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WORLD



- US provided Canada intelligence on Nijjar's killing: NYT
- Russian airstrikes kill 2, wound 3 in southern Ukraine

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NATION



- Speed and scale of infrastructure development matching aspirations of 140 crore Indians: PM
- 'Probably winning Telangana, certainly winning MP, Chhattisgarh, very close' in Rajasthan'

## Aids and assistive devices distributed to Divyangjans in Karbi Anglong



**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Sept 24:** In association with the Department of Women and Child Development of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Karbi Anglong district administration, the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India

(ALIMCO), directed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, organised a Samajik Adhikarita Shivir (Social Empowerment Camp) on Sunday. The event aimed to distribute aids and assistive devices to (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## PM's monthly Mann ki Baat broadcast India-Middle East-Europe corridor will become basis of world trade for centuries: PM Modi

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Sunday that the India-Middle East-Europe corridor will become a basis of world trade for the coming hundreds of years and history will remember that it was envisioned in India.

In his monthly Mann ki Baat broadcast, Modi recalled the "Silk route", an ancient trade corridor used by India when it was a prosperous and great trading power, and said the country made the suggestion of the India-Middle East-Europe economic corridor at the recent G20 Summit.

"This corridor is going to become the basis of world trade for hundreds of years to come, and history will always remember that this



corridor was initiated on Indian soil," he said.

The successful summit after the success of India's Chandrayaan-3 mission doubled every citizen's happiness, he said while noting

that the two accomplishments have figured most in the messages he has received from people.

India's leadership was acknowledged by the world as it succeeded in making the African Union a

member of the G20, he said.

Bharat Mandapam, the venue which hosted the G20 Summit, has become a "celebrity", the Prime Minister said, noting that people have been clicking selfies with the state-of-the-art conference hall.

With Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary falling on October 2, he said no one can forget the sight of world leaders paying homage at his memorial during the G20 Summit, a recognition as to how his ideas remain relevant globally.

Modi expressed happiness at many cleanliness programmes being planned to mark his birth anniversary, with the Union government departments launching 'Swachhta hi sewa' programme.

Noting that a big cleanliness

programme will be organised at 10 am on October 1, he urged people to join the exercise in their neighbourhood or any public place.

It will be a true tribute to Gandhi ji, he said and asked people to buy some khadi products.

Noting that the World Tourism Day falls on September 27, he said tourism is said to create maximum employment with minimum investment, adding that goodwill matters a lot in drawing tourists.

India's goodwill has risen over the last few years, he said, and it has only gone up further with the G20 meetings as over one lakh foreign delegates travelled to different parts of the country and witnessed its diversity, cuisines and heritage. "The wonderful (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Three held

**SILCHAR:** Three persons, hailing from Manipur, have been arrested in Assam for allegedly looting shops and a petrol pump, using firearms, in different parts of Cachar district, a senior police officer said here on Sunday. The accused persons have been engaged in robberies in various parts of the district and arrested on Saturday, Cachar additional superintendent of police Subrata Sen told reporters. During an initial investigation, it has been found that all of them are residents of Manipur's Kangpokpi district and they have been displaced from their homes following an ethnic strife in the neighbouring state. "They had initially taken shelter in a camp in Mizoram's Kolasib district. Later, they entered Assam and got involved in illegal activities here," Sen claimed. Two firearms and ammunition have also been recovered from their possession, Sen said. During the last two months, they robbed cash worth ₹ 3-4 lakh and other valuable items from several shops, including wine and hardware outlets and petrol pumps, the police officer claimed.

#### Heroin seized

**GUWAHATI:** Nearly 300 grams of heroin worth around ₹ 2.4 crore was seized from three persons from various parts of Assam, police said on Sunday. The accused were arrested from Karbi Anglong, Kamrup Metropolitan and Bongaigaon districts, a senior official said. In the first case, police set up a check-point in an area under Borpatra police station in Karbi Anglong district in the wee hours following a tip-off. "Around 177 grams of heroin was seized from a woman who was travelling in a bus. She had concealed the narcotics in 14 soap boxes," the official added. Guwahati Police too carried out an anti-drugs operation and arrested a youth from Noonmati area. "Nearly 12 grams of heroin was found on him," the official said. In another case, Bongaigaon district police arrested a person from Sonaikhula village in Manikpur and seized 10 soap cases containing 107 grams of heroin, he added.

### Himanta inaugurates Batadrava Thaan beautification projects

## New law to be enacted to prevent land sale and purchase around Batadrava Thaan: CM

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday marked the 575th birth anniversary of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev by inaugurating several infrastructure projects at Batadrava Thaan, with a total cost of ₹ 22 crore. These projects include Satriya Sora, a conference hall, the Damodar Ata Tourist Guest House, and an office complex. The foundation stones for these projects were laid on April 16, 2021, and their construction was completed in just 17 months.

During the event, chief minister Sarma paid tribute to Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev and highlighted the government of Assam's commitment to the development of Batadrava Thaan. He further announced plans to beautify the Thaan premises further by enhancing the ponds, creating parking spaces, and providing conveniences such as restrooms for devotees.



Chief minister Sarma also stated that a law would be enacted soon to prevent the sale and purchase of land within an 8-km radius of Batadrava Thaan premises to non-indigenous communities.

"The district commissioner has been

instructed not to approve land transactions involving non-indigenous communities until this law is implemented," the chief minister said. Regarding developmental activities outside the Thaan premises, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## River Cleaning Drive observed in Diphu

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Sept 24:** In celebration of World River Day, the Diphu Municipal Board, in collaboration with the district administration of Karbi Anglong, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), ALF of Day-NULM, and CMMU Diphu under SBM, initiated a Diphu river cleaning drive. The cleaning drive commenced at 7 am and saw participation from various individuals and officials, including MLA of Diphu Bidyasing Englang, Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) Johnny Timming, and district commissioner Madhumita Bhagawati, ACS.

The cleaning efforts focused on the Diphu river and the surrounding market area. MLA Bidyasing Englang emphasized the importance of keeping rivers clean, citing their various uses, including for drinking water. He noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

initiative to maintain clean rivers should be upheld and that creating awareness among the public is essential to achieve this goal.

"River water is used for various purposes. It is used for cleaning of utensils, washing of cloths and for bathing. It is also used for drinking purposes. Taking the message of Prime Minister Modi

of keeping river clean, we need to create awareness to the general public of keeping river clean free from pollution," the MLA said.

District commissioner Bhagawati highlighted the pollution in the Diphu river caused by the indiscriminate dumping of waste, including plastics and polythene bags. She stressed the collective responsibility of keeping the Diphu river clean and pollution-free, aligning with the Swachh Abhiyan (Clean India campaign) and World River Day objectives.

## NIT-Silchar appoints new dean of academics

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** In response to a week-long protest on campus following a student's suicide, Professor Brinda Bhowmik has been appointed as the new Dean of Academics at NIT-Silchar, replacing BK Roy, according to officials on Sunday.

Professor Bhowmik, who teaches in the Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, will assume the role of Dean (Academics) from September 25. Her appointment is provisional for two years from the date of taking charge or until further notice. The protests erupted on campus after a third-year student from Arunachal Pradesh was found dead in his hostel room on September 15. Students (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Scindia inaugurates new terminal building at Tezu Airport in Arunachal

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** The Union minister for civil aviation and steel, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, inaugurated the newly-developed infrastructure at the Tezu Airport in Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh on Sunday.

Tezu airport is the fourth in the state after Donyi Polo, Pasighat and Ziro airports and 17th in the north-east.

The minister said that in the last 65 years, there were only 74 airports in the country but in the last nine years of BJP government rule at the Centre, 75 new airports have been constructed.

Scindia expressed gratitude to the people of Arunachal Pradesh for their support in the state's development. He highlighted Arunachal Pradesh as the future 'Gateway of



Bharat' and praised the region's horticultural exports, which are reaching destinations as far as Germany, London, and Singapore.

The Tezu Terminal building, constructed at a cost of ₹ 170 crore on 212 acres of land, with a 1500-

meter runway, is fully equipped to handle ATR-72 type aircraft. Tezu is now connected to Imphal, Dibrugarh, and Guwahati.

The minister also announced that three new air routes would be operationalised (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

'The collaboration for the project was initiated by Sauramangala Foundation founder Nagakarthish'

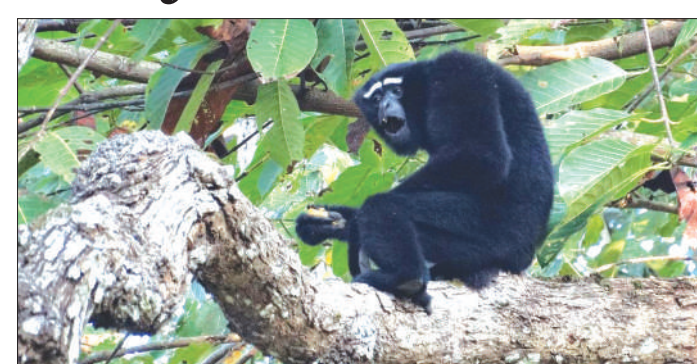
## Meghalaya coffee producer to help in conservation of Western Hoolock Gibbon

**SHILLONG, Sept 24:** Two tribal communities involved in the conservation of the endangered Western Hoolock Gibbon in Meghalaya have got a shot in the arm with a local coffee and chocolate producer announcing to support their cause.

The Western Hoolock Gibbon is called Huro by the Garo community while people in eastern Khasi-Jaintia Hills call it Huleng.

Dasmarlin Majaw, the proprietor of Smoky Falls Coffee, told PTI that their firm will help in the conservation of the endangered ape found in the forests of the state.

"We are officially launching the conservation initiative at the World Coffee Conference and Expo, a world-class event for coffee and coffee producers, in Bengaluru on Tuesday. We are excited to be working on something new," she said.



The collaboration for the conservation project was initiated by Sauramangala Foundation founder Nagakarthish, whose concept of combining Meghalaya's finest coffee/cocoa and conservation efforts of the endangered ape will stand to benefit both parties, she said.

Majaw said she could not relate

to it at first until she paid a visit to the Huro Foundation project in Garo Hills last month that felt strongly for the apes.

The Huros are found in several forests of Garo Hills and there are a few of them at the Sonja Wildlife Rescue Centre, where they were brought after rescuing them from

people who had held the apes as captive pets.

The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council also had formally identified a village wildlife reserve in Selbalgre village, about 20 km from Tura in West Garo Hills district, which is considered as a habitat for the Huros. Around 300 km east of Selbalgre, communities in Hima Malai Sohmat (Malai Sohmat chieftainship) in East Khasi Hills district are also working on the conservation of the Hulengs (local name for Hoolock Gibbons).

Malai Sohmat dorbar had in 2019 banned hunting and killing of Hulengs in the community forests in about five villages. Since then, these communities have been trying to find ways not to cut trees and instead find alternative livelihoods through (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Manipur CM holds talks with BRO officials over plans to fence India-Myanmar border



**IMPHAL, Sept 24:** Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Sunday held a meeting with officials of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to discuss plans to erect fencing along a section of the India-Myanmar border.

The meeting comes a day after the CM told reporters that his government has urged the Union Home Ministry to cancel the free movement regime along the India-Myanmar border and complete its fencing.

The free movement regime allows people residing close to both sides of the India-Myanmar border to venture 16 km deep into each other's territory without any document.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, the CM said: "Held a meeting with the officials of BRO and deliberated the plan to begin construction of an additional 70 km of border fencing along the Indo-Myanmar border. I was joined by the Chief Secretary, DGP & officials from the Home Department."

"In view of the rise in illegal immigration and drugs smuggling from the neighbouring country, safeguarding our porous borders has become an urgent necessity," Singh added. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



# RBI likely to keep interest rate unchanged as inflation still high: Experts

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** The Reserve Bank is likely to maintain status quo on policy rates for the fourth time in a row as its bi-monthly monetary policy review meeting early next month, as retail inflation continues to remain high and the US Federal Reserve has decided to keep a hawkish stance for some more time, according to experts.

The Reserve Bank had raised the benchmark repo rate to 6.5 per cent on February 8, 2023 and since then it has retained the rates at the same level in view of the stubbornly high retail inflation and certain global factors including elevated crude oil prices in the international market.

The Reserve Bank Governor-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting is scheduled for October 4-6, 2023. The last meeting of the MPC, the highest rating-setting panel, was in August.

"We do expect the RBI to hold on to a status quo position this time as inflation is still high and liquidity tight. In fact, going by RBI forecast on inflation, it would be above 5 per cent in Q3 too, which will ensure that the status quo prevails for the calendar year for sure and probably Q4 too," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda.

Sabnavis further said there are uncertainties relating to Kharif crop, especially on pulses, which can increase prices.

"The comfort is that there is less concern on growth which is on target," he added.

Although the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation eased a bit to 6.83 per cent in August from 7.44 per cent in the preceding month in July, it remained above the Reserve Bank's comfort level of 6 per cent.

It may be mentioned that the government has mandated the RBI to keep inflation at 4 per cent with 2 per cent margin on either side.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA Limited said the headline CPI inflation is expected to ease to 5.3-5.5 per cent in September 2023 from 6.8 per cent in August 2023, benefitting from the halving of the average price of tomatoes as well as a favourable base.

"... We expect the CPI inflation to ease to 5.6 per cent in Q3 FY2024 and further to 5.1 per cent in Q4 FY2024, amid upside risks to food inflation on account of the impact of uneven and sub-par monsoons and low reservoir levels on Kharif yields and Rabi sowing, respectively," she said.

Nayar said ICRA expects the MPC to remain on hold in October 2023 policy, while continuing to



demonstrate caution amid a cloudy outlook for food inflation and elevated crude oil prices.

The Reserve Bank has projected CPI inflation at 5.4 per cent for 2023-24, with Q2 at 6.2 per cent, Q3 at 5.7 per cent and Q4 at 5.2 per cent, with risks evenly balanced. CPI inflation for Q1, 2024-25 is projected at 5.2 per cent.

On his expectations from the next bi-monthly monetary policy, Sanjay Bhutani, Director, Medical Technology Association of India (MTAI) said the RBI has gone along with the market sentiment of retaining the benchmark interest rate at 6.5 per cent for quite some time now.

However, it's time for the central bank to contemplate a reduction of the interest rate with the objective of boosting growth, he said.

"...if that is not possible in view of high retail inflation and the hawkish stance of the Federal Reserve, the medical technology sector, which is reeling under the burden of high debt, does expect the RBI to continue with the pause and at the same time provide some firm indication of easing rates in the near future," Bhutani opined.

Sandeep Bagla, CEO, Trust Mutual Fund was of the opinion that the environment for interest rates has worsened considerably from

MPC's last policy review in August. In the US and in India, the economy has shown resilient growth, and inflation numbers have risen beyond comfort levels.

"While food prices have softened, crude oil prices have climbed up, thereby raising inflationary expectations as evidenced by sharp rise in US treasury yields. The MPC will consider all these factors and maintain status quo on repo rates, as headline inflation is expected to come down in the coming months," he said.

The Reserve Bank mainly factors in the CPI-based inflation while arriving at its bi-monthly monetary policy.

The borrowing cost which started rising in May last year has stabilised with RBI keeping the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent since February, when it was raised from 6.25 per cent. Later in the next three bi-monthly policy reviews in April, June and August the benchmark rate was retained.

The MPC consists of three external members and three officials of the RBI. The external members on the panel are Shashanka Bhide, Ashima Goyal, and Jayanth R Varma. Besides Governor Das, the other RBI officials in MPC are Rajiv Ranjan (Executive Director) and Michael Debabrata Patra (Deputy Governor). (PTI)

## Biz messaging, WhatsApp engines of growth, says Meta India's Devanathan

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** Business messaging and WhatsApp are the next engine of growth and key priority for Meta India, its top executive said exuding confidence that the company is "just getting started" given the "immense headroom" here, as more businesses digitise and transform.

Businesses across the board are innovating and using WhatsApp to reach new audiences with sectors such as banking, e-commerce, gaming and small businesses taking the lead, Sandhya Devanathan, Vice President, Meta India, said.

Businesses all across are innovating right from bill payment to sale of metro tickets, or banks sending statement balances, she said citing instances of how companies are embracing WhatsApp.

"...honestly I think we're just scratching the surface, if we think about the headroom...I see WhatsApp as next engine of growth for our company here in India, so absolutely business messaging and WhatsApp are a key priority for India Meta organisation," Devanathan told PTI.

WhatsApp monetisation in India is a "key priority" for Meta globally, she added.

As per the last published numbers, Facebook has 440 million users in India, and Devanathan says that Meta has, since then, grown across its family of apps. As many as 200 million businesses are on WhatsApp globally, using the WhatsApp Business app. "We do not breakdown the India number, but it is a pretty good number, it is a huge number in India," she said.

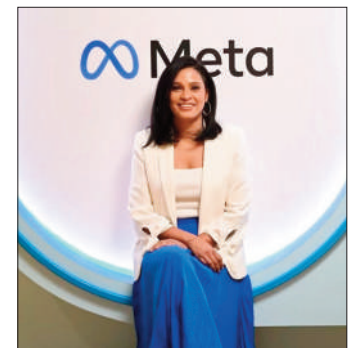
"The reason why it (WhatsApp monetisation) is a priority is because we see that headroom, we are just getting started...everything from bill payments now with NPCI to buying metro train tickets, I think Chennai is already live and we'll have a few more getting added on...to banks sending statement balances," she said asserting that Meta is seeing wave of innovation across verticals and sectors.

There is an immense potential as more than more companies here digitise and transform.

"...because the headroom is not going to come only from the marketing side. It is going to come from customer service, re-engagement, how they talk to their customers through entire journey like notifications or orders and things like that. So I'm excited about what you see there," she said.

WhatsApp engagement with JioMart (that allows consumers to shop from JioMart via WhatsApp chat) was a global-first for Meta.

"We're learning from that on how do we actually work with Tier 2, Tier 3 cities in India. Also, think



about the other headroom -- 400 million people end up shopping online in 2025, their first order of preference is not going to be to download an app...their first form factor they're going to be exposed to or gravitate towards is probably a messaging app and probably WhatsApp," Devanathan said.

The popular messaging platform recently announced the expansion of its payments service in India to make it easier for people transacting with businesses to pay for purchases directly in the chat, with a choice of UPI apps, including rival digital payment options, as well as credit and debit cards.

Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg asserted that India is leading the world in people and businesses embracing messaging.

WhatsApp is working with partners Razorpay and PayU "to make paying for something as simple as sending a message", and the Meta-owned platform has unveiled a host of new features to woo businesses in the booming commerce market. A series of new tools have been announced for turbocharging businesses, including WhatsApp Flows and Meta verified badge, to "speed up how to get things done with businesses in a WhatsApp chat". WhatsApp Flows is a new feature for businesses to create richer in-chat experiences for their customers like booking a reservation, ordering delivery or checking in for a flight, directly on WhatsApp. Businesses will be able to choose from a series of flexible, pre-made building blocks so they can easily design rich, customisable experiences for their customers.

Zuckerberg had said WhatsApp Flows gives businesses the ability to create customised experiences within chat threads.

Citing some examples of how this would work, he had said that with 'WhatsApp Flows', a bank can build a way for customers to book an appointment to open a new account, a food delivery service can build a way to place an order from any of their partner restaurants or an airline can build a way to check in for a flight and pick up a seat. All this without having to leave the chat thread. (PTI)

## M-cap of 8 of 10 firms lose ₹2.28 trn; HDFC, Reliance biggest laggards

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** The combined market valuation of eight of the 10 most valued firms plunged by ₹2,28,690.56 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit, amid an overall weak trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark fell 1,829.48 points or 2.69 per cent, and the Nifty declined 518.1 points or 2.56 per cent. Equity markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi.

From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, ITC, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance were the laggards while Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Hindustan Unilever were the gainers. The market valuation of HDFC Bank plummeted by ₹99,835.27 crore to ₹11,59,154.60 crore. Shares of the company fell by nearly 8 per cent last week.

The valuation of Reliance Industries plunged ₹71,715.6 crore to ₹15,92,661.42 crore. The company's shares declined over 4 per cent last week.

ICICI Bank's valuation dropped ₹29,412.17 crore to ₹6,65,432.34



crore and that of Bharti Airtel fell by ₹12,964.55 crore to ₹5,10,759.01 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys declined by ₹6,744.34 crore to ₹6,20,893.53 crore and that of ITC went lower by ₹6,484.52 crore to ₹5,52,680.92 crore.

The mcap of Bajaj Finance fell by ₹1,266.37 crore to ₹4,52,773 crore and that of State Bank of India dipped ₹267.74 crore to ₹5,33,781.04 crore. However, Hindustan Unilever added ₹2,913.49 crore taking its valuation to ₹5,83,239.04 crore. The mcap of TCS climbed ₹1,024.53 crore to ₹13,18,228.14 crore. In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries remained the most valued company followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance. (PTI)

## Reliance Retail receives full subscription amount of Rs 2,069 cr from KKR

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd, the retail arm of Reliance Industries, has received the full subscription amount of ₹2,069.50 crore from the global investment firm KKR and has allotted 17.1 million equity shares.

Following the share allotment, KKR's shareholding in Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL) has increased to 1.42 per cent, from 1.17 per cent.

"Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd today received the subscription amount of ₹2,069.50 crore from Alyssum Asia Holdings II Pte. Ltd. (KKR) and allotted 17,158,752 equity shares to KKR," Reliance Industries said in a regulatory filing on Saturday evening.

Earlier this month, Reliance Industries had announced KKR's investment of ₹2,069.50 crore in RRVL, the holding company of the retail business of billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led group, for a 0.25 per cent additional stake at a valuation of about ₹8.36 trillion.

Founded in 1976, KKR has approximately \$519 billion in assets under management as of June 30, 2023.

Earlier this month, RIL received ₹8,278 crore from Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) for around 1 per cent stake in RRVL at a valuation of ₹8.278 trillion (\$100 billion).

In 2020, RRVL had raised ₹47,265 crore (around \$6.4 billion) from global private equity funds for a 10.09 per cent stake, valuing the company at more than ₹4.2 trillion.

This was the largest fundraising exercise in the sector at that time.

The company had raised funds from Silver Lake, KKR, Mubadala, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, GIC, TPG, General Atlantic and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund at a valuation of around \$57 billion at that time.

RRVL is aggressively expanding its business by acquiring companies and getting the franchise rights of leading international brands for India.

Besides, it is investing in scaling up infrastructure and also acquired the India business of German retail major Metro Cash and Carry.

Last month, in the AGM of Reliance Industries, Chairman Mukesh Ambani said that several marquee global strategic and financial investors have shown strong interest in Reliance Retail.

Addressing shareholders, he had said that if RRVL was listed on stock exchanges, then based on the current valuation, it would be among the top four listed entities in the country.

In less than three years, the valuation of Reliance Retail has doubled and the pace of this value creation is "unmatched globally", Ambani had said.

In its latest annual report, RIL said Reliance Retail had achieved a significant milestone of crossing a billion transactions and its registered user base has grown to 249 million.

It operates a network of over 18,500 stores and digital commerce platforms across grocery, consumer electronics, fashion & lifestyle, and pharma consumption baskets.

In FY23, Reliance Retail's digital commerce and new commerce businesses contributed 18 per cent of its revenue, which stood at ₹2.60 trillion. (PTI)

## Percentage of Indians appearing in TOEFL for secondary education abroad rising, says ETS

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** The percentage of Indians appearing in TOEFL to pursue secondary education and certifications abroad has seen a gradual increase over the years while those taking the test for immigration purpose has declined, according to Educational Testing Service (ETS). The Princeton-based ETS, which conducts the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Graduate Record Examination (GRE), said the trend reflects the shifting aspirations of the younger demographic.

According to data exclusively accessed by PTI, the percentage of Indian test takers for licensure, certification or to attend secondary school abroad, has gone up from 5.83 per cent of the total aspirants in 2021 to 7.77 per cent in 2022. During the same period, the percentage of Indian test takers appearing in TOEFL for employment or immigration has declined from 8.19 per cent to 7.22

per cent.

Top officials at ETS have confirmed that the trend is being observed since 2018.

The data showed that the percentage of Indians appearing in TOEFL to attend a graduate or postgraduate business programme/a graduate or postgraduate programme, other than a business programme, has increased from 70.84 per cent in 2021 to 71.87 per cent in 2022. "From our data, we observed a growing trend of secondary education students opting for the TOEFL test. This trend is testimony to the shifting aspirations of the younger demographic, especially in their pursuit of international education," Sachin Jain, the Country Manager of ETS India and South Asia, told PTI. There was a 53 per cent growth in Indian TOEFL test takers in 2021 compared to the previous year. In 2022, the number of test takers saw a 59 per cent rise over 2021. (PTI)

## IJMA urges jute commissioner to ban use of purchased yarn

**KOLKATA, Sept 24:** Jute mills have asked the jute commissioner to issue an advisory prohibiting the use of purchased jute yarn for the manufacture of B Twill bags (used for foodgrain packaging) meant to be supplied on government account against production control orders (PCSOs). The request was made by the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) chairman Raghavendra Gupta in a recent letter to the regulator following weak order flow for the mills. The IJMA argued that factories involved in the conversion of "intermediate" jute goods such as "yarn" into jute bags should not qualify as jute mills. The definition of a jute mill in the Jute and Jute Textiles Control Order, 2016 states that a manufacturer must be mandatorily involved in the conversion of "raw jute" into jute textiles by mechanical process or electrical process or both processes. There is bumper production of jute in Bangladesh this season and amid anti-dumping duties on several mills and traders of the neighbouring country, yarn from Bangladesh is illegally making its way to mills to produce jute bags meant for government supply, an IJMA official told PTI. (PTI)

## Carmakers Mercedes, Lexus, Audi expect bumper sales in festive period



**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** Luxury carmakers Mercedes-Benz, Lexus and Audi expect sales momentum to continue in the ongoing festive season with demand remaining robust for high-end cars.

With offtake remaining strong, the festive season push could even see the luxury car segment posting its highest ever volumes in a year in 2023. In an interaction with PTI, Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director and CEO Santosh Iyer noted that the festive season looks very promising as compared with last year. "This year the festive season is spread across four months and we are optimistic as we started on a very positive note, from Onam onwards," he stated. With a strong demand primarily driven by recent launches and buoyant customer sentiment, Mercedes-Benz expects the growth momentum to continue, Iyer said. Lexus India President Naveen Soni said the luxury car market continues to grow in the country. "This year, the demand for high-end cars has brought cheer to the industry. Luxury cars, as a market segment, are growing at a healthy pace," he said. Rising numbers of high-net-worth individuals, millennials, high levels of disposable incomes, well-travelled consumers coupled with stable economic growth are fuelling this growth, he noted.

"At Lexus, we have already overtaken sales of 2022 and expect an equally strong momentum from the second quarter to carry well in the coming festive period. Customer sentiments have perked up, and fresh bookings remain strong," Soni said. To further offer greater value to customers this festive season, the automaker has introduced the limited edition of its sports coupe, LC 500h, he said. The company has also opened bookings for the new-generation LM multipurpose vehicle, he added. "This is a new category for Lexus in India, and we're confident that this will redefine the ultra-luxury mobility experience," Soni said. Audi India head Balbir Singh Dhillon said the company retailed 3,474 units in the first half of this year witnessing a strong 97 per cent growth.

The company continues to see strong demand for models like A4, A6, Q3, and Q5, among others, Dhillon said. The company has recently launched Q8 Limited Edition for the festive season and will be introducing more products during the season, he added. "Evolving demographics and favourable economic conditions are leading to growth in the luxury car market," Dhillon said. The company is on a growth path and expects to close the year with high double-digit growth, he added. It is expected that the overall domestic passenger vehicle sales will cross the 1 million-unit sales mark in the festive period this year. The 68-day festive period this year falls between August 17 and November 14. (PTI)

## Number of MSMEs in Bengal estimated to have reached 1 cr after pandemic: Official

**KOLKATA, Sept 24:** The number of MSME units in West Bengal is estimated to have reached 1 crore with the economy bouncing back after the pandemic, a senior official said. Addressing a programme, West Bengal Small Industries Development Corporation Ltd (WBSIDCL) executive director V Teja Deepak said there were 90 lakh MSME units in the state before the pandemic.

"There were 90 lakh Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Bengal before the COVID-19 pandemic, and now it must have reached 1 crore after the pandemic," he said.

Maintaining that the state government's schemes such as "Shilper Samadhan" have been a great help to the sector, he said the time taken to give various permissions for setting up businesses has also come down significantly.

"Bengal is doing well in the export of textile and leather, and the 'Biswa Bangla' marketing is attracting buyers across the globe," he said. Speaking at the programme organised here by SBI and The Statesman on Saturday, PSU Andrew Yule and Company's CMD RS Manku said the entity makes over 50 per cent of its procurement from MSME units. "Around 50-60 per cent of our procurement are from the MSMEs. We urge the owners of such units to join hands with Yule," he said.

"What Mahatma Gandhi had said about the cottage industry has now come to be developed as MSMEs," he added. SBI's chief general manager Prem Anup Sinha, who was also present at the programme, urged industrialists to take the assistance of banks and maintain a relationship for financial needs. (PTI)

## India's first lighthouse festival opens in Goa spotlight on 75 historical sites to be developed as major tourist destinations

**PANJIM (Goa), Sept 24:** Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday inaugurated the maiden edition of Indian Lighthouse Festival at the historic Fort Aguada here and said that the festival aims to transform historic lighthouses into tourist hotspots with public private partnership (PPP).

Sonowal further said India should aim to take a leadership role in global maritime trade.

"We are modernising 75 lighthouses... the festival is aimed at rejuvenating the rich maritime history of India's 75 iconic lighthouses and unravel the illustrious stories to the world," the Ports, Shipping and Waterways minister said.

The inaugural session was also attended by Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Tourism Shripad Naik and Goa tourism minister Rohan



Khaunte, among others.

The minister said the government's vision is to promote lighthouses as tourism destinations, to breathe new life into these historic structures, and to create opportunities for local communities and businesses.

According to an official statement, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) is

aiming to leverage the Indian Lighthouse Festival to shore up the base for the Public Private Partnership route to develop the historic into world-class tourist destinations.

Sonowal earlier launched a campaign 'Lighthouse Heritage Tourism' to transform 75 historic lighthouses into tourism spots. Also, speaking at the event, Goa

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said lighthouses are beacons of hope and symbols of strength. "Our coastal state Goa has played a vital role in India's maritime history," he said.

According to the statement, historic lighthouses are being renovated with adequate facilities. India has as many as 203 lighthouses dotting its vast coastline of 7,517 km. The three-day festival beginning September 23 will be celebrated across all the lighthouses in the country as part of an effort to transform these historic spots as tourist destination.

The key highlights of India's First Lighthouse Festival are cultural exhibitions, sessions highlighting maritime history and culture, classical performances, light and sound shows, melodious evenings with celebrity singers, flavours of the coast and community engagements. (PTI)



# Diphu youth selected to explore space studies in Thailand

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Sept 24:** A youth from a little known Diphu town from Karbi Anglong district Mainak Chakraborty has been selected as a delegate of the Asia World Model United Nations (AWMUN) VI Conference to be held from November 3 to 6 at Thailand capital city Bangkok.

Mainak Chakraborty is doing IIT at PW Vidyapeeth Centres, Kota, Rajasthan. He is resident of Diphu near Binapani LP School. His father is Mona Chakraborty and mother Mita Chakraborty. Chakraborty started his primary



education from Badan Memorial High School and later moved to

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Diphu, and passed his matric here. Out of numerous applicants from all over India and he is one among the ten students selected for the prestigious Aerospace Training Programme at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar for securing an excellent marks in the selection test. The AWMUN informing Mainak Chakraborty about the invitation to the AWMUN conference said it is golden opportunity to develop and explore the utmost potential about space studies. The eligibility to enter in Asia World Model United Nations as delegate

should be age between 15 to 25 years having experience in conferences or have high interest in global affairs. He or she must be a high school or university graduate.

Being selected for the NASA Space exploration programme under Aaka Space Studio, which is scheduled to take place in mid-December, Chakraborty will have the chance to embark on star exploration and prom night camping, and will also get to experience zero gravity, take part in a lunar walk and explore the lunar module designed as per NASA Space exploration programme.

# Guv visits Srimanta Sankardev Sangha Kendriya Naamghar

*Prays for all sections of the society*

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** On the occasion of Jagatguru Srimanta Sankardev's 575th birth anniversary, Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria on Sunday paid a visit to Srimanta Sankardev Sangha Kendriya Naamghar in Rupnagar, in the city and prayed for all sections of the society.

In his address to the devout gathering, he stated the profound significance of Srimanta Sankardev and Srimanta Madhavdev in Assam's socio-cultural fabric, highlighting their pivotal roles in shaping the region's socio-cultural and spiritual ethos.

The Governor noted that Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev's teachings on Neo-Vaishnavism played a unifying role in Assam, fostering a sense of togetherness. He emphasised that Srimanta Sankardev's



teachings also strengthen the virtues like morality, character building, and spiritual uplift. Governor Kataria also expressed hope that the blessings of Sankardev would inspire him to contribute positively to the

development of Assam. Furthermore, he highlighted the responsibility of religious institutions to guide individuals towards spirituality and help them to realize the essence of their ancestral heritage.

## Gorkha get-together of THB College held



**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 24:** A get-together of the Gorkha students of THB College organised by the THB College unit of All Assam Gorkha Students' Union was held recently at Gamiripal Natya Mandir with Punam Devi in the chair.

The open session began with illumination of ceremonial lamps by the students' representatives followed by a spectacular chorus performed by the students of THB College. After the chorus, an interactive session with the fresher's was held on the stage. The open session was addressed by Anjan Baskota, a young journalist, as an appointed speaker.

Dr Chinta Mani Sarmah, principal of Biswanath College graced the event as a chief guest. The open session was addressed by Chakrapani Sarma, artist pensioner, Dr Tilak Sarmah, HoD of the department of Nepali, THB College, Raju Limbu, vice president of Sonitpur district AASGU, Bijay Chetry, education secretary of Sonitpur district AASGU among others. Lekhray Mugali and Sushmita Chetry conducted the proceedings of the freshmen social. A series of cultural programmes were performed by the students in between the main event.

## State level prize money Jikir competition held

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 24:** All Assam Goriya Jatiya Parishad in association with Biswanath district committee of Goriya Parishad and in collaboration of the public of Gahigaon decides to organise state level prize money Jikir-Jari competition at Nurpur, Sootea to mark the Digharshan Conference to commemorate the upcoming Fateha-e-Yazdaham which is scheduled on November 25 and 26 this year. The religious programme will be held with a two-day programme. The first day programme covers state level Jikir-Jari competition, stated a press release.

The organising committee has issued some guidelines for the Jikir-Jari competition which states that the Jikir's must be composed by Ajan Pir, there should be minimum five members in each Jikir team and maximum ten in one team. The group should not be a combination of boys and girls along with a mandatory dress code. The winning team will be awarded with a cash award rupees twenty five thousand, the first runners up team will be awarded with prize money of Rupees fifteen thousand while the second runners up team will get a cash amount of Rupees ten thousand only. Interested groups may contact in the following numbers 7002235336, 9864113182 for further details.

## Kolong Kapili celebrates its 16<sup>th</sup> foundation day at Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Sept 24:** Kolong Kapili, a leading private sector aquaculture field school indulged long in providing training as well as empowering entrepreneurs to offer livelihood support through integrated and sustainable as well as eco-friendly aquaculture in the North-eastern region for long, on Sunday observed its 16th foundation day at Hotel Rishiraj here.

Kolong Kapili organised a ten day long residential training programme for members of farmers producer organisations (FPO) with a focus on community video mak-

ing aiming to equip registered farmers with ideas, knowledge and skills related to videography particularly emphasising community oriented content at the hotel itself from September 22 to October 1.

Amidst the training programme, the brand ambassador of department of fisheries, govt of Assam 'Kolong Kapili' today celebrated its 16th foundation day here.

While speaking to this correspondent here Jyotish Talukdar and Binoy Kr Das respectively director and deputy director of Kolong Kapili stated that over one lakh fish farmers from Assam and

Arunachal Pradesh have been benefited through Kolong Kapili and claimed too that through CRP and aqua entrepreneurs programmes, they are trying to develop a model across the state.

Jyotish Talukdar urged all the educated youths of the state to join in aquaculture and extend their hands to become self sustainable in fishery sector so that the state can be the world model to save the soil and water. The director of Kolong-Kapili also offered sincere gratitude to the stakeholders who have helped Kolong-Kapili since its beginning.

## Governor attends 12<sup>th</sup> convocation of Assam Don Bosco University

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** Assam Governor and visitor of Assam Don Bosco University Shri Gulab Chand Kataria while addressing the convocation of the university said, "Education and degrees should not be limited only to the purpose of job, rather they should nurture the faculties like social responsibility, service to the nation and humanity etc."

Delivering his address at the 12th Convocation of Assam Don Bosco University at Tapesia campus in Sonapur recently, Kataria extended his heartfelt congratulations to the graduates, emphasising that convocation is the perfect occasion to celebrate years of tireless effort and dedication. He encouraged students to consider how their knowledge and expertise can serve as a guiding beacon for the development of individuals and society.

He also said that education and degrees should not be limited only to the purpose of a job, rather they should help the students to nurture the qualities like social responsibility, fellow feeling, service to the nation and humanity. Education should be a medium to spread the message of unity and integrity in the country.

The Governor acknowledged the pivotal role that teachers play in shaping students for the future and he underscored their contribution to na-

tional-building activities. He stressed that the collective efforts of hardworking students in Amrit Kaul will give the nation much needed boost to position the nation on the global stage as super power.

The Governor also said, "You are the new and young workforce of our country. You are going to join millions of youth with your individual dream, vision, innovative ideas to steer the growth of the nation. I am confident that you will also make good use of the education and knowledge acquired from the university and work for development of the country."

The Governor said that the latest technological development in the field of education has changed the academic landscape of the country. There have been many revolutionary changes in the processes of teaching in higher educational institutions in India.

To match the best universities and colleges of the world, the institutions of higher education are adopting new and innovative trends in teaching methods.

The Governor also asked the graduates to be prepared for new changes taking place in the education sector. He on the occasion also complemented Assam Don Bosco University for taking adequate steps for implementing the National Education Policy 2020.

Kataria also said that the Government of India has placed greater emphasis on research in the National Education Policy, thereby promoting technical education and skill development. He also said that under the National Education Policy, reforms are being made in the education system to provide quality education.

The Governor also hailed the remarkable achievement of a record number of female graduates. He highlighted the outstanding accomplishments of women across various fields, from ISRO to the nation's borders. He also expressed confidence that with more opportunities, they can continue to play a significant role in advancing the nation's development.

In the convocation, degrees were conferred on 1286 students of which 555 students received bachelor's degree in Engineering & Technology, Arts and Basic Sciences and 731 students received Master's degree in various branches of Engineering, Science, Humanities and Management. Doctoral degrees were conferred on 23 accomplished scholars.

The chancellor, Fr Januarius Sangma, vice chancellor, Fr (Dr) Jose Palley and pro vice chancellor Fr Joseph Nellnatt, directors of Schools, Heads of Departments, faculty members, students and eminent dignitaries from all over the country attended the convocation.

## Centenary celebration committee for Jamuguri HSS formed

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 24:** Jamuguri Higher Secondary School, a leading educational institution established in 1925 in Jamugurihat, Sonitpur district, will complete its centenary year of establishment in 2025. The 100th anniversary will be celebrated with a wide range of programmes. The school was established in 1925 with the great efforts of the education lovers and distinguished personalities of the time. The school has been maintaining good educational standards since its inception. The students studying in this school have been able to establish themselves as good citizens of the country. Many students have shown good results and achieved special places in the state while many of them are employed as high ranking government officials in different parts of the state as well as in different parts of the country.

In this connection, a public meeting was convened in the school premises recently to discuss about the upcoming centenary celebration of the school and to form a celebration committee as with Janardan Bhuyan, former principal of the higher secondary school in the chair.

The meeting began with a song composed by teacher Pradyumna Hazarika covering the history of the school followed by a welcome address offered by Jiban Bora, principal of the school. Addressing the public meeting as a chief guest Padma Hazarika, MLA Sootea LAC traced the golden history of the educa-



tional institution and paid homage to the departed souls who sacrificed a lot in the process of establishment of the school. The public meeting unanimously decided to observe a year-long programme as a part of centenary celebration from February 2024 to February 2025 and to organise a get-together. In this regard, a public committee was constituted with Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, chief minister of Assam as a chief patron, Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika as president, Jiban Bora as chief secretary, Nitumani Bora and Surajit Choudhury as joint secretaries along with other sub-committees. The public meeting was also addressed by Hemanta Bora, Kamal Rajbanshi among others. The public meeting also decided to publish a research based voluminous souvenir to mark the special occasion. The public meeting was attended by former students, teachers, representatives of various public organisations of the greater Jamugurihat and dignitaries of the area.

## KA Hindi Bhashi triennial conference from Sept 29

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Sept 24:** The triennial conference of Karbi Anglong Hindi Bhashi Chhatra Sanstha (KAHBCS) and Hindi Bhashi Sanstha (KAHBS) will held at Bakaliaghat Irrigation Sports Complex from September 29 to October 1, this was informed by Gobardhan Chauhan, secretary of the RC.

It may be mentioned there that the 7th edition of triennial conference of KAHBCS and the 5th triennial conference of KAHBS which was supposed to be held on August 25, 26 and 27 and due to certain reasons was rescheduled. The reception Committee (RC) of the conference has appealed to the Hindi speaking community to extend their cooperation in making the conference a success. Chief executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Tuliram Ronghang will be attending the as chief guest in open session of the conference.

## All Assam Bhaona Competition to be organised in Demow

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, Sept 24:** Under the patronage of the People of Demow in association with locals for the first time in Demow an All Assam Bhaona Competition will be organized.

In this regard a public meeting was held recently where the organising committee was formed. The first executive meeting of the organising committee was held on September 22 in Demow Public Library. Pranab Chetia, president of the organising committee presided in the first executive meeting. In the executive meeting it was decided that Bhaona Competition will be organised in Demow Public Playground from November 14 to November 18 for five days for the year 2023.

## BSF Wives Welfare Association celebrated BWWA Day-2023



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** The Border Security Force Wives Welfare Association (BWWA) celebrated 31st BWWA Day at Ftr HQ Patgaon, Guwahati. Bhawna Yadav, head of BWWA Guwahati inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp and graced the occasion in the presence of all BWWA members.

