

**6 WORLD**

**8 NATION**

- Pak court restores appeals of Nawaz Sharif against his conviction in two graft cases
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- Nine years of BJP govt in Haryana: CM Khattar highlights plans, achievements
- ED summons CM Gehlot's son in FEMA case

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## Govt goes tough on staff indulging in bigamy

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** The state government employees will have to think twice before opting for a second marriage with the government warning of punitive action against any employee indulging in bigamy.

The state government has barred its employees from marrying another person if the spouse is alive.

The office memorandum (OM) by the personnel department, which did not mention about the divorce criterion, instructed employees to take the government's permission before marrying another person if the spouse is alive.

"No government servant who has a wife living shall contract another marriage without first obtain-



ing the permission of the government, notwithstanding that such subsequent marriage is permissible under the personal law for the time being applicable to him," it added.

Likewise, no female government

servant shall marry any person who has a husband living without first obtaining the permission of the government, said the OM, which came into force with immediate effect.

The notification was issued by personnel additional chief secretary Niraj Verma on October 20.

It said the guidelines have been issued as per the provisions of Rule 26 of The Assam Civil Services (Conduct) Rules 1965.

"In the context of the above provisions, the disciplinary authority may initiate immediate departmental proceedings...for imposition of major penalty, including compulsory retirement," the order stated.

It termed such a practice as a gross misconduct on the part of a government servant having 'large bearings' on society.

The OM further asked authorities to also take necessary legal steps whenever such cases are detected.

## Israeli troops launch ground raid into Gaza

**RAFAH, Oct 26:** Israeli troops and tanks launched a ground raid into northern Gaza that lasted throughout Wednesday night into Thursday, the military said, striking several militant targets in order to "prepare the battlefield" before a widely expected ground invasion after more than two weeks of devastating airstrikes.

The hours-long raid came after the UN warned that it's on the verge of running out of fuel in the Gaza Strip, forcing it to sharply curtail relief efforts in the territory, which has also been under a complete siege since Hamas' bloody rampage across southern Israel ignited the war earlier this month.

The rising death tolls in Gaza are unprecedented in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Even greater loss of life could come if Israel launches an expected ground offensive aimed at crushing Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since



2007 and survived four previous wars with Israel.

The health ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza said on Wednesday that more than 750 people were killed over the past 24 hours, higher than the 704 killed the previous day.

The Associated Press couldn't independently verify the death toll, and the ministry doesn't distinguish

between civilians and combatants. By comparison, 2,251 Palestinians, mostly civilians, were killed in the entire six-week-long war in 2014, according to UN figures. On Wednesday, the wife, son, daughter and grandson of Wael Dahdoudh, a veteran Al-Jazeera correspondent in Gaza, were killed in an Israeli strike. **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

## Himanta fires 'religious conversion' salvo at Chhattisgarh CM Baghel

**MAHASAMUND, Oct 26:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday hit out at his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel, accusing him of opening a "big market of religious conversion" in the state to weaken Sanatan Dharma.

Addressing a public rally in Mahasamund city in the poll-bound state, the senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader urged people to elect the BJP in Chhattisgarh so that a double-engine government can work for its development. He also targeted Rahul Gandhi saying the Congress leader has never visited the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Sarma's rally was held ahead of the filing of nominations of BJP candidates from four constituencies—Mahasamund, Khallari, Basna and Saraipali in Mahasamund district. "...We have to think about the situation to which the Bhupesh Baghel government has pushed Chhattisgarh. Religious conversions are taking place. A conspiracy is being played to convert tribals in every

part of the state, Sanatan (Dharma) is being attacked," he said.

"We should think about what Congress has given in (the last) five years. Has he (CM Baghel) opened any university in five years? In Assam, medical colleges have been set up in each district. There has been no basic transformation in the state (Chhattisgarh). Baghel does drama every time and he has opened a big market of religious conversion to weaken Sanatan Dharma," Sarma said.

Targeting the Congress, he said 75 years passed since India got Independence, but it is PM Narendra Modi who finally constructed Ram temple (in Ayodhya). He asked why the Congress failed to build the temple all these years.

"Why didn't the PMs under the Congress rule at the Centre build Ram temple and waited for PM Modi ji (to do so)? It is because the Congress has no devotion for Lord Ram and its leaders always worshipped Babar," he said. "I have never seen any Congress leader visiting the **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

## ULFA (pro-talk) seeks reservation in 94 assembly seats for indigenous people

**JORHAT/GOLAGHAT, Oct 26:** The pro-talk faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) has demanded reservation in 94 assembly constituencies for the indigenous people of the state, an office bearer of the organization said on Thursday.

ULFA (pro-talk) general secretary Anup Chetia said they have sent their suggestions to the Centre on the draft peace agreement and are waiting for a response from the Union government.

"We want reservation in 94 seats of Assam legislative assembly for the indigenous people of the state. This is more important after the delimitation exercise," he said.

In August, the Election Commission published its final delimitation report by retaining the number of assembly seats in Assam at 126 and the Lok Sabha constituencies at 14. The state has seven Rajya Sabha seats. It revised the nomenclature of one parliamentary and 19 assembly constituencies.



Talking about the decades-old issues related to ULFA, Chetia expressed his faith in the present government to solve them amicably.

"We are waiting for a positive response from the central government to our suggestions. We are optimistic and praise the sincerity shown by the Centre," he said.

Chetia also demanded a 'correct National Register of Citizens' for Assam and asserted that the cut-off year for implementing the Citizen-

ship (Amendment) Act for the state should be 1951 instead of 2014.

The CAA seeks to provide Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014 from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Chetia hoped that the "peace agreement with the Centre will be signed very soon", marking an end to the problems raised by the organization. **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

## 8 Indians awarded death sentence in Qatar; India deeply shocked

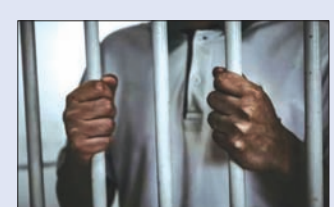
**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Eight former Indian Navy personnel were on Thursday handed death penalty in Qatar by a local court, a verdict that India described as "deeply" shocking.

The Indian nationals, all employees of Al Dahra company, were taken into custody in August last year in an alleged case of espionage. The charges against the Indian nationals were not made public by Qatari authorities.

In its reaction, the Union ministry of external affairs (MEA) said it is attaching "high importance" to this case and is exploring all legal options.

"We have initial information that the Court of First Instance of Qatar has today passed a judgement in the case involving eight Indian employees of Al Dahra company," it said.

"We are deeply shocked by the verdict of death penalty and are awaiting the detailed judgement. We are in touch with the family



members and the legal team, and we are exploring all legal options," it said. The MEA said it will continue to extend all consular and legal assistance to the Indians. "We attach high importance to this case and have been following it closely. We will continue to extend all consular and legal assistance. We will also take up the verdict with Qatari authorities," it said in a statement.

"Due to the confidential nature of proceedings of this case, it would not be appropriate to make any further comment at this juncture," it added. India's ambassador to Qatar met the men in prison on October 1 after being granted consular access. **(PTI)**

## Polling stations for 109 Howrah (ST) constituency unveiled in Karbi Anglong

HT Bureau

**DIPHU, Oct 26:** In a significant development, the District Election Officer of Karbi Anglong has released the draft list of polling stations for the newly delimited legislative constituency of 109 Howrah (ST).

The office of the District Election Officer said that residents are encouraged to review the list, and if they have any claims or objections, they can address them at the District Election Officer's office before October 31st.

This crucial step marks progress in the electoral process, ensuring transparency and fairness in the upcoming elections.

## Prestone Tynsong awaits police commissionerate proposal

**SHILLONG, Oct 26:** Meghalaya deputy chief minister in-charge of Home (Police) Prestone Tynsong on Thursday informed that the government is waiting for the proposal from the Police headquarters for setting up of the police commissionerate.

Speaking to reporters, Tynsong said, "We have instructed the police headquarters to work out everything and to send the proposal to the government. So we are waiting for that."

He said that the new recruitment process is almost completed. However, there are few issues as some changes are needed in the recruitment board rules.

"Ultimately I have to take it to the cabinet and hopefully the cabinet will also approve a few changes in the rules which need to be made and once that is done we will go for advertisement and we will complete the whole process of recruitment," he added. He said that the next recruitment will be for a minimum 2,500 personnel. **(N/N)**

## 30 lakh EVMs, over year long preparations for simultaneous LS, assembly polls

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** The Election Commission will require around 30 lakh electronic voting machines (EVMs) and a preparation time of nearly one-and-half years for the smooth conduct of simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, sources have said.

An EVM comprises one control unit, at least one ballot unit and one voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) unit.

According to the sources, the commission will require nearly 30 lakh control units, about 43 lakh ballot units and about 32 lakh VVPATs for the simultaneous polls, taking into consideration the reserve units kept for replacement in case of any malfunction or damage. Sources said there is a shortfall of nearly 35 lakh voting units -- control units, ballot units and VVPAT units -- for the simultaneous conduct of Lok Sabha and assembly polls.

As deliberations on the conduct of simultaneous polls gathered steam, the Election Commission had informed the Law Commission a few months ago that it would also require adequate warehousing facilities

to store the electronic voting machines.

The Law Commission, which is working on a report on holding simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and state assemblies, had organized an interaction with the EC on its requirements and challenges for holding synchronized polls.

Sources aware of the interaction said much would depend on the number of polling stations set up when such an exercise takes place. When Lok Sabha and assembly elections are held simultaneously in some states, voters cast their votes in two separate EVMs. In the last Lok Sabha elections, there were 12.50 lakh polling stations.

The commission now requires around 15 lakh control units, 15 lakh VVPAT units and 18 lakh ballot units for 12.50 lakh polling stations.

An EVM has shelf life of 15 years.

While there was no official estimate available on how much these voting units cost, at the previous procurement rates also the total cost for one crore units will be in excess of ₹ 15,000 crore, including over ₹ 6,500 crore for VVPAT units. **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

## Land warfare will remain 'extremely important' in India's case: Army chief



**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict reaffirmed the significance of land warfare and the domain will remain "extremely important" in India's case as well as for countries having contested borders, army chief Gen Manoj Pande said on Thursday.

In an interactive session at an event, referring to the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, he said the border situation remains stable and

that his force is focusing on boosting its overall combat capabilities to effectively deal with any future security challenges.

Delving into global geopolitical upheavals, the chief of army staff said the key lesson that the army has learnt from the Russia-Ukraine conflict is that it can't rely on import of military hardware and achieving self-reliance in defence is very important.

He described the Indo-Pacific as a key region and noted that India has an important role to play.

The army chief was speaking to Lt Gen Raj Shukla (ret'd) at the curtain-raiser for the first Chanakya Dialogue. He said the first batch of 40,000 Agniveers has joined the units and the feedback on them from the field units has been encouraging.

To a question on increasing global focus on the maritime domain while both Russia-Ukraine war and Hamas-Israel conflict have the dimension of land, Gen Pande said land warfare will remain crucial in the Indian context. Though he chose not to make specific reference, it was clear the army chief was indicating the border issue with China. **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

## US, European Union, Russia responsible for 83% of CO2 emission Rich nations to emit 3.7 giga tones of CO2, strain climate goals

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Developed countries seem to be falling way short of achieving their carbon emission reduction goals as envisaged in the Paris Agreement.

The developed nations are projected to collectively emit around 3.7 giga tones extra carbon dioxide in 2030 against the reduction goals outlined in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, according to a new analysis released on Thursday.

This represents a 38 per cent emission overshoot, with the US, the European Union, and Russia responsible for 83 per cent of this.

Emission overshoot refers to a situation where the greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere exceed the targets or limits set to mitigate climate change.



The issue brief by independent think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) highlights that only two developed countries, Norway and Belarus, are on track to achieve their re-

duction commitments by 2030. The mitigation efforts of developed countries impact the carbon budget available to developing nations, which need sufficient carbon space to address

their economic and social development challenges and ensure a just transition.

Climate science defines carbon budget as the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted for a given level of global warming (1.5 degrees Celsius in this case). Rich nations have already consumed more than 80 per cent of the global carbon budget, leaving countries like India with very little carbon space for the future.

Currently, developed countries' NDCs -- national plans to achieve the Paris Agreement goals -- for 2030 collectively represent a 36 per cent reduction in emissions from their 2019 levels. This is less than the 43 per cent reduction that is required to keep the 1.5 degrees Celsius target alive. Vaibhav Chaturvedi, fellow of CEEW, said, "The numbers are clear - even in this critical decade, **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

'After Covid, the market recovery is very strong (in India) in comparison to other countries'

## Toyota initiates process to enhance manufacturing capacity in India

**TOKYO, Oct 26:** Japanese auto major Toyota Motor Corporation has initiated the process to enhance manufacturing capacity in India with two plants running at full capacity in the country, a senior company official said on Thursday.

Speaking to media on the sidelines of the Japan Mobility Show here, Toyota Motor Corporation Board Member and Executive Vice President Yoichi Miyazaki confirmed the development and said the company is reaching full plant capacity utilisation in India.

"We have started a discussion (on the matter)," he said when asked if the company is looking to make fresh investment on capacity enhancement in the country.

He said the demand for automobiles, especially higher segment cars, has surged in India post Covid. "After Covid, the market recovery is very strong (in India) in comparison to other countries so we believe demand itself is very strong in India," the company executive said.

Bengaluru-based Toyota Kirloskar Motor, a joint venture between Toyota Motor Company and



Kirloskar Group, operates two plants with a total production capacity of 3.42 lakh units per annum. With enhanced demand leading to long waiting periods on certain products, the automaker is now looking to set up a third plant in India.

Miyazaki said it is a good sign for the automaker that the car market in India has started to witness a gradual increase in acceptance of bigger cars.

When asked if the Indian car

market moving from small cars to higher segments makes the market more attractive for Toyota, he said, "With the strength of higher segments going up in the Indian market, it tells us it is now Toyota's time."

TKM has seen a robust increase in demand for its models this year. During April-September period, its sales grew 35 per cent to 1,23,939 units from 91,843 units in the same period of last year.

The automaker has two facilities

within the Bidadi compound, Karnataka, which rolls out different sets of products. One facility commenced production in December 1999 and rolls out Innova Hycross, Innova Crysta, Fortuner, and Legender. It has an installed production capacity of 1.32 lakh units per annum.

The second plant at the same site, with an installed production capacity of 2.10 lakh units, rolls out products like Camry Hybrid, Urban Cruiser Hyryder and Hilux.

The facility commenced production in December 2010. The company also sells models like Glanza and Rumion which are sourced from Maruti Suzuki India as part of a global collaboration between Suzuki and Toyota. It also imports Vellfire and LC 300 as completely built up units (CBU).

Earlier this year, TKM initiated a third shift at Bidadi to enhance production capacity by about 30 per cent to cut the waiting period for certain models. The company invested over ₹ 90 crore to upgrade the existing infrastructure and added about 1,500 workforce for the third shift at the plant. (PTI)

## Govt rolls out mandatory quality norms for helmets for police force, water dispensers

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** The government has issued mandatory quality norms for helmets for police force, bottled water dispensers, and door fittings to curb the import of sub-standard goods and boost domestic manufacturing of these goods. Three separate notifications -- Helmets for Police Force, Civil Defence and Personal Protection (Quality Control) Order, 2023, Bottled Water Dispensers (Quality Control) Order, 2023, and Door Fittings (Quality Control) Order, 2023 -- were issued in this regard by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on October 23. Under these orders, items cannot be produced, sold, traded, imported and stocked unless they bear the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) mark. These orders will come into force with effect from six months from the date of publication of the notifications, the DPIIT said.

In order to safeguard the domestic small/micro industries, ensure smooth implementation of the QCO and ease of doing business, relaxations have been granted to small/micro industries as regards to timeliness, additional nine months have been given to small industries and an additional 12 months to micro industries, the de-



partment said. DPIIT in consultation with BIS and stakeholders has been identifying key products for notifying QCO. This has led to the initiation of development of more than 60 new QCOs covering 318 product standards.

Violation of the provision of the BIS Act can attract imprisonment of up to two years or a fine of at least ₹ 2 lakh for the first offence.

In case of second and subsequent offences, the fine will increase to a minimum of Govt rolls out mandatory quality norms for helmets for police force, water dispensers 5 lakh and extend up to 10 times of the value of goods or articles. Various initiatives, including the development of QCO, are

being undertaken by the department to develop quality sensitisation among users and manufacturers alike. These initiatives, coupled with developing quality testing labs and product manuals, would help build a quality ecosystem in the country, it said. Mandatory QCOs help curb the import of sub-standard products, prevent unfair trade practices and ensure the safety and well-being of consumers as well as the environment.

These initiatives, coupled with the development of testing labs, product manuals, and accreditation of test labs, would aid the development of a quality ecosystem in the country. (PTI)

## LG Electronics announces winner of 'India ka Celebration' campaign

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** LG Electronics, one of India's prominent consumer durable brands, is delighted to unveil the fortunate winner of its ongoing 'India ka Celebration' campaign. Mridusmita Phukan, a resident of Dibrugarh, is the proud recipient of an LG Dream Home Package, adding an extra layer of delight to this year's Diwali festivities.

The campaign, running from September 16th to November 12th, 2023, provides customers with a golden opportunity to celebrate Diwali with LG and seize fantastic

offers. LG is committed to making this Diwali brighter, more convenient, and truly unforgettable, as the company spreads joy and enhances the festive spirit. Srimanta Khandual, Branch Manager, Guwahati, LG India, commented, "Our 'India ka Celebration' campaign is all about spreading happiness and making Diwali truly special. LG is dedicated to enhancing the festive spirit, and we're thrilled to see the excitement it brings to our customers' lives. Heartfelt congratulations to our lucky winner, Dr Mridusmita Phukan."

This Diwali, LG is also sharing

joy and happiness by giving everyday customers the opportunity to win the coveted LG Dream Home Package. This exciting package includes a Side-by-Side Refrigerator, Front Load Washing Machine, Water Purifier, Microwave Oven, and an OLED TV. These products are designed to provide utmost convenience and luxury to customers, making their Diwali celebrations even more special. Participating in these exciting offers is as simple as sending an SMS with the following details in this format: "First Name" "Last Name GTM Code" to 7835073507.

## HDFC Bank launches 'Festive Treats' Govt to meet officials of airlines, travel portals to discuss consumer grievances on Nov 8

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** HDFC Bank, India's premier private sector bank, has announced the launch of its annual campaign - 'Festive Treats', featuring lightning-fast banking services and an array of over 10,000 offers on Cards & EASYEMI. Building on the success of four previous campaigns, this year's theme, 'Iss Tyohaar No Intezaar,' signifies that there is no need to wait this festive season. In addition to providing instant services, the Bank is rolling out a multitude of offers across Accounts, Loans, Cards, EASYEMI, Consumer Loans, Cardless EASYEMI, and other products, making shopping during this festive season not only enjoyable but also accessible for all consumers.

As part of Festive Treats, both existing and non-bank customers, including salaried individuals and business owners, can avail these enticing offers. The Bank is offering Xpress Loans at discounted interest rates and processing fees for various needs, such as homes, vehicles, businesses, and personal expenses. Moreover, the Bank has secured exclusive partnerships with renowned brands and merchants including Apple, Samsung, LG, Sony, Haier, HP, Acer, IKEA, Home Centre, Amazon, Lifestyle, and many other platforms. Customers also have the opportunity to save up to ₹ 50,000 through HDFC Bank Cards and EASYEMI options on Cards and Consumer Loans.

Ravi Santhanam, Chief Marketing Officer, HDFC Bank, expressed, "The 'Festive Treats' campaign reflects our commitment to spreading joy during this season of celebration. The anticipation for attractive deals and offers is now over. Through our advanced instant digital solutions, customers can seamlessly access banking services online to fulfill their wishes. The campaign slogan, 'Iss Tyohaar No Intezaar,' encapsulates the essence of festive cheer combined with ease and convenience. We wish all our consumers a joyful festive season!"

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Amid rising complaints from air travellers, the Centre has called a meeting on November 8 with senior officials of all airlines and travel portals to discuss grievances related to 'refund not given after ticket cancellation' and showing every seat as 'paid' despite free web check-in, among others. Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh, in a media briefing, said about 10,000 complaints related to the airline sector has been received through the government's National Consumer Helpline in the last one year.

About half of the complaints are related to "ticket cancelled but no refund received from airlines". Some of the major grievances also include airlines showing every seat as paid despite free mandatory web check-in, he said.

"These complaints are just a tip of the iceberg. We have called a meeting on November 8 to discuss these consumer grievances with all airlines, travel portals and consumer organisations," Singh said.

While booking a ticket either through airline websites or travel portals, he said, the department has noticed that many of the consumers are not happy with the interface and they think they are "misled and cheated".

"Airlines say 'free web check-in' but 'seats are paid'. Once a traveller has paid the fare and the airlines have issued a confirmed ticket then all the services have to be fair and to the advantage of the consumers. You cannot take consumer to a ride," he said. The ministry has nothing to do with the business model of airlines or travel companies, but "we are saying that when a consumer has a confirmed ticket then he should not put to further inconvenience in form of these things (paid seat) which are making life difficult for air travellers". (PTI)

## Artificial Intelligence company from Silicon Valley enters Bihar

**WASHINGTON, Oct 26:** A Silicon Valley-based Artificial Intelligence company has opened an office in Bihar, making it the first IT company from the US to enter the state.

Tiger Analytics, headquartered in Santa Clara, has opened its first office in Patna this month. "We are hoping that the initial step that we are taking, can lead to a lot of progress down the road," Mahesh Kumar, founder and CEO of Tiger Analytics, told PTI in a recent interview. The company currently has some 4,000 employees in India, but they are mostly in Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad.

Kumar, who is himself from Bihar, said during the COVID crisis a large number of its employees went back home to Bihar and started working remotely.

"We have close to a hundred people between Bihar and Jharkhand right now. They're working remotely and they were happy there, they didn't want to come back," he said.

