

**6 WORLD**

● Warplanes strike Gaza refugee camp as Israel rejects US push for a pause in fighting

● Nepal govt scrambles to rush aid to quake victims

**8 NATION**

● Congress did not care for tribals, its two leaders fighting to capture party in MP: PM

● Modi govt's fight against corruption 'nautanki': Kejriwal

## Where is the evidence? Indian High Commissioner to Canadian govt



**OTTAWA, Nov 5:** Canada's investigation into the murder of a Sikh extremist has been tainted by a high-level Canadian official's public statements, India's high commissioner to Canada Sanjay Kumar Verma has said as he asked Ottawa to provide evidence to back up its allegations.

In an interview with the Globe and Mail newspaper, Verma on Friday said that there "is no specific or relevant information provided in this case for us to assist them in the investigation."

"Where is the evidence? Where is the conclusion of the investigation? I would go a step further and say

now the investigation has already been tainted," Verma was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"A direction has come from someone at a high level to say India or Indian agents are behind it," he said on Saturday, without naming anyone.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in the Canadian town of Surrey in June. India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020. India rejected the allegations as "absurd" and "motivated".

Days after Trudeau's allegations, India temporarily suspended the issuance of visas to Canadian citizens and asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country to ensure parity. Canada has withdrawn 41 diplomats and their family members from India.

Verma strongly denied Canada's allegation and said that India made 26 requests to Ottawa over the past five or six years to extradite people, but Canada did not take any action. He also spoke about security threats to him and other Indian diplomatic staff in the country. On Saturday, external affairs minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi said (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## BJP committed to create marvellous Mizoram: PM Modi

*'The BJP brought the country's capital Delhi to the doorstep of the Northeast'*

**AIZAWL, Nov 5:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday released a video message for the people of poll-bound Mizoram seeking their support and blessings to make their homeland "marvellous".

Addressing the people of the Northeastern state on the last day of the campaign, Modi in the video message said the BJP-led central government has taken steps to improve its various infrastructures, including railway, health and sports.

Terming the people of Mizoram like his family members, he said it has always been a great pleasure for him to interact with the state's warm people.

"We have worked in all possible ways to reduce the distance after



forming government at Centre in 2014. We gave prime importance to fulfil your aspirations, dreams and necessities," Modi said.

"Friends, the BJP is committed to creating a marvellous Mizoram. I am sure that we will get your support and blessings to make it hap-

pen," he added.

Polling for the 40-seat Mizoram assembly will be held on November 7 and votes will be counted on December 3.

The BJP is contesting in 23 seats. It had contested in 39 constituencies in 2018 and won one seat, opening its account for the first time in the state Assembly.

The Prime Minister was earlier scheduled to visit the state and hold a public meeting in Mamit district on October 30. His visit was, however, cancelled without citing any reason.

"In the last nine years, I got the opportunity to visit the Northeast 60 times. Large-scale development and connectivity works also reduced the (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Road mishap

**HOWRAGHAT:** One died on the spot when a speeding car crashed into the rear of a passenger tempo at Phuloni under Uttar Borbil police outpost in Karbi Anglong. The car, AS-02D-6353, tailgated into a passenger tempo, AS-25-BC-8489, going in the same direction. In the crash, the driver of the tempo identified as Dhanang Engti, a resident of Poisa Engti village died on the spot and his wife along with another woman were injured. The injured, wife of the driver is Rengka Killingpi and Omphu Killingpi, resident of Sikari Gate, under Bakalia police station. The injured were admitted in Phuloni Primary Health Centre and the body of the deceased has been forwarded to Diphu Medical College & Hospital for post-mortem examination.

#### Woman died

**BAKALIA:** A woman died on the spot when a passenger bus lost control at Disobai, Karbi Anglong under Bakalia police station in the morning. The bus, AS 02 DC 3208, lost control and fell into a ditch by the roadside. In the accident, a woman passenger died on the spot and more than 10 others were injured. The injured are admitted to Bakalia hospital. The deceased woman is yet to be identified.

#### Heroin seized

**BAKALIA:** The police in Karbi Anglong recovered heroin from a woman passenger of a bus. The police were carrying out checking on NH-39 under Khatkhati police station when they intercepted a bus, AS 05 C 1702, coming from Dimapur in the morning. On suspicion, a woman's passenger luggage was checked and heroin weighing 256.04 gms was found with a market value of ₹ 2.5 crores. The woman identified as Rita Mazumder, wife of Bijay Mazumder, resident of Lakla Pathar, Timsukia district under Lekhapani police station was arrested. The recovered heroin was seized, packed and sealed in the presence of independent witnesses.

### PICTURESQUE



*Nature's poetry unfolds in Dhakuakhana where sun-kissed paddy fields embody pure elegance on Sunday. UB photos*

## Bhutan King Wangchuck arrives in Delhi, Jaishankar calls on him

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck arrived here on Sunday to a red carpet welcome with external affairs minister S Jaishankar receiving him at the airport, reflecting the importance India has attached to the trip.

Wangchuck's high-profile trip to India comes amid renewed push by Bhutan and China for an early settlement of their decades-old boundary dispute.

New Delhi has been keeping a close eye on the negotiations between Bhutan and China on their boundary row as it could have implications for India's security interests, especially in the Doklam tri-junction.

Later, Jaishankar called on the visiting dignitary. After the meeting, the external affairs minister said India supports the vision of sustainable transformation of Bhutan under the King's guidance.

"Privilege to call on His Majesty, the King of Bhutan

shortly after his arrival in New Delhi. Pleased to hear about the experience of his first visit to Assam. India supports the vision of sustainable transformation of Bhutan under His Majesty's guidance," Jaishankar said on 'X' after meeting the king.

Wangchuck began his eight-day visit to India from Guwahati on November 3.

Earlier, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "His Majesty the King of Bhutan warmly received by EAM @DrSJaishankar upon his arrival in New Delhi. His Majesty is on an official visit to India." "The visit will further strengthen close bonds of friendship and cooperation with a valued partner," he said on X. The king of Bhutan is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Ministry of External Affairs on November 2 said the Bhutan king's visit would provide an opportunity (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## INDIA alliance will work for people, not 'leader's image': Shashi Tharoor

**AIZAWL, Nov 5:** Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Sunday asserted that the opposition INDIA alliance is the answer if the citizens of the country want the next government at the Centre to work for the people rather than the "image of a leader".

The Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala claimed that the Congress is ahead of the BJP in all the five assembly poll-bound states and the outcome will boost the morale of the opposition alliance before next year's Lok Sabha polls.

In an interview with PTI, Tharoor said, "I think the time has come for Indian voters to ask what is in their self interest, not what is in Modi's image or PR work of the BJP. Do you want a government that will give your welfare a priority? Do you want a government that will put people first and not the image of the leader first?"

He asserted that the Indian Na-



tional Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) is the answer if the citizens want a government that will think about the people instead of a single leader.

"Frankly, it seems the people of India are getting ready to send a strong message to the BJP. If you look at the elections, at the moment, the BJP is way behind the Congress in four of the five states and slightly behind in the fifth one,

Rajasthan. "So, if you are looking at the outcome, it looks like the opposition is going to get a very strong wind in its sails when it goes for Lok Sabha elections next year. And that can't be good news for the BJP," he added.

Referring to the pre-poll surveys in Rajasthan, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana, the senior Congress leader said that all of them have put the opposition party ahead of the BJP in all states except Rajasthan.

"If you also pick up what party workers are saying on the ground, there is a lot of confidence in the Congress party that we are going to do very well in these elections," he added. Polling in these five states will take place between November 7 and 30 in multiple phases, while the votes will be counted on the same day on December 3. Asked if he would like to term the polls in these five states as "semi-finals" before the (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## BJP sharpens attack on Cong over Mahadev betting app scam

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** The BJP on Sunday sharpened its attack on the Congress over the alleged Mahadev betting app scam and asked Rahul Gandhi as well as Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel to clarify their "links" with the money transactions in the case.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters in Delhi, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged that the "facts" coming out in the case indicate that the Congress has no match in "inventing new ways of corruption and cheating".

"Be it inventing new ways of corruption or setting new benchmarks of corruption, the Congress party is today a living proof that no one can match them. Breaking their own previous records, they have now set a new record," Trivedi charged.

Referring to media reports, the BJP leader said that a person sitting in Dubai has claimed that he is the owner of the betting app, and he has also clearly talked about giving money to Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel and his associates.

"Given the new revelations coming in, it won't be an exaggeration to say that the way the Congress is inventing new methods of corruption and cheating, the Chhattisgarh government has perhaps added a new dimension to it. Perhaps it is leaving behind infamous international thugs like Natwarlal and Charles Sobhraj also," he alleged. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday claimed that a forensic analysis and a statement made by a 'cash courier' have led to "startling allegations" that Mahadev betting app promoters paid about (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Mobile internet ban in Manipur extended till Nov 8

**IMPHAL, Nov 5:** The Manipur government has extended mobile internet ban in the state till November 8, officials said on Sunday.

The move comes after a mob had on Wednesday attacked a camp of 1 Manipur Rifles here to loot its armoury, prompting security personnel to fire several rounds in the air.

The ban was extended following "apprehensions that anti-social elements might use social media extensively for transmission of images, hate speeches and hate video messages inciting the passions of the public which might have serious repercussions for the law and order situation in the state". An order issued by commissioner (Home) T Ranjit Singh, acknowledged the existence of "elements of imminent danger of loss of life and/or damage to public-private property...as a result of inflammatory (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## ULFA-I cadre surrenders in Dibrugarh

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIBRUGARH, Nov 5:** An active cadre of the United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I) cadre surrendered before the security forces here in Dibrugarh on Sunday.

The cadre identified as Madhab Chetia alias Suraj Asom surrendered at the Jeypore Army camp in Naharkatia in the presence of senior Army and police officials. Chetia had reportedly escaped from an ULFA camp in Myanmar.

He handed over a hand grenade to the Army authorities while surrendering. According to Army sources, the surrendered ULFA-I cadre is a resident of Disangmukh in Sivasagar district and he had joined the banned outfit in 2021 and had undergone weapons training in Myanmar. With this development, this was (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Music maestro Bhupen Hazarika remembered on death anniv

**GUWAHATI, Nov 5:** From laying flowers in his memory to singing his songs, tributes flowed across Assam for music maestro Bhupen Hazarika on his 12th death anniversary on Sunday.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah recounted how Hazarika's creations showed that art can be used to bring in social change.

"My solemn tribute to the Bard of Brahmaputra, Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Ji, on his punyati," Shah wrote on X.

"Bhupenda's creations exemplify the best of our culture and also set the precedent of how art can be best put to use to usher in social change. The maestro's creations will continue to serve as a message for generations to create a fair and equitable society," he added.

Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, in a post on X, wrote: "Like the ever-flowing waters of the Burhaluit, may the words of love,



unity and harmony of Sudhakonto echo in the heart of every Assamese."

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also paid his tribute on the micro-blogging site.

He wrote: "Through his songs of humanity, Dr Bhupen Hazarika had enlivened the masses. Travelling from the banks of the Luit to

the different corners of the world, he had lent a unique identity to Assam's songs and culture."

"The compassionate voice of Bhupen Da will forever remain in our hearts," he added.

Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal, in his tribute, said the songs of Hazarika carried the essence of new hope, brotherhood

and harmony.

"The Bard of the Brahmaputra's multifaceted talent and contributions has greatly enriched our culture & thoughts. Solemn tributes to the Bharat Ratna and iconic balladeer on his punyati," Sonowal wrote on X.

Memorial functions were held across the state, organised by the government as well as private groups.

State Cultural Minister Bimal Kumar Borah paid floral tributes at the Dr Bhupen Hazarika Samadhi Kshetra at Jalukbari in Guwahati.

A programme to mark the occasion was held at the venue by the state government. The Bhupen Hazarika Sangskritik Nyas organised a programme at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra here, where art and quiz competitions among children were also held.

The songs of the 'Bard of Brahmaputra', as he is often called, were sung at the memorials. (PTI)



# India's power consumption grows 9.4 pc to 984.39 billion units in April-October

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** India's power consumption grew 9.4 per cent to around 984.39 billion units in the April-October period this fiscal compared to a year ago mainly due to improvement in economic activities and weather conditions.

Power consumption in the April-October period in fiscal year 2022-23 was 899.95 billion units, according to power ministry data.

Another indicator, peak power demand, was also higher at nearly 241 GW during the April-October period this fiscal against 215.88 GW in the same period in 2022.

The country's power consumption grew nearly 22 per cent to 138.94 billion units (BU) in October, showing a surge in electricity demand due to festivities and increased economic activities.

In the same month a year ago, power consumption stood at 113.94 BU, higher than 112.79 billion units recorded in October 2021, as per government data.

A spokesperson of Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd said, "In the last couple of months, electricity consumption has gone up substan-



tially." In October 2023, the power consumption in Tata Power-Delhi Distribution Ltd area of operation went up by around 10.16 per cent to 845 MUs (million units), compared to 767 MUs in October 2022.

"The demand has remained higher mainly due to delays in winter onset this year. The festive activities in the month of October have also contributed to the demand phenomena," the spokesperson explained.

However, the spokesperson stated that due to mild summer this year, the electricity consumption during April-May was substantially lower in comparison to the same period last year.

The spokesperson pointed out that the demand started inching up since July due to extreme humid conditions.

The power ministry had estimated the country's electricity demand to touch 229 GW during summer. The demand did not reach

the projected level in April-July due to unseasonal rain.

The peak supply, however, touched a new high of 224.1 GW in June before dropping to 209.03 GW in July. Peak demand touched 238.19 GW in August. In September this year, it was nearly 241 GW.

Industry experts said power consumption was affected in March, April, May, and June this year due to widespread rainfall.

They said power consumption grew in August and September, mainly due to humid weather conditions and also perk up in industrial activities ahead of the festive season.

They stated that the double-digit growth in power consumption in the month of October reflects the impact of festivities and better economic activities.

There were festivals of Navratri, Durga Puja and Dusshera in October.

The experts are of the view that power consumption growth will remain steady in coming months due to festivities and improvement in economic activities. (PTI)

## China Premier Li seeks to bolster his country's economic outlook at the Shanghai export fair

**TAIPEI, Nov 5:** Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Sunday pledged to continue deepening reforms, expand free trade zones and relax market access for foreign investment while seeking to generate excitement around a largely lackluster economy.

Li made the remarks when delivering a keynote speech at the opening of the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai, seeking to draw thousands of foreign businesses shopping for Chinese products and looking to expand trade and investment with the world's second-largest economy.

China's economy expanded at a 4.9 per cent annual pace between July-September, beating analysts' forecasts of about 4.5 per cent, official data show. But that was much slower than the 6.3 per cent annual growth rate of the previous quarter.

The Chinese government has adopted various policies to help the economy; raising spending on building ports and other infrastructure, cutting interest rates and easing curbs on home-buying. But economists say wider reforms are needed to address long-term problems that are stifling growth. The expo between November 5-10 is an annual event launched by President Xi Jinping in 2018 with the theme of promoting China's image as being in favour of free trade.

We will further relax market access ... protecting the rights and interests of foreign investment in accordance with the law, and continue to create a market-oriented, legal, and international business environment, Li said at the opening.

Foreign businesses have complained of a worsening investment environment in China, particularly with the passage of new legislation that could deem the possession of standard economic forecasts as being a form of espionage. American businesses have said current conditions make it almost impossible to invest in China without taking on significant risks.

This year's expo brought Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, currently paying an official visit to China which is largely focused on restoring trade links blocked for years due to economic and political

tensions. From the outset of his prime ministership, Albanese had demanded that China immediately lift what he described as unjustified official and unofficial trade barriers costing Australian exporters 20 billion Australian dollars (USD 13 billion) a year.

Those barriers have since been substantially reduced and now cost around AUD 2 billion (USD 1.3 billion).

The fact that it is the first visit in seven years to our major trading partner is a very positive step and I look forward to constructive discussions and dialogue with the president and the premier during my visit to Shanghai and Beijing, Albanese said prior to his departure on Saturday.

At a luncheon in Shanghai on Sunday, Albanese said he was planning to discuss joint approaches to climate change, challenges to agriculture and cooperation in the arts, and said, despite its ups and downs, the relationship continued to be based on respect, maturity, and mutual benefit.

Australia will cooperate where we must and engage in our national interest, Albanese said. Dialogue with China is vital to helping secure peace, prosperity and security in our region and globally, and to navigate the challenges and opportunities our region will face this century.

More than 200 Australian companies are being represented at the Shanghai fair.

Albanese has signalled that Australia won't back China's bid to join the free trade agreement known as the 12-nation Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or the CPTPP, saying China did not live up to the proposed standards. He has also said he would protest a lack of transparency in China's treatment of a detained Australian democracy blogger Yang Hengjun when meeting with President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

Despite that, Li said China would continue to actively pursue the accession to the CPTPP and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement and negotiate for the conclusion of more high standard free trade agreements. (AP)



## India unlikely to have hyperloop trains in near future: NITI member V K Saraswat

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** India is unlikely to go in for hyperloop technology for ultra high-speed trains in the near future as the technology is at a 'very low level' of maturity and may not be economically viable at the current juncture, NITI Aayog Member V K Saraswat said on Sunday.

Saraswat, who is heading a committee to explore the technological and commercial viability of the Virgin Hyperloop technology, further said some foreign companies have shown interest to bring the technology in India.

"Hyperloop technology as far as we are concerned, we found that the offer which came from foreign countries are not very viable options. They are at a very low level of maturity of technology," he told PTI in an interview.

Hyperloop is a high-speed train, running in vacuum in a tube. The technology is proposed by Elon Musk, who is behind electric car company Tesla and commercial space transport company SpaceX.

"So we have not given much importance to that and as on today, it is only a study programme. I don't expect hyperloop to enter into our transportation framework in the near future," he said.

The Virgin Hyperloop test run was conducted on November 9, 2020, on a 500-metre track in Las Vegas in the US with a pod, as the hyperloop vehicles are called, travelling with passengers, including an Indian, inside an enclosed tube at more than 161 km/hr.

According to Saraswat, the offers which came are at a very low level of maturity and "we can not make investment on that kind of a technology."



Virgin Hyperloop is among a handful of companies which are trying to build such a system for passenger travel.

Maharashtra has deemed hyperloop a public infrastructure exercise and approved the Virgin Hyperloop-DP World Consortium as the original project proponent for the Mumbai-Pune hyperloop project.

Replying to a question on India's reliance on lithium imports from China, Saraswat said as on today, production of lithium ion battery in India is very low, so the dependence is on the import of batteries from China and other sources. "But mostly it is from China because competition wise the Chinese batteries are cheaper," he said.

Pointing out that India has given incentives for setting up battery manufacturing facilities in the country, Saraswat said, "Hopefully, next year you will have couple of business houses going into production in a large scale for manufacturing of lithium-ion battery in the country."

About 75 per cent of the lithium-

ion imports come from China.

On reports of India talking to Chile and Bolivia for tapping into lithium mining, Saraswat said there was a suggestion that India should go for acquisition of certain mining facilities in Chile, Argentina and other places.

"And what has happened is instead of the government directly going to these countries and acquiring mines, our private sector has already signed business to business agreement with some of the companies in these countries and they have already got supply chain agreement for getting lithium from these centres."

Chile endowed with most lithium reserves, is the second largest global lithium producer.

To a query on the government promoting methanol as alternative fuel, Saraswat said, "we have been able to complete our trials of blending 15 per methanol in diesel."

He said all the trials conducted with Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTCL) and Ashok Leyland have been successful. (PTI)

## Ahead of global business summit, West Bengal govt holds roadshow for Punjab industry stakeholders

**CHANDIGARH, Nov 5:** The West Bengal government conducted a roadshow here to draw attention of industries from Punjab region and explore investment opportunities ahead of a global business summit in Kolkata scheduled later this month.

The 7th edition of the 'Bengal Global Business Summit' (BGBS) will take place on November 21-22 this year.

As a prelude to this event, a roadshow was organised in Chandigarh to explore trade and investment opportunities in West Bengal, according to a press release.

In collaboration with ASSOCHAM, the government of West Bengal hosted an interactive session with business stakeholders from the Punjab region.

This session brought together some of the leading business groups from West Bengal and key industry players from Chandigarh region.

Drishmeet Singh Buttar, Co-Chairman, ASSOCHAM Chandigarh UT Development Council, and Managing Partner, Healing Super Specialty Hospital, Chandigarh, highlighted West Bengal's investor-friendly approach while talking about opportunities in the eastern state.

Amit Mitra, Principal Chief Advisor to the Chief Minister and Finance Department, Government of West Bengal, who also holds the rank of a cabinet minister in the state, delivered the keynote address.

He began his address citing an emotional connection between West Bengal and Punjab since the period of India's freedom struggle and sought partnership in continuation of this tradition.

He said that an RBI study shows West Bengal is the 4th largest state in terms of net value added.

Stating that Punjab has infrastructure and human resources, he invited the industries from the state to visit BGBS and meet overseas delegations.

Anoop Kumar Agrawal, Principal Secretary, Department of Technical Education, Training, and Skill Development, Government of West Bengal, said the state has a large manpower accounting for 7.2 per cent of the country's workforce.

Nikhil Nirmal, Managing Director, West Bengal Small Industries Development Corporation Limited (WBSIDCL), said the state is home to more than 89 lakh MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), the second highest in India.

The state has an MSME facilitation centre in each district and holds a finance clinic in each district every month to hand-hold the MSME sector.

Harish, Executive Director of West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation Limited (WBIDCL), shared the details about the past BGBS events, the number of agreements signed, and the global participation.

Komal Dashora, Member, ASSOCHAM Eastern Region Healthcare Council, and Director and President Medica Hospitals Pvt Ltd, spoke of the initiatives taken by the government to help industry, such as one officer, one project model, etc.

Somesh Dasgupta, Chairman, ASSOCHAM Eastern Region Energy Sector Council, and Whole Time Director, India Power Corporation Limited (IPCL), highlighted the abundance of quality power for all industrial needs in Bengal.

He invited businesses to explore Durgapur Asansol Industrial belt that offers the most competitive power rate. (PTI)

## M-cap of 9 of top-10 most valued firms surges ₹ 97,463 cr; Reliance leads

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** The combined market valuation of nine of the top-10 most valued firms surged ₹ 97,463.46 crore last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer, amid an overall positive trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 580.98 points or 0.91 per cent. Barring Bajaj Finance, the rest nine firms, including Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India emerged as gainers. The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped ₹ 36,399.36 crore to ₹ 15,68,995.24 crore.

State Bank of India's market capitalisation (mcap) zoomed ₹ 15,305.71 crore to reach ₹ 5,15,976.44 crore. The valuation of ICICI Bank surged ₹ 14,749.52 crore to ₹ 6,54,042.46 crore and that of HDFC Bank climbed ₹ 11,657.11 crore to ₹ 11,25,842.89 crore.

The mcap of Bharti Airtel rallied ₹ 9,352.15 crore to ₹ 5,23,087.22 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Limited gained ₹ 6,320.4 crore to ₹ 5,89,418.46 crore. (PTI)

## FPI sell-off continues; ₹ 3,400 cr pulled out in just 3 sessions in Nov

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** Foreign Portfolio Investors' (FPIs) selling spree continues as they pulled out over Rs 3,400 crore from the Indian equity markets in the first three trading sessions of November on rising interest rates and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. This came after such investors withdrew ₹ 24,548 crore in October and ₹ 14,767 crore in September, data with the depositories showed. Before the outflow, FPIs were incessantly buying Indian equities in the last six months from March to August and brought in ₹ 1.74 trillion during the period.

Going forward, this selling trend is unlikely to continue since the main trigger for FPI selling, the rising bond yields, has reversed on the US Federal Reserve signalling a dovish stance in its November meeting.

"The main trigger for this reversal in bond yields is the

subtle dovish commentary from Fed chief Jerome Powell that 'despite elevated inflation, inflationary expectations remain well anchored'. The market has interpreted this statement as the end of the rate hiking cycle, "V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

According to the data with the depositories, FPIs sold shares to the tune of ₹ 3,412 crore during November 1-3. FPIs have been on a selling spree since the start of September.

"This could be largely attributed to the growing geopolitical tensions due to the conflict between Israel and Hamas, alongside a notable rise in US Treasury bond yields, "Himan-shu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Adviser India, said. (PTI)

## Employees of pharma company in Haryana get cars as Diwali gift

**CHANDIGARH, Nov 5:** A pharmaceutical company in Haryana's Panchkula said it has gifted 12 cars to its employees and plans to give similar rewards to 38 others for their "hard work and loyalty" during this Diwali.

In a statement, Mits Healthcare Private Limited said it has given cars to its employees as a Diwali gift.

The company's director M K Bhatia, who referred to his employees as "celebrities", presented the cars to 12 "star performers".

The company also plans to give cars to 38 more employees in the near future, it said.

Bhatia attributed the success of his company to the hard work, dedication, and loyalty of his employees.

