

WORLD 6 Trump to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital: White House UK foils terror plot to blow up Downing Street gates, kill PM NATION 8 TMC accuses Amit Shah of model code violation Priyanka accuses Modi govt of 'neglecting' Wayanad rehab efforts

Campaigning for by-elections to 5 State assembly seats gains momentum Samaguri by-poll: Three nominations spiked; 11 valid

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 29: The nomination papers of 11 of 14 aspirants in Assam's Samaguri assembly constituency, where bypolls will take place next month, were found to be valid on Tuesday. The scrutiny of nomination papers in the Samaguri seat was withheld on Monday due to some issues in the documents of two independent candidates. "Of the 14 candidates who filed their nomination papers, documents of 11 have been accepted, and those of three aspirants rejected during the scrutiny," an official release said. Bypoll will take place in Dholai (SC), Sidli (ST), Bongaigaon, Behali and Samaguri assembly constituencies as these seats fell vacant with the representatives of them winning the recent Lok Sabha elections. A total of 38 candidates had filed nomination papers for these seats till the last date on Friday.



Out of those, nine had submitted nominations in Dholai, three in Sidli, eight in Bongaigaon, four in Behali and 14 in Samaguri. Barring Samaguri, the nomination papers of all 24 candidates in four other assembly constituencies were found to be valid on Monday. The last date for withdrawal of nomination is

October 30. The polling will take place on November 13 and votes will be counted on November 23. Meanwhile, campaigning for the by-polls has gained momentum. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has said that its top national leaders, including Arvind Kejriwal, Atishi and Bhagwant Mann, will be campaigning in the Assam by-elections even as other major national parties in the contest, BJP and Congress, are mostly sticking with the state leaders. A BJP spokesperson said the party's by-poll campaign will be led by its state leadership, including Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and state party president Bhabesh Kalita. "Since it is a by-election, our campaign will be helmed by the local leadership. Besides the chief minister and party president, the state ministers, MLAs, MPs and other leaders are already in full campaign mode," he said. The saffron party is contesting three (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Virtual inauguration of facilities at AIIMS-Guwahati

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma took to microblogging site X on Tuesday to announce the virtual inauguration of various facilities at AIIMS, Guwahati by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sarma wrote, "On #Ayurveda-Day2024, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji launched and laid the foundation stone of various health sector projects worth over ₹12,850cr & dedicated several new initiatives to the people of Assam." On the occasion of Ayurveda Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated various facilities at the Guwahati-based AIIMS and research organisation NIPER. He unveiled a radiotherapy block, MRI 3T, dexa scan, audiotrium, biplane and night shelter



units at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)-Guwahati, located in Kamrup district. Besides, he inaugurated the Centre of Excellence for Phytopharmaceuticals at the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER). PM Modi also launched development projects worth nearly ₹ 12,850 crore and extended his government's flagship health insurance scheme 'Ayushman Bharat' to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above. Notably, CM Sarma expressed his gratitude to the PM and Union health minister for their efforts to enhance the facilities of the institution. He concluded, "I joined this momentous occasion from AIIMS, Guwahati."

Manipur Police arrest eight members of banned UNLF(P)

IMPHAL, Oct 29: The police have arrested eight members of the banned United National Liberation Front of Manipur (Pambei) for allegedly threatening residents and obstructing the land demarcation process in Thoubal district, police said in a statement on Tuesday. Police recovered a substantial cache of arms and ammunition from the suspects, including five AK-47 assault rifles, one M-16 rifle, and a 9mm pistol, the statement said. The arrest highlighted growing concerns among security agencies regarding escalating violence linked to the UNLF(P), despite the group having signed a ceasefire agreement with the Union government last November. The UNLF(P), led by Kh Pambei, became the first Meitei armed group in the Imphal Valley to enter into a ceasefire agreement with the government on November 29, 2023. This agreement was aimed at renouncing violence, yet officials have criticised the group for failing to provide a list of its cadres who were expected to surrender their

weapons. The arrested individuals have been identified as Laishram Atangba Meitei alias Ningthoujao (24), Leishangthem Nongpok Meitei alias Singajit (26), Thongam Khangakpa Meitei alias Jatra (45), Thiyam Ningthou Meitei alias Ingocha (46), Akoijam Thoupangba Meitei alias Thoiba (24), Thounaojam Sugnu Ngakpa alias Yaiphaba Meitei (26), Ngasepam Nongthouba Meitei alias Romio (40), and Sorokhaibam Nganba alias Dayananda Singh (27). According to the police, these individuals were involved in illegal activities involving sophisticated firearms. The police also seized 16 mobile phones and a Sports Utility Vehicle during the operation. Security agencies have raised alarms over the UNLF(P)'s violent actions against both law enforcement and civilians, which have persisted since the ceasefire agreement. Notably, UNLF(P) members have been accused of participating in violent (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Locals protest govt's plan to chop century-old trees for flyover

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Eminent personalities and residents of Guwahati on Tuesday condemned the BJP-led Assam government for planning to cut around 25 century-old trees to make way for a flyover in the heart of the city. They hit the streets and protested the government's decision to cut the trees, some of which are over 200 years old on the banks of the iconic Dighalipukhuri tank, to facilitate the ongoing construction of the flyover. Later, they submitted a petition to the Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court and requested him to take suo motu cognisance of the matter, which is crucial for the welfare of the environment.

The government is constructing a four-lane 5.05 km long flyover, the longest in the city, from Dighalipukhuri to Noonmati, at a cost of ₹ 852.68 crore. It is scheduled to become operational by 2026. "I cannot believe that in the name of development, the first thing the authorities think is felling trees. The bankruptcy in imagination in town planning is unfathomable. Please stop felling trees," Bollywood actor Adil Hussain, who hails from Assam, said in a post on Facebook. Sharing a video clip of the protest by eminent people on the banks of Dighalipukhuri, he expressed dismay that 150-year-old trees are set to be chopped in mere minutes in one (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Karbi Anglong DC announces publication of DPER for 2024-25

HT Bureau DIPHU, Oct 29: The District Commissioner of Karbi Anglong, Nirola Phangchopi held a press meet to announce the publication of the Draft Photo Electoral Roll (DPER) for 2024-2025, as per the directions of the Election Commission of India. The press meet was attended by ADC Chandan Borgohain, ACS election officer, DIPRO, and representatives from various media outlets. The Draft Photo Electoral Roll 2025 has been published with January 1, 2025, as the qualifying date, and the period for filing claims and objections regarding inclusion, modification, or deletion is open from October 29 to November 28, 2024. The final publication of the electoral roll is scheduled for January 6, 2025. The draft electoral roll is available for public inspection at all polling stations and the election branch of the deputy commissioner's office in Karbi Anglong, during office hours. The current draft reflects a total voter count of 520,224 for the district, representing a net increase of 0.57% from the last final publication on February 8, 2024, held prior to the parliamentary election. Of these, 257,739 are male voters, showing a 0.45% increase, and 262,484 are female voters, with a 0.68% increase from the previous roll. The updated voter population by legislative assembly constituencies stands at 152,973 for Bokajan, 187,725 (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

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Monopoly Bachao Syndicate; Rahul Gandhi alleges 'nexus'

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: The Congress on Tuesday levelled fresh conflict of interest charges against SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch, with Rahul Gandhi claiming a "Monopoly Bachao Syndicate" was at work, at the core of which was a "dangerous nexus" among the Adani Group, key regulatory bodies, and the BJP. The opposition party alleged that Buch rented out her property to a company associated with an individual connected to the Indiabulls Group, which was under the stock market regulator's scanner. There was no immediate reaction from either Buch or the Adani group to the allegations. However, previously both the SEBI chief and the Adani group had separately dismissed allegations of any wrongdoing. The opposition party also alleged that Buch has been associated with Predible Health Private Limited, holding equity in it, and she continued to hold shares in the company even after becoming a full-time member of SEBI. The party further pointed out that Jacesa Investments Limited which is based out of St Vincent and The Grenadines and invested in Predible Health Private Limited, is listed in offshore leaks by Paradise Papers shared by ICIJ. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, the Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera also alleged that Ananth Narayan Gopalkrishnan, who became a Whole Time Member at SEBI on October 10, 2022, also rented out his property in Mumbai to a stockbroker hired (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Advertisement for Rozgar Mela 2024. Text: ২০০৮ চনৰ ৩০ অক্টোবৰৰ অভিশপ্ত দিনটোত সন্ত্ৰাসবাদীৰ দ্বাৰা সংঘটিত ধাৰাবাহিক বোমা বিস্ফোৰণত প্ৰাণ হেৰুওৱা লোকসকললৈ গভীৰ শ্ৰদ্ধাঞ্জলি নিবেদন কৰিছোঁ. ৩০ অক্টোবৰ ২০২৪. তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত. Connect with us @diprassam dipr.assam.gov.in

Young achievers across NE gathered to mark the milestone Rozgar Mela is a celebration of hope and new beginnings: Margherita



HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 29: The Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Textile Pabitra Margherita addressed the gathering at Rozgar Mela 2024 held on Tuesday celebrating the new beginnings for thousands of young aspirants and underscoring the government's commitment to a prosperous, self-reliant India. "Today is not just an event," the minister said, "it is a celebration of hope, new beginnings, and limitless possibilities. This is a day where dreams take flight, and the future of our youth shines even brighter." He highlighted how the Rozgar Mela reflects the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose pursuit of Atmanirbhar Bharat fuels India's growth journey. As part of this initiative, over 51,000 appointment letters were distributed nationwide, placing young individuals in diverse roles across various ministries and departments. "This is a promise made by our Honorable Prime Minister to ensure no one is left behind on our journey toward a developed and prosperous India," the minister said. In Meghalaya, 207 appointed letters were distributed among the aspirants, of which 191 are from the department of post, 15 from the Railways, and 1 from NIT Meghalaya. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Janasanyog/D/8069/24/30 October 2024

South Korea's POSCO joins hands with JSW Group to tap India's steel, renewable energy market

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: South Korea's POSCO Group on Tuesday signed an agreement with Sajjan Jindal's JSW Group to set up an integrated steel plant in India with an initial capacity of 5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA), which, as per industry estimates may cost around ₹ 40,000 crore.

A statement by the JSW group in this regard did not give details of either the investment or location of the proposed integrated steel plant. However, according to industry estimates, 1 MTPA greenfield steel project costs around ₹ 8,000 crore.

"JSW Group (JSW) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Korea's POSCO Group (POSCO), outlining a framework for collaboration in steel, battery materials, and renewable energy sectors in India," the home-grown business house said in a statement. The MoU was signed at JSW Group's corporate headquarters in Mumbai, in the presence of Jindal, POSCO Chairman Chang In-hwa, and senior executives from both the business houses.

For POSCO, it will fulfil its long-held ambition of having a large steel unit in India to cash in on growing demand in the country.

The Korean company had also explored the possibility of collaboration with state-owned RINL and privately held Adani Group for setting up a steel plant. As part of the



MoU, both JSW Group and POSCO will also explore collaborations in the areas of battery materials related to Electric Vehicles (EVs), and renewable energy for meeting the captive requirements of the proposed integrated steel plant.

"This MoU with POSCO marks a significant step forward in our journey to contribute to the Indian steel industry. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, India presents tremendous opportunities for sustainable growth, and our partnership with POSCO strengthens JSW's commitment to drive that transformation.

"Together, we aim to set a benchmark in technology and sustainability that can shape the future of manufacturing in India and beyond," said Sajjan Jindal, Chairman

of JSW Group, which has presence in sectors like steel, automobiles, infrastructure among others.

The partnership will focus on setting up an integrated steel plant in India with an initial capacity of 5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

"This collaboration will contribute significantly to the economic development of Korea and India and drive our joint efforts towards a more eco-friendly and sustainable future," Chang In-hwa, Chairman of POSCO said.

JSW's leading manufacturing presence and strong project execution capabilities, combined with POSCO's technological excellence, would create a strong platform for developing cutting edge solutions for the Indian steel and energy sectors," Chang In-hwa added.

POSCO has been trying to enter the Indian market for years. Its earlier attempts include setting up a 12 MTPA project at USD 12 billion investment in Odisha. However, the foreign player had to drop the plan due to inordinate delays in land acquisition.

Later the company engaged with state-owned Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) to take forward its greenfield steel plant project.

A joint working group was formed comprising RINL and POSCO officials to prepare a pre-feasibility report with respect to their plans to set up the mega steel facility in Andhra Pradesh.

Luck did not play for POSCO and RINL headed for disinvestment with a Cabinet's decision of 2021.

In January 2021, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gave its 'in-principle' approval for 100 per cent disinvestment of government stake in RINL, also called Visakhapatnam Steel Plant or Vizag Steel, along with RINL's stake in its subsidiaries/joint ventures through strategic disinvestment by way of privatisation.

Earlier in 2022, POSCO had signed an initial pact with Billionaire Gautam Adani led Adani Group and to explore business opportunities to invest about USD 5 billion on projects that include setting up an integrated steel mill in Gujarat. (PTI)

Gold rises ₹ 300 to ₹ 81,400 per 10 grams on Dhanteras

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: Gold price rose by ₹ 300 to ₹ 81,400 per 10 grams, near its record high level, in the national capital on Tuesday due to heavy demand for Dhanteras by jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Silver increased by ₹ 200 to ₹ 99,700 per kg on rising demand by industrial units and coin makers. It had closed at ₹ 99,500 per kg in the previous close on Monday.

Traders said they are preferring silver coins for token buying while ignoring the traditional purchases of gold at existing levels.

Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped ₹ 300 to near an all-time peak of ₹ 81,000 per 10 grams. On Monday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity had closed at ₹ 81,100 and ₹ 80,700 per 10 grams. In-futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery appreciated by ₹ 178 or 0.23 per cent to ₹ 78,744 per 10 grams.

"Gold prices in MCX remained positive, with Dhanteras adding enthusiasm for long positions. More buying occurred on this auspicious day, pushing the prices on the MCX and trading above ₹ 80,000 in the physical jewellery market," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Silver contracts for December delivery bounced ₹ 786 or 0.81 per cent to ₹ 98,210 per kg on the MCX. Globally, Comex gold futures rose 0.23 per cent to USD 2,762.20 per ounce.

"Gold advanced toward a record in the European trading hours on Tuesday amid concerns about the US Presidential election and escalating US debt crisis continue to fuel safe-haven demand, pushing flows into the precious metal," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. (PTI)

Dhanteras gems and jewellery sales may cross ₹ 30,000 cr amid rising prices

KOLKATA, Oct 29: Dhanteras and Diwali demand for gems and jewellery this year is anticipated to remain strong despite rising prices, with Diwali sales potentially crossing ₹ 30,000 crore in the domestic market, according to industry experts. Price hikes in precious metals are prompting consumers to view gold as a reliable asset, while silver is gaining popularity among people due to its relatively lower price and high industrial demand.

Some experts estimate sales growth in value terms of 10-15 per cent year-on-year this Diwali across the country, though there may be a dent in volume.

Silver has emerged as the top performer with returns exceeding 40 per cent, followed by gold at 23 per cent, significantly surpassing stock market benchmark returns.

Eastern Regional Chairman of the Gems & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said, "Gold continues to shine due to global uncertainties and geopolitical conditions, while silver is drawing substantial interest as an affordable option."

The Council also noted a shift from diamonds to gold this year, as

Sensex advances 364 pts on late buying in banking, oil shares

MUMBAI, Oct 29: Benchmark Sensex recouped its early losses to close higher by nearly 364 points on Tuesday, extending gains to the second day on the back of late buying in banking and oil shares.

The 30-share BSE barometer climbed 363.99 points or 0.45 per cent to settle at 80,369.03 with 16 of its components ending higher and 14 closing lower.

The index opened lower and fell by 583.69 points to 79,421.35 in late morning deals. However, buying in banking, financial and oil shares in the second half helped recoup losses and close the day higher. The index hit a high of 80,450.48 in day trade.

The NSE Nifty rose 127.70 points or 0.52 per cent to 24,466.85.

Firm global trends and unabated buying by domestic institutional investors (DIIs) helped in the rebound, traders said. From the 30 Sensex pack, State Bank of India jumped 5 per cent, followed by

ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro.

In contrast, Maruti, Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Bharti Airtel, Indianud Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the laggards.

"Nifty extended its recovery for a second consecutive session on Tuesday rebounding well from morning lows. Banks (including PSU Banks) did well for the second consecutive session," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.74 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.71 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, bankex jumped 2.20 per cent, financial services (2 per cent), realty (1.46 per cent), capital goods (1.28 per cent) and utilities (1.26 per cent).

Consumer Discretionary, telecommunication, IT and tech were the laggards. A total of 2,242 stocks advanced while 1,623 de-

clined and 126 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"The Nifty started on a negative note, but resilience in select heavyweights, particularly in the banking sector, spurred a steady rebound as the session advanced," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,228.08 crore on Monday, while DIIs bought equities worth ₹ 1,400.85 crore, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled in the green while Shanghai ended lower. European markets were trading higher. The US markets ended in positive territory on Monday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.66 per cent higher at USD 71.89 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 602.75 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at 80,005.04 on Monday. The Nifty soared 158.35 points or 0.65 per cent to 24,339.15. (PTI)

Bharti Airtel anticipates change in board designations

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Gopal Vittal the current Managing Director & CEO of Bharti Airtel for the last twelve years is set to take charge as the Vice Chairman. During his period, Airtel built a winning portfolio of businesses across mobile, B2B, Home Broadband, DTH and digital services. Even in mobile, an intensely competitive space, Airtel has seen its revenue market share grow from 30% to 40%. As part of a structured succession process, Gopal in his role, while continuing to lead the India business, will take on broader telecom responsibilities across the group. Gopal will be appointed to the Board of Airtel Africa Plc as the Bharti nominee director to provide strategic guidance. In addition, he will be responsible for driving group synergies in select areas such as Network strategy, digital & technology, procurement and talent. Gopal will move into the role of Executive Vice Chairman of Bharti Airtel Ltd on January 1, 2026. To succeed Gopal as the MD and CEO, Shashwat Sharma currently Chief Operation Officer, will be appointed MD & CEO of Bharti Airtel Ltd on January 1, 2026. In preparation for this role, he is being appointed CEO designate of the Company. As the CEO designate,

Shashwat will be responsible for the entire end-to-end consumer business. Gopal will be responsible for mentoring and grooming Shashwat to take over as MD & CEO of Bharti Airtel Ltd. Gopal will start to spend time between Delhi and Bangalore. He will continue to travel extensively to ensure a structured transition and provide leadership and oversight across the group including overseas operations.

Speaking on the occasion Sunil Bharti Mittal, chairman, Bharti Airtel said, "Airtel, India's foremost corporate entity, has had a distinguished record of well thought out structured succession planning. I am extremely pleased with the succession and transition plan of leadership at Airtel and there could not have been a better time for Airtel to unveil the new arrangement where change and continuity will go hand in hand."

"Empowerment has been an article of faith with me which has resulted in a highly energized management delivering superior results. Airtel is one of the rare home grown enterprises where the finest professionals combine entrepreneurial flair to bring to hundreds of millions of customers, the best technology and services in our industry", she further said.

the popularity of lab-grown diamonds has impacted the demand for natural diamonds.

Ashok Bengani, President of the Ankurhati Gems and Jewellery Manufacturers Welfare Association, highlighted industry efforts to reduce import duties to boost market sustainability.

"The geopolitical situation underscores the need for visionary leadership from the Finance Ministry to reduce import duties by 9 per cent, from the current 15 per cent on gold imports, making it easier for the market to thrive," he said. "This Dhanteras and Diwali season, sales are expected to cross ₹ 30,000 crore, despite some decline in volume," Bengani added.

Suvankar Sen, MD & CEO of Senco Gold Ltd, noted that higher gold prices may slightly impact sales volume, estimating a 12-15 per cent decline in volume. However, value-wise, he expects a 10-12 per cent increase.

"The addition of lower 9Kt purity and lightweight gold jewellery

options has expanded demand opportunities, especially among working women," he said.

Anjali Jewellers echoed this sentiment, citing strong demand driven by gold's reputation as a safe investment.

"This Dhanteras, there's an individualistic trend with buyers selecting pieces tailored to their needs. While some are purchasing bridal jewellery, others prefer lightweight, everyday pieces," said Annargha Utti Choudhury of Anjali Jewellers. Men's jewellery is also seeing a notable uptick, with items such as bracelets, rings, and ear studs gaining traction, he said. Bablu De, President of the Swarna Silpa Bachao Committee, a prominent retailers' body, expressed optimism despite rising prices, with expected sales growth of 10-20 per cent.

"This year's business is expected to be better, with higher prices giving consumers confidence that the value of gold will continue to

Contd. from Page 1.

Samaguri by-poll

seats, leaving one constituency each for its allies AGP and UPPL. The Congress's list of 40 star campaigners mostly comprises state leaders including party chief Bhupen Kumar Borah, Leader of Opposition in the assembly Debabrata Saikia and the party MPs and MLAs.

Monopoly Bachao Syndicate

by a brokerage firm called IMC India Securities, which is regulated by SEBI, and received ₹ 64.8 lakhs in rent. Simultaneously, the party put out a video, the third in a series featuring Gandhi and Khera, in which the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha talks about how the Adani Defence website allegedly reveals how the company profits by "merely rebranding" foreign-made weapons.

In his post along with the video, Gandhi said, "The rot in India's institutional framework has reached alarming depths with the rise of a 'Monopoly Bachao Syndicate'. At the core of this syndicate is a dangerous nexus between Adani, key regulatory bodies, and the Modi-led BJP." The Adani Defence website reveals how the company profits by merely rebranding foreign-made weapons, while crucial funds meant for training, pensions and the welfare of young soldiers and their families are diverted through schemes like Agniveer, he alleged.

"This betrayal compromises national security and jeopardises our youth's future," Gandhi said. "Previously, we exposed how the 'Adani Bachao Syndicate' thrives through the complicity of institutions like SEBI under Madhubu Buch, who is accused of manipulating the system to protect Adani's inflated valuations," he said.

