singer Shubhneet Singh's India tour after the ticket booking app faced a boycott call on social media for hosting a singer who is allegedly a Khalistani sympathiser.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, BookMyShow said it will do a complete refund of the tickets within 7-10 days.

"Singer Shubhneet Singh's Still Rollin Tour for India stands cancelled. To that end, BookMyShow has initiated a complete refund of the ticket amount for all consumers who had purchased tickets for the show. The refund will be reflected within 7-10 working days in the customer's source account of the original transaction," it said.

Earlier in the day, a #Uninstall-BookMyShow was trending on X with some calling Shubh, as the singer is popularly known as, a 'Khalistani' and supporter of separatist leaders.

This followed a diplomatic row between India and Canada that saw each expelling a senior diplomat. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged New Delhi's hand in the killing of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, in British Columbia in June this year. India quickly dismissed Canada's assertion as absurd.

The row has worsened the already poor relations between the two countries and thrown cold water on trade talks, which have been paused.

Shubh is an upcoming Punjabi rapper who rose to fame due to the large number of streams on Instagram reels of his song 'Still Rollin'. He released his first break-out single 'We Rollin' in 2021 and as of 2023, it has reached more than 201 million views on YouTube. (PTI)

## Global shares mixed ahead of Fed decision on rates

**TOKYO, Sept 20:** Global shares were mixed Wednesday as markets awaited a decision on interest rates by the Federal Reserve.

France's CAC 40 inched down less than 0.1 per cent to 7,281.23 and Germany's DAX added 0.3 per cent to 15,715.93.

Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.6 per cent to 7,704.97 after the government reported inflation fell unexpectedly in August to its lowest level since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has led to sharp rises in energy and food costs.

The Office for National Statistics said the consumer prices index was up 6.7 per cent in August from the year before, down from 6.8 per cent in July. US futures were little changed, with contracts for both the S&P 500 and the Dow industrials up less than 0.1 per cent.

The Fed began a meeting on interest rates Tuesday, with an announcement scheduled for later Wednesday. Traders are split on whether the Fed may raise rates again this year, but they're largely expecting the Fed to begin cutting rates next year. Such cuts can act like steroids for financial markets, giving a lift to all kinds of investments. Japan's central bank is due to wrap up a two-day policy setting meeting on Friday.

In Asian trading, Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 0.7 per cent to finish at 33,023.78. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped 0.5 per cent to 7,163.30. South Korea's Kospi was little changed, inching up less than 0.1 per cent to 2,559.74. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dipped 0.6 per cent to 17,885.60, while the Shanghai Composite shed 0.5 per cent to 3,108.57.

Trade data for Japan showed exports fell 0.8 per cent last month from a year earlier, marking the second straight month of declines, as exports to China sank 11 per cent. Japan's exports to the US rose 5.1 per cent, while exports to Europe surged 12.7 per cent. By product category, auto exports zoomed 40.9 per cent, while those of semiconductors rose 8.1 per cent, according to Finance Ministry data.

"We think the weak recovery in China will continue to have a negative impact on exports for a while, but semiconductors seem like they are bottoming out from the down cycle," Robert Carnell, regional head of research Asia-Pacific at ING, said in a report.

He said the strong contribution to economic growth from exports in the April-July quarter was expected to weaken in this quarter.

In an update on the Chinese economy, officials in Beijing acknowledged challenges in boosting growth in the world's No. 2 economy, but told reporters they were confident that a recovery was underway and that they had the capacity to ensure stability of financial markets.

Global markets have seen-sawed for weeks on uncertainty about whether the Fed is done with its market-shaking hikes to interest rates. By pulling its main interest rate to the highest level in more than two decades, the Fed has helped inflation to cool from its peak last year but at the cost of hurting prices for investments and damaging some corners of the economy. (AP)

## HDFC Bank introduces three innovative digital payments products on UPI

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** HDFC Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, has introduced three innovative digital payments products on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). These products are designed to revolutionise the way customers and merchants conduct seamless transactions.

The first product, UPI 123Pay, enables payments via an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. This feature provides customers with the convenience of booking and paying for services through a simple phone call, without the need for internet connectivity or a smart-phone. For instance, Indane Gas customers can

effortlessly book and pay for their gas cylinders using this IVR-based system, streamlining the process and saving valuable time.

The second offering is the UPI Plug-In Service for Merchant Transactions. This service enhances the customer experience by providing smoother and faster transactions when making purchases from participating merchants. It eliminates the need for customers to switch between different apps when making UPI payments, offering a more seamless and frictionless payment experience. The third product, AutoPay on QR, simplifies recurring payments through UPI QR codes. Customers can easily subscribe to digital services for themselves, their friends, or family

members using this feature. It ensures security and high standards for customer transactions, guaranteeing the safety and protection of sensitive data. Parag Rao, the country head of Payment Business, Consumer Finance, Technology, and Digital Banking at HDFC Bank, emphasised that these innovative products represent the future of digital payments. They aim to redefine the way people engage in digital transactions, offering greater convenience, efficiency, and security. These initiatives underscore HDFC Bank's commitment to reshaping the intersection of banking and technology, providing innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of customers and merchants in the digital age.

## Culinary champions crowned at Sunrise Kitchen Premier League Grand Finale

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** The grand finale of the 'Sunrise Kitchen Premier League', organised by ITC Sunrise Masala in collaboration with 93.5 Red FM, illuminated the All Saints Cathedral Hall with its golden aura on September 16. This event marked the culmination of an exciting culinary competition, where a deserving champion was crowned under the enchanting dimming sunlight.

The 'Sunrise Kitchen Premier League' has been an extraordinary culinary journey, featuring talented chefs from across the city who vied for the prestigious title. This competition showcased a diverse range of gastronomic delights, tested contestants' culinary skills, and captured the hearts of food enthusiasts.

Numerous contestants enthusiastically participated in the competition, presenting their delectable creations to the discerning judges. The overwhelming response from the audience contributed to the resounding success of this event.

These skilled chefs not only excel in preparing iconic Meghalayan dishes like Jadoh (a rice and meat dish) and Dohkhlioh (a savoury pork salad) but also serve as guardians of the region's culinary heritage. Their expertise and dedication help preserve the age-old traditions and flavours that define Meghalaya's gastronomy.

Sunrise Pure recognises the significance of collaboration and cultural exchange. This initiative provides an opportunity for people to savour the unique flavours of Meghalaya.

Through this collaboration, Sunrise Pure aims to foster a deeper appreciation for Meghalaya's culture and shine a brighter spotlight on the state's culinary treasures. By identifying and honouring talented chefs, they not only celebrate their mastery but also inspire a new generation of culinary enthusiasts to explore and embrace Meghalaya's rich cultural heritage.

## Café B-You presents 'Back to School Sunday Brunch' and 'European Friday Dinner Feast'

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** Café B-You, situated within the Radisson Blu Guwahati, is thrilled to introduce an extraordinary culinary celebration for the entire month of September. With two unique events – 'Back to School Sunday Brunch' and 'European Friday Dinner Feast', Café B-You invites you to savour memorable dining experiences that span the globe, promising a month filled with delightful treats and unforgettable moments. As the summer season comes to an end and the school season approaches, Café B-You presents the 'Back to School Sunday Brunch'. This event welcomes guests to relish quality time with family and friends. The brunch is available every Sunday in September from 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm, set against Café B-You's charming ambiance, making it the perfect way to bid farewell to the lazy days of summer and embrace the excitement of the upcoming school year.

The 'Back to School Sunday Brunch' offers a diverse and sumptuous spread catering to every palate. Vikas Kumar Verma, executive assistant manager-Operations at Café B-You, shared his thoughts, stating,

"Our 'Back to School Sunday Brunch' is a celebration of family and the joy of shared meals. We have curated a special brunch experience to help you create cherished memories with loved ones before the busy school routine sets in." This limited-time event, exclusively available throughout September, is an opportunity to gather your loved ones and enjoy quality time together. Café B-You extends a warm welcome to all guests, whether you're looking to treat your family, celebrate a special occasion, or simply indulge in a delightful brunch. Every Friday in September, from 7:00 pm to 11:30 pm, Café B-You transforms into a European culinary haven with the 'European Friday Dinner Feast'. This event promises a gastronomic adventure celebrating the rich tapestry of European cuisine. The 'European Friday Dinner Feast' features a diverse and enticing menu inspired by European culinary traditions. From Mediterranean delights to hearty Central European comfort food, the menu showcases the best of European gastronomy. Guests can anticipate a tantalising selection of appetisers, main courses, and desserts that highlight the region's distinct culinary identities.

## Gold falls ₹ 50; silver tumbles ₹ 300

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** Gold prices fell by ₹ 50 to ₹ 60,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid weak global cues, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had ended at ₹ 60,350 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also tumbled ₹ 300 to ₹ 74,500 per kilogram. In the overseas markets, gold and silver were quoting lower at USD 1,929 per ounce and USD 23.20 per ounce, respectively. Comex gold retreated from a two-week high as traders turned

cautious and trimmed their positions ahead of the outcome of US FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting on interest rates later today, Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. (PTI)

## Rupee recovers from record lows, jumps 24 paise to end at 83.08 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, Sept 20:** Staging an impressive rebound from its lifetime low levels, the rupee surged by 24 paise to end at 83.08 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, aided by losses in global crude prices and a weak dollar ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy decision. Besides, possible intervention by the central bank to check volatility in currency markets also helped the domestic unit, forex traders said.

Halting its four-session losing streak at the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened strong at 83.22 against the dollar and

traded in the range of 83.27-83.06 against the greenback.

The rupee finally closed at 83.08 against the dollar, registering a gain of 24 paise from its previous close. In the previous session on Monday, the rupee had settled at an all-time low of 83.32 against the dollar.

Currency markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi.

"The recent rise in crude oil prices had raised concerns about inflation and these concerns were likely to be addressed in the US Federal

Reserve's statement.

"The dollar also traded weaker, and there was profit booking observed in crude oil prices, which declined from USD 92.40 to USD 89.50. These factors contributed to the rupee's gains after five consecutive days of losses. The trading range for the rupee is expected to be between 82.75 and 83.35," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities, said.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.14 per cent to 104.68. (PTI)

## India's solar tech venture finalist in Prince William's Earthshot Prize 2023

**LONDON, Sept 20:** A solar-powered tech venture that is combating food waste in India is among 15 worldwide finalists competing for the GBP 1 million 2023 Earthshot Prize, founded by Britain's Prince William and dubbed the 'Eco Oscars'. S4S Technologies, founded in 2013 by seven university friends Nidhi Pant, Vaibhav Tidke, Swapnil Kokte, Ganesh Bhare, Shital Somani, Tushar Gaware and Ashwin Pawade, is shortlisted in the "Earthshot Prize to Build a Waste-Free World" category as the finalists were unveiled by the royal during a visit to New York on Tuesday.

S4S, which stands for Science for Society, made the cut for its work in tackling food waste, rural poverty, and gender inequality by helping smallholder female farmers preserve and market surplus produce.

"The organisation provides rural communities with cheaper solar-powered conduction dryers and food processing equipment to



prepare their crops on-site, rather than using cold storage or other more expensive methods of conventional industrial food preservation," notes the Earthshot Prize.

With a focus on supporting female farmers, S4S also supports its entrepreneurs in using the preserved waste to produce and sell valuable food products, such as

ketchup. S4S creates a market, connecting commercial buyers to these products and returning most of the profits to the farmers who made them.

"Food waste, rural poverty and gender inequality are deeply intertwined challenges for the people of India. S4S' innovative solution combines cutting-edge technology

with the practical support and training needed to ensure women farmers can thrive and improve their livelihoods for themselves and their families," added co-founder Nidhi Pant.

The Prince of Wales announced the 15 finalists at the second Earthshot Innovation Summit, held alongside the UN General Assembly in New York to celebrate and champion innovators focused on solving our most pressing global climate challenges. The 15 innovators shortlisted represent six continents and were chosen from more than 1,100 nominees.

Each of the finalists will be in the running to receive one of the five GBP 1 million prizes awarded at the third annual Earthshot Prize awards ceremony in Singapore on November 7.

Founded by Prince William in 2020, the Earthshot Prize aims to discover and help scale the world's most innovative climate and environmental solutions to protect and restore our planet. The

## McDowell's No 1 Soda kicks off 'Yaari Season' celebrating friendship

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** McDowell's No 1 Soda is delighted to announce the commencement of 'Yaari Season', a festive celebration dedicated to the unbreakable bonds of friendship. The brand invites people from across the country to embrace the true spirit of 'Yaari'.

As part of the Yaari Season, McDowell's No 1 Soda is reintroducing the hit Yaari anthem, 'Yaari Duniya Pe Bhaari', created in collaboration with renowned musicians Armaan Malik, Amaal Malik, and Nikhita Gandhi. This anthem has already garnered over 31 million views and is sweeping across social media platforms, touching the hearts of millions of friends. Notably, this anthem marks the first-ever collaboration of the talented sibling duo.

The anthem is a celebration of friendship and aims to evoke a sense of togetherness. Its upbeat rhythm, infectious energy, and heartfelt delivery have captured the hearts of audiences nationwide. Yaari Season represents a time of joy and excitement in friendship, where laughter fills the air, cherished memories are created, and lifelong friendships are forged.

McDowell's No 1 Soda is hosting a contest in Assam, inviting people to share selfies with their 'yaars' (friends) by scanning a QR code.

The most exceptional selfie will win an opportunity to experience the ultimate Yaari Villa in Kaziranga with their friends. The Yaari Villa offers an immersive setting for friends to relax and strengthen their bonds.



Ruchira Jaitly, chief marketing officer, Diageo India, shared her thoughts on the occasion, saying, "Friendship Day, or the Yaari Season as we call it at McDowell's No 1 Soda, is a time dedicated to celebrating the essence of friendship. Through our brand's unwavering commitment to the spirit of belonging and friendship, we aim to bring people together, with shared moments of joy and celebration. As we embark on this Yaari Season, we invite everyone to join us in celebrating those extraordinary friendships that make life truly remarkable and say, 'Apni Yaari Duniya Pe Bhaari'."

Zubeen Garg, a renowned singer, expressed his excitement about the collaboration, stating, "The anthem is already a major hit with over 31 million views across the country. As a musician, it brings me immense joy to collaborate with McDowell's No 1 Soda to recreate their iconic 'Yaari Duniya Pe Bhaari' anthem in Assamese, aiming to strike a chord with the Assamese audience. The anthem is beautifully composed to evoke a sense of nostalgia while reinforcing the true bond of friendship."

## IDBI Bank extends festive offers on Amrit Mahotsav FD Schemes

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** IDBI Bank is extending its festive offers on its popular 'Amrit Mahotsav FD Schemes'. During this limited-time promotion, the 444 days option will offer a lucrative peak rate of 7.75% p.a. Additionally, the 375 days option will attract a rate of up to 7.60% p.a.

This festive offer extension will be available for a limited period until October 31, 2023. Furthermore, the Bank has made its rates more attractive in the maturity slab of '271 days to less than 1 year' by increasing it by 50 basis points (bps), offering a peak rate of 6.75% per annum.

## Trader, son shot dead in Azamgarh market

**AZAMGARH (UP), Sept 20:** A 55-year-old cloth merchant and his son were shot dead in the Maharanjan area of this Uttar Pradesh district on Wednesday, police said.

Rashid Ahmed and his son were shot dead in the Sardaha Market around 8 am, they said.

Superintendent of Police Anurag said, "Rashid Ahmed and his son Shoaib (22) were cleaning their shop around 8 am when three motorcycle-borne assailants entered the shop and shot at them."

Ahmed died on the spot. His son tried to flee but was chased by the assailants and gunned down a few metres away, he said.

"We have formed a team to investigate the matter. Footage from CCTV cameras installed in the area is being reviewed to identify the attackers. It appears that the attack stemmed from an old rivalry," said Anurag. (PTI)

prize is centred around five "Earthshots" of Protect & Restore Nature; Clean Our Air; Revive Our Oceans; Build A Waste-free World; and Fix Our Climate.

In addition to their eligibility for the GBP 1 million prize, all finalists receive mentorship, resources, and technical support from the Earthshot Prize Fellowship Programme, a year-long programme for each cohort of 15 Finalists to accelerate the growth of their groundbreaking solutions.

That support includes access to the prize's robust network of influential businesses, investors, and climate experts, including the Earthshot Prize's Global Alliance of Partners, comprised of some of the world's largest businesses, donors, investors, and environmental organisations committed to climate action.

The five winners of this year's prize will be selected by Prince William and the prestigious Earthshot Prize Council, a global body of activists, experts, and influencers. (PTI)



# Guv Kataria attends 63rd foundation day of Gauhati Medical College and Hospital

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** Governor Gulab Chand Kataria attended the 63rd foundation day celebration of Gauhati Medical College (GMCH) in the presence of minister of Health and Family Welfare Keshab Mahanta at the GMCH Auditorium Hall in the city on Wednesday.

During his address, the Governor emphasised that the foundation day of any organisation provides an opportunity to reflect on past achievements and celebrate milestones. He congratulated GMCH's teachers, administrators, students, and every individual associated with the institution for their 63-year journey. Established on September 20, 1960, at the temporary campus of Ayurvedic College in Jalukbari, Gauhati Medical College and Hospital was later relocated to Bhangagarh in 1968, inaugurated by the late Governor of Assam, Braj Kumar Nehru. Over the years, GMCH has grown to encompass 600 ICU beds and 3214 general beds.

Highlighting GMCH's vital role in healthcare and medical education throughout the north-east, the Governor commended its contributions. The institution has produced numerous doctors, specialists, super-specialists, nurses, and para-



medical staff. Its strong academic foundation and healthcare services offer cutting-edge medical education and state-of-the-art treatment facilities.

The Governor praised GMCH's dedication during the Covid-19 pandemic, acknowledging the doctors and paramedics who served tirelessly under the leadership of the then Health minister, Himanta

Biswa Sarma, now chief minister. He emphasised the importance of compassionate patient care and urged medical students to serve humanity with gentleness, acknowledging that patients approach hospitals with hope.

Governor Kataria expressed his hope that GMCH would continue to make significant contributions to India's healthcare and medical

education sectors. The event was attended by commissioner and secretary of the Medical Education and Research department, Dr Siddharth Singh, GMCH principal Dr A C Baishya, vice-chancellor of Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences Dr Dhruva Jyoti Borah, director of Medical Education Dr Anup Kumar Barman, and other dignitaries.

## Minister Nandita Gorlosa distributes aid and sports equipment in Haflong

HT Correspondent

**HAFLONG, Sept 20:** Nandita Gorlosa, state minister for Power, Sports & Youth Affairs, among other portfolios, ceremonially distributed cheques to beneficiaries for medical assistance under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, gym and sports equipment under the Directorate of Sports & Youth Welfare, and cotton yarn under MLALADS fund for the year 2022-23. The event took place at the District Library's Auditorium Hall in Haflong.

The distribution ceremony was attended by EMs of DHAC Nojit Kempri, Biswajit Daulagup, Nepal Hojai, principal secretary Thai Tsho Daulagup, ACS, MACs of DHAC, SHG members, students, and the general public.

Minister Nandita Gorlosa addressed the gathering, expressing concern about the increasing cancer rates in Dima Hasao district over the last two years. She emphasised the importance of maintaining good health through a balanced diet and regular medical check-ups. She assured the public that the government provides financial aid for medical assistance through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. To access MLA financial assistance, one can submit an appli-



cation form available at the BJP office.

Encouraging the youth of Dima Hasao, minister Gorlosa announced plans to establish a sports academy in the district to enhance sporting opportunities. She also informed the audience about the state government's upcoming 'Khel Maharan' event, scheduled from November 1, 2023, to January 10, 2024. The competition aims to identify and nurture sports talents at the grassroots level and will feature five disciplines: athletics, football, kabaddi, volleyball, and

kho-kho. It will include four age categories: Under 19 (men), Under 19 (women), Above 19 (men), and Above 19 (women). Executive Member Nojit Kempri also praised the government's efforts in assisting the people of Dima Hasao in times of need.

## Jayanta Hazarika's birth anniversary celebrated in grand style

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** Byatikram Group, in collaboration with Xur Bahini, once again orchestrated a magnificent celebration in honour of the legendary singer and composer, Jayanta Hazarika, on Wednesday at the Pragjyoti ITA in Machkhowa, continuing its annual tradition.

The event commenced at 2:00 pm in the esteemed ITA Seminar Hall and was graced by a distinguished guest list. Among the prominent attendees were Ruhul Amin, assistant high commissioner of Bangladesh; the renowned singer, Manisha Hazarika; Akon Choudhury, deputy general of NHPC; Mausum Kumar Uzir, president of All Assam Development Council; Dr Bobita Sinha, chairperson of Helping Hand Social Foundation; the accomplished filmmaker and social worker, Shankar Lal Goenka; Krishna Baruah, state mission director of ASRLM; Eminent Singer JP Das; actor Kapil Bora; social worker Pranesh Debnath; Prof Jiban Nath, along with other illustrious personalities from diverse fields.