The company manufactures general range, critical care, orthopedics, gynaecology, dermatology, cosmeceuticals and cardio diabetic pharma products. (PTI)

# Wage provisions limit SBI Q2 net profit growth to 9 pc; bank says no concerns on unsecured loans

**Mumbai, Nov 5:** The country's largest lender SBI on Saturday reported a 9.13 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹ 16,099.58 crore for the September quarter, weighed down by money it had to set aside for employees' impending wage and pension revisions.

On a standalone basis, the State Bank of India (SBI) had a 8.03 per cent increase in the profit after tax for the reporting quarter at ₹ 14,330 crore. However, the same was down 15.13 per cent compared to ₹ 16,884 crore in the June quarter. It's core net interest income grew 12.27 per cent to ₹ 39,500 crore on the back of a 12.39 per cent growth in advances but the Net Interest Margin (NIM) contracted 0.12 per cent to 3.43 per cent as the cost of deposits rose.

SBI Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said the operating profit de-

clined over 8 per cent to ₹19,417 crore for the quarter.

He pointed to the surge in provisions for wages and pensions to over ₹ 5,900 crore as a major factor behind the fall in operating profit.

The bank, which started provisioning for an increase in wages and pensions since last November, revised up the pay growth assumption to 14 per cent from 10 per cent resulting in the hit, he said.

A write-back of over ₹ 1,200 crore from higher-than-required standard asset provisions done in the past helped reduce the hit of higher wage provisions on the bank's profits.

The loan loss provisions for the quarter were down 9.75 per cent to ₹ 1,815 crore, helped by containing of slippages. The gross non-performing assets ratio improved

to a decadal best of 2.55 per cent.

With the Reserve Bank flagging caution on unsecured lending, Khara said there are no concerns for the SBI on this line and added that the unsecured loans' portfolio is better than secured loans.

The gross NPA from the unsecured book is only 0.69 per cent, he said, attributing the same to a focus on lending to those having salary accounts with the SBI and also ones working for better rated corporates.

Khara said the corporate loan growth was a muted 6.61 per cent, as entities focused on using internal accruals for making their investments.

Over ₹1.5 lakh crore of ₹ 4.77 lakh crore in corporate loans sanctioned earlier are awaiting disbursements, Khara said, pointing that it will do better in the second half on



this aspect.

Khara hoped that the NIMs will stay at the same levels as the current one, and added that in the worst case, there can be a 3-5 basis points contraction in the number.

The bank is focusing on increasing its current account deposits to

help garner adequate deposits for fuelling the high credit growth, he said, hinting that there will not be a hike in deposit rates amid what some in the industry call a "war for deposits".

It does not plan for any hike in savings bank deposits rate as being

muller or implemented by some rivals, and will not burn cash to push products like the central bank digital currency either, he said.

The bank is targeting to add 600 more branches to the current network of over 22,400 branches by the end of FY25, Khara said, adding that the private sector rivals launching dedicated offerings for semi-urban and rural areas are "aping" SBI.

The international book witnessed handsome growth on the back of companies' demand for external commercial borrowings and trade finance, Khara said, specifying that the bank has done well in the US, Japan and the Middle East.

Khara said it is business as usual at the branch in Tel Aviv, and there is no impact on the state-run bank's business as a result of the frostiness in ties with Canada as

well. It's overall capital adequacy stood at 14.28 per cent as of September 30 and Khara said there is no need for any new fund infusion either saying the buffers will go up beyond 15 per cent by end of March quarter once the profits from subsidiaries come in.

The bank doesn't have any plans to slice-off its digital banking offering Yono into a separate entity, Khara said, adding that the offering is central to the bank's own business.

Domestic brokerage StoxBox said it is a mixed set of results that was not expected from a giant like SBI.

"We feel that the bank has missed its direction and needs to buck up with the business growth, especially in this high-interest environment and intense competition," it said. (PTI)



# Bhutan King concludes maiden visit to state



**HT Bureau**  
GUWAHATI, Nov 5: Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk completed his three-day inaugural visit to Assam and departed for Delhi from the Rowrah airport in Jorhat on Sunday. The royal visitor received a warm send-off at the airport by Assam Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, Jorhat MLA Hitendranath Goswami, and senior state and district officials.

During his visit, the King engaged in various activities, including a visit to the Kamakhya Temple, interactions with the Bhutanese diaspora in Guwahati, attending a cultural program, and a dinner hosted by Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria.

He spent Saturday at Kaziranga, where he was given a farewell at his hotel by Forest and Environment Minister Chandra Mohan Pa-

towary, Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, and officials.

King Wangchuk also had a rendezvous with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at both Guwahati and Kaziranga. His visit to the Kaziranga National Park included an evening jeep safari in the central Kohora range, visiting various points, observing wildlife, elephant bathing, and enjoying the sunset amidst the park's scenic beauty.

Moreover, the King graced a cultural program that showcased Assam's rich musical and dance traditions, followed by a dinner hosted by the Chief Minister.

The 43-year-old monarch was accompanied by the Royal Bhutan Ambassador Major General Vetsop Namgyel and other senior members of the royal office throughout his visit to the state. (With inputs from PTI)

## Remembering Dr Bhupen Hazarika on his 12<sup>th</sup> death anniv: Tributes across Sonitpur



**HT Correspondent**  
TEZPUR, Nov 5: On the occasion of Dr Bhupen Hazarika's 12th death anniversary, Sonitpur district witnessed numerous commemorative events honoring the legendary music maestro and cultural icon.

The Tezpur Sahitya Sabha organised a memorial program, commencing with the lighting of a lantern at Dr Hazarika's portrait. Eminent personalities, including actress Krishna Das Nath, actor Arun Nath, and former president of Tezpur Sahitya Sabha Dr Suresh Kumar Arjya, paid floral tributes to the late musician. Various organizations and individuals, such as Sonitpur Zila Sahitya Sabha, echoed the sentiment by highlighting Dr Hazarika's invaluable contributions to Assamese culture and society.

Throughout the district, different socio-cultural and national organi-

zations conducted programs. Bala para Sahitya Sabha unveiled a bust of the music legend, while Kalabhum Baan Theatre hosted a commemorative event in conjunction with the Sonitpur district administration. Additionally, the All Assam chorus competition, focused on Bhupendra Sangeet, drew participation from over 30 groups and witnessed the judging of renowned artists like JP Das and Shanta Uzir.

Puthimari residents, Asam Chitra Parishad, Sonitpur Zila Sahitya Sabha at Borchala, and Darrang College Girls Hostel Alumni Conference, among others, orchestrated various programs to honor the memory and legacy of Dr Bhupen Hazarika.

The events showcased a collective reverence and appreciation for Dr Hazarika's contributions, preserving his legacy and influence on Assamese culture.

## Hygiene and cleanliness drive in Tezpur



**HT Correspondent**  
TEZPUR, Nov 5: Residents and community groups in the greater Chandmari area of Tezpur came together for a collective initiative aimed at maintaining cleanliness and promoting hygiene within their neighborhood. The Chandmari Nagarik Manch and Nari Pragati Sangha orchestrated a robust cleanliness drive and an extensive awareness campaign, emphasizing the importance of a clean environment. Starting at 9 am on Sunday, community members congregated at Chandmari Harihar Dham Mandir complex to kick off the cleanliness drive, demonstrating their commitment to keeping their surroundings pristine. Subsequently, a public meeting at 9:45 am engaged participants in discussions around the significance of cleanliness for overall health and well-being.

Prominent figures including retired Assam Rifles officer and social activist Prashad Thapa, esteemed litterateur KB Kaushik, lawyer Motiraj Adhikari, and respected social worker and medical officer PB Chetry, among others, addressed the audience. Their messages underscored the urgent need for united efforts in maintaining cleanliness, advocating for health and hygiene standards in the community. During the meeting, a collective resolution was reached to conduct regular cleanliness drives, aiming to transform Tezpur-Chandmari area into one of the most hygienic and clean localities within the district. The event concluded with PB Chetry expressing gratitude and offering a vote of thanks. The concerted efforts and commitments made during the meeting stand as a testament to the community's dedication to fostering a clean and healthy environment for all residents.

## Mishap claims life of child in Sootea

**HT Correspondent**  
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 5: A devastating incident unfolded on Sunday in Gereki, Sootea, resulting in the loss of a young life identified as Chunu Ghatowar (9). The unfortunate episode involved a swift-moving Swift Dzire car with registration number AS 01 DV6451, traveling from Dhekiajuli to Biswanath Chariali along NH 15.

The vehicle lost control and collided with business establishments situated near NH 15 in Gereki. The impact caused significant damage, breaking down the shop's post and shutter, penetrating into the closed establishment. Tragically, young Chunu Ghatowar was sitting on the steps of the business when the speeding car struck, causing fatal injuries. The force of the impact also affected the post and shutter of the shop. Additionally, three other passengers in the car suffered severe injuries.

Local residents promptly joined efforts with the Sootea police to transport the injured to Biswanath Chariali Sub-divisional Hospital. Despite immediate medical attention, doctors, unfortunately, declared Chunu Ghatowar deceased. The young child hailed from the Bhowloguri area in the northern part of Sootea. The accident has deeply affected the community, and local authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding this tragic event.

## 27<sup>th</sup> edition of 100 Drums Wangala Festival inaugurated

**HT Correspondent**  
DONGKAMUKAM, Nov 5: On Sunday evening, EM KAAC Madhurim Lekthe inaugurated the 27th edition of the 100 Drums Wangala Festival at the Rajendra Memorial LP School playground in Bithung, approximately 10 km from Dongkamukam. Organized by the Karbi Anglong A'chik Cultural Society (KAACS), the event commenced with an inaugural prayer led by Fr CA John, the Parish Priest of Satgaon Parish.

Lekthe commenced his address by acknowledging the significant progress in the develop-

ment of the rich heritage and composite culture within the community. Reflecting on the uniqueness of the previous year's 26th Wangala Festival held in his constituency, he highlighted the distinctiveness of this year's celebration. He emphasized the cosmopolitan nature of the twin hills districts, where various tribes, besides Karbis, uphold their distinct identities, fostering a harmonious coexistence.

Expressing well-wishes for the bright future of the tribe, Lekthe extended gratitude to the organizers for the invitation to the inaugural gathering. Every year, the Garos of Karbi Anglong

and West Karbi Anglong commemorate this significant festival from November 5th to 7th in honor of their god of giving, 'Misi Saljong'. A total of 25 troupes from Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong have reportedly registered to partake in the festivities.

The inaugural meeting, presided over by President Reception Committee Clement Sangma, was graced by the presence of Fr Albert Thyrmang, Fr Justin, Chairman of the Veterinary Development Board Titolal Hasnu, Fr Charles Sangma, Central Committee leaders, and a substantial number of participants.

## Anuradha Sharma Pujari emphasises on positive journalism and unity

**HT Correspondent**  
TEZPUR, Nov 5: Anuradha Sharma Pujari, a distinguished journalist and writer, stressed the crucial role of impartial and people-centric journalism while addressing the inaugural session of the newly formed Sonitpur District Journalists' Forum at the Baliram Lahkar auditorium.

Pujari highlighted the significance of impartiality in journalism, noting that the essence of true journalism lies in its impartial nature and its reach to the people. Emphasising the impact of media content, she advocated for a focus on positive stories, citing the influence of negativity on society. However, she expressed concern over the influence of social media trends affecting the media's integrity and its grasp on the truth.

Reflecting on the post-covid scenario, Pujari raised issues surrounding vested interests attempting to undermine the credibility of newspapers, mentioning propaganda attempts during the pandemic, which falsely linked newspapers to the spread of the virus. She lamented the intrusion of politics and capitalism in the media, highlighting the competitive divisions among journalists based on TRP and circulation-driven motives.

Pujari urged journalists to maintain a positive out-

look and called for unity among them. She expressed hope that the conscientious efforts of journalists would bring about a positive transformation in society.

The event witnessed speeches from notable figures including Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika, who encouraged journalists to foster a positive work culture among the youth. Tezpur MLA Prithviraj Rabha highlighted the historical significance of journalism in Tezpur and the district. Sonitpur district commissioner Deba Kumar Mishra commended the unity of journalists within the district through the newly formed forum. Bhargab Das, a senior journalist and former student leader from Mangaldoi, also shared his memories and connections with Tezpur and the district. The morning session began with the hoisting of the flag by Barin Kumar Saikia, Secretary of Sonitpur Press Club, followed by paying homage to late journalists of the district.

The formation of a new district committee for journalists' united forum, with Dr Ashwini Deka as the observer, took place in the morning. The open session was presided over by Dr Jyotikamal Hazarika, Principal of Tezpur College.

The event marked a significant beginning for the unity and proactive involvement of journalists within the Sonitpur district.

## Nabin Chandra Kath Hazarika remembered on 106<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary

**HT Correspondent**  
TEZPUR, Nov 5: Fondly remembered on his 106th birth anniversary, Nabin Chandra Kath Hazarika, a distinguished lyricist, poet, former MLA of Tezpur, Deputy Speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly, and founding secretary of Tezpur Sahitya Sabha, was honored in a poignant event at Nabin Bhawan on Friday evening. The ceremony commenced with a ceremonial lighting at the late Hazarika's portrait by noted advocate and litterateur, Bipin Kataky, followed by a tribute-paying gathering.

The commemoration witnessed the presence of several eminent figures and representatives from various organizations. Notable personalities, including MLA Tezpur Prithviraj Rabha, artist Aparup Agarwala, senior advocate Jamini Kumar Baishya, Secretary of Tezpur Sahitya Sabha Dwijen Nath, District Cultural Development Officer Jiten Kumar Das, distinguished dancer Rubi Bora Bordoloi, advocate Jaan Bora, writer and faculty of LGB Girls College Pallab Bhattacharya, and President of Sonitpur District Congress Committee Dadul Borkakoti, graced the event with heartfelt contributions. Dulal Chandra Kath Hazarika, the son of the late Nabin Chandra Kath Hazarika and a noted lawyer of Gauhati High Court, extended a warm welcome to the gathered guests and shared poignant rec-

ollections of his father. He briefly delineated his father's literary journey and his significant societal contributions. MLA Tezpur Prithviraj Rabha reflected on Hazarika's invaluable role in Assamese society and acknowledged his contributions, particularly in the establishment of the Tezpur Sahitya Sabha Bhawan. Notably, he recalled the profound impact of Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha's last lecture at the Bhawan, laid by Nabin Chandra Kath Hazarika.

Advocate Jamini Kumar Baishya, in his insightful speech, highlighted Hazarika's commitment to the Assamese language, recounting how he conducted all his legal affairs in Assamese, symbolizing his deep affection for his mother tongue and homeland. The President of Tezpur Sahitya Kanon, Bipin Kotoky, reminisced about Hazarika's presidency and recited one of the late poet's compositions. The evening was enriched further by the perspectives shared by various personalities on Hazarika's multifaceted endeavors.

District Cultural Development Officer Jiten Kumar Das pledged to systematically and scientifically preserve a portrait and the literary creations of the revered author at Jyoti Bharati. To enrich the program, Rubi Bora Bordoloi captivated guests with a rendition of a song penned by the late Kath Hazarika in an event facilitated by Midul Kumar Saharia.

## District Task Force meet on Vector-borne Diseases in Morigaon

**HT Correspondent**  
MORIGAON, Nov 5: The second meeting of the District Task Force on Vector-borne Diseases convened at the office of the Chief Medical and Health Officer (Infectious Diseases) in Morigaon on Sunday. Presided over by district commissioner Devashish Sharma, the meeting engaged multiple departments, including the Health Department, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, and Agriculture Department to address the prevention of Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES).

Emphasizing preventive measures against dengue, Commissioner Sharma highlighted the imposition of fines for breeding 'Aedes' mosquitoes in residential or office premises, asserting stringent monitoring by the district administration. He stressed the necessity of continuous fever surveillance and comprehen-

sive awareness campaigns to eradicate malaria from char areas.

Underlining the significance of heightened awareness, Sharma mandated government and private hospitals and laboratories to promptly report cases of vector-borne diseases, aiming to prevent fatalities. Morigaon's District Malaria Officer, Supriya Das, detailed the ongoing weekly dengue surveillance program in urban, rural, and other district regions until November 14. Das reported no malaria cases in Morigaon since 2018 and confirmed the district's application for a malaria eradication certificate.

The meeting deliberated on launching awareness initiatives to curtail dengue mosquito breeding, especially focusing on urban areas through collaboration with Morigaon Municipality. Additionally, plans for issuing newspapers on the subject were discussed.

## Assam govt doing commendable work to take sports to grassroot level: PM

**GUWAHATI, Nov 5:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the 'Khel Maharan' (Sports Competition) organised by the Assam government is a commendable effort to take sports to the grassroot level. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma released a message sent by the Prime Minister at a press conference here wherein he hoped that the 'Khel Maharan' will enhance the vibrant sports culture of Assam and help nurture more sporting talents who will bring glory to the nation. Assam has already been a sporting hub, giving many athletes who have made the nation proud at the global level, Modi said. The organisation of 'Khel Maharan' will go a long way in further promoting and popularising competitive sports among youth across the state. 'Holding competitive games at the levels of Panchayat, assembly constituency, district and state levels will also help unearth new talent across diverse sporting disciplines', he said. (PTI)

## Community fishing brings festive atmosphere along Tarong River in Kokrajhar

**HT Correspondent**  
KOKRAJHAR, Nov 5: The Haloadal Tarong River near Titagiri witnessed a tremendous gathering of people, all enthusiastic to partake in community fishing in Kokrajhar. Every year on November 5, the Tarong Irrigation Sluice gate releases river water, drawing individuals from across Kokrajhar district and its adjacent areas for a day of joyous fishing festivities along the Tarong River.

This agricultural river stream, spanning from the district's north to the downstream linking Gaurang River in the south, transforms into a hub of fishing activity, especially during the harvesting season. People from diverse backgrounds and walks of life arrive equipped with



Zekhai, Kobai, Polo, nets, and more, sharing in the exhilaration of community fishing. Their enthusiastic participation has turned the fishing event into a celebration, marking the advent of the winter season. Expressing their delight,

## Clash over land dispute in Nagaon leaves youth severely injured

**HT Correspondent**  
NAGAON, Nov 5: A land dispute in the Khutika area of Nagaon turned violent on Saturday, resulting in the serious injury of a young man named Hriday Bora. According to sources, the clash erupted when one party, led by Vishal Agarwal, who recently purchased a piece of land through a bank auction, attempted to occupy the land. This action was contested by the other party, represented by Rupa Bora's family, who had initially mortgaged the land along with a house to the bank for a loan.

Allegedly, the land was auctioned as the Bora family couldn't repay the loan taken from Canara Bank, leading to the forfeiture of the mortgage and the subsequent auction. When Vishal Agarwal and his associates arrived to claim the land, a confrontation ensued, with the Bora family objecting to their actions.

The disagreement escalated into a physical altercation, resulting in a severe injury to Hriday Bora, who was reportedly attacked with a hammer by individuals accompanying the land purchaser. The injured youth was promptly taken to a local hospital and later referred to a medical facility in Guwahati for further treatment.

Local law enforcement, including Haibargaon police and paramilitary personnel, swiftly intervened, bringing the situation under control. An FIR was lodged by the victim's mother at the Haibargaon police outpost concerning the incident. The clash, arising from conflicting claims over the land's ownership, led to a regrettable escalation, resulting in severe injury and prompting legal action in the matter.

community members emphasized the sense of joy and togetherness fostered by this annual tradition. "I arrived in the morning and had a great time catching various types of fish until noon," shared a woman from Salakati village.

The river's banks were alive with the bustling activities of the community, resonating with peace and a spirit of celebration. "The Tarong River was bustling with activity, and it was a joyous occasion. I am delighted to be part of this fishing tradition," expressed Rajon Kumar Narzary from Kanthalguri village. The community fishing event at Tarong River not only serves as an annual fishing extravaganza but also cultivates a sense of unity and festivity among the citizens, making it a highly anticipated and cherished occasion.

## 55-year-old Imam fatally stabbed inside mosque in Tinsukia

**HT Correspondent**  
DIBRUGARH, Nov 5: In a distressing incident, a 55-year-old Imam was fatally stabbed inside a mosque in Tinsukia district, Upper Assam, on Sunday morning. The victim, identified as Maulana Tehzeeb Islam from Bihar's Purnia district, served as an Imam at a mosque in Tinsukia's Makum Kolabari area.

Mohammad Ibrahim Ahmed (42), a local resident, was swiftly arrested as the prime suspect in the stabbing. He reportedly entered the mosque with a machete and repeatedly attacked Maulana Tehzeeb Islam during his morning prayers. An eyewitness recounted trying to intervene but was unable to prevent the fatal attack. Despite efforts to halt the assailant, the Imam succumbed to the injuries on the spot.

Upon the police's arrival, the body was recovered for a post-mortem examination. The accused allegedly fled the scene after the attack, leaving the murder weapon behind. He later returned to the site, attempting to blend in with the locals. However, authorities managed to identify and detain him.

An immediate case under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was filed against Ibrahim Ahmed, who was swiftly arrested. The community responded with protests, urging strict punishment for the accused. Police have confirmed the resolution of the case as the prime suspect has reportedly confessed to the crime.

Authorities plan to present the accused in court promptly and expedite the chargesheet submission. This appalling incident has sparked significant outrage in the local community.

## North East Cycling Awards 2023 Governor emphasises cycling for climate change mitigation

**HT Bureau**  
GUWAHATI, Nov 5: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria graced the North East Cycling Awards 2023 held at a prominent city hotel organised by "Paddle for Change," a non-governmental organization. The event celebrated and recognized individuals and organizations dedicated to promoting cycling in the North East region with a key focus on combating climate change.

Governor Kataria commended "Paddle for Change" for their efforts and emphasized the pivotal role of cycling in individual health and the national economy. He highlighted the substantial impact of cycling in preserving the environment, stressing the collective responsibility in climate preservation.

Expressing admiration for the government's initiative providing bicycles to female students, the Governor hailed the program for not only enhancing access to education but also fostering inclusivity by breaking down barriers in learning.

Furthermore, Governor Kataria underscored the significance of adopting public transport over private vehicles, citing its potential to bring about positive societal changes. The event was graced by the presence of forest minister Parimal Suklabaidya, CEO of Pratidin Groups Rishi Baruah, and several other esteemed dignitaries.

The ceremony was a tribute to the commitment and advocacy for cycling as a solution to climate change and a step towards a greener, healthier future.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*You always admire what you really don't understand.*  
— Blaise Pascal

## Chhattisgarh's CM under ED scrutiny

The recurring pattern of the Enforcement Directorate uncovering alleged wrongdoings of opposition parties just before elections demands scrutiny. This suggests a need for a change in leadership; the Narendra Modi government should relinquish power if any nexus is discovered. The ED, often working alongside the CBI and other central investigating agencies, obstructs the country's path to freeing itself from the Modi administration. Of all these agencies, the ED is the most formidable, and some might argue, the most insidious. Once it targets an opposition leader, it seldom relents. Curiously, the ED consistently strikes right before an election. As the Chhattisgarh assembly elections draw near, the Enforcement Directorate has once again taken action. This time, its target is Chhattisgarh's chief minister Bhupesh Baghel, whom the ED alleges received Rs 508 crore in illegal gratification from the promoters of the infamous Mahadev App to cover election expenses. This accusation reeks of apparent political motivation and raises suspicions of a vendetta, likely prompted by Baghel's strong position in the upcoming assembly elections. Defeating Bhupesh Baghel poses a significant challenge, and the BJP, desperate to wrest Chhattisgarh from Congress, will go to great lengths.

The ED insists that Baghel has received a total of Rs 508 crore from Mahadev App for election expenses. A similar allegation was previously made against the Aam Aadmi Party. The ED has also claimed to uncover benami bank accounts of Mahadev App linked to Baghel, involving Rs 15.59 crore. The Congress has criticised the Modi government for using the ED to influence elections, particularly after ED's probe into "cash courier" Asim Das's revelations. The Congress accuses the government of misusing the ED to intimidate opposition parties. Chief minister Bhupesh Baghel responded, accusing the BJP of relying on central investigating agencies like the ED, IT, DRI, and the CBI to contest elections. He vehemently criticised the ED for attempting to tarnish his image, viewing it as a political move to discredit the popular Congress government. However, Baghel and the Congress face a challenging situation. Unlike the previous "Delhi Liquorgate" scandal, "Mahadevgate" leaves behind a more visible trail, with evidence such as money seized from Asim Das, proof of his connections to Dubai, the involvement of a police officer as a conduit, and intelligence on Mahadev App's links with the Chhattisgarh chief minister.

