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- Palestinian hospital official says 17 killed in Israeli strike on northern Gaza
- Iranian charged for plotting Trump assassination: US authority
- 'Ek rahoge toh safe rahoge': PM alleges Cong-JMM pitting OBC sub-castes against each other
- Why has PM 'denied' Adivasis their religious identity, refused to enact Sarna code: Cong

Claims and counter-claims of gunshots galore ● CM attacks Congress

Amit Shah slams MVA's appeasement politics'; says Patole backs Muslim quota

Poll-related violence rocks Samaguri

NAGAON, Nov 10: Incidents of violence rocked Samaguri assembly constituency where by-elections will be held on November 13 with both the ruling BJP and the opposition Congress alleging that gunshots were fired targeting each other's supporters over the last 24 hours, police said on Sunday.

It was also alleged that three journalists who went to cover the violence, which happened on Saturday, were manhandled by Congress supporters.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma slammed the Congress for "resorting to violence under cover of darkness" to intimidate BJP workers, stating that no one would be allowed to sabotage or undermine the democratic process.

"We got reports that an incident of firing took place at Mari Puthikhaiti village in Samaguri. BJP workers alleged that a shot was fired from the house of one Congress worker aiming at ruling party MLA Jitu Goswami's vehicle," a police officer said.

In the vehicle, Goswami and BJP leader Suresh Bora were travelling, although no one had been injured in the firing, he said.

"On the other hand, Congress work-



ers alleged that the party's former anchalik panchayat member Ismail Hussain's son Imam Uddin was shot at by BJP workers, injuring him in the leg," the officer said.

The injured victim, Uddin, was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment, he said, adding that the claims and counter-claims are being verified.

Over the night, at least half a dozen vehicles were smashed by supporters of the ruling and opposition parties at several places in the constituency when they clashed with each other, police

has "stooped to such depths" in this by-election, he said that it was not just fear of defeat but the "desperation" to hold on to their core vote bank that drives them to such extremes.

"Justice will be served, and we will not allow anyone to sabotage or undermine our democratic process," the CM said.

Slamming the Congress, MLA Goswami demanded immediate punitive action against the attackers, "led by MP Rakibul to terrorise the voters".

The BJP candidate said, "I strongly condemn the incident of firing. Rakibul Hussain gave a very provocative speech last night, following which the shooting took place. We are now going to complain to the Election Commission, demanding urgent steps."

He also condemned the alleged attack on the journalists and said freedom of the press is paramount in a democracy. On Sunday, journalists held a sit-in protest at Samaguri against the attack and demanded the immediate arrest of the culprits.

Hussain, who has been campaigning aggressively for his son's first electoral battle, reached the scene of violence and condemned (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

JALGAON/BULDHANA, Nov 10: Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah on Sunday said the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi could stoop to any level for the sake of appeasement and vote bank politics.

He further said Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole had agreed to the Ulema Council's demand for Muslim reservations.

Addressing rallies in Raver assembly constituency in Jalgaon and Malkapur seat in Buldhana, Shah pointed out to a recent memorandum submitted by the Ulema Council to the opposition Congress seeking 10 per cent reservation in jobs and education for the Muslim community.

"Patole has agreed to end reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs and give it to Muslims as demanded by the Ulema Council," Shah said in Buldhana.

The demand for 10 per cent quota for the Muslim community would eat into the benefits of Dalits, tribals and Other Backward Classes, since there is a 50 per cent cap on quota and any increase will come at the cost of existing ones, he told the gathering.

"Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders' lust for power has blinded them to long-term consequences of their actions on marginalised communities. The BJP is firmly committed to welfare of all communities but is strictly against any form of reservations for Muslims. As long as there is even one BJP MP or MLA, we will oppose religion-based reservation. This is our commitment," he asserted.

"The MVA parties have compromised the country's safety due to their appeasement politics. They are undermining national security for the sake of votes," he added.