The program was enriched by captivating song and dance performances, featuring a lineup of talented artists including Sandeepa D Sharma, Dhristee Devi, Kripamoy Das, Anulata Nath, Nizara Banikya, Jiban Nath, Rinjmoni Saikia, Manashi Devi, Sanskrita Malakar, Sarat Raj, Anuhang Bordoloi, and many more. Additionally, there was a mesmerising live art presen-



tation by Biswadeep Sarma, Protim Saikia, Nabanit Augusti, Garima Deka, Sonia Boro, Tapash Nath, Sentu Modak, and Ajanta Das.

During this momentous occasion, the noted Bodo singer, Sulekha Basumatary, was conferred with the prestigious Jayanta Hazarika Byatikram Lifetime Achievement Award 2023.

Dr Saumen Bharatiya, the founder of Byatikram Group, expressed, "Jayanta Hazarika's music transcends time and boundaries, garnering him a vast following in India and abroad. Our humble endeavour is to unite Jayanta Hazarika's fans and celebrate his enduring musical legacy."

Sulekha Basumatary shared her sentiments, stating, "I have always been inspired by the brilliance of Jayanta Hazarika. Receiving this honour on his birthday

feels like I am on cloud nine. I am committed to drawing inspiration from this recognition and contributing to the advancement of Bodo music."

Representing Xur Bahini, an organisation founded by the late Jayanta Hazarika himself, Manisha Hazarika, an acclaimed singer and Jayanta Hazarika's wife, remarked, "Xur Bahini is Jayanta Hazarika's brainchild. We are delighted to celebrate his brief but impactful life on this significant occasion. It's an opportunity for his fans and music enthusiasts to come together and cherish the memory of the enigmatic Jayanta Hazarika."

The event received valuable support from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, government of Assam, NHPC, assistant high commission of Bangladesh, and Dr Paul's.

# Youth arrested in Nagaon for alleged anti-national activities

HT Correspondent

**NAGAON, Sept 20:** Iqbal Hussain, a resident of Gendhuwa Pothar near Nagaon Batadrava Than, who had previously worked in Bangalore, was apprehended from his residence by a team from the Orissa Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for his alleged involvement in anti-national activities.

According to sources, the Orissa CID had filed a case under the In-

formation Technology (IT) Act against Hussain for purportedly sharing data and internal information with a Pakistani individual named Abdul Haleem. The arrested youth was subjected to extensive questioning at the Nagaon Jajori Police Station. After completing the necessary legal procedures at the local court, he is expected to be transported back to the Orissa CID headquarters.

Nagaon's superintendent of police, Navaneet Mahanta, stated that a CID team from Orissa had sought the cooperation of Nagaon Police to apprehend the youth against whom the Orissa CID had registered a case under the IT Act. The local Jajori Police Station worked in collaboration with the CID team to locate the youth, who had been residing at his Batadrava Gandhuwa Pothar-based residence.

## Two arrested in connection with youth's death following chase

HT Correspondent

**SIVASAGAR, Sept 20:** Two individuals were arrested by Sivasagar Police after they were pursued by the public for attempting to escape in an ambulance, leaving a dead body at the Sivasagar Civil Hospital Campus on Monday. The deceased youth was identified as Keshabananda Chetia of Bailung Pathar, Marnoi Kinar, while the two suspects were identified as Akram Ahmed of Taxi Ali, Sivasagar, and Ritu Ullah of Geleki.

According to Keshabananda's family members, the two suspects had picked him up from his house to celebrate one of their birthdays. Keshabananda had recently been released from a drug rehabilitation centre and was in the process of recuperating at home. The circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear, but local residents suspect foul play and demand that the two notorious drug peddlers face stringent police action.

Despite the best efforts of the police administration, the issue of drug abuse continues to persist in certain areas of the district. Recently, Sivasagar district police organised a massive awareness meeting against drug abuse in Bihooar Santok.

## NFR enhances customer experience and freight services



HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** In its ongoing efforts to improve customer interaction and enhance freight transportation services, North Frontier Railway has recently implemented several strategic initiatives. These initiatives involve the opening of various stations for both inward and outward goods traffic during August 2023, simplifying the movement of diverse goods for different customer segments.

To better serve customers and boost freight revenue, NF Railway opened Jirania Station under the Lumding division for container traffic operations using the Lift On - Lift Off method, effective from August 7, 2023. This move streamlines container transportation processes, making them more efficient and customer-friendly.

Additionally, Rangapani Station under the Katihar division began handling inward automobile traffic from August 11, 2023. This initiative simplifies the logistics of automobile transportation, improving service quality for customers in

this sector.

Furthermore, North Lakhimpur Station, under the Tinsukia division, commenced operations for outward coal traffic from August 18, 2023, contributing to the efficient transportation of coal and supporting the coal industry's needs.

Azara and Mirza Stations, part of the Rangiya division, opened their doors to handle inward Calcinced Petroleum Coke (CPC) consignments from August 28, 2023, expanding the range of goods accommodated and strengthening NF Railway's capacity to meet diverse customer demands.

The concerted efforts to enhance customer interaction and establish new terminals are expected to significantly increase the loading and unloading of freight trains. This, in turn, is projected to drive substantial revenue growth for NF Railway in the foreseeable future.

North Frontier Railway remains dedicated to adapting to evolving customer needs and maintaining its pivotal role in the transportation and logistics sector.

## Former NCHAC chairman Subrata Thaoson passes away

HT Correspondent

**HAFLONG, Sept 20:** Subrata Thaoson, the former chairman of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), passed away on Wednesday, at the age of 51. He was an active member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and held various positions within the BJP Dima Hasao.

Born on June 20, 1972, in Khailimdisa village, Maibang, he later resided in Haflong. Subrata Thaoson is survived by his wife and two minor children.

In honour of the departed soul, the BJP District Committee has declared a one-day mourning period on September 21, 2023. During this time, all party members are kindly requested to refrain from organising any party activities and to display the party flag at half-mast in district and all Mandal offices as a mark of respect.

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

When you can't make them see the light, make them feel the heat. - Ronald Reagan

## Khalistan movement outside India

After India gained freedom from Britain in 1947, some people didn't think a country with so many different regions could stay together. India has managed to stay united, but there have been challenges to its unity. One significant challenge is the Khalistan movement, which wants to create a separate homeland for Sikhs. On September 18th, Canada's leader, Justin Trudeau, claimed that Indian government agents were responsible for the killing of a Canadian Sikh leader who supported Khalistan independence in June. India's government denies any involvement and accuses Canada of sheltering "terrorists and separatists." How serious is the Khalistan movement? The Khalistan movement has its roots in Sikhism, a religion followed by 23 million people in India and 3 million worldwide.

India's government wasn't too worried about Khalistan at first because they were more concerned about the politics in Punjab, a state in India. In the 1970s, people in Punjab were demanding more self-rule and policies that favoured Sikhs. The ruling party in India at the time, Congress, thought these requests were a step toward breaking away from India. In the 1980s, this demand for self-rule in Punjab turned into violence. Some of the violence was because more and more people were following Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a preacher who had extreme views. He said that Sikhs were like "slaves" in independent India and wanted them to go back to the core beliefs of their religion. Bhindranwale didn't openly ask for Khalistan's independence, but he said he wouldn't say no if it was offered. His words made the violence between different groups of people even worse. Operation Blue Star had a significant impact on the Khalistan movement. It's estimated that over 3,500 people lost their lives during this operation, including many government soldiers, pilgrims, and even Bhindranwale himself.

This violence deeply affected the Sikh community, creating a lasting emotional scar. Shortly after, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who had ordered the operation, was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. This event led to even more violence, with Sikhs being attacked across India, resulting in the deaths of thousands. As a result, the Khalistan movement gained strength. Sikhs in both India and other countries joined the cause, and violence by Khalistani militants increased. In 1985, Khalistani terrorists placed a bomb on an Air India flight travelling from Montreal to London. This horrific act resulted in the loss of 329 lives, primarily Canadians. Outside of India, the Khalistan movement remains active. There are groups in the United States, Australia, Britain, and Canada that still advocate for separatism. India's relationship with Canada was already tense before Mr. Nijjar's killing and Mr. Trudeau's accusation. Similar tensions could arise with other countries. While Khalistan might not pose a threat to India's internal unity anymore, it continues to have an impact on its foreign policy.

# Will selfie diplomacy reset relations with the United States?

Most political observers are curious to know, what's next after United States President Joe Biden and the world's longest-serving women Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, both posed for selfie shots in New Delhi recently.

The two leaders met during a break at the G-20 Summit in Delhi in early September. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr Abul Kalam Abdul Momen admitted to the media that he approached Biden and sought his consent that his prime minister wished to take a photo with the leader of a super-power.

In a candid confession to television media, Dr. Momen said Biden promptly agreed with a smile. Hasina accompanied by her only daughter Saima Wazed approached for a selfie spree with Biden. A grin of excitement from Biden, Hasina and Saima were reflected in the shots.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) press wing made urgent requests on WhatsApp group of embedded journalists accompanying the PM's media entourage to publish the selfie photos. Within a few hours, the selfies were splashed on the online edition of major news organisations. Why this hullabaloo of selfies?

Hasina's ranting against the USA came to a grinding halt. The following day, the governing Awami League party general secretary Obaidul Quader shot an arrow toward the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and told cheering crowds that "BNP shocked seeing Biden taking selfie with Sheikh Hasina." For months, Hasina's political rhetoric against America hit hard on its foreign policy towards third-world countries, especially Bangladesh and pressure on the issue of human rights records, labour rights and vote fraud which severely dented Bangladesh's image.

She once said that America proposed to establish a naval base at 8 Sq. Km of Saint Martin's is-

land in the southwest of the country on the Bay of Bengal. Her denial of such a proposal has made Washington determined not to see her (Hasina) in power again.

She also went a step forward and said the USA has struck a deal with BNP to establish a military base at a 'critically endangered' coral island. The base was to keep watch over a huge swath of the Bay of Bengal, which merges with the Indian Ocean to monitor merchant vessels and battleships of China, which indeed an absurd proposition, says the former Ambassador to Washington.

Meanwhile, intermittent visits of US officials, the European Union and the United Nations call on the government to hold free, fair, credible and inclusive elections in the upcoming January 2024 general elections and to respect human rights compliance. On selfie diplomacy, when asked whether the USA relations with Bangladesh is likely to thaw, Humayun Kabir disagrees and said a tête-à-tête between two heads of government and photo-shoots usually will not make any change in US foreign policy.

The policy is prepared by a team of think tanks, consisting of seasoned diplomats and international security experts, and then the US State Department draws a road map with individual countries and Bangladesh is no exception.

Earlier, Washington threatened to restrict the issuance of visas to travel to the USA of any official, judiciary, individual, as well as governing and opposition responsible for or complicit in undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

Her government has reiterated that the next elections would be "free, fair and violence-free elections". The foreign dignitaries visiting Bangladesh and listening to stakeholders including opposition leaders are not convinced of the government's commitment to

an inclusive election.

The crackdown on opposition and intimidation by henchmen of Awami League often pounce upon opposition rallies, while the police remain a silent spectator.

Several thousand opposition members were arrested and thousands are languishing in prison for months. The New York Times writes that the opposition was deliberately targeted to punish them for demanding a 'caretaker government' to oversee the elections as they have lost hope in Hasina's government to hold credible general elections.

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Saleem Samad

On the other hand, she is visibly annoyed over 170 global leaders and Nobel laureates who have urged the government to suspend legal proceedings against Muhammad Yunus.

In an open letter dated 27 August, leaders, including former US President Barack Obama, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and more than 100 Nobel laureates, said the case of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus. "We are alarmed that he has recently been targeted by what we believe to be continuous judicial harassment," the letter read. The UN also voiced alarm at using legal proceedings in the South Asian country to intimidate and harass rights advocates and civil society leaders, including Yunus.

"While Yunus will have the opportunity to defend himself in court, we are concerned that smear campaigns against him, often emanating from the highest levels of government, risk undermining his right to a fair trial and due process in line with international standards, the letter said."

Angry Hasina said that such a statement challenges the integrity and credibility of the judiciary system of a country and remarked that the law should take its path in the case of Yunus.

Without naming Hillary Clinton, the former Foreign Minister of the USA, she invited her to

come to Dhaka and defend Yunus against his "corruption" and robbing financial benefits of the staff of Grameen Telecom.

Law Minister Anisul Huq told Deutsche Welle of Germany that the lawsuits were not meant to harass the Nobel laureate. "Those who faced injustice sought remedy at the court. It's their right as citizens of Bangladesh. It will be decided at the court trial whether he committed any crime," Huq concluded. Some say Hasina became infuriated when Yunus announced he would form a King's party in 2007 when a military-backed caretaker government took charge of the country.

However, the plan to formally float the King's party fell flat in a few weeks of its announcement. Since then Yunus never showed any interest in politics.

In yet another political development, a fresh global outcry was caused after sending two prominent human rights defenders Adilur Rahman Khan and ASM Nasiruddin Elan of Odhikar for two years. They were accused 10 years ago of exaggerating the number of deaths during the police midnight crackdown on Islamist organisation Hefazat-e-Islam during a seizure of downtown Dhaka on 5 & 6 May 2013. Human Rights Watch reported at least 58 people killed in police action, Amnesty International said 44 died, government claims only 11, while Odhikar said 61 were killed.

Besides, nearly a hundred eminent citizens and several international rights organisations, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, United Nations Human Rights and the United States called on the government to release the defenders, which the UN said: "Such reprisals also have a chilling effect and may deter others from reporting on human rights issues and cooperating with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms."

"Have you ever seen a regime so insecure that they feel more threatened for critiquing the government," political historian Mo-hiuddin Ahmad poses the question. Whenever or whoever raises the issues of human rights abuse, or holding of free and fair elections, the government starts shaking and scores of pro-government cyber warrior launches misinformation and disinformation campaign, remarked Ahmad. As China and the US jostle for influence in Asia, French President Emmanuel Macron offered an alternative to Bangladesh during a recent short visit to Dhaka. While the United States and China compete for influence in the wider region, Macron has pushed France as an alternative partner for Bangladesh, writes Arafatul Islam of German Deutsche Welle. Sadia Aktar Korobi, a researcher on international affairs and studying at the University of Dhaka writes in the Far Observer that India sees Bangladesh as both an economic and strategic investment; other major powers have their own goals with Dhaka. Obviously, the US has shown a keen interest in Bangladesh, but its policies are complicated by Washington's ever-consistent need to interfere in the internal matters of others, says the researcher Korobi.

On one hand, the US wants Bangladesh to join the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to restrain China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific. The growing frustration caused by incidents like this is pushing Bangladesh more towards China and India, the researcher concludes. (The author is an award-winning independent journalist based in Bangladesh. A media rights defender with the Reporters Without Borders (@RSF\_inter). Recipient of Ashoka Fellowship and Hellman-Hammett Award. He could be reached at saleemsamad@hotmail.com; Twitter: @saleemsamad)

## At current pace world to take 197 to 430 years to close gender gap

By: Dr. Gyan Pathak

On the current pace of reforms, the world may take between 197 to 430 years to close the global gender gap, which means misallocation of women's talents and abilities would remain a major issue to the detriment of societies for a long time. The estimate is based on stationarity of the very slow dynamics of narrowing the gender labour force participation (LFP) gaps within 1 per cent of the long-run steady state, and excluding the years 2020 and 2021 to purge the effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

A new IMF working paper prepared by Prepared Alejandro Badel and Rishi Goyal shows that in absence of a significant step up in policy efforts, gender gaps may in fact never close. The new estimates are based on deterministic (linear or log-linear) trends.

For 189 countries, annual data are available since 1991 on the gender LFP gap defined hereafter as the labour force participation rate for men minus the labour force participation rate for women. In 1991, the world's average gap was 26.6 percent, while in 2021; the average gap was 19.5 percent, implying a reduction rate of 1.03 percent per year.

The paper says, if the gap were to continue to fall at the observed rate of 1.03 percent per year, 99 percent of the current gap would be closed in about 445 years. This type of calculation is at the heart of the above-mentioned common approaches regarding the time that it would take the world to achieve gender equality.

Earlier this year, the UN Secretary General stated, "Gender equality is growing more distant. On the current track, UN Women puts it 300 years away..." Extrapolating the rate of progress from 2006 to 2023, the World Economic Forum (2023) reported that closing global gender gaps in economic participation and opportunity will take 169 years, up from the pre-pandemic period. In a similar vein, based on current legal frameworks and the recent pace of reforms, the World Bank's 2023 Women, Business, and the Law report estimated a minimum of 50 years for the closing of the gender gap in legal rights.

This paper lends further support to these concerning time-to-equality calculations and to the urgent calls for intentional and systematic policy efforts to close gender gaps. Using a common approach from macroeconomic dynamics to study the evolution of gender gaps in labour force participation across countries, it presents an even more dire interpretation of the data - based on trends over the past three decades; key gender gaps may never close but could perpetually remain elevated for many countries.

Using Markov chains, a common approach in macroeconomics, this paper analyzes the dynamics of the cross-country distribution of the gender gap in labour force participation (LFP). This methodology does not impose strong restrictions on the data, allowing for episodes of progress as well as regress by countries on gender inequality.

Based on the experience of the past three decades, the analysis predicts a further narrowing of gender gaps over time. But the long-run distribution of gender gaps in labour force participation features a substantial share of countries with persistently large gaps, implying that in absence of a strengthened and systematic policy effort, some of the current misallocation of women's talents and abilities could persist perpetually.

The paper has presented a simple exercise to understand the dynamics of LFP gender gaps implied by the international experience between 1991 and 2021. During some time periods, some countries have increasing gaps over time. If this remains the case, the global gap will not "close". Instead, gender gaps will narrow but remain quite large for the foreseeable future in absence of a significant step up in policies and measures to prioritize closing the gaps.

Clearly, stronger policy interventions are needed to prioritize and achieve women's economic empowerment that benefits not just women but societies. The logic of Markov chains teaches us that the interventions should be focused not only on reducing gender gaps but also in maintaining low gaps in countries where more progress has been achieved, as this is the only path to a uniform global closing of the LFP gender gap - or, in other words, sustained utilization and improved allocation of human resources.

The analysis also shows that attention should be paid not only to countries where the gaps are the largest, but also across the distribution including where gaps are narrower and where further progress is also likely to be slowest (based on recent trends, policies, and patterns of shocks).

The results of the analysis are not exclusively caused by increasing gaps in emerging market and developing economies. In the data, the cases of increasing gaps are quite evenly distributed across IMF region and country income categories.

Furthermore, when the paper analyzed the joint dynamics of income and gender gaps, it found that taking development into account leads to slightly larger gaps in the long-run distributions.

These results taken together caution about a deterministic transition toward gender equality along the development path. (IPA Service)

By: Lalit Garg

World Peace Day or International Day of Peace and Non-Violence is celebrated every year on 21 September. This day is considered an ideal of freedom, peace, non-violence and happiness among all countries and people in general. This day is celebrated mainly to establish peace and non-violence throughout the world. The first Peace Day was celebrated in 1982 by many countries with the help of political parties, military groups and people. This year the 41st International Day of Peace is being celebrated on Thursday, 21st September 2023. This year's theme is Action for Peace - Our Ambition for the Global Goals. This call to action is awakening us to our individual and collective responsibility to promote peace, which contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and which will further create a culture of peace for all. Everyone loves peace. Non-violence and peace are the beauty of life. Man sacrifices most of his life in its search.

But it is quite disappointing that today man is moving away from this peace and non-violence day by day. Today, the Russia-Ukraine war that has been going on continuously for one and a half years, and the spread of commercialism all around has made peace and non-violence further elusive. That's why UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, "Today more than ever, peace is needed. War and conflict are causing devastation, poverty and hunger, which are driving millions of people from their homes. There is climate chaos all around and most of the countries of the world are in the grip of huge inequalities and political polarization." This year-2023 is also the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

Human beings, animals, birds, insects, spiders etc. all want to remain alive. No one wishes to die. When someone does not want death, then what is the justice in imposing it on him? People who believe in peace and non-violence do not torture, kill or hurt any living being, and from this tendency, the idea of non-violence and peace has emerged. Non-violence consists in uplifting the entire humanity along with oneself, avoiding self-fall and saving others from it.



Disturbance is darkness, and peace is light. Darkness cannot be seen with eyes closed. Similarly, peace cannot be seen through unrest. To see peace requires the light of non-violence in the eyes. The earth, sky and ocean are all disturbed. Selfishness and hatred have disintegrated human society. Although the message of 'world peace' has been given in each and every era, it has more relevance today amidst the possibilities of world war.