A police officer is also in ED custody, serving as the intermediary to receive the "bribe" from Mahadev App, intended for senior bureaucrats and Chhattisgarh politicians. The officer's travel expenses to Dubai were covered by a travel agency linked to Mahadev App. Bhupesh Baghel's standing has been significantly compromised, and it's likely that the investigation will favor the BJP. Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya has promised Chhattisgarh voters that they can vote without fear. This raises questions about his intentions and who Chhattisgarh voters should truly fear. Both the "cash courier" and the police officer are in ED custody for seven days, and the PMLA special judge in Raipur is overseeing their cases. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge questions the timing of the ED's actions, just as the elections draw near, suggesting that it may be an attempt to intimidate the opposition. The Chhattisgarh assembly elections are scheduled in two phases, on November 7 and 17, with vote counting on December 3.

## Samajwadi Party determined to contest 65 seats in Lok Sabha polls from Uttar Pradesh

By: Pradeep Kapoor

INDIA partners Samajwadi Party and Congress are claiming good number seats from Uttar Pradesh for 2024 Lok Sabha polls to strike hard bargain. UPCC president Ajai Rai surprised his party leaders as well as other partners of INDIA including Samajwadi, RLD and left parties when he announced that the Party will contest all the 80 seats.

Talking to newsmen Ajai Rai said that he had the responsibility to prepare the organisation, party leaders and workers to contest all the 80 Lok Sabha seats. Ever since Ajai Rai took over as UPCC president, he is busy projecting Congress as the main challenger to BJP in the state for next Lok Sabha polls.

Ajai Rai claimed that Rahul will contest from Amethi and requested Priyanka to take on PM Narendra Modi in Varanasi. Significantly enough Congress under his leadership is also busy in focusing on massive outreach programs to contact castes and communities voters.

Ever since Rahul Gandhi announced support for caste census Congress leadership in the state is finalising programs to raise this issue at village level. Congress is making all efforts to make dent in minorities support of Samajwadi Party enjoying support of muslim voters ever since Mulayam Singh Yadav as CM ordered firing in Ayodhya in 1990 to protect Babri Mosque. Congress recently inducted powerful muslim leader from western UP, Imran Masood who had earlier been with Samajwadi Party, BSP and Congress.

Significantly UPCC president Ajai Rai visited Sitapur Jail to meet former SP minister Mohd Azam Khan. Rai knew that he would not be allowed to meet Azam Khan but he wanted to send political message to Muslim community. Congress is busy in inducting Muslims from different parts of state. Similarly minority cell of the party is very active in contacting the muslim

workers of even SP.

The fact remains Congress party was reduced to one seat in Lok Sabha in 2024 Lok Sabha elections with very low vote percentage. There is a realisation that going by the seat won in 2019 and vote share, Samajwadi Party will only give a few seats. That is why all efforts are being made for hard bargain.

Bitterness created in Madhya Pradesh where Samajwadi Party was deprived of adequate number of seats by Congress leadership will have its impact on seat sharing for total number of 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP.

On the other hand, Samajwadi Party has also made it clear that the party will contest in 65 Lok Sabha seats leaving 15 seats for Congress, RLD and smaller parties. During 2022 assembly polls, Samajwadi Party emerged as main opposition party with 111 seats with impressive vote percentage.

Samajwadi Party has learnt lesson from 2019 when it contest Lok Sabha in alliance with BSP which increased its tally from nil to 10. Samajwadi Party could retain only five seats won in 2014. Samajwadi Party also had bitter experience of alliance with Congress in 2017 assembly polls when party was voted out of power. Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi addressed several joint meetings and organised road shows but could not weave magic for the alliance.

Akhilesh Yadav is concentrating on strengthening alliance of pichda, dalit and alsankhayak) PDA and repeatedly asked party leaders and workers to spread the message of caste census to every house at village level. He started his cycle yatra also to strengthen PDA.

There is a realisation in political parties that the process of seat sharing in INDIA will start only after the results of assembly polls in five states are out. The mood of the voters to be reflected through assembly polls will decide the seat sharing formula for INDIA partners. (IPA Service)

# Mahua Moitra's harassment by BJP-led 'ethics committee' is a shame

Never before in the history of parliamentary functioning the prolocutor of any legislative panel has come under such blistering criticism of character assassination and misogynistic perversion as Vinod Kumar Sonkar, the chairman of the Lok Sabha Ethics Committee.

There is no apparent reason to suspect the allegation levelled against him by TMC member Mahua Moitra, which was even publicly reiterated by the opposition members on the committee, that the panel chairperson, BJP MP Vinod Kumar Sonkar, instead of asking questions pertinent to her taking cash and favour from the businessman Hiranandani and misuse of the internet system of the Lok Sabha, exhibited a preconceived bias by questioning her in a malicious and defamatory way. These members in fact had stormed out of the meeting hall in protest against the behaviour of the prolocutor.

Moitra has been accused of asking questions at the behest of businessman Darshan Hiranandani. It was also alleged that she shared her login credentials with the Dubai-based businessman. The complaint against Moitra was filed by Jharkhand BJP MP Nishikant Dubey who alleged that 61 questions were asked by her against Adani. But the fact is only six questions related to Adani. Dubey even went on to accusing her of violating the parliamentary rules and norms by giving her login credentials to Hiranandani.

It's crystal clear that the BJP ecosystem and its media cell has been ready with a well-designed trap to unseat Moitra from Lok Sabha and end her political career. They were hesitant to arrest her as that would have made her the darling of the people and the forces fighting the misrule of Narendra Modi. For them her character assassination and maligning her image as a cheap and greedy lady were the best mechanism. Dubey, with this aim filed a complaint with the ethics committee.

The design of the BJP ecosystem and media cell got exposed when Sonkar put forward mala fide, devious, demeaning and deceitful questions to her, compelling the opposition members on the committee to walk out. As has been informed to Speaker of Lok Sabha, Om Birla by Moitra herself, she was asked "who she spoke to late at night, on what software and for how long. They wanted to know if the wives of those she spoke to knew about it or not." While narrating her mental agony and the nature of humiliation to a TV channel, she had to face from Sonkar, she said she was being literally projected as a "prostitute". She sought to know: "Is this the level of enquiry of an Ethics Committee?"

Sonkar later said the committee had been tasked with conducting a comprehensive probe into the matter and that instead of cooperating, Moitra turned angry along with opposition members and they

used "objectionable words" and made unethical claims against him. But his clarification does not exonerate him of Moitra's allegation against him that he deliberately put unethical and demeaning questions to her. The committee should have asked her to explain her conduct in the matter of cash for question and seeking gift from Hiranandani.

Matters came to a head when the chairman started asking personal questions such as how many times Moitra had called Hiranandani on the phone at night, which hotel she stayed at in Dubai and Mumbai. "We objected and so did Moitra," said an Opposition MP on the panel. The focus was on the personal details instead of the substantive part of the complaint, he added.

Her agony and hurt feelings got reflected in her letter to Lok Sabha Speaker

Om Birla, after just coming out of the meeting room on Thursday, alleging that she was subjected to the "proverbial vastraharan" by the chairperson of the Ethics Committee during a hearing on the cash-for-query allegations against her. "I write to you in great anguish today to update you on the unethical, sordid, and prejudiced behaviour meted out to me at the hearing of the Ethics Committee by the Chairman.

I have been subjected to the proverbial 'vastraharan' by him in the presence of all members of the Committee. I cannot tell you how demeaning the whole line of questioning was. It was downright dehumanising. Do you know what it means to be asked the level of questions I was subjected to by the so-called Ethics Committee?"

Moitra also wrote: "The committee ought to designate itself under a name other than the Ethics committee as it has no ethics and morality left. Instead of asking questions pertinent to the subject, the Chairman exhibited a preconceived bias by maliciously and clearly in a defamatory way questioning me, so much so that 5 of the 11 members present walked out and boycotted the proceedings in protest at his shameful conduct."

It is not clear whether Speaker Om Birla will initiate any constitutional action in the matter, as many people have got their stakes in it. But one thing is absolutely clear that BJP will use its full might to see her penalised and thrown out of house. The BJP ecosystem cannot tolerate any one speaking against Adani and Modi.

Nonetheless she had own argument and does not find herself of committing any crime. She wrote to Birla: "Why these rules were never given to MPs and if they were why is every single MP sharing this id and login with numerous people?" she said. "I repeatedly protested on record that while the Chairman was welcome to ask me any question relevant to the enquiry - namely on the login and on those



allegations of gifts for which evidence existed but he could not ask me detailed personal questions making insinuations about my dignity as a woman."

Moitra has raised one important issue — why the Lok Sabha Ethics Committee chairman Vinod Kumar Sonkar did not allow her to cross-examine lawyer Jai Anant Dehadrai and businessman Darshan Hiranandani in the "cash-for-query" allegations levelled by them against her. She had already pointed to Sonkar: "The complainant Dehadrai has provided NO documentary evidence to back his allegations in either his written complaint, and neither could he provide any evidence in his oral hearing. In keeping with the principles of natural justice, I wish to exercise my right to cross-examine Dehadrai."

In the case of Hiranandani — who is the alleged "bribe-giver" and is said to have given a suo motu affidavit to the committee — Moitra pointed out that the document has "scant details and no documentary evidence whatsoever" and demanded that he be called to depose before the panel and provide a "documented itemised inventory with amounts, date, etc". Even her request to cross examine was acceded to by the ethics committee. It is absolutely correct that any inquiry without such cross-examination by her would be "incomplete and unfair. Sonkar certainly owes an explanation why she was denied this opportunity. The Committee is ready to penalise her based on their complaint. But ironically enough, it is not providing opportunity to Moitra to verify the veracity of the allegation from the complainants.

What has indeed been shocking that the ethics committee, instead of preparing its own set of questions, was reading out the questions from a script. Moitra said: "This is an Ethics Committee reading from a script, asking all sorts of filthy questions." BSP member Danish Ali said: "We did not want to be part of such a

process because they are asking unethical questions. Draupadi ka cheerharan kar rahein hain wahan (Draupadi is being stripped inside)."

Incidentally, the BJP member on the committee Aparajita Sarangi said: "The chairperson of the committee was asking questions regarding the contents of the affidavit by Hiranandani and she did not want to answer them. And then they created a ruckus." To put the matter in proper perspective, the so-called affidavit from Hiranandani did not mention any personal matters of Moitra.

At least three opposition MPs who formed part of the 14-member ethics panel, N Uttam Kumar Reddy of the Congress, Danish Ali of the BSP and Giridharil Yadav of the RJD, walked out of the meeting accusing the committee, which is supposed to be probing charges of violation of ethical behaviour of a woman MP, "acted in an unethical manner" during the questioning session. Reddy alleged "his questions were prejudicial, biased and undignified. We had been trying to tell him from the start of the day to not follow this line of questioning, but he wouldn't listen".

It is obvious that the BJP script has been strictly adhered to. This belief gains strength that just after these profane incidents, Dubey came out with his remark that Moitra has to go. Nothing can stop her. Meanwhile, protesting MPs have sought to know how BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, a complainant, managed to get hold of a "confidential" report of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) stating that Moitra's parliamentary login was accessed 47 times from Dubai and even put it out in public domain when that report was only made available to committee members a day later. Opposition parties are also eagerly looking forward to the action which TMC chief Mamata Banerjee is supposed to take after the meeting as revealed by the party leader Derek O'Brien. (IPA Service)

## Israel's far-Right government is suffocating domestic dissent

By: Yona Roseman

Since the outset of Israel's war on Gaza, the Israeli government has been severely ramping up its crackdown on domestic dissent. Activists, members of academia, and ordinary citizens are getting hit with doxxing, job terminations, threats and arrests — especially members of Israel's Palestinian minority.

Increasing repression is commonplace in wartime, but Israel's already authoritarian government, led by far-right figures such as Police Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, along with the enormous grief that Israelis suffered in the wake of the October 7 attacks, have paved the way for especially harsh treatment of dissidents.

Akin to some Western states' attacks on Palestinian solidarity protests, the Israeli police are effectively forbidding anyone from expressing such ideas. Following the violent dispersal of pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Haifa and Umm al-Fahm this month, the police commissioner declared that "those who identify with Gaza can be escorted there on buses." Protesters who simply showed up to the events, among them minors and a journalist, were kept under arrest for days.

The solidarity ban goes even further. An indoors conference for Jewish and Arab activists organized by the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Affairs was forcibly cancelled by police, who reportedly threatened the owner of the event venue that they would shut it down lest he mix it with the event organizers. "From the 7th of October, we have been in a clear and immediate democratic emergency," former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg said in a speech following the quashing of the conference, which he was supposed to cochair.

The police aren't alone in

their efforts to suppress Israeli solidarity with Palestinians. Hundreds of right-wing protesters showed up at anti-occupation, ultra-Orthodox journalist Israel Frey's home in Bnei Brak on Saturday night in response to a prayer he held for Israeli and Palestinian child casualties the day prior. Rioters were recorded launching fireworks at his apartment. After escorting Frey and his family out of his apartment, police left Frey to fend for himself, with hordes of rioters still present. He fled to a hospital where the far-right mob continued to search for him, only managing to find safe refuge in the early morning. He remains in hiding at the moment of writing.

Unlike the impunity the police have extended to far-right mobs, left-wing activists are facing detention and arrests for much less. In Jerusalem, two activists from the movement Omdim Beyachad (Standing Together) were detained while hanging posters that read: "We will get through this together," in both Arabic and Hebrew. Police confiscated their posters and shirts. Police also arrested a young man, breaking into his home without a permit, and interrogated him for hours simply for putting up a sign over his balcony that said: "There is no holiness in an occupied city." (He had the sign up long before the war began.)

Two weeks after he participated in Haifa's solidarity protest, police arrested Israeli activist and blogger Yoav Haifawi. They rampaged through his home, confiscating any purportedly political material they could find, from flags, posters, and photographs to his wife's paintings. The police still haven't returned these items to him since his release.

Haifawi describes his arrest as purely political. "[The police] want to participate in the war effort," he explained in an interview. "Haifa doesn't have many



worthy targets, so they found what they thought was the most worthy target to attack."

Ben-Gvir boasted about Haifawi's arrest on social media and upon his release, accusing the presiding judge, who happens to be Arab, of being "an enemy from within."

Haifawi, who has been arrested many times throughout his life, stressed that Israel's authoritarian tendencies run deep, but that the war's outbreak has inaugurated an even more stifling level of repression. "Protests were already tense, but [the police] did not stop us from demonstrating." Now, he says, "the police [have] announced that they would not allow any demonstrations."

Repression of activists is not confined by the Green Line. On the day of Hamas's attack, Palestinian human rights activist Green Line. Issa Amro was taken from his home in Hebron by settlers and soldiers, who arrested him for over ten hours. He was cuffed, degraded, and attacked. Two weeks later, soldiers forced him out of his home for having guests — Breaking the Silence founder Yehuda Shaul and a foreign journalist — which he was forbidden from doing earlier that week.

In Area C of the West Bank, as many Palestinians suffer displacement by violent settlers supported by the Israel Defense

Forces, anti-occupation Israeli activists who seek to aid those Palestinians are facing attacks. In the now-abandoned community of Wadi al-Seeq, as settlers held Palestinian residents at gunpoint and tortured them for hours, soldiers joined the settlers in beating, robbing, and arresting Jewish activists on the scene. After the violence ended, authorities wiped activists' phones to erase any trace of what had happened. In the village of At-Tuwani in Masafer Yatta, activists were shot at by a settler as they were filming his partners bulldozing an agricultural garden.

The biggest target of the current wave of repression are Palestinian citizens of Israel, in particular in the education sector. As early as October 16, over a hundred citizens had been arrested or taken in for investigation over social media posts, among them actors, singers, and public figures. Accused of supporting Hamas's attacks, many such posts only declared solidarity with Palestinian civilians, spoke out against the war, recited religious texts, or even simply analyzed the state of the war.

Sharaf Hassan, chairman of the Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education, describes a systemic campaign by right-wing organizations, joined by student unions and endorsed by educa-

tion institutions, of scavenging through social media posts of Arab students, teachers, and professors, going back as far as a decade, to find anything criticizing the occupation, opposing the war, or waving the Palestinian flag.

"The absolute majority of these posts do not break any law, it's just an attempt to exploit the attitude of the war and rising nationalism and racism to direct the fire towards the national minority," Hassan told me. The follow-up committee has received hundreds of inquiries from students facing disciplinary actions and teachers and professors being fired, having their teaching certificates taken or facing arrest. Left-wing Jewish education figures have endured similar treatment. "To use American terms," Hassan says, "this is textbook McCarthyism."

The Israeli government is now considering laws and regulations that would go still further. Potential changes include making "excessive consumption of terrorist media" punishable by prison sentence, banning foreign press and ignoring freedom of information requests for the duration of the war, attempting to revoke the citizenship of those charged with supporting terrorism, and a for-now-shelved proposal legalizing the use of live fire on protesters blocking roads during wartime. The police also attempted to ban all political protests, but ended up backing down.

When even members of the Knesset who are subject to legal immunity get censored for "harming public trust," activists are finding it impossible to act without the threat of harsh consequences. At a grim time like this, US activists should closely monitor these developments and stand in solidarity with those on the ground who are standing up despite the crackdowns. It will show us that we are not alone. (IPA Service)



# Cold temperature elevates risk for cardiac ailments

By: Dr Bimal Chhajer

Heart attack is a cause of blockage of blood flow through the blood vessels due to plaque build up that breaks down into clots. While the heart has to work harder to pump the blood throughout, excessive work on the heart muscle gives a heart attack or in severe cases can lead to heart failure as well.

Cardiac Ailments is one of the leading causes of death in India and worldwide killing about 1 in 5 men and 1 in 8 women. According to WHO reports. Heart attacks that were once reckoned to be an elderly problem has now been reflected in the middle aged population as well. The increasing stress of modern life has exposed even younger people to the risk of heart diseases.

While a person's genetic disposition and family history remain the most common and uncontrollable risk factors, majority of heart diseases in the younger generation is due to excessive stress and long working hours coupled with erratic sleep patterns, which cause inflammation and increase the risk of heart disease. Smoking and a sedentary lifestyle further accelerate the risk symptoms in people in the age group of 20 to 30 years and ultimately heart failure.

Risk factors such as smoking and diabetes, in particular, pro-

voke inflammatory changes and promote the formation of blood clots, thus obstructing the blood flow. The one factor that strongly predicts both heart and brain health is high blood pressure. Infact, many people are not even aware that they have high blood pressure because it has no visible symptoms, which is why it is called as 'the silent killer'.

**Symptoms of a heart attack**  
Though the symptoms of heart attack may vary from person to person, angina, commonly known as chest pain may be the most common symptom, accompanied by unusual breathlessness, palpitation, heaviness or tightness in the chest excruciating to shoulder, jaws and arms. The symptoms may vary from being mild to moderate to severe, depending upon individual and their genetics.

While the condition may happen to anybody irrespective of age and gender, certain signs and symptoms should never be ignored -

- Sudden pressure, tightness, or painful sensation in the chest that seems to spread to the jaw, neck and back upto the arms.
- Sudden or unusual shortness of breath
- Cold sweats even at normal room temperatures
- Sudden dizziness or light headedness.
- Sudden feeling of nausea and coughing

When it comes to heart attack,

timing is everything and the chances of survival doubles with timely intervention. It is advised to everyone specially those at risk of a heart attack such as diabetics, high blood pressure, smokers, overweight, elderly and those with a family history of heart attack to always keep Sorbitrate and Aspirin tablets ready in car, home and office as heart's First Aid. Self help may not always be good enough but is the simplest way to prevent damage to the heart in an impending heart attack hence you must seek medical help - call for help and try and reach a hospital.

Cardiac ailments being a lifestyle related ailment and hence the treatment should also be focused in the same direction. Present day Cardiologists are in the wrong track by emphasizing more use of Bypass surgery or Angioplasty, medicines, emergency treatments - but they are overlooking the real cause of heart attack and heart disease. If all of them work by removal of the cause of heart disease - namely diet, exercise, Yoga, stress Management - we can control the spread of heart disease as well as work towards Eradicating heart disease.

From the heart point of view they should keep the risk factors like Blood Pressure, Sugar at the best. They should avoid all kinds of non vegetarian food and cut down oil to cut down the lipids.



Walking can be restricted at home and they should do Yoga and meditation for half an hour on daily basis. To boost up the immunity they should take extra dose of Anti Oxidants, Vitamin C, Haldi, Amla, Tulsi, eat plenty of vegetables, salads and fruits.

The eduVaccine revolves around the concept of 'Reversal of heart diseases' through regular monitoring of heart health through a 'SAAOL Safety Circle' which can guide every adult of the country to take steps to reverse and prevent heart disease. This technique has benefitted over 2 lakh heart patients in the past 24 years with non-invasive treatment modules like lifestyle change; US FDA approved EECF and a combination of Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, and Detoxification. With the development of the SAAOL Safety circle which is the best indicator of the heart health has

benefitted many to prevent future heart complications. It has three circles and 12 factors to control, six parameters related to medical and four each related to healthy diet and lifestyle habits.

While a person's genetic disposition and family history remain the most common and uncontrollable risk factors, majority of heart diseases in the younger generation is due to excessive stress and long working hours coupled with erratic sleep patterns, which cause inflammation and increase the risk of heart disease.

Angiography is an examination method to image the arteries of the body. With the use of dye, fluoroscopic camera and X-ray, the surgeons observe the blood flow through the arteries to check for blockages if any. Depending on the specific part of the body to be examined the angiography has different types

and is used to detect various abnormalities like - aneurysm, blockage and narrowing of blood vessels, haemorrhage, inflammation, thrombosis or even a tumour.

## Types of Angiogram

- a) Coronary angiogram - That is used to look at the arteries near the heart.
- b) Pulmonary Angiogram - To study the arteries in the lungs.
- c) Cerebral Angiogram - Arteries in the brain.
- d) Carotid Angiogram - Arteries of the head and neck.
- e) Peripheral Angiogram - arteries of the legs or arms.
- f) Aortogram - to inspect the aorta - the main artery in the body.

Cardiac Hospitals in India perform more than 2 lakh open heart surgeries and are increasing annually by 25% but they are not able to control the numbers of heart attacks. The surgeries done are only palliative.

This raises a big question mark on the use of unnecessary Angioplasties and Bypass surgeries in India and the 10,000 Heart Hospital Industry driven by the greedy Heart Surgeons and Interventional Cardiologists. In India more than 5 lac stents are being put every year and some 60,000 Bypass surgeries are being done in the heart Hospitals and 85% of them are done on stable heart patients - which can be easily avoided.

Educating the essentials about

Heart disease and its risk factors is important to eradicate the casualties from the root. To prevent heart diseases from becoming an epidemic in India is to educate the masses about the essentials of a good heart health and regular screening.

The recent data suggests that over 1 crore globally have been infected till now out of which around 5 lac have lost their lives. India attributes to around 5.7 Lac infected persons with a mortality of around 16000. This in comparison to Coronary Artery Diseases (CAD) and other heart ailments is very low.

Globally over 20 crore people annually are being diagnosed with CAD and 2 crore have lost their lives, which accounts to 10% mortality rate. India alone accounts for 6 crore people having some form of heart disease with a mortality rate of 35 lac per annum. India is the present-day leader in the whole of the world so far as the number of heart patients is concerned and the number of heart patients are still on the rise. It is estimated that around 9000 per day lose their lives and the count is still increasing.

There are 8-10 crore (80-100 million) heart patients in India and every 10 seconds one person dies of heart disease in this country. *(The author is a ex-consultant, AIIMS, New Delhi, and Director - SAAOL Heart centre)*

## Eighteen ways to reduce bloating

By: Jennifer Berry

Bloating can cause discomfort, but there are many ways to reduce it. Exercise, supplements, massage, dietary changes, and other strategies can all help reduce bloating quickly.

Abdominal bloating is when the abdomen feels full and tight. In this article, we provide techniques for getting rid of bloating quickly and explain how to reduce bloating in the long term.

### Why am I so bloated?

Bloating commonly occurs due to a buildup of gas somewhere in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

Bloating causes the belly to look larger than usual, and it may also feel tender or painful. Fluid retention in the body can also lead to bloating.

The best way to tackle bloating is to determine its cause. Other common triggers for bloating include:

**Digestive issues:** Constipation, food allergies, and intolerances can lead to bloating. When stool becomes backed up in the large bowel, it can cause bloating and a feeling of discomfort. Excess gas may also build up behind the stool, making the bloating worse.

**Diet:** Fizzy drinks, too much salt or sugar, and not enough fiber in the diet can all cause bloating.

**Hormonal changes:** Many people experience bloating before and during their periods due to hormonal changes and water retention.

### What relieves bloating fast?

Bloating usually happens when excess gas builds up in the stomach or intestines. When bloating occurs right after a meal, it usually resolves itself, but it is often possible to speed up this process.

Many home remedies can help to manage the pain and discomfort of bloating. The following quick tips may help people get rid of a bloated belly quickly:

#### 1. Go for a walk

Physical activity can get the bowels moving more regularly, which can help to release excess gas and stool.

Getting the bowels to move is especially important if a person is feeling constipated. A walk around the block can provide fast relief from gas pressure.