Gandhi said Buch's role raises serious questions about regulatory capture and the erosion of institutional integrity in favour of corporate interests. "The Congress party has consistently raised alarms about this growing syndicate, exposing how Buch and others are consolidating power in the hands of a few, serving those in authority. We all know who is behind this 'Monopoly Bachao Syndicate,'" he said.

In a post on X, Gandhi said, "Monopoly Bachao Syndicate! Monopoly in Airports. Monopoly in Ports. Monopoly in Cement. Monopoly in Power. Monopoly in Defence too. Whatever sector Adani wants, Syndicate tries to get him a monopoly." Referring to the allegations made by Khera, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "This is just the latest disclosure in a string of such irregularities that have come to light, beginning with evidence that Ms Buch had links with the Adani Group." "The non-biological PM has in the meantime been conspicuously silent on this matter, perhaps due to Ms Buch's association with the Adani Group." Ramesh said. (PTI)

Locals protest govt's plan

of Guwahati's most beautiful areas. Senior advocate Angshuman Bora told PTI that a petition was filed before the Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court praying for a suo motu PIL against the government's decision. "Who can think of cutting trees? Probably the one who is born with a demon's soul," he said after taking part in the protest rally.

According to an RTI reply, the PWD stated that the authorities decided to chop trees surrounding the historic Dighalipukhuri without carrying out any environmental impact assessment and public hearing. "The RTI clearly showed that the government has violated norms. That's why we have approached the court. From tonight, we will guard the trees every night so that they cannot be cut. We will do it every night till the court decides," said author Tridib Borah. Padma Shri awardee Ajay Dutta, who joined the protest, termed the decision to cut trees as anti-human and said development is for the benefit of people, not against it.

"These beautiful trees, which house thousands of birds, cannot be felled due to the arrogance of one person. He has to listen to the people's voice," he said hinting at chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who also holds the PWD portfolio. Renowned poet Sankar Saikia said the government's decision is anti-people and such kinds of development are not needed at all. "You cannot develop by destroying nature. We have to protect it from this anti-people government," he added. Senior journalist Maimi Mahanta said these trees work as the lungs of Guwahati and they cannot be cut in the name of development. "This entire area and the trees are part of history and our heritage. We cannot wipe it from our society," she added.

According to popular legend, Dighalipukhuri was constructed by King Bhagadatta, who led the Kauravas in the Battle of Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata, during the 'swayamvar' of his daughter Bhanumati. Historically, the pond was used by the Ahoms as a naval dockyard, especially during the 1671 'Battle of Saraighat' on Brahmaputra. Its access to Brahmaputra was eventually closed during colonial times. The connecting portion was further filled, on which the Circuit House was built and later the Gauhati High Court came up.

Additionally, several landmark structures, including the state museum, district library, Rabindra Bhawan, the Reserve Bank, a section of Cotton College, Handique Girls' College (the first women's college in the Northeast), Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Hall, and the district courts are also housed there. (PTI)

Manipur Police arrest

incidents, including looting of arms from the 5th India Reserve Battalion in February.

Additionally, police apprehended a cadre from the proscribed People's Liberation Army in the Imphal West for allegedly involved in extortion. Despite the tense atmosphere in Manipur, police reported that the situation has remained under control over the past 24 hours, with security forces conducting search operations in vulnerable areas.

Authorities have increased security along National Highways 37 and 2 to ensure the safe passage of vehicles, especially those carrying essential goods. In light of recent events, the police have urged the public not to succumb to rumours and have called for the return of any looted arms and ammunition. Intelligence reports indicate that UNLFP members have been establishing camps in areas predominantly inhabited by the Kuki population, raising fears of targeted violence against the tribal community. Despite the ceasefire aimed at curbing hostilities, incidents have shown that UNLFP cadres continue to operate freely, armed and seemingly beyond the reach of law enforcement. The ongoing ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki communities have resulted in over 200 fatalities since May last year, underscoring the urgent need for lasting peace in the region.

The UNLF, founded in 1964, has a long history of insurgency in both Indian and neighbouring territories. The Centre has previously engaged with various armed groups in the Northeast to promote peace and development. The situation remains precarious, following the Manipur government's withdrawal from a Suspension of Operations agreement with Kuki groups amid concerns of territorial encroachment by insurgents. The Centre has not agreed to the Manipur government's decision. (PTI)

Karbi Anglong DC announces

for Howrahgah, and 179,526 for Diphu, showing varying increases across these regions, the DC informed. The DC further mentioned that the pre-revision efforts have included house-to-house verification, polling station rationalisation, and addressing discrepancies in the voter list. Following these activities, 23 new polling stations have been added across the district, with specific new additions in each constituency, namely Bokajan, Howrahgah, and Diphu, to better serve the electorate and streamline the voting process. She also said the public and all registered voters are encouraged to check their details in the Draft Photo Electoral Roll 2025. Claims and objections can be filed in person at the election branch or through digital means, including the BLO and voter helpline apps, or online at www.voters.eci.gov.in. Forms available include Form 6 for new voter registration, Form 7 for objections to inclusions or deletions, and Form 8 for address changes, corrections, or EPIC replacement. The DC urged all both level officers (BLOs) to work diligently and visit villages to ensure accurate voter data. This effort will help in achieving a comprehensive and error-free electoral roll for the district, ensuring all eligible citizens are properly represented.

Meanwhile, the district commissioner of West Karbi Anglong, Sarangapani Sharma, along with district election officer Anika Lekthepi, held a press conference at the district commissioner's conference hall in Hamren town, to announce the draft publication of the electoral roll for the two assembly constituencies No.111 Rongkhang (ST) LAC and No.112 Amri (ST) LAC.

The DC informed that the total voters of the district is 2, 27,692 out of which 1, 13,294 are female and 1, 14,393 are male. Rongkhang has a total of 1, 29,858 voters, out of which 6,5414 are male and 64, 444 are female. Meanwhile, Amri has a total of 97,834 out of which 48,984 are male and 48,850 are female.

The total polling stations of the two LACs is 312 in the district, which may be increased or decreased based on requirements, informed the DC. The press conference was also attended by MLA of Baithalangso, Rupsing Teron and ward commissioner of Dongkamukam town. The DC further stated that the draft electoral roll has been published to ensure transparency and accuracy in the electoral process.

Rozgar Mela is a

In Shillong, young achievers from Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, and Assam gathered to mark this milestone, showcasing the government's dedication to reaching every corner of India, including the vibrant and resource-rich Northeast. Exhorting the youth for dedication in their service, the minister said, "This day is not about statistics, it is about you. You are ambassadors of our government's vision for India. Your integrity, dedication, and commitment will be the foundation of our nation's growth, our motherland India's growth," he said. In a message to the candidates and their families, the minister extended his warmest congratulations, calling the occasion a proud moment for the nation. He encouraged all to work together to build a future that is prosperous, inclusive, and full of opportunity for every Indian.

Speaking to the Pressmen after the event, Margherita termed the Rozgar Mela an incredible event organised across 40 different locations in India, including right here in Meghalaya. "I am proud to see hundreds of successful youth gathered, eager to embrace their new roles. It fills me with joy to witness candidates expressing appreciation for the government's efforts", he added. He further stated, "This event is truly unprecedented, with over 51,000 appointment letters being distributed to our successful youth. I must say our youths are so empowered today listening to the honourable Prime Minister, who addressed the youth and guardians, that we are all contributors to nation-building. He also commended our youth and stakeholders in government for their commitment to advancing towards a Viksit Bharat". The minister expressed his gratitude for this remarkable achievement as he said, "Not just as a minister but as a citizen of India, I take great pride in witnessing this progress in New India, as we march towards the path of prosperity." With Rozgar Mela 2024, the government reiterates its promise to support, guide, and equip India's youth with skills and training, building a workforce ready to serve the country with dedication and integrity.

Earlier, PM Narendra Modi addressed the Rozgar Mela and distributed more than 51,000 appointment letters to newly appointed youth in government departments and organisations via videoconferencing.

Addressing the occasion, the Prime Minister noted the auspicious occasion of Dhanteras and conveyed his best wishes on the occasion. Underlining that this year's Diwali would be a special one, the Prime Minister said that it is the first Diwali since Lord Shri Ram has been seated in his magnificent temple in Ayodhya after 500 years.

He said that several generations have waited for this Diwali, while many have sacrificed their lives for it or faced adversities. The Prime Minister emphasised that the present generation is extremely fortunate to witness and become a part of such celebrations. In the atmosphere of festivity, said the Prime Minister, 51,000 youth are being handed out recruitment letters for government jobs. He congratulated the new recruits and conveyed his best wishes to them. The Prime Minister highlighted that offering permanent government jobs to lakhs of youths has been a legacy which is continuously going on. He added that lakhs of youths were handed appointment letters even in the states being governed by BJP and NDA allies.

The Prime Minister reiterated the government's commitment that the youth of the country should get maximum employment. Noting that the policies and decisions of the government have a direct impact on job creation, the Prime Minister highlighted the development of expressways, highways, roads, rail, ports, airports, laying of fibre cables, setting up of mobile towers and expansion of new industries in all parts of the country. (Input from PIB)

Congress launches Shakti Clubs in Morigaon

HT Correspondent MORIGAON, Oct 29: With the aim of empowering women in social, political, and educational spheres, the Indian National Congress (INC) launched a new campaign in the district on Tuesday...

Morigaon releases draft electoral roll for three constituencies

HT Correspondent JAGIROAD, Oct 29: The draft electoral roll for the 52nd Jagiroad, 53rd Laharighat, and 54th Morigaon constituencies was released on Tuesday by the district commissioner...



Image showing a draft electoral roll document with columns for names and addresses.

29, 2024, and November 28, 2024. All claims will be processed, and objections will be resolved by December 24, 2024. The final voter list will be published on January 6, 2025...

Teenager missing

HT Correspondent BOKAJAN, Oct 29: Family members are searching for 16-year-old Rahul Thakur, who has been missing since October 20. The son of Durgess Thakur and Moni Devi was last seen at his ancestral home in Santipur...

BTC initiates malaria control measures in Kokrajhar

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 29: In response to the increasing incidence of malaria cases in Kokrajhar district, the principal secretary of BTC, Akash Deep, has instructed the Health Department to enforce strict adherence to antimalarial treatment regimens...

identify asymptomatic carriers in high-risk zones. He encouraged collaboration among circle officers, gaonbura, VCDC members, forest officials, and health workers to monitor adherence to transmission-reducing practices...

these areas at risk of becoming malaria-endemic, urgent intervention strategies were proposed, including the installation of visual aids, distribution of IEC pamphlets, and the release of short videos aimed at promoting behavioral change and educating residents on preventive measures...

Karbi Anglong hosts 'Run for Unity' event to celebrate National Unity Day

HT Bureau DIPHU, Oct 29: In celebration of National Unity Day also called as 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas', the Karbi Anglong District Administration in collaboration with the Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA), Diphu, organized 'Run for Unity' event on Tuesday...

and other officials, gathered to honor the spirit of unity and integrity in the nation. Nirola Phangchopi, ACS, the District Commissioner of Karbi Anglong, addressed the media, underscoring the significance of National Unity Day...

Election training for by-election begins

HT Correspondent BISWANATH CHARIALI, Oct 29: Amit Khatri, IAS, general election observer, and Kamaldeep Singh, IRS, expenditure observer, appointed by the Election Commission of India for the upcoming by-election to the 77-Behali Assembly constituency, conducted a field visit on Monday...

APDCL cuts power at Bokajan govt guest house over unpaid bills

HT Correspondent BOKAJAN, Oct 29: The Assam Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APDCL) cuts power at bokajan govt guest house over unpaid bills on Tuesday. One instance is the Soil Conservation Inspection Bungalow (IB) at Bokajan, where the APDCL staff have gone to the office and disconnected electricity connection for a huge bill amount...

IISF 2024 to showcase India's science and tech vision at IIT Guwahati

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 29: India International Science Festival (IISF) 2024 is being organised at IIT Guwahati from November 30, 2024 to December 3, 2024 under the theme, "Transforming India into a Science and Technology Driven Global Manufacturing Hub"...

DBT, DoS, and DAE. He added that to improve meteorological services, the Central Government has launched a significant project titled 'Mission Mausam'. He also noted that India ranks among the top five countries with computational facilities for weather forecasting...

Closure order looms over illegal schools in Dalgao

HT Correspondent DALGAON, Oct 29: In a significant move, the Dalgao Block Education Office has issued closure notices to two schools—No 2 Mazgaon Abul Kalam Model Academy and No 5 Sunrise Academy—over alleged violations of government regulations. Acting on the district commissioner's directive (No SSA/DA/TT/QSE/618), dated August 9, 2024, the authorities have sparked concern among numerous unauthorised institutions operating in the region...

Dima Hasao hosts 'Run for Unity' to mark Rashtriya Ekta Diwas



HT Correspondent HAFLONG, Oct 29: Along with the rest of the nation, a 'Run for Unity' was held as a pre-celebration for Rashtriya Ekta Diwas to pay tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary on Tuesday...

NCC, sportspersons, and officials from various departments, all of whom took an active role. The 'Run for Unity' was flagged off by NCHAC executive member in charge, Donphainon Thaoson, who served as the chief guest of the program...

birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, it is a special occasion to foster and reinforce our dedication to preserving and strengthening the unity, integrity, and security of our nation. District commissioner Simanta Kr Das, ACS, also highlighted the significance of unity and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's contributions to India's integration, followed by a speech from superintendent of police, Mayank Kumar, IAS.

NFR introduces special trains & enhanced security measures



Image showing a train at a station platform with passengers and staff.

increased passenger flow, a total of 44 pairs of special trains comprising over 500 trips are running to and from the jurisdiction of NF Railway. These special trains are operating in addition to the scheduled passenger trains connecting major destinations in the eastern and northern parts of the country for Diwali and Chhath Puja. NF Railway has enhanced security measures at all major stations and trains within its jurisdiction during the festive rush...

Five cattle lifters thrashed by locals in Dibrugarh

HT Correspondent DIBRUGARH, Oct 29: Despite the enactment of the Assam Cattle Preservation Act, 2021, cattle smuggling remains rampant in Dibrugarh, with cattle lifters operating nightly in various areas. On Sunday night, local residents of the Bogibeel area in Dibrugarh apprehended and thrashed five cattle lifters before handing them over to the Bogibeel police. The cattle lifters have been identified as Vicky Hussain, Rahul Rai, Saiful Islam, Latu Das, and Kiran Das...

them. They were thrashed by the agitated crowd before being handed over to the police," a source said. The cattle lifters confessed to the crowd that they worked for one Atikur Ali from the Naliapool area in Dibrugarh. They also stated that they work for Atikur for an amount of ₹ 3000-4000 per day. Sources identified Atikur Ali as a primary cattle smuggler who has engaged henchmen to assist him in lifting stray cattle...

Dima Hasao holds key review meeting on child protection

HT Correspondent HAFLONG, Oct 29: The district administration of Dima Hasao, in collaboration with the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), conducted a review meeting on Monday, at the District Commissioner's Office Conference Hall. The meeting gathered representatives from various line departments and NGOs to discuss child protection issues and prepare for the upcoming National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) grievance redressal camp. The session was led by additional district commissioner Sangeeta Devi, ACS. ADC Devi outlined the meeting's objective, highlighting the District Level Bench Camp scheduled for November 8, 2024, at Government Boys' Higher Secondary School in Haflong...

objective, highlighting the District Level Bench Camp scheduled for November 8, 2024, at Government Boys' Higher Secondary School in Haflong. This bench will serve as a platform to address grievances related to violations of children's rights, providing a mechanism for individuals to lodge complaints about any form of deprivation or abuse affecting children in the district. She emphasised the importance of gathering data on child rights issues at the grassroots level, requesting block development officers (BDOs) to coordinate with Village Level Committees and stakeholders to report any instances of child rights violations. The collected information will be submitted to the District Commissioner's Office for further action. The bench camp will be open to complaints from anyone connected to children's welfare, including children themselves, parents, guardians, and child rights advocates. Complaints can come from any setting involving children, such as street settings, schools, child care institutions, children's homes, hostels, or any other facility where children study, train, or reside. Additionally, the District Child Protection Unit submitted a list of NGO volunteers who will work to raise awareness and support the Village and Block Level Committees.

LIC SILCHAR DIVISIONAL OFFICE JEEVAN PRAKASH, MEHERPUR, SILCHAR-15. NOTICE LIC of India will be shifting its Haflong Branch Office to the new address as under: LIC of India C/O- Mr. Otom Karigapsa Near Autonomous Council PO- Haflong District - Dima Hasao Haflong- 788819 The New Branch Premises will be functional tentatively from 06-01-2025. Sr. Divisional Manager

Election observers in Behali

HT Correspondent BISWANATH CHARIALI, Oct 29: Amit Khatri, IAS, general election observer, and Kamaldeep Singh, IRS, expenditure observer, appointed by the Election Commission of India for the upcoming by-election to the 77-Behali Assembly constituency, conducted a field visit on Monday to check the polling stations and SST arrangements, stated a press release. During their visit to the polling stations, the observers interacted with the sector officers, headmasters, and BLOs.

Election training for by-election begins

HT Correspondent BISWANATH CHARIALI, Oct 29: The first phase of training for polling personnel for the upcoming Behali by-election was held on Tuesday at Biswanath Commerce College. A total of 744 polling officials, including 186 presiding officers, 186 first polling officers, 186 second polling officers, and 186 third polling officers, received training. Sixteen master trainers conducted the training sessions. Additionally, women polling officials designated for five women-only polling stations also participated in the training. Notably, the second and third phases of election training will be held on November 5 and 9 at Biswanath College, respectively.

Dima Hasao hosts 'Run for Unity' to mark Rashtriya Ekta Diwas

HT Correspondent HAFLONG, Oct 29: Along with the rest of the nation, a 'Run for Unity' was held as a pre-celebration for Rashtriya Ekta Diwas to pay tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary on Tuesday. On this occasion, the district administration and Dima Hasao police organised a 'Run for Unity', which saw enthusiastic participation from the Assam Rifles, Assam Police, CRPF, NCC, sportspersons, and officials from various departments, all of whom took an active role. The 'Run for Unity' was flagged off by NCHAC executive member in charge, Donphainon Thaoson, who served as the chief guest of the program, from Lal Field to Council Parking in Haflong. NCHAC EM Donphainon Thaoson spoke about the observance of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, stating, "Commemorating the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, it is a special occasion to foster and reinforce our dedication to preserving and strengthening the unity, integrity, and security of our nation."

Former MIA Pradyut Bordoloi honoured by Margherita Congress

HT Correspondent MARGHERITA, Oct 29: The Margherita Block Congress Committee on Tuesday hosted a large-scale felicitation event at the Margherita Congress Bhawan to honour Pradyut Bordoloi, the former Margherita MLA and two-term Nagaon MP. Pradyut Bordoloi, a distinguished Congress leader in the region, was joined by his wife, Rani Bordoloi; son, Pratik Bordoloi, who is the state secretary of the IT Cell Assam Pradesh Congress Committee; Tinsukia District Congress Committee president Jayanta Kalita; Avinash Gogoi; Manoranjan Borgohain; Karna Bahadur Chetry; Sibannath Chetia; Md Toufik Khan; and other prominent Congress leaders. More than 500 Congress leaders and workers attended the grand felicitation programme. The event began with a grand motorcycle rally starting at Powai Gate and concluding at Margherita Congress Bhawan, where over 100 motorbikes and vehicles accompanied Pradyut Bordoloi in a spirited procession. Upon arrival, Pradyut Bordoloi was greeted with flowers and a traditional Adivasi Jhumur dance, embodying the cultural pride of the community. In addition to the Margherita Block Congress Committee, the ceremony saw participation from various local Congress bodies, including the Margherita Assembly Youth Congress Committee, Margherita NSUI, Margherita Mahila Congress Committee, Margherita Sewa Dal, Congress Gorkha Cell, and the Minority Cell, alongside more than 100 other organisations from across the Tinsukia district.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. No use being a damn fool about it - W C Fields

Maharashtra poll scene heats up

On Tuesday, the last day for filing nominations for the November 20 Maharashtra assembly elections, both the Mahayuti and the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliances were still looking for closure to their seat-sharing blues. Nobody in either grouping could provide clarity to the goings on, the protracted delays plaguing seat-sharing. And while on seat-sharing, the BJP is fighting allegations of "wrong-choice" candidates, accused of giving tickets to "outsiders". This, even as the Congress and the Shiv Sena (UBT) were at odds within the MVA and the BJP and the Shiv Sena (Shinde) within the Mahayuti. The ruling Mahayuti alliance was stuck for a decision on seven seats even as late as on the morning of October 29. And which party in the MVA was contesting which seats was not yet finalized. There was no finality on 16 seats. All the while, INDI-Alliance partner Samajwadi Party waited impatiently for a slice of the seats. SP leader Abu Azmi couldn't hold his patience and his tongue. He has been threatening that the Samajwadi Party would go it alone and to hell with the INDI-Alliance. A similar dilemma kept Mahayuti partners also wide awake. One got the impression throughout the week that the confusion in both the MVA and the Mahayuti wasn't about to go away anytime soon. And then jumped Maulana Sajjad Noman into the cauldron! Noman is spokesperson of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, an NGO which often intervenes on behalf of the Muslim community on issues concerning Muslims.

No Muslim spiritual leader had ever sought such a direct in-your face trade-off. Sajjad Noman even identified the politician to whom he had made the extraordinary offer and counter-demand. But Sajjad Noman had cut it too fine. Besides, how could he even think that any political party would agree to a seat-sharing arrangement with a Maulana? If Noman wanted to play spoilsport, he failed miserably. That being said, somebody wrote of the Maharashtra Assembly election going "off-script". But was there a script in the first place? The story is that both alliances failed to come to hassle-free seat-sharing arrangements. The Maha Vikas Aghadi was the headline for weeks and Mahayuti alliance partners had to fly to Delhi to sort out hitches. The MVA partners could not even stick to their 85-85-85 tie. Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party had to wait and wait for its share of the seat-loot, with Abu Azmi blowing hot and cold in turns! This, even as posters of Yogi Adityanath's 'Batenge toh Katenge' rang up a narrative that upset the MVA's well-laid out plan.