Slamming the Congress and NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, the senior BJP leader said they opposed the construction of the Ram Temple for decades, and only after Narendra Modi became prime minister, the issue was resolved with the construction of a grand temple in Ayodhya. Shah said the BJP's vision for the state aligns with the ideals of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

The Mahayuti promises a government focused on preserving Maharashtra's culture and prosperity, he added.

Shah also dared Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray to get Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, a Maha Vikas Aghadi ally, to hail Hindutva ideologue VD Savarkar and Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray.

Under the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA dis-



pensation, which ruled between 2019 and June 2022, Maharashtra lost its competitive edge in industrial growth and the state fell to fourth rank, Shah pointed out.

Slamming the opposition parties for claiming that industries were leaving Maharashtra and new ones were not coming up, the senior BJP leader said the MVA can do no good for the state.

Hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shah said terror attacks under previous Congress-led Union governments faced no response, while the NDA dispensation ordered surgical strikes to hit camps across the border.

Praising the Modi government's move to amend the Waqf Board Act, Shah said, "In Karnataka, villages, temples and agricultural lands were converted into Waqf land. But after the Centre's amendments, such acts will not be possible."

Shah said the Modi government, between 2014 and 2024, allotted Rs 10,15,890 crore to Maharashtra, while this figure was just Rs 1.51 lakh crore under the Manmohan Singh-led UPA dispensation's 10-year rule. The MVA has been misleading people and has failed to fulfil its promises, he said.

"The MVA's guarantees are nothing but lies, appeasement and involve corruption. They promise hundreds of things, but as (Congress chief) Mallikarjun Kharge rightly said, promises should be ones that can be fulfilled. The guarantees the Congress gave in Karnataka, Telangana and Himachal Pradesh were not fulfilled," he said.

The MVA cannot protect Maharashtra as its constituents are concerned about their own interests rather than that of the state or nation, he claimed.

"The MVA opposed Mumbai's metro rail lines, coastal road, Pune outer link road, Dharedevi redevelopment and Vainganga-Nalganga river linking project. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Sonowal urges students to drive India's progress

TEZPUR, Nov 10: Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, and former chief minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal has urged students to embrace their responsibilities as citizens and contribute to the country's progress.

The Union minister was speaking during TechXetra 2024, the annual techno-cultural festival at Tezpur University, on Saturday.

Speaking to students at the KBR Auditorium, Sonowal called on them to actively engage in India's journey to becoming a global powerhouse. He highlighted his ministry's objectives, underscoring maritime transport's vital role in the nation's social and economic development.

Sonowal also detailed India's Maritime Vision 2030, which aims to position India among the top 10 shipbuilding (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Justice Sanjiv Khanna to be sworn in as 51st CJ today

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who has been part of several landmark Supreme Court judgements such as scrapping the electoral bonds scheme and upholding abrogation of Article 370, will be sworn in as the 51st Chief Justice of India on Monday.

President Droupadi Murmu will administer the oath of office at Rashtrapati Bhavan in a ceremony scheduled at 10 am. Justice Khanna will succeed Justice DY Chandrachud, who retired on Sunday, and his term will last until May 13, 2025. The Centre officially notified Justice Khanna's appointment on October 24 following Chief Justice Chandrachud's recommendation on October 16. Friday was the last working day of Justice Chandrachud as the CJ and he was given a rousing farewell by judges,



lawyers and staff of the apex court and the high courts.

Justice Khanna, who served as a Supreme Court judge since January 2019, has been part of several landmark judgements such as upholding the sanctity of EVMS, scrapping the electoral bonds scheme, upholding the abrogation of Article 370 and the grant of interim bail to former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. Hail-

ing from an illustrious Delhi-based family, Justice Khanna is the son of former Delhi High Court judge Justice Dev Raj Khanna and the nephew of prominent former apex court judge H R Khanna.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on January 18, 2019, was a third-generation lawyer before being appointed as judge of the high court. He is driven by the zeal to reduce pendency and speed up justice delivery.