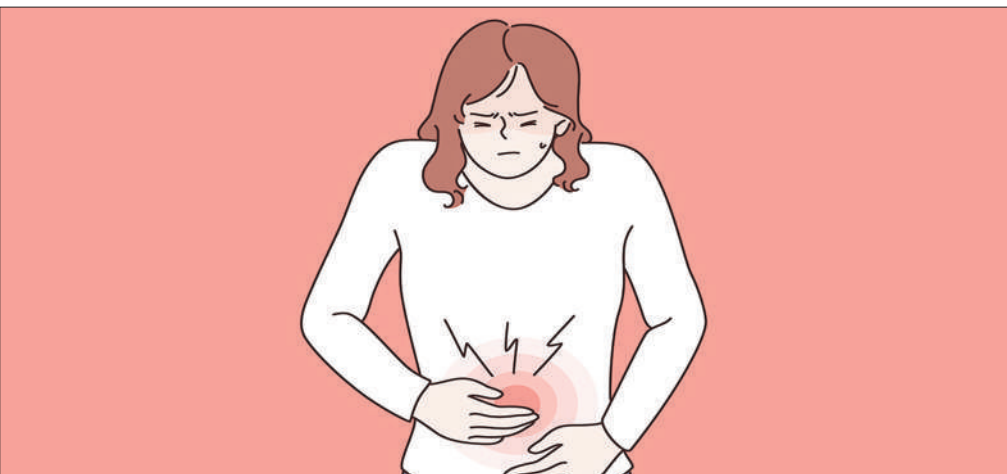
#### 2. Try yoga poses

Certain yoga poses can position the muscles in the abdomen in a way that encourages the release of excess gas from the GI tract. This can reduce bloating.

Child's Pose, Happy Baby Pose, and squats can all help people to relieve a buildup of gas quickly. Learn more about yoga poses for flatulence.

#### 3. Use peppermint capsules

Peppermint oil capsules may also be helpful for indigestion and related gas. Manufacturers usually market them as a treatment for the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), but people without IBS can



also use them to relieve bloating.

Peppermint works by relaxing the intestinal muscles, which allows gas and stool to move along more effectively. People should always follow the instructions on the packet. Anyone who is prone to heartburn may need to avoid peppermint.

#### 4. Try gas relief capsules

Simethicone pills and liquid are anti-gas medications that can help to move excess air out of the digestive tract. It is essential to always take medication according to the instructions on the label.

#### 5. Try abdominal massage

Massaging the abdomen can help to get the bowels moving. A massage that follows the path of the large intestine is especially helpful. People can follow the steps below to do this:

- Placing the hands just above the right hip bone.
- Rubbing in a circular motion with light pressure up toward the right side of the ribcage.
- Rubbing straight across the upper belly area toward the left rib cage.
- Moving slowly down toward the left hip bone.
- Repeating as necessary.

If the massage causes any pain, it is best to discontinue it immediately.

#### 6. Use essential oils

A study from 2016 Trusted Source tested the effectiveness of supplements containing a combination of fennel and curcumin essential oil in 116 people with mild-to-moderate IBS.

After 30 days, people reported an improvement in their IBS symptoms, including bloating and abdominal pain.

People should not consume essential oils without speaking to a doctor first. This is because some formulations may be toxic or can interfere with medication, and there is no regulation of dosages.

#### 7. Take a warm bath, soaking, and relaxing

The heat of the bath can provide relief for a sore abdomen. Relaxation can reduce stress levels, which may allow the GI tract to function more effectively and help reduce bloating.

#### Long-term solutions for bloating

Quick fixes are not always effective for some causes of bloating. However, people who have frequent bloating may find that certain lifestyle

changes can tackle the causes and reduce bloating over time.

People can use these simple steps to try to prevent bloating in the long term:

#### 8. Increase fiber gradually

Eating more fiber helps to prevent constipation and bloating. However, it is important to bear in mind that eating too much fiber or increasing fiber intake too quickly can cause even more gas and bloating.

Including a reasonable amount of fiber in a person's diet, while making sure to drink enough water, will help prevent this. Most nutritionists recommend that adults eat about 18-38 grams (g) of fiber a day.

That said, only 7% of people meet their recommended daily fiber intake of 25 grams (g) for females and 38 g for males. When increasing fiber intake, it is best to start slowly and increase the intake over several weeks to allow the body to adjust to this change in the diet.

#### 9. Replace sodas with water

Fizzy, carbonated drinks contain gas that can build up in the stomach. The carbon dioxide that makes soda and similar beverages fizzy can also cause bubbling and bloating in the stomach. Sugars or artificial sweeteners in the diet can also cause gas and bloating.

#### 10. Avoid chewing gum

The sugar alcohols in gum can cause bloating in some people. Swallowing air while chewing also may lead to bloating and gas pain. People can use ginger mints or peppermints to freshen their breath instead.

#### 11. Get more active every day

Exercise helps your body move stool and gas out of the colon and may make bowel movements more regular. Exercise also releases extra sodium from the body through sweating, which can help to relieve water retention.

It is vital to drink plenty of water before and after exercising to stay hydrated, as dehydration can make constipation worse.

#### 12. Eat at regular intervals

Many people experience bloating directly after a big meal. It is possible to avoid this by eating several smaller meals each day, which can help to keep the digestive system moving.

Swallowing food quickly can introduce air into the digestive

tract. Drinking from a straw can also lead to people swallowing more air, which in turn leads to gas and bloating. People who have bloating should avoid using straws if possible and try eating slowly to avoid swallowing air during meals.

#### 13. Try probiotics

Probiotics are good bacteria that live in the intestines. Taking a probiotic supplement may help regulate the colon bacteria that can produce gas and cause bloating.

#### 14. Cut down on salt

An excess of sodium causes the body to retain water. This can cause a swollen and bloated feeling in the belly and other areas of the body, such as the hands and feet.

#### 15. Rule out medical conditions

In some cases, bloating may result from a medical condition. To get rid of this bloating, a person may need help from a doctor to diagnose and manage their condition.

Inflammatory bowel disease, including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, may cause people to experience bloating. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), can also cause this symptom.

Gynecological conditions, such as endometriosis and ovarian cysts, can also cause pain, swelling, and feelings of bloating in the abdominal area.

People with these symptoms should discuss them with a doctor, who will also want to know about any relevant family medical history and other medical conditions. The doctor may order diagnostic tests to look for any problems. These may include an X-ray, ultrasound, colonoscopy, or blood tests.

#### 16. Consider a low-FODMAP diet

Trying an elimination diet such as the low FODMAP diet might help a person exclude specific foods that are causing bloating. However, this should be done in consultation with a doctor or a dietician.

FODMAPs are a type of carbohydrate that occurs in many different foods. A 2020 meta-analysis of 12 studies found that eating low-FODMAP foods reduced IBS symptoms by a mean of 45 percentage points.

#### 17. Keep a food diary

Food intolerances are responsible for many cases of bloating. They can lead to excessive gas in the digestive

tract.

Bloating is common in people who have lactose intolerance and are unable to digest the lactose sugar in dairy products. Autoimmune intolerance to gluten, known as celiac disease, is another potential culprit.

For people whose bloating happens after meals, keeping track of food and drink intake for several weeks should help to determine whether specific foods are responsible.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide a food diary template to help people to get started.

#### 18. Look at supplements and medications

Some supplements, such as iron, can cause constipation and other symptoms of indigestion. This can increase bloating. Potassium, on the other hand, may reduce bloating by helping to balance the body's sodium levels.

Medications may also cause side effects that affect GI function or cause indigestion. If this happens, a doctor or pharmacist can suggest alternatives that are more gentle on the digestive tract.

#### When to see a doctor

Although it is not common, bloating and swelling of the abdomen can signify a severe medical condition. Liver disease, inflammatory bowel disease, heart failure, kidney problems, and some types of cancer can cause bloating.

Bloating that continues for days or weeks may indicate a health issue that needs medical attention. It is advisable to speak to a doctor about ongoing bloating that does not go away over time.

People whose bloating occurs alongside these symptoms should seek medical advice:

- appetite changes or trouble eating
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- weight loss
- fever
- severe abdominal pain
- bright red blood in the stool
- black or dark maroon stools

#### Does bloating cause weight gain?

A person could gain a pound or two from bloating, but this is usually not significant weight gain and will go down once the bloating subsides.

#### Does drinking water help with bloating?

Instead of other drinks like sodas, which can make bloating worse, water is a much better alternative. It can help reduce both bloating and constipation.

Ultimately, the outlook for bloating depends on the underlying cause. Most of the time, bloating is due to minor issues that lifestyle changes or OTC treatments can resolve.

People should see a doctor if bloating is ongoing or occurs with other symptoms. Determining the underlying cause of bloating and other digestive issues is the first step to getting treatment and feeling better. *(Courtesy: Medical News Today)*

## Why dengue outbreaks are becoming larger and less predictable

By: Simon Bishop

Something unusual seems to be happening with dengue, a potentially fatal mosquito-borne viral disease found across swathes of tropical Africa, Asia and the Americas. As with most infectious diseases, the number of cases tends to rise and fall over the years as epidemics come and go, but recently changes seem to be afoot in how dengue is behaving.

Not only is the number of new infections steadily rising around the world, but outbreaks are becoming larger and less predictable. For example, 2019 saw the greatest number of dengue fever cases ever recorded - almost twice as high as the previous year. And in July 2023, there were a record number of deaths from the disease in Bangladesh.

Most people infected with dengue will suffer from flu-like symptoms, ranging from relatively mild to very unpleasant, with fever, headache and joint pain.

In more severe cases, though, blood vessels can become damaged by the virus, allowing blood to leak into the surrounding tissues. This condition, known as dengue haemorrhagic fever, can produce bruising, and bleeding from the nose and gums. It can ultimately lead to organ failure and death as the body slips into shock.

The principal agent, or vector, in the transmission of dengue, is the Asian Tiger mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, although its cousin *Aedes albopictus* is also capable of spreading the virus.

While *Aedes aegypti* is essentially a tropical mosquito, it is a very adaptable insect. In recent years, it has expanded its range out of the tropics into southern Europe and to several states in the US, including Florida, Hawaii, Texas and Arizona.

All mosquitoes need water to breed, but another thing that has helped in its migration is its ability to use even the smallest of water containers to do so, something as small as a discarded plastic bottle cap will do.

Despite this capability, it is usually the lack of breeding sites that caps the number of mosquitoes in circulation and therefore their ability to spread the dengue virus. But in Bangladesh this year the rains arrived early and, coupled with an unusually high temperature and humidity, this led mosquito numbers to surge.

Because a large proportion of the population of Bangladesh spends a great deal of time outside and tends to have houses that are relatively simple for mosquitoes to enter, it took little time at all for dengue to take hold and then explode.

Although no one is certain about what's driving the increase and instability of dengue, climate change may be contributing as much of the world is getting both warmer and wetter.

Fortunately for most high-income countries, even areas within the current range of *Aedes Aegypti*, climate change will probably not lead to any major outbreaks simply because people spend so much of their time indoors and out of the reach of mosquitoes. It takes a certain amount of biting pressure within a population to sustain transmission.

### WHO warns of dengue spread to new places

However, a new report by the World Health Organisation's chief scientist suggests that the disease may still be able to establish itself in parts of Europe, the US and Africa where it has previously been absent.

Something that is also likely to be seen more often is what happened recently in Bangladesh repeats itself across similar middle- and low-income countries where the opportunity for mosquitoes and people to mix is greater.

The solution is likely to be an affordable and effective vaccine. Indeed, the WHO has recently recommended the Qdenga vaccine for children living in areas where the infection is a major public health problem.

However, dengue is not the only concern as there are a variety of other mosquito-borne infections that kill around a million people every year. Diseases like chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika virus are all transmitted by *Aedes aegypti*.

An increasingly warmer, wetter and less reliable climate is therefore probably going to be the precursor for many more - and less predictable - mosquito-related disease outbreaks, and ultimately deaths, in the future. As with most other life-threatening communicable diseases, it is once again the poorest communities in the global tropics that will have to bear the brunt of this. *(Courtesy: The Wire)*





# Warplanes strike Gaza refugee camp as Israel rejects US push for a pause in fighting

**DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Nov 5:** Israeli warplanes struck a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip early Sunday, killing at least 40 people and wounding dozens, health officials said.

The strike came as Israel said it would press on with its offensive to crush the territory's Hamas rulers, despite US appeals for a pause to get aid to desperate civilians.

The soaring death toll in Gaza has sparked growing international anger, with tens of thousands from Washington to Berlin taking to the streets Saturday to demand an immediate cease-fire.

Israel has rejected the idea of halting its offensive, even for brief humanitarian pauses proposed by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his current tour of the region. Instead, it said that Hamas was "encountering the full force" of its troops.

"Anyone in Gaza City is risking their life," Israel's minister of defence Yoav Gallant said.

Large columns of smoke rose as Israel's military said it had encircled Gaza City, the initial target of its offensive. Gaza's Health Ministry has said more than 9,400 Palestinians have been killed in the territory in nearly a month of war, and that number is likely to rise as the assault continues.

Airstrikes hit the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza overnight, killing at least 40 people and wounding 34 others, the Health Ministry said. It said first responders and residents were still digging through the rubble, hoping to find survivors.

An Associated Press reporter at a nearby hospital saw eight dead

children, including a baby, who had been brought in after the strike. A surviving child was led down the hospital corridor by an adult holding her hand, her clothes caked in dust, an expression of shock on her face.

Arafat Abu Mashaia, who lives in the camp, said the Israeli airstrike flattened several multi-story homes where people forced out of other parts of Gaza were sheltering.

"It was a true massacre," he said early Sunday while standing on the wreckage of destroyed homes. "All here are peaceful people. I challenge anyone who says there were resistance (fighters) here."

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The camp, a built-up residential area, is located in the evacuation zone where Israel's military had urged Palestinian civilians in Gaza to seek refuge as it focuses its military offensive on the north.

Despite such appeals, Israel has continued its bombardment across Gaza, saying it is targeting Hamas fighters and assets everywhere and accusing it of using civilians as human shields. Critics say Israel's strikes are often disproportionate, considering the large number of women and children killed.

Blinken met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the occupied West Bank on Sunday, a day after meeting with Arab foreign ministers in neighboring Jordan. Abbas has had no authority in Gaza since Hamas routed forces loyal to him in 2007.

Blinken met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday, who insisted there could be no temporary cease-fire until all



hostages held by Hamas are released. Arab leaders have called for an immediate cease-fire. But Blinken said that "would simply leave Hamas in place, able to regroup and repeat what it did on October 7," when the group launched a wide-ranging attack from Gaza into southern Israel, triggering the war.

He said humanitarian pauses can be critical in protecting civilians, getting aid in and getting foreign nationals out, "while still enabling Israel to achieve its objective, the defeat of Hamas."

Egyptian officials said they and Qatar were proposing humanitarian pauses for six to 12 hours daily to allow aid in and casualties to be evacuated. They were also asking for Israel to release a number of women and elderly prisoners in exchange for hostages, suggestions Israel seemed unlikely to accept. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the press on the discussions.

Swaths of residential neighbourhoods in northern Gaza have been

the border.

In the occupied West Bank, at least two Palestinians were shot dead during an Israeli arrest raid in Abu Dis, just outside of Jerusalem, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. The military said a militant who had set up an armed cell and fired at Israeli forces was killed during the raid.

At least 150 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the war, mainly during violent protests and gun battles during arrest raids.

Thousands of Israelis protested outside Netanyahu's official residence in Jerusalem on Saturday, urging him to resign and calling for the return of roughly 240 hostages held by Hamas. Netanyahu has refused to take responsibility for the October 7 attack in southern Israel that killed more than 1,400 people. Ongoing Palestinian rocket fire has forced tens of thousands of people in Israel to evacuate their homes.

In another reflection of widespread anger in Israel, a junior government minister, Amihai Eliyahu, suggested in a radio interview Sunday that Israel could drop an atomic bomb on Gaza. He later walked back the remarks, saying they were "metaphorical." Netanyahu issued a statement saying the minister's comments were "not based in reality" and that Israel would continue to try to avoid harming civilians.

Among the Palestinians killed in Gaza are more than 3,900 Palestinian children, the Gaza Health Ministry said, without providing a breakdown of civilians and fighters. The Israeli military said 29 of its soldiers have died during the ground operation. (AP)

## Blinken meets Palestinian leader in West Bank, stepping up Mideast diplomacy as Gaza war escalates

**RAMALLAH (WEST BANK), Nov 5:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken brought his frenetic Mideast diplomatic push on the Israel-Hamas war to the occupied West Bank on Sunday, meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in his latest bid to ease civilian suffering in the Gaza Strip and begin to sketch out a post-conflict scenario for the territory.

Blinken travelled to Ramallah for his previously unannounced visit in an armoured motorcade and under tight security just hours after Israeli warplanes struck a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, killing at least 40 people and wounding dozens, health officials said.

Despite the secrecy and the State Department refusing to confirm the trip until after Blinken had physically left the West Bank, protests erupted against his visit and US support for Israel as word of his arrival leaked.

Aside from pleasantries, neither man spoke as they greeted each other in front of cameras

and the meeting ended without any public comment. It was not immediately clear if the lack of words indicated the meeting had gone poorly.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Blinken reaffirmed the US commitment to the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance and resumption of essential services in Gaza and made clear that Palestinians must not be forcibly displaced.

Blinken and Abbas discussed efforts to restore calm and stability in the West Bank, including the need to stop extremist violence against Palestinians and hold those accountable responsible, Miller said, in reference to violence being committed by Israeli settlers.

The meeting with Abbas, whose Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority has not been a factor in Gaza since Hamas took it over by force in 2007, came at the start of Blinken's third day of an intense Middle East tour — his second since the war began with a surprise Hamas attack on Israel on October 7.

Blinken had visited Israel and met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday before decamping to Jordan for meetings with senior Arab officials on Saturday.

At each stop, Blinken has offered firm US support for Israel's right to defend itself but also stressed that it must adhere to the laws of war, protect civilians and increase humanitarian aid supplies to Gaza. To do that, as well as to ease the flow of foreigners fleeing Gaza, he has made the case that Israel should implement rolling humanitarian pauses to its airstrikes and ground operations, something that Netanyahu has thus far flatly rejected.

US officials believe that Netanyahu may soften his position if he can be convinced that it is in Israel's strategic interests to ease the plight of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. The soaring death toll has sparked growing international anger, with tens of thousands from Washington to Berlin taking to the streets over the weekend to demand an immediate cease-fire. (AP)

## Ukrainian missile strike on shipyard in Crimea damages Russian ship

**MOSCOW, Nov 5:** The Russian military said a Ukrainian missile strike on a shipyard in annexed Crimea had damaged a Russian ship. The Russian Defence Ministry said late Saturday that Ukrainian forces fired 15 cruise missiles at the Zaliv shipyard in Kerch, a city in the east of the Crimean Peninsula. Air defences shot down 13 missiles but others hit the shipyard and damaged a vessel, a statement from the ministry said.

The ministry didn't give details about the ship or the extent of the damage. The Ukrainian air force commander, Mykola Oleschchuk, said in a statement that at the time of the attack carried out by Ukrainian tactical aviation, "one of the most modern ships of Russia's Black Sea fleet was at the shipyard — carrier of the Kalibr cruise missiles". He didn't say directly, however, that this particular ship was damaged by the strike.

The Crimean Peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014, has been a frequent target since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine 20 months ago. Crimea has served as the key hub supporting the invasion. Ukraine has increasingly targeted naval facilities in Crimea in recent months. In September, a Ukrainian missile strike on a strategic shipyard in the port city of Sevastopol damaged two Russian ships and wounded 24 people. Later that same month, a missile strike blasted the Crimean headquarters of Russia's navy in Sevastopol. (PTI)

## Will hand over leadership to deputy PM by next general election: Singapore's PM Lee

**SINGAPORE, Nov 5:** Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Sunday that he will hand over the city-state's leadership to Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong before the next general elections, expected in November 2025, according to a media report.

Talking about the ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) transition plans while addressing party members at the annual PAP awards and convention, 71-year-old Lee, who is the party's secretary-general, also said that "if all goes well", he will do so by the PAP's 70th birthday on November 21 next year, Channel News Asia reported.

The PAP, set up by founding Prime Minister, the Late Lee Kuan Yew on Nov 21, 1954, has been ruling the economically prosperous city-state.

During the award and convention ceremony, Lee addressed more than 1,000 party members, following speeches by Wong, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat and several new PAP faces.

Wong was endorsed as the leader of the party's fourth-generation or 4G, team last year after the 62-year-old Heng stepped aside so that a younger leader with a "longer runway" could take over.

Lee previously said he hoped to step down before his 70th birthday, which was in February 2022. However, the plan was disrupted by the pandemic.

During this year's National Day Rally, he said his succession plans are back on track with the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, adding that recent controversies involving ministers and Members of Parliament will not delay the timetable for political renewal.

He did not give a timeline then, according to a Channel News Asia report on Sunday.

"Either I can continue to lead the party in the next GE, which would be my fifth as PM, and then hand over soon afterwards to Lawrence; or I can hand over to Lawrence before the GE, then he leads the party into the campaign, wins his own mandate, and takes the country forward with the full backing of the nation," Lee was quoted as saying. (PTI)

## Nepal govt scrambles to rush aid to quake victims



**KATHMANDU, Nov 5:** Nepal's authorities on Sunday scrambled to rush aid to those affected by Friday's earthquake that has killed at least 157 people and left a trail of destruction in the Himalayan nation's remote mountainous region.

The earthquake with an epicentre in Jajarkot district, about 500km west of Kathmandu, was recorded just before midnight on Friday. As the earthquake destroyed hundreds of houses in the mountainous region, several people had to spend Saturday night under the open sky.

Out of a total of 157 people who died in the tragedy, the bodies of 120 have so far been handed over to the family members. About 253 people were injured in the quake, the most devastating in the country since 2015.

The relatives of victims were now preparing for their cremations.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday held a Cabinet meeting during which he decided to provide Rs. 2 lakh cash each to the family of those killed in the Jajarkot earthquake as immediate relief, according to officials.

The Nepal government also decided to provide free medical treatment to those injured in the earthquake.

"All the injured individuals will receive treatment free of cost, whatever may be the cost be," minister for health and population Mohan Bahadur Basnet said after the Cabinet meeting.

According to the minister, the rescue efforts for earthquake victims have been completed. But rescuers are still looking for people who could be trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings.

"The distribution of food, tarps, and tents has already begun in some affected areas, with plans for further deliveries in progress. The government is committed to ensuring that all necessary assistance is provided to the survivors," he said.

This time, the government will rectify the weaknesses that occurred during the 2015 earthquake response, he pointed out.

In the aftermath of the disaster, Nepal's immediate neighbours,

India and China, and the United States have offered support with logistics, and search for the victims by sending rescue teams to the country.

Since various countries have expressed willingness to extend assistance to the earthquake victims, the government will formulate standards for the type of aid it can accept, he said.

Local government officials said the situation was chaotic on Saturday morning due to inadequate means to deal with the disaster.

Harishchandra Sharma, assistant chief district officer in Jajarkot, said the under-resourced and poorly equipped district hospital was struggling.

"The hospital lacks both human resources and equipment to deal with a huge number of victims. We were struggling to cope with things on Saturday morning," he told the Kathmandu Post newspaper.

The situation has largely come under control with more doctors and medical teams arriving from Kathmandu and Surkhet, he said.

"The people have been compelled to live in the cold under the open sky after they lost their houses to the disaster. Supporting them with relief materials should be our major focus. We are working to this effect," Sharma said.

Suresh Sunar, the Chief District Officer of Jajarkot, said that rescue efforts had been ongoing since Friday night, but they were successfully concluded by Saturday night, allowing relief distribution to begin on Sunday.

Sunar also said that over 1,000 households have been affected, resulting in millions worth of damage.

He added that preparations have been made to streamline the relief distribution process through a one-door system. Jajarkot suffered the most damage in the earthquake that occurred on Friday night, with 105 casualties reported in Jajarkot alone.

A team of seismological experts at National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Center, Lalchaur has reached Jajarkot to carry out further study and research on the earthquake that occurred on Friday night. (PTI)

## Turkiye's main opposition party elects Ozgur Ozel as new leader

**ISTANBUL, Nov 5:** Türkiye's main opposition party voted for fresh leadership in the early hours of Sunday, five months after a devastating election defeat that saw President Recep Tayyip Erdogan extend his two-decade rule.

Ozgur Ozel replaced Kemal Kilicdaroglu after delegates of the Republican People's Party, or the CHP, elected him as new leader. The results in a second round of voting — held in a sports hall in Ankara — saw Ozel take 812 of 1,366 delegate votes to become the CHP's 8th leader.

Speaking from the stage in front of thousands of flag-waving CHP members, Ozel — his voice hoarse with excitement — promised the cheering crowd a brighter political future and "to make people smile."

Dissent spread among members of the CHP after the party failed to capitalise on dire economic circumstances in Türkiye and the fallout from February's

earthquakes to oust Erdogan in parliamentary and presidential elections in May.