The BJP has been taking flak for engineering the split in the Shiv Sena, as well as in the NCP. Now, it is payback time and nobody is in a forgiving mood. Into this cauldron, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's 'batenge toh katenge' and AIMPLB spokesperson Maulana Sajjad Noman's offer of an bloc Muslim votes in return for Muslim seats in the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly. Maulana Sajjad Noman is in a hurry to beat Mehboob Ali's 2027 deadline though whether he got what he asked for is not known. November will show.

Faster civil trials in India through tech reforms and innovations are imperative

Indian judiciary faces a significant backlog of civil cases, with around 11.1 million cases pending, of which 22 percent are older than five years. These prolonged delays erode public trust in the legal system and leave many in a prolonged state of uncertainty while awaiting justice.

In Ramrameshvari Devi & Ors. versus Nirmala Devi, where Dr Arun Mohan served as amicus curiae, the Supreme Court expressed deep concern over the state of civil litigation in India. The court noted how the appellants in this case exemplified the misuse of the judicial system, enabling unscrupulous litigants to continually harass respondents and their families.

Civil suits in India take an average of 10 years to resolve, with an additional 10 years at the appellate stage if the enforcement of the decree is contested. Even then, the challenges for the plaintiff often intensify during the execution proceedings.

The court emphasised that the credibility of the judiciary is at risk unless urgent remedial actions are undertaken.

In response to these challenges, the court has implemented a series of directives aimed at accelerating case resolutions. Chief justices of high courts are now required to monitor older cases more closely, and civil court judges must adhere strictly to procedural timelines outlined in the Civil Procedure Code (CPC).

Trials are encouraged to proceed on a day-to-day basis, whenever feasible. These measures come in light of a specific case (Yashpal Jain versus Sushila Devi) pending for 41 years, illustrating the broader problem of delayed justice in India.

One of the key strategies for managing the backlog of cases involves leveraging technology to streamline court operations and enhance efficiency. Justice P. Sathasivam, former Chief Justice of India, has also emphasised the importance of e-governance in the judiciary. He advocates for the adoption of information and communication technology to streamline case progression, enhance transparency and ensure that cases are resolved within prescribed

timeframes. The integration of technology into the Indian judicial system has demonstrated significant promise in expediting the disposal of civil cases, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency and accessibility of legal processes. Launched in 2005, the e-Courts Mission Mode Project has been pivotal in digitising courts across India.

The project focuses on digitising district and subordinate court complexes across India, with the goal of creating a paperless environment that facilitates secure and efficient record-keeping. The key service levels targeted by this project include the registration of cases with auto-generated unique case numbers, the provision of copies of judgments through a web platform, and the preparation and delivery of decrees via email, where applicable.

Additionally, the project aims to automate the generation of cause lists and court diaries, provide online access to case statuses from the filing of the case to its final disposition, and facilitate the generation of daily Orders.

Furthermore, each court will have its dedicated website, enhancing accessibility and transparency. As of 2023, over 18,735 courts have been computerised, enabling real-time case tracking, e-filing and virtual hearings.

Twenty-eight virtual courts, operational in 21 states and Union territories, have processed over 5.08 crore cases and collected more than ₹ 561.09 crore in online fines as of May 31, 2024. This model demonstrates how technology can effectively manage routine judicial functions and expedite case processing.

This digital shift has notably reduced administrative burdens and procedural delays. The National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) serves as a key tool in this transformation, offering real-time data on pending and disposed cases.

It helps in identifying limitations and monitoring the judicial process more effectively, ensuring greater accountability within the system. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of technology, with courts rapidly transitioning to virtual hearings. The

Supreme Court and various high courts utilised video conferencing to continue judicial functions during lockdowns, a practice that remains in use for geographically distant parties and urgent cases.

Additionally, the Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Courts Efficiency (SUPACE) project, initiated in 2021, explores the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in legal research and case management.

AI assists judges by providing relevant legal precedents and aiding in decision-making, thereby reducing the time required for legal research.

Although AI's role is still evolving, its capacity to support predictive analysis, document review and case management holds promise for enhancing judicial efficiency and reducing backlogs.

Technology can further improve civil case resolution through online dispute resolution (ODR) platforms, which offer alternative avenues for resolving disputes outside the traditional courtroom setting.

ODR facilitates the process of mediation and arbitration via digital platforms, enabling parties to reach settlements in a more expedient and cost-effective manner. This approach is particularly beneficial for resolving low-value civil disputes, which often contribute to the backlog in courts.

Through the integration of ODR into the civil justice system, the potential for reducing delays and enhancing the overall efficiency of case management is greatly increased. Digital document management and e-filing systems have also been widely adopted, allowing litigants and lawyers to file cases and submit documents online.

For instance, the Delhi High Court's e-filing system has led to a significant reduction in procedural delays, streamlining the pre-trial process. The Rajasthan High Court's launch of a mobile application for electronic summons service further illustrates this trend, incorporating features such as photographic evidence, signatures, and GPS location tracking to

confirm receipt.

Although still in its early stages in India, the use of advanced data analytics in case management holds the potential for triaging and prioritising cases based on urgency, complexity and social impact.

These technological advancements are crucial for addressing the longstanding issues of case backlog and inefficiency in the Indian judicial system. By improving the speed and transparency of civil case disposal, reducing costs for litigants, and ensuring more equitable access to justice, digital transformation is paving the way for a more effective legal process in India.

Several significant structural and procedural reforms have also been undertaken to address delays. Order 18 Rule 4 of Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2002 now permits the chief examination of witnesses through affidavits, with cross-examination conducted in court or by a commissioner.

This amendment aims to expedite witness testimonies and streamline case processing. The National Mission for Justice Delivery

and Legal Reforms, established in 2011, aims to improve access to justice and enhance accountability through various initiatives. These include improving court infrastructure, increasing the number of judicial officers, and implementing legislative reforms to reduce litigation delays.

For instance, the centrally sponsored scheme for the development of infrastructure facilities has allocated ₹ 8,758.71 crore for expanding court facilities, including new court halls and residential units for judges.

Additionally, the Delhi High Court's endorsement by the single Bench of Justice Prateek Jalan in Lease Plan India (P) Ltd versus Rudrakash Pharma Distributor, of using WhatsApp for serving summons, a practice now adopted in several high courts, illustrates how digital communication can accelerate the delivery of legal documents and reduce procedural delays.

Addressing common dilatory tactics employed by litigants is also crucial for reducing case delays. Tactics such as raising unnecessary disputes, requesting frequent adjournments, and introducing irrelevant evidence often contribute to prolonged case resolution.

To counteract these delays, courts are focusing on ensuring that all necessary documents are on record, using discovery procedures effectively, and making prompt decisions on objections related to evidence.

The government's commitment to reducing judicial backlog includes filling judicial vacancies and establishing fast-track special courts. Since 2014, there has been a notable increase in the number of judges appointed to the Supreme Court and high courts, as well as an expansion in the sanctioned strength of judicial officers in district and subordinate courts.

Fast-track special courts have been established to handle serious crimes and expedite the resolution of pending rape cases, with a scheme extended by the Union cabinet for another three years, from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026, at a total outlay of ₹ 1,952.23 crore.

Recent legislative amendments, such as the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2018 and the Commercial Courts (Amendment) Act, 2018, further aim to streamline legal processes and reduce delays. These amendments are part of a broader effort to enhance judicial efficiency and expedite case resolution.

The integration of technology and procedural reforms represents a crucial strategy for accelerating civil trials in India. By leveraging advancements such as the e-courts project, AI, and virtual courts, and addressing procedural challenges and dilatory tactics, the judiciary can work towards a more efficient and effective justice delivery system.

These tech-savvy solutions not only promise to reduce the backlog of cases but also aim to restore public confidence in the judicial process, ultimately ensuring that justice is delivered in a timely manner. (IPA Service)

Rituals and realities in Assam's Sankar Samaj BRICS Summit: An antidote to the West?

By: Satvabrat Borah

The experience of losing a loved one is always difficult, no matter who you are or where you come from. In Assam, especially in the Sankar Samaj community, there are special rituals that families follow after someone dies, a tradition filled with meaning and a sense of duty. These rituals are intended to show respect for the departed, offer support for the grieving family, and guide the soul peacefully on its journey. But for many families, following these customs can bring unique emotional, financial, and social pressures that add to their sorrow. While these rituals are essential and valued, they can sometimes feel like an overwhelming burden, affecting the family's mental, emotional, and even financial wellbeing.

The death of a family member brings with it a wave of emotions - sadness, loss, sometimes shock, and often a deep sense of helplessness. People in the family may all be feeling these emotions in different ways. Some may be in denial, some may cry openly, while others may become quiet and withdrawn. During this time, following a strict set of rituals can make the grieving process even more intense.

Every day during the eleven-day mourning period, there are prayers and offerings that remind the family of their loss. These ceremonies are beautiful in their own way and provide comfort for many, but they can also be emotionally draining, as the family is asked to relive the pain over and over. Each time they perform a prayer or an offering, they are reminded of the person they lost, and this constant reminder can make the grieving process feel even more difficult.

Another challenge for families comes from the expectations of the community. In many traditional communities, there are strong beliefs about how death rituals should be performed. These beliefs are passed down from generation to generation, and community members often expect families to follow these practices very closely. While this shows re-

spect for the departed, it can create stress for grieving families, who may feel pressured to do everything exactly as tradition dictates, even if it's not what they would have chosen for themselves. Elders and extended family members may insist on certain customs, and when a family cannot meet these expectations, they may feel judged or criticized.

For example, if they do not have the resources to perform all of the expected rituals, or if they want to keep things simpler, they might face disapproval. This pressure from the community can make the family feel that they are not grieving "correctly," or that they are not showing enough respect for the deceased. It can create a sense of guilt and self-doubt, which makes it even harder for them to find peace.

The financial strain of these rituals can also be very real for many families. As part of the traditions, it is common to have offerings of food, prayers, and gatherings that involve extended family and community members. In some cases, families are expected to host a larger meal or give donations in memory of the departed, especially on the eleventh day of mourning.

For a family that is struggling financially, these rituals can be an added burden that they may not be able to afford. They might feel torn between wanting to honor their loved one and worrying about the costs. There are instances where families go into debt just to make sure the ceremonies are performed properly, hoping to avoid any judgment from the community. This financial stress can feel like a heavy weight on the grieving family, especially when they are already dealing with the emotional pain of loss.

As part of the mourning period, families in Sankar Samaj traditions often follow certain restrictions. They may avoid attending social events or celebrations, refrain from certain foods, and live a simpler, more austere lifestyle during these eleven days. This is meant to show respect for the deceased and to help the family focus on honoring their loved one. How-

ever, these restrictions can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation, especially for younger family members or children who might not fully understand why they have to give up things they enjoy.

For example, children might miss playing with friends or attending school events, which can make them feel cut off from their usual lives. Adults may find it challenging as well, especially if they are used to a busy lifestyle and suddenly have to put everything on hold. While the period of mourning is intended to be reflective and meaningful, it can feel isolating and even difficult for some family members.

During this time, the family often has visitors who come to pay their respects. Relatives, friends, and neighbors visit the family's home, sometimes staying for extended periods. While this support is meant to comfort the family, it can sometimes feel overwhelming. The grieving family might feel that they need to put on a brave face or act as good hosts, even when they are exhausted or struggling to keep their emotions in check.

They may feel pressured to attend to guests instead of focusing on their own grieving process, and the constant flow of visitors can make it hard to find moments of peace. For some, it feels as if there is no space or privacy to process their feelings fully. The family may feel like they must hide their true emotions and act a certain way in front of others, adding to the stress of an already challenging time.

Grief is something that everyone experiences differently. For some family members, rituals and structured practices are comforting, as they provide a sense of purpose and give them something to focus on. But not everyone feels this way. Some individuals may grieve more quietly or in ways that don't align with traditional expressions of sorrow. For example, a person who grieves internally might be seen as unfeeling, while someone who is openly emotional might worry about being too expressive.

This judgment can make

people self-conscious about their grieving process, making them feel as though they need to fit a certain mold to meet the community's expectations. In some cases, family members might even feel resentment for being judged during such a personal and vulnerable time.

Despite these challenges, many people in the Sankar Samaj community still find deep meaning in these rituals, which connect them to their heritage and to their loved ones. However, it's essential to acknowledge that, for some, the rituals can feel like a double-edged sword. On one hand, they provide a way to honor the deceased and connect to the community.

On the other hand, they can impose pressures that make the experience more painful than it might need to be. As times change, some families are finding ways to adapt these rituals to their personal beliefs and needs, while still showing respect for tradition. It is a delicate balance, one that each family must navigate in their own way, often learning as they go along.

The eleven days of mourning are filled with emotion, reflection, and a sense of duty. Families often perform each ritual with great care, hoping that their loved one's soul finds peace. The journey is difficult, but for many, there is comfort in knowing that they have done everything they could to honor the departed. This period of mourning is a time of sorrow, remembrance, and sometimes even healing. Though there are pressures and hardships, the family takes this journey together, united in love and respect for the one they have lost.

In the end, the experience of following these rituals is as complex as grief itself. Each family feels the weight of their loss differently, and every person within that family brings their own emotions, perspectives, and experiences to the process. For some, the traditions bring closure; for others, they bring challenges. But all families who go through this experience share a common bond, one that is deeply rooted in love and in the hope that, one day, they will find peace.

By: Asad Mirza

The BRICS group has become a major political force in the last two decades, building on its desire to create a counterweight to Western influence in global institutions. The group's expansion in 2023 increased its heft. After Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) joined it in 2023, the alliance that initially referred to Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa has gradually become a bigger body. Russian President Vladimir Putin at the BRICS closing session in the southwestern Russian city of Kazan said all countries joining the bloc "share similar aspirations and values and a vision of new democratic global order."

The three-day summit, which ended on Thursday, last, also provided a platform for member countries to discuss plans to deepen financial cooperation and develop alternatives to Western-dominated payment systems.

But at the same time, the summit also brought out new disagreements on issues such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia's 2024 leadership could intensify the bloc's anti-West focus, including attempts to edge out the US dollar - though experts feel that it may be an uphill task.

Though there are assumptions that the bloc could undermine the Western-led international order, sceptics say its ambitions to create its own currency and develop a workable alternative to existing institutions face potentially insurmountable challenges.

In fact, BRICS is not a formal organisation, but rather a loose bloc of non-Western economies that seek to build an alternative to what they see as the dominance of the Western viewpoint in major multilateral groupings, such as the World Bank, the Group of Seven (G7), and the UN Security Council.

The group's 2024 expansion comes with a range of geopolitical implications. It represents growing economic and demographic heft: the ten BRICS countries now comprise more than a quarter of the global economy and almost half of the world's population. The group is poised to exert influence over the wars in the Gaza Strip and Ukraine, the shape of the global economic system, the competition between China and the West, and efforts to transition to clean energy.

BRICS's thematic priorities are, firstly, advocate for greater represen-

tation in global organisations. The group aims both to push for reform of existing institutions, and to form negotiating blocs within those institutions.

Secondly, coordinate a balanced economic policy. The 2008 global recession hit the BRICS countries hard, leading the group to emphasise economic coordination on issues such as tariff policy, export restrictions of critical resources, and investment.

Thirdly and most ambitiously, work out a new global payment system to reduce reliance on the US dollar. Increasingly disgruntled over the domination of the dollar in global transactions, which exposes them to Western sanctions, BRICS leaders have long advocated for de-dollarisation in favour of increased trade in local currencies or even a potential common BRICS currency.

And lastly, create an alternative finance system. The group's New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) are meant to mimic the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), respectively. BRICS members hope that alternative lending institutions can invigorate South-South cooperation and reduce dependence on traditional funding sources.

The BRICS countries have sought to reduce the primacy of the US dollar in international trade, primarily by increasing the use of their own currencies for trading, especially China's Renminbi. There is also a push to introduce a new, BRICS-wide. Other monetary proposals laid out earlier included founding a new cryptocurrency or using a combined basket of BRICS currencies.

Meanwhile, the Western countries have largely downplayed the group's growth. White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said that Washington does not see BRICS as a geopolitical rival, while Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has largely dismissed efforts to move away from the dollar. Similarly, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has downplayed growing ties between BRICS members.

Still, some European policymakers have cautioned that the anti-West sentiment is growing more confrontational. They see the expansion as the result of a lacklustre Western response to low-income countries' needs. They say Western countries need to begin reforming financial institutions in earnest.

Indeed, this year's Summit Decla-

ration may offer little of substance. But there were a number of bilateral meetings before and in the margins of the gathering that are more indicative of the direction of BRICS. Perhaps most importantly, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and China's president, Xi Jinping, held their first face-to-face discussion in five years.

This is a remarkable change from just a few months ago, when tensions between New Delhi and Beijing were intense enough for Modi to cancel his participation in the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Astana, Kazakhstan. Yet, with a deal now reached over their countries' longstanding border dispute, the two most populous and, in terms of GDP, economically most powerful members of BRICS have an opportunity to rebuild their fraught relations.

A warming of relations between China and India could generate more momentum for BRICS to deliver on its ambitious agenda to develop, and ultimately implement, a vision for a new global order. Implicit in this would be a shift of leadership in BRICS from China and Russia to China and India, and with it, potentially a change from an anti-Western to a non-Western agenda.

The summit also gave Putin the chance to push his own vision of BRICS as a counterpoint to the US-led West.

But this may be a view shared in the global east - Russia, China, and Iran, as well as non-BRICS members North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela. But many in the Global South - particularly India and Brazil - are unlikely to go all in with this agenda. They will focus on benefiting from their BRICS membership as much as possible while maintaining close ties with the West.

India is the most significant player in BRICS when it comes to balancing between East and West. However, as the flailing expansion drive of the organisation indicates, there is also an internal battle in BRICS over its future direction. This, in turn, creates space and time for the West to exercise more positive and constructive influence in the ongoing process of reshaping the international order.

The Global East may be beyond redemption, but there is still a massive opportunity to reengage with-in the Global South, led by India. (The author is a New Delhi-based senior commentator on international and strategic affairs, environmental issues, an interfaith practitioner, and a media consultant)

Women are at a higher risk of dying from heart disease — in part because doctors don't take major sex and gender differences into account

By: Amy Huebschmann & Judith Regensteiner

A simple difference in the genetic code — two X chromosomes versus one X chromosome and one Y chromosome — can lead to major differences in heart disease. It turns out that these genetic differences influence more than just sex organs and sex assigned at birth — they fundamentally alter the way cardiovascular disease develops and presents.

While sex influences the mechanisms behind how cardiovascular disease develops, gender plays a role in how health care providers recognize and manage it. Sex refers to biological characteristics such as genetics, hormones, anatomy and physiology, while gender refers to social, psychological and cultural constructs.

Women are more likely to die after a first heart attack or stroke than men. Women are also more likely to have additional or different heart attack symptoms that go beyond chest pain, such as nausea, jaw pain, dizziness and fatigue. It is often difficult to fully disentangle the influences of sex on cardiovascular disease outcomes versus the influences of gender.

While women who haven't entered menopause have a lower risk of cardiovascular disease than men, their cardiovascular risk accelerates dramatically after menopause. In addition, if a woman has Type 2 diabetes, her risk of heart attack accelerates to be equivalent to that of men, even if the woman with diabetes has not yet gone through menopause. Further data is needed to better understand differences in cardiovascular disease risk among nonbinary and transgender patients.

Despite these differences, one key thing is the same: Heart attack, stroke and other forms of cardiovascular disease are the leading cause of death for all people, regardless of sex or gender. We are researchers who study women's health and the

way cardiovascular disease develops and presents differently in women and men. Our work has identified a crucial need to update medical guidelines with more sex-specific approaches to diagnosis and treatment in order to improve health outcomes for all.

Gender differences in heart disease: The reasons behind sex and gender differences in cardiovascular disease are not completely known. Nor are the distinct biological effects of sex, such as hormonal and genetic factors, versus gender, such as social, cultural and psychological factors, clearly differentiated. What researchers do know is that the accumulated evidence of what good heart care should look like for women compared with men has as many holes in it as Swiss cheese. Medical evidence for treating cardiovascular disease often comes from trials that excluded women, since women for the most part weren't included in scientific research until the NIH Revitalization Act of 1993.

For example, current guidelines to treat cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure are based primarily on data from men. This is despite evidence that differences in the way that cardiovascular disease develops leads women to experience cardiovascular disease differently. In addition to sex differences, implicit gender biases among providers and gendered social norms among patients lead clinicians to underestimate the risk of cardiac events in women compared with men. These biases play a role in why women are more likely than men to die from cardiac events.

For example, for patients with symptoms that are borderline for cardiovascular disease, clinicians tend to be more aggressive in ordering artery imaging for men than for women. One study linked this tendency to order less aggressive tests for women partly to a gender bias that men are more open than women to taking risks.

For example, for patients with symptoms that are borderline

for cardiovascular disease, clinicians tend to be more aggressive in ordering artery imaging for men than for women. One study linked this tendency to order less aggressive tests for women partly to a gender bias that men are more open than women to taking risks. These issues are further exacerbated for women of color. Lack of access to health care and additional challenges drive health disparities among underrepresented racial and ethnic minority populations.

Sex difference in heart disease: Cardiovascular disease physically looks different for women and men, specifically in the plaque buildup on artery walls that contributes to illness.

Women have fewer cholesterol crystals and fewer calcium deposits in their artery plaque than men do. Physiological differences in the smallest blood vessels feeding the heart also play a role in cardiovascular outcomes.

Women are more likely than men to have cardiovascular disease that presents as multiple narrowed arteries that are not fully "clogged," resulting in chest pain because blood flow can't ratchet up enough to meet higher oxygen demands with exercise, much like a low-flow showerhead. When chest pain presents in this way, doctors call this condition ischemia and no obstructive coronary arteries.

In comparison, men are more likely to have a "clogged" artery in a concentrated area that can be opened up with a stent or with cardiac bypass surgery. Options for multiple narrowed arteries have lagged behind treatment options for typical "clogged" arteries, which puts women at a disadvantage.

In addition, in the early stages of a heart attack, the levels of blood markers that indicate damage to the heart are lower in women than in men. This can lead to more missed diagnoses of coronary artery disease in women compared with men.