There has been a war raging on between Russia and Ukraine for the past several months and many more countries harbour the ambitions to wage a similar war. Amidst all the fears and possibilities of this war, efforts for peace talks are becoming increasingly ineffective. The second big problem of the war between Russia and Ukraine is that in reality the war is not a war between Ukraine and Russia at all. The real war is going on between the Western alliance and Russia, and these parties are absent from the peace talks. Today, when we find ourselves in the midst of a cold war, China is now standing alongside Russia in that cold war. And in this period, China has become not just 1.25 cents, but 125 cents.

In fact, the world moving towards world war needs the reconstruction of non-war, peace and non-violence. And if this reconstruction is not done, then the boiling war in Ukraine will engulf not only Ukraine but many other countries. Peace alone will not solve the problem in Ukraine. This fire will continue to burn like this in future, too. Maintaining peace in the entire world is the main goal of the United Nations today. It is also clearly mentioned in the United Nations Charter that the UN was born to prevent international conflicts and to develop a

culture of peace. In this era of conflict, terror and unrest, propagating the importance of peace has become extremely important and relevant.

Therefore, the United Nations, all its institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and national governments organize this day every year. To spread the message of peace to every corner of the world, the United Nations has appointed world famous personalities from the spheres of art, literature, cinema, music and sports as the peace messengers.

India is a country that gives maximum importance to non-violence and peace, its precious soil has given birth to many saints, seers and sages, who gave the message of non-violence and peace to the world through their life of sacrifice and sadhana. Mahatma Gandhi laid maximum emphasis on non-violence and peace. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had given five basic mantras to establish peace and tranquility in the world, these are also called 'Principles of Panchsheel'. These five basic principles of Panchsheel are the five basic principles of mutual cooperation among countries with different political, social and economic systems to establish the ideals of human welfare and world peace - respecting each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, not taking aggressive action against each other.

Do not interfere in each other's internal matters, follow the policy of equality and mutual benefit and believe in the policy of peaceful co-existence. It is believed that if the world follows the above five points; there will be peace and tranquility, non-violence and peace everywhere in the entire world. On the occasion of 'World Peace Day', white pigeons are

flown at various places in every country, spreading the principles of 'Panchsheel' to the world. The following couplet by a poet conveys a very thoughtful idea of peace - "Let us carry the message of brotherhood, so that the blood of any protector of the country is not shed in vain." Today many people believe that the biggest threat to world peace comes from imperialist economic and political misdeeds.

Developed countries create war situations, so that their military equipment can be sold. This is such a bitter truth that no one can deny.

Violence and unrest are the burning problems of the world. Non-violence and peace are the only solution to this problem. Non-violence is also one of the constituent elements of Indian culture. Here saints and ascetics of all religions have been preaching non-violence. In this context, the statement of Acharya Shri Mahapragya is going to pave the way for a permanent solution to the problem. During his Ahimsa Yatra, he had repeatedly reiterated that he was searching for the reasons for violence in his journey. The philosophy of Lord Mahavir is the philosophy of non-violence. Words like non-violence, equality, friendship, compassion, restraint, etc. give expression to the same meaning.

Ahimsa Savabhuya Khe-mankari - There is a need to create a non-violent society to remove the ashes that have fallen on the bright light of non-violence which brings welfare to all the living beings of the world and to remove the rust from the power of non-violence and sharpen its edge. This year, during his presidency of G-20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was seen giving shape to the entire world as one family by declaring Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. They are trying to establish world peace and non-violence in the world, the whole world is looking towards India with hopeful eyes that once again India should shine the light of peace and non-violence. There is great significance and utility in celebrating Peace and Non-Violence Day, it will enlighten the inner instincts, the voice of adopting non-violence and peace will be raised from the inner mind and non-violence and peace will come in the human nature engaged in violence and unrest. (The author is a journalist, columnist who can be reached at lalitgarg11@gmail.com)



# Do spiders dream? What about cuttlefish? Bearded dragons?

By: Carolyn Wilke

Young jumping spiders dangle by a thread through the night, in a box, in a lab. Every so often, their legs curl and their spinnerets twitch – and the retinas of their eyes, visible through their translucent exoskeletons, shift back and forth.

“What these spiders are doing seems to be resembling – very closely – REM sleep,” says Daniela Rößler, a behavioural ecologist at the University of Konstanz in Germany. During REM (which stands for rapid eye movement), a sleeping animal’s eyes dart about unpredictably, among other features. In people, REM is when most dreaming happens, particularly the most vivid dreams. Which leads to an intriguing question. If spiders have REM sleep, might dreams also unfold in their poppy-seed-size brains?

Rößler and her colleagues reported on the retina-swivelling spiders in 2022. Training cameras on 34 spiders, they found that the creatures had brief REM-like spells about every 17 minutes. The eye-darting behaviour was specific to these bouts: It didn’t happen at times in the night when the jumping spiders stirred, stretched, readjusted their silk lines or cleaned themselves with a brush of a leg.

Though the spiders are motionless in the run-up to these REM-like bouts, the team hasn’t yet proved that they are sleeping. But if it turns out that they are – and if what looks like REM really is REM – dreaming is a distinct possibility, Rößler says. She finds it easy to imagine that jumping spiders, as highly visual animals, might benefit from dreams as a way to process information they took in during the day.

Rößler isn’t the only researcher thinking about such questions in animals distantly removed from ourselves. Today, researchers are finding signs of

REM sleep in a broader array of animals than ever before: in spiders, lizards, cuttlefish, zebrafish. The growing tally has some researchers wondering whether dreaming, a state once thought to be limited to human beings, is far more widespread than once thought.

REM sleep is generally characterised by a suite of features in addition to rapid eye movements: the temporary paralysis of skeletal muscles, periodic body twitches, and increases in brain activity, breathing and heart rate. Observed in sleeping infants in 1953, REM was soon identified in other mammals such as cats, mice, horses, sheep, opossums and armadillos.

Events in the brain during REM have been well-characterized, at least in humans. During non-REM periods, also known as quiet sleep, brain activity is synchronised. Neurons fire simultaneously and then go quiet, especially in the brain’s cortex, making swells of activity known as slow waves. During REM, by contrast, the brain displays bursts of electrical activity that are reminiscent of waking.

Even across mammals, REM sleep doesn’t all look the same. Marsupial mammals called echidnas show characteristics of REM and non-REM sleep at the same time. Reports on whales and dolphins suggest that they may not experience REM at all. Birds have REM sleep, which comes with twitching bills and wings and a loss of tone in the muscles that hold up their heads. Still, researchers are starting to find similar sleep states across many branches of the animal tree of life.

Researchers are finding different phases of sleep in more and more creatures across the animal kingdom. In mammals, sleep is divided into active, rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep and quiet, non-REM sleep, and these phases are associated with specific patterns of brain



activity. Though such brain activity patterns haven’t been investigated in many animals, researchers have documented active sleep phases, wherein animals experience jerky movements such as twitches or rapid eye movements, interspersed with quiet (quiescent) sleep, when those behaviors aren’t present. The growing tally suggests an evolutionary importance for multiple types of sleep.

In 2012, for example, researchers reported a sleep-like state in cuttlefish, as well as a curious, REM-like behaviour during that state of putative sleep: Periodically, the animals would move their eyes rapidly, twitch their arms and alter the colouring of their bodies. During a fellowship at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, behavioural biologist Teresa Iglesias investigated the phenomenon further, collecting terabytes of video of half a dozen cuttlefish.

All six showed bouts of REM-like activity that repeated roughly every 30 minutes: bursts of arm motions and eye movements during which their skin put on a show, jumping through a variety of colours and patterns. The creatures flashed

camouflage signals and attention-grabbing ones, both of which are displayed during waking behaviours. Since the cephalopod’s brain directly controls this skin patterning, “that kind of suggests that the brain activity is going a bit wild,” says Iglesias, now at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology in Japan. Researchers have since observed a similar state in octopuses. If octopuses and cuttlefish dream, “it just kind of blows down the walls of what we think about humanity being so special,” Iglesias says.

Researchers have also observed a REM-like stage in bearded dragons by recording signals from electrodes in their brains. And they have reported at least two sleep states in zebrafish based on the fishes’ brain signatures. In one of the states, neural activity synced up like it does in a non-REM stage of mammals. In another state, the fish showed neural activity reminiscent of a waking state, as happens in REM. (The fish didn’t show rapid eye movements.)

Observing multiple sleep stages in such an evolutionarily distant relative from ourselves, the authors suggested that differ-

ent sleep types arose hundreds of millions of years ago. It’s now known that flies, too, may flit between two or more sleep states. Roundworms appear to have one sleep state only.

Researchers consider the possibility of nonhuman animals dreaming during REM-like sleep because creatures act out waking-like behaviours in this state – like the cephalopods’ pattern-flashing or the spiders’ spinneret-shaking. In pigeons, sleep scientist Gianina Ungurean of the Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence in Munich and the University Medicine Göttingen has observed, with colleagues, that pupils constrict during REM as they do during courtship behaviour. That evokes the question of whether the pigeons are dreaming or in some way re-experiencing what happened during their waking courtship instances, she says.

REM sleep also has been linked to the replay of experiences in some animals. For instance, when researchers looked at the brain electrical activity of sleeping mice that had earlier run a maze, they saw the firing of neurons that help with navigation and are linked with the

head’s direction, even though the heads of the mice weren’t moving. They also saw activity in neurons associated with eye movement. The combination suggests that the mice may have had a dreamlike experience in which they were scanning the environment, Ungurean says.

With all these signs, it’s fair to posit that animals could be dreaming, Ungurean says. “However, if we take these reasons one by one, it turns out that none of them is sufficient.” The brain activity associated with replay, like that of the maze-running mice, doesn’t occur only during REM or sleeping, Ungurean says. It can also occur during planning or daydreaming. And the link between REM and dreaming isn’t absolute: Humans dream in non-REM too, and when drugs are used to suppress REM sleep, human study participants can still have lengthy and bizarre dreams.

Ultimately, people know they are dreaming because they can report it, Ungurean says. “But animals cannot report, and this is the biggest problem that we have in purely scientifically and robustly establishing this.”

There’s still debate over what REM is even for. “No one really knows what the function of sleep is – non-REM or REM,” says Paul Shaw, a neuroscientist at Washington University in St. Louis. One of the most accepted ideas is that REM helps the brain to form and reorganize memories; other theories are that REM supports brain development, aids in developing the body’s movement systems, maintains the circuitry needed for waking activities so they don’t degrade during sleep, or boosts brain temperature.

But if REM turns out to be present in far-flung species within the animal kingdom, that suggests its role, whatever it may be, could be very important, Iglesias says.

Not all scientists believe that researchers are seeing REM.

They may simply be fulfilling preconceived notions that all animals have two sleep states and interpreting one of those as REM, says Jerome Siegel, a neuroscientist who studies sleep at UCLA. Some of these animals – such as the spiders – may not even be asleep, he argues. “Animals may do things that look the same, but the physiology isn’t necessarily the same,” he says.

Researchers continue to look for clues. Rößler’s team is trying to develop stains that would allow them to image spider brains – this might reveal activation in areas that are functionally analogous to the ones that we use when we dream.

Iglesias and others have implanted electrodes in cephalopods’ brains and captured their electrical activity during two sleep states – one that shows waking-like activity, and another that’s a quiet state, with neural signatures similar to ones observed in mammals. And Ungurean has trained pigeons to sleep in an MRI machine and found that many of the brain areas that light up in human REM sleep also activate in birds.

If cuttlefish and spiders and a broad array of other critters dream, it raises interesting questions about what they experience, says David M. Peña-Guzmán, a philosopher at San Francisco State University and author of the book *When Animals Dream: The Hidden World of Animal Consciousness*. Since dreams unfold from the viewer’s perspective, dreaming animals should have the capability to see the world from their point of view, he says.

Dreaming would also hint that they have imaginative capabilities, he adds. “We want to think that humans are the only ones who can enact that break from the world,” he says. “We might have to think a little bit more about other animals.” (Courtesy: *The Wire*)

## Wildfires, floods and more, how will tourism and travel adapt to climate change?



By: Nick Davies

Holidays are making a comeback after several years of disruption caused by the Covid19 pandemic. Nearly 4 billion passengers boarded international flights in 2022, up from fewer than 2 billion in 2020. Recent research suggests that people are likely to continue travelling more in 2023 and beyond.

But this resurgence in travel is concerning. The tourism sector alone is responsible for an estimated 8%–10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Conditions at traditional holiday destinations in high summer are becoming increasingly unpleasant if not downright hazardous.

During the past year, numerous climate records have been broken as heatwaves and wildfires ravaged large parts of Europe, Asia and North America. In July, both Sardinia and Sicily experienced temperatures in excess of 46°C, nearly breaking European records.

Most of what we do while on holiday, particularly on holidays abroad, releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and ultimately has an impact on the climate. But the way most of us get there – by flying – is potentially most damaging. UK data suggests that a single passenger on a short-haul flight, for instance, is responsible for releasing the equivalent of approximately 154g of CO<sub>2</sub> for every kilometre travelled.

As the effects of climate change become increasingly severe, there’s genuine concern that traditional destinations will become too hot in summer to remain appealing to visitors. This raises the question: how will tourism adapt?

### Changing destinations

Researchers have been trying to predict the future of tourism for quite some time. One idea is that tourism will undergo a “poleward shift” as global warming causes

temperatures to rise not only in traditionally hot regions, but also in locations further to the north and south.

A modelling study from 2007 predicted that, by 2050, hotter weather would make popular tourist hotspots like the Mediterranean less appealing in the summer. At the same time, northern destinations such as Scandinavia and the UK would experience longer holiday seasons.

Approximately half of global tourism is concentrated in coastal areas. So another concern is the potential loss of beaches due to rising sea levels. In the Caribbean, an estimated 29% of resort properties would be partially or fully inundated by one metre of sea-level rise – though many of these resorts would have lost a significant amount of their beach area before this.

Some other beach destinations are potentially even more vulnerable. Sardinia was hit by disruptive storms in 2022. Research suggests that the beaches there may struggle to accommodate tourists in the near future due to a greater risk of flooding and storms.

The impact of climate change on tourism will extend beyond just coastal areas. Many popular city break destinations, including Porto in Portugal, are expecting to endure more severe heat. Tourism in mountainous areas will be affected, too, as accelerated snow melt leads to shorter ski seasons.

The practicalities of tourism shifting Changing conditions will affect where humans can safely travel to. But travel patterns take time to evolve. In the meantime, established destinations will need to change to withstand challenges such as extreme heat, rising sea levels and other climatic conditions.

Existing tourist destinations in areas of the world that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as the Nile Delta in Egypt, are already considering ways to adapt. These include building seawalls and

natural dunes to protect tourist areas from coastal flooding. Changing construction materials and reconfiguring urban spaces to improve ventilation have also been proposed as ways to reduce reliance on expensive and energy-intensive air-conditioning.

New destinations that begin to emerge in more temperate regions will require substantial infrastructure development to support the influx of visitors. This includes transport systems, accommodation, dining options and attractions. The process of establishing tourist destinations typically takes time and requires careful thought.

Barcelona, for example, has experienced a rapid surge in tourism demand since the 1992 Olympics. This has resulted in a tenfold increase in visitors over the past three decades.

Such rapid tourism development can put a strain on local people and the environment. Although Barcelona already had a transport system and some infrastructure to accommodate visitors, the rapid growth in tourism has led to strong opposition from local residents.

### What will happen next

The current thinking among tourism academics is that those responsible for managing tourist destinations should work towards reducing carbon emissions by focusing on the domestic market.

But, as recent summers have shown, international tourism does not look set to slow down yet. Even amid crises such as the fires burning through Rhodes in summer 2023, tourists continued to arrive.

Rather than choose different destinations, the most likely scenario – at least in the short-term – is that tourists themselves will adapt to the effects of climate change. During Europe’s summer 2023 heatwave, there were reports that people were staying in their hotel rooms in the hottest part of the day and taking sightseeing trips in the evening.

Nevertheless, there are some signs that travellers may be starting to worry about more extreme weather conditions and adapt their travel plans accordingly. A survey conducted in May 2023 showed that 69% of Europeans planned to travel between June and November – a fall of 4% compared to 2022. The heatwave of summer 2023 might mean that tourists start looking for cooler destinations as early as the coming year.

The evolving landscape of global tourism in the face of climate change is complex. What is clear, though, is that if Europe continues to experience extreme weather conditions like the summer of 2023, many people will think twice about booking their place in the sun. (Courtesy: *Scroll.in*)

## Queen of rain no more: How Karnataka’s Agumbe lost to little-known Udupi towns

By: M Raghuram

Karnataka’s Agumbe Rainforest Complex (ARC) has been on school textbooks for its phenomenal rainfall ever since the British erected the first rain gauge there in 1882. Agumbe in Shivamogga district had been christened as the ‘Cherrapunji of the South’ for receiving over 8,000 mm of rainfall during the monsoon.

ARC received its peak rainfall of 6,000 mm during the monsoon months of June and August. But, for two years now, the peak monsoon rainfall here has been wavering in the range of 5,250 mm–5,500 mm, leading to Agumbe losing its crown to little-known towns in Udupi district.

However, Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Corporation (KSNDMC) officials said there has always been more rain in many places in the Western Ghats in the past.

Nadpal and Mudradi have got more rain than ARC and were closely followed by Amagaon in Belagavi district, they pointed out.

In 2021, Agumbe – situated just 90 kilometres from the coastal city of Mangaluru – recorded less rain than Hulikal in the next hill range. Moreover, Nadpal and Mudradi, located at least 45–50 kilometres away from ARC, got more rainfall than Agumbe in 2022.

Though many places in the Western Ghats have been receiving more rains than Agumbe in the past, many got their own rain gauges only in 2022. And these gauges have started showing the results in 2022–2023, according to KSNDMC officials.

While Agumbe recorded 6,251.5 mm of rain in 2022–2023 so far, Nadpal town received 6,391.8mm, pushing Agumbe to second place. And Hulikal in Hassan district, with 6,422.9 mm, dragged Agumbe further to the third position in the state.

More rain gauge installations are to come up in 2023–2024, according to the KSNDMC officials. Many gauges set up in 2022 started functioning during the mid-monsoon period of 2022 and by the end of the monsoon of 2023. These gauges will accurately show rainfall results in the current southwest monsoon by October first week.

Though the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted just 95 per cent of the usual rain for the country this year, it pitched that parts of the Western Ghats, including the Nilgiris and Sahyadris, would get more rain than usual.

However, the monsoon stalled for over 22 days in August, leaving the Western Ghats completely dry.

As of now, the state has got only 65 per cent of the usual rain and it is unlikely to receive the remaining 30 per cent in the next 20 days or more left in the monsoon calendar, according to KSNDMC records.

The rain gauge installed by the Karnataka Power Corpo-

ration Limited (KPCL) 20 years ago has been recording more rain than Agumbe.

“We have been recording higher rains than Agumbe, but due to the fact that Agumbe has been on the rain gauge for more than a century, a quarter of the rainfall received at Agumbe was highlighted,” said Vinayak Kumar, an official of the KPCL rain gauge centre in Hulikal.

“In fact, we were recording a little more than 9,000 mm for the last two years, which was more than what the rain gauge in Agumbe recorded,” he added.

KSNDMC had also set up a modern automatic rain gauge in Hulikal in 2013. However, the gauge could not give the right reading due to extreme monsoon conditions, which was another factor for Agumbe to get highlighted.

The actual rain figures will be available only if we take the average rainfall in all the gauges in the ARC and Hulikal, according to local rain experts.

“We are getting less rain in Agumbe. During July–September, we could not venture out without our umbrellas and raincoats, but now we do get patches of bright sunshine

very often during the peak monsoon period,” said Govinda Nayak, a trader from Agumbe.

Researchers from ARC felt that the rains were not as heavy as they were in the past. “During our field tours to the neighbouring hill ranges, we could feel the rains there were much heavier than in Agumbe,” they said.

Rain in Agumbe feeds hundreds of water bodies that nurture scores of rivers originating in the Western Ghats.

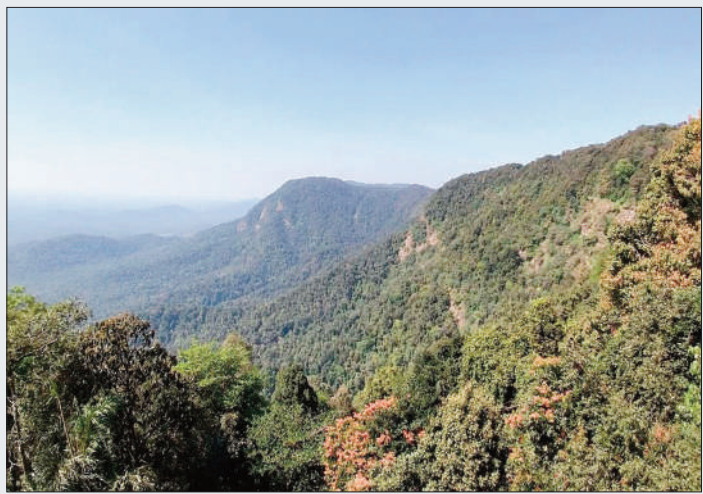
Studies of rainfall patterns in Agumbe help

hundreds of researchers all over the country gauge rainfall as well as form theories on hydrological profiles in the southern peninsula, experts at Kuvempu University in Shivamogga said. But looking at the new rain-intensive areas in Karkala taluk, the university feels that their students must also take recordings from Nadpal and Mudradi.