Justice H R Khanna, the uncle of Justice Khanna, hit the headlines by resigning in 1976 after he wrote a dissenting verdict in the infamous ADM Jabalpur case during the Emergency. The majority verdict of a Constitution bench, upholding the abrogation of fundamental rights during the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Tipra Motha to press Governor for quick action on Tiprasa accord

AGARTALA, Nov 10: Tipra Motha Party (TMP), an ally of the BJP-led coalition government in Tripura, will submit a deputation to Governor Indrasena Reddy Nallu demanding speedy implementation of the Tiprasa Accord.

The TMP signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Centre and the Tripura government on March 2, 2024, to address the issues faced by the state's indigenous people.

Speaking to reporters here on Sunday, TMP supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma said, "We had a meeting with party leaders and frontal organisations today and decided to give a deputation to Reddy through Block Development Officers (BDOs) on November 14 for the speedy implementation of the Tiprasa Accord." (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Cong 'shahi parivar' hell-bent on breaking OBC-ST-SC unity to snatch reservations: PM

GUMLA (JHARKHAND), Nov 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attacked the Congress, accusing that its 'shahi parivar' (royal family) is hell-bent on breaking the ST-SC-OBC unity to "snatch reservations under an evil design".

Addressing an election rally at Gumla, he accused the JMM-led coalition of looting the state's rich resources such as minerals, forest, sand and coal, putting 'Roti-Beti-Mati' (bread, land and daughter) at grave threat. He also accused the ruling dispensation of facilitating illegal immigration.

"The Congress knows that if STs, SCs and OBCs are united, they will pose a threat to the party's existence. This is the reason the Congress 'shahi parivar' is hell-bent on break their unity... They want to snatch reservations.

"The Congress is trying to pit one tribal community against another... Munda against Oraon, Lohra against Kharia, Kharwar against Korwa etc. with an agenda to break the tribal society's strength," he said.

The Congress cannot tolerate tribals in higher posts, which is why it opposes Droupadi Murmu's elevation (to the post of President) and continues to insult her, the PM said, adding former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren was also insulted.

The BJP is committed to restoring tribal pride and 'Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh' will be celebrated for one year from November 15 across the country to honour tribal icon Birsa Munda, he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

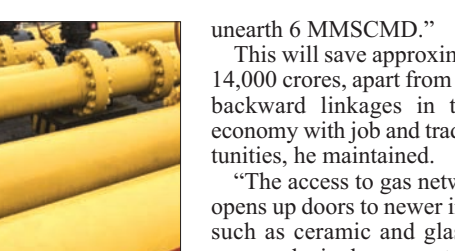
Exploration, monetisation of natural gas will benefit Northeast: IGX

GUWAHATI, Nov 10: Exploration and monetisation of natural gas deposits in the northeastern region can help cut down its import, while also boosting the local economy and providing more trade opportunities, a top official of the Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) said.

Rajesh K Mediratta, managing director and CEO of IGX, the country's first automated national level gas exchange, maintained that the region can supply the surplus gas not only to other parts of the country, but also to neighbouring Bangladesh and earn significant revenue.

"The Northeast has tremendous potential in the production of natural gas. As the Northeast Gas Grid is likely to become operational by 2026, the deposit of 6 million MM-SCMD of natural gas can be monetised by the existing producers," Mediratta said.

"This will add to the country's



energy security as IGX will help gas producers sell the surplus gas to the other regions," he said, while speaking at a seminar on 'Gas Market Development for North East' here on Friday.

Highlighting the potential of natural gas from the Northeast in support to India's energy security, the official said, "India is currently importing about 50 per cent of its consumption, around 100 MM-SCMD to meet the total demand of 200 MMSCMD. With the effective gas pipelines in the region, the existing petroleum companies can

unearth 6 MMSCMD."

This will save approximately Rs 14,000 crores, apart from allowing backward linkages in the local economy with job and trade opportunities, he maintained.