During the celebration, various colourful cultural programmes were conducted. The wives of the brave martyrs who sacrificed their lives while protecting the country were also felicitated. Yadav commended the role of organisation for ensuring various welfare activities in BSF.

She apprised that BWWA has undertaken the pivotal role for upliftment and welfare of the families of BSF personnel.

BWWA was established in 1992 with the aim to promote the welfare for families of all BSF serving/retired personnel, rehabilitation of widows, provide vocational training to families for economic empowerment & undertake charitable mission on the need basis.

BWWA is a non-profit organisation, which trains and assists the spouses of BSF personnel in areas such as skill development, education of children, introducing new opportunities to spouses of BSF personnel as well as their children, career counseling, health, life style, housing for widows and sharing and resolving their problems so that spouses of BSF personnel should gear up to face challenges in life at own.

## Heroin recovered from Tinsukia bound night bus



**HT Correspondent**

**BOKAJAN, Sept 24:** Barpathar police towards Saturday evening during regular naka checking recovered a total of 14 nos of soap boxes containing heroin weighing 176.71 grams from the possession of one lady namely Niamjun Muniak (27). Muniak was travelling towards Tinsukia from Dimapur in a night super bus bearing registration no AS 01 JC 6754.

Muniak is daughter of late Jenwang Muniak of H/No. 211 near AO Baptist Church Puruna Bazar B, PS- East Police Station, district Dimapur, Nagaland. The market value of the recovered items is around Rs 15 Lakh, police said. ASP John Das APS, Barpathar OC Dipen Bora and a CRPF were physically present during the checking.

## Rongbong Terang conferred Dr Moidul Islam Literary Award

*Terang in his speech said that the award has given him a new lease of life to explore a new horizon, the synthesis of cultures in the soil of this great state*

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Sept 24:** Padmashree Rongbong Terang was conferred the Dr Moidul Islam Bora Smriti Rakya Samity and Arunodoi Sahitya Sabha in association with Rangpurjyoti Club recently here in presence of an august gathering.

Presenting the award and the felicitation mementos, former secretary general of Asom Sahitya Sabha Dr Basanta Goswami said that the creator of 'Rangmilir Hanhi' is an emotional bridge connecting the vales with the hills. Dr Goswami said that Dr Moidul Islam Bora was an uncompromising self as far as the dignity and heritage of Assamese literature is concerned.

Terang in his speech said that the award has given him a new lease of life to explore a new horizon, the synthesis of cultures in the soil of this great state. He added that Dr



Bora himself was a great architect of friendship and co-operation among people of diverse cultures who was

elected to become the president of the Asom Sahitya Sabha at the age of 40 in Jorhat session in 1940. He added that Sivasagar is very rich culturally, ethnically, and environmentally.

The river Dihow is an eternal source of inspiration for all creative men on the bank of which the first Assamese newspaper Arunodoi and the first Karbi book written in Assamese script 'Daram Anam Afrang Ikithan' was published in 1875. Monirul Islam Bora, president, Arunodoi Sahitya Sabha, delivered the welcome address while president, Sivasagar Jila Sahitya Sabha, Dr Nirupoma Mahanta, and Sontosh Dutta also spoke on the literary works of Dr Moidul Islam Bora.

Rongbong Terang later met another literary luminary of the state Padmashree Imran Shah in his Dhali Ali residence and had a cordial exchange of ideas for a long time.







# Studying the genes that delay Alzheimer's decline may lead to treatments

By: Steven Feldstein

Diseases that run in families usually have genetic causes. Some are genetic mutations that directly cause the disease if inherited. Others are risk genes that affect the body in a way that increases the chance someone will develop the disease. In Alzheimer's disease, genetic mutations in any of three specific genes can cause the disease, and other risk genes either increase or decrease the risk of developing Alzheimer's.

Some genetic mutations or variants interact with other genetic alterations that lead to Alzheimer's disease. In some cases, gene alterations can interact with Alzheimer's-causing genetic variants in a way that proves beneficial; they actually suppress the pathological brain changes the other mutations would normally lead to. These protective gene variants can drastically slow or prevent cognitive decline. In two recent case reports on familial Alzheimer's disease, mutations delayed Alzheimer's symptoms for decades.

I am a neurologist and neuroscientist who has spent my career studying Alzheimer's disease and dementia both in the laboratory and in the clinic. Determining how genes affect brain chemistry is vital to understanding how Alzheimer's disease progresses and devising interventions to prevent or delay cognitive decline.

## The amyloid hypothesis

In the early 1990s, scientists proposed the amyloid hypothesis to explain how Alzheimer's disease develops. The first neuropathological changes detected in the brain of Alzheimer's disease patients were the formation of amyloid plaques – clumps of protein pieces called beta-amyloid. Other changes in the Alzheimer's brain, such as the accumulation of another type of abnormal protein called neurofibrillary tangles, were thought to develop later in the course of the disease.

Beta-amyloid begins to accumulate in the brain up to 15 years before symptoms emerge. Symptoms correlate with the number of neurofibrillary tangles in the brain – the more tangles, the worse the cognition. Researchers have tried to determine whether preventing or removing amyloid plaques from the brain would be an effective treatment.

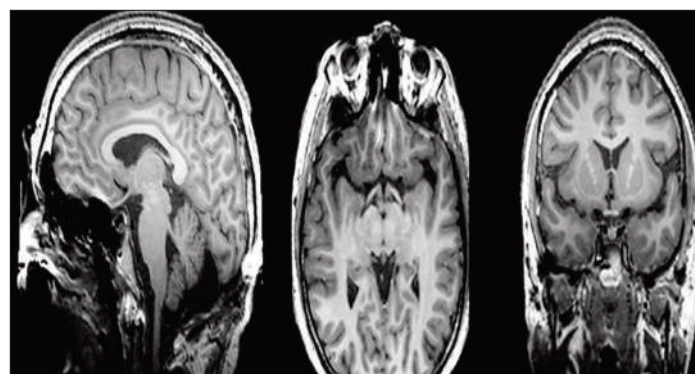
Imagine the excitement of the scientific community in the 1990s when researchers identified three different genes causing familial Alzheimer's disease – and all three were involved with beta-amyloid.

The first was the amyloid precursor protein gene. This gene directs cells to produce the amyloid precursor protein, which breaks down into smaller fragments, including the beta-amyloid that forms amyloid plaques in the brain. The second gene was termed presenilin 1, or PSEN-1, a protein needed to cut the precursor protein into beta-amyloid.

The third gene, presenilin 2, or PSEN-2, is closely related to PSEN-1 but found in a smaller number of families with familial Alzheimer's disease.

These findings added strength to the amyloid hypothesis explanation of the disease. However, uncertainty and opposition to the amyloid hypothesis have developed over the past several decades. This was in part tied to a recognition that several other processes – neurofibrillary tangles, inflammation and immune system activation – are also involved in the neurodegeneration seen in Alzheimer's.

The hypothesis also got significant pushback after many clinical trials attempting to block the effects of amyloid or remove it from the brain were unsuccessful. In some cases, treatments had significant side effects. Some researchers have come up with



strong defences of the hypothesis. But until a clinical trial based on the amyloid hypothesis could show definitive results, uncertainty would remain.

## Genetic discoveries with treatment implications

The vast majority – more than 90% – of Alzheimer's cases occur in late life, with disease prevalence increasing progressively from age 65 and up. Such cases are mostly sporadic, with no clear family history of Alzheimer's.

However, a relatively small number of families have one of the three known genetic mutations that cause the disease to be passed down. In familial Alzheimer's, 50% of each generation will inherit the mutated gene and develop the disease much earlier, usually from their 30s to early 50s.

In 2019 and 2023, researchers identified changes in at least two other genes that markedly delayed the onset of disease symptoms in people with familial Alzheimer's disease mutations. These mutated genes were found in a very large family in Colombia whose members tended to develop Alzheimer's symptoms by their 40s. A woman in the family carrying a mutated PSEN-1 gene did not have any cognitive symptoms until she was in her 70s. A genetic analysis showed that she had an additional mutation in a variant of the gene that codes for a protein called apolipoprotein E,

or ApoE. Researchers believe the mutation, called the Christchurch variant – named after the city in New Zealand where the mutation was first discovered – is responsible for interfering with and slowing down her disease.

Importantly, her brain had a great deal of amyloid plaque but very few neurofibrillary tangles. This suggests that the link between the two was broken and that the suppressed number of neurofibrillary tangles also slowed down cognitive loss.

In May 2023, researchers reported that two siblings in the same large family also did not develop memory problems until their 60s or late 70s and were found to carry a mutation in a gene that codes for a protein called reelin. Studies in mice suggest that reelin has protective effects against amyloid plaque deposition in the brain. In these patients' brains, as with the patient who had the Christchurch variant, there were extensive amyloid plaques but very few neurofibrillary tangles. This observation confirmed that the tangles are responsible for the cognitive loss and that there are several ways to "disconnect" amyloid and neurofibrillary tangle accumulation.

The second antibody, lecanemab, sold as Leqembi, was approved in January 2023 via the same accelerated approval pathway. It was then fully approved in July 2023.

The third antibody, donanemab, completed a successful phase three clinical trial and is awaiting more safety data. When that is submitted to the FDA, the agency will consider the drug for approval. (Courtesy: The Wire)

majority of nonfamilial Alzheimer's manifests after age 70 or 75, a 10-year delay in the emergence of first symptoms of Alzheimer's could have a massive effect in decreasing the prevalence of the disease.

These findings demonstrate that Alzheimer's can be slowed and will hopefully lead to additional new therapies that can someday not only treat the disease but prevent it as well.

## Starts and stops

Despite over 20 years of doubts and therapy failures, the past several years have seen positive results from three different treatments – aducanumab, lecanemab and donanemab – that remove amyloid plaques and slow loss of cognitive function to some extent. Although there is still discussion of how much slowing of decline is clinically significant, these successes provide support for the amyloid hypothesis. They also suggest that other strategies will be needed for optimal treatment.

The US Food and Drug Administration's 2021 approval of the first antibody treatment for Alzheimer's, aducanumab, sold under the brand name Aduhelm, was controversial. Only one of the two clinical trials testing its safety and effectiveness in people yielded positive results. The FDA approved the drug on the basis of that single study through an accelerated approval process in which treatments meeting an unmet clinical need can receive expedited approval.

The second antibody, lecanemab, sold as Leqembi, was approved in January 2023 via the same accelerated approval pathway. It was then fully approved in July 2023.

The third antibody, donanemab, completed a successful phase three clinical trial and is awaiting more safety data. When that is submitted to the FDA, the agency will consider the drug for approval. (Courtesy: The Wire)

# How to recognize the symptoms of diabetes

By: Jenna Fletcher

Diabetes limits the body's ability to control the amount of glucose, or sugar, in the blood. Keeping an eye out for the early symptoms of type 1 and type 2 diabetes can help ensure a timely diagnosis and prevent complications. The two main types of diabetes are type 1 and type 2. Type 2 is more common.

Both keep the body from creating and using the hormone insulin effectively. Insulin enables the body to process sugar in the blood and make sure that it stays at a healthy level.

If levels of blood sugar, or glucose, get too high, it can damage cells and cause complications throughout the body.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 26.8 million people in the United States had a diagnosis of diabetes in 2018. Among them, nearly 1.6 million had type 1 diabetes.

Meanwhile, they estimate that another 7.3 million people had undiagnosed diabetes that same year.

And in 2015, they report, about 88 million people had pre-diabetes – high blood sugar levels indicating that a person is at risk of diabetes.

Being able to identify early symptoms of diabetes can help a person know when to seek care. Receiving a diagnosis and treatment early can prevent long-term damage. Some signs and symptoms of diabetes that common to both types include:

- fatigue
- hunger during or shortly after a meal
- weight loss, despite eating more
- extreme thirst
- frequent urination
- blurred vision
- slow healing of cuts and bruises
- tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands or feet
- acanthosis nigricans, an issue that causes skin on the neck, armpits, groin, and other areas to change color and texture, possibly becoming velvety

It is worth noting that factors such as age and overall health can affect how a person experiences these symptoms.

## Type 1 diabetes in infants and young children

Young children are more likely to develop type 1 than type 2. A caregiver may notice:

- fatigue
- intense hunger
- unexplained weight loss
- vision changes
- yeast infections, which may present as a diaper rash
- a fruity smell on the breath
- unusual behaviour, such as irritability, restlessness, or mood changes

## Type 1 diabetes in adults

This condition usually arises during childhood, but it can appear at any age. A person should see a doctor if they develop:

- unexplained weight loss
- extreme thirst
- frequent urination
- blurry vision
- repeated yeast infections
- slow healing of cuts and bruises

## Type 2 diabetes

Many people only learn that they have type 2 diabetes during a routine checkup.

Others see doctors about symptoms of the condition or its complications.

Symptoms of diabetes-related complications include:

- skin infections or itching
- eye and vision changes
- tingling, pain, numbness, and weakness in the feet and hands
- poor circulation and ulcers on the feet
- thirst or dry mouth
- a fruity odor on the breath
- kidney problems

**Avoiding complications**  
The sooner a person with diabetes receives a diagnosis, the sooner they can start treatment, which focuses on regulating blood sugar levels.

Hyperglycemia is the medical name for high blood sugar levels. It can occur when a person's treatment plan is not sufficient to manage their diabetes or when factors prevent the person from following their treatment plan.

Without treatment, hyperglycemia can cause the complications below.

**Diabetic ketoacidosis**  
Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is an acute condition in which substances called ketones accumulate in the body.

Ketones are a byproduct that forms when the body breaks down fat for fuel.

DKA can develop within hours, and it can be life threatening. Early signs and symptoms include:

- shortness of breath
- severe dry mouth
- high blood sugar levels
- high ketone levels in the urine

After this, the following may occur:

- tiredness
- dry or flushed skin
- nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- difficulty breathing
- difficulty focusing
- confusion
- a fruity smell on the breath

Anyone with these symptoms needs emergency medical attention.

**Long-term diabetes complications**  
The following tend to occur later in life if a person does not receive effective treatment:

- heart disease
- stroke
- kidney failure
- vision loss

Also, some people with long-term diabetes complications require the amputation of a limb. Receiving treatment for either type of diabetes early can help prevent these from happening.

**Causes**  
Type 1 and type 2 diabetes have different causes.

**Type 1 diabetes**  
Type 1 diabetes develops when the body's immune system attacks the cells in the pancreas that are responsible for producing insulin.

When this happens, the body cannot produce enough insulin to process and regulate blood sugar.

As a result, people with type 1 diabetes require lifelong insulin in addition to other therapies and care strategies.

Health experts are still unsure of the precise causes, but genetic and environmental factors, such as viruses, may play a role.

**Type 2 diabetes**  
A person with type 2 diabetes either does not produce enough insulin or their body does not use it efficiently. The latter is known as insulin resistance.

In a person with type 2, excess sugar builds up in the bloodstream, resulting in symptoms and, without treatment, complications.

Type 2 diabetes typically develops in older adults, but it can affect younger people.

**Risk factors for type 2 diabetes**  
Increasing age is the most significant risk factor for type 2 diabetes.

Other factors can also play a role. For example, the condition is more common among Black and Native Americans, compared with their white counterparts.

Also, type 2 diabetes appears to be more common among people who:

- have obesity
- have overweight
- are not physically active or have a sedentary lifestyle
- have extra belly fat
- have had gestational diabetes, which develops during pregnancy
- have hypertension, or high blood pressure
- are older than 35
- have a family history

**Diagnosis and treatment**  
A doctor typically diagnoses diabetes by asking about symptoms and ordering a blood test, which can show high blood sugar levels.

If the person is not experiencing symptoms, the doctor may order a follow-up test to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment depends on the type of diabetes. A person with type 1 needs to take insulin every day, using injections or pumps.

For a person with type 2 diabetes, a doctor recommends self-care strategies and other ways to manage blood sugar levels. This might involve taking prescribed medications, including insulin.

It is important to follow the recommended treatment plan. Anyone who is having difficulty doing this or experiencing any side effects should consult their doctor for guidance right away.

**Summary**  
Spotting the early symptoms of diabetes can help a person receive a timely diagnosis and start treatment right away. This helps prevent diabetes complications, which can be very dangerous. (Courtesy: Medical News Today)

# Elevate your strength and stamina: Dive into intense training regimens

By: Ajit Gupta

Beneath the golden dawn's first embrace, a new journey awaits, where sweat becomes the ink upon the canvas of determination. Behold, as we extend our hand to guide you through the realm of transformation, where ordinary mortals evolve into titans of resilience. Imagine a place where the echoes of your heartbeat synchronize with the rhythm of the universe. Each breath drawn is a promise to challenge your limits, to shatter the barriers that have held you captive. The sun shall witness your unyielding spirit as you step into the arena of intense training.

## Elevate your strength and stamina

In the sanctuary of dedication, every drop of sweat that graces your brow becomes a testament to your unwavering commitment. The weights that once seemed daunting become your allies, whispering tales of strength into your eager ears. The pulsating music fuels the fire within, urging you to push beyond what was once deemed impossible.

Together, we sculpt not only the body but also the mind, forging an unbreakable connection between the two. Your muscles may ache, but they shall awaken stronger as if infused with the very essence of perseverance. The camaraderie formed in the crucible of training binds you with fellow seekers, creating a

web of support that lifts you higher.

And as the days turn into weeks and weeks into months, you shall stand at the crossroads of change. Your reflection in the mirror will not only reveal a physical transformation but a metamorphosis of the soul. The trials endured have carved a mark upon your character, a symbol of your refusal to yield.

In the realm where determination meets sweat, where the fire of ambition burns brighter than the sun, we beckon you to embark on a journey of transformation. A journey that will sculpt your body, sharpen your mind, and forge an unbreakable spirit. Welcome to the crucible of training, a realm where ordinary limitations are shattered, and extraordinary potential is unearthed. Imagine standing at the precipice of possibility, gazing into the chasm of your own limitations. Now, envision those limits crumbling away like ancient ruins before a relentless tide. This is the essence of our intense training regimen – a symphony of sweat and effort that composes a crescendo of strength and stamina. It's not just about the physical, but the intertwining of body and soul, pushing beyond what you thought was achievable.

As you step into this world, you'll find yourself guided by seasoned mentors who have danced with fatigue and embraced discomfort as a partner on their path to greatness. They will challenge

you, not just with weights and circuits, but with wisdom forged through countless hours of dedication. With their guidance, you'll learn that true strength isn't just in lifting heavy objects, but in the resilience to keep moving forward when the weight feels unbearable.

The training grounds themselves are like no other – a canvas of grit and determination. Picture yourself sprinting across a field as the sun paints the sky in hues of gold, sweat cascading like liquid determination down your brow. Feel the burn in your muscles as you power through another repetition, your heartbeat synchronizing with the rhythm of your effort. Every drop of sweat that hits the ground is a testament to your commitment, a brushstroke on the canvas of your transformation.

But this journey isn't just about the physical. Your mind, a boundless frontier, will also undergo a metamorphosis. It will learn to embrace challenges not as obstacles, but as stepping stones. It will unravel the art of focus, honing in on the task at hand amidst distractions. As you push your body, your mind will ascend to new heights, discovering a wellspring of resilience you never knew existed.

And stamina? It will become your closest companion. You'll find yourself enduring longer, pushing farther, and embracing discomfort with open arms. Through high-intensity intervals and

heart-pounding circuits, you'll forge an endurance that extends beyond the physical – an endurance that whispers in the face of adversity, "I am unbreakable." But this journey, like any masterpiece, requires time and dedication. It's not a sprint, but a symphony that unfolds with each note of effort. There will be moments of doubt, moments when the weights feel heavier than the world itself. Yet, it's in those moments that you'll discover the depth of your own strength.

So, as you embark on this odyssey of transformation, remember that every drop of sweat, every ounce of effort, is a brushstroke on the canvas of your potential. You are not just building a more muscular body, but a stronger soul. The journey will be tough, but the reward will be worth every single step. Are you ready to dive into the abyss of your own capabilities? To emerge from the crucible of training as a phoenix of strength and stamina, soaring to heights you never dreamed possible? The choice is yours. The journey awaits. So, dare to dive into the depths of these intense training regimens, for within them lies the alchemy of transformation. Embrace the challenge, and emerge reborn, a beacon of inspiration for those who witness your journey. The path is arduous, but the rewards are boundless—elevated strength and stamina, and a spirit that knows no bounds. (Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)

# Dopamine detox is trending: Here are the signs that you may need to take one

By: Kavita Devgan

Megha Narayan (name changed for privacy) is a 28-year-old content creator on social media. She recently went on a three-day holiday in the hills away from her phone. She was on a self-declared dopamine detox.

Not only did she not post, she also did not click a single picture, nor did she shoot a reel while she was there. Did it help her?

Definitely, she says, and cites better mental clarity as one of the benefits. She plans to go for a longer duration the next time. Dopamine detox is trending. Do you need it?