At the time, pre-election polls had predicted a strong showing for the CHP's former leader Kilicdaroglu in what many saw as the opposition's greatest chance to unseat Erdogan since he took office in 2003.

But Erdogan secured his third presidential term in a run-off vote.

Ozel said in his winning speech Sunday that he would mobilise the party immediately to "compensate for the great sadness" of May's election defeat.

Kilicdaroglu, 74, had led the party since 2010, and ever since, the CHP failed to win a single national election although it scored significant victories in local elections in 2019, taking a handful of major cities — including Ankara and Istanbul.

The former party head was criticized for not standing down after losing May's election. (AP)

## Afghan farmers lose income of more than USD 1 billion after the Taliban banned poppy cultivation

**ISLAMABAD, Nov 5:** Afghan farmers have lost income of more than USD 1 billion from opium sales after the Taliban outlawed poppy cultivation, according to a report from the UN drugs agency published on Sunday.

Afghanistan was the world's biggest opium producer and a major source for heroin in Europe and Asia when the Taliban seized power in August 2021.

They pledged to wipe out the country's drug cultivation industry and imposed a formal ban in April 2022, dealing a heavy blow to hundreds of thousands of farmers and day labourers who relied on proceeds from the crop to survive. Opium cultivation crashed by 95 per cent after the ban, the report from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime said.

Until 2023, the value of Afghanistan's opiate exports frequently outstripped the value of its legal exports. UN officials said the strong contraction of the

opium economy is expected to have far-reaching consequences for the country as opiate exports before the ban accounted for between 9-14 per cent of the national GDP.

Afghans need urgent humanitarian assistance to meet their most immediate needs, absorb the shock of lost income and save lives, said UNODC executive director, Ghada Waly.

"Afghanistan is in dire need of strong investment in sustainable livelihoods to provide Afghans with opportunities away from opium," she said.

Afghans are dealing with drought, severe economic hardship and the continued consequences of decades of war and natural disasters.

The downturn, along with the halt of international financing that propped up the economy of the former Western-backed government, is driving people into poverty, hunger, and addiction. (AP)

## Afghans fleeing Pakistan lack water, food and shelter once they cross the border, aid groups say

**ISLAMABAD, Nov 5:** Afghans fleeing Pakistan to avoid arrest and deportation are sleeping in the open, without proper shelter, food, drinking water and toilets once they cross the border to their homeland, aid agencies said Sunday. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans have left Pakistan in recent weeks as authorities pursue foreigners they say are in the country illegally, going door-to-door to check migrants' documentation. Pakistan set Oct 31 as a deadline to leave the country or else they'd be arrested as part of a new anti-migrant crackdown.

Afghans leave Pakistan from two main border crossings, Torkham and Chaman. The Taliban have set up camps on the other side for people to stay in while they wait to be moved to their place of origin in Afghanistan.

Aid agencies said Torkham has no proper shelter. There is limited access to drinking water, no heating source other than open fires, no lighting, and no toilets. There is

open defecation and poor hygiene. UN agencies and aid groups are setting up facilities with thousands of people entering Afghanistan every day.

Kayal Mohammad lived in the northwest Pakistani city of Peshawar for 17 years. He has five children and was deported to the Afghan border almost a week ago. He told The Associated Press he wasn't allowed to take any household belongings with him. Everything he and his family own remains in Pakistan.

His seven-year-old daughter Hawa weeps because she is cold. She drinks tea for breakfast from a cut-up plastic bottle and sleeps without a blanket.

Her father urged the international community for help. "We cannot ask the Taliban government," he said. "They have nothing because they are yet to be recognised as a government. There are families who have nothing here, no land, no home. They are just living under the open sky. No one is helping."



Thamindri Da Silva, from the relief and development organisation World Vision International, said most people are moved to a dry riverbed once they have gone through their initial registration and processing at a transit centre.

People enter Afghanistan with just the clothes on their back because their watches, jewellery and cash were taken at the Pakistani border, she added.

Arshad Malik, country director

for Save the Children, said many of those returning are coming back without education documents, making it difficult for them to continue their learning, as well as lacking the local Afghan languages of Dari and Pashto because they studied Urdu and English in Pakistan. He warned that child labour in Afghanistan as well as their involvement in smuggling are likely to increase due to poverty as most returning families were among the

poorest migrants in Pakistan.

"Smuggling at Torkham by children was one of the concerns from the past, so the involvement of children in smuggling and illegal goods' transfer will increase," Malik said.

The Taliban say they have committees working "around the clock" to help Afghans by distributing food, water and blankets.

Pope Francis in public remarks on Sunday at the Vatican decried the situation of "Afghan refugees who found refuge in Pakistan but now don't know where to go anymore". Afghanistan is overwhelmed by challenges, compounded by the isolation of the Taliban-led government by the international community. Years of drought, a beleaguered economy and the aftermath of decades of war have led to the internal displacement of millions of Afghans.

Concerns have risen among the humanitarian community about the impoverished country being unable to support or integrate those currently forced to leave Pakistan. (AP)



## NEHU VC refutes allegations put by JAC

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Nov 5:** North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Vice Chancellor Prabha Shankar Shukla has strongly refuted allegations raised by the Joint Action Committee (JAC), an umbrella body of NEHUTA, NEHUNSA, and NEHUSU, regarding the implementation of the New Education Policy (NEP) and the appointment of a contractual Technical Officer/Senior Consultant at NEHU, Meghalaya.

Addressing the media, Shukla clarified that the implementation of NEP 2020 at the postgraduate level was undertaken with due approvals from the concerned authorities. He emphasized the benefits of NEP for the new generation and highlighted its wide adoption across the country.

Regarding the appointment of Rohit Prasad, Shukla asserted that the JAC's claims of illegality are baseless. He pointed out that the NEHU Act empowers the vice chancellor to take immediate action on any matter and that Prasad possesses the necessary qualifications and experience for the position. Shukla expressed

disappointment with the JAC's unwillingness to engage in meaningful discussions. He cited a letter from the NEHUTA Executive Committee indicating their reluctance to meet with the VC on the issue. The vice-chancellor appealed to the JAC to come forward and discuss the matter rationally, adhering to the university's Act, Statutes, and Regulations. He emphasized his openness to seeking

guidance from the teaching and non-teaching staff to reach an amicable decision in the best interests of the university's future.

On the subject of the ragging incident at NEHU's Tura Campus, Shukla confirmed that an FIR has been filed, and the police are investigating the matter. The NEHU PRO clarified that the Naga Elders and NGOs did not submit any report, nor was it expected of them. Their involvement was limited to a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and the university administration to review the ongoing investigation. The official report was submitted by the university's Inquiry Committee.



## Medulance to run health emergency services in M'laya

**SHILLONG, Nov 5:** Emergency services provider Medulance on Sunday announced that it had bagged the contract to run the health emergency services in Meghalaya.

Equipped with 5G smart-connected ambulances, Medulance aims to reduce response and real-time patient monitoring while being shifted to hospitals in the challenging landscape, officials said here.

"Medulance's goal is to deploy a fleet of 5G smart connected ambulances and upgrading GPS-enabled ambulances to the entire state as soon as possible. This initiative will bring cutting-edge technology to the forefront of emergency response and improve the chances of saving lives in Meghalaya. Right now, we envision making Meghalaya the first state to have 5G smart emergency response," Medulance Healthcare co-founder Pranav Bajaj said in a statement. (PTI)

## MTLT backs ACVOA 'chakka bandh'

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Nov 5:** Mokochung Town Lanur Telongiem (MTLT) extended support on the "chakka bandh" called by All Commercial Vehicle Owners Association (ACVOA).

In a press release, MTLT president, Imnaonen Pongen and general secretary, Imkongchuba Pongen said that the demand of ACVOA was justified as they had rendered their service in the last Assembly Election 2023, adding that the government should give them what was due at the earliest.

MTLT said that the government should also take into consideration as commercial vehicles would be requisitioned for duty during the upcoming Lok Sabha election 2024.

While pointing out that bandh was disturbing the economic wellbeing of Mokochung Town, MTLT expressed hope that public should not suffer and appealed to the government to solve the issue at the earliest.

## Police rescue abducted businessman in Dimapur

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Nov 5:** A businessman who was abducted from Dimapur on October 26 was rescued on November 2. According to PRO of Kohima Police, businessman Anil was abducted by some unknown persons and an FIR was received in South Police Station to this effect on October 29.

In this regard, a case was registered and during the preliminary investigation it was ascertained that the victim proceeded to Dimapur on October 26 after being contacted by certain individuals from a Naga political group (NPG) for settlement of a monetary issue pertaining to a close relative of the victim defaulting on a loan amount and absconding thereafter.

Subsequently, the victim was rescued from Dimapur town by a combined team of Kohima and Dimapur Police personnel on November 2. Further, investigation was in progress, the PRO stated. It may be mentioned that Kohima Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has vehemently condemned the kidnapping of its member Anil Choudhary.

# Opposition to my nomination influenced by political parties: Meriam L Hrangchal

Congress candidate opposed for marrying outside Mizo community

**LUNGLEI (MIZORAM), Nov 5:** Congress candidate for Mizoram Assembly elections, Meriam L Hrangchal, who was opposed by a local students' union for marrying a person from outside the Mizo community, has claimed that the resistance was "influenced" by her opponent political parties.

In an interview with PTI, Hrangchal who is contesting from the Lunglei South constituency termed the students' organisation Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) as a "pressure group" and asserted that people in her constituency are not concerned about her personal choice or family issues.

Hrangchal married local resident Deepen Zoliana, who belonged to the Gorkha community but has adopted Christianity and Mizo identity.

"Some political parties supported them (MZP) and there was political influence to oppose my candidature. They are a pressure group. There will be pressure groups and NGOs who will express their opinion, but that does not necessarily mean they will change things politically," Hrangchal who is contesting elections for the first time said.

Such groups spoke about her personal choice and family life, but people are wise enough to know who loves this land and who will work for them, the Congress candidate said.

On October 20, supporters of MZP held a



demonstration in Aizawl, protesting against the Congress for fielding Hrangchal in the Lunglei South constituency as she is a Mizo woman who married a person from outside the community.

"In my constituency, there is no problem and people have hopes on me. I am not concerned about it (MZP's protest) as I am in the middle of my campaigning. I think they need to be educated regarding what is their jurisdiction," she said.

Hrangchal said MZP is a student group and they should focus on issues related to the community like lack of textbooks till now while examinations are nearing.

"I am thankful that the Congress party stood by me and made it a non-issue. Majority of the people have the right mentality on the issue," she added.

Mizoram Congress President Lalsawta said Hrangchal was given nomination as the party believes that she is an "asset" to the state.

The MZP had in December last year asked all political parties not to nominate any Mizo woman who is married to a non-Mizo person. Talking about her campaigning, Hrangchal said she is focussing on the basic needs of the people like roads, water, food, transportation, electricity and education.

"I have promised that I will give ₹ 2,000 per month to all the widows of my constituency. Mizo women are very hard-working and they take a lot of pain in raising their children. This support will ease their burden to a large extent," she said.

Hrangchal said that this promise is specific to her constituency only and it will be financed from the MLA Local Area Development fund. She also stated that after winning the polls, she will try to revamp the government schools of the area.

"The government schools are in really bad shape. This has forced even below poverty line (BPL) families to send their kids to private schools, thereby affecting their family income. I was a principal of a government school, which was defunct and I had transformed it into a model school with the highest enrollment," she claimed.

Hrangchal said that she took voluntary retirement around five years ago after 23 years of service. Asked about the Congress party's chances this time, Hrangchal said: "We will form the government for sure. People are together this time and they realise that Congress is the most reliable."

The Congress is contesting in all the 40 seats. It had won five seats in the last Assembly election in 2018.

Polling for the Mizoram assembly will be held on November 7 and votes will be counted on December 3. (PTI)

## Campaigning for Nov 7 assembly polls ends in Mizoram

### BJP hopes to win 6 seats

**AIZAWL, Nov 5:** Campaigning for the November 7 Mizoram assembly elections ended at 4pm on Sunday with no reports of any law and order problems throughout the month-long period, additional chief electoral officer H Lianzela said.

He asserted that any form of electioneering, public meetings, press conferences by political parties, interviews and panel discussions in the media have been strictly prohibited till voting is over.

Out of the 1,276 voting centres in the state, 149 are remote polling stations, Lianzela said, adding around 30 polling stations along the inter-state and international borders have been declared critical and vulnerable.

Security has been tightened across the state and along international borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar, a police officer said. Mizoram shares a 510km porous border with Myanmar and a 318km border with Bangladesh.

At least 3,000 policemen and 5,400 personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been deployed for the polls, the officer added.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, Union minister of road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari, Union minis-

ters Sarbananda Sonowal and Kiren Rijiju visited the state and campaigned for BJP candidates.

BJP state president Vanlalhmua said the party will win 6-8 seats.

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Jairam Ramesh and Shashi Tharoor campaigned for party candidates.

During campaigning, ruling party MNF tried to capitalise on issue of refugees and internally displaced people from Myanmar, Bangladesh and Manipur and Mizo sub-nationalism besides highlighting the development in the state over the last five years despite financial constraints triggered by the pandemic.

The opposition highlighted the failure of the MNF government in fulfilling its promises, including implementation of the flagship programme, Socio Economic Development (SED), construction of flyovers, good roads, among others.

The ZPM banked on its policy of change and introduction of a new system of governance.

More than 8.57 lakh electorates, including 4,39,026 women, will decide the fate of 174 candidates. Results are scheduled to be announced on December 3. (PTI)

## 10,585 votes cast through home voting and postal ballots in Mizoram

**AIZAWL, Nov 5:** Altogether 10,585 senior citizens, people with disabilities (PwDs) and government officials exercised their franchise for the November 7 Mizoram polls through home voting and postal ballots till Saturday, an official said.

While 2,059 senior citizens (80 years and above) and PwDs exercised their franchise through home voting, 8,526 government officials, including security and polling personnel, voted through postal ballots, additional chief electoral officer H Lianzela said on Sunday.

Of the 11 districts, Aizawl topped the list in home and postal voting with 2,534 people exercising their franchise, followed by Lawngtlai (1,614) and Lunglei (1,582), he said.

Lianzela said out of Mizoram's 1,276 voting centres, 149 are remote polling stations. "Officials who will be deployed in such polling stations started leaving for their destinations on Sunday," he said, adding that the election campaign came to an end at 4pm.

More than 8.57 lakh electorates, including 4,39,026 women, will decide the fate of 174 candidates in the



polls, the official said.

The ruling Mizo National Front (MNF), main opposition party Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) and Congress have fielded candidates for all the 40 seats.

BJP and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have fielded 23 and 4 candidates, respectively, in addition to 27 independents already in the fray. (PTI)

## Women and children of Kuki community return home



**IMPHAL, Nov 5:** Women and

children belonging to the Kuki community who were taking shelter at KLP post of Assam Rifles in Moreh town following intensified combating operations returned to their respective houses on Sunday. Meanwhile, armed miscreants reportedly attacked a foot patrolling team of Manipur police commandos in restive Moreh town on Sunday. No casualty was reported in the attack.

Official sources said that two

miscreants who came on a motorbike fired upon the police team on foot patrolling at the border town today around 11.30 am.

The sources said that when the police signaled to stop for checking on suspicion, the pillion rider took out a small gun and fired toward the police personnel and sped away in a bid to escape.

The police fired some rounds in the air while challenging to stop.

The motorbike, however, met with an accident after driving some

meters and the two miscreants ran away toward the thick forest of the area and escaped, the sources also said.

The police commandos recovered the abandoned motorbike and handed it over to Moreh police station after lodging a case, the sources added.

Today's attack was the second time the armed miscreants attacked police personnel sent from Imphal as reinforcement after the killing of a senior police officer in a sniper attack by suspected militants on October 31.

The sources said that police commando team led by additional SP (ops) Wangkhomba Okramcha of Thoubal district was conducting the foot patrolling as a part of area domination in the restive border town where the police have been conducting joint operations with the state and the central security agencies.

With additional forces from Imphal, the police have been conducting massive combating operations in the town at the Indo-Myanmar border to maintain the law and order in the restive town and to nab culprit(s) involved in the killing of the SDPO. (NNN)

## Demand for National Register of Citizenship in Manipur

'Detect and deport illegal immigrants from Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh'

**IMPHAL, Nov 5:** Hundreds of students took part in a rally on the streets in Imphal on Saturday demanding immediate implementation of National Register of Citizenship (NRC) in Manipur.

No untoward incident happened during the rally carried out under the joint aegis of six different students' bodies - AMSU, MSF, DESAM, KSA, SUK and AIM.

The rally kicked off from Imphal College campus at Kwakeithel and marched along Tidim Road upto Raj Bhavan where they seated on the ground near the main entrance gate amid the heavy presence of police and security forces.

The students from various colleges and schools chanted various slogans demanding implementation of NRC in the state, detection and deportation of illegal immigrants, etc. while leaving the gate following pressure from the police.

"Detect and deport illegal immigrants from Myanmar, Nepal



and Bangladesh," read one of the placards carried by the students.

"We demand NRC in Manipur," "Check influx of illegal immigrants," other placards read.

At the concluding part of the rally that converged at the origin place after marching on the street, a meeting was held in which

leaders of the six students' bodies stressed the need for introduction of the NRC in the state.

They asserted that implementation of the NRC is the only long-term policy to check the ever-increasing illegal immigrants in the state.

Talking to reporters on the side-

line of the rally, spokesperson of the six students' bodies, Mayengbam Somorjit alleged that the influx of outsiders into the state has given a great impact to the demography of the state.

"We are demanding implementation of the NRC in the state for a long time to protect the indigenous population," he said. Unfortunately, the state government as well as the Centre had not taken up any step to implement the NRC to address the issue of illegal immigrants.

The clear evidence was the recent detection of a large number of Myanmar nationals staying in border town Moreh when state police and security forces launched search operations to nab perpetrator(s) behind the killing of SDPO Ch Anand Kumar, he said.

As many as 32 Myanmar nationals were detected and detained on the initial stage of the operation launched in the border town Moreh after the killing of the SDPO on

October 31 last.

"The detection of a large number of foreigners from the neighbouring state itself showed that population invasion is taking place in the state taking advantage of the ongoing crisis," he alleged.

On the other hand, the spokesperson added that after the outbreak of the violence, detection of illegal immigrants in Churachandpur district remained suspended. The developing situation in the state further showed that population invasion is picking up to dominate the indigenous population of the state.

The students' bodies as well as civil society organisations have repeatedly urged the authorities to take measures to detect, delete, and deport illegal immigrants, especially from Myanmar, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

However, no concrete step is seen being taken up so far, he lamented. (NNN)

## NAME CORRECTION

I, Md Jiaur Rahman of the below mentioned address do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my name has been recorded in my school certificate and Admit card as Md Jiaur Rahman. On the other hand, my name has been recorded in PAN, AAD-HAAR and voter ID Card as Jiaur Rahman. That both Md Jiaur Rahman and Jiaur Rahman are the same and one person.

Sd/-  
Jiaur Rahman  
Vill- Balabari  
PS-Dhula, Darrang

## NAME CORRECTION

I, Kurban Ali of the below mentioned address do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my actual and correct name is Kurban Ali. But name has wrongly been recorded as Md. Kurban Ali in my HSLC and all of HS educational documents. That both Kurban Ali and Md. Kurban Ali are the same and one person.

Sd/-  
Kurban Ali  
SO- Abdul Mazid  
Vill- No. 3 Baruahjar,  
PS- Dalgaoon, Darrang



# Congress did not care for tribals, its two leaders fighting to capture party in MP: PM

**SEONI, Nov 5:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Congress did not work for the welfare of tribals and that two senior Congress leaders were fighting in Madhya Pradesh to establish their sons and capture the party organisation in the state.

"We are the disciples and worshippers of tribals who made Lord Ram, Purshottam Ram," Modi said addressing a public meeting in Seoni district of MP ahead of the state assembly elections scheduled on November 17.

Out of the total 230 assembly seats in MP, 47 are reserved for the Scheduled Tribe candidates. Of the four assembly seats in Seoni, two are reserved for tribal candidates.

Modi said the Congress, despite being in power for five-six decades in the country after Independence, did not do anything for the welfare of the tribal community.

He also said the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna, providing free ration to 80 crore poor people, will be extended for the next five years. The PM listed the works done by the BJP government for the uplift of tribals and slammed the previous Congress government over various scams.

During the Congress regime before 2014, scams worth lakhs and crores of rupees took place but no such thing has taken place during the BJP government and the money thus saved is being spent on providing free ration to the poor people, he said.

Slamming the Congress, the PM said, "The Congress was creating confusion among the tribals. The word tribal does not sound good from their mouth. These tribals have taken care of Lord Ram. Did the tribal society not make Lord Ram, Purshottam Ram?"



"We are the disciples and worshippers of tribals who made Lord Ram, Purshottam Ram," he added. For the first time in the country, a separate ministry for the welfare of tribals was constituted when the BJP came to power under the leadership of the then prime minister

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Modi said. "This is our culture. A ministry, department and budget have been allocated for the uplift of tribals," Modi said, noting the Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas (Tribal Pride Day) is celebrated on November 15 every year. (PTI)

## Modi govt's fight against corruption 'nautanki', only corrupt join BJP due to ED scare: Kejriwal

**CHANDIGARH, Nov 5:** AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday dubbed the Narendra Modi government's fight against corruption a 'nautanki', saying those whom the BJP accuses of wrongdoing are rewarded with ministerial berths upon joining the party.

Addressing a party event in Haryana's Rohtak, the Delhi chief minister also said that if someone has committed a "huge sin or a crime" and joins the BJP, the officials of the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Enforcement Directorate or Income Tax Department will never dare to even touch that person.

"Who are the corrupt? The corrupt are not those who have been nabbed by the ED and sent behind bars. The corrupt are those who joined the BJP due to ED's scare. Those who have been nabbed by the ED, but did not join the BJP, are fiercely honest. Because they know today or tomorrow they will come out," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said.

"But those who indulge in dishonesty, know that if they are arrested they will have to go to jail for life and immediately join the BJP. So, understand who is corrupt and who is honest," Kejriwal said.

The ED had recently summoned Kejriwal for questioning in the alleged Delhi excise policy case and to record his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Kejriwal on Thursday did not appear before the ED



and wrote to the central agency demanding the "recall" of its summons to him, calling it "vague, motivated and unsustainable in law".

Targeting the BJP at the event, he said, "They say they will arrest Kejriwal, I want to tell them you may arrest me, but how will you suppress my voice?"

"You arrest me, Modi ji shoot me, Kejriwal will die, but even in your sleep you will hear my voice and my voice will ring in your ears, my voice will not let you sleep peacefully," he said. (PTI)

## Kerala Govt accuses Left govt of being extravagant, breaching constitutional provisions



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 5:** Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Sunday lashed out at the Left government, which has moved the Supreme Court over his not signing of certain bills, by calling it "extravagant" and accusing it of breaching constitutional provisions.

Khan, speaking to reporters, accused the state government of wasting money after it claimed before the Kerala High Court that it was in bad shape financially.

"The government is going to the High Court and saying it is in bad shape. But we will indulge in festivities, in extravaganzas and we will waste money."

"You are building swimming pools for personal use, when you are not able to pay the pension of people who have spent their lives serving the state," he alleged.

On reporters raising queries regarding his not signing of certain bills passed by the Kerala assembly, Khan asked whether the bills for appointing individual Vice

Chancellors to each university would incur some expenditure.

He said that the state government was putting the responsibility of appointing VCs on the universities.

But the varsities get funds from the state and the Centre, Khan said. Therefore, every bill which has a provision for expenditure "becomes a money bill and it cannot be placed before the assembly without the Governor's approval," he claimed.

State industries minister P Rajeev refuted this claim of the Governor.

Rajeev said the Kerala Assembly Speaker decides whether a piece of legislation is a money bill or not.

"These (the bills regarding appointment of VCs) are not money bills at all," he said.

The minister also said that the bills passed by the legislature should not be withheld indefinitely and the Governor could have sent the bills back to the assembly

pointing out his concerns.

On Khan being told by reporters that the state government had moved the Supreme Court against his not signing bills, he said he will give his response to the notice that he will get from the apex court and not to the media.

The government, a few days ago, had said that it moved the Supreme Court against Khan not signing certain bills passed by the state legislature as he was not discharging his constitutional duties.

The bills to which Khan has withheld assent include the Lok Ayukta Amendment Bill and two different University Laws Amendment Bills.

Speaking to reporters, Khan also claimed that the Governor was part of the legislature according to the Constitution and the Kerala assembly was passing resolutions on subjects which are not its constitutional responsibility without informing him.

"They are breaching every convention. The elected government does not mean you violate provisions of the Constitution or that you breach the constitutional conventions," he contended.

He also alleged that there was a provision that the Governor had to be briefed about everything, but he got to know about the Kerala assembly 2023 event through newspapers.