"The access to gas network also opens up doors to newer industries such as ceramic and glass which run exclusively on natural gas. Given the natural resources, these industries are expected to thrive in the region," Mediratta added.

The rejuvenated gas distribution network with the Northeast Gas Grid will also improve supply to tea estates, allowing them to switch back to natural gas from the traditional energy sources like coal, he claimed. He also highlighted that natural gas is a cheaper and cleaner option as compared to LPG, which makes case for households to switch to gas. On the market potential for export of natural gas from the region, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Canada High Commission under increased security after Sikh protest

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: Security was beefed up outside the Canada High Commission in Chanakya-puri area after Hindu-Sikh group held a protest there against an attack on a Hindu Temple in Canada. Many Sikh protestors climbed the barricades and raised slogans against the violence inside a temple in Canada's Brampton.

The protest was held under the banner of Hindu Sikh Global Forum.

Delhi Police was seen pleading the protestors to stay behind the barricades.

"We have deployed additional force and barricades have been done outside of the High Commission of Canada following a protest march call. Our teams are not allowing anyone to breach the law and order," a senior police officer said. (PTI)

Brampton police arrests SFJ Canada coordinator in Hindu temple violence case

OTTAWA, Nov 10: Canadian police have arrested a 35-year-old Brampton resident on charges of assault with a weapon during a violent demonstration at a Hindu temple in the city, authorities said.

On November 3, a protest occurred at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton and unverified videos circulating on social media appeared to show demonstrators holding banners in support of Khalistan. The videos showed fist fights and people striking each other with poles on what appears to be the grounds surrounding the temple.

The Peel Regional Police responded to the altercation during the demonstration at the Mandir. As tensions between opposing sides increased, the demonstrations became physical and assaultive, a statement said on Saturday.

Police began investigating several offences that occurred during the demonstration, many of which were captured on video; including individuals using flags and sticks to assault people, it said.

Investigators from the 21 Division Criminal Investigations Bureau and Strategic Investigation Team (SIT) have arrested and charged Inderjeet Gosal of Brampton, the Peel Police statement said.

Gosal, is Sikhs for Justice coordinator for Canada, Toronto Star reported. The US-based SFJ is banned in India. On November 8, 2024, he was arrested and charged with assault with a weapon. He was released on conditions and is to appear at the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India to focus on climate finance, accountability, protection for vulnerable communities at COP29

'The largest historical emitters must move faster and raise their ambition'

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: As world leaders and climate negotiators converge on Baku for COP29, beginning Monday, India is set to bring renewed focus to the urgent need for climate finance, accountability, and protection for vulnerable communities.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not attend the conference, and environment minister Bhupendra Yadav may also be absent, with Union minister of state for environment, Forest, and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh leading the 19-member delegation instead.

India's national statement is scheduled for November 18-19.

India's key priorities at the conference are likely to focus on ensuring accountability of developed nations on climate finance,



strengthening resilience for vulnerable communities, and achieving an equitable energy transition, experts anticipate.

Dr Arunabha Ghosh, CEO of the Council on Energy, Environment

and Water (CEEW), emphasised that COP29 must go beyond promises, pushing developed nations to accelerate their paths to net zero and meet their financial commitments. "The climate COPs are

about raising ambition, enabling action, and, most importantly, holding everyone accountable. While COP28 resulted in many promises, it let developed countries off the hook. COP29 must be about accountability," said Ghosh.

"The largest historical emitters must move faster and raise their ambition. Climate finance should be consistent, convenient, catalytic, and credible, and COP29 must ensure it delivers real resources and capacity to protect the most vulnerable."

This year's negotiations are anticipated to tackle the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance, a critical benchmark that could reach trillions of dollars annually, a figure many developing nations insist is essential to combat climate change effectively. Ali Mohamed, Kenya's Climate Change Envoy, reinforced the urgency for a "Finance COP" that prioritises financing without deepening debt burdens for nations already struggling to adapt to climate impacts.

