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## CBI, NIA refute allegations of high-handedness in Manipur

**IMPHAL, Oct 2:** Amid tribal groups accusing the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) of high-handedness in Manipur, the central agencies on Monday said every arrest made in the restive state, which has been witnessing ethnic clashes since May, is based on evidence gathered by investigative teams.

The NIA and CBI officials working here in an ethnically charged environment have been facing the daunting task of completing investigations in various cases, including those related to attacks on army personnel in 2015, the probe agencies said. Refuting the allegations levelled by the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Front (ITLF), an organization claiming to represent the Kuki-Zo community of Manipur hills, officials from both agencies said no partiality has been shown against any community, religion or sect,



and that only the rule book of the Indian Penal Code was abided by.

Referring to the recent arrest of Seiminlung Gangte, a tribal, the officials said he is one of the key accused in an SUV blast case that took place in the Kwakta area of Bishnupur district on June 21. Three people were injured in the blast.

He was brought to New Delhi after securing his transit remand from the competent court. In the national capital, the accused was produced before a designated court, which remanded him to NIA custody, they added. Due course of law is being followed and the evidence collected (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Gandhiji opposed religious conversions, emphasized personal beliefs: CM Himanta pays rich tributes to Mahatma on Gandhi Jayanti

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said that the "Father of the Nation" Mahatma Gandhi was opposed to religious conversions and considered religious beliefs a matter of personal choice.

Sarma said this while addressing a gathering at Gandhi Mandap in Guwahati where he paid floral tributes to Gandhi on the occasion of his 154th birth anniversary on Monday.

"Gandhiji was opposed to religious conversion by the means of allurements and that he was of the opinion that religion is a matter of personal choice and one shouldn't intervene or interfere in another's person's religious beliefs and practices," the chief minister added.



He said Gandhiji believed that had the Christian missionaries in the subcontinent attempted to practice the teachings of Christ such as selfless compassion, forgiveness,

among others, instead of putting all their energies to increase the number of native converts to Christianity, the natives of Bharat would have been more receptive towards

the Abrahamic religion.

Sarma further said that Gandhiji, through his works, symbolized peace and universal brotherhood. In the contemporary world, the philosophy propagated by the great leader during his lifetime continues to inspire people across nations to embrace the path of non-violence.

"The practice of the concepts of truth and peace remained integral to Gandhiji's life," Sarma added. Stressing upon Gandhiji's relentless activities aimed at emancipation of the downtrodden sections of the society, Sarma said the "Father of the Nation" considered the practice of untouchability a curse on humanity and propagated the need for reforms in Hinduism so as to annihilate any kind of discrimination based (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Intelligence gathering posts to come up along Indo-China border

**MAGO, Oct 2:** Border posts of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) along the India-China frontier from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh will have an additional team of intelligence officers for surveillance and information gathering. A highly placed source said the central government has approved a proposal for establishing the set-up that will be known as the Border Intelligence Post (BIP).

The move bears significance in view of the increased Chinese activities along the border and transgressions by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA).

A stand-off between the Indian Army and the PLA in Ladakh has been going on since June 2020.

Each of the BIPs will be manned by five officials of the Intelligence bureau and protected by ITBP personnel, the source in the know of the development said on the condition of anonymity.

Those personnel who would be deployed at the BIPs will keep an eye on activities across the border and share updates with the higher authorities and the government.

The source, however, refused to disclose the

amount sanctioned by the central government for the project citing its sensitive nature.

Mago is the first village close to the border with China in the Chuna sector in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district. An all-terrain motorable road was built in the village only in 2020.

There are around 180 border outposts (BOPs) of the ITBP along the entire India-China border and the establishment of 45 more was sanctioned recently.

Twenty Army soldiers were killed in a clash with the PLA in June 2020 in Ladakh's Galwan Valley. On December 9 last year, PLA troops intruded in Yangste in Arunachal Pradesh, which led to a clash between the soldiers of the neighbouring countries and resulted in injuries to both sides.

Since the India-China border is not fully demarcated, both sides have different perceptions of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

There have been reports of PLA troops often transgressing the disputed areas. Speaking at a function here on Monday, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said a country is safe when its borders are safe. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Timely treatment to reduce hearing impairment among kids: CM

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said that disability like hearing impairment among children can be drastically reduced if necessary treatment protocols are followed on time. The chief minister said this during the '22nd Confluence of Hearing and Speech Impaired children for Skill Development' organized by Acharya Tulsi Mahashraman Research Foundation, Mahaveer Intercontinental in collaboration with Anam Prem at Tuli Grand at Dharapur locality of Guwahati.

As many as 550 specially-abled children belonging to hearing-impaired category from across the country were imparted skill-development training at the four-day workshop. The workshop was organized with an aim to encourage them to tread in the path of entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Addressing the event, Sarma extended warm greetings to the organizers of the event for taking the initiative to train as many as 550 specially-abled children in

skill development.

Sarma said, "The cases of hearing impairment being observed in a certain percentage of children in the country can be drastically reduced if such special cases are brought to notice on time and necessary treatment protocols followed. We need to be create awareness on a mission mode."

Referring to the utility of cochlear implants in treating hearing impairment, the chief minister spoke about the treatment method being provided free of cost to affected children in Assam.

"The specially-abled (divyang) children are highly intelligent and are filled with confidence and bestowed with pleasant personalities. They need to be provided with a proper medium so that they can channelize their intellectual abilities for productive purposes. Such workshops would go a long way in enabling the divyang children to make the best use of their talents," Sarma further said.

The chief minister also assured to consider the setting up of a "divyang university" in the state.

## 2 ULFA-I cadres arrested in Arunachal

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Oct 2:** Two active cadres of ULFA(I) were apprehended with arms and ammunition in a joint operation by the Khonsa Battalion of Assam Rifles in conjunction with Arunachal Pradesh police in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district.

Based on reliable inputs, a joint team of the Khonsa Battalion of Assam Rifles and Arunachal Pradesh police launched an operation and apprehended the two ULFA(I) cadres.

According to sources, the two hardcore insurgents who had crossed the Indo-Myanmar international border were trying to make their way to Assam in a bid to carry out subversive activities.

The cadres have been identified as self styled private Nilutal Asom alias Monjit Gogoi and self styled private Upen Asom alias Ruhini Gogoi. Both are residents

of Assam and were recruited to the ULFA(I) last year.

According to police, weapons and ammunition were recovered from them.

The security forces have been trying to curb the influx of such cadres through the long and porous Indo-Myanmar international border.

"This year alone, there have been numerous arrests and surrenders of ULFA (I) cadres in southern areas of Arunachal Pradesh, which has dealt a serious blow to the activities and hierarchy of the banned outfit," said a police source.

Militants known to have bases in Myanmar, have been trying relentlessly trying to cross into the Indian territory to carry out subversive activities. As the general elections are slated to be held next year, this trend has increased in a bid to disturb the process.

## Axom Sanskritik Mahasangram to be held

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Oct 2:** Along with other parts of the state, the Karbi Anglong district administration has intensified preparation for Axom Sanskritik Mahasangram, 2023-24. The programme will be held from October 25 to February 7, 2024.

The event is being organized by the state cultural affairs department that will include singing and dance competitions at every gaon panchayat, ward, VCDC and member of autonomous council (MAC) level in Assam. Interested candidates are required to download the application form from <https://directorculture.assam.gov.in> and submit it to the gaon panchayat office, municipal office or block development officer's office by October 10. The songs have been divided into four categories namely Bhupendra sanget, Bishnu Rabha sanget, Jyoti sanget (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## CM joins soil collection ceremony for Amrit Kalash Yatra in Dharapur

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attended the ceremonial collection of soil from villages at Gaon Panchayat under the Amrit Kalash Yatra, a component of the ongoing "Meri Maati, Mera Desh" campaign, at an event held at Dharapur locality in Guwahati on Monday.

Meri Maati, Mera Desh is a nation-wide campaign called upon by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remember the martyred bravehearts who laid down their lives in the line of duty while protecting the honour and integrity of the nation.

Speaking at the event, Sarma said the nation has attained many feats in the 75 years of Independence and it is apt that Bharat now attains its rightful position of a world leader on all fronts.

"With this objective in mind,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon every citizen of India to celebrate the years leading to 2047 --- the 100th year of Independence --- as the Amrit Kaal," Sarma said, adding that Meri Maati, Mera Desh campaign is a part of that very Amrit Kaal.

Sarma further said it is a matter of immense pride that every household have come out wholeheartedly with a handful of soil under the Meri Maati, Mera Desh campaign which will eventually be used to build an "Amrit Udayan" near the War Memorial in New Delhi.

He also expressed great satisfaction at the overwhelming support the Meri Maati, Mera Desh and Amrit Kalash Yatra campaigns have managed to garner across the nooks and corners of the state.

"Soils collected in the campaigns in the State would also be utilised to

build a number of public institutions at Panchayat, Block, etc. levels. They would also be utilized during the construction of the proposed University to be named after martyr of the Freedom movement Kanaklata Baruah at Gohpur," he added.

Referring to the 75 years of the nation's journey after Independence as one that was tough but eventful, Sarma lauded the indomitable spirit of the countrymen, spirit severe adversarial conditions that led to the nation attaining a leading position at many fields such as science and technology, economic growth, military strength, among others. The chief minister exuded confidence under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country would script new chapters of success and glory in every field in days to come. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Gandhi Jayanti celebrated in Karbi Anglong

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Oct 2:** Gandhi Jayanti commemorating the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi was observed in Diphu on Monday.

MP Horensingh Bey, Diphu Municipal Board chairman, Rah Kro and Karbi Anglong district commissioner, Madhumita Bhagwati garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and offered rich floral tributes at the Gandhi Park in Diphu on the occasion.

Sewpaking on the occasion, MP Horensingh Bey said it is a privilege to honour the great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who struggled to achieve independence for India.

The MP wished the people of the three hill districts of Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. As announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi



for 'Ek tareekh, Ek ghanta, Ek saath' on October 1 a mega cleanliness drive had been undertaken across the nation. Similarly, a cleanliness drive had been organized in Diphu town.

MP Bey said Chief Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma has taken note of the problems faced by municipal workers of Diphu. On the occasion, municipal workers of DMB were felicitated with the Karbi traditional turban. It is for the first (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## 5.2 magnitude quake hits Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, Oct 2:** An Earthquake of magnitude 5.2 shook Meghalaya and nearby states on Monday evening, the National Centre for Seismology said. There was no immediate report of any loss of life or damage to property.

The tremor occurred at 6.15 pm in North Garo Hills district in the northeastern state at a depth of 10 km. The epicentre is around 3 km from Resubelpara, the district headquarters. The jolt was also felt in nearby states such as Assam and the northern part of West Bengal and Sikkim.

"We have not received any report of loss of life or damage to property," said an official of the disaster management authority here.

The northeastern states fall in the high seismic zone, and earthquakes frequently hit the region. (PTI)

## Scientists' discoveries made possible mRNA vaccines' creation against Covid-19 American scientists win Noble prize in medicine

**STOCKHOLM, Oct 2:** It was a euphoric moment for scientists Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman who won the Nobel prize in medicine on Monday for their discoveries that enabled the creation of mRNA vaccines against Covid-19.

Their discoveries could also be used to develop other vaccine shots in the future.

Hungarian-born American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman were cited for contributing "to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times," according to the panel that awarded the prize in Stockholm.

The panel said the pair's "groundbreaking findings... fundamentally changed our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system."

Traditionally, making vaccines required growing viruses or pieces



of viruses — often in giant vats of cells or, like most flu shots, in chicken eggs — and then purifying them before next steps in brewing shots.

The messenger RNA approach is radically different. It starts with a

snippet of genetic code that carries instructions for making proteins. Pick the right virus protein to target, and the body turns into a mini vaccine factory.

Nevertheless, simply injecting lab-grown mRNA into the body

triggered an inflammatory reaction that usually destroyed it.

Karikó, a professor at Szeged University in Hungary and an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Weissman, of the University of Pennsylvania, figured out a tiny modification to the building blocks of RNA that made it stealthy enough to slip past those immune defenses.

Karikó, 68, is the 13th woman to win the Nobel Prize in medicine. She was a senior vice president at BioNTech, which partnered with Pfizer to make one of the Covid-19 vaccines.

She and Weissman, 64, who is a professor and director of the Penn Institute for RNA Innovations, met by chance in the 1990s while photocopying research papers, according to Penn Today, the university's news website.

Dr. Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at Britain's University of

East Anglia, described the mRNA vaccines as a "game changer" in helping to shut down the coronavirus pandemic, crediting the shots with saving millions of lives.

"If it hadn't been for the mRNA technology, Covid would have been much worse," he said. "Vaccines generally were the turning point in slowing down Covid and the mRNA vaccines were just so much better than all the others," he said, noting that the main vaccine used in the UK, made by AstraZeneca, is barely in use anymore.

"We would likely only now be coming out of the depths of Covid without the mRNA vaccines," Hunter said. Bharat Pankhania, an infectious diseases expert at Exeter University, said that a major advantage of mRNA technology was that vaccines could be made in extremely large quantities since their main components are made in laboratories. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Shutdown disrupts normal life in Manipur's Churachandpur

**IMPHAL, Oct 2:** A complete shutdown in the tribal-dominated Churachandpur district of Manipur on Monday brought normal life to a standstill. Kuki organizations had called for the bandh to protest against the arrest of seven people, including two minors, from the area by the NIA and CBI.

Suspects in the case of the kidnapping and killing of two Manipuri youths in July this year were among the arrested people.

Circulation of photos of the two youngsters on social media in recent times had led to an upsurge of demonstrations in Imphal Valley, leading to the case being handed over to CBI. Public vehicles were off the road, while markets and business establishments remained shut during the shutdown in Churachandpur district, police said.

The ITLF, a conglomerate of recognized tribal communities of Manipur, had called for an indefinite shutdown in the district from 10 am

on Monday to protest against the arrests and demanded that they be released within 48 hours.

Churachandpur-based Joint Students Body (JSB) also called a 12-hour shutdown in the district from 6 am on Monday.

The killing of the two youths - Phijam Hemanjit, a 20-year-old man, and Hijam Linthoingambi, a 17-year-old girl had gone missing on July 6. Photos of their bodies surfaced on September 25 leading to violent protests mainly by students.

Chief Minister N Biren Singh had on Sunday said that four people were arrested by CBI in connection with the kidnapping and killing of two Manipuri youths, and the government would ensure the maximum punishment for them.

Singh had also said that the NIA on Saturday arrested one person from Churachandpur in connection with a case of a transnational conspiracy by Myanmar and Bangladesh (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



# India to clock GDP growth of 6.5% in FY24: NITI Aayog Ex-VC Rajiv Kumar

**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** The Indian economy will grow at around 6.5 per cent in the current financial year as the country's macro-economic situation is benefiting from the reforms that have been taken up in the last nine years by the Narendra Modi-led government, former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar said on Monday.

Kumar further said that India needs and can grow at 8 per cent-plus as that level of economic growth is required to meet aspirations of the country's young population and to generate sufficient jobs for its workforce.

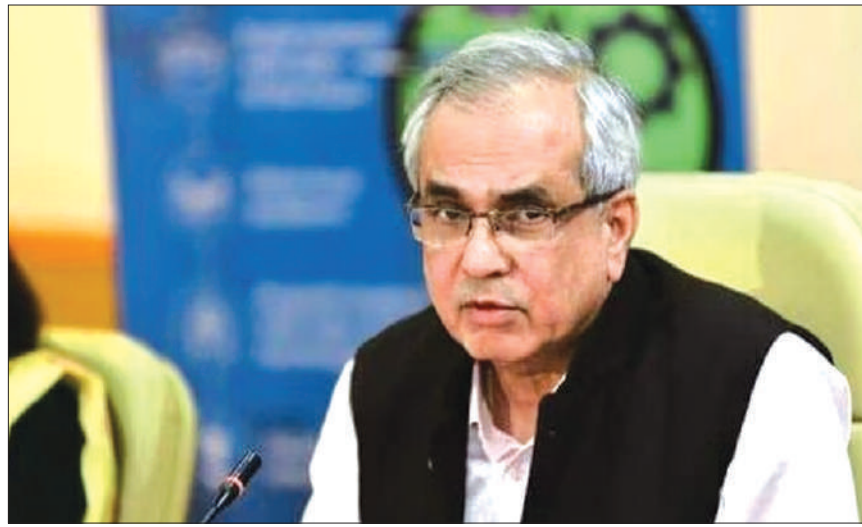
"My growth projection (of India's GDP growth in FY 2023-24) is 6.5 per cent. "And I think we can easily maintain this (growth) over the next few years," he told PTI in an interview.

India's GDP growth in 2022-23 was 7.2 per cent, lower than 9.1 per cent in 2021-22.

According to Reserve Bank of India's projections, India's GDP is likely to grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Kumar further said, "Macroeconomic situation India is benefiting from the reforms that have been implemented in the last nine years. Therefore, both the external macro-economic balance as well as the domestic ones are in good shape." He said that India's current account deficit is manageable, the country's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover about 11 months of imports and the foreign direct investment flows are continuing.

On the domestic side, Kumar said inflation is beginning to come down to the target



levels and the government tax revenues have shown a good 16 per cent increase over last year.

"So, this will take care of the fiscal situation and lead to fiscal consolidation. As a result of this improvement, the rating agencies have improved their ratings and JP Morgan has included India in its international bond indices," he said.

According to Kumar, the only weakness that he sees is that the private corporate investment is not yet responding in the manner that "we would expect, but that also is beginning to improve as demonstrated by the increase in bank credit growth over the last

six months".

Expressing concern over decline of India's exports between April and August by about 11 per cent compared to the same period last year, he said, "This reflects our age old situation which is that India's export performance is strongly correlated with the global trade performance."

Kumar pointed out that as the global trade has weakened, India's exports performance has also weakened given the weak demand in Europe, the US and other developed economies.

"We have to change this. We must do whatever we can to ensure that our exports

have a greater share of world markets," he said. On some US-based economists' claim that India is overstating economic growth, Kumar said that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) must take a firm position and give enough reasons as to why they are using the wholesale price index (WPI) deflator and not the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as GDP deflator.

"And that needs to be firmly established once and for all," Kumar emphasised.

Meanwhile, India's real GDP growth was 7.8 per cent on a year-on-year basis in Q1 FY24, as per the Income or Production Approach.

Recently, former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian, in an article, argued that India's GDP is not measured from the expenditure side and measured only from the income side. This tends to over estimate GDP growth.

Last month, chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran rejected criticism of "statistical discrepancy" in the first quarter GDP data, saying when the same statistical authority reported the severest contraction in the first quarter of 2020, the naysayers had called it credible as it suited their narrative.

The article by Nageswaran was written in light of debates over India's economic performance and economist Ashoka Mody, a Princeton University professor, raising concerns regarding the country's GDP growth rate for the first quarter of the financial year 2023-24. (PTI)

## Tea production decreases by around 4 pc to 177.95 mkg in August



**KOLKATA, Oct 2:** Tea production across the country declined by around four per cent to 177.95 million kilograms in August this year as compared to the output in the year-ago month.

The production volume in August last year was 185.48 million kgs (mkg).

According to Tea Board data, production in north India, primarily comprising the states of Assam and West Bengal, fell to 158.04 mkg in the month under review from 170.97 mkg produced in August, 2022.

In Assam, production volumes decreased to 99.78 mkg in August this year as against 109.81 mkg in the year-ago month.

Production in West Bengal also fell to 53.65 mkg in August 2023, as against 56.19 mkg in the corresponding month last year.

Tea industry sources said that production in north India declined due to adverse weather conditions and pest attacks.

However, production volumes increased in South India, which stood at 19.91 mkg in August this year as compared to 14.51 mkg in the same month of 2022. (PTI)

## CIL's coal supply to power sector up 11 pc at 433 MT

**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** CIL's coal supply to the power sector rose 11 per cent to 432.7 million tonnes in the April-December period of current financial year. In the year-ago period, the supply was 390.2 MT.

The supply to the non-power sector last month was 10.5 MT due to increased output.

Coal India Ltd's output in April-December 2022-23 increased to 479 MT from 413.6 MT in the year-ago period.

"To outdo the annual output target of 700 MT, CIL has to produce 221 MT in Q4 FY23 against 209 MT for comparable quarter last financial year," it said.

Our production pace is already up and expected to rise higher. Another point in our favour is large quantities of over burden removal. We feel positive about scaling over the output target," the company said in a statement.

The PSU excavated 1,154 million cubic metres (MCuM) of over burden removal (OBR) till December against 968.6 MCuM in the corresponding . The PSU supplied close to 508 MT of coal to all consuming segments in April-December, registering a growth of 5.4 per cent as compared to the year-ago period. (PTI)

## Bhiwandi, Kolkata, Arrah among world's 10 cities with slowest traffic: Report

**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** Three of the world's 10 slowest cities in terms of traffic speeds are in India, according to the findings by a US-based private non-profit research organisation.