The reasons for these differences are not fully clear. Some potential factors include differ-

ences in artery plaque composition that make men's plaque more likely to rupture or burst and women's plaque more likely to erode. Women also have lower heart mass and smaller arteries than men even after taking body size into consideration.

Reducing sex disparities: Too often, women with symptoms of cardiovascular disease are sent away from doctor's offices because of gender biases that "women don't get heart disease." Considering how symptoms of cardiovascular disease vary by sex and gender could help doctors better care for all patients.

One way that the rubber is meeting the road is with regard to better approaches to diagnosing heart attacks for women and men. Specifically, when diagnosing heart attacks, using sex-specific cutoffs for blood tests that measure heart damage — called high-sensitivity troponin tests — can improve their accuracy, decreasing missed diagnoses, or false negatives, in women while also decreasing overdiagnoses, or false positives, in men.

Our research laboratory's leaders, collaborators and other internationally recognized research colleagues — some of whom partner with our Lude- man Family Center for Women's Health Research at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus — will continue this important work to close this gap between the sexes in health care. Research in this field is critical to shine a light on ways clinicians can better address sex-specific symptoms and to bring forward more tailored treatments.

The Biden administration's recent executive order to advance women's health research is paving the way for research to go beyond just understanding what causes sex differences in cardiovascular disease. Developing and testing right-sized approaches to care for each patient can help achieve better health for all. (Courtesy: *Down To Earth*)

Whose womb is it anyway?

By: Mrinal Pande

“At one time I had called for observing family planning, but I am now making an appeal to people to increase the population by producing more children.” — N. Chandrababu Naidu, chief minister of Andhra Pradesh.

“... Today there is a scenario of decreasing Lok Sabha constituencies. It raises a question: why should we restrict ourselves to having fewer children? Why shouldn't we aim for 16 children?” — M.K. Stalin, chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

With their recent statements, the two powerful male chief ministers have recently questioned the birth limits encouraged by India's family planning programme launched in the '50s. Both rule two of the richest and most progressive of our southern states that have rigidly held to the two-children-per-family norm and have far higher economic and social indices than most northern states.

Stalin has two children and his Andhra counterpart Naidu has one son. It is interesting to know why they are now demanding a return to larger families. It is just as interesting to note that neither seems to focus upon the repercussions of the expansion on females, the actual bearers of children. Pregnancy as well as the birth risks associated with repeated child-bearing are likely to swell along with a swell in population. Naidu and Stalin are not the first ones to question small families, nor are their main reasons (fewer seats in the Lok Sabha, less allocation of central funds and a swell in the numbers of retired and ageing people in their states) the only reasons for opting for larger families.

A number of Hindu and Muslim leaders have also repeatedly stated that their tribe must increase their numbers quickly lest they risk becoming voiceless minorities. Not too long ago, in 2016 to be precise, at a convention of newly married couples, a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) worker named Darpan quoted the RSS chief's plea for Hindus increasing their fertility rates "for the sake of society, our culture and our civilisation."

A video about the purported population explosion of Muslims in Europe and elsewhere in the world was reportedly shown thereafter. BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj and associates of the controversial godman Yati Narsinghanand have also gone on record urging Hindus to produce more children to avoid India becoming a Muslim-majority state.

All promoters of this bizarre idea of producing more children to have greater power and a voice louder than the rest seem to be driven by the same urge that led Chinese leader Mao Zedong to encourage high fertility rates — he is said to have declared that "With many people, strength is great." He too did not

show any concern with pregnancy and childbirth-related issues that among women would have generated questions and demanded answers the state was not prepared to give. In the case of India, leaders from both the ruling party and the opposition are also largely non-inclusive in demanding 16 children per family. Fears the southern satraps seem to be gripped with have more to do with proportional representation in the Lok Sabha, and the fears are not unreal.

If the delimitation of seats in the Lok Sabha (an exercise frozen for 25 years in 2001) happens as expected in 2026, the north with its higher population will see an increase in its authority over the southern states. No state of course will have zero seats, but the five southern states may lose 23 seats if the change in demography in the last 25 years is taken into account. And even if the total number of seats stays as is, the southern states would lose 25 seats and the top five in the north will get 33 additional seats.

Fewer seats and a smaller population may mean the better-governed and more prosperous South will get a lower share of central funds despite contributing more to the central kitty than many 'BIMARU' states.

Some ideas are not really new but need reaffirmation at confused times like this. One of these is a simple idea that women citizens are intrinsically as human as men and not just a sum total of certain biological givens that can be adjusted randomly by men without consulting women.

Rooting for more and more children should be seen as a fundamental infringement on young mothers' reproductive rights and physical autonomy. As more and more families turn nuclear with both parents working, they find that political decisions, randomness in limiting and then delimiting family size, and environmental changes all shape and affect both men and women equally. So at the moment, all men and women seem in agreement with the simple notion that the Family Planning programme ushered in four decades ago: chhota parivar, sukha aadhaar. (A small family is a happy family).

The absurd and politically driven lurch from Europe to China to India of pushing families to a past when fathers sired families with a large brood and women bore their progeny as a matter of course, seems senseless to better-educated young couples today who are marrying and having children much later than their parents did. The high cost of having more children, the pregnancy-related need for medical supervision, the harsh maternity leave policies most private companies have and the unequal burden of child-rearing that women of all classes and castes still experience, makes their exclusion from political debates on fertility absurd.

A 2022 survey by the Chinese recruitment firm Zhilian Zhaopin

of professional women revealed that the reason the three-child policy failed to take root in an authoritarian state like China was that on the ground, only 0.8% of surveyed women wanted three children. Many women were happy marrying later and felt that their employment would be negatively affected by having more children — perhaps in view of clear pregnancy-based discrimination at the workplace.

Given China's spectacular failure to turn the clock back on fertility norms, leaders demanding more and more children per family should move tactically and think about becoming inclusive.

Instead of pushing for more children, they should push for a bigger say for women from the South in the Lok Sabha and build a case for the criterion of delimitation being demographic change and not demographic performance. In general, women down South look better placed on educational and social indices. Good administration has seen to it that the fruits of progress reach them regularly as also medical facilities.

Lending support to women would automatically give them greater leverage with the Union government that has been beating its own drum about being promoters, sisters and daughters. This would also present a healthy parallel to the increasingly authoritarian, male chauvinist and Hindi-Hindu stance the Union government has been selling.

North or South, as Indians living in the world's largest democracy, we must all now seriously debate why it is that instead of asking the economy and polity to adjust to the change in the size of families, males dominating the political, religious and economic spheres expect women to adjust their fertility so that the needs for more Hindus, more Lok Sabha seats, skilled labour or cannon fodder are met.

It would be relevant to point out here that even our initial state-driven movements for smaller families and saving planet Earth have arisen not from a primary concern for mothers or Mother Earth, but from pressures generated by the wastefulness of the Vikas model and the repeated misallocation of financial resources by governments controlling all central funds, which they use for their own long-term political well being.

A revolutionary delimitation exercise where no state gets fewer seats than its current allocation and larger states get proportional representation may abolish the reason for the southern states' rage.

They can also prosper more by becoming more inclusive and appreciative of females and not treating them as misfits and outsiders in politics and in the markets. They could then go further and induct skilled northern labour to offset the gaps created by an ageing population and attain an enviable national popularity. (Courtesy: *The Wire*)



Why Indian women deserve support, not judgement

By: Rachna Lakhpoti

Indian women are increasingly taking on obligations that exceed 55 hours per week. They manage to pursue their professional careers while also managing a household — what one may refer to as the “second job.” It reveals an unsettling fact about the intimidating pressure on women to perform above their capabilities. Although this problem between job and private life affects women all over the world, it is especially difficult for Indian women due to cultural expectations, societal standards and the long-held conviction that they “must do it all.”

The question arises: why is there so much pressure on Indian women to push themselves beyond their breaking point? The answer lies in deeply ingrained gender roles and societal expectations. While strides have been made in women's empowerment, the onus of managing the household and caring for children continues to largely fall on their shoulders, even as they excel in their careers.

As more women enter the workforce and pursue professional goals, the expectation to

continue fulfilling traditional roles has not diminished. Instead, it has expanded, creating an unsustainable juggling act.

Are women taken for granted? In many ways, yes. The concept that women are born to balance this act manifests itself in the belief that they can easily handle a high-demanding profession while also serving as primary carers, homemakers, and support for the rest of the extended family. However, such an assumption ignores the impact on their physical and mental well-being. Each woman's drive is influenced by the societally imposed “superwoman” image, which puts undue pressure on them.

And when they falter, they are unfairly judged. But why should society judge women for trying to manage the impossible? The expectations placed on women often come with little recognition or appreciation for the sacrifices they make. Instead, when women struggle or choose to prioritise one aspect of their life over another, they are met with criticism rather than compassion.

This is especially true for those who lack a strong support system. If a woman does not

have family members willing to share the load of child-rearing or household management, she is left to carry an even heavier burden. Should she be judged for that? Absolutely not.

Let us not forget that many Indian women are also teachers, a profession that requires nurturing, patience and a relentless dedication to the betterment of future generations. These women are shaping young minds in the classroom while simultaneously caring for their own families at home. The least society can do is give them the space and freedom they deserve, without the weight of judgement.

It's time we, as a society, recognise that women's worth is not measured by their ability to “do it all.” We must start questioning the unrealistic expectations placed on them and, instead, advocate for a culture that promotes shared responsibilities. Supporting women in their endeavors — whether in their careers or at home — by giving them the freedom to make choices without judgement is essential. Only then can we begin to alleviate the unnecessary pressures that have, for too long, weighed on the shoulders of Indian women. (Courtesy: *The Pioneer*)

Skincare tips to get your Diwali glow

By: Shahnaz Husain

Diwali is just around the corner! What better time than now to make sure you shine your brightest. The run-up to Diwali is just a day away and our preparations in terms of gifts, diyas and sweets are already rolling.

The days running up to Diwali are more hectic than wedding season in terms of cleaning, shopping, house decoration etc which generally dampens your mood leaving you looking exhausted, tired and dull at the end of the day.

Diwali involves joy, celebrations, family dinners and a whole lot of great excitement. As we immerse ourselves in the festivities, women and men set to sparkle brighter than the fireworks and shine more than the diyas to look perfect this Diwali.

Most of us seek quick solutions to fix our beauty woes and tend to laden up the skin with numerous varieties of chemical-laden costly cosmetics to look natural, youthful and evergreen.

As you indulge in family gatherings and step out to celebrate, it's time to get a radiant glow with organic homemade



ingredients for Diwali which is an absolute favourite with most Indians.

Here are simple things to shine brighter than the festive lights from the comforts of your home. Start taking care of the skin and hair a few days before. Nighttime cleansing is an absolute must, especially for city dwellers. Chemical air pollutants, dirt and grime hang in the air. They are potent skin irritants. Make up should also be removed at night.

All these can cause dryness of the skin, or disrupt the normal acid-alkaline balance of the skin, leading to rashes and other eruptive conditions, like pimples and acne. As Diwali approaches, the weather also

changes. Seasonal changes also influence the skin. The humidity becomes less and the skin loses moisture to the atmosphere. So, one need to keep the skin moisturised and also protects it from sun exposure. For normal to dry skin, cleanse twice a day, with a cleansing gel, containing ingredients like aloe vera.

Massage the cleanser lightly into the skin and remove it with moist cotton wool. Then apply rose water or skin tonic, using cotton wool. During the day, use sunscreen, before going out in the sun. Or, use moisturizer, if you are indoors. Moisturisers are available in cream and liquid form. For dry skin, at night, after cleansing, apply a nourishing cream and massage it on the

face. Wipe off with moist cotton wool. You can apply a serum afterwards.

Oily skins also need moisture. But, if they apply creams, they can get pimples. To moisturise oily skin, mix one teaspoon of pure glycerin with 100 ml rose water. Keep it in an airtight jar in the fridge. Use a little of this lotion after cleansing. This moisturizes the skin, without making it oily. Use cleansing milk or face wash to cleanse the skin.

The use of facial scrubs helps to brighten the skin and add a glow. Use a facial scrub twice a week. Mix ground almonds or rice powder with curd and a pinch of Haldi. You can also add dried and powdered orange and lemon peels. Apply on the face and rub gently on the skin with small circular movements. Then wash off with water.

Apply a sunscreen before going out in the sun. So, you can look for a sunscreen lotion or cream, depending on your skin type. You should also look for day creams, nourishing or night creams and serums.

As Diwali and winter approach, try some home remedies to relieve dryness. Apply honey on the face daily for 10

minutes and wash off with water. If you have an aloe vera plant at home, the gel, found in the inner portion of the leaves, can be applied on the face to moisturize it.

Grate carrots and apply on the face for 15 to 20 minutes. Carrot is rich in Vitamin A and good for nourishing the skin in winter. It suits all skin types.

Mix half a teaspoon of honey, one teaspoon of rose water and one teaspoon of dried milk powder. Mix into a paste and apply on the face. Remove after 20 minutes with water. . Applying mayonnaise or egg yolk on the skin also helps to relieve dryness. Suits dry skin.

Nourish the hair with oil treatments once or twice a week. Heat olive oil and apply on the scalp and hair. Then dip a towel in hot water, squeeze out the water and wrap the hot towel around the head, like a turban. Keep it on for 5 minutes. Repeat the hot towel wrap 3 or 4 times. This helps the hair and scalp absorb the oil better.

Egg white is a wonderful natural cleanser for oily hair and its protein content helps to add body. Apply egg white on the hair about half an hour before your shampoo. To nourish dry

hair, massage egg yolk or mayonnaise into the scalp. Leave it on for half an hour and then wash the hair. It helps to soften the hair and is very useful for hair that has suffered damage through colouring, straightening or perming.

If you have been working hard just before Diwali, a few “pick me up” tips will help. Give yourself a manicure and pedicure the day before. In fact, after soaking the hands and feet in warm water, massage with a rich cream, so that the skin is smooth and soft. A good pick-me-up treatment for the hands is to rub them with sugar and lemon juice. Pay attention to details like waxing and threading too, at least a day in advance.

A “pick-me-up” face mask can leave your skin clean and glowing. Cleanse the skin. Mix honey with egg white and apply it on the face. Wash off with water after 20 minutes. For those with very dry skin, mix half a teaspoon of honey, egg yolk or pure almond oil and one teaspoon of dried milk powder. Mix into a paste and apply on the face.

Leave it on for half an hour and rinse off with water. After washing off the pack, give the

skin a compress with cotton wool pads soaked in rose water.

For hands and nails, mix almond oil and honey in equal parts and massage them into the nails and cuticles. Leave on for 15 minutes and wipe off with a moist towel. Mix 3 tablespoons of rose water with one tablespoon each of glycerin and lemon juice. Apply on hands and feet and leave for half an hour. Wash off with plain water.

If your hair is looking dull give it a quick conditioning treatment before your shampoo. Mix one teaspoon each of vinegar and honey with one egg. Beat them together well. Massage the mixture into the scalp. Then wrap the hair in a hot towel for twenty minutes, before washing the hair. Your hair will have more body and look shiny and manageable.

Give your hair a tea-water and lemon rinse after shampoo, to add shine. Boil used tea leaves again in enough water. After boiling, you should have about 4 cups of tea water. Cool and strain it. Then add the juice of a lemon and use it as a last rinse after shampoo. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is popular as the herbal queen of India)

Hezbollah announced Sheikh Naim Kassem is its new leader

Israeli strike in northern Gaza kills at least 60 as Hezbollah announces new leader

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Oct 29: An Israeli strike on a five-story building where displaced Palestinians were sheltering in the northern Gaza Strip killed at least 60 people early on Tuesday, more than half of them women and children, Gaza's Health Ministry said.



A photograph showing the aftermath of a strike in Gaza, with rubble and debris scattered on the ground.

In a separate development, Lebanon's militant group Hezbollah said it has chosen Sheikh Naim Kassem as its new top leader following the killing of Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike last month. Israel also faced backlash from aid groups after its parliament passed legislation that could severely restrict the ability of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees to operate in the Palestinian territories. The agency, known as UNRWA, is the largest aid provider in Gaza.

Hezbollah said in a statement that its decision-making Shura Council elected Kassem, who had been Nasrallah's deputy leader for over three decades, as the new secretary-general. Hezbollah vowed to continue with Nasrallah's policies "until victory is achieved".

Kassem, 71, a founding member of the militant group established following Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, had been serving as acting leader after Nasrallah was killed on September 27. He has given several televised speeches vowing that Hezbollah will fight on despite a string of setbacks.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel, drawing retaliation, after Hamas' surprise attack on Gaza on October 7, 2023, triggered the war there. Iran, which backs both groups, has also traded fire with Israel on two occasions.

The tensions with Hezbollah boiled over last month, as Israel un-

leashed a wave of heavy airstrikes and killed Nasrallah and most of his senior commanders. Israel launched a ground invasion into Lebanon at the start of October.

Strike in northern Gaza comes as Israel wages a major operation there. Even as attention has shifted to Lebanon and Iran in recent weeks, Israel has continued to wage a large operation in northern Gaza and to carry out airstrikes across the territory.

Dr. Marwan al-Hams, director of the field hospitals' department at the Gaza Health Ministry, announced the toll from Tuesday's strike in the northern town of Beit Lahiya at a news conference. He said another 17 people are missing.

The ministry's emergency service said at least 12 women and 20 children were among the dead, including babies. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military, which has been waging the operation in northern Gaza for more than three weeks, targeting what it says are pockets of Hamas militants who have regrouped there.

The dead included a mother and her five children, some of them adults, and a second mother with her six children, according to an initial casualty list provided by the emergency service.

Dr. Hossam Abu Safiyya, the director of the nearby Kamal Adwan Hospital, said it was overwhelmed by the wave of wounded people from the strike. Israeli forces raided the medical facility over the weekend, detaining dozens of medics. The army said it detained scores of Hamas militants.

"The healthcare system has completely collapsed," Abu Safiyya said in a voice message to journalists on Tuesday. He said people who arrive wounded are dying because there is no care for them.

The Israeli military has repeatedly struck shelters for displaced people in recent months, saying it carried out precise strikes targeting Palestinian militants and tried to avoid harming civilians. The strikes have often killed women and children. The military said it detained scores of Hamas militants in the raid on Kamal Adwan, the latest in a series of raids on hospitals since the start of the war.

Israel's latest major operation in northern Gaza, focused on the Jabaliya refugee camp, has killed hundreds of people and driven tens of thousands from their homes in another wave of mass displacement more than a year into the war in the tiny coastal territory. Israel has also sharply restricted aid to the north this month, prompting a warning

from the United States that failure to facilitate greater aid efforts could lead to a reduction in military aid.

Palestinians fear Israel is enacting a plan proposed by a group of former generals, who suggested the civilian population of the north should be ordered to evacuate, aid supplies should be cut off, and anyone remaining there should be considered a militant. The military has denied carrying out such a plan while the government has not said clearly whether it is carrying out all or part of it.

On Monday, Israel's parliament passed two laws that ban UNRWA from operating on Israeli soil and cut all ties between the agency and the Israeli government. Israel controls access to both Gaza and the occupied West Bank, and it was unclear how the agency would continue to operate there.

Israel says UNRWA has been infiltrated by Hamas and that the militant group siphons off aid and uses UN facilities to shield its activities, allegations denied by the UN agency. Aid groups have warned that there is no immediate replacement for UNRWA, which provides education, health care and emergency aid to millions of Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation and their descendants.

Refugee families make up the majority of Gaza's population. "Severing this lifeline in Gaza as winter threatens to exacerbate an already desperate situation is cruel and dangerous," said William Bell, the Middle East head of Christian Aid, a British charity. The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. (AP)

Brazil becomes second BRICS country after India not to join China's BRI



BEIJING, Oct 29: In a major setback to China's BRI, Brazil has decided against joining Beijing's multi-billion-dollar initiative becoming the second country after India in the BRICS bloc not to endorse the mega project. Brazil, headed by President Lula da Silva, will not join the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and instead seek alternative ways to collaborate with Chinese investors, Celso Amorim, special presidential adviser for international affairs, said on Monday.

Brazil wants to "take the relationship with China to a new level, without having to sign an accession contract", he told Brazilian newspaper O Globo.

"We are not entering into a treaty," Amorim said, explaining that Brazil does not want to take Chinese infrastructure and trade projects as "an insurance policy".

According to Amorim, the aim is to use some of the Belt and Road framework to fund Brazilian infrastructure projects and the investment funds associated with the initiative, without necessarily formally joining the group, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted him as saying.

The Chinese "call it the belt [and road] ... and they can give whatever names they want, but what matters is that there are projects that Brazil has defined as a priority and that may or may not be accepted by Beijing", Amorim said. The decision contradicts China's plans to make Brazil's joining of the initiative a centerpiece of Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Brasilia on November 20, the Post reported.

Officials from Brazil's economy and foreign affairs ministries recently voiced opposition to the idea, it said.

The prevailing opinion in Brazil was that joining China's flagship infrastructure project would not only fail to bring any tangible benefits for Brazil in the short term but could also make relations with a potential Trump administration more difficult.

Last week, Amorim and the president's chief of staff Rui Costa travelled to Beijing to discuss the initiative. According to sources, they returned "unconvinced and unimpressed" by China's offers, the Post reported.

Lula did not attend this month's BRICS summit at Kazan due to an injury and his close associate and former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff currently heads the Shanghai-based BRICS New Development Bank (NDB). BRICS originally consisted of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have been admitted as new members. Brazil will be the second member of the BRICS after India not to endorse the BRI.

India was the first country to voice reservations and stood steadfast in its opposition to BRI, a pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping to further the global influence of China with investments to build infrastructure projects. India has protested against China for building the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), stated to be the flagship project of the BRI through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) in violation of its sovereignty.

India is also vocal about its criticism of BRI projects stating they should be based on universally recognised international norms, good governance, and the rule of law and follow principles of openness, transparency and financial sustainability.

China subsequently faced criticism that the BRI projects in smaller countries like Sri Lanka, especially for its take-over of the Hambantota for a 99-year lease as a debt swap turned out to be debt traps resulting in a deep financial crisis in both smaller countries.