"For Africa, it is important that the final goal agreed in Baku should not worsen our debt situation," Mohamed said. "The Framework on Global Climate Resilience needs to translate into real actions that support agriculture, water, health, biodiversity, infrastructure, and human settlements."

Dr Frances Colan, senior director for International Climate Policy at the Center for American Progress, highlighted the conference's importance following the re-election of Donald Trump in the US. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Fraud detection system blocks 13.5 mn calls, saves ₹ 2,500 cr: Scindia

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: The technical system deployed by the government is blocking 1.35 crore fraud calls daily and has helped save people's assets worth ₹2,500 crore till date, Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia has said.

The minister, in an interview with PTI, said most of the spam calls originate from servers outside the country, and the systems have been able to block the majority of such fraudulent calls.

"In terms of the number of marketing calls you get in your phone, the number of fraud calls that come in, we have put in place a full system to be able to tackle that. Our DoT fraud detection network has saved close to about ₹ 2,500 crore of people's assets today, as we speak, through Sanchar Sathi and Chakshu," Scindia said.

The systems have led to the disconnection of close to about 290,000 phones and blocked close to about 1.8 million headers that were used for sending out messages, he added.

"Along with that, (there) was another vicious method through which people would use servers outside India, which would masquerade themselves as a +91 number (Indian number). We have put in place software that stops these calls that are blocking an average of 13.5 mn such calls per day," the minister said.

The government has put in a new software where it is integrating law enforcement agencies as well as banks, he said, adding that "520 agencies have been on-boarded".

While charting out his priorities, Scindia said that rolling out of AT-



manirbhar (self-reliant) BSNL 5G by May and 4G for all under the saturation scheme by April are among his top priorities, along with notifying all rules left under the Telecommunications Act 2023 by December.

He said that a plan to roll out 1 lakh base stations for BSNL 4G is underway, of which roll out of which 50,000 towers have been completed.

"By April-May next year, we will roll out 1 lakh BTSs, which means we will have our own domestic publicly-owned company rolling out 4G. The move from 4G to 5G then, is only tweaking the core a little bit, as well as adding an additional BTS. By April-May next year, hopefully, some sites will become 5G enabled as well, within the BSNL system. So, that's the alacrity with which we are working. That's my first priority," Scindia said.

The government wants BSNL to be one of the major players in the telecom sector and increase its

market share and subscribers significantly.

"We have infused capital, we have supplied spectrum, we've allowed the company to grow. We would like to see exponential addition to that customer base and it becomes one of the formidable players in the telecom landscape in India. In the telecom space, we must continue to have three or four players in the game," Scindia said.

The minister said his second priority is to ensure 4G saturation across the country. "We have close to about 37,000 villages that are left with connectivity on 4G in the country. A lot of them are in very distant areas. We are looking at making sure that we have 100 per cent saturation on 4G by March-April, next year," he said.

Scindia said that out of about 27,000 BTS required, 10,000 have already been installed.

The 4G saturation will provide coverage to roughly 1.6 crore population.

The minister also said that after

assuming office, he issued notification of the Telecom Act, passed in Parliament last November, and now he has to mandatorily issue all rules by December.

"The first thing I did when I assumed office was I issued the notification of the Telecom Act. Why is that important? That's important because the minute you do that, then your 180-day counter starts, and within six months, mandatorily, you have to issue all the rules. So by the end of December, the total of those 31 rules, we have done almost about 14 or 15, and the balance we hope to have done by the end of December," he added.

The Telecommunications Act 2023 supersedes the existing and archaic regulatory framework for the telecommunication sector, based on the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, the Wireless Telegraphy Act (1933), and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act (1950).

The government has partially notified rules under the Act with effect from June 26. The rules allow the government to take over the control and management of any or all of any telecommunication services or network, in the interest of national security, friendly relations with foreign states, or in the event of war.

