

WORLD
NATION

- At least 30 premature babies evacuated from Gaza's main hospital
- Vivek Ramaswamy says his Hindu faith gives him freedom
- Rajasthan Cong like cricket team whose batters spent 5 years trying to run out each other: Modi
- Adani-Hindenburg row: Plea in SC seeks contempt action against SEBI

THE HILLS TIMES

www.thehilltimes.in

THE HILLS TIMES

Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. XXIV

Issue No. 304

RNI-ASSEN/2000/12862

DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2023

PAGES 12

PRICE ₹ 8

India meets its waterloo in final; Australia lift sixth ODI world cup title



AHMEDABAD, Nov 19: India's thundering juggernaut came to a screeching halt in an anti-climactic finish as Australia denied a golden generation of Indian cricketers the silverware it so desperately craved by lifting an unprecedented sixth World Cup trophy, here on Sunday.

The Australians once again showed what meticulous planning and ruthless execution is all about, chasing 241 in just 43 overs with Travis Head (137 off 120 balls) once again proving to be India's nemesis.

Prior to the showdown, Australia skipper Pat Cummins had said that there is "nothing more satisfying than hearing a big crowd go silent" and he kept his word. There was pin-drop silence as Australia

marched towards victory.

Many broken pieces of shattered hearts lay all around the gigantic Narendra Modi stadium, which was expected to become the new 'Theatre of Dreams' for a buoyant Indian cricket team.

Skipper Rohit Sharma, a once-in-a-generation talent, Ravindra Jadeja, an all-rounder par excellence and an artist called Mohammed Shami possibly lost their last but arguably best shot at winning a 50-over World Cup.

Rahul Dravid, who has invested two years in building a crack ODI unit might have to remain content without that elusive silverware in his cabinet. Motera was drowned in 'Ocean of Blue' in anticipation

of World Cup trophy but the 10 emphatic wins on the trot ended in nothingness as India saved their worst for the last scoring a below-par 240 in 50 overs.

To their dismay, Australian team under its inspirational skipper Pat Cummins, weathered the early jitters before Head, buoyed by a superlative fielding effort in the afternoon, anchored his team with a chiselled knock that had 15 fours and four sixes. It was a fantastic knock on a slow track, a perfect display of how to play spinners and pacers alike.

Head had missed first part of the World Cup due to a broken hand but came back at the right time to once again torment the Indians with a hundred after scoring one

in that World Test Championship final.

With every six that Head hit, a few hundred of fans left the stadium, the shoulders dropped and suddenly orange was more visible in the stands than blue.

Head needed one ally for this middling total and found a perfect one in Marcus Labuschagne (58 not out off 110 balls), who played the second fiddle to perfection. It was a battle Australia won tactically and also with brilliant field placement which complemented a fine bowling performance.

Josh Hazlewood (2/60) and Mitchell Starc (3/55) after a few initial few wayward overs found their length but it was one delivery from (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Drilling on hold, rescue workers prep for multi-pronged approach

Uttarakhand tunnel collapse

UTTARKASHI/NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Rescue work at the collapsed Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand was virtually on hold Sunday as the agencies involved in the effort set themselves up for the next stage -- adopting multiple approaches to reach the 41 men trapped inside for a week.

Officials said a road to the top of the hill has been laid in a single day for digging a vertical shaft down into the tunnel.

Also, the Tehri Hydroelectric Development Corporation was set to begin "micro tunneling" Sunday night from the Barkot end of the under-construction tunnel on the Char Dham route, part of which collapsed on November 12.

Boring through the debris of the collapsed 60-metre stretch from the Silkyara end was put on hold Friday afternoon when the American-made heavy-duty auger machine encountered a hard obstacle after about 22 metres.

The setback forced a rethink on Friday. Officials drew up a series of alternative plans to reach the workers trapped inside the under-



construction tunnel.

But after a visit to the site Sunday, Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari said boring horizontally through the debris with the huge auger machine appeared to be the best bet. He anticipated a breakthrough two and a half days.

A media brief issued in Delhi said this drilling would begin again Monday, after safety arrangements for rescue workers are put in place.

By Sunday evening, rescue workers had pushed in a six-inch wide tube up to 39 metres into the

rubble. Once it cuts across the collapsed stretch, the trapped workers would be sent food and water through this pipe as well.

A smaller four-inch wide "compressor pipe" already runs through the debris and is being used to send in food, water, oxygen and medicines, officials said.

The stretch in which the workers are trapped is about two kilometres of the built-up portion of the tunnel and is 8.5 metres high. There is electricity and water available, a press release said.

The Rail Vikas Nigam Limited has begun work on a vertical pipeline for supplying essential items after the completion of the approach road to the top of the hill.

"Saving the trapped workers and evacuating them at the earliest is the biggest priority," Gadkari told reporters at Silkyara after a meeting with the experts there. "Preparations are underway to restart the auger machine and resume drilling and pipe-laying at the tunnel," he said. Gadkari said the auger machine had worked well through the soft soil but there were vibrations in the tunnel when it encountered a hard object. This posed a danger to the safety of the rescue workers.

"Though I am no technical expert, in the given circumstances horizontal digging seems the best option. If the auger machine does not encounter any obstacles it might reach the trapped workers in two and a half days," he said.

Uttarakhand Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha said the minister has suggested that there could be space between the (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Pests damage 28,000 hectares of paddy across 15 districts of state

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: More than 28,000 hectares of paddy across 15 districts of Assam have been damaged by a specific kind of caterpillar, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.

The state agriculture department has supplied necessary pesticides and sprayers to contain the spread of the rice ear-cutting caterpillar or mythimna separata, the chief minister's office (CMO) said in a post on X.

"This pest has affected over 28,000 Ha of paddy cultivation in over 15 districts," it added.

Sarma has chaired a high-level meeting to curb the infestation and issued advisories to all the stakeholders, the CMO said.

"We are constantly monitoring this infestation. Along with implementing mitigation guidelines, I



have also instructed our officers to ensure affected farmers get all the benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana," Sarma said while sharing the CMO's post.

The CMO also said that awareness among the public will be created regarding it.

The state directorate of agricul-

ture has sent advisories to all the district agriculture officers (DAOs) for taking action and requested them to submit a further requisition for chemicals if needed, it said.

"Video conferencing with all DAOs regarding pest monitoring and control measures undertaken... Advised to (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Two BJP leaders join Cong in Karbi Anglong

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 19: Two BJP leaders of Karbi Anglong joined the opposition Congress in Karbi Anglong. Former MLA, Jagat Sing Engti and Pradip Diphusa of the BJP joined the Congress along with others in a 'Mass Joining Programme' held here at the Diphu Club in presence of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president, Bhuben Kumar Borah.

Both the leaders were denied a ticket by the BJP leadership in the last member of autonomous council (MAC) election to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) in 2022. Jagat Sing Engti said that the reason for him to join the Congress is the non-implementation of an autonomous state.

Engti said, "The leaders of BJP came to Karbi Anglong and promised the implementation of an autonomous state. Rajnath Singh and L.K. Advani came and clearly prom-

ised that Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao will be granted autonomous status under Article 244 (A). As the leadership of BJP had promised the autonomous state, we joined the party."

He further said, "Tuliram Ronghang, BJP's chief executive member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council has also won elections. All the seats were won by the BJP and formed the council. However, now the issue of autonomous state is secondary. Ronghang keeps saying that he wants an autonomous state, but when the BJP is in the state and the Centre, they can implement the MoS in a day and also the autonomous state."

Accusing Ronghang of wholesale nepotism, he said as of prevailing situation the people of Karbi Anglong will suffer a lot more. "All contracts and bills are given to family link concerns including (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

but when the BJP is in the state and the Centre, they can implement the MoS in a day and also the autonomous state."

Accusing Ronghang of wholesale nepotism, he said as of prevailing situation the people of Karbi Anglong will suffer a lot more. "All contracts and bills are given to family link concerns including (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

APCC holds discussion with Karbi organisations

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 19: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) led by its president, Bhuben Kumar Borah held a meeting with nine social organisations in Karbi Anglong.

APCC president, Borah met the leaders of the Joint Action Committee of Autonomous State (JACAS), Karbi Farmers Association (KFA), Hills Tribal League (HTL), Karbi Anglong Indigenous Youth Association (KAIYA), Karbi Unemployed Youth Association (KUYA), Karbi Students Youth Council (KSYC), KNYC, Karbi Students Association (KSA-Jemson) and KAYA.

The APCC leaders discussed the demands and issues of the organisations. Further, it also deliberated on the alleged dilution of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council's power, the border problem and dissatisfaction over BJP's policies.

Later, interacting with the media, Borah said that the meeting with the groups was with the intent to find a solution towards the early and permanent resolution to the political demands of the hill districts. (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Indian cyberspace seeing incidents at higher rate than global average

BENGALURU, Nov 19: The Indian cyberspace has seen nearly double the number of cyber incidents as compared to the global average, national cybersecurity coordinator MU Nair said on Sunday.

Addressing a session on 'Aligning Technologies to Future Conflicts' at the Synergia Conclave 2023, Nair said ransomware attack payments of nearly USD 1.54 billion have been made on an average over the past 10 months, which has doubled since 2022.

"These payments are just the tip of an iceberg since several of these incidents go unreported," he said.

Nair said the Indian cyberspace has seen cyber incidents at an average of 2127 times during the past six months, which is much more than the global average of 1108.

Nair said it's time for countries to rally together to contain and limit disruptive practices on cyberspace.

"There are a large number of initiatives in this direction under the United Nations and regional forums where nations are looking for solutions to cyberspace which is not confined to national boundaries," he said.



Nair said several international initiatives are addressing the evolving challenges of cyber security. One notable effort is the UN Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) on advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, appointed by the United Nations General Assembly, he said.

In 2021, the UNGGE adopted a report that contributes significantly to the development of international cybersecurity, he said.

"Key recommendations from the UNGGE include the development of international norms and principles, promotion of international co-operation, and strengthening of national (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Arms recovered in Manipur

IMPHAL, Nov 19: Manipur police recovered a cache of arms and ammunition in a joint operation with the central security forces in the peripheral area of Bishnupur district bordering Churachandpur district on Saturday.

The police have been conducting joint operations with the state and the central security forces at various places across the violent affected districts of the state since the middle week of September to recover armed and ammunition looted from the state police and security forces in the wake of the eruption of ethnic clash on May 3 last.

In continuation, the search operation, area domination and flag marches were conducted by the security forces in the fringes (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

NKBA conference in KA

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Nov 19: Preparations are in full swing for the 113th Nihang Karbi Baptist Association (NKBA) annual conference and youth rally, scheduled to be held in Panjan Hirihri Baptist Area Fellowship in Karbi Anglong.

The hosting responsibilities for the annual conference and youth rally lie with the Hirihri Baptist Church Mondoli, and the event is set to take place from February 8 to 11 next year. The NKBA has appealed to all political and social organizations to avoid calling for a bandh during the program.

29 Myanmar soldiers who crossed over to India after gunfight sent back

AIZWAL, Nov 19: 29 Myanmar soldiers, who fled to Mizoram following intense gunfights with militia group People's Defence Force (PDF), were sent back to their country on Sunday, an official said.

With these, a total of 74 Myanmar army personnel, who crossed over to India after their camps were overrun by militia groups in the recent gunfight, have been escorted back to their country, she said.

These 29 soldiers had entered Mizoram on November 16 after their camp at Tuibual in Myanmar's Chin state, a few km from the international border, was overrun by Chin National Defence Force (CNDP), a local militia group affiliated with the PDF.

"These soldiers were air-



lifted by defence authorities to Moreh in Manipur. From Moreh, they went to Tamu, the nearest Myanmar town," the official told PTI.

Incessant rains disrupted the process, which prolonged their stay in India, she added. The Myanmar soldiers came on foot to Saikhumpha in Mizoram's Champhai district near Tiau river, the natural boundary

between India and Myanmar, and were received by the Assam Rifles and state police, the official said.

They were in the custody of Assam Rifles before they were sent back to their country, she said.

Earlier, 45 Myanmar soldiers, who fled to Mizoram after their camps were overrun by PDF, were sent back to (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Joha rice is unable to capture other markets in country due to its low yield at present

Assam Rice Research Institute developing high-yielding aromatic Joha

TITABAR, Nov 19: If the Assam Rice Research Institute (ARRI) has its way, then the much preferred aromatic Joha rice of the state will bring in a good yield, making it possible to reach other regions in the country.

The rice research institute here, celebrating its centenary year, is working towards developing a high-yielding premium quality version of Assam's famed aromatic Joha rice to add to its avant garde collection that includes among others a diabetic-friendly purple rice variety. The Assam Rice Research Institute (ARRI), about 20 km away from Jorhat, began as a rice experimental station in 1923 to cater to the issues faced by farmers from the Brahmaputra valley of the state.



The institute, which has played a key role in increasing production and productivity of rice in the state since its inception, came under the administrative control of Assam Agricultural University (AAU) in

1969 as Rice Research Station.

On January 27 this year, the station was re-designated as Assam Agricultural University-Assam Rice Research Institute (AAU-ARRI). AAU-ARRI chief scientist

Sanjay Kumar Chetia said the institute is now focused on need-based agriculture.

"That is the reason ARRI now does market survey, invites stakeholders like farmers, retailers, wholesalers, millers and companies for information on what aspect it should focus its research on. For instance, ARRI is now focusing its research on development of climate-smart cultivars such as drought tolerant, biotic and abiotic stress tolerant, anaerobic germination tolerant cultivars for direct-seeded rice," Chetia told PTI.

"The research also focuses on development of bio-fortified rice varieties rich in zinc and iron content. Research work has also been undertaken (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Startups will play important role to help India be 3rd largest economy: CEA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 19: Startups will play an important role in helping India become the third largest economy in the world, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) to the Union government V Anantha Nageswaran has said. Nageswaran said that tier-2 and 3 cities, including Kerala's capital, have become game-changers in helping startups flourish in the country due to improvements in infrastructure and supportive policies of the government, according to a KSUM release.

The CEA, during his Leadership Talk on the concluding day of the Huddle Global 2023 organised by the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), said that India was the fifth largest economy on course to become the third largest in a few years.

"In fact, I will say 7-in-7 is the buzz slogan, that is 7 trillion USD economy in seven years. Seven trillion USD economy size by 2030 is possible if India maintains its present growth trajectory, and in that journey startup entrepreneurs are going to play an important role," he is quoted as having said in the release.

He was of the view that the active participation of startups in India in developing business models on the foundation of expanding physical and digital infrastructure will continue to generate efficiency, revenue and economic returns for the country.



"The last decade has seen an exceptional transformation in the startup landscape in India, which has emerged as the third largest ecosystem globally, with over 1.12 lakh startups presently recognised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) across 763 districts.

"Among them, more than 110 are unicorns with a total valuation of around USD 350 billion," he said. The CEA further said that the country ranks second in innovation quality.

He said that innovation in India was not just limited to certain sectors as startups were solving problems in 56 industrial sectors, with 13 per cent of them from IT services, nine per cent from health and life sciences, seven per cent from education, five per cent from agriculture and five per cent from food

and beverages.

Nageswaran also said it was significant that 49 per cent of the startups were from tier-2 and 3 cities which have turned to be game-changers as the business advantages in these locations enable entrepreneurs to operate at lower costs as compared to tier-1 cities.

"Apart from improved infrastructure and the government's pro-active policies, the availability of a technically skilled talent pool is a huge advantage for startups to set up and flourish in tier-2 and tier-3 cities," he said.

He said that historically there was a perception that small towns were difficult places to conduct business.

"...but with improved internet penetration, vastly better physical infrastructure, road, rail and air connectivity and supportive gov-

ernment policies, this is no longer true," he said.

He also noted Kerala's startup journey has been an inspiring one.

The CEA said that KSUM has served as the catalyst since its establishment in 2006 to promote change that propelled the state into the forefront of the global startup arena. KSUM is the Kerala government's nodal agency established in 2006 for entrepreneurship development and incubation activities in the state.

Nageswaran said that with over 4,000 registered tech startups, 63 incubators and 10 lakh square feet of incubation space, KSUM has not only met its goal of promoting technology-based entrepreneurship but has also earned the distinguished position of being among the world's top business incubators.

The November 16-18 fifth edition of Huddle Global, India's biggest beachside startup conclave, was organised by KSUM at Adimalathura beach, near Vizhinjam, here.

Attended by around 1,500 delegates, the event displayed sophisticated products from emerging sectors such as robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, life sciences, space tech, blockchain, IoT, e-governance, fintech, healthcare, agritech, edutech and SaaS from across the country. (PTI)

India a USD 4 trillion economy? Adani to Fadnavis hail, but no official word

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Billionaire Gautam Adani to two Union Ministers and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis among others on Sunday hailed India crossing USD 4 trillion mark though there was no official confirmation if the country has achieved the landmark.

The finance ministry and the National Statistical Office did not immediately comment on the viral social media post on India's GDP crossing USD 4 trillion.

Highly placed sources said that the viral news was incorrect and India was still shy of that landmark. An unverified screengrab from the live tracking GDP feed for all countries based on International Monetary Fund data has been widely shared on social media, including by many including senior BJP leaders.

It is very difficult to have live tracking of GDP numbers of all countries as numbers of various sectors of the economy are available with a lag. "Congratulations, India. Another two years to go before India becomes the 3rd largest nation in terms of Global GDP by overtaking Japan at \$4.4 trillion and Germany at \$4.3 trillion. The Tricolour surge continues! Jai Hind," Adani said on social media platform X. Many political leaders, including Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis hailed the achievement. "India's moment of global glory as our GDP crosses \$4 Trillion. The rise of #NewIndia



under PM @narendramodi ji's leadership is truly unparalleled," Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said in a post on X.

Another Cabinet minister, G Kishan Reddy in a post said, "Congratulations As The GDP Touches \$4 Trillion For The First Time and Marches Ahead. On the course towards \$5 Trillion Economy - Modi Ki Guarantee."

Reddy is Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of Northeast Region as well as Telangana BJP president.

Fadnavis also posted, "This is what dynamic, visionary leadership looks like! That's what our #NewIndia progressing beautifully looks like! Congratulations to my fellow Indians as our Nation crosses the \$ 4 trillion GDP milestone! More power to you, more respect to you Hon PM @narendramodi ji!" D Purandeswari, BJP's Andhra Pradesh president

said, "Congratulations BHARAT on becoming a 4 Trillion Dollar Economy! This phenomenal achievement has been made possible by the path breaking reforms introduced and implemented by Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji Government in the last 9.5 years." India recorded GDP growth of 7.8 per cent during the April-June period of 2023-24, the highest in the past four quarters, on the back of double-digit expansion in the services sector, retaining its position as the world's fastest-growing major economy. The 7.8 per cent GDP growth in the June quarter is higher than the 6.3 per cent recorded by China during the same period.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data released in August, the agriculture sector gross value added (GVA) recorded a growth of 3.5 per cent, up from 2.4 per cent in April-June 2022-23. (PTI)

Entrepreneurs are returning from Europe-US to be part of India's growth story

SINGAPORE, Nov 19: More and more Indian entrepreneurs from Europe and the United States are heading back to India where the economy is growing and opportunities are large, Saurabh Srivastava, the former NASSCOM chairman, has said.

"Today, more and more Indian entrepreneurs are heading back to India from Europe and the US have achieved success in those markets," Srivastava, the co-founder of the National Association of Software and Services Company (NASSCOM), said on the sidelines of Singapore Fintech Festival from November 15-17 here.

"This is because the economy is growing and the opportunities are large and the government is very focused on entrepreneurs."

Srivastava said he wants to see the Indian economy growing at double-digit though it is stable at the current 6.5 per cent growth.

Given the large 1.4 billion population, India should have a million startups to drive the economic growth, said the Padma Shree Awardee, who has funded about 150 startups.

"Indians are among the most inspirational people in the world, and we should not have difficulties in growing at a faster pace," he said.

Srivastava pointed out that the GIFT City in Ahmedabad is an excellent initiative in winning investments and the business community by creating a tax-free zone. Solar and wind energy are now available while the Indian space sector is set to be a global leader, he said.

Srivastava, who wears a number of hats in Indian institutions and the corporate sector, had also played a lead role in the setting up The Indus Enterprise (TIE) chapter in Singapore in 2001.

He recalled how the Singapore government had welcomed and supported the idea of TIE Singapore chapter, and called for its members to be multi-nationals in line with the prosperous city state's large MNC community. (PTI)

Govt supplies multivitamins, antidepressants, dry fruits to 41 workers trapped in Uttarkashi tunnel: Official

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The government is sending multivitamins, antidepressants and dry fruits to 41 workers trapped for the past seven days in an under-construction tunnel that collapsed in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand, Road, Transport and Highways Secretary Anurag Jain said on Sunday.

"Fortunately, there is light inside because the electricity is on. There is a pipeline, and thus water is available. There is a 4-inch pipe, which was used for compression. Through that, we are sending food from day 1," he said.

Jain, in a video brief update on the Uttarkashi tunnel collapse rescue operation, further said there is water and electricity in two km portion inside the tunnel, which is the finished part of the 4.531-kilometre two lane bi-directional tunnel at Silkyara in Uttarkashi.

"We are sending multivitamins, antidepressants and dry fruits to workers who have been trapped inside the under-construction tunnel at Silkyara in Uttarkashi," he said. The Silkyara tunnel, about 30 km from the district headquarters of Uttarkashi and a seven-hour drive from the Uttarakhand capital Dehradun, is part of the ambitious Char Dham all-weather road project of the central government.

The tunnel is being constructed under the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).

The tunnel collapsed around



5.30 am last Sunday. The rescue operation was suspended on Friday afternoon when a US-made auger machine deployed to drill and push in pipes through the rubble to prepare an escape passage for the workers developed a snag that exacerbated the anxiety.

By the time drilling was halted, the auger machine had drilled up to 24 metres through the rubble, spread over a 60-metre area inside the tunnel.

The Union government also held a high-level meeting on Saturday where five options to rescue the workers were discussed with different agencies assigned with specific alternatives to work on.

NHIDCL MD Mahmood Ahmed has been made in charge of coordination with all the central agencies and has been stationed in

Silkyara.

ONGC, RVNL, Satluj Jal Vikas Nigam Ltd, BRO and state PWD, besides NHIDCL, will be the agencies carrying out different responsibilities to establish early access to the trapped workers.

Rescue operations stalled around 2.45 pm on Friday. During the positioning of a fifth pipe, a big cracking sound was heard in the tunnel, after which rescue operation was suspended immediately, a statement from NHIDCL -- tasked with the construction of the tunnel -- said on Friday night.

The sound created panic among the rescue team. An expert involved with the project warned about the possibility of further collapse in the vicinity. Subsequently, the pipe-pushing activity was stopped. (PTI)

Driven out of Pakistan, Afghans to lose their homes, and businesses yet again

KARACHI, Nov 19: Haji Mubarak Shinwari had come to Pakistan in 1982 with his five sons and two brothers. He worked assiduously to build a healthy network of businesses including cloth, fabrics, transport, and giving loans and now owns numerous properties at Al-Asif Square on the outskirts of Karachi.

"We have lived here without documents for all these years and set up our businesses with the help of locals," Shinwari said.

He is not alone.

Barely a few kilometres north of downtown Karachi is the Al-Asif Square, which is known for its huge Afghan population. Close by are two big settlements of Afghan labourers and small business owners.

A visit to Al-Asif Square and these settlements gives an impression of being in mini Kabul with Afghan people milling around many of their shops and different restaurants offering Afghan delicacies.

Tens and thousands of Afghans, mainly those who came to Pakistan as refugees since the Soviet invasion in 1978, have done business and work in all major cities of Pakistan for decades with Karachi in Sindh province and Quetta in the Balochistan province being their main centres.

Sadiq Ullah Kakar, legal adviser for the Afghan consulate in Karachi, explained that the majority of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan belong to the lower middle class. "So, they do not possess any qualifications or even a tertiary level education," he said.