The Agumbe Rainforest Research Station was also studying the behaviour of the monsoons in ARC for two reasons: First, the general biodiversity academic interest and second, the effects on the world’s only natural habitat of the King Cobra.

It comprises a large area of forests from Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary, Kudremukh National Park, Kodachadri and Mookambika hill ranges and reserve forests around Kundapur, Shankaranarayana, Hosanagara, Sringeri and Thirthahalli, which makes it a fertile field for more rain-related research.

These regions foster thick bamboo groves, which are endemic to the Western Ghats. These groves need more rain to grow to such girths that can house the nests of King Cobras. Without rain, the bamboo groves perish, said the researchers at the Agumbe Rainforest Research Centre. (Courtesy: *Down To Earth*)





The war has raged longer & losses have been greater than Russia hoped

# Russia has turned food, energy and even children into weapons: Zelenskyy

**UNITED NATIONS, Sept 20:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday that Russia is "weaponizing" everything from food and energy to abducted children in its war against Ukraine — and he warned world leaders that the same could happen to them.

"When hatred is weaponized against one nation, it never stops there," he said at the U.N. General Assembly's annual top-level meeting. "The goal of the present war against Ukraine is to turn our land, our people, our lives, our resources into weapons against you — against the international rules-based order." The war in Ukraine has deepened major global supply disruptions caused by the pandemic, driving a huge spike in food and energy prices, jolting the global economy and increasing hardship in many developing countries.

Decades-old energy supply channels to Europe from Russia, a major oil and gas producer, were halted or severely disrupted by the war due to sanctions, trade disputes, pipeline shutoffs and a major push by Western countries to find alternative sources. Both Russia and Ukraine also are major grain exporters, and Russia withdrew this past summer from a deal that allowed shipments of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy pointed to the food and fuel crunches, and he highlighted what Ukraine says were kidnappings of at least tens of thousands of children taken from Ukraine after Moscow's invasion: "What will happen to them?"

"Those children in Russia are taught to hate Ukraine, and all ties with their families are broken. And this is clearly a genocide," Zelenskyy said in remarks that ran 15 minutes — the meeting's often-disregarded time



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaking at a podium during a press conference.

limit. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant in March for Russian President Vladimir Putin and another official, accusing them of abducting children from Ukraine. Russian officials have denied any forced transfers of children, saying some Ukrainian youngsters are in foster care. Russia gets its chance to address the General Assembly on Saturday. Deputy U.N. Ambassador Dmitry Polyansky sat in Russia's seat during Zelenskyy's address.

"Did he speak?" Polyansky said with a wry smile when an Associated Press reporter asked about his reaction to the address. "I didn't notice he was speaking. I was on my phone." Zelenskyy took to the world stage at a sensitive point in his country's campaign to maintain international support for its fight. Nearly 19 months after Moscow launched a full-scale invasion, Ukrainian forces are three months into a counteroffensive that has not gone as fast or as well as initially hoped.

Ukraine and its allies cast the country's cause as a battle for the rule of international law, for the sovereignty of every country with a powerful and potentially expansionist neighbour, and for the stability of global food

and energy supplies.

"We must stand up to this naked aggression today and deter other would-be aggressors tomorrow," U.S. President Joe Biden told the assembly on Tuesday in his own speech. As he pledged support to Ukraine, there was a round of applause, including from Zelenskyy.

Russia insists its war is justified, claiming that it is defending Russian speakers in Ukraine from a hostile government and protecting Russian interests against NATO encroachment, and more. The war has raged longer and losses have been greater than Russia hoped, and the fighting has spurred widespread international condemnation against Moscow. But the Kremlin also has influential friends that haven't joined the chorus of censure: China and India, for instance, have staked out neutral positions. So have many Middle Eastern and African nations. Many Latin American and Caribbean countries prefer to focus world attention on other global issues, including climate change and conflict in Africa.

Moscow is keen to display its global influence and its relationship with China and insists that it cannot be internationally isolated by the U.S. and its European allies.

Meanwhile, Ukraine is concerned that backing from its allies may be ebbing. They have supplied billions of dollars' worth of arms but fear that their stockpiles are shrinking and that defense contractors are struggling to boost production lines. Hours before Zelenskyy spoke at the U.N., allied defense leaders convened at a U.S. military base in Germany to discuss next steps. Some nations pledged further money and weapons. But a key sticking point is whether to supply longer-range missiles that Kyiv insists it

needs.

The U.S. Congress is weighing Biden's request to provide as much as \$24 billion more in military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, amid a growing partisan divide over spending on the conflict. Zelenskyy is scheduled to spend time Thursday on Capitol Hill and to meet with Biden at the White House.

After landing Monday in New York, Zelenskyy suggested that the U.N. needs to answer for allowing his country's invader a seat at the tables of power. If there is still "a place for Russian terrorists" in the United Nations, "it's a question to all the members of the United Nations," Zelenskyy said after visiting wounded Ukrainian service members at Staten Island University Hospital.

Russia is a permanent, veto-wielding member of the U.N. Security Council, which is entrusted with maintaining international peace and security. Zelenskyy took the United Nations to task even before the war. In one memorable example, he lamented at the General Assembly in 2021 that the U.N. was "a retired superhero who's long forgotten how great they once were."

A former comedian and actor who took office in 2019, Zelenskyy later became a wartime leader, wearing military fatigues, rallying citizens at home and appearing virtually and in person before numerous international bodies.

At the Staten Island hospital, he awarded medals to military members who had lost limbs. With help from a New Jersey-based charity called Kind Deeds, 18 troops have been fitted for prostheses and are undergoing outpatient physical therapy, hospital leaders said. "We all will be waiting for you back home," Zelenskyy told those he met. "We absolutely need every one of you." (AP)

## Kremlin: Russia and China must edge closer to counter Western efforts to contain them

**MOSCOW, Sept 20:** A senior Kremlin official has called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted China's top diplomat for security talks.

Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia's Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Tuesday that Moscow "seeks progressive development and strengthening of the Russian-Chinese relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation."

"Amid the campaign unleashed by the collective West that is aimed at the double containment of Russia and China, it's particularly important to further deepen Russian-Chinese coordination and interaction on the international arena," Patrushev said. He noted that Putin is set to hold "substantive" talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during next month's trip to Beijing to attend a summit of the Chinese Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

Patrushev, a longtime Putin associate, reaffirmed Russia's "invariable" support for Beijing's policy on issues related to Taiwan, the western Xinjiang region and Hong Kong, which he said "are being used by the West to discredit China."

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has conducted increasingly large military drills in the air and waters around the island. Chinese authorities also have sought to eradicate any possibility of unrest in regions that are home to sizeable ethnic and religious groups, including Tibetans and the Uyghur community in Xinjiang, north of Tibet, the harsh policies that have drawn strong criticism from the West.

The Kremlin has continuously expressed support for Beijing as Russia and China have grown increasingly close while their relations with the West deteriorate.

Last month, China helped engineer an expansion of the BRICS partnership, which invited six more countries to join what has been a five-nation bloc that includes China, Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa.

Beijing has sought to project itself as neutral in the Ukraine conflict, even while it has refused to condemn Moscow's actions and declared last year that it had a "no-limits" friendship with Russia. China has denounced Western sanctions against Moscow, and accused NATO and the United States of provoking Putin's military action.

Beijing has also proposed a peace plan that was largely dismissed by Ukraine's allies who insist that Moscow must withdraw its forces from the neighbouring country.

Wang arrived in Russia on Monday on a four-day visit following his weekend talks with US President Joe Biden's national security adviser in Malta. He began his trip by conferring with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"The more violent the unilateral actions of hegemony and bloc confrontation become, the more important for us to keep up with the times, show a sense of duty as great powers, and further fulfil our international obligations," Wang said at the start of Monday's talks with Lavrov. (AP)

## Iran's prez urges US to demonstrate it wants to return to the 2015 nuclear deal

**UNITED NATIONS, Sept 20:** Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi said on Tuesday that his country will never give up its right "to have peaceful nuclear energy" and urged the United States "to demonstrate in a verifiable fashion" that it wants to return to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Addressing the annual high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly, Raisi said the American withdrawal from the deal trampled on US commitments and was "an inappropriate response" to Iran's fulfilment of its commitments.

Then-President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the US out of the accord in 2018, restoring crippling sanctions. Iran began breaking the terms a year later and formal talks in Vienna to try to restart the deal collapsed in August 2022.

Iran has long denied ever seeking nuclear weapons and continues to insist that its programme is entirely for peaceful purposes — points Raisi reiterated Tuesday telling the high-level meeting that "nuclear weapons have no place in the defensive doctrine and the military doctrine" of the country. But UN nuclear chief Rafael Grossi said in an interview Monday with The Associated Press that the Iranian government's removal of many cameras and electronic monitoring systems installed by the International Atomic Energy Agency make it impossible to give assurances about the country's nuclear programme. Grossi has previously warned that Tehran has enough enriched uranium for "several" nuclear bombs if it chose to build them.

The IAEA director general also said on Monday he asked to meet

Raisi to try to reverse Tehran's un-called for ban on "a very sizable chunk" of the agency's inspectors.

Raisi made no mention of the IAEA inspectors but the European Union issued a statement late Tuesday saying its top diplomat, Josep Borrell, met Iran's Foreign Minister on Tuesday and raised the nuclear deal and the inspectors as well as Iran's arbitrary detention of many EU citizens including dual nationals.

At his meeting with Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the EU said Borrell urged Iran to reconsider its decision to ban several experienced nuclear inspectors and to improve cooperation with the IAEA.

Borrell again urged the Iranian government to stop its military cooperation with Russia, the EU statement said. Western nations have said Iran has supplied military drones to Russia for use in the war in Ukraine, which Tehran denies.

Raisi spoke to the General Assembly a day after Iran and the US each freed five prisoners who were in jails for years. The US also allowed the release of nearly USD 6 billion in Iranian frozen assets in South Korea for humanitarian use. The five freed Americans arrived in the US earlier on Tuesday.

The Iranian president made no mention of the prisoner swap.

Israel's UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan walked out of the assembly hall when Raisi got up to speak, carrying a sign with a picture of Mahsa Amini, the 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman who died in police custody in Iran last year, sparking worldwide protests against the country's conservative Islamic theocracy. (AP)



## UK PM signals plan to backtrack on some climate goals

**LONDON, Sept 20:** Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is preparing to water down some of Britain's environmental commitments on Wednesday, saying the country must fight climate change without penalising workers and consumers. The news drew wide criticism from political opponents, environmental groups and large chunks of UK industry, but was welcomed by sections of the governing Conservative Party.

Sunak issued a late-night statement on Tuesday in response to a BBC report saying the prime minister is considering extending deadlines for bans on new gasoline and diesel cars — currently set for 2030 — and on new natural-gas home heating, due in 2035.

Sunak said he would set out a "proportionate" approach to the environment. He summoned his Cabinet to an unscheduled conference call to discuss the plans ahead of a speech hastily rescheduled for Wednesday afternoon. It had been due later in the week. "For too many years, politicians in governments of all stripes have not been honest about costs and trade-offs," Sunak said. "Instead, they have taken the easy way out, saying we can have it all." Sunak did not confirm details of his announcements. He said he would keep a promise to reduce the UK's emissions of climate-warming greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050, but "in a better, more proportionate way". The government has previously boasted of Britain being a leader in cutting carbon emissions. UK greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by 46 per cent from 1990 levels, mainly because of the almost complete removal of coal from electricity generation.

The government had pledged to reduce emissions by 68 per cent of 1990 levels by 2030 and to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. But with just seven years to go until the first goalpost, the government's climate advisers said last month that the pace of action is "worryingly slow".

Sunak's decision in July to approve new North Sea oil and gas drilling also spurred critics to question his commitment to climate goals. News of plans to backtrack broke as senior politicians and diplomats from the UK and around the world — as well as heir to the British throne Prince William — gathered at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where climate is high on the agenda. Sunak is not attending, sending his deputy instead.

Greenpeace UK policy director Doug Parr said the prime minister was "taking the public for fools".

"Rowing back on home insulation and commitments to help people move away from gas will ensure we stay at the mercy of volatile fossil fuels and exploitative energy companies," Parr said.

Environmentalists were not the only ones blindsided by the move. Automakers, who have invested heavily in the switch to electric vehicles, expressed frustration at the government's apparent change of plan. "We're questioning what is the strategy here, because we need to shift the mobility of road transport away from fossil fuels towards sustainable transport," said Mike Hawes, chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, an industry body. Ford UK head Lisa Brankin said the company had invested 430 million pounds (USD 530 million) to build electric cars in Britain. (AP)

## Allies divided over support for Canada's allegations against India over killing of Sikh separatist leader

**TORONTO, Sept 20:** A day after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged India's involvement in the killing of a prominent Sikh separatist leader, the Canadian media reported that Ottawa's Five Eyes allies were not keen on taking sides though they have said that the claims should be thoroughly probed.

Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and one of India's most-wanted terrorists who carried a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh on his head, was shot dead by two unidentified gunmen outside a gurdwara in Surrey in the western Canadian province of British Columbia on June 18. Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau told the House of Commons on Monday that he waited until he was able to raise the issue with allies and with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi earlier this month before telling the public about the possible link. India has dismissed Trudeau's allegation as "absurd and baseless."

"We wanted to make sure that we had a solid grounding in understanding what was going on in analysis and indeed in facts. We wanted to make sure we were taking the time to talk with our allies, to share what we knew," The Canadian Press news agency quoted Trudeau on Tuesday.

Canada is part of a 'Five Eyes' network which is an intelligence alliance consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Trudeau has also said he does not want to make things worse for relations with India.

"We are not looking to provoke or escalate. We are simply laying out the facts as we understand them, and we want to work with the government of India to lay everything clear."

According to a report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canada's other Five Eyes allies "showed little inclination Tues-



day to wade into an escalating row between Ottawa and New Delhi over allegations." Most opted to treat the allegation as a matter still to be investigated — in spite of the fact that the Trudeau government feels it has enough information to make an accusation in Parliament and expel a diplomat, it noted. The United States, United Kingdom and Australia have all issued statements calling for the allegations to be thoroughly probed.

Terming the US National Security Council spokesperson Adm. John Kirby as "perhaps the most supportive of Canada," the CBC report quoted him saying on Tuesday: "They are certainly serious allegations and we believe in order to determine how credible they are, there needs to be a thorough investigation." The CBC report also said that Kirby "urged India to participate and cooperate in that investigation" as "it is important to find out exactly what happened."

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese refused to comment on the matter at all even as Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong told a press conference in the UN Headquarters on Tuesday that "these are concerning reports, and I note that investigations are still underway" and that "We are monitoring these developments closely with our partners, and we'll continue to do so."

Another of the allies, UK made no official announcement but its For-

eign Secretary James Cleverly put out a tweet on platform X without any mention of India, the CBC report said. "All countries should respect sovereignty and the rule of law. We are in regular contact with our Canadian partners about serious allegations raised in the Canadian Parliament. Important that Canada's investigation runs its course and the perpetrators brought to justice," read Cleverly's tweet.

On September 18, Trudeau alleged in the Parliament that Canada's national security apparatus has reason to believe that "agents of the Indian government" had carried out the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil.

While Trudeau is urging India to take the matter seriously, Liberal Party members also say they hope to maintain normal ties with a country Ottawa has selected as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific, The Canadian Press reported.

Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre said Trudeau must share more information about what led him to make the statement in Parliament. He said the prime minister did not share more details with him than what he had said in the House of Commons.

"We need to see more facts. The prime minister hasn't provided any facts," he told reporters on Tuesday.

New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh has written to the newly appointed head of the public inquiry on foreign interference, asking Justice Minister-Josée Hégué to include India in her probe. The Liberals have suggested her terms are wide enough to include any country as well as the Nijjar case.

"In my experience, as a Sikh-Canadian, there have always been suspicions that India was interfering in the democratic rights of Canadians," Singh wrote in the letter.

"Yesterday's announcement by the prime minister confirms that these suspicions are valid," he said. (PTI)

## Azerbaijan and Armenian forces reach cease-fire deal for breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh, reports say

**YEREVAN, Sept 20:** Armenian news reports said a cease-fire agreement with Azerbaijan was reached on Wednesday to end the two days of fighting in the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The deal was announced by the authorities of the separatist region of Azerbaijan and would take effect at 1 p.m. local time, the reports said.

The agreement was reached through negotiations with the Russian peacekeeping contingent in the region and envisages the withdrawal of Armenian military units and equipment from Nagorno-Karabakh and disarming the local defense forces, the reports said.

No further details were immediately available. The development came after explosions rocked parts of Nagorno-Karabakh earlier in the day, after Azerbaijani forces on Tuesday launched used heavy artillery fire on

Armenian positions in the region. Local officials said scores of people were killed or wounded.

Azerbaijan has called the artillery fire an "anti-terrorist operation" and said it will continue until the separatist government of Nagorno-Karabakh dismantles itself and "illegal Armenian military formations" surrender. It said it was only targeting military sites, but significant damage is visible on the streets of the regional capital, Stepanakert, with shop windows blown out and vehicles punctured apparently by shrapnel.

The blasts reverberated around Stepanakert every few minutes on Wednesday morning, with some explosions in the distance and others closer to the city. The artillery fire raised concerns that a full-scale war in the region could resume between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which for

more than three decades have been locked in a struggle over the mountainous territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. The most recent heavy fighting there occurred over six weeks in 2020. Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry announced the start of the military operation on Tuesday, hours after it reported that four soldiers and two civilians died in land mine explosions in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The ministry did not immediately give details but said that front-line positions and the military assets of Armenia's armed forces were being "incapacitated using high-precision weapons," and that only legitimate military targets were being attacked.

Russia's defence ministry said Wednesday that its peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh had evacuated more than 2,000 civilians, but did not give details on where they were taken. (AP)

## Six Palestinians are killed in latest fighting with Israel

**TEL AVIV, Sept 20:** Israeli military operations in the occupied West Bank and unrest in the Gaza Strip have killed six Palestinians, Palestinian health officials said on Wednesday, the latest spike in a wave of violence that has roiled the region for more than a year. At least three of those killed were claimed as militant fighters.

The death toll from the most recent flare-up stood at four late Tuesday. But on Wednesday the Palestinian Health Ministry raised it, saying an Israeli raid into the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank killed four people and wounded some 30 others, while a raid in a separate refugee camp killed another Palestinian. A sixth Palestinian was killed by Israeli fire in unrest in the Gaza Strip, officials said.

The deadly violence between Israel and the Palestinians over the last year and a half has surged to levels unseen in the West Bank in some two decades.

Israel has stepped up its raids on Palestinian areas and Palestinian attacks against Israelis have been mounting. Tensions also appear to be spreading to Gaza.

The Israeli military said on Wednesday that troops opened fire toward a Palestinian who was throwing explosives at them while they were on an overnight arrest raid in the refugee camp of Aqabat Jabr. The camp, near the Palestinian city of Jericho, has emerged as one of the focal points of Israel's raids.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said Israeli forces killed 19-year-old Dhargham al-Akhras in the raid.

The bloodshed in the Jenin camp hours earlier was the latest in that stronghold of Palestinian militants where the Israeli military often carries out deadly raids. In July, Israel launched its most intense operation in the West Bank in nearly two decades, leaving widespread destruction in the

camp. The army said that forces carried out a rare strike Tuesday with a suicide drone during the operation and exchanged fire with gunmen in Jenin.

While leaving the camp, the army said, an explosive detonated underneath an army truck as gunmen opened fire, damaging the vehicle. No soldiers were injured.

Three of those killed in Jenin were claimed as members of the Hamas militant group or the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and were identified as Mahmoud al-Sadi, 23, Mahmoud Ararawi, 24, and Ata Yasser Musa, 29.

Videos posted on social media showed medics unloading the wounded at a hospital, while in other videos, explosions and gunfire could be heard echoing in the camp. As Israeli soldiers withdrew, a crowd of young men chanted: "Oh, you who ask, who are we? We are the Jenin Brigade."

After the Israeli military with-

drew from the Jenin camp, dozens of gunmen and residents poured into the streets to protest against the Palestinian Authority and its failure to protect them, according to footage shared by residents.