Truth be said, we all need it (even if our work is not online 24/7)! But to decide, let's do this test. If you find yourself experiencing even two of the behaviors below mentioned, continue reading to know how you can go about it:

- Poor sleep
- High anxiety levels
- Inability to sit still
- Overeating to counter boredom (usually junk food)
- Excessive internet usage and gaming

- Constantly looking for a screen to interact with
- Dependence on stimuli like phone alerts, texts, and social media notifications

## What Is Dopamine?

Dopamine is a neuro-chemical that works as a chemical messenger, and impacts many behavioral and physical functions like our mood, learning, attention, and even our sleep. It also makes us happy and is the 'feel good' chemical – anything that gives us pleasure triggers the release of dopamine. Its deficiency and excess both spell trouble.

## Wondering why the excess is trouble?

Well, dopamine can be distracting, it prompts (excessive) repetition of feel-good behaviors – making us scroll mindlessly on social media or binge-watch shows on OTT, night after night. This can be detrimental to our health – sleepless nights, hormonal imbalance, emotional disturbances, blinding envy – and can also be a hindrance in us achieving our goals. Excessive dopamine spells trouble.

## Why Do the Detox?

Ideally, the dopamine rush should be

induced with natural things like dancing, cooking, shopping, or listening to music. But when we depend on instant hits too often via social media, alcohol, junk food, etc, the brain gets muddled up and screams for a recalibration.

Now a true or complete "dopamine detox" is impossible because the brain continues to produce dopamine all the time, but a recalibration – making your pleasure centers more balanced – can definitely be achieved with a conscious detox, de-addiction, and abstinence process.

## The Bright Side of the Detox

A fast or unplugging for a few days won't rewire the mind or deliver unmatched happiness or unexpected professional success. But it might help you recognise the triggers that are messing you up. It can:

- Help lessen social media dependency
- Improve well-being
- Help regulate your dopamine response
- Makes you feel calmer & less anxious
- Clears the mind & helps it be more focused
- Locking gadgets away for a detox!

## What is a Dopamine Detox?

During a dopamine detox, one needs to avoid dopamine triggers for a set period of time, which could vary from an hour to several days to a few weeks.

This involves three steps:

**Step 1:** To identify behaviors that you turn to too frequently for a quick boost (eg. social media, gaming, watching TV).

**Step 2:** Take a break from them for some time, ideally spend a period of abstinence, or unplugging from the world.

**Step 3:** To stop hankering after the instant hits of dopamine, replace them with healthier activities that produce dopamine.

## How to Actually Detox?

The aim should be to detach from the addictive stimuli like social media, sugar, shopping, junk food and the likes, and replacing these with less impulsive habits and lifestyle choices consciously.

- Taking a break from your phone to engage in other activities can be beneficial.

Following are some of the things that might help:

- Take a break from social media,

gaming, and watching TV – it's okay to be bored for a while!

- Experience new things – sign up for a new kind of dance or learn a musical instrument or maybe pottery.
- Step-up exercise – it speeds up the process by which the brain's dopamine receptors return to their normal state.
- Reduce sugar intake drastically.
- Cut off processed foods and alcohol.

- Focus on iron folate and vitamin B 6 rich foods.
- Eat more protein every day.
- Get your dose of direct sunlight every morning without fail.
- Pencil in at least an hour in nature every day.

By the end of the detox, you will feel more centered, balanced, and less affected by the usual dopamine triggers, and hopefully work out a better relationship with things that give you happiness.

More tangible benefits may follow in the form of stress relief, lower blood pressure, improved sleep, and better health.

The detox is not a quick fix, rather should be a part of a regular way of living. (Courtesy: The Quint)



# US provided Canada intelligence on Nijjar's killing: NYT

WASHINGTON, Sept 24: The US provided Canada with intelligence after the killing of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, but communications intercepted by Ottawa were more definitive and led it to accuse India of orchestrating the plot, The New York Times has reported citing sources.

The report came on Saturday as the top US diplomat in Canada confirmed that there was "shared intelligence among Five Eyes partners" that had prompted Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's offensive allegation against India in the killing of a Khalistani extremist on Canadian soil.

The allegations have infuriated India, which rejected the allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case. India also accused Canada of being a safe haven for terrorists.

Nijjar, the chief of the banned

Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), was killed in Surrey in British Columbia on June 18. India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020.

The United States has urged India to cooperate with Canada in its investigations.

"In the aftermath of the killing, US intelligence agencies offered their Canadian counterparts context that helped Canada conclude that India had been involved," the NYT reported, quoting unnamed allied officials as saying. Yet what appears to be the "smoking gun," intercepted communications of Indian diplomats in Canada indicating involvement in the plot, was gathered by Canadian officials, allied officials said. David Cohen, US Ambassador to Canada, in an interview with CTV News said that "shared intelligence among Five Eyes partners" had informed Trudeau of the possible involvement of Indian agents in the murder of a Canadian citizen in June.

"I will say this was a matter of



shared intelligence information. There was a lot of communication between Canada and the United States about this, and I think that's as far as I'm comfortable going," Cohen told CTV News.

After Nijjar's death, American officials told their Canadian counterparts that Washington had not had any advance information about

the plot, and that if US officials had they would have immediately informed Ottawa under the intelligence agencies' "duty to warn" doctrine, according to two allied officials, the newspaper reported.

The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss what has become a diplomatic firestorm, said Canadian officials

had offered a general warning to Nijjar but had not told him that he was the target of an Indian government plot, according to the report.

Cohen told CTV that said that the US takes very seriously these allegations. "And, you know, if they prove to be true, it is a potentially very serious breach of the rules-based international order in which we like to function," he said in response to a question.

While Secretary of State Antony Blinken has called on India to cooperate with the Canadian investigation, American officials have largely tried to avoid triggering any diplomatic blowback from India, the paper said. But the disclosure of the involvement of US intelligence risks ensnaring Washington in the diplomatic battle between Canada and India at a time when it is keen to develop New Delhi as a closer partner, it said.

Blinken said the US is "deeply concerned" about the allegations raised by Canadian Prime Minister

Trudeau against India and Washington was "closely coordinating" with Ottawa on the issue and wants to see "accountability" in the case.

Speaking at a press conference in New York on Friday, Blinken said the US has engaged directly with the Indian government on the issue and the most productive thing would be the completion of this investigation. Trudeau on Friday said that Canada shared with India "many weeks ago" evidence on the killing of Nijjar and wants New Delhi to commit constructively with Ottawa to establish the facts in the "very serious matter."

When asked about Canada sharing any information in the case with India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi said: "No specific information has been shared by Canada on this case, either then or before or after. We have, you know, as we have said, or I think we have made very clear, we are willing to look at any specific information." (PTI)

## Russian airstrikes kill 2, wound 3 in southern Ukraine



KYIV, Sept 24: Russian airstrikes on Sunday killed two people and wounded three others in southern Ukraine's Kherson province, the region's governor reported on Sunday as the war in Ukraine entered a 20th month.

According to Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin, Russian forces struck the city of Beryslav, destroying an unspecified number of private houses. A woman was killed and three people were wounded, including a police officer, he said.

Another airstrike also killed a 67-year-old man in the village of L'vove, Prokudin said without specifying the type of weapons used in the attack.

The communities hit both are located in the Ukrainian-controlled part of the Kherson region, where the Dnieper River that bisects the province has marked a battle line since Russian troops withdrew across it in November 2022, a retreat that boosted the invaded country's morale.

The Russians regrouped on the river's eastern bank and regularly shell cities and villages across the river, including the city of Kherson, the regional capital that was occupied early on in the war but retaken by Ukrainian forces more than 10 months ago.

In Russia, a Ukrainian drone hit an administrative building in the city of Kursk and "insignificantly damaged" the roof, regional Gov. Roman Starovoit reported. He didn't report any casualties or say what the building housed.

Unconfirmed media reports both in Russia and Ukraine said it was the offices of the Kursk branch of Russia's main security agency, the Federal Security Service, also known as the FSB.

The Kursk region of Russia borders Ukraine and also is a frequent target of attacks. The drone strike on Sunday took place as residents commemorated the anniversary of the regional capital's founding.

There was no immediate comment from the Ukrainian authorities, who usually don't acknowledge responsibility for attacks on Russian territory.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was traveling home from North America, where he addressed the UN General Assembly and paid his first wartime visit to Canada.

In a social media statement on Saturday, Zelenskyy said he stopped in Poland on his way back to Ukraine to give state awards to two Polish volunteers.

Zelenskyy apparently didn't meet with any Polish officials, but in a post on X, previously known as Twitter, he thanked Poland for "its invaluable support and solidarity that helps defend freedom of our entire Europe".

Poland has taken in large numbers of Ukrainian refugees and been a fierce supporter of neighbouring Ukraine since Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into the country on February 24, 2022. However, a trade dispute has recently tested the relationship between Kyiv and Warsaw. (AP)

## It is still a world of double standards: EAM Jaishankar

NEW YORK, Sept 24: External Affairs minister S Jaishankar has said that it is still a world of "double standards" and those countries which are occupying positions of influence are resisting the pressure to change and those with historical influence have weaponised a lot of those capabilities.

Jaishankar was speaking at a Ministerial Session titled "South Rising: Partnerships, Institutions and Ideas" hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, United Nations India and the Reliance Foundation.

"I think more than political will, there is political pressure for change," he said here on Saturday. There is a growing sentiment in the world and the global South in a way embodies it. But there's also political resistance, he said. "Those who are occupying positions of influence, we see this in the UN Security Council most of all, are resisting the pressure to change."

"Those who are economically dominant today are leveraging their production capabilities and those who have institutional influence or historical influence have actually weaponised a lot of those capabilities as well," Jaishankar said. "They will all mouth the right things, but the reality is still today, it's a world very much of double standards," Jaishankar said.

Covid itself was an example of it, he said. "But I think this whole transition will really be in a sense the global South putting more and more pressure on the international system. And, the global North... it's not just the North. There are parts which may not think of themselves in the North, but are very resistant to change," he said.

Jaishankar added cultural rebalancing really means recognising the diversity of the world, respecting the diversity of the world, and giving other cultures and other traditions their due respect.

He referred to the G20 Summit in Delhi earlier this month and cited the example of millets. He noted that the global South historically ate less wheat and more millets. (PTI)

## Russian foreign minister lambastes the West but barely mentions Ukraine in UN speech

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 24: Russia's top diplomat denounced the United States and the West on Saturday as self-interested defenders of a fading international power structure, but he didn't discuss his country's war in Ukraine in his speech to the UN General Assembly.

"The US and its subordinate Western collective are continuing to fuel conflicts which artificially divide humanity into hostile blocks and hamper the achievement of overall aims. They're doing everything they can to prevent the formation of a genuine multipolar world order," Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said. "They are trying to force the world to play according to their own self-centered rules," he said.

As for the 19-month war in Ukraine, he recapped some historical complaints going back to the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, and alluded to the billions of dollars that the US and Western allies have spent in supporting Ukraine. But he didn't delve into the current fighting.

For a second year in a row, the General Assembly is taking place with no end to the war in sight. A three-month-long Ukrainian counteroffensive has gone slower than Kyiv hoped, making modest advances but no major breakthroughs. Ukraine's seats in the assembly hall were empty for at least part of Lavrov's speech. An American diplomat wrote on a notepad in her country's section of the audience during Lavrov's speech.

The speech accused the US of, among other things, "whipping up hysteria on the Korean Peninsula." North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a rare foray out of his country last week by train to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, an unsettling development for South Korea and allies including the United States. Later, in a press conference, Lavrov said the U.S. was "effectively engaged in hostilities with us, using the Ukrainians as fodder." "You can call this whatever you want to call this, but they are directly at war with us,"



he said. "We call this a hybrid war. But that doesn't change the reality." Under assembly procedures that give the microphone to presidents ahead of cabinet-level officials, Lavrov spoke four days after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and U.S. President Joe Biden.

Zelenskyy accused Russia of "weaponising" food, energy and even children against Ukraine and "the international rules-based order" at large. Biden sounded a similar note in pressing world leaders to keep up support for Ukraine: "If we allow Ukraine to be carved up, is the independence of any nation secure?" On North Korea, he reiterated criticism of the North's violations of Security Council resolutions regarding its nuclear and ballistic missile programs but said Washington is "committed to diplomacy that would bring about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

Since invading Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has offered a number of explanations for what it calls the "special military operation" in Ukraine. Among them: claims that Kyiv was oppressing Russian speakers in Ukraine's east and so Moscow had to help them, that Ukraine's growing ties with the West in recent years pose a risk to Russia, and that

it's also threatened by NATO's eastward expansion over the decades. Lavrov hammered on those themes in his General Assembly speech last year, and he alluded again Saturday to what Russia perceives as NATO's improper encroachment.

But his address looked at it through a wide-angle lens, surveying a landscape, as Russia sees it, of Western countries' efforts to cling to outsized influence in global affairs. He portrayed the effort as doomed.

The rest of the planet is sick of it, Lavrov argued. "They don't want to live under anybody's yoke anymore." That shows, he said, in the growth of such groups as BRICS - the developing-economies coalition that currently includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and recently invited Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to join next year.

"Our future is being shaped by a struggle, a struggle between the global majority in favor of a fairer distribution of global benefits and civilized diversity and between the few who wield neocolonial methods of subjugation in order to maintain their domination which is slipping through their hands," Lavrov said, adding that the United Nations needs to change to have "a fair balance of interests."

Both Lavrov and Zelenskyy also addressed the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday but didn't actually face off. Zelenskyy left the room before Lavrov came in.

Lavrov also sat out Zelenskyy's speech at the General Assembly, but rejected the Ukrainian president's 10-point peace plan as "not feasible" and "not realistic" during the press conference following his speech. "I had my own affairs to attend to. We know what he's going to say. Why waste time?" the Russian said to explain his absence. Nonetheless, he said he'd watched video of the Ukrainian president's remarks there and in the Security Council and thought "he seemed rather grim." (AP)

## Israeli military raid kills 2 Palestinians in West Bank

NOUR SHAMS REFUGEE CAMP (WEST BANK), Sept 24: Two Palestinians were killed during an Israeli military raid Sunday in the northern West Bank, Palestinian health officials said, the latest bloodshed in a surge of violence during a sensitive Jewish holiday period.

The Israeli military said it moved into the Nour Shams refugee camp, near the town of Tulkarem, to destroy what it described as a militant command center and bomb-storage facility in a building.

It said that engineering units detonated a number of bombs planted under roads, and that militants opened fire and hurled explosives, as troops responded with live fire.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said two men — Asid Abu Ali, 21, and Abdulrahman Abu Daghash,

32 — were killed by Israeli fire. The raid caused heavy damage to roads and the suspected building.

Israel has been carrying out stepped-up military raids, primarily in the northern West Bank, for the past year and a half in what it says is a campaign to root out Palestinian militants and thwart future attacks.

But Palestinians say the raids entrench Israel's 56-year occupation over the West Bank. The raids have shown little sign of slowing the fighting and contributed to the weakening of the Palestinian Authority, the self-rule government that administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

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 this year.

The tensions have begun to spread over the past week to the Gaza Strip, where hundreds of Palestinians have been holding daily demonstrations along the fence separating the territory from Israel.

On Saturday, Israeli airstrikes hit a militant site for the second time in as many days, after Palestinians sent incendiary balloons into Israeli farmland and Palestinian protesters threw stones and explosives at soldiers at the separation fence.

The spike in violence comes during the Jewish New Year holiday season. (AP)

## Death toll in a Taiwanese golf ball factory fire rises to 10

TAIPEI (TAIWAN), Sept 24: Search teams found the bodies of the last three missing people on Sunday at the site of a golf ball factory fire in southern Taiwan, bringing the death toll to 10, according to Taiwanese media reports. Launch Technologies, the operator of the plant, is a major global supplier of golf balls.

Four of the victims were firefighters. Taiwan's Central News Agency, quoting a Pingtung County fire official, said an explosion caused part of the building to collapse about 6:10 pm on Friday, trapping firefighters and workers under rubble. A second explosion followed 20 minutes later.

Two bodies were found on Sunday morning and the final one was recovered in the afternoon. About 100 people were injured in the blaze at Pingtung Technology Industrial Park. The fire was not extinguished until the next day. The cause remained unclear.

Taiwan is a major manufacturer of golf balls with factories supplying major brands including Callaway, TaylorMade, Bridgestone, Mizuno and Wilson, according to the 2021 annual report of Launch Technologies Co.

Launch Technologies, which is listed on the Taipei Exchange, shipped about 260 million golf balls last year, accounting for one-fifth of the global total, the Central News Agency said. About 80 per cent of its sales are in the United States. (AP)

# Carbon removal: why ambitious 'no nonsense' plans are vital to limit global heating to 2 degree Celsius

SYDNEY, Sept 24: 2023 is proving to be a year of climate and weather extremes. Record-busting global air and ocean temperatures, unprecedented low levels of Antarctic sea ice, and devastating fires and floods have been reported across the world.

Less discussed by the world media is the continuing rise in atmospheric greenhouse gases driving these changes. Carbon dioxide (CO2) is at a level not seen since the hothouse world of the Pliocene, 3 million years ago. On top of that, an El Niño event is now likely, so widespread extreme events may intensify in coming months.

Despite the changes we are seeing, global efforts to cut emissions fall well short of what's needed to keep heating to less than 2 degree Celsius, let alone the more ambitious Paris Agreement target of 1.5 degree Celsius. This creates an urgent need for the purposeful removal of atmospheric CO2 as well as cuts in emissions.

In a recent article in Nature, we argue for a different approach to pricing carbon. It should take into account how it is removed from the atmosphere, for how long, and with what confidence. This will help fund the most promising technologies for reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

### Carbon removal is on the agenda

The United Nations hosted a "no-nonsense" Climate Ambition Summit in New York this week with the aim of accelerating the global transition away from carbon. This must be done to avoid breaching 2 degree Celsius of global heating relative to the pre-industrial era.

Two strategies are being pursued: carbon emission reductions carbon dioxide removal (CDR), also called "negative emissions".

At COP26 in 2021, global resolutions on cutting emissions drove the push for "net zero" across nations, cities and sectors. However, some worldwide activities, including aviation and heavy industry, face challenges eliminating emissions. Carbon credits have become the main way to offset their remaining emissions.

The dilemma lies in the nature of carbon credits. Most are allocated for so-called "avoidance" measures. A prime example is not clearing forest, which has come under intense scrutiny.

And these measures do nothing about the existing excess carbon dioxide.

A big change in our thinking is needed. The emphasis must shift from emission "avoidance" to "removal" offsets that actively pull carbon from the atmosphere. So how do we tackle the monumental challenge of reducing atmospheric CO2?

What's needed is a shift from avoidance to verifiable carbon dioxide removal. Almost all current removal efforts come from traditional land management. Less than 1% comes from innovative removal technologies.

Removal technologies include: biochar — where carbon from plant material is sequestered as charcoal and stored in soil direct air carbon capture and storage (DACCS) — which directly removes CO2 from the air and stores it in geological formations.

A major advance at COP26 was to work out the projected demand and market trajectory for carbon offsets. Offset credits play a vital role in advancing CO2 removal technologies and developing carbon markets.

Another key goal was to formulate a carbon trading rulebook. The resulting Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets predicts demand



for carbon offsets will grow tenfold by 2030 and 50-fold by 2050.

### So what are the obstacles?

We identify a potential bottleneck. Developing, testing and scaling up CO2 removal technologies takes time. This means a lag in supply could stymie the rapidly growing demand for carbon dioxide removal.

Another problem is that the current carbon offset market offers a flat rate, no matter the quality or effectiveness of the CO2 removal method. There is an urgent need for a tiered market that values high-quality, proven CO2 removal methods. This will provide an incentive to fast-track

their use. The carbon offset market's pricing mechanism is a stumbling block. The price for offsetting a tonne of CO2 is in the range USD 10–100. Cheaper avoidance strategies, such as not clearing forests, heavily influence this price.

The existing pricing falls short when we consider the costs of CO2 removal technologies, which can exceed US\$200 per tonne removed.

The prevailing metric, simplifying everything to "one tonne of carbon", doesn't consider the complexities of CO2 removal. Each method has its own specifics about how long it can store carbon, how reliably it can be verified and the potential risks or side effects. Shoehorning such a varied

field into a single metric stifles innovation in CO2 removal.

**What are the solutions?** Understanding the market's resistance to intricate metrics, we propose a more nuanced yet approachable two-step solution:

Shift in metrics: change the standard from a "carbon tonne" to a "carbon tonne year". This recognises the longevity of CO2 removal methods and rewards those that store carbon longer. Such a metric connects directly with efforts to cut emissions. A mandatory warranty: each "carbon tonne year" requires a warranty from the seller to vouch for the method's reliability (verification) and its overall safety (assessing risks and side effects).

These changes will foster a system that appropriately values CO2 removal methods that are long-lasting, reliable and safe. It creates an incentive to develop and use these methods.

In our Nature article, we advocate a structured ten-year plan. This timeframe is crucial for maturing the markets, establishing effective regulatory frameworks and fine-tuning verification.

It's essential to prepare for the evolution and scaling up of carbon dioxide removal. A decade provides a realistic window to develop the processes needed to reach net zero.

The magnitude of this task cannot be overstated. In just a few decades, CO2 removal must operate on a colossal scale, comparable to global food production.

The New York summit has set the stage for the COP28 meeting in Dubai later this year. An ambitious long-term global strategy can still provide a sustainable future within the heating limits set in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

It's time to get real about carbon. (AP)



# 'Today we are almost 6 lakh crore economy precisely 5.6 lakh crore' Assam is on journey of growth and development: CM Himanta

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** Assam is on a roll with the state making rapid strides in its growth journey during the past two years.