"So, we realised that they're very good talented people, young people, they want to stay close to home but there are no opportunities in Bihar for them to work. Even when we set up this office (in Patna), a lot of social media re-

sponses came. People are looking forward to Tiger (Analytics) growing there (in Bihar) so they can go back and work from there," Kumar said. Kumar, who interacts with other successful entrepreneurs from Bihar in Silicon Valley regularly, said their goal is to encourage more like-minded people to come together and use it as an initial seed to grow a bigger ecosystem in Bihar. Tiger Analytics is primarily a consulting company in the field of artificial intelligence and machine learning.

"We hope that taking this lead into account, many more companies will come to Bihar in the same way," Sandeep Poundrik, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Industries, Bihar told PTI. A delegation of senior Bihar officials travelled to Silicon Valley this summer for meetings with Bihar-origin successful tech entrepreneurs.

"We are trying to get IT companies to start their operations in Bihar. .... It's not a very easy task, especially because right now there are not many IT companies in Bihar," said Poundrik who is also CEO of the Bihar Foundation, a state government-supported body for its diaspora community. Thousands of engi-

neering students from Bihar currently seek opportunities outside the state due to the limited presence of IT companies within Bihar, he said. Responding to a question, Poundrik acknowledged that it's a little more challenging to attract investment in Bihar in the IT sector.

"Number one.... I would say their perception of Bihar is not very positive, especially outside India. Because they have never heard of Patna or Bihar. So if any IT company wants to start their unit, they only think about Chennai, Bangalore or Hyderabad. They never think about Bihar," he said.

"Second, I think the market is not local as far as IT is concerned. We have created the infrastructure. So in addition to whatever infrastructure the government has created for startups and IT companies, there's a lot of private infrastructure which has come up in Patna. About 12 IT towers are being developed in Patna in various stages of construction in the Patliputra industrial area," he said.

Encouraged by Tiger Analytics' move, the Bihar government is now planning to organise a Global Investors Summit in Patna on December 13 and 14. (PTI)

## Dr Reddy's announces launch of direct-to-consumer e-commerce website 'Celevida Wellness'

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd., a leading global pharmaceutical company, has introduced its first direct-to-consumer (D2C) e-commerce platform, 'Celevida Wellness,' catering to diabetes patients through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Svaas Wellness Limited. 'Celevida Wellness' aims to serve as a comprehensive solution for personalized diabetic care, catering to individuals with Type 2 diabetes and pre-diabetes.

The website will feature the Celevida product range, alongside products from third-party brands, providing a holistic portfolio to meet the daily nutritional requirements of diabetic patients, spanning breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, beverages, meal replacements, and more. Products undergo a rigorous selection process, ensuring their nutritional composition aligns with the needs of diabetes patients. Currently, the website offers delivery services to over 18,000 pin codes across India.

Since its initial launch by Dr Reddy's in 2019, Celevida has been a leading brand for dietary management of diabetes, earning trust and accolades. The introduction of 'Celevida Wellness' (www.celevidawellness.com) empowers the Celevida range and other brands to directly reach consumers.

M.V. Ramana, Chief Executive Officer, Branded Markets (India and Emerging Markets), commented, "We are delighted to announce the launch of 'Celevida Wellness' as a direct-to-consumer e-commerce plat-

form under our subsidiary, Svaas Wellness. We envision 'Celevida Wellness' as a comprehensive solution for Type 2 diabetic and pre-diabetic patients, offering meals, personalized dietary and health information, and eventually features like a digital diary for health tracking and access to on-call nutritionists. This launch strengthens our presence in the nutraceutical segment and marks our entry into the D2C space, aligning with evolving pharma business models as we aim to reach over 1.5 billion patients by 2030. As consumer preferences shift towards mobile and e-commerce channels, 'Celevida Wellness' serves as a D2C avenue to provide eligible products not only to more diabetic and pre-diabetic consumers but also to health-conscious consumers. With 'Celevida Wellness,' we strive for continuous learning and a best-in-class consumer experience. This venture will enable us to create scalable capabilities that can be replicated across markets."

Based on data from the Indian Council of Medical Research - India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) national cross-sectional study, India has an estimated 101 million individuals with diabetes and 136 million with prediabetes. Celevida Wellness is positioned to address the unmet needs of diabetes patients, aiding them in managing and controlling the disease through appropriate nutrition and dietary intake. Future features for Celevida Wellness include a 'Digital Diary' for condition and nutrition tracking, as well as on-call consultations with nutritionists.

## Sensex tumbles 900 points amid broad-based selloff; slips below 64K

**MUMBAI, Oct 26:** Sliding for the sixth straight session, equity benchmark Sensex on Thursday plunged about 900 points to crash below the 64,000 level due to an across-the-board selloff amid heightened tension in the Middle East.

Besides sluggish trends in global markets, deep losses in auto, financial and energy stocks as well as fresh selling by foreign investors added to the gloom, analysts said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 900.91 points or 1.41 per cent to settle below the 64,000 mark at 63,148.15. During the day, it plummeted 956.08 points or 1.49 per cent to 63,092.98.

The Nifty dived 264.90 points or 1.39 per cent to 18,857.25. Since October 17, the BSE benchmark has tumbled 3,279.94 points or 4.93 per cent, while the Nifty fell 954.25 points or 4.81 per cent.

Mahindra & Mahindra was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, falling 4.06 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints, Nestle, Bajaj Finserv, JSW Steel, Titan, HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors and Larsen & Toubro.

In contrast, Axis Bank, ITC, HCL Technologies, NTPC and IndusInd Bank were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower, while Shanghai ended in the green.

European markets were trading with significant losses. The US markets ended in negative territory on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.65 per cent to USD 89.54 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4,236.60 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. (PTI)

## MISSING

Naseeruddin (14), S/o- Safar Uddin, Height: 4.8 feet, Vill: Wasaling No. 2, under Police Station: Diyungmukh, Dist: Dima Hasao. Went missing on 21-09-2020. Case No. 14/2020 U/S 363 IPC.

## UNWTO launches education toolkit for incorporating tourism as a subject in high schools across the globe

**SAMARKAND (UZBEKISTAN), Oct 26:** Recognising the tourism sector as "a pillar of economic and social development," the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has launched an education toolkit for the incorporation of tourism as a subject in high schools across the world.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili pitched for the introduction of tourism as a subject in schools and establishing more tourism academies and universities across the globe at the 'Global Education Forum' during the 25th General Assembly of the UNWTO here.

"We recognise the vital need of supporting our member states in training and supporting the tourism workers of today and of tomorrow, giving them the skills and knowledge they need to meet the changing employer demands and build a truly resilient and competitive sector," Pololikashvili said.

"The introduction of tourism into high schools reflects the

heightened relevance of our sector as a pillar of economic and social development. The support of Ministries of Tourism will be essential for making it happen. At the same time, it is equally crucial we engage with key stakeholders within the high school ecosystem to ensure the success of this transformative initiative," he added.

The toolkit includes modules not only for Ministries of Education but also for parents, school directors, and teachers, who will require robust support and empowerment in this endeavour.

Kunal Vasudeva, co-founder and managing director of the Indian School of Hospitality (ISH), formally launched the toolkit at the event that concluded here on Saturday.

"In a sector characterised by constant transformation, innovative educational programmes are vital for fostering sustainable progress. Our objective is to inspire change and underscore the critical role of education in nurtur-



ing the next generation of hospitality leaders and change agents.

"There is a need for a global approach towards hospitality education and a UNWTO-backed accreditation can become the gold standard. The toolkit is a valuable resource to enhance tourism education worldwide," he said.

UNWTO Executive Director Natalia Bayona said introducing tourism education and training at

an early stage lays the foundations for developing the necessary skills and knowledge.

"The toolkit specifically focuses on making tourism a part of high school education. Its successful implementation will need the leadership of the Ministries of Tourism of UNWTO member states. Their role involves articulating a compelling vision for introducing tourism in high schools, and ac-

tively engaging all relevant stakeholders," she said.

The toolkit offers an overview of the current status of high school and vocational education training worldwide. Additionally, it presents successful case studies of integrating tourism education and training in public and private schools. "It also introduces academic partners from UNWTO who can assist in the implementation of this transformative process," Bayona said.

Packed curricula, insufficient career learning, complex regulatory environment, lack of government support, insufficient funding, lack of qualified faculty, negative perception about tourism, insufficient commitment, and lack of advocacy, are among the roadblocks listed by experts in the introduction of tourism as a subject in schools.

Among the recommendations made in the toolkit are - focus on advancing in the general education track of national school systems;

optimising the visibility and adoption of tourism in international systems; introducing a skills-based education that encourages completion of studies at university; engaging and empowering key stakeholders in high schools; addressing the tourism gap and shaping the beliefs and perceptions around tourism.

The toolkit has separate suggestions, modules, and recommendations for the British education system, the American system and the International Baccalaureate system.

The 25th session of the UNWTO General Assembly incorporated a vibrant Global Forum on Education, emphasising the pivotal role of education in shaping the future of the tourism industry.

The event brought together high-level ministers, thought leaders and renowned experts from around the globe to explore out-of-the-box approaches to tourism education and its significant impact on the sector. (PTI)

## Governor graces state-level ceremonial function of Amrit Kalash Yatra

# 'Amrit Kalash Yatra is a reflection of rich cultural heritage and spirit of nationalism'

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** State Governor, Gulab Chand Kataria, presided over the state-level ceremonial function of the Amrit Kalash Yatra at the Srimanta Sankardev International Auditorium in Guwahati. The Amrit Kalash Yatra, which is part of the "Meri Maati Mera Desh" campaign, is a reflection of India's rich cultural heritage and a symbol of nationalism.

This campaign, following the success of its first phase, encourages people to participate in the Amrit Kalash Yatra. The initiative involves collecting soil and rice from villages in Amrit Kalash, which is then sent to blocks. From there, the Kalash is distributed to districts, eventually culminating in Guwahati before being transported to Delhi for the campaign's culmination.

Speaking at the event, Governor Kataria emphasized the campaign's uniqueness, describing it as a representation of India's cultural heritage and monumental achievements. He



stated, "The campaign captures the spirit of India's diverse socio-cultural, political, and economic facets, invigorating a renewed sense of patriotism and unity amongst us."

The Governor highlighted the impact of the "Meri Maati Mera Desh" campaign, noting that it has significantly strengthened the spirit of nationalism among Indians. He praised the campaign's in-

clusive nature, which encourages public participation at various administrative levels, strengthening the bonds of friendship and unity within the nation.

Governor Kataria revealed that the Amrit Kalash Yatra, part of the "Meri Maati Mera Desh" campaign, would involve transporting 7,500 urns filled with soil from different parts of India to the National Capital. This soil would be

used to create the Amrit Vatika and Amrit Udyan, symbolizing the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat,' a concept promoted by the Prime Minister.

The Assam Government also paid homage to the state's Veers and Veerangas, and the leftover holy soil will be used to construct the Kanaklata Vishwavidyalaya in Gohpur.

At the event, two urns from each of the 270 locations across the state were assembled at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra. Of these, 270 urns will be transported to New Delhi, while the remaining ones will be sent to Gohpur for the construction of the university.

The Governor expressed his gratitude and admiration for all participants and officials whose tireless efforts ensured the campaign's overwhelming success throughout Assam. The event was attended by several dignitaries, including state ministers, MPs, MLAs, the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police, and other senior officials.

## Nurturing young hearts: 5-day Sanskar Nirmaan Shivir for girls enlightens and empowers



HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** Over 60 young girls from across Assam gathered in the serene and welcoming atmosphere of Terapanth Bhawan to participate in a unique and transformative event organized by the Terapanth Sabha. The "Sanskar Nirmaan Shivir for Girls," spanning five days, aimed to instill a profound understanding in these young participants: "I am responsible for my good health and happiness."

Namita Kothari, a Professional Pranik healer and trainer from GMCKS Lightworkers Pranik Healing Centre in Uzan Bazar, Chennikuti, Guwahati, led the program. Supported by her dedicated team, including Shobha Saboo, Ruchika Saraogi, Shashwat Kothari, and Lakhi, this event served as a beacon of light, guiding

young souls towards self-discovery and empowerment.

The five-day journey was designed to be a holistic experience for the girls, where they learned to consciously develop core values, inner strength, confidence, and self-love. The primary objective was to transform ordinary lives into extraordinary ones and equip these young minds with the tools to handle life's challenges and manage their emotions effectively, especially anger.

On Day 1 of the Shivir, one of the primary lessons imparted was the importance of keeping negativity at bay. The girls were taught how to recognize and eliminate negative thoughts, emotions, words, and actions. They were encouraged to embrace positivity and mindfulness, allowing these virtues to flow smoothly into their

lives like a gentle, life-giving stream.

In a world where young hearts are often burdened by the pressures of modern life, the girls received invaluable tips on how to keep the battery of their lives fully charged. They were shown the path to becoming the best version of themselves, an aspiration met with genuine appreciation and acceptance.

A particularly noteworthy part of the program was the demonstration of super brain yoga by Shobha Saboo. This practice helps keep their energies balanced, enabling the girls to harness the power of their minds and bodies in harmony.

The success of this program will extend beyond imparting knowledge, leaving the girls inspired and transformed. The lessons learned will undoubtedly shape their futures, instilling within them the belief that they are indeed responsible for their own good health and happiness.

The Terapanth Sabha, through this remarkable initiative, is sowing the seeds of self-reliance and positivity in the hearts of these girls. The Sanskar Nirmaan Shivir for girls serves as a testament to the power of self-awareness and self-love, illuminating the path to happiness and well-being. Such events demonstrate that, when guided with care and wisdom, the young minds of today can blossom into the empowered, confident, and joyful leaders of tomorrow.

## One drowns in Sivasagar Betbari

HT Correspondent

**SIVASAGAR, Oct 26:** In a tragic incident, Ajit Kalita, a 48-year-old heavy vehicle driver employed by the Sivasagar Municipality Board, lost his life in a drowning accident. On Wednesday, he went fishing with two colleagues at Betbari Dilihi Gohain Gaon. During their fishing expedition, Kalita's net became entangled in something submerged deep in the water. In an attempt to free the net, he dived into the pond. Tragically, he never resurfaced from the water. Onlookers at the scene frantically attempted to assist Kalita by extending bamboo poles into the water, but their efforts were in vain. Subsequently, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel retrieved Kalita's lifeless body from the pond. His hands were still entangled in the fishing net at the time of recovery.



Dr M S Lakshmi Priya chaired a coordination meeting with the state representatives of IAP, IMA and GOGS at NHM state headquarter on Thursday. HT Photo

## Lumding railway station attains 'Eat Right Station' certification for quality food

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** In recognition of their commitment to providing high-quality and nutritious food to passengers, N. F. Railway has achieved the prestigious 'Eat Right Station' certification from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). These stations are the second and third, respectively, in N. F. Railway to receive this status, following the Guwahati Railway

Station. The certification is valid from October 19, 2023, to October 18, 2025.

As part of its ongoing efforts to ensure safe and hygienic food for passengers, N. F. Railway plans to expand this initiative to more stations in the future. Rangiya, Tinsukia, Alipurduar Junction, and Katihar are among the stations being considered for 'Eat Right Station' certification, with the necessary preparations already underway. Guwahati Railway Station of N. F. Railway had previously received the 'Eat Right Station' certification, which is valid from June 2, 2023, to June 2, 2025.

The 'Eat Right Station' certification is bestowed by FSSAI to railway stations that consistently adhere to food storage and hygiene standards. It is awarded to stations that set exemplary standards in providing safe and wholesome food to passengers. The certification is the result of an audit conducted by a third-party agency accredited by FSSAI.

## Debolal Gorlosa unveils statues of Dimasa freedom fighter and princess to honor legacy

HT Correspondent

**HAFLONG, Oct 26:** In a significant tribute to the rich history and culture of Dima Hasao, Debolal Gorlosa, the Chief Executive Member of the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council, unveiled statues honoring two remarkable figures - Sengyajik Joya Thaosen, an unsung Dimasa national freedom fighter, and Princess Dishru. The unveiling ceremony took place near Synod Rotary for Sengyajik Joya Thaosen and near the SE, PWD (R&B) office for Princess Dishru in Haflong town. The event was graced by the presence of Nandita Gorlosa, the Assam minister for power, sports & youth welfare, among others.

Following the unveiling of the statues, a grand public gathering was held at the N. L. Daulagupu Stadium, attended by around twelve thousand people representing all corners of Dima Hasao. The attendees were dressed in traditional Dimasa attire, and the event featured a captivating Dimasa traditional dance performance by 2000 women, organized by the Council's Cultural and Publicity Department.

CEM Debolal Gorlosa addressed the enthusiastic crowd and emphasized the im-



portance of preserving one's cultural roots and heritage. He praised the bravery and dedication of freedom fighter Joya Thaosen, whose sacrifices contributed to the peaceful life enjoyed by the people in the district.

Gorlosa also highlighted the artistic legacy of Princess Dishru, who played a pioneering role in Dimasa handloom weaving. Her contributions have left an indelible

mark on the community's handloom traditions, producing beautiful and artistic designs.

Assam minister Nandita Gorlosa spoke about the significance of cultural traditions in passing down beliefs and values from one generation to the next. She expressed her gratitude for the overwhelming response from people across Dima Hasao who gathered under one roof to celebrate this historic event.

The installation of these two statues fulfilled a long-standing demand from the people of Dima Hasao and was welcomed with open hearts. Sengyajik Joya Thaosen, a fearless freedom fighter, was tragically shot dead by British soldiers at the age of 19 while on her way to join the Azad Hind Fauz. Princess Dishru is revered for her immeasurable beauty and skills in handloom design, and Dimasas consider her a legendary figure who left an enduring mark on their culture.

The event was attended by various dignitaries, including the executive members of the council, members of the Autonomous Council, principal secretaries, the district commissioner, and other officials.

## Drugs Destruction Drive

# CBIC destroys seized goods valued at crores in Guwahati

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** In line with the Special Campaign 3.0 initiated by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, the Guwahati Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Customs Zone, a part of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, carried out the destruction of seized goods. The operation involved the disposal of 9,077.24 kilograms of Ganja valued at ₹ 14.44 crores and 1.51 crore foreign-origin cigarette sticks worth ₹ 29.66 crores, which were seized under the Customs Act, 1962.

This destruction, conducted by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), is part of the Special Campaign 3.0, which aims to efficiently manage and dispose of seized goods while enhancing public welfare and national well-being. Additionally, it contributes to maintaining cleanliness and freeing up office space, which are key objectives of Special Campaign 3.0.



The Drugs Destruction Drive was led by Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of CBIC, with the presence of Bandhana Deori, Chief Commissioner of CGST and Customs in the Guwahati Zone, G M Kamei, ADG DRI, Mahfuzur Rahman, CCP NER Shillong, Rajeev Yadav, Pr. ADG DG HRD, and Debasish Dey, Regional Officer of the State Pollution Control Board.

In the previous financial year (2022-23), the Guwahati Customs also conducted the destruction of 7,472.4 kilograms of Ganja valued at ₹ 7.72 crore and 1.78 crore foreign-origin cigarette sticks valued at ₹ 30.23 crore. The operation included the disposal of other customs-seized goods such as black pepper, dried dates, and anti-mosquito coils.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Indian Horticulture Congress to be held at AAU, Khanapara from Nov 6

HT Correspondent

**JORHAT, Oct 26:** The 10th Indian Horticulture Congress, themed "Unleashing Horticultural Potential for Self-Reliant India", is scheduled to take place at the Assam Agricultural University, Khanapara from November 6 to 9. This significant event will be jointly organized by the Indian Academy of Horticultural Science in New Delhi and the Assam Agricultural University.

The congress anticipates the participation of approximately 500 prominent horticultural scientists from across the country. They will engage in discussions and deliberations on recent advancements and outline future strategies in the horticultural sector. The congress will encompass various themes, including elite germplasm and variety development, genomics in trait breeding, artificial intelligence in Horticulture, strategies for development of minor commercial crops, recent developments in production of seeds and planting materials, innovation for sustainable horticultural production, urban and peri-urban horticulture, horticulture in North Eastern India, Horticulture based farming systems, management of biotic and abiotic stresses, climate smart horticulture, secondary horticulture, horticulture for food - pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries, new initiatives and developments for minimising post harvest losses, exploiting emerging trade opportunities and horticulture under new education policy-2020.

This congress represents a significant platform for the exchange of knowledge and ideas among experts in the field of horticulture. It is expected to contribute to the growth and self-reliance of India's horticultural sector.

## AAU develops biopesticides and biofertilizer, boosts agri sector in Morigaon

HT Correspondent

**MORIGAON, Oct 26:** In an effort to promote organic farming and enhance agricultural practices, Assam Agricultural University's Plant Pathology department has developed two significant agricultural products: 'TRICHODERMA,' a biopesticide, and 'BASILAS,' a biofertilizer. These innovations have had a profound impact on the agri sector, particularly through the efforts of the Poohar Producer Company Ltd., a Morigaon-based producer company.

Dr Debajit Kalita, Director and Chief Scientist of Poohar Agro Producer Company Ltd., led a training camp focused on the "Field Evaluation of AAU-bio Formulations Against Rice Diseases" and the utilization of the two developed microbial bioformulations, 'TRICHODERMA' and 'BASILAS.' Dr Popy Bora, a senior scientist from Assam Agricultural University, provided guidance during the training camp, which took place at Borchala, Kahibari, Bhukahubori.

The joint effort of Poohar Agro Producer Company Ltd. and Assam Agriculture University aimed to highlight the benefits of using the developed biopesticides, particularly how they can improve the livelihoods of farmers. These biopesticides have the potential to significantly impact agricultural production and promote organic farming.

One of the notable outcomes of these newly developed microbial bioformulations is their ability to inspire unemployed youths to engage in farming as a viable livelihood option. By using these formulations, unemployed youths have achieved increased yields in their agricultural produce. It is expected that these biopesticides will play a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting organic farming practices among farmers, ultimately contributing to the growth of the agricultural sector.

## NEIST scientist selected for prestigious Scientific High Level Visiting Fellowships prog to France

HT Correspondent

**JORHAT, Oct 26:** Dr Bijit Kumar Choudhury, a Senior Scientist specializing in Geology and Computational Seismology at the Geo Sciences and Technology Division (GSTD), CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST) in Jorhat, Assam, has been selected for the Scientific High Level Visiting Fellowships (SSHN) program for the year 2023. He will undertake a short research trip to France (SRTF) in the senior researcher category.