As per the report, Bhiwandi in Maharashtra, Kolkata, and Bihar's Arrah are among the 10 slowest cities in the world on the speed index.

The study, conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), covered over 1,200 cities in 152 countries.

According to the report — 'The Fast, the Slow and the Congested: Urban Transportation in Rich And Poor Countries' — the average travel speed of motor vehicles throughout the day is the highest in Flint (US), slowest in Bangladesh capital Dhaka, and is the most congested in Bogota (Colombia).

It also said nine of the 10 cities with the slowest uncongested speeds are in Bangladesh, India, and Nigeria.

Researchers used data from Google maps to analyse traffic in more than 1,000 cities having a population of over 300,000.

Bhiwandi ranked 5th in the world's 20 slowest cities on the speed index, followed by Kolkata (6th) Arrah (7th), Bihar Sharif (11th), Mumbai (13th), Aizawl (18th), Bengaluru (19th) and Shillong (20th). (PTI)

## 'Finmin decided to seek explanation on Acharya's 'wrath of markets' speech; Jaitley didn't pursue'

**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** The finance ministry under the then finance minister Arun Jaitley had decided to seek explanation from RBI deputy governor Viral Acharya on his controversial 'wrath of the markets' speech but refrained from issuing the letter to him, said ex-finance secretary Subash Chandra Garg in his book.

Acharya later resigned six months ahead of his three-year tenure for 'personal reasons', said the book titled 'We Also Make Policy: An Insider's Account of How the Finance Ministry Functions'.

Garg in his book said that Acharya had used false data to bring home the point that governments that do not respect central bank independence sooner or later incur wrath of financial markets.

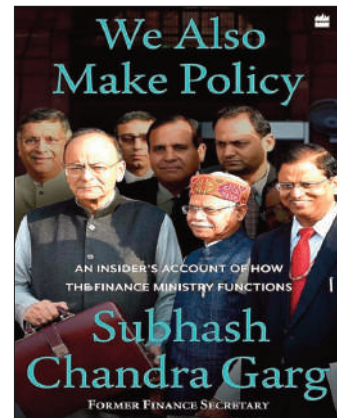
"Governments that do not respect central bank independence will sooner or later incur the wrath of financial markets, ignite economic fire, and come to rue the day they undermined an important regulatory institution; their wiser counterparts who invest in central bank independence will enjoy lower costs of borrowing, the love of international investors and longer lifespans," Acharya had said in a lecture in Mumbai in October 2018 when the tiff between the government and the RBI was at its height. "Viral Acharya used data from the sovereign bond markets of Argentina to make the point that bonds were sold off and yields

and credit default swap rates rose massively when the governor (Martin Redrado) of the central bank resigned in the wake of the government's interference," Garg said in his book published by Harper Collins.

However, Garg said, the ministry examined the data used by Acharya in his lecture and found to be inaccurate.

"Dr Viral Acharya had used false data to make his point about the so called parallels between Argentina and India. This was not expected from a researcher of his stature. He had also delivered an incendiary speech, probably with no parallel in the annals of central banking, knowing well that the speech could further spoil the relationship between the government and RBI," the book said. Finance minister Arun Jaitley was also shocked when he was apprised of the data. With his consent, it was decided to call for an explanation from Acharya, it said, adding, a letter was drafted that basically contained four allegations.

"First, Viral Acharya delivered a public speech on theme 'On the Importance of Independent Regulatory Institutions: The Case of the Central Bank' on October 26, 2018, which created a strong impression in India in the media and the minds of economic and financial analysts, participants and commentators that the independence of RBI was under threat, as a result of the Government of India allegedly



taking measures to stifle its independence and taking measures to raid the reserves/buffers built in the balance sheet of RBI," Garg wrote. Second, he said, the language used in the lecture was unusually incendiary/fiery, which was very unusual for a central banker, and accused the government of having a short-term perspective and mindset, brandishing it as unfit to take policy decisions of a long-term nature.

Further, all these accusations were made in public without even first bringing them to the notice of the government and discussing the same, he said.

Third, he said, Acharya used false data to make his points and finally making a false accusation that the Government of India was trying to raid RBI's reserves despite knowing fully well that the government had made no such

move and no such proposal was made or direction issued to this effect to RBI. It was proposed in the draft letter that Acharya provide the proof of his research and the actual source of the data he relied upon to reach the conclusion that Argentine sovereign bond yields spiked by as much as a fourth after Redrado's resignation.

Further, Garg said, it was proposed that Acharya be asked to explain why he used a media/agency report, which was nothing more than a false rumour as the reason to use intemperate, incendiary, half baked, emotive and harsh language in his speech.

However, he said, this letter was never issued and the file remained in the custody of Arun Jaitley for some time before the matter died in due course.

Subsequently, he said, Acharya put in his papers six months in advance of the completion of his three-year tenure in July 2019 for 'personal reasons'.

Recently Acharya in his updated edition of his book said that the RBI resisted a "raid" planned by some in the government to extract Rs 2-3 lakh crore from its balance sheet in 2018 to meet populist spending in run-up to general elections. This apparently had led to differences between RBI and the government, which even contemplated invoking never-used Section 7 of the Reserve Bank of India Act to issue directions to the central bank. (PTI)

## Asian shares mixed as Japan business confidence rises and US shutdown is averted

**BANGKOK, Oct 2:** Asian shares were mostly higher in thin trading Monday with many markets closed for holidays.

Markets in China are closed for a weeklong holiday. Markets in South Korea also were closed.

Oil prices gained and US futures were higher as the threat of a US federal government shutdown receded after Congress approved a temporary funding bill late Saturday to keep federal agencies open until November 17.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index slipped after a central bank survey showed business confidence on the rise.

The Bank of Japan's "tankan" quarterly survey measured business sentiment among major manufacturers at plus 9, up from plus 5 in June.

Sentiment among major non-manufacturers rose four points to plus 27, in the sixth consecutive quarter of improvement and the most positive result in about three decades.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 index gave up early gains, shedding 0.3 per cent to 31,759.88. Australia's S and P/ASX 200 lost 0.2 per cent to 7,033.20. Taiwan's Taiex gained 1.2 per cent, while the SET in Bangkok edged 0.1 per cent higher.

On Friday, Wall Street



closed out its worst month of the year with more losses. The S and P 500 slipped 0.3 per cent to 4,288.05 and the Dow fell 0.5 per cent to 33,507.50. The Nasdaq composite edged 0.1 per cent higher, to 13,219.32. After easing earlier in the day on encouraging signals about inflation, Treasury yields got back to rising as the day progressed.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury yield returned to 4.58 per cent, where it was late Thursday, after dipping to 4.52 per cent. It's again near its highest level since 2007. Treasuries are seen as some of the safest investments possible, and when they pay higher yields, investors are less likely to pay high prices for stocks and other riskier investments.

That's a big reason why the S and P 500 dropped 4.9 per cent in September to drag what

had been a big gain for the year down to 11.7 per cent

Treasury yields have been climbing sharply as Wall Street accepts a new normal where the Federal Reserve is likely to keep interest rates high for longer. The Fed is trying to push still-high inflation down to its target, and its main tool of high interest rates does that by trying to slow the economy and hurting prices for investments. The Fed's main interest rate is at its highest level since 2001, and the central bank indicated last week it may cut interest rates next year by less than it earlier expected.

Friday's economic data showed that not only was inflation a touch cooler than expected in August, so was growth in spending by US consumers. That can be a positive for inflation but it may also dent what's been a big driver

keeping the US economy out of a recession.

The resumption of US student-loan repayments also may funnel more dollars away from the spending by consumers that has helped to keep the economy afloat.

Oil prices have jumped to their highest level in more than a year, which is pressuring the economy by raising fuel costs for everyone.

Early Monday, a barrel of US crude was up 34 cents to USD 91.13 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It sank 92 cents Friday to settle at USD 90.79, but it's still up sharply from USD 70 in June.

Brent crude, the international standard, rose 32 cents to USD 92.52 per barrel.

The latest monthly update on the US jobs market is due this week, with a couple of important reports on inflation coming the following week.

Postponements of such reports could complicate things for the Fed, which has insisted it will make upcoming decisions on interest rates based on what incoming data say about the economy.

The Fed's next meeting on rates ends on Nov. 1. In currency trading Monday, the dollar rose to 149.65 Japanese yen from 149.38 yen. The euro slipped to USD 1.0575 from USD 1.0589. (AP)

## WhatsApp bans 74 lakh accounts in August

**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** Meta-owned WhatsApp banned 74 lakh accounts in August, keeping in line with IT rules, according to the latest India monthly report by the messaging platform. Of these, 35 lakh accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users. The 'user-safety report' contains details of user complaints received and the corresponding action taken by WhatsApp, as well as WhatsApp's own preventive actions to combat abuse on the platform. "Between August 1 and August 31, a total of 7,420,748 WhatsApp accounts were banned. 3,506,905 of these accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users," it said.

## NAME CORRECTION

My actual name is Ramzan Ali but wrongly recorded in my all educational documents i.e. HSLC, HS Admit Card, Marksheets, Registration, Certificate etc as Md. Ramzan Ali in place of Ramzan Ali. That Ramzan Ali and Md. Ramzan Ali is the same and one person.

That's corrected by an affidavit Before Notary Public Darrang, Mangaldai.

Name : Ramzan Ali  
S/O : Late Nizamuddin  
R/O : Panbari  
P/O : Bhakatpara  
P/S : Dhula  
Dist : Darrang (Assam)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM. OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR, HANDLOOM & TEXTILES (Hills), DIPHU.				
No. HTHE.75/2023/8		Date Diphu the 28 <sup>th</sup> Sept., 2023		
<b>NOTIFICATION</b>				
It is for general information to all concerned applicant that the Date of Written Test Examination for the post of <b>Junior Assistant &amp; Cinema Operator</b> respectively and Viva-Voce test for the post <b>Grade-IV</b> will be held as per program mentioned below.				
Sl. No.	Name of post	Date	Time	Venue
1	Junior Assistant	15-10-2023	10:00 AM to 12:00 PM	Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School, Diphu
2	Cinema Operator	15-10-2023	10:00 AM to 12:00 PM	Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School, Diphu
3	Grade-IV	16-10-2023 Roll No-001 to 400	10:00 AM to 04:00 PM	Office of the Joint Director Handloom & Textiles (Hills) Diphu
4	Grade-IV	17-10-2023 Roll No-401 to 764	10:00 AM to 04:00 PM	Office of the Joint Director Handloom & Textiles (Hills) Diphu
In this connection, the applicants who have applied for the above, mentioned posts may collect <b>Admit Card</b> from the office of the Joint Director, Handloom & Textiles (Hills), Diphu from <b>5<sup>th</sup> October, 2023</b> during office hours.				
Sd/- Joint Director Handloom & Textiles (Hills), Diphu				
Memo. No. HTHE.75/2023/8-A		Date Diphu the 28 <sup>th</sup> Sept., 2023		





## মহিলাৰ সুৰক্ষা, নিৰাপত্তা আৰু সবলীকৰণৰ ওপৰত বৃহৎ জনসজাগতা সভা

আন্তৰ্জাতিক কন্যা শিশু দিৱসৰ লগত সংগতি ৰাখি অসমৰ চাহ বাগিচা অঞ্চলত মাহজোৰা কাৰ্যসূচী

মহিলা আৰু কন্যা শিশুসকলৰ সুৰক্ষা আৰু সবলীকৰণৰ অৰ্থে

স্থান : ফুলবাৰী চাহ বাগিচা, বঙাপৰা, শোণিতপুৰ  
তাৰিখ : ৪ অক্টোবৰ, ২০২৩ | সময় : পুৱা ১১ বজাত



মুখ্য অতিথি

অজন্তা নেওগ

মাননীয় মন্ত্ৰী, মহিলা আৰু শিশু বিকাশ

গৌৰৱময় উপস্থিতি

অশোক সিংহল

মাননীয় মন্ত্ৰী, গৃহ আৰু নগৰ পৰিক্ৰমা, জলসিঞ্চন

পল্লব লোচন দাস

মাননীয় সাংসদ, তেজপুৰ লোকসভা সমষ্টি

কৃষ্ণ কমল তাঁতী

মাননীয় বিধায়ক, বঙাপৰা

পৃথিৱাজ ৰাভা

মাননীয় বিধায়ক, তেজপুৰ

পদ্ম হাজৰিকা

মাননীয় বিধায়ক, চতিয়া

ৰঞ্জিত দত্ত

মাননীয় বিধায়ক, বিহালী

উৎপল বৰা

মাননীয় বিধায়ক, গহপুৰ

প্ৰমোদ বৰঠাকুৰ

মাননীয় বিধায়ক, বিশ্বনাথ

গণেশ কুমাৰ লিঙ্গু

মাননীয় বিধায়ক, বৰচলা

অংশগ্ৰহণকাৰীসকলৰ মাজত

- বাগানৰ পৰম্পৰাগত খেলা-ধূলা আৰু নাচ-গান
- মুকলি কুইজ
- বক্তৃতা চিনাক্তকৰণ শিৰিষ
- শিক্ষা, সুৰক্ষা আৰু পৰিপুষ্টি সম্পৰ্কীয় বাৰ্তা বুথ



তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*It is not length of life, but depth of life.*  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Cinematic lens master

**S**oumendu Roy, the acclaimed cinematographer renowned for his collaborations with legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray, passed away in Kolkata at the age of 90. His contributions to the world of cinema, especially in the realm of cinematography, were nothing short of remarkable. Roy's journey into the world of filmmaking began when he took up the responsibility of caring for an expensive camera on behalf of Technician's Studio during the shooting of Ray's debut film, "Pathar Panchali". This marked the start of his apprenticeship under Ray's principal cinematographer, Subrata Mitra. During his time working alongside Mitra, Roy absorbed invaluable lessons in the art and craft of filmmaking. He openly acknowledged that his initial fascination with photography was ignited by a gift of a Baby Brownie camera. Little did the giver of this gift know that Roy would go on to achieve such heights in his career.

A significant moment in Roy's career occurred during the filming of "Jana Aranya" when he and Ray had a one-sided exchange about lighting for a scene. Ray, known for his meticulousness, recognized Roy's commitment to perfectionism. Despite occasional questions about his role as a cinematographer in Ray's films, it was evident that Roy possessed qualities that aligned perfectly with Ray's expectations. Ray was known for his detailed explanations to the actors and crew, including Roy, about the intensity of light required for scenes. Both filmmaker and cinematographer understood that achieving the right mood of the characters on screen was paramount, and any deviation could mar the film's quality. Roy's exceptional qualities made him the ideal choice for Ray's cinematographer. His skill set was put to the test in "Sonar Kella," where he flawlessly captured the final scene of a young boy in search of his friends in an abandoned castle in Jaisalmer. The use of natural light in this sequence made it appear effortless to the audience.

Another significant challenge came with "Asani Sanket", a film depicting the Great Bengal Famine of 1943. Roy's expertise shone through as he successfully met the demands of this complex project. Roy's association with Satyajit Ray extended to the film "Ghare Baire," based on a Tagore novel. However, his talents were not confined to Ray's films alone. He worked with directors such as Tapan Majumdar on "Palatak" and "Alor Pipasa," as well as Tapan Sinha on "Wheelchair" and "Ek Doctor Ki Maut." His versatility and adaptability were evident as he collaborated with these accomplished directors. When asked about his years with Ray, Roy succinctly summed up his learning as "the language of cinema." With Soumendu Roy's passing, the world mourns the loss of one of the great cinematographers who worked alongside Satyajit Ray. Together with Subrata Mitra, they formed an integral part of Ray's cinematic legacy, leaving behind a lasting impact on Indian cinema.

## 22 per cent growth in Kerala's tax revenue

By P. Sreekumaran

**T**here is heartening news for Kerala's economy. The dark predictions about an imminent economic collapse made by incorrigible Government-baiters and doubting Thomases have been proved to be what they are: patent falsehoods. The facts speak for themselves. The data are self-explanatory. The news that makes delightful reading is that Kerala's tax revenue has recorded a robust growth. The fiscal year 2022-23 shows a remarkable growth rate of 22.11 per cent in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22. The State's own tax revenue has perked up in a big way. Kerala is second only to Maharashtra (25.6%) and Gujarat (28.4%). These two states have been able to produce better results because they boast strong manufacturing bases. Compared to this, Kerala's feat is no less impressive despite it being a big consumption state.

The remarkable rise in Kerala's own tax revenue is being ascribed mainly to the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Experts say GST collections are showing a steady improvement. The GST collections grew by 19.44 per cent to ₹ 34,641 crore in 2022-23. The State's own tax revenue has gone up to ₹ 77,164.84 crore from ₹ 63,191.75 crore posting an increase of nearly 14,000 crore.

The problems plaguing the State's economy are due primarily to the "faulty fiscal policies" of the Union Government towards the States in general and Kerala in particular. Just to cite an instance, the State's share of grants in aid from the Centre suffered the highest decline from 25.8 per cent to 20.6 per cent, representing a 5.2 percentage points. In the case of Kerala, the share of central taxes fell from 11.13 per cent to 9.38 per cent. As for revenue mobilization, the highest growth was witnessed in land revenue because of the increase in rates. Revenue from land transactions saw a 52.95 per cent rise from ₹ 470.81 crore to ₹ 720.10 crore. Excise duties of the State posted a 41.52 per cent growth to ₹ 2,875.95 crore in 2022-23 from ₹ 2,032.23 crore. Last year also saw a marked decline in borrowing as well - 47 per cent. This is being attributed to severe curbs on borrowing in Kerala in the name of off-budget borrowing. Kerala also recorded a big decline in revenue expenditure - 2.63 per cent. The all-India average for revenue expenditure growth was 11.5 per cent. This is an impressive achievement viewed against the highest revenue expenditure growth recorded by states like Andhra Pradesh (26.1 per cent), Punjab (17 per cent), Maharashtra (16.1 per cent) and Odisha (16.1 per cent).

The habitual Kerala critics ended up with egg on their faces because the Fitch Ratings has reversed the outlook on Kerala to "stable" from "negative", while retaining the 'BB' rating for the state's long-term foreign and local currency issuer default ratings (IDR). The revised ratings are reflective of the improving trend in the wake of the pandemic. The state's economic expansion will effectively undo the increased debt burden, leading to steady debt ratios. The remarkable turnaround has come in less than 10 months. It may be mentioned that the rating agency had revised the outlook of the State in October last year to negative from stable while keeping the BB rating.

Welcoming revision from negative to stable, Kerala's finance minister K N Balagopal asked the opposition parties to fight for the State's rightful share from the central pool of taxes and stop blaming the LDF Government for the state's financial problems.

Meanwhile, in an interesting development, economic experts have come up with a novel suggestion to counter the decline in the State's share from the divisive pool of central taxes. The prescription is this: Kerala should allow the number of migrant workers in the State to be counted as its population in the next census! The best way to do this is to encourage the migrant workers to settle in the State with their families. That way they will be included in the population count. The result will be a larger share from the central government's divisive pool. At present, Kerala's share from the central divisive pool has come down from 3.875 per cent in the 10th Finance Commission to 1.925 per cent in the 15th Finance Commission. The fall in the divisive pool for Kerala is because over 60 per cent of the weightage for such devolution is linked to population.

Kerala's population growth, at present, is less than 1 per cent annually, while north Indian states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are growing at nearly 2 per cent per annum. This results in greater share for them in divisive pool. A survey conducted in 2013 had estimated Kerala's migrant population at close to 25 lakh. It could well be anything between 50 and 60 lakh now. It is also estimated that the migrants send nearly 25,000 crore back to their home states annually. Kerala also prides itself on providing a slew of benefits to migrant workers. It is the first state to enact a social security scheme for them. (IPA Service)

## BRICS declaration not enough, India has to work for labour force

**“**Ensuring decent work, dignity, and respect for all” remains the chief challenge in the labour market with decent work and workers' rights as core issues, as it is reflected in the deliberations in the Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meet (September 26-29, 2023) and the joint declaration made at the conclusion of the event in Durban, South Africa.

BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – have been facing four specific problems which remained in focus during the meet: Promoting labour rights for all and reducing decent work deficits; Universal access to social protection and ensuring a minimum basic income; Promoting decent work and closing the skills gap in the informal economy; and Building sustainable enterprises, innovation, and enhancing productivity.

The labour markets in BRICS countries are impacted by future of work mega drivers, including technological advancements, climate change, demographic shifts and changes in investment and trade patterns as well as mutually reinforcing crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The declaration has, understandably, avoided mentioning the impact of Russian aggression on Ukraine, on workforce. However, the countries have reaffirmed their commitments to respect, promote, and realise fundamental principles and rights at work to provide decent work for all and achieve social justice.