Two weeks after the October 31 deadline by the Pakistan government to send back Afghans without valid documents displacing thousands already - and now, even those with valid papers planned to be sent back after December 31 - the situation is grim with uncertainty writ large on their faces.

More than 1,65,000 Afghans have already

fled Pakistan since the deadline expired.

Reason? The Pakistan government is adamant that it needs to protect its state and claims that many of these Afghans are involved in criminal and terrorist activities and hence wants to get rid of any and everyone from its northern neighbour.

It has also blamed the Taliban government in Kabul for not cooperating in preventing the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other splinter terror groups from using Afghan soil to carry out terror attacks in Pakistan.

The decision has put hundreds of Afghans such as Mubarak at a loss. Thousands of Afghans who have lived in Pakistan for many years are being forced to leave the country after facing massive losses in their businesses, assets, and savings. "It is a bad situation for us now," Mubarak said.

He is unable to understand how he can save and transfer his hard-earned assets when he is forced to relocate to Afghanistan as the Pakistan government has placed restrictions on the transfer of cash and property to Afghanistan (from Pakistan), with refugees only allowed to take ₹ 50,000 cash per person with them.

Most Afghans who have returned or are preparing to return to their homeland now face the harsh reality of losing their businesses and homes they built for decades. The issue has become so critical that Afghanistan's acting commerce minister, Haji Nooruddin Azizi met with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani in Islamabad last week to discuss it.

Another historical reason has been that these Afghans have been part of Pakistan's unofficial, undocumented, and unorganised sector economy. Even those Afghans who hold some form of identification i.e. either a POR (Proof of Residency) card or an ACC (Afghan Citizen Card) are not allowed to do business in their own names in Pakistan. (PTI)

Sugar prices are rising worldwide after bad weather tied to El Nino damaged crops in Asia

BANGKOK, Nov 19: Skyrocketing sugar prices left Ishaq Abdulraheem with few choices. Increasing the cost of bread would mean declining sales, so the Nigerian baker decided to cut his production by half.

For scores of other bakers struggling to stay afloat while enduring higher costs for fuel and flour, the stratospheric sugar prices proved to be the last straw, and they closed for good.

Sugar is needed to make bread, which is a staple for Nigeria's 210 million people, and for many who are struggling to put food on the table, it offers a cheap source of calories. Surging sugar prices — an increase of 55 per cent in two months — means fewer bakers and less bread.

"It is a very serious situation," Abdulraheem said.

Sugar worldwide is trading at the highest prices since 2011, mainly due to lower global supplies after unusually dry weather damaged harvests in India and Thailand, the world's second- and third-largest exporters.

This is just the latest hit for developing nations already coping with shortages in staples like rice and bans on food trade that have added to food inflation. All of it contributes to food insecurity because of the combined effects of the naturally occurring climate phenomenon El Nino, the war in Ukraine and weaker currencies. Wealthier Western nations can absorb the higher costs, but poorer nations are struggling.

The United Nations Food and

Agriculture Organisation is predicting a 2 per cent decline in global sugar production in the 2023-24 season, compared with the previous year, translating to a loss of about 3.5 million metric tons (3.8 million U.S. tons), said Fabio Palmeri, an FAO global commodities market researcher. Increasingly, sugar is being used for biofuels like ethanol, so global reserves of sugar are at their lowest since 2009.

Brazil is the biggest sugar exporter, but its harvest will only help plug gaps later in 2024. Until then, import-dependent countries — like most of those in sub-Saharan Africa — remain vulnerable.

Nigeria, for instance, buys 98 per cent of its raw sugar from other countries. In 2021, it banned imports of refined sugar that ran counter to a plan to build up domestic sugar processing and announced a USD 73-million project to expand sugar infrastructure. But those are longer-term strategies. Abuja traders like Abba Usman are facing problems now.

The same 50-kilogram (110-pound) bag of sugar that Usman bought a week ago for USD 66 now costs USD 81. As prices rise, his customers are dwindling.

"The price keeps increasing every day, and we don't know why," Usman said. It's partly due to the El Nino, a natural phenomenon that shifts global weather patterns and can cause extreme weather conditions ranging from drought to flooding. Scientists believe climate change is making El Nino stronger.



India endured its driest August in over a century, and crops in the western state of Maharashtra, which accounts for over a third of its sugarcane production, were stunted during the crucial growing phase. India's sugar production is likely to decline by 8 per cent this year, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association. The world's most populated nation is also the biggest consumer of sugar and is now restricting sugar exports.

In Thailand, El Nino effects early in the growing season altered not just the quantity but also the quality of the harvest, said Naradhip Anantasuk, leader of the Thailand Sugar Planters Association.

He expects only 76 million metric tons (84 million US tons) of sugarcane to be milled in the 2024 harvest season, compared with 93 million metric tons (103 million US tons) this year.

A report by US Department of Agriculture predicted a 15 per cent dip in output in Thailand in October. Thailand reversed a hike in

sugar prices within days, imposing price controls for the first time since 2018. Anantasuk said this would discourage farmers from growing sugar by capping their income. "It's like preventing the industry from growing, preventing an open competition," he said.

Wholesale prices had been allowed to rise to help farmers cope with higher costs — partly due to government demands that they not burn their fields, which makes harvesting cheaper but envelops much of Thailand in heavy smog.

Looking ahead, Brazil's harvest is forecast to be 20 per cent bigger than last year's, said Kelly Goughary, a senior research analyst at the agriculture data and analytics firm Gro Intelligence. But since the country is in the Southern Hemisphere, the boost to global supplies won't come until March.

This is because of favourable weather earlier this year in Brazil along with an increase in areas where sugarcane was planted, according to the USDA.

The next few months are the greatest concern, said the FAO's Palmeri. Population growth and rising sugar consumption will further strain sugar reserves, he said.

The world now has less than 68 days of sugar in stockpiles to meet its needs, compared with 106 days when they began declining in 2020, according to data from the USDA.

"It's at the lowest levels since 2010," said Joseph Glauber, senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute.

Indonesia — the biggest sugar importer last year, according to the USDA — has cut back on imports and China, the No. 2 importer, was forced to release sugar from its stocks to offset high prices domestically for the first time in six years, Palmeri said.

For some countries, importing more expensive sugar eats up reserves of foreign currency like dollars and euros that also are needed to pay for oil and other crucial commodities, said El Mamoun Amrouk, an FAO economist.

That includes Kenya. Once self-sufficient in sugar, it now imports 200,000 metric tons (110,000 U.S. tons) a year from a regional trade bloc. In 2021, the government limited imports to protect local farmers from foreign competition, but it reversed that decision as harvests shrank due to insufficient rain and mismanagement.

The amount of sugar milled in Kenya fell steadily from June to August. To compensate, monthly imports doubled from September to October. (PTI)

M-cap of 7 of top 10 firms swells ₹ 1.50 trn; TCS, Infosys biggest gainers



NEW DELHI, Nov 19: The combined market valuation of seven of the top 10 valued firms climbed ₹ 1,50,679.28 crore last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest gainers, amid an overall optimistic trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 890.05 points or 1.37 per cent. Reliance Industries, TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ITC and Bharti Airtel were the gainers while ICICI Bank, State Bank of India and Bajaj Finance faced erosion from their market valuation.

The valuation of TCS jumped ₹ 62,148.99 crore to ₹ 12,81,637.63 crore, emerging as the biggest gainer from the top 10 pack.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys rallied ₹ 28,616.98 crore to ₹ 5,96,681.75 crore. The mcap of Reliance Industries climbed ₹ 28,111.41 crore to ₹ 15,93,893.03 crore and that of HDFC Bank surged ₹ 11,136.61 crore to reach ₹ 11,42,215.81 crore. The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever soared ₹ 10,032.75 crore to ₹ 5,94,317.36 crore and that of Bharti Airtel advanced ₹ 6,828.74 crore to ₹ 5,32,585.63 crore.

ITC added ₹ 3,803.8 crore taking its valuation to ₹ 5,47,808.43 crore. However, the mcap of State Bank of India tumbled ₹ 14,502.5 crore to ₹ 5,02,589.52 crore and that of ICICI Bank fell by ₹ 11,308.97 crore to ₹ 6,46,254.41 crore. The market valuation of Bajaj Finance diminished by ₹ 4,973.68 crore to ₹ 4,46,169.40 crore.

Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued company followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India and Bajaj Finance. (PTI)

Chhath Puja reverberates with devotion across Hojai district

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Nov 19: The auspicious occasion of Chhath Puja was celebrated with fervent religious devotion on Sunday evening across Hojai district. Commemorated on the sixth day after Diwali, this festival holds great religious significance for people from the eastern parts of the country.

The Chhath festival in Hojai was marked by grandeur and joy, as devotees gathered at the ghats to offer oblations to the Sun God, revered as the source of life on Earth and the deity believed to fulfill all wishes. Participants from diverse communities, including Assamese, Manipuri, Punjabi, Bengali, Marwari, Karbi, Nepali, congregated at the ghats to express their reverence to the Sun God.

Both Shiv Bari Ghat and Natan



Bazar Ghat hosted the Sun idol for prayers. Devotees in Siliguri Basti, Amtola Basti, Tali Basti,

Mandoli Gaon, and Lanka, among other places, diligently followed rituals to invoke the blessings of

Sun God. The ghats were adorned with colorful lights, and decorative gates illuminated the surroundings.

Children enjoyed the festive day with the bursting of crackers and relishing delicious food. Despite the World Cup 2023 final, devotees flocked in large numbers to pay homage to Sun God and Chhath Maiya, praying for India's victory.

The successful organization of the festivity by all Chhath Puja ghat committees was marked by special attention to cleanliness. Adequate security arrangements were ensured by the police authorities. The vibrant celebrations showcased the unity of diverse communities coming together in reverence during Chhath Puja in Hojai district.

Pijush attends closing ceremony of Pub Kamrup College's golden jubilee year celebrations



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: State minister for parliamentary affairs, water resources, information & public relations, printing & stationery, social justice & empowerment, Pijush Hazarika, graced the closing ceremony of the golden jubilee year celebrations of Pub Kamrup College on Saturday.

The event, held at Baihata Intersection in the historically significant Kamrup district, included a cultural program inaugurated by the minister.

Pijush Hazarika expressed his delight at acknowledging the distinguished history and identity of Pub

Kamrup College, one of the state's esteemed institutions of higher education.

During the ceremony, the minister launched three books titled "Sahityar Subhas" by Bhabesh Deka, "Mukhor Arar Mukh" by Kiran Chandra Kakati, and "Axomiya Mahayasi Jibon Parikrama" by Nalini Devi. The minister, accompanied by MLA Diganta Kalita, Principal Dr. Bhupen Kumar Sharma, and other dignitaries, extended respect and greetings to the teachers and students, wishing the college continued success in illuminating society with the brilliance of education.

MSSV celebrates 6th Naturopathy Day



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: On the occasion of the 6th Naturopathy Day, the Department of Yogic Science and Naturopathy at Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya (MSSV), in collaboration with the National AYUSH Mission, government of Assam, organised various programs on Saturday, at the Guwahati Unit of MSSV.

Professor Mrinal Kr Borah, Registrar of the university, highlighted the importance of living a natural life in his welcome speech. He also provided an overview of the various Yoga and Naturopathy programs, ranging from Certificate to Ph.D., offered at MSSV.

The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Indranoshee Das (ACS), Director of National AYUSH Mission, government of Assam. She discussed the vision of Naturopathy, its benefits, and the potential for future collaborations with the Ministry of AYUSH.

Dr. Terina Thangjam, the guest of honor, explained the meaning of Naturopathy and discussed the ten important principles of Naturopathy. Tarali Das (ACS), OSD AYUSH, also shared her thoughts and blessed the participants.

Prof B.N. Phukan shared his views on Naturopathy and its awareness. Dr. Hemanta Das, Dy Director AYUSH, spoke about the holistic approach to health through Naturopathy. Dr. Ujjwal Arun Maske, Head of the Department of Yogic Science and Naturopathy at MSSV, discussed important aspects of Naturopathy for the students, providing insights on maintaining good health.

Assam Rifles Public School organises educational excursion to KNP

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 19: Assam Rifles Public School, Agartala, undertook a four-day educational excursion for its students to Kaziranga National Park (KNP) from November 15 to 19, 2023, as per a press release.

The tour, flagged off by Brig Vikram Guleria, SM, Commander Agartala Sector of Assam Rifles, saw the participation of 36 students from diverse backgrounds, including those from economically disadvantaged families.

Renowned for providing quality education at a reasonable fee, Assam Rifles Public School, Agartala, focuses on the holistic development of its students through various extracurricular activities. The school's drill contingent has consistently secured first place in Independence Day and



Republic Day parade events in the state over the past two years. Many students have also earned accolades in sports and academics at both state and national levels.

This initiative by ARPS Agartala aims to empower young citizens by instilling a sense of responsibility towards the conservation and preservation of natural

resources. The excursion tour not only provided students with a firsthand experience of the biodiversity at Kaziranga National Park but also showcased the rich culture and heritage of the North East. The educational tour is expected to leave a lasting impression on the students' formative years.

NABARD's Project Rainbow empowers LGBTQIA community with skill-based training in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 19: The NABARD Assam Regional Office has taken a commendable step by initiating skill-based training on Kantha Stitching & Embroidery for 30 beneficiaries from the LGBTQIA community in Sivasagar. The training, part of NABARD's Project Rainbow, concluded on November 17.

During the closing ceremony, the District Development Manager (DDM) of NABARD Sivasagar congratulated all the beneficiaries for successfully completing the training. He emphasized that this marks only the beginning, urging the participants to focus on bulk production and effective marketing of the products. Advising them to create a brand, he highlighted the impor-

ance of sustaining product sales.

The beneficiaries have collectively decided to market their products under the brand name "Rainbow Art Forum." They plan to take orders through e-market platforms, marts, and various social media platforms.

Kantha Stitching & Embroidery, a centuries-old tradition, involves stitching patchwork cloth from rags. Originating from the thrift of rural women in the Bengal region, especially in West Bengal, Orissa, and Bangladesh, Kantha is one of the oldest forms of embroidery in India. Its roots trace back to the pre-Vedic age (prior to 1500 BCE). The craft was historically practiced by women across all rural classes, showcasing both thrift and beauty in their creations.

Police seize cattle-laden truck near Jorabat

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: In a successful operation, the police intercepted a truck near Jorabat on the outskirts of Guwahati and rescued at least 20 cattle heads on Saturday.

Acting on received information, the police conducted a search of the truck and discovered several cattle, including cows, loaded on it. The cattle-laden truck, suspected to be involved in illegal activities, was immediately seized by the police. Three individuals, identified as Baharul Islam, Shariful Islam, and Shahizul Ali, who were present in the truck during the operation, were arrested. The truck, reportedly en route to Meghalaya from Rupohi in Nagaon, Assam, had no documentation for the seized cattle. The police have initiated an investigation into the incident.

NCC celebrates 75 years with inspirational North Eastern Region Car Rally



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 19: In a joyous celebration of 75 years of dedicated service, the National Cadet Corps (NCC) is creating history through an energetic North Eastern Region Car Rally, spanning from November 6th to November 26th, 2023. Led by the Additional Director General (ADG) of NCC Dte NER, the car rally started from the enchanting city of Shillong and will culminate in Guwahati on NCC Day, weaving a vibrant tapestry of unity and patriotism.

A significant pit stop on this exhilarating journey occurred at Darrang College, Tezpur, where Maj Gen Gagan Deep engaged with 678 cadets from Tezpur. He emphasized the core objectives of the rally - instilling camaraderie, leadership, sportsmanship, adventure, and a deep spirit of patriotism among the youth while upholding the cherished values of the NCC.

The Tezpur leg of the rally was inaugurated by Prithiraj Rava, MLA of Tezpur Legislative Assembly Constituency. The event, held at Darrang College, Tezpur on Saturday (November 18), witnessed Prithiraj Rava applauding the significant role of the NCC in nation-building. His interactions with the participating cadets underscored the pivotal role of youth in shaping the nation's destiny.

In a poignant address before the flagging off, Prithiraj Rava not only recognized but lauded the enduring contribution of the NCC to the cause of nation-building. He took the opportunity to engage with the young cadets, elucidating the profound importance of their role in shaping the future of the nation.

The NCC's 75th-anniversary celebrations through this vibrant car rally serve as a testament to its enduring legacy and unwavering commitment to nurturing responsible and patriotic youth.

Assam State Zoo welcomes newborn giraffe

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: The Assam State Zoo and Botanical Garden celebrated the arrival of a male Giraffe calf last Thursday.

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma shared the joyful news on the 'X' platform, expressing his delight over the new addition to the zoo. CM Sarma took to Twitter, saying, "Happy to share that the Assam State Zoo has been blessed with a cute baby Giraffe just three days ago. Any suggestions for naming the newborn?" He sought suggestions from the public for a fitting name for the newborn Giraffe. The Assam State Zoo currently houses three Giraffes. In 2019, a male Giraffe named 'Vijay' was brought to the zoo, and in 2022, a female Giraffe named 'Vijaya' was introduced. The recent addition of the newborn Giraffe adds to the diversity of wildlife at the zoo, bringing joy to both visitors and caretakers.

Himanta extends Chhath Puja greetings

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma extended warm greetings to the people of the state on Sunday in celebration of Chhath Puja. Taking to the platform X (formerly Twitter), CM Sarma expressed his wishes in Hindi, emphasizing the significance of the festival.

In his tweet, translated from Hindi, CM Sarma said, "Happy Chhath Puja! Today, as we offer Sandhya Arghya to the setting sun, the lively preparations for Chhath Prasad begin. From sugarcane to thekua, dry fruits to fruits, the diversity of items symbolizes the richness of our culture. May this day be filled with spiritual harmony and joy for all."

Chhath Puja is a festival dedicated to Lord Surya, the God of energy, and Chhathi Maiya. It is celebrated in regions of Bihar, Jharkhand, Eastern Uttar Pradesh in India, and Nepal. The festival involves rigorous fasting and prayers by women for the well-being and prosperity of their families and children. Devotees adhere to a Satvik diet and maintain utmost hygiene during the festival, which falls on the sixth day of the month of Kartik. The rituals include offering Arghya to Lord Surya and Chhathi Maiya, chanting mantras from the Rig Veda texts. The festival holds historical significance, believed to have been performed by Vedic-era sages exposing themselves to direct sunlight to gain energy from the sun's rays.

Aaranyak conservationists address human-elephant conflict at international symposium



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: Assam-based conservationists from Aaranyak, Dr. Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Dr. Alokika Sinha, Abhijit Boruah, and Rubul Tanti, participated in the 19th International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium in Chiang Mai, Thailand, held from November 14-17. The global symposium, organized by the International Elephant Foundation, aimed to address the escalating pressures on wild elephant populations worldwide.

Aaranyak, a leading conservation organization based in Assam, highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by wild elephants due to shrinking habitats and the increasing human-elephant conflict (HEC) globally. The symposium brought together conservationists and researchers striving to protect

remaining wild animals and habitats through research and conservation efforts.

Dr. Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Head of the Elephant Research and Conservation Division at Aaranyak, presented on how the organization promotes human-elephant coexistence in Assam and Meghalaya. The initiative, in partnership with the British Asian Trust and supported by the Darwin Initiative, aligns with the implementation of IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict Guidelines. Dr. Alokika Sinha, Senior Conservation Biologist at Aaranyak, extensively presented on the organization's efforts to build meaningful relationships with local communities to mitigate human-elephant conflict and facilitate coexistence. This initiative is supported by the US Fish and

Wildlife Service and SBI Foundation.

The symposium provided a valuable opportunity for the conservationists to learn from global initiatives aimed at mitigating human-elephant conflict and to establish collaborative relationships for implementing strategies in the Northeast India region to address the growing HEC.

Aaranyak, known for its extensive work on biodiversity conservation, recognizes human-elephant conflict in Assam as a significant challenge. The organization is adopting a multifaceted scientific approach to reduce the intensity of human-elephant conflict, ensuring the long-term conservation of Asian elephants and the well-being of local communities in Assam and Meghalaya.

Additional festive special trains announced

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: In an effort to enhance passenger convenience during the festive season, it has been decided to operate additional one-way special trains. These special trains are scheduled to run between Guwahati - Jodhpur and Silchar - Udhna railway stations.

Special Train No. 05697 (Guwahati - Jodhpur) is set to depart from Guwahati on 21st November, 2023, at 11:15 hours, reaching Jodhpur at 04:30 hours on 23rd November, 2023. The route will cover Rangiya, New Jalpaiguri, Katihar, Khagaria, Changanari, New Bongaigaon, New Jalpaiguri, Katihar, Khagaria, Hajipur, Danapur, Mirzapur, Satna, Itarsi, and Jalgaon. The special train will offer 2-tier, 3-tier economy, sleeper class, and general seating.

Simultaneously, Special Train



No. 05680 (Silchar - Udhna) will depart from Silchar on 21st November, 2023, at 10:30 hours, reaching Udhna at 14:50 hours on 23rd November, 2023. The route includes stops at Guwahati, Changanari, New Bongaigaon, New Jalpaiguri, Katihar, Khagaria, Hajipur, Danapur, Mirzapur, Satna, Itarsi, and Jalgaon. The special train will offer 2-tier, 3-tier, sleeper class, and general seating for passenger comfort.

Passengers with waitlisted tickets on other trains along these routes are encouraged to take advantage of these additional festive special trains. Details of the special trains are available on N. F. Railway's social media platforms, and passengers are advised to verify the information before embarking on their journey.

Oath taking ceremony for newly formed Sonitpur district committee of Laboratory Technicians Association

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 19: The newly formed committee of the Sonitpur district chapter of the All Assam Laboratory Technicians Association organized an oath taking ceremony at Tezpur Medical College & Hospital premises on Saturday. The event took place in the presence of central committee office bearers of the organization and the newly elected district committee members.

Jaran Munda assumed the role of president, and Ratul Das became the general secretary, among other elected members. The oath was administered by Mahendra



Kumar Nath, a central body member of Assam Sahitya Sabha. Nath delivered a speech emphasizing the organizational aspects, duties, commitments, and responsibilities

of the office bearers within and outside the organization.

President Jaran Munda urged the new members to work with dedication, focusing on the organiza-

tion's ideology and contributing to the betterment of society. Various office bearers, including vice presidents Sallen Bora, Pradip Bhuyan, Mohan Rajbongshi, and general secretary Ratul Das, addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of organizational discipline.

The event witnessed the presence of portfolio holders, committee members, and other dignitaries. The formation of the 24-member new committee for the Sonitpur district was established in the organization's annual conference on August 13, with Jaran Munda as president and Ratul Das as general secretary.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Wise sayings often fall on barren ground, but a kind word is never thrown away.- Arthur Helps

Electoral bond debate

In a pivotal legal battle, the electoral bond scheme faces scrutiny as the five-member constitution bench, led by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, reserves judgment on petitions challenging its legitimacy. The petitioners, including the Association of Democratic Rights and the CPI-M, contend that the scheme fosters 'non-transparency in political funding', thereby endorsing widespread electoral corruption. The controversy dates back to 2019 when Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi's bench declined to stay the scheme, citing the need for an in-depth hearing. Instead, political parties were directed to submit donation details in sealed covers to the Election Commission. Despite subsequent attempts to halt the scheme, a bench led by then Chief Justice S.A. Bobde rejected a stay in 2021. The current petitions seek an expedited resolution before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Chief Justice Chandrachud's recent decision to refer the case to a five-member constitution bench underscores the issue's significance. The petitioners argue that the electoral bonds promote corporate funding, black money circulation, and corruption. They stress voters' right to know about political parties' funding sources, asserting that it directly influences party policies and perspectives.