Dr Choudhury's visit will take him to the Institut de Physique du Globe (IPGP) at the University of Paris, France. The primary aim of this research trip is to work on a collaborative earthquake research project within the Earth Sciences and Astronomy research domain.

Out of 554 applications received by IFI/Embassy of France, only 51 were selected for this prestigious fellowship. The selection was based on the excellence of the research project proposed, its significance for bilateral scientific cooperation, the reputation of the French and eminent Indian Higher Education and Research Institutions (HERI) involved, and alignment with the eligibility criteria and selection guidelines outlined in the call for applications.

The fellowship is funded by the French Institute in India (IFI) in collaboration with the Embassy of France in India. Dr Choudhury's application stood out due to the alignment of its scope of interest with some of the strategic priorities of stakeholders and the comprehensive articulation of the project, as evidenced by the deliverables.

The French Institute in India (IFI) is the educational, scientific, and cultural wing of the Embassy of France in India, and this initiative aims to nurture and strengthen Franco-Indian research networks. Dr Choudhury's selection is a testament to his expertise and the importance of his research in the field of seismology and geology.

This collaboration promises to contribute significantly to the understanding of earthquake-related phenomena and the development of strategies for mitigating their impact.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.*  
- Charles de Gaulle

## Mizoram polls: A complex scenario

As the Mizoram Assembly elections approach, the BJP finds itself embroiled in a challenging political battle, largely due to its perceived failure in controlling the ethnic riots in neighbouring Manipur. The ramifications of these events have shaken the state's political landscape, especially its relationship with the Mizo National Front (MNF), a significant political ally. The BJP's expansion into the Northeast has seen varying degrees of success, with Assam and Tripura being exceptions due to a Christian minority. However, in Mizoram, the party's alliance with the MNF has been more complex. Reservations have always existed among the more orthodox Christian voters in the Northeast regarding the BJP's philosophy and policies. The fear of an aggressive 'Hindutva' mindset within the party, perceived majoritarianism, and favouritism for Hindu ideals and values have deepened concerns. These concerns materialized during violent clashes in Manipur between the indigenous Meitei community and Christian tribals like the Kukis and Zos. The mishandling of the situation further fuelled Christian sentiment. Manipur witnessed significant casualties, with over 180 people killed and property worth at least ₹ 200 crore destroyed. This turmoil spilled over into Mizoram, with over 40,000 refugees from Manipur and Myanmar living in special relief camps within the state.

In this challenging scenario, the MNF has chosen not to align itself closely with the BJP, especially after the Manipur events. Chief Minister Zoramthanga has declined to participate in a joint campaign with the BJP and will not share a platform with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his upcoming visit, citing Mizoram's Christian majority status. Furthermore, disagreements over the financial assistance provided to the state by the central government for the relief camps have strained the centre-state relationship. The MNF expressed its inability to close down the camps abruptly, leading to more civilians seeking refuge in Mizoram from Myanmar's civil war. The Congress party is now poised to exploit the BJP's difficulties and campaign independently, hoping to make gains in the absence of MNF's support. Rahul Gandhi, a prominent opposition campaigner, has already visited Mizoram, criticizing the BJP for not addressing the Manipur crisis promptly. Congress has released a list of 39 candidates, promising ₹ 2000 pensions for senior citizens and special schemes for aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as subsidized LPG cylinders at ₹ 750. This strategy aligns with the growing trend among major parties to offer populist sops for the economically weaker sections during election campaigns.

However, offering freebies may not guarantee long-term success. The ruling Congress in Karnataka, for example, faced challenges in fulfilling its pre-election promises. Resource constraints compelled the state to restrict eligibility for certain benefits, leading to public dissatisfaction and opposition attacks. In the upcoming Mizoram Assembly elections, the BJP will contest 23 seats, while the MNF and the main opposition party, Zoram Peoples Movement (ZPM), will contest all 40. The electorate comprises 856,868 voters, including 438,925 women. With 174 candidates in the fray, including 23 from the BJP and 4 from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the results are eagerly anticipated and set to be announced on December 3. The complex political landscape in Mizoram highlights the challenges faced by the BJP, the ambitions of the Congress, and the evolving strategies of political parties in the region as they navigate the delicate balance between populist promises and effective governance.

# Maldives: Shifting dynamics and challenges in Indo-Maldivian relations

The recent elections in the Maldives marked a significant shift in Indo-Maldivian relations, culminating in the victory of Dr. Mohamed Muizzu. He is known for his pro-China stance and, regrettably, his unfavorable stance towards India. This outcome serves as a poignant reminder of the transformation in the diplomatic landscape since India's decisive Operation Cactus on November 3, 1988.

Three and a half decades ago, India's surgical intervention not only safeguarded democracy in the Maldives but also thwarted the coup attempt led by Abdullah Luthufi. He had enlisted a group of Sri Lankan Tamil mercenaries in an endeavor to overthrow President Abdul Gayoom.

In 1988, amid Cold War tensions and internal discord, the operation carried out on the personal initiative of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi received significant international praise. Leaders like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, from the Western world, particularly lauded India's proactive stance in preventing the subversion of democracy.

Being pro-China doesn't inherently imply being anti-India; it's not a simplistic or linear equation. However, in Dr. Muizzu's case, current reports in the public domain suggest that this relationship appears to be more complex, with indications of a leaning towards anti-India sentiments, at least for the time being.

Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's stance against India has unnecessarily heightened geopolitical tensions, posing a distinct challenge to Indian influence in the Indian Ocean, which is our strategic backyard.

India and Maldives enjoy intimate connections through ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and commercial bonds. The name Maldives originates from the Sanskrit words "ml" (garland) and "dvipa" (island). Additionally, the official language of Maldives, Dhivehi, shares profound linguistic roots with Indic languages like Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Tamil.

The Maldives, upon gaining independence from the British on July 26, 1965, found early assistance and aid extended by India to the Maldives.

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT By: Dipak Kurmi



Exploiting India's benevolent presence in the Maldives, they have gone so far as to politicize the well-intentioned assistance and aid extended by India to the Maldives.

These narratives find their origins in 2010 and 2011 when India presented surveillance helicopters to the Maldives, accompanied by a defense cooperation agreement for joint surveillance in the Indian Ocean. The opposition at that time, led by figures like Abdullah Yameen, condemned this agreement, portraying it as India's effort to encroach upon Maldivian sovereignty and strengthen its dominance over the island state.

Likewise, in December 2012, a controversy was orchestrated to remove GMR-GMIAL (GMR Male International Airport Private Limited), which had secured a \$511 million concession for 25 years to enhance and manage the Male International Airport. The dubious rationale used to justify the expulsion of GMR centered on deeming the \$25 airport development charge per person, utilized

for airport use, as a tax rather than a user fee. This classification was deemed illegal, asserting that it lacked approval from the Maldivian Parliament.

In 2013, as a result of these orchestrated smear campaigns, Abdullah Yameen ascended to power, deviating from the long-standing pro-India stance that had been the default position for the Maldives. He not only heightened the anti-India rhetoric but also aimed to fuel xenophobic and jingoistic nationalist sentiments.

Consequently, he utilized these contrived narratives to strengthen ties with Beijing. This shift manifested in the Maldivians joining the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and actively inviting Chinese investment into the region as a counterbalance to India.

In 2018, with the inauguration of Ibrahim Solih as the new President, he promptly addressed the missteps of his predecessor and aimed to enhance relations with India through the implementation of an "India First" policy. This approach prioritized India for economic and defense partnerships and demon-

strated a heightened awareness of India's apprehensions regarding the expanding influence of China in the Indian Ocean.

In retaliation, the Opposition coalition, comprising the People's National Congress (the party affiliated with Dr. Muizzu) and the Progressive Party of Maldives, initiated a campaign known as "India Out." This policy sought to eliminate the Indian military presence in the Maldives, which, in actuality, comprises only 75 Indian military personnel stationed in the country to support the operation of Dornier aircraft and two helicopters gifted by the Indian government.

The intrinsic majoritarianism embedded in the current ruling establishment in Delhi contributed to the growing anti-Indian sentiment in the Maldives.

Maldives, being a highly conservative society with Islam as its state religion, experienced instances of pro-Hindu and anti-Muslim rhetoric emanating from India. The Maldivian Opposition coalition, currently in office, strategically employed these occurrences to polarize society and cultivate its voter base on an anti-Indian platform.

Maldives holds strategic importance for India as it oversees critical Sea Lanes of Commerce (SLOCs) connecting Asia with Europe. Therefore, it acts as a crucial buffer to preempt the spread of Chinese influence from the South China Sea to the Northern Indian Ocean and beyond. With Chinese control over the Gwadar and Hambantota ports, a pro-China Maldives could potentially enhance their access, if not their ability,

to project power in the Indian Ocean. These developments have clear implications for India's sphere of influence, akin to its Monroe Doctrine.

Regrettably, Mohamed Muizzu is making things challenging, not only for India but also, by implication, for himself, with his persistent anti-India rhetoric. From the very start of his tenure, he reiterated his campaign promises of removing Indian troops and further declared his intention to pardon the former President Abdullah Yameen, known for his anti-India stance. Consequently, Yameen was released from prison and placed under house arrest.

Furthermore, Dr. Muizzu's unwavering commitment to Salafism, a radical school of Islam, contrasts with the relatively liberal Deobandi Islam and the permissive Sufi Islam that define the Muslim ethos of the subcontinent.

The rising resonance of radicalism and extremist ideologies among the youth in Maldives is a growing concern. Some reports indicate that Maldives contributes the highest number of cadre per capita to the ranks of Al-Qaeda and ISIS. As a result, India-Maldives relations are expected to face challenging times, with an anticipated increased Chinese presence in its strategic backyard and a greater proliferation of radicalism in its neighborhood. The funds of atheism may fuel the extreme fringes of religion. It is, therefore, imperative that India deeply rethink its strategy concerning the Maldives. *(The writer can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)*

## Worst humanitarian disaster is happening in Gaza strip as Israel gets free hand

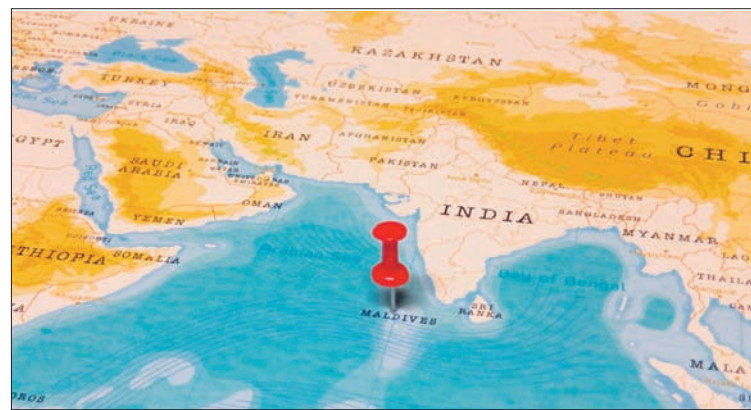
By: Debabrata Biswas

After eighteen days of the surprise attack by Hamas on Israel, the return onslaught against Gaza strip continues. The Hamas attack resulted in the killing of 1400 Israelis and abducting of more than 200 others, leading the Israeli govt. to declare war on the Palestinians in Gaza and even in West Bank to end all the terror attacks on Israel. Actually those have been going for decades. Benjamin Netanyahu vows to wipe out Hamas from the face of the earth, but it is the same man who told his Likud colleagues in March 2019 - "Anyone who wants to thwart the establishment of Palestinian state has to support bolstering Hamas and transferring money to Hamas. This is a part of our strategy - to isolate the Palestinians in Gaza from the Palestinians in the West Bank."

Israeli leaders have promised to eliminate Hamas - but possibly cannot end Hamas existence; even if it succeed to eliminate Hamas infrastructure in Gaza, in the process killing thousands of civilians, including children and uprooting a whole population from their land. - 'Hamas is not simply a militant organization limited in Gaza Strip - it is more an ideology. You can not eliminate an ideology by force' - said Gawain Bahgat, - National Security professor of Asia Centre at National Defence University in Washington.

Israel, how strong it may be with the backing of USA and other western powers, cannot achieve its goal in a short period. Israel is going to start a ground assault shortly, which will incur significant Israeli casualties and Palestinian collateral deaths of many more as well - which would result in pressure in both internally and from outside world, where concern about civilian deaths, including many children are already leading inflamed tensions regionally and internationally.

Though US president Joe Biden had gone to Israel day after the Hamas attack, breaking any precedent before and unilaterally supported Israel strongly, ignoring caution from many of Democratic congressmen, he recently toned down his unconditional supporting voice due to internal and external pressures. Biden has granted \$ 10 billion to Israel's aid and sent them the most modern war planes and



*Israeli leaders have promised to eliminate Hamas - but possibly cannot end Hamas existence; even if it succeed to eliminate Hamas infrastructure in Gaza, in the process killing thousands of civilians, including children and uprooting a whole population from their land. - 'Hamas is not simply a militant organization limited in Gaza Strip - it is more an ideology. You can not eliminate an ideology by force' - said Gawain Bahgat, - National Security professor of Asia Centre at National Defence University in Washington*

missiles. It is to be noted that 20% of Israel's budget is fuelled by US dollars and US aid is unconditional for Israel which no other countries are favoured with.

There is a possibility that the war might escalate to other regions. The US had deployed two naval strike groups to eastern Mediterranean, led by USS Eisenhower and USS Gerald R Ford aircraft carriers. It has also deployed several squadrons of F 15, F 16 and A 10 warplanes to its bases in the Middle East. This show of force is expressly an attempt to deter other players, especially Iran and Hezbollah from getting involved in the conflict. But now there's a report that China has sent six war ships to the Middle East.

As Israel is pounding Gaza ceaselessly with its war planes, the humanitarian crisis is surging; all the International laws are being violated, war crimes are being committed - concern about it are also rising. In America, Senator Bernie Sanders and former president Barack Obama both strongly expressed annoyance in Biden's unilateral support of Israel and Israel's brutal attack on Palestinian civilians in the name of crushing Hamas. Both expressed concern for the humanitarian crises and asked for immediate ceasefire, saying history will not forgive us for this. Student bodies in college and universities are divided in their support, but as the war escalates, many are expressing their concerns about

the humanitarian crisis that aroused from the conflict and vied for immediate ceasefire.

Till October 23, more than 5790 Palestinians were killed, 40% of that are children. There is a serious shortage of essentials in Gaza Strip: food, fuel, drinking water, shelter, medicines and other commodities. Hospitals are being bombed. About more than 190,000 Palestinians have fled north Gaza after the Israeli warning. Many of them took shelter in UNRWA schools run by UNICEF and many of them are children. Even some of these schools are bombed. 'The Save the Children Charity' reported that one child in Gaza was being killed every 15 minutes. On Saturday, 'the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor' was estimating a daily death toll of 200 children are infants. At least 4000 have been injured. "Gaza's children are suffering record psychological trauma and terror" Euro-Med says. Many are homeless and short of food and safe drinking water, or have been forced to flee south under fire, compounding their trauma. 'Human Rights Watch' said - 'Israeli bombardments and blockade of Gaza mean that countless wounded and sick children, among many other civilians, will die for want of medical care'.

Though Biden now has taken initiative to send convoy of relief through Egypt, it is very much inadequate, about 7% of the total mini-

mum requirements to reach Gaza so far to avoid a total humanitarian disaster. World Health Organization said it is unable to provide fuel and life saving supplies to major hospitals in northern Gaza due to lack of security. It called for "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire so that health supplies and fuel can be delivered safely throughout the Gaza Strip". The number of aid trucks being allowed in Gaza is "wholly inadequate", - says United Kingdom's Tory minister Andrew Midul.

"The US speaks a good deal about principles; political analysts point out that president Biden has embedded a hierarchy of human life in official American policy. He expressed outrage at the massacre of the Jews by Hamas, as he should have; but he struggles to be equally clear valuing Gazan lives, especially of children.

Not for the first time, the international community stands accused of complicity in a war crime, of a collective crime against humanity; it is watching it at Gaza, mostly and it is failing miserably to stop it. Killing and targeting civilians, especially children is illegal under 1949 Geneva International convention.

In a joint statement on Sunday, the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Canada while supporting Israel's right to defend, called for "adherence to International humanitarian laws, including the protection of the civilians". But they know full well that in Gaza, the exact opposite is happening. Big powers like China and Russia who could have really done something effective to stop the savage blood-bath in Gaza are not active at all. Chinese President has even commented that Israel has the right for self defence. Chinese foreign minister is visiting Washington on October 26 for discussions. Palestinians are left alone to fend for themselves.

The continuing Israeli-Hamas war has once again shown the duplicity and the revanchist attitude of the NATO nations as also the cavalier stance of China and Russia. It seems that the Gaza strip Palestinians are fated to face the worst humanitarian disaster in recent history as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has got free hand in implementing his resolve to free Gaza from the Palestinians taking advantage of the October 7 Hamas attack. *(IPA Service)*

## India's Olympic dream: A testament to Atmanirbhar Bharat

Making a formal declaration of India's interest in hosting the Olympics, India has thrown its hat into the ring for the 2036 Olympics bid. The news has ignited a wave of anticipation and pride among the nation's 140 crore citizens who see this as a symbol of India's progress towards becoming a global powerhouse and a testament to the success of the Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) campaign.

The decision to bid for the Olympics is a bold step for India, considering the massive infrastructure and logistical challenges associated with hosting such a monumental event. However, the government's unwavering commitment to transforming the nation into a global sporting destination, combined with the country's rich sporting heritage, makes India a strong candidate.

Infrastructural and technological advancements have been at the forefront of India's self-reliance campaign, and hosting the Olympics would be the ultimate litmus test for the country's progress in these areas. Over the past decade, India has witnessed a surge in infrastructure development, with world-class stadiums, training facilities, and state-of-the-art sporting academies cropping up across the country.

This massive investment in sporting infrastructure has resulted in a sharp rise in India's sporting prowess. The nation, once known primarily for its cricketing dominance, has now made its mark in several other sports such as badminton, wrestling, shooting, and athletics. India's athletes have consistently performed well at international events, bringing home medals and making the country proud.

To bid for the Olympics, India will need to showcase its ability to host an event of this magnitude and prove that it has the infrastructure, organizational capacity, and resources to handle the influx of athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators. The nation's successful hosting of the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, despite initial skepticism and organizational challenges, has already laid a solid foundation for future mega-events.

The Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign has also played a crucial role in boosting India's sporting ecosystem. The emphasis on promoting indigenous manufacturing and reducing dependency on imports has led to the development of homegrown sports equipment and technology. This development is not only cost-effective but also puts India at the forefront of innovation in the sports industry.

Additionally, the campaign has encouraged the government and private sector to invest heavily in grassroots sports

development. By focusing on nurturing young talents in various sports and providing them with world-class training and facilities, India is building a robust pipeline of athletes who can potentially represent the nation in future international sporting events.

The bid to host the 2036 Olympics is not just about showcasing India's sporting prowess, but also about driving economic growth and employment opportunities. The event will require significant investments in infrastructure, hospitality, tourism, and various other sectors, which will create a surge in job opportunities and boost the economy.

Furthermore, the Olympics have historically served as a catalyst for urban development. Hosting such a major event offers an opportunity for India to revamp its cities, improve transportation networks, and enhance public spaces. This will not only benefit the Olympic Games but also leave a lasting legacy of improved urban infrastructure for the citizens.

However, amidst all the optimism and enthusiasm, it is important to acknowledge the challenges and concerns that come with hosting the Olympics. The scale and complexity of organizing an event of this magnitude require meticulous planning, coordination, and execution. Ensuring the safety and security of athletes and spectators, managing traffic and logistics, and addressing environmental concerns are just a few of the many hurdles that India would need to overcome.

Nevertheless, India has shown its ability to successfully host large-scale international events like the Commonwealth Games and the World Cup Cricket, which should provide confidence to the international community. The government's experience in managing such events, coupled with its commitment to transforming India into a global sporting hub, makes the 2036 Olympic bid a realistic and attainable goal.

India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics reflects the nation's aspirations, its unwavering commitment towards self-reliance, and its determination to establish itself as a global force in the world of sport. It is a dream that encompasses the hopes and aspirations of 140 crores Indians who see hosting the Olympics as a stepping stone towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

If successful, the 2036 Olympics will not only propel India onto the global stage but also serve as a testimony to the country's remarkable journey of growth, development, and self-sufficiency. It will be a moment of immense pride for the nation and a testament to the success of India's Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign. *(The author can be reached at shashankadas0007@gmail.com)*



# Caracals on the brink of extinction, could become second cat species to be wiped out from India

By: Shuchita Jha

With an estimated 50 individuals across the country, concentrated in the western parts of India, the caracal (Caracal caracal schmitzi), a small wild cat noted for its long-tufted ears and a reddish-tan or sandy-brown coat, is critically endangered and perhaps on the brink of extinction in India. Wildlife experts and scientists fear that after the Asiatic cheetah, that was declared extinct in 1952, the caracal will be the second cat species to be wiped out from the country.

As per estimates in a 2015 study, some 28 caracal individuals are found in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan and scientists estimate around 20 in Kutch in Gujarat. These are reported to be the only two populations of the cat that remain in India.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, or IUCN, Cat Specialist Group the feline, with distinctive black markings on its face and white circles around the eyes and mouth, is native to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and arid areas of Pakistan and northwestern India.

While the species is listed under "least concern" under the IUCN Red List globally, it has been listed as "near threatened" by the Conservation Assessment and Management Plan and IUCN Red List assessment in India. The species is included in the Schedule-I category of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, offering it the highest possible protection.

"Historically, the caracal was found all across Central India and the Indo-Gangetic plains. But there has been no sighting of the animal in these regions for the last 40 years," says YV Jhala, former dean of the Wildlife Institute of India. "We

have extensively tried to camera trap (caracal) in Kuno National Park since 2006 but it all was in vain."

In 2022, the Wildlife Institute of India along with the Indian Space Research Organisation, Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and Leo Foundation of The Netherlands conducted a study in nine states – Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh – on the presence of caracals.

The study indicated that areas in Kutch (Gujarat), Aravalli mountains (Rajasthan), Malwa plateau (Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) and Bundelkhand region (Madhya Pradesh) were potentially suitable habitats for caracals.