This was said by Assam chief minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma at the two-day Pratidin Media Network Conclave 2023 held at Hotel Ashoka in the capital on Sunday evening.

Chief minister Sarma said Assam is a very peaceful state with no agitation and protests and it is the right time to make investments in the state. "There are no issues in Assam provided we don't rake up issues. It is the most peaceful state with congenial atmosphere prevailing for investment," Sarma said adding that the present generation wants the state to reap in investments and to grow industrially.

The chief minister revealed that investment proposals worth more than ₹ 15,000 crore are under the consideration of the state government. "In the last two years Assam is consistently showing economic progress. Today we are almost 6 lakh crore economy precisely 5.6 lakh crore. Assam's inflation is the lowest in the country. Rajasthan's inflation rate is 8.6 per cent whereas ours is 4 per cent and it



sells petrol-diesel at ₹ 108 per litre whereas we sell at ₹ 98. Assam is on a journey of development. The state is in a jubilant mood, festive mood with no agitation, bandh, picketing or protests and festivals like Bihu and Puja being held throughout the night."

Dr Sarma said that not only the State of Assam but the whole of the Northeast region is experiencing major transformation in differ-

ent sectors.

The chief minister said that the state GDP would attain 9 to 10 lakh crore by 2026 when the tenure of his government ends and become the 7th-8th largest economy by 2032.

On being asked by consulting editor of Pratidin Time, Mrinal Talukdar in course of the hour-long interview session whether he sees himself in Delhi, the chief minister

quipped that he was in Delhi. Sarma was quick to add that he wants to take Delhi to Assam with the state turning into a political and economic hub of the country. "I want to take Delhi to Assam. India's politics should be controlled from Assam and India's economy should be controlled from Assam," quipped the chief minister amid thunderous applause from the audience.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of AAJU, Sonitpur district held in Tezpur

HT Correspondent

**TEZPUR, Sept 24:** Media and journalists have to play an important role in the current state of our country and society. As an inevitable part of the society journalists should dedicate their service towards the people and to always work for the benevolence of the people, senior journalist and former editor of Assamese weekly, 'Agnigarh' published from Tezpur Anjan Goswami discussed the role of journalist. Goswami took part in the open session of the day-long 12th biennial conference of Sonitpur district chapter of All Assam Journalists' Union that was organised on Sunday at the Head office of the organization in Tezpur Town. He further said that people are the supreme in democracy while media plays the role of backbone in strengthening democracy.

The session was held under the aegis of vice president of All Assam Journalists Union, Rajesh Dutta and attended by a host of dignitaries.

Veteran journalist of the district and adviser of AAJU Sonitpur district committee Golap Kalita urged the media people to maintain sacrifice, sincerity and utmost responsibility in dedicating their services.

Pulin Bhattacharyya, president Asomiya Bhasa Unnati Sadhini Sabha in his speech attending as



invited guest said that media should always stand as the voice of mass people and should always serve for the development and betterment of the society and people with uncompromising attitude.

Pankaj Kumar Nath, president AAJU also in his speech urged the journalist fraternity during the session to always work for the mass people and stand by them and dedicate their service towards reflecting the problems of the mass people around them to overcome the challenging situations faced by the journalist community. From the chair of the president, Rajesh Dutta highlighted the problems of the untiring workers of the fourth state and the present situation of the society with deep insight. He urged all to march in their field of work with truth, honesty, justice and dig-

nity. Earlier, the delegate session was held in presence of a host of central office bearers of the front-line scribes' body where central body adviser Bholanath Nath, Bhagawan Baishya, Dilip Nath, Sishir Borthakur and several others took part in the threadbare discussion. Later, new district committee with 31 members was formed headed by Anjan Goswami as president, Mintu Hemrom as Executive President, and Apurba Bora as general secretary in which vice president of AAJU Tarun Deka and assistant secretary of AAJU Ratan Bhuyan attended as central observer. The meeting also enlisted Pankaj Kumar Nath, Bholanath Nath, Rajesh Dutta, Golap Kalita, Pulin Bhattacharyya, Nalini Ranjan Bhuyan, Bhagawan Baishya and Golok Bora in the advisory panel.

## Manipur govt plans to reintroduce all-out war against illegal poppy cultivation

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** The Manipur government has again reintroduced the all-out war against illegal poppy cultivation. It has been preparing to destroy acres of poppy plants ahead of their harvest at the end of October in different parts of the state, state officials said.

The destruction operations will be planned carefully by the newly formed Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) and implemented by forming teams. Apart from state forces, the central security forces are also being engaged in this war.

In an order, joint secretary (Home) Mayengbam Veto Singh stated that the new move is in pursuance of a Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) communication regarding ground verification and destruction operations in connection with illicit opium/poppy cultivation in Manipur.

To this effect, the state government has reconstituted ANTF with the objective of bringing together stakeholders concerned on a single platform for effective coordination and implementation of the War on Drug-2.0 and anti-drug campaign activities with immediate effect.

A joint committee of the Narcotics Control Bureau and Narcotics and Affairs of Border (NAB) has also been formed to survey and destroy poppy plantations in this sensitive border state, Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said in a statement on Saturday. Illegal poppy cultivation and its harvesting is one of the main causes of communal violence in the state.

The new ANTF comprises IGP (Intelligence/NAB) as head of the task force; IGP (Zone-III), IGP (Cyber Crime), ICAR director, principal chief conservator of forests, joint secretary (Home), DCs/SPs of districts concerned, TA&H director, Social Welfare director, Horticulture director, MARSAC director, Forensic Science director, additional district magistrates (ADMs) of Imphal West and East, Cyber Corporation (IT) representative, and two government advocates as members; SP (NAB) as convener-1 & secretarial support, and NCB, Manipur head as convener-2. Notably, around 14,359.4 acres of poppy cultivation and 20 acres of cannabis were destroyed under BJP 1.0 (2017-2022), while under BJP 2.0 (2022-23), 4,305.1 acres of illegal poppy cultivation were destroyed. 3,517.8 acres of poppy cultivation were destroyed in 2022 alone.

For this year (2023), till March, 787.3 acres of poppy cultivation have been destroyed to date. Since January 1, 2020, 80 people including 16 village chiefs, 62 poppy cultivators, and 2 investors have been arrested.

## Karbi Anglong Sand Supplier Association apprehends sand loaded dumper

HT Bureau

**DIPHU, Sept 24:** Karbi Anglong Sand Supplier Association (KASSA) on Saturday evening apprehended one sand-loaded dumper truck bearing registration no NL-07AA-2333 and later handed over the truck to the forest department Dokmoka Forest Beat office.

Informing to media persons, Karbi Anglong Sand Supplier Association, president Anglong Hanse said, "Since many days supplying sand was stopped by the Sand Mahaldar Union in order to get the proper rate of sand. The KASSA has come to know that some sand suppliers defying the KASSA order have been supplying sand. The KASSA members apprehended one such fully loaded sand supplying illegally."

KASSA stated that few suppliers are supplying sand illegally without obtaining legal documents and urged the forest department to take strict action against such persons.

"We informed the forest department about the apprehension of the dumper truck with full load sand and later the forest personnel arrived and took the truck to the Dokmoka Forest Beat office. Meantime we have also submitted a complaint letter to the forest department to take stringent action on the illegal operation of sand," said Hanse.

## Landslide causes cave-in on NH-10

Traffic disrupted between Sikkim, Bengal

**GANGTOK/DARJEELING, Sept 24:** Heavy rain in the hills of West Bengal and Sikkim triggered a landslide that caused a cave-in on the National Highway 10 in Darjeeling district on Sunday, disrupting vehicular movement on the key arterial link between the two states, officials said.

Following heavy rain, a massive amount of rocks and slush rolled down the hill and damaged the highway at Sethi Jhora in Bengal, around 30 km from Siliguri, they said. The road is completely closed for repairs, and the restoration will take a few days, one of the officials said. Vehicles from the Himalayan state and West Bengal are taking a detour to reach their destinations. Heavy vehicle movement will be allowed only between 7 pm to 6 am and will be open via Kalimpong district in Bengal, another official said. The area witnessed landslides and blocking of the highway several times this monsoon. (PTI)

## Nagaland HM orders action on "poor quality" shoes supplied to cops

HT Correspondent

**DIMAPUR, Sept 24:** A video circulating on social media that showed poor quality of hunting boots being supplied to the Nagaland police personnel has caught the attention of the state government.

Expressing concern over the video showing sub-standard shoes being supplied to the police personnel, deputy chief minister Y Patton, who also holds the home portfolio, asked state police chief Rupin Sharma to verify its authenticity and take appropriate actions.

Taking to his Twitter handle, Patton said: "Concerned by the video circulating that suggests poor quality shoes have been provided to Nagaland Police personnel. Urging @DGP\_Nagaland to verify its authenticity and take appropriate measures."

He said ensuring the welfare and safety of our forces is paramount. The circulated video supposedly recorded by a Nagaland police personnel showed that the sole of a new pair of hunting boots supplied to them could be easily torn apart by bare hands.

The video showed the police personnel saying they have to do their duty day in and day out wearing these kinds of shoes. He said while the upper portion of the shoe seems quite right, the lower part is easily breakable. DGP Sharma could not be contacted for his comments on the matter.



Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia interact a village shopkeeper women in Tezu of Arunachal Pradesh on Sunday. UB Photos

## Trucks painted to look like Assam Rifles vehicles in Manipur, police informed

**IMPHAL, Sept 24:** The Assam Rifles has written to the Manipur Police, stating that many trucks in Kachhing district have been painted in camouflage colours with insignia of the paramilitary force, resembling their vehicles, an official said on Sunday.

In a letter written to the Churachandpur superintendent of police, the paramilitary force claimed that some men with the help of valley-based insurgent groups (VBIGs) have acquired many trucks from markets and converted them to ones resembling the vehicles used by the

Assam Rifles by painting and putting the insignia of the force. "Conversion of civil vehicles to look alike of Assam Rifles vehicles clearly shows the nefarious intention of VBIGs to tarnish the image of Assam Rifles or to utilise the same for anti-national activities" the letter read.

The force also asked the Churachandpur police to disseminate the inputs to the SP of Kachhing district and higher authorities so that "preemptive action can be taken to avert any kind of adverse incident".

Manipur has been witnessing ethnic violence

for more than four months. More than 175 people have been killed and several hundreds injured since ethnic clashes broke out in the northeastern state 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.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal valley, while tribals, including Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mostly in the hill districts. (PTI)

## Average 5-7% power tariff hike in Tripura

**AGARTALA, Sept 24:** Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL) has hiked power tariff by an average of 5 to 7 per cent, an official said on Sunday. The power tariff hike will come into force from October 1, the official said. The TSECL once a profit-making government entity has incurred a total loss of ₹ 280 crore during 2021-22 FY and a loss of ₹ 80 crore in the first three months of the current financial year. The last time, TSECL revised the power tariff was in 2014. At present, the northeastern state has around 10 lakh consumers. "After taking into consideration all factors and consultation with Tripura Electricity Regulatory Commission (TERC), an average 5-7 per cent power tariff has been increased to save the power corporation", TSECL's managing director, Debasish Sarkar told PTI. The main reason behind the hike was due to the

rise in the cost of gas – around 196 per cent over the past few years, he said, adding around 98 per cent of power plants in Tripura are gas-based combined cycle. "Earlier, TSECL used to spend ₹ 15 crore for procuring for gas per month for running gas-based power generation units but now it has risen to ₹ 35-40 crore per month."

There is no way rather than going for a power tariff hike", he said. Sarkar said the Centre has introduced a uniform transmission tariff for the entire country which brings more woes to the small states like Tripura. "Now we are paying ₹ 5.6 to ₹ 6 crore annually for introducing the uniform transmission tariff. It also adds more burden on TSECL. That's why we wanted a hike in power tariff but this hike will address our 20-25 per cent revenue deficit only", he said. (PTI)

All India Vayu Sainik Camp is a centrally organised camp held every year by the directorate general, NCC where Air Wing Cadets from 17 NCC directorates from different region of the country take part

## 12 Nagaland cadets attend All India Vayu Sainik camp in Bangaluru

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** As many as 12 cadets from 1 Nagaland Air Squadron NCC under NCC Group HQ Kohima are participating at The All India Vayu Sainik Camp is being held at Bengaluru from Sept 23 to Oct 4.

NCC Directorate, North Eastern Region contingent with 38 cadets, 24 Senior Division (Boys) and 14 Senior Wing (Girls) will be competing in various fields such as drill, skeet shooting, 0.22 rifle shooting, tent pitching & line area competition, health & hygiene, air force specific subject (emphasis on flying related subjects), standard operating procedures of flying Virus Microlight/Zen Air Aircrafts etc.

All India Vayu Sainik Camp is a centrally organised camp held every year by the directorate general, NCC where Air Wing Cadets from 17 NCC directorates from different region of the country take part. The training standards of Air Wing NCC units are also assessed during the camp in accordance with the Air Force pattern, generating a competitive spirit, and foster a



sense of discipline, leadership, and national integration amongst the participating cadets.

Names of the cadets participating from Nagaland are Cdt Shekato Yephtho and Cdt Priyanka Mech from Eastern Christian College, Cdt Lanmi Khamrang, Cdt Hikivi Aye, Cdt

Ngipnon, Cdt Kenzeuyigongbe Elu, Cdt S. Ngou Shio, Cdt Kevikelie Nyekha, from Patkai Christian College and Cdt Ngamliih Yalam, Cdt Ngwaying Lungalang, Cdt Machipheheile, Cdt Phamlong A Konyak, from Kohima Science College.

## 3 arrested for bid to smuggle ₹ 1 cr worth of gold



**SHILLONG, Sept 24:** Three persons were arrested in Shillong for their involvement in smuggling gold of foreign origin worth over ₹ 1 crore. Acting on specific information that a sizeable quantity of gold of foreign origin smuggled through the Indo-Bangladesh borders of Meghalaya would be carried in a car to Guwahati, officers of commissioners of customs preventive (CCP) Shillong intercepted a Mahindra XUV 500 car in the early morning of September 23, at Jhalupara, Shillong.

The car had one occupant who was based in Rangia in Assam, though originally from West Bengal. On interrogation, he confessed that smuggled gold of foreign origin was in his possession.

Thereafter, 14 pieces of gold, which were packed in two plastic pouches, were recovered. Total weight was 1632.450 grams valued at ₹ 1,01,78,326, the CCP said in a statement.

It said specific details of a middleman who had handed him 7 pieces were gathered and on a swift follow-up action, the officers of CCP intercepted the said person at Jhalupara. He further revealed that he had collected the gold from a lady at a shop at Bara Bazar in Shillong.

A further operation at the said shop resulted in recovery of ₹ 9.5 lakh which is admitted to be sale proceeds of smuggled gold, which was also seized.

The lady was also interrogated, and it was revealed that the gold was smuggled from the Indo-Bangladesh border. Three persons have been arrested and further investigation is in progress, the CPP said. (NNN)



# Speed and scale of infrastructure development matching aspirations of 140 crore Indians: PM

**NEW DELHI/UDAIPUR, Sept 24:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the speed and scale of infrastructure development matched the aspirations of 140 crore Indians as he flagged off nine Vande Bharat Express trains connecting religious and tourist destinations across 11 states.

Flagging off the Vande Bharat Express trains via video conferencing, Modi also slammed the previous governments for not paying adequate attention for modernisation of railways and assured that the "day is not far when Vande Bharat will connect every part of the country".

Governors, chief ministers, Union ministers and elected representatives were present at the nine railway stations from where the indigenously built semi-high speed trains were flagged off.

The trains stopped at various stations where they were welcomed by enthusiastic school children and hoards of people with elected representatives addressing functions en route.

Union minister Kailash Choudhary and Rajasthan BJP president C P Joshi boarded the Vande Bharat Express train at Udaipur and travelled till Chittorgarh where a huge crowd of BJP workers raised the slogans of "Vande Mataram" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai" as the train chugged into the station.

In his address, the prime minister said



the popularity of Vande Bharat trains was rising constantly and more than 1.11 crore passengers have already travelled in them.

He said 25 Vande Bharat Express trains were already functional and nine more were being added on Sunday.

"This speed and scale of infrastructure development in the country is exactly matching the aspirations of 140 crore Indians," Modi said.

The nine trains will provide faster connectivity across 11 states -- Rajasthan,

Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala, Odisha, Jharkhand and Gujarat.

"Indian Railways is the most trusted co-passenger of India's poor and middle-class people. The number of people who travel in the railways in one day is more than the population of many countries," he said.

"It is unfortunate that not much attention was given to modernise Indian Railways. But now our government is working for the transformation of Indian

Railways," Modi said.

"I am confident that the changes taking place at every level in Indian Railways and society will prove to be an important step towards a developed India," the prime minister said.

He said that to achieve the goal of a developed India by 2047, the development of every state and the people of every state is necessary.

Modi said that selfish thinking of concentrating railway development in the state of the railway minister has damaged the country a lot and "now we simply cannot afford to keep any state backwaters".

"We have to move ahead with a vision of sabka saath, sabka vikas," he said.

"The Vande Bharat trains will be the fastest train along the routes of their operation and will help save considerable time of the passengers," it said.

The introduction of these Vande Bharat trains will herald a new standard of rail service in the country, the statement said.

These trains, equipped with world-class amenities and advanced safety features, including Kavach technology, will be a key step towards providing modern, speedy and comfortable means of travel to common people, professionals, businessmen, student community and tourists, it added. (PTI)

## Govt has 'mismanaged' economy across all sectors: Congress

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** The Congress on Sunday alleged that the government has mismanaged the economy across all sectors and since it is "too inept" in fixing issues such as unemployment and price rise, it is distorting the data instead.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said now that the special session of Parliament is over, it is clear that the Modi government was trying to "distract and divert" the nation from some critical issues -- "the Adani scam, the caste census and especially the rising unemployment, growing inequality and the economic distress".

In a statement, he said no matter how much the Modi government hides the data, the reality is that the vast majority of people are suffering.

He claimed that some of the facts reported last week are being "brushed under the carpet".

He said RBI's latest bulletin of September 2023 shows the "complete failure" of the Modi government to execute a recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Forty-three per cent of people were in the labour force in February 2020. Over 3.5 years later, the participation rate remains around 40 per cent. As a matter of grave concern, a report from Azim Premji University shows that over 42 per cent of graduates under the age of 25 were unemployed in 2021-22," Ramesh said.

In 2022, women were still making only 85 per cent of their earnings before the pandemic, he claimed.

"Remember that India was already facing the highest unemployment rate in 45 years before the onset of the pandemic -- a sta-

tistic that the Modi government tried hard to hide from the public domain," he alleged.

The Congress leader highlighted that the prices of essential commodities have been rising sharply, impacting the household budget of ordinary families.

"After the uncontrolled spike in tomato prices, now tur dal prices are up 45 per cent from January 2023, and overall pulses inflation has touched 13.4 per cent. Prices of atta are up 20 per cent since August, besan is up 21 per cent, gur is up 11.5 per cent, sugar is up 5 per cent," Ramesh said.

Uncontrolled price rises across the essential household sector shows the inability of the Modi government to manage the economy, he added.

Ramesh also alleged that the crony capitalism of the Modi government has concentrated all economic benefits to a select few firms, making it next to impossible for MSMEs to compete.

"A report by Marcellus found that 80 per cent of all profits went to just 20 companies in 2022. In contrast, the market share of small business was at its lowest level in India's history; small business sales were around 7 per cent of the total before 2014 but fell to under 4 per cent in Q1 2023. Seventy-five per cent of small businesses are losing money, according to a 2023 survey of 100,000 small business owners by Consortium of Indian Associations," he said in his statement.

Noting that credit to the private sector is the engine of growth, Ramesh said a decade of stagnant credit is a symptom of a mismanaged economy. (PTI)

## Probably winning Telangana, certainly winning MP, Chhattisgarh, 'very close' in Rajasthan: Rahul

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** Exuding confidence about a good showing in the upcoming assembly polls, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said that as of now the Congress is certainly winning Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, probably winning Telangana, and there is a "very close" contest in Rajasthan which the party believes it will emerge victorious in. Gandhi also referred to the row over BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's derogatory remarks against BSP leader Danish Ali in Lok Sabha, alleging that the BJP indulges in such tactics to distract from the demand for a caste census. He asserted that the opposition is adapting and working together and the BJP is "in for a surprise in 2024" general elections.

Speaking at a conclave organised by the Pratidin Media Network of Assam, Gandhi also said the idea of 'One Nation, One Election' was aimed at distracting from real issues of the people.

"It's one of the BJP's distraction strategies," he asserted. The main issues in India are concentration of wealth, huge inequality in wealth, massive unemployment, huge unfairness towards the lower caste, OBCs, and tribal communities, and price rise, he said.

"Now, the BJP can't contest those. So let's have Mr. Bidhuri make a statement. Let's get together and sort of have elections together. Let's change the name of India'. This is all distraction. We know it, we understand it. And we're not going to let them do it," he said. He asserted that his party not winning any of the states in the upcoming state polls is out of the question.

Assembly polls are scheduled to take place in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram.