Israel says the raids are meant to dismantle militant networks and thwart future attacks.

Some 190 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the year, according to a tally by The Associated Press. Israel says most of those killed have been militants, but youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in the confrontations have also been killed.

At least 31 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks against Israelis since the beginning of 2023.

In the Gaza violence, health officials said the Israeli military killed a 25-year-old Palestinian along the volatile frontier with Israel as youths mounted violent protests at a separation fence. (AP)



## Normal life hit on second day of 48-hour Manipur bandh



**IMPHAL, Sept 20:** Normal life was hit across Manipur's Imphal valley districts on Wednesday, the second day of the 48-hour statewide shut-down called by Meira Paibis, a collective of Meitei women, and five local clubs, demanding unconditional release of five "village defence volunteers" arrested by police, officials said.

For the second day, educational institutions, markets, banks and commercial establishments remained closed,

while attendance in government offices was negligible and a few vehicles plied on the roads, they said.

Across all the five districts of Imphal valley, women in large numbers blocked roads and raised slogans demanding the release of the youths. Protesters blamed the state government and police for failing to tackle the law and order in the hill areas.

S Sakhi, a protester at Wangkhei in Imphal East district said, "Police continue to arrest, detain and fire tear gas

shells on unarmed civilians across the five districts of Imphal valley while doing hardly anything against the armed gunmen openly taking out processions in Kuki-dominated areas of Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts." "The village volunteers' job is to protect Meitei villages in the periphery of the hill and valley areas from attacks by Kuki Zo militants," protester S Bebisana at Naoremthong in Imphal West district said.

On Saturday, police arrested five youths for carrying sophisticated weapons and donning camouflage uniforms. In a statement, police said the five had been produced before the judicial magistrate and remanded to police custody. On September 16, protesters tried to storm the Porompat police station, demanding the release of the five youths, prompting security forces to fire several rounds of teargas shells. A few protesters and an RAF personnel received minor injuries during the stand-off. (PTI)

### 8 die in road mishap in Nagaland's Tseminyu dist

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Sept 20:** Eight persons, including five women, were killed when a Mokochung-bound passenger vehicle (Tata Sumo) was reportedly hit by a truck from behind at K Station area in Tseminyu district on Wednesday morning. The passenger vehicle was going from Kohima.

Both the vehicles fell into a gorge after the accident. While seven persons died on the spot, another succumbed to injuries on the way to hospital in Kohima. All the deceased, including the driver, were occupants of the passenger vehicle. The driver of the truck and its two other occupants have been arrested. They are being kept at Tseminyu Police Station till the time of filing this report. Three of the deceased women from Mokochung district had joined the state government departments after clearing the Nagaland Staff Selection Board exam recently.

Chief minister Neiphiu Rio, deputy chief ministers TR Zeliang and Y Patton expressed grief at the tragic accident and expressed condolences to the bereaved families.

"I am deeply saddened by the tragic road accident in Tseminyu district where eight precious lives have been lost," Rio tweeted. The state government announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the families of the deceased.

### Rains hit life in Dimapur

**DIMAPUR, Sept 20:** Normal life in Dimapur, Nagaland's commercial hub, was hit in a heavy downpour that submerged its low-lying areas and created a flood-like situation, an official said on Wednesday. Heavy rains began lashing the area on Tuesday afternoon and there was intermittent rain till Wednesday morning.

The amount of rainfall is, however, yet to be known.

Under its impact several colonies were submerged and movement of pedestrians and vehicles were affected due to the water logging in Dimapur. Students were seen wading to and from their schools. State Disaster Response Force, civil defence and home guards teams used boats to evacuate residents from the worst affected areas.

The district administration has set up a relief camp at the Dimapur circuit house for the rain affected people where relief materials were being provided to them. (PTI)

## Meghalaya trek leaders begin training in Darjeeling and Uttarakhand

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 20:** The state Tourism minister of Meghalaya, Paul Lyngdoh, attended a send-off program for participants of the trek leaders training program on Tuesday. He encouraged the first batch of participants to stay focused during their training and return to the state enriched with knowledge. The event was also attended by CVD Diengdoh IAS, director of the department of Tourism, government of Meghalaya. Minister Paul Lyngdoh emphasised the significance of adventure tourism in Meghalaya and mentioned that 25 trails had been mapped and identified. He expressed hope that more trails would be identified in the coming years. Many of these trails are connected with local history and folklore. The government has invested time and resources in preparing for the participants' trip, and he urged them to use their time wisely and return enriched.

The trek leaders training program is conducted by Trek the Himalayas, an agency empanelled

## 'Made in North East' concept can boost region's economy, says Nagaland adviser

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Sept 20:** Nagaland's adviser to industries department Hekani Jakhalu said the 'Made in North East' concept introduced five years ago can serve as a catalyst for strengthening relationships and boosting the regional economy through inter-state and international trade.

Opening the business session of the 1st Northeastern States Chamber of Commerce and Industry Business Conclave at Niathu Resort in Chumoukedima on Tuesday, Jakhalu highlighted the rich heritage and potential of the north-eastern states and called for collaboration among all stakeholders to chart a path toward sustainable economic growth.

On the significance of the conclave in the economic development of the north-eastern states, she said despite the region's diversity, there is a shared aspiration among the states to foster economic growth and prosperity.

Jakhalu spoke about the need for collective progress and teamwork, stating that the challenges and aspirations faced by the region should be shared.

She noted that one of the key challenges of the region was the underutilisation of its potential, resources and opportunities for economic growth and development. She stressed the importance of not just establishing infrastructure but also equipping the people with the technical skills required to make use of these resources effectively.

Jakhalu stressed that the budget allocation under the North East Entrepreneurs Development Scheme should be increased to provide financial assistance to MSMEs at concessional interest rates.

Highlighting the decline in investment share in the north-east under the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy 2007, she called for urgently developing a new industrial policy with enhanced incentives for at least ten years, with a focus on supporting the MSME sector.

The business session of the conclave included discussions on various topics, including the prospect of business convergence in the north-eastern states, investment opportunities and India's Act East Policy. Stakeholders from all eight north-eastern states attended the conclave and shared their concerns, issues, and challenges.

## Imphal Valley witnessing surge in extortion complaints: Official

**IMPHAL, Sept 20:** Districts in the Imphal Valley in violence-hit Manipur are witnessing a surge of complaints related to extortion, a senior official said. Addressing a press conference, additional secretary (Home) Maharabam Pradip Singh said the state government was working to restore normalcy, but the efforts were being hampered by armed miscreants.

"We have information that such miscreants masquerading as police commandos are roaming around. These acts, including demands for extortion and threats, have hampered the efforts that the police have been genuinely making," he said.

"We have received reports from different valley districts that there is an increase in complaints related to extortion and threats," Singh said on Tuesday.

He said police have taken serious note of these complaints, and are committed to address those.

The Manipur Police have initiated multiple steps to deal with armed miscreants, including setting up check posts at strategic points and conducting search operations, he said. More than 175 people have been killed and several hundreds injured since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status. (PTI)

## KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL CENTRAL SELECTION BOARD (HEALTH & FW) KAAC:: SECRETARIAT DIPHU — 782460

No, KAAC/CCB/Esstt-1/H&FW/Adv.t./2023-24/2

Dated Diphu the 20 September' 2023.

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The Central Selection Board (Health & Family Welfare) KAAC, Diphu invite applications from Indian Citizen as defined under Article 5 to 8 of the constitution of India In the prescribed Standard Form of Application published in part IX of Assam Gazette along with self attested copies of educational certificates, Mark sheets and all other testimonials alongwith 02 (TWO) copies of recent passport size photographs for filling up the following newly created posts against District Hospital Hamren, West Karbi Anglong under Joint Director of Health Services, Karbi Anglong District, Hamren.

Sl. No.	Name of the post (s)	No. of Posts	Scale of pay	Educational & other requisite Qualification
1.	Staff Nurse	46 (forty six) Nos.	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Grade Pay Rs. 6,800/- p.m.	GNM Course passed from any Institution recognized by Indian Nursing Council and registered with "Assam Nurses' Midwives' and Health Visitors' Council".
2.	Pharmacist	1 (One) No.	PB-2, 14000-49000/- + Grade Pay Rs. 7,600/- p.m.	Diploma/Degree in Pharmacy Course from Medical Colleges of Assam and from Govt. recognized Institutes, registered under Assam Pharmacy Council.
3.	Ophthalmic Asst.	1 (One) No.	PB-2, (14000-40500) + Grade Pay Rs. 7,600/- p.m.	Diploma In ophthalmic Technology passed from Govt. recognized institute.
4.	Radiographer	1 (One) No.	PB-2, (14000-50500) + Grade Pay Rs. 6,200/- p.m.	Diploma in Radiology passed from Govt. recognized Institute
5.	Laboratory Technician	5 (Five) Nos.	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Grade Pay Rs. 6,200/- p.m.	Diploma in laboratory Technician course passed from Govt. recognized institute
6.	ECG Technician	1 (One)	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Pay Rs. 5,600/- p.m.	Diploma in ECG Technician from Govt. recognized Institute
7.	Physiotherapist	1 (One)	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Grade Pay Rs. 7,400/- p.m.	Diploma in Physiotherapy from Govt. recognized Institute
8.	Medical Record Tech.	1 (One)	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Grade Pay Rs. 6,200/- p.m.	HSSLC (Science) passed & Computer knowledge. Preference will be given to candidate having training In Medical Record Technician Training in Govt. Hospital/ Medical College.
9.	OT Technician	2 (Two) Nos.	PB-2, (14000-40500) + Pay Rs. 5,600/- p.m.	HSSLC (Science) passed/ Diploma in OM Technician from Govt. recognize Institute
10.	Dresser	1 (One)	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Grade Pay Rs. 5,000/- p.m.	HSSLC (Sc) with diploma In physician Assistant Course/OT Technician course.
11.	Driver	1 (One)	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Grade Pay Rs. 5,200/- p.m.	HSLC Passed/ Valid Motor vehicle license (Transport) issued by component authority
11.	Electrician	1 (One)	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Grade Pay Rs. 6,200/- p.m.	HSSLC passed/ IIT Passed In electrician from a sized institute
12.	Plumber	1 (One)	PB-2, (14000-60500) + Pay Rs. 5,600/- p.m.	IIT passed in plumbing from a recognized Institute
13.	OT Attendant	4 (Four) Nos.	PB-1, (12000-52000) + Grade Rs. 3900/-p.m.	Minimum qualification read upto Class VIII
14.	Peon	2 (Two) Nos.	PB-1, (12000-52000) + Grade Rs. 3900/- p.m.	Minimum qualification read upto Class VIII
15.	Ward Boy	6 (Six) Nos.	PB-1, (12000-52000)+ Grade Pay 3900/-p.m.	Minimum qualification read upto Class VIII
16.	Ward Girl	6 (Six) Nos.	PB-1, (12000-52000)+ Grade Pay 3900/-p.m.	Minimum qualification read upto Class VIII
17.	OPD Attendant	2 (Two) Nos.	PB-1, (12000-52000)+ Grade Pay 3900/-p.m.	Minimum qualification read upto Class VIII
18.	Chowkidar	2 (Two) Nos.	PB-1, (12000-52000) + Grade Pay Rs. 3900/- p.m.	Minimum qualification read upto Class VIII
19.	Cleaner	8 (Eight) Nos.	PB-1, (12000-52000) + Grade Pay Rs. 3900/- p.m.	Minimum qualification read upto Class VIII

#### Terms & Conditions:-

- The Candidate should not be less than 18 years and not more than 40 years as on 01/01/2023. The upper age limit is relaxable.
  - By 5 years for SC/ST candidate, i.e. upto 45 years.
  - By 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidates i.e. upto 43 years.
  - By 2 years for Ex-Servicemen i.e. upto 42 years.
  - By 10 years for Person with Disabilities (PWD) i.e. upto 50 years.
- Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected on the spot.
- Application received either by post or by hand after the last date of submission of application will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- The Selected candidates will be entitled with new pension scheme (NPS) 2005 as per directed of Government.
- Self Attested copies of all testimonial certificate of educational qualification, Birth Certificate, Caste Certificate, Current Employment Exchange Registration Number and two copies of recent passport size photograph.
- The Authority reserves all rights to cancel/reject the application without assigning any reason thereof and no further communication will be entertained.
- Candidates willing to apply more than one post shall have to submit separate application form for each post.
- The complete application should address to the i/c-Member Secretary, Central Selection Board (Health & Family Welfare), KAAC, Diphu alongwith his/her complete postal address and submit it in the drop box placed at the Secretariat Medical Unit Building KAAC, Diphu on or before 21-09-2023 to 04-10-2023 during office hours except on holidays under NI Act. Candidates should indicate the name of post applied for on the front cover of envelope.
- The eligible candidates shall apply in Standard Form of application along with KAAC money Receipt of Rs. 10/- (Rupees ten) for ST/SC and Rs. 20/- (Rupees twenty) for other candidates as application fee.
- Canvassing in any form will lead to disqualification.
- No T.A. or D.A. will be provided to any candidate from the Department for the same.
- The Competent Authority reserves all the rights to enhance or reduce the posts and also to cancel/Postpone the interview at any time without assigning any reason thereof and without any intimation to the candidate.
- The date of Interview will be notified later on in the local papers.
- Concerned HOD is requested to make payment for the advertisement from concerned Head of Account.

Sd/-

Member Secretary,  
Central Selection Board (Health & FW)  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu.  
Dated Diphu the 20 September' 2023.

Memo No. KAAC/CCB/Esstt-1/H&FW/Adv.t./2023-24/ 2-A



## CM Sukhu introduces bill to repeal 13 obsolete laws

**SHIMLA, Sept 20:** Himachal Pradesh chief minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu on Wednesday introduced a bill seeking to repeal 13 laws that have outlived their utility.

The enactments which have "lost their significance or have become obsolete and redundant" or whose retention as "separate, independent and distinct act" is unnecessary are proposed to be repealed, Sukhu said. The new legislation is called the Himachal Pradesh Repealing Bill-2023. The acts proposed to be repealed include the Presidency Small Cause Courts Act, 1882; Agriculturists Loans Act, 1884; Provincial Small Cause Courts Act, 1887; Mandi Minor Forest Produce Exploitation and Export Act, 1997 and 1941. The Chamba Minor Forest Produce Exploitation and Export Act, 2003 and Punjab Tobacco Vend Fees (Repealing) Act, 1953 are also proposed to be repealed.

The Himachal Pradesh Private Forest Act, 1954; the Punjab Labor Welfare Fund Act, 1965; Punjab Professions, Trades, Callings and Employment Taxation (Himachal Pradesh Repealing) Act, 1968; HP Preservation of Forests and Maintenance of Supplies of Forest Based Essential Commodities Act, 1984 will also be repealed.

The other bills are the HP Protection of Interest of Depositors (In Financial Establishment) Act, 1999; HP Paramedical Council Act, 2003 and HP Administrative Tribunal (Transfer of Decided and Pending Cases and Applications) Act, 2008. (PTI)

## Smriti Irani slams oppn over demand for 'immediate' implementation of quota

### WOMEN'S BILL

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** Union minister Smriti Irani on Wednesday slammed the opposition over its demand for an immediate implementation of quota under women's reservation bill, asking it whether it wished to follow the constitutional process.

Intervening in the discussion on the constitutional amendment bill to provide reservation for women, the Women and Child Development Minister hit out at the opposition, such as the Samajwadi Party, for demanding reservation for minorities, saying they do not know that reservation based on religion is "prohibited" by the constitution.

Irani also said it was for the first time acknowledged in the house that it was not one particular family which got the bill for reservation for women in local bodies, but the government of PV Narsimha Rao, whose mortal remains were not allowed to enter the Congress office here.

Responding to opposition's demand that the reservation be implemented with immediate effect, Irani read out provisions of the Constitution regarding census and delimitation to drive home the point that it was necessary to include in the bill.

"Is it the wish of opposition leaders that constitutional process is not followed? Should we not abide by the Constitution? Is that the position taken by the opposition parties?"

# Cong backs 'nari shakti' bill but quota should be effective immediately, include OBC women: Sonia Gandhi

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** Extending her party's support to the women's reservation bill, Congress parliamentary party chief Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday demanded that the quota be implemented immediately and provision be made for reservation for OBC women.

Initiating the debate on the bill from the opposition's side, Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha that any delay in bringing the reservation into effect would be "gross injustice" to Indian women.

"Rajiv Gandhi's dream is only half fulfilled. It will be fulfilled with the passage of this bill. The Congress supports this bill. We will be happy with the passage of this bill but we also have a concern. I want to ask a question. For the last 13 years, Indian women have been waiting for their political responsibilities, and now they are being asked to wait for a few more years -- two years, four years, six years, eight years," the former Congress chief said.

Is such behaviour with Indian women appropriate, she asked.

"It is the demand of the Indian National Congress that the bill be immediately implemented... but, along with that, provision should be made for the reservation of SC, ST, OBC women after conducting a caste census," she said.

The government, Gandhi told the House, should take the required steps for this.

The bill has proposed that the reservation continue for a period of 15 years and there will be one-third quota for women also within the seats reserved for SC/STs.

"This is the most appropriate moment to acknowledge and thank women for their contribution," Gandhi said.

"On behalf of the Indian National Congress, I demand from the government that



the Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023 be implemented as soon as possible while clearing all roadblocks in its way. Doing this is not only necessary but also possible," Gandhi said.

Initiating the discussion, Gandhi said she stands on behalf of the Indian National Congress to support the 'Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam'.

"From smoke-filled kitchens to brightly-lit stadiums, the journey of Indian women has been long. But finally she has reached her destination. She gave birth, ran a household, ran fast among men and with infinite endurance often saw herself losing but won in the end.

"The Indian woman has patience like an ocean in her heart, she never complained about being wronged and never thought only about her own benefits. Like a river she

worked for the welfare of all... remained steadfast like the Himalayas in difficult times. It is impossible to estimate a woman's patience, she does not recognise rest and does not even know how to get tired," Gandhi said.

"Woman is the mother of our great country. But she has not only given birth to us, she has also made us intelligent and powerful enough to think for ourselves by nourishing us with her tears, blood and sweat," the Congress leader added.

Only by recognising the hard work, dignity and sacrifice of women can we pass the test of humanity, Gandhi said.

"In the fight for independence and the creation of a new India, women have fought shoulder to shoulder with men on every front. She was not buried under the burden of hopes, aspirations, troubles and household

chores," she said.

Lauding the contribution of the likes of Sarojini Naidu, Sucheta Kripalani, Aruna Asaf Ali, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and millions of other women, she said they have always ensured that the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru Sardar Patel, Baba Saheb Ambedkar and Maulana Azad are realised on the ground.

"The personality of Indira Gandhiji is a very bright and living example in this regard," she said in a speech that made its political points but also brought in personal, emotive notes.

"This is a very poignant moment in my life. It was my life partner Rajiv Gandhi ji who for the first time had brought the constitutional amendment for participation of women in local bodies, but it was defeated in the Rajya Sabha by seven votes. Later, the Congress government under the leadership of Prime Minister PV Narsimha Rao got it passed," Gandhi said.

Today, as a result of that, there are 15 lakh elected women leaders through local bodies across the country, she added.

After the House proceedings began, union law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Wednesday moved the women's reservation bill for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabha, saying it is a step towards women empowerment.

The constitutional amendment bill was introduced in the Lower House on Tuesday. It was the first bill introduced in the new Parliament building.

The bill provides for 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The reservation will come into effect only after the completion of the census and delimitation exercise. (PTI)

## Bengal man admitted to Kolkata hospital with Nipah symptoms



**KOLKATA, Sept 20:** A man, who had recently returned from Kerala, was admitted to the city-based Beliaghata ID Hospital with symptoms of Nipah virus infection, a senior official of the health department said.

The man from Burdwan district, who was working as a migrant labour in Kerala, was admitted to the hospital with high-fever, nausea, and throat infection, he said.

Requisite tests on the youth, who is in the mid-20s, to confirm the infection is yet to be done, one of his family members said.

"He returned from Kerala where several cases of Nipah virus infections have been reported. So, we are not taking any chances. Doctors are keeping a close watch on him," the official said.

The health department official said the patient was initially at a hospital in Ernakulam in Kerala after he complained of high fever.

"He returned to West Bengal after being discharged from the hospital. But he again fell ill within a couple of days. He was first taken to the National Medical College and Hospital and then to Beliaghata ID Hospital," he added. (PTI)

## Kerala CM unveils logo of Vizhinjam Port

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Sept 20:** As the initial phase of the ambitious international seaport coming up at Vizhinjam is nearing completion, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan unveiled its logo and identity at a function held here on Wednesday.

The port will be known as Vizhinjam International Seaport, Thiruvananthapuram.

Official sources said the logo would help the port's identity on the global maritime trade map.