"There is such a big event taking place in Kerala and I came to know of it only through newspapers," he said.

Regarding the Kerala assembly event, Rajeev said that it has witnessed huge public participation despite it being criticised and opposed by some political parties. (PTI)

## BJP releases fifth list of candidates for Rajasthan polls

**JAIPUR, Nov 5:** The BJP on Sunday released a list of 15 candidates, which includes some fresh faces, for the November 25 Rajasthan Assembly elections.

The party has dropped sitting MLA from Mawli (Udaipur) Dharmnarayan Joshi and fielded K G Paliwal instead.

The party has also changed two candidates announced earlier.

Among the new faces fielded by the party are Gopal Sharma, a journalist, from Civil Lines, businessman Ravi Nayyar from Adarsh Nagar, and Upen Yadav, who held demonstrations and agitations on the issues of unemployed youths during the Congress rule, from Shahpura.

The party is yet to declare the candidates for Barmer, Pachpadra and Badi seats.

The BJP had announced Poonam Kanwar Bhati, the daughter-in-law of former minister Devi Singh Bhati, and Sarika Chaudhary as candidate from Baran-Atru seat in the third list on November 2. However, in the fresh list, Poonam Kanwar Bhati was replaced by her son Anshuman Singh Bhati in Kolayat seat. The BJP

has also replaced Sarika Chaudhary with Radheshyam Bairwa in Baran-Atru seat. While Amit Chaudhary has been fielded from Hanumangarh, Chandramohan Batvada from Kishanpole, Vijay Bansal from Bharatpur, former MLAs Rajkumar Rinwa from Sardarshahar, Prahlad Gunjal from Kota North and Babu Singh Rathore from Shergarh.

The candidates for Rajakhara, Masuda, Pipalda and Baran-Atru seats were also announced.

Journalist Gopal Sharma has been fielded from Jaipur's Civil Lines against Congress candidate and minister Pratap Singh Khachariawas.

Former MLA Prahlad Gunjal has been made the party's candidate from Kota North seat, which is held by Rajasthan parliamentary affairs minister Shanti Dhariwal. Gunjal is considered to be former chief minister Vasundhara Raje's loyalist.

The Congress is yet to announce its candidate for this seat. With the fifth list, the party has so far announced candidates for 197 out of 200 seats in the state. The last date of filing nomination is November 6. (PTI)

## Ethics Committee to adopt draft report tomorrow amid indication of recommendation against Moitra

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** The Lok Sabha's Ethics Committee will meet on November 7 to consider and adopt its draft report in relation to the 'cash-for-query' allegations levelled against TMC MP Mahua Moitra by BJP's Nishikant Dubey.

The meeting for adopting the draft report means that the committee headed by BJP MP Vinod Kumar Sonkar has finished its enquiry and will now be making its recommendation after its members ranged along party lines in their last deliberations on November 2.

The BJP members are in a majority in the 15-member committee which is likely to take a grim view of the charges against Moitra, more so after she accused Sonkar of asking filthy and per-

sonal questions to her in the last meeting before walking out in a rage along with opposition members.

There are indications the committee may make a recommendation against her in its report to Speaker Om Birla amid a possibility of dissent notes from opposition members.

All five opposition members had stormed out of the November 2 meeting, alleging that Sonkar asked personal and indecent questions to her regarding her travels, hotel stay and telephone calls.

She later alleged that she was subjected to a "proverbial vastraharan" in the meeting.

The committee chairperson dismissed opposition members' claims as a case of unethical con-

duct aimed at shielding her.

The decision of Moitra, who appeared before the panel as a subject of enquiry and thus lacked the privileges bestowed on its members, to walk out of the meeting is likely to be taken up critically by the committee in its report.

Dubey has accused Moitra of asking questions in Lok Sabha to target the Adani Group at the behest of businessman Darshan Hiranandani in exchange for bribes.

He said it was Hiranandani who used her login to file questions from different places, mostly Dubai. Moitra has admitted that he used her login details but has rejected any pecuniary considerations, asserting that most MPs share their login credentials with others. (PTI)

## India-Nepal border forces' talks to begin in Delhi today

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** Border guarding forces of India and Nepal will hold a three-day bilateral meeting here from Monday and discuss measures to curb trans-frontier crimes and timely sharing of intelligence inputs, an official said.

The seventh edition of the annual coordination talks between the two countries is led by India's Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) director general Rashmi Shukla and the visiting inspector general of the Armed Police Force (APF) of Nepal, Raju Aryal. The meeting will be in Delhi from November 6 to 8, the official said on Sunday.

"The talks at the level of two heads of the forces serve as a crucial platform for both forces to engage in discussions on border-related matters," an official statement said.

"The SSB and APF delegations aim to strengthen the coordination between the two border guarding forces for more effective management of the open and unfenced India-Nepal border," it said.

The "focus" of the meeting shall be on the development of effective mechanisms to collaboratively combat trans-border crimes and facilitate the prompt exchange of critical information between the forces, it said.

The SSB is a central armed police force under the Union Home Ministry and it is tasked to guard the 1,751 km India-Nepal open international border.

These annual talks have been held alternatively in India and Nepal since 2012. (PTI)

## Bihar caste survey deliberately showed inflated Muslim, Yadav population: Shah

**MUZAFFARPUR (BIHAR), Nov 5:** Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday attacked Bihar's Nitish Kumar government, accusing it of deliberately showing inflated Muslim and Yadav population in the state's caste survey as part of its "appeasement politics". Addressing a rally at Patna in Muzaffarpur district, the senior BJP leader said that the decision to conduct the caste survey in the state was taken when Nitish Kumar's JD(U) was an NDA constituent.

"The decision to conduct the caste survey in Bihar was taken when the JD(U) was part of the NDA. But the way the survey was conducted reveals the ulterior design of the Mahagathbandhan government... population

of Muslims and Yadavs were deliberately inflated during the exercise," he said.

"The Mahagathbandhan government is simply indulging in politics of appeasement and is not interested in the welfare of people belonging to other backward communities," he alleged. Attacking the opposition INDIA alliance, of which both JD(U) and RJD are key members, Shah alleged that the only agenda of the bloc is to oppose Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Nitish Kumar should stop dreaming about becoming the next PM... that will never happen. The INDIA alliance did not even make him its convener. He is responsible for bringing back 'Gundaraaj' (rule of goons) in Bihar." (PTI)

## INDIA bloc now 'INDI zero' alliance as its constituents are fighting, says Piyush Goyal

**INDORE, Nov 5:** Union minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday said opposition bloc Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) had begun disintegrating and had now turned into "INDI zero".

Goyal referred to the spat between Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath over seat sharing for the Assembly polls here, as well Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's statement that the Congress was more interested in polls than setting the course for the INDIA bloc.

"The opposition alliance has started integrating even before it is formed. The parties in it are pitted against each other in the Assembly polls in various states. It has now turned into 'INDI zero' alliance," Goyal said at a press conference during a tour of poll-bound MP.

"Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is sad about the state of the alliance. The Aam Aadmi Party abuses the Congress. In West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the constituents of the alliance are fighting," he claimed.

The INDIA alliance comprises more than 25 parties opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party, including the Congress and Kumar's Janata Dal (United).

Dubbing MP Congress chief Kamal Nath and the party's senior leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh as a "mismatched pair", Goyal claimed the two were at loggerheads and busy in establishing their sons in politics.

"Kamal Nath has already lost his credibility among the masses and is now left alone in Congress politics," Goyal claimed.

On the BJP not naming CM candidates for the five states where Assembly polls are being held, Goyal said, "We have the blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We are all generals under him. It is the failure of the Congress that it does not have any popular leader who can go to the masses."

On rising onion prices, Goyal said the Centre had increased the buffer stock of the kitchen staple from two lakh tonnes to five lakh tonnes in view

of irregular rains in different parts of the country and later added a consignment of two lakh tonnes while making additional purchases. "This is the first time since Independence that the Central government is providing

onions at ₹ 25 per kg to retail consumers from its buffer stock. Due to this, onion prices have stabilized in many places," he said.

The Union minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said prices will come down when onions sown late in the Kharif season makes it way to the markets in the next one to two weeks. (PTI)



## Mewar royal family's connect with people will help BJP win Nathdwara: Party nominee Vishvaraj Singh

**JAIPUR, Nov 5:** The erstwhile Mewar royal family's connect with the people over centuries and the BJP's popularity will ensure its victory in Nathdwara, says Vishvaraj Singh Mewar, who is making his electoral debut with the party fielding him against seasoned Congress leader CP Joshi for the Rajasthan polls.

Joshi, the sitting MLA of Nathdwara and speaker in the assembly, has represented the constituency in the House five times, and banks on the welfare schemes and development works of the Congress government in the state to win the November 25 elections.

The BJP, however, hopes to win the seat by showcasing the works of its government at the Centre and linking the electoral contest to the "pride of Mewar", Vishvaraj Singh, a descendant of celebrated Mewar king and Rajput warrior Maharana Pratap.

Rajputs and Brahmins form a large part of the 2.35 lakh voters in the constituency, followed by electors from the OBC and tribal communities.

"Several people ask me about 'Rajtantra' and 'Loktantra'. I have to say that the family has been there for around 1,500 years, which is a long time, and this

can happen only when you are connected with the people," Vishvaraj Singh told PTI after he filed his nomination papers for the elections on Friday.

He said that 'Rajtantra' (monarchy) and 'Loktantra' (democracy) are different forms of governance but the ultimate goal is to serve the people and carry out development. "As far as democracy is concerned, my father Mahendra Singh has also been an MP, my maternal grandfather has also been MP. People from our family have been in politics. We have always met people... now the way has changed, earlier we used to meet in a 'Rajtantra', now we meet the public in a 'Loktantra'," Vishvaraj Singh said.

On his opponent Joshi, he said, "He (the Congress leader) has been in politics for many years, and as far as the challenge goes, this is the land of Srinathji and Haldighati and I am confident that the BJP will win here."

Nathdwara is famous for the Srinathji temple that is visited by a large number of people.

Congress Rajsamand district president Hari Singh Rathore said that development works worth ₹ 1,700 crore have been done in the Nathdwara constituency



during the tenure of Joshi.

"This is the constituency where a large number of development works in every sector has been done. The party is confident of getting votes in the name of development," Rathore said.

On the BJP fielding Vishvaraj Singh, he said, "The battle has always been tough in Nathdwara, but CP Joshi is a stalwart leader who has done many de-

velopment works. The BJP candidate is from the erstwhile royal family whereas we are highlighting the development works done by the Congress."

BJP Rajsamand district president Man Singh said that the Congress candidate is a senior leader but the Mewar family has great influence in the region and it will help the party in winning the seat.

"It is a hot seat and the contest is a

question of pride for the people. The blood of Maharana Pratap runs through the veins of Kunwar Vishvaraj Singh. We are certainly going to win," he said.

Rajsamand MP and a member of the erstwhile Jaipur royal family, Diya Kumari, who is contesting the assembly elections from Jaipur's Vidhyadhar Nagar, is believed to have played an important role in bringing Vishvaraj Singh into the BJP.

He joined the BJP in Delhi on October 17 and was declared the party's nominee from Nathdwara in the second candidate list issued on October 21.

Vishvaraj Singh said that when the leadership of the country (BJP government at the Centre) is capable and visionary, then it should be supported, and added this is why he joined the party.

His wife Mahima Kumari said that she has been visiting rural areas and meeting people, and they talk about the need to address their issues.

"They narrate their problems to us. They say that the benefits of the state government's schemes and programmes are not reaching them. The situation under Congress rule is pathetic," Kumari said. She said that drinking water is a

major issue in the constituency.

Ravindra Singh, a local, said he believes that "it is our duty to support the member of this (royal) family which has had a great influence in the region".

Countering Rathore, BJP leader CP Dingh alleged that corruption in development projects in Nathdwara is an issue. "Rampant corruption was there in development works and people know this," he said. In the 2008 assembly elections, the Nathdwara seat saw Joshi losing to BJP's Kalyan Singh by a vote. In 2009, Joshi contested the Lok Sabha elections from Bhilwara and became a union minister in the Congress-led UPA government.

Vishvaraj Singh is the son of Mahendra Singh Mewar, who was elected as BJP MP from the Chittorgarh seat in 1989, and grandson of Bhagwat Singh Mewar, who was the titular ruler of the princely state of Udaipur or Mewar from 1955 until the Indian government abolished all royal titles in 1971.

Bhagwant Singh's father Bhupal Singh was the 'Raj Pramukh' of Rajasthan from 1948 until his death in 1955. He was chosen as the 'Raj Pramukh' in the third stage (out of seven stages) of the integration of Rajasthan. (PTI)



# Cong guarantees in HP, Rajasthan, Karnataka have failed like its leader Rahul, claims Thakur

**BHOPAL, Nov 5:** Union minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday said the Congress' guarantees in Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka have failed just like its leader Rahul Gandhi.

The Congress had deceived people with such announcements, including Gandhi promising (ahead of the 2018 Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh) that he would change the chief minister if his party's government does not implement farm loan waiver of upto ₹ 2 lakh in 10 days.

Gandhi also promised ₹ 4,000 as unemployment allowance but all these poll guarantees failed since these were not implemented during its 15-month rule (under Kamal Nath between December 2018 and March 2020), Thakur alleged.

"Such guarantees have failed in Karnataka, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh (where the Congress is in power). In HP, it had given guarantee of providing ₹ 1500 per month to 22.50 lakh women. It has not been implemented even after 10 months (of the party coming to power). They had promised one lakh jobs but are yet to provide even 1,000," Thakur claimed.

In HP, which is Thakur's home



state, the Congress had promised to purchase cow-dung at ₹ 2 per kilogram, milk at ₹ 100 per litre, provision of 300-unit free electricity but none of these have been fulfilled.

While the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Madhya Pradesh launched the 'Ladli Behna Yojana' for women, neighbouring Congress-ruled Rajasthan has seen the highest number of atrocities against women, the Union information and broadcasting minister alleged.

Slamming Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal for severe air pollution in the national capital region, Thakur said the former had

showed big dreams but the three smoke towers installed by the Aam Aadmi Party government are shut.

Kejriwal used to blame the stubble burning in Punjab (when the Congress was in power) for Delhi's pollution but now both states have Aam Aadmi Party governments, despite which he was unable to do anything resulting in Delhi turning into a "gas chamber".

Asked about Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accusing the Centre of using Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation and Income Tax to terrorise opposition parties, Thakur said these agencies work independently and act as per the law.

Kharge was speaking at a poll rally on Friday, his statement coming amid an allegation against Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel of receiving ₹ 508 crore from the promoters of 'Mahadev' betting app, which is being probed for money laundering and other irregularities.

Thakur said the Congress and its leaders are under the scanner since the charges are serious, adding that ₹ 2.25 crore cash and one kilogram gold was found from an official of a department under Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot.

"The Gehlot government of Rajasthan committed irregularities in Jal Jiwan Mission. In Chhattisgarh, the Mahadev app scam came forward. There are coal, goathon and other scams in that state," he alleged.

Thakur said the probe into the app scam in Chhattisgarh was on for a long time and had not started with an eye on polls. Chhattisgarh will witness Assembly polls in two phases on November 7 and 17.

Delhi CM Kejriwal used to give certificates of honesty to AAP leaders Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain and Sanjay Singh, all of whom are in jail now for alleged corruption, Thakur claimed. (PTI)

## HC directs Delhi govt, MCD to strictly comply with SC ruling on manual scavenging



**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** The Delhi High Court has directed the city government and civic authorities to ensure compliance with the decision of the Supreme Court on strict implementation of law for eradication of manual scavenging.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma observed that the top court has passed various directions on the issue, including enhanced compensation amount of ₹ 30 lakh for sewer deaths and minimum ₹ 20 lakh compensation in case of permanent disability.

"The apex court has issued various other directions to ensure that the practice of manual scavenging stands completely eradicated. The Government of NCT of Delhi, the Delhi Jal Board, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and all other authorities are directed to strictly comply with the judgment delivered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court," said the bench, also comprising Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, in a recent order.

"The apex court has enhanced the compensation amount for sewer deaths from ₹ 10 lakh to ₹ 30 lakh, and in case of sewer victims suffering disabilities, the compensation is to be fixed depending on the severity of the disabilities. The minimum compensation to be awarded to sewer victims suffering from disabilities has been fixed at ₹ 10 lakh and in case the disability is permanent and renders the victim economically helpless, the compensation must not be less than ₹ 20 lakh," the court observed.

The high court's order came on a batch of petitions seeking strict enforcement of the provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR Act) and its rules.

The bench observed that in view of the Supreme Court's order, which was passed while dealing with a prayer for the implementation of the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 and the PEMSAR Act and for the imposition of a blanket ban on manual scavenging, no further orders were required to be passed on the present batch of petitions.

"The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the aforesaid judgment has issued various directions for strict enforcement of the 1993 Act and the PEMSAR Act... In light of the aforesaid judgment delivered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, no further orders are required to be passed in the present writ petitions and the same are, accordingly, disposed of," said the court. (PTI)

## NIA files chargesheet against 7 accused in Pune ISIS terror module case

**MUMBAI, Nov 5:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge-sheet against seven ISIS members accused of being involved in a conspiracy to carry out terror attacks in different parts of the country, an official said on Sunday.

They were charge-sheeted before the NIA Special Court here under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Explosive Substances Act, the Arms Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in the Pune-based ISIS module case, the spokesperson of the federal agency said.

The official identified the charge-sheeted accused as "Mohammad Imran-Mohammad Yusuf Khan alias 'Matka' alias 'Aamir Abdul Hameed Khan' and Mohammad Yunus-Mohammad Yakub Saki alias 'Adil' alias 'Adil Saleem Khan'" of Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh; "Kadeer Dastagir Pathan alias 'Abdul Kadeer' and Seemab Nasiruddin Kazi" of Kondwa in Maharashtra's Pune; and "Zulfikar Ali Barodawala alias 'Lalabhai' alias 'Saif', Shamil Saquib Nachan and Aakif Ateeque Nachan" of Padgha in Maharashtra's Thane.

The accused were involved in collecting and raising funds for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) with the intention to further its activities related to terror and violence, the spokesperson said.

The official said it was found that the accused organised terrorist training camps, harboured known and wanted terrorists, and committed acts preparatory to the fabrication of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

"In addition, they were also found in pos-

session of IEDs, firearms, and ammunition," the spokesperson said, adding that they had hatched a conspiracy to further the terrorist activities of the ISIS, with the intention to strike terror amongst the people and threaten the security, integrity and sovereignty of India.

"Investigations uncovered a larger conspiracy with international connections and the involvement of foreign-based ISIS handlers in the ongoing case. The investigation has unveiled a complex network of individuals committed to propagating the extremist ideology of the ISIS within India," the official said.

The official said the accused, as part of this network, also took an oath of allegiance to the self-styled Khalifa (leader) of the ISIS.

"Their intentions were to carry out acts of terrorism on Indian soil. The accused conducted extensive reconnaissance missions across multiple states, including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Telangana and others. Their aim was to identify potential targets for planting and detonating the fabricated IEDs, posing a significant threat to national security," the spokesperson said.

The official said they had meticulous plans for evading arrest following the potential blasts and added that "as part of their escape plan, these individuals identified remote and deep forests as possible hideouts and used drones for reconnaissance to locate suitable camping locations while on the run".

"The accused were also found to be collecting funds from various sources, both within India and abroad, to finance their terror designs and plans," the spokesperson said. (PTI)

## MP polls: Cong opposed caste census, Mandal Commission report

**TIKAMGARH, Nov 5:** The Congress stopped caste census and implementation of the Mandal Commission report in the past and the BJP was taking a similar stand, but both parties know the importance of "PDA" or "picchde (backwards), Dalits and Adivasis", claimed Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday.

Addressing a rally in Jataara Assembly seat in Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh, where Assembly polls will be held on November 17, Yadav said both the Congress and the BJP are now talking about caste census and reservations to woo the PDA segment.

"It was the Congress that stopped the caste census and refused to implement the Mandal Commission report. The Bharatiya Janata Party is taking the same path. Now, Congress and BJP are talking about caste census, reservations. As polls come close, both parties realise the strength of PDA," Yadav claimed.

Yadav said his party was in favour of caste census, 27 per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes, and a scheme for women better than the MP government's Ladli Behna Scheme as the aid would be ₹ 3000 per month.

Slamming the Narendra Modi government, Yadav claimed those recruited in the armed forces under the Agniveer scheme will not get martyr status or financial assistance in case they are killed in the line of duty.

Can a government that gives such half-baked provisions to soldiers be called nationalist, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister asked.

He said atrocities against women was the highest in MP, while the situation for Dalits and tribals was also dire.

People do not know the enticement that came into play leading to the collapse of the Kamal Nath government and return of the BJP dispensation under Shivraj Singh Chouhan in March 2020, the SP chief said.

The SP and the Congress are part of the opposition bloc Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) but the two parties are fighting the MP polls separately.

Yadav and Nath had a spat earlier over the lack of an alliance for the MP polls, with the former claiming such behaviour on the part of the Congress could lead to repercussions in UP. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Where is the evidence? Indian

that there is room for diplomacy to address the diplomatic row between India and Canada. He said both sides have been in touch and hoped that a way would be found to resolve the row. At the same time, he asserted that "sovereignty and sensitivity" cannot be one-way streets. (PTI)

## BJP committed to create

physical distance. The BJP brought the country's capital Delhi to the doorstep of the Northeast," he said in the video message. The Prime Minister said that Mizoram is rich in nature and culture, and it has the potential to become a global tourist hub with improvement of infrastructure, which in turn will improve trade.

"Friends, during one of my earlier visits to Mizoram, I had promised to work for transformation by transportation. Since then, a revolution has happened across sectors by the BJP-led government," Modi said.

Infrastructure brings investment, industry and income growth, thereby creating employment opportunities for the youths of Mizoram, he added.

"In railways, we did something that has not happened in seven decades of Independence. We had the honour of connecting Mizoram with a broad gauge network till Bairabi. We are investing more than ₹ 8,500 crore in a new broad gauge project from Bairabi to Sairang," Modi said.

On the road network, he said till 2013-14, the total length of National highways in the region was 11,000 km which has increased to 16,000 km in 2022-23.

He assured the people that many steps would be taken to improve Mizoram's health infrastructure so that people do not need to go to other places for treatment.

"Friends, Mizoram's 4.5 lakh people were offered Ayushman Bharat cards. In entire Mizoram, there are around 100 hospitals where people are getting free treatment," Modi said, adding jobs are being created in the health sector. Stating that Mizoram's farmers are the foundation of the state's development, he said 1.7 lakh peasants are getting money in their account under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.

Modi said that the Northeast played a key role in India's rise in sports and the BJP is committed to increase sports infrastructure in the region, including Mizoram.

He said that for developing the urban infrastructure, the BJP government has sanctioned more than Rs 500 crore for the Aizawl Smart City Project.

"The district, which was left behind in Mizoram, we undertook special initiatives. In Mamit, the success of the aspirational district programme is a testimony to that effort. Now, Mamit is doing better than other districts in other parameters of development," Modi said.

He also listed several initiatives taken by his government to uplift the condition of women, including those of Mizoram. "Today's India is showing women-led development to the entire world. The women reservation law is one such example. Our thinking is very clear regarding women empowerment and this can be seen in our works in Mizoram," the Prime Minister said.

He also spoke about the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana and said that under this scheme, free ration has been ensured to 80 crore poor citizens of the country during the last three years since the Covid-19 pandemic. "Now our government has decided to continue this scheme for the next five years," Modi said. (PTI)

## KAAC chief urges youth

'farmer certificate' from Agriculture department. "A certificate is a must to sale the agriculture products like rice, potato, yam, mustard, lentils etc. at high price at centres", he added. During the event, senior citizens of Bithung Rengthama MAC constituency were also felicitated.

Tarjen Langthasa, EM Amarsingh Tisso, MAC Headings Rongphar, President BJP WKADC Radip Ronghang and others were also present on the occasion.

## Bhutan King Wangchuck

to both the sides to review the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation and to further advance the exemplary bilateral partnership, across diverse sectors. Wangchuck's visit to India comes against the backdrop of new momentum in boundary talks between Bhutan and China. Last month, Bhutan Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji held talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing.

A Chinese readout on the talks said Bhutan firmly abides by the one-China principle and stands ready to work with China for an early settlement of the boundary issue and advance the political process of establishing diplomatic relations. In August, China and Bhutan agreed to expedite and take simultaneous steps to implement a "three-step roadmap" to resolve their festering boundary dispute.

In October 2021, Bhutan and China signed an agreement on the "three-step roadmap" to expedite negotiations to resolve their boundary dispute. The signing of the pact came four years after the Indian and Chinese armies were locked in a 73-day stand-off in the Doklam tri-junction after China tried to extend a road in the area that Bhutan claimed belonged to it. The India-China stand-off in the Doklam plateau in 2017 even triggered fears of larger conflict between the two neighbours. Bhutan had said the area belonged to it and India supported the Bhutanese claim. (PTI)

## INDIA alliance will work

Lok Sabha elections, Tharoor said the terminology is a "bit awkward" because the voters have learnt to vote differently in assembly and Lok Sabha elections. "Also, in the few months between the results of the state elections and the declaration of the code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections, anything can happen. Last time around in 2018, (Narendra) Modi's party lost all five states and by May of 2019, they had won a majority of seats in all these states.