Indian diplomats here point out that besides staying away from three annual high-profile meetings of the BRI in Beijing in the past few years, India continued to voice its opposition to it both in the BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, (SCO).

US Trade Representative Katherine Tai recently urged Brazil to view the proposal to join BRI through an "objective lens" and "risk management".

The Chinese embassy in Brasilia called her remarks "irresponsible" and "disrespectful".

China's state-run Global Times in an editorial on Monday termed Tai's comments against BRI as "steeped in the spectre of 'Monroe Doctrine'".

"Brazil does not need others to dictate who to cooperate with or what kind of partnerships to conduct, and the normal economic and trade cooperation between China and Latin American countries should not be subject to scrutiny from third countries," it said.

"Currently, the US is attempting to build a 'small yard, high fence' against China in Brazil and other Latin American countries", it said. "The cooperation between China and Brazil not only aligns with the interests of both countries but also meets the need for the Global South to build a more just and equitable international economic order. This trend is something that Washington cannot stop," it said. (PTI)

NKorea sends foreign min to Russia as its troops train to fight in Ukraine



SEOUL, Oct 29: North Korea said Tuesday its top diplomat is visiting Russia, in another sign of their deepening relations as rival South Korea and Western nations say the North has sent thousands of troops to support Russia's war in Ukraine.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said a delegation led by Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui departed for Russia on Monday, but didn't specify the purpose of the visit.

In a closed-door hearing at South Korea's parliament, the South's spy agency said Choe may be involved in high-level discussions on sending additional troops to Russia and negotiating what the North would get in return, according to Lee Seong-kweun, a lawmaker who attended the meeting.

The announcement of Choe's visit came hours after the Pentagon said North Korea has sent about 10,000 troops to Russia, who are expected to arrive in battlefields in Ukraine within "the next several weeks."

South Korean and Western leaders have expressed concern that North Korea involvement could help prolong Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and that Russia may offer technology in return that could advance the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programme.

Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh told reporters Monday that

some of the North Korean soldiers have already moved closer to Ukraine and were believed to be heading for the Kursk border region, where Russia has been struggling to push back a Ukrainian incursion.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers it's examining the possibility that some groups of North Korea's military personnel in Russia, including generals or other high-ranking officials, may have already moved to frontline areas.

The spy agency also said to appear to be struggling to resolve communication issues although the Russian military is training North Korean troops on Russian military terminology, Lee said. The agency said space-based reconnaissance is an area where North Korea is likely receiving Russian help.

It said North Korea may be acquiring advanced components from Russia as it prepares to launch another military reconnaissance satellite following a failed attempt in May, said Park Sun-won, another lawmaker who attended the hearing.

North Korea first placed a spy satellite in orbit last November. Its leader Kim Jong Un has described those assets as crucial for monitoring South Korean and US military activities and enhancing the threat of his nuclear-capable missiles. (AP)

Petition seeking ban on deposed B'desh PM's Awami League withdrawn



DHAKA, Oct 29: A writ petition filed in a high court in Bangladesh seeking a ban on ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League and several other parties was withdrawn on Tuesday.

Leaders of the anti-discrimination students' movement, which led to the ouster of Hasina's 15-year regime on August 5, on Monday in a petition in Dhaka High Court sought the court's directions to prevent the Awami League and 10 other parties from conducting political activities in the country.

Court officials and lawyers said three top leaders or coordinators of the movement -- Sarjis Alam, Hasnat Abdullah and Hasibul Islam -- decided not to proceed with the petition that also questioned the past three general elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024 which installed Hasina-led Awami League to power.

The elections were staged amid allegations of massive vote manipulation or boycott by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia and several other parties.

The movement leaders, however, preferred not to proceed with the second writ either that questioned the legitimacy of these three parliamentary elections.

The two writs, listed by a two-member high court bench for hearing on Tuesday,

were withdrawn as the proceedings began in the morning. The petitioners' lawyers informed the bench that their clients would not proceed with the writs. The bench comprising Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Shikhar Mahmudur Raji subsequently ordered the writs be removed from the list.

Alongside Awami League, the writ petition was filed against Jatiya Party (Ershad), Jatiya Party (Manju), Ganatantri Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) (Barua), and Workers Party of Bangladesh.

In response to their inclusion in the petition, the LDP demanded an apology from the petitioners. The CPB said they might have been mentioned out of a misunderstanding, and the Jatiya Party (Ershad) said

they would address the matter through legal means. The right-wing LDP and left-wing CPB were harsh critics of the Awami League regime and did not take part in the elections.

The BNP, which has appeared as the major political force in Bangladesh politics following Hasina's ouster, however, said they opposed a ban on any political party for inclusiveness in elections. Meanwhile, the interim government on Monday evening said it had yet not decided upon banning any political party.

"The government only has banned Bangladesh Chhatra League (pro-Awami League student organisation). It did not decide at this point to ban any other political party," a spokesman from the Bangladesh interim government's media wing said in a briefing. The students' movement in a rally on October 22 at Central Shaheed Minar here announced a five-point demand, including the ban on Awami League and the removal of President Mohammad Shahabuddin after protests erupted following his remarks that he did not receive Hasina's resignation.

The first of their five-point demands was the scrapping of the country's original 1972 Constitution which was drafted a year after Bangladesh's establishment following a nine-month Liberation War against Pakistan. (PTI)

Boat carrying Egyptian migrants to Europe capsizes off Libyan coast, killing 12

CAIRO, Oct 29: A boat carrying 13 Egyptian migrants to Europe has capsized off Libya's coast, killing all on board except for one person, local authorities and a Libyan group said Tuesday.

Al-Abreen, a group that provides humanitarian assistance to migrants in Libya, said on Facebook that the boat capsized 60 kilometers east of the city of Tobruk on Monday evening. One migrant sur-

vived, according to the group, which said the bodies were recovered and brought to shore.

The Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration in Tobruk also confirmed the incident. In recent years, the North African nation has become the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East.

Last month, a migrant boat carrying 32 people capsized off the Libyan coast due to engine

failure, leaving one person dead and 22 others missing, according to Libyan authorities. The coast guard in Tobruk said nine people were rescued. Al-Abreen said the boat was bound for Europe and was carrying migrants from Egypt and Syria. Human traffickers have long taken advantage of instability in Libya that escalated after a NATO-backed uprising overthrew and killed longtime leader Moammar Gadhafi in

Germany recalls ambassador from Iran as it protests execution of Iranian German prisoner

BERLIN, Oct 29: Germany protested to Iran on Tuesday over the execution of Iranian German prisoner Jamshid Sharmahd, who lived in the US and was kidnapped in Dubai in 2020 by Iranian security forces, and recalled its ambassador to Berlin for consultations.

The Foreign Ministry wrote on the social network X that Iran's charge d'affaires in Berlin was summoned to hear "our sharp protest" against Tehran's action and added that it reserves the right to take "further measures". It didn't elaborate.

At the same time, German Ambassador Markus Potzel "protested in the strongest terms against the murder of Jamshid Sharmahd" to the Iranian foreign minister, it said. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock then recalled him to Berlin for consultations. Sharmahd, 69, was put to death in Iran on Monday on terrorism charges, the country's judiciary said. That followed a 2023 trial that Germany, the US and international rights groups dismissed as a sham.

He was one of several Iranian dissidents abroad in recent years either tricked or kidnapped back to Iran as Tehran began lashing out after the collapse of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers including Germany. Iran accused Sharmahd, who lived in Glendora, California, of planning a 2008 attack on a mosque that killed 14 people — including five women and a child — and wounded over 200 others, as well as plotting other assaults through the little-known Kingdom Assembly of Iran and its Tondar militant wing.

Iran also accused Sharmahd of "disclosing classified information" on missile sites of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard during a television program in 2017. His family disputed the allegations and had worked for years to see him freed.

Sharmahd had been in Dubai in 2020, trying to travel to India for a business deal involving his software company. He hoped to get a connecting flight despite the coronavirus pandemic disrupting global travel.

Sharmahd's family received their last message from him on July 28, 2020. It's unclear how the abduction happened. But tracking data showed that Sharmahd's mobile phone traveled south from Dubai to the city of Al Ain on July 29, crossing the border into Oman. (AP)

Polio vaccinators attacked, held hostage in two separate incidents in NW Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Oct 29: Three terrorists were killed in a gunbattle when they attacked a polio vaccinators' team in Pakistan's restive northwest province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday.

In another incident, unknown militants took hostage the entire team of polio vaccinators at a dispensary in the same province, sources said here.

The attack on polio vaccinators came a day after Pakistan on Monday started its third nationwide polio campaign to vaccinate 45 million children.

In the first incident in Aurkazai tribal district, border-

ing Afghanistan, a policeman also killed in the shootout while frustrating the attack on the polio vaccinators.

At least three terrorists were mowed down by the police in the fierce gunbattle and a fresh team has been rushed to the site, sources added.

No group claimed responsibility for the brutal attack.

In the second incident in North Waziristan's tehsil Shewa, unidentified militants took hostage the entire team of

polio vaccinators at the Mamet Kot dispensary in the restive northwest province.

The assailants also seized weapons from the police officers, according to sources.

Tribesmen are against oral polio vaccination of their children and in the region of Shariya to substantiate their viewpoint and call it as unIslamic.

Pakistan on Monday started its third nationwide polio campaign to vaccinate

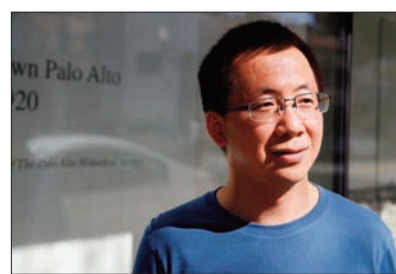
45 million children against the crippling disease as the virus was detected in the environmental samples from 16 districts.

The week-long vaccination campaign aims to tackle the alarming spread of polio in the country, which has reported 41 cases this year.

Of these, 21 polio cases have been reported from Balochistan, 12 from Sindh, six from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and one each from Punjab and Islamabad.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only countries in the world where polio remains endemic, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). (PTI)

ByteDance founder Zhang Yiming tops China's rich list



HONG KONG, Oct 29: ByteDance founder Zhang Yiming tops the list of China's richest people, according to the Hurun Research Institute, although many of them have seen their net worth plunge over the past year.

The institute, which publishes the annual Hurun China Rich List, found that the total wealth of entrepreneurs on the list this year was USD 3 trillion, down 10 per cent from the previous year.

The number of billionaires based on their net worth in US dollars was also down 142, to 753. Hurun tallied 1,185 billionaires since 2021.

"The Hurun China Rich List has shrunk for an unprecedented third year running, as China's economy and stock markets had a difficult year," said Rupert Hoogewerf, chairman and chief researcher of the Huron report. ByteDance's Zhang came in No. 1 for the first time this year, with a net worth

of USD 49.3 billion, according to Hurun. ByteDance, which is the parent company of popular short-video platforms Douyin and TikTok, saw its revenue grow to USD 110 billion last year. He is also the first individual born in the 1980s to top the Hurun list.

Bottled water magnate Zhong Shanshan fell to second place in 2024 with USD 47.9 billion, after his brand Nongfu Spring faced backlash in February when con-

sumers accused it of disloyalty to China due to designs of its bottles.

The backlash wiped out billions in market value for Nongfu Spring.

Coming in third is Tencent founder Pony Ma with a net worth of USD 44.4 billion, as the gaming firm saw its revenues rise.

This year's China Rich List had just 54 new names added to the list, the lowest figure in two decades. New additions include Charlin Mao and Miranda Qu Fang, the founders of Xiaohongshu, a social media and lifestyle platform popular with young users.

China's economy has lagged in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic as the country grapples with a real estate crisis and a volatile stock market. Policymakers are expected to unveil major stimulus measures to encourage consumption and spending, which have declined in recent months. (AP)

SDF candidates withdraw in Sikkim Clear path for SKM's uncontested victories



GANGTOK, Oct 29: In a surprise move, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) aspirants Prem Bahadur Bhandari and Daniel Rai on Tuesday withdrew their candidature from Soreng-Chakung and Namchi-Singhithang assembly constituencies, paving the way for the uncontested victories of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) nominees Aditya Golay and Satish Chandra Rai.

Modern medical equipment for proper diagnosis has already been installed in the state ayurvedic hospital Tripura govt keen to set up ayurvedic college: CM Manik Saha

AGARTALA, Oct 29: Tripura chief minister Manik Saha on Tuesday said that his government is keen to establish a full-fledged ayurvedic college in the northeastern state as such treatment is gaining popularity among the people.



up a full-fledged ayurvedic college to provide better treatment facilities," he said. State health and family welfare secretary Kiran Gite said that the Ravi Shankar Foundation has already contacted the government and expressed its eagerness to set

up an ayurvedic college in the state. "We will look into its credentials and if these match our requirements, the government will call the organisation to establish an ayurvedic college. If the Tripura Government Dental College could be set up within the shortest period, why wouldn't we be able to do the same for an ayurvedic college? We will do this," Saha said.

Nagaland Legislative Assembly marks 60 years of governance

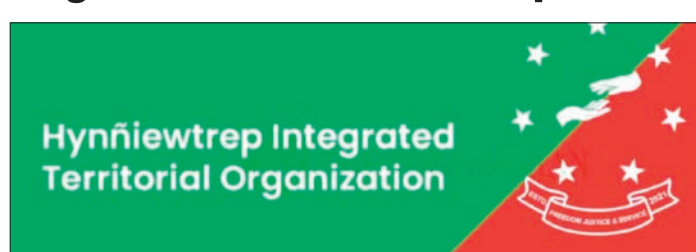


KOHIMA, Oct 29: The Nagaland Legislative Assembly (NLA) celebrated its 60th anniversary on Tuesday, reflecting on six decades of governance and its intrinsic connection to the Naga political issue.

NERAMAC holds promotional event of millet in Dimapur

DIMAPUR, Oct 29: The North-Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd. (NERAMAC), a central government enterprise under the Ministry of development of north eastern region (DoNER), held a "Promotion of Millets in India" event at Zone Niathu by the Park in Dimapur recently.

HITO questions alleged delay of action against cement companies in Meghalaya GPRN/NSCN honours Paralympics bronze medalist Sema



SHILLONG, Oct 29: The Hyniewtrep Integrated Territorial Organization (HITO) has questioned the alleged delay to take action against the cement companies in East Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya for operating on forest land.

area's natural woodlands. Despite this, they have issued certificates for various parcels of land that are not officially documented as forests according to the JHADC's records, thereby classifying them in a manner that neglects their true ecological significance," it added.

In light of these observations, the HITO also questioned whether the office recognizes the serious implications of this situation. "Furthermore, we question your awareness of the Ministry of environment and forests and climate change's likely position against granting environmental clearance for the establishment of a cement factory in a residential area. Such operations are associated with significant adverse environmental impacts, raising profound concerns for public health.

GPRN/NSCN honours Paralympics bronze medalist Sema

HT Correspondent DIMAPUR, Oct 29: The GPRN/NSCN led by its 'president' RM Lotha and 'ato kilonser' (prime minister) N Kitovi Zhimomi felicitated Paris Paralympics bronze medalist in shot put Hokato Sema at 5th Mile in Chumoukeda district on Monday.

The felicitation ceremony highlighted Sema's inspirational journey and his remarkable achievement on the international stage which filled the Indian nation and the Nagas of Nagaland in particular with pride, the release said. Zhimomi acknowledged Sema's exceptional contribution to the Nagas. He highlighted how Dr Tali Ao captained the Indian football team in the London 1948 Olympics and brought laurels to the country.

IAMC celebrates 9th National Ayurveda Day and Dhanwantari Jayanti -2024

Display of AYUR AHARA MELA (Traditional Food Recipe Fest) was also presented by the students

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Along with the country and worldwide, the IA Ayurvedic Medical College of the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) has celebrated the 9th National Ayurveda Day on Tuesday on the occasion of birth anniversary of Sri Sri Lord Dhanwantari.



The program was flagged off with Ayurveda Walkathon Rally within the campus joined by students and staff with slogans and banners, highlighting the theme of Ayurveda Day -- "Ayurveda Innovation for Global Health"--and specially Preventive and Promotive measures of Ayurveda for appraisal of common people.

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER. Sealed tender affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paisa) only with a validity period of 180 Days which will subsequence to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered contractors of Class-II and Class-I (A, B, & C) category of Assam PWD (Road & Building) and BTC according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the works under SOPD & various schemes under BTR for the year 2024-25 as stated below.

TMC accuses Amit Shah of model code violation

Party seeks EC action over Shah's political remarks

KOLKATA, Oct 29: The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday accused Union Home Minister Amit Shah of violating the model code of conduct during his recent visit to West Bengal and urged the Election Commission to initiate action against him for "making political comments at an official function" in the state ahead of the November 13 bypolls.

The ruling party in the state also appealed to the EC to issue a show-cause notice to the BJP leader and sought direction from the poll panel to restrain him from making "political comments" at official functions in the bypoll-bound districts.

"We seek your urgent attention regarding a serious breach of the model code of conduct by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, which took place during the inauguration event of the integrated check post, passenger terminal and Maitri Dwar at Petrapole in North 24 Parganas," the TMC alleged.



The party called upon the chief electoral officer (CEO) to "issue a show-cause notice" to Shah for alleged violation of the model code of conduct. The TMC sought "appropriate directions/orders to stakeholders concerned to further restrain Shah and the BJP leaders from violating the MCC guidelines ahead of the bye-elections".

"Despite the directives categor-

ically stating that the scope of reference covers the administrative districts of the poll-bound constituencies of Haroa and Naihati which fall under North 24 Parganas, Shah chose to make politically coloured remarks at the official event in Petrapole, North 24 Parganas, on October 27.

"The politically charged remarks — calling for a 'parivartan'

in 2026 — were in no way connected to the event in question," the TMC claimed.

Shah inaugurated a new passenger terminal building and a cargo gate 'Maitri Dwar' at Petrapole land port bordering Bangladesh on Sunday and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the development of West Bengal.

"Bring in change in West Bengal in 2026. (We) will put an end to infiltration and ensure peace in the state", Shah had said.

The next assembly elections in the state are due in 2026.

Six assembly constituencies in the state will go for bypolls on November 1. These six constituencies are Sitai in Cooch Behar district, Madarihat in Alipurduar, Naihati and Haroa in North 24 Parganas, Medininipur in West Medininipur and Taldangra in Bankura.

These bypolls will be held due to the resignations of sitting MLAs following their victories in this year's Lok Sabha elections. (PTI)

Farmers in Punjab and Haryana facing conspiracy over MSP: Surjewala



CHANDIGARH, Oct 29: Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala accused the Central government of orchestrating a conspiracy against farmers in Punjab and Haryana by undermining the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system. Speaking at a press conference in Chandigarh on Tuesday, he claimed that the government seeks to eliminate MSP through covert means after facing backlash over the controversial farm laws, which have since been repealed.

Surjewala challenged Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to a debate on the issue, asserting that a significant reduction in paddy procurement this year compared to previous years indicates a deliberate strategy to weaken farmers. He highlighted that the government's actions are part of a broader plan to dismantle grain markets and progressively diminish MSP, mirroring the agricultural

policies implemented in Bihar.

The Congress leader noted that, until October 29, procurement figures revealed a sharp decline in paddy purchases: 82,88,450 metric tonnes from Punjab and Haryana—a stark contrast to previous years. Surjewala emphasized that in Haryana, only 1,33,114 out of 4,19,532 registered farmers sold their paddy on MSP, leaving over 2.86 lakh farmers without support.

He criticized the government for slashing agricultural subsidies, claiming that ₹ 3,30,000 crore in fertilizer, food, and fuel subsidies have been cut in the past five years. Surjewala pointed to a reduction in food subsidy allocations, asserting that these cuts disproportionately harm farmers and low-income laborers.

Surjewala also raised concerns over the reduction of registered farmers eligible for MSP, arguing that the decrease from 1,11,03,434 to 51,20,405 across 19 states within a year is alarming and suggests a systematic effort to sideline agricultural interests. He concluded by questioning how the government plans to meet procurement goals given the limited time remaining in the purchasing window, further asserting that the situation represents a betrayal of farmers' trust. (PTI)

HC grants bail to 'aides' of AAP Satyendar Jain in PMLA case



NEW DELHI, Oct 29: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted bail to two accused — Vaibhav Jain and Ankush Jain — in an alleged case of money laundering involving AAP leader Satyendar Jain.

Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri granted the reprieve to the duo observing an accused in a money laundering case could not be equated with those involved in severe offences like murder, rape or dacoity. The high court highlighted Section 45 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), which imposes certain restrictions on the grant of bail — could not be used as a tool for incarceration.

In the 18-page verdict, Justice Ohri said, "Section 45 of the PMLA, while imposing additional conditions to be met for granting bail, does not create an absolute prohibition on the grant of bail. When there is no possibility of trial being concluded in a reasonable time and the accused is incarcerated for a long time, depending on the nature of allegations, the conditions under Section 45 of the PMLA would have to give way to the constitutional mandate of Article 21," the court observed.

The court further underlined bail was the rule and jail was the exception. "This principle is nothing but a crystallisation of the constitutional mandate enshrined in Article 21, which says that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law," it added.

The court said in the present case there were several accused; thousands of pages of evidence to be assessed; scores of witnesses to be examined and the trial, which was at the stage of arguments on charge,

could not be expected to conclude "anytime in the near future".

Co-accused Satyendar Jain, it noted, had been granted bail and the pending further probe by the CBI in the predicate offence, would inevitably delay the money laundering case as well.

Further, there was also a likelihood of a supplementary chargesheet being filed in the matter, added the court.

"Both the applicants be released on regular bail subject to them furnishing respective personal bonds in the sum of Rs 1 lakh, with one surety of the like amount each to the satisfaction of the concerned Jail Superintendent/court," directed the court.

The bail, however, was held to be subject to certain conditions, like the accused persons not leaving Delhi/NCR without permission.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) alleged Vaibhav and Ankush were business associates of the former Delhi minister and had abetted the commission of the offence.

A court had granted bail to Satyendar Jain, who was arrested by the ED in May 2022, citing the "delay in trial" and his "long incarceration".