It further identified the Ranthambore-Kuno Landscape, which falls in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, as a highly potential caracal habitat area and a suitable site for the conservation of the feline. The Madhya Pradesh Biodiversity Board is also undertaking a study on caracals in this landscape.

**Uncertainty about population decline**

Though the caracals have not been spotted from the Central India range for over four decades, scientists and wildlife experts are yet to determine a reason for the decline in the population. Jhala says that while habitat loss is a common factor for all wildlife, other species of cats are doing relatively well, but the same cannot be said for the caracal.

"Protected areas like Gandhisagar National Park and Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary all had caracals and the prey base here is high. So, there is no question of threat to habitat or lack of prey but it is still not understood as to why the population is falling so heavily even in



these protected areas," Jhala adds.

Subharanjan Sen, Assistant Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Madhya Pradesh, echoing Jhala says, "No one knows why the cats are not being spotted anymore. It might be due to a disease but we aren't sure."

Jhala has the same speculations. However, he adds that while a general disease would have affected other species of lesser cats too, if there is a disease that is leading to the vanishing of the caracals, it has to be species-specific. "These are speculations but we need to look into it to determine the root cause before we can start thinking about conservation strategies," he says.

Initially, large-scale hunting and illegal trade were the two main causes for the decline but Sen says that poaching and seizure of the cat have not been reported for many decades. He added that while the cat had not been spotted for a long time in Madhya Pradesh, they might have been looking at the wrong places all this while.

"The forest department is mostly focused on dense forests but the caracal is found in open forests and scrublands. It is a species of wasteland, which generally falls under the revenue department's jurisdiction, so we

might have missed them as we did not set camera traps in these areas," he says.

**Challenges in conservation**

In 2021, the National Board for Wildlife and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change announced a Species Recovery Plan for the conservation and population revival of 22 species in India, including the caracal.

As per the project plan, Ranthambore is working on the conservation of the species with a focus on strengthening government management of wild cats and habitats by enhancing private sector partnerships, regional collaboration and knowledge transfer and learning supported by gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation.

The plan talks about developing conservation master plans, monitoring protocols for wild cats, Standard Operating Procedures and strengthening wildlife-related law enforcement.

Randeep Singh, Associate Professor at Amity Institute of Forestry and Wildlife, Amity University, Noida who will be undertaking the study in the Ranthambore-Kuno Landscape later this year told Mongabay-India that the project will start in the ravines of Chambal and Sawai as these are considered to

be the potential habitat for the species.

"We will set up camera traps in parts of Rajasthan and Kuno National Park to study the population and will then devise strategies for conservation. First and foremost, it is important to know the number of individuals present in the area," says Singh.

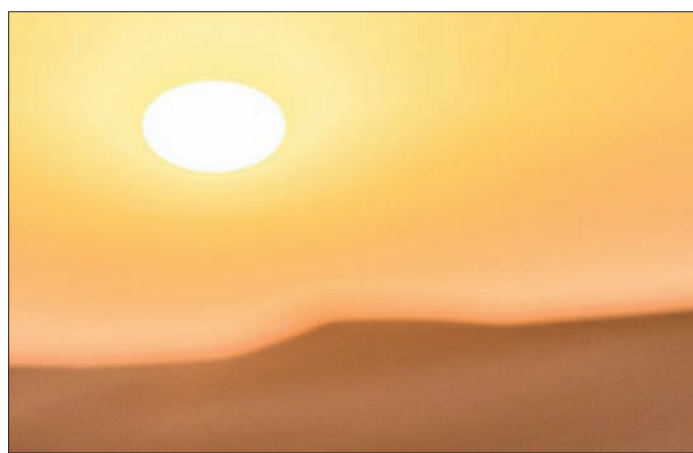
Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of Madhya Pradesh, JS Chouhan also feels that the survey of potential habitats is necessary before designing conservation strategies. "If the researchers find that there is even a small population in the landscape that they are planning to undertake the study in, I am sure the MP Forest Department will be more than willing to dedicate more than one sanctuary in the region to protect the species. But since it has not been spotted in MP for many decades, on some level, I feel that it is more like a distant dream," Chouhan says.

The Rajasthan Forest Department is also planning to start a breeding programme for caracals but with a lot of challenges and technicalities involved, the project is in its initial phase. However, the conservation process will only begin once the major threats leading to the decline are identified.

However, Jhala feels that while a breeding programme might help stabilise the population, it will cause a decline in wild species.

"Once the threats are identified then we can design strategies to address them. But even in a breeding centre, we need to have a good founder population before we begin with the programme. If there are less than 50 individuals remaining, it is hard to start breeding them," adds Jhala, highlighting some major roadblocks in establishing a caracal breeding centre. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

## Four factors driving 2023's extreme heat and climate disasters



By: Michael Wysession

Between the record-breaking global heat and extreme downpours, it's hard to ignore that something unusual is going on with the weather in 2023.

People have been quick to blame climate change – and they're right: human-caused global warming plays the biggest role. The weeklong heat wave that started in June 2023 in Texas, the US Southwest and Mexico would have been virtually impossible without it, one study found.

However, the extremes this year are sharper than anthropogenic global warming alone would be expected to cause. September temperatures were far above any previous September, and around 3.1 degrees Fahrenheit (1.75° C) above the preindustrial average, according to the European Union's earth observation programme.

July was Earth's hottest month on record, also by a large margin, with average global temperatures more than half a degree Fahrenheit (a third of a degree Celsius) above the previous record, set just a few years earlier in 2019.

Human activities have been increasing temperatures at an average of about 0.2 F (0.1° C) per decade. But this year, three additional natural factors are also helping drive up global temperatures and fuel disasters: El Niño, solar fluctuations and a massive underwater volcanic eruption.

Unfortunately, these factors are combining in a way that is exacerbating global warming. Still worse, we can expect unusually high temperatures to continue, which means even more extreme weather in the near future.

An illustration by the author shows the typical relative impact on temperature rise driven by human activities compared with natural forces. El Niño/La Niña and solar energy cycles fluctuate. The Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano's underwater eruption exacerbated global warming. Photo: Michael Wysession

**How El Niño is involved**

El Niño is a climate phenomenon that occurs every few years when surface water in the tropical Pacific reverses direction and heats up. That warms the atmosphere above, which influences temperatures and weather patterns around the globe.

Essentially, the atmosphere borrows heat out of the Pacific, and global temperatures increase slightly. This happened in 2016, the time of the last strong El Niño. Global temperatures increased by about 0.25 F (0.14 C) on average, making 2016 the warmest year on record. A weak El Niño also occurred in 2019-2020, contributing to 2020 becoming the world's second-warmest year.

El Niño's opposite, La Niña, involves cooler-than-usual Pacific currents flowing westward, absorbing heat out of the atmosphere, which cools the globe. The world just came out of three straight years of La Niña, meaning we're experiencing an even greater temperature swing.

Based on increasing Pacific sea surface temperatures in mid-2023, climate modelling now suggests a 90% chance that Earth is headed toward its first strong El Niño since 2016.

Combined with the steady human-induced warming, Earth may soon again be breaking its annual temperature records. June 2023 was the hottest in modern record. July saw global records for the hottest days and a large number of regional records, including an incomprehensible heat index of 152 F (67 C) in Iran.

**Solar fluctuations**

The Sun may seem to shine at a constant rate, but it is a seething, churning ball of plasma whose radiating energy changes over many different time scales.

The Sun is slowly heating up and in half a billion years will boil away Earth's oceans. On human time scales, however, the Sun's energy output varies only slightly, about 1 part in 1,000, over a repeating 11-year cycle. The peaks of this cycle are too small for us to notice at a daily level, but they affect Earth's climate systems.

Rapid convection within the Sun both generates a strong magnetic field

aligned with its spin axis and causes this field to fully flip and reverse every 11 years. This is what causes the 11-year cycle in emitted solar radiation.

Earth's temperature increase during a solar maximum, compared with average solar output, is only about 0.09 F (0.05 C), roughly a third of a large El Niño. The opposite happens during a solar minimum. However, unlike the variable and unpredictable El Niño changes, the 11-year solar cycle is comparatively regular, consistent and predictable.

The last solar cycle hit its minimum in 2020, reducing the effect of the modest 2020 El Niño. The current solar cycle has already surpassed the peak of the relatively weak previous cycle (which was in 2014) and will peak in 2025, with the Sun's energy output increasing until then.

**A massive volcanic eruption**

Volcanic eruptions can also significantly affect global climates. They usually do this by lowering global temperatures when erupted sulfate aerosols shield and block a portion of incoming sunlight – but not always.

In an unusual twist, the largest volcanic eruption of the 21st century so far, the 2022 eruption of Tonga's Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, is having a warming and not cooling effect.

The eruption released an unusually small amount of cooling sulfate aerosols but an enormous amount of water vapour. The molten magma exploded underwater, vaporizing a huge volume of ocean water that erupted like a geyser high into the atmosphere.

Water vapour is a powerful greenhouse gas, and the eruption may end up warming Earth's surface by about 0.06 F (0.035 C), according to one estimate.

Unlike the cooling sulfate aerosols, which are actually tiny droplets of sulfuric acid that fall out of the atmosphere within one to two years, water vapour is a gas that can stay in the atmosphere for many years. The warming impact of the Tonga volcano is expected to last for at least five years.

**Underlying it all: Global warming**

All of this comes on top of anthropogenic, or human-caused, global warming.

Humans have raised global average temperatures by about 2 F (1.1° C) since 1900 by releasing large volumes of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere. The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is up 50%, primarily from the combustion of fossil fuels in vehicles and power plants. The warming from greenhouse gases is actually greater than 2 F (1.1° C), but it has been masked by other human factors that have a cooling effect, such as air pollution.

Sea surface temperatures in 2023 (bold black line) have been far above any temperature seen since satellite records began in the 1970s. Photo: University of Maine Climate Change Institute, CC BY-ND 4.0

If human impacts were the only factors, each successive year would set a new record as the hottest year ever, but that doesn't happen. The year 2016 was the warmest in part because temperatures were boosted by the last large El Niño.

**What does this mean for the future?**

The next couple of years could be very rough.

If a strong El Niño develops over the coming months as forecasters expect, combined with the solar maximum and the effects of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai eruption, Earth's temperatures will likely continue to soar.

As temperatures continue to increase, weather events get more extreme. The excess heat can mean more heat waves, forest fires, flash floods and other extreme events, climate models show.

In January 2023, scientists wrote that Earth's temperature had a greater than 50% chance of reaching 2.7 F (1.5° C) above preindustrial era temperatures by the year 2028, at least temporarily, increasing the risk of triggering climate tipping points with even greater human impacts. Because of the unfortunate timing of several parts of the climate system, it seems the odds are not in our favour. (Courtesy: The Wire)

## Air pollution renders antibiotics ineffective

By: Kota Sriraj

There was a sense of palpable urgency to address climate change, air pollution and degradation of the environment at the recently concluded three-day G20 summit held in New Delhi. Led by India, the G20 nations agreed to urgently accelerate their actions to address environmental crises and climate change challenges with the help of a green development plan. This in a way reflects the prophetic warning to world leaders by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) held in 2022, that humanity is on a "highway to climate hell with a foot on the accelerator". Because 80 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions emanate from G20 nations, the member nations needed to understand the gravity of the problem and ensure meaningful progress in this regard.

As the stakes for mankind keep rising thanks to rising pollution and climate change, keeping global average temperatures below 2 degrees centigrade alone may not be the

urgent goal of the nations. Newer and more perilous problems are arising due to unabated pollution levels. A recent study published in the health journal "Lancet" has established a connection between bacterial antibiotic resistance and air pollution, particularly PM 2.5. The study suggests that PM 2.5 contains elements of antibiotic resistance, and inhaling this pollutant can lead to an increase in the spread of antibiotic resistance. The authors of the study aimed to estimate the global premature death toll caused by resistance to antibiotics due to PM 2.5 pollution.

PM 2.5 refers to particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or smaller. These particles, consisting of solid and liquid elements, are of varying sizes, with some, like dust and soot, visible to the naked eye and others, such as PM 2.5, only observable under electron microscopes. Inhaling these pollutants can pose serious health risks, especially to the respiratory system. The Lancet study compared and analysed the PM 2.5 levels with levels of antibiotic resistance and made a disturbing discovery that the higher the pollutant level, the greater the

antibiotic resistance. PM 2.5 are smaller than human hair and contains antibiotic resistance elements.

As these pollutants travel through the ambient air, they disperse antibiotic resistance elements, which can then be inhaled by humans which in turn sets in motion the resistance. The concerning aspect is that antibiotic-resistant bacteria can withstand antibiotic treatments, rendering the drugs ineffective against them. Antibiotics are primarily used to eliminate microorganisms, especially bacteria, but resistant bacteria are impervious to their effects.

The data for this research was collated from 116 countries utilising sources like ResistanceMap, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control Surveillance Atlas, and the PLISA Health Information Platform. Overall, nine pathogens and 43 drugs were analysed. It was observed that the surge in antibiotic resistance among bacteria is largely attributed to the indiscriminate use of antibiotics. Repeated and widespread antibiotic usage can empower bacteria to develop resistance over time, often facilitated by Antibiotic Resistance Genes (ARGs).

Pathogenic bacteria, responsible for infections and diseases, can acquire antibiotic resistance through ARGs in a process known as horizontal gene transfer.

The Lancet health report concluded that the need of the hour is to address the PM2.5 levels. Without this, antibiotic resistance may increase by approximately 17%, with related deaths rising by 56% globally by 2050. Conversely, adhering to the World Health Organization's recommended PM 2.5 level of 5 µg/m³ could lead to a 17% reduction in antibiotic resistance and a 23% decrease in deaths. But this is easier said than done. Of the world's 30 cities with the worst air pollution, 21 are in India. Capital New Delhi is the worst with PM 2.5 being nearly 10 times higher than the World Health Organisation levels.

According to the CleanAir organisation India sees 2 million early deaths and a loss of 95 billion to the economy due to PM 2.5. Given these bleak conditions, India needs to cover a lot of ground to rein in PM 2.5 levels while there is still time. The National Clean Air Program (NCAP) is a determined step in the right direc-

tion, but it needs more grit and resolve behind it if the initiative has to succeed.

Some major steps are the need of the hour for India. Firstly, immediate curbs on ammonia release in farms are essential; this must be followed by a full ban on refuse burning. Apart from this rural brick kilns must be persuaded to shift to cleaner kiln-firing technologies. Urgent efforts also need to be made to convert coal-based power plants to clean energy, as this by itself will make a huge difference. To make this a reality, India must make a push for creating the correct financial architecture through investment funds with a dedicated green focus that can play an instrumental role in catalysing the growth of green industries and simultaneously addressing the twin problems of air pollution and climate change. These funds would combine a returns-driven strategy with the sustainability imperative and accelerate investment in green industries. Measures such as these can help India fight air pollution and prevent a calamitous future where common antibiotic efficacy is not held ransom by polluted air. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

## How climate change is affecting the seasons

By: Jadu Dash

Autumn has finally arrived in the United Kingdom following an unusually sunny September. The days are growing shorter, the temperature cooler and the leaves are changing colour.

The delayed onset of autumn in 2023 is not a one-off. It's actually part of a broader trend in which the shift from summer to winter is happening later in the year. My own research that I've carried out over the past 13 years points towards climate change as the likely culprit.

One of the most noticeable effects of climate change is the changing patterns of vegetation seasonality around us. This includes the timing of important biological events such as bud burst, the appearance of the first leaves, flowering and leaf fall.

In general, the appearance of the first leaf marks the arrival of spring, while leaf fall signals the beginning of autumn. The timing of these events is changing, particularly in the northern hemisphere, where spring appears to be starting earlier and

autumn's onset is being delayed. Traditionally, monitoring vegetation seasonality involved meticulously documenting these seasonal events year after year. The earliest records of spring events in the UK date back to 1736, when naturalist Robert Marsham began recording the timing of spring events in Norwich, England.

Today, satellite data has become an essential tool for tracking changes in vegetation seasonality. This data can be used to estimate vegetation vigour (an indicator of vegetation's condition, strength and lushness). Changes can then be used to identify the start and end of each growing season.

**Longer growing seasons**

Climate researchers now have nearly five decades of satellite observations at their disposal. Analysis of this data reveals that spring has advanced by approximately 15 days, while autumn has been delayed by a similar amount. The overall outcome has been the extension of the growing season by an entire month over the past three decades.

The shift in the timing of the seasons is particularly pronounced at higher latitudes. Vegetation situated more than 55° north of the equator, such as in the larch forests of northern Russia, has shown a trend towards an extended growing season, increasing by up to one day per year.

A longer growing season is not necessarily a bad thing. It means a longer period of photosynthesis, which theoretically could boost net carbon uptake – although there is no concrete evidence for this yet.

But an earlier onset of the growing season exposes plants to the risk of damage from spring frosts and an increased vulnerability to summer drought. Research has found that an early spring in central and northern Europe in 2018 promoted increased vegetation growth. This, in turn, contributed to soil losing its moisture quickly, amplifying summer drought conditions.

**Role of climate change**

Temperature is one of the primary factors influencing vegetation growth at high northerly

latitudes. So, an earlier onset of spring and a later arrival of autumn are probably driven by the rising global mean temperature. Since 1981, the global mean temperature has increased by 0.18°C per decade.

Nonetheless, the influence of temperature on the duration of the growing season may change depending on the type of vegetation. In ecosystems primarily dominated by forests, a warmer climate can lead to more photosynthesis and increased vegetation productivity.

On the other hand, in a warmer climate, more water evaporates from the Earth's surface, drying out the soil. This could adversely affect the growth of plants with shallow roots, such as grasses and herbaceous plants.

Another consequence of climate change is the increased frequency of droughts during the peak of the growing season. Drought conditions result in severe water stress for plants, leading to the premature shedding of leaves or a change in their colour, a phenomenon often referred to as a "false au-

tumn". The UK experienced such conditions in August 2022, when there was an early leaf fall and the browning of leaves, as the country grappled with an extreme heatwave.

A longer and drier growing season can also increase the risk of forest fires. A US study from 2006 revealed a significant surge in wildfire activity within the forests of the northern Rockies from the mid-1980s. This change was closely linked to increased spring and summer temperatures and an earlier spring snowmelt. Climate change is having a clear impact on vegetation growth and seasonality. But the extent and severity of its impact varies depending on the type of plant and where it grows.

The availability of satellite data spanning the past 50 years is a valuable resource for capturing changes in the duration of the vegetation growing season. This data is helping scientists quantify the scale and consequences of these changes, providing insights into how plants are responding to our warming climate. (Courtesy: Down To Earth)

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The availability of satellite data spanning the past 50 years is a valuable resource for capturing changes in the duration of the vegetation growing season. This data is helping scientists quantify the scale and consequences of these changes, providing insights into how plants are responding to our warming climate. (Courtesy: Down To Earth)

# Pakistan court restores appeals of Nawaz Sharif against his conviction in two graft cases



**ISLAMABAD, Oct 26:** A top court here on Thursday restored appeals of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supremo Nawaz Sharif against his conviction in two high-profile corruption cases, in a major relief to the former prime minister who wants to clear his name to contest the general elections expected in January.

Sharif, accompanied by his younger brother and PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif, appeared before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) for the second time since his return to Pakistan from London on October 21 after a self-exile of about four years.

A two-member division bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb announced the verdict, which was reserved earlier today.

The bench issued the verdict while hearing the 73-year-old three-time former prime minister's

pleas seeking protective bail in the Al-Azizia steel mill and Avenfield corruption cases and for restoring his appeals against his conviction. "Congratulations to all of Pakistan on the restoration of justice," his party said in a post on X, celebrating the restoration of appeals. A large number of his supporters gathered outside the court building and raised slogans in his favour.

Sharif was earlier granted a protective bail until October 24 when he appeared before the court to surrender and also filed pleas for revival of his appeals in both cases.

The court after the initial hearing had issued notice to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and adjourned the hearing until today.

During the hearing, the NAB prosecutor informed the court that the anti-corruption watchdog was not interested in the arrest of Sharif, while his counsel pressed for restoration of appeals. NAB

also refused to oppose the plea by Sharif's lawyers.

The court after the conclusion of the arguments reserved judgment which it announced later.

On Tuesday, the caretaker government of Pakistan's Punjab province had suspended Sharif's seven-year sentence in the Al-Azizia corruption case.

Sharif was convicted in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption case and sentenced to seven years in jail in December 2018. Delivering the verdict, the judge had said at the time that there was concrete evidence against him in the Al-Azizia case and that he was unable to give the trail of the money used to set up the Al-Azizia steel mills in Saudi Arabia by his family in 2001 and later on the Hill Metal Establishment also in the Gulf Kingdom.

He was also convicted in July 2018 by an accountability court in the Avenfield properties case and

sentenced to 10 years in jail. He was arrested and put in jail but set free after being given bail while his appeals against acquittal in the case were pending.

His daughter Maryam Nawaz was also sentenced to seven years in jail in the Avenfield case but was acquitted in September 2022 along with her husband Muhammad Safdar.

He has always denied allegations of any wrongdoing and termed his conviction orchestrated by the powerful establishment in collusion with the judiciary.

The IHC declared him a proclaimed offender in both cases in December 2020.

Sharif, who was disqualified in 2017 and later in 2018 convicted in both cases of corruption, wants to clear his name to lead his party in the general elections, which are expected in January 2024. However, no specific date has been announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The Pakistan People's Party has alleged that the ECP would give the poll date once Sharif gets a clean chit from the courts in all the cases he is facing. Both the PPP and jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party have called Sharif the 'new ladla' (favourite) of the military establishment.

Khan's party said Sharif returned to the country after four years of exile because of the blessing of the military establishment which has given him assurance to make him the next prime minister.

Sharif is the only Pakistani politician who became the prime minister of the coup-prone country for a record three times. (PTI)

## Canada welcomes India's decision to resume some visa services

**TORONTO, Oct 26:** Canada has welcomed India's decision to resume some visa services in the country from Thursday, saying the move was a "good sign" after "an anxious time" for many Canadians, amid a diplomatic row over the killing of a Sikh separatist.

India's high commission in Canada said on Wednesday that the country's officials will resume processing some types of visa applications for Canadians applying from across the country as well as abroad.

The decision came a month after New Delhi suspended the services in Canada and for Canadian citizens worldwide as tensions flared between the two nations last month following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on June 18 in British Columbia.