In defense, the Union government contends that the scheme prioritizes donor confidentiality and privacy, shielding contributors from potential retribution. Critics lament the erosion of transparency, as the new scheme conceals the flow of funds to political parties, eliminating internal corporate disclosures of political donations and impeding shareholder and regulatory oversight. A notable criticism centers on the reintroduction of the cash channel, allowing donations up to Rs 20,000 to go unreported. Political parties are not obligated to disclose whether they received funding in such small amounts, potentially increasing the availability of cash. Chief Justice Chandrachud acknowledged the anonymity inherent in a cash-based system, emphasizing concerns about unaccounted funds. While the government asserts that electoral bonds were introduced to curb black money in politics, opponents argue that existing instruments such as cheques, drafts, and bank transfers make anonymous instruments redundant. They point to the Reserve Bank of India's stance supporting political funding through conventional banking channels.

Opponents of the electoral bonds claim that the scheme perpetuates a party's dominance by accumulating vast sums of money, undermining the democratic fabric and constitutional principles. The argument posits that the scheme facilitates a party's sustained influence by providing capital for various endeavors. The debate over the electoral bond scheme hinges on finding a delicate balance between transparency and anonymity in political funding. As the constitution bench deliberates on this critical issue, the outcome will undoubtedly shape the landscape of political financing and the broader democratic framework. The decision holds far-reaching implications for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, underscoring the need for a judicious resolution that upholds both democratic values and the integrity of the electoral process. The electoral bond controversy encapsulates a broader debate about the essence of democratic governance. Critics argue that the scheme, by allowing unchecked financial influence, threatens the fundamental principles of fairness and equality in elections. The claim that electoral bonds could empower a political party indefinitely raises concerns about a potential erosion of the democratic ethos. As the judiciary deliberates, the imperative lies in safeguarding the democratic process from undue financial influence while respecting the legitimate concerns about donor privacy. Striking this delicate balance is essential for preserving the integrity of the electoral system and ensuring that the democratic voice of the people remains unswayed by disproportionate financial forces.

BJP has turned Madhya Pradesh into a sick and communally charged state during its tenure

By: P Sudhir

Madhya Pradesh is a state ruled longest by the BJP after Gujarat. The BJP has ruled the state from 2002 till now with a one and a half year interruption of a Congress government (which was toppled through defections). During the assembly election campaign, union home minister, Amit Shah, has claimed that the BJP has turned Madhya Pradesh from a bimaru (sick) state to a bemsaal (incomparable) state in the last 18 years. After having ruled the state for such a long time, the BJP has to justify its record. That is why a host of BJP leaders, apart from Amit Shah, like Nirmala Sitharaman and Rajnath Singh have been declaring that Madhya Pradesh has ceased to be a sick state and become an "un-matched" one.

The BIMARU tag was attached to the Hindi region states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to underline their economic backwardness and low level of social indicators. It is this categorisation of Madhya Pradesh that the BJP now disowns by declaring that the state has made rapid progress under BJP rule.

But what is the reality? Madhya Pradesh's economic performance is among the worst in the country. In 1993-94, the state ranked 19 out of 27 states in per capita net state domestic product. However, this rose by only two spots to 17 in 2021-22. As per the NITI Aayog, over half the population in the state belongs to the lowest two wealth quintiles. As far as education is concerned, in 2020, Madhya Pradesh ranked 20 of the 30 states on indicators such as enrollment in elementary, higher secondary and college level education.

Madhya Pradesh's rank in social indicators is also low. For instance, in 2019-21, Madhya Pradesh had 35.7 per cent stunted children and ranked 25 out of 30 states. The state's ranking in the parameter of

underweight children improved only by two spots (28 to 26) between 2015-16 and 2019-21. The overall low social ranking of Madhya Pradesh is indicated by its rank in the Human Development Index (HDI), where it was at the 27th position out of 30 states in 2021. If the socio-economic indicators continue to languish in the bottom half of the list of states, the overall impact of the communal-corporate regime that the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government has instituted shows deleterious results. The state has seen the loot of national resources with indiscriminate mining allowed. The latest is the Dhirauli coal mining lease given to the Adani group which is spread over 2,672 hectares of forests, fields and villages.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Madhya Pradesh had the highest number of cases recorded of atrocities against Scheduled Tribes in 2021, accounting for 29.8 per cent of the total cases recorded in the country. It also had the third highest number of cases recorded of atrocities against Scheduled Castes with 14.1 per cent of the cases. The Hindutva agenda, which has been vigorously pursued particularly in the current term of the BJP government beginning 2019, has seen vicious attacks on the minorities. The attacks on Muslim vendors in Indore and the demolition of the houses of Muslims in Kharagone are some of the instances of persecution of the minorities. Even Christian places of worship have not been spared. All told, the nature of the communal-corporate regime in Madhya Pradesh has only led to the perpetuation of the 'bimaru' state of affairs, a society which is infected by the communal pathogen and marked by the naked oppression of dalits, adivasis and minorities.

This is a record which is causing great disaffection among the people and it will be reflected in the verdict when Madhya Pradesh goes to the polls on November 17. (IPA Service)

Inflation is in control but RBI should be cautious as election expenses may ignite it again

Prices of late have shown southward trends. Should that result in RBI loosening its anti-inflationary stance? There is a view that the Reserve Bank of India should now initiate the process of reversing its stand on inflation and start lowering the lending rates from sometime early next year.

This comes on the back of the easing of price pressure witnessed for a while. The latest price figures released by the government shows a continuing negative trend in the wholesale price index. Almost from the beginning of the current financial year, the whole price has remained in the negative zone.

Earlier, the RBI used to take the wholesale prices as the benchmark for fixing its monetary policy stance. However, this was changed and the RBI shifted to the consumer price index as its guidepost for the overall prices and determining its monetary policy accordingly. This is in tune with the prices of three central banks as well.

Since the inflation target-

ing practice of the RBI pegs the inflation level at 4% "plus/minus 2%", the current level of consumer price index is well within this level. In fact, the Consumer prices have been around this tolerance band for this financial year excepting the month of July when it breached the band.

One can expect that the prices should remain benign for the next quarter as well since it is this time of the year that prices tend to maintain a lower print. The consumer price index is tilted more in favour of food articles than the wholesale index.

Post October, the prices of food items tend to remain stable, if not falling. With the new harvests coming on the market, the prices of vegetables and all other fresh produce get depressed. It is during the lean months of the summer that the prices again show rising trends. These start influencing the general prices northwards.

Kinks in the supply chain

and shortages of warehousing facilities earlier used to compound the fluctuations in prices between the post-harvest period and the lean months. The situation is however improving and the stock holding of fresh produce could be much better these days. As a result, the price fluctuations should even out in future.

The monetary policy stance could not be formulated only on the basis of the inflation print narrowly.

It is important that the judgement of the policy makers also given a much greater play. Their perception about the price trend for the medium term is as much important as the data as such. This used to be emphasised by none else than the former T+RBI governor, gram Rajan.

India's monetary policy stance will be determined by a combination of factors in the medium term. Of these, the overwhelmingly deciding factor should be,

in our view, the forthcoming election year. As such, with the state elections ongoing now, there is a lot of uncertainty about the political dispensation in near future. An election is marked by a spurt in expenses. The election expenses are mainly in cash and these percolate down the economy. At any rate, the huge election expenses have to be organised and these create pressures on the overall system. The finances are mobilised from the private sector and the businesses ultimately.

On top of the current crop of state elections, the general election next year will be the major incidence. A general election is a massively expensive affair and in spite of all the restriction on election expenses by candidates, there is a run-off. It is extremely difficult to estimate the amount of excess spending overall by the political parties.

All said and done, the elections would generate and add huge amounts in unaccounted money. These have been found to be purely inflationary.

Additionally, the political parties keep giving extravagant promises to woo the electorates and these at least in the first year have to be partially fulfilled. We are witnessing the wild promises that the rivals are extending to attract attention. Thus, as such, the election process imposes major burden on the economy.

In such circumstances, standing at this juncture, it would be a cautionary tale from the RBI. It is difficult to imagine that the RBI would sinking of unwinding its anti-inflationary regime anytime in the first half of next year. Then depending on the way the prices behave, it might start considering some loosening from the second half of next year. The overall state of the economy should be taken into account in this process, needless to say.

India is currently growing at a comfortable pace, considering that the global economy is in none too good a shape. With uncertainties rising flowing from the wars in Middle East and in Europe, the situation is fraught with dangers.

If anything, India must now gird up to face global headwinds. IT has been seen that problems first arise in the financial markets which were then transmitted to the real economy. Even little disruptions lead to changed perceptions about the future.

These could set in motion global financial markets turbulence. Such developments are not unknown. A much less riskier situation in the past decade had resulted large scale movement of capital from the emerging market economies to the developed markets, mainly in the US. The last episode of financial markets turmoil was during the tapering of US quantitative easing.

India is now fairly well positioned to negotiate global economic turbulence. Instead of being overambitious and seek a faster clip of growth, the entire gamut of economic policies should now be well coordinated so as to gather cushion to meet such exigencies and maintain stability in the domestic economy. (IPA Service)

There are many lessons for Indian left from November revolution of 1917 in Russia

By: D. Raja

The epoch-making events of November 1917 changed the course of humanity forever. The Revolution of 1917 had profound and far-reaching impact on world history. It not only marked the overthrow of the Czarist monarchy and the establishment of the Soviet Union, but it also ignited a wave of socialist and communist movements worldwide. The spread of revolutionary ideas inspired political and social change across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, leading to the emergence of new political ideologies and reshaping the global balance of power.

The Russian Revolution's effects were felt in the form of the Cold War, the spread of communism, and the reconfiguration of international alliances, making it a pivotal event that shaped the course of 20th century world history. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and its subsequent Decree on Peace had a significant ideological impact on colonized countries around the world. The Bolsheviks' call to end the imperialist wars and for the promotion of "peace without annexations or indemnities" resonated with many colonized peoples who were suffering under the yoke of imperial powers.

The Revolution's message of self-determination, anti-imperialism, and anti-colonialism inspired nationalist and independence movements in various colonies. It encouraged colonized populations to envision a future free from the exploitation and domination of their colonial rulers, ultimately contributing to the broader global shift towards decolonization and the dismantling of empires in the 20th century. The Russian Revolution served as an ideological catalyst

for many colonized nations in their struggle for independence and self-rule.

In our times, the inhuman war imposed on Palestine has already claimed more than 11,000 innocent lives not even sparing schools and hospitals, women and children. When imperialism is trying hard to move support away from the just cause of Palestine, the importance of Decree on Peace increases further and has a bearing on our understanding of world order which promotes peace. In a shared world, conflict and war take a toll not only on the belligerents but on everyone. The path to a just and equitable world order is also a path to peace, harmony and prosperity for all and we will have to strive for that. India's role should remain pivotal for a just world order and people will have to come together to check the deviations visible in our foreign policy and take it in a progressive direction. India's vacillating stand on the issue and tacit support to the US-Israel nexus is neither good for the West Asian region nor for India's standing in the Global South.

The Decree on Peace issued by V I Lenin can be the guide towards an egalitarian world order by shunning imperialist designs and further the spirit of cooperation. The decree's call for self-determination and an end to imperialism wars still resonates with the aspirations of Palestinians. Imperialist mechanisms like the British Mandate for Palestine and the Balfour Declaration have laid the groundwork for the ongoing conflict and the ideals of equality as established by the Russian Revolution stand as a guide to world peace. The path to emancipation for Indian people must take care of Indian realities while having an international per-

spective. The biggest lesson of the Russian Revolution is how Lenin and Russian communists adopted the teachings of Marxism to the specifics of Russia. In case of India too, a one size fits all approach will be counterproductive as India has its own peculiarities and impediments to equality and emancipation.

In India, class exploitation, inequality, and the concentration of wealth remain pervasive challenges that shape the socioeconomic landscape. Despite economic growth, a large segment of the population continues to face exploitation as they grapple with unemployment, poverty, precarious work conditions and insufficient wages. Income inequality has widened, with the wealthiest accumulating substantial wealth while a substantial proportion of the population struggles to meet basic needs. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few perpetuates a cycle of privilege, hindering access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for the less privileged. Tackling these issues is crucial for India's sustainable development and social cohesion, necessitating comprehensive policies and reforms to promote more equitable wealth distribution and reduce class disparities. These inequalities must be fought and removed to usher the country into a revolutionary society.

At the same time, caste inequality in India has deeply entrenched itself in the country's social fabric, perpetuating a debilitating cycle of discrimination, oppression, and exclusion. This system, which assigns individuals to specific social strata by birth, has led to systemic disadvantages, with millions of marginalized individuals facing limited access to education, employment,

and even basic human rights.

Caste-based discrimination has hindered social progress, fostering a climate where economic disparities persist, and social mobility remains a distant dream for many.

This disabling impact not only stunts the potential of millions but also hampers India's overall development and social harmony, necessitating sustained efforts to address and rectify this deep-seated issue and strive for a more inclusive and equitable society. A sustained struggle against caste discrimination, the material conditions that promote caste inequalities and the mentality of Manusmriti being upheld by the RSS-BJP led right-wing are biggest enemies of equality in society. If India is to get rid of this demeaning cycle of discrimination, all these forces have to be defeated politically and ideologically.

Another impediment before emancipation of our country remains patriarchy. Patriarchy has exerted a profound and enduring impact on Indian society, influencing gender roles, power dynamics, and social norms. It has perpetuated the subordination of women, limiting their access to education, economic opportunities, and decision-making power. Women's liberation movements, led by left forces primarily, have sought to challenge and dismantle these deeply entrenched patriarchal structures.

This process suffered a jolt with the patriarchal RSS-BJP's capture of power as they try to push back historical progress and women to the domestic sphere alone. Despite these obstacles, the struggle for women's liberation in India continues, with women advocating for gender equality, increased participation in leadership roles, and the dis-

mantling of oppressive patriarchal norms to create a more inclusive and just society. Patriarchy and the structures that enable it should be defeated thoroughly for the consummation of Indian revolution by liberating half of our population from the clutches of domination and subservience. At its face, the removal of class, caste, and gender inequalities in India remains a complex and multifaceted challenge. To achieve this ambitious goal of real emancipation of masses, concerted efforts are needed on multiple fronts. This involves addressing economic disparities through policies that promote equitable wealth distribution, educational opportunities and access to essential services.

Simultaneously, tackling deeply rooted caste-based discrimination requires social reforms, coupled with efforts to promote social inclusion to uplift marginalized communities. Gender equality necessitates comprehensive initiatives aimed at changing deeply ingrained social norms, enhancing women's representation in various spheres, and implementing stringent measures against gender-based violence and discrimination.

Achieving this vision of a more just and equal India requires sustained commitment from all quarters, with an emphasis on policies, education, awareness, and social change to empower individuals across class, caste, and gender lines. All forces that stand with cronyism, caste-based divisions and subjugation of women have to be fought and defeated unitedly in this struggle for true liberation of our country. The teachings of the Russian Revolution, which struck at the root of inequalities in Russia, continue to be a source of guidance in our endeavours. (IPA Service)

Xi-Biden summit was a bid to make our planet 'accommodate two super powers'

By: Sushil Kuttu

US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in San Francisco and President Xi told President Biden that Planet Earth was big enough for "both the countries", the first time a Chinese big shot has referred to China as a country big enough to rival "superpower United States". If Xi's self-congratulatory comment has struck as odd or as an affront to the United States, President Biden has taken it in his stride even as the rest of the world, including Putin's Russia and Modi's India, must have considered Xi's statement as long overdue.

The Xi-Biden handshake came on the heels of President Biden telling journalists he still considered Xi "a dictator", stating that it cannot be anything else because China is China. If a message had been conveyed, the Chinese President's smiles were only broader. "President Xi the Dictator" suited the Chinese President as it made sure the Chinese back home did not get any bright ideas. Of late, there has been talk that Xi was battling people-perception issues.

Anyway, the face-to-face meetings between the two superpowers helped remove misgivings in the ties, leading to hope that US-China relations will stabilize from here on. President Biden was anxious tensions

should "not veer into conflict" and President Xi answered that "turning their back on each other is not an option...", adding that the US-China relationship was "the most important bilateral relationship in the world... for the two peoples, for the world, and for history".

With accommodation in his mind and peace in his tone, President Xi made sure Americans got to see a different Xi, and not the "Dictator" that President Biden took him for. For China and the United States, turning their back on each other is not an option, Xi said. "It is unrealistic for one side to remodel the other, and conflict and confrontation has unbearable consequences for both sides."

The White House termed the meetings "candid and constructive". Military ties between the countries got a boost with communications between the world's two most powerful militaries once again restored. Hopefully, from now on, Chinese PLA jets will not fly within kissing range of American fighter jets for tensions to "veer into conflict". Those questioning President Biden's cognitive prowess should immediately take a break. Chinese fighter jets often do get too close for comfort.

This was the first time in the past one year that President Xi and President Biden have been face-to-face. They discussed a range of issues, even those that were marked "areas

of difference". The two countries issued a joint statement on climate, but nothing earth-shaking. Planet Earth, which is big enough for two superpowers, will continue to heat. The Biden-Xi meetings were held in the backdrop of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

If aliens in some far off galaxies are keeping a watch on happenings on Earth, they would know such meetings keep happening and declaring climate "as one of the greatest challenges of our time" was routine for such superpower summits. Planet Earth is not about to get any respite or relief. President Xi and President Biden vowing to together fight global heating is always par for the course as far as such meetings are concerned.

Besides, there are other more pressing issues where the US and China need to come to an understanding, the most important being Israel's 'War on Gaza', with the everyday mounting death tolls of Palestinian women and Palestinian children giving both Israel and the United States a bad name.

From what we hear, China is on Palestine's side along with Iran, Turkey and Russia. Perhaps, China and the US will both take a break and take the lead in brokering peace. If any country has leverage with Iran, it is China. Ditto with Turkey. And both Turkey and Iran have appointed themselves

interlocutors of Hamas. Hamas listens to them and Turkey and Iran listen to China. At least that is the grapevine. Going forward Xi and Biden's new bonhomie can be leveraged for the region's good.

China wouldn't mind playing world-handler alongside the US. But there's Taiwan waiting and that is the burning hot issue between the US and China. The future of Taiwan concerns both China and the United States, but while China wants to annex Taiwan, the US wants Taiwan to remain a "free nation" and not China's vassal. Luckily, for the Xi-Biden summit, both leaders steered clear of turning "Taiwan" into a battlefield in San Francisco, which ensured that the Xi-Biden summit did not "veer into conflict", much to the relief of both President Biden and President Xi.

The other binding agreement was on controlling the flow of fentanyl from China into the United States. The killer drug is taking a heavy toll in terms of life in the United States and China can make a difference if President Xi takes up the issue seriously. At the end of the day, the Xi-Biden talks have brought both countries closer with President Xi Jinping playing peacemaker, leaving President Joe Biden to be the pacemaker. All in all a fruitful set of meetings, proving President Xi Jinping right that Planet Earth is big enough for two superpowers. (IPA Service)

What is good health?

By: Adam Felman

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), healthcare costs in the United States were \$3.5 trillion in 2017. However, despite this expenditure, people in the U.S. have a lower life expectancy than people in other developed countries. This is due to a variety of factors, including access to healthcare and lifestyle choices.

Good health is central to handling stress and living a longer, more active life. In this article, we explain the meaning of good health, the types of health a person needs to consider, and how to preserve good health.

What is health?

Regular exercise contributes to good health.

In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health with a phrase that modern authorities still apply.

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

In 1986, the WHO made further clarifications:

"A resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities."

This means that health is a resource to support an individual's function in wider society, rather than an end in itself. A healthful lifestyle provides the means to lead a full life with meaning and purpose.

In 2009, researchers publishing in *The Lancet* defined health as the ability of a body to adapt to new threats and infirmities.

They base this definition on the idea that the past few decades have seen modern science take significant strides in the awareness of diseases by understanding how they work, discovering

new ways to slow or stop them, and acknowledging that an absence of pathology may not be possible.

Types

Mental and physical health are probably the two most frequently discussed types of health.

Spiritual, emotional, and financial health also contribute to overall health. Medical experts have linked these to lower stress levels and improved mental and physical well-being.

People with better financial health, for example, may worry less about finances and have the means to buy fresh food more regularly. Those with good spiritual health may feel a sense of calm and purpose that fuels good mental health.

Physical health

A person who has good physical health is likely to have bodily functions and processes working at their peak.

This is not only due not only to an absence of disease. Regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate rest all contribute to good health. People receive medical treatment to maintain the balance, when necessary.

Physical well-being involves pursuing a healthful lifestyle to decrease the risk of disease. Maintaining physical fitness, for example, can protect and develop the endurance of a person's breathing and heart function, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition.

Looking after physical health and well-being also involves reducing the risk of an injury or health issue, such as:

- minimizing hazards in the workplace
- using contraception when having sex
- practicing effective hygiene
- avoiding the use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs
- taking the recommended vaccines for a specific condition or

country when travelling

Good physical health can work in tandem with mental health to improve a person's overall quality of life.

For example, mental illness, such as depression, may increase the risk of drug use disorders, according to a 2008 study. This can go on to adversely affect physical health.

Mental health

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, mental health refers to a person's emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Mental health is as important as physical health as part of a full, active lifestyle.

It is harder to define mental health than physical health because many psychological diagnoses depend on an individual's perception of their experience.

With improvements in testing, however, doctors are now able to identify some physical signs of some types of mental illness in CT scans and genetic tests.

Good mental health is not only categorized by the absence of depression, anxiety, or another disorder. It also depends on a person's ability to:

- enjoy life
- bounce back after difficult experiences and adapt to adversity

The stakes are high. The room is tense. I am stressed, and I can't decide if I want to watch a heartbreaking defeat, or risk missing a glorious victory.

I decide to watch. It's grueling torture. But ultimately, India wins. The room erupts in celebration, there's shouting and hugging and sighs of relief, to a backdrop of firecrackers going off in my colony (being in Delhi, this, we could have done without).

This euphoria of victory feels so personal and so palpable, I even wake up the next day with a spring in my step, when normally I'd have been dragging my feet. And it's not just me, online and offline, jubilation is all around me.

None of us had anything to do with the win, but all of us are in on it. Spectator sports have always invoked strong feelings. The joy, the vicarious triumph, the devastation, and even the unbridled anger are very real emotions that fans of team sports are

"health" as a whole, rather than as a series of separate factors. All types of health are linked, and people should aim for overall well-being and balance as the keys to good health.

Genetic factors

A person is born with a variety of genes. In some people, an unusual genetic pattern or change can lead to a less-than-optimum level of health. People may inherit genes from their parents that increase their risk for certain health conditions.

Environmental factors

Environmental factors play a role in health. Sometimes, the environment alone is enough to impact health. Other times, an environmental trigger can cause illness in a person who has an increased genetic risk of a particular disease.

Access to healthcare plays a role, but the WHO suggest that the following factors may have a more significant impact on health than this:

- where a person lives
- the state of the surrounding environment
- genetics
- their income
- their level of education
- employment status

It is possible to categorize these as follows:

The social and economic environment: This may include the financial status of a family or community, as well as the social culture and quality of relationships.

The physical environment: This includes which germs exist in an area, as well as pollution levels.

A person's characteristics and behaviours: A person's genetic makeup and lifestyle choices can affect their overall health.

According to some studies, the higher a person's socioeconomic status (SES), the more likely they are to enjoy good health, have a



good education, get a well-paid job, and afford good healthcare in times of illness or injury.

They also maintain that people with low socioeconomic status are more likely to experience stress due to daily living, such as financial difficulties, marital disruption, and unemployment.

Social factors may also impact on the risk of poor health for people with lower SES, such as marginalization and discrimination.

A low SES often means reduced access to healthcare. A 2018 study in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* indicated that people in developed countries with universal healthcare services have longer life expectancies than those in developed countries without universal healthcare.

Cultural issues can affect health. The traditions and customs of a society and a family's response to them can have a good or bad impact on health.

According to the Seven Countries Study, researchers studied people in select European countries and found that those who ate a healthful diet had a lower 20-year death rate.

The study indicated that people who ate a healthful diet are more likely to consume high levels of fruits, vegetables, and olives than people who regularly consume fast food.

The study also found that people who followed the Mediterranean diet had a lower 10-year

all-cause mortality rate. According to the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, this diet can help protect a person's heart and reduce the risk of several diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cancer, and diseases that cause the brain and nerves to break down.