With these new rules in place, the universal service obligation fund will become Digital Bharat Nidhi, which can be used for funding research and development and pilot projects instead of just supporting the establishment of telecom services in rural areas. The new rules add a mandate of protecting users from spam and malicious communications. (PTI)

MAIRA Diamonds launches new showroom on GS Road

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 10: MAIRA Diamonds, a locally-founded luxury jewellery brand specialising in lab-grown diamonds and polki jewellery, has opened its latest showroom in Roodraksh Mall on GS Road, Guwahati.

The inauguration was graced by celebrated Assamese actress and cultural icon Aimee Baruah, symbolising a celebration of local entrepreneurship and luxury innovation.

Founded by Srishti and Shivani, two female entrepreneurs from Guwahati, MAIRA stands out as a brand committed to sustainable luxury and ethical jewellery practices. The new showroom showcases a collection of lab-grown diamonds and handcrafted polki jewellery, offering a unique, affordable luxury experience for the modern consumer.

"We are deeply honoured to have Mrs Aimee Baruah gracing the in-



auguration of our showroom," said Srishti, Co-founder of MAIRA. "Her presence symbolizes the strength and creativity of Assam's women, inspiring us to push boundaries in the jewellery industry." The new showroom is located on Guwahati's iconic GS Road,

marking a significant step forward in MAIRA's mission to offer elegant and responsibly crafted jewellery. The showroom's opening comes with exclusive offers for the first 15 days, inviting customers to experience MAIRA's blend of ethics and elegance in the heart of the city.

Contd. from Page 1.

Sonowal urges students to drive

nations by 2030. He concluded by highlighting the importance of vision, commitment, and effective policy-making for successful leadership.

Sonowal was welcomed by prof RR Hoque, Vice-Chancellor (in charge), prof KC Biswal, registrar, and the coordinators of TechXtra. Prof Biswal, in his welcome address, gave an overview of the festival, describing it as a celebration of innovation, creativity, and technology, with events such as technical workshops, hackathons, coding contests, and ideathons. A cultural program was also organized in honour of the minister's visit.

Poll-related violence rocks

the BJP's alleged "barbaric" attack on Congress workers. "I immediately informed Nagaon SP Swapnil Deka and other local police officers, urging them to take action. However, Deka and others blamed Congress workers instead of carrying out an impartial investigation in front of the reporters," he said.

Incidents of violence have been reported almost on a daily basis in Samaguri since the bypoll was announced. Already, a number of complaints have been filed by both the BJP and Congress before the Election Commission. The BJP is making an all-out effort to snatch the seat in the demographically sensitive Nagaon district, while Congress is in no mood to leave its stronghold under any circumstances.

Hussain, who won the Dhubri Lok Sabha seat this year by a record margin of over 10.12 lakh votes, was an MLA from Samaguri for five consecutive terms before becoming a parliamentarian. Bypoll will take place in Dholai, Sidli, Bongaigaon, Behali and Samaguri assembly constituencies as these seats fell vacant with their MLAs winning the Lok Sabha elections. The polling for the by-elections will take place on November 13 and the votes will be counted on November 23. (PTI)

Justice Sanjiv Khanna to be

Emergency, was considered a "black spot" on the judiciary. Justice H R Khanna declared the move unconstitutional and against the rule of law and paid a price as the then central government superseded him and made Justice M H Beg the next CJ.

Justice H R Khanna was part of the landmark verdict propounding the basic structure doctrine in the Kesavananda Bharati case of 1973. Among the notable judgments of Justice Sanjiv Khanna in the Supreme Court is upholding the use of electronic voting machines in elections, saying the devices were secure and eliminated booth capturing and bogus voting.