India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020. India has rejected Trudeau's allegations as "absurd" and "motivated".

On Wednesday afternoon, Immigration Minister Marc Miller called India's move "a good sign" after "an anxious time" for his many Canadians.

"Our feeling is that a suspension should never have happened in the first place," he was quoted as saying by CTV News.

He said the "really concerning diplomatic situation with India has created a lot of fear in a lot of communities."

Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan, who is also a Sikh, said the resumption of visa processing is good news, but wouldn't speculate on what message New Delhi is trying to send.

"It's good to see that they have resumed that. It would have been nice (if) they didn't take it in the first place," Sajjan told reporters. (PTI)

## At least 16 dead in Maine mass killing and police hunt for the shooter as residents take shelter

**LEWISTON (US), Oct 26:** A man shot and killed at least 16 people at a restaurant and a bowling alley in Lewiston, Maine, on Wednesday and then fled into the night, sparking a massive search by hundreds of officers while frightened residents stayed locked in their homes.

A police bulletin identified Robert Card, 40, as a person of interest in the attack that sent panicked bowlers scrambling behind pins when shots rang out around 7 pm. Card was described as a firearms instructor believed to be in the Army Reserve and assigned to a training facility in Saco, Maine.

The document, circulated to law enforcement officials, said Card had been committed to a mental health facility for two weeks in the summer of 2023. It did not provide details about his treatment or condition but said Card had reported "hearing voices and threats to shoot up" the military base. A telephone number listed for Card in public records was not in service.

Lewiston Police said in an earlier Facebook post that they were dealing with an active shooter incident at Schemengees Bar and Grille and at Sparetime Recreation, a bowling alley about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) away.

One bowler, who identified himself only as Brandon, said he heard about 10 shots, thinking the first was a balloon popping.

"I had my back turned to the door. And as soon as I turned and saw it was not a balloon - he was holding a weapon - I just booked it," he told The Associated Press.

Brandon said he scrambled down the length of the alley, sliding into the pin area and climbing up to hide in

the machinery. He was among a busload of survivors who were driven to a middle school in the neighboring city of Auburn to be reunited with family and friends.

"I was putting on my bowling shoes when when it started. I've been barefoot for five hours," he said.

Melinda Small, the owner of Legends Sports Bar and Grill, said her staff immediately locked their doors and moved all 25 customers and employees away from the doors after a customer reported hearing about the shooting at the bowling alley less than a quarter-mile away. Soon, the police flooded the roadway and a police officer eventually escorted everyone out of the building.

"I am honestly in a state of shock. I am blessed that my team responded quickly and everyone is safe," Small said. "But the same time, my heart is broken for this area and for what everyone is dealing with. I just feel numb."

After the shooting, police, many armed with rifles, took up positions while the city descended into eerie quiet - punctuated by occasional sirens - as people hunkered down at home.

The Androscoggin County Sheriff's Office released two photos of the suspect on its Facebook page that showed the shooter walking into an establishment with a weapon raised to his shoulder.

Two law enforcement officials told The AP that at least 16 people were killed and the toll was expected to rise. However, Michael Sauschuck, commissioner of the Maine Department of Public Safety, declined to provide a specific estimate at a news conference, calling it a "fluid situation." (AP)

## EAM Jaishankar calls on SCO nations to strictly adhere to principles of international law, respecting sovereignty of each other

**BISHKEK, Oct 26:** Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) should work together to promote stability and prosperity in the region by strictly adhering to the principles of international law, respecting the sovereignty of each other and encouraging economic cooperation, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday in an apparent dig at China. Jaishankar's remarks came as he addressed the 22nd session of the Council of Heads of Government of SCO at Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

"SCO should work together to promote stability and prosperity in the region by strictly adhering to the principles of international law, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other and encouraging economic cooperation," he said in his address.

In this context, the centrality of the interests of Central Asian states plays a key role, he said.

Beijing is investing billions of dollars in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan.

India has protested against the projects in Pakistan as it is being laid through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

He said India shares deep civilisational ties with the people of the SCO region. Currently, the SCO countries include India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

"The continuous movement of goods, ideas and people traversing

the region has left indelible imprints on our customs, traditions, language and cuisine. These historical relationships should now create a template for greater economic cooperation," Jaishankar said.

"To improve trade within the region, we need robust connectivity and infrastructure. Such initiatives should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries," he said.

"The Global South should not be saddled with unviable debt arising from opaque initiatives," Jaishankar said, in another jibe at China, which is accused of launching unviable infrastructure projects in countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan, saddling those countries with debts. At the same time, Jaishankar said that the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) could become "prosperity enablers."

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, which many see as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, was jointly announced by the leaders of the US, India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union on the sidelines of the G20 summit in September.

The International North-South Transport Corridor is a 7,200-km long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road routes for moving freight between India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. (PTI)

## Biden condemns retaliatory attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank

**WASHINGTON, Oct 26:** President Joe Biden on Wednesday spoke out against retaliatory attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank in the aftermath of the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel. He also said he was redoubling his commitment to working on a two-state solution to end the decades-long Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Biden said the attacks by "extremist settlers" amounted to "pouring gasoline" on the already burning fires in the Middle East since the Hamas attack.

"It has to stop. They have to be held accountable. It has to stop now," Biden said at the start of a news conference with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who was being honored with a state visit to Washington.

Settler violence against Palestinians has intensified since the Hamas attack, and Palestinians have been killed by settlers, according to Palestinian authorities. Rights groups say settlers have torched cars and attacked several small Bedouin communities, forcing them to evacuate to other areas. The West Bank Protection Consortium, a coalition of non-governmental organizations and donor countries, including the European Union, says hundreds of Palestinians have been forcibly displaced in the West Bank due to settler violence since October 7. That's in addition to over 1,100 displaced since 2022.

Deadly violence has been surging in the West Bank as the Israeli military pursues Palestinian militants in the aftermath of the Hamas attack from Gaza. Biden again condemned the brutality of the Hamas attack that killed 1,400 Israelis and said he was convinced that Hamas was driven in part by a desire to undo U.S.-led efforts to normalize Israeli relations with some of its Arab neighbors, including Saudi Arabia.



The violence threatens to open another front in the two-week-old war, and puts pressure on the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the West Bank and is deeply unpopular among Palestinians, in large part because it co-operates with Israel on security matters.

Biden said the attacks by "extremist settlers" amounted to "pouring gasoline" on the already burning fires in the Middle East since the Hamas attack. Biden said the attacks by "extremist settlers" amounted to "pouring gasoline" on the already burning fires in the Middle East since the Hamas attack.

The president also said that after the Israel-Hamas conflict comes to an end, Israelis, Palestinians and their partners must work toward a two-state solution. "Israelis and Palestinians equally deserve to live side by side in safety, dignity and peace," Biden said, adding, "When this crisis is over, there has to be a vision of what comes next. And in our view, it has to be a two-state solution." Biden emphasized that point during a Wednesday afternoon call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, telling the

Israeli leader it will be important to focus "on what comes after this crisis" including "a pathway for a permanent peace between Israelis and Palestinians," according to a White House statement.

The leaders also discussed ongoing efforts to locate and free the more than 200 hostages that Hamas and other militant groups captured, the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza, and ensuring safe passage for foreign nationals looking to leave the strip.

The Hamas-run Health Ministry says more than 6,500 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed in retaliatory strikes. Biden said he had doubts about the accuracy of the Hamas death count, but stressed that it was critical for Israel to move carefully in its response to minimize civilian deaths.

"I'm sure innocents have been killed, and it's the price of waging a war," Biden said. "Israel should be incredibly careful to be sure that they're focusing on going after the folks that are propagating this war." Biden said.

Biden also said he has not directly sought assurances from Netanyahu that Israel will hold off on an expected ground invasion into Gaza before hostages can be released.

"What I have indicated to him is that if that's possible, to get these folks out safely, that's what he should do. It's their decision," Biden said at news conference at the White House. "But I did not demand it. I pointed out to him, if it's real, it should be done." About 10 Americans remain unaccounted for amid the Israel-Hamas war, according to the White House. (AP)

## Russia, China veto US-led draft resolution in UNSC on Gaza, rival text by Moscow also fails



**UNITED NATIONS, Oct 26:** Russia and China vetoed a US-led draft resolution in the UN Security Council that would have called for humanitarian pauses in fighting to allow aid access to Gaza while a rival text by Moscow on the Israel-Hamas conflict failed to garner enough votes in its favour.

The 15-nation UN Security Council voted on two rival draft resolutions tabled by Washington and Moscow on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. The first resolution by the US affirmed the right of member states to defend themselves against threats to peace and security posed by acts of terrorism. It called for all measures - specifically humanitarian pauses - to allow for full, rapid, safe, and unhindered access into Gaza, territory ruled by Hamas militants.

The Council's permanent members Russia and China vetoed the US-led resolution. The UAE also vetoed the draft, which received ten votes in favour (Albania, France, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, UK, US) and two abstentions by Brazil and Mozambique.

Before the vote on the resolution, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said Washington has worked to forge consensus around a resolution that is strong and balanced.

"We solicited input. We listened. We engaged with all Council members to incorporate edits, including language on humanitarian pauses and the protection of civilians fleeing conflict, and language on the importance of deconfliction mechanisms to protect UN facilities and personnel."

After the vote, she expressed disappointment that Russia and China vetoed the resolution and called on the Council members not to encourage Moscow's "cynical and irresponsible behaviour" by voting for its text, which she said was offered up at the very last minute with zero consultations and which contains a number of problematic sections.

The Council then voted on Moscow's resolution that called for a humanitarian ceasefire, unhindered aid into Gaza and the immediate cancellation by Israeli forces of the evacuation order for civilians to head into southern Gaza. The resolution failed to get adopted as it did not get sufficient votes in its favour. Only four countries - China, Gabon, Russia, and the UAE - voted in favour of the resolution while the UK and US vetoed it and nine nations - Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland abstained. This was the fourth time in over a week that the powerful UN Security Council, responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, failed to adopt a resolution and take unified action in the ongoing conflict that broke out after Hamas attacked Israel on October 7. (AP)

## South Korea, US and Japan condemn North Korea's alleged supply of munitions to Russia

**SEOUL, Oct 26:** South Korea, the US and Japan strongly condemned what they call North Korea's supply of munitions and military equipment to Russia, saying on Thursday that such weapons shipments sharply increase the human toll of Russia's war in Ukraine.

A joint statement by the top diplomats of South Korea, the US and Japan came days after Russia's foreign minister scoffed at a recent US claim that his country received munitions from North Korea, saying that Washington has failed to prove the allegation.

"We will continue to work together with the international community to expose Russia's attempts to acquire military equipment from (North Korea)," said the joint statement by South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.

"Such weapons deliveries, several of which we now confirm

have been completed, will significantly increase the human toll of Russia's war of aggression," it said.

North Korea and Russia - both locked in separate confrontations with the U.S. and its allies - have recently taken steps to strengthen their defense and other ties. Speculation about North Korea's provision of conventional arms to refill Russia's exhausted weapons stores flared last month, when North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia's Far East to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military facilities.

The U.S., South Korea and others believe North Korea seeks to receive sophisticated weapons technologies to enhance its nuclear program in exchange for its munitions supply.

During his visit to Pyongyang last week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in a reception speech that Russia valued North Korea's "unwavering" support for its war on Ukraine. He also

proposed regular security talks with North Korea and China to cope with what he described as increasing U.S.-led regional military threats.

After returning to Moscow, Lavrov shrugged off the U.S. accusation of the North Korean arms transfers, saying that "the Americans keep accusing everyone."

"I don't comment on rumors," he said, according to Russian state media.

Earlier this month, the White House said that North Korea had delivered more than 1,000 containers of military equipment and munitions to Russia. The White House released images that it said showed the containers were loaded onto a Russian-flagged ship before being moved via train to southwestern Russia. Thursday's Seoul-Washington-Tokyo statement said the three countries are closely monitoring for any materials that Russia provides to North Korea in support of the North's military objectives. (AP)

The trio - Tang Hongbo, Tang Shengjie and Jiang Xinlin - will replace a crew that has been on the station for 6 months

## China sends its youngest-ever crew to space as it seeks to put astronauts on moon before 2030

**BEIJING, Oct 26:** China launched its youngest-ever crew for its orbiting space station on Thursday as it seeks to put astronauts on the moon before 2030.

The Shenzhou 17 spacecraft lifted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on the edge of the Gobi Desert in northwestern China atop a Long March 2-F rocket at 11:14 a.m. (0314 GMT).

According to the China Manned Space Agency, the average age of the three-member crew is the youngest since the launch of the space station construction mission, state broadcaster CCTV earlier reported. Their average age is 38, state media China Daily said.

Beijing is pursuing plans to place astronauts on the moon before the end of the decade amid a rivalry with the U.S. for reaching new milestones in outer space.



This reflects the competition for influence between the world's two largest economies in the technology, military and diplomatic fields.

The trio - Tang Hongbo, Tang Shengjie and Jiang Xinlin - will replace a crew that has been on the station for six months. Tang is a veteran who led a 2021 space mission for three months.

On Wednesday, the agency also

announced plans to send a new telescope to probe deep into the universe. CCTV said the telescope would enable surveys and mapping of the sky, but no timeframe was given for the installation.

China has researched the movement of stars and planets for thousands of years while in modern times, it has pushed to become a leader in space exploration and science.

It built its own space station after it was excluded from the International Space Station, largely due to U.S. concerns over the control of the program by the People's Liberation Army, the military branch of the ruling Communist Party.

China's first manned space mission in 2003 made it the third country after the former Soviet Union and the U.S. to put a person

into space using its own resources.

American spending, supply chains and capabilities are believed to give it a significant edge over China, at least for now. China has broken out in some areas, however, bringing samples back from the lunar surface for the first time in decades and landing a rover on the less explored far side of the moon.

The U.S., meanwhile, aims to put astronauts back on the lunar surface by the end of 2025 as part of a renewed commitment to crewed missions, aided by private sector players such as SpaceX and Blue Origin.

In addition to their lunar programs, the two countries have also separately landed rovers on Mars, and China plans to follow the U.S. in landing a spacecraft on an asteroid. (AP)

## Nagaland forest dept call to protect Amur Falcons



### HT Correspondent

**DIMAPUR, Oct 26:** With the beginning of the arrival of Amur Falcons in Nagaland, the state forest department on Thursday appealed to all the concerned and responsible citizens to protect and preserve the migratory birds by refraining from hunting them and ensuring their safe stay and passage through the region.

It pointed out that the Amur Falcon is granted legal protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. According to this Act, the Amur Falcon (*Falco Amurensis*) is classified as a protected species, the department said. It reminded that hunting these birds or possessing their meat is a serious criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for up to three years under the provisions of the Act.

The migratory Amur Falcon, also known as Molulem in the local dialect, has begun its arrival in Naga-

land this month. These majestic birds embark on an incredible long-distance journey, traversing up to 22,000 kilometers in a single year, all the way from eastern Asia to South Africa and back during early autumn. Nagaland serves as a crucial stopover for these remarkable creatures, where they congregate in enormous flocks, sometimes numbering up to one lakh, to rest and refuel for a duration of three to four weeks. Their presence holds immense ecological importance, as they naturally regulate pest populations and participate in vital pollination activities.

The department said the dedicated efforts of both the state government and the public have significantly contributed to providing a secure passage for these avian travelers over the years. As a result, Nagaland has proudly earned the well-deserved title of the "Amur Falcon Capital of the World".

## 4 arrested, arms, explosives seized in Manipur

**IMPHAL, Oct 26:** Security forces arrested four persons including two militants from three different places in Manipur and seized arms and ammunition from their possession, police said on Thursday.

Two persons were arrested in Churachandpur district and one firearm along with 25 rounds of ammunition seized from them on Wednesday, they said.

The duo identified as Kammin Hangshing and Kammin Sei from Kangpokpi district were travelling in a four-wheeler and were stopped at the Torbung Bangla area checkpoint. They have been handed over to Churachandpur police station for further legal action.

Police nabbed two cadres of the proscribed United National Liberation Front (UNLF) from Imphal East and Imphal West districts and seized one 9 mm pistol along with 143 rounds of ammunition. (PTI)

## Indra Sena Reddy Nallu takes oath as Tripura Governor

**AGARTALA, Oct 26:** Indra Sena Reddy Nallu was sworn in on Thursday as the 20th Governor of Tripura. He was administered the oath of office by Tripura High Court Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh at a function held at the Raj Bhavan here.

Chief minister Manik Saha, his cabinet colleagues and chief secretary J K Sinha were among those present at the swearing-in ceremony.

"I thanked President Droupadi Murmu for reposing responsibility as the governor of Tripura. I will do my best to develop the state. I want to bring transparency, empowerment and accountability to the state of Tripura and will cooperate with the state government led by Chief Minister Manik Saha," he told reporters after the oath-taking ceremony.

Nallu, a senior BJP leader in Telangana and a three-time MLA of undivided Andhra Pradesh, succeeded Satyadev N Arya.

Justices Sabyasachi Datta Pukayastha and Biswajit Palit also took oath as the judges of the high court.

The number of judges in the high court now rose to five, including the chief justice. (PTI)

## Of 15,915 students living in 347 relief camps, 15,641 readmitted to nearby schools: Manipur minister

**IMPHAL, Oct 26:** Manipur Education Minister Thounaojam Basantakumar Singh on Thursday said out of 15,915 students staying in 347 relief camps, 15,641 have been "linked/re-admitted" to nearby schools.

Thounaojam told reporters that when violence erupted in the state on May 3, schools were shut for summer vacation, which was later extended owing to the deteriorating law and order situation. "Classes from 1 to 8 reopened from July 5 while higher classes resumed from August 10," he said.

The minister said as on October 23, attendance in schools was 77 per cent.

"In all, 26 schools — 18 in Churachandpur and three each in Imphal East and Jiribam districts — are yet to be reopened as they were being used as relief camps or for accommodating personnel of Central Armed Police Forces."

On steps being taken for welfare of displaced students, Thounaojam said, "The students have been admitted in nearby schools free of cost. Nodal officers have been appointed from the school education department to ensure free admissions and provide textbooks, notebooks, stationery items and uniforms."

Identity cards have been issued to displaced students and both the Board of Secondary Education of Manipur and Council of Higher Secondary Education Manipur are coordinating in retrieving documents and certificates that were



destroyed during the violence, he said.

"To cover 100 per cent syllabus, winter vacations will be curtailed and Saturdays will be full-day classes. A new order will be issued in this connection soon," Thounaojam said.

He informed that a dedicated educational TV channel called "Lairik" on Jio TV is providing free e-learning content to students.

The minister said the Chief Minister College Students Rehabilitation Scheme 2023 has been launched under which free admission will be provided.

Thounaojam said the government was seriously considering restoration of mobile internet services soon. "The government is willing to restore mobile internet services within a couple of days. Inputs have been taken from security agencies too," he added. (PTI)

## Museum showcasing artefacts of Hump Ops of WWII to be inaugurated soon: Arunachal CM

**PASIGHAT, Oct 26:** A unique museum showcasing remnants of an aircraft that crashed in Arunachal Pradesh during World War II is nearing completion and will be inaugurated soon, chief minister Pema Khandu has said.

"The Hump WW2 Museum' in Pasighat will pay tributes to 'Hump Operation', one of the most remarkable feats of aviation history, he said. During World War II, the Allied Forces led by the United States flew supplies over the Himalayas. The route was known as 'The Hump' because of the altitude of the Eastern Himalayas. Many of their aircraft went missing in Arunachal Pradesh and were never found in the remote jungles and mountains.

"The Hump route traverses regions of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Tibet, Yunnan (China) and Myanmar, and it is estimated that nearly 650 aircraft crashed in these areas during World War II due to the extreme flying conditions," Khandu said on Wednesday evening, after reviewing the progress of the ongoing work here.

"The Hump WW2 Museum' will showcase the remnants of an American aircraft that crashed in the state during World War II and other important artefacts related to these events.

"The museum is nearing completion and will be inaugurated soon," the chief minister said.

The museum is being set up at the initiative of Khandu and the state government is planning to invite the United States ambassador to India for the inauguration, an official said. In 1942, when the Japanese Army blocked the 1,150 km Burma Road, a mountain highway connecting Lashio in present-day Myanmar and Kunming in China, the US-led



allied forces had to undertake one of the biggest airlifts in aviation history. The pilots of the Allied forces nicknamed the route "The Hump" because their aircraft had to navigate deep gorges and then quickly fly over mountains rising beyond 10,000 feet. From 1942 to 1945, military aircraft transported nearly 6,50,000 tonnes of supplies like fuel, food and ammunition from airfields in Assam to those in Yunnan in China. The mountains of Arunachal Pradesh often get unpredictable weather within minutes, zero visibility within seconds and sudden heavy winds, making it difficult for planes and choppers to fly even now.

According to a US Embassy handout in 2017, investigators from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) returned to India that year to continue the search

## Urgent action sought against QNet scam in Manipur

### HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Oct 26:** Manipur, a state known for its rich cultural heritage, is grappling with a pressing issue involving individuals who, under the guise of entrepreneurship, have been engaging in self-serving actions. These individuals have established various business operations in collaboration with firms, making false promises to entice people, including the unemployed youth of Manipur and those displaced due to ongoing violence in the region. They utilize platforms like QNET to fabricate tales of substantial earnings, resulting in extensive scams that have financially devastated numerous individuals.

QNET Ltd, formerly known as QuestNet and GoldQuest, has faced a multitude of allegations and legal challenges related to its multi-level marketing (MLM) practices on a global scale, including India. These allegations often revolve around accusations of running a pyramid scheme

or employing deceptive MLM practices. One female victim shared a distressing story of how she was lured into the QNET scheme. Promised significant earnings and a secure business opportunity, she invested Rs 1.30 lakh. Instead, she underwent a series of training sessions that left her feeling deceived. She was even encouraged to recruit others into the scheme, contributing to the apparent pyramid-like structure.

Despite her efforts to recover her investment, her pleas were denied. Shockingly, she discovered that many others had fallen victim to this fraudulent operation. A list of key associates involved in this operation is provided in her complaint.