How a person manages stress will also affect their health. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, people who smoke tobacco drink alcohol, or take illicit drugs to manage stressful situations are more likely to develop health problems than those who manage stress through a healthful diet, relaxation techniques, and exercise.

Preserving health

The best way to maintain health is to preserve it through a healthful lifestyle rather than waiting until sickness or infirmity to address health problems. People use the name wellness to describe this continuous state of enhanced well-being.

The WHO define wellness as follows:

"Wellness is the optimal state of health of individuals and groups. There are two focal concerns: the realization of the fullest potential of an individual physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually, and economically, and the fulfillment of one's roles and expectations in the family, community, place of worship, and other settings."

Wellness promotes active awareness of and participating in measures that preserve health, both as an individual and in the community. Maintaining wellness and optimal health is a life-long, daily commitment.

Steps that can help people attain wellness include:

- eating a balanced, nutritious diet from as many natural sources as possible
- engaging in at least 150 minutes of moderate to high-intensity exercise every week, according to the American Heart Association
- screening for diseases that may present a risk
- learning to manage stress effectively
- engaging in activities that provide purpose
- connecting with and caring for other people
- maintaining a positive outlook on life
- defining a value system and putting it into action

The definition of peak health is highly individual, as are the steps a person may take to get there. Every person has different health goals and a variety of ways to achieve them. It may not be possible to avoid disease altogether. However, a person should do as much as they can to develop resilience and prepare the body and mind to deal with illnesses as they arise. *(Courtesy: Medical News Today)*

Connecting the dots: Unveiling the link between epilepsy and brain ailments, and the promise of Cyberknife Radiosurgery

By: Dr Aditya Gupta

In the intricate web of neurological disorders, epilepsy stands as a prominent thread, weaving its impact across the lives of millions. However, beneath the surface, a complex interplay exists between epilepsy and other related brain ailments, such as brain tumors and arteriovenous malformations (AVMs). Unraveling this connection is not only crucial for a deeper understanding of these conditions but also for fostering awareness that can lead to more effective treatment and management strategies.

The interconnected tapestry of brain health

Epilepsy, characterized by recurrent seizures, is often a symptom of an underlying neurological issue. One such connection lies with brain tumors, abnormal growths of tissue in the brain. Studies indicate that individuals with brain tumors are more susceptible to epilepsy, and seizures can serve as an early warning sign of an undiagnosed tumor. The intricate relationship between these two conditions necessitates a comprehensive approach to diagnosis and treatment.

Similarly, arteriovenous malformations (AVMs), a condition where blood vessels in the brain are tangled and prone to rupture, can also manifest with epilepsy. The abnormal blood flow in AVMs can trigger seizures, underscoring the need for a holistic understanding of these interconnected brain ailments.

Raising awareness: The first step to effective management

Despite the evident links between epilepsy and other brain conditions, public awareness often remains limited. Advocacy and education are crucial to empower individuals with knowledge about these connections, enabling early detection and intervention. Community outreach programs, informational campaigns, and collaboration between healthcare professionals and advocacy groups can play a pivotal role in disseminating this vital information.

Treatment challenges and the role of Cyberknife Radiosurgery

Addressing the intricate relationship between epilepsy and other brain conditions requires advanced treatment modalities that are both precise and minimally invasive. Cyberknife radiosurgery, a revolutionary technology that has shown promise in treating various neurological disorders.

Unlike traditional surgery, Cyberknife radiosurgery does not require incisions. Instead, it utilizes highly focused beams of radiation to target and treat the affected area with sub-millimeter accuracy. This non-invasive approach is particularly beneficial for treating brain tumors and AVMs in delicate or hard-to-reach areas, minimizing damage to surrounding healthy tissue.

Managing epilepsy through Cyberknife Radiosurgery

For epilepsy patients whose seizures are linked to brain tumors or AVMs, Cyberknife radiosurgery offers a targeted solution. By precisely delivering radiation to the affected area, Cyberknife helps shrink or eliminate tumors and mitigate the risk of AVM rupture. This targeted approach not only addresses the root cause of epilepsy but also reduces the likelihood of recurrence.

Moreover, Cyberknife radiosurgery can be a viable option for individuals who may not be suitable candidates for traditional surgery due to factors such as age, health conditions, or tumor location. The outpatient nature of Cyberknife treatment allows for a quicker recovery, enabling patients to resume their daily activities with practically no interruption.

Empowering the public

To harness the potential of Cyberknife radiosurgery in the management of epilepsy and related brain conditions, it is imperative to bridge the awareness gap. Community seminars, informational materials, and online resources can play a crucial role in educating the public about the benefits of this advanced technology. Collaboration between healthcare providers, advocacy groups, and the media can amplify the message, ensuring that those affected by these conditions are aware of the available options for treatment and management.

Raising public awareness is a vital step toward fostering a proactive approach to brain health. By understanding these connections and embracing advanced technologies like Cyberknife radiosurgery, we can not only enhance treatment outcomes but also empower individuals to take control of their neurological well-being. As we continue to unravel the complexities of the brain, knowledge and awareness will remain our most potent weapons in the fight against these interconnected neurological challenges. *(The author is the Director –Neurosurgery and Cyberknife, Artemis Hospital, Gurugram)*

Cricket WC | Loyalty, hormones & more: Why do sports make fans so emotional?

By: Anoushka Rajesh

Turn the television off. Five minutes later, I turned it on again. Off. On. Off again. It's the Men's ODI Cricket World Cup semi-finals. India is playing New Zealand and the match was stuck in limbo. It could have gone either way.

The stakes are high. The room is tense. I am stressed, and I can't decide if I want to watch a heartbreaking defeat, or risk missing a glorious victory.

I decide to watch. It's grueling torture. But ultimately, India wins. The room erupts in celebration, there's shouting and hugging and sighs of relief, to a backdrop of firecrackers going off in my colony (being in Delhi, this, we could have done without).

This euphoria of victory feels so personal and so palpable, I even wake up the next day with a spring in my step, when normally I'd have been dragging my feet. And it's not just me, online and offline, jubilation is all around me.

None of us had anything to do with the win, but all of us are in on it. Spectator sports have always invoked strong feelings. The joy, the vicarious triumph, the devastation, and even the unbridled anger are very real emotions that fans of team sports are

all too familiar with — Just ask any fan of football.

But, why is that?

Why do we feel so strongly about matches and games, the outcome of which has no real-world impact on our lives whatsoever? Sports, hormones, and online support groups: Why do we care so much?

"If your team is winning, your country is winning, people take the wins personally. As a result of this, happy hormones are released, which makes them feel euphoric," says Dr Rituparna Ghosh, Clinical Psychologist at Apollo Hospital, Mumbai.

The hormones in question include dopamine, endorphins, and even some cortisol (a stress hormone). According to a study conducted in Spain, even just watching sports releases testosterone in both men and women.

So, although it feels silly to someone on the outside, if you're invested in sports, there are real physiological responses to the stimulus which manifest as real emotions.

What happens when the team you support loses, or is on a losing streak?

"They take it in the same way, personally. That leads to the negative part of the stress which causes distress," says Dr Ghosh.

So the team's defeat feels like a personal defeat, leaving people

distraught, dejected, and angry with no real avenue to release these emotions because the situation is entirely outside their control. In many, the grief can even cause depression for a few days after.

It's so common that if you Google 'how to cope with your team losing', or 'post match depression', you'll get an overwhelming number of results for Reddit threads and communities dedicated to discussing just that.

Beyond sports: A sense of community

The phenomenon is interesting because it extends beyond just how invested you are in that particular sport. It can, in some ways, be traced all the way back to a primal social need for a sense of community and even 'finding meaning', say anthropologists.

In the modern world, more often than not, humans find connections through communities built around shared interests. So sports and other collective activities, have transcended the status of leisure activity. The team we support slowly starts becoming entwined with our identities, and gives us a sense of belonging, says Dr Divya Jain, Sport & Counselling Psychologist, at Fortis Healthcare, Gurugram.

"In the World Cup, it's our national team, but this also hap-

pens in football and the Super Bowl wherein a country is not involved," she adds. And a collective identity can be a strong driving force for our emotions.

"When large crowds of people come together with a singular focus, there is a deindividuation that happens where you tend to become one with the crowd. This can also lead to heightened emotions, and even extreme actions." - Dr Divya Jain. There is also such a thing called the 'social identity theory' that explains a team winning or losing can mean so much to some people.

How we feel about ourselves is based to a degree on our accomplishments— those we achieve ourselves as well as those achieved by the groups to which we belong. In other words, if you belong to a group or organisation which is successful or respected you will tend to feel better about yourself. The sports teams you support make you feel that way, "like a part of them is winning," says Dr Rituparna Ghosh.

Ask yourself, is it getting out of control?

If harnessed right, following the exploits of your favourite team or even player can help boost your own self-esteem, make you feel motivated, provide shots of happy hormones

now and then, and give you something to take your mind off the everyday drudgery of life, says Dr Peter Keelan, a US-based psychotherapist, in his online blog.

However, there is also a flip side to it. The psychological distress that has a significant impact on your mental health, sometimes lead to extreme outcomes, and even spill over to your interpersonal relationships, says Dr Ghosh. "I have seen people going to the extent of harming themselves because of their favourite team losing, or their favourite player not scoring well." - Dr Rituparna Ghosh.

"People sometimes go so deep into it that they start bringing up religion, and race and making personal attacks too," she explains. "It can also ruin interpersonal relations with friends and family who might be supporting other teams, or simply belong to the country of rival teams." - Dr Rituparna Ghosh.

So, at the end of the day, say the experts we spoke to, as long as you are aware that it's just a sport, you have the tools to deal with the feeling of loss (just like with victory), you're good, and it's not hampering your mental peace or that of others around you, you're good. *(Courtesy: The Quint)*

There's a relatively easy way to reduce the health risks from sitting all day

By: Keith Diaz

People who sit for hours on end develop chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease and dementia at much higher rates than people who move throughout their day. Current guidelines recommend that adults should "sit less, move more." But these recommendations don't provide any specific advice or strategies for how often and how long to move.

Our work provides a simple strategy: Take a five-minute light walk every half-hour if you have to sit for prolonged periods. This could reduce your health risks from sitting. To reduce the harmful health effects of sitting, take a five-minute light walk every half-hour. That's the key finding of a new study that my colleagues and I published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*.

We asked 11 healthy middle-aged and older adults to sit in our lab for eight hours — representing a standard workday — over the course of five separate days. On one of those days, participants sat for the entire eight hours with only short breaks to use the bathroom. On the other days, we tested a number of different strategies to break up a person's sitting

with light walking. For example, on one day, participants walked for one minute every half-hour. On another day, they walked for five minutes every hour.

Our goal was to find the least amount of walking one could do to offset the harmful health effects of sitting. In particular, we measured changes in blood sugar levels and blood pressure, two important risk factors for heart disease.

In particular, five-minute walks every half-hour reduced the blood sugar spike after eating by almost 60%.

That strategy also reduced blood pressure by four to five points compared with sitting all day. But shorter and less frequent walks improved blood pressure too. Even just a one-minute light walk every hour reduced blood pressure by five points. In addition to physical health benefits, there were also mental health benefits to the walking breaks. During the study, we asked participants to rate their mental state by using a questionnaire.

We found that compared with sitting all day, a five-minute light walk every half-hour reduced feelings of fatigue, put participants in a better mood and helped them feel more energized. We also found that even walks just once every hour were

enough to boost mood and reduce feelings of fatigue.

Why it matters

People who sit for hours on end develop chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, dementia and several types of cancer at much higher rates than people who move throughout their day. A sedentary lifestyle also puts people at a much greater risk of early death. But just exercising daily may not reverse the harmful health effects of sitting.

Because of technological advances, the amount of time adults in industrialised countries like the US spend sitting has been steadily increasing for decades. Many adults now spend the majority of their day sitting. With the migration to more remote work, people are less inclined to venture out of the house these days. So it's clear that strategies are needed to combat a growing 21st century public health problem.

Current guidelines recommend that adults should "sit less, move more." But these recommendations don't provide any specific advice or strategies for how often and how long to move.

Our work provides a simple and affordable strategy: Take a five-minute light walk every half-hour. If you have a

job or lifestyle where you have to sit for prolonged periods, this one behaviour change could reduce your health risks from sitting. Our study also offers clear guidance to employers on how to promote a healthier workplace. While it may seem counterintuitive, taking regular walking breaks can actually help workers be more productive than working without stopping.

What still isn't known

Our study primarily focused on taking regular walking breaks at a light intensity. Some of the walking strategies — for example, one-minute light walks every hour — did not lower blood sugar levels. We don't know if more rigorous walking would have provided health benefits at these doses.

What's next

We are currently testing over 25 different strategies for offsetting the health harms of prolonged sitting. Many adults have jobs, such as driving trucks or taxis, where they simply cannot walk every half-hour. Finding alternative strategies that yield comparable results can provide the public with several different options and ultimately allow people to pick the strategy that works best for them and their lifestyle. *(Courtesy: The Wire)*

At least 30 premature babies evacuated from Gaza's main hospital

KHAN YOUNIS (Gaza Strip), Nov 19: At least 30 premature babies were evacuated from Gaza's main hospital on Sunday and will be transferred to facilities in Egypt, the territory's Health Ministry said, as scores of other critically wounded patients remained stranded there days after Israeli forces entered the compound.

The fate of the newborns at Shifa Hospital had captured global attention after the release of images showing doctors trying to keep them warm. A power blackout had shut down incubators and other equipment, and food, water and medical supplies ran out as Israeli forces battled Palestinian militants outside the hospital.

A World Health Organisation team that visited the hospital on Saturday said 291 patients were still there, including 32 babies in extremely critical condition, trauma patients with severely infected wounds, and others with spinal injuries who are unable to move.

Medhat Abbas, a spokesman for the ministry, confirmed the evacuation of the babies in a phone call with The Associated Press, without providing further details. There was no immediate comment from the WHO, and it was not clear if all the babies had been evacuated.

Underscoring the perils of movement inside the coastal enclave, Doctors Without Borders said a convoy of clearly marked vehicles carrying staff and their families was fired upon in Gaza City on Saturday. A relative of a staff member was killed and another person was injured, the aid group said.

About 2,500 displaced people, mobile patients and medical staff left Shifa Hospital on Saturday

morning, the WHO said. It said 25 medical staff remained, along with the patients.

Patients and health staff with whom they spoke were terrified for their safety and health, and pleaded for evacuation, the agency said, describing Shifa as a death zone.

Israel has long alleged that Hamas maintains a sprawling command post inside and under Shifa, part of its wider accusation that the fighters use civilians as cover. It has portrayed the hospital as a key target in its war to end Hamas' rule in Gaza following the militant group's wide-ranging attack into southern Israel six weeks ago, which killed over 1,200 people and triggered the war.

Hamas and hospital staff deny the allegations, and critics have held up the hospital as a symbol of what they say is Israel's reckless endangerment of civilians. Thousands have been killed in Israeli strikes, and there are severe shortages of food, water, medicine and fuel in the besieged territory.

Israeli troops who have been based at the hospital and searching its grounds for days say they have found guns and other weapons, and showed reporters the entrance to a tunnel shaft. The AP couldn't independently verify Israel's findings.

STRIKES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH

Elsewhere in northern Gaza, dozens of people were killed on Saturday in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp when what witnesses described as an Israeli airstrike hit a crowded UN shelter.

The scenes were horrifying. Corpses of women and children were on the ground. Others were screaming for help, Ahmed Radwan, who was among the



wounded, said by phone. AP photos from a local hospital showed more than 20 bodies wrapped in bloodstained sheets.

The Israeli military, which has repeatedly called on Palestinians to leave northern Gaza, said only that its troops were active in the area with the aim of hitting terrorists. It rarely comments on individual strikes.

Heavy clashes were reported in the Jabaliya camp overnight into Sunday. There was the constant sound of gunfire and tank shelling, Yassin Sharif, who is sheltering in a UN-run hospital in the camp, said by phone. It was another night of horror.

In southern Gaza, an Israeli airstrike hit a residential building near the town of Khan Younis on Saturday, killing at least 26 Palestinians, according to a doctor at the hospital where the bodies were taken.

Doctors Without Borders said staff members and their families were trying to evacuate northern Gaza in a clearly marked convoy on Saturday but turned back after shots rang out at a crowded Israeli checkpoint. On their way back, the

convoy was attacked, it said, without identifying the attackers.

More than 11,500 Palestinians have been killed, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, believed buried under rubble. The count does not differentiate between civilians and combatants; Israel says it has killed thousands of militants.

HOSTAGES AND AID

Around 1,200 people have been killed on the Israeli side, mainly civilians killed during Hamas' October 7 attack, in which the group also dragged some 240 captives back into Gaza. The military says 52 Israeli soldiers have been killed.

Hamas has released four hostages, Israel has rescued one, and the bodies of two hostages were found near Shifa in an area where there had been heavy fighting. Israel, the United States and the Persian Gulf nation of Qatar, which mediates with Hamas, have been negotiating over a hostage release for weeks. On Saturday, a senior White House official suggested it would need to be completed before the entry of large amounts of desperately needed aid.

"A release of large number of hostages would result in a significant pause in fighting and a massive surge of humanitarian relief," Brett McGurk, the White House's National Security Council coordinator for the Middle East, said at a conference in Bahrain.

More than two-thirds of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, is providing basic services to hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in schools and other facilities.

Over the weekend, Israel allowed UNRWA to import enough fuel to continue humanitarian operations for another couple of days, and to keep internet and telephone systems running. UNRWA had been forced to put aid operations on hold Friday during a communications blackout.

Israel cut off all fuel imports at the start of the war, causing Gaza's sole power plant and most water treatment systems to shut down, leaving most residents without electricity or running water.

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said on Saturday that Israel's forces were expanding operations in Gaza City. With every passing day, there are fewer places where Hamas terrorists can operate, he said, adding that the militants would learn that in southern Gaza in the coming days.

His comments were the clearest indication yet that the military plans to expand its offensive to southern Gaza, where Israel had told Palestinian civilians to seek refuge. The evacuation zone is already crisscrossed with displaced civilians, and it was not clear where they would go if the offensive moved closer. (AP)

Argentines vote in election that could lead Trump-admiring populist to the presidency



BUENOS AIRES (Argentina), Nov 19: Voters in Argentina headed to the polls Sunday in a presidential runoff election that will determine whether South America's second-largest economy will take a rightward shift.

Populist Javier Milei, an upstart candidate who got his start as a television talking head, has frequently been compared to former U.S. President Donald Trump. He faces Economy Minister Sergio Massa of the Peronist party, which has been a leading force in Argentine politics for decades.

On Massa's watch, inflation has soared to more than 140% and poverty has increased. Milei, a self-described anarcho-capitalist, proposes to slash the size of the state and rein in inflation, while Massa has warned people about the negative impacts of such policies. The highly polarizing election is forcing many to decide which of the two they consider to be the least bad option.

Whatever happens in this election will be incredible, said Lucas Romero, director of local political consultancy Synopsis. It would be incredible for Massa to win in this economic context or for Milei to win facing a candidate as professional as Massa.

Voting stations open at 8 a.m. (1100 GMT) and close 10 hours later. Voting is conducted with paper ballots, making the count unpredictable, but initial results were expected around three hours after polls close.

Milei went from blasting the country's political caste on TV to winning a lawmaker seat two years ago. The economist's screeds resonated widely with Argentines angered by their struggle to make ends meet, particularly young men.

Money covers less and less each day. I'm a qualified individual, and my salary isn't enough for anything, Esteban Medina, a 26-year-old physical therapist from Ezeiza, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, told The Associated Press on the sidelines of a Milei rally earlier this week.

Massa, as one of the most prominent figures in a deeply unpopular administration, was once seen as having little chance of victory. But he managed to mobilize

the networks of his Peronist party and clinched a decisive first-place finish in the first round of voting.

His campaign has cautioned Argentines that his libertarian opponent's plan to eliminate key ministries and otherwise sharply curtail the state would threaten public services, including health and education, and welfare programs many rely on. Massa has also drawn attention to his opponent's often aggressive rhetoric and has openly questioned his mental acuity; ahead of the first round, Milei sometimes carried a revving chainsaw at rallies.

Massa's only chance to win this election when people want change ... is to make this election a referendum on whether Milei is fit to be president or not, said Ana Iparaguirre, partner at pollster GBAO Strategies. Milei has accused Massa and his allies of running a campaign of fear and he has walked back some of his most controversial proposals, such as loosening gun control. In his final campaign ad, Milei looks at the camera and assures voters he has no plans to privatize education or health care.

Most pre-election polls, which have been notoriously wrong at every step of this year's campaign, show a statistical tie between the two candidates. Voters for first-round candidates who didn't make the runoff will be key. Patricia Bullrich, who placed third, has endorsed Milei.

Javier Rojas, a 36-year-old pediatrician who voted for Bullrich in October, told The Associated Press he's leaning toward Milei, then added: Well, to be honest, it's more of a vote against the other side than anything else.

Underscoring the bitter division this campaign has brought to the fore, Milei received both jeers and cheers on Friday night at the legendary Col n Theater in Buenos Aires. The vote takes place amid Milei's allegations of possible electoral fraud, reminiscent of those from Trump and former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. Without providing evidence, Milei claimed that the first round of the presidential election was plagued by irregularities that affected the result. (AP)

Cold weather claims 5 lives in Nepal's earthquake-hit Jajarkot district

KATHMANDU, Nov 19: Five elderly people, including two women, died due to harsh cold weather in Nepal's earthquake-hit Jajarkot district, police said on Sunday. While three elderly persons -- a man and two women -- died on Saturday, two others died on Friday, they said.

All the five elderly individuals had taken refuge under separate tents as their homes were rendered uninhabitable by the destructive earthquake that hit the district earlier this month, police said.

Jajarkot was hit by a 6.4 magnitude earthquake on November 3 in which at least 153 people were killed and thousands rendered homeless.

According to local authorities, over 34,000 families in Jajarkot continue to live under makeshift tents as their residences were completely damaged by the earthquake. Among the most vulnerable to the harsh conditions are children, new mothers, patients with chronic illnesses, and the elderly population. (PTI)

Vivek Ramaswamy says his Hindu faith gives him freedom

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: Indian-American Republican presidential aspirant Vivek Ramaswamy has said that his Hindu faith gives him freedom and has inspired him to launch his bid for the White House.

He also said that if elected, he would promote values that are not exclusive to one religion and make faith, family, hard work, patriotism "cool" again in the US.

Ramaswamy's remarks came during The Family Leader Forum event organised on Saturday.

During the event, the 38-year-old tech entrepreneur opened up to the Christian audience about his Hindu faith and spoke about how it has instilled values in him that are similar to Christianity. "My faith is what gives me my freedom...my faith is what led me to this presidential campaign actually," he said. "I am a Hindu. I believe that God is true. God has sent us here for a purpose. It is our duty to realise the purpose of God. It is our moral duty. The core of our religion is that God resides in all of us," he said. "Those are God's instruments that work through us in different ways, but we are still equal because God resides in each of us. That's the core of my faith".

Ramaswamy, who launched his 2024 presidential bid in February, said that it is because of his upbringing that he has developed a respect for family, marriage and parents. "I grew up in a traditional household. My parents taught me family is the foundation. Respect your parents. Marriage is sacred. Abstinence before marriage is the way to go. Adultery is wrong. Marriage is between a man and a woman. (PTI)

French Holocaust survivors are recoiling at new antisemitism, and activists are pleading for peace

PARIS, Nov 19: Survivors of Nazi atrocities joined young Jewish activists outside the Paris Holocaust memorial Saturday to sound the alarm about resurgent antisemitic hate speech, graffiti and abuse linked to the Israel-Hamas war.

The impact of the conflict is drawing increasing concern in France and beyond. Thousands of pro-Palestinian and left-wing activists rallied in Paris and around Britain on Saturday to call for a cease-fire, the latest of several such protests in major cities around the world since the war began.