A bench headed by Justice Khanna, on April 26, termed the suspicion of manipulation of the EVMs "unfounded" and rejected the demand for reverting to the old paper ballot system. He was also part of the five-judge bench that declared the electoral bond scheme, meant for funding political parties, as unconstitutional. Justice Khanna was a part of the five-judge bench, which upheld the Centre's 2019 decision abrogating Article 370 of the Constitution which granted a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was the Justice Khanna-led bench, which for the first time, granted interim bail to Kejriwal, the then chief minister, till June 1 to campaign in the Lok Sabha elections in the excise policy scam cases. (PTI)

Amit Shah slams MVA's

Even the (Mumbai-Ahmedabad) bullet train project was delayed due to the MVA's opposition," he said. Under the leadership of Modi, the country is witnessing significant growth and its economy is set to become the world's third largest by 2027, he said. The BJP would continue to champion such policies focused at development at the national and state levels, he added.

Further attacking the Congress, Shah said the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru put the recommendations of the Kakasaheb Kalekar commission, which advocated quota for backward classes, in cold storage, while then PM Indira Gandhi shelved the Mandal commission recommendations. "It was the BJP under Modi which brought real change for backward communities," Shah asserted. (PTI)

Tipra Motha to press Governor

The first meeting on the Tiprasa Accord was held in Delhi on September 21, where it was agreed that follow-up meetings would take place every two months to advance the agreement. However, Debbarma emphasized that there is no clear timeline for the implementation of the accord, similar to the Naga peace talks or the TNNV (Tripura National Volunteers) accords.

He said, "I will continue to negotiate with the Centre for the rights of the indigenous people. If the government of India accepts 90 per cent of our demands, we will leave the remaining 10 per cent. We are fighting for the rights of indigenous people but not at the expense of others. We demand 25 seats to be reserved for the indigenous people out of 60-member Assembly." (PTI)

Cong 'shahi parivar' hell-bent

Stating that he was the first Prime Minister to visit Ulihatu in Khunti, the birthplace of tribal icon Birsa Munda, he said, "Modi worships those who are rejected by others." The PM said that under Dharti Aba Janjatiya Utkarsh Abhiyan, more than 60,000 tribal villages across India will be developed at a cost of ₹ 80,000. Modi also promised that those who looted Jharkhand's resources and played with the future of its youth will not be spared and will be put behind bars.

Accusing JMM-led dispensation of selling Jharkhand's land, rivers and hills and earning crores of rupees by smuggling sand, he said, "Those who looted people's money will spend their lives in jail, they will have to return the money." He alleged that the coalition leaders were not only looting resources but also even taking bribe for issuing birth and death certificates, and they have no right to remain in power. (PTI)

Exploration, monetisation of natural

Mediratta said, "Bangladesh has tremendous market potential as the country has been using natural gas. The natural gas producers can definitely look at this scope with potential."

"With the region now connected with the National Gas Grid, there is scope for the region to earn by supplying surplus gas at a competitive cost at the IGX to other parts of the country. As the global price is at around USD 13 per MMBTU, Northeast provides a huge competitive economic edge for the producers of the region," he added. (PTI)

Brampton police arrests

Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton at a later date, it said. A SIT dedicated to investigating incidents of criminality during the November 3 and 4 incidents has since been formed. On November 3, the protestors carrying Khalistani flags clashed with people and disrupted a consular event co-organised by the temple authorities and the Indian Consulate.

The Sunday incident was condemned by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who said every Canadian has the right to practise their faith freely and safely. India condemned the attack with an expectation that those indulging in violence "will be prosecuted". In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said that New Delhi remains "deeply concerned" about the safety and security of Indian nationals in Canada. (PTI)

India to focus on climate finance

who is anticipated to adopt policies favouring oil and gas expansion. In a departure from past conferences, India will not host a pavilion at COP29. This absence also comes as India balances its role as a developing nation with rising energy demands and a focus on economic growth, particularly as the world looks to emerging economies for leadership in reducing emissions.

The release of the Global Carbon Budget on November 13 will provide a detailed assessment of current emission trends and the global trajectory toward meeting the Paris Agreement targets.

Linda Kalcher, executive director of Strategic Perspectives, underscored that the EU must step up its efforts in response to shifting U.S. climate policies. "The EU is one of the most reliable partners on climate finance for developing countries, but it cannot hide from the moment," Kalcher noted. Li Shuo, director of China Climate Hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute, described COP29 as a test of multilateralism.