The countries have committed to “reducing informal work through the promotion of the transition from informal to formal economy, expanding social protection coverage, eliminating discrimination in employment and occupation, ensuring adequate and fair wages and enhancing job security.” The promotion and realisation of labour rights has been given a high priority. Promoting an enabling environment for freedom of association and collective bargaining requires a combination of legal and institutional frameworks, strong employers' and workers' organisations and an efficient labour administration that promotes labour rights, facilitates labour inspection

and professional dispute settlement services. Tripartism and regular consultations with the social actors must therefore be enhanced. The effective abolition of child labour remained priority, and the countries committed to step up our efforts to eradicate child labour based on the Durban Call to Action. Significance of labour rights and international labour standards have also been acknowledged.

Universal access to social protection has been acknowledged as human right. Ensuring a minimum basic income was emphasized and declared that BRICS members would aim at “providing at least a basic level of income security for all through nationally defined social protection floors.”

It must be noted in this regard that “universal social protection” was endorsed during 2017 Labour Employment Ministers Meeting through BRICS Social Security Cooperation Framework, and an MoU was signed in 2018. However, very little has been done so far. The countries have however reiterated their “determination” to enhance progress towards universal social protection for all by 2030.

BRICS members have again committed themselves for promoting decent work and closing the skills gap in the informal economy. It should be noted that much higher proportion of workers are in informal work, in India about 90 per cent.

The joint declaration read, “we commit to closing the skills gap of the informally employed to reduce decent work deficits and enhance the ability of workers and enterprises to transition to the formal economy.” To promote sustainable enterprises, innovation and enhancing productivity, the countries have agreed to establish a BRICS Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work Platform.

The joint declaration is pleasant to read at a time when the labour market is facing unprecedented multiple crises. ILO Director-General Gilbert F. Houngbo, while addressing the meet, has called for ensuring labour rights. He regretted that 160 million children were engaged in child labour in

2020, while close to 50 million people were living in modern day slavery in 2021. He said that crises are compounding, social injustices persist, and the aspiration of decent work for all is a long way from being achieved.

ILO DG exposed the participating countries by saying, “We know that many including in the BRICS countries are working excessive hours. Forty-eight hour working weeks – and even much longer – are all too common.” Every day, millions of people work in unsafe or unhealthy conditions, just so they can feed themselves and their families. Well over two million die each year as a direct result of occupational accidents and diseases. Hundreds of millions more are injured at work. Discrimination in the workplace remains a problem of immense proportions. If we consider gender for instance, we see significant gender wage gaps and lower employment participation rates in most countries. While welcoming the BRICS declaration, ILO DG mentioned two specific issues - First, labour rights are human rights. A founding principle of the ILO is that labour is not a commodity. Workers must be treated with dignity and be protected from the disproportionate power of employers, whether public or private. Secondly, respect for labour rights helps reduce inequalities and enables workers to claim a fair share of the wealth which they have helped to generate. Central to this are freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Houngbo also emphasized that “a higher proportion of workers in BRICS countries are in informal employment.” On behalf of the Organised Labour in the BRICS countries, the BRICS Trade Union Forum conveyed their six key points. First, Deliberate and targeted investment in people for inclusive development, job creation and guaranteeing quality healthcare and education.

Second, Elimination of income inequalities in class, gender, or racial... more critical for informal, farm, domestic, platform, and other atypical and vulnerable workers

as well as persons with disabilities. The ever-growing levels of income inequality remain a threat to social stability, progress and peace across the world, including in the BRICS nations. Third, Institutionalisation of social dialogue and cooperation by tripartite partners of government, business and labour to advance decent work and inclusive development remains fundamental if we are to make progress in overcoming our many socio-economic challenges. This means national processes should defend and advance decent work, collective bargaining and social justice.

Fourth, The ILO, its Governing Body and overall composition must be inclusive. Fifth, Advancing Social Protection and support for workers and communities facing deprivation, despair and poverty, whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of economies and the planet, and improving the lives of working-class communities. And sixth, ... A just transition that ensures clean energy and environmental justice, whilst protecting and creating jobs and communities.

What transpired in the BRICS Labour Ministerial Meet 2023, has great significance for India, where informality is around 90 per cent, unemployment around 8 per cent, no social security coverage for 76 per cent of workers, and joblessness and price rise has triggered a cost-of-living crisis, about 68 per cent of people are not able to even afford healthy food, and majority of women and children are anaemic. PM Modi led government must honour the commitments made in the declaration and do something for workers, rather than pursuing such a labour reform through the four labour codes that Central Trade Unions believe anti-labour.

It must also be recalled that the present ruling establishment has all along since 2014 been violating the tripartite principle, and not even convening meeting of ILC, the highest tripartite body, since 2015. CTUs has been alleging to have sidelined in the present regime. Modi government must stand to the commitments made in BRICS Labour Ministers Meet. (IPA Service)

## Saudi-Israeli deal would be a gamechanger, but not for discussed reasons

By: James M Dorsey

**A** Saudi-Israeli agreement to establish diplomatic relations involving enhanced US commitments to Gulf security could be a game-changer for great power rivalry in the Middle East. To be sure, US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu face formidable obstacles in paying the price tag Saudi Arabia puts on the normalisation of relations with Israel. In return for relations, Saudi Arabia has demanded legally binding security commitments from the United States, support for its nuclear programme, and unfettered access to sophisticated weaponry – conditions that would be challenged in Congress.

The kingdom has also linked diplomatic relations to ambiguously defined progress in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – a demand Netanyahu will have difficulty meeting with his current coalition government, the most ultra-nationalist and ultra-conservative in his country's history.

Speaking to Fox News, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman described the Palestinian issue as “very important” and one that “we need to solve.” Bin Salman shied away from spelling out what a solution would entail

beyond saying he hoped it “will ease the life of the Palestinians.”

Within days of the interview, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan told the United Nations General Assembly and a webinar normalising relations with Israel would require a plan to establish an independent Palestinian state.

On the first visit to the West Bank by a senior Saudi official since the creation of the Palestine Authority in 1994, Ambassador Nayef al-Sudairi, the kingdom's first envoy to the Palestinian entity, said Saudi Arabia was “working towards establishing a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

Palestinian officials told their Saudi counterparts that as part of the kingdom's agreement to recognise the Jewish state, Israel would have to stop building new settlements, expand Palestinian control over security and construction in the West Bank, accept full Palestinian membership of the United Nations, and consent to the opening of a Palestine Liberation Organisation office in Washington and a US consulate in East Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, senior Israeli officials asserted that Saudi Arabia was merely paying lip service to the Palestinian issue in talks about Israel. A senior Palestinian official conceded “that what is

being discussed includes elements that are less than statehood. We're talking about a pathway to getting there.”

The obstacles haven't prevented Bin Salman and Netanyahu from raising heightened expectations recently by suggesting significant progress in agreeing on the terms of a US-Saudi-Israeli deal. Speaking to Fox News, Bin Salman said his country and Israel were getting “closer” daily to establish formal relations. Netanyahu was equally ebullient at the UN General Assembly. Largely overlooked in public discussions about a possible Saudi-Israeli normalisation of relations is the fact that the Saudi demands signal that the kingdom, like the United Arab Emirates, which is requesting an “ironclad” security arrangement with the United States, prefers the US rather than China to be its security partner for the foreseeable future.

“Isn't it interesting? When you look at MBS' asks from us, they start with he wants a defence treaty with us... What that tells you is that at the end of the day, they don't think there is anybody else they can rely upon if they're really stranded,” said Dennis Ross, a former US Middle East peace negotiator. Ross was referring to Bin Salman by his initials.

Former US National Security Council official Kirsten Fontenrose argued that Bin Salman had created a situation where he could forcefully argue for a binding security arrangement even if efforts to forge a deal with Israel failed. “MBS looks at this and says, ‘Right now, it looks like the sticking point is Israeli politics. So, even if I don't get this, I look like the good guy,’” Fontenrose said. I expect there will be pressure from the Saudis moving forward, even if we don't get normalisation, to follow through... (saying), ‘Well, we have arrived so closely on some of these ideas on a US security pact, we've done so much work on civilian nuclear cooperation, why don't we just continue this?’” Fontenrose added.

Even so, it is hard to believe that Saudi Arabia and the UAE think they can retain the freedom to hedge their bets and expand relations with China, as well as Russia, particularly regarding the Ukraine war and Western sanctions, in ways that the United States would see as threatening its national security and undermining its policies.

While the United States would likely not disrupt the Gulf states' economic and trade ties with China, the Gulf's largest trading partner, it would limit Saudi and

UAE cooperation with China on geopolitical issues, nuclear development, technology collaboration, and arms acquisition.

“The administration is asking for some things from the Saudis. They want them to continue to peg oil to the dollar, there was some talk that they may allow the Chinese to buy oil with the Chinese currency... What is being asked here is not to stop their commercial relationship but to create boundaries in some of the high-tech areas... It's a two-way street,” Ross, the former US negotiator, said.

The kingdom “cannot have it both ways. If it wants that kind of commitment from the United States, it has to line up with the United States... If our security relationship with Saudi Arabia is to be deepened because the Saudis want it, then there are certain obligations that come with that,” said former US diplomat and prominent analyst Martin Indyk. Undoubtedly, Saudi Arabia and the UAE will test how far they can push the envelope if they come to a security understanding with the United States. Ultimately, however, they are likely also to find that a security arrangement would, at least in the Middle East, shift the geopolitical US-China power balance in the United States' favour. (IPA Service)

## Shift in global trade makes Russia a dumping yard for excess Chinese containers

By K Raveendran

**I**n a rather unnoticed development as a byproduct of the Russia-Ukraine war, a directional shift in Russia's trade with the world has turned the global container trade upside down, creating both challenges and opportunities for all players concerned. This container crisis is primarily a consequence of the deepening trade imbalance between Russia and China. According to Container Xchange, the technological platform for the global logistics trade, Russia is flooded with more containers bringing goods from China than can be sent back, with railway depots grappling with an overwhelming accumulation of empty shipping containers originating from China. The commodities exchanged between the two countries play a role in exacerbating the problem, as Russian raw materials are primarily transported to China via rail tanks and open wagons rather than in containers. The platform estimates that currently there are around 150,000 surplus containers in Russia. All containers from Russia to China go with a pickup charge. In fact, many Chinese companies are selling containers below market price to get rid of the boxes since it doesn't make sense to send them back to China. From Moscow to Shanghai, the offline market offers around \$1,500 for new containers. If cargo worthy containers are in good condition and cost less, they prefer to sell the boxes in the local market.

In February 2022, the average price of a 40ft high cube container in Moscow was \$4,175, which has come down to \$580 as of 25 September 2023. Similarly, the average price of a cargo worthy 20 ft container, which was \$1,961 in February 2022, has now hit a bottom of \$675.

China, traditionally a substantial purchaser of Russian energy, has now emerged as a vital source of imports, encompassing a wide range of products such as machinery, pharmaceuticals, auto parts, consumer goods, smartphones, cars, and agricultural equipment, from China. This shift has created a shortage of closed cargo containers, further intensifying the logistics challenge. This shift is also a direct result of numerous international companies exiting the Russian market amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and the conflict in Ukraine.

Trade between China and Russia witnessed substantial growth of 36.5 percent in the first seven months of 2023, totalling \$134.1 billion, according to Chinese customs data. China's exports to Russia surged by 73.4 percent, reaching approximately \$62.54 billion, while imports from Russia also grew significantly by 15.1 percent, totalling \$71.6 billion. Soon after Russia's invasion in Ukraine in February 2022, the bilateral trade between China and Russia dipped for a brief period of time and then picked up to reach record levels. Russia anticipates that its trade volume with China will surpass \$200 billion this year, a notable increase from the approximately \$185 billion recorded in 2022. Overloaded Russian ports and roads are causing transportation inefficiencies. Although some investments have been made to improve infrastructure, fiscal constraints complicate matters. Russia is seeking Chinese investors to address these issues, but uncertainty stays due to recent actions against Western companies. In an attempt to improve the container congestion, Russian shipping companies have started offering discounts to expedite the return of containers to China.

The compatibility between Russia and China's foreign

policy objectives, emphasizing multipolarity and resisting control, may strengthen their partnership in Asia, impacting the region's geopolitics. This shift towards Asia represents a clear trend for Russia towards establishing better trade partnerships with Asian countries.

For instance, in 2022, trade between Russia and Central Asian countries increased by 15 percent, reaching more than \$42 billion. This growth is attributed to strong trade partnerships among countries in organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Central Asian nations, such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, collaborate closely with Russia on technology and independence-related matters. This expansion of trade bolsters Russia's regional influence and strengthens its ties with Central Asian partners.

European sanctions and voluntary boycotts have, on the other hand, redirected Russian trade away from the euro area, increasing dependence on non-sanctioning partners and leading to discounted commodity exports. This shift has reoriented Russia's global trade, making it heavily reliant on China and other Asian countries. Once a key euro area trade partner, Russia experienced a 50 percent dip in trade with Europe. While euro area exports to Russia initially dropped quickly, they have since partially recovered for non-sanctioned goods, while sanctioned goods exports remain low. Russia also reduced natural gas flows to Europe, causing a 90 percent drop in gas imports. Europe compensated by importing gas from Norway, Algeria, and Azerbaijan while increasing liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports, substantially diminishing Russia's influence in European energy markets. (IPA Service)



# Can diabetes be passed down in the genes?

# One Nation-One Election is vital for good governance

# ion-One Election is r good governance

## Can Rabindranath Tagore be called a nativist?

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls; Where words come out from the depth of truth; Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection; Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the dreary desert sand of dead habit; Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action : into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.n *(Courtesy: Scroll.in)*



# 10 people are dead after church roof collapsed in northern Mexico during Sunday Mass

**CIUDAD MADERO (Mexico), Oct 2:** The roof of a church collapsed in northern Mexico during Sunday Mass, killing at least 10 people and injuring around 60, authorities said as searchers probed in the wreckage throughout the night and into Monday morning looking for survivors and more victims.

Approximately 30 parishioners were believed to have been trapped in the rubble when the roof caved in, officials said. Searchers crawled under the roof slabs and officials brought in dogs to help search for possible survivors.

The Tamaulipas state police said about 100 people were in the church at the time of the collapse.

The state security spokesman's office said early Monday that 10 people had been confirmed dead from the collapse, which it described as likely being caused by a structural failure. The office said 23 of the 60 injured remain hospitalized, with two in serious condition. Tamaulipas state police said units of the National Guard, the state police and state civil defense office and the Red Cross were involved in the operation.

The Mexican Council of Bish-

ops issued a statement saying that "we join in prayer at the tragic loss of life and those injured."

Bishop José Armando Alvarez of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tampico said the roof caved in while parishioners were receiving communion at the Santa Cruz church in the Gulf coast city of Ciudad Madero, next to the port city of Tampico.

The diocese later posted a list of people who had been injured, including a 4-month-old baby, three 5-year-olds and two 9-year-olds.

The number of young victims — police officers said three of the dead were children — may have been due to the fact that baptisms were to take place at the church.

"We lament the painful loss of people who were there celebrating the baptism of their children," Alvarez wrote. At the same time, there were signs of hope.

"From underneath the rubble, thanks to Divine Providence and the work of the rescue teams, people have been pulled out alive!" Alvarez's diocese wrote in a statement posted on its social media accounts. "Let's keep praying!"

He also called on anyone who had wood to donate to bring it to



the church, apparently to shore up the roof while rescue teams crawled inside. Photos published by local media showed what appeared to be a concrete and brick structure, with parts of the roof fallen almost to the ground.

Security camera footage from about a block away showed the unusual, gabled roof simply collapsed downward.

Walls did not appear to have been blown outward, nor was there any indication of an explosion, or anything other than simple structural failure. The roof appeared to

be made of relatively thin poured concrete, and photos distributed by state authorities showed the roof slab resting on the top of pews in some parts of the church. That left open the possibility there were air spaces for any survivors.

"At this time, the necessary work is being performed to extract the people who are still under the rubble," Alvarez said in a taped message. "Today we are living through a very difficult moment."

Video distributed by the state civil defense office showed the outer edges of the roof propped up

by short wooden blocks. It also showed initial efforts to lift off parts of the collapsed roof closer to the ground, in the centre of the church, with a crane. But the office said the efforts to lift roof sections were abandoned because of the danger that a chunk of the now-crumbling slab might fall back and endanger any survivors.

The video described how officials had reverted to manual rescue efforts, apparently sending rescuers under the slab with wood props or hydraulic jacks to reach those trapped underneath. Specially trained dogs also were sent into the rubble to detect survivors.

The civil defense office said the dogs did not initially appear to detect signs of survivors, so an older method was implemented that had been used in past earthquakes: sending rescue teams into the rubble to shout and listen for signs of any response.

Building collapses are common in Mexico during earthquakes, but the National Seismological Service did not report any seismic activity strong enough to cause such damage at the time of the collapse. Nor was there any immediate indication of an explosion. (AP)

## Top European diplomats meet in Kyiv to support Ukraine as signs of strain show among allies



**KYIV, Oct 2:** Some of Europe's top diplomats gathered Monday in Kyiv in a display of support for Ukraine's fight against Russia's invasion as signs emerge of political strain in Europe and the United States about the war. The foreign ministers from the European Union's 27 member countries converged on the Ukrainian capital for an unannounced informal meeting that officials said would review the bloc's support for Ukraine and discuss Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's proposed peace formula.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the foreign ministers' first joint meeting outside EU borders sent a signal that EU support is "unwavering" and underscored the EU's commitment to Ukraine.

The United States, the EU and the United Kingdom have provided massive military and financial support to Ukraine, enabling it to stand up to the Kremlin's attack. The assistance is crucial for Ukraine's weakened economy and has so far been open-ended.

But uncertainty has set in over how long Kyiv's allies will keep sending it billions of dollars (euros).

US President Joe Biden on Sunday reassured allies of continued US financial support for the war effort, after Congress averted a government shutdown by adopting a short-term funding package that dropped assistance for Ukraine in its battle against Russia.

Many US lawmakers acknowledge that winning approval for Ukraine assistance in Congress is growing more difficult as the war grinds on. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba told reporters that Ukraine held discussions with representatives of both parties in the US Congress to ensure more help will arrive.

"The decision was taken as it was, but we are now working with both sides of the Congress to make sure that it does not repeat again under any circumstances," Kuleba said.

"The question is whether what happens in the US Congress last weekend is an incident or a system. I think it was an incident," he added.

The EU meeting in Kyiv took place after the weekend election victory in EU member Slovakia of Robert Fico, whose pro-Russian agenda has increased the question marks about the EU's continued support for Kyiv.

The small eastern European country could bring more tension to the EU's discussions on Ukraine, as has happened with Hungary's at-times cool attitude toward Kyiv. Budapest has maintained close relations with Moscow and argued against supplying arms to Ukraine or providing it with economic assistance.

The foreign ministers of Hungary and Poland were not at the Kyiv gathering. Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said Europe must be ready to provide further help "for many good reasons".

"First of all, in order to support Ukraine, but also to send a strong trans-Atlantic signal that what's going on on our own soil is something we have to take on a great responsibility for," Løkke Rasmussen said. (AP)

## Indian mining tycoon, son among six killed in plane crash

**JOHANNESBURG, Oct 2:** An Indian billionaire and his son were among the six individuals killed when their private plane crashed near a diamond mine in southwestern Zimbabwe after experiencing a technical fault, according to media reports. Harpal Randhawa, the owner of RioZim, a diversified mining company producing gold and coal as well as refining nickel and copper, along with his son and four others was killed when the plane crashed in the Zvumahande area of Mashava, iHarare, a news and media website in Zimbabwe, reported.

The Cessna 206 aircraft, owned by RioZim, was en route from Harare to the Murowa diamond mine when the tragic incident occurred on Friday. The single-engine aircraft crashed near the Murowa Diamonds mine, which is partly owned by RioZim. The plane experienced a technical fault, possibly resulting in a mid-air explosion, before plummeting into Peter Farm in the Zvumahande region. All passengers and crew on board lost their lives in this accident, the report said.

The Herald, a state-owned daily newspaper, quoted police as saying four of the victims were foreigners and the other two Zimbabweans.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police reports a plane crash which occurred on September 29 between 7.30 am and 8 am, where six people are confirmed dead, police said. The Murowa Diamond Company (RioZim)-owned white and red Zcam aircraft had left Harare for the mine at 6 am and crashed about 6km from Mashava.

RioZim confirmed the crash and said it was working with relevant authorities to gather more information. Names of the deceased are yet to be released by police but journalist and filmmaker Hopewell Chinono, who was a friend of Randhawa, confirmed his death.