France is home to the largest Jewish population outside Israel and the U.S., and western Europe's largest Muslim population. The war has re-opened the doors to anti-Jewish sentiment in a country whose wartime collaboration with the Nazis left deep scars. Some 100,000 people marched through Paris last week to denounce antisemitism.

Esther Senot, 96, said the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7 stirred up her memories of World War II. "Massacres like that, I have lived through," she said at the Paris Holocaust Memorial. "I saw people die in front of me."

Her sister was among them: "They brought her to the gas chamber in front of my eyes," she said. Most of Senot's family members died. She survived 17 months in Auschwitz-Birkenau and other death camps and made it back to France at age 17, weighing just 32 kilograms (70 pounds).

Senot was speaking at an event organized by Jewish youth organization Hachomer Hatzai, at which teenage activists drew parallels between what's happening now and the leadup to World War II. They held a sign saying "We will not let history repeat itself."

France's Interior Ministry said this week that 1,762 antisemitic acts have been reported this year, as well as 131 anti-Muslim acts and 564 anti-Christian acts. Half of the antisemitic acts involve graffiti, posters or protest banners bearing Nazi symbols or violent anti-Jewish messages. They also include physical attacks on people and Jewish sites, and online threats. Most were registered after the Hamas attack on



Israel on Oct. 7, the ministry said.

Serge Klarsfeld, a renowned Nazi hunter and head of the Sons and Daughters of Jewish Deportees from France, noted that anger at the Israeli government's actions often gets mixed with anti-Jewish sentiment. While he is concerned about the current atmosphere in France, he sought to put it in perspective.

"Certainly there are antisemitic acts (in France), but they are not at an urgent level," he said. He expressed hope in "the wisdom of the two communities, who know how lucky they are to live in this exceptional country."

France has citizens directly affected by the war: The initial Hamas attack killed 40 French people, and French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu is shuttling around the Middle East this week to try to negotiate the release of eight French citizens held hostage by Hamas.

Two French children have also been killed in Israel's subsequent offensive on Gaza, according to the Foreign Ministry, which is pushing for humanitarian help for Gaza's civilians.

On Sunday, hundreds of French entertainment stars from different cultural and religious backgrounds plan a silent march in central Paris to call for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. They will march from the Arab World In-

stitute to the Museum of Art and History of Judaism. Like France and some other countries, Britain has seen protests to demand a cease-fire each weekend since the war began. Organizers from Palestinian organizations and left-wing groups said rallies and marches were held in dozens of towns and cities across the U.K. on Saturday. The sanctuary had some moderate bleaching this year but nothing like the devastation that hit other reefs during the summer's record-breaking heat. Still, Johnston said that's among her top concerns for the sanctuary's future. Waters that get too warm cause corals to expel their colorful algae and turn white. They can survive if temperatures fall but they are left more vulnerable to disease and may eventually die.

Florida's coral reef -- the world's third-largest -- experienced an unprecedented and potentially deadly level of bleaching over the summer. Derek Manzello, coordinator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Watch, said that so far this year, at least 35 countries and territories across five oceans and seas have experienced mass coral bleaching. He said it's too early to know how much of Florida's reefs will recover since coral may die as much as a year or two after the bleaching. (AP)

Climate change is hurting coral worldwide; But these reefs off the Texas coast are thriving

OFF THE COAST OF GALVESTON, Texas, Nov 19: Divers descending into azure waters far off the Texas coast dip below a horizon dotted with oil and gas platforms into an otherworldly landscape of undersea mountains crusted with yellow, orange and pink coral as far as the eye can see.

Some of the world's healthiest coral reefs can be found in the Gulf of Mexico, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) off the Texas coast. Sheltered in a deep, cool habitat far from shore, the reefs in the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary boast a stunning amount of coral coverage. But scientists say that like all reefs, they are fragile, and their location will only offer protection for so long in the face of a warming climate.

"To see that much coral in one place is really magnificent -- an experience that most people don't get on reefs in this day and age," said Michelle Johnston, the acting superintendent and research coordinator for the federally protected area.

Manzello said climate models suggest that all of the world's coral will be suffering severe bleaching

every year beginning around 2040.

"If you have severe bleaching events every year, the prognosis is not good because that basically means the corals aren't going to have a chance to recover," he said.

Sanctuary officials say even in the occasional years when Flower Garden Banks has experienced more serious bleaching than this year, it has bounced back quickly thanks to its overall health and depth, and it's already recovering this year.

A report expected in the coming months will look at the sanctuary's vulnerability to the projected effects of climate change.

The Flower Garden Banks stands out for its amount of coral cover -- an average of over 50 percent across some areas of the sanctuary -- compared with around 10 percent cover in the Caribbean and Northwest Atlantic region, Manzello said. Its corals are also about 60 feet (18 meters) below the surface and surrounded by even deeper waters, compared with many reefs where corals are in shallower water just offshore.

In the early 1900s, fishermen told of peering into the Gulf's wa-

ters and seeing a colorful display that reminded them of a blooming garden, but it was such an unusual spot so far from shore that scientists making the initial dives in the 1960s were surprised to actually find thriving coral reefs.

The corals in the Flower Garden Banks were able to flourish so far from shore because of mountain-like formations called salt domes, which lifted the corals high enough to catch the light, Johnston said.

Divers travel from around the world to see the reefs at Flower Garden Banks, where colorful fish, manta rays, sharks and sea turtles waft through and worms that look like Christmas trees pop in and out of corals.

Andy Lewis, a Houston attorney, said he knew from his first trip to the sanctuary about a decade ago that it was "going to have to be part of my life." Lewis became a dive master and is now president of Texas Caribbean Charters, which takes about 1,000 people a year out on diving trips there, with about half making a return trip.

"It's just a real adventure," said Lewis, who also serves on the sanctuary's advisory board. "I love



getting on the boat."

That boat leaves from a spot near Galveston, where currents from Mississippi River drop sediment that turns the water near shore a murky brown. By the time the boat motors out to the sanctuary, the water is clear and blue.

"You drop down and you are on top of live coral as far as you can see," Lewis said.

Lauren Timmes, a nurse from Colorado, described rounding a bluff on her dive this fall and being surrounded by massive reefs as schools of fish darted through. She

found the description from so long ago apt: "It's like a field of flowers," she said.

The Flower Garden Banks is one of 15 national marine sanctuaries and two national marine monuments protected by the NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, and the only one in the Gulf of Mexico.

The sanctuary is made up of 17 separate banks that cover 160 square miles (414 square kilometers). When it was designated in 1992, the sanctuary had two banks. Its largest and most recent expan-

sion of 14 banks came in 2021, a process that included input from the advisory committee, which includes representatives from industries that rely on the Gulf, from oil and gas to recreation to fishing.

Johnston said that one way to help the reefs stay healthy is to reduce stresses. That includes making sure mooring buoys offer boats a place to tie up so their anchors don't damage reefs, and removing invasive species that could cause the number of fish to decline.

Manzello said efforts like those are being done in hopes that greenhouse gas emissions will also be cut globally. "We need all of these things happening in concert to really shepherd coral reefs through the next 20, 30, 40 years," Manzello said.

Coral reefs support about a fourth of all marine species at some point in their life cycle. They are also economic drivers. By providing a home for fish that keeps them healthy, they support commercial fishing in addition to bringing in tourism revenue.

"Because coral reefs are declining all over the globe, when we find ones that are healthy, we want

to keep them that way," said Kelly Drinnen, education and outreach specialist for the Flower Garden Banks. "And they kind of serve as the repositories for what could help restore some other reef potentially in the future."

In fact, samples of healthy corals from the sanctuary are being banked and studied in a lab at Galveston Island's Moody Gardens, a tourist destination that includes an aquarium. That includes growing out fragments of coral with hopes of someday replanting them. The Flower Garden Banks weren't damaged by the massive oil spill that followed the deadly 2010 explosion on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, but other reefs in the Gulf were. Data gathered from studying the sanctuary's deeper habitat is being used to help guide restoration of those reefs.

Researchers are also studying the genetics of the Flower Garden Banks coral, including whether it's different than species in Florida.

"The more knowledge we have, the better we are equipped to try to protect that reef," said Brooke Zurita, a senior biologist at Moody Gardens. (AP)

To encourage creative minds Arunachal CM proposes 'Writers' Village'



ITANAGAR, Nov 19: In a bid to provide the perfect ambience to writers, artists, researchers and creative minds in Arunachal Pradesh, Chief minister Pema Khandu has proposed the establishment of a 'Writers' Village' in the state.

Khandu made this announcement during the valedictory function of the three-day Arunachal Literature Festival (ALF) here on Saturday night.

The chief minister said that the village, to be established in a suitable place in the state, would be a resort in the laps of nature where writers and artists can push their creative pursuits in peace and solitude.

Khandu revealed that the 'project' was on his mind for quite some time and said that the occasion was the perfect time to announce it.

"Arunachal has some of the best locations where the mind roams free, hearts beat in perfect rhythm and the soul is at total peace. Writers and artists just need such an ambience to perfect their art. We will offer it," he said.

According to the chief minister, the 'Writers' village' would be a perfect resort with all basic facilities at some remote location, where writers can stay for weeks and months fine-tuning their creative pursuits.

"I would like to invite all creative minds to avail this facility," he said.

The ALF is being attended by more than fifty renowned and budding authors and poets from across the country including those from Arunachal Pradesh. Some of the big names this year are Anand Neelakanthan, Kavita Kane, Preethi Shenoy, Asgar Wajahat, Mahesh Dattani, Janice Pariat and Anuja Chandramouli.

"Literature is a reflection of humanity and a way for us to understand each other. By listening to the voice of another person we can begin to figure out how that individual thinks. I believe that literature is important because of its purpose and in a society, which is

becoming increasingly detached from human interaction, novels create a conversation," Khandu said.

The chief minister was all praise for the state's Information and Public Relations department for organising the festival annually since 2018 in collaboration with Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS) headed by renowned authors like Y D Thongchi and Mamang Dai.

Acknowledging that the festival is growing with each passing year, Khandu suggested that the festival should travel across the state and not stay confined to the state capital. He assured enhancement of funds for organizing the festival on a rotation basis across the state from next year.

Khandu reiterated his stance on the significance of preserving local dialects and languages. He said that the younger generation ought to learn and speak in their native tongues naturally.

"It is our responsibility to teach our kids our mother tongue and it's the responsibility of our kids to take it forward. We must always remember that cultural erosion begins when the use of local dialects gets disrupted," he said.

The state government, he informed, has successfully introduced several tribe dialects in the syllabus of primary-level schools and work is on to do the same for the remaining of the tribes.

The chief minister expressed optimism that the ALF would successfully ignite young minds to not only read literature but also write it.

"Literature helps us to unlock our minds and perception of the world and allows us to see out of the box. With this, we begin to reflect, ask questions, and understand better. Meanwhile, reading literature gives us knowledge about history, religion, customs, and traditions; and provides us the opportunity to understand customs and beliefs other than our own. Literature helps us to understand other systems of living around the world," Khandu added. (PTI)

Darlong Baptist Church marks silver jubilee with grand celebrations

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 19: The silver jubilee celebration of the Baptist Church in Darlong, Seijosa, under the Pakke-Kesang district, was observed with grandeur on November 17, as per a press release. Dongli Golo, a prominent young political leader of the 12th Pakke Kessang ST Assembly Samasti, graced the occasion as the chief guest alongside Rev. Gyamar Baba, a renowned singer of NBCC.

The 25th-year Silver Jubilee Celebration-2023 was marked by enthusiastic participation, with Dongli Golo extending best wishes to all present. In his speech, he expressed gratitude to Ramesh Tallang, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, and his wife,

Organizing Secretary Papung Chiri, and other committee members for their warm hospitality. Special thanks were conveyed to Range Chairman Raju Welly, his wife, believers of Darlong Baptist Church, and Seijosa Range.

During the celebration, prayers were offered for the well-being of the people of Pakke Kessang assembly constituency and Arunachal Pradesh. The event was deemed a huge success, with guests commending the wonderful prayer program of the Baptist Church's silver jubilee celebration. The ceremony not only marked a significant milestone for the church but also fostered a sense of unity and celebration among the community.



case of designs from Arunachal Pradesh by Gleam Dive. It will be followed by designs by Dimasa weaver from Assam Ritu Daulagaphu. The next show will be by designer Metam Vao. Then folk musician and singer from Karbi Anglong in Assam, Warklung Phu Ningding will enthrall the audience. During his second song, a sequence by Sawabalambi will be presented by specially-abled artisans and weavers.

The next sequence will be by Neeta Sidisow which will be followed by Apatani folk singer Tapi Uka's performance. During her performance, designer Hibu

Tripura Assembly contemplating not allowing questions on old subjects

The Rules Committee of the Assembly headed by the Speaker held a meeting in this regard on Friday

AGARTALA, Nov 19: The Tripura Assembly is contemplating enacting a rule to disallow raising any question on a particular subject, which is three or more years old by any member of the House, Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen said.

Parliament too has such a mechanism and the state Assembly wants to follow that, Sen said.

"Under a rule (of the assembly), one can submit or ask questions on a particular issue, which is even three, four or five years old. Although it was a practice during the Left Front regime not to allow questions on any subject, which is three or more years old, it was not made a rule then.

"Now, we want to bring a bill enacting a rule to not allow any question on a subject which is three years or more old in Assembly," Sen said.

The Rules Committee of the Assembly headed by the Speaker held a meeting in this regard on Friday with representatives



of political parties and they wanted to have the practice prevailing in Parliament, he said.

"We know Parliament does not allow

questions on a particular subject, which is three years or more old. We will bring details on the issue from the Lok Sabha secretariat. If our plan is matched with

Parliament's, the government will table a bill seeking not to allow questions on issues which are three years or more old," he said.

Leader of the Opposition in Tripura Assembly, Animesh Debbarma of Tipra Motha said "Two of our MLAs attended the meeting. They briefed us about the meeting. We strongly oppose the initiative of the Speaker because it will snatch away the right to ask questions on important issues on the grounds of three years or more old."

CPI(M) state secretary Jitendra Choudhury claimed that the Rules committee was divided over the issue.

"If the move is turned into a Rule or Act, the legislators will not be allowed to raise any corruption issue after three years or four years or more. The Speaker assured us to seek details from the Parliament secretariat. It will be tabled in the next meeting of the Rules Committee. Let's see what happens," Chowdhury, who is the leader of the CPI(M) legislature party, said. (PTI)

Biswanath prepares for 2nd phase of Swasthya Sewa Utsav

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 19: With a focus on enhancing the quality of healthcare services, the state of Assam is gearing up for the second phase of the Swasthya Sewa Utsav (SSU). The initiative aims to assess all public health facilities in the state, excluding medical colleges and sub-centers/health & wellness centers (HWC). Following the successful implementation of the first phase in April 2023, the second phase of Swasthya Sewa Utsav (SSU) is scheduled to take place from November 20th to 22nd, 2023, across the state.

The assessment will be conducted phase-wise, covering various public health institutions during the specified dates. In Biswanath district, a total of 31 health facilities, including 2 Sub-Divisional Hospitals, 3 Model Hospitals (CHC), and 26 Primary Health Centers (PHC), will undergo evaluation. The assessment will be carried out by doctors from Tezpur Medical College & Hospital, along with 18 ACS/ALRS/Block Development Officers and senior officials from other line departments. Additionally, 5 Senior Administrative Officers will serve as external evaluators from Guwahati.

The Swasthya Sewa Utsav (SSU) is a crucial step toward ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of public health institutions, contributing to the overall enhancement of healthcare services in the region.

UPPL felicitates gold medal winner



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Nov 19: The ruling United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) has offered greetings to Hiraj Upadhyay for securing gold in MBA in tourism department

from HNB Garhwal University. Hiraj Upadhyay is son of Bipin Upadhyay and Tika Devi Upadhyay, resident of Patgaon Bazar in Kokrajhar district, cleared his MBA in tourism department by

securing gold medal.

On Sunday, a five member delegation team of UPPL party visited at his Patgaon residence, and extended warm welcome and felicitation to Hiraj Upadhyay and his parents with traditional Aronai, Bouquet and gifts.

The team was led by Hantigiri Narzary, media secretary, and team members included senior office secretary, Chinmoy Dey, office secretary, Dimbeswar Upadhyay, Banargaon Block president, Raju Basumatary.

Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region, extended his warm congratulations and felicitation to Hiraj Upadhyay for his feat.

"It is great privilege to extend felicitation to Sri Hiraj Upadhyay, gold medalist, MBA in tourism department under HNB Garhwal University. This will encourage the student community to achieve such laurels for the state", Boro said.

All Assam Bhaona Competition concludes

DEMOW, Nov 19: The All Assam Bhaona Competition concluded at Demow Public Playground which was held since November 14.

The cultural groups from various places performed Bhaona's during these five days of All Assam Basis Bhaona Competition. prizes were given to the winning teams according to the performances.

Manikanchan Bhaona Team, Amguri who performed the "Kumar Haran Hari Hara Judha" got the first prize, the Arunodai Cultural Group, Phulpanisiga who performed the "Sri Sri Ram Parajoy Sitar Patal Gamon" got the second prize and the Maharathi Cultural Kendra, Nakatani Gaurisagar, Sivasagar who performed the "Ambar Deh Tyag" got the Third prize. The prizes were also given to the Best Discipline Team, Best Manipulator, Best Man Character, Best Woman Character along with the prizes for different position were given and the consolation prizes were also given.

Unknown flying object affects flight services in Manipur

IMPHAL, Nov 19: Normal flight services at Manipur's Imphal International Airport were affected on Sunday afternoon over sighting of an unidentified flying object (UFO), officials said.

Two flights were diverted and three others delayed. Services normalised after around three hours.

"Due to sighting of an unidentified flying object within Imphal controlled airspace, two flights have been diverted and three departing flights have been delayed. Flight operations commence after receipt of clearance from the competent authority," a statement issued by Airport Director Chipemmi Keishang said.

An official of the Air Traffic Control (ATC) said they received a message from the CIFS at 2.30 pm, informing them that a UFO was found near the airport.

"The UFO was visible with bare eyes moving westwards of the air-



field till 4 pm," the official said.

The diverted flights included an Indigo flight from Kolkata which was initially instructed "to hold overhead" and was diverted to Guwahati after 25 minutes.

The delayed flights however left Imphal airport after receiving clearance late after around three

hours. The Indian Air Force Eastern Command at Shillong was informed of the development, the official said.

Manipur is bordered by Nagaland, Mizoram and Assam, besides sharing an international border with Myanmar to its east. (PTI)

6th North East India Fashion Week celebrates creativity on day 2

The Artisans Movement to present top designers

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 19: The sixth edition of North East India Fashion Week - The Artisans Movement began at the Koro Happa River Island in Jollang, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh on November 18 with a series of enthralling designs showcased in front of a massive audience.

Arunachal Pradesh chief minister and chief guest of the event Pema Khandu, state MLA and chief patron of the event Tech Kaso, Tripura minister and guest of honour Bikash Debbarma among other distinguished guests, attended the inaugural ceremony of the festival.

Designer and CEO Yana Ngoba Chakpu informed that the three-day festival will witness over 30 designers and artisans taking the centerstage with their creations. The fashion extravaganza is being organized by One Arunachal, a registered NGO dedicated towards raising awareness and preserving the traditional and cultural oneness of Arunachal Pradesh.

On November 20, the fashion sequence starts with special show-



case of designs from Arunachal Pradesh by Gleam Dive. It will be followed by designs by Dimasa weaver from Assam Ritu Daulagaphu. The next show will be by designer Metam Vao. Then folk musician and singer from Karbi Anglong in Assam, Warklung Phu Ningding will enthrall the audience. During his second song, a sequence by Sawabalambi will be presented by specially-abled artisans and weavers.

The next sequence will be by Neeta Sidisow which will be followed by Apatani folk singer Tapi Uka's performance. During her performance, designer Hibu

Olo Budhi's creations will be showcased.

Next will be talented designer-duo Nang Watika Mantaw and Nang Wenika Namchoom showcasing Khamti weaves. They will be followed by designer Leeza Bagra.

Next will be a thrilling performance by Arunachal Idol-fame singer Markio Tanalolo.

The final presentation will be by designer Rupa Rebe where Rubaru Mr India and Mr Arunachal 2023 will be the showstopper.

Yana Ngoba's flagship event, North East India Fashion Week - The Artisans Movement aims to

systematically conduct a series of pilot studies towards improving the prospects for inclusion, empowerment, and quality of life of artisans and weavers in northeast India. The event will commemorate the movement & showcase the talents of artisans from northeast India. More than 30 designers and weavers will participate in the 3-day fashion event.

Speaking about the sixth edition of North East India Fashion Week, Chairman One Arunachal Shri Joram Tat said, "Through North East India Fashion Week- The Artisans Movement, we strive to identify artisan role models, boost self-esteem within the artisan community, advocate for their skills, and offer a platform to showcase their unique talents. With the valuable support of our NGO, we are committed to training and promoting the weavers and designers from the region through ongoing skill development and capacity building. This endeavor aims to enhance employability, secure better livelihoods, dignity labor, and establish a brand presence with global market connections."

Tekhao Leima Kuranganayani' by Ajanta Buragohain released

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 19: On the 2nd day of the 10 day Assam Publication Board book fair in the Boarding Field, 'Tekhao Leima Kuranganayani', a historical novel written by Ajanta Buragohain on the life of the Ahom Queen Kuranganayani was released by Dr Saumeyjoti Mahanta, writer and principal, Sibsagar Commerce College.

In his speech, Dr Mahanta said that writing a novel on a historical character is like rediscovering our own past, the hidden stories and many more things. The

writer has also written a popular novel on Lachit Borphukan. Presiding over the meeting, Prof Jiten Borpagohain said that no nation can have an identity without history and it would take days to tell the whole story of Sivasagar's historical importance.

Dr Tridib Mahanta, Dr Ajanta Gogoi Das, Prof Umananda Sarma, guest writer Rajeswar Sing Raju of Jammu, Abdul Jelil, Promode Kalita, Khirad Kumar Goswami, Probodh Das and Dhiraj Goswami addressed the meeting and spoke appreciably of the books released in the meeting.



The Civic Reception Programme of SEIL was held on Sunday organised by ABVP, Meghalaya prant. HT photos

Rajasthan Cong like cricket team whose batters spent 5 years trying to run out each other: Modi

JAIPUR, Nov 19: Amid the World Cup fever in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Rajasthan Congress is like a cricket team whose batters spent five years trying to run out each other.

Addressing a public meeting in Churu district in support of BJP candidate Rajendra Rathore from the Taranagar constituency, Modi exhorted people to vote for the party in the November 25 Rajasthan Assembly polls to ensure rapid development of the state.

In Jhunjhunu, he targeted the Congress by alleging that the party has "developed the tradition of corruption, nepotism and appeasement" which led to a huge loss for the country. The youth in India did not get opportunities because of this, he claimed.

At the public meeting in Churu, Modi referred to the power tussle between chief minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot saying, "In cricket, a batter comes and scores runs for his team. But there is so much infighting within the Congress that instead of scoring runs, its leaders spent five years trying to run out each other."

His remarks came shortly before the Indian cricket team was to take on Australia in the World Cup final at the Narendra Modi stadium in Ahmedabad.

Modi further said, "When their team is so bad, what runs will they score and what work will they do for you?"

He said if the BJP is voted to power in Rajasthan, it will throw out all corrupt people and the state will witness rapid development. "The more you stay away from the Congress the more you save Rajasthan, the more your future is assured," Modi told the rally.



"The relationship between good intentions and the Congress is the same as that between light and darkness. What will be the intention of a government that gobbles up money allotted for drinking water," he asked, alluding to the alleged Jal Jeevan Mission scam in Rajasthan.

"The Congress and development are each other's enemies and will remain so," he said and alleged that the "Congress" paper leak mafia sold the future of youths for lakhs of rupees."

Modi accused the Congress government of being involved in a fertiliser scam and of looting the farmers.

"In the last five years, the Congress played with the future of youths. There have been raids on coaching centres and the

relatives of a minister close to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot have become officers and your children did not get the chance," he said.