Addressing the function, the chief minister said the Vizhinjam Port is a dream project for Kerala, and it offers a wide scope for the state in the international maritime trade sector. He said the first ship would dock at the port on October 4. Vijayan wished that the newly unveiled logo would carry forward the glory of the international seaport across the world.

Kerala minister for ports, Ahamed Devarkovil delivered the presidential address.

During the speech, Devarkovil said a dream that India and Kerala had for a long time is getting ready here with the commencement of the new port.

Stating that Vizhinjam Port is going to be the first transshipment port in the country, the minister made it clear that this is not a private port but is being built on a public-private partnership. The liability gap fund is being approved for the first time in the country in this port construction, the minister further said.

The opening of the port would provide good growth opportunities for the state in the employment, finance, and tourism sectors, he said.

The minister said Covid-19 and the recent strike against the port caused delays in its construction. But the state government handled it effectively, he added.

Stating that the allied development projects with regard to the port would boost Kerala's economy, the minister said the outer ring road around the port would be built at a cost of ₹ 6,000 crore, and the Central government has given the nod for it. At least 10 lakh containers are expected in the first phase itself, the minister said, adding that an industrial park is also under the anvil. (PTI)

## 'Secular', 'socialist' missing from copies of Constitution given to lawmakers: Adhir

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Wednesday alleged that the words "secular" and "socialist" were missing from the Preamble in the copies of the Constitution given to lawmakers on the opening day of proceedings at the new Parliament building.

As many Opposition leaders also hit out at the government over what they called was a "serious" issue and a "crime", law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said the copies carried the original version of the Preamble of the Constitution and that these words were added later to it after constitutional amendments.

"This is as per the original Preamble. Amendments were made later," he asserted.

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi also said the words were not there in the Preamble.

"Have you seen the full Constitution or only the Preamble. In the Preamble, it was not there," Gandhi said outside Parliament when asked on Chowdhury's claim.

Terming the matter as serious, Chowdhury said the words have been "cleverly removed" and expressed doubts over the intentions of the BJP government.

"The Preamble of the Constitution in the copy that we carried to the new building does not include the words secular and socialist. They have been cleverly removed...this is a serious matter and we will raise this issue," he told reporters.

Chowdhury said he knows that the words were added later in 1976 to the Constitution.

"For me this is a serious issue. I doubt



their intentions as their heart does not seem to be clear on this," he said.

The Congress Leader of the House in Lok Sabha also said that if someone gives a copy of the Constitution today, it should carry the version of it as of today.

Former law minister Ashwani Kumar said he does not think the government will ever attempt to remove the words.

"It cannot be done without a constitutional amendment and will be clearly counterproductive for the government," Binoy Viswam of the CPI termed the omission of the words as a "crime".

TMC member Dola Sena said the Constitution has been amended several times and if a copy of it has been given now it

obviously should include all the amendments till date. She said she will raise the issue in the house.

She said the BJP is now claiming that this is the original copy of the Preamble to the Constitution and not the latest version, they should have mentioned clearly in the copy given to MPs.

Congress MP and deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Pramod Tiwari also raised objections to the "removal" of the words from the Constitution, saying he will raise the matter in the house as it was "serious".

Several opposition MPs, including those from the Left and other parties, are likely to raise the matter at their meeting. (PTI)

## Climate experts from Global South condemn developed countries' 'hypocrisy' on fossil fuel expansion

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** International climate policy experts have denounced the "hypocrisy" of some developed countries for their continued expansion of fossil fuel production despite lofty promises to combat climate change and have asked them to come clean to the COP28 in Dubai and demonstrate genuine leadership.

A new report titled "Planet Wreckers: How 20 Countries' Oil and Gas Extraction Plans Risk Locking in Climate Chaos" has exposed the staggering scale of the issue, revealing that five Global North countries -- the US, Canada, Australia, Norway and the UK -- account for 51 per cent of the planned expansion from new oil and gas fields through 2050.

The report by research and advocacy group Oil Change International comes ahead of United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' Climate Ambition Summit in New York City.

Guterres has called for countries to show up with commitments to stop oil and gas expansion and plan a phase-out of existing production in line with the 1.5-degree-Celsius limit.

The report says these rich nations must halt expansion immediately, prioritise production phase-outs and contribute fairly to global energy transition funding. Failure to do so could result in 173



billion tonnes of carbon pollution, equivalent to over 1,100 new coal plants' lifetime emissions or more than 30 years of US annual carbon output, being released.

Diego Pacheco, head of the Bolivian delegation and spokesperson of the Like-Minded Developing Countries at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), told PTI that developed countries are pursuing an "imperial strategy of hypocrisy".

"Rich countries of the (Global) North continue planning new oil and gas production while trying to impose goals of zero oil and gas

production in the short term on developing countries, thus consuming the remaining carbon budget that already belongs to developing countries," he said.

Pacheco added that the narrative of "keeping 1.5 degrees alive" is merely a Trojan horse that conceals a new form of colonialism known as carbon colonialism.

"This approach creates a flexible and comfortable path for developed countries, allowing them to continue their business-as-usual strategies while imposing incredible sacrifices on the people of developing countries. Among these are the poorest and most vulnera-

ble people in the world, who will be left without any option to live a life with justice and dignity," he said. Meena Raman, director of programmes at global research organisation Third World Network, said, "The hypocrisy of the West is nothing new and this report further confirms this."

The report underscores the stark contrast between rhetoric and action. Developed countries, often proclaiming themselves as climate leaders, fall short when it comes to meaningful efforts to phase out fossil fuels. Instead, they persist in expanding drilling operations and lecturing the developing world about reducing coal and fossil fuel subsidies, she said.

"This report shows their bluff has been exposed," the climate policy expert told PTI.

Raman underscored the need for developed nations to align their actions with their climate ambitions, saying it is time for them to abandon duplicity and demonstrate genuine leadership.

"These countries must come clean to COP28 and announce that they will stop the expansion of fossil fuels immediately, phase out existing production, and pay their fair share to the Green Climate Fund to support the transition in developing countries and to the soon-to-be-set-up Loss and Damage Fund," she said.

Raman argued that failure to act will condemn both their own populations and the world to further suffering from the devastating impacts of climate change.

Climate Action Network-International Global Policy Lead Indrajit Bose noted the dissonance between developed countries' rhetoric and actions and stressed that these nations must align their actions with their advocacy for fossil fuel phase-out and the importance of limiting temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

"The IPCC's (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) sixth assessment report (AR6) states that global fossil fuel use must substantially decline by 2030 to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Developed countries must take the lead in phasing out fossil fuels and, in accordance with principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, provide financial and other support to developing nations," he told PTI.

Bose argued that achieving a just transition and fossil fuel phase-out in the Global South requires substantial international support in various forms and highlighted the principle that those historically and currently contributing the most to the climate crisis must significantly increase their support for those who have contributed the least. (PTI)

## e-Trains to run normally in 3 states

**RANCHI/BHUBANESWAR, Sept 20:** Trains under the jurisdiction of SER and EcoR will ply on their scheduled routes in parts of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha as an indefinite rail blockade called by Kurmi organisations from Wednesday has been withdrawn, officials said.

As a precautionary measure, at least 11 trains were cancelled and 12 others diverted on Tuesday under the jurisdiction of South Eastern Railway (SER) and East Coast Railway (ECoR) in Jharkhand and Odisha, respectively, in view of the rail blockade, they said. The South Eastern Railway had in a release issued on Tuesday said that "normal train services will be restored with immediate effect in view of the withdrawal of proposed agitation by the Kurmi community".

The EcoR, too, had said it has decided to run trains on normal routes with immediate effect, as the Kurmi Samaj agitation "has been called off".

However, members of the Totemik Kurmi Vikas Morcha (TKVM), reportedly sat on the tracks at Ghagra station in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district on Wednesday morning to press for their demand of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the community, and inclusion of Kurmal language in the eighth schedule of the Constitution, the officials said.

In Ranchi's Muri, around 500

agitators were stopped by security forces at a certain distance from the station, officials said.

"Adequate forces have been deployed at Muri to prevent the agitators from disrupting train movement," chief public relations officer (CPRO) of Ranchi Railway Division Nishant Kumar told PTI.

The district administration has also imposed prohibitory measures under CrPC Section 144 in Silli Circle near the Muri Railway Station from 6 pm on Tuesday till further orders, an official said. Section 144 prevents unlawful assembly of four or more persons and public movement in groups.

A report from Odisha said Kurmi Samaj activists briefly blocked tracks at Bhanjapur Railway Station in Baripada town of Mayurbhanj district on Wednesday, but the rail lines were cleared and train services resumed soon.

Ajit Mahato, a leader of Adivasi Kurmi Samaj in West Bengal, had Tuesday said that the indefinite rail blockade called by Kurmis was withdrawn "as our senior leaders are being harassed by police. We will take a collective decision on the next course of action on September 30 in Purlia".

Several Kurmi bodies had earlier announced the stir at nine stations in Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha from Wednesday, including Muri, Gomoh, Nimdih, Khemasuli, Kustaur and Harichandpur. (PTI)



## Citing drought-like situation, Ktaka CM says will seek SC injunction on release of Cauvery water to TN

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** Citing the "drought-like situation" in Karnataka, chief minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said the state government will appeal in the Supreme Court for an injunction against the CWMA order that stipulates the release of about 5,000 cusecs of water per day to Tamil Nadu till September 28.

Siddaramaiah also sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention in this regard.

The order by the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) came on September 18.

Siddaramaiah and deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar are likely to meet the union jal shakti minister to discuss this matter.

Meanwhile, senior BJP leader and Union parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi urged the Congress government in Karnataka not to "politicise" the matter as the state has agreed to release 2,500 cusecs out of 5,000 cusecs of water to TN. The issue was discussed in a meeting with all Members of Parliament and Union Ministers from Karnataka in the national capital here. Barring Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, all MPs from the state attended the meeting.

"The state is in distress as we have not received enough rainfall. There is a drought-like situation in the state. Out of 230 taluks, 195



taluks have been declared as drought-hit. In a meeting to be held soon, another 20-odd taluks will be declared drought-hit," Siddaramaiah told reporters after the meeting.

August month saw a rainfall shortage for the first time in 123 years. In times of distress, there is no formula to decide how much water to be released for Tamil Nadu, he said.

"Unfortunately, there is no distress formula to address this suffering. ...We cannot release water. We will appeal to the Supreme Court for an injunction against the CWMA order..." he said.

The chief minister also shared

that the Supreme Court, in the modified order, had asked Karnataka to release 177.25 TMC of Cauvery water in a normal year. However, it did not specify the quantum of water to be released during any distress year.

"Till now, we were to release 108 TMC of water had it been a normal year. So far, only 39.6 TMC water has been given because there is no water and no rain," he added. Deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar said there is very little inflow of water in the state.

CWMA has not come out with a formula on the quantum of water

to be released in times of distress situation, he said.

"We are facing a distress situation as we have only 1/3rd of the water. For the first time in the last 120 years, such a situation has arisen. CWMA has asked us to release 5,000 cusecs of water, but we have no water even for drinking. We discussed this with all MPs. They have assured us they will support in our fight," Shivakumar said. Joshi has assured he will fix a meeting on behalf of Karnataka with the Union Jalshakti Minister to present the case, he said and added he has also sought time from the PM to discuss the matter.

Meanwhile, Joshi said the Congress government in Karnataka should talk to the DMK government in Tamil Nadu on the issue as the two parties are allies.

"They should have told to CWMA that it will not be possible to release water. ...It is your mistake," he said and added MPs and ministers will help whenever possible, but they "should not politicise".

He said DMK is an ally of the Congress party and asked how many times the state government spoke to the DMK-ruled Tamil Nadu government and its chief minister on this issue.

"The negotiation between two states should happen," he suggested. (PTI)

## Delhi HC restrains misuse of personality attributes of actor Anil Kapoor

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** The Delhi High Court on Wednesday restrained websites and other platforms from misusing the name, image, voice and other attributes of persona, including the "jhakaas" catchphrase, of actor Anil Kapoor for commercial gain.

Justice Prathiba M Singh passed the ex-parte interim order on a lawsuit by the 67-year-old film star alleging unauthorised exploitation of his personality and celebrity rights for commercial use.

Advocate Pravin Anand, appearing for Kapoor, said several websites and platforms have been misusing the personality traits of the plaintiff through various activities.

Kapoor's counsel referred to the unauthorised sale of merchandise, collection of fees by using his photograph as a motivational speaker, morphing his image in a derogatory manner, and selling pictures with forged autographs and the "jhakaas" catchphrase, GIF images and stickers, among others.

"Jhakaas", a Marathi slang meaning superb that was first used by the actor in the 1985 movie 'Yudh', is exclusively associated with Anil Kapoor due to his unique way of delivering it, the court was told. The lawsuit sought protection of Kapoor's personality rights with respect to his name, voice, image, likeness, manner of speaking and gestures, among others.

Justice Singh observed while there can be no doubt that free speech is protected, the same would be illegal when it "crosses the line" and results in tarnishing and jeopardising individual personality rights.

"Using the plaintiff's name, voice, dialogue, image in illegal manner, that too for commercial purposes, cannot be permitted. Court cannot turn a blind eye to such misuse of personality," Justice Singh said.

"Defendants 1-16 are restrained from using in any manner the plaintiff Anil Kapoor's name, image, voice, likeness or personality or any other attribute of his personality to create any merchandise, ringtones, or in any manner misuse the plaintiff's name, voice and other elements by using technological tools such as artificial intelligence, face morphing, GIFs for monetary gains or otherwise," ordered the court.

The defendants included various entities including 'Simply Life India' which enables people to contact motivational speakers, 'VisionComputers' which provides his wallpapers as well as 'Giphy', an online database and search engine that allows users to search for and share GIFs, a type of image format that supports animated images, typically of short duration and limited resolution, and is widely used for internet graphics.

The court also restrained other unknown persons from disseminating the offending links. The court directed the authorities concerned to suspend and block the offending platforms.

"Fame for a person comes with disadvantages and this case shows that reputation and fame can transcend into damage," it said.

Such misuse can damage a celebrity's right to endorsement, which is source of livelihood, it said and added the plaintiff was able to make a prima facie case for interim relief at this stage.

The court also noted that celebrities enjoy right to privacy and the new technological tools such as artificial intelligence make it possible for any user to misuse the attributes of one's personality.

"The court has no doubt in holding that the plaintiff's name, voice, persona etc deserve to be protected not only for plaintiff's own sake but also for the sake of his friends and family who would not like to see his image being misused," the court said.

The plea, filed through law firms Anand and Anand, and Anand and Naik said Anil Kapoor was known worldwide because of his work in films, serials and web series in the last more than 30 years and no one is entitled to misappropriate or imitate any facet of his personality for commercial use without consent. (PTI)

## PTI Fact Check joins WhatsApp Channels

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** PTI Fact Check, the fact checking unit of India's most trusted news agency Press Trust of India, has joined WhatsApp Channels, a new feature by Meta that lets users follow news organisations, celebrities and others from within WhatsApp.

The one-way broadcast tool was launched by the Meta-owned instant messaging platform in India and over 150 countries last week.

PTI Fact Check's WhatsApp Channel offers access to more than 400 fact checked stories, tips to spot and verify misinformation and disinformation on social media and also provides opportunities to participate in the organisation's fact check efforts.

The move gains significance given elections to five state assemblies this year and the Lok Sabha polls next year. This period is expected to witness a sharp rise in the flow of fake and misleading information on social media platforms. The WhatsApp Channel allows users to easily receive stories on viral claims that have been fact checked by PTI.

WhatsApp Channels deliver private updates from organisations, services and eminent personalities from across genres and industries that people can follow.

It does so in a new tab called 'Updates', which is separate from chats with family, friends and communities. The channels are filtered automatically based on the users' origin country and can also be searched by name and category within the platform. (PTI)

## Hope all parties will come together to ensure implementation of women's reservation bill: UN Women

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** The UN Women has expressed hope that political parties across the board will come together to ensure timely implementation of the women's reservation bill given that gender quotas in policies and politics is crucial to advancing gender equality and women's rights.

It also said reserving 33 per cent seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies will "leapfrog India into one of 64 countries" that have reservation for women in their national parliaments. In a statement, the UN Women said achieving a critical mass of 30 per cent representation for women in Parliament is known to yield positive outcomes for women's empowerment.

"This quota reserving 33 per cent seats for women will leapfrog India into one of 64 countries around the world who have reserved seats for women in their national parliaments," UN Women India Country Rep-

resentative Susan Ferguson said.

"However, we hope that implementing such reservations will ultimately lead to achieving 50 per cent representation of women in parliaments across the globe," she added.

The government on Tuesday introduced the Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam, reserving 33 per cent seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, reviving a bill pending for 27 years and blending history, politics and societal imperatives on the first day in the new Parliament building. UN Women said the decision to table the bill reflects the country's commitment to gender equality and women-led development. Calling it a "bold" and "transformative" step, Ferguson underlined the importance of political representation for women's sustained empowerment and expressed hope that the proposed bill will be endorsed by all stakeholders, including MPs and the civil society. (PTI)

## RS: Oppn members criticise govt for low spending on scientific research

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** Opposition members in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday criticised the government over low spending on scientific research while calling for increasing the salaries of scientists.

In a discussion on 'India's glorious space journey marked by successful soft landing of Chandrayaan-3', members also called for the need to use science to solve the problems of the common people and improve their lives. Taking part in the discussion, V Sivadasan CPI(M) said over the years the number of space mission launches has come down.

"It is not due to lack of work from scientists. I believe it is due to lack of government funding," he said, adding India's spending on science and technology as a percentage of GDP was a meagre 0.7 per cent while countries like South Korea, the US and China spend far more.

"We are spending a larger amount on making statues than for science education. Expenditure of Chandrayaan-3 is ₹ 615 crore but the expenditure on statues might be ₹ 10,000 crore," Sivadasan said.

Abdul Wahab (IUMI) highlighted the need to increase the salaries of scientists who, he said, despite putting in long hours of work "are paid very less" as a result of which many people were choosing higher-paying jobs. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Dean removed amid protests

Other issues can be officially accepted in the next meeting of the senate on October 6. On Tuesday, students of the institute had written to President Droupadi Murmu seeking her help to resolve the escalating crisis in the premier institute. The students alleged in the letter that the actions and attitudes of the institute's administration has plunged the campus into a state of chaos, causing widespread distress among the student body which demands your urgent attention".

The students had also demanded that the college administration should lodge an FIR to ensure a proper investigation into the alleged suicide of the student and his family should be extended comprehensive financial, legal, security and emotional support. They also demanded that those students who are involved in the ongoing protest should be assured in writing that there will not be any disciplinary and academic action against them by NIT Silchar administration and legal action by Cachar administration.

The students also demanded the setting up of a high-level committee to bring academic reforms in the institute to reduce the burden on students and ensure their mental and physical well-being. The student, Kok Buker, from Arunachal Pradesh was found hanging in his hostel room on September 15.

The students had launched a protest since Friday night and had allegedly vandalised the residence of the dean (academics), following which police lathi-charged them and 40 students were injured. (PTI)

## Suicide in NIT-Silchar:

the deceased and fellow students and issue a clear and unequivocal clarification refuting all baseless allegations," the letter stated. The students also demanded the resignation of Roy, who they alleged had a past record of harassing several other students and was primarily responsible for the death of Buker. They also urged the director and the registrar to listen to the demands of the students' fraternity to normalise the situation. The students also demanded that the college administration should lodge an FIR to ensure a proper investigation into the alleged suicide. They also demanded that those students who are involved in the ongoing protest should be assured in writing that there will not be any disciplinary, academic and legal action against them by NIT Silchar and Cachar administration.

The students also demanded the setting up of a high-level committee to bring academic reforms in NIT Silchar to reduce the burden on students and ensure their mental and physical well-being. Buker was found hanging in his hostel room on September 15 following which police broke open the door to bring down the body even as students had prevented the authorities from entering the room. The students launched a protest since Friday night and had allegedly vandalised the residence of the dean (academics), following which the police lathi-charged them and 40 students were injured. The students said they will continue with their protest in a democratic manner and had staged a sit-in demonstration on Monday. (PTI)

## Yellow alert for state till

with heavy rainfall and thunderstorms is likely to occur in Assam during this period. The northeastern region has been placed on alert due to the combination of cyclonic circulation and increased moisture, which is expected to lead to significant precipitation in the area.

## AU gets new chancellor

of Education. A university chancellor is an honorary figurehead who represents the institution at various ceremonial and ambassadorial events. In central universities like Assam University, the chancellor is appointed by the President of India, who serves as the visitor of the university. (With inputs from PTI)

## Speaker expunges allegations

the intent of his submission made during a discussion on a motion on Tuesday, Mukul said that the deputy chief minister has misinterpreted the basic intent of the submission.