I am deeply saddened by the passing of Harpal Randhawa, the owner of RioZim who died today in a plane crash in Zvishavane. Five other people including his son, who was also a pilot but a passenger on this flight, also died in the crash, wrote Chinono on X. (PTI)

## Indonesian president launches Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway, funded by China

**JAKARTA, Oct 2:** Indonesian President Joko Widodo inaugurated Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway on Monday as it was set to begin commercial operations, a key project under China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative that will drastically reduce the travel time between two key cities.

The project has been beset with delays and increasing costs, and some observers doubt its commercial benefits. But Widodo has championed the 142-kilometre (88-mile) railway, which was issued its official operating license from the Transportation Ministry on Sunday.

The USD 7.3 billion project, largely funded by China, was constructed by PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia-China, known as PT KCIC, a joint venture between an Indonesian consortium of four state-owned companies and China Railway International Co. Ltd.

The railway connects Jakarta with Bandung, the heavily populated capital of West Java province, and will cut travel time between the

cities from the current three hours to about 40 minutes. Its use of electrical energy is expected to reduce carbon emissions.

Widodo in his opening remarks officially named Indonesia's first high-speed railway the fastest in Southeast Asia, with speeds of up to 350 kph (217 mph) as Whoosh, from Waktu Hemat, Operasi Optimal, Sistem Handal, which means timesaving, optimal operation, reliable system in Indonesian language.

The Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train marks the modernisation of our mass transportation, which is efficient and environmentally friendly, Widodo said. Our courage to try new things gives us confidence and the opportunity to learn and will be very useful for the future, making our human resources more advanced and our nation more independent, he added.

Widodo, along with other high-ranking officials, rode Whoosh from its first station, Halim in eastern Jakarta, to Bandung's Padalarang station, one of the line's four stations, located

about 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the central area of Bandung. He took a 25-minute test ride on the train on September 13 and told reporters that he felt comfortable sitting or walking inside the bullet train even at its top speeds.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang took a test ride early last month while visiting Jakarta for three days of talks with leaders of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and other countries.

Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, the coordinating minister for maritime and investment, said China Railway has agreed to transfer its technology to Indonesia so that in the future the country's high-speed trains can be made domestically. For two weeks leading up to the inauguration, PT KCIC has been running a free-of-charge public trial.

Indonesia broke ground on the project in 2016. The line was originally expected to begin operations in 2019, but was delayed by disputes over land acquisition, environmental issues and the COVID-19 pandemic. (AP)

## New UN migration chief says private sector 'desperate' to take migrants despite negative narrative

**GENEVA, Oct 2:** The new head of the UN's migration agency said on Monday that the private sector is "desperate" for their countries to take in migrants to mop up labour shortages, especially in the West — endeavouring to steer a narrative away from reticence and suspicion about migrants in many parts of the world.

Amy Pope, the first woman to head the International Organisation for Migration, sought to play up the economic benefits of migration for rich nations with aging populations and declining workforces — in the face of "build-the-wall" rhetoric in the United States to block migrants from Latin America and right-wing movements in Europe that want to keep foreigners out.

"We hear from ... the private sector globally, but especially in Europe and in North America, that they are desperate for migration in order to meet their own labour market needs and in order to continue to fuel innovation within their own companies," Pope, who is American, told reporters.

She said the evidence was "fairly overwhelming" that migration benefits economies by filling jobs, powering innovation or "fueling the renovation or revitalisa-



tion of aging communities." "Migration, on the whole, is a benefit. That's not to say that the rhetoric around migration reflects the fact that it is a tremendous benefit."

Governments who open up to migration often do so at their political peril: The Biden administration — which strongly supported Pope's candidacy — recently gave work permits to nearly 500,000 Venezuelans, whose home country has been in economic and political turmoil in recent years to help get them to work, pay taxes and stop being a burden on public finances.

But critics insist such policies are likely to encourage migrants to flock to the United States, and say they take manual and blue-collar jobs and put downward pressure on wages. Pope insisted that countries must ensure legal and proper "pathways" to migration, a long-

standing call by UN institutions.

"The difference today is that 30 of the biggest economies have experienced very significant labour shortages — and we are seeing it everywhere," she said, adding that agriculture, construction, health care and hospitality were among the sectors affected. Pope said her first trip abroad in the job will be to East Africa, where drought and the impacts of climate change have driven many to flee.

She said 80 per cent of African migrants stay in Africa, and said her job was "not to focus just on south-to-north migration, which I know occupies a lot of the political space and a lot of the print space."

She pointed to shrinking humanitarian aid budgets, the need to draw in the private sector into the "conversation" to support migration, and signs that migration is set to continue to grow. "Whether it's climate change, whether it's conflict, whether it's the inability to find a job or a future at home, or violence within neighbourhoods or communities, more and more people are looking to find a better life somewhere else in the world," she said of a message gleaned from her talks last week with migration experts in Asia. (AP)

## 'Conviction of ISRO scientists behind Chandrayaan-3 mission simply amazing'

**WASHINGTON, Oct 2:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has praised the scientists behind India's successful Chandrayaan-3 mission, saying their conviction about it was "simply amazing."

Addressing a gathering of eminent Indian-Americans at the India House here on Saturday, Jaishankar gave a first-hand account of what was happening on August 23 when India's third Moon mission Chandrayaan-3 touched down on the lunar south pole.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Johannesburg, South Africa, to attend the 15th BRICS Summit from August 22-24.

Jaishankar, who accompanied Modi, during the visit, told the audience that they took time off from the BRICS meeting. "The Prime Minister was following the landing and was talking to the ISRO... because these are tense moments, you know, however confident anybody is about a mission, that that period you want to have, you want to have somebody around you who will give you reassurance."

"And believe me, nobody can do reassurance better than Mr. Modi is, is today reassuring the entire country and in many ways the whole world. So, he was actually plugged in from South Africa. And he was talking to the ISRO when this was unfolding," he said.

As the Lander Module of Chandrayaan-3 successfully touched down on the lunar surface, Modi spoke to the ISRO team at Mission Operations Complex (MOX) in Bengaluru virtually from Johannesburg.

Once everything went well, Prime Minister Modi decided that instead of flying back to Delhi, he would land directly in Bengaluru and go straight to the ISRO to congratulate the scientists behind the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

"Since I was travelling with him, I too had a chance



to tag along," with Prime Minister Modi's visit to the ISRO's Telemetry Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) in Bengaluru on August 26, he said.

Modi flew down to Bengaluru directly from Athens after summit talks with his Greek counterpart Kyriakos Mitsotakis. Jaishankar recalled that there were about 1,000 people in the room where Prime Minister Modi met the ISRO scientists.

"They looked the most normal people you could think of yet you could feel they were the most special people. And the kind of confidence that they exuded, because I was actually sitting among them."

Jaishankar said he actually asked some of the scientists, "So how tense were you guys? Were you worried? What were the possibilities of something not going the way you thought? And I must tell you, it was you know, the confidence there..."

"That conviction about the mission was simply amazing," Jaishankar said, adding that "it stuck so deeply in my mind."

With the successful Chandrayaan-3 mission, India became the fourth country to master the technology of soft landing on the Moon after the US, China and the erstwhile Soviet Union. (PTI)

## Turkiye strikes suspected Kurdish militant targets in northern Iraq after suicide attack in Ankara



**ANKARA, Oct 2:** The Turkish defence ministry says its warplanes have carried out raids on suspected Kurdish rebel targets in northern Iraq on Sunday following a suicide attack on a government building in the Turkish capital. A ministry statement said some 20 targets of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) were "destroyed" in the aerial operation, including caves, shelters, and depots.

Earlier, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device near an entrance of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, injuring two police officers. A second assailant was killed in a shootout with police on Sunday, the interior minister said.

A news agency close to the PKK said the group has claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing.

The attack happened hours before Türkiye's Parlia-

ment was set to reopen after its three-month summer recess with an address by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Two police officers were slightly wounded in the bombing near an entrance to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Minister Ali Yerlikaya said on X. As-sailants who arrived at the scene inside a light commercial vehicle carried out the attack, he said.

"Our heroic police officers, through their intuition, resisted the terrorists as soon as they got out of the vehicle," Yerlikaya later told reporters. "One of them blew himself up, while the other one was shot in the head before he had a chance to blow himself up."

"Our fight against terrorism, their collaborators, the (drug) dealers, gangs, and organised crime organisations will continue with determination," he said.

The interior minister did not say who was behind the attack. However, ANF News, a news agency close to the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, reported on Sunday night that the group had claimed responsibility for the blast.

Leftist extremists and the Islamic State group have also carried out deadly attacks throughout Türkiye in the past. Erdogan gave his speech in Parliament as planned and called the attack "the last stand of terrorism." "The scoundrels who targeted the peace and security of the citizens could not achieve their goals and they never will," he said. (AP)

## India will assist in maintaining all sites connected to Gandhi in South Africa: Envoy

**JOHANNESBURG, Oct 2:** India will assist in maintaining all sites connected to Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, the Indian envoy here said on Monday as the world marked the 154th birth anniversary of the global peace icon.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, High Commissioner Prabhakar Kumar paid floral homage to the bust of Gandhi at the Constitutional Court premises here, which was once a prison where the Mahatma and his followers served sentences during their resistance to discriminatory laws.

Gandhi served four terms of imprisonment between 1908 and 1913 here, including his very first sentence in South Africa.

The bust was unveiled in 2012 by then-President Pratibha Patil when she paid a visit to South Africa.

"In all my postings abroad, I have always garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and now in South



Africa, where I am doing so for the first time, it is very special, because Gandhiji was here for 21 years," Kumar said.

After the garlanding, Kumar visited permanent exhibitions at the venue dedicated to the lives of both

Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, who served 27 years as a political prisoner of the apartheid government before becoming South Africa's first democratically-elected president in May 1994.

The diplomat said he is also

looking forward to attending the installation of a seven-foot statue of Gandhi at Tolstoy Farm, the once-thriving commune established by Gandhi about 30 km south of Johannesburg during his tenure as a lawyer in the city.

After falling into complete disrepair due to vandalism, only the foundation of Gandhi's original zinc and wood home was left, surrounded by tall grass, until interventions by Gandhian activist Mohan Hira and the Mahatma Gandhi Remembrance Organisation (MGRO).

With support largely from the Indian government, Tolstoy Farm has now been restored to some extent with a fruit orchard, a Peace Garden with flowers and shrubs, and a library.

Hira arranged for an artisan from India to sculpt the latest statue at his residence here before moving it to Tolstoy Farm. (PTI)



## Governor visits Sarania Ashram, pays tributes to Mahatma Gandhi

# Unite for Gandhi's vision, embodying his ideals: Guv Kataria

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Governor Gulab Chand Kataria paid rich floral tributes to the Father of the Nation at Sarania Ashram, Kasurba Gandhi National Memorial Trust on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor expressed happiness at visiting the place where Mahatma Gandhi himself had visited in 1946. He said, "Gandhi Jayanti is not just a day of celebration but also a day of reflection. It reminds us of the principles and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi ji had unwavering faith in peace, non-violence, compassion, and truth. His commitment to truth and nonviolence continues to inspire us today."

The Governor also accentuated Mahatma Gandhi's crucial role in uniting the entire nation and leading India towards its hard-fought freedom. "Let us unite through our collective efforts to bring his vision to fruition, diligently working towards the realisation of a society that embodies the ideals held in high regard by Gandhi ji," the Governor said.

He also noted Gandhi ji's enduring



ing influence and tireless efforts in championing Swaraj, fighting untouchability, advocating for women's rights, and supporting the economic well-being of the poor and farmers.

The Governor also recalled the contributions of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who shares his birthday with Gandhi ji. He described Shastri as a humble

yet strong leader who guided India through tough times, with a vision that led the country toward progress. Lal Bahadur Shastri was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's political teachings. Governor Kataria urged the young generation to follow the ideals of these great leaders, emphasising that their philosophies remain relevant even today.

The Governor also spoke highly of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative in launching the Swachh Bharat program on October 2, 2014. According to him, this initiative sensitised the countrymen toward cleanliness and gave a new momentum to cleanliness efforts throughout the nation. Furthermore, the Governor planted a sapling at the Ashram.

## AMRIT KALASH YATRA BY MUNICIPAL BOARD

### Gandhi Jayanti celebrated in Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Oct 2:** In harmony with the rest of the nation, the district administration of Nagaon celebrated the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, on Monday, paying floral tributes to him. To coincide with Gandhi Jayanti, the Nagaon Municipal Board organised the Amrit Kalash Yatra as part of the 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' program. During this event, earthen pitchers (Kalash) filled with soil collected from every household within the Nagaon Municipal Board jurisdiction were carried to the Gandhi Mandap, located in the heart of Nagaon.

The procession of pitchers to the Gandhi Mandap was accompanied by a vibrant traditional procession featuring the beating of traditional musical instruments. Leading this procession was MLA Rupak Sharma, joined by Ambika Mazumdar, chairman of the Municipal Board, Simanta Bora, vice chairman, ward commissioners of Nagaon Municipal Board, prominent citizens, and the general public.

MLA Sharma was later joined by district commissioner Narendra Kumar Shah, and together they paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at the Gandhi Mandap near Nagaon Swahid Bhawan. The event was attended by additional district commissioner Phyllis V L Hrangchal, additional superintendent of police

Pranab Jyoti Kalita, executive officer of Nagaon Municipal Board Shilpi Rekha Pandit, along with senior officials and employees from both Nagaon Municipal Board and the district administration.

Following the Amrit Kalash Yatra, a general meeting was held at the Nagaon Municipal Board office to honour individuals who have rendered exceptional service to the nation. Retired DIG of Assam Police, Debojit Hazarika, and retired Army officer Naba Sarma were felicitated during this gathering by local MLA Rupak Sharma.

In addition to the celebrations, MLA Rupak Sharma inaugurated the newly renovated auditorium and the district's first public library, Nagaon Swahid Bhawan, in the afternoon. The century-old Nagaon Swahid Bhawan underwent renovation as part of the infrastructure development fund initiated by MLA Rupak Sharma, with the original structure being preserved.

In commemoration of the birth anniversaries of both Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Nagaon Lions Club organised an art and drawing competition for children below 13 years old. Over 50 children from various local educational institutions participated, with Mayur Phokan and Siddhartha Sankar Bora serving as judges. Rupanjana Das, the club's president, along with other club members, attended the program.

## Sangrami Sena celebrates 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Oct 2:** The prominent youth organisation, Sangrami Sena, Asom, marked its fifth anniversary with a commemorative event held at the Tai Ahom Sanskriti Bikash Kendra in Satian Chariali. The event's opening session was presided over by Pankaj Khound, the organisation's president.

During the celebration, three esteemed journalists were felicitated by the organisation. The recipients of these accolades were Manoj Kumar Borthakur of The Assam Tribune, Firoj Khan of Dainandini Barta, and Ashraf Ahmed of The Niyomiya Barta.

Additionally, Sangrami Sena, Asom, bestowed the prestigious Samaj Surov Award upon Utpal Sonowal, a dedicated social worker and an employee of ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation).

The event was attended by various dig-

nitaries, including Ankuran Phukan, the president of Ahom Sena, Debajit Dutta, the president of Sangrami Yuva Chitra Parishad, Parash Moni Das, the president of SC Students Union, and journalist Pranjal Pujari. Mahendra Dihingia, the president of Ahom Gana Mancha, and several others also graced the occasion.

In his address, Debajit Dutta, the president, highlighted the unwavering democratic resistance displayed by Assamese youths against divisive political policies over the years. Prashmoni Das stated that the representatives of the 60 lakh SC (Scheduled Caste) population in the state assembly have not taken significant actions to benefit the community. He alleged that 10 lakh of the 60 lakh SC individuals in Assam are fraudulent, and he criticised the silence of SC representatives in the Assembly regarding this issue.

## Nine new missions and schemes launched in BTR on Gandhi Jayanti

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Oct 2:** On the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 154th birth anniversary, the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) government has launched nine new projects and schemes aimed at furthering development and welfare in the Bodoland region. The Gandhi Jayanti celebration took place at the Bodofa Cultural Complex in Kokrajhar, with a diverse audience in attendance.

Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of the Bodoland Territorial Region, ceremonially inaugurated these new missions and schemes, which include Mission Bwiswmuti, Binod Brahma Sports Academy in Udalguri and Kokrajhar, Aai Onsai Bithangki, Energy for Health Program, Bodoland Sports Excellence Award, Bodoland Cancer Care Trust, Establishment of Bodoland Rural Industries Centre in BTR, People's Constituency Development, The Lakshmi Mahila Plan, CEM Dashboard Portal, Establishment of 5 Gender Resource Centres, and Farmer's Database Portal of BTR.

The Gandhi Jayanti event was organised by the government of Bodoland Territorial Region under the theme of a peaceful, smart, and green Bodoland. During the occasion, a memorandum of agreement (MoA) was signed between the



Selco Foundation and the government of BTR to work jointly on the distribution of solarisation in 500 health centres across the BTR districts. Financial support under the PM Fasal Bima Yojna Schemes was also distributed among farmers in BTR.

CEM Pramod Boro said that these newly launched initiatives will usher in sustainable development and welfare in the Bodoland region. He highlighted the 'Mission Bwiswmuti', a digital single-window for land and revenue-related services, as a step toward citizen-centricity and transparency in digitising land records and providing streamlined online services to the people of BTR.

CEM Boro reaffirmed the BTR

government's commitment to comprehensive societal development and the well-being of its citizens. He paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of non-violence, on the occasion of International Non-Violence Day. Gandhi's ideology and philosophy, he noted, continue to be remembered and cherished worldwide.

Earlier, CEM Pramod paid floral tributes at Mahatma Gandhi Children Park and the BTC Secretariat main gate, with various dignitaries in attendance. A street play on non-violence and cleanliness was performed by students of the Basic Training Centre in Kokrajhar, and an oath to maintain cleanliness in the city and its surroundings was taken during the meeting.

## Guwahati SOS Children's Village joins Shramdaan



**HT Correspondent**

**HOJAL, Oct 2:** SOS Children's Village Guwahati actively participated in 'One Hour of Shramdaan Towards Cleanliness', as reported in a press release. In collaboration with the Palashbari Municipality, SOS Children's Villages conducted a cleanliness drive at the river view point area. Additionally, a rally was

jointly organised to raise awareness about cleanliness. The event was graced by Monika Kalita, chairman of Palashbari Municipality, who attended as the chief guest, along with other esteemed guests. Police personnel were also present to ensure the safety and security of all participants.

The cleanliness drive involved the active participation of 30 boys and 10 girls, all aged 14 and above, along with 10 co-workers, including the village director, assistant village director, and two mother/aunts. During her speech at the event, chief guest Monika Kalita commended the SOS team for their enthusiastic involvement in the Shramdaan drive. She said that maintaining a clean environment is not just a responsibility but a moral duty, as a clean environment is closely connected to one's mental and spiritual well-being.

In addition to SOS Children's Village Guwahati, another wing of SOS Children's Village India, known as the Family Strengthening Program, also celebrated the Swachhata program. The Family Strengthening Program is a community-based flagship initiative of SOS Children's Village India, operating in seven different villages of Kamrup Rural across three blocks named Rani, Rampur, and Chay Gaon. The program carried out the Swachhajnali program in collaboration with local Panchayats, Bal Panchayats, and community members at Bongora and Khidirpukhuri.

## Journalist Teresa Rehman and bamboo artisan Mohan Saikia receive awards in Jorhat

**HT Correspondent**

**JORHAT, Oct 2:** Noted journalist and writer Teresa Rehman and renowned bamboo artisan Mohan Saikia, both from Sivasagar district, were bestowed with awards named after freedom fighters Bahadur Gaon Burah and Formud Ali. These prestigious awards were presented by the Central Club Jorhat at a ceremony held at the club on Monday.

Mohan Saikia, who is known for crafting handicrafts and books from bamboo, has created approximately 200 bamboo-crafted books. These awards were established to honour the memory of Bahadur Gaon Burah and Formud Ali, who were part of the group led by Maniram Dewan and Piyali Baruah during the historic 1857 revolt in Assam, aimed at overthrowing British colonial rule. After the British thwarted the rebellion, both Bahadur Gaon Burah and Formud Ali were

sent to Kalapani in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1858, where they served imprisonment alongside other members of the group. Dewan and Baruah were executed by the British regime.

The awards ceremony, presided over by Nawaz Ahmed, president of Jorhat Central Club, a prominent socio-cultural voluntary organisation in Upper Assam established in 1929, honoured Teresa Rehman and Mohan Saikia. The awards included a trophy, citation, selang chadar, and a packet of books for each recipient.

In his welcome address, club general secretary Toufikul Hussain, a renowned social worker, spoke about the organisation's initiative to establish these awards in memory of two Jorhat freedom fighters, with the aim of preserving their legacy and inspiring future generations.

## Assam Rifles leads 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign in Lokra

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Oct 2:** Assam Rifles, under HQ Inspector General Assam Rifles (East), took the initiative to organise the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign as part of the 'Swachhata Pakwada' from October 1 to 2 at the Battalion Headquarters in Lokra, according to a press release.