"When the BJP forms government in Rajasthan, paper leaks will be investigated at a fast pace. No matter how big or influential a person is involved, he will not be spared," Modi said.

In Jhunjhunu, Modi said India is now setting new records and achieving new feats in every field. "Take any field, India is doing wonders. There is enthusiasm all around and there is confidence that we will make India a developed country by 2047."

Referring to the 'Red Diary', he claimed the entire account of the Con-

gress' "license to loot" was recorded in it and now the pages have started turning slowly. "Here the pages of Red Diary opened and on Gehlotji's fuse blew up. The magician's magic is visible in the Red Diary."

Sacked state minister Rajendra Gudha has been alleging that "illegal transactions" involving Gehlot and other leaders are recorded in the diary that he possesses. Purported pictures of some pages of the diary recently surfaced on social media.

Referring to the Shekhawati region of the state from where hundreds of youths join the armed forces, Prime Minister Modi said this is a brave land and the bravery of its sons plays a big role in keeping the country safe.

"The Congress has left no stone unturned to deceive the sons of such a land. On the issue of One Rank One Pension, the Congress kept the bravehearts of this place in trouble for decades, misled them, made them suffer," he alleged.

Modi also held the Congress government responsible for high fuel prices in the state. Petrol is cheaper by ₹ 12-13 in Haryana, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

"Your bus fare is expensive. It is difficult to ride a scooter or bike. This is happening because of the Congress' loot. The BJP government at the Centre has made petrol cheaper for the entire country."

"As soon as the BJP comes to power in Rajasthan after December 3, petrol rates will be reviewed in Rajasthan like other states," Modi added.

Polling for the 200-member Rajasthan Assembly will be held on November 25 and votes will be counted on December 3. (PTI)

Adani-Hindenburg row: Plea in SC seeks contempt action against SEBI

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court for initiation of contempt proceedings against the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), alleging it has violated the timeline for completing the investigation and submitting its report on the allegations of stock price manipulation by the Adani group.

An application has been filed by PIL petitioner Vishal Tiwari saying that despite the deadline given to the SEBI it has failed to comply with the direction of the court and has not submitted the final conclusion/report as was directed by the court.

It said by the order dated May 17, 2023, the apex court directed SEBI to submit its report till August 14, 2023. It said on August 25, 2023, SEBI filed the status report regarding its investigation stating that overall it has done 24 investigations, out of which 22 investigations have achieved finality and two are of interim nature.

The application also referred to the latest report by the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) against the Adani Group and its alleged investments via "opaque" Mauritius funds.

The application said that the primary focus of the PIL was on what steps shall be taken in future to strengthen the regulatory system so that the investors could be protected and their investment in the share market remains safe.

"Because after the publication of the Hindenburg report against the Adani Group thousands of

crores of the investors' money got lost."

"But now the question arises, whether the present regulatory authority is efficient enough or if some changes are required by setting up a new regulatory body with a more efficient mechanism so that in future such damaging incidents may not occur in the share market and the investors' money may be protected," it said.

Tiwari in his application said that a strong mechanism is also required to keep vigil upon the companies' conduct and practises - whether they are complying with necessary rules and regulations laid down by the regulatory authority.

"That till now after the recommendations and suggestions given by the expert committee in its report the Union Government has not taken any strong step in compliance of that and has not apprised the court with any secured framework for the protection of investors in future," it said. Tiwari said that SEBI in its application has objected to the suggestion of a necessary timeline for the completion of the investigation.

"The SEBI objection is contrary to the present need of a strong and efficient regulatory mechanism because timeless investigations lead to the disappearance of evidence and vital information against any entity which is under investigation and it also reduces the confidence of the investors in the market," it said, adding that SEBI failed to file its report despite timeline fixed by the court till August 14. (PTI)

Railways should roll back dynamic pricing: Mamata

KOLKATA, Nov 19: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said the railways should roll back dynamic pricing of train tickets, and pay more attention to the safety and security of travellers.

Banerjee, a former railway minister, claimed that train fares were sometimes higher than flight tickets, following reports that ticket costs rose astronomically this week on various routes during the ongoing festive season.

"Sad to find that railway passenger fares are steeply increasing and even in Suvidha trains the fares are sometimes higher than air fares!! Where will common people go in case of emergencies?" she said on X.

"Fare hike must be curbed and reduced! And attention must be given to safety and security issues," Banerjee said. The railways introduced dynamic pricing in 2016. Commenting on rising railway accidents in the country, she also questioned why anti-collision devices and other such measures that she had introduced during her railway stint, were not used to keep a check on mishaps.

"During my tenure as railways minister, I had introduced anti-collision devices and other anti-accident measures! Why are they not being used to avert the increasing number of train accidents, while anti-people fare regime continues unchecked?" the Trinamool Congress supremo said.

There have been reports of skyrocketing prices of train tickets on some routes connecting Bihar and Jharkhand with other important cities, amid the Chhath festivities.

Earlier this week, dismissing reports of a shortage of berths for passengers opting for non-AC coaches, railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had said there was nearly a three-fold increase in the number of special train trips this festive season as compared to last year.

The railways is operating 6,754 additional train trips this festive season between October 1 and December 31 to clear the rush of passengers, as against 2,614 in the same period last year, he had said. (PTI)

Every possible method being tried for speedy evacuation: Gadkari

UTTARKASHI (UTTARAKHAND), Nov 19: Whatever is required to save the 41 trapped workers will be done and keeping the morale of workers and their family members high should be everyone's collective responsibility, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Sunday as he reviewed the rescue operation at the partially collapsed Silkyara tunnel.

The minister for road transport and highways, who was accompanied by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, said the rescue operation is challenging as the soil strata in the Himalayan region is not uniform. It is soft at some places and hard at other places which makes any mechanical operation difficult, he said. Horizontal drilling with the American auger is the quickest method in the given circumstances to reach the trapped workers, Gadkari said.

"American auger was working alright when it was drilling through soft soil. It faced some problems after it encountered some hard obstacle that led to the machine applying greater pressure and creating vibrations following which it was stopped for safety reasons," he said at a press conference in Silkyara.

"We are working on six options simultaneously. The PMO is also closely monitoring the operation. Our biggest priority is to save all those who are trapped and as soon as possible. Whatever is needed will be done," he said. Whichever machine or technical assistance is required will be provided, he said.

"Keeping up the morale of the trapped workers and their family members should be everyone's collective responsibility at the mo-

ment," he said. He said the trapped workers are being constantly provided oxygen, electricity, food, water and medicines.

Apart from one pipeline through which they were supplied food earlier, an alternative larger-diameter pipeline has also been inserted up to 42 metres through the rubble so that food like roti, vegetables and rice apart from light food could also be supplied to them, he said. Road, Transport and Highways Secretary Anurag Jain also said that multivitamins, antidiarrhoeals and dry fruits are being provided to the 41 workers trapped for the past seven days.

"Fortunately, there is light inside because the electricity is on. There is a pipeline, and thus water is available. There is a 4-inch pipe, which was used for compression. Through that, we are sending food from day 1," he said. Jain, in a video brief update on the rescue operation, further said there is water and electricity in two km portion inside the tunnel, which is the finished part of the 4.531-kilometre two lane bi-directional tunnel at Silkyara in Uttarakashi. Experts from different fields have been pooled in and asked to suggest whatever methods can be applied to ensure the safe and early evacuation of the trapped workers, Gadkari said.

Preparations are on to start vertical drilling through the hill above the tunnel, he said, adding every possible method is being tried for their speedy evacuation.

Gadkari said tunnels at a cost of approximately ₹ 2.75 lakh crore are being built by the Centre in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. (PTI)

Study reveals how hunger influences decision-making

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: A study on mice has shown how gut-produced hunger hormones can influence decision-making and drive an animal's behaviour.

The researchers said that the findings demonstrate how the hunger hormone can cross the blood-brain barrier and directly impact the brain to drive activity, controlling a circuit in the brain that is likely to be the same or similar in humans.

The blood-brain barrier is known to strictly restrict many substances in the blood from reaching the brain. The study findings are published in the journal, *Neuron*.

Researchers put mice in an arena that had some food, and looked at how the mice acted when they were hungry or full.

While all the mice spent time investigating the food, only the hungry ones would begin eating, the researchers at University College London, UK, found.



They also used brain imaging to study activity in the mice's ventral hippocampus, which is a decision-making part of the brain understood to help form and use memories to guide behaviour.

The researchers found that activity in a subset of brain cells in the ventral hippocampus increased when the mice approached the food and that this neural activity inhibited them from eating.

However, when the mice were hungry, less neural activity in this brain region was observed and therefore, they

were not inhibited from eating.

The researchers also found that this corresponded to high levels of the hunger hormone ghrelin circulating in the blood.

Further, by activating these ventral hippocampal neurons, the researchers were able to experimentally make mice behave as if they were full and therefore stopped eating.

Researchers also said that the findings could contribute to research into the mechanisms of eating disorders, along with other links between diet and other health outcomes such as risk of mental illnesses.

The scientists said they are continuing their research by investigating whether hunger can impact learning or memory by checking if mice perform non-food-specific tasks differently depending on how hungry they are.

They also said additional research might also shed light on whether there are similar mechanisms at play for stress or thirst. (PTI)

Will retire from politics, if proved I have taken money in single case of transfer: Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU, Nov 19: With JD(S) state president H D Kumaraswamy repeatedly attacking him and his son Yathindra, a former Congress MLA, accusing them of a "cash for transfer" racket, Karnataka Chief minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said he will retire from politics, if proved that he has taken money, even in a single transfer case of government officials. He alleged such cash for transfer happened during Kumaraswamy's tenure.

"I have told you not to ask about it (Kumaraswamy's allegations). Haven't I responded to it already? Let him tweet (post on X) a number of times. He is speaking about what they did during his tenure (as CM)," Siddaramaiah said in response to a question about Kumaraswamy's attacks.

Speaking to reporters here, the chief minister said, "He (Kumaraswamy) is speaking about the money they (Kumaraswamy and JDS leaders) took for transfers. They took money during his tenure. In our tenure, we have not taken any money. I have already said - I will retire from politics, if it's proved that I have taken money in even a single case of transfer."

"Let him tweet a hundred times, I don't



want to reply," he added.

Kumaraswamy had recently sought to link a phone conversation between Yathindra and Siddaramaiah, which was widely circulated on social media, to allege a "cash for postings/transfer" scam, a charge which has been rightly rejected by the chief minister and his son. Continuing his attack, Kumaraswamy has even alleged that an official, whose name was mentioned in a phone conversation be-

tween the CM and his son, had figured in the transfer list of police inspectors released recently. Further accusing Yathindra of acting like a "super chief minister", the JD(S) leader had even sought the resignation of Siddaramaiah over a video clip.

The former chief minister today too, in a series of posts on 'X', on the issue, accused Siddaramaiah of outsourcing his Varuna constituency in Mysuru district to his son Yathin-

dra. Yathindra from 2018-23 had represented the Varuna segment, and in 2023, he gave up the seat to his father Siddaramaiah to contest from his home seat for one last time, and himself did not contest from any other constituency.

"The people of Varuna have chosen you (Siddaramaiah). You have to do their work yourself. Why outsource the constituency to your son? I never outsourced the constituency to my son when I was CM. You have outsourced Varuna to the son," Kumaraswamy posted. Noting that as far as he knows, no CM has ever outsourced his constituency to children, he accused Siddaramaiah of giving power to his son, through the backdoor, by ensuring him a Karnataka Development Programme (KDP) post in the segment. "Is there any provision in the constitution that allows this? If so, let me know."

Further stating that as far as he knows, CSR stands for Corporate Social Responsibility, Kumaraswamy said, "Now it has become Corrupt Son Of Siddaramaiah! Have you outsourced to your son -- to do CSR collection in the state? Is he in-charge of CSR for 224 constituencies (in the state)? You seem to have your eye on the 2 per cent CSR as well." (PTI)

Election Commission has become a caged parrot: Raut

MUMBAI, Nov 19: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday said the Election Commission of India had become a caged parrot and a sham and was "practising double standards in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party".

In his weekly column 'Rokhtok' in Shiv Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana', Raut also accused the BJP of resorting to religious propaganda to "bribe" voters after losing ground in five states where Assembly polls are being held (in November).

Latching on to union home minister Amit Shah's statement in Madhya Pradesh last week promising people of government-organised tours to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya if the BJP retains power, Raut said this was clearly campaigning on religious lines. If such a statement had been made by a Congress leader, then the ECI, like the Enforcement Direc-

torate, would have been at the doorstep with a "warrant", the Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP alleged. Garnering votes by "bribing" the electorate is shocking and the ECI has shut its eyes, which is detrimental to democracy, Raut asserted.

The idol consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya is scheduled for January 22.

"(Former chief election commissioner) T N Seshan, during his tenure, showed the poll body did not even have to roar, it just had to wiggle its tail and it would instill fear in all political parties. The Election Commission has become a sham," Raut said.

"Whatever has happened (during poll campaigning in five states, namely Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram) has proved the Election Commission has become a caged parrot,"

Raut alleged.

When Shiv Sena founder late Bal Thackeray sought votes for party candidate Ramesh Prabhu on the issue of Hindutva in the 1987 Vile Parle bypoll, his voting rights were revoked for six years, Raut pointed out. Sena MLAs Suryakant Mahadik, Ramakant Mayekar and Prabhu, who won the bypoll, were disqualified.

"They (BJP) managed the Election Commission and other constitutional bodies and fought the Hindutva battle," Raut alleged.

On Thursday, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) wrote to ECI over Shah's Ram Temple tour promise and sarcastically asked if the poll body had relaxed the model code of conduct.

In the letter, the Shiv Sena (UBT) accused the ECI of practising "double standards" in favour of the BJP. (PTI)

Centre trying to create economic crisis in Kerala; Cong acting as spectator: CM Vijayan

KASARAGOD (KERALA), Nov 19: Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday accused the BJP-ruled Centre of trying to destroy the federal structure and creating an economic crisis in the southern state through its various policies and blamed the Congress-led UDF of being a silent spectator to the same.

Alleging neglect and discrimination on the part of the Central government towards Kerala, Vijayan said it was getting this treatment despite achieving unprecedented gains in tax collection, domestic production and infrastructure development.

Speaking during the Nava Kerala Sadas at the Uduma constituency here in the evening, the CM said that the Union government through its various policies was "financially strangulating the Left government" since it came into power back in 2016.

"At the same time, the Congress and the UDF opposition led by it were being a mute spectator to this discrimination. Why this hesitancy in speaking out against the actions of the Centre which are against the state and its people?" he asked while addressing a gathering of thousands.

People turned in huge numbers to raise their complaints and grievances before the CM and his cabinet colleagues as part of the Nava Kerala Sadas outreach programme.

During his speech, Vijayan highlighted the various projects, like national highway expansion and IGL gas pipeline implementation, which he claimed had not taken off during the earlier UDF regime and were made possible only after the Left government came to power.

Earlier in the day also, at a press conference, the CM blamed the Centre for the economic crisis in the state and accused the UDF opposition of using the same as an opportunity to destroy the Left government's popularity.

Vijayan said the outreach programme intends to show people these "hidden realities" and also address their problems.

He said that a day ago, 1,908 complaints were received at the counters set up for that purpose and action would be taken on them. Referring to the large number of people who had gathered for the programme a day ago and on Sunday, he said that there were a huge number of women among them.

The CM said that the presence of women in large numbers indicates the effect of the steps taken by the government for their protection.

He also referred to the recent verdict in the Aluva rape-cum-murder case and said that the speedy probe, trial and the maximum punishment given to the accused indicates that any kind of violence against children was unacceptable and would be dealt with mercifully.

One hundred and ten days after a minor girl was brutally raped and killed in Kerala's Aluva, a special court had on November 14, sentenced a migrant worker to death in the case.

Vijayan said that since coming to power, the government has taken strong measures to ensure the safety of women and children and this was evident from the women's participation in the Nava Kerala Sadas held at Paivalike here a day ago. (PTI)

Haryana-based JJP hoping to emerge as 'key' regional player in Rajasthan polls

CHANDIGARH, Nov 19: The Jannayak Janta Party is confident of putting on a good performance in the assembly elections in Rajasthan, where the Haryana-based outfit is contesting from 20 seats in its first foray outside its home base.

Ajay Singh Chautala, who heads the regional outfit, was a two-time legislator from Rajasthan during his time in the Indian National Lok Dal before the party split into the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) in 2018.

The JJP is now looking at Ajay Singh Chautala's guidance and experience to manoeuvre the polls in Rajasthan.

The party is also banking on Chaudhary Devi Lal, the former deputy prime minister whose political legacy it claims to carry forward, who was the MP from Sikar in 1989. Three of the 20 assembly seats the party is contesting are in the Sikar parliamentary segment.

The JJP, a BJP ally in Haryana, was keen to contest the Rajasthan polls jointly but decided to field candidates on its own after the saffron party did not show any inclination.

In Haryana, there have been signs of differences between the BJP and the JJP in recent months. Some senior BJP leaders have also talked about contesting next year's Lok Sabha and assembly polls on their own and a section are in favour of snapping ties with the JJP.

Both the parties have remained non-committal on contesting the 2024 elections jointly.

The JJP, formed after a vertical split in the Indian National Lok Dal, extended support to the BJP after the saffron party fell short of majority following the 2019



Haryana Assembly polls.

JJP secretary general Digvijay Chautala said the party and other regional outfits hold the key to the Rajasthan Assembly election fortunes, referring to its 'key' poll symbol.

About the JJP's chances, he said, "We will put up a good performance."

Pointing to regional parties bagging a few seats in assembly polls in Rajasthan over the years, Digvijay Chautala said these outfits "will win 30-35 seats, indicating that no single party will be able to form a government without their support."

"All regional forces will have to come together and make some sort of alliance post the results and join hands," he said, pointing to the scenario if no single party gets a majority.

Digvijay Chautala, Haryana deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala and Ajay Singh Chautala have been campaigning for JJP candidates fielded from various seats, including Danta Ramgarh

and Fatehpur. He said people there are aware of the work done by the JJP in Haryana. These include taking steps to make the lives of farmers better, opening e-libraries in rural areas and initiatives in aviation and other sectors.

Underlining the role regional parties can play if they have a share in power, Digvijay Chautala said, "Looking at Rajasthan, especially the remote areas, education and medical infrastructure and the roads are in a bad shape. Big parties win but their attention remains limited to big cities and towns after victory and these areas get neglected."

"If regional parties are there, they will definitely strengthen these areas and undertake development," he added.

When asked why a tie-up with the saffron party did not materialise in Rajasthan, Digvijay Chautala said, "The BJP's Rajasthan unit was not able to understand the actual strength of the JJP. They were considering us to be a new party and didn't actually under-

stand that this party was born from Chaudhary Devi Lalji's ideology."

He said Chaudhary Devi Lal played a role in paving the way for Bhairon Singh Shekhawat to come to power in Rajasthan in 1990.

Ajay Singh Chautala was MLA from Rajasthan twice, winning from Danta Ramgarh in 1990 and Nohar in 1993, he said and added people of these segments still remember his development work.

"The BJP, I think, failed to understand the importance of Chaudhary Devi Lalji's ideology or the number of followers it still has in Rajasthan. I think they made a big loss in the matter (by not contesting jointly)," Digvijay Chautala said.

He also accused the Congress of making false promises ahead of the assembly polls and said people will not fall for their "guarantees."

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot has announced seven guarantees -- an annual honorarium of ₹ 10,000 to women heads of families, cooking gas cylinders at ₹ 500 to 1.05 crore families, purchase of dung from cattle rearers at ₹ 2 per kilogramme, law for old pension scheme for government employees, laptop or tablet to students taking admission in state-run colleges, insurance cover up to ₹ 15 lakh per family to compensate for losses due to natural calamities, and school education in English medium -- if the Congress retains power in the state.

Rajasthan has witnessed a two-way contest between the Congress and the BJP during the past three decades.

Polling for the 200-member Rajasthan Assembly will be held on November 25 and the votes will be counted on December 3. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Drilling on hold, rescue

top of the debris and the tunnel roof, and this could be explored by robots to see if another pipe for life support could be pushed through. Road Transport and Highways Secretary Anurag Jain said multivitamins, antidiarrhoeals and dry fruit are being provided to the trapped workers. "Fortunately, there is light inside because the electricity is on. There is a pipeline, and so water is available. There is a four-inch pipe that was used for compression. Through it we are sending food from day 1," he said. The multiple-pronged approach now being adopted follows a series of setbacks after a portion of the Silkyara-Barkot tunnel collapsed the previous Sunday morning, blocking the way out for the worker who were ending the night shift. When using earth-moving equipment failed, an auger machine was brought in. When this too didn't work, the larger American-made drilling machine was airlifted by the IAF from Delhi. A similar machine was also dispatched from Indore in case a replacement was needed. The vertical drilling equipment arriving next is too big to be hauled by air and will be brought to the site by road, the authorities said. (PTI)

India meets its Waterloo

Pat Cummins and his set-up that became the turning point. Cummins' ball bounced a shade extra and Virat Kohli (54), trying a defensive jab towards the empty cover area, played on. He had opened the cover region and bowled a Test match length, packing the leg-side field and on a fairly benign track, it took one ball to bounce a tad extra and break a billion hearts. Cummins didn't do much through the entire tournament but did just enough when he needed to, just like the captains do. There was a deafening silence inside the stadium brimming with 92,453 fans and 'King Kohli' found it hard to take the long walk back to the pavilion. On a track where stroke-making became extremely difficult with each passing over, KL Rahul's composed 66 off 107 was an innings that was useful but played in one gear with a solitary boundary that did more harm than good in the final context of the match.

HEADS' STUNNING CATCH

On a track where Rahul played lot of dot balls, Head showed how to use feet against Indian spinners, something that Rohit tried but Head's 'Kapil Devesque' catch running backwards from his cover position brought premature end to Indian skipper's innings. The degree of difficulty that the Indians faced in getting big hits could be seen as they managed only 13 fours in the entire innings, apart from the three sixes hit by skipper Rohit. The three Australian spinners -- Adam Zampa, Glenn Maxwell and Travis Head -- gave away only 83 runs in their 18 overs with two wickets. Between overs 11 to 40, India hit only two boundaries.

PERFECT FIELDING EFFORT

The Australian fielding was exceptional as the field placement by Cummins was immaculate and the manner in which the fielders inside the ring cut the angles and outfielders saved boundaries was there to be seen. Kohli started with three stunning boundaries -- an on-drive, a slash behind point and a cover drive to set the pace followed by a punch off Maxwell through extra-cover. With Cummins sending Shreyas Iyer back with a pitched-up delivery that straightened and the batter played inside the line, it was time for consolidation from the Kohli-Rahul duo, who added 67 in 18.1 overs. It was a phase where Cummins' cerebral captaincy helped the Aussies maintain a stranglehold on the duo. India couldn't hit a boundary for 97 balls and the wagon wheel showed that most of Kohli's 34 singles came in the arc between square leg and long-on. Rahul, at the other end, had just one boundary. Cummins placed a fielder on the leg-side boundary and asked his spinners to bowl straight lines, allowing Kohli little room to manoeuvre on the off-side. It was day when the King was meant to be checkmated. (PTI)

Pests damage 28,000

adopt local indigenous technologies," it added. The CMO said that all district commissioners have been asked to ensure strict implementation of the directions. "In order to prevent pest infestation in Rabi crops like maize, potato, etc, crop-specific pesticides are to be applied during the vegetative growth stage," it said, adding that early harvesting should be undertaken. (PTI)

29 Myanmar soldiers

their country. At present, the situation along the India-Myanmar border is peaceful and there are no reports of any clashes since November 15, officials said. Around 5,000 civilians also crossed over to Mizoram after the fighting started in the neighbouring country last week. The majority of them have returned to their country, a police officer said. Mizoram shares a 510-km-long porous border with Myanmar. The northeastern state has provided shelter to more than 31,000 people from Myanmar, who fled after the military junta seized power in a coup in February 2021. The Myanmar nationals, who took shelter in Mizoram, are from the Chin community. The Chins and Mizos belong to the Zo ethnic group. (PTI)

Two BJP leaders join

Kache Constructions. Petty contractors have nowhere to go, are not given their bills and left in the lurch," he said. Engti had started off as a student leader. He was active in Karbi Students Association's central committee from 1985 - 1994. From 1994 he got involved in the movement for an autonomous state. He was elected as the MLA on an ASDC ticket from Bokajan for three consecutive terms from 1996. In 2011 he again contested as ASDC backed PAPA (People's Alliance for Peace Initiative) candidate, but lost to Congress Klengeon Ingti. In 2012, Engti jumped to KAAC politics and contested in the KAAC election as ASDC backed PAPA candidate from Sarupathar MAC constituency. He won the election. Just six months before the expiry of the five year MAC term (2012-2016) together with four other PAPA backed elected MACs, Kangieng Terang, Darsing Ronghang, Horensing Bey and Semson Tisso, joined the BJP.