Another male victim reported a similar experience. Introduced to QNET by an individual named Dianarose Thokchom, he was promised significant earnings and introduced to what appeared to be a reputable online business opportunity. His investment of

₹ 1.90 lakh led to the realization that this was far from what was promised.

The experiences of victims like her and him shed light on the gravity of the situation. QNET's associates are suspected of fraudulent activities that exploit the hopes and dreams of unsuspecting individuals. Chat transcripts, payment proofs, and photographs support the victims' claims. To address this issue, victims are now calling for the registration of FIRs against the individuals and associates responsible for the QNET scam; a comprehensive investigation to uncover the full extent of these fraudulent activities and bring those responsible to justice; support and assistance for victims who have fallen prey to the QNET scheme; awareness campaigns to educate the public about MLM scams, their risks, and how to identify and avoid them; measures to prevent associates of QNET from continuing to defraud innocent individuals in Manipur.

for remains of US personnel missing since World War II.

In 2016, the DPAA deployed a team to northeast India for 30 days in search of remains of unaccounted-for US airmen. The 2017 was their fifth mission to India since 2013.

"There are approximately 400 US airmen missing in India, most of whose remains are believed to be located in the Himalayan Mountains in northeast India. "During World War II, the United States provided supplies to the Chinese Army by flying over the Himalayas, a route known as 'The Hump'. Many of these aircraft went missing and were never found in the mountainous terrain," the US embassy had said. (PTI)

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL GUWAHATI	
Suvarna Bhawan, House No. 12, New Town Path, Near Hanuman Mandir, G.S. Road, Ulubari, Guwahati- 781007 (Assam)	
Case No.: OA/513/2022	
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.	
YES BANK.	Exh. No.: 3746
VS	
MESSERS DIGARU CONSTRUCTION PRIVATE. LIMITED	
To,	
(1) MESSERS DIGARU CONSTRUCTION PRIVATE LIMITED	
NABANITA COMPLEX SONAPUR OLD MARKET, SONAPUR KAMRUP METRO SONAPUR 782402 Kamrup, ASSAM - 782402	
(2) MR BIPLAB JYOTI TARI SON OF SIDHESWAR TARI	
RESIDENT OF VILLAGE TOWN JUBI P8 KHETRI SUB DIVISION GUWAHATI DISTRICT KAMRUP METRO SONAPUR 782401, KAMRUP, ASSAM - 782401	
SUMMONS	
WHEREAS, OA/513/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 09/10/2023.	
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs.4791083.74/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).	
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you the defendants are directed as under:-	
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;	
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than prior notice and assets specified by the application under serial number 3A of the original application;	
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;	
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;	
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.	
You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the application and to appear before Presiding Officer on 18/12/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.	
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 13/10/2023.	
Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons	Registrar
Seal	Debt Recovery Tribunal
Note : Strike out whichever is not applicable.	
Guwahati	

No.KOK/Bldg/Tech-132/2018-19/3329

### SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five) only with a validity period of 180 (One hundred eighty) days, which will subsequently be to be converted and drawn up in the printed F-2 Form are invited from the intending Registered contractors of Class-I (A, B, C) & Class-II Categories of the Assam, P.W.D. (Bldg) for submitting tenders for the work stated below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 1:30 P.M on 31/10/2023 and will be opened on the same date and place at 2:00 P.M.

Name of Division	Name of Work	(Approx.) Estimated Value of work	Earnest money 1% for ST/SC/OBC/ MOBC & 2% for GNL	Cost of Tender Documents	Time of Completion
1	2	3	4	5	6
P.W.D. Kokrajhar Dist. & Chirang Dist. Territorial Building Division.	Repairing of Renovation of Birhangaon SD at Birhangaon in Chirang District, BTC, Assam.	Rs.19,04,949.00	Rs.19,100.00 & Rs.38,200.00	Rs.600.00	4 (Four) Months
	Repairing and Renovation of Doctor's Quarter of Dotma BPHC cum CHC at Dotma under Kokrajhar District.	Rs.13,40,754.00	Rs.13,500.00 & Rs.27,000.00	Rs.500.00	3 (Three) Months

Detailed N.I.T. may be seen in all working hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent up to 1:30 P.M in all working days from 27/10/2023 to 02/11/2023 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form I.P.O./Demand Draft/Bank Draft. / C.D duly pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Kokrajhar District & Chirang District Territorial Building Division, Kokrajhar. The Contractors should submit attested copy of Registration Certificate for the year 2023-2024, latest clearance Certificate of Income Tax, GST, along with tenders. In case the office is remain closed/ bandh for any reason on tender papers issuing/receiving/opening date, then the same will be issued/received/opened in the next working day.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W.D.,  
Kokrajhar Dist. & Chirang Dist.  
Territorial Building Division, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)-2023-24/670

## KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL CENTRAL SELECTION BOARD (HEALTH & FW)

### KAAC::SECRETARIAT DIPHU-782460

No. KAAC/CCB/Esstt-1/H&FW/Advt./2023-24/13

Dated 25/10/2023

### MODIFICATION VIVA-VOCE NOTICE

In partial modification to this office Viva-Voce Notice letter No. KAAC/CCB/Esstt-1/H&FW/Advt./2023-24/13 Dated 09/10/2023, it is hereby informed to all concerned that the date of Viva-Voce Test of deferent categories of post under Central Selection Board (Health & FW) Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu will be held as per schedule date, time and venue as mentioned below:-

Sl. No.	Name of Post (s)	Date of Viva-Voca Test	Timing	Venue
1.	Peon	02-11-2023	10:00 am to 4:00 pm	O/o-Jt. Director of Health Service, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
2	Ward Girl	02-11-2023	10:00 am to 4:00 pm	O/o-Jt. Director of Health Service, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
3	Ward Boy	03-11-2023	10:00 am to 4:00 pm	O/o-Jt. Director of Health Service, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
4	OPD Attendant	03-11-2023	10:00 am to 4:00 pm	O/o-Jt. Director of Health Service, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
5	Chowkidar	03-11-2023	10:00 am to 4:00 pm	O/o-Jt. Director of Health Service, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
6	OT Attendant	04-11-2023	10:00 am to 4:00 pm	O/o-Jt. Director of Health Service, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
7	Cleaner	04-11-2023	10:00 am to 4:00 pm	O/o-Jt. Director of Health Service, Karbi Anglong, Diphu

The candidate will report to the venue 30 minutes before the schedule time for interview.

Sd/-  
Secretary & I/c-Member Secretary,  
Central Selection Board (Health & FW)  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu

# CM Khattar highlights plans, achievements

**CHANDIGARH, Oct 26:** Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar Thursday presented a report card on the completion of nine years of his government, highlighting several achievements as well as people-oriented and public welfare programmes carried out in his tenure.

Khattar also recalled that when the BJP formed the government in Haryana for the first time on its own in 2014, many people questioned his capability in running the government as he was apparently targeting his political opponents. "We have now completed four years of the second term," he said.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, which fell short of majority in the 2019 assembly polls, formed a post-poll alliance with Jan-nayak Janta Party to form the government. Addressing the media here and flanked by minister Kanwar Pal and senior officers of

his government, Khattar said his government had announced to work on five S-- 'Shiksha, Swasth, Suraksha, 'Swambhiman' and 'Swavlamban' with good governance.

Khattar said when he took over the reins of the state in 2014, everybody knew what was the state of governance at that time as he was targeting the previous Congress government. There were talks of discrimination, corruption and there was an atmosphere of despair at that time, he said.

"After being fed up with the atmosphere of despair, the people of Haryana chose this government with hope," he added.

He also said questions were raised at that time that "this man does not have any experience and without any experience, how many days will he be able to run the government".

Recalling his sharp response to the Con-

gress in 2014 after becoming chief minister, Khattar said, "We don't have the kind of experience they had of indulging in loot and corruption, but I certainly have the experience of serving the people".

"Nepotism and regionalism were replaced by a commitment to equitable development," he said.

The 69-year-old senior BJP leader spoke about several plans and programmes including his government's flagship Parivar Pehchan Patra (family ID scheme), and Meri Fasal Mera Byora, compensation to farmers, welfare schemes for the poor and other sections etc as he emphasized on using the technology for good governance.

The PPP (family ID) helps in framing

policies and programmes for the welfare of people, he said.

He also said the prime minister had also praised the state's PPP scheme and even asked the states to examine the possibility of implementing it.

Khattar said the state's sex ratio (number of females per 1,000 of males) has improved from 871 in 2014 to 932 at present, adding that he expects it to improve further. On the agriculture front, Khattar said his government raised the compensation amount for crop loss because of natural calamity from ₹ 6,000 per acre in 2013 to ₹ 15,000 per acre.

He said in the last nine years, his government disbursed a compensation of ₹

11,000 crore to farmers while the previous government paid ₹ 1,158 crore in 10 years.

On the health segment, Khattar said the number of medical colleges in the state rose to 15 under his government as against six in 2014, adding that eight more medical colleges will come up in the state. The number of MBBS seats has risen to 2,185 as of now in the state as against 700 in 2014, the chief minister said.

The assembly elections are due in Haryana next year.

"The state's economic landscape transformed with abundant agricultural production benefiting farmers, thriving industries creating jobs, and world-class infrastructure attracting economic growth and investments. Social welfare initiatives uplifted marginalised populations, instilling hope and self-reliance in the state's youth, thereby contributing to overall

progress," he said.

Highlighting nine significant tasks in nine years, Khattar said during the present state government's tenure, many milestones have been achieved, but primarily, creating Parivar Pehchan Patra, "we are effectively providing the benefit of 397 schemes and services to 45 lakh families from the comfort of their homes". Clean drinking water has been provided through pipelines to every rural household (31.41 lakh households), and 24-hour electricity is being supplied to 5,791 villages (86 per cent of the total villages), he said.

The innovative Antyodaya Saral Portal has brought 675 schemes and services from 54 departments online, connecting the government directly with its citizens. This not only instilled confidence but also led to the removal of 36.75 lakh fake beneficiaries from 141 schemes, he said. (PTI)

## ED summons CM Gehlot's son in FEMA case

*ED raids premises of Rajasthan Cong president in paper leak matter*

**JAIPUR, Oct 26:** Turning the heat on the ruling Congress in poll-bound Rajasthan, the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday raided the premises of state Congress president Govind Singh Dotasra in Jaipur and Sikar as part of a money laundering probe into the alleged exam paper leak case and summoned chief minister Ashok Gehlot's son in a foreign exchange violation case.

Besides the premises of the 59-year-old Dotasra, a former minister for school education, the agency is also searching the premises of a party candidate from Mahua seat in Dausa, Omprakash Hudla, and some others, official sources said.

The raids are being undertaken under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). An armed escort of central paramilitary force CRPF accompanied the ED teams.

The Congress slammed the Centre over the ED's action against its leaders in Rajasthan and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of taking the help of probe agencies in fighting polls, and said people would give the BJP a befitting reply. Chief minister Gehlot flayed the ED action, saying terror has been unleashed in the country. He alleged the BJP was targeting him through ED raids as they could not topple his government.

Elections for the 200-member Rajasthan Assembly will be held on November 25. The results will be declared on December 3.

Dotasra is the party candidate from Lachmangarh seat of Sikar against BJP's Subhash Maharia. He is also the sitting MLA from this seat while Hudla is an independent MLA and the Congress has fielded him from the Mahua assembly seat this time.

The money laundering case stems from FIRs filed by the Ra-

jasthan Police against the accused.

The accused, "in connivance with each other leaked the question paper of general knowledge of senior teacher grade II competitive examination, 2022 which was scheduled to be conducted by RPSC (Rajasthan Public Service Commission) on 21.12.2022, 22.12.2022 and 24.12.2022 and provided it to appearing candidates for the consideration amount of ₹ 8-10 lakh per candidate," the ED had said. Former Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) member Babulal Katara and two other people identified as Anil Kumar Meena and Bhupendra Saran were arrested by the ED in this case.

The agency also summoned the Rajasthan chief minister's son Vaibhav Gehlot for questioning in a case related to alleged contravention of the foreign exchange law. Vaibhav Gehlot has been asked to appear before the federal agency's headquarters in New Delhi on Friday, the sources said.

However, he is expected to seek a fresh date for appearance as he needs to gather documents dating from 2011 till now to furnish them to the ED investigators, they said. FEMA proceedings are civil in nature as compared to the criminal legal procedures under the PMLA.

The summons are linked to the recent ED raids against Rajasthan based hospitality group Triton Hotels & Resorts Pvt. Ltd., Vardha Enterprises Pvt. Ltd. and its directors and promoters Shiv Shankar Sharma, Rattan Kant Sharma and others.

The agency had searched the group and its promoters for three days in August at locations in Jaipur, Udaipur, Mumbai and Delhi.

Rattan Kant Sharma's alleged links with Vaibhav Gehlot are

under the scanner of the ED and the agency is expected to question and record his statement under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). He has been a business partner of Vaibhav Gehlot in a car rental company in the past.

Unaccounted cash of ₹ 1.2 crore was seized by the ED after these searches. Soon after the action against its leaders in Rajasthan, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that agencies such as the ED, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Income Tax Department become the real 'panna pramukh' (party workers) of the BJP as soon as elections come.

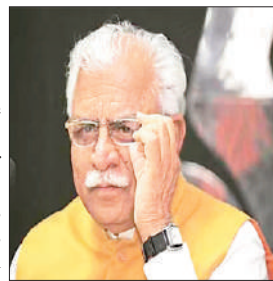
"Seeing its certain defeat in Rajasthan, the Bharatiya Janata Party made its last throw of the dice! After Chhattisgarh, the ED has also entered the election campaign in Rajasthan and started action against Congress leaders," Kharge said.

"The dictatorship of the Modi government is fatal for democracy. We will continue to fight against the misuse of agencies, and the public will give a befitting reply to the BJP," the Congress chief said in a post on X.

Addressing a press conference here, the Rajasthan chief minister claimed that ED raids happen wherever elections are held. Be it Chhattisgarh, Karnataka or Himachal Pradesh, ED raids happened just before elections, he said.

"Raids happened but the Congress won the elections. The situation is worrisome. They have unleashed terror in the country," he said.

Citing data, Gehlot said that 112 searches by the ED happened during 10 years of UPA rule and charge sheets were filed in 104 cases. But after 2014, as many as 3,010 raids happened and charge sheets were filed in 881 cases, he said. (PTI)



## OFFICE OF THE HEADMISTRESS LANGSOLIET HIGH SCHOOL LANGSOLIET, KARBI-ANGLONG, ASSAM

**Memo No: LHS/E/Apptt./2023/1610**

**Dated: Langsoliyet, 27-10-2023**

### Advertisement

Applications are invited from the eligible candidates, who are citizens of India as defined under Article 5-8 of the Constitution of India, in the prescribed Standard Form of Application published in part IX, Assam Gazette along with copies of certificates, marksheets, other testimonials and documents, duly attested by a gazetted officer, as well as 02 (two) copies of recent passport size photographs, contact information and valid Age/Address proof documents, for filling up of the following vacant posts at Langsoliyet High School (at newly established Adhoc - Higher Secondary Level - Arts) under the Inspectorate of School, KADC, Diphu.

**Vide Letter No:IS/KAAC/Recog/HSS/2022/9865-67**

**Dated: 28-09-2022**

SL. No	Name of Post	GIA p. m	No of Vacancies	Minimum Educational Qualifications
1	Subject Teacher – English	16,200	1	Masters degree with English and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
2	Subject Teacher – Assamese (MIL)	16,200	1	Masters degree with Assamese and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
3	Subject Teacher – Hindi (MIL)	16,200	1	Masters degree with Hindi, and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
4	Subject Teacher – Economics	16,200	1	Masters degree with Economics and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
5	Subject Teacher – Education	16,200	1	Masters degree with Education and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
6	Subject Teacher – Pol. Science	16,200	1	Masters degree with Pol. Science and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
7	Subject Teacher – Geography	16,200	1	Masters degree with Geography and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
8	Subject Teacher – History	16,200	1	Masters degree with History and B.Ed from recognized institution, both with 50% marks, and atleast 2 years of verified teaching experience
9	UDA	12,400	1	Bachelors degree from recognized institution with 50% marks, verified computer-related work experience of atleast 2 years, and diploma certification in computer applications from recognized institution
10	Gr. IV	8,000	1	Higher Secondary from recognized board with 50% marks

**Last Date of Submission of Application: 04-11-2023**

**Terms and Conditions:-**

1. Age –Candidate should not be less than 18 years and not more than 38 as on 01/01/2023 for Gen/OBC/MOBC and 43 years for ST/SC.
2. The ST/SC and MOBC candidates will be required to submit caste certificate along with the application.
3. Documents related to valid Employment Exchange Registration must be enclosed with the application.
4. Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected on the spot.
5. Application must reach the office of the Langsoliyet High School on or before 04-11-2023.
6. Application received either by post or by hand after the last date/time of submission of application will not be accepted under any circumstances.
7. The selection decisions undertaken by the hiring panel shall be final and binding.

Sd/-  
Headmistress  
Langsoliyet High School

## LS Ethics Committee calls TMC MP Mahua Moitra on October 31

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** The Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha has asked Trinamool Congress member Mahua Moitra to appear before it on October 31 in connection with the cash-for-query allegations against her.

After a meeting of the panel on Thursday, its head and BJP MP Vinod Kumar Sonkar also said they will seek assistance from the Ministries of Home Affairs and IT in probing the allegations against the TMC MP.



Moitra has been asked to appear before the panel on October 31, Sonkar said.

The panel on Thursday recorded statements of lawyer Jai Anant Dehadrai and BJP leader Nishikant Dubey in connection with the matter.

In his complaint to Speaker Om Birla, BJP member Dubey has cited documents shared by Dehadrai to back his cash-for-query allegations against Moitra. Birla had referred the matter to the Ethics Committee. (PTI)

## 9-day Yamuna Yatra from Delhi to Mathura against heavy pollution in river

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Ahead of Chhath festival, several social-religious organisations led by Yamuna Sansad will embark on a Yamuna Yatra from Delhi to Mathura to draw attention towards heavy pollution in the river.

Under the Yatra, to be flagged off from Chhath Ghat near ITO in New Delhi on October 28, thousands of people will march following the course of Yamuna towards Mathura, Yamuna Sansad convener Ravi Shankar Tiwari said at a press conference. Covering more than 185 Km, the nine-day march will conclude in Mathura on November 5.

"The Yatra will have eight stopovers during which people living along the Yamuna will be invited to discuss pollution in the river and ways to solve the problem with full public support," Tiwari said. Several other organisations including Narmada Mission led by seer Sri Dada Guru will take active part in the Yatra, he said. The seer has been on a mission to conserve and preserve Narmada



from human interventions and marched more than 3.200 Km to create awareness among the people, Tiwari said. The Yamuna Yatra will be flagged off from Chhath Ghat, by nationalist thinker and former BJP veteran KN Govindacharya. A havan will also be performed praying Varun dev (jal ke devta) for restoration of Yamuna to its clean form, he added Govindacharya said around 500 metres of land around the rivers

should be kept free from any construction work so that their flow is not hindered and no encroachment takes place. The country should be aware about its rivers and their conservation and people should be motivated to actively engage in environmental service. The governments having huge resources at their disposal should use it to preserve the rivers and prevent them from turning into drains of urban sewer, he said. (PTI)

# Rajasthan CM targets BJP after ED action

## 'They've unleashed terror in country'

**JAIPUR, Oct 26:** Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot Thursday slammed the BJP after ED summoned his son Vaibhav and raided the premises of the Congress state president Govind Singh Dotasra, saying terror has been unleashed in the country.

He claimed that Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids happen wherever elections are held. Be it Chhattisgarh, Karnataka or Himachal Pradesh, ED raids happened just before elections, the chief minister said.

"Raids happened but the Congress won the elections. The situation is worrisome. They have unleashed terror in the country," Gehlot told reporters at a press conference here.

Asserting that the Congress "will not be scared no matter how hard they try, he alleged the BJP was targeting him through ED



raids as they could not topple his government.

"We will win the election," the Rajasthan chief minister asserted.

Citing data, Gehlot said that 112 searches by the ED happened during 10 years of UPA

rule and charge sheets were filed in 104 cases. But after 2014, as many as 3,010 raids happened and charge sheets were filed in 881 cases, he said.

The Congress state in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, state ministers Mahesh Joshi

and Pratap Singh Khachariyawas were among those also present at the press conference.

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday raided the premises of Rajasthan Congress president Govind Singh Dotasra and Omprakash Hudla, the party's candidate from Mahua assembly seat, as part of a money laundering probe into the alleged exam paper leak case in the poll-bound state.

The federal probe agency has also summoned chief minister Ashok Gehlot's son Vaibhav Gehlot for questioning in a case related to alleged contravention of the foreign exchange law.

After the raids, Congress workers sat on a dharna in Sikar and Jaipur and raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. (PTI)

## Kerala govt opposes NCERT's proposal to rename 'India' as 'Bharat' in school textbooks

**KOLLAM (KER), Oct 26:** The Left government in Kerala on Thursday strongly opposed the NCERT panel's suggestion to replace "India" with "Bharat" in school textbooks.

The CPI(M)-led dispensation alleged that this was a form of "parochial politics" with a hidden agenda, something the southern state could not accept under any circumstances.

A high-level committee for social sciences, appointed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to revise the school curriculum, has recommended the replacement of "India" with "Bharat" in textbooks for all classes nationwide. Addressing a press conference, state education minister V Sivanakutty stated that the state would reject the panel's recommendation to change the country's name.

He asserted that there was a deliberate effort to "saffronise" the entire curriculum, denying the new generation the opportunity to learn the authentic history of the country. Sivanakutty alleged that this national-level curriculum revision was incompatible with democratic values.

"Every citizen has the right to use India or Bharat as mentioned in the Constitution," he pointed out.

Asking to use only "Bharat" in the textbook was with a "hidden agenda and parochial politics," and Kerala cannot accept it, he said while explaining the government's stand. In a federal country, the opinion of states should also have been sought before taking significant decisions, but it is not happening in India now, the minister alleged.

He recalled that Kerala had responded "academically" when a similar attempt to "distort history" took place at the national level during a previous curriculum revision.

Citing figures, he said out of the 33 crore children of school-going age, only 25 crore actually attend educational institutions. The remaining are not in school for various reasons.

As a progressive society, Kerala bears the responsibility to expose attempts to evade such critical issues, Sivanakutty said.