The 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign, translating to 'Cleanliness is Service', represents a collective effort to foster a cleaner and healthier India. Assam Rifles recognises the crucial importance of maintaining a clean environment for the well-being of our communities.

## NFR observes Swachhata Pakhwada

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** In line with the Prime Minister's 'Swachh Bharat Mission' initiative, the Swachhata Pakhwada has been diligently observed across the Indian Railways since September 16, 2023. As part of this nationwide campaign, the NF Railway launched a series of cleanliness activities aimed at raising awareness about cleanliness within its premises, with the culmination of the Pakhwada taking place on Monday.

The campaign's primary objective is to sensitise individuals about the importance of proper hygiene, discourage open defecation, and promote the cleanliness of railway stations and tracks. From the very beginning, various activities were organised at railway colonies, workplaces, and station premises to foster awareness among railway employees, their families, and passengers. Over the fortnight-long campaign, the focus was on several aspects of cleanliness, including Swachh Awareness, Swachh Samwad, Swachh Stations, Swachh Rail Gaadi, Swachh Parisar, Swachh Ahar, Swachh Neer, and Swachh Prasadhan.

Swachhata seminars and awareness camps were conducted across all five divisions under the NF Railway. Street plays, known as 'Nukkad Natak', were staged at various locations to raise awareness about Swachhata (cleanliness), and messages promoting the Swachhata Abhiyan were broadcasted at various railway stations to inform passengers. Regular updates on all



activities and innovative practices related to Swachhata were widely shared on the official social media platforms of NF Railway.

On Monday, marking the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, a significant Swachhata Abhiyan took place near Guwahati Railway Station. The initiative was led by Yatendra Kumar, the additional general manager of NF Railway, along with senior railway officials and staff. The event included a tree plantation drive involving local children, Nukkad Natak performances, floral tributes to Gandhiji's portrait, and bhajan programs held at Guwahati Railway Station premises. Similar pro-

grams were organised at various railway stations, platforms, circulating areas, and hospital premises across the five divisions of NF Railway. In a separate ceremony, as part of Swachhata Pakhwada, Sunil Kumar Jha, general manager of NF Railway's construction department, paid tribute to Gandhiji's portrait at the construction office in Maligaon, where senior officials and staff from the construction department were present. Swachhata Pakhwada provides an opportunity for the Railways to demonstrate their dedicated efforts in maintaining the highest levels of cleanliness in trains, stations, surrounding areas, railway colonies, schools, and railway hospitals.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of Gossaigaon Press Club concludes

**HT Correspondent**

**GOSSAIGAON, Oct 2:** The 12th Biennial Conference of the Gossaigaon Press Club successfully concluded at the club's premises, featuring a day-long program filled with meaningful activities.

The event commenced with the club's flag being hoisted by Hafizur Rahman, president of the Gossaigaon Press Club, assisted by Sayed Ali, correspondent of The Assam Rising. This was followed by a smriti tarpan ceremony led by Utpal Dey, secretary of the Gossaigaon Press Club, and a tree plantation ceremony conducted by Abdul Wahab Ahmed, the chief advisor of the club.

Padma Shree Dr Kameswar Brahma, former president of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, inaugurated the delegates' meeting around 10 am. Dr Brahma delivered a valuable speech about the role of media as the fourth pillar of democracy. During the delegates' meeting, the old committee was dissolved, and a new committee was formed, with Utpal Dey as president and Mir Jiaur Rahman as general secretary of the Gossaigaon Press Club.

Subsequently, a conference was held for both old and new journalists associated with the Gossaigaon Press Club. Over 40 scribes who had been part of the club in the past attended the conference. These veteran journalists shared their experiences of covering sensitive news in the early 1990s when extremism was on the rise. They recounted receiving death threats from extremists due to their cov-



erage of sensitive news. The senior scribes advised newcomers to adhere to ethical journalism while reporting the news.

The Gossaigaon Press Club also organised an open session, where Jiron Basumatary, MLA of the 28th Gossaigaon LAC, Aranyak Saikia, IAS SDO-Civil Gossaigaon, Jeth Mol Maloo, a respected social worker from Gossaigaon, and the presidents and secretaries of Srirampur, Tamarhat, and Dotma graced the stage. Before the opening session, child artists from Gossaigaon performed captivating traditional dances.

Jiron Basumatary, MLA of the 28th Gossaigaon LAC, spoke about the critical role journalists play in reporting news. He likened the power of journalists to be more potent than nuclear weapons and compared them to Indian soldiers. In times of conflict, the media plays a piv-

otal role in disseminating news from strife-torn areas, often at great personal risk.

Aranyak Saikia, IAS, SDO Civil Gossaigaon, stressed the benefits of reading newspapers for acquiring knowledge and succeeding in competitive exams. He explained the concept of the fourth pillar in democracy and delved into the notion of yellow journalism, highlighting its negative impact.

Jeth Mol Maloo, a renowned social worker from Gossaigaon, acknowledged the decline in the importance of newspapers due to the rise of social media platforms. He noted that people now tend to follow web portals instead of printed newspapers. However, he expressed concern that web portal reporters often lack depth in their reporting, publishing information without thorough consideration of its implications.



# Demand for change of CM not acceptable: Manipur minister

**IMPHAL, Oct 2:** Manipur consumer affairs minister Leishangthem Sushindro has rejected the demand of a group of youngsters from the state to replace chief minister N Biren Singh and form a new regional party to work in the interest of the state.

The group of youngsters under the banner of Youths of Manipur (YOM) held a meeting with 23 ruling-party MLAs and ministers and Congress leader Okram Ibobi Singh in New Delhi's Manipur Bhavan on Saturday. Leishangthem, upon his arrival here from Delhi on Sunday, told reporters, "The demand for change of CM is tantamount to inviting President's Rule in the state. The CM is chosen by the elected representatives. Just because they have demanded to replace the CM doesn't mean it has to be done."

He said, "An MLA is elected by people. I will not hold any talks with the youths if their demand is replacement of the CM."



On Saturday, the YoM took to social media and used "unparliamentary remarks" to abuse the ruling MLAs and alleged them of turning their heads away from the present crisis besides

asking them to resign.

Meanwhile, an official source close to a minister told PTI, "The Centre and the state are working day and night to restore normalcy in the

state. They are working tirelessly to ensure supplies reach Imphal valley despite blockades on the highways. Pre-fabricated houses have been built on war-footing to house the affected people. Even CBI was promptly sent to the state to investigate the killing of the two Manipuri students."

In a statement on Saturday, the DIPR informed that the Delhi meeting addressed the "pressing concerns and finding constructive solutions to the ongoing situation" and the legislators reiterated their "commitment to no separate administration, ensuring security arrangements to prevent firing and seeking audience with the prime minister."

The legislators termed the attempt to attack Sushindro during the meeting by some members of the youths as "highly condemnable" saying it was "uncalled for and would invite legal action." (PTI)

## Nagaland honours best-performing villages, dists under SBMG, JJM

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Oct 2:** Nagaland honoured 16 best-performing villages from across all the 16 districts of the state under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)-Gramin and eight best-performing districts under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) at Iwu-Shi Garden, Nagarnagar, here on Gandhi Jayanti on Monday.

PHED and cooperation minister Jacob Zhimomi felicitated the best-performing villages and districts with certificates at the state-level felicitation programme held in commemoration of Swachhata Hi Seva 2023 under the theme "Garbage Free India" in the presence of DCs of Dimapur, Nuland and Chumoukedima districts and department officials.

Addressing the gathering, Zhimomi called the felicitation programme a cleanliness festival. He said the SBM, a vision document of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has now become a national movement to impart civic sense among the citizens of the

country. Saying that the Centre gave a call to make India a dust-free nation, he said keeping the environment clean is an integral part of development.

"When we talk about good roads, good railways, good airports and good malls, we must also understand that healthy and safe sanitation is a part of development," Zhimomi said. He stressed that Nagaland should not lag behind in any aspect of development. He also quoted Mahatma Gandhi saying that sanitation is more important than national freedom.

On the occasion, the minister acknowledged and congratulated all the respective villages and districts for their community spirit and service in ensuring a clean environment. He also thanked the districts of Dimapur, Chumoukedima and Nuland for carrying forward the SBM.

Zhimomi said there was no better occasion than the Gandhi Jayanti to acknowledge their achievements.

"Your achievements are worth emulating," he added.

## NCC cadets from NE to perform at R-Day Parade



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** Altogether 50 NCC girl cadets are participating in a 10 day training camp, to represent the Northeastern region at Republic Day Parade 2024 on Kartavya Path, New Delhi. The training camp commenced on October 2 at the Saint Mary's Cathedral Higher Secondary School, Kohima. As many as 25 Cadets of SFS High Secondary School Guwahati, and 25 Cadets of St Mary's Cathedral High Secondary School, Kohima, along with instructor staff, are attending the camp.

Brig PS Sangwan, group commander, NCC Group, Kohima addressed and interacted with cadets during the opening ceremony of the camp. He congratulated the cadets for being part of historic event and motivated them to make their families, community and state proud.

## ABVP to organise 'Purvottar Adhyayan Yatra' to explore Northeast India's heritage

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) is thrilled to announce its upcoming "Purvottar Adhyayan Yatra" in November. This decision was made during the All India Office Bearers meet held on October 1 and 2 in Shillong, Meghalaya.

The "Purvottar Adhyayan Yatra" by ABVP aims to offer 75 students from various states across India a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich traditions, diverse cultures, and natural wonders of Northeast India. During this enlightening journey, participants will have the chance to visit different tribes, explore local traditions, and discover historical sites scattered throughout the picturesque landscapes of Northeast India.

Drawing inspiration from the immensely successful Inter-State Student Life Darshan (SEIL) Yatra, initiated by ABVP in 1966 and organised annually, this initiative fosters unity and understanding among students by enabling them to appreciate the incredible diversity that defines India. The SEIL Yatra

has played a pivotal role in providing students from different tribes of Northeast India the opportunity to visit various states across the country. Through this experience, they better understand the nation's cultural unity, linguistic diversity, and educational environment.

Yagyawalkya Shukla, the national general secretary of ABVP, commented on the significance of this endeavour. He stated, "The states of Northeast India are rapidly emerging as prominent educational hubs, marking a positive development in the country's education sector. Not only are these states rich in natural beauty, but they are also progressing on various fronts. This is indeed a promising sign for the entire nation."

Furthermore, Shukla emphasised the growing number of students from Northeast India venturing to different parts of the country for educational pursuits and other purposes. He stressed the importance of efforts to help students understand the invaluable heritage of North-East India, ultimately fostering a sense of unity amid diversity.

## Tripura main oppn Tipra Motha urged to merge party with Cong

**AGARTALA, Oct 2:** Congress Working Committee member Sudip Roy Barman on Monday called upon Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma to merge his party with the Congress for the betterment of the indigenous people.

Barman made the request on a day when over 7,000 Tipra Motha and CPI(M) workers, including former minister Manindra Reang, who had joined the regional party before the Assembly election earlier this year, joined the Congress.

"It was the Congress which gave due recognition to the royal palace. The maharaja (Kirit Bikram Manikya) and maharani (Bibu Kumari Devi) were made MPs by the Congress. The Motha supremo was made secretary of AICC and Tripura Pradesh Congress chief", he said during a party programme.

Asserting that he loves Motha supremo, Roy Barman said he still considers Pradyot Kishore as a member of



the Indian National Congress (INC).

"I appeal to Motha supremo to merge his party with the Congress and take the lead role in Pradesh Congress. We will lend all possible help," he said.

Noting that the Congress had already accepted direct funding to Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), the party's veteran lawmaker said they also supported Roman script in Kokborok language.

Announcing that the Congress will

intensify the fight for the rights of indigenous people, Roy Barman said the Adivasi Congress Party's frontal wing will stage a sit-in during the winter session of the Parliament in December or January for the cause.

Pradyot Kishore quit the Congress state president post in September 2019 and floated his own party, Tipra Motha, in 2021. His decision worked wonders as he won the election of TTAADC in the same year banking on his popular slogan Greater Tripaland. His party bagged 13 seats in the 60-member state Assembly polls in February 2023 and emerged as the main opposition party in the northeastern state.

Earlier in the day, AICC secretary Szarita Laitphlang and TPCC president Asish Kumar Saha welcomed 7,423 leaders and workers of Tipra Motha and CPI (M) to the party fold. The new joiners include former minister Manindra Reang, who joined the Tipra Motha before the Assembly election. (PTI)

## USTM & BBCL celebrate National Voluntary Blood Donation Day

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** The department of Zoology at the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM), in partnership with the Dr Bhubaneswar Borooah Cancer Institute (BBCL) Guwahati, and the National Service Scheme (NSS) cell at USTM, organised a successful blood donation camp yesterday on the occasion of National Voluntary Blood Donation Day. National Voluntary Blood Donation Day underscores the importance of maintaining a year-round commitment to voluntary blood donation. The objective is to ensure the availability of safe blood transfusions during emergencies and for individuals battling life-threatening illnesses.

The event, which was attended by an enthusiastic crowd comprising students, faculty, and administrative staff of USTM, began with the formal inauguration by senior medical staff from the blood center of BBCL. Dr A K Sharma, principal, and Dr R K Sharma, superintendent of the University Hospital of Ayurveda & Naturopathy (UHAN) at USTM, along with faculty members from the department of Zoology, kicked off the blood donation camp. Participants willingly registered as blood donors through voluntary nominations, demonstrating their commitment to saving lives through blood donation. The initiative garnered significant support from both students and staff at USTM, resulting in the collection of 10 units of blood. These donations will prove vital in treating patients with critical medical conditions.

The event's resounding success was marked by the number of voluntary registrations from the audience, individuals who pledged to become future blood donors. USTM and BBCL's joint celebration of National Voluntary Blood Donation Day served as a reminder of the crucial role that voluntary blood donation plays in ensuring the availability of safe and timely blood transfusions for those in need, a PR stated.

## NSCN (I-M) denies kidnapping of New Market GB allegations



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** NSCN (I-M) has denied involvement of its cadres in kidnapping gaon burah (village headman) of New Market Abdul Kayum Talukdar.

The NSCN (I-M) in a statement clarified that the incident had nothing to do with kidnapping and rather was a case of cheating by Talukdar, a resident of Khatkhathi, Assam.

NSCN (I-M) claimed that a group of Nugas had bought about 100 bighas of land at Khatkhathi, Assam and entrusted

the plot to some Muslims as care-takers (tenants).

In the first week of September, the Naga land owners along with Talukdar went to the spot to ask the Muslim caretakers to vacate the land as they were planned to dispose it. After a few weeks, the Naga land owners along with the prospective buyers went to check the land to take measurement, sources said.

Sources said the tenants got agitated and countered them with deadly arms, claiming that Talukdar had sold the land to

them and declared that they would not part with the land come what may.

Somebody was also heard threatening Talukdar on phone not to allow the land to be disposed, while original documents (patta) were with the Naga land owners.

Later, the Naga group called Talukdar to settle the case. But he repeatedly ignored their calls and refused to meet them. Out of desperation to settle the case peacefully, MIP said the Naga Army personnel were entrusted with the task to bring Talukdar to Hebron. He was picked up, but neither blindfolded nor his hands were tied, MIP clarified. On the way when the IRB stopped them for checking, MIP accused Talukdar of lying to the IRB personnel that he was kidnapped.

According to the group, Talukdar was a habitual cheat with many Nugas becoming victims of his fraud.

However, NSCN (I-M) expressed surprise and wanted to know how Talukdar, who was a bona fide resident of Khatkhathi, was made the GB of New Market, Dimapur.

## Padma Shri recipient Satyaram Reang passes away



**AGARTALA, Oct 2:** Satyaram Reang, who was awarded the Padma Shri for his outstanding contribution towards tribal folk music and dance, died at his Santirbazar home in South Tripura district on Sunday. He was 88 and is survived by a son and four daughters. Reang, a resident of Dashami Reang para, a remote village in South Tripura district, was conferred the Padma Shri in 2021.

He had played a key role in promoting Hajagiri dance and preserving tribal folk culture and tradition.

Condoling his death, chief minister Manik Saha said, "I am shocked by Satyaram Reang's death. He was instrumental in promoting tribal folk culture, especially Hajagiri dance. May his soul rest in peace".

Union minister of state for social justice and empowerment Pratima Bhoumik also condoled the death of the veteran folk musician who had worked for the promotion of tribal music and culture. "I express my deepest grief over the death of a legendary figure who was conferred Padma Shri award in tribal music. May his soul rest and peace," she said in a Facebook post. (PTI)

## Govt fails to take concrete step to end crisis in Manipur: CWC

**IMPHAL, Oct 2:** Congress Working Committee (CWC) member and former deputy chief minister of Manipur, Gaikhangam on Monday said if the BJP government was serious in resolving the crisis in Manipur, it could end the problem within a week.

The senior Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) leader and CWC member was speaking to media persons on the sidelines of observance of the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 119th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at Congress Bhawan in Imphal today.

Gaikhangam slammed the BJP government saying that no visible step was taken up even after five months of violence in the state.

"Unable to resolve the crisis shows that the government has failed on all fronts and there is no civil administration in the state", he said, adding that the crisis has devastated all denizens of Manipur.

The failure of the government has put the people in a dilemma as they were confused about who is governing and administering the state, he also said.

The CWC member alleged that



the Centre as well as the state, seemed not taking up any concrete steps to end the crisis. "If the government is kind enough, then the ongoing violence can be ended within a week as the armed forces of the country are known for their efficiency in the world".

The present situation in the state is the opposite of what Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, wanted, Gaikhangam added.

The senior Congress leader also appealed to the people of all sections of the society to calm down and make efforts to restore peace

and normalcy in the state.

He further urged the BJP governments, both at the Centre and in the state, to take initiative to bring back peace and normalcy in the state while reiterating that the Congress is always ready to extend all kinds of cooperation to the government in this regard.

The MPCC observed the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 119th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at Congress Bhawan, BT Road in Imphal. (NNV)

## Arunachal Pradesh Governor, CM pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi

**ITANAGAR, Oct 2:** Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik (Retd) and chief minister Pema Khanu on Monday paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his 154th birth anniversary.

The governor paid floral tributes to the Father of the Nation at the Raj Bhavan here.

Speaking on the occasion, Parnaik called upon the people to imbibe the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, particularly his virtue of simplicity.

He said that Gandhi believed in "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" and advocated for love for all living things.

Parnaik said that Gandhi was a very secular person, honest to the core, and lived a simple life. He was disciplined and always promoted it in all his activities.

The governor recalled the contributions of Gandhi in the Indian Independence movement on the occasion and said that his idea of "non-violence" facilitated in achieving the



country's freedom.

The governor also paid tribute to former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on his birth anniversary.

He said that Shastri was known for his honesty and humility throughout his life and his popular slogan "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan".

Chief minister Pema Khandu celebrated the occasion at Mago, India's first village towards the Tibet border in Tawang district, along with defence personnel near the border.

Sharing a photo in X, Khandu said that he was accompanied by General Officer Commanding (GoC) of Ga-

jaraj Corps Lt Gen Manish Erry, Lok Sabha MP from the state Tapir Gao, MLAs Phurpa Tsering and Nyato Dukam, zila parishad chairperson (ZPC) of Tawang Leki Gombu and public leaders and officials.

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda also accompanied the chief minister.

"Warmly welcoming the esteemed Bollywood personality, Shri Randeep Hooda, as he brings his presence to the captivating Tawang. We are filled with delight to have him join us during our visit to the border areas, where we will commemorate Gandhi Jayanti alongside the courageous jawans dedicated to safeguarding our borders," the chief minister said on X. Khandu also paid tributes to the Father of the Nation.

"Remembering with reverence Father of the Nation on his jayanti. His message of non-violence, peace, justice and truth remains as relevant today as it was during his time, a timeless path to lasting change. Humble

tribute to great soul!" he added.

Arunachal Pradesh urban development minister Kamlung Mossang along with chief secretary Dharmendra paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi during a programme organised at Gandhi Udyan here. The minister also flagged off a clyclothon for "garbage free India" which was followed by flagging off a walkathon from Gandhi Udyan to Indira Gandhi Park here.

The programme also witnessed inter-faith prayers by all religions and a cleanliness drive as part of "Swachhata Hi Seva".

The state unit of BJP also observed the occasion at Bank Tinali here, where leaders of the party paid floral tributes to Gandhi.

As part of Seva Pakhwada (service fortnight), a cleanliness drive was organised by the party in various parts of the state capital from September 17, which culminated at Thupten Gatselling Monastery, here. (PTI)

## IMD predicts rainfall activity over Nagaland

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 2:** India Meteorological Department has predicted light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall or thunderstorm & lightning with isolated heavy rainfall very likely over Nagaland from October 2 to 4.