In 2017, he again contested the KAAC elections on a BJP ticket from the same Sarupathar MAC constituency and won the election. He served as an executive member (EM) and in-charge higher education (college level) in the CEM Tuliram Ronghang's executive committee. However, in the 2022 KAAC election, he was denied a BJP ticket. Pradip Diphusa, who was in the Congress earlier joined the BJP on June 23, 2016 led by the then chief executive member of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang together with 18 other elected members. Diphusa was an executive member (EM) in KAAC then. President of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, Bhupen Kumar Borah said, "Along with heavy weight leaders like Jagat Sing Engti and Pradip Diphusa, 600 others have joined the Congress. It has brought enthusiasm in us. I.N.D.I.A block will do well. More will join the Congress in the days to come. I don't want to reveal their names."

Heroin worth ₹ 2.5 crore

peddlers, hailing from Manipur. "With his help, we nabbed the women from a hotel in Lalmati and during searches, recovered 20 packets of soap cases containing heroin along with ₹ 22,400 in cash from them," Barah said. After interrogation of the two women, police raided another hotel on TRP Road at Machkhowa and recovered ₹ 1,50,000 cash from a room. "Efforts are on to nab other associates," the police commissioner said. (PTI)

Assam Rice Research

to develop high-yielding premium quality aromatic Joha rice and high yielding red rice varieties," he said. In 2022, ARRI developed and popularized a high-yielding purple rice variety, Labanya. "There are many nutritional qualities that make Labanya diabetic friendly. It has a lower GI (<55), high dietary fibre, higher antioxidant content (68 µg/ml), and higher phenolic compound (61 µg/ml). To add to these, this variety has high head rice recovery and is easy to cook," Chetia said. He, however, added that diabetic-friendly rice varieties are not that popular among the farmers because of poor yield. On other varieties, he said though there is great demand for the aromatic Joha rice in Assam, it is not able to reach the markets in other parts of the country as desired. "This is mostly because the production of Joha rice is lower than normal rice which could only meet the demands of the domestic market. Also, the farmers are not aware of the market of Joha in the country and profitability of this class of rice," Chetia, who is behind the development of several rice varieties, said. AAU-ARRI currently has 11 scientists and 30 research scholars. It occupies about 50 hectares of land of which 40 hectares are cultivable land. Of these 40 hectares, about 13 hectares are being utilised for research and in the remaining 27 hectares, quality seeds of popular rice varieties are produced. Research on rice is undertaken in six disciplines - plant breeding, agronomy, soil science, plant pathology, entomology and plant physiology. So far, the institute has developed more than 45 rice varieties through its breeding programme which include Ranjit, Bahadur, Priyolee, Kushal and Moniram. Ranjit and Bahadur have become a household name among the farmers not only in Assam, but also in neighbouring states like Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal and countries like Nepal and Bhutan. Earlier this month, three high yielding rice varieties developed by AAU-ARRI - Prachur, Satadbi and Patkai - were released for cultivation. Junior scientist Jyoti Lekha Borah said the institute is organising an international conference on "Next-Gen Preparedness for Food Security and Environmental Sustainability" from November 22-24 as part of the centenary year celebrations. According to Chetia, AAU-ARRI is also focusing on increasing the cropping intensity by shifting mono-crop areas to multiple cropping. Integrated farming system is another component introduced among the farmers to increase their income, he said, adding research is also aimed at soil and water conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. (PTI)

APCC holds discussion

The APCC president stated that their national leader Rahul Gandhi will visit the state in the coming days. Meanwhile, JACAS chairman, Khorsing Teron said the BJP has no intention for fulfilling the demands of the people of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts. He blamed the BJP for the situations arising out of the border issue and hoped that the Congress would find a permanent solution to them in the future.

Indian cyberspace seeing

cyber security capabilities. "Additionally, an ad hoc committee is collaborating on a comprehensive international convention to counter the use of ICTs for criminal purposes," he added. (PTI)

Arms recovered in Manipur

and vulnerable areas of Imphal west, Thoubal, Bishnupur and Tengnoupal districts, the police said. In one of the operations at Uyumakhong village under Moirang police station of Bishnupur district, a cache of arms and ammunition was recovered, the police further said. The recovered items were one SLR rifle with magazine, one carbine without magazine, four HE hand grenades, one 51 mm smoke bomb, one WP smoke bomb and two 2-inch para bombs. The police recovered the cache in a joint operation with the troops of 5 Sikh Regiment as input regarding movement of miscreants and caching of explosives, arms and ammunition near Uyumakhong village. The search operation was conducted after cordoning some areas of the village from 6 am and lasted till 8 am, the source said. The recovered cache was handed over to Moirang police station after registering a case for further investigation, the police added. A total of 5,668 arms along with ammunition were also looted during the initial stage of the violence that erupted in the state on May 3 last. (NNN)

Chhath celebrated with great fervour across Bihar

PATNA, Nov 19: Lakhs of men and women across Bihar paid tributes to the setting sun on Sunday as part of Chhath, the state's most popular festival which has now gained fame far and wide.

Chhath devotees, those who observe a grueling 36-hour fast, stood in waist-deep water, some choosing deep vessels atop roofs but many others walking long distances to reach ghats of rivers, lakes or ponds. Many men carried wicker baskets on their heads, heavy with items used in the ritual worship while the more adventurous ones chose to cover the distance prostrating on their bare chests (dandvat).

All roads seemed to lead to the Ganga in the state capital where devotees and their family members burst into loud chants of "Har Har Gange" when chief minister Nitish Kumar went past on a steamer, waving at the citizens while on his annual vigil.

The chief minister made it a point, before embarking on his steamer tour, to offer worship to the "Astaachal-gami Surya", as the setting sun is known in local parlance, at his official residence where devotees from among his close family members were observing the austerities.

Kumar, who has during his long tenure been on good terms with Raj Bhavan, had taken along Governor Rajendra Arlekar, who took over in February this year and got a chance to experience first-hand the fervour of the festival to worship the Sun. (PTI)

DMRC chief appeals to people to not engage in objectionable activities in Delhi Metro

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: With a string of controversial videos made in Delhi Metro trains and premises going viral in the last several months, DMRC chief Vikas Kumar has appealed to people to refrain from engaging in "objectionable" activities and said steps were being taken to curb such incidents.

In an interview with PTI, Kumar also said squads do "surprise checks" from time to time and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is "trying its best" to check these activities.

Seeking fame, some metro riders in the past have often resorted to gyrating on some popular numbers inside train coaches or at platforms, while someone else filmed it. In other cases, videos have emerged on social media platforms such as Instagram where young couples have been filmed getting intimate in a train.

On one occasion, a video of a young woman in a skimpy dress had gone viral on X, triggering an online debate on public decency and freedom of an individual.

Kumar, the managing director of the DMRC, said security personnel cannot be posted everywhere on the metro premises and urged passen-

gers to report such incidents to authorities.

"We first of all try to counsel such people (who resort to such activities). And, we appeal to those people to refrain from engaging in such objectionable activities for the good of society. A person cannot be present everywhere. It is a responsibility of citizens also that if they see such objectionable activities, they should catch hold of such people and bring it to the notice of authorities," he said in the recent interview with PTI.

There are designated squads in place, which do surprise checks from time to time, Kumar added.

While the CISF is tasked with guarding the premises of Delhi Metro stations, there are DMRC squad members in civvies who conduct checks for any violation of norms, including men entering into coaches reserved for women.

"We try our best. We have curbed such activities (making of videos). Many such activities may not be known to people as to what we have stopped," Kumar said.

While the Delhi Metro, a lifeline for Delhi-NCR, has made it into the hearts of people of this region in its journey of over 20 years, these con-

troversial videos have at times somewhat tarnished its otherwise spotless image, attracting unwarranted criticism.

In October, a video showing a couple getting intimate in a Delhi Metro train had gone viral sparking an outrage among people on social media. The undated video showed a man, purportedly in an act of romance, sipping on a soft drink and transferring the beverage from his mouth to the mouth of his female friend.

Many users on X had expressed disgust at the video, which, they said, was made to get attention on social media.

An undated video purportedly showing a man lighting a beedi in a Delhi Metro compartment was widely circulated on social media in September.

In the wake of such videos going viral on social media, many users had tagged the DMRC on X, Facebook and Instagram, asking it "when will such things stop" or "is DMRC not able to stop such activities".

Kumar, however, said the brand 'Delhi Metro' is one which cannot be blemished. "Delhi Metro is a brand and a centre of excel-



yVD Sharma submitted a complaint to ECI accusing the police of acting with bias against Pateria.

In the memorandum to the ECI, the BJP alleged Khajuraho police station in-charge Sandeep Khare and Chhatrapur Superintendent of Police Amit Sangh were of Congress mentality and were working to help candidate Vikram Singh Nati Raja.

Sharma, talking to reporters later, said no action was taken by the police on the complaint by Pateria, who was allegedly attacked by Vikram Singh and his supporters.

Under pressure from the Congress, the police booked 35 persons, including 20 BJP workers, for murder without any investigation, he alleged.

Sharma alleged Vikram Singh and his supporters killed Khan to influence the elections.

Sharma also asked how the (Congress) agitation outside the police station was allowed by the administration when the model code of conduct for the Assembly polls was still in force.

Meanwhile, Superintendent of Police Amit Sanghi said elected representatives and the family of deceased had come to meet him and they were assured of proper action in the case.

The deceased's father Harun Khan said the sit-in has been withdrawn after the assurance from the SP.

On the other hand, Digvijaya Singh said strict action should be taken against the accused or else, if required, the agitation will be held again. (PTI)

SHEYNNIS PALACIOS FROM NICARAGUA CROWNED MISS UNIVERSE 2023



NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Nicaragua's Sheynnis Palacios has been crowned Miss Universe for the year 2023, marking her country's first win at the international beauty pageant. The 72nd edition of the Miss Universe pageant was held on Saturday night at the Jose Adolfo Pineda Arena in San Salvador, El Salvador. Miss Thailand Anntonia Porsild emerged the first runner-up and Miss Australia Moraya Wilson was named the second runner-up at the event. (PTI)

Production begins on Shabana Azmi, Zeenat Aman-starrer 'Bun Tikki'



SHIMLA, Nov 19: "Bun Tikki", starring Shabana Azmi, Zeenat Aman, and Abhay Deol, started production on Sunday here, the makers said.

Faraz Arif Ansari of "Sheer Qorma" fame will direct the film, which is backed by Jio Studios and celebrated fashion designer Manish Malhotra's banner Stage 5 Production.

Malhotra shared the film update on his official Instagram account.

"It was my dream to make movies with sensitive, emotional stories. We at #Stage5productions started our 2nd film production with a lot of love and passion #BunTikki this morning with prayers and the lord's blessings in Shimla written and directed by @farazarifansari produced by #jyotideshpande @malhotra_dinesh @marikedesouza and Myself.

"Starring Iconic @azmishabana18 @thezeenataman uber talented @abhaydeol @officialjiostudios @stage5production @om_sunny_bhambhani @tanaymalhotra01 #movies #passion #love," the designer and producer wrote in the post.

Malhotra announced the launch of his production house in September. The first project under Stage 5 Production is "Train From Chhapraula", directed by Tisca Chopra. The film stars Radhika Apte, Divyenndu, Anshuman Pushkar, Sauraseni Maitra, Sharat Saxena, Kusha Kapila and Anurag Kashyap. (PTI)



IFFI 2023 RAJKUMAR HIRANI TO HEAD JURY PANEL FOR BEST WEB SERIES AWARD

PANAJI, Nov 19: Film-maker Rajkumar Hirani will serve as the head of the five-member jury for the best web series (OTT) award at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), set to begin in Goa from Monday.

According to a press note, actors Divya Dutta, Prosenjit Chatterjee, and filmmakers Krishna DK and Utpal Borpujari are part of the jury panel for the inaugural category.

This year, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced the addition of the new award category -- best web series

(OTT) award -- to the 54th edition of the film extravaganza that will be presented to a show for its "artistic merit, storytelling excellence, technical prowess and overall impact".

A total of 32 entries across 10 languages from 15 OTT platforms have been selected for the inaugural best web series award. The winning series will receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh.

British film "Catching Dust" will open IFFI on Monday and American film "The Featherweight"

will close the gala on November 28.

Actors Aparshakti Khurrana and Karishma Tanna will host the opening event at Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Panaji on Monday, which will also feature performances by Shriya Saran and Nushratt Bharucha.

The guest list for the event also includes Vijay Sethupathi, Sara Ali Khan, Pankaj Tripathi, Sunny Deol, Karan Johar, Shantanu Moitra, Shreya Ghoshal and Sukhwinder Singh, among others. (PTI)

'DHOOM' DIRECTOR SANJAY GADHVI DIES AT 56

MUMBAI, Nov 19: "Dhoom" director Sanjay Gadhvi died on Sunday morning at his residence here, his elder daughter Sanjina said. He was 56. Gadhvi, who was three days shy of his 57th birthday, is best known for helming two blockbuster hits in the Yash Raj Films' "Dhoom" franchise -- "Dhoom" (2004) and "Dhoom 2" (2006).

According to Gadhvi's daughter, the director was "perfectly healthy".

"He passed away at 9.30 am this morning at his residence. We are not sure what it is, but it is most likely a heart attack. He wasn't unwell, he was perfectly healthy," Sanjina told PTI. Gadhvi made his directorial debut in 2000 with "Tere Liye", which he followed up with 2002's "Mere Yaar Ki Shaadi Hai", his first project with Yash Raj Films (YRF).

In a statement shared on X, the studio said the "magic Gadhvi created on screen will be cherished forever". "May his soul rest in peace. #SanjayGadhvi," it further read.

Gadhvi gained prominence with his third directorial, the stylish action thriller "Dhoom", which made motorbiking a rage among Indian youth in the early 2000s.

The 2002 film followed

the story of a cat and mouse game between a gang of motorbike robbers, led by Kabir (John Abraham), and Jai Dixit (Abhishek Bachchan), a Mumbai cop who teams up with Ali (Uday Chopra), a motorbike dealer to stop them. It also starred Esha Deol and Rimi Sen. The success of "Dhoom" spawned a film franchise. Gadhvi also directed its superhit sequel "Dhoom 2". The 2006 film starred Abhishek, Chopra, Hrithik Roshan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Bipasha Basu. Abhishek said he was shocked beyond belief by the filmmaker's sudden demise.

"Sanju, when I spoke to you last week and we were reminiscing about our shoots and memories I would never have imagined even in my craziest dreams that I would have to write a post like this. I'm shocked beyond belief," the actor wrote on Instagram alongside a photo he took of Gadhvi while they were filming the climax of "Dhoom 2" in South Africa. (PTI)

"You had faith in me, even when I didn't. You gave me my first ever hit! I can never ever forget that or be able express what it meant to me. I will cherish your friendship always. (PTI)

Trisha condemns 'Leo' co-actor over 'sexist and repulsive' remarks



CHENNAI, Nov 19: Tamil cine star Trisha Krishnan has condemned "Leo" co-actor Mansoor Ali Khan for his "vile and disgusting" remarks about not getting the chance to share screen space with her in the blockbuster

movie.

In a recent interview, Khan, who had an important cameo in the Lokesh Kanagaraj-directorial "Leo" starring Vijay, made derogatory remarks about not having any scene with Trisha during the film's shoot schedule in Kashmir.

Trisha said the comments made by Khan are "sexist, disrespectful, misogynistic, repulsive and in bad taste" and she

will never work with the actor ever again.

"A recent video has come to my notice where Mr. Mansoor Ali Khan has spoken about me in a vile and disgusting manner. I strongly condemn this and find it sexist, disrespectful, misogynistic, repulsive and in bad taste.

"He can keep wishing but I am grateful never to have shared screen space with some-

one as pathetic as him and I will make sure it never happens for the rest of my film career as well. People like him bring a bad name to mankind," she said in a statement shared on X.

Kanagaraj also came out in support of Trisha. The director said he is "disheartened and enraged to hear the misogynistic comments made by Mr. Mansoor Ali Khan". (PTI)

Experience the nostalgia of old school Bollywood with the excitement of a fresh sound: 'Anjani X' by Ezu & B Young is here!

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 19: In a musical fusion that transcends borders, "Anjani X" highlights the ultimate collaboration between Ezu's vibrant verses and B Young's distinctive international R&B flair.

The sensational song "Anjani X" serves as a perfect nostalgic treat encapsulating a sample from the iconic "Ladki Badi Anjaani Hai" from Kuch Kuch Hota Hai that seamlessly intertwines with English and Punjabi lyrics, creating a musical tapestry with an effortless flow that is bound to captivate global audiences.

The captivating track "Anjani X" is a phenomenal co-

lescence of the distinctive styles of Ezu and B Young while keeping the true spirit of Bollywood alive. Ezu's fresh take on Punjabi verses harmonises with B Young's unique R&B style, delivering a dynamic auditory experience that resonates across diverse music tastes.

The infectious beats, sensational lyrics along with an uber cool music video makes this track an ultimate banger. The accompanying music video features the artists Ezu and B Young in the lead as they vibe their curated jam. It serves as a visual spectacle, artfully shot to showcase the artists in their signature



styles. The presence of the Bollywood inspired dancers adds that extra oomph factor to the song making it more appealing to the audiences while also bringing the magic of the East and West together in a vibrant celebration of music and movement.

Talking excitedly about their song Ezu said, "For curating 'Anjani X', merging cultural influences with contemporary beats was definitely an exciting and enriching experience. I love Bollywood and Kuch Kuch

Hota hai was definitely one of my favourites and to be able to sample the song "Ladki Badi Anjaani Hai" with B Young was like a pinch me moment. Can't wait for the audiences to vibe hard to this track."

"Anjani X is a very special song to me. It was an experience more than a song. The fusion of Bollywood sound and Punjabi lyrics with my style was an incredible journey to witness and I am so glad I did it with Ezu. I am beyond thrilled to see the response of the fans to this track," shared the international artist B Young.

Romania clinch Euro 2024 spot with 2-1 victory over Israel



FELCSUT, HUNGARY, Nov 19: Israel lost 2-1 to Romania on Saturday in an emotionally charged European Championship qualifying game it hosted in Hungary because of the war with Hamas.

Romania, which had missed out on the 2020 edition despite being one of the hosts, qualified for Euro 2024 with the win. Israel is assured a playoff spot thanks to its Nations League record.

The Group 1 match was the last of two "home" games for Israel in Felcsut, a Hungarian village of around 1,900 people.

The games were relocated to Hungary after all matches were canceled in Israel following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. Israel tied Switzerland 1-1 in its first game in Hungary on Wednesday.

As supporters of the Israeli team arrived at the stadium on Saturday, many chanted slogans and draped Israeli flags over their shoulders. Some staged a demonstration for the hostages still being held by Hamas, raising banners that said, "Men, women, children murdered," and chanting "Bring them home."

The war was triggered by Hamas' attack in southern Israel, in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted some 240 men, women and children. More than 11,500 Palestinians have been killed, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Dannel Morag, 19, said he came to Hungary from his hometown of Ashdod, 15 miles (around 25 kilometers) north of Gaza, just to see the match.

He will soon join the Israeli Defense Force and wanted to show support both for the team

and his country.

Yuval Nakibli, a 25-year-old from Israel, said she felt it was important to support the Israeli team, adding "We can show what's really important, and it's to bring all the hostages home right now and finish that terrible war."

A series of blue teddy bears with their eyes covered by black bandages were put on some of the seats at Pancho Arena.

Eran Zahavi put Israel ahead with a header two minutes into the match.

The visitors rallied with

goals by George Puscas in the 10th and Ianis Hagi in the 63rd. Romania's Valentin Mihailescu was sent off in the 85th for a sliding tackle on Israel's Dor Turgeman.

Israel needed a win to keep alive its chances of automatically qualifying for next year's tournament in Germany.

Israel stayed third with 12 points from nine matches, five points behind second-place Switzerland and seven behind leader Romania.

Israel next visit Andorra on Tuesday to finish its qualifying campaign. (AP)

I-LEAGUE

Shillong Lajong FC show Gokulam Kerala the door on home turf

SHILLONG, Nov 19: Shillong Lajong FC made the best use of their home advantage in the I-League match here on Sunday, stunning the former champions Gokulam Kerala FC 3-1 at the SSA Stadium.

While it was Shillong's first win in the four matches so far, Gokulam suffered their first defeat of the season.

Having left the stadium empty-handed, the Kerala side are stuck in second place in the points table with 10 points from five matches.

Mohammedan Sporting, who won on Saturday, continue to top the table with 13 points from five outings.

Displaying an impressive performance in front of partisan fans, Shillong Lajong FC took the lead with a clinical header from Daniel Goncalves in the 29th minute. He made the most of a free kick from the left by skipper Hardy Cliff Nongbri as the lanky Goncalves jumped to beat the defence and head the

ball to the corner of the net.

Gokulam managed to level the score a couple of minutes before half time. Off a combined move, in which captain Alex Sanchez played a major role, Francisco Perdomo finished it off in style.

If Gokulam were toying with the idea of going home with at least one point, it suffered a jolt in the 75th minute because of their own mistake. As they conceded a penalty, Renan Paulino confidently struck the ball into the left side of the net.

Breaking the deadlock in the 75th minute with a penalty, Shillong Lajong FC regained the lead as Renan Paulino confidently struck the ball into the left side of the net.

The final nail in the visitors' coffin was hammered well into the add-on time by Hardy when he took the issue beyond doubt, scoring the third goal for his team. The winners now have taken their points tally to six from four matches. (PTI)

THE 2026 WORLD CUP IN THE US, MEXICO AND CANADA WILL INCLUDE 48 TEAMS

Argentina eye Di Maria and Brazil tests Jesus ahead of World Cup qualifying clash

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 19: Argentina and Brazil tested new options up front on Saturday for their World Cup qualifying match next week, an encounter that could give the losing side a bitter ending to 2023. Lionel Messi's Argentina lost to Uruguay on Thursday its first match since it hoisted the World Cup trophy in Qatar, while the host of the super-clasico will play without the injured Vinicius Junior at the Maracana Stadium after two consecutive defeats in South American qualifying.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni tested a formation in the first training, eyeing the match in Rio de Janeiro with veteran Angel di Maria replacing Nico Gonzalez, trying to explore Brazil's weaknesses on the flanks. That was a problem for the World Cup champion in their 2-0 home defeat to Uruguay.

Brazil's Fernando Diniz, facing pressure because of the team's poor performances under his watch, tested Gabriel Jesus in Vinicius' position at the team's training ground. Without several key players, he seems to trust a system with four strikers who can also fill the midfield: Jesus, Gabriel Martinelli, Rodrygo and Raphinha.

Rodrygo said in a news conference that he accepts having "more responsibilities" on the team. Among the four strikers Diniz is likely to play, he is the one who knows best how to function in multiple positions.