Asked about the party's chances, Gandhi said, "I would say, right now, we are probably winning Telangana, we are certainly winning Madhya Pradesh, we are certainly winning Chhattisgarh. Rajasthan, we are very close, and we think we will be able to win. That is what it is looking like, and by the way, that is also what the BJP internally is saying."

The Congress learnt a very important lesson in Karnataka that the BJP wins elections by distracting and not allowing us to construct our narrative and so we fought the polls constructing our party's



narrative.

"What you are seeing today, this gentlemen Mr. Bidhuri and then suddenly Mr. Nishikant Dubey, all this is the BJP trying to distract from all the caste census. They know that the caste census is a fundamental thing that the people of India want and they don't want to have that discussion," the former Congress chief said.

"Every time we bring a point on the table, they use this type of stuff to distract us and we have learnt now how to deal with it," he said.

"What we did in Karnataka is we gave a clear vision for the state, 'this is the social security programme that we are going to set up for you' and then we control the narrative."

"If you look at the Telangana polls, we are controlling the narrative, the BJP is not even in the narrative, it is gone. The BJP has been decimated and it is over in Telangana," Gandhi said. He claimed that the Congress is controlling the narrative in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the run up to the polls there.

"If you speak to people in Rajasthan on what is the issue in terms of anti-incumbency, they will tell you they like the government," he said.

"We are adapting in a situation where the BJP controls the media. Don't think the opposition is not capable of adapting, we are adapting, we are working together, we are 60 per cent of India's population. BJP is in for a surprise in 2024 (Lok Sabha polls)," he said.

Gandhi also said that the women's reservation bill can be implemented "tomorrow morning" and all that is required to be done is to state that 33 per cent of

the seats will be reserved in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas. There is no connection between women's reservation and census or between women's reservation and delimitation, he argued.

Gandhi also claimed that the government came up with the idea of a special session to distract from media reports in newspapers such as Financial Times on the Adani matter.

"The first thing they were planning to do was to change India to Bharat... but there was a huge backlash, they realised people will not like this, so put that in the background and came up with this," he said. The government is saying that the women will reap benefit of the bill after 10 years but the Congress wants it now, he added. During the interaction, Gandhi also talked about his recent Ladakh visit during which he toured the Union Territory on a motorcycle.

He said it allowed him to continue the Bharat Jodo format in a different way.

On his learnings from his over 4,000 km Kanyakumari to Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra, Gandhi said that in 21st century India, the communication architecture is so captured by the BJP that it is practically impossible to speak to the people of India through that.

"It is very clear that my YouTube channel, my Twitter, they are all suppressed. The yatra was a necessity for us. No matter what the opposition says, it does not go through without distortion in the national media," he said.

"Big learning was old school communication going and meeting people, which Mahatma Gandhi ji pioneered in the modern era, others pioneered in older times, that still works," he said. No matter how much energy the BJP put, no matter how much the media tried to distort, it did not work, because there was a direct connection, Gandhi said.

"For every story BJP media was trying to put in there were thousands of videos coming in to counter that. It was almost like a reverse capture of the mass media," he said. This problem is not just an Indian problem as it is being faced across the world, he argued.

"For me, personal learning was even more interesting. It is that where you think your limit lies, is nowhere your limit actually lies. Your limit is much further than you can imagine," he said. (PTI)

## PM to address mega meet of BJP workers in Bhopal today

*The BJP had rolled out five yatras to reach out to the masses early this month*

**BHOPAL, Sept 24:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a mega congregation of BJP workers here in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh on Monday. The 'Karyakarta Mahakumbh' is being organised on the birth anniversary of Jana Sangh co-founder Deendayal Upadhyaya to mark the formal culmination of the BJP's 'Jan Ashirwad Yatras' that crisscrossed the length and breadth of the state, party leaders said. This will be the third visit of the prime minister to Madhya Pradesh in the past 45 days where the ruling party is locked in a close contest with Congress.

According to sources, the BJP has set an ambitious target of gathering 10 lakh people for the Monday event being projected as a show of strength by the saffron party. "Modiji is going to address 'Karyakarta Mahakumbh' at Jamboree Maidan in Bhopal on September 25, the birth anniversary of Deendayal Upadhyaya," MP BJP chief VD Sharma told PTI. The prime minister will arrive at the Maidan at around 11 am. He is expected to leave Bhopal at 1 pm, he added.

"Lakhs of BJP workers are expected to reach the venue. They are very excited to hear Modiji," Sharma said.

The BJP had rolled out five yatras to reach out to the masses early this month, with party president JP Nadda flagging off the first Yatra from Chitrakoot in Satna on September 3.

These yatras have covered 223 out of the total 230 assembly segments in MP.

"The formal culmination of these yatras would mark the mega workers' meet in Bhopal on September 25," party leaders said. In the run-up to the MP assembly polls, the BJP has come up with the

slogan "abki bar 150 par" (victory in more than 150 seats).

Ahead of the mega meet of BJP workers on Monday, Bhopal is dotted with large cut-outs of Modi. Posters of senior BJP leaders have also been put up at various spots.

Union Minister and BJP's MP election in-charge Bhupendra Yadav, Union minister and MP Election Management Committee convener Narendra Tomar, state BJP chief VD Sharma, and other top leaders along with BJP cadres decorated the busy Roshanpura Chowk and installed the party's flags at the spot.

Accompanied by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the Union ministers and other leaders went to the Maidan and reviewed the preparations on Sunday.

With the Jan Ashirwad (blessings of people) Yatra, the BJP has highlighted development and welfare schemes under the Chouhan government. As the battle to set up narratives for the upcoming elections is growing intense, the Congress has also launched 'Jan Akrosh Yatra' to target the "failures" of the BJP government.

In the 2018 assembly elections, the BJP missed another shot to power by a whisker as Congress won 114 out of 230 seats, restricting the saffron party at 109. The Congress under Kamal Nath formed a coalition government with the support of Independents, BSP, and SP. However, the dispensation collapsed after 15 months when a string of Congress MLAs led by Jyotiraditya Scindia, now a Union minister, joined the saffron party, paving the way for the return of Shivraj Singh Chouhan as the chief minister. (PTI)

## MotoGP event will promote global automobile investments in UP, India: CM Adityanath

**NOIDA, Sept 24:** Uttar Pradesh has enormous potential for sports activities and that is why both the state government as well as the Centre are making all possible efforts to promote this sector, CM Adityanath said ahead of the MotoGP main event in Greater Noida on Sunday. He was addressing a Business Conclave before the main MotoGP race. Representatives of several major domestic and multinational companies participated in the conclave where state's MSME Minister Rakesh Sachan and Industrial, Exports Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta were also in attendance.

The chief minister said he has been informed that more than one lakh tickets have been sold for the pulsating motorcycle race's maiden show in India being held at the Buddh International Circuit (BIC).

"More than 275 national and international brands are associated with the MotoGP event which include BMW, Tissot, Michelin, Red Bull, Shell, DHL, Oakley, Amazon, Petronas, etc. This race also provides an unparalleled opportunity for promotion of these brands and for dialogue with them," Adityanath said.

"The MotoGP race is a major attraction for global automobile industry. Organising this event in UP will help explore the potential in increasing investments in the state and in India. Our government will work with full commitment to explore these opportunities. On the other hand, for the development of sports and sportspersons we will get full support from the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the CM said.

He said Uttar Pradesh currently has a population of 25 crore and a large part of it is in

the working age group. He also stressed that UP is one of the fastest growing economies among the states in the country.

"The Buddh International Circuit was developed by the state government in 2011. It was known as the host venue for Formula One Grand Prix. With the MotoGP event, the immense potential of Uttar Pradesh has been presented to you through a short film (shown to participants earlier in the day)," Adityanath said.

He said Prime Minister Modi on Saturday laid the foundation for an international cricket stadium in 'India's cultural and spiritual capital' Varanasi. The chief minister said the UP government is working with the Centre to develop sports facilities like stadiums and mini-stadiums in every district of the state. (PTI)

## Three people go missing after being swept away in Parvati river

**KOTA, Sept 24:** Three people went missing after being swept away in the Parvati river near Kishanpura village in Rajasthan's Kota district, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred on Saturday afternoon when the three people were taking a bath in the river's overflowing water and catching fish, they said.

Three persons -- identified as Rahul Gujarati (23), Banti Jatav (42) and Babulal (45) -- all residents of Gandhi Colony under the Baran Sadar police station area were swept away in deep water in the Parvati river on Saturday afternoon while they were bathing and catching fish, said SHO Ramvilas.

The river's water level reportedly suddenly began rising and the three persons, along with two others named Kishan and Neelu, were swept away by the strong current of the water, he added.

The SHO said Kishan and Neelu somehow managed to reach the shore while the three others went missing.

The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and civil defence teams began the search operation soon after the incident but the three missing have not yet been traced, he added. (PTI)

## Percentage of Indians appearing in TOEFL for secondary education abroad rising, says ETS

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** The percentage of Indians appearing in TOEFL to pursue secondary education and certifications abroad has seen a gradual increase over the years while those taking the test for immigration purpose has declined, according to Educational Testing Service (ETS).

The Princeton-based ETS, which conducts the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Graduate Record Examination (GRE), said the trend reflects the shifting aspirations of the younger demographic.

According to data exclusively accessed by PTI, the percentage of Indian test takers for licensure, certification or to attend secondary school abroad, has gone up from 5.83 per cent of the total aspirants in 2021 to 7.77 per cent in 2022. During the same period, the percentage of Indian test takers appearing in



TOEFL for employment or immigration has declined from 8.19 per cent to 7.22 per cent.

Top officials at ETS have con-

firmed that the trend is being observed since 2018.

The data showed that the percentage of Indians appearing in TOEFL

to attend a graduate or postgraduate business programme/a graduate or postgraduate programme, other than a business programme, has increased from 70.84 per cent in 2021 to 71.87 per cent in 2022.

"From our data, we observed a growing trend of secondary education students opting for the TOEFL test. This trend is testimony to the shifting aspirations of the younger demographic, especially in their pursuit of international education," Sachin Jain, the Country Manager of ETS India and South Asia, told PTI.

There was a 53 per cent growth in Indian TOEFL test takers in 2021 compared to the previous year. In 2022, the number of test takers saw a 59 per cent rise over 2021.

"There are so many industry reports that talk about the number of Indian students heading abroad hitting 2.5 million in the next three to five years. So that, I think, is a very

strong macro push that is happening," Jain said.

"The second thing is, I think there is a lot more, I would say enablement by foreign countries towards Indian talents... another big macro kind of pull which is happening right from Australia, Canada and the UK, the big destination markets as we call them like all of them have changed," he added. The top cities in India with the highest number of test takers are New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Gurugram, Chennai, Kolkata and Ahmedabad.

Starting July 26, ETS executed a series of changes in the English language proficiency test to create an optimal experience for those taking it. Reducing the duration to less than two hours instead of three and allowing the candidates to be able to see their official score release date upon completion of the test, were among a few of the changes. (PTI)



# From panchayat to Parliament: How 33 pc reservation empowered women at panchayat level

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** Geeta Mahanand, the sarpanch of Risama panchayat in Chhattisgarh's Durg, said she would have never come forward to contest the rural polls had there been no reservation for women in the Panchayati raj system.

A housewife who was thrust into politics after the seat was reserved for women, Mahanand said reservation not just empowered her to make decisions but also boosted her confidence to do more for the society.

In the three decades since reservation of seats for women in panchayati raj institutions was introduced, the country saw women dismantling gender barriers to take the lead in the political field at the grassroots level and excel in it.

In 1992, the P V Narasimha Rao government passed the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts mandating the reservation of one-third of seats for women in Panchayati Raj institutions. Over three decades later, the 128th Constitution amendment bill, referred to as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, is seen as yet another significant stride towards achieving gender equity in politics.

After becoming sarpanch, Mahanand took proactive steps to improve cleanliness in her panchayat. "We received a grant of Rs 20 lakh for our cleanliness efforts. We paid special attention to cleanliness in all institutions. We constructed toilets and employed women under the Swachh Bharat initiative, paying them from the panchayat fund.



We also levied a cleanliness tax." Initially, she faced some resistance as people were sceptical about the new initiatives.

"There were initial disagreements. However, eventually they came around. We worked with children to convince elders and they now talk about the importance of proper waste disposal. We are currently in the process of getting a library constructed," Mahanand said.

Recounting her entry into politics, she said, "The villagers suggested that, since I was educated, I should contest the election. I was new to politics, and no one in my family had ever been in this field. Initially, my husband acted as an advisor." About the passage of the women's reservation bill in Parliament, Mahanand said, "It should have happened earlier. We talk about equality, but there is still no clarity on when it would be implemented."

Asked about some expressing concerns that the bill, in its current

form, might allow women from political families to dominate, leaving little room for those who truly need the opportunity, she said, "It might happen, but women must come forward and assert their rights."

A woman sarpanch of a remote village in Rajasthan, who prefers not to disclose her identity, said, "Empowerment came to me through reservation."

Thrust into the election fray, she endured domestic abuse. "My husband tried to control me, but the women in the village rallied in my support. Gradually, even my own family began to respect me, realizing that all I want to do is to improve the condition of my village."

"As my children grew up, they too started supporting me. Had it not been for reservation, I might have never considered stepping out of my home and contesting elections," she added.

In Salkheda village of Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district, village

council member Anita's journey has been marked by resilience and empowerment.

"In this small village, women faced many difficulties. Men didn't allow them to step out. Hand it not been for reservation, it would have been incredibly hard for a woman to contest elections. When I became a member, an NGO taught us how to convey our ideas to the people and bring about change," she said.

Anita's commitment to empowering women extended beyond her own election. "In my panchayat, I encourage women to step forward and take on more responsibilities. I firmly believe they should have a larger role to play," she said.

Seema Bhaskaran, the Lead for Gender at the grassroots organisation Transform Rural India said women's reservation in panchayat opened up the political space for women. "In states where reservation in panchayati raj has been combined with capacity building of women elected representatives, the change has been impactful," she said.

In India, the National Rural Livelihood Mission has facilitated training for elected women representatives and Self-Help Group federations in decentralised planning and citizenship within Panchayati Raj Institutions. This has greatly contributed to enhancing the political voice of women, Bhaskaran said.

"This is an inevitable concomitant for battling patriarchy intersecting with entrenched structural barriers of caste," she added. (PTI)

## Cauvery issue: Agitation continues in K'taka against the release of water to TN

**MANDYA, Sept 24:** The protest against the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu continued in Mandya, the Cauvery heartland, on Sunday as well. Farmers and various pro-Kannada organisations staged a sit-in demonstration at Sanjay Circle here demanding justice. Holding placards and banners, the protesters raised slogans asking the state government to stop the release of water to the neighbouring state. They alleged that there is inadequate water in the Krishna Raja Sagar Dam for drinking water supply, let alone to meet the irrigation requirements of farmlands in the agriculture dominated district.

The Karnataka Rakshana Vedithe and Cauvery Water Rakshana Horata Samiti spearheaded the agitation from the morning.

The protests have been happening for the past few days and intensified on Saturday when 'Mandya Bandh' was observed.

Various farmers and pro-Kannada outfits have given a call for a Bengaluru Bandh on Tuesday against the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu.

Last week, the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) had directed Karnataka to continue releasing 5,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for another 15 days, after the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) made such a recommendation last week. The Supreme Court too refused to interfere with orders of the CWMA and CWRC, following which protests erupted in different parts of the state. Karnataka has been maintaining that it is not in a position to release water, taking into account its own requirement for drinking water and irrigation of standing crops in the Cauvery basin areas, as there has been water scarcity due to deficit monsoon rains. (PTI)

## BJP needs political willpower to create Gorkhaland: GTA chief

**DARJEELING (WB), Sept 24:** Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) chief executive Anit Thapa on Sunday said that the BJP needs "political willpower" to carve Gorkhaland state out of West Bengal.

Thapa, who is also the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGP) supremo, asserted that the Gorkhaland issue is known to everyone and there was no need for any tripartite talks (between the Centre, Gorkha parties and West Bengal government).

"Our desire is Gorkhaland, but those who can make it a reality have no such desire. We must not undermine the wish for Gorkhaland in our minds and hearts. However, till Gorkhaland is achieved, we must make our place better so that everyone can live peacefully and carry out livelihood activities," he said, addressing a rally here. Gorkhaland statehood proponents demand the creation of a state for Nepali-speaking Indian Gorkhas in northern West Bengal, where they reside in large numbers.

Thapa also launched the 'Mero Jamin, Mero Adhikaar' (My land, my right) campaign to press for the demand for distribution of 'pattas' to tea garden residents of entire parcels of lands currently possessed by them.

The West Bengal government



had earlier announced that it would provide land rights of up to 5 decimals to those residing in tea gardens.

After the tea garden residents demanded rights for entire parcels of lands possessed by them and the opposition parties supported their cause, the BGP raised the issue before the state government, and the process of issuing 'pattas' (land documents) in tea gardens in GTA area was halted.

"As soon as I came to know about people's demands, I made their voices heard in Kolkata and the process of issuing these pattas was stopped," he said.

"This campaign is not to strengthen the BGP. It is for providing land rights to people

residing in the tea gardens. I urge the opposition to come together on this issue," he said.

Thapa said he was ready to sit for talks with tea workers' groups to understand their demands on land rights and raise those before the state government.

"Till the lands of those residing in tea gardens and cinchona plantations are not registered in their names, they will not be freed from slavery. I urge the tea garden owners, who have earned money and fame from Darjeeling tea, to support our cause. I will make the state government understand, but the tea garden owners should not create hurdles (in issuance of pattas)," he said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Aids and assistive devices

Divyangjans (persons with disabilities) in Karbi Anglong district under the Assistance to Disabled Persons (ADIP) scheme. Tuliram Ronghang, chief executive member of KAAC, served as the chief guest and ceremonially distributed the aids and assistive appliances to Divyangjans. The event was attended by MP of 3-Diphu (ST) Parliamentary Constituency Horensing Bey, executive members of KAAC, Karbi Anglong district commissioner Madhumita Bhagawati, deputy director general of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Kishore B. Surwade, and other dignitaries.

The program included the distribution of various aids and assistive devices, such as tricycles, motorized tricycles, wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, canes, cell phones, and more, to a total of 2466 beneficiaries. These devices were provided under the ADIP scheme of the Government of India. In his speech, Tuliram Ronghang expressed the government's commitment to making life easier for Divyangjans and encouraged them to avail the facilities and assistance available. He also mentioned plans to provide financial assistance to Divyangjans in Karbi Anglong from the next financial year and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for their initiatives for Divyangjans.

Horensing Bey, MP, emphasised that these aids and assistive devices aim to improve the quality of life for Divyangjans and requested authorities to ensure devices are provided to those who may have been left out. The program distributed aids and assistive devices to 194 beneficiaries on the first day, with the remaining devices to be distributed over the next three days.

## India-Middle East-Europe

experiences that the delegates who came here have carried back with them will further expand tourism," he said. Modi said it was a matter of immense pride that Santiniketan associated with Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and the Hoysala temples of Karnataka were recently declared world heritage sites. Such sites number now 42 in India and it is the country's efforts to have more and more places associated with its culture and heritage recognised as the World Heritage Sites.

Ahead of the start of festival season, he asked people to remember 'vocal for local' and buy 'Made in India' products.

"As far as possible, you should buy goods made in India, use Indian products and gift only Made in India goods. Your little joy will become the cause of immense happiness for someone else's family. Whatever Indian goods you buy, our labourers, workers, craftspeople and other artisans will directly benefit from it," he said.

In his remarks, Modi expressed happiness at the way students associated themselves with the G20 event. Throughout the year, programmes related to the G20 were held in many universities of the country. "In this series now, another exciting program is going to happen in Delhi - the 'G20 University Connect Programme'. Many prestigious institutions like IITs, IIMs, NITs and medical colleges will also participate. If you are a college student, you must watch this programme on September 26 and join it. I myself will attend the programme," he said.

While hailing the success of Chandrayaan-3, Modi noted that "More than 80 lakh people watched this incident on ISRO's YouTube Live Channel; which is a record in itself."

This conveys how deep the attachment of crores of Indians is to Chandrayaan-3". Indian culture and music, he said, have now become global.

The fascination of people all over the world towards them is increasing day by day, he said while sharing a short clip of a 21-year-old German woman Kasmi.

Kasmi, who is visually impaired, has never been to India but was fascinated by its music from an early age, he said, lauding her. The most inspiring thing is that she has mastered singing in many Indian languages like Sanskrit, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Assamese, Bengali, Marathi, Urdu and has also mastered her notes in all of them, he said.

In the programme, the Prime Minister also praised a group of youths in Nainital for starting 'Ghoda Library', aimed at taking books to children living in remote villages so that they could read poems, stories and moral education books apart from school books.

In Hyderabad, 11-year-old Akarshana Satish studying in class 7 is running seven libraries for children, he said while citing examples of people working to save wild animals and pigeons. In Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district, he noted people have joined hands to revive the Sot river.

"By walking on the path of duty, you too can become the medium of many such changes around you," Modi said. (PTI)

## New law to be enacted to

chief minister Sarma reported that 81 percent of the first phase's projects had been completed, with an estimated cost of ₹ 50 crore. "In the second phase, a total of ₹ 114 crore will be allocated for development activities. Additionally, the government of Assam plans to beautify 21 other sites directly related to Mahapurush Sri-manta Sankardev," chief minister Sarma added.