Meanwhile, Kohima on Monday recorded a maximum temperature of 25.2 degree celsius and a minimum temperature of 13.8 degree Celsius.



**ASSAM UNIVERSITY**  
SILCHAR-788011, ASSAM

Employment Notification No: 4/2023 Dated 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Online applications (Link: <https://ausnt.samarth.edu.in>) are invited from Indian nationals for filling up the following Non-Teaching posts in Assam University at its Diphu Campus. (i) LDC-03 (1 UR, 1 SC & 1 EWS).

Note: (a) if suitable EWS candidates are not found, for the vacancies reserved for EWS, such vacancies will be kept open for UR category. Accordingly UR candidates may apply for the posts reserved for EWS. Last date for receipt of filled in application form is **31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023**. Detailed eligibility criteria, application fees, and instructions etc. are available in the University website <http://www.aus.ac.in> or <https://ausnt.samarth.edu.in> Any change(s)/amendment/addendum etc related to this notification will be available in the university website only.

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Registrar



# Bihar's caste survey out; OBCs, EBCs nearly two-thirds of total population

PATNA, Oct 2: The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar on Monday released findings of its much-awaited caste survey which revealed that OBCs and EBCs constitute a whopping 63 per cent of the state's total population.

According to the data released here by Development Commissioner Vivek Singh, the state's total population stood at a little over 13.07 crore, out of which the Extremely Backward Classes (36 per cent) were the largest social segment followed by the Other Backward Classes at 27.13 per cent. The survey also stated that Yadavs, the OBC group to which deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav belongs, were the largest in terms of the population, accounting for 14.27 per cent of the total.

Dalits, also known as the Scheduled Castes, accounted for 19.65 per cent of the total population in the state, which is also home to nearly 22 lakh (1.68 per cent) people belonging to the Scheduled Tribes.

Those belonging to the "unreserved" category, which denotes the proverbial "upper castes" who dominated politics till the Mandal wave of 1990s, comprise 15.52 per cent of the total population.

The survey also establishes that the state's population is overwhelmingly Hindu, with the majority community comprising 81.99 per cent of the total population, followed by Muslims (17.70



per cent). Christians, Sikhs, Jains and those following other religions as also the non-believers have a minuscule presence, together making up for less than one per cent of the total population.

Lauding the government officials who undertook the gigantic exercise, chief minister Nitish Kumar said, "A meeting will soon be convened of all the nine political parties with an electoral presence in the state legislature and the facts and figures will be shared with them."

RJD president Lalu Prasad, who is Kumar's ally as well as the father of his deputy Tejashwi Yadav, also issued a statement, declaring that the exercise will set the tone for "a nationwide caste census which will be undertaken when

we form the next government at the Centre".

Both Prasad and Kumar have played an instrumental role in the formation of the INDIA coalition, which affirmed its commitment to holding a caste census at a meeting it held in Bengaluru recently.

The Bihar caste survey is "an epoch-making decision in independent India. We consider it as a fitting tribute to Gandhi Ji and his ideals of addressing the needs of the poor and marginalised," said water resources and information and publicity minister Sanjay Jha.

The decision to hold the survey is another example of the foresight of the chief minister, he said.

The opposition BJP, however, voiced dissatisfaction with the caste survey, stressing that it did

not give an idea of the "changed social and economic realities" over the years.

State BJP president Samrat Choudhary said that his party had "given its consent" for the exercise and would make an assessment of the findings which have now been made public.

Notably, the survey was ordered last year after the Narendra Modi government at the Centre made it clear that it would not be able to undertake a headcount of castes other than SCs and STs as part of the census.

The last time, a headcount of all castes was undertaken, was way back in 1931. Those calling for a fresh caste survey insist that a new estimate was required mainly for the weaker sections of the society which, with improved life expectancy in the post-Independence era, must have seen a rise in their proportion of the population.

The state cabinet gave its nod to hold a caste survey on June 2 last year when it also allocated an amount of ₹ 500 crore for the mammoth exercise. The survey briefly ran into rough weather when it was stayed by the Patna High Court which was hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the exercise.

However, the deadline it then set, of February 2023, was over-shot and the survey itself could take off no sooner than January 7 this year. (PTI)

## Our fight is against drugs, not any party or leader: Kejriwal on Cong MLA's arrest

PATIALA, Oct 2: Under attack from the Congress over the arrest of its MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira in a 2015 drugs case, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal Monday said they are fighting against drugs and not against any party or a leader.

Kejriwal, who was on a day-long Patiala visit, also appealed to all political parties to support AAP in a war against drugs.

"Three-four days back, a very big person was caught who was facing an accusation of drug trafficking. All the parties are targeting Bhagwant Mann, asking him why he did it. I want to ask whether drug traffickers should be arrested or not. Whether drug traffickers should be put behind bars or not?" Kejriwal said.

Addressing a gathering in Patiala after the launch of a campaign for rejuvenation of government hospitals, Kejriwal said, "I want to tell all these parties that we have no fight against any party. Our fight is not against any leader. We are not against anyone. We are

against drugs."

"Drugs have destroyed our youth and an entire generation...we will not tolerate drugs at any cost," he said.

Kejriwal appealed to all political parties, saying if any of their leaders was doing drugs, he should be thrown out and handed over to police.

"I appeal to all parties to support us in a war against drugs," he said.

Kejriwal said there was a time when Punjab was known for drugs and movies were also being made on the drugs issue. Patting the back of the Bhagwant Mann government over steps taken to curb the drug menace in the state, he said the Punjab Police have launched a war against drugs in the last 3-4 months.

Congress MLA Khaira was arrested by the Punjab Police on Thursday in connection with the 2015 drugs case from his Chandigarh residence.

The Congress leaders had called the police action against the Bholath MLA as political vendetta. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## CBI, NIA refute allegations

by the anti-terror agency will be placed before the competent court, the officials further said, adding that baseless allegations were being made only to derail the probe and create confusion among the general public. On September 22, the NIA arrested Moirangthem Anand Singh from Imphal in connection with a different case. Singh, along with four others, was arrested by the Manipur Police for possession of weapons looted from the police armoury.

However, all five were bailed out, but Singh was arrested by the NIA for his involvement in terror activities. He was brought to Delhi and is facing due legal process, the officials said. Similarly, the arrests carried out by the CBI on Sunday were based on preliminary evidence collected during its probe into the cases of two missing Manipuri students who are believed to have been killed, its officials said.

All four were placed under arrest in a joint operation of the CBI, Manipur Police and the army to ensure that there was no adverse law-and-order situation, they said.

More than 180 people lost their lives and several hundreds were injured since the ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3, after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organized in the hill districts to protest against the 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. Tribals -- Nagas and Kukis -- constitute little over 40 per cent and reside in the hill districts. (PTI)

## Himanta pays rich tributes to

on one's caste between members of the Hindu society. The chief minister also said Gandhiji had immense faith in the power of prayers and believed that in order to gain the Almighty's blessings, one should resort to prayers with all devotion and honesty. Sarma also said that Gandhiji had a soft corner in his heart for Assam and its residents and this was manifested through more than four visits --- in 1921, 1926, 1934 and 1946 --- to the state by the great leader during his lifetime.

"Gandhiji extended wholehearted support to the people of Assam's opposition to the Cabinet Mission's proposal of clubbing the present-day Northeast India together with the then East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh)," he avowed.

Sarma also exuded confidence that the ideologies and teachings of Gandhiji would be embraced by all to lead a principled and meaningful life. MP Queen Ojha, mayor of Guwahati Municipal Corporation Mrigen Sarania, Kamrup (Metro) district commissioner Pallab Gopal Jha, Guwahati commissioner of police Diganta Bara along with a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion. (PTI)

## Intelligence gathering posts

"Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, not a single village is left where vehicles can't reach. These border villages were neglected earlier. I also assure you that in the next six months, all border villages in Arunachal Pradesh will have 5G mobile phone connectivity," said Rijju, who represents the Arunachal West constituency in the Lok Sabha.

In the last few years, the central government has not only ramped up its infrastructure at the LAC, but also introduced schemes for the development of border villages. Among these is the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) under which all-round development of select frontier villages is carried out.

"The highest number of villages among all states will be developed in Arunachal Pradesh under the VVP. Out of the 665 villages selected under the VVP, 453 are in Arunachal in first phase," Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said at the function. (PTI)

## Axom Sanskritik Mahasangram

and Rabindra sangheet. Specific songs for the competitions have to be downloaded and performed. 25 Bhubendra sangheets, 21 Bishnu Rava sangheets, 20 Jyoti sangheets and 19 Rabindra sangheets have been selected for the competition.

Contestants can download these songs from any reliable source. For details, the designated officer in charge of the district commissioner's office and the state cultural affairs department may be contacted. Youths from different parts of the state can participate in the competitions in three categories of 12-18 years, 19-24 years and 25-35 years in addition to the team categories. The Karbi Anglong district administration is expecting a huge response from the public in all categories of the competition.

## CM joins soil collection ceremony

Sarma, at the event, also felicitated a number of retired soldiers belonging to the locality who had served in the armed forces, paramilitary forces, and state police forces. Member of Parliament Queen Ojha, Member of Legislative Assembly Ramendra Narayan Kalita, District Commissioner of Kamrup (Metro) Pallab Gopal Jha were also present in the event.

## Gandhi Jayanti celebrated

time they have been facilitated. Meanwhile, the West Karbi Anglong district Congress Committee (WKADCC) celebrated the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the 119th birth anniversary of India's second Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri.

President of WKADCC, Sing Teron along with other party members paid rich floral tributes to the two great leaders. Speaking on the occasion Teron said that the hard work and sacrifice of the two leaders helped the country to attain independence. It is for their dedication and selfless sacrifice they are still being remembered.

Teron said good days will come soon as the Congress alliance I.N.D.I.A. Block wins the forthcoming Lok Sabha election in the country. The district party president also said very soon party workers from other parties will join the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

The 'Meri Maati, Mera Desh' programme was carried also out in Sarupathar in Karbi Anglong on the occasion. As part of the programme, Amrit Kalash Yatra was organized by the Sarupathar Mandal Committee of the BJP. A procession was taken out with earthen pots filled with soil from various places. Deputy speaker of Assam legislative assembly, Numal Momin, member of autonomous council (MAC), Kadom Terangpi and chairman of the village development committee, Silason Rongpi also participated in the programme.

## American scientists win Noble

Pankhania predicted that the technology used in the vaccines could be used to refine vaccines for other diseases like Ebola, malaria and dengue, and might also be used to create shots that immunize people against certain types of cancer or auto-immune diseases like lupus. "It's possible that we could vaccinate people against abnormal cancer proteins and have the immune system attack it after being given a targeted mRNA shot," he explained.

"It's a much more targeted technology than has been previously available and could revolutionize how we handle not only outbreaks, but non-communicable diseases."

Nobel Committee member Gunilla Karlsson Hedestam said the prize could go some way to addressing concerns among skeptics about the speed with which Covid-19 vaccines were developed. She said the award highlights "the decades of basic research that's behind this kind of work."

Meanwhile, both Karikó and Weissman were elated to receive the prestigious award.

Karikó said her husband was the first to pick up the early morning call, handing it to her to hear the news. "I couldn't believe it," she said. "I was very much surprised. But I am very happy." Before Covid-19, mRNA vaccines were already being tested for other diseases like Zika, influenza and rabies — but the pandemic brought more attention to this approach, Karikó said. "Clinical trials were already done before Covid, but people were not aware," she said.

Thomas Perlmann, the secretary of the Nobel Assembly who announced the prize, said both scientists were "overwhelmed" by the news when he spoke to them shortly before their names became public. The prize carries a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (USD 1 million) — from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. The laureates are invited to receive their awards at ceremonies on December 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death. Nobel announcements continue with the physics prize on Tuesday, chemistry on Wednesday and literature on Thursday. The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced Friday and the economics award on October 9. (AP)

## Shutdown disrupts normal life

-based leadership of terror outfits to wage war against India by exploiting the current ethnic strife in Manipur. The arrested person was the second accused apprehended in the case, registered suo motu on July 19. On September 22, the NIA arrested another person from Manipur in connection with it.

More than 180 people lost their lives and several hundreds were injured since the ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3, after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organized in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals -- Nagas and Kukis -- constitute little over 40 per cent and reside in the hill districts. (PTI)

## PM pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat

NEW DELHI, Oct 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary and said his timeless teachings "continue to illuminate our path." The nation remembered Bapu and former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, revered freedom fighters and stalwarts of India, both of whom were born on October 2. Modi on Monday also paid floral tributes to Shastri at Vijay Ghat memorial early in the morning. Today marks the 154th birth anniversary of Gandhi, hailed as the Father of the Nation, who led India to freedom through the path of non-violence, and continues to be a globally revered figure. "I bow to Mahatma Gandhi on the special occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. His timeless teachings continue to illuminate our path. Mahatma Gandhi's impact is global, motivating the entire humankind to further the spirit of unity and compassion. "May we always work towards fulfilling his dreams. May his thoughts enable every youngster be (sic) the agent of change he dreamt of, fostering unity and harmony all over," Modi posted on X on Monday. Urging people to hear her soulful rendition, Modi noted that he had mentioned the young singer, who is visually impaired, in his recent 'Mann ki Baat' broadcast. The prime minister had highlighted her love for Indian music in the radio programme. Several Union ministers and bureaucrats were present on the occasion at Rajghat, situated on the banks of Yamuna. Modi also hailed Shastri on X, saying his iconic call for 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' resonates even till this date. "His unwavering commitment to India's progress and his leadership during challenging times remain exemplary. May we always work to realise his vision for a strong India," he posted. (PTI)

## CM Baghel rides motorbike to lead 'Bharosa Yatra' in his assembly segment ahead of polls

DURG, Oct 2: Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel on Monday rode a motorcycle to lead the ruling Congress 'Bharosa Yatra' in his assembly constituency in Durg district to propagate the works done by his government in the last five years.

Similar day-long Bharosa Yatras (march of trust) were also taken out in the remaining 89 assembly constituencies of the poll-bound state by the Congress to mark Gandhi Jayanti.

During the yatras, the Congress said, it apprised people about welfare schemes of the Baghel government and also told them how the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) neglected the residents of the state during its 15-year rule (2003-2018).

Riding motorcycles, a large number of ruling party leaders and workers accompanied Baghel in the 40-km-long yatra kicked off from Selud village in the Patan assembly constituency in Durg district.

Addressing a gathering of workers at the launch of the yatra, Baghel hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his statement on paddy procurement in Chhattisgarh.

"The PM lied (during his recent rally in Bilaspur) to people that the Centre procured every single grain of paddy from



farmers in the state. Who has opened paddy procurement centres? Who has decided to procure 20 quintal paddy per acre? All these works are being done by the state government," the chief minister said.

When there was a "double-engine" government in Chhattisgarh (2014-2018), with PM Modi and Raman Singh leading the central and state governments, respectively, they had decided to procure 10 quintal per acre from farmers in place of 15 quintal per acre, he said.

Baghel said his government has strengthened the local economy and transformed the lives of people.

"We have improved education, health and infrastructure in the last five years," he asserted.

Talking to reporters later, Baghel said his party Congress has decided to observe a peaceful 'Bastar Bandh' (shutdown) on Wednesday in protest against the Centre's plan to pri-

vatis the newly commissioned Nagarnar Steel Plant of mining major NMDC in Bastar district.

Prime Minister Modi will dedicate the plant to the nation during his visit to Jagdalpur on Wednesday.

Baghel accused the opposition BJP of spreading rumours on alleged irregularities in recruitment by the state public service commission (PSC).

Earlier, state ministers, Congress MLAs and MPs took part in the yatras in their respective constituencies.

The assembly elections are expected to be held in the state in November-December.

The state government had in the last few months organised 'Bharose Ka Sammelan' (gathering of trust) at various places to connect with the masses. These events were also attended by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi. Slogans like 'Bhupesh Hai To Bharosa hai' (if there is Bhupesh, we have trust) and 'Bharose Ki Sarkar' (government of trust) featured during these programmes.

The opposition BJP concluded its 'Parivartan Yatra' (March of Change) on Saturday (September 30) in Bilaspur city where Prime Minister Modi addressed a gathering. (PTI)

## No copyright in scriptures but their adaptations protected: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, Oct 2: The Delhi High Court has restrained several entities from reproducing and disseminating content belonging to Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, established by ISKCON founder Srila Prabhupada, saying while there can be no copyright in religious scriptures, their adaptations which are "transformative works" -- like Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana or BR Chopra's Mahabharat -- are entitled to protection from piracy.

Justice Prathiba M Singh, while dealing with the Trust's lawsuit on the issue, said copyright would vest in original parts of works which preach, teach or explain the scripture and the piracy of such copyrighted works of the plaintiff cannot be permitted.

"Defendant Nos.1 to 14 shall stand restrained in any manner from printing, reproducing, communicating, disseminating any part of the Plaintiff's works to the public either in print form or in audio-visual form or in electronic form including through websites, mobile applications, weblinks, Instagram posts or any other posts on the social media as would result in the infringement of Plaintiff's copyright," ordered the court recently in an ex parte interim order.

It also directed Google LLC and Meta Platforms Inc to take down the infringing works from their platforms while ordering suspension and blocking of the offending links by the authorities.

The plaintiff submitted that it has copyright in all works of spiritual teacher Abhay Charanaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who



simplified the religious books and scriptures and made it easy for the common man to understand them.

It was stated that during Prabhupada's lifetime and after his "Mahasamadhi" the plaintiff spread his teachings in various forms including printed and audio books, and the defendants were making them available on their online platforms, mobile apps and Instagram handles without any licence or right to reproduce or communicate them.

"There can be no doubt that the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita is one of the most revered ancient scriptures in the world. The Bhagavad Gita along with the other scriptures like Bhagavatam which are written about by the Author (Prabhupada) are all public domain works.

"There can be no copyright claimed

in the Scriptures. However, any adaptations of the said work including providing explanation, summary, meaning, exegesis/interpretation or creating any audio visual works for eg, television series like Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana or B R Chopra's Mahabharata; dramatic works created by drama societies based on scriptures etc, being transformative works, would be entitled to copyright protection - being original works of the Authors themselves," said the court.

The court said though there can be no objection in the actual reproduction of the text of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita or other spiritual books, the manner in which they are interpreted by different gurus and spiritual teachers "copyright would vest in respect of the original parts of the literary works which preach, teach or explain the scripture."

The court stated that in the present case, Prabhupada himself set up the plaintiff Trust and handed over the copyrights to be administered by the trust and the defendant's content was "complete reproduction," which cannot be done without authorisation, licence or permission. These are not mere reproductions of the original scriptures but their meaning, summary, introduction, preface, cover etc, have all been reproduced, the court observed, adding that such conduct has an impact on the plaintiff's revenue from the copyrighted work.

"Such piracy of the copyrighted works of the Plaintiff-Trust cannot be permitted. If such piracy goes unchecked, the copyright in the said works would be considerably diluted leading to immense loss of revenues to the Plaintiff Trust. (PTI)

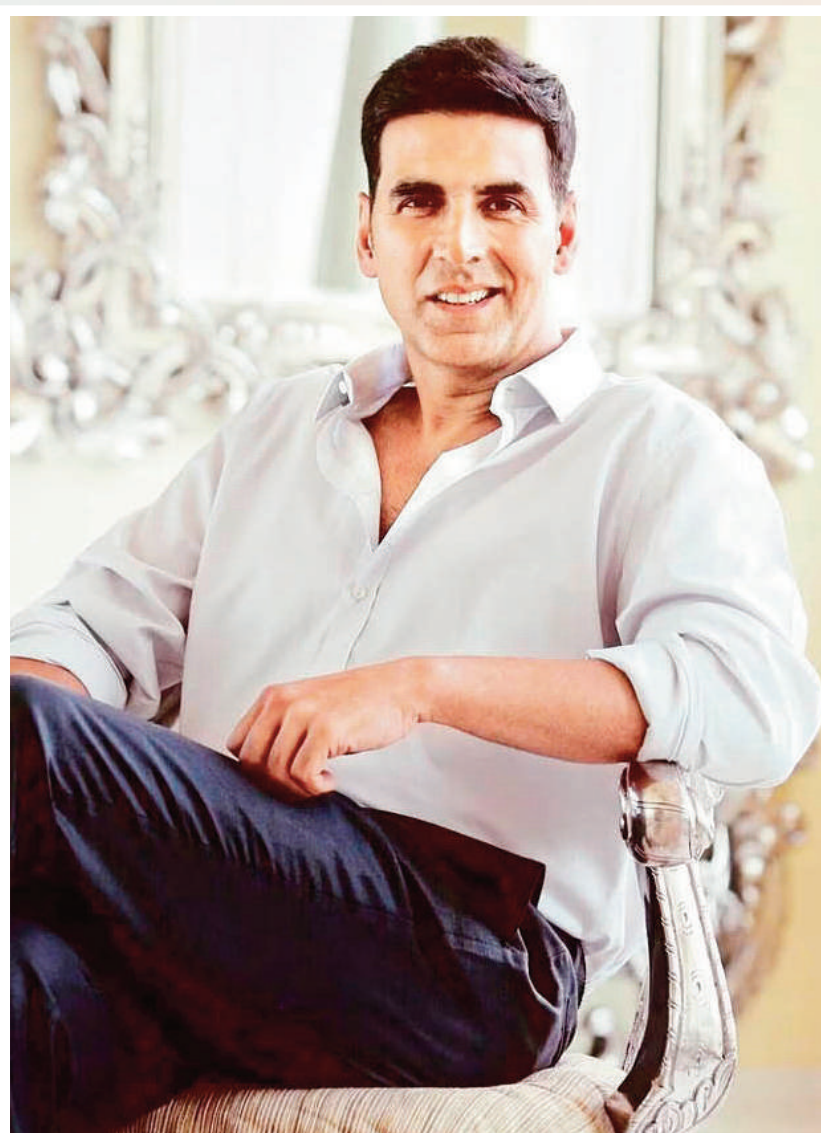


# AKSHAY KUMAR ANNOUNCES 'SKY FORCE' BASED ON INDIA'S 'FIRST AND DEADLIEST AIR STRIKE'

**MUMBAI, Oct 2:** Superstar Akshay Kumar on Monday announced his new feature film, "Sky Force", which will chronicle the "untold true story of India's first and deadliest air strike". The 56-year-old actor took to X and shared an announcement teaser of the movie on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, revered freedom fighters and stalwarts of India, both of whom were born on October 2. "Today, on the day of Gandhi-Shastri Jayanti, the whole country is saying - 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan'. No better day than today

to announce the incredible story of #SkyForce : Our untold story of India's first and deadliest airstrike. Give it love, please. Jai Hind, Jai Bharat," Kumar wrote on the microblogging site.