The case pertains to Satyendar Jain allegedly laundering money through four companies linked to him. While senior advocate Sidarth Aggarwal and lawyer Malak Bhatt represented Vaibhav, Ankush was represented by senior advocate Rebecca John.

On September 30, the high court refused to grant default bail to them on the grounds that the chargesheet filed against them was purportedly incomplete. They were arrested on June 30, 2022. (PTI)

ED files chargesheets against AAP MLA in Delhi Waqf case

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday filed a chargesheet against AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan over money laundering charges in a case of alleged irregularities in the Delhi Waqf Board.

The 110-page supplementary chargesheet also named one Mariam Siddiqui, who was not arrested by the ED as an accused in

the case. The court is likely to take it up for consideration on November 4.

Khan was arrested by the ED on September 2 from his Okhla residence and is currently in judicial custody.

Special judge Vishal Gogne on Tuesday posted his bail application for hearing on November 7. (PTI)

BJP intensifies campaign in Nagpur and targets 11 of 12 seats with massive outreach

NAGPUR, Oct 29: Out of the total 12 assembly constituencies in Nagpur district of Maharashtra, the ruling BJP is contesting as many as 11 seats, while only one has gone to ally Shiv Sena, which perhaps indicates the importance the party attaches to this region.

The party has tasked 50,000 of its workers to reach out to voters ahead of the polls. It is making all-out efforts, including door-to-door meetings and holding interactions with people from different walks of life, to win these seats.

Nagpur is also the home district of several high-profile party leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and state party chief Chandrashekar Bawankule. Union minister and former BJP chief Nitin Gadkari also hails from here. Also, the party's ideological fountainhead, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is headquartered in Nagpur.

A senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said the party has laid much stress on this region and is leaving no stone unturned to win all the seats from here in the next month's state elections.

Union Home Minister and former party president Amit Shah visited Nagpur on September 24 and interacted with office-bearers of all 62 constituencies in the Vidarbha region. He made a pitch for increasing the vote share by 10 per cent in every booth and work in tandem with all the alliance partners. Shah also said that Vidarbha is a strong-

hold of the BJP and the road to power in Maharashtra goes through Vidarbha.

In the 2019 assembly elections, the BJP won six out of the total 12 seats, Congress four, NCP one and one independent.

This time, the saffron party is contesting 11 seats. Fadnis, who has earlier successfully contested the assembly election for five times, is contesting from the Nagpur South-West constituency, while Bawankule is fighting from the Kamptee constituency.

A senior BJP leader said efforts are being made to reach out to maximum voters through meetings and other means.

"More than 70 per cent party workers in the district have hit the ground and are going door-to-door to connect with voters. The party workers are reaching out to especially those pockets where a false narrative about the Constitution was spread by the opposition parties," he said. Several organisations linked to the Sangh Parivar are doing the needful, the leader said, and expressed confidence that the BJP and the Mahayuti constituents will win all 12 seats comfortably unlike this year's Lok Sabha elections in Vidarbha, he said.

Of the 12 constituencies, the BJP is locked in a direct fight with the Congress in most of the seats in Nagpur. While the BJP is contesting 11 seats, its ally Shiv Sena is contesting the Ramtek constituency.

Talking about the BJP's poll

Priyanka accuses Modi govt of 'neglecting' Wayanad rehab efforts

WAYANAD (KERALA), Oct 29: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra intensified her campaign for the Wayanad bypoll on Tuesday, sharply criticizing the BJP-led Central government for undermining democracy and failing to provide adequate support for the rehabilitation of landslide-hit areas in the district.

She accused the Modi administration of neglecting the needs of affected residents and not allocating promised funds for recovery efforts.

During her campaign, Priyanka argued that the government's actions over the past decade demonstrate a blatant disregard for the people and the values upon which the nation was founded. She emphasized that the BJP's approach to politics is a departure from the principles of public service enshrined in the Constitution, asserting that the ruling party is focused solely on maintaining power at any cost.

Speaking at various corner meetings in Wayanad, Priyanka highlighted the "ugly face" of politics as seen in the region, where compensation for landslide victims has not yet materialized, despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurances after visiting the disaster-affected areas. She pointed out that similar issues arose in Himachal Pradesh, where the central government has also failed to provide timely assistance.

Priyanka criticized the government's economic policies, including demonetization, which she claimed disproportionately benefit



a small group of business associates linked to the Prime Minister, while neglecting the needs of farmers and tribal communities. She lamented the lack of government support for vital areas such as employment, education, and healthcare, stressing that the Modi government has shown complete disrespect for the people of India.

The Congress leader also referenced the ongoing violence in Manipur, asserting that the pursuit of power through divisive tactics is "wrong politics." More than 200 people have died, and thousands have been displaced due to ethnic strife in the region since May last year.

Addressing the gathered crowd, Priyanka expressed gratitude to the people of Wayanad for their support of her brother, Rahul Gandhi, especially amid a concerted effort to tarnish his reputation. She emphasized the special bond of love, trust, and loyalty between the resi-

dents of Wayanad and her brother, assuring them that she would continue to advocate for their concerns in Parliament, even though the Congress is not in power at the Centre or in Kerala.

As part of her campaign activities, Priyanka also visited the Seethi Haji Memorial Football Stadium in Edvana, Malappuram, where she interacted with young football players, acknowledging that the sport represents more than just a game in the community. She reiterated her commitment to supporting youth and sports development in Wayanad.

This bypoll, necessitated by Rahul Gandhi vacating the seat following his victory in Rai Bareilly, will be held on November 13. Priyanka is contesting against LDF's veteran leader Sathyan Mokeri, a former MLA, and the BJP's Navya Haridas, a two-time councillor of the Kozhikode Corporation. (PTI)

Puri criticises Punjab's lack of action on CBG and ethanol plant investments



CHANDIGARH, Oct 29: Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday asserted that Punjab should get fresh investments for setting up compressed biogas (CBG) and ethanol plants, and said he wrote to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann several times, but nothing happened on the ground.

Replying to a question on the law and order issue in AAP-ruled Punjab, Puri said if the law and order is not right, then even the existing industry will also leave the state.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of Rozgar Mela here, Puri said entrepreneurs in Punjab should be encouraged to set up CBG plants in the state.

"I feel pain that CBG plants are increasing in the country, but here (Punjab) CBG plants are finding it hard to run. If a CBG plant is run, it will benefit farmers. If an ethanol plant is set up, it will benefit farmers as they are run on biomass.

"I wrote many letters to the

(Punjab) CM in this regard, and I always got a response that they are doing it, but nothing happens on the ground," he claimed.

"Punjab should get fresh investment in energy for setting up CBG and ethanol plants."

On protests in some villages against setting up of CBG plants, Puri said in Punjab, running plants are being shut down.

"It is a very sad situation," he noted.

"All states want to open. Where we have petrol pumps, CNG stations want to be set up, we are talking about clean energy, and there are contrived and manipulated protests where these (plants) are in Punjab," said the Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Replying to a question that the AAP government in Delhi was blaming the BJP for Yamuna pollution, Puri took a dig at the Arvind Kejriwal-led outfit, saying, "We remind them that they have their government in Delhi, which they forget sometimes".

To a question on the blame game over the issue of stubble burning, Puri said there is no blame game.

"It is solely the responsibility of the state government. You can see the satellite map (to find from) where the fire (is taking place). It is not the blame game, and it is obscurantism that they are trying," Puri said, pointing towards the Aam Aadmi Party. (PTI)

Sharad Pawar criticises nephew Ajit over family rift

NCP chief mocks Ajit's emotional plea during Baramati rally

BARAMATI, Oct 29: NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar turned the heat on his estranged nephew and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar on Tuesday, virtually accusing him of breaking the family for his political ambitions.

Campaigning for his grand-nephew and NCP (SP) nominee from the Baramati assembly segment, Yugendra Pawar, the Pawar senior mimicked Ajit, who a day earlier became emotional over Yugendra's candidature at a rally.

Sharad Pawar's action of pretending to wipe his eyes with a handkerchief in the middle of the speech evoked a peal of laughter from the audience.

The elections to 288 seats in Maharashtra are scheduled for November 20. Votes will be counted three days later.

Addressing a rally on Monday, Baramati MLA Ajit Pawar alleged that "seniors" should have ensured that a family rift is avoided, referencing to Yugendra's candidature.

"My parents and brothers never taught me the sin to break the house (family)," Sharad Pawar said while addressing a rally at Kanheri town near Baramati.



"People tasked me with leading Maharashtra a long time ago. I am now a mentor and have entrusted the party affairs to the new generation," he said.

Underscoring the uncertainties of politics, the former Union minister said one should not leave his colleagues for the sake of securing power for oneself.

"Unfortunately, when we (NCP) were not in power, some of our colleagues suddenly woke up at dawn and took oath. That government didn't last for even for four days," Pawar said.

Notably, Ajit Pawar took oath as Deputy Chief Minister when he was a member of the opposition NCP (undivided) with BJP's Devendra Fadnis as CM at Raj Bhavan amid a political tug-of-war over the formation of a government, post the 2019 assembly elections. "He (Ajit) went to the other side to secure the deputy chief minister's post despite having served as Deputy CM four times. You got the position most of the time. If you fail to get the position only once, will you break the house (family)?" Sharad Pawar

asked.

Now it is being said that I broke the family. It is a funny thing to hear, he added.

The veteran politician underlined that he never created a rift in the Pawar clan and everyone listened to him as the family head.

"I never did anything by going against anyone and will never do so. Going forward, regardless of anyone taking any stand, I will not go on the wrong track. I will ensure that my family will remain united," Sharad Pawar added.

Targeting Ajit, the Pawar senior referred to the former's speech at a rally. "It was said that I created a rift in the family. The sin of breaking the family was never taught by my parents and brothers. All my brothers, including Ananttrao Pawar (father of Ajit Pawar), lived with me," he added.

Sharad Pawar recalled how he concentrated on politics in Maharashtra and at the national level, while domestic issues and farming were taken care of by his family members.

"I could concentrate on my job because of the blessings of my brothers. I won't discriminate

against their children," he added.

He highlighted the "change of language" used by Ajit Pawar from the campaigning for the Baramati Lok Sabha seat to the latest emotive pitch.

Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar lost her maiden electoral contest from the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency by her sister-in-law and Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule.

"During Lok Sabha polls, people were told (by Ajit) not to fall prey to emotion. People were told that Pawar Saheb (Sharad Pawar) would shed tears and seek votes (for his daughter Supriya Sule)," Sharad Pawar said.

"You might have seen in yesterday's speech.....", he said even as he took out a handkerchief pretending to wipe tears, mimicking Ajit.

Pawar claimed he offered positions as ministers to several leaders but didn't entrust Supriya Sule with a single position.

The Pawar senior also said he was dragged to the court as the name and symbol of the NCP founded by him were allotted to the other faction. (PTI)

Govt creating system that gives opportunity to every youngster: PM

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: Asserting that it is his government's commitment to providing employment to a maximum number of youngsters, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that a system is being created that gives opportunity to every youth and allows them to fulfil their aspirations.

Addressing a 'Rozgar Mela' after distributing appointment letters for government jobs to over 51,000 people, he spoke of his government's efforts to boost the presence of new technologies and modern sectors such as space and semiconductors so that new employment opportunities are created. In his video address, Modi said earlier governments lacked in policy and intent, leading to India falling behind the world in rising sectors, including in modern technologies. Old and outdated technologies used to be brought to the country, he added.

"A mindset existed that believed modern technologies cannot develop in our country. This mindset did us a lot of harm," he said, stressing that if industries which generated employment in the modern world did not exist in the coun-



try, then creating new employment opportunities would be difficult. "We began work to rid the country of this old mindset of earlier governments," Modi said, adding that policies and decisions of the government have a direct bearing on employment. So far, over 7.5 lakh people have been given appointment letters for government jobs since the launch of the Rozgar Mela scheme by the prime minister in 2022.

The prime minister said it is his government's commitment to give jobs to the maximum number of people and cited the all-around in-

frastructure works such as the construction of expressways, highways, ports, rail networks and airports underway in the country.

Water and gas pipelines are being laid, and schools and universities are being opened, he said, asserting that development works are not only giving facilities to people but also creating employment opportunities. Greeting people on the occasion of Dhanteras, he said this Diwali is going to be special as it will be the first when Lord Ram is placed in his grand temple in Ayodhya. Many generations passed waiting for this moment, he added.

"The current generation is extremely fortunate to witness and become a part of such celebrations." Highlighting his government's efforts to create more employment opportunities, he referred to the Production-linked Incentives (PLI) scheme to encourage domestic manufacturing. A massive investment is taking place, leading to the creation of record opportunities, Modi said.

Over 1.5 lakh startups have been launched on this government's watch, he said, while also pointing to the paid internship programme for youngsters which seeks to induct over one crore youth over the next five years.

India, Modi said, has entered into agreements with 21 countries to facilitate immigration and employment for Indian youths.

He asked government officials to conduct themselves in a way that they are cited as an example of the world over. They are servants and not rulers, Modi added.

The prime minister said his disempowerment has offered permanent government jobs to lakhs of youths and a large number of them were handed appointment letters even in

the states being governed by the BJP and its allies.

A festive atmosphere prevails in Haryana where 26,000 youths were given jobs by the newly-formed government, Modi said while asserting that the BJP dispensation there is known for doing so without "kharchi" and "parchi" (bribe and recommendation).

Referring to the inauguration of an aircraft manufacturing facility in Vadodra, the prime minister said thousands of people would get direct employment while the MSME sector would hugely benefit by becoming a part of the manufacturing value chain.

Whenever a scheme is launched, the focus is not just on the direct benefits to its target group but also on developing an entire ecosystem of employment generation, Modi said.

To make his point, he cited the examples of the massive rooftop solar scheme, which seeks to provide up to 300 units of electricity free, and the 'Lakhpati Didi' programme that aims to ensure annual income of ₹ 1 lakh to 3 crore women associated with self-help groups.(PTI)

Sardar Patel deprived of Bharat Ratna for long: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that efforts were made to erase and undermine Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's enormous contribution to the country and he was deprived of Bharat Ratna for a long time.

Flagging off 'Run for Unity' ahead of the birth anniversary of Patel, the minister said it was due to the foresightedness and acumen of the country's first home minister that over 550 princely states were merged with the Union of India and the country became united.

He said it was because of Sardar Patel that the Lakshadweep Islands, Junagarh, Hyderabad and all other princely states were merged with India.

"But there were efforts to erase and undermine the enormous contribution of Sardar Patel to the country. He was also deprived of Bharat Ratna for a long time," Shah said while addressing participants at the Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium here.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi installed the tallest statue of Patel in Kevadia, honoured him in a befitting manner and has kept his memory alive, he said.

Modi inaugurated Patel's 182-metre statue - Statue of Unity - at Kevadia in Gujarat in 2018. He laid the foundation stone for the project in 2013 when he was the Gujarat chief minister.

Shah said Sardar Patel's vision, ideas and message in every field have been given a concrete shape by Prime Minister Modi.

Sardar Patel was bestowed with Bharat Ratna -- the country's highest civilian award -- posthumously in 1991, 41 years after his death in 1950.

Shah said the people of the country are now united and have dedicated themselves to fulfilling the prime minister's dream of turning

India into a fully developed nation by 2047.

"The prime minister has put forth before all countrymen the pledge to build a fully developed India by 2047, which would be at the top of the ladder in every field in the world," he said.

He said now India stands before the world as a flourishing, developing and strong nation.

The home minister said India stands strong before the world on the path of becoming the leader in every field, and its foundation was laid by Sardar Patel.

"The great ideas of Sardar Patel will definitely become a guiding light for the young generation of the country," he said.

Shah called upon citizens to take a pledge to strengthen the unity of India through the 'Run for Unity' and to realise the dream of a fully developed India by 2047.

The home minister said the 'Run for Unity' is normally organised on October 31, the birth anniversary of Patel. But this year, it was organised two days ahead as Deepawali is falling on that day, he said.

"Today is Dhanteras and we are organising the run on this auspicious occasion," the home minister said.

The Modi government has been observing October 31 as 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' or National Unity Day since 2014 to foster and reinforce its dedication to preserving and strengthening the unity, integrity and security of the nation.

Patel was born on October 31, 1875, at Nadiad in Gujarat.

As India's first home minister and deputy prime minister, Patel is credited for the merger of over 550 princely states into the Union of India. Various programmes, recalling Sardar Patel's contribution to unifying India, are being organised as part of the National Unity Day celebrations. (PTI)

'Thousands of lamps will be lit in temple built on birthplace of Ram Lalla'

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: This Diwali will be historic as after a 500-year wait thousands of lamps will be lit in the temple built on the birthplace of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya on the festival, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

Modi said it would be a Diwali "when our Ram returns home" and this time the wait is over not after 14 years but after 500 years.

The prime minister made the remarks after launching development projects worth nearly ₹ 12,850 crore and extending his government's flagship health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat

to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above.

An idol of Ram Lalla was consecrated at the Ayodhya temple in January this year, a landmark event led by Prime Minister Modi who had also given a clarion call to go beyond the grand temple's construction to build the foundation of a "strong, capable and divine" India of the next 1,000 years.

Lakhs of people had watched the consecration ceremony on television in their homes and neighbourhood temples, savouring the historic moment.(PTI)

Over 150 injured in fireworks accident at Kerala temple

KASARAGOD (KERALA), Oct 29: A fire accident during a Theyyam performance at a temple near Neeleswaram late last night left 150 people injured, 10 of them seriously, when firecrackers stored in the vicinity exploded, police said on Tuesday.

While police said that the exact cause of the blaze is yet to be ascertained, eyewitnesses said sparks from firecrackers fell on the roof of the stocks stored nearby, leading to an explosion that scared away the people watching the Theyyam performance.

The incident happened at Veerarkavu Temple near Neeleswaram in this northernmost district of Kerala, police said.

Neeleswaram police have registered a case into the firework accident under the Explosive Substance Act and various sections of the BNS. "A case was registered into the incident, and eight persons are booked. All those booked are temple committee members," a senior police officer told PTI.

It was suspected that the firecrackers were burst without complying with safety norms and guidelines, he said.

Hundreds of people, including women and children, had gathered to have a glimpse of the Theyyam at the shrine.

Theyyam is a centuries-old ritualistic performance held at temples and 'kavus' (sacred groves) in the Malabar (north Kerala) region of Kerala. Mobile phone footage, broadcast by television channels, showed hapless people getting scattered and running in panic after a thundering explosion and a ball of fire happened on one of the premises of the shrine.

The incident was suspected to have happened after the fire crackers stored in a shed in the temple premises caught fire accidentally, eyewitnesses said.

According to police, over 150 people sustained serious and minor injuries in the accident, and at least 108 persons were seeking treatment in various hospitals in Kasaragod, Kannur, and Kozhikode districts and in Mangalore in neighbouring Karnataka, police said.

The District Collector said on Tuesday that those who were seriously injured had 80 per cent burns.

"The cause of the accident is being ascertained. Samples have been collected from the site," he said. He further said that according to a preliminary probe, the fireworks storage facility and the place where the crackers were being burst were close by.

"The safety precautions were not taken. The requirement of maintaining a minimum distance of 100 meters between the two was not followed. No permission was taken either for storage of fireworks," he added. Mobile phone footage broadcast by television channels, showed the severity of the accident and the distress of the helpless crowd gathered at the village temple. In the footage, a large crowd could be seen gathered on one side of the temple, with a Theyyam artist, dressed in ritualistic red attire, performing amidst them.

A burst was heard, and a ball of fire and billowing smoke appeared on the other side of the shrine, an eyewitness recalled.

People, including women and children, were seen scattering, running around, and urging others to move away. (PTI)

ED raids IAS officer, others in Jharkhand liquor 'scam' linked money laundering case

RANCHI, Oct 29: The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday raided premises linked to IAS officer Vinay Kumar Choubey, some other government officers and a number of liquor businessmen and middlemen in Jharkhand, which is poll-bound, and Chhattisgarh as part of a money laundering investigation into an alleged excise "scam".

Officials said the searches are being undertaken at 15 premises in Ranchi and Raipur after a criminal case was recently registered by the Jharkhand office of the federal probe agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Teams of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) provided security to the ED teams.

The ED took cognisance of a September 7 FIR filed by the Chhattisgarh police anti-corruption bureau (ACB) at Raipur naming Choubey, retired Chhattisgarh IAS officer Anil Tuteja, Anwar Dhebar, the elder brother of Raipur Mayor Ajijaz Dhebar, Arunpati Tripathi, an Indian Telecom Service (ITS) officer and special secretary of the Chhattisgarh excise department, and four others.

The premises of 1999-batch Jharkhand cadre IAS officer Choubey, currently the secretary of Jharkhand Panchayati Raj department, joint secretary of excise department of the state Gajendra Singh, liquor traders and linked persons are being searched, they said.

Choubey was the principal secretary to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and the excise secretary of the state during the implementation of the 2022 excise policy in Jharkhand. The police FIR alleges that the Jharkhand liquor policy of 2022 was framed to illegally benefit liquor syndicates of the state leading to loss to the Jharkhand government.

Gujarat journalist controlled company involved in GST 'fraud' case: ED

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday claimed a Gujarat-based journalist was "controlling" an accused company from whose premises unaccounted cash was seized by the state police recently as part of an investigation into a GST "fraud" case.

The federal probe agency said it undertook fresh searches on Sunday in this money laundering case and raided seven premises in Ahmedabad, Surat and Bhavnagar and seized "incriminating" documents.

According to the ED, journalist Mahesh Langa was "controlling" DA Enterprises from whose premises "a large quantum of unaccounted cash" was seized by the police.

It is further gathered that various other benami transactions are suspected to have happened with shell companies, it alleged.

The money laundering case stems from an FIR of the Ahmedabad Police Crime Branch that was registered on receipt of a complaint from the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) against "creation of more than 200 shell entities by a group of organised criminals in order to fraudulently receive and pass-on the Input Tax Credit (ITC) at the strength of bogus invoices, without supply of any goods or services".

The main accused company in this case is Dhruvi Enterprises.