"So, what happened? Well, partially because Pulwama happened. With Pulwama and Balakot, the government was able to transform what had been a referendum on their economic incompetence into a national security vote. People said for national security reasons, they vote for Modi," he added. On the possibility of using any such issue again during next year's elections, the Kerala MP said: "I don't think lighting can strike at the same way at the same place twice." He said that the ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) can capitalise on two events happening in January -- completion of Ram Mandir and visit of (US President) Joe Biden as the chief guest in the Republic Day celebrations. Questioning the BJP promises made before the Narendra Modi government came to power, Tharoor asked the people of the country if all those assurances have been fulfilled, and take a decision accordingly.

Talking about the controversy surrounding the name of the country, the MP said: "I think it is a completely unnecessary distraction from the real issues facing that country. India is something that everyone identifies as part of our country's idea. Why do we want to choose from one to the other? Let us keep both (India and Bharat)." He said people very easily switch between India and Bharat depending upon the language they speak or write. If it is in English and at an international forum, then India and it's Bharat if it is in someone's mother tongue. "The word India originates from the same etymological roots as the word Hindu. Both came because the Persians saw the people beyond the river Indus as one people. They couldn't say the name Sindhu because they couldn't pronounce 'S' very clearly, so they made it Hindu.

"That's how Hindu and India both originated from the Persian words for the people beyond the river Sindhu. So, if you don't want to say 'garv se kaho ki hum Indian hain' (say proudly that we are Indians), you can't say 'garv se kaho ki hum Hindu hain' (say proudly that we are Hindus). Both are from the same origin," the veteran author-turned-politician explained.

On the alleged misuse of the central investigating agencies, Tharoor alleged that this is not new as the BJP has been doing it throughout their tenure since 2014.

"It just accelerates before there is a vote. They somehow want to discourage the people who have the courage to challenge them. I think we are going to find more and more cases against the opposition and the critics of the government. "... and frankly I think the public now has learnt to see through the messaging behind this. It cannot be that the only people worth investigating in this country are opposition leaders," he added. Tharoor was in Aizawl to campaign for Congress candidates for the elections to the 40-member Mizoram Assembly which will take place in a single phase on November 7. The votes polled will be counted on December 3. (PTI)

## Mobile internet ban in

material and false rumours which might be transmitted/ circulated to the public through social media...in the context of the recent incidents of violence in some parts of the state". Tension had been brewing in the state capital after an SDPO was shot dead by tribal militants at Moreh town on Tuesday. Barring a few days in September, mobile internet has remained banned in Manipur since May 3 when ethnic clashes broke out, and the government has been extending the prohibition periodically.

However, the order, for the first time, said the state government would "go for opening of mobile towers on trial basis in those district headquarters which had not been affected by violence". "The same, if found feasible, shall be replicated to other areas where the law and order situation has improved," the government order said.

The ethnic strife in the northeastern state has affected ten districts. Broadband services, which were also banned from May 4 for around two months, were made partially available since mid-July. Manipur has remained gripped by recurring bouts of violence since ethnic clashes first erupted in May. More than 180 people have been killed since then. The clashes have occurred over a number of grievances that both sides have against the other, however, the flashpoint of the crisis has been a move to give Meiteis Scheduled Tribe status, which has since been rolled back and an attempt to turf out tribals living in protected forest areas.

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

## ULFA-I cadre surrenders

the fourth surrender by ULFA-I militants in the past one week in upper Assam. Last Thursday two ULFA-I militants identified as Palash Moran and Montu Moran had surrendered before the police in Tinsukia district. Similarly on November 2, another Myanmar-trained ULFA-I militant identified as Ashique Ali alias Riyaz Asom had surrendered before the Superintendent of Police of Sivasagar district with a China-made hand grenade. Ali had reportedly joined the militant outfit in April 2022 and had recently fled from a training camp in Myanmar. It worth mentioning that there has been several instances of ULFA-I cadres fleeing or deserting their camps in Myanmar in recent times.

## BJP sharpens attack on

₹508 crore to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel so far, and that "these are subject matter of investigation". The alleged agent, 38-year-old Asim Das, has been arrested by the agency in Raipur after it recovered ₹ 5.39 crore cash from him. He was allegedly sent by the app promoters from the UAE "especially, to deliver large amounts of cash for electioneering expenses of the ruling Congress Party".

"In view of the new forms of corruption coming to light in Chhattisgarh, it seems that corruption has many fathers but the money is orphan," he charged. "Bhupesh Baghel and Rahul Gandhi both have no other option but to clarify where this money came from... Congress should clearly give a reply to the question as to what is the relation between this corruption and the gulf countries," the BJP leader said. (PTI)

## Heavy rains to continue in parts of Kerala as orange alert issued in three districts

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 5:** As heavy rains lashed parts of Kerala, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday issued an orange alert in three districts of the state for the day.

The IMD issued an orange alert for Pathanamthitta, Idukki and Malappuram districts.

It also issued a yellow alert in Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Palakkad districts of the state.

An orange alert means very heavy rains from 12 cm to 20 cm of rain and a yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 to 11 cm.

Additionally, the IMD also predicted thunderstorm with moderate rainfall and gusty winds at one or two places in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta,



Idukki and Malappuram districts and light rainfall at one or two places in all other districts of Kerala.

Earlier in the day, it predicted isolated heavy rainfall in Kerala for the next few days due to the

prevailing weather conditions over the southern part of the country.

An IMD forecast said that a cyclonic circulation lay over south Tamil Nadu and neighbouring areas which was likely to move west-north westwards towards southeast and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea in the next three days. Under the influence of the strong lower level easterly winds from the Bay of Bengal due to the above systems, widespread light to moderate rainfall is very likely over south peninsular India during the next seven days, it said.

It also said that isolated heavy rainfall was very likely over Kerala between November 5 and 8 and isolated very heavy rainfall also very likely in the state on Sunday. (PTI)



## A special outfit can be worn more than once: Alia on wearing wedding saree for National Film Awards

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** Alia Bhatt says repeating her ivory wedding saree for the National Film Awards ceremony was an "instinctive" decision as she wanted to honour the milestone moment by wearing a special outfit. Alia won the best actress National Film Award for her performance in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's "Gangubai Kathiawadi". For the ceremony held last month, she wore the hand-dyed ivory organza sari embroidered with fine tilla work, designed by Sabyasachi Mukherjee for her wedding with actor Ranbir Kapoor in 2022. "Whenever there is a big event or big moment coming up, you start preparing for it... I instinctively felt like, 'I'm going to re-wear my wedding saree'. The saree was ideated and done beautifully by Sabyasachi Mukherjee but it was a lot of me, white and gold combination and certain symbols. "It was the garment I felt most myself in. And it was a really special moment for a different reason. A special outfit can be worn for a special occasion more than once," the 30-year-old said at the HT Leadership Summit here. The actor said she endorses reusing and recycling clothes as it has been a common practice for years. "I don't think I was doing anything that people haven't been doing for many years... For those, who may already be doing it, they say we are encouraging the conversation more. For those, who feel that for a special occasion they have to wear an outfit that hasn't been seen before, I just wanted to change that a little bit around." (PTI)



## Cinema not just about creativity, it is also about money: Sujoy Ghosh



**DEHRADUN, Nov 5:** "Jaane Jaan" director Sujoy Ghosh says one cannot ignore the financial aspect of filmmaking for creative satisfaction.

Speaking at the country's first crime literature festival which began here on Friday, Ghosh said as a director he has certain responsibilities towards those putting in money in a project. "Cinema is not all about creativity and artistic excellence. It is also as much about money. I cannot make a film just for my own creative satisfaction when someone else's money is also involved in it," Ghosh said. Asked why he changed the ending of "Jaane Jaan", which is based on the Japanese novel "The Devotion of Suspect X", the director said, "I thought its original ending may not be palatable for the Indian audience." Though an adaptation, Ghosh said he treated the Kareena Kapoor Khan-starrer as a love story rather than a murder mystery. "I interpreted it as the story of a man's unrequited love for a woman," said Ghosh, who has also directed films such as "Kahaani" and "Badla".

The director believes the setting of the story plays an important part in making the film believable. "I have made films in places I have grown up or known closely. I set 'Kahaani' in Kolkata as I was born in the city and knew it thoroughly. A real setting makes your characters look real, otherwise they would look fake. Similarly, I set 'Jaane Jaan' in Kalimpong, which I knew." (PTI)

## Advance booking opens for 'Tiger 3'

**MUMBAI, Nov 5:** Production house Yash Raj Films (YRF) on Sunday opened the advance booking for "Tiger 3", starring Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif, a week ahead of its Diwali release.

Directed by Maneesh Sharma and also featuring Emraan Hashmi, the upcoming movie will hit the screens worldwide on November 12.

YRF shared the update on its official X page.

"The countdown has officially begun! 1

week to go for

#Tiger3! In cinemas on

Sunday, 12th Nov! Re-

leasing in

Hindi, Tamil

& Tel-

ugu.

Ad-

advance

bookings open.

Book your

tickets

NOW," the

banner

said in

the

post.

Previously, the studio said shows of "Tiger 3" will start from 7 am across India.

The film will also be available in multiple premium formats like: 2D, IMAX 2D, 4DX 2D, PVR P[XL], DBOX, ICE and 4DE Motion.

Set after the events of "Pathaan", "Tiger 3" will see Salman's titular spy race against time to save both

his family and country.

The movie marks the fifth film in the

YRF Spy Universe, conceptualised by studio head

Aditya Chopra.

(PTI)



## 'Dilli Dark' is about acceptance, says director Dibakar Das Roy



**MUMBAI, Nov 5:** Filmmaker Dibakar Das Roy says the aim behind his directorial debut "Dilli Dark" is to focus on those who feel like an outsider in society today.

The Delhi-set dark comedy follows the story of a Nigerian MBA student called Michael Okeke -- played by Nigerian actor Samuel Abiola Robinson -- who battles prejudice against the African diaspora in the national capital.

Roy said he wants to drive home the message of "acceptance" through the film. "At this point of time, in a world which is very agitated, I think acceptance, non-judgmentalism... That's the most basic way in which we can put our politics. This is what I would want people to take back from the film.

"The whole intent behind it is to not just talk about Africans in Delhi. The in-

tent is to talk about anyone who feels like an outsider in society today, that could be in India, America, or any other place. Michael Okeke is a metaphor for every outsider, whether he is an Indian or foreigner in any society," the Kolkata-born writer-director told PTI.

"Dilli Dark" recently had its world premiere at the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival. The film, billed as a satirical take on racism, will also be screened at the 27th Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival on November 14. Citing the example of the late satirist and comedian Jaspal Bhatti, Roy said he uses comedy as a tool to comment on important issues. "Satire is one of the most beautiful art forms that were ever created. Satire is a beautiful tool because it doesn't take things seriously and at the same time it asks rather than tells," he added. (PTI)

## 'Against the Tide' by Sarvnik Kaur gets the prestigious Golden Gateway Award



**HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 5:** Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival closed with a grand ceremony at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC). One of the biggest film festivals in South Asia, Jio MAMI, this year has over 300 films in 70 languages from 70 different countries. Of these, a record number of 70 films are by female filmmakers.

The festival also had 40 world premieres, 45 Asian premieres, and over 70 South Asian premieres. The festival is spread across 8 venues and 20 screens. While the closing ceremony took place on November 3, 2023, the festival will continue to screen some

of the most popular titles on November 4th and 5th.

The closing ceremony was hosted by the incredibly talented actor Kalki Koechlin and attended by top-of-the-line guests from the Indian and international film fraternities. The losing-night ceremony honored the filmmakers in the various competition categories. The South Asia Competition awards were presented by the jury, which included Head of Jury Mira Nair, Australian writer and filmmaker David Michod, Filipino filmmaker and actor Isabel Sandoval, and Edouard Waintrop, French Film Critic and Festival Director. The jury awarded the Golden Gateway award to

Against the Tide by Sarvnik Kaur, the Silver Gateway award went to Bahadur - The Brave by Diwa Shah. and the Special Jury Award went to Agra by Kanu Behl. The Film Critics Guild Gender Sensitivity Award was announced next for a film that challenges gender stereotypes and norms. It was given by the jury, which included film critic Aditya Shrikrishna and RJ Stutee Ghosh. The winner in this category was Barir Naam Shahana (A House Named Shahana) by Leesa Gazi.

The Rashid Irani Young Critics Lab is a special programme created by Jio MAMI to nurture young writers within the realm of cinema. The Rashid Irani Young Critics' Choice

Award was presented by Christian Jeune, Director of the Film Department, Deputy General Delegate. Festival de Cannes. The winner in this category was Kayo Kayo Colour? (Which Colour?) by Shahrukhkhan Chavada. Next at the event was the NETPAC award, given to a film from the main South Asia Competition section. Presenters included jury members Dr. Gulnara Abikeyeva, a film critic, researcher, and head of jury, along with writer and editor Latika Padgaonkar and Festival Director of the Sydney Film Festival Nashen Moodley. They presented the award to Rimdogitanga (Rapture) by Dominic Sangma.



## Air quality is not ideal, trying to minimise outdoor exposure of players: Hathurusinghe



**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe on Sunday expressed concerns over the severely poor Air Quality Index here ahead of their World Cup match against Sri Lanka, and said they have been trying to minimise players' exposure to the noxious atmosphere.

Bangladesh's match against the Islanders on Monday has a veil of uncertainty around it after a thick layer of toxic haze has enveloped the city since the last four days.

The vagueness over the match is particularly high as the AQI is likely to remain in the severe category at least till Tuesday.

However, the ICC had said a decision on the game could be taken only on the match day morning after assessing the conditions.

"Air quality is affecting both teams. It's not ideal. We were a little bit concerned. That's why we cancelled one practice session."

"So, we are trying to minimise our exposure to the outdoors because we need to practice and we have to be careful of the long-term effect of this condition," said Hathurusinghe during the pre-match press conference.

However, Hathurusinghe said the team will have to abide by the decision of the organisers as and when it is made.

"We have no choice. We have to play in the conditions in front of us," he added.

After opting out of their training session on Friday, Bangladesh had a light session last evening.

However, the Tigers went about their usual business this afternoon with batters honing their skills at nets.

Litton Das spent the most time at nets, while Mushfiqur Rahim, Najmul Hossain Shanto also went through the drills but pacers did not join their colleagues at nets.

Most of the cricketers and support staff were wearing masks due to the air pollution.

Hathurusinghe said team medical staff are keeping a close watch on the players.

"Our doctor has kept a close eye on the players. Some of the players didn't turn up for practice as they are asthmatic. So, they stayed indoors. Even for practice, we're very conscious," he said.

"We train what we have to train, and they go back into the dressing room. They don't spend time unless they're bowling or batting."

Asked if Delhi is fit for international cricket particularly in early November, the coach said: "It is not up to me. I'm not a qualified

person to talk about their quality and whether it's fit or not to play."

### Champions Trophy qualification still achievable

Bangladesh has endured a tough last few weeks in the tournament, having succumbed to six successive losses to become the first team to be knocked out of the World Cup.

But Hathurusinghe said they are now focussing on qualifying for the 2025 Champions Trophy by finishing in the top 7.

"Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have played really good matches in the recent past. The thing is, both teams are in a really similar situation, to be honest. We are trying to finish as high as possible because we have lost the opportunity to get into the semifinal now."

"But still the Champions Trophy (qualification) is up for grabs and we need to finish as high as possible. So, this game has a big impact."

"I think it's achievable because we are still a good team. We know that we are better than what we have shown. So, our best game we haven't played so far, even near to our best. So, we still think that the Champions Trophy qualification is achievable," he said.

### 'Can't do much in seven months'

Hathurusinghe, who took over the coach's role in February this year, shared the responsibility of the team's failure but said there's not much he can do in seven months.

"I take responsibility as well as anyone in the group. We didn't play our best cricket but the thing is nothing has changed from the first game to now. Only (what) has changed is what's going through between our ears," he said.

The former Sri Lankan batter said Bangladesh need to play fearless cricket instead of confining themselves into a shell.

"Our skills haven't gone anywhere. So, I think we put ourselves down by having high expectations. So, we all need to look at mirrors and see what went wrong."

"For some reason, we have gone into a shell, especially batting. That is what we need to fix and come and play fearless cricket."

For him, the World Cup was just a starting point.

"I'm only 7 months into the job. There's not much I can do within seven months. What I have done was to just take the team from where the team was and make sure that they were up for this. Actually, my work has to start after this." (PTI)

## Man City, Bayern, Madrid and Barcelona can advance in Champions League by extending perfect starts

**GENEVA, Nov 5:** The Champions League is a showcase of the world's best club teams and, this week, possible respite for others enduring painful seasons.

Manchester City, Bayern Munich and Real Madrid all can advance to the Champions League round of 16 with a fourth straight win in their groups. Each is at home against an opponent it beat on the road three weeks ago.

It is a different story for their domestic rivals Manchester United, Union Berlin and Sevilla.

In Manchester, the divide between City and United was clear when the defending European and English champion coasted to a 3-0 win at Old Trafford last weekend. United has stunningly lost five home games already this season, though did scratch out a 1-0 win against Copenhagen, which it plays Wednesday in Denmark.

Bayern has won 16 straight group-stage games in the Champions League and has not lost one since 2017. On Saturday, Bayern humiliated Borussia Dortmund 4-0 in its own stadium, fired by Harry Kane's third hat trick of the season.

Union Berlin is on a 12-match losing streak since Sept. 3, including all three so far in its Champions League debut season. It gets no easier at Napoli on Wednesday.

Madrid began the weekend leading La Liga and is home to the current most thrilling player in world soccer. Jude Bellingham scored twice in a statement 2-1 win at Barcelona last weekend and also in each Champions League game so far.

Sevilla has fired a coach, spent the whole season in the bottom half of the league and is winless in the Champions League. Sevilla now visits Arsenal which is unbeaten at home all season.

Elite supremacy will likely be confirmed when Man City hosts Young Boys on Tuesday, and on Wednesday when Bayern welcomes Galatasaray and Madrid plays Braga.

Barcelona makes it four of the eight group leaders with the maximum nine points. The Spanish champion also will advance with another win Tuesday when it faces Shakhtar Donetsk.

**HAMBURG HUB**  
Barcelona will be the latest Champions League club to visit Shakhtar's adopted home city of Hamburg for the competition this season. Royal Antwerp is next on Nov. 28. Hamburg is a hub for international soccer in the next month, even if the German city's former European champion club is out



of that picture.

The port city stages those Champions League games for Shakhtar ahead of the Dec. 2 draw for the men's European Championship finals tournament.

The Volksparkstadion home of second-tier Hamburger SV has a 50,000-plus capacity and is one of 10 venues for Euro 2024, hosting five games including a quarterfinal.

The stadium is being used by Shakhtar because Ukrainian clubs have not hosted international games for security reasons since the Russian military invasion started in February 2022.

There were chants for Hamburger SV from a 46,000 crowd when Shakhtar lost 3-1 to Porto in September, perhaps showing frustration of local fans whose team last played in the Champions League 17 years ago. HSV won the 1983 European Cup — beating Juventus and its superstar forward line of Michel Platini, Paolo Rossi and Zbigniew Boniek 1-0 in the final — but is now in its sixth straight season in the Bundesliga

second division.

### LOSING STREAKS

It is rare for teams that lose their first three Champions League group games to advance to the next stage.

The currently pointless teams — Benfica, Royal Antwerp, Union Berlin — can take inspiration from the two teams who managed the feat. Atalanta in 2019-20 had the worst possible start to its debut campaign, and only drew its fourth game. Yet Atalanta ultimately went to the quarterfinals and was minutes away from eliminating Paris Saint-Germain, the eventual beaten finalist.

Newcastle also advanced from the first group stage in 2002-03 after starting with three losses.

All three 0-for-3 clubs have away games this week — Antwerp is at Porto on Tuesday, then on Wednesday Benfica is at Real Sociedad and Union visits Napoli.

### MIXED IN MILAN

One Milanese team can qualify for the round of 16 this week and the other can be

pushed to the brink of elimination.

Inter Milan, beaten finalist last season and Serie A leader, can book its spot with a win at Salzburg on Wednesday.

The situation is bleaker for seven-time champion AC Milan, which lost to Inter in the semifinals in May.

Milan is last in Group F with no goals and no wins before hosting PSG on Tuesday, three weeks after a 3-0 loss in Paris.

Still, the Rossoneri can take heart that only four points separates first from last in a tough group where Borussia Dortmund hosts Newcastle on Tuesday.

Milan fans likely will give a hostile reception to their once revered goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma on his return to San Siro. He left in 2021 as a free agent with Milan getting no transfer fee.

Donnarumma got a taste in September of what to expect when he was booed by sections of the Milan crowd playing for Italy against Ukraine in a Euro 2024 qualifying game. (AP)

## ICC gets advice from renowned pulmonologist Randeep Guleria ahead of Delhi game

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** With the notorious air pollution putting Monday's Sri Lanka-Bangladesh World Cup match in jeopardy, the ICC has sought advice from renowned pulmonologist Randeep Guleria to ensure that the game takes place as scheduled.

Bangladesh's match against the Islanders has a veil of uncertainty around it as a thick layer of toxic haze has enveloped the city since the last four days. The AQI (Air Quality Index) is likely to remain in the severe category till at least Tuesday. While a decision will be taken by the match officials on Monday, the game's governing body has put in place mitigation measures like installing water sprinklers and adding air purifiers in the dressing rooms to curb the hazardous air pollution.

"The BCCI engaged the services of renowned Pulmonologist Dr Randeep Guleria to assess the situation in Delhi ahead of Monday's game and provide independent expert advice," an ICC spokesperson told PTI.

"Under Dr Guleria's guidance, the venue team has been taking mitigating actions throughout the day including the implementation of water sprinklers around the premises and the installation of air purifiers in the dressing rooms and match officials areas." The steps have helped in lowering pollution levels in the immediate vicinity. "The AQI within the stadium was monitored throughout the day which has reduced to levels considered acceptable by Dr Guleria," the spokesperson said. While Sri Lanka decided to stay indoors on Saturday, Bangladesh braved hazardous conditions to train last evening, wearing masks at the Feroz Shah Kotla. The "Tigers" had cancelled their opening training session on Friday due to the poor quality air.

However, Bangladesh went about their usual business this afternoon with batters honing their skills at nets. Litton Das spent the most time at nets while Mushfiqur Rahim, Najmul Hossain Shanto also went through the drills but the pacers did not join their colleagues at the nets. Most of the cricketers and support staff were wearing masks due to the air pollution. "The ICC will continue to work in collaboration with Dr Guleria, BCCI, DDCA, and the Delhi Government to monitor the air quality and to take all possible steps to mitigate the air quality concerns at the Arun Jaitley Stadium and the match remains scheduled to take place in Delhi on Monday," the ICC spokesperson said. (PTI)

officials areas." The steps have helped in lowering pollution levels in the immediate vicinity. "The AQI within the stadium was monitored throughout the day which has reduced to levels considered acceptable by Dr Guleria," the spokesperson said. While Sri Lanka decided to stay indoors on Saturday, Bangladesh braved hazardous conditions to train last evening, wearing masks at the Feroz Shah Kotla. The "Tigers" had cancelled their opening training session on Friday due to the poor quality air.

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## Vaishali dumps Zhongyi Tan, inches closer to GM title

**ISLE OF MAN (UK), Nov 5:** On the verge of her Grandmaster title, R Vaishali outwitted former Women's world champion Zhongyi Tan of China to remain in sole lead after the end of the 10th and penultimate round of FIDE Women Grand Prix here.

Vaishali, along with her younger brother Praggnanandhaa became the first brother-sister duo to qualify for the respective Candidates and they will be in action in Canada next year, fighting for a place in the World Championship finals.

At 2498 live rating, Vaishali is just two points short of becoming a Grandmaster and when she does that, she and Pragg will also become the first siblings in the world to achieve this feat.

Vaishali on eight points, is followed solely by Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine a half point behind. Another half point away is Vaishali's last round opponent Bathkuyag Mungutlu of Mongolia.

Vaishali's second place is secured irrespective of her last round result.

It was a Sicilian defense by Zhongyi and it came as a surprise to Vaishali as the Chinese went for the Classical system. Vaishali decided to sidestep from long theoretical battles and her instinct proved right even though Zhongyi got a fighting position in the middle game.

Known to create chances, Vaishali geared up to launch a king side attack against a centralised black king and it paid great dividends. Vaishali picked up pawns at will and black's desired counter play never saw the light of the day.

In the open section, Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi also continued with his dazzling run and put it across Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania in a one-sided affair.