"Sky Force" will present the "untold true story that captures the bravery, the emotion, the patriotism of all those men in uniform involved in India's first and deadliest airstrike at a time against Pakistan, against all odds", the makers said in a press note. The film, backed by Jio Studios and Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films, will be released in theatres on October 2, 2024. (PTI)



## Want complete control on my films: 'Dhuin' director Achal Mishra



**LEH, Oct 2:** As a director-producer, Achal Mishra says he wants "complete control" over a project even if it means telling stories on a limited budget with a small crew.

The 27-year-old, who started his filmmaking journey with 2019's "Gamak Ghar", has made his second film "Dhuin" with three people and no predefined budget. He is also the editor and producer of the movie, which was screened on the second day of The Himalayan Film Festival here. "When making a film like 'Gamak Ghar', a lot of creative decisions, I realised, were being defined by how I learnt filmmaking... That became a decisive thing in understanding a budget.

"With budget, I've realised it also defines your process of how you are going to make a film. And, I don't want to write a film first and go on the floor and shoot it. I want to keep it as open as possible. Having a small budget and small crew allows that," Mishra told PTI in an inter-

view. Asked if he would like to have a producer on board, Mishra said that's a question he was still finding his way around.

"While shooting, I want complete control. Even after shooting the film, it's the authority that lets you have control over something as simple as the duration of a film," the photographer-director said.

Mishra gave the example of "Dhuin", which at 50 minutes runtime doesn't traditionally fit under the category of either a short film or a full-fledged feature film.

"There was no one else involved (as producer on 'Dhuin'). Had there been anyone else, it would have become 30 minutes or 1 hour 30 minutes (in length). If somebody lets me have that sort of freedom, then definitely (I'll take on a producer)," he added. With a bigger crew, the Darbhanga-born filmmaker said there's always a possibility of second guessing one's instincts. (PTI)

## KANGANA RANAUT'S 'TEJAS' TO HIT THEATRES ON OCT 27, makers release teaser

**MUMBAI, Oct 2:** "Tejas", headlined by Kangana Ranaut, is set to be released in theatres on October 27, the makers announced on Monday.

The movie, written and directed by Sarvesh Mewara, features Ranaut in the role of an Indian Air Force pilot.

Production house RSVP Movies shared the release date and teaser of the film on its official page on X.

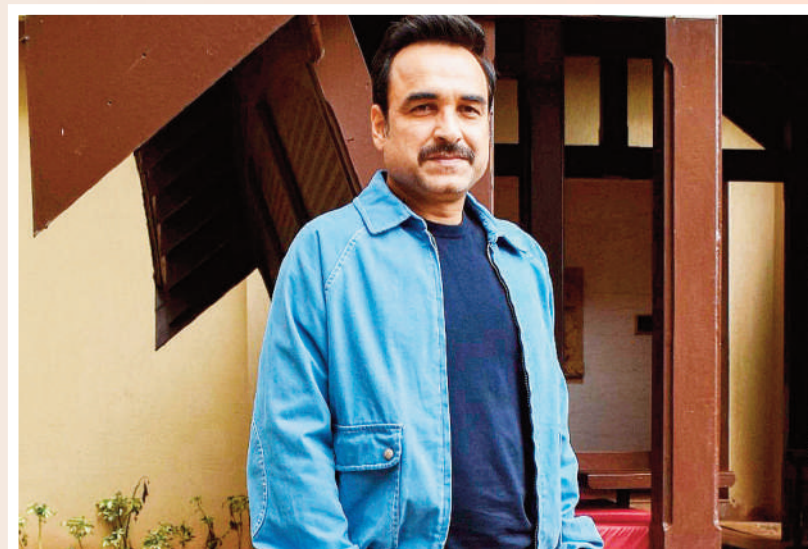
"Jab bhi baat desh ki aayegi, woh saari hadein paar kar jaayegi! #TeaserOutToday #Tejas In cinemas on 27th oct," the post read.

According to the makers, "Tejas" revolves around Ranaut's Tejas Gill, who aims "to instil a deep sense of pride in the valiant soldiers who tirelessly defend our nation, confronting numerous challenges along the way".

The film was previously scheduled to arrive in cinemas on October 20. (PTI)



## HAVE STARTED DOING LESS FILMS BECAUSE I'M TIRED NOW, SAYS PANKAJ TRIPATHI



**MUMBAI, Oct 2:** "When you're hungry, you tend to overeat" is how Pankaj Tripathi describes his drive to do quality work, which motivated him to take up as many projects as possible.

The actor, however, has now decided to slow down. This year he has had two releases so far, "OMG 2" and the latest "Fukrey 3".

"I have started doing less films, because I'm tired now. There are times when I don't remember when I gave this shot, and what happened, and for which film. This is not a good situation to be in. You can't be acting, 340 days and I was doing that. Now, I don't want to do that," Tripathi told PTI.

The actor, a graduate from the

National School of Drama (NSD), said he did back-to-back projects as he was "hungry" for good work.

"I liked those stories and hence I decided to be a part of it. The issue is when you are hungry, you tend to overeat, and when you have good food served on a plate then you surely end up overeating. So, a similar thing was happening with me (as an actor). Like, there was a lot of work coming my way, and there was overeating happening," he said.

Tripathi's next release is "Main Atal Hoon", based on the life of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It is directed by Ravi Jadhav, best known for National Award-winning movies such as "Natarang" and "Balgandharva". (PTI)

## Delhi's Roshanara Club where cricket met cinema via 'Gandhi'

**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** The century-old Roshanara Club in Delhi besides serving as a cradle of Indian cricket, has a place in world cinema history as it featured in Richard Attenborough's Oscar-winning film on Mahatma Gandhi.

"Gandhi", Attenborough's 1982 film which won multiple Academy Awards, continues to hold its magic for the audience, even more than 40 years since it hit the theatres.

The biopic was shot on different locations in India, in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Patna, among others.

In Delhi, Attenborough, known for his attention to details, used original locations, such as the Birla House, the Rashtrapati Bhavan (earlier Viceroy House) and Rajpath (now Kartavya Path), as much as possible to recreate key events including Gandhi's assassination and the funeral march of 1948, for which an army of extras were hired.

At Roshanara Club, a cricket match sequence was shot, with its lush green ground and British-era pavilion adding a layer of authenticity to the scene that was set in the early 20th century when Gandhi had visited Bihar, particularly Champaran district which would later serve as his 'karma-boom'.

In the scene, the cricket match can be seen interrupted by the arrival of a car, carrying two police personnel in uniform and one of them informing club guests about some disturbance in Motihari, the then district headquarters of Champaran, and an epicentre of Gandhi's movement for peasants.

The historic club in north Delhi was established on August 15, 1922, and had turned 100 last year. However, in a dramatic turn of events, the famed club on September 29 was sealed by the Delhi Development Authority, which also took possession of the

sprawling property.

The action came nearly six months after an "eviction notice" was served on the Club by the DDA as its lease had expired earlier, a senior official said, hours after it was sealed last week.

Rajan Manchanda, general secretary of the Club and joint secretary of the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA), has appealed to the authorities to "extend the lease period", given the historicity of the club.

"This is a historic club where cricket greats like Lala Amarnath, Nawab Pataudi, Bishan Singh Bedi, and even many current players have cut their teeth. It has hosted many international matches and Ranji Trophy matches," he told PTI.

Roshanara Club featured in Oscar-winning "Gandhi" and "we have all heard anecdotes attached" to the shooting of the classic movie, he said. (PTI)





## SOUTH AFRICA HAVE NEVER MADE THE FINAL OF A WORLD EVENT

# South Africa SWOT: Can Proteas punch above their weight?



**HYDERABAD, Oct 2:** An injury-hit South Africa will bank on their IPL stars, including David Miller and Kagiso Rabada, to lift their maiden global trophy at the ODI World Cup in India.

South Africa have never made the final of a world event in both the 50-overs and 20-overs formats. The Proteas missed their chances when they were expected to win but in the upcoming edition, the Temba Bavuma-led side will have to punch above its weight to shed the perennial under-achievers' tag.

Here is the SWOT analysis of a team which goes into the competition high on confidence, having come from behind to beat Australia 3-2 in the recent series at home: **Strengths:** David Miller and Heinrich Klaasen are among the most in-form batters going into the World Cup. Miller, who has played numerous match winning knocks in the shorter formats over the past 18 months, will hold key to the team's chances. His rich experience of playing India — both IPL and international cricket — should also come handy.

Klaasen was South Africa's stand out batter of the series against Australia. His 174 off just 83 balls in the fourth ODI showed how explosive he can be.

The No 4 batter Aiden Markram too has hit top form going into the 50-over showpiece.

Skipper Bavuma, who has gone back home due to personal reasons, is expected to rejoin the side ahead of the tournament opener against Sri Lanka in Delhi on October 7.

His opening partner Quinton de Kock, who averages around 50 in India, will be aiming to replicate that form before he says goodbye to ODI cricket.

**Weaknesses:** Injury to pacers Anrich Nortje and Sisanda Magala has dealt a body blow to South Africa. Nortje, especially, would have provided much-needed firepower in the fast bowling department.

Rabada, who has a decent record in India, will lead the attack which also includes the 23-year-old Gerald Coetzee.

Spinners Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi were among the wickets in the recent series against Australia

but don't have an enviable record in India. They will be determined to change that in favourable conditions.

**Opportunities:** The tournament is a massive opportunity for someone like Coetzee, who has made his debut across formats this year. The exciting talent has the gift of raw pace and a performance to remember in India could go a long way in taking his team deep into the tournament. His successful exploits could also help Coetzee attract the attention of IPL teams ahead of the next season.

For Bavuma, the World Cup is probably one final chance to leave a lasting legacy behind.

The likes of Bavuma and Miller are possibly playing their last ODI World Cup.

Lanky fast bowler Marco Jansen will be another player to watch out for.

**Threats:** South Africa will be depending on too much on Rabada and it remains to be seen, if their spinners are able to provide wickets in the middle overs. The batting department does look a lot more settled than bowling. (PTI)

## Unpredictable Pakistan need openers and spinners to raise the game



**HYDERABAD, Oct 2:** One can never write off Pakistan in a global event and that will be the case again when Babar Azam and Co head into the ODI World Cup in India on the back of an inconsistent run.

Not so long ago, Pakistan were looking like a well-rounded unit but their Asia Cup campaign has exposed the chinks in their armour.

Playing in India will give the players the chance to become national heroes overnight. Pakistan open their tournament campaign against the Netherlands here on October 6.

Here is the SWOT analysis of the most unpredictable team in world cricket:

**Despite the injury to Naseem Shah,** Pakistan's pace attack remains a potent force. The ball tends to swings in the powerplay at most venues in India and Shaheen would be aiming to exploit that including against India in Ahmedabad on October 14.

His new ball partner in Naseem's absence remains undecided but the choice is likely to be between the seriously quick Haris Rauf and the seasoned Hasan Ali, who is making a comeback.

The batting relies heavily on Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan and they both looked in sublime touch in the opening warm-up against New Zealand here on Friday. It could be a legacy defining campaign for Babar who would aim to lead from the front.

The absence of Naseem has definitely created a window of opportunity for the opposition batters. Shaheen and Naseem are relentless with the new ball and rivals have to deal with only one half of the destructive duo.

Rauf, who usually comes in to bowl as first change, opened the bowling against New Zealand but did not look as effective despite his express pace. There will be added pressure on Hasan who is likely to be targeted by rival teams in all phase of the game considering his medium pace.

The opening combination of Imam Ul Haq and Fakhar Zaman also don't inspire a lot of confidence. Big match batter Zaman needs to overcome his inconsistency while Imam, who has a 50 plus average in 66 ODIs, needs to bat a higher strike rate than his current 82.18.

The form of spinners Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz is also a concern.

The tournament presents a massive opportunity to the likes of Saud Shakeel, Iftikhar Ahmed and Salman Agha. However, not all three are expected to feature in the playing eleven at the same time.

Shakeel, who has proved his mettle in Test cricket averaging a staggering 87.50 in seven games, is yet to make the same impact in the 50-over format. He looked good against New Zealand in the warm-up and will be hoping that more chances comes his way.

Middle-order batters Iftikhar and Agha will be expected to chip in with part-time off-spin over the course of the long tournament.

As vice-captain Shadab Khan pointed in the media interaction on Sunday, the last thing Pakistan need is another injured squad member. Naseem's loss has disturbed the balance of the bowling attack and they can't ill-afford another key player on the sidelines. Pakistan have the tendency to self-implode and they will need to be wary of that. (PTI)

## After emulating her mother, Harmilan wants to do one better

**HANGZHOU, Oct 2:** Mother and daughter winning medals in Asian Games is rare, but India's metric mile national record holder Harmilan Bains has done that here, and she is now hoping to do one better.

The 25-year-old Harmilan clinched a silver in the women's 1500m race on Sunday, the same colour of medal her mother Madhuri had won in the 800m race in the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea.

She clocked 4 minutes 12.74 seconds while the national record in her name is 4:05.39.

Bains is now gunning for a medal in the 800m, the same event as her mother's. If she succeeds on Wednesday, she will go past her mother.

"I will say, mom, 800m is still there," she said when asked what she will say to her mother after the 1500m silver medal.

"I will try my best for the 800m and will work on the soreness on my legs. I was pretty sure that I will win a medal (in 1500m) and was even confident of winning gold but had to be settled with a silver."

Madhuri once ran a 1500m trial with Harmilan in her womb in order to keep her job with a public sector company in Punjab.

Harmilan's father, Amandeep Bains, is also a South Asian Games medalist and a former men's 1500m national champion.

Harmilan, who used to race with boys when she was young, won her first international medal in 2016 -- a 1500m



bronze at the Asian Junior Championships in Ho Chi-Minh in Vietnam.

She suffered a knee injury in 2017, which led to her missing some big events during her recovery, which lasted for over a year.

In 2019, she regained full fitness and won a 1500m bronze at the Federation Cup in Patiala.

She broke the 1500m national record at the National Open Championship in 2021 with a time of 4:05.39, bettering Sunita Rani's previous mark of 4:06.03. However, a knee surgery meant that she was out of reckoning from the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

"For nearly a year, I did not do anything. For four months, I was totally bed-ridden, then got multiple MRIs done. The doctors said it was water in the knee," she said.

"Then at last, doctors said it was plica syndrome (pain and swelling in the middle of the knee) and the only option was to have a surgery. I underwent surgery again, six months on a bed again, rehab, and then again on the track, and now an Asian Games medalist." (PTI)

## Joshna stunned by lower ranked Korean Mingyeong

**HANGZHOU, Oct 2:** Star Indian squash player Joshna Chinappa made a shock exit from the women's singles event after losing 1-3 to lower-ranked Heo Mingyeong of South Korea in the pre-quarterfinals at the Asian Games here on Monday.

The 37-year-old, who received a first round bye, went down 4-11 12-10 9-11 8-11 in 37 minutes to the South Korean, ranked 158th, in the round of 16.

The result is a major upset as Joshna was a medal favourite.

The Chennai player had won a singles bronze in the 2018 edition.

She also has two silvers and as many bronze in team events the Asian Games, including the one she picked up in this edition last week. She has been hit by injuries recently and lack of game time has pushed Joshna to as low as 70 in the world rankings.

The other Indian in the fray, Tanvi Khanna progressed to the quarterfinals with an easy 11-1 11-3 11-2 win over Arichaya Chujit of Thailand.

The Indian mixed doubled pair of Anahat Singh and Abhay Singh continued its winning run to enhance its chances of making the quarterfinal.

The duo cruised to 2-0 (11-5 11-6) win over Thailand's Anantana Praserttratanakul and Arkaradet Arkarahirunya to stay on top of group D. (PTI)

## Das-Ankita fight back to oust Malaysia; Indian archers make quarters in four events

**HANGZHOU, Oct 2:** The Indian recurve mixed pair archery duo of Atanu Das and Ankita Bhakat showed tenacity to defeat Malaysia in a three-setter and sail into quarterfinals at the Asian Games here on Monday.

Indian archers stormed into last-eight in three team events -- recurve mixed, compound mixed, compound men's team -- when the elimination round got underway at the Fuyang Yinhu Sports Centre here.

As of now, India are in medal contention in four events with the top-seeded women's team compound archers getting a bye into the quarters.

Fifth seeded Indian duo of Das and Ankita rallied to beat Malaysian team of Syaiera Binti Mashayikh, Muhammad Zarif Syahir Bin Zolkepli 6-2 (39-38, 37-36, 39-33).

The Malaysia duo enjoyed a 2-0 lead with three 10s including one X in the first set.

But the experienced Indian duo bounced back with two 10s and went on to level as the Malaysians crumbled under pressure.

The Malaysians hit the red-ring (8) once and went on to lose the second by a slender one-point margin.

There was more misery in store for the Malaysians who shot into

the red ring thrice (8-8-8), while Das-Ankita drilled in three perfect 10s en route to a six-point win in the third set.

The Indian pair sealed the issue with three more 10s in the fourth set and set up a last-eight clash against fourth-seeded Indonesians.

Should they overcome the Indonesian challenge, the Indians may run into the top-seeded Koreans in potential semifinal clash in Olympic-qualifying event.

There are six quota spots available from the Asian Games -- to the recurve mixed team winner, as well as another two archers ranked highly in the individual events.

In the compound mixed team, top-seeded Indian duo of Ojas Deotale and Jyothi Surekha Vennam dropped just one point from 16 arrows to eliminate UAE's Amna Alawadhi and Mohammed Binamro 159-151.

The duo will take on formidable Malaysia (No 8 seed) in the

quarters and thereafter they have an easy draw till the final.

In compound men's team event, second-seeded Indians trio of Ojas, Abhishek Verma and Pratham Singh thrashed 15th seeded Singapore (Woon Teng NG, Lee Chung Hee Alan, Jun Hui Goh) 235-219.

The Indian triumvirate had a cautious start and had four 10s to take 58-55 lead.

But the Indians came on their own from second end onwards and dropped just three points to rout their rivals by a 16-point margin.

The compound men's team is now pitted against lower-ranked Bhutan in the quarters and will have a potential semifinal clash against third seeded Chinese Taipei.

The top-seeded Indian women's compound team of Jyothi, Aditi Swami and Parneet Kaur, who got a bye into the quarters, will open its campaign against ninth-seeded Hong Kong who ousted Bangladesh 225-218. (PTI)



## Saurabh Walkar: NZ bank on Indian analyst for big performance in World Cup

**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** Shaping strategies to suit different oppositions and venues will be key for every team during the World Cup and New Zealand have an Indian, who is familiar with conditions and owns the data to assist them — Saurabh Walkar, their performance analyst.

India and other Asian nations, who are masters of subcontinental conditions will demand a particular approach, while England's freight train-like cricket will warrant another.

Walkar is gearing up for the tough days ahead.