The event was attended by various dignitaries, including Satradhikars from Shri Shri Salaguri Satra and Shri Shri Noruwa Satra, along with Members of Assam Legislative Assembly Rupak Sarma, Jitu Goswami, Sashi Kanta Das, along with a host of other dignitaries.

## Navies of India, US

at bilateral and multilateral exercises such as the Malabar, Sea Dragon, RIMPAC and Tiger Triumph. The Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) is considered one of the largest international maritime warfare exercises. It is hosted by the US Navy's Indo-Pacific Command.

At the ISS, Admiral Kumar spoke extensively about the challenges of human resource management, with specific reference to recruitment and retention of trained personnel and India's initiatives towards addressing these through the Agnipath scheme, empowering women and driving the Indian Navy into a gender-neutral force, according to Madhwal.

The Indo-US defence ties have been on an upswing in the last few years. In June 2016, the US designated India a "Major Defence Partner" paving the way for sharing of critical military equipment and technology.

The two countries have also inked key defence and security pacts over the past few years, including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 that allows their militaries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies.

The two sides also signed COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) in 2018 which provides for interoperability between the two militaries and provides for the sale of high-end technology from the US to India. (PTI)

## NIT-Silchar appoints new

alleged that Roy had insulted the victim, who had six backlogs in his first-semester examination held in 2021. Due to lockdown and a lack of internet connectivity at home, he couldn't attend online classes, leading to the backlog.

The student had requested a special examination to clear the backlogs, but Roy allegedly insulted him. Following this incident, the student locked himself in his room, and his body was later found hanging.

Among the protesters' demands were Roy's resignation, as they held him responsible for the suicide, and a guarantee that no disciplinary action would be taken against the protesting students.

The hunger strike they initiated ended on Friday after assurances were given by the college authorities. (With inputs from PTI)

## Scindia inaugurates new

in Arunachal Pradesh by October this year. Scindia added that under the Centre's UDAAN-5 scheme, new flight services would begin between Itanagar and New Delhi from Donyi Polo Airport at Hollongi near here, besides a service between Itanagar and Jorhat in Assam and between Ruksin in East Siang district and Itanagar.

"The 'jodi' of PM Modi and Chief Minister Pema Khandu is taking Arunachal to new heights," Scindia said. He emphasised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for Arunachal as a point where the 'Arun' (Sun) enters India, symbolising Atulniya Bharat.

The secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, expressed optimism about Tezu's potential and its capacity to handle 300 passengers initially, with room for expansion to accommodate up to 1000 passengers. He encouraged utilising Tezu Airport for economic development, particularly in exporting Arunachal's agricultural products and medicinal herbs to global markets.

The event was attended by dignitaries including the deputy chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, minister of tourism and civil aviation for Arunachal Pradesh, and Members of Parliament, among others. (With inputs from PTI)

## Meghalaya coffee producer

eco-tourism and other means, Tyngshain Dewkhaid, a schoolteacher at Phlangwanbroi village, said.

He said the extremely shy animals may not be visible, but visitors can hear their calls early in the morning. "If we pay enough attention, the songs and calls of the Hulengs can be heard in a distant forest. It is pleasing to hear them making noises as it means that there is a sizable population of them in our forests," he said.

Last year, a cycling competition was held at his village to highlight the conservation initiatives for Hulengs. Shillong-based Ian and Gary, who organised the competition, said it was a success and cyclists from the state's capital and other parts of the state participated. The participants were given T-shirts and calendars containing information on the Hulengs.

Dasumar said she is yet to connect with people in the Hima Malai Sohmat area, but is keen to be part of a larger effort for conservation of the forests and Hulengs in the area.

"This year I am planning to set aside 500 kg of coffee for the Huro/Huleng project and another 1000 pieces of the chocolate from her factory," she said.

This is worth close to ₹ 10 lakh and about 50 per cent of the profit will be handed over to the conservation initiative, she said, adding that the packaging for coffee and chocolate will depict the gibbons for creating awareness about these unique apes. (PTI)

## Manipur CM holds talks

Manipur shares a 398-km-long border with Myanmar, of which only around 6 km is fenced, sources said. There are allegations that illegal immigrants from Myanmar were behind the recent violence. A Meitei organisation has also asserted that the over four-month-long strife is a manifestation of the tension over deforestation, illegal opium poppy cultivation and change in demography in certain areas of the state mainly caused by illegal immigrants from Myanmar.

It is alleged that firearms were supplied to militants in Manipur from Myanmar. 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. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal valley, while tribals, including Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mostly in the hill districts. (PTI)

## Delhi govt asks departments to formulate plan to implement 63 action points of G20 declaration

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** The Delhi government has asked its departments to formulate detailed, time-bound plans to implement the 63 action points of the G20 declaration, officials said on Sunday.

Earlier this month, the planning department, in an order approved by Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, asked various departments to prepare their respective action plans and submit those by September-end. The vision outlined in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration needs to be translated into reality at the ground level through its successful implementation. Immediate follow-up actions for translating 63 action points into concrete action plans are needed, the order stated.

"You are, therefore, requested to formulate a detailed, time-bound action plan to implement the action points of the G20 declaration pertaining to concerned departments," said the order issued by the planning department special secretary. "Detailed action plan containing major milestones and timelines be sent to the undersigned latest by September 30," it added.

The G20 Summit was held in New Delhi on September 9-10 and a G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration unanimously adopted



by the bloc.

The declaration contained issues such as employment and livelihood, poverty, climate change, global skill development, economy, investment, reducing gender gap, child labour, combating corruption and food security, among others.

Departments such as transport and environment and agencies, including the Delhi Transport Corporation and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, will work on the action point related to pursuing low greenhouse gas and carbon emissions.

The action points that the industries and the health departments will work on include improving access to medical countermeasures and facilitating more supplies and production capacities in developing countries to prepare better for future health emergencies.

The IT department will work on an action point that involves improving access to digital services and digital public infrastructure and leveraging digital transformation opportunities to boost sustainable and inclusive growth.

The employment, education and labour departments will work on

an action point that promotes sustainable, quality, healthy, safe and gainful employment.

Closing gender gaps and promoting the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women in the economy as decision-makers will be the action point of the women and child development department.

The industries department will work on promoting the ease and reducing the cost of doing business, enhancing MSMEs' access to information to promote their integration into international trade.

Ensuring adequate social protection and decent working conditions for gig and platform workers will be covered under the action point of the industries, social welfare and the labour departments.

Increasing efforts to eliminate child and forced labour along global value chains will be the action point worked on by the women and child development and the labour departments. Strengthening law enforcement-related international cooperation and information sharing and strengthening the asset recovery mechanism for combating corruption will be done by the Vigilance Directorate and the Anti-Corruption Branch. (PTI)



## PASSING OF WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION: PRIYANKA CHOPRA



**LOS ANGELES, Sept 24:** Terming the passing of the women's reservation bill a "historic milestone", actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas said the next step would be its swift and effective implementation.

Priyanka took to her Instagram Stories and welcomed the passing of the long-pending bill, named Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, in the Parliament earlier in this week.

"Inspiring a new age with this historic milestone..."

"The passing of the women's reservation bill - 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' is indeed a step in the right direction, but the crucial next phase is its swift and effective implementation. Here's to an India that truly

supports and empowers its women!" the actor, now based out of Los Angeles, wrote.

The bill to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women received the parliamentary nod on Thursday as the Rajya Sabha unanimously voted in its favour. The Lok Sabha passed it on Wednesday. It will now require the approval of a majority of the state assemblies.

The reservation, however, will come into effect only after the completion of the census and delimitation exercises.

In the past, actors Kangana Ranaut, Bhumi Pednekar, Tamannaah Bhatia, Kirti Kulhari have voiced their support for the bill. (PTI)

## 'AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY' WRITER PRAYAG RAJ DIES AT 88



**MUMBAI, Sept 24:** Veteran screenwriter Prayag Raj, best known for his work in Amitabh Bachchan's blockbuster hits "Amar Akbar Anthony", "Naseeb" and "Coolie", has died due to age-related issues. He was 88.

According to his son Aditya, the writer passed away on Saturday evening at his Bandra residence.

"He passed away peacefully on Saturday at 4pm at his residence in Bandra. He had multiple ailments since eight to ten years like heart disease and age-related issues," Aditya told PTI.

Raj, who penned the story for Bachchan's "Naseeb", "Suhaag" and "Coolie" and "Mard", had over 100 films to his credit as a writer and a few as a lyricist.

He also wrote the Bachchan, Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan-starrer "Geraftaar", apart from contributing to the screenplays of Rajesh Khanna's "Roti", Dharmendra-Jee-tendra's "Dharam Veer" and "Amar Akbar An-

thony".

His last film as a writer was the unreleased "Zamanat", directed by the late S Ramanathan.

Raj's last rites were performed on Sunday morning at Shivaji Park crematorium in Dadar here. It was attended by family, and his friends from the industry.

Bachchan paid tribute to his frequent collaborator on his personal blog.

"Last evening we lost another pillar of our great film industry," the veteran actor wrote on Sunday.

Anil Kapoor, who worked on "Hifazat", written by Raj, said he is saddened by the industry veteran's demise.

"I'm truly saddened by the loss of the late Prayag Raj. Working with him on 'Hifazat' was a privilege. May his soul rest in peace," he wrote on X alongside a photograph with Raj from the sets of the movie.

"Sorry to hear about the passing away of writer-director actor Prayag Raj. RIP," wrote "Amar Akbar Anthony" actor Shabana Azmi. (PTI)

## Advance booking opens for 'Fukrey 3', 'The Vaccine War'



**MUMBAI, Sept 24:** The advance booking for "Fukrey 3" and "The Vaccine War" opened on Sunday, the makers have announced.

Both the Hindi films are set to hit the screens on September 28. "Fukrey 3", the third installment in the buddy comedy franchise, is directed by Mrighdeep Singh Lamba and produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani under the banner of Excel Entertainment. "Yeh parivarik film ki advance bookings ab ho gayi hai shuru! Book your tickets now."

#4daystoFukrey3," Excel Entertainment wrote on its official Instagram page. The upcoming sequel will see Pulkit Samrat, Varun Sharma,

Manjot Singh, Richa Chadha and Pankaj Tripathi reprise their respective roles.

"The Vaccine War", directed Vivek Agnihotri, is based on the true story of Indian scientists, their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and how they developed an affordable vaccine for India and the world.

Produced by Pallavi Joshi and I Am Buddha, the film features Anupam Kher, Nana Patekar, Sapthami Gowda, and Joshi.

"ADVANCE BOOKINGS OPEN NOW. 4 DAYS TO GO! 28 September 2023. #TheVaccineWar #ATrueStory," the banner wrote on its official X page. (PTI)

## Colors TV announces premiere date for 'Bigg Boss 17'



**MUMBAI, Sept 24:** The 17th season of popular reality series "Bigg Boss", hosted by superstar Salman Khan, will air on TV channel Colors from October 15.

The show will be broadcast weekdays at 10 pm and at 9 pm over the weekend. The reality series will also be available for streaming on JioCinema, the channel announced on its official X page Saturday night.

"Saam-daam-dand-bhed ka karengye tyaag, kuch sadasyon ke liye Bigg Boss kareng khuleam pakshpaat. Dekhiye #BiggBoss17, 15th Oct se, Mon-Fri 10PM & Sat-Sun 9PM sirf #Colors par," the channel captioned the date announcement teaser.

In June, Salman hosted the second season of "Bigg Boss OTT Hindi", which streamed on JioCinema. The actor, who will next be seen in "Tiger 3", has been presenting "Bigg Boss" since 2010. (PTI)



## VIKRANT MASSEY, SHEETAL THAKUR ANNOUNCE PREGNANCY

**MUMBAI, Sept 24:** Actors Vikrant Massey and Sheetal Thakur on Sunday announced they are expecting their first child.

The couple, who tied the knot in 2022, shared the news on Instagram. The baby is due next year, they said.

"New beginnings. We are expecting. Baby coming 2024," Massey and Thakur posted on their respective official accounts.

Massey, 36, and Thakur, 30, who began dating in 2015, have worked together in the Ekta Kapoor-backed series "Broken But Beautiful" (2018).

Thakur is also known for her work in films such as "Chappad Phaad Ke". Massey will next be seen in "12th Fail", a movie directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. (PTI)

## 'Dev Anand 100' film festival kicks off with 'Johnny Mera Naam', 'Guide' screenings



**MUMBAI, Sept 24:** A film festival celebrating the birth centenary of screen icon Dev Anand, opened on Saturday evening with packed shows of the actor's popular films "Johnny Mera Naam" and "Guide" at PVR Juhu here.

The two-day event named 'Dev Anand @ 100 - Forever Young', curated by Film Heritage Foundation (FHF), is showcasing four of the actor's movies. The other two films "CID" and "Jewel Thief" will be screened on Sunday.

Waheeda Rehman, Dev Anand's co-star of films such as "CID" and "Guide", actor Jackie Shroff, filmmaker Sriram Raghavan, and FHF director Shivendra Singh Dun-

garpur introduced the two titles marking the opening of the festival.

Rehman recounted being introduced to Dev Anand on the sets of "CID", the 1956 film which marked her Hindi cinema debut.

"I feel very lucky that I did my first film 'CID' with Dev sahab. When we were introduced, I called him 'Dev sahab', he said 'Waheeda, you won't call me Dev sahab'. I said 'I'm not that ill-mannered, you are elder to me and such a big star. This is my first film. How can I not call you Dev sahab?' He said, 'I don't feel comfortable when someone calls me 'sahab', I feel like a school teacher. So, just call me Dev', the 85-year-old star said at the event.

Dev Anand was the "only actor I addressed by first name", she added.

"Not once did he make me feel that he is such a huge star or older to me in age. He made me feel comfortable and was cooperative. I'm proud to have worked with a legend like Dev Anand. I wish he was here. I'm sure up there he must be feeling happy. He has received so much love from us," the actor said. "He was, is and will remain ever-green. He was a charming personality, dedicated, punctual and a thorough gentleman," she further said. Rehman also credited the late actor for her casting in "Guide", the 1965 film directed by his brother Vijay Anand. Dev Anand produced and starred in

the film. "It was such a pleasure to have worked with him. He was the one of the reasons behind me being (cast) in 'Guide'. He had said 'No one will play Rosie other than you, Waheeda'," she said.

The screening was also attended by Vaibhav Anand, son of Vijay Anand, the families of Dev Anand, Chetan Anand, Prem Nath and Jagdish, as well as actors Mink Brar and Divya Dutta. "The response has been amazing. The cinema halls were packed in many parts of India. It was so good to see such a young crowd come and watch these films. It was an amazing experience. It's almost houseful everywhere," Dungarpur, also a filmmaker and archivist, told PTI. (PTI)



## RAMITA WIN INDIVIDUAL BRONZE

## INDIAN WOMEN'S 10M AIR RIFLE TEAM BAGS SILVER

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** The experienced trio of Mehuli Ghosh, Ramita Jindal and Ashi Chouksey's bagged the women's team silver while Ramita also clinched an individual bronze in the 10m air rifle event as Indian shooters made an impressive start to their Asian Games campaign, here on Sunday.

A combined score of 1,886.0 earned the Indian trio the second spot behind hosts China, who smashed the Asian record with a score of 1,896.6.

Junior world champion Ramita then won the individual bronze in her event, shooting 230.1 in the eight-shooter finals.

China won both the gold and silver medals in the event with Huang Yuting breaking the Games record with a score of 252.7 on way to top podium finish. Han Jiayu came in second with 251.3 points.

The 19-year-old Ramita was in contention for a silver medal before she fell behind because of a rank poor 9.9 on the 13th shot.

Mehuli, the other Indian to make the eight-shooter final, finished fourth with a score of 208.43. Despite ending up second best to China in the team category, all three Indian women shooters were in the 'zone' on Sunday.

Ramita scored 631.9 in qualification to finish second, while Mehuli was fourth with a score of 630.8 points. The third Indian, Ashi, was slightly off-target, managing 623.3, to finish 28th in the qualification round. But the combined



score of the trio was good to earn them the silver and lift the morale of the Indian contingent, which is hoping to better the haul from the previous edition of the Games in Jakarta and Palembang, where they won nine medals.

The team medals in shooting are decided on the combined scores of a country's shooters in the qualification round. China won the team gold with all their three shooters -- Han Jiayu, Huang Yuting and Wang

Zhilin -- firing on all cylinders to reset the Games record. Mongolia finished third with a combined score of 1880.0.

All three Indians were up to the task in the qualification round with Ramita shooting consistent scores of 104.3, 106.7, 105.2, 104.3, 105.4 and 106.0 in the six series to garner 631.9, which placed her second behind Han Jiayu of China, who smashed the 10m air rifle Games qualification record and Asian

record with a superb 634.1.

Mehuli, who also made it to the individual final with a score of 630.8 in qualification, too had things going for her with scores of 104.6, 105.7, 104.6, 105.1, 104.9 and 105.9. She finished fifth to make the final round. However, the third Indian shooter Ashi failed to make it to the final, finishing 28th with a qualification round score of 623.3. Mehuli, 22, following her exploits in several international events of late, was the

firm favourite to stand on the podium in the individual event, but Ramita had other plans.

Ramita, who was crowned world champion in the 10m air rifle junior event at the ISSF World Championship (Rifle/Pistol) in Cairo last year overcame the slight lapse in concentration on the 13th shot to again get into the groove and shoot some good scores, eliminating Mehuli while in contention for bronze. (PTI)

## Arjun-Arvind rowing pair wins Silver; coxed-eight team too comes in second



**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** In a rollicking start, Indian rowers powered their way to two silver and a bronze medal in the Asian Games, here on Sunday.

On a pleasant morning with the conditions just perfect for rowing at the Fuyang Water Sports Centre, Arjun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh opened the country's account with a silver medal in the men's lightweight doubles sculls event.

The Indian duo clocked 6:28.18s to finish behind China's Junjie Fan and Man Sun, who won gold with 6:23.16s.

The Uzbekistan pair of Shakhzod Nurmatov and Sobirjon Safaroliyev bagged the bronze clocking 6:33.42s.

The silver was just a precursor of the things to come as the grueling men's coxed eight event saw a keen tussle between China and India before the latter finished second with a time of 5:43.01s, which was 2.84s behind the host team, which clocked 5:40.17.

The Indian men's coxed-eight team comprised Neeraj, Narekh Kalwaniya, Neetish Kumar, Charanjit Singh, Jaswinder Singh, Bheem Singh, Puneet Kumar and Ashish.

Indonesia, who clocked a time of 5:45.51s, were third.

"It was a great race for us. It went according to the plan we had gone over with our coach and teammates yesterday," said Dhananjay Uttam Pande, who performed the role of a coxswain in the team, said.

"My role as a cox is to guide the boat, give them the right instructions about what pace to maintain in the race, and which team to focus on. My job is to make all the eight members think together."

The achievement is all the more creditable given that rowers from powerhouse Uzbekistan and Japan finished fourth and fifth respectively.

spectively.

"Our target was not to neglect main teams like Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Japan. We wanted to build pressure on them and then target China for the win," Pande said.

His teammate Neetish added: "We have been training together since 2019, and attended all the camps at the same time. We still have more events to go tomorrow, so we will celebrate together only after that."

In the coxless pair event, India's Babul Yadav and Lekh Ram settled for a bronze with a time of 6:50.41 sec, behind Hong Kong (6:44.20 sec) and Uzbekistan 6:48.11.

Arvind said they were aiming for gold but an injury two months ago hampered his training.

"We missed training for 20 to 25 days as I was having lower-back pain two months back. Our aim was to win gold but because of my injury, I wasn't able to push myself as much. Even during the trials, I was battling this injury," said Arvind.

"I went to Hyderabad to get treatment and the physio there really worked on getting me back in good shape. I resumed practice and only because of that have I been able to win this silver medal," he added.

"We will now work for the Paris Olympics and then try to win gold at the 2026 Asian Games."

His team-mate Arjun said they had the gold medal on their mind. "Gold was the target but we did our best. Our coach told us to just do our best. We could not do our (personal) best of 6:19, which we did at our Army nodal centre in Pune," said Arjun.

Arjun and Arvind have been training together for the last four years and it sowed in the fine coordination the pair forged on Sunday. (PTI)

## Men's paddlers struggle to quarters after women bow out

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** Veteran Achantha Sharath Kamal raised his game just in time to help the Indian men's team escape unscathed against Kazakhstan but the women's table tennis team imploded against a resilient Thailand to bow out of the Asian Games here on Sunday.

Star Indian paddler Manika Batra failed in both her singles matches as the women's team lost 2-3 to a resilient Thailand.

The match against Kazakhstan was locked 2-2 when Sharath Kamal produced a face-saving win in the decisive fifth rubber.

Sharath had lost the opening singles tamesly 1-3 (11-8, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8) to Krill Gerassimenko, the top-ranked player from Kazakhstan. The world No. 78 started briskly and ended in the same vein, despite Sharath winning the second game.

Sathyan accounted for Aidos Kenzhigulov 14-12 11-8 11-5 to level the score before Harmet Desai put India ahead. The world No. 69 Indian beat against Alan Kurumangaliyev 11-7, 12-10, 11-5. However, Sathyan faced stiff resistance from Krill in their reverse singles, but the world No. 107 struggled, eventually losing 5-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-5, 5-11.