"Dhruvi Enterprises was created by certain individuals based on fake documents and obtained GST registration. Later, this entity has raised invoices in the name of 12 different entities including DA Enterprises, who availed fraudulent Input Tax Credit (ITC) from the GST department," the ED claimed. (PTI)

India, Spain must contribute in building open and secure Indo-Pacific: Pedro Sanchez

Both countries must work together in areas like the protection of civilians and delivery of humanitarian

MUMBAI, Oct 29: Underlining the need to protect freedom of navigation amid assertiveness of Beijing in the South China Sea, Pedro Sanchez, President of the Government of Spain, on Tuesday said his country and India must contribute in building an Indo-Pacific region that is open and secure.

Speaking at an event organised by the Spain-India Forum and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in Mumbai, Sanchez maintained that the rules-based international order is at stake and hence Madrid and New Delhi must defend and work towards strengthening multilateral institutions.

He said the world's centre of power has shifted towards Asia where India plays a key role.

Sanchez announced that Spain is working to launch a new strategy for Asia which will revitalize his country's relations with the largest continent in the world.

The central Indo-Pacific region accounts for 36 per cent of the world's GDP, pointed out the Spanish leader who is on an official visit to India.

He said the vital region accounts for 60 per cent of world population and 50 per cent of global maritime trade which faces security challenges such as piracy, terrorism, natural disasters, arms and drug trafficking and illegal fishing.

As this region has significant strategic natural resources such as oil, fisheries, and critical mineral reserves, security challenges are more significant here,



Sanchez pointed out. "We must, therefore, protect freedom of navigation and overflight. India and Spain must contribute to a secure Indo-Pacific," he said.

Sanchez maintained that to ensure peaceful existence among countries, principles like territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations must be abided by.

He said India and Spain must work together in areas like the protection of civilians and delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need, and defence of human rights and democracy.

Sanchez said Artificial Intelligence (AI) has extraordinary potential, but stressed the need to calculate the risk of misuse of this transformative technology.

"As our countries improve their technological capabilities, AI cooperation can transform key sectors. It can also help address challenges related to the spread of

false information that threaten our democracies," Sanchez noted.

International cooperation in AI is essential for a safer, more egalitarian and open world, emphasised the visiting Spanish leader.

"AI must be ethical. We must establish strong ethical standards and accountability mechanisms to ensure that it respects human rights and promotes social good," he added.

"We should all participate in the establishment of this comprehensive framework for the global governance of digital technology and AI," Sanchez said.

In order to do so, building AI capacity in the Global South is critical. This involves creating a global network of AI research and development centres, providing targeted training programmes and ensuring access to high performing computing resources, he observed.(PTI)

ENGAGEMENT UNDER SAMAGRA SHIKSHA AXOM

No. SSA-20012/7/2022-Equity-SSA/I/776116/2024

The Samagra Shiksha, Axom invites online applications from Indian Citizens (as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India) for the under mentioned positions under Samagra Shiksha, Axom on contractual basis. The online applications will be received from **30.10.2024 to 13.11.2024**. The posts are temporary in nature and will neither be regularized under Samagra Shiksha, Axom nor will be absorbed under any job/programme of Government of Assam in future and no person (s) so engaged shall have any right (s) to claim for permanent appointment in any post (s) in the government or in the Samagra Shiksha, Assam.

Age for categories of post: The candidate should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 62 years of age as on 01-01-2024.

The age limit of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the Matriculation/HSLC Admit Card or Pass Certificate issued by a recognized Board/ Council and no other document shall be accepted in lieu of the mentioned documents.

Sl No	Name of the Post	Essential Qualification and Experience	Remuneration	Tenure of Service	No. of Post	Place of posting
1	Academic Resource Person (ARP) for Career Counseling	Minimum at-least Graduation with certificate of diploma in Career Counseling/PG Diploma in Counseling or Masters in Psychology (preferred). Preferred minimum of one-year experience in providing career/educational counseling to students at schools. NOTE: if it is a graduate with a diploma - at least 5 years of teaching/counseling experience. If Master's, 1 year of relevant experience.	Rs. 25000.00 per month	Tenure should be one year to cover the entire academic session.	147	As Block Resource Coordinators in the 147 education blocks under Samagra Shiksha Axom

N.B.-

- The link of the recruitment portal will be available in the Samagra Shiksha website <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>
- Read the User Guidelines carefully which is available on the recruitment portal on how to submit the online application form.
- Claims for any correction will not be entertained after submitting the online registration and online application.
- Before filling the on-line application, applicant has to go through the User Guidelines for online registration and online application.
- Candidate must upload the supporting document of educational qualification, experience and others through portal.
- Only eligible candidates will have to appear in test/interview, the exact date of which will be communicated separately.
- A candidate must be in good mental and bodily health and free from any physical defect likely to interfere with the efficient discharge of his/ her duties as an Officer of the service.
- The exact date & time of the Test/ Interview will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates separately.
- Marking pattern will be on General Awareness, Personality & Aptitude, Subject matter in relevant field, Relevant Experience, etc. for the post. The applicant has to obtain minimum 50% of the total marks on the above in the interview and only then the candidates will be short-listed.
- The office will not be responsible for any non submission of online application due to any error or other problem.
- The decision of the Selection Committee in all aspects and all respects pertaining to the application and its acceptance or rejection as the case may be, conduct of test and at all consequent stages concluding in the selection or otherwise of any candidate shall be final in all respects and binding on all concerned. The Mission also reserves its right to alter and modify time and conditions laid down in the notification for conducting the various stages up to selection or withdraw the Notification at any time, duly intimating details thereof to all concerned, as warranted by any unforeseen circumstances arising during the course of this process, or as deemed necessary by the Mission at any stage.

Janasanyog/DF/1322/24/30-Oct-24

সমগ্ৰ শিক্ষা
Samagra Shiksha

Sd/-Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Cinema an opportunity to have a conversation: Kanu Behl on exploring power nexus in 'Despatch'

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: In a modern world, which is becoming more "opaque and foggy" with the growing disparity between the rich and the poor, "Despatch", the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer investigative thriller, is an attempt to understand this landscape, says filmmaker Kanu Behl.

The film, which premiered at the recently concluded MAMI Mumbai Film Festival, revolves around Joy Bag, a Mumbai-based crime journalist, struggling with mid-life crisis and facing an existential threat from digitalisation. He gets sucked into an increasingly murky affair involving a corporate-political nexus which, if exposed, can shake the foundations of the city.

Inspired by real characters from the world of journalism, "Despatch" began taking shape in 2016, said Behl, known for hard-hitting stories such as "Titli" and "Agra".

The filmmaker and co-writer Ishani Banerjee were not interested in portraying journalists as these "cardboard cut-out kind of characters" who are out to do a story for the greater good. "We ended up diving into this rabbit hole of research where, over the next year and a half, we ended up meeting a lot of journalists, lawyers, sharpshooters, people from the underworld. The more we researched, we realised that something strange is happening.

"The modern world that we are living in today is becoming so opaque and so foggy that now, as the gap between the rich and poor gets increasingly wider and as the rich hold more and more power, you can't even know who is doing what and for what reason," Behl told PTI.

The 44-year-old filmmaker said as writers, the impulse is to find a clear story but the truth that was emerging out of their research was different.

"And we thought, how interesting is this? Because we are staring at a landscape where we want to do a film about a journalist looking for something, but it's not even possible to find out what he's looking for. And that became really exciting because it gave us the opportunity to do a very subversive film." With Bajpayee as the perfect vessel to convey the complexities of the story they were telling, Behl said they were keen to do a character piece about journalists with all "their foibles and frailties" while also trying to reflect the truth of the world.

Behl, a graduate from the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, began his filmmaking career as an assistant director on Dibakar Banerjee's "Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!" and then co-wrote the critically-acclaimed "Love Sex aur Dhokha" with Banerjee, besides working as the chief assistant director on the project. His feature film debut "Titli", about a car-jacking gang in Delhi, was selected in the section Un Certain Regard category at the Cannes Film Festival. "Agra", about a sexually repressed man, was part of the Directors' Fortnight section at Cannes.

While he does not want to bind himself into making a certain kind of cinema, Behl said movies, for him, are a way to explore the reality around him.



'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' title song brought me to Bollywood: Neeraj Shridhar

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: Singer Neeraj Shridhar says he gave back-to-back hits for films such as "Race", "Love Aaj Kal", and "Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani", but it is the title track of "Bhool Bhulaiyaa" to which he owes his success in Bollywood.

The singer, also the lead vocalist of Indian pop and rock group Bombay Vikings which was formed in Sweden in the early 1990s, has recreated the popular song for the upcoming film "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3".

Shridhar sang the original song, composed by Pritam and penned by Sameer, for 2007's "Bhool Bhulaiyaa" directed by Priyadarshan.

"When I sang the original, I was not used to singing Bollywood songs a lot. I had sung many songs for films like 'Heyy Babyy'. Then, I did three songs for 'Love Aaj Kal' like 'Chor Bazari', 'Aahun Aahun', and 'Twist'. There was 'Race'. I also sang 'Prem Ki Naiyya' from 'Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani'..."

"But none of the songs had come out when 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' happened. All of a sudden, most of these songs came out around the same time. I owe it to this song ('Bhool Bhulaiyaa'). It brought me to Bollywood," the singer told PTI in an interview. Shridhar, who has collaborated with American rapper Pitbull and Punjabi singing star Diljit Dosanjh for the "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" title track, still remembers the first time T-Series head and producer Bhushan Kumar approached him to lend his vocals to the original song.

The singer said just months after he recorded

the title song for the 2006 comedy "Bhagam Bhag" for T-Series, Kumar told him that he would get a call from Pritam.

"Pritam also loved my music for Bombay Vikings. We clicked together right from the beginning. I was really excited because by then I had got the knack of singing in front of a lot of people in a studio. Bhushan bhai and Sameer bhai were there; it was like a concert in the studio."

Shridhar said he had to sing the song again because there was "some issue with the audio files".

"It was finally recorded at Pritam's studio. It was one of the first songs to be recorded there."

The singer said he didn't anticipate the "Bhool Bhulaiyaa" title track would go on to become a chartbuster.

"I was told that this was going to be a hit. But I took it like just another song. But it became a huge hit," he recalled.

Fifteen years later, Shridhar was called upon again to sing a newer version to the same song but for "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2", directed by Anees Bazmee.

"At the time, I had not sung a Bollywood song for a long time. The last time I gave a huge hit was 'Tumhi Ho Bandhu' (from 2012's 'Cocktail')... I sang about four or five new lines for the 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' track.

"That also worked out pretty good... I was kind of reborn in Bollywood. Recently, I met Bhushan bhai and he told me to not speak to anyone about the new version for the third film. He only said it's going to be big," he added.

Shridhar also praised Tanishk Bagchi, who composed the new reiterations of the song both for "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2" and "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3".

"Tanishk is a great lad. He has fused the new melody with the old one by Pritam. He has done a wonderful job."

The singer, who also produces artists in Europe and is into advertising, said fans will

get to hear more from him soon.

"I want to do what I did as Bombay Vikings again. Very soon you'll hear songs in typical Swedish music in some Hindi songs."

"Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" releases on November 1. It stars Kartik Aaryan, Madhuri Dixit, Vidya Balan and Tripti Dimri. (PTI)



FILMING STARTS ON 'PANCHAYAT' SEASON FOUR

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: The fourth season of Prime Video's critically-acclaimed series "Panchayat" has commenced shooting, the streamer announced on Tuesday.

Prime Video shared the news on Instagram where it posted stills from the upcoming chapter, which is being directed by Deepak Kumar Mishra and Akshat Vijaywargiya.

"Aye Butkun, 4 cup chai bol diya jaaye. #PanchayatOnPrime, Season 4 Now Filming," the streamer wrote in the caption.

The show's lead star Jitendra Kumar is returning for the new season along with Neena Gupta, Raghubir Yadav, Faisal Malik, Chandan Roy, and Sanvikaa.

Created by The Viral Fever (TVF), "Panchayat" revolves around Abhishek Tripathi (Jitendra Kumar), an engineering



graduate who for lack of a better job option, joins as secretary of a panchayat office in a remote village named Phulera in Uttar Pradesh. The eight-episode series, which premiered with its first season in April 2020, was

an instant hit on Prime Video and garnered overwhelming response leading to a second season that came out in May 2022. The show's third installment was released on the streaming service in May this year. (PTI)

FROM ADMIRERS TO BFFs

'CHHAILA' SINGERS SHREYA GHOSHAL, SUNIDHI CHAUHAN ON THEIR EVOLVING EQUATION

MUMBAI, Oct 29: They are two of India's widely loved playback singers and Sunidhi Chauhan and Shreya Ghoshal say they have come a long way from first crossing paths for a sound check to trading experiences as mothers.

Chauhan, 41, and Ghoshal, 40, recently reunited for an independent song track "Chhaila", composed by Salim-Sulaiman, with lyrics penned by

Shraddha Pandit. "Let's just say that we are friends, best friends, BFFs, and everything that comes along with friends and besties," Chauhan told PTI when asked about her current relationship with Ghoshal.

"She had a lovely, charming persona and of course, what a performer in studios and live shows," Ghoshal said about Chauhan.

Their singing styles may be different but both were discovered by the film industry through reality music shows. Chauhan became a household name after winning "Meri Awaz Suno", whereas Ghoshal gained prominence when she emerged victorious on "Sa Re Ga Ma".

Chauhan fondly remembers listening to Ghoshal sing "Paan Khaye Saiyan Hamaro" on "Sa Re Ga Ma". "It was one of the purest things that I saw on TV of such a little girl singing. I was also very little but still some things didn't make sense. Like the way she was looking, there was beauty on the face and in the voice.

"It was such a beautiful combination that I saw on TV and that too coming from a 12 or 13-year-old girl or maybe younger," said the singer, who got her first break in films with "Ruki Ruki Si" from the 1999 film "Mast".

They soon went on a tour to the US together with vocalist Shaan.

Chauhan admitted her memory of that first meeting has faded with time, but recalled the warmth with which Ghoshal greeted her.

"We spent a little time for the first time on the bus, going for the sound check and coming back. It was wonderful meeting her. Her mother, she's very loving towards me and I love her. She's so beautiful, so it's just a great family."

Ghoshal, who entered the music scene a

few years after Chauhan when she sang for Sanjay Leenla Bhansali's "Devdas", shared that her family was already an ardent fan of Chauhan after watching "Meri Awaz Suno".

"She was a household name very early on, and somehow when you see an artist (on a show), woh apna bann jata hai, you adopt (her). So Sunidhi was that kind of a person where my family members, including me, mummy, and papa loved her even before meeting her," she added.

Their first proper meeting happened in one of the recording studios when Chauhan was leaving after finishing a recording. Ghoshal vividly remembers that Chauhan wore hoop earrings and was dressed in a checkered shirt.

Over a period of time, Chauhan said they realised how similar they are to each other.

"We have immense love and respect for each other. We are just two girls or women, who like each other's vibe, and we like, to be honest with each other, there's honesty in us, in our music," she added. This comfort level between the singers -- who have sung multiple film songs together in the past like "Imaan Ka Asar" from "Dor" and "Hum To Aise Hain Bhaiya" from "Laaga Chunari Mein Daag" -- proved instrumental in crafting the vibrant track "Chhaila".

"We did this song with pure honesty; we were open like a book," Chauhan said.

Ghoshal added, "(There were) no inhibitions or limitations. It was all easy to do. It doesn't happen with everyone, it is not easy to be comfortable with another artist, but this was unusually easy. In our case, we opened up with each other."

She teased about the possibility of a "Chhaila 2.0". "It was very liberating. I'm sure we will do many more (such collaborations)," Chauhan added. Motherhood has become another talking

point in their friendship. As both singers navigate the joys and challenges of raising children, their conversations now include stories about parenting to completing school projects.

While Chauhan shares six-year-old son Tegg with music composer-husband Hitesh Sonik, Ghoshal and her entrepreneur husband Shiladitya Mukhopadhyaya are parents to son Devyaan, three.

"Now, we both are mothers so we have a lot of similar problems and happy moments that we share and we are like, 'Did this happen to you?' Tegg is two-three years older than Devyaan. "So, the conversations are like, 'He is doing the same, or this is what is happening in school, I've to do a project, I have to buy scissors and glue'. She is like, 'I'm doing the same'. So, we are having the same kind of conversations, now the similarities are more," Ghoshal said. (PTI)



MOHUN BAGAN FACE RESURGENT HYDERABAD FC IN ISL

HYDERABAD, Oct 29: Mohun Bagan Super Giant would be wary of a resurgent Hyderabad FC when the two sides face each other in their Indian Super League here on Wednesday.

Hyderabad FC enter the match on the back of a resounding 4-0 win over Mohammedan Sporting in Kolkata that ended their seven-match winless streak.

With that set aside, the team will now be hoping to get back-to-back three points under their belt, having last achieved this feat in a run of five matches from December 2022 to February 2023.

Sustained success has been a concerning cause for the team, but recent signs have indicated that they have overcome those troubles to really come on their own and perform at par with their potential.

Hyderabad FC put on a marvellous goal-scoring show against Mohammedan Sporting, converting four of their 11 attempted shots into goal. The Mariners, on the other hand, have been overcoming Hyderabad FC consistently in the recent past, losing only once in their previous seven matches against the side.

The defending ISL champions have won four times and drawn twice in the period, keeping a



clean sheet in six encounters. The Mariners beat Hyderabad FC in both their fixtures last season. However, a revived home team setup might present a tougher challenge to the Kolkata-based team. Mohun Bagan Super Giant

have netted six times from set-pieces in the current campaign - the highest amongst all teams. Three of these goals have come from corners, showing that the Hyderabad FC backline will have to be extra cautious in their defensive play from such situa-

tions. The Mariners' skill in creating effective attacks from open plays and set-pieces shows their unique strength when playing cohesively. The two sides have played 12 games in the ISL, with Hyder-

abad FC winning twice. Mohun Bagan have been triumphant on five occasions, whereas five games have resulted in a draw.

Hyderabad FC head coach Thangboi Singto has praised his players for following his strategies to perfection. He has appreciated individuals for understanding their roles well and hopes that the trend continues in the coming games too.

"During the game against Mohammedan SC, I had told the team that what we did in the first 20-25 minutes against Jamshedpur FC is what we should take forward. They did that very well," Singto said.

"Individual roles have been understood, from the forward line to the midfield. One part is understanding and the other is implementing it, and they did the latter very well."

Mohun Bagan head coach Jose Molina highlighted a key area that he wants his team to improve upon. He wants them to defend collectively.

"We will improve our defence when we will improve our attack. And it's not only about defending players and attacking players but for me, it's the whole team working together. 11 players defending and attacking together and that is what we have been watching the last (few) matches," Molina said. (PTI)

Aaqib Javed not in fray for Pakistan white-ball coach but could be made NCA head: sources

KARACHI, Oct 29: Senior national selector Aaqib Javed is not in the fray to fill the vacant post of Pakistan white-ball head coach but he could be made the chief of the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Lahore, according to sources. South African Gary Kirsten, who guided India to 2011 World Cup triumph, resigned on Monday following a rift with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) which asked the Test team head coach Jason Gillespie to take care of the national side on an interim basis in the white-ball tour of Australia next month.

There was speculation that former Pakistan pacer Aaqib could be in the fray for taking up of the job left vacant by Kirsten, but a PCB source told PTI that he is more interested in working on a project which involved development of young players.

"The PCB contemplated appointing Aaqib as head coach of the white ball squad after the resignation of Gary Kirsten but he's now more likely to accept the post of the National Cricket Academy in Lahore," the PCB source said.

He said PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi is expected to announce some key changes to top positions in the Board in the next few days, one of them being the appointment of a new white-ball coach.

"The Board is considering moving former Test spinner Nadeem Khan from his current position as Director NCA to head of the international cricket department with Aaqib taking over as head of the NCA," the source said.

The PCB will have to name a permanent white-ball head coach soon, given the team's various limited-over commitments after the Australia tour, which include matches in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

According to the source, Naqvi felt that a former cricketer would be best suited to head the international cricket affairs for which Nadeem Khan appeared the best choice.

He said the PCB chairman was not satisfied with the performance of current head of international cricket Usman Wahla who, in turn, could be made Pakistan Super League (PSL) head.

"There have also been issues between some of the players and Wahla over NOCs for foreign leagues and the central contracts," the source said.

He said the PCB is most likely to move Usman Wahla to head the PSL as not only is he a permanent employee but also has some strong political connections.

"In the next few days there will be shuffling of positions in the Board," the source said. (PTI)

Jorhat A Division Football League to begin from Nov 14

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Oct 29: The Jorhat A Division Football League will commence on November 14 at the Kalyani Khel Pathar in North Jorhat. A total of 10 teams have confirmed their participation in the league. The event is being organised by the Jorhat District Sports Association in collaboration with the North Jorhat Sports Association.

Meanwhile, the Jorhat District Inter-School Football League is scheduled to begin on November 13 at the Jorhat Stadium, with 15 teams confirming their participation.

Spaniards Rodri and Bonmatí win Ballon d'Or award as Real Madrid snubs ceremony

PARIS, Oct 29: Spanish midfielders Rodri and Aitana Bonmatí won the men's and women's Ballon d'Or award on Monday as the world's best soccer players, while Real Madrid snubbed the star-studded ceremony in Paris in apparent protest.

The 28-year-old Rodri won the prestigious award for the first time after helping Manchester City win the Premier League and being a key player in Spain's European Championship triumph.

He succeeded eight-time winner Lionel Messi of Argentina and beat Real Madrid's Vinicius

Júnior into second place, a result which greatly displeased the Spanish club. Madrid and its players stayed away from the ceremony, then vented their feelings on social media.

Rodri showed his emotion when his name was read out by former winner George Weah, putting his hands over his face. "Incredible night for me," said Rodri, who is out for the season after injuring his ACL last month and arrived on crutches to the ceremony. "One of my key things is I always try to improve every game."

Known as a hard-working and unselfish player despite his

abilities, Rodri was quick to deflect praise onto others.

"I just want to say thank you again to the people who recognize my value in the game," he said. "When I was a kid I never thought of winning the Ballon d'Or, but in the last years I've been playing the highest level."