"I knew my time would come, little by little. With Neymar out, Vini out, people expect more from me, and I need to deliver," he said. "Brazil vs Argentina at the Maracana is special. I am young, but I have some experience. This will be a top three in my most important matches." Brazil has never lost a home match in World Cup qualifying. Argentina still leads the 10-team South American qualifying group with 12 points from five matches. Uruguay is second with 10 points. Colombia has nine and Venezuela eight. Brazil will host the World Cup champions at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro in fifth position, with seven points. Ecuador, Paraguay and Chile have five points each. Bolivia has three and Peru one.

The 2026 World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada will include 48 teams, meaning direct entry for the top six teams from South America. The seventh-place team can earn a berth in an intercontinental play-off. (AP)



France destroy 10-man Gibraltar 14-0 for record win in European Championship qualifying

NICE, FRANCE, Nov 19: Kylian Mbappé scored a hat trick as France routed Gibraltar 14-0 for the biggest-ever victory in European Championship qualifying on Saturday.

Veteran striker Olivier Giroud came off the bench to score twice as Les Bleus broke the 13-0 record set by Germany against San Marino in 2006 for Euro 2008 qualifying. "The team played extraordinarily well today," said Mbappé, who took his international tally to 46 goals. "This was a victory for teamwork." Teenage midfielder Warren Zaïre-Emery became France's youngest goal scorer on his international debut and then went off injured against a Gibraltar side that played most of the match with 10 players following an early sending off.

France's biggest previous win was 10-0 against Azerbaijan in a European qualifying game in 1995. The only negative note for France was the injury to Zaïre-

Emery, the latest prodigy to break into the national team. Coach Didier Deschamps said initial tests showed the injury was not too serious. "We were worried because the ankle flared up quickly," he told broadcaster TF1. "Scans showed there is no fracture, but it's a pretty big sprain. I'm sure he'd rather remember his first appearance for his goal than for anything negative."

Zaïre-Emery started and confidently finished the move in the 16th minute to become France's youngest scorer at 17 years and 255 days. The Paris Saint-Germain player limped off after defender Ethan Santos trod on his right ankle just as Zaïre-Emery smacked the ball into the top right corner. Santos, who had scored an own-goal in the third minute, was sent off.

World Cup runner-up France was already through to Euro 2024 as Group B winner. This was a seventh straight win, with 27 goals scored and just one con-

ceded. Rock-bottom Gibraltar has lost all seven matches and allowed 35 goals.

Inter Milan forward Marcus Thuram poked home France's second goal after just four minutes. Following Zaïre-Emery's fine goal, Mbappé made it 4-0 from the penalty spot in the 30th following a handball.

Right back Jonathan Clauss drilled in a fine shot from 20 meters; right winger Kingsley Coman struck from close range, and midfielder Youssef Fofana's shot went under the goalkeeper's body to make it 7-0 after just 37 minutes.

Juventus midfielder Adrien Rabiot turned in the eighth following a goal-mouth scramble and Coman's deflected effort made it 9-0 midway through the second half. Winger Ousmane Dembélé netted before Mbappé side-footed home and then brilliantly lobbed the goalkeeper from 44 meters to make it 12-0 in the 82nd minute. (AP)

Senior Men's National C'ship: Karnataka, Haryana, TN, Odisha, Delhi cruise

CHENNAI, Nov 19: Karnataka, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Odisha won their respective matches on the third day of the Senior Men's National Hockey Championship here on Sunday.

The first match of the day saw Karnataka beat Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu by 5-0. The goalscorers for Karnataka were Captain Sheshe Gowda (33rd), Yathish Kumar B (43rd), Nachappa (47th), Abharan Sudev B (56th), and Mohammed Raheel Mousen (60th).

Haryana defeated Gujarat 22-1 in the second game. The goal fest was commenced by Haryana's Deepak (4th), followed by goals from captain Sumit (6th), Antil Vishal (9th, 38th), Sanjay (10th, 27th, 29th, 34th, 45+, 57th), Kohinoorpreet Singh (11th), Abhishek (13th, 17th, 21st, 51st), Mandeep Mor (15th), Rajant (18th, 42nd), Manpreet (23rd), Yashdeep Siwach (33rd, 60th), Joginder Singh (38th).

The only goal for Gujarat was scored by Yash Mahendrabhai Rathod (44th).

Tamil Nadu mauled Hockey Himachal by 13-1 in the next

match. For Tamil Nadu, BP Soman (4th), Mareeswaran Sakthivel (5th, 48th, 51st), Pruthvi G.M (8th), Kanagaraj Selvaraj (9th, 28th, 50th), C Dinesh Kumar (11th, 57th), Karthi S (27th, 34th) and Sundarapandi (44th) netted the goals.

Shubham (55th) scored the lone goal for Himachal. Delhi beat Telangana 6-1. Abhishek Rana (7th), Rahul Gharai (22th), Aman Khan (40th), captain Gursimran Singh (57th), and Vashudev (58th, 60th) scored to build a comfortable lead for Hockey.

Bhavani Ranjit Chand (49th) managed to score a consolation goal for Telangana.

The last game of the day, Hockey Association of Odisha trounced Hockey Arunachal 27-0. Xess Nilam Sanjeev (2nd, 3rd, 15th, 32nd), Matiyas Dang (4th, 34th, 47th, 54th, 60th), Ashis Kumar Topno (11th, 25th, 49th), Kujur Prasad (13th, 14th, 39th), Lakra Shilinand (18th, 22nd, 35th, 44th), Captain Amit Rohidas (20th, 37th, 53rd), Rosan Minz (25th), Kerobin Lakra (28th), Rajin Kandulna (37th, 51st), and Nag Prajukt (56th) scored for Odisha. (PTI)

I-League: Sreenidi Deccan FC hammer TRAU 5-0

KALYANI, Nov 19: Jagdeep Singh's brace headlined Sreenidi Deccan Football Club's smooth 5-0 victory over Tiddim Road Athletic Union (TRAU) in their I-League match here at the Kalyani Stadium on Sunday.

Jagdeep's effort and one goal each from Gurmukh Singh, Lalromawia and David Castaneda powered Deccan to their highest-ever victory margin in a competitive game.

Both sides traded blows in the opening period, but it was Deccan, who created the better chances.

The opening goal came from a Faysal Shayesteh corner, which was not dealt with by TRAU and the loose ball fell to defender Gurmukh. He did well to hit the goal from a close range in the 41st minute.

The second half was all about

Deccan, who dominated the proceedings from the start to the finish.

In fact, the majority of play in the second half took place in the TRAU half.

In the 48th minute, right-back Jagdeep's cross caught out TRAU goalkeeper Kabir at his near post and he could only succeed in bundling it into his own net to make it 2-0.

Jagdeep then doubled his tally and tripled his team's with an individual effort to make it 3-0 in the 57th minute.

Midfielder Lalromawia piled further misery on TRAU in the 66th minute as he won possession near the penalty box and rifled in a shot to make it 4-0.

The substitute Castaneda added one more goal in the stoppage time with a comfortable right-footed finish for the fifth goal. (PTI)

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND, Nov 19: Manchester City striker Erling Haaland will miss Norway's European Championship qualifying game against Scotland on Sunday with what the national team's doctor described as a painful foot injury.

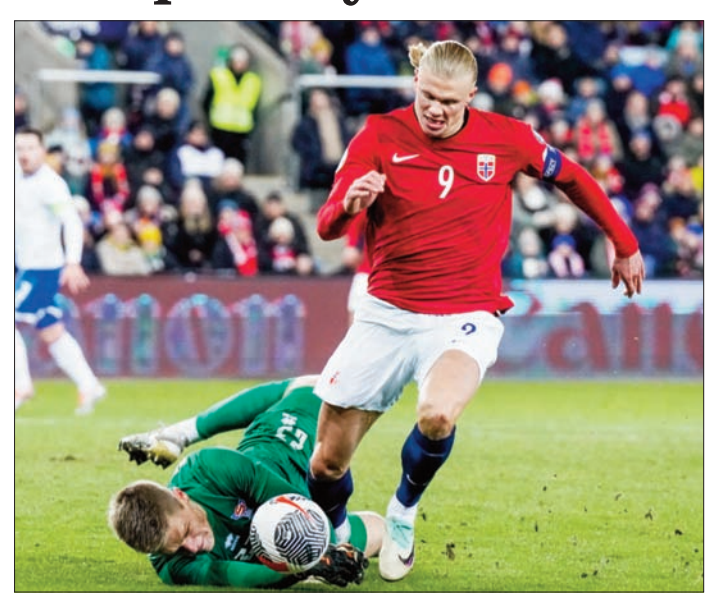
Adding to the injury, Norway can't now qualify for Euro 2024 after Romania beat Israel 2-1 on Saturday. Israel misses out on an automatic qualifying spot but goes into the playoffs because of its Nations League record. That means Norway and Haaland can no longer reach the playoffs and will not play at Euro 2024.

Haaland was hurt when playing in Norway's 2-0 win over the Faeroe Islands in a friendly on Thursday.

"Unfortunately, I am missing tomorrow's game against Scotland. Wishing the boys all the best. Now treatment and trying to get back asap," Haaland posted on social media Saturday.

Team doctor Ola Sand said the left foot injury had left Haaland in pain and with restricted movement. Norway manager Stale Solbakken later gave a more upbeat assessment.

"It's the movement in his foot that is the problem but it's not a serious injury. Had it been a final, I don't know (if he would have been fit to play)," said Solbakken, speaking at Hampden on Saturday evening. "All parties agree it is probably a little too early (for him to play) but it is not a career-threatening in-



jury." Sunday's game in Glasgow won't now affect either team's qualifying chances. Scotland has already qualified for next year's European Championship in Germany and Norway is third in the group and can't qualify automatically, and with its playoff hopes now over.

The injury had initially been described as a possible recurrence of an earlier ankle injury. Haaland came off with an ankle injury in the 6-1 win over Bournemouth in the Premier League on Nov. 4. He started in City's next game three days later. City, the leader, plays second-place Liverpool when the Premier League returns on Nov. 25. Haaland has 13 goals in 12 Premier League games for City this season. (AP)

Yashaswini scores upset win at ITF Women's World Tour event

BENGALURU, Nov 19: India's Yashaswini Panwar produced an upset win over Demi Tran of the Netherlands to enter the final round of qualifying in the ITF Women's World Tour event here on Sunday.

India's Yashaswini Panwar produced an upset win over Demi Tran of the Netherlands to enter the final round of qualifying in the ITF Women's World Tour event here on Sunday.

The 22-year-old Karnataka player beat third seeded Demi Tran 7-5, 6-2 in the first round

of qualifying.

In another upset victory, Vanishita Pathania prevailed over seventh seed Priyanshi Bhambhani 6-3, 4-6, 10-8 in a match that lasted a little over two hours. The rest of the fancied players in the top eight bracket advanced without much problem.

Top seed Sandeep Singh Rao brushed past Sai Janvi 6-0, 6-1 while second seed Sravya Shivani Chilakalapudi overcame a fighting Priyanka Rodricks 6-1, 7-5. (PTI)

WINNING MOMENT



Australian players seen celebrating after winning the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 in Ahmedabad on Sunday. (Twitter)

We stand with you today and always: PM Modi after Indian cricket team's World Cup loss

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday praised the Indian cricket team for its talent and determination throughout the World Cup tournament after its loss to Australia in the finals.

"We stand with you today and always," the prime minister said in a post on X.

"Dear Team India, your talent and determination through the World Cup was noteworthy. You've played with great spirit and brought immense pride to the nation," Modi said after Australia defeated India in the finals.

The Prime Minister had reached Ahmedabad to witness the final match.

He congratulated the Australian cricket team on its World Cup victory.

"Congratulations to Australia on a magnificent World Cup victory! Theirs was a commendable performance through the tournament, culminating in a splendid triumph. Compliments to Travis Head for his remarkable game today," Prime Minister Modi said in another post on X.

The Australians chased 241 in just 43 overs with Head scoring 137 off 120 balls. (PTI)

I wasn't invited for World Cup final: Kapil Dev



AHMEDABAD, Nov 19: Former India captain Kapil Dev on Sunday claimed that he was not invited to the World Cup final between the hosts and Australia here.

Kapil, who led India to their maiden ODI World Cup title in 1983, said he wanted to travel for the game with the rest of his teammates. "I wasn't invited there. They didn't call me so I did not go. As simple as that. I wanted the whole '83 team to be there with me but I guess due to the fact that it's such a big event and people are so busy handling responsibilities, sometimes they forget," Kapil told ABP News.

Among other former India captains who were present at the Narendra Modi Stadium were Sourav Ganguly, who was invited in the capacity of a former BCCI president. Inviting past presidents and officials is a BCCI norm.

The other celebrities who were in attendance for the high profile game were actors Shahrukh Khan, Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh. Badminton great Prakash Padukone was also seen sitting in the stands. (PTI)

Bhullar lands a closing eagle for 5-shot win in Indonesia Masters; Kochhar second



JAKARTA, Nov 19: Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar closed an amazing week with a brilliant eagle putt from 20 feet on the 18th hole to clinch his 11th Asian Tour title and an incredible fifth win in Indonesia here on Sunday.

Bhullar dropped two bogeys during the day in his card of 67 at the BNI Indonesia Masters that also had four birdies. The eagle from 20 feet was the icing on the cake.

He finished with 63-67-63-67 for a 24-under 260 total and won USD 270,000 for his efforts.

Bhullar's five-shot win at the BNI Indonesia Masters was also the biggest of his international career and finishing second behind him was fellow countryman Karandeep Kochhar who had a bogey-free 63 on the final day.

It was also the first win in the International Series for any Indian. The last win for any Indian on the Asian Tour was 15 months ago, also in Indonesia, by Bhullar, who revealed that his mother was born in Indonesia.

The win took Bhullar to fourth place on the Asian Tour Order of Merit, while Kochhar is the next best Indian at 19th.

"It wasn't that easy. This is my fourth Asian Tour wire-to-wire.

And this was a victory with a seven-shot lead (after three rounds) and I just kept telling myself I have done that in the past and I am ready to do that this week," said Bhullar who playing steady throughout the week.

His other wire-to-wire wins came in the Macao Open in 2012 and 2017 and at the 2013 Indonesia Open.

"Today I played pretty well actually. I struggled a bit in the middle of the round, there was a stretch when I was trying my level best but I was not making the birdies but the chip in on number 16 turned around everything. And, of course the eagle on the last was the icing on the cake."

Beginning the final day with a seven-shot lead, Bhullar was never in danger despite a brilliant charge by Kochhar, who was nine behind at the start and finished five back by the end.

Bhullar ensured there were no hiccups early in his round as he birdied the third and the sixth. A dropped shot on the ninth did not mean much as he got it back on 11th. A second dropped shot on 15th was quickly repaired with a birdie on the 16th. He closed with an eagle on the 18th.

"I have been doing meditation

since I was 14 years old, and I think this is my 17th year on Tour. I learned over the years how to deal with the pressure and especially the conditions and the situation I was in the last three rounds. So, I think the past experience has really helped me," said Bhullar.

Making it a great week for India were Veer Ahlawat (69) in tied-seventh at 14-under, while S Chikkarangappa (68) was 12-under. Rashid Khan (68) was T-36 at 8-under, Anirban Lahiri (72) at 5-over was 67th and Honey Baisoya (79) was T-68.

Kochhar had a brilliant front nine with five birdies on the third and fourth, followed by another on sixth and two more on eighth and ninth for a 5-under 30.

On the back nine, he had three more birdies for a superb 63, a card that was twice achieved by Bhullar this week on the first and third days and bettered only once by David Puig on the third day.

"Obviously a very good day from start to finish. I told myself that the way I was hitting the ball the last few days I'm going to have a lot of opportunities, so it was all about being patient," Kochhar said.

Ben Campbell (65) and David Puig (66) never really posed a challenge for the rock-solid Bhullar.

Amazingly, in four of Bhullar's last five wins, fellow Indians have either been sole second or tied second.

An added bonus for Bhullar was that his victory catapulted him from 46th place on The International Series Order of Merit to eighth. Those from second to eighth place are fast tracked into the second round of the LIV Golf Promotions event in three weeks in Abu Dhabi. The top three finishers there will earn places in next year's LIV Golf League. (PTI)

Pro-Palestine fan breaches security to reach Kohli



AHMEDABAD, Nov 19: A pro-Palestine fan breached a tight security cordon to enter the field of play in a desperate attempt to hug Virat Kohli during the World Cup final between India against Australia here on Sunday.

The incident happened before the first drinks break.

The security personnel apprehended the man, who was identified as Wayne Johnson, an Australian of Chinese-Filipino origin.

He was arrested and taken to Chand Kheda Police station.

Political sloganeering is an offence at cricket games but with Johnson being a foreign national, it is not yet known what kind of action will be taken against him.

Johnson wore a face mask with design of a Palestine flag and a T-shirt with slogans on both sides.

On the front of the t-shirt, 'stop bombing Palestine' was written and on the back, 'Save Palestine'.

His sudden intrusion caught everyone unaware but the security was quick to apprehend him.

The ICC doesn't allow any political sloganeering during its event and any such act is also not allowed in India.

Israel and Palestine militant group Hamas have been engaged in a war since October 7, when the latter attacked a music festival in Kibbutz Re'im. (PTI)

Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran team puts up spectacular show ahead of World Cup final

AHMEDABAD, Nov 19: With the world's largest cricket stadium underneath packed to the brim by euphoric fans, the Surya Kiran Acrobatic Team of the Indian Air Force put up a spectacular show before the World Cup final between India and Australia here on Sunday.

A total of nine Hawk Mk-132 SKAT aircrafts of the IAF created history as it is for the first time that they produced an aerial show ahead of any cricket match in India and it is only fitting that their maiden show took place before a World Cup final.

The Surya Kiran team pilots, a part of the 52nd Squadron of the Indian Air Force, produced a 10-minute show before the toss at the Narendra Modi Stadium, which has a capacity of more than 1,30,000.

Usually composed of 13 pilots, the 'ambassador of Indian Air Force' SKAT team has only nine of them performing at any given time in their Hawk advanced trainer jets.

The Rohit Sharma-led Indian team was the first to make it to the semifinals after a 45-game league round and were also the first to enter the final, having recorded 10 consecutive wins in this World Cup.

Given their current form, two-time World Cup winners India are firm favourites to add a third title in their cabinet.

On the other hand, the five-time champions Australia were the third team to make the semifinals behind India and South Africa, but have been on an eight-game winning spree even though they are yet to produce a complete performance. (PTI)

ICC ban a betrayal of the nation: Sri Lanka sports minister

COLOMBO, Nov 19: Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe on Sunday slammed Sri Lanka Cricket for bidding for a ban from the ICC, calling it a "big betrayal of the country".

Ranasinghe had appointed an interim committee after sacking the governing body headed by Shammi Silva following the national team's disastrous World Cup campaign.

"This is big betrayal of the country," said Ranasinghe after reading out correspondence with the ICC by Silva administration. "They were doing so to selfishly hang on to positions after audit reports had highlighted their corrupt action."

Ranasinghe had appointed legendary captain Arjuna Ranatunga as the head of the seven-member interim committee.

But the ICC then suspended SLC with immediate effect for government interference and Silva also managed to obtain a court order suspending the interim committee.

In response to a parliamentary speech by the main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa accusing



SLC of promoting the ICC for a ban, SLC said Ranasinghe was politically interfering in its work and as a full member they were duty bound to adhere to the articles of association of the ICC.

The case on the suspension of the interim committee is to be taken up on Monday in the Court of Appeal.

At least three judges have refused hearing the case. Ranasinghe led a scathing attack against the chair of the court of appeal in

parliament for ignoring the audit report that highlighted the misdeeds of the SLC.

Last Wednesday, SLC had slapped a defamation lawsuit against Ranasinghe for making "damaging defamatory statements" against it, deepening the administrative crisis in the country.

The chaos in Sri Lankan cricket came after the national team's early exit from the World Cup. The Lankans managed only two wins in nine games. (PTI)

How Australia managed to dominate mighty Indian batting unit

AHMEDABAD, Nov 19: Australia's grizzled-haired veterans brought all their big-game experience to the fore, restricting a hitherto rollicking India to 240 all out in the World Cup final here Sunday.

Their dominance over the hosts had multiple focal points to it, while India made a couple of moments of their own through fifties by Virat Kohli and KL Rahul.

Here's a closer look at important moments in the match.

1. Rohit lives by sword

From the beginning of the tournament, Rohit batted only in one gear, evidenced by his strike-rate of 126. On this day, the Mumbaier made runs at 151. His strategy was clear, blunt the Aussie new ball bowlers and the skipper blasted two sixes off pacer Josh Hazlewood to give early momentum to his side.

But Rohit's innings did not bloom into something bigger. His effort to hoist off-spinner Glenn Maxwell over the ring ended when Travis Head took a lovely running-diving catch towards sweeper cover. Australia snapped India's march too for that moment.

2. Australia's fielding

The Antipodeans have always been a very good fielding side, and they raised the



bar one notch up in the summit clash. Travis Head took that brilliant running catch to dismiss Rohit Sharma and David Warner made more than one diving saves near the ropes to save the boundaries, leaving Indian batters a bit frustrated.

It also forced them to change their gungho approach that they followed so far in the tournament. Cummins also made some

really good field placements.

When Kohli and Rahul were batting, the Aussies skipper opened the cover region with a sweeper in place and closed ranks around the square-leg and mid-on areas. It was a clear ploy to force the Indian batters to take more risks to make quick runs, or contend with those workman-like singles to covers and leg-side.

3. Edgy Gill and Shreyas

This was the first 50-over World Cup final for Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer, and they looked a bit nervous. Gill was like a cat on a hot tin roof, and hardly offered a settled moment. His harrowing time at crease ended when a half-hearted pull off left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc found Adam Zampa at the edge of the circle.

Shreyas came to this match riding on back-to-back hundreds against Netherlands and New Zealand. But this noon, his innings lasted just three balls. Cummins caught him rooted inside the crease with a delivery that jagged back just enough at a fair clip.

4. Kohli and Rahul stand tall

They joined forces when India were shaking at 81 for 3, but Kohli and Rahul sussed up the conditions and pitch very well, knuckled down to make steady 67 runs for the fourth wicket. It was more industrious than eye-popping, but that was what India needed at that moment.

In fact, the entire alliance had just one boundary in it, but India recovered to a good extent through them until Kohli (54) chopped one from Pat Cummins onto his stumps.

However, Rahul (66) continued to hold

the innings together with a composed innings.

Through the whole of this showpiece Pat Cummins the bowler was conspicuous by his absence. Coming into this match, the pacer's run-rate was above six and has taken 13 wickets from 10 matches. But he would have liked to make a bigger impact, and the New South Welshman chose the finest occasion to make his mark.

He got the big wickets of in-form Kohli and Shreyas to keep India in check, also bowled an economic spell. Pacers Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood too helped him taking five wickets among them on a pitch that had very little for their type of bowlers, using umpteen variations.

The spinners -- Adam Zampa, Glenn Maxwell and Travis Head -- too chipped in choking run-flow in the middle period. They hardly allowed Indians to get the boundaries, a vital part of India's batting supremacy in the tournament so far.

There were two periods of prolonged boundary drought in hosts' innings, the Rahul-Kohli stand where India managed a lone four, and in the period between 41st and 50th overs, a phase when India managed just two fours through Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj. (PTI)

Prized possession for Kohli: Tendulkar gifts him iconic No. 10 jersey

AHMEDABAD, Nov 19: Star India batter Virat Kohli received a prized memorabilia ahead of the World Cup final against Australia here on Sunday -- the iconic No. 10 jersey of his idol Sachin Tendulkar.

Tendulkar gifted Kohli his signed jersey worn during his last ODI, the Asia Cup match against Pakistan at Mirpur in 2012. Kohli had broken Tendulkar's record for most one-day centuries during the World Cup semifinal against New Zealand at Mumbai on Wednesday.

"A special occasion & a special pre-match moment. There's CLASS written all over this gesture! The legendary Sachin Tendulkar gifts Virat Kohli his signed jersey from his last ODI," the BCCI wrote on X, with a picture of Kohli holding the jersey.

Kohli is the first batsman in the history of the game to score 50 ODI centuries, going past Tendulkar who has made 49 tons. (PTI)