Vidit's fourth victory with black pieces ensured that he remained in joint lead alongside Hikaru Nakamura of United States and Andrey Esipenko of Russia who all have 7.5 points apiece. With just one round remaining in the 460000 USD prize money event, Arjun Erigaisi also remained in contention for a place in the candidates with a finely crafted victory over Samuel Savian of United States.

Arjun is now joint fourth in the event and needs a victory over Nakamura to remain in hunt for the candidates for which two places are reserved from this tournament.

Gujrathi employed the Sicilian defense to show his intentions for

a complex battle. Bogdan-Daniel fell prey to a tactical shot and lost a pawn and thereon the Indian was a perfect picture of composure as he improved slowly and wrapped up the full point.

Praggnanandhaa (6 points) meanwhile played out a draw with Anton Korobov of Ukraine and remained in the hunt for a place in the prize list along with P Harikrishna, Aravindh Chithambaram and S L Narayanan who all inched up to 5.5 points following draws in the tenth round.

Amongst the ladies, Tania Sachdev and D Harika posted victories to reach 5.5 points while Vantika Agrawal and Diviya Deshmukh also had winning outcomes to reach five points respectively.

Important and Indian results round 10 (Indians unless specified):

Hikaru Nakamura (Usa, 7.5) beat Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 6.5); Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rom, 6.5) lot to Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (7.5); Andrey Esipenko (Fid, 7.5) beat Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri, 6.5); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 7) beat Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 6); Samuel Sevian (Usa, 6) lost to Arjun Erigaisi (7); Alexandr Predke (Srb, 7) beat Yuriy Kuzubov (Ukr, 6); Anton Korobov (Ukr, 6) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (6); Aravindh Chithambaram (5.5) drew with P Harikrishna (6); Nihal Sarin (5.5) drew with Evgeniy Najer (Fid, 5.5); Amin Tabatabaei (Iri, 5.5) drew with S L Narayanan (5.5); Aryan Chopra (5) drew with Sam Shankland (Usa, 5); Raunak Sadhwani (5) drew with Aydin Suleymanli (Aze, 5); Nijat Abasov (Aze, 4.5) drew with Leon Luke Mendonca (4.5); D Gukesh (4) drew with Daniel Dardha (Bel, 4); Murali Karthikeyan (4) drew with Denis Lazavik (Fid, 4); Abhijeet Gupta (3.5) lost to Michal Krasenkow (Pol, 4.5); B Adhiban (4) beat Ihor Samunenkov (Ukr, 3).

Women: R Vaishali (8) beat Zhongyi Tan (Chn, 6.5); Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 7.5) beat Deyisi Cori (Per, 6); Antoaneta Stefanova (Bul, 6.5) drew with Leya Garifullina (Fid, 6.5); Mai Narva (Est, 6) beat Bathkuyag Mungutlu (Mgl, 7); Tania Sachdev (5.5) beat Polina Shuvalova (Fid, 4.5); D Harika (5.5) beat Govhar Beydullayeva (Aze, 4.5); Vantika Agrawal (5); beat Julianna Terbe (Hun, 4.5); Ulviyya Fataliyeva (Aze, 4) lost to Diviya Deshmukh (5); Alice Lee (Usa, 3.5) drew with B Savitha Shri (3.5). (PTI)

## Sachin Baisoya plays a flawless final round to emerge champion

**CHANDIGARH, Nov 5:** Delhi's Sachin Baisoya played a flawless final round of five-under 67 to outclass his nearest rivals and take home the trophy at the ₹ 1.5 crore Jeev Milkha Singh Invitational Tournament here on Sunday. Baisoya (66-68-71-67), who was overnight second and three off the lead, produced three birdies and an eagle in round four to end up with a tournament total of 16-under 272. The 28-year-old Sachin, who bagged his second career title and also his second of the season, walked away with the winning cheque worth ₹ 22,50,000 that moved him up from third to second position in the PGTI Ranking. The pro from the Delhi Golf Club now has season's earnings of ₹ 63,46,666. On the PGTI Ranking, Baisoya trails close friend Om Prakash (Leader) by nearly ₹ 21 lakh. Chandigarh's Abhijit Singh Chadha (70-66-70-67) also brought in an error-free card of 67, to move up one spot and end the week in tied second at 15-under 273 as the highest-placed local golfer. (PTI)

## Ramesh, Prajakta emerge winners in Hyderabad Half Marathon

**HYDERABAD, Nov 5:** Telangana's B Ramesh Chandra and Prajakta Godbole of Maharashtra won the men's and women's titles in the Hyderabad Half Marathon here on Sunday. On a pleasant morning, with cool breeze for comfort, Ramesh cracked the 21.1 kms in one hour 13 minutes and 10 seconds to be crowned champion. Satish Kumar (1.15:50) and Piyush Masane (1.16:56) tailed him to the finish line to take the other two positions on the podium in the category. Among women, 28-year-old Prajakta underlined her reputation as one of India's top distance runners by covering the half marathon distance in an impressive one hour 23 minutes and 45 seconds. Preenu Yadav (1.24:46) and Tejaswini Umbkane (1.25:11) grabbed the second and third places behind her. Cricketing icon and brand ambassador of Aegae Federal Life Insurance, Tendulkar flagged off over 8,000 runners at the crack of dawn, making the Hyderabad Half Marathon one of the biggest running events in southern India. (PTI)

## On 35<sup>th</sup> birthday, 'grateful' Virat Kohli says it is 'stuff of dreams' to level-up with Sachin Tendulkar

**KOLKATA, Nov 5:** Virat Kohli on Sunday said that scoring his 49th ODI century on his 35th birthday, which put him at par with the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, was the stuff dreams are made of and thanked the almighty for blessing him with such a moment.

A decade after Tendulkar walked away from international cricket having set the record of most international centuries in 50-overs cricket, Kohli levelled up with the batting legend in delivering yet another crucial performance.

Kohli scored a fabulous 121-ball 101 (10x4s) to take India to a huge 326/5 on a sluggish surface against South Africa, with Shreyas Iyer chipping in with 77 and Rohit Sharma making 24-ball 40.

"Every opportunity to play for



India is a big one; to be able to ton up on my birthday is a stuff of dreams. Grateful to God that I've been blessed with such moments," Kohli told the broadcaster after

India's innings.

Tendulkar was quick to wish Kohli on his remarkable achievement and wished that he gets a world-record 50 ODI tons in the

'next few days'.

"Well played Virat. It took me 365 days to go from 49 to 50 earlier this year. I hope you go from 49 to 50 and break my record in the next few days. Congratulations!!!" he posted on X (formerly Twitter).

Kohli had to drop the anchor while the others batted around him after India's progression slowed down due to the pitch slowing down here at the Eden Gardens.

Talking about the innings, Kohli said, "It was a wicket that was tricky to bat on. We got a great start. My job was to keep the momentum going when I got in. But, after ten overs, the ball started gripping, and the wicket started slowing down," he explained.

"My role was to bat deep and till the end after the openers fell be-

cause that's what I've done; that was the communication as well - to have guys bat around me."

"Shreyas starting hitting well as well. We were not thinking we would get to 326, but that's what happens when you dig deep and take the game into the last few overs."

Kohli said spending a lot of time in training sessions before the Asia Cup proved to be vital for him and Iyer, during their 134-run stand on Sunday for the third wicket.

"Shreyas and I had a lot of practice sessions before the Asia Cup and invariably batted together at 3 and 4. Both of us are comfortable against spinners. Both of us are comfortable rotating strikes against spinners, credit to him for putting away bad balls," he signed off. (PTI)



# Dominant India crush SA after Kohli's record-equalling 49<sup>th</sup> ton on 35<sup>th</sup> birthday

**KOLKATA, Nov 5:** On his 35th birthday in one of the game's iconic venues packed with the most exuberant fans, Virat Kohli equalled his idol Sachin Tendulkar's record of most ODI centuries with his 49th hundred, laying the foundation for India's 243-run pummelling of South Africa in the World Cup on Sunday.

This, perhaps, was written in the stars.

Entering the Eden Gardens after a run of seven successive wins by his team, Kohli was up against an in-form and ambitious South African side seeking to shed the choker's tag and win its maiden World Cup title.

But, by the time the game got over, South Africa were left bruised and battered after being bowled out for 83 in 27.1 overs as India consolidated its top place in the pecking order, with Kohli finally matching Tendulkar after the whole country waited for weeks in anticipation.

Attempting to steel the thunder from Kohli was Ravindra Jadeja, who ended with excellent figures of 5/33.

Set an imposing target of 327 after Kohli's 121-ball 101 not out, Shreyas Iyer's fluent 87-ball 77 and some fireworks towards the end by Suryakumar Yadav and Jadeja, the Proteas crumbled like a pack of cards.

India captain Rohit Sharma also deserves special mention for his 24-ball 40, putting South Africa on the back foot straightaway with his attacking intent.

When the Proteas' turn to bat came, the

pitch remained pretty much the same but the Indian bowling was again at a different level altogether, running through the side with the same relentlessness and potency they have been doing through the tournament.

South Africa were in dire straits in no time, tottering at 40/5 and then 67/7 as India had the match all wrapped up.

The menacing pace trio of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, and Mohammed Shami was once again on the money before star all-rounder Jadeja did the star turn with his turn, bounce and accuracy. Not content with his cameo with the bat (29 off 15 balls), Jadeja got the ball to behave in whichever way he wanted it to and finished with fine figures.

The first to go was the in-form Quinton de Kock, who got an inside edge against Siraj after smashing him for a boundary.

Losing De Kock was a big blow for the South Africans, and skipper Temba Bavuma too fell cheaply to continue his quest for one substantial knock in the showpiece, bowled by a beautiful turning delivery from Jadeja.

South Africa were three down inside the powerplay as Shami, with a good length ball that jagged away off the seam, induced an edge from Aiden Markram and KL Rahul completed a low catch.

Rassie van der Dussen thought he was saved when Shami's loud appeal for an lbw failed to impress the on-field umpire but the Indian seamer and his wicket-



keeping colleague Rahul's decision to review was vindicated when the technology showed that the ball would go on to hit the middle and leg stump.

South Africa bat deep but Jadeja, meanwhile, snared Heinrich Klaasen (1) and David Miller (11) to inch closer to a massive win, which was achieved when

Kuldeep Yadav bowled Lungi Ngidi.

The match was over in South Africa's 28th over and with a lot of time still left to play.

Earlier, the setting was ideal for Kohli to equal Tendulkar's record after missing the magic three-figure mark more than once in the tournament. He was dis-

missed for 95 and 88 against New Zealand and Sri Lanka but the Indian run-machine did not disappoint the ecstatic full house at the Eden Gardens.

The monkey was finally off his back in the 49th over when Kohli gently pushed Kagiso Rabada for a single. The century came off 119 balls with 10 fours, show-

ing that Kohli toiled hard for his runs.

For Kohli, the milestone ton came in 277 innings, while Tendulkar had brought up his 49th ODI century in 452 innings. A comparison, though, is not fair considering the different playing conditions in the two eras.

The relief was evident as he took his helmet off, kissed his bat, and saluted the crowd that gave him a standing ovation.

Rohit went about his business in his own inimitable style while Shubman Gill (23 off 24) was cautious as the two provided a flying start to the hosts after electing to bat.

Iyer played the perfect foil for Kohli before Jadeja played a crucial role in taking India past the 300-run mark.

Barring Keshav Maharaj who bowled his full quota at a stretch, no other bowler could create an impact on an Eden wicket that became slower as the game progressed and aided spin.

At a venue where he scored the ODI world record score of 264, Rohit smashed bowlers all around the park before Bavuma's terrific catch at mid-off halted his innings. Rohit smashed Rabada powerfully through covers, but the South Africa skipper held firmly to the ball in front of his eyes.

India's turbo-charged start by Rohit was halted by Kagiso Rabada's wicket-keeper first over, and Maharaj produced a classical left-arm spin to remove the in-form Gill. (PTI)

## Uncertainty looms over Lanka-Bangla World Cup clash due to severe air pollution

**NEW DELHI, Nov 5:** The notorious air pollution in the national capital has shrouded the World Cup clash between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in doubt and it remains to be seen if the health of the players takes precedence over the contest, here on Monday.

A thick layer of toxic haze has enveloped the national capital once again, forcing the two teams to cancel their training at least once as Air Quality Index (AQI) remains in the severe category. While Sri Lanka decided to stay indoors on Saturday, Bangladesh braved hazardous conditions to train last evening, wearing masks at the Feroz Shah Kotla. The 'Tigers' had cancelled their opening training session on Friday due to poor quality air.

The AQI is above 400-mark on a scale of 500 since Thursday and according to the Air Quality Early Warning System, it is likely to remain 'severe' till Tuesday.

On Sunday morning, the AQI stood at 457 according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The International Cricket Council (ICC) has made it clear that a call on future of the match will be taken only on game day when the match officials assess the air quality on Monday.

Article 2.8 of ICC's playing conditions, says "If at any time the umpires together agree that the conditions of ground, weather or light, or any other circumstances are dangerous or unreasonable, they shall immediately suspend play, or not allow play to start or to



recommence." "The decision as to whether conditions are so bad as to warrant such action is one for the umpires alone to make, following consultation with the ICC Match Referee."

Both the teams are no strangers to such a situation with the Sri Lankan players resorting to masks during a Test series back in 2017 and Bangladesh cricketers doing the same in a T20 in 2019.

A number of Sri Lankan players had faced respiratory issues back then, while some even vomited in the dressing room due to the hazardous conditions. Bangladesh are already out of reckoning, while Sri Lanka's semifinal hopes are hanging by a thread, depending more on mathematics and luck than performance.

Ranked ninth out of 10 teams, Bangladesh are playing for pride, while Sri Lanka are little better placed at seventh in the standings and will look to hold on to the po-

sition to qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

Sri Lanka have an overwhelming 42-9 record against Bangladesh in 53 ODIs but the Tigers had defeated the Islanders in the warm-up game ahead of the World Cup and will take inspiration from that win. Sri Lanka are coming into the match after facing a nightmare against Indian pacers, who bundled them out for 55 during a 302-run thrashing and Kusal Mendis and his men will have to pick themselves up quickly against an equally hurt Tigers.

While injuries have been an issue, Lankan players have also faltered against high-quality opponents and Bangladesh will have to produce a superlative performance to exploit their weakness. Sadeera Samarawickrama has been the find of the tournament for the Lankans, who have been served well by Pathum Nissanka and skipper Kusal Mendis in their batting from

time to time though they lacked consistency.

In bowling too, Lankan pacers have blown hot and cold, while lack of key spinners have hurt the team. For Bangladesh, it has been a forgettable outing as they have managed just one win against Afghanistan in the tournament.

A chaotic build-up and lack of form of their players have seen them succumbing to their sixth successive loss and become the first team to be eliminated from the World Cup following a defeat to Pakistan in their last game.

Their batters have not been able to build partnerships, while the bowlers too have failed to stop the run flow or take wickets, leaving even skipper Shakib Al Hasan bereft of any answers.

**Squads:** **Bangladesh:** Shakib Al Hasan (c), Litton Das (wk), Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Najmul Hossain Shanto (vc), Tawhid Hridoy, Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Mahmudullah Riyad, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Nasum Ahmed, Mahedi Hasan, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib

**Sri Lanka:** Kusal Mendis (c&wk), Kusal Perera, Pathum Nissanka, Lahiru Kumara, Dimuth Karunaratne, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Charith Asalanka, Dhananjaya de Silva, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Kasun Rajitha, Angelo Mathews, Dilshan Madushanka, Dushan Hemantha, Chamika Karunaratne. Match starts 2:00 PM IST. (PTI)

**MANCHESTER, Nov 5:** The Premier League table has a familiar look about it after Manchester City blasted its way back to the top with a 6-1 rout of Bournemouth on Saturday. Arsenal's 1-0 loss at Newcastle left the defending champions out in front, at least until Tottenham plays Chelsea on Monday.

Belgium's Jeremy Doku was in irresistible form — scoring one and creating another four goals — to help City extend its 100% record at home this season and keep the heat on Spurs. That result also put the pressure on Arsenal to win big at St. James' Park if it was to move above City on goal difference. Instead, Anthony Gordon's contested goal inflicted a first league defeat of the season on last year's runner-up to leave it in third place and in danger of dropping out of the top four depending on results on Sunday.

Both Liverpool and Aston Villa have the chance to move above Arsenal when they play at Luton and Nottingham Forest, respectively. Tottenham, meanwhile, could open up a five-point lead on London rival Arsenal if it beats Chelsea.

Tottenham is now the only unbeaten team left in England's top flight and will be looking to extend that run when up against former manager Mauricio Pochettino on Monday.

**ARSENAL ANGER** Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta was furious after an extensive VAR review allowed Gordon's 64th-minute goal to stand and Newcastle secured a narrow win.

VAR checked for three possible infringements before giving the goal. There were checks to see if the ball had gone out of play, if there had been a foul and for a possible offside. In the end the goal stood and it proved to be decisive. "I've been 20 years in this country and now I feel ashamed. It's a disgrace and there's too much at stake here," Arteta said. "It's not good enough. I feel embarrassed to be part of this."

**SAUDI SOCCER**

This was a good week for Newcastle and Saudi Arabia's ambitions in soccer. In the space of a few days, the Saudi-backed club has secured back-to-back wins against two of the traditional giants of the English game after beating Manchester United 3-0 in the League Cup on Wednesday.

Saudi Arabia is also all but certain to host the 2034



World Cup after its only rival, Australia, pulled out of the running this week.

**UNITED RELIEF**

Under-pressure Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag was minutes away from a latest setback at Fulham until Bruno Fernandes' late strike secured a 1-0 win. Like his coach, Fernandes has also come in for criticism as the sense of crisis at United has deepened, with club great Roy Keane calling for the Portugal international to be stripped of the captaincy. But the midfielder came up with a crucial goal to end his team's two-game losing streak (in all competitions) in the first minute of stoppage time. "It's really important, we know the position we are in," Fernandes said. "We need to get results, it was massively important for us to get the three points today. 'I know we have even more than we showed today.'"

**HAALAND BLOW**

Erling Haaland was substituted at halftime against Bournemouth after twisting his ankle.

While Guardiola said the withdrawal was a precaution, the Norway striker looked in discomfort when pulling up in the first half. Guardiola did not know if his leading scorer would be available to play Young Boys in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Even without him, City cruised to its latest win, with Doku showing his match-winning qualities.

"When he takes the ball and goes, everybody is excited and myself too. Something is going to happen and it's happened," Guardiola said. (AP)

## OIL-NFR North East Half Marathon showcases incredible performances at Bogibeel Bridge

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Nov 5:** In a display of sporting prowess and enthusiasm, the OIL-NFR North East Half Marathon was held in Dibrugarh, witnessing a strong turnout of 800 participants across three categories. The event took place at the iconic Bogibeel Bridge, the longest rail-cum-road bridge in the nation.

Distinguished dignitaries such as Union minister of state for petroleum and natural gas, Rameswar Teli, along with senior officials from Oil India Limited and NF Railways, inaugurated the marathon. Notable figures including Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan, district commissioner Bikram Kairi, and SP Shwetank Mishra graced the event with their presence.

**Results:**

**21-km Category:**

**Men:**

1. Trilok Kumar - 1st Place (1:08:44 hours)
2. Monobi Sinha - 2nd Place (1:10:04)
3. Niroj Kumar Maurya - 3rd Place (1:12:12)

**Women:**

1. Nodia Patar - 1st Place (1:37:05 hours)
2. Maya Medhi - 2nd Place (1:40:20)
3. Monisha Doley - 3rd Place (1:44:40)

**10-km Category:**

**Men:**

1. Daniel Lyngdoh W - 1st Place (32:42 minutes)
2. Tikhswar Kurmi - 2nd Place (33:42)
3. Bishal Urang - 3rd Place (34:06)

**Women:**

1. Sangmir Terongpi - 1st Place (42:19 minutes)
2. Fulmoni Urang - 2nd Place (44:52)
3. Lakhi Bhumij - 3rd Place (45:16)

**5-km Category:**

**Men:**

1. Dhormeswar Gunju - 1st Place (16:36 minutes)
2. Lalbahadur Monia - 2nd Place (16:48)
3. Sunil Sen - 3rd Place (17:12)

**Women:**

1. Dipa Sen - 1st Place (22:53 minutes)
2. Hunmoni Munda - 2nd Place (23:03)
3. Ankita Deka - 3rd Place (23:52)

The marathon highlighted exceptional athleticism and endurance, celebrating the spirit of fitness and community engagement in Dibrugarh.

## Battle of attrition for birthday boy Kohli scores laborious 49<sup>th</sup> hundred

**KOLKATA, Nov 5:** The 'chase master' had a different target on a Super Sunday. The aim was to chase the original 'master'.

Virat Kohli, on his 35th birthday, was rewarded for his unwavering dedication and remarkable consistency as he equalled Sachin Tendulkar's world record of 49 ODI hundreds - in only 277 innings. Phenomenal is the only word that comes to mind.

The record is an ode to Kohli's determination to bring down almost all the existing batting records.

However Kohli's celebration was muted after getting that century off 119 balls. It seemed there was more relief than elation and one couldn't but revisit Tendulkar's epic 100th hundred and the 49th ODI ton in Mirpur back in 2012.

The 114 off 147 balls wasn't Tendulkar's best effort and neither is Kohli's ton in Kolkata among his top-10 ODI hundreds.

"The 49 ODI hundreds record is not my record, it's India's record. As long as it stays with India, I am happy," Tendulkar said in a statement to media.

The stage was set, the party had begun in the afternoon itself when Rohit Sharma served the appetizer with a 40 that was as juicy as the shammi kebabs that one gets at the Park Street eateries. Birthday boy Virat Kohli stepped in with 67,000 people bracing for a succulent main course -- a record-equalling 49th ODI hundred.

Having missed out in Dharamsala and Mumbai, Kohli was determined to get the 'monkey off his back' in the 'city of joy'.

The thousands of smart phone torch-lights were ready for that moment when a tap towards cover off Kagiso Rabada got him the milestone.

It was more of a battle of attrition as he played as many as 55 dot balls. That's 9.1 overs without a run and another interesting



statistical nugget is that only one of his 10 boundaries came off spinners and it was Aiden Markram, the part-time off-break bowler.

**Proteas' leg theory works**

While analysing Kohli's batting today, one needs to take into account that India scored 100 runs in 13.1 overs and certainly looked good for a total of 375.

Virat faced 56 deliveries from the two left-arm spinners - Keshav Maharaj (29 balls) and Tabraiz Shamsi (27 balls) and scored 35 runs in all.

Off Maharaj, he got 16 that had 14 singles, mostly whipped down to the deep mid-wicket region. Shamsi gave away 19, including 13 singles.

The two spinners, interestingly didn't concede a single boundary to Kohli. Even more fascinating was a 10-ball over from Shamsi (due to the four wides) where Kohli mistimed four pull-shots off rank bad balls.

"It was a wicket that was tricky to bat on,

we got a great start from Rohit and Shubman. My job was to keep it going on. The ball started gripping and turning, it slowed down and then my role was to bat deep. That was what was communicated to me by the team management," Kohli told host broadcasters during the innings break.

However the same Shamsi was hit for five fours and a six in all - four of them by Shreyas Iyer and was swept confidently twice by Suryakumar Yadav.

Maharaj was exceptional during the innings as he didn't concede a single boundary.

Now what exactly did the two left-arm spinners did?

Save the ball that beat Shubman Gill's outside edge, Maharaj stuck to leg-middle line and Shamsi, as a wrist spinner, bowled his stock delivery, that turns into a right hander.

During the middle-overs, Temba Bavuma employed a square leg and shortish mid-

wicket on the leg-side inside the 30-yard circle along with a deep mid-wicket and fine-leg at the boundary.

Now Kohli isn't a natural sweeper or slog sweeper against slow bowlers. Once they bowled the leg-middle line with the occasional ball gripping, all he did was to try the tuck off his hips but the area was cordoned and hence it didn't work for him.

Those who watched India's Test match against England in Bengaluru back in 2001, would remember how Nasser Hussain very effectively used Ashley Giles to break Tendulkar's rhythm with leg-stump line.

But that was a Test match with no fielding restrictions and this was ODIs and hence Bavuma and his bowlers would get credit for perfect execution.

In fact, Iyer, looked better during that phase as he started using his feet and also played the inside out over extra cover effectively.

At the end of the 40th over, Kohli was batting on 75 off 95 balls and by the end of the innings, he scored another 26 off 26 balls. The last 10 overs yielded 87 and the remaining 61 runs from other batters came off 34 balls.

Kohli had his reason to justify the pace of his innings.

"We don't have Hardik in the team, so we knew a wicket or two could cost us, we had to dig deep and take the match deep," he said.

From one angle it might appear selfish that he chased his hundred but it is also true that when you not do have Pandya for a flourishing finish and Mohammed Shami is slated to bat at number eight, Kohli had to change his approach and go safe.

It won't matter much though in the final outcome as India are already through to the semifinals. (PTI)