The 26-year-old Bonmatí retained her award after helping Barcelona win the Spanish league, the Spanish cup and the Champions League. Bonmatí joined Barca teammate Alexia Putellas in winning two titles since the women's trophy was first awarded in 2018. She beat her teammates Caroline Gra-

Gani's defiant ton in vain as Karnataka secure first win of the season

PATNA, Oct 29: Sakibul Gani's batting century wasn't enough to prevent Bihar from succumbing to an eight-wicket loss against Karnataka, who claimed their first outright win of the Ranji Trophy season and boosted their qualification hopes with a vital six points here on Tuesday.

After declaring overnight at 287/7 with a 144-run lead, Karnataka's prospects improved early on as they dismissed both Bihar openers for just six runs in the second over of the final day.

Gani, who made headlines for his triple century on debut in 2022, partnered with the experienced Babul Kumar in a defiant 130-run stand that frustrated the Karnataka bowlers.

Babul's composed 44 off 111 balls (5x4) offered support, while Gani fought on, striking 15 fours and four sixes in an impressive 130-run knock that held Bihar's innings together.

Ultimately, Gani was the last man dismissed, LBW to Vidyadhar Patil (1/34), after being the linchpin of Bihar's 212-run total.

Only three Bihar batters -- Gani, Babul, and Jitin Yadav (15) -- reached double digits, underscoring Gani's impact on an otherwise faltering innings.

With light fading fast, Karnataka's bowlers stayed composed, with Shreyas Gopal taking 4/70 for a match haul of eight wickets and pacer Vijaykumar Vyshak, recently called up for the national T20I squad, contributing 3/44 as they bowled out Bihar in 66.2 overs. Needing just 69 runs to win, Karnataka chased down the target in 10.1 overs, giving the eight-time former champions' qualification hopes a substantial lift. In Indore, Rajat Patidar, who has struggled after a disappointing

Test debut series against England earlier this year, roared back to form with a sensational 102-ball 159, yet Madhya Pradesh had to settle for a draw against Haryana. Haryana, with a first-innings lead, secured three points to remain at the top of the Group C standings with 13 points, five ahead of Kerala and Karnataka at second and third places respectively on net run-rate.

Trailing by 132 runs after the first innings, Madhya Pradesh faced a challenging final day. Patidar, who recently missed out on India A's squad for Australia after an unimpressive Duleep Trophy, showcased his class with a blistering 68-ball century -- his 13th in first-class cricket -- dismantling Haryana's bowling attack of Yuzvendra Chahal and Jayant Yadav.

Madhya Pradesh erased the deficit and declared at 308/4, setting Haryana a target of 177 under fading lights. However, Haryana managed 115/3 before the game ended in a draw.

Brief Scores
In Patna: Bihar 143 and 212 in 66.2 overs (Sakibul Gani 130, Babul Kumar 44; Shreyas Gopal 4/70, Vijaykumar Vyshak 3/44) lost to Karnataka 287/7 and 70/2 in 10.1 overs (Nikin Jose 28 not out) by eight wickets. Points: Karnataka 6, Bihar 0.

In Mullanpur: Punjab 210 and 267/3 in 94 overs (Jaskaranvir Singh Paul 115 not out, Pukhraj Mann 91). Uttar Pradesh 556/9 declared. Match drawn. Points: Uttar Pradesh 3, Punjab 1.

In Kolkata: Kerala 356/9 declared in 120 overs. Bengal 181/3 in 63 overs (Shuvam Dey 67, Sudip Chatterjee 57). Match drawn. Points: Bengal 1, Kerala 1.

In Indore: Madhya Pradesh 308 and 308/4 declared in 48.1 overs (Rajat Patidar 159), Haryana 440 in 155.5 overs (Lakshay Dalal 105, Dheeru Singh 94, Himanshu Rana 90, Harshal Patel 81; Kumar Kartikeya 5/118) and 115/3 in 38 overs (Mayank Shandilya 68 not out). Match drawn. Points: Haryana 3, MP 1. (PTI)



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Disappointed to miss out on final, but happy to win bronze: Jr hockey team skipper

BENGALURU, Oct 29: Indian junior men's hockey team captain Amir Ali admitted that they were disappointed after failing to qualify for the final of the Sultan of Johor Cup but said a bronze medal was much better than returning home empty-handed.

India beat New Zealand in a tense shoot-out in the third-fourth place classification match to clinch the bronze medal in the junior tournament at Johor Bahru, Malaysia last Saturday.

"We were very disappointed after missing out on the final due to goal difference. But as a team, we decided, there was no point looking back at what we could have done better. We decided to focus on the bronze-medal match and told ourselves that we can't go back home empty handed," Ali said after returning here.

India remained on top of the points table throughout the tournament with strong performances against Japan (4-2), Great Britain (6-4), Malaysia (4-2), and New Zealand (3-3). But the 0-4 loss against eventual winners Australia cost them dearly as they missed out on a spot in the final to Great Britain by one-goal difference.

It was the legendary goalkeeper PR Sreejesh's first assignment as coach of the Indian junior men's team.

"At least 12 players in the team were playing a big tournament for the first time. They had earlier played the Test series but they were new to a tournament

setup. Sree bhai (Sreejesh) is the best mentor we could have had," Ali said.

"He constantly spoke to us about enjoying the matches and we played without taking any pressure. This was largely why we bounced back even after conceding goals and ended up winning those matches too," said the member of the Indian team that won the Sultan of Johor Cup in 2022.

"He would talk to us about going step by step in the match and even during half-time breaks, when we would be behind in scoreline, he would tell us how we can go about without being under pressure. It was only that match against Australia where we lost by a huge goal margin that cost us dearly."

Back to business at SAJ, Bengaluru, the Indian junior team has now set its focus on winning the Junior Asia Cup title, a qualifying tournament for next year's FIH Junior World Cup.

The Junior Asia Cup begins on November 26 in Muscat, Oman.

"We are back in the camp and have begun our preparations for the Junior Asia Cup. The next few months are crucial for us as we prepare for the Junior World Cup on home soil," Ali said.

"Being in the same campus as the senior team helps us a lot. Even for me personally, the experience I gained playing with the senior team has helped in guiding the newcomers in the junior side. I have learnt a lot from Harmanpreet Singh and Manpreet," he said. (PTI)



Aussie wicketkeeper batter Matthew Wade retires, moves to coaching role

MELBOURNE, Oct 29: Matthew Wade, a T20 World Cup winner in 2021, on Tuesday retired from international cricket, and will now start working in a coaching role in Australia's white-ball set-up.

Wade, a wicketkeeper batter, will join Australia's coaching staff under Andre Borovec for the upcoming T20I series against Pakistan, and the Tasmanian will also be with the group for the ODI series starting at Melbourne next week.

The 36-year-old has played 36 Tests, 97 ODIs and 92 T20Is in a career that spanned across 13 years, and his last appearance for the national team was in this year's T20 World Cup.

However, Wade will continue to play domestic cricket for Tasmania and Big Bash League for Hobart Hurricanes at least for the next two seasons.

"I was fully aware my international days were most likely over at the end of the last T20 World Cup. My international retirement and coaching have been a constant conversation with George (Bailey) and Andrew (McDonald) over the past

six months," Wade said in a statement released by Cricket Australia.

"Coaching has been on my radar over the last few years and thankfully some great opportunities have come my way, for which I am very grateful and excited," he added.

The left-handed batter thanked CA and teammates for the support throughout his career.

"As my international career closes, I want to thank all of my Australian teammates, staff and coaches. I enjoyed the ride as challenging as it can be at international level," Wade said.

"Without good people around me I would have never got as much out of myself as I did," he added.

Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley said: "Congratulations to Matthew on what has been a wonderful international career during which his skill and versatility has made him an outstanding performer across all formats. I'm delighted he will add to his massive contribution by coaching the next generation of stars." (PTI)



ham Hansen of Norway and Salma Paralluelo of Spain as Barcelona completed a 1-2-3.

"It's a pleasure to be here again," said Bonmatí, who received the award from Oscar winner Natalie Portman. "Thanks to my teammates and the clubs who make me a better football player every year."

Even though attacking midfielder Jude Bellingham was third and Dani Carvajal finished fourth in the voting, and coach Carlo Ancelotti won the coach of the year award, no one from Madrid attended the gala in central Paris.

Ancelotti posted a message

on X instead as did Vinicius, who was considered by many to be the favorite for the award, even though Rodri also had an outstanding season.

"I'll do it 10x if needed," Vinicius wrote in Portuguese. "They are not ready."

Madrid midfielder Eduardo Camavinga made it clear what he thought of the vote, calling it "football politics."

"My brother you are the best fourth in the world and no award can say otherwise," the France international wrote on X along with a photo of him and Vinicius celebrating together. "Love you my bro." (AP)

Harshit Rana to join Indian squad in Mumbai ahead of third Test



NEW DELHI, Oct 29: Rookie pacer Harshit Rana will join the Indian squad ahead of the third Test against New Zealand in Mumbai after starring in Delhi's first outright win of the ongoing Ranji Trophy season.

Rana, who was already among the reserves, was released for Delhi's match against Assam before the second Test in Pune that India lost by 113 runs to concede an unassailable 0-2 lead in the series. This was the team's first loss in a Test rubber at

home in 12 years.

Rana will join the Indian squad in Mumbai on Wednesday, two days before the match gets underway at the Wankhede Stadium. But it remains unclear if his presence in the dressing room will be as a reserve or

as a member.

The 22-year-old has been picked in the main squad for the five Tests in Australia beginning November 22 in Perth.

"Harshit will join the team tomorrow," said a BCCI source.

With Indian team management carefully monitoring the pacers' workload ahead of the Australia tour, there is a possibility that spearhead Jasprit Bumrah is rested from the third Test, raising the possibility of Rana's debut.

Rana had taken a five-wicket haul against Assam in the first innings and followed it up with two wickets in the second essay. Delhi won the game by 10 wickets.

Delhi head coach Sarandeep Singh said Rana is ready for the grind of Test cricket.

"He is ready to play Test cricket. He is a positive guy, he knows what he is doing. He is ready for the highest level," Sarandeep, a former BCCI selector, told PTI.

"He bowled his heart out for Delhi, he is always looking for wickets and is handy all rounder. He is like a horse, can bowl long spells. I hope he does really well in Australia," he added.

Rana bowled 19.3 overs in the first innings for his five wicket haul against Assam before taking two wickets in 11 overs in the second. His 59 in the first innings helped Delhi take the first innings lead.

Rana had also impressed in two games he played in the Duleep Trophy last month. (PTI)

Deepthi Sharma reaches career-high 2nd spot in ICC ODI bowlers rankings

DUBAI, Oct 29: India off-spinner Deepthi Sharma has been rewarded for her excellent recent form as she moved up two places to reach career-high second spot in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings for bowlers on Tuesday.

On the back of some strong performances in the recent ICC Women's T20 World Cup in the UAE, Deepthi has been one of India's best players through the opening two matches of her side's ongoing white-ball series against New Zealand at home.

Deepthi has three wickets from two matches against the White Ferns at a miserly economy rate of 3.42.



It has seen Deepthi gain two places to move to second on the table, and the senior India spinner has closed in on England tweeker and No.1 ranked ODI bowler Sophie Ecclestone.

There is also some movement outside the top 10, with the New Zealand trio of Lea Tahuhu (up three places to 12th), Amelia Kerr (up one spot to 13th) and Sophie Devine (up nine runs to equal 30th) building on their recent success at the T20 World Cup. Devine (up three runs to eighth) and Kerr (up one spot to 11th) also gain some ground on the latest list for ODI batters, with compatriots Suzie Bates (up two spots to equal 15th) and Maddy Green (up seven places to 18th) making gains following some decent scores against India.

Right-hander Jemimah Rodrigues (up three runs to equal 30th) is the big winner on the ODI batter rankings from an India perspective, while Deepthi (up one place to third) and Devine (up two spots to seventh) both make some ground on the latest list for ODI all-rounders.

There is also some joy for a pair of Zimbabwe players, with Chipo Mugeru-Tiripano gaining 21 spots to move to 28th on the batter rankings and teammate Josephine Nkomo improving 13 places to move to 32nd on the list for ODI bowlers after some impressive efforts in their recent series against the USA. (PTI)

NZ batter Kane Williamson to miss third Test against India

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: Senior batter Kane Williamson will miss the third Test against India at Mumbai to ensure full recovery from a groin injury ahead of the home series versus England, starting from November 28.

Williamson did not play in the first two Tests against India, which the Kiwis won to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

It also ended India's 18-series winning streak at home dating back to 2012.

The final Test of the rubber will be played at the Wankhede Stadium from November 1.

"Kane continues to show good signs, but isn't quite ready to jump on a plane and join us," NZ head coach Gary Stead said in a media release.

"While things are looking promising, we think the best course of action is for him to stay in New Zealand and focus on the final part of his rehabilitation so he'll be good to go for England," Stead added. The first Test between New Zealand and England will be played at Christchurch.

"The England series is still a month away so taking the cautious approach now will ensure he is ready for the first Test in Christchurch," Stead said. The series defeat against the Black Caps has pruned India's hopes of qualifying for next year's World Test Championship (WTC) final despite still holding on to the top spot with 62.82 percentage points. Now, they need to win the third Test against the Kiwis, and also ensure a series victory over Australia in the five-match rubber starting next month. (PTI)

De Zorzi, Stubbs hit maiden Test centuries, South Africa dominates Day 1 vs Bangladesh

CHATTOGRAM (BANGLADESH), Oct 29: Opener Tony de Zorzi and Tristan Stubbs hit maiden centuries to help South Africa dominate Bangladesh on Day 1 of the second and final Test on Tuesday.

The Proteas reached 307-2 before bad light forced an early stumps with Zorzi batting on 141. David Bedingham was on 18.

Stubbs scored 106 from 198 balls with the help of six fours and three sixes before being out. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam took both of the wickets for 110 after bowling 30 overs.

Zorzi was instrumental in putting South Africa on the front foot after stand-in captain Aiden Markram won the toss and opted to bat first.

Zorzie and Markram put on 69 runs for the opening stand, scoring at a run rate of nearly four until left-arm spinner Taijul intervened.

Taijul broke through with the wicket of Markram, who chipped a tossed-up delivery straight to mid-on after scoring 33 off 52 with two 4s.

Zorzi edged a delivery off pacer Hasan Mahmud behind when on six, but debutant Mahidul Islam failed to hold on to the catch. Zorzi made Bangladesh pay heavily for the missed chance.

Taijul, who took eight wickets in the opening Test that Bangladesh lost by seven wickets, was largely ineffective as Zorzi attacked him as a strategy to put pressure on the hosts' bowling line-up.

Stubbs was also similarly comfortable in his stay in the crease and used his feet properly against the spinners. Zorzi raised his maiden Test century from 146 balls, employing a sweep shot to precision for a boundary against off-spinner Mehidy Hasan through deep square-leg. (AP)

Halliday lifts NZ women to 232 against India in 3rd ODI



AHMEDABAD, Oct 29: Middle-order batter Brooke Halliday struck a 96-ball 86 and lifted New Zealand from a precarious 88/5 to 232 all out against India in the series-deciding third women's ODI here on Tuesday.

To start with, the Indian bowlers fired in unison and had the visitors in all sorts of trouble

with their disciplined line and length.

Looking to win the series and regain some lost ground after their early exit in the recent T20 World Cup, India began the match in earnest and struck twice to leave the Kiwis at 25 for two in 7.1 overs.

Jemimah Rodrigues and

wicket-keeper Yastika Bhatia combined to run out Suzie Bates while Lauren Down was jettisoned by Saima Thakor at the start of eighth over.

Introduced in the 11th over, young leg-spinner Priya Mishra (2/41 in 10 overs) gave India a major breakthrough when she bowled New Zealand captain Sophie Devine (9 off 11 balls), leaving the visitors in a spot of bother 36 for three.

New Zealand's hopes of putting up a competitive score rested on the shoulders of Georgia Plimmer, who dropped anchor considering the situation her team found itself in.

However, having ambled to 39, Plimmer was dismissed by Mishra, and her innings lasted 67 balls. Maddy Green was run out for a 15-ball 19 as New Zealand slipped to 88 for five in the 24th over.

In search for a partnership, the Kiwis finally found it as the duo of Halliday and wicketkeeper batter Isabella Gaze (25 off 49 balls) added 64 runs for the sixth wicket to steady the innings. (PTI)

Maharashtra crush Meghalaya by 10 wickets, earn bonus point

AURANGABAD, Oct 29: Maharashtra inflicted a 10-wicket defeat on Meghalaya as they walked away with a bonus point with openers

Murtaza Trunkwala and Siddhesh Vir easily overhauling a 101-run target on the final day of their Ranji Trophy Group A match here on Tuesday.

Murtaza did most of the scoring, notching up an unbeaten 78 off just 73 balls, while Siddhesh (24 not out) played the ideal foil as Maharashtra completed the task in just 21.1 overs after

Meghalaya were bundled out for 185 in the morning session.

Meghalaya had scored a modest 276 in the first innings with Maharashtra responding with a 361 of their own. The team from the northeast then could manage just 185 in the second essay to leave their opponents with an easy task of scoring 100-odd runs, which they managed without much ado.

Earlier in the morning, Meghalaya, who were 157/8 overnight, lost their remaining two batters for the addi-

tion of 28 runs with Maharashtra left-arm pacer Mukesh Kumar accounting for four wickets.

Sumit Kumar was the highest run-getter for Meghalaya in the second innings, scoring 45 runs before he was the last man out, dismissed by pacer Rajneesh Gurbani.

Murtaza seemed to be in a hurry to complete the task when Maharashtra padded up the second time. The 28-year-old opener, who has risen through the state's age-group ranks, smashed 13

boundaries even as fellow-opener Siddhesh was reduced to a spectator at the other end.

In Agartala, the Group A match between Mumbai and Tripura ended in a draw with the reigning champions earning three points by virtue of the first-innings lead.

Mumbai, who were reduced to 7/2 at close on day 3 on Monday, declared their second innings at 123 for 6 on Tuesday, setting their opponents a 272-run target. (PTI)

Paine says he doesn't regret sledging Ashwin in 2020-21 Sydney Test



MELBOURNE, Oct 29: Former Australia captain and wicketkeeper batter Tim Paine doesn't regret sledging Ravichandran Ashwin during the third Test of the 2020-21 Border-Gavaskar Trophy, saying he did it to unsettle the India off-spinner, who was "annoying"

him by getting his wicket frequently.

After losing the series opener at Adelaide, India defied all odds to clinch the series 2-1. Ashwin played a vital role in drawing the third Test in Sydney, battling for 42.4 overs with an aching back alongside Hanuma Vihari.

After failing to break Ashwin's resolve with the bat, Paine started poking the Indian from behind the stumps. "I can't wait to get you to the Gabba, Ash, I'll tell you what, woohoo," Paine said ahead of an over from off-spinner Nathan Lyon.

But Paine does not regret it.

"No, I don't because this day Ashwin didn't play in that (Brisbane) Test match. I wasn't talking to the Indians, I was talking to him. I said we cannot wait to get you to the Gabba.

"...because he was annoying us, fair to say. He is a fantastic cricketer. He was getting me out all the time and that was annoying me as well," Paine said in a podcast of 'thegradecricketer'.

Ashwin too replied in kind to Paine, saying: "Just like we wanna get you to India. That will be your last series."

Paine said the sledge was aimed at the Indian spinner.

"But no, that was purely directed straight at him and he pulled out of that Test match because of back spasms."

"Did I had a great game in that match? No, but I fronted up. Actually day one of the Test match he (Ashwin) was jogging laps. Those back spasms couldn't have been that bad," he added. (PTI)

Dubey's six-wicket haul leads Vidarbha to 266-run win over Uttarakhand



DEHRADUN, Oct 29: Left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey's six-wicket burst propelled Vidarbha to a massive 266-run win over Uttarakhand on the fourth and final day of their Ranji Trophy match here on Tuesday.

Tasked with chasing an improbable 338, Uttarakhand succumbed to the guiles of Dubey (6/38) to get bowled out for a mere 71 in a shade over 21 overs.

Veteran off-spinner Akshay Wakhare (3/17) gave Dube excellent support from the other end.

Vidarbha, runners-up to Mumbai last season, received six points for the outright win, and now, have three wins from as many matches and lead Group B with 18 points. Uttarakhand slipped to fifth place with six

points from three matches.

Earlier, Vidarbha, resuming from overnight 255 for six, were bowled out for 300 in their second innings with left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh (5/97) ripping through the lower order of the opposition.

Himachal Pradesh notched their second innings victory of the season to leap to second place in Group B with 14 points.

They defeated Andhra by an innings and 38 runs to go with their innings win over Uttarakhand in the first round.

Brief scores:

In Dehradun: Vidarbha 326 and 300 all out in 75 overs (Dhruv Shorey 59, Danish Malewar 42, Yash Rathod 56; Swapnil Singh 5/97) beat Uttarakhand: 289 and 71 all out in 21.2 overs (Yuvraj Choudhary 38; Harsh Dubey 6/38; Akshay Wakhare 3/17) by 266 runs.

Vidarbha: 6 points.

In Visakhapatnam: Andhra 344 all out & 118 all out in 32.1 overs (SK Rasheed 34; Vinay Galetiya 5/49, Mayank Dagar 4/23) lost to Himachal Pradesh: 500 all out in 158 overs (Ankit Kalsi 53, Akash Vasishth 52, Rishi Dhawan 195, Mukul Negi 42; KV Sasikanth 5/118, PVSAN Raju 3/130) by an innings and 38 runs.

Himachal Pradesh: 7 points (including 1 bonus point for innings win).

In Jaipur: Gujarat 335 all out and 314/9 in 101 overs (Umang 153 not out; Jaymeet Patel 82; Ajay Kookna 5/107, AV Choudhary 3/37) vs Rajasthan 319 all out.

Match ends in draw; Gujarat took first innings lead and 3 points. Rajasthan: 1 point.

In Hyderabad: Hyderabad 536/8 declared beat Puducherry 153 all out and 333 all out in 119.3 overs (V Ganga Sridhar 106, Ajay Rohara 69, Akash Kargave 31; Tanay Thyagarajan 7/106) by an innings and 50 runs.

Hyderabad: 7 points (including 1 bonus point for innings win). (PTI)

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