## Greater one-horned rhinos

South Africa continues to battle devastating poaching losses of its white rhinos as poachers target the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park and other reserves in the KwaZulu-Natal province, it added. One of the major concerns is that the status and whereabouts of 12 of the approximately 76 remaining Javan rhinos is unknown. Signs of Sumatran

rhinos are increasingly hard to find, creating more uncertainty about their population in the wild, the report states.

Across the globe, rhinos - once considered less threatened - have seemingly become the primary target of poaching efforts, which are orchestrated by highly organised, transnational criminal syndicates, the foundation noted.

It said India has suffered two poaching losses - one in Kaziranga National Park and one in Manas National Park - this year so far.

Indonesia's Ujung Kulon National Park, home to the world's only population of Javan rhinos, has seen an alarming increase in incursion attempts over the past year, the report states. Namibia, home to the largest number of black rhinos in the world, saw a devastating 93 per cent increase in rhino poaching from 2021 to 2022, according to the report. The report emphasises that addressing climate change is increasingly vital for rhino survival. Climate-related droughts in Africa are impacting both humans and wildlife, exacerbating conflicts over water resources. The resulting economic hardships could lead to increased poaching, further endangering rhinos.

"Competition over water resources may also cause increasing strife and disruption between communities and between humans and wildlife, bringing people in ever closer contact with rhinos," the report states. It further adds, "Poverty resulting from the loss of crops and livestock may lead to increased poaching as a way to earn income. Dry conditions could also cause an increase in wildfires, leading to a loss of habitat." At the other end of climate disruption, dramatically increased precipitation and longer monsoon periods in Asia could cause more direct deaths of rhinos and humans alike. These seasonal floods are already causing some greater one-horned rhinos to get stranded on temporary islands or drown, the foundation said in the report. (PTI)

## India to host conclave

"The Indian Army's involvement in the Indo-Pacific mirrors this thought. As we delve into the region's intricacies and our role within its development, the paramount importance of peace, security, and stability cannot be overlooked," he said.

"Since Independence, the Indian armed Forces, particularly the Indian Army, have made significant contributions in promoting peace and stability in the region," he said. Lt Gen Kumar said the Indian Army's commitment is not limited to security efforts alone but extends to humanitarian endeavours and relief efforts during natural disasters also. The theme of the conclave is "Together for Peace: Sustaining Peace and Stability in the Indo-Pacific Region".

"In the IPACC roundtable, the chiefs of Indo-Pacific Armies will address the issues of role of military diplomacy in mitigating crises", enhancing military collaboration and interoperability through training and the need for self-reliance by modern armies," Lt Gen Kumar said. Chief of Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande will have bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the event.

"This gathering serves as a testament to the pivotal role this region holds in the global landscape, both economically and strategically," the Vice Chief of Army Staff said. "As we deliberate on the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, we are reminded that the Indo-Pacific is not just a geographical expanse, but a stage where nations unite to shape the narrative of our shared future," he said. (PTI)

## Congress policies responsible

Sanatana Dharma, the Congress has maintained silence." Asked about the situation in Rajasthan, Sharma said chief minister Ashok Gehlot is nervous and announcing new schemes every few days. "If he was truly concerned for the welfare of the people, he should have launched these schemes long before the election," Sharma said. Assembly elections in Rajasthan are due later this year.

Recalling his days in the Congress, Sharma said it was a custom to distribute mobile phones, laptops and spices ahead of elections.

Sharma claimed that the rate of inflation in Assam is just 4 per cent while that in Rajasthan is 8.6 per cent and demanded an apology from the Congress government for the high fuel prices in the state. He also asked the Congress to stop the "drama" of rolling out relief. (PTI)

## LS nod to women's reservation

are from the OBC category, Shah said. He said over 40 per cent of its MLCs also belong to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The debate also saw rival political parties claim credit for women's reservation, with Gandhi saying that the bill was a dream of her late husband and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, who made attempts to grant reservation to women in local bodies in 1989 but failed, and BJP members asserting that former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee brought the bill twice only to be met with unruly scenes in the House. The bill was brought in 2008 during the coalition government led by Prime Minister Manmohan

Singh and passed by the Rajya Sabha, where it was introduced, in 2010. However, the bill could not be passed in the Lok Sabha due to political differences. It subsequently lapsed with dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.

AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi was the lone voice of opposition to the bill contending that the measure would provide reservation only to "savarna women", and exclude OBC and Muslim women who have little representation in Parliament. The AIMIM has two members in Lok Sabha.

On the issue of immediate implementation of the proposed law, Shah said such a move would lead to allegations of partiality and insisted that the matter be best left to the delimitation commission which would carry out the exercise in a transparent manner.

"If we do it and Wayanad becomes reserved you will say it is a political step. If Hyderabad becomes a reserved seat, Owaisi ji will say it is politically motivated," the home minister said. Wayanad in Kerala is represented in Lok Sabha by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Shah said the delimitation commission was an appropriate forum for demarcation of constituencies reserved for women as it is chaired by a retired Supreme Court judge and has representation from political parties.

Several members had demanded immediate rollout of women's reservation and criticised the provisions that said that the quotas will come into effect after the delimitation exercise undertaken after the first census after the commencement of the proposed law.

Speaking on the bill, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra said, "Women's reservation is dependent on two totally indeterminate dates, can there be a greater jumla? Forget 2024, this may not be possible in 2029."

Former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi said, "For the last 13 years, Indian women have been waiting for their political responsibilities, and now they are being asked to wait for a few more years -- two years, four years, six years, eight years."

Several opposition leaders said that the women's reservation bill was a panic reaction of the government after the formation of the opposition group INDIA.

"We support the bill. We want to empower all women. But this is nothing but a 'jumla'. This is nothing but a panic reaction (of the ruling dispensation) to the formation of the opposition group INDIA.... This government has no intention of empowering women. Their only intention is to capture power," Janata Dal (United) leader Rajiv Ranjan Singh said. NCP member Supriya Sule termed the legislation a "post-dated cheque" and demanded the government spend out the date and timeline for its implementation.

Akali Dal member Harsimrat Badal also targeted the BJP over its leaders being booked for crimes against women.

"Women wrestlers, who brought so many medals, have been sitting for months but the Babubali is still sitting here," she said, referring to former Wrestling Federation of India president and Lok Sabha member Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who has been accused of sexual harassment by several women wrestlers. Singh has denied the charges. Bahujan Samaj Party member Sangeeta Azad, Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader Nana Nageswara Rao and Shiv Sena member Bhavana Gawali wholeheartedly supported the bill.

Twenty-seven women members cutting across party lines participated in the debate on the bill, with BJP legislators coming out in support of it and the opposition members demanding its immediate implementation. At present, there are 82 women members in Lok Sabha, out of the total strength of 543. (PTI)

## India warns citizens in

seen such incidents," it said. The India-Canada ties were reeling under some strain for the last few months in view of increasing activities of the pro-Khalistani elements in the North American country. India believes the Trudeau government is not addressing its genuine concerns.

The MEA said the Indian high commission and the Consulates General in Canada will continue to be in contact with the Canadian authorities to ensure the safety and well being of the Indian community in Canada. "Given the deteriorating security environment in Canada, Indian students in particular are advised to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant," it said. It said the Indian nationals and students from India in Canada must also register with the High Commission of India in Ottawa or Consulates General of India in Toronto and Vancouver through their respective websites or on http://madad.gov.in. "Registration would enable the High Commission and the Consulates General to better connect with Indian citizens in Canada in the event of any emergency or untoward incident," the MEA said.

In an explosive statement in the House of Commons on Monday, Trudeau said that Canada was looking at "credible allegations potentially linking" Indian agents to the killing of Nijjar, a Canadian Khalistani terrorist. He was shot dead by two gunmen in Surrey on June 18. In a strongly-worded statement, the MEA on Tuesday trashed Trudeau's comments asserting that "such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity." (PTI)



# SRK-starrer 'Jawan' crosses ₹ 900 crore-mark at worldwide box office



**MUMBAI, Sept 20:** "Jawan", headlined by Shah Rukh Khan, has amassed ₹ 907.54 crore at the global box office in 13 days of its release.

Production house Red Chillies Entertainment on Wednesday shared the latest gross worldwide box office collection of the Atlee directorial on its official X page.

"And this is how the King ruled the box office!" the banner captioned the post.

"Jawan" hit the screens on September 7 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

Billed as an high-octane action thriller that outlines "the emotional journey of

a man who is set to rectify the wrongs in the society", the film stars Shah Rukh in the dual role of Vikram Rathore and his son Azad.

It also stars Nayanthara and Vijay Sethupathi with Deepika Padukone and Sanjay Dutt in special appearances.

Sanya Malhotra, Priyaman, Girija Oak, Sanjeeta Bhattacharya, Lehar Khan, Aaliyah Qureshi, Ridhi Dogra, Sunil Grover and Mukesh Chhabra round out the cast of the movie.

A Red Chillies Entertainment presentation, "Jawan" is produced by Gauri Khan and co-produced by Gaurav Verma. (PTI)

# 'HOSTEL DAZE' TO END WITH SEASON FOUR ON PRIME VIDEO



**MUMBAI, Sept 20:** Popular comedy-drama series "Hostel Daze" will conclude its run on Prime Video with the upcoming fourth season.

Created by The Viral Fever (TVF), the final instalment of the series will debut on the OTT platform on September 27, Prime Video said in a press release.

The show captures the lives of six college students and their hostel experiences. It features Ahsaas Channa,

Luv Vispute, Shubham Gaur, Nikhil Vijay, Ayushi Gupta and Utsav Sarkar.

"In the final season, everyone's favourite gang – Akanksha, Chirag, Rupesh aka Jaat, Jatin Kishore aka Jhantoo, Nabomita, and Ankit – enters the final year of college and gear up for the 'real world'," read the official season four description.

The six-episode season four is directed by Abhinav Anand. (PTI)

# Warner Bros Discovery bringing back 'Star vs Food' with spin-off season

**MUMBAI, Sept 20:** Warner Bros Discovery on Wednesday announced that culinary show "Star Vs Food" is returning with a spin-off season, hosted by celebrity chef Ranveer Brar.

Titled "Star vs Food Survival", the spin-off will premiere on Discovery Channel and streaming service discovery+ on October 9, a press release stated.

It will see Brar leading a star-studded cast on an adventurous journey through the vibrant flavours and culinary treasures of two unique Indian locales: Coorg and Spiti, a press release said.

The celebrity guests who will feature in the show include Suniel Shetty, Sanjay Dutt, Aparshakti Khurana, Mouni Roy, and Nakuul Mehta.

The celebrities will step out of their comfort zones and into the wild terrains, embarking on thrilling survival adventures amidst extreme conditions, according to the release.

"Each episode features Brar alongside a different celebrity as they explore India's uncharted culinary treasures, transforming wild finds into delectable dishes. From taking on adventurous tasks to crafting local delicacies in unspoiled wilderness, each episode promises excitement," it added.

Brar, who also acted in popular series "Modern Love Mumbai", said he is honoured to meet some of the brightest stars of Indian cinema and



collectively discover some of India's hidden culinary delights.

"This season, we venture beyond cooking to explore the breathtaking regions of Coorg and Spiti while having our guests take on challenges around the locality. It's a privilege to witness these incredible stars in the wilderness, and I can't wait to share their heartwarming narratives and mouthwatering dishes with all our viewers," the 45-year-old chef said in a statement.

Sai Abishek, Head of Factual and Lifestyle Cluster, South Asia, Warner Bros Discovery, said "Star vs Food Survival" will take the excitement and drama of culinary entertainment to new heights. "Our audiences have loved previous seasons because they saw our stars as

their authentic selves, grappling with the culinary challenges in the kitchen, which automatically created relatability. But this time, in this spin-off, we're taking them out of their comfort zones and into the wild terrains to test their survival skills," he added.

Warner Bros Discovery had launched "Star vs Food" in April 2021, which was followed by a second season in September the same year. (PTI)

# ASHUTOSH GOWARIKER, MONA SINGH'S NETFLIX SHOW 'KAALA PAANI' SET FOR OCTOBER 18 DEBUT

**MUMBAI, Sept 20:** Streaming service Netflix on Wednesday announced that "Kaala Paani", a survival drama series that marks filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker's return to acting, will premiere on its platform on October 18.

Set in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the series is described as a "grounded story about the fight for survival and questions audiences on how far they would go to survive", a press release stated.

The cast also includes Mona Singh, Amey Wagh, Sukant Goel, Arushi Sharma, Radhika Mehrotra, Vikas

Kumar, Chinmay Mandlekar and Poornima Indrajith.

"Kaala Paani" marks the second collaboration between Netflix and Posham Pa Pictures after the 2022 film "Jaadugar". The show comes from Sameer Saxena, who had directed "Jaadugar". He serves as a showrunner and co-director on the project alongside Amit Golani. It is penned by Biswapati Sarkar, Golani, Sandeep Saket and Nimisha Misra. Gowariker, who as an actor starred alongside Shah Rukh Khan in television series "Circus" as well as movies "Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa" and "Chamatkar", said he is excited to be a part of the OTT

project. "Kaala Paani" is a world of its own and I'm really excited to be a part of an intriguing Netflix project like this. Sameer, Amit and Biswapati have created a Series with a genre that will breathe new life into our audience's viewing experience.

"I am hoping that audiences will be just as intrigued as I was, and enjoy it as much as I did performing in it," Gowariker, the director of "Lagaan", "Swades" and "Jodhaa Akbar", said in a statement.

"Kaala Paani" marks the third series outing for Singh in 2023 after she featured in "Made in Heaven" season

two and "Kafas".

"Kaala Paani" is a show that will immerse you in a world where every moment, decision, and heartbeat holds the key to survival in an unforgiving environment. Participating in a project that keeps you perpetually on the edge is an absolute rush," Singh said.

"With a groundbreaking plot supported by the creative minds of Sameer, Amit and the Netflix team, this show provided me with the opportunity to stretch my limits as an actor, resulting in an incredibly exhilarating journey," she added. (PTI)

# BACARDI NH7 Weekender festival to return in December in Pune

**MUMBAI, Sept 20:** The 2023 BACARDI NH7 Weekender will be held from December 1 to 3 at Pune's Teerth Fields, the organisers announced Wednesday.

The 14th edition of the event, billed as India's multi-genre music, comedy, and gaming extravaganza, will pay an ode to the "spirit of community, discovery, and celebration, living up to its legacy of being more than a music festival", the organisers said in a press release.

The 2023 gala will witness "not just a more prominent global line-up but also the inclusion of Gen Z talents on the line up", it added.

"BACARDI NH7 Weekender 2023 will host over 45 homegrown and international artists over three days, with an eclectic assortment of genres such as metal, rock, pop, hip hop, electronic, funk, Punjabi & more

spanning across four stages," the release said.

The festival will also include an array of well-crafted and immersive attractions for people such as Ferris wheel rides, curated culinary delights, a flea market, art installations, and a gaming area.

Akshat Rathee, Co-Founder & Managing Director, NODWIN Gaming, said the aim with the festival is to create a sense of togetherness within the community through music, gaming, food and art.

"Our team, led by festival director Tej Brar is committed to crafting an experience for fans of all ages by bringing together an evolved lineup of eclectic international & homegrown acts across a multitude of genres.

"This edition of BACARDI NH7 Weekender will also see the introduc-

tion of an expansive gaming area, truly capturing the confluence of music and gaming, delivering a one-of-a-kind experience to our festival attendees," he added.

Sameeksha Uniyal, Senior Brand Lead, Brand BACARDI, India & South East Asia, said the company is committed to delivering experiences and creating moments that last a lifetime.

"We are thrilled to bring BACARDI NH7 Weekender 2023 back to our audiences for its 14th edition! Our aim is to create a space that transcends the borders of music, culture, inclusivity, and celebration, bringing people together to witness India's happiest music festival. We're truly excited to witness the love that BACARDI NH7 Weekender 2023 will garner from audiences this year," she said. (PTI)





# Ashwin vs Washington: Story behind an unexpected World Cup trial

**MOHALI, Sept 20:** A month and half back, Ravichandran Ashwin was eloquently explaining on his Tamil YouTube channel, why a talent like Tilak Varma should be seriously considered for the ODI World Cup.

One of India's greatest match-winners in Test cricket wouldn't possibly have envisaged that in six weeks time he would be summoned for a two-match trial against Washington Sundar -- nearly a decade and half junior to him.

Close selection calls are par for course when it comes to World Cup squads.

But just two weeks before the mega event, the Indian team management has called the two off-spinners for the three-match series against Australia to keep a ready back-up option in case Axar Patel's quadriceps tear doesn't heal on time.

It will be a virtual shoot-out and their performances on flat decks of Mohali and Rajkot will be monitored by Ajit Agarkar's selection committee.

"I think Ashwin will be slightly ahead now that a bowler of his stature has been called into the mix. I have always felt that Ashwin should have been in the mix from the time the team got into the ODI World Cup mode," said former chairman of selectors MSK Prasad, who was at helm when the 2019 squad was selected.

So, who will be his pick if Axar can't make it to the World Cup?



"Look, let us hope that Axar is fit for the final ODI in Rajkot. Because if he is fit, however well Ashwin or Washy bowl, it will be Axar who will retain his place. If he has been your pick ahead of these two, then you have to have him if he is good to go," Prasad set the record straight.

"But this is one of the most fascinating World Cup trials that you will get (to see). Question is: if they are looking at a 50-50 batting-bowling option then it is Washy. But if they are looking at a purely spin bowling option, then Ash holds an edge as far as I am concerned," Prasad said.

Harbhajan Singh, however, has

a contrarian viewpoint.

The 'Turbantor' believes that if the team management and selectors took an informed decision to summon Washington in Colombo for the Asia Cup final and even fielded him in the playing XI, then he should be the first-choice replacement.

"Washington bowls well in Powerplays. He is a brilliant fielder and last but not the least is a left-hander in that lower middle order. So, he does come as a package," said Harbhajan.

Another national selector, who refused to be named, had an interesting take on the Washington vs Ashwin debate.

"No offence meant but Axar's supposed hamstring injury could just be a blessing in disguise. The decision to have a right-arm finger spinner should have been taken long back and now, perhaps, at eleventh hour, they have got that opportunity," the selector, who has seen some pitched battles between previous captains and selection committees, said.

He then decoded the whole issue that the Indian team is facing.

"Not denying that Axar played two crucial knocks in the Asia Cup and one was in a winning cause against Sri Lanka. But just look at his bowling on a track that offered considerable turn. If Charith

Asalanka is picking up four wickets and you (Axar) are not even getting most of your deliveries to turn, it is a problem," added the former selector.

"Mind it, Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) is lethal when there is help off the surface and doubly so, if Ashwin is operating at the other end. Also, why did they call two off-spinners and not a like-for-like replacement. The next in line are Shabbaz Ahmed and Abhishek Sharma (left-arm spin and left-handed bat). These two are okay for Asian Games level but certainly not for the World Cup," he added.

"Also at the moment, they asked Ashwin to report for his fitness update at NCA (after the Super 4 against Pakistan, if one goes by his Instagram handle), you would know that he is in line and there is a clear dilemma in Rohit (Sharma), Rahul (Dravid) and Ajit (Agarkar)'s mind as to who is the best option.

"Is it a bits and pieces cricketer like Washy or someone like Ashwin, who can turn a game or two on Indian tracks? Hence they called both," the selector said.

Prasad agreed to the point.

"I believe some of the tracks will offer help for spinners. In Chennai, think about Ashwin's possible match-up against Steve Smith or a left-hander like David Warner. Yes, his successes came in the red ball (cricket) but just think about the possibilities," the former India stumper added. (PTI)

# Antim Panghal shocks reigning world champion Parrish, reaches semifinal



**BELGRADE (SERBIA), Sept 20:** Antim Panghal shocked reigning champion Olivia Dominique Parrish en route to the World Championship semifinals, raising hopes of locking a quota for the Paris Olympics even as other Indian contenders bit the dust in their respective categories, here Wednesday.

The two-time U20 champion Panghal slipped to a 0-2 deficit at the start of the bout against the American but edged her rival 3-2 in the women's 53kg opening round. She later outplayed Poland's Roksana Marta Zasina by technical superiority and followed that up with a 9-6 win over Russian Natalia Malysheva, who is competing as a neutral athlete.

The American swung into action with a quick take-down move from a right-leg attack. Unperturbed, the 19-year-old Indian began to defend well and foiled two similar attempts, not conceding any more points till the end of first period.

With her strong defense continuing, Panghal did not let Parrish make any attacking move with the result the American was put on clock.

Panghal got hold of the American's left leg and converted that into a successful take-down move to draw parity. She tried to get a leg lace but could not pull off the

move.

The American lost a point on passivity. Standing wrestling followed and Panghal defended her slender lead to walk out a winner.

She needed only one minute and 38 seconds to outplay Roksana Marta Zasina in her next bout, beating the Poland wrestler by technical superiority to move into the quarterfinals. After two take-down moves, Panghal pulled off leg-lace move with perfection to finish the bout in a jiffy.