With the scores tied, much depended on the most experienced Sharath in his reverse singles against Aidos.

Sharath Kamal was caught on the wrong foot and lost the first two games but closed Aidos out with a 5-11, 7-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-9 in the decisive rubber. (PTI)

## India rout Uzbekistan 16-0 in Asian Games men's hockey goalfest

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** Lalit Upadhyay, Varun Kumar and Mandeep Singh slammed a hat-trick each as India started their men's hockey campaign at the Asian Games with a 16-0 rout of lowly-ranked Uzbekistan here on Sunday. Ranked third in the world, India began the match as clear favourites against the world No. 66 Uzbeks and expectedly dominated the proceedings from start to finish in the Pool A match.

Lalit (7th, 24th, 37th, 53rd) and Varun (12th, 36th, 50th, 52nd) fired in four goals each, while Mandeep (18th, 27th, 28th minutes) found the net thrice.

Abhishek (17th), Amit Rohidas (38th), Sukhjeet (42nd), Shamsheer Singh (43rd) and Sanjay (57th) were the other goal scorers as India toyed with the Uzbek defence all through the match.

India skipper Harmanpreet Singh did not play the match as he



was rested after donning the responsibility of being the joint flag-bearer along with Olympic medalist boxer Lovlina Borgohain during the opening ceremony of the Asian Games on Saturday.

It was a complete domination from the Indians who took seven minutes to break the deadlock, but once they did, it was complete

mayhem for Uzbekistan.

It was raining penalty corners for India as they secured as many as 14 in the entire 60 minutes but converted just five, which should be a cause for concern for chief coach Craig Fulton.

But what is heartening is the display of the forward-line as it combined well with the midfield

to pump in 10 goals, while the other came from a penalty stroke in the 36th minute.

The Indians got their first chance in the fifth minute but Abhishek's tap from close range was saved by Uzbek goalkeeper Davlat Tolibbaev.

Minutes later Sukhjeet earned India's first penalty corner but Sanjay's flick was kept away by Tolibbaev.

But India broke the deadlock seconds later when Lalit scored from a rebound after Tolibbaev had made a double save.

Varun doubled India's lead in the 12th minute by converting a penalty corner with a powerful low flick to the left of the Uzbek goalkeeper.

Just at the start of the second quarter, India secured another penalty corner but once again Tolibbaev came to his side's rescue to deny Sanjay. (PTI)

## Indian women go down to Thailand 0-1; fail to enter knockout stage

**WENZHOU (CHINA), Sept 24:** The Indian women's football team failed to qualify for the knockout stage of the Asian Games after their 0-1 defeat to Thailand here on Sunday.

Indian side fought bravely but a 52nd minute goal from Thongrong Parichat helped Thailand to emerge winner in their Group B match. India had lost their Asian Games opener to Chinese Taipei 1-2. The defeat against Thailand also ended their chances of finishing among the

three second placed teams, who will enter the knockouts along with five top-ranked sides, from five groups.

India made a composed start to the match and even looked the better side, creating a series of chances. Anju Tamang came up with the first promising move for the Indians in the 11th minute from the right flank before her low cross was intercepted.

Five minutes later, Manisha Kalyan too created a couple of chances in the company of Bala

Devi and Dangmei Grace, but they failed to yield any result.

In the 25th minute, Manisha saw her shot getting blocked by the Thai defence, and a minute later Grace shot the ball over the bar.

However, Thailand made their own foray through Chhetthabutr Kanyanat but she was effectively cancelled out by the combination of Ashalata Devi and goalkeeper Shreya Hooda.

India and Thailand went into the half-time 0-0.

In the second half, Thailand increased their sorties.

India managed to keep them out, but not for long. Parichat slotted in easily a low cross from the right flank by Pengngam Saowalak.

Post that goal, India attempted to bounce back with some strong and purposeful moves.

Manisha produced a couple of opportunities, but both were denied by the Thai keeper and in a couple of other times she was called for being off-side. (PTI)

## Asian Games Visa row: Discriminatory approach is against Olympic Charter, says Union Minister

**COIMBATORE (TN), Sept 24:** China denying visas to three Indian athletes from Arunachal Pradesh is "discriminatory" and against the Olympic Charter which is not acceptable to India, Union Minister Anurag Thakur has said.

The northeastern state is an integral part of India and would continue to remain so, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Youth Affairs said here, adding that he had cancelled his visit to China while standing with the players.

Female players Nyeman Wangsu, Onilu Tega and Mepung

Lamgu have been denied accreditation, which also works as a visa for the Asian Games that officially opened on Saturday in Hangzhou.

"As you could see I am not in China, I am in Coimbatore, standing with my players. And this discriminatory approach of a country which is against the Olympic Charter, is not acceptable at all," he told reporters here.

Beijing's move "is not acceptable to India and I have cancelled my trip to China on these grounds as they have denied the opportunity to the players from Arunachal Pradesh to be a part of the Asian Games," Thakur added. (PTI)

## Nagal steamrolls Macau's Leung, moves into men's singles pre-quarterfinals

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** India's top tennis player Sumit Nagal moved into the men's singles pre-quarterfinals of the Asian Games without losing a game as he expectedly thrashed Macau's hapless Ho Tin Marco Leung, here on Sunday.

It was expected to be an easy second-round match for the 159th ranked Nagal, whose rival does not even have a ranking on the ATP computer.

The fifth seed Nagal, who had got a first round by, needed just

45 minutes to dispatch his opponent 6-0 6-0.

He will take on the winner of the other second round match between Kazakhstan's Beibit Zhukayev and Tajikistan's Firuz Mukhidinov.

Later in the day, the second seeded Saketh Myneni and Ramkumar Ramanathan will open their men's doubles campaign against Nepal's Abhishek Bastola and Pradip Khadka in what is expected to be another cakewalk for the Indians. (PTI)

## Divyang athlete Chimu Das awarded Assam Divyang Ratna 2023 Guwahati hosts Assam Divyang Jyoti Mahotsav 2023; Minister Nandita Garlosa inaugurates

**HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Sept 24:** Assam Minister Nandita Garlosa officially inaugurated the Assam Divyang Jyoti Mahotsav 2023 in Guwahati on Sunday.

The event took place at Hotel Rajmahal in the heart of Guwahati and was organized by Care U 365, a charitable organization, along with support from the Department of Sports and Youth Welfare. Chief guest Minister Garlosa expressed her dedication to the holistic development of the state's Divyang individuals, particularly the Divyang sportspersons like Lora Chowali, who won international acclaim for the Indian visually impaired cricket team.

During the ceremony, Divyang cricket sensation Chimu Das was awarded the Assam Divyang

Ratna 2023, which includes a cash prize of 21,000 rupees and a commendation letter. The event also featured a captivating performance by renowned artist Arupjyoti Baruah, who presented the theme song of the Assam Divyang Jyoti Mahotsav 2023. The program had the presence of Geetarth Goswami, Secretary of the State Advisory Committee on Sports and Youth Welfare, who played a crucial role in the organization of this ambitious event.

In addition to that, the 78-kilometer cross-channel swim by the internationally acclaimed visually impaired swimmer from Assam, Elvish Ali Hazarika, was highlighted at the event. Also, the Assam Olympic Association's Vice President Bishnuram Nunisa, hotelier Sunil Sethia, and former



students of Gauhati Sainik School attended the event, along with senior journalists from Guwahati and students and athletes from various parts of the state.

Care U 365 President Vhrigu Baruah described the significance of the Assam Divyang Jyoti Mahotsav 2023 and elaborated on the

organization's commitment to promoting cultural events alongside sports for Divyang individuals. This year's edition of the event includes a series of sports competitions, such as blindfold cricket, shot put, discus throw, archery, relay races, tug of war, wheelchair basketball, chocolate hunt, blind-

fold dart, chess, and finger painting, among others. The blindfold cricket tournament kicks off at 9:30 AM, followed by the visually impaired cricket competition at 2:45 pm. On September 25th, at 4 pm, the Nishaloi Machkhova Cultural Project will present cultural performances by Divyang children and teenagers from various parts of the state. It's worth noting that Care U 365 has been tirelessly working towards the overall development of Divyang individuals in Assam since its inception in 2017, providing opportunities for their holistic growth and showcasing their talents to the world. This year's Assam Divyang Jyoti Mahotsav aims to inspire Divyang individuals to dream freely and promotes cultural and sporting activities among them.



## Marco Bezzecchi emerges champion in the inaugural Indian GP



**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** Marco Bezzecchi displayed remarkable temperament and riding skills to emerge winner in the inaugural Indian Grand Prix here on Sunday.

Bezzecchi, riding for Mooney VR46 Racing Team, had to ward off stiff competition from Jorge Martin and Francesco Bagnaia, the championship leader, before standing on the victor's podium at the Buddh International Circuit.

The race started with Martin of Prima Pramac racing into the lead at Turn 1, followed by Bagnaia and Bezzecchi was in third place this time.

Bezzecchi, however, regained his top spot soon. First, he overtook Bagnaia to claim second place and then raced into the lead when an error at Turn 4 sent Martin wide. Thereafter, Bezzecchi left the pack way behind to fight for the remaining two places on the podium. He went past the chequered flag eight seconds before the following riders.

Bezzecchi was understandably elated after the victory.

"It's a track that I liked the first

time I rode on it. There was some hard braking, but also some fast parts and chicanes.

"Physically, I felt better with the head, so change of direction was not a problem. Sector three was really fantastic to ride," he said.

Martin finished the race in second place, however, Bagnaia crashed out at Turn 4, his third of the season.

Yamaha's Fabio Quartararo ended up as third-placed rider followed by KTM's Brad Binder.

Eight-time world champion Marc Marquez who was gunning behind Bagnaia and Martin in the fourth place, before he ran wide, finished ninth.

In the 12-lap Moto2 race, Pedro Acosta claimed the title and extended his championship lead.

Riding for Marc VDS, Tony Arbolino, the closest rival of Acosta, took the second spot, while American Joe Roberts was third.

Meanwhile, James Masia of Leopard Honda won the Moto3 title without any kind of threat from the pack behind him. (PTI)

## Indian fencer Taniksha Khatri goes down in QF, misses medal narrowly

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** India narrowly missed out on a medal in Asian Games fencing when Taniksha Khatri lost to world No 2 Man Wai Vivian Kong of Hong Kong 7-15 in individual epee quarterfinal here on Sunday.

Khatri, who won her three pool matches to qualify for the knock-out round, had seven touches but her opponent was superior and sealed the issue to make the semifinals. A quarterfinal win would have guaranteed at least a bronze medal for the Indian who outperformed her teammate Ena Arora by just four points (15-11) in the round of 32. Khatri then prevailed over Uzbekistan's Shakhzoda Egamberdieva 15-10.

Earlier in the pool matches, Khatri defeated Ivy Claire Dinoy of Philippines (5-1), Zolboo Ochirkhuyag of Mongolia (5-0) and Yemen's Samah Abdullah Musleh Alshami 5-1.

Her only two losses were to

Singapore's Elle Meihui Koh (1-5) and South Korea's Sera Song 3-5.

The knock-outs have three rounds of three-minute each and the fencer who completes 15 touches is adjudged the winner.

The pool matches on the other hand have the best of five touches.

Two more Indians -- Bibish Kathiresan and Dev -- were in the fray on Sunday.

Kathiresan lost to South Korea's Kwanghyun Lee 5-15 in the last-32, while Dev was knocked out by Chinese Taipei's Yi-Tung Chen 8-15.

Two-time Commonwealth Games gold medallist Bhavani Devi, who is India's biggest medal hope in fencing, will begin her campaign on Tuesday.

The sabre fencer is fresh from winning a bronze medal at the Asian Championships in Wuxi, China in June. (PTI)

## Men's volleyball team goes out of medal hunt

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** Japan pushed Indian men's volleyball team out of the medal race at the Asian Games with a fluent 3-0 win in a cross-group match here on Sunday.

Keihan Takahashi emerged as star performer for Japan by logging 21 points, playing a key role in his team's 25-16 25-18 25-17 victory in one hour and 11 min-

utes. Erin Varghese was top scorer for India with eight points.

Japan will now face China in the semifinals whereas India will play against either Pakistan or Qatar in fifth-sixth place classification match on Tuesday.

The Indian team had topped the Group C after winning against Cambodia and South Korea. (PTI)

## Indian women suffer embarrassing defeats in rugby, hopes dashed

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** The Indian women's Rugby 7s team suffered humiliating defeats in its first two matches of the Asian Games here on Sunday.

India began its group stage campaign with a massive 0-38 loss to Hong Kong.

Later in the day, defending champion Japan hammered the Indians 45-0 in the Pool F match, effectively ending its chances of making it to the semi-finals.

India will next be up against Singapore on Monday and will try to register a win that could allow it to finish third in Group B and feature in the classification playoff for the fifth-sixth place.

The Indian Rugby 7s women's side is being led by Sheetal Sharma. It is only the second time that the side has made it to the Asian Games, with the first being in Doha 2006, where it finished at the bottom in Group B. (PTI)

## PREETI CRUISES TO QUARTERFINALS

# Nikhat begins Asian Games campaign with dominant win

**HANGZHOU, Sept 24:** In a re-match of World Championship final, top Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen outclassed Vietnam's Thi Tam Nguyen 5-0 to move to the women's 50kg pre-quarterfinals while Preeti Pawar (54kg) sealed a place in the quarterfinals of the Asian Games here on Sunday.

Two-time world champion Zareen defeated the two-time Asian Champion Nguyen by unanimous decision.

One of only four boxers to not get a first round bye in the 50kg event despite being the reigning world champion, Zareen controlled the proceedings from the word go.

"I had not expected it (to be a one-sided bout) but my plan was to make it one because it's happening in another country and I didn't want to give any chance to her. My plan was to win the first two rounds unanimously and then relax in the third," Zareen said after the win.

In the opening two rounds Zareen landed accurate punches, rattling her opponent.

Such was her power that the referee was forced to give Nguyen the eight count twice in 30 seconds in the opening round.

Nguyen tried to attack in the second round but Zareen retaliated with strong combination punches, forcing a third eight count upon the Vietnamese boxer.

With her work done, Zareen conserved energy in the final three minutes, defending beauti-



fully with the help of her nimble footwork.

With coveted Olympic quotas at stake, Zareen said she is concentrating on qualifying for the Paris Games first.

"I am focussing on qualification first. Then step by step I'll think of final and gold," Zareen said. All four semifinalists in the light flyweight category will earn

Olympic quotas.

Also Putting up a dominating show was talented Indian boxer Preeti, who notched up an RSC (referee stops contest) win over Jordan's Silina Alhasanat.

Zareen will face Chorong Bak of South Korea in the Round of 16 while a tough bout awaits Preeti. The Indian teenager will have to fight seasoned Kazakh

boxer and three-time worlds

medallist Zhaina Shekerbekova

The 19-year-old Preeti, who made the pre-quarterfinals of the World Championships earlier this year, is now one bout away from assuring herself of a medal and an Olympic quota.

Playing a strategic bout, Preeti started the contest on a defensive mode before unleashing her at-

tacking game.

After a sedate start, the Indian went on the offensive and landed perfect jabs and hooks to win the opening two rounds easily.

After showing promise initially, Silina faded away and looked at sea as the referee gave her two standing counts in the second and third rounds before stopping the contest. (PTI)

## GILL, IYER, SURYAKUMAR FIRE INDIA TO 399/5

**INDORE, Sept 24:** Shubman Gill continued his sensational run with a fifth ODI hundred of the year while Shreyas Iyer hit a timely ton under pressure to fire India to a record 399 for five against Australia in the second game here on Sunday.

Gill (104 off 97 balls) and Iyer (105 off 90 balls) shared a stroke-filled 200-run stand off 164 balls after Ruturaj Gaikwad (8) missed out on a batting beauty.

Suryakumar Yadav (72 not out off 37 balls) and skipper K L Rahul (52 off 38 balls) plundered a pedestrian looking Australian attack in the death overs to provide the final flourish for India.

The last 10 overs yielded 103 runs as India racked up their highest-ever total against Australia in ODIs.

The Holkar Stadium tends to produce high-scoring games and Sunday's game proved no exception.

Gill's peerless form is an ominous reminder to



rivals ahead of next month's World Cup.

It was a second consecutive ODI hundred for the 24-year-old at this venue, having hammered 112 off 78 balls against New Zealand earlier this year when India ended with a match-winning 395.

Unlike Iyer, Gill began slowly on Sunday, collecting nine off his first 19 balls before going after the Aussie bowlers with disdain.

He was unstoppable

after his first strike which was a straight six off pacer Sean Abbott in the ninth over.

Cameron Green tried a short one against Gill who was happy to pull him away for a six over fine leg. But the rain caused a 40-minute delay, putting a temporary halt to the entertainment.

Both Gill and Iyer, who struggled with cramps towards the end of his innings, continued to find boundaries after resumption.

The highlight of Gill's

knock was how frequently he danced down the track against the fast bowlers while Iyer's aggressive intent from ball one stood out in a scenario where he was desperately searching for runs.

Both Iyer and Gill got their half-centuries with straight sixes, off debutant Spencer Johnson and Green respectively.

Conditions were ideal for the batters but Australian attack, missing

the likes of Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins, looked short on ideas. Lead spinner Adam Zampa too could not stem the flow of runs.

Iyer was the first to complete the century, his third in ODIs, while Gill got to the milestone, his sixth in the format, 19 balls later.

When both the batters departed, Rahul and Kishan (31 off 18) played some bold strokes to up the scoring rate.

Suryakumar, who had to change his game in the previous match to adapt to the needs of ODI cricket, came out to bat in the 41st over.

In the T20 context, it was an ideal time for him to come and explore his 360 range from ball one. He did just that to power India to a formidable total.

His innings included four sixes in a row off Green in the 44th over. The towering pacer conceded 103 runs in his 10 overs, so symbolic of their wretched outing with the ball on the day. (PTI)

## Bumrah rested for second ODI, to rejoin team in Rajkot

**INDORE, Sept 24:** Premier India pacer Jasprit Bumrah was on Sunday rested for the second ODI against Australia here with Prasidh Krishna replacing him in the playing XI.

Making the announcement before toss at the Holkar Stadium here, the BCCI said Mukesh Kumar was drafted in the squad as Bumrah's replacement.

Bumrah will be back for the final ODI in Rajkot on Wednesday along with Team India regulars Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Kuldeep Yadav and Hardik Pandya who all were rested from the first two games.

"Jasprit Bumrah did not travel with the team to Indore for the 2nd ODI against Australia. He has gone to visit his family and given a short break by the team management.

"Fast bowler Mukesh Kumar has joined the team as Bumrah's replacement for the 2nd ODI. Bumrah will join the team for the final ODI in Rajkot," said the BCCI.

Bumrah, who made his comeback from a back surgery with the T20s in Ireland last month, seems to be back to his best.

The 29-year-old was impressive in India's victorious campaign in Asia Cup in Sri Lanka earlier this month. Bumrah had missed the game against Nepal and flown back home for the birth of his first child. (PTI)

## Shreyas Iyer settles middle-order debate ahead of WC with timely hundred

**INDORE, Sept 24:** India might be treating the ongoing ODIs against Australia as a warm-up exercise before the World Cup but Shreyas Iyer had all to play for going into the three-match series.

The 28-year-old has had to deal with his share of injuries since making his international debut back in 2017.

The Asia Cup that India won marked his comeback from a back surgery after six months but a back spasm in the middle of the tournament meant he only got to bat once over the course of two weeks.

Considering what he has gone through the year, especially the range of emotions in the last one month, a third ODI hundred could not have come at a better time for him.

Iyer was India's designated number four before the injury pegged him back and a virtual no show in the Asia Cup meant his place in the playing eleven was far from secure.

In the meantime, Ishan Kishan also made a strong claim for a middle-order spot with a few good knocks.

Iyer had a lot to prove in the Australia series and a run-out in the first ODI



showed that luck too was not on his side. However, he made his own luck at the high-scoring Holkar Stadium on Sunday.

When he walked out to bat at number three, he had Gill at the other end like he had on Friday when got run out attempting a single.

The mix up might have played on his mind but in a high-pressure scenario, Iyer oozed confidence from the start and showed the same faith in Gill while taking

a quick single to get off the mark.

Iyer is known for his belligerent play against the spinners but he was equally effective against the pacers.

He began with a lofted hit off debutant Spencer Johnson before producing a couple of crisp cover drives off Josh Hazlewood. As Gill took his time to get going in the powerplay, Iyer found the gaps with ease. An odd short ball was directed at Iyer deliberately but he was quick to put it

away.

An aerial strike over cover off Sean Abbott pretty much confirmed that Iyer was in his elements. The 45-minute rain delay did not disturb his rhythm and he returned to do what he does best: take the attack to the spinners.

After slapping left-arm pacer Johnson for a straight six to bring up his fifty, Iyer punished leg-spinner Adam Zampa for bowling a half-tracker and his third six came in the following over from offie Matthew Short, a massive hit over wide long-on.

Strike rotation was also a key part of his innings comprising 39 singles.

Iyer completed a memorable hundred with a single off Zampa in the 30th over. The roar from him after reaching the milestone was understandable considering the series of events over the past six months.

The much needed runs from his bat might have come on a better of a track and against an ordinary looking Australian attack.

But it might just be enough to settle the middle-order debate going into the World Cup at home. (PTI)