The minister further said that since education is a subject on the concurrent list of the Constitution, the state has the right to take its own decision in that area. If the NCERT intends to give children, through its textbooks, content that is "unconstitutional, unscientific, and a distortion of real history," Kerala would defend it by raising academic debates, he said. (PTI)

## Cong trying to politicise ED action in Rajasthan: BJP

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot and other Congress leaders are trying to "politicise" the Enforcement Directorate's action as it has moved in to catch "big fishes" who were involved in the examination paper leak case, the BJP said on Thursday. The BJP's reaction came after the Congress slammed the Centre over the ED action against its leaders in Rajasthan and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of taking the help of probe agencies in fighting the November 25 assembly polls in the state. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday raided the premises of Rajasthan Congress president Govind Singh Dotasra in Jaipur and Sikar as part of a money laundering probe into the exam paper leak case and summoned chief minister Ashok Gehlot's son in a foreign exchange violation case. Gehlot flayed the ED action, saying terror has been unleashed in the country. He alleged the BJP was targeting him through ED raids as they could not topple his government. Hitting back, senior BJP leader and union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat dismissed the charge as "baseless" and said Gehlot and other Congress leaders are trying to politicise the probe agency's action out of "frustration". (PTI)

## National Games will further sportsmanship and unity: PM Modi

**PANAJI, Oct 26:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is scheduled to inaugurate the 37th National Games 2023 in Goa on Thursday evening, hailed the sporting event saying it will further sportsmanship and unity by bringing together athletes from across the country.

The National Games are being held in Goa for the first time. PM Modi will inaugurate the games at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Fatorda in South Goa around 6.30 pm, officials said.

Taking to social media platform X, PM Modi said, "Today evening, I will be in Goa to inaugurate the 37th National Games. These games will further sportsmanship and unity, bringing together athletes from across the nation. I am confident the games will celebrate talent, hard work and the love for sports!"

Union sports minister Anurag Thakur, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and others would be present for the inaugural event, the officials said.

A total of 28 states and union territories are participating in the National Games, they said. (PTI)

## ED raids residences of TMC minister Jyotipriyo Mallick, others over 'ration scam'

**KOLKATA, Oct 26:** Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials began an early Thursday morning search at the residences of West Bengal minister Jyotipriyo Mallick in connection with an ongoing probe into the alleged multi-crore ration distribution scam.

The ED sleuths raided two flats belonging to Mallick, the state's forest minister, at Kolkata's Salt Lake area, supported by a team of central forces, an officer said.

The ruling Trinamool Congress termed the raids as "nothing but political vendetta" amid festivities in the state.

Search operations were also underway at eight other flats including the residences of Mallick's former personal assistant, while he was the food minister, he said.

"There are eight officers conducting the exercise at Mallick's residences. We are also conducting searches at his former personal assistant's residence in Dum Dum, and at a few other places," the ED officer told PTI.

The central probe agency had arrested one person who allegedly has close links to the TMC as well as Mallick, he said.

Mallick is being questioned about his connection with the ar-



rested person, the officer said, adding, the minister's bank accounts are also being scrutinised.

TMC leader and state minister Shashi Panja criticised the raids at Mallick's residences, asserting that "this is an attack on the culture of Bengal at the time of 'Bijoya Dasami'". This is nothing but vendetta politics. We have seen there were raids at our leaders' places before Durga Puja when we were demonstrating, demanding release of (MGNREGA) funds."

"We are not surprised at such search operations as they (central agencies) have identified certain targets... And this will continue," Panja alleged.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Rahul Sinha claimed that the TMC is "deeply mired in corruption", with several of its leaders facing allegations of corruption.

"Whenever the ED or CBI conducts raids at TMC leaders' residences, they cry foul and describe the exercise as being politically motivated. The reality is... nearly every TMC leader is facing corruption allegations," Sinha said.

Officials of central probe agencies recently conducted searches at various locations in the state, including at the residence of Food and Supplies Minister Rathin Ghosh and Urban Development Minister Firhad Hakim. (PTI)

## 'Climate change, biodiversity loss one indivisible crisis'

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** More than 200 health journals globally have come together to simultaneously publish an editorial calling on world leaders and health professionals to recognise that "climate change and biodiversity loss are one indivisible crisis".

They must thus be tackled together to preserve health and avoid catastrophe, said the editors-in-chief of leading journals, including The Lancet, The British Medical Journal (BMJ), the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) and the National Medical Journal of India.

Urging the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare this indivisible crisis as a global health emergency, the authors say that it is a "dangerous mistake" to respond to the climate crisis and the nature crisis as if they were separate challenges.

"The climate crisis and loss of biodiversity both damage human health, and they are interlinked. It makes no sense for climate and nature scientists and politicians to consider the health and nature crises in separate silos," said Kamran Abbasi, Editor in Chief of The BMJ in a separate statement.

Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, air pollution, and the spread of infectious diseases are some of the major health threats exacerbated by climate change and thus, human health is damaged directly by both the climate crisis and the nature crisis, they said, stressing that the poorest and most vulnerable communi-



ties often bear the highest burden of this damage.

For example, the authors said, pollution threatens access to clean water, fundamental to human health, by damaging water quality and causing a rise in water-borne diseases.

They also cited the example of ocean acidification which has reduced the quality and quantity of seafood that billions of people rely on for food and their livelihoods.

On biodiversity loss, the authors write that it undermines good nutrition and constrains the discovery of new medicines derived from nature.

Further, they write that emergence of new diseases and pandemics have heightened, owing to land use changes that have forced a closer contact between thousands of species, thereby

increasing the exchange of pathogens.

While the biodiversity conference (COP) of December 2022 agreed on the conservation and management of at least 30 per cent of the world's land, coastal areas, and oceans by 2030, the authors noted that the climate and nature scientists providing the evidence for COPs are largely separate.

Many of these commitments have not been met, they said in the editorial.

"This has allowed ecosystems to be pushed further to the brink, greatly increasing the risk of breakdowns in the functioning of nature," the authors warn.

"Even if we could keep global warming below an increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels, we could still cause catastrophic harm to health by destroying nature," they said.

This risk, combined with the severe impacts on health already occurring, means the WHO should declare the indivisible climate and nature crisis as a global health emergency, before or at the World Health Assembly in May 2024, they write.

"Health professionals are highly trusted by the public, and they have a central role to play in articulating this important message and advocating for politicians to recognise and take urgent action to address the global health emergency. Over 200 health journals are today sending an unequivocal message," said Abbasi. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Israeli troops launch

Qatar-based network showed footage of his grief upon entering a hospital and seeing his dead son. Dahdouh and other mourners attended the funerals on Thursday wearing the blue flak jackets used by reporters in the Palestinian territories. The Israeli military says it only strikes militant targets and accuses Hamas of operating among civilians in densely-populated Gaza. Palestinian militants have fired rocket barrages into Israel since the war began.

Israel has vowed to crush Hamas' capacity to govern Gaza or threaten it again, while also saying it doesn't want to reoccupy the territory from which it withdrew soldiers and settlers in 2005.

That could prove a daunting challenge, since Hamas is deeply rooted in Palestinian society, with political and charity organizations as well as a formidable armed wing.

Benny Gantz, a retired general and a member of Israel's war Cabinet, said the any possible ground offensive would be only "one stage in a long-term process that includes security, political and social aspects that will take years."

"The campaign will soon ramp up with greater force," he added.

During the overnight raid, soldiers killed fighters and destroyed militant infrastructure and anti-tank missile launching positions, the military said. It said that no Israelis were wounded. There was no immediate confirmation of any Palestinian casualties.

Israeli Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, a military spokesman, said the limited incursion was "part of our preparations for the next stages of the war." Israel also said it had also carried out around 250 airstrikes across Gaza in the last 24 hours, targeting tunnel shafts, rocket launchers and other militant infrastructure.

The Gaza health ministry says more than 6,500 Palestinians have been killed in the war. That figure includes the disputed toll from an explosion at a hospital last week. The fighting has killed more than 1,400 people in Israel, mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack, according to the Israeli government. Hamas also holds at least 224 hostages in Gaza. The warning by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, over depleting fuel supplies raised alarm that the humanitarian crisis could quickly worsen. Gaza's population has also been running out of food, water and medicine.

About 1.4 million of Gaza's 2.3 million residents have fled their homes, with nearly half of them crowded into UN shelters. Hundreds of thousands remain in northern Gaza, despite Israel ordering them to evacuate to the south, saying those who remain might be considered "accomplices" of Hamas. In recent days, Israel has let more than 60 trucks with aid enter from Egypt, which aid workers say is insufficient and only a tiny fraction of what was being brought in before the war. Israel is still barring deliveries of fuel — needed to power generators — saying it believes that Hamas will take it. An official with the International Committee of the Red Cross said that it hopes to bring in eight trucks filled with vital medical supplies.

"This is a small amount of what is required, a drop in the ocean," said William Schomburg, head of the sub-delegation in Gaza. "We are trying to establish a pipeline." (AP)

## Himanta fires 'religious

Ram temple in the last 3-4 years. Rahul Gandhi goes to temples during elections, but he doesn't go to the Ram mandir (in Ayodhya) as he is scared that people of Babar will get annoyed and abuse him," he added.

He hit out at the Congress government in Chhattisgarh over its promise of loan waiver to farmers, and said the Congress had made the same promise in the last election but did not fulfil it completely. "Why did farmers in the state have to take loans? It is because their children do not have jobs. The Baghel government should have worked to generate employment," he added. Elections to the 90-member Chhattisgarh assembly will be held in two phases - on November 7 and 17. (PTI)

## ULFA (pro-talk) seeks

ULFA (pro-talk) vice president Pradip Gogoi said major problems of the people will be solved right from the grassroots level after the agreement is signed. "The ULFA will be dissolved then and the organization will not enter politics to contest polls.

If members want to take part in elections, it will be their personal or individual effort," he said. More than 200 cadres above the rank of sergeant of the organization participated in a deliberation held at a resort in the Kaziranga National Park on Wednesday. On youths continuing to join the ULFA (Independent), Chetia said they are going to the banned outfit these days out of "only selfish motive". "Many of them come back as soon as they cannot withstand the hardship of fugitive life," he added. (PTI)

## 30 lakh EVMs, over year

The cost can go even higher if local body polls are also held together with Lok Sabha and assembly polls. The high-level committee on "one nation, one election" headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind is examining holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, municipalities and panchayats, keeping in view the existing framework under the Constitution and other statutory provisions.

According to sources, the poll watchdog in its interaction with the Law Commission also listed out challenges such as need for more warehousing facilities for EVMs. Referring to the nearly one-and-half years of preparatory time, they said two public sector undertakings -- ECIL and BEL -- who manufacture EVMs would also need to be informed well in advance.

They said the semiconductor industry should also be stable to cater to the enhanced demand. When the iteration took place, there were problems related to the semiconductor industry which seem to have settled now, they pointed out. The EC would also need time for 'first-level check' (FLC) of EVMs before polls. The EC has already commenced FLCs for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in a phased manner across India. During FLCs, EVMs, including VVPATs, machines are checked for mechanical flaws by engineers of Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. (ECIL). Faulty machines are returned to the manufacturers for repair or replacement. A mock poll is also held to check the two machines in the presence of representatives of political parties. (PTI)

## Land warfare will remain

"I mentioned about the lessons we drew from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. And if I can delve on one of the key lessons -- I think land will continue to be a key domain of warfare, especially in cases where you have contested borders just as in our case," he said.

"I think the victory marker will have to be in the land domain. The salience of land domain, I think, is going to be extremely important in our case," he said. Talking about India's rising global profile, Gen Pande said India will continue to play a key role in the Indo-Pacific region.

"With the enhanced stature, we will have additional responsibilities and with this we will have certain challenges to encounter," he said. The chief of army staff said "In all of this, we need to remain proactive rather than responding or reacting. We should be able to shape our strategies." He said there will be responsibilities, opportunities and challenges for India in the Indo-Pacific. "I think the nation is on the rise, be it the economic growth, technological progress or the influence that the nation wields in the world arena," Gen Pande said. He described the last one year period for the army as "challenging yet satisfying".

"As far as the operational situation is concerned, on the borders, I would say it is stable and we have dealt with internal security challenges in a manner that is expected of us," he said.

The chief of army staff also noted that the ongoing reform process in the army is being implemented as planned. "About a year back, we spelt out our transformation roadmap. In that we defined five distinct foundations as pillars of transformation," he said.

"These were restructuring and right-sizing of the force, modernization and technology infusion, refining and improving our systems and processes to improve combat and functional efficiencies, jointness and human resources management," he said. He said the progress of the reform process has been good. The army chief also listed technology infusion into his force as a key focus area.

In his remarks, Gen Pande also spoke about how national security is emerging as a crucial aspect in the geopolitical competition.

"What we are seeing is the centrality of national interest in this global flux...The salience of national security is growing in the entire international system," he said. Highlighting the changing character of war, Gen Pande said "by this I am alluding to what we are witnessing in the context of Russia-Ukraine conflict." "You have new domains -- be it cyber, be it space, be it information warfare, battle of narratives and the rest. All these indicate that we need to be better prepared and future ready to be able to meet future security challenges," he said. "Looking at the future security challenges, I think we need to transform and that is what we are doing," he added. (PTI)

## EC issues notice to

This country is a country of the Hindus and will belong to Hindus. Do not teach us secularism, we do not need to learn secularism from you," he said. The Congress on Wednesday filed a complaint with the Election Commission against Sarma for his remarks against Akbar, the party's candidate from Kawardha. The party alleged that Sarma's remarks showed a clear-cut intention to incite sections of society against one another. While issuing the notice to Sarma, the Election Commission reminded him of a provision in the poll code which states that "no party or candidate shall include in any activity which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes and communities, religious or linguistic." Elections to the 90-member Chhattisgarh assembly will be held in two phases - on November 7 and 17. (PTI)

## Rich nations to emit

developed countries are not projected to meet their 2030 NDC targets. This failure has implications for the limited global carbon budget available now, especially for developing countries like India." He said that to fulfill their responsibility as historical emitters and financially capable economies, developed countries must do more than meet the global average in emission reduction. The projections also reveal that developed countries rely on drastically ramping up emission reductions after 2030. Even if all developed countries were to reach net zero by 2050, they would require more than four times the average annual reductions they achieved from 1990 to 2020.

CEEW estimates that even in a net-zero-by-2050 scenario, developed countries would collectively emit over 40-50 per cent of the remaining global carbon budget left for the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming target, even though they are home to less than a fifth of the world's population.

Sumit Prasad, programme lead, CEEW, said, "The climate journey of developed countries -- historical and proposed -- does not show deep enough emission reductions to reflect climate leadership. This means that the burden to mitigate global warming shifts to developing countries, which is problematic in a context where financial support to developing countries to achieve this transition has not been forthcoming, as promised." In their submissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) regarding their expectations from the global stocktake, a two-year review of the collective global action to achieve the Paris Agreement's goals, many developing countries emphasised that significant gaps exist in developed countries' pre-2020 ambition and implementation, and that their 2030 and 2050 mitigation ambitions are inadequate.

Initiated in Glasgow in 2021, the first-ever global stocktake will conclude at the annual climate talks (COP28) in Dubai in December and set the stage for the next few years of global action to cut down the greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change.

According to the UNFCCC, the recognition that developed countries' 2030 mitigation ambitions are inadequate may also find its way into the outcome of the global stocktake. (PTI)

## Kangana Ranaut visits Ram temple in Ayodhya ahead of 'Tejas' release



**AYODHYA, Oct 26:** The Ram temple will become "the biggest place of holy pilgrimage for Hindus", said actor Kangana Ranaut on Thursday after she visited the shrine to seek blessings for her upcoming film "Tejas".

The temple plays a pivotal role in "Tejas", set to be released in theatres on Friday and featuring Ranaut in the role of an Indian Air Force pilot, added the actor.

"What the Vatican City is to Christians, the Ram Temple of Ayodhya will become the biggest place of holy pilgrimage for Hindus. We will see it become such a grand temple, something that the Hindus have wished for since centuries. It will become a grand symbol of our country and a beautiful link to Sanatan culture in the world," Ranaut told reporters here.

"The temple also plays an important role in our film 'Tejas'. The film is based on the Indian Air Force and we have come here (to seek blessings ahead of the release)," she further said.

Ranaut, 36, also posted pictures of her visit to the temple on Instagram.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday accepted the invitation to attend the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, which is expected to take place on January 22. Ranaut's "Tejas" is written and directed by Sarvesh Mewara. (PTI)

## It's about past coming back to haunt present: Neil Burger on new film 'The Marsh King's Daughter'

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Filmmaker Neil Burger says his latest movie "The Marsh King's Daughter", a tense thriller set in the American wilderness, explores themes of family legacy and the past coming back to haunt a person's present. As a director, Burger has been working in Hollywood for over 20 years and has built a varied filmography that includes movies like "The Illusionist", "Limitless", "Divergent" and "The Voyagers".

All of his films, the director said, have a recurring motif which is a question he seeks an answer to -- "Can a person become the best version of themselves?"

"I've done a sci-fi movie, a movie set in the past which was 'The Illusionist' and now this movie, which is a thriller set in the wilderness. I'm interested in different things, but on the other hand, there is sort of a thread that goes through them all thematically," Burger told PTI in a virtual interview.

"It is this idea of change. Can you sort of throw off the legacy of how you grew up or whatever behaviour you were forced to do or whatever person you were forced to become? It's also about empowerment. Can you become who you want to be or can you become empowered? And can you become sort of the best version of yourself? 'Limitless' is about that. Even 'Divergent' is about that and this movie is about that as well," the 59-year-old added.

"The Marsh King's Daughter", based on author Karen Dionne's 2017 novel of the same title, is set to be released in Indian theatres on November 3. It is distributed by PVR INOX Pictures in the country.

Starring Daisy Ridley and Ben Mendelsohn, the movie is about Helena Pelletier, a young mother who carries a complicated legacy as the daughter of an incarcerated murderer, known as the Marsh King.

When she finds out that her estranged father has broken out of prison, Helena sets out to outmanoeuvre the man who taught her everything about surviving in the wilderness, as per the official plotline.

Burger said he read the script, penned by Elle Smith and Mark L Smith, during the COVID-19 pandemic and wanted to make the film on the subject.

"I'd been looking to make a film set in nature. And in this movie, nature and the wilderness are a big part of the story. It is a sort of its own character in the movie. (PTI)



## Priyanka Chopra Jonas on her way to India to attend Jio MAMI Mumbai Int'l Film Festival

**MUMBAI, Oct 26:** Actor-producer Priyanka Chopra Jonas is en route to India to participate in the Jio MAMI Mumbai International Film Festival, which begins on Friday.

The 41-year-old star, who is now based out of Los Angeles, shared a travel update on her Instagram Story on Thursday.

"It's been a minute Mumbai... Cannot wait," Priyanka captioned the photo of her hand holding her Indian passport and a boarding pass.

Kareena Kapoor Khan-starrer "The Buckingham Murders", directed by Hansal Mehta, is set as the opening film of the gala.

The Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival is back with its on-ground edition after a hiatus of three years. It will come to a close on November 5.

The festival will showcase over 250 films with a special focus on contemporary films and new cinematic voices from South Asia here. According to the organisers, the gala boasts of over 40 world premieres, 45 Asia premieres, 70 South Asia premieres, and 13 sections.

Its 2023 line-up features big titles like Hirokazu Kore-eda's "Monster", Bradley Cooper's Oscar tipped "Maestro", Anurag Kashyap's "Kennedy", and Justine Triet's Palme d'Or winning movie "Anatomy of a Fall". (PTI)



## NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI TO STAR IN 1990s-SET THRILLER



**MUMBAI, Oct 26:** Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui has started shooting for an untitled 1990s-set thriller directed by Sejal Shah, the makers said on Thursday.

The film is a joint production venture by Vinod Bhanushali and Kamlesh Bhanushali of Bhanushali Studios Limited and Bombay Fables, headed by Shah and Bhavesh Mandalia.

Siddiqui said he is happy to be a part of this "incredible" film, produced by Vinod Bhanushali.

"Sejal Shah's transition from a prolific producer to director is inspiring, and I am excited to work with her again after 'Serious Men'. This film is going to be a rollercoaster of emotions and a memorable journey for both the team and the audience," the actor said in a statement.

Shah, who co-produced the Siddiqui-starrer "Serious Men", said she is thrilled to helm this project.

"Working with a brilliant actor like Nawazuddin Siddiqui and being supported by Vinod Bhanushali and the entire team makes this an exciting directorial foray," the filmmaker said.

"Bhanushali Studios Limited is dedicated to producing content that resonates with the audience. Our collaboration with Sejal Shah and Nawazuddin Siddiqui has the potential to deliver a spellbinding cinematic experience that will leave a lasting impact," added Vinod Bhanushali. Siddiqui was last seen in the ZEE5 film "Haddi". (PTI)

## Objectivity must as we are responsible to history: Benegal on being neutral in political films

**MUMBAI, Oct 26:** Veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal says it is important for a director to be objective while making films about politically relevant events and personalities.

Benegal, considered a pioneer of the Indian parallel cinema movement with classics such as "Ankur", "Nishant", "Manthan", "Bhumika", "Junoon" and "Mandi" to his credit, said it is always easy to take sides but a storyteller has a responsibility towards history and must present it as objectively as possible.

"It is easy to take sides. You cannot look at it objectively, not everybody can, even I cannot, but the fact is that we have to see to it that we are as objective as possible because you are responsible to history, not to anybody else," Benegal told PTI in a group interview. He was asked about movies like Vivek Agnihotri's "The Kashmir

Files" and Sudipto Sen's "The Kerala Story", and how important it is for filmmakers to stay neutral when they make films about politically relevant events. "It depends on how close you are to the (subject), whether you can be objective enough or not. Now 'The Kashmir Files' is a very earnest film but he is too close to the subject because he is (referring to actor Anupam Kher) a Kashmiri himself, he is too close. He cannot have the objectivity that is necessary," Benegal said.

Starring Kher and Pallavi Joshi, "The Kashmir Files" depicted the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir valley in the 1990s. It opened to polarised reactions in March 2022 but became one of the most commercially successful Hindi films of the year. Benegal, 88, is currently promoting his latest film "Mujib - The

Making of a Nation".