In the quarterfinal, she led 6-0 but the Russian effected a comeback with a take-down and consecutive gut-wrench points to make it 6-6. On counter-attack Panghal took the lead again. She extended the lead with a left-leg attack which she converted into a take-down. About 30 seconds were still left in the bout but Panghal denied her rival.

However, Manisha (62kg), Priyanka (68kg) and Jyoti Berwal (72kg) have lost their bouts and exited the tournament.

All 10 men's free-style wrestlers have already exited the tournament without winning either an Olympic quota or a medal in non-Olympic categories.

All Indian athletes are competing under the UWW flag because the wrestling federation is suspended. (PTI)

# Tvesa sees lead cut to half as Ananya chases hard in 13th Leg of Hero WPGT

**GURUGRAM, Sept 20:** Tvesa Malik saw her lead cut by half but still held a comfortable three-shot margin over her nearest rival, Ananya Datar, after two rounds in the 13th leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour (WPGT) at the DLF Golf & Country Club. Tvesa was 5-under 139 for two rounds and Ananya, seeking her maiden Hero WPGT win, was at 2-under 142.

Tvesa had three bogeys between the eighth and the 13th as she carded 2-over 74.

At one stage, Ananya (71-71), who shot a second straight 71 to come within three shots, was just one behind after 11 holes at the challenging Gary Player layout, which will host India's biggest women's event -- the Hero Women's Indian Open next month.

The rest of the field was way behind. Khushi Khanijau (75-70) rose up the leaderboard to get to third at 1-over 145, while Neha Tripathi (71-75) slipped from overnight joint second to fourth at 2-over 146.

Tvesa dropped shots on the third and par-5 eighth before she found her first birdie of the day on the ninth to make the turn in 1-over 37.

Meanwhile, Ananya was 2-under for the front nine as she had three birdies and just one bogey in her 2-under 34. The lead between the two was now just three.

On the back nine, when Tvesa bogeyed the par-4 11th and Ananya birdied the same hole, the lead was just one shot.

The duo bogeyed the par-4 13th and Ananya dropped a shot on the 14th to help Tvesa move two strokes ahead. A birdie on the par-4 17th made the lead a handy three for Tvesa as Ananya parred the last four holes. (PTI)

# After 1-5 hammering by China, India face Bangladesh in must-win Asian Games football match

**HANGZHOU, Sept 20:** Battered by hosts China in their opening match after playing without any training session, India will be up against a tricky Bangladesh side in their must-win group match in the Asian Games football competition here on Thursday.

A rag-tag Indian team reached here late Monday evening and played its first match without proper rest and sleep and was hammered 1-5 by China on Tuesday.

Igor Stimac's team needs to beat Bangladesh in its second Group A game to remain in the fray for the knock-outs.

A loss on Thursday may not straightway knock India out of reckoning as the best third-placed teams from the six groups can also advance to the Round of 16, but that will leave the team with a lot of uncertainties in the final game.

Qualifying as one of the best four third-place teams could also set India up against tougher sides in the pre-quarterfinals.

Bangladesh have never been an easy side for



India in any level and they will also be desperate for a win after losing their opening match 0-1 to Myanmar.

India will, however, be strengthened after the arrival of defender Konsam Chinglensana Singh, who could not travel with the team before due to a visa delay. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) arranged 'express visa' -- which could be procured in two-three days --

for him and he has arrived here separately.

It will not be easy for the Sunil Chhetri-led side to beat Bangladesh and log its first win of the competition as the team was assembled at the last minute with very few known faces after the Indian Super League clubs refused to release their players.

The Indians played on an even keel in the first 45 minutes but they caved in the second half, exposing the gulf in quality between the two teams.

Stimac himself admitted after the China match that he has brought a third-rung team with him.

"This is our third or fourth-choice team here. I would love to play against China with my best team. Then it would be totally opposite, but the players that are here are heroes," the Croatian coach said.

"What they went through, with travelling problems, arriving here very late, not having time to recover and handling the first 45 minutes in a brilliant way. (PTI)

# Punjab FC sign Greek defender Dimitrios Chatziisaia

**MOHALI, Sept 20:** Punjab FC on Wednesday announced the signing of Greek defender Dimitrios Chatziisaia for the Indian Super League 2023-24 season.

The 30-year-old Chatziisaia has joined the ISL side having played for clubs in Greece, Turkey and Belgium earlier.

Chatziisaia started his youth career with Omania Stavroupolis and played

for Greek clubs Vatanikios FC, AO Glyfada FC and Chania FC as a senior.

He represented Panionis and later played for PAOK FC for three seasons, with whom he also won the Greek Cup.

Chatziisaia also played for the Turkish club Caykur Rizespor and went to Belgium on loan to play for Cercle Brugge.

His last stint was with Greek club Atromitos FC where he played 55

matches and scored one goal.

"Chatziisaia becomes the final foreigner in Punjab FC's roster and will be a key member of Staikos's (Vergetis) team for the season ahead," the club said in a statement.

The football director of Punjab FC Nikolaos Topoliatas said, "Dimitrios joins us having played in various countries of Europe, his experience will help to solidify our defence." (PTI)



# Men's hockey team undergoes shift in philosophy, emphasis on defensive structure for Asiad

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** The Indian men's hockey team is undergoing a philosophy shift, moving away from the traditional attacking style of play with new head coach Craig Fulton emphasising on having a sound defense.

Defence has always been the Indian team's weakness. Playing with an attacking mindset the strikers and midfielders move forward, leaving the defence vulnerable.

However since the time he took over the top job in April, Fulton has made it clear that chinks in defence are non-negotiable for him.

"It's a little bit of philosophy change, we really want to improve our defence and counter-attack to win and that's the philosophy," Fulton told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"And also the mental side of the things, when the team and individuals are struggling, we are working on finding out ways to get the job done," Fulton said.

The South African added that working on the mental side of things is also top priority for them as a gold-medal finish would fetch them a direct berth at next year's Paris Olympics.

For this, World Cup-winning Indian cricket team's former mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton will be engaging with the men's

hockey team during the business end of the Asian Games.

Upton, who was one of the key members of the Indian cricket team's support staff en-route to the 2011 World Cup triumph, has already conducted three mental conditioning sessions at the National Camp in Bengaluru.

"Yes, it's (the sessions with Upton) been very very helpful but it's still early days. It's about understanding how the team works and what makes the players tick from the mental perspective, to find out where we are as a team and where we want to go and what we need to work on. So that's where Paddy has come on."

"It's just a process to get the outcome. It's about when you start and where you want to be as a team. That was really engaging, there were lots of lessons learnt from the cricket team's 2011 World Cup journey along the way."

"And Paddy will be there with us at the Asian Games for the last week of the tournament," he added.

Fulton, under whose guidance India won the Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai last month, is pretty clear about his present target -- to become number one in Asia by winning the Asian Games gold and qualify for Paris Olympics.



"I have only been here for 4 months with the team where we had three really good competitions and things are going really well. At the end of the day we will now get tested in the Asian Games. And we just want to qualify (for Paris Olympics)."

"India has a rich history of Asian Games and Asian Champions Trophy. When I first joined I wanted India to be the No.1 team in Asia. We have to know where we are, where we need to improve and ultimately we want to qualify di-

rectly for Paris through Asian Games, that's the realistic and ultimate goal," he said.

Fulton said there is no alternative to training to get better everyday and achieve success at the global stage.

"I think you have to break it down when it comes to every day thing, what you do in training, how you approach training. We try to put our best in training and the players want to win in training when no one is watching us."

"We try to really create a very

competitive environment and at the same time you have to know where you are in order to improve areas that probably have let you down before," he said.

"So whatever the cycle of the team it is has really done well in Tokyo, had a bit of disappointment in the World Cup but now we are on the up. We know we are really doing well and need to improve all the time," Fulton added.

India will open their Asian Games campaign against Uzbekistan on Sunday. (PTI)



# Barca, Man City and PSG start Champions League with wins

**BERLIN, Sept 20:** Barcelona's João Félix, Manchester City's Julián Álvarez and Paris Saint Germain's Kylian Mbappé all scored Tuesday as their teams made winning starts in the Champions League.

But the wildest celebrations of the night came in Rome, where Lazio goalkeeper Ivan Provedel headed in the team's equalizer in the fifth minute of injury time to earn a 1-1 draw with Atlético Madrid. It was the last action of the game.

As the group stage began without either Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo for the first time since 2002-03, a 16-year-old almost scored on his competition debut for Barcelona.

Lamine Yamal struck the side netting, then saw an effort saved by Antwerp goalkeeper Jean Butez after coming on as a substitute in Barcelona's 5-0 win over the Belgian team.

Celtic finished with nine players in a 2-0 loss at Feyenoord that stretched the Scottish champion's winless streak in the group stages to 11 games.

**CITY HAS TO COME FROM BEHIND**  
Manchester City started its title defense by coming from behind to beat Red Star Belgrade 3-1 at home.

City had 22 shots on goal in the first half yet found itself 1-0 down at the break after Mirko Ivanic played Ghana winger Osman Bukari through to score in first-half injury time.

The linesman raised his flag, but a VAR check confirmed Bukari was onside, setting



off celebrations among the 3,000 traveling supporters.

Alvarez equalized right after the break, finishing from a narrow angle after going past the goalkeeper, and it seemed only a matter of time before the second goal arrived as the home team pushed for more.

The otherwise outstanding goalkeeper Omri Glazer was at fault when it came on the hour mark, missing the ball as he went to punch away a free kick from Alvarez that sailed inside the far post.

Spanish midfielder Rodrigo sealed the win in the 73rd.

Leipzig defeated Swiss team Young Boys

3-1 away in the other Group G game.

**BARCELONA FLYING**

Antwerp endured a chastening evening in Barcelona, where Jelle Bataille's own goal in the 22nd minute came after João Félix had already scored and set up Robert Lewandowski for another.

There was no respite for the visitors, with Gavi adding another in the second half before Félix grabbed his second.

Porto defeated Ukrainian champion Shakhtar Donetsk 3-1 away in the other Group H game. Shakhtar is playing its home games in Hamburg, Germany because of the Russian invasion of its country.

**PSG OFF THE MARK**

Mbappé scored a penalty to break the deadlock as Paris Saint-Germain earned a 2-0 win over Borussia Dortmund. Achraf Hakimi scored against his former team to seal what was a deserved win.

Dortmund midfielders Marcel Sabitzer and Marius Wolf both left the field with injuries. AC Milan was held to 0-0 draw by Newcastle in the other Group F game.

**GOALKEEPER HAS LAST WORD**

Atlético coach Diego Simeone was booked for protesting on his return to the Stadio Olimpico and Lazio, the club he won four trophies with as a player.

Young Atlético midfielder Pablo Barrios put the visitors ahead in what was a heated game, but the biggest drama came at the end, when Provedel left his area to add support in attack and managed to score with a header to Luis Alberto's cross.

Provedel didn't know where to run as the stadium erupted around him.

Also in Group E, Feyenoord had two goals ruled out by VAR for offside and saw a penalty saved in its 2-0 win over Celtic.

Calvin Stengs broke the deadlock in first half injury time but the home team had to wait till the 76th minute for Iran midfielder Alireza Jahanbakhsh to get the second goal.

Celtic defender Gustaf Lagerbielke was sent off with his second yellow card as he conceded the penalty, and substitute Odin Thiago Holm followed him off with a straight red for a dangerous lunge at Mats Wieffer. (AP)

## Ronaldo held scoreless as Al Nassr opens ACL campaign with 2-0 win vs Persepolis



**TEHRAN, Sept 20:** Cristiano Ronaldo was held scoreless in his first game in the Asian Champions League as his Al Nassr team beat Iranian club Persepolis 2-0 in Tehran on Tuesday.

The game was played inside an empty Azadi Stadium after Persepolis was ordered to play without fans for one game by the Asian Football Confederation after Indian club Goa complained about an offensive social media post made by the club in 2021.

That meant Iranian fans were deprived of the chance of seeing Ronaldo and the Saudi Arabian team's other big-money signings like Sadio Mane and Marcelo Brozovic. But both goals came from Saudi Arabian players.

Abdulrahman Ghareeb opened the scoring on the hour-mark and defender Mohammed Qassem doubled the lead 12 minutes later, with his first goal for the Riyadh club. Ronaldo, who tops the scoring chart in the Saudi Pro League, had a chance to score after 20 minutes but headed straight at the Persepolis goalkeeper when unmarked at the edge of the six-yard box.

While the atmosphere in the stadium was quiet, Ronaldo's presence had caused considerable local excitement on Monday. Hundreds of local fans stormed into Al Nassr's hotel hoping to

get a glimpse of the 38-year-old Portugal star as they chanted his name.

It was so chaotic that Al Nassr, which is still searching for a first Asian championship, was unable to train.

This was the first visit of a Saudi Arabian team to Iran since 2015, after diplomatic relations were restored in June in a deal brokered by China.

The victory takes Al Nassr to the top of Group E above Al-Duhail of Qatar and Tajikistan's Istiklol, who drew 0-0. Only the 10 group winners and the six best runners-up in the 40-team tournament will progress to the second round.

Japanese champion Yokohama F. Marinos lost 4-2 at home to Incheon United in the South Korean team's first Champions League game.

South Korean champion and two-time continental winner Ulsan Hyundai Horang-i defeated BG Pathum of Thailand 3-1. Japan's Kawasaki Frontale won 1-0 at Malaysian powerhouse Johor Darul Tazim while China's Shandong Taishan picked up a 3-1 win against Kaya of the Philippines.

On Monday, Al Hilal and its star forward Neymar were held to a 1-1 draw by Uzbekistani club Navbahor. (AP)

## Southee to undergo surgery on thumb, call on WC availability to be taken next week



**AUCKLAND, Sept 20:** New Zealand veteran fast bowler Tim Southee is set to undergo a surgery on his injured right thumb on Thursday and a call on his availability for the World Cup in India will be taken next week.

Southee broke and dislocated his right thumb while attempting to take a catch in the fourth ODI against England last week.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead is hopeful the 34-year-old seamer will recover in time for the side's opening game in the mega event on October 5.

"We've got our fingers crossed the surgery goes well for Tim," Stead said.

"He'll have some pins or screws inserted in his right thumb and, providing the procedure is a success, it will be a matter of ensuring Tim can tolerate the pain and manage the actual wound when returning to train and play."

Ahead of their opener against defending champions England, New Zealand are scheduled to take on Pakistan and South Africa in the World Cup warm up matches on September 29 and October 2.

"Our opening game of the World Cup against England is not until Thursday October 5 in Ahmedabad, so that would be our logical target in terms of his availability. (PTI)

## Michal Probiez succeeds Fernando Santos as coach of Poland's national soccer team

**WARSAW, Sept 20:** Michal Probiez has been appointed as coach of Poland, the president of the national soccer federation said on Wednesday.

Probiez, who is promoted from the under-21 team, takes over from Portuguese Fernando Santos.

Santos was fired last week with Poland fourth in its five-team European Championship qualifying group.

Santos, who led his native Portugal to the Euro 2016 title, was dismissed after almost nine months in the job.

"The Poland team coach is Michal Probiez," federation president Cezary Kulesza wrote on



X, formerly Twitter. "This is the best possible choice. I wish the new coach good luck."

Probiez, who will be 51 on Sunday, previously coached a string of teams including Greek side Aris Salonika and Polish clubs Gornik Zabrze and Widzew Lodz.

A news conference with Kulesza and Probiez is due to take place in Warsaw at noon local time.

Poland is behind leader Albania, Czech Republic and Moldova in Euro Group E qualifying after losing three of its five games, despite three goals from Robert Lewandowski.

Poland next plays rock-bottom Faroe Islands on Oct 12. (AP)

## B'desh cricketers hungry to gain pre-World Cup boost in ODI series vs New Zealand

**MIRPUR, Sept 20:** After failing to reach this month's Asia Cup final, Bangladesh is hungry to gain a much-needed boost ahead of the 50-over World Cup by beating New Zealand in the three-match ODI series that starts on Thursday. Bangladesh rested a host of key players for the Asia Cup, captain Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Najmul Hossain and Towhid Hridoy among them, in order to keep them fresh and injury-free, although it has still not named its squad for next month's World Cup.

New Zealand has sent only five World Cup-bound players to Bangladesh, stand-in skipper Lockie Ferguson, Trent Boult, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi and Will Young.

Tamim Iqbal, who stepped down as ODI captain last month, is back for Bangladesh after recovering from a back problem. Mahmudullah, axed after the England series in March following poor form, also returns.

Liton Das, who leads the side in Shakib's absence, said: "There are many things to achieve from the series. The first thing is to win, that will be a big achievement ahead of

the World Cup.

"We won't play to show just individual brilliance. A five-wicket haul or a century doesn't matter if the team doesn't win."

Ferguson, yet to play on Bangladesh soil, believes conditions will test his New Zealand team to the limit.

"Bangladesh is very good in home conditions and is a huge challenge here," he said. "It's important for us just to focus on what's coming up tomorrow and try to adapt as quickly as possible to the conditions. Some of us haven't played here so we'll have to adapt quicker."

New Zealand hasn't won an ODI match in the country since 2008 and Ferguson said the input of former Bangladesh bowling coach Shane Jurgensen would be invaluable.

"We're leaning on the knowledge of the guys who have been here previously and leaning on Jurgensen about how to play the game, construct our innings with the bat and try to defend it with the ball, or vice versa," he said. (AP)

## Sreejesh eyes direct berth to Olympics through Asiad, wants to change colour of medal in Paris



**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** At 35, PR Sreejesh is standing at the twilight of his career and the Hangzhou Asian Games is most likely his last appearance at the continental showpiece.

But the veteran Indian hockey goalkeeper is determined to win the gold at Hangzhou to give himself a chance to earn a direct entry to the Paris Olympics next year, and do better there winning a yellow-coated medal.

Eight-time champions India had won a

historic bronze at the Tokyo Olympics after 41 years beating Germany 5-4 in the play-off match.

"Obviously, next year's Olympics is my main target and I want to change the colour of my medal there. But having said that, we need to qualify through the Asian Games (to Olympics) so that we get ample time to prepare ourselves," Sreejesh told PTI.

Sreejesh reiterated that age is just a number for a sportsperson and gave the

example of tennis great Novak Djokovic in this regard.

"I am right now taking one game, one tournament at a time. As (Novak) Djokovic said, 35 is the new 25. So, I'm definitely there," he said.

Having handled the duties under the goal post of the Indian hockey team for more than 17 years, Sreejesh wants to groom the next generation of goalkeepers in India.

"Krishan (Bahadur Pathak) and me have been donning the goalkeeping responsibilities for a long time. We share a good rapport. There are upcoming goalkeepers like Suraj Karkera and Pawan Malik who are good and will only get better with time.

"I just want to ensure that there is enough back-up," he said.

The Indian men's hockey team goalkeepers, including Sreejesh, underwent some sessions under Dutchman Dennis van de Pol in the lead up to the Asian Games, which has been very helpful according to the veteran custodian.

"Dennis van de Pol is a good coach. It has really been beneficial to work with him. His experience and vast knowledge about goalkeeping has been very useful for us.

"He has deep knowledge about his skills and expertise and it has definitely helped us in all aspects of goalkeeping qualities," he signed off. (PTI)

### Harness Partnership to Defeat Dengue

## DENGUE SPREADS THROUGH AEDES MOSQUITOES

LOOK OUT FOR SYMPTOMS OF DENGUE

<b>High Fever</b>	<b>Joint Pain</b>
<b>Headache</b>	<b>Redness of the Eyes</b>
<b>Pain Behind Eyes</b>	<b>Rash on Skin</b>
<b>Muscular Pain</b>	<b>Bleeding from Gums</b>

STEPS TO PREVENT DENGUE

- Make sure there is no water stagnating in and around your house, in open containers, discarded coconut shells, unused flower pots etc.
- Always use a mosquito net (LLIN) while sleeping, even during the day. Dengue mosquitoes bite during the day.
- Protect yourself from mosquito bites by wearing long sleeved clothes and use age appropriate repellents like electric mats, coils etc.
- If you feel any dengue-like symptoms, consult a doctor immediately, Do not take medicines without a doctor's consultation.

Fill open pit with soil and do not allow water to stagnate

Cover overhead tanks

Avoid water collection in flower pots

Avoid water collection in tyres

Avoid water collection in broken pots and utensils

Wear full sleeves clothes

Use Mosquito net while sleeping

Prevent incubation of mosquitoes inside and outside your home. Save yourself from Dengue.

Treatment of Dengue is available in all Government Hospitals. Laboratory facilities for testing Dengue is available free of cost in all District Hospitals and Medical Colleges.

Call 104 for Health related queries | Call 108 for Ambulance Service | For any help, contact ASHA/ANM

(NHM/D/2023-24/1242)