"It is a big opportunity for me as New Zealand is a very strong team, and they were finalists in the last two editions of the World Cup. It is a big challenge but I have confidence in my preparations," Walkar told PTI.

So, how did his stint with New Zealand eventuate? "They were looking for a performance analyst who knows Indian conditions. Someone who has the experience of working with Indian players. New Zealand coach Gary Stead gave an audi-

ence to me, and it went really well," said Walkar.

New Zealand will start their World Cup campaign against defending champions England at Ahmedabad on October 5.

Another stern test awaits the Black Caps when they face hosts India on October 22 at Dharamsala.

But the Blackcaps can find some solace from the fact that Walkar is familiar with players from both the teams, and he might just have an extensive data bank on them.

"I have worked with players like Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav during my time with the Mumbai Ranji team. It was also a fanboy moment for me as I had watched them only on TV earlier. "I have also associated with England cricketers like Jos Buttler during the Hundred at Manchester Originals."

"So, the New Zealand team will require some high-level input from me during the World Cup. My duty will be to provide that to Stead. I believe I have the data for it," said Walkar,

who had worked eight years with the Mumbai Ranji side.

However, this is not the first time Walkar is getting associated with a national team.

The 38-year-old Mumbaikar had worked with Afghanistan during the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 in the UAE, in which Australia emerged the champions.

"Lance Klusener (then Afghanistan coach) interviewed me after applying for the job (of a performance analyst). I saw the job vacancy on their website. He was impressed with my presentation."

"It was a great experience as Afghanistan were also a very new team, and they were coming from a very different background. The whole team was very enthused about technical things and it was terrific to work with some talented players like Rashid Khan," he added.

Walkar's beginning as a performance analyst was not easy because he had to give up his engineering course in Electronics and Telecommunications in 2006, and along with it a possi-

bly lucrative career also.

The spark for him to choose a career associated with cricket came rather unexpectedly.

"I always wanted to be associated with cricket. I had played some institutional cricket, local leagues etc. But that was not taking me anywhere."

"But I got a chance to be at England nets at CCI (Brabourne Stadium) and they had a performance analyst with them, and made me realise that I now have a way to continuously involve in cricket," he said.

England had stayed in Mumbai for a little over a week to play two warm-up matches against MCA XI in preparation for their ODI and Test tour in 2008. But that decision to divert his career proved right as Walkar soon got an invitation to join Rajasthan Royals during the inaugural edition of the IPL.

It was a big break for a youngster to work along with some of the legends like Shane Warne. "It was a remarkable experience. Shane Warne was not big on numbers, as he believed

in keeping players motivated through a speech or a personal talk. Darren Berry (former RR technical director) was dealing with data and numbers," Walkar remembered.

Later, he received a chance to work with the Lucknow Super-giants, but by then the role of data analyst had assumed much more significance.

"Working at Lucknow (Super-giants) was a different experience as Andy Flower was a man of numbers and data. But what I have noticed is that the IPL franchises and players have opened up to the importance of data in cricket, something they looked down upon in the first two or three editions," he said.

Walkar also had to adapt himself to the new era.

"It is also about adapting yourself to the needs of players and teams that you associate with. In the earlier years, we also did not have too much data. But in 2023, we have a solid base of 16 or 17 years of data (of players) to bank on," he added. (PTI)



# China is relentless in its domination of the medals at the Asian Games

**HANGZHOU (CHINA), Oct 2:** China is simply relentless in its domination of the Asian Games.

At the games five years ago in Jakarta, Indonesia, the country won 132 gold medals and 287 medals overall. This time, into Day 9 with five full days remaining, China has already broken its mark for gold medals and is very close to matching the overall total from five years ago.

With 290 gold medals awarded, China has won almost half — 141. Its overall total stood at 255, just short of the 287 mark set in 2018.

Host nations typically get a “home field” bounce when hosting the Olympics or a large multi-sport event like the Asian Games.

Skater Jung Cheolwon crossed the line in Monday’s 3,000-meter relay and began to celebrate thinking he’d won the gold medal for South Korea.

But he was shocked when the scoreboard showed South Korea had finished second to Taiwan, which clocked 4 minutes, 05.692 seconds. South Korea finished in 4:05.702.

Jung apologized to his teammates for his costly error.

“I made a rather big mistake,” the 27-year-old Jung said. “I didn’t come at full speed to the finish line. I let my guard down too early. I am very sorry.”

## Parul, Priti bag Silver and Bronze in 3000m steeplechase; Ancy wins Silver in long jump

**HANGZHOU, Oct 2:** India’s Parul Chaudhary and Priti secured silver and bronze medals respectively in the women’s 3000m steeplechase, unheralded Ancy Sojan made a grand entry on the big stage with a long jump silver, while the 4x400m mixed relay team got a fortuitous upgrade to second spot due to ‘lane infringement’, on an eventful day at the Asian Games on Monday.

On a day when Parul and Priti, despite giving off their best in the gruelling steeplechase event, were left chasing the shadow of Bahrain’s Yavi Winfred Mutile, a ‘lane infringement’ by the Sri Lankan 4x400m mixed relay quartet saw the India’s bronze turn to silver in a matter of minutes after the completion of the event.

The Indian quartet had earlier finished third on the podium behind Sri Lanka.

In 3000m steeplechase, Parul clocked 9:27.63 seconds, which was more than nine seconds behind the Bahrain runner, who took the top podium finish in 9:18.28 seconds, a new Games record. The previous record stood in the name of country-mate Jebet Ruth (9:31.36 sec) set during the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea.

Though Parul also breached the Asian Games record, it was nowhere close to her national record and personal best of 9:15.31 clocked at the World Championships in Budapest, which helped her qualify for the Paris Olympics, in August.

Compatriot Priti finished a good 16 seconds behind Parul, clocking a personal best 9:43.32 seconds to win the bronze in a close finish with Bahrain runner Mekonen Tigist Getent, who timed 9:43.71 seconds.

Yavi began to pull away in the sixth lap of the gruelling race, even as Parul faded out. The Kenyan-born Bahrain runner, who won the 2023 World Athletics Championships gold in the event beating country-mate Beatrice Chepkoech, finished at least 50 metres ahead of the 28-year-old Parul.

In women’s long jump, Ancy breached her personal best twice and leapt 6.63 metres to bag the silver behind Shiqi Xiong of China, whose jump of 6.73 metres helped her claim the yellow metal.

Vietnam’s Nga Yan Yue won the bronze with a best effort of 6.50 metres. In the third attempt, Ancy registered her personal best of 6.56 metres, which she bettered in her fifth attempt.

The other Indian in the fray, Shailli Singh looked crestfallen, finishing a disappointing fifth with an effort of 6.48 metres. Such was Shailli’s — the U-20 World Championships silver medallist — plight that she looked on the verge of an emotional meltdown before her last two attempts.

Shailli gave it her all but it was Ancy’s day and she celebrated it by wrapping the tri-colour around her soon after winning the silver.

The quartet of Muhammad Ajmal Variyathodi, Vithya Ramraj, Rajesh Ramesh and Subha Venkatesan then clocked 3:14.34 seconds in mixed team 4x400m relay to win a bronze medal. But, to their joy, the Sri Lankan quartet — which had beaten the favourites to the second spot by a fraction of a second with a time of 3:14.25 seconds — was disqualified due to ‘lane infringement’. (PTI)



Uzbekistan failed to completely dominate the ancient martial art of kurash, which has its roots in the Central Asian country. The sport debuted in the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

Uzbekistan won four of the seven gold medals available. But China picked up two gold and Iran added another.

On Monday on the closing day, Liu Yi of

China defeated Zahra Bagheri of Iran 3-0 in the women’s 87-kilogram division, and Sadeq Azarang of Iran defeated Kim Ming-yo of South Korea 10-0.

On Sunday, Yu Dan of China won the women’s 70-kilogram final against Donya Aghaei of Iran.

Yu is a former judoka that China has moved into kurash because of its similarities

to other martial arts.

“In terms of throws and grips, there are many similarities between wrestling, judo and kurash,” Yu said. “It has helped me a lot.”

Japan completed its sweep of the triathlon gold medals by winning the mixed relay on Monday.

Kenji Nener won the men’s gold on Friday and Yuko Takahashi added the women’s title on Saturday. Both ran on Monday in the winning team event, which saw China take the silver and Hong Kong the bronze.

“It was tough,” Takahashi said. “I was almost dead at the end, but I gave it everything.”

Many triathletes competed in the world championships in Pontevedra, Spain, on Sept. 22-24 and then rushed to China.

Esports wrapped up Monday as one of the most talked about events at the Asian Games.

Going into bronze- and gold-medal games, China led the medal table with three gold and four overall. South Korea had two gold and also four overall.

Thailand was the only other nation with gold and also had four overall. Tawian had four overall but failed to win gold.

Malaysia won the bronze on Monday in Dota 2, defeating Kyrgyzstan 2-0. China played Mongolia for the gold medal. (AP)

## South Africa lack good all-rounder at No.7, going into World Cup: Graeme Smith



**NEW DELHI, Oct 2:** South Africa are lacking depth in their batting in the absence of quality all-rounders, an aspect that could affect the team’s chances in the World Cup, reckons former skipper Graeme Smith.

There was a time when South Africa boasted of world class all-rounders like Lance Klusener, Jacques Kallis and even a bowling all-rounder like Shaun Pollock but Temba Bavuma’s team doesn’t have a quality batter at No. 7.

“Where they fall short is, they don’t have a lot of depth in batting like some of the other teams have. Who is going to be that all-rounder for them at No. 7? Marco Jansen or someone else,” Smith said during an exclusive interview with PTL.

For South Africa to succeed, left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj’s control and wicket-taking ability will go a long way, in case Bavuma wants to leave an impression as a leader.

“Whether they go with two spinners or not but Keshav Maharaj needs to have an outstanding tournament. Obviously, he has Tabraiz Shamsi on his wings but reliability of Maharaj is key to Temba as a captain,” said Smith, who scored nearly 7000 runs in ODIs.

The 42-year-old, who retired in 2014, is also hopeful that Kagiso Rabada will carry a lot on his shoulders in the absence of Anrich Nortje and Sisanda Magala due to injuries.

“Rabada, we all know how world class he is and we would like him to have an incredible World Cup tournament. Always carries a lot on his shoulders and you need a couple of key players to play well and then push through knock-out of the tournament and give yourself good chances back-to-back to hold that trophy.”

Nortje’s absence will hurt South Africa on those batting friendly tracks.

“I think Nortje in particular, to win in India in a long tournament, you need players who can contribute. Nortje’s pace through the air, wicket-taking ability is certainly going to be missed.”

The key to South African campaign will be the top six batters, he said.

“If South Africa need to be successful, they would need their 6-7 big players to really have a great World Cup. If you look at top-order you have Quinton, Temba and in that middle-order, really you have really good players of spin, power players like David Miller, Heinrich Klaassen and Aiden Markram that’s going to be key area for South Africa if they are going to be successful.”

South African cricket over the years has gone through phases where cricket virtually took a backseat but come this edition of World Cup, Bavuma’s team needs to stick to serious conversations regarding the game, feels Smith.

Will the current group of players be able to shed the chokers’ tag?

“There has been so much happening around South African

cricket that key for the group is to have strong cricket conversations. Keeping it to cricket will be most important things for this group,” Smith opined.

During the 2021 T20 World Cup, Quinton de Kock refused to take a knee as a mark of support for the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement and internally the situation in the dressing room wasn’t conducive.

While Smith wasn’t explicit in what he meant by stick to cricket conversations only but it is understood that outside noise has often cluttered the Proteas players’ minds.

“They should challenge each other, train hard and get better. Commit everything to every game and focus on cricket aspect and keep out the noise,” the big-bodied left-hander of yesteryears said.

Smith has played three World Cups and understands the disappointment associated with losing close games.

“I am pretty clear about which are the ones we should have won and ones, where we were simply not good enough. There are lot of things that go into winning World Cup. You need players, you need a bit of luck and conditions that you are playing in and their last game on 11th of November and that’s a long

time.

“Lots of different conditions and lots of travelling and they can keep it to good cricket conversations and training. That’s what they can control.”

Smith, who has worked closely with Cricket South Africa, is currently the Commissioner of SA20 and is a witness to the changing landscape of world cricket where the relevance of the ODI format is being debated.

“It will be an interesting time to see how ODI cricket progresses. From my perspective, the calendar is already full with franchise cricket and bilateral cricket. It will be interesting to see how ODI cricket finds space between World Cups, that will be an interesting dynamic to see.”

Quinton de Kock has announced that he will retire from ODIs after World Cup and Smith finds the senior opener’s decision perfectly logical.

“Quinnie is a personality, who has always enjoyed his time away from cricket. We know cricket these days requires immense amount of travelling and commitment and him as a personality always enjoyed a balance. His decision to retire is based on obviously opportunities to play franchise cricket but also opportunities to stay at home.

“That’s always been clear in the way Quinton has operated as a personality. I retired at 33 and I look at his (Quinton) record and he has played a lot of ODI cricket already.

“I played 196 ODI games and I don’t think he (145) is far off that. He has played a lot of cricket and how Quinnie is as a personality, he has probably made the best decision for himself where he is with himself and his family.” (PTI)

## India make quarters in all six team events; campaign ends in women’s individual recurve section



**HANGZHOU, Oct 2:** Indian archers showed tenacity and authority in equal measure to storm into the quarterfinals in all the six team events of the Asian Games here on Monday.

The Indians played five team elimination rounds and dropped just one set on way to their respective quarterfinal matches in both recurve and compound sections.

India have got a bye into the quarters by virtue of topping the qualifications in the women’s compound team event.

India remained in contention in all five gold medals up for grabs in compound section with all the four archers — Ojas Deotale, Abhishek Verma, Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Aditi Swami — progressing to their respective individual quarterfinals in the afternoon session.

In the recurve section, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Atanu Das advanced, while India’s campaign ended in women’s individual section, in the only blip of the day.

First, it was the top-seeded compound mixed team of Ojas Deotale and Jyothi Surekha Vennam, who showed the way as they dropped just one point from 16 arrows to eliminate UAE’s Amna Alawadhi and Mohammed Binamro 159-151.

The duo will take on formidable Malaysia (No 8 seed) in the quarters, and thereafter, they should have an easy draw till the final.

Then, the Indian recurve mixed pair duo of Atanu Das and Ankita Bhakat were at their resilient best and overcome a first-set deficit to defeat Malaysia in a three-setter.

The fifth seeded Indian duo of Das and Ankita rallied to beat the Malaysian team of Syagiera Binti Mashayikh and Muhamad Zarif Syahir Bin Zolkepli 6-2 (39-38, 37-36, 39-33).

The Malaysia pair enjoyed a 2-0 lead with three 10s including one X in the first set. But, the experienced Indian duo bounced back with two 10s and went on to draw level, as the Malaysians crumbled under pressure.

The Malaysians hit the red-ring (8) once and went on to lose the second by a slender one-point margin.

There was more misery in store for the Malaysians who shot into the red ring thrice (8-8-8), while Das-Ankita drilled in three perfect 10s en route to a six-point win in the third set.

The Indian pair sealed the issue with three more 10s in the

fourth set and set up a last-eight clash against the fourth-seeded Indonesians.

Should they overcome the Indonesian challenge, the Indians may run into the top-seeded Koreans in a potential semifinal clash in the Olympic-qualifying event.

There are six quota spots available from the Asian Games — the recurve mixed team winners and two archers ranked high in the individual events.

In compound men’s team event, the second-seeded Indian trio of Ojas, Abhishek Verma and Prathamesh Jawkar thrashed 15th seed Singapore (Woon Teng NG, Lee Chung Hee Alan, Jun Hui Goh) 235-219.

The Indian triumvirate had a cautious start and had four 10s to take a 58-55 lead.

But the Indians came on their own from second end onwards and dropped just three points to rout their rivals by a 16-point margin.

The compound men’s team is pitted against lower-ranked Bhutan in the quarters and will likely face the third seeded Chinese Taipei in the semifinals.

The top-seeded Indian women’s compound team of Jyothi, Aditi Swami and Parmeet Kaur, who got a bye into the quarters, will open its campaign against ninth-seeded Hong Kong, who ousted Bangladesh 225-218.

The Indian men’s recurve team of Das, Dhiraj and Tushar Shelke beat Hong Kong’s Kwok Yin Chai, Law Kwun Pok Lucien and Wn Chun Kit 6-0 (58-47, 57-49, 57-55) in a lopsided contest.

The third-seeded Indians, who face lower-ranked Mongolia (No 11) in the last-eight, have an easy draw till the final, with Korea and Japan in the top half.

The unfancied women’s recurve team of Ankita Bhakat, Bhajan Kaur and Simranjeet Kaur also shone through, ousting 12th seeded Thailand.

The fifth-seeded Indians won 5-1 (49-47, 54-54, 55-54) and are pitted against fourth-seeded Japan in a tough quarterfinal match-up. Reigning world champion Deotale began with an easy defeat of Ahmad Alshatti (Kuwait) 148-138. He then overcame Chen Chieh-Lun of Chinese Taipei 146-145 in a tough contest.

The fourth seeded Verma defeated Belal Ayman Alawadi of Saudi Arabia 147-139, and then ousted Nguyen Van Day (Vietnam) 146-142 to make the last-eight. (PTI)

## Rachin Ravindra: From cheering for NZ at a Bengaluru bar in 2019 to being part of 2023 World Cup batch



**HYDERABAD, Oct 2:** Rachin Ravindra found the night of July 14, 2019, one of the longest and hardest to endure as he watched New Zealand’s heartbreaking defeat to England in the ODI World Cup final sitting in a Bengaluru pub.

Ravindra, then all of 19 was on an annual trip to India with his father’s cricket club and the roller-coaster experience of watching the final is still etched in his memory.

New Zealand losing that final to England on the boundary count-back rule divides opinion to this day. Rachin, whose first name is inspired by the first names of Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid, remembers that night as it was yesterday.

As a budding cricketer dreaming to represent New Zealand one day, the Indian-origin cricketer was shattered with the outcome of the game and the desire to represent New Zealand grew stronger.

Cut to 2023, he is among the fast rising cricketers in the New Zealand set-up. Primarily a batter, who also takes his left-arm spin very seriously, Rachin has already made a statement with a gutsy 97 as an opener in the World Cup warm-up against Pakistan here last week.

Born to Indian parents in Wellington, Rachin has a strong connect with the cricket mad nation with his family roots in Bengaluru. It was fitting that he made his Test debut in India two years ago and now he is set to make his World Cup debut here.

“Looking back on my Test debut, it was a special and emotional time. Being able to play in India, the fanfare around the game here, to be able to experience that is pretty special.

“My parents come from Bangalore and it is amazing to play a World Cup here,” the 23-year-old PTI referring to the Kanpur Test which he was able to draw

for his team while batting alongside number 11 Ajaz Patel.

From watching previous World Cup as a fanboy to now being part of the next one, it has been a pretty “cool” journey for Rachin.

“It is actually quite a story. My dad takes a bunch of age group boys to India (annually) and we were in Bangalore on a senior trip. We were watching the final (2019) in a stock exchange bar.

“I watched the whole final. It was unbelievable and

such a rollercoaster experience with the high and lows of the game. Having Indian supporters around us was pretty cool. It is an experience I will never forget.”

New Zealand is probably the most liked team on the planet but on that night, no pleasantries were exchanged in that bar. A couple of days ago, New Zealand had ended India’s run in the semifinals.

“All of us were New Zealanders, so we were massively going for the Black Caps but quite a few Indians were going for England, probably because of the

emotional hangover from the semifinal.

“That created a nice little atmosphere there as we all know how the game went,” recalled Rachin.

Did he think then that he will be part of the 2023 batch?

“It has been a great ride. You always think one day you might get a chance. Being a 19-year old at that time, few years into professional cricket, you have those dreams to be part of a World Cup. It is pretty cool how it has come to fruition,” he said.

Rachin, who opens for Wellington back home but bats in the middle-order for New Zealand, feels the experience of playing age-group cricket around the country will help him in this World Cup as the team travels all around India for its nine league games.

“For sure. Any sort of experience playing in India goes a long way. Grateful for these tours of India in my younger days. Goes a long way in playing spin and how to bowl in these conditions, face different type of seamers on different wickets. “The conditions over here are so different to what we get back home. I think it will definitely come in handy. Prior to this World Cup, I have played in Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, up North. It gives you a bit of sense of belonging and calms you down knowing you have played here,” said Rachin, whose father Ravi Krishnamurthy has been his coach since childhood.

Rachin might not get to open in the tournament proper like he did against Pakistan but he has already made a statement. However, he is fully aware of his role in the side. “Naah (laughs),” he responded when asked about opening the innings regularly. “It was a nice wicket to bat on. To be fair I do open for my domestic side, have always been an opener so nice to get the opportunity for New Zealand. Whatever role I get hopefully I would be able to do it,” he added. (PTI)