The biographical drama narrates the life story of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first president of Bangladesh and later its prime minister who was assassinated with most of his family in 1975.

Benegal said it is difficult to make a film on a politician's life. He added that it was essential for him to tap into the humane side of Rahman and bring out unknown facets of his life.

"It is not easy to make because you end up doing many conventional things. It is very difficult to say anything from another point of view because so many points of view have already been covered by so many people -- historians and newspaper reporters ---because they are people in the news and hence there's a lot written about them.

"So, in that jungle of information

you have to find your way and find that one thing that suddenly reveals the man. It's like peeling an onion. Like, we have our prime minister, how many of us know him, I don't know but we think we know him because there's a public image about him. But how many of us know him as a person? This happens with public figures."

"Mujib - The Making of a Nation" is a collaboration between India's National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC).

Benegal credited the central government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for allowing him to make the film the way he wanted to make. "Mujib - The Making of a Nation" is scheduled to be released in theatres on Friday. (PTI)



## BABAR'S CAPTAINCY ON LINE

# PAKISTAN LOCKED IN A DO-OR-DIE BATTLE AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

**CHENNAI, Oct 26:** His captaincy on line after a hat-trick of defeats, Babar Azam will be keen to find some inspiration and that exclusive piece of Pakistani magic when his team squares off against a formidable South Africa in a do-or-die game of the World Cup here on Friday.

One more defeat and knock-out doors will be shut on Pakistan and Babar, who is already feeling the heat, might end up losing captaincy as it will be virtually impossible for his team to salvage the campaign in remaining three games even if it wins those.

"Looking ahead, the board will make decisions in the best interest of Pakistan cricket based on the team's performances in the World Cup. At present, the PCB encourages fans, former players and stakeholders to rally behind the team as they strive to make a triumphant comeback in the mega-event," PCB's statement ahead of an important will only increase tremendous pressure on skipper and the team.

From hereon, Pakistan needs to win all its matches and expect Australia to falter in at least two of their remaining four games.

There's a saying in world cricket that one doesn't know which Pakistan team will turn up on a particular day. There could be a geniuses at work one day and on other days, they could

even embarrass themselves leave alone their legion of fans.

A gutsy Pakistan team is always necessary for a global tournament like World Cup and Babar would expect that against a rampaging South Africans, it would produce a world class performance. The gulf in performance between two teams has been huge despite Proteas' shock defeat against the Netherlands at Dharamsala.

Quinton de Kock and Heinrich Klaasen has headlined the batting with timely contributions from others like Aiden Markram while Pakistan's archaic batting approach has left them in dire straits at the halfway of the league stage. The difference in approach is evident when one looks at the boundary count of the two sides. South African batters have hit 155 fours and 59 sixes while Pakistan managed only 24 sixes in five games and 136 boundaries.

An embarrassing statistic is Pakistan batters hitting a six in Powerplay after consumption of 1200 deliveries across games in first six overs. While De Kock, Klaasen, Markram, David Miller, all-rounder Marco Jansen have all had a strike-rate of over 100, only Saud Shakeel and Iftikhar Ahmed, the two middle-order batters have barely crossed the three-figure strike-rate. (PTI)



## India women's hockey team looks to showcase real potential in ACT

**RANCHI, Oct 26:** The failure to clinch the gold medal at the just-concluded Asian Games still fresh in its mind, the Indian women's hockey team will look to showcase its real potential in the Asian Champions Trophy when it starts its campaign against Thailand here on Friday. India lost 0-4 to China in the semifinals of the Asian Games in Hangzhou but defeated Japan 2-1 to clinch the bronze medal.

The bronze medal, however, was a disappointing result for the Indians, who started as favourites and were eyeing a gold in the Asian Games, which would have given them a direct ticket to next year's Paris Olympics.

The ACT, however, will provide a perfect platform for the Savita Punia-led side to avenge their defeat against reigning Asian Games champions China and silver medallists Korea, against whom they drew 1-1 in the league stages.

Six teams, including hosts India, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand will compete in the tournament. As per the format, all six teams will play each other in the round-robin league stage and the

top-four teams will advance to the semifinals. India's chief coach Janneke Schopman has named a tried and tested side, with the only notable absentee from the Asian Games squad being experienced midfielder Sushila Chanu, who has been rested due to a suspected Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injury. Baljeet Kaur has replaced Sushila in the squad.

Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, who too was in the Asian Games squad, has been named as a replacement player along with Sharmila Devi and will travel with the squad as back-up option.

Besides Sushila, there were no surprises as such in the squad named for the ACT to be played at the Marang Gomme Hockey Stadium here from October 27 till November 5.

Besides India, defending champions Japan and Asian Games gold medallist China are the other favourites in the tournament.

After Thailand, India will play Malaysia (October 28), China (October 30), Japan (October 31) and Korea (November 2). The semifinals and final are scheduled for November 4 and 5. (PTI)



## Champions League: Barca beat Shakhtar 2-1 for third straight win

**BARCELONA, Oct 26:** Barcelona beat Shakhtar Donetsk 2-1 on Wednesday to keep a perfect record and stay on course to advance to the knockout rounds of the Champions League after two straight group-stage eliminations.

Ferran Torres and Fermin Lopez scored a goal each in the first half to help Barcelona secure its third straight victory in Group H. The Catalan club reached nine points, three more than Porto, which won 4-1 at winless Antwerp. Shakhtar stayed with three points.

Barcelona, the five-time European champion, hasn't advanced past the group stage since Lionel

Messi left in 2021.

"It's a sign of progress for us to earn nine points in the first three matches," Barcelona coach Xavi said. "We are not through to the next stage yet, but we took a step toward that."

The victory kept the Spanish club unbeaten in 13 matches overall this season, with 10 wins and three draws.

Shakhtar, in the debut of new coach Marino Pusic, was trying to win consecutive Champions League matches for the first time in more than five years. Torres put Barcelona ahead in the 28th with a volley from inside the area after Lopez's shot hit the woodwork.



Lopez added to the lead in the 36th after clearing a defender just outside the area and firing a right-footed shot into the top corner. The ball hit the post before finding the net. Shakhtar, which won at Antwerp in the previous round, pulled one closer with Georgiy Sudakov in a breakaway in the 62nd in what was the first goal conceded by Barcelona in the Champions League this season.

The Catalan club stayed mostly in control through end to secure the win, its fourth in the last five matches in all competitions.

Torres had a goal called off for offside in the 59th, and Lopez had one disallowed for the same reason in the 60th, just after he had hit the post. Torres had scored the winner for Barcelona in its 1-0 win at Porto in the previous round. (AP)

## Haaland ends barren streak in Champions League with 2 goals in Man City's 3-1 win

**BERN (SWITZERLAND), Oct 26:** Erling Haaland's barren streak in the Champions League is over.

Two second-half goals by the scoring phenom led Manchester City to a 3-1 win at Young Boys and the brink of the knockout stage already in its title defense.

Haaland hadn't scored in his previous five matches in the competition, stretching back to last season's semifinals in May, but he ended that improbable run by blasting a spot kick down the middle in the 67th to put City 2-1 ahead.

The Norway striker wrapped up the victory by curling a shot into the top corner with his weaker right foot in the 86th minute.

"People expect him to score four goals every time," City manager Pep Guardiola said. "They want him to fail."

"I'm sorry, this guy's going to score goals all the time ... He is going to score until the last day he plays football."

It's now 37 goals in 33 Champions League games for Haaland, who is into double figures (11) for the season in all competitions as he looks to follow up a debut campaign for City when he netted 52 times.

"People get onto him because of the season he had last year," City defender Rico Lewis said. "It is a credit to him."

A third straight win by City to open Group G extended its unbeaten streak in European competition to 17 games, which is tied for the longest by an English team. City is making the most of being handed a benign group in



its title defense, having already beaten Red Star Belgrade and Leipzig. Another win at home against Young Boys in two weeks and Guardiola's team will have qualified with two matches to spare, allowing City to focus on a tough-looking upcoming Premier League schedule.

That begins with Sunday's Manchester derby at Old Trafford.

Before his penalty, it had been a frustrating evening for Haaland and indeed for City, which was restricted to half-chances in a first half that ended goalless on the artificial pitch at Wankdorf Stadium. A tap-in by center back Manuel Akanji eventually gave City the lead in the 48th after Ruben Dias' header has been tipped onto the crossbar.

The titleholders conceded against the run of play four minutes later when Meschack Elia timed his run perfectly to get in behind City's defense and scoop a classy finish over the stranded Ederson.

Rodri was tripped in the box to give Haaland a chance to regain the lead for City. He didn't squander it, and his finish for his second goal was a sign of his growing confidence. (AP)

## Praggnanandhaa held by Aryan Chopra; Gukesh draws with Mamedov

**ISLE OF MAN (UK), Oct 26:** Grandmaster and World Cup silver medallist R Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by compatriot Aryan Chopra while D Gukesh signed peace out of a theoretical opening against Rauf Mamedov of Azerbaijan in the first round of the FIDE Grand Swiss that got underway here.

On a day when Raunak Sadhwani held fourth seed Anish Giri to a solid draw, Arjun Erigaisi, Aravindh Chithambaram and S L Narayanan turned out winners against Frederik Svane of Germany, Wu Li of Isle of Man and Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux of Canada respectively.

In a shocking turn of events, Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi succumbed to Erwin L'ami of Holland. After nearly outplaying his Dutch counterpart, Gujrathi lost control towards the end, and some serious mistakes in the endgame cost him a rook for a knight. L'ami scored the upset after 65 moves.

Aryan Chopra is another young Grandmaster who hails from Delhi and is trying to make a mark in international circuit. Playing the black side of a Slav defense against someone who is, by consent, one of the best talents in the world, Chopra fought valiantly and held on to his own in a finely-paced game.

Praggnanandhaa traded queens early in the opening and dented the black's pawn structure a bit and even stood slightly better for quite some time. However, the position was always closer to a draw and a flurry of exchanges led to an equal opposite-coloured Bishops endgame. (PTI)

## Indian women's football team crushed 7-0 by Japan

**TASHKENT, Oct 26:** India had no answer to a second half storm from Japan in their first match of the AFC Women's Olympic Qualifying Tournament Round 2, suffering a heavy 0-7 defeat at the Lokomotiv Stadium here on Thursday. India head coach Thomas Dennerby had set up a low block, playing a 5-3-2 formation, a strategy that worked well for the first 45 minutes as they managed to keep it 0-1 at the breather. A majority of defensive work fell on the shoulders of centrebacks Ashalata Devi, Sweetie Devi and Ritu Rani, central

midfielders Sangita Basfore, Shilky Devi and Indumathi Kathiresan, who had their work cut out inside their own penalty area.

India had a few rare forays into the Japan attacking third in the opening exchanges, as Indumathi sent a long ranger which was blocked by Hana Takahashi. The ensuing corner was dealt with by the Japan defence, and then continued an onslaught that lasted for the length of the game.

Yoshino Nakashima was the first Japanese player to get her name on the scoresheet, entering the Indian

penalty area from the left, to chip it into the top corner in the 17th minute. The Indian defence played with resolution, restricting Japan's attacks to wider areas, where full-backs Dalima Chhibber and Sanju were given ample support by their corresponding centre backs.

An array of saves by goalkeeper Shreya Hooda and a brave goal-line clearance by Ritu Rani raised hope for the Indians, who went into their dressing room a goal down against the side placed 8th in the FIFA rankings.

That tactic changed completely

in the second half, however, when Japan began to use the wings to focus their passes into the centre, one that worked wonders for the Nadeshko. They used low crosses from the flanks to the top of the penalty box and scored four goals in the 11 minutes following the restart. Yoshino Nakashima scored her second goal of the match before substitute Honoka Hayashi added a third. Mina Tanaka joined in on the act, scoring a header, and setting up Miyabi Moriya to make the score 5-0 in Japan's favour by the 56th minute. (PTI)

## Guys will be hurting, semifinals looks a bit distant now: Cook

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Netherlands coach Ryan Cook admitted their dream of reaching the semifinal at the ongoing World Cup "looks a bit distant" following the drubbing that the team got at the hands of Australia here. The Dutch team lost by 309 runs -- the biggest in tournament history -- against Australia, their fourth loss to lie at the bottom of the points table.

The Dutch team will face Bangladesh in their next assignment, before taking on Afghanistan, England and India.

"We're going to back ourselves against any team that we come up against. Obviously, we do have four more matches left and we'll be aiming to try and get as many victories as we can."

"We said that at the start of the tournament when we got here that we'll sort of be pushing for semi-

finals. That looks a bit distant at the moment," Cook said after the match.

"But obviously, if we can get a couple of wins along the way from any of the teams that we come up against, we'll be preparing really well for that and we're trying our best to make that happen." "I think the guys will be very disappointed out there in the change room. We talked a good game before the game, and we didn't play a good game of cricket today," Cook added.

"We didn't execute our plans quite like we wanted to and then the fight that we have shown in lots of the matches we saw only glimpses of that and we need to play better cricket for a lot longer if we're going to compete with teams like Australia.

"Resilience is something we

pride ourselves on as a team and we'll be able to get back up for the next game and learn our lessons from that. But the guys will be hurting in the changing room for sure."

The Netherlands bowling completely fell apart in the face of a brutal assault from Glenn Maxwell at the back end as they were left with a mountain to climb after Australia posted 399 for 8. One of the bowlers who was at the receiving end of Maxwell's onslaught was Logan van Beek, who was smashed for two maximums.

"Well, it has to be one of the best (innings). I think some of the shots he played, in particular those reverse shots were superb. I was bowling at the end there and I didn't miss by much and he tied me over backward point."

"The uniqueness of Maxwell is that Bas is trying to bowl to the leg

side, and he can reverse you over the off side," Logan van Beek, who conceded two sixes to Maxwell in the next over, said after the match.

"As a bowler, you're thinking: 'I want to get hit to the leg side, but he's just hit my leg-side ball over cover for six; where do I go next?' I think it's the fact that he can assess the situation, assess the plan of the bowler, and find a way to counteract it. He won't necessarily wait for the bowler to miss, but he will create a miss. "In a funny way, it was actually a really cool challenge to go to bowl to a guy in that mood."

Maxwell was particularly harsh on Bas de Leede, who ended up conceding 115 runs to go with his two wickets in his quota of 10 overs, the most expensive ODI spell in history. (PTI)

## Took leg-stump guard, changed to top-hand grip and got results: Smith

**NEW DELHI, Oct 26:** Taking the traditional leg-stump guard and tweaking his grip from bottom to a top-handed one went a long way in Steve Smith regaining his form after a mini-slump in the ongoing World Cup. On Wednesday, the 34-year-old smashed nine fours and a maximum on way to a solid 68-ball 71 and forged a 132-run partnership with David Warner (104) to lay the foundation of Australia's mammoth 399-8. Smith said he worked on a "couple of things" during the net sessions on Tuesday.

"I moved back to leg stump a little bit. I got my hands a little bit higher than what they've been for the last week. For some reason, they've dropped down a bit. I just felt it in the nets yesterday and everything sort of clicked back into place again," he said after Australia beat the Netherlands by a record 309 runs. "I felt like I was batting well a couple of weeks back against India. I thought I was actually getting back through the ball nicely on a pretty tough surface and playing well and then for a week kind of lost it for a bit." Smith made a good start to the tournament with a 46 against India on a tricky pitch in Chennai but then followed it up with scores of 19, 0 and 7 in the next three matches. "I got a couple of nice balls, I suppose the one that swung back and got me out, and (Kagiso) Rabada's, which was a little questionable. I felt like I've been batting really well. I just

needed to get the feel again and batting yesterday at the nets straight away I had a smile on my face at the back end. "I felt good and took that into today and felt nice. I thought I was getting good positions today and yeah, hopefully that continues."

Smith looked good to get a hundred before he was stopped at 71 off 68 with Roelof van der Merwe holding on to a sharp catch at backward point. "Yeah, it (hundred) would have been nice. I felt I was batting well. It was a nice partnership obviously with David and were able to set it up for the guys to have a smack at the back end and get us up near 400 so," he said.

"It would have been nice to kick on for a little bit longer and have a bit of fun, but yeah, it was a nice platform that we were able to set." India and South Africa are currently positioned at the number one and two spots in points table.

"I think both of those sides are playing really good cricket. South Africa batting is kind of structured similarly to what we did, this sort of game the way we played. They're trusting kind of their top five batters to go out and build a platform and then guys like Klassen and Miller to smack it at the back end."

"So they've done it well, obviously played on some nice surfaces as well with one here. And then India I think, yeah, they're obviously the favourites at the moment." (PTI)

## Nissanka, Samarawickrama fifties propel Sri Lanka to 8-wicket win; England near elimination

**BENGALURU, Oct 26:** England's reign as the 50-over World Cup champion sunk into serious jeopardy as resolute fifties by Pathum Nissanka and Sadeera Samarawickrama along with a set of on-the-money bowlers spurred tenacious Sri Lanka to an eight-wicket victory here on Thursday.

England, opting to bat first, suffered a baffling batting implosion and were bundled out for a paltry 156, courtesy the five wickets shared among themselves by comeback man Angelo Mathews (2/14) and impressive Lahiru Kumara (3/35).

Despite losing a couple of early wickets, Sri Lanka confidently finished their chase as Nissanka (77 off 83 balls) and Samarawickrama (65 off 54 balls) led the process with an unbroken 137-run stand for the third wicket.

With just two points from five matches, England retain a mere theoretical chance to make it to the semifinals, while the Islanders, who now have four points, can eye a few stronger outings in the remaining four matches.

England might have hoped for a miracle when they dismissed opener Kusal Perera and Lankan captain Kusal Mendis through left-arm pacer David Willey to reduce their opponents to 23 for 2.



But Nissanka and Samarawickrama, two of SL's best ODI batters this year, combined to produce a solid partnership to ease Lanka's nerves.

The right-handers are capable of elegance but with a victory very much in need the pair traded flair for compactness for a good part of their alliance.

Flashes of their natural batsmanship, though, were there. Samarawickrama delectably drove Wiley through the covers, while Nissanka waltzed down the track and smoked leg-spinner Adil Rashid over long-on for a huge six.

Nissanka brought up his fifty, his fourth in the tournament, with a flowing cover drive off pacer Mark Wood and Samarawickrama reached his second half-century of this edition with a wristy single to mid-wicket off Chris Woakes.

But otherwise, the Lankans

batted within themselves and gathered runs in a determined fashion to keep England bowlers at bay. And England lacked determination on the day. It was just a matter of a couple of batsmen sticking out in the middle for the Three Lions to reach a far better and competitive total.

But none barring Ben Stokes (43) and Dawid Malan (28) did not even remotely attempt to bat with purpose for a team that was playing in a must-win match.

There was a bit of spongy bounce on the M Chinnaswamy Stadium deck and the Lankan bowlers were accurate but the shambolic way in which the England batsmen played could not be shielded.

Opener Dawid Malan who milked 45 runs with his partner Jonny Bairstow, could be excused though.

Mathews, an injury replacement

for pacer Matheesha Pathirana, put him in two minds with a delivery that bounced from the length just enough to take an edge off his bat to Mendis behind the stumps.

However, Malan during his 25-ball 28 showed that the pitch is not a hard one to bat on while essaying some gorgeous drives through the off-side.

Unfortunately, several subsequent batters were culpable of playing really poor cricket.

Joe Root got run out while taking off for a non-existing single, captain Jos Buttler made an expansive drive outside the off-stump off Kumara to get caught behind and Bairstow never timed the pull off Kasun Rajitha to find Dhananjaya de Silva at mid-on. Liam Livingstone played the wrong line off Kumara to get trapped leg-before. Moeen Ali went for a cut off Mathews when there was no width on offer, and Kusal Perera snafled the simple offering at point. These were batsmen who were expected to lead England's batting charge and they failed to respond.

Stokes did try on his own. He had the assistance of fortune as well when Samarawickrama floored a tough chance at point off Kumara when the all-rounder was on 12. England were 86 for 5 then. (PTI)

## India creates history in Asian Para Games, takes tally to record 80 medals with 2 days left

**HANGZHOU, Oct 26:** Indian para athletes on Thursday created history by winning the highest number of medals in the Asian Para Games, taking country's tally to 80, including 18 gold medals.

India have now gone past the earlier best of 72 achieved in the 2018 edition in Indonesia. India's medal tally read 18 gold, 23 silver and 39 bronze, and the count will keep on increasing till the end of the fourth day of competitions. With two more days left in the Games, the country is on course to achieving its target of 100 medals in this Hangzhou edition.

India had won 72 medals (15 gold, 24 silver, 33 bronze) in the last edition in Jakarta which was the best before this Hangzhou Games.

Sachin Sarjerao Khilari won the first




gold of the day in men's F46 shot put with a Games record throw of 16.03m while Rohit Kumar took the bronze with 14.56m.

Para shooter Sidhartha Babu then bagged another gold in R6 mixed 50m rifle prone SH1 event as he shot an Asian Para Games score of 247.7. The compound mixed team of Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar won a gold after defeating their Chinese counterparts Lin Yueshan and Ai Xinliang 151-149 in the final.

India also won a bronze medal in archery men's doubles W1 event with the pair of Adil Mohamed Nazir Ansari and Naveen Dalal defeating the Kazakh pair of Nurshat Toleukassym and Sagdat Duisembayev 125-120.

Simran and Bhagyashri Madhavrao Jadhav won a silver each in women's T12 100m and women's F34 shot put respectively. Simran clocked 26.12 seconds while Jadhav cleared 7.54m. Narayan Thakur won a bronze in men's T35 100m with a time of 14.37 seconds. Shreyansh Trivedi also took a bronze in men's T37 100m with a time of 12.24 seconds.

In para badminton, Sukant Indukant Kadam (men's singles SL4), Sivan Nithya Sumathy (women's singles SH6), Manisha Ramadass (women's singles SU5), Mandeeep Kaur/Manisha Ramadass (women's doubles SL3-SU5), Krishna Nagar/Sivaranjan Solaimalai (men's doubles SH6) and Pramod Bhagat/Sukant Indukant Kadam (men's doubles SL3-SL4) won a bronze medal each after losing their respective semifinal matches. (PTI)




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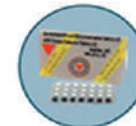
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