"I'm not worried about whether multilateralism will prevail. I know it will," said Li Shuo. "But in light of the US election outcome, China and the EU will have to take a leadership role. Financial commitments and action on loss and damage are critical to keeping the global economy afloat." (PTI)

Wealth creators must not feel heat of system: Dhankhar

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: Those in commerce and business must not feel "heat of the system" as they are the job and wealth creators and contribute to social harmony, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Sunday.

He also said that the principle of "economic nationalism" was more important than fiscal gains of a few individuals.

Addressing an event of Maharaja Agrasen Technical Education Society here, Dhankhar said he has always advocated that "those in trade, commerce, industry must not feel heat of the system. They must have respect in society".

The vice president was of the view that this segment was the job and wealth creator and contributes to social harmony.

"They are economy drivers... They have learned the art in this country to give back to the society. By and large they do it," he said while noting that the freedom movement of India is dotted by their contribution.

The vice president also underlined the need to follow the principles of economic nationalism, whereby unnecessary imports can be curbed to save foreign exchange and help local industry flourish.

He told the students that they should respect various views and should never ignore the other point-of-view to ensure social harmony. (PTI)

Odisha startup launches fully autonomous logistics drone service

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 10: An Odisha-based startup Bon V Aero has launched a fully autonomous logistics drone service called Air Orca. The launch of the drone service was made in the presence of venture capitalist Tim Draper.

"Today's launch of Air Orca marks an important advancement for India's logistics sector and for us as an Odisha-based company," said Satyabrata Sathapathy, CEO of Bon V Aero said on Saturday.

"Developing and manufacturing this drone indigenously has allowed us to tailor it for India's specific needs. Tim Draper's support strengthens the impact of this launch, and we are grateful for his involvement as we aim to extend Air Orca's benefits to both civilian and defence applications across

India," Sathapathy said.

Tim Draper said: "It's exciting to witness the launch of Air Orca here in Odisha. Autonomous drones like Air Orca provide practical solutions for modern logistics by expanding reach, flexibility and reliability with myriad use cases from disaster response to high-altitude operations for the defence forces. With the recent hurricanes in the US fresh in my mind, I anticipate that Bon V Aero's innovation can be an effective tool for disaster response in India and globally." The Air Orca is fully designed, developed and manufactured in India by Bon V Aero.

With advanced autonomous capabilities, Air Orca is engineered to tackle diverse logistical challenges, particularly in regions

where traditional transportation methods are impractical. The drone is designed to serve as a first responder in post-disaster scenarios, delivering relief supplies to affected areas and providing critical support during emergencies.

"Bon V Aero is first Indian company to set a world record by lifting a 30 kg payload at Umiling La, Ladakh, the highest motorable road pass at 19,024 feet. This performance outshines helicopters, which face greater challenges when transporting similar cargo at such high altitudes," Sathapathy said. The startup also claimed that Air Orca aims to address a variety of logistics needs across sectors like healthcare, e-commerce, military logistics and disaster management on a global scale. (PTI)

Odisha to implement NEP 2020 in universities from current academic year

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 10: The Odisha government will implement the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, in all state-run universities and affiliated colleges from the current academic year, a statement said. The decision was taken by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, aiming to bring many reforms in the state's education system, it said.

In accordance with the NEP, four-year undergraduate programmes will be started, replacing the regular three-year courses. A student can earn a certificate, diploma, degree and degree with honours after completion of each year in the four-year programme, it added.

The state government has developed a credit framework on the basis of guidelines set by the University

Grants Commission (UGC), under which, the students can involve themselves in skill development, internship, community service and extra-curricular activities, NCC and NSS to earn credits, the statement said.

It will help students to choose their subjects on their own and complete their degree course within seven years with the option of multiple entries and exits from their institution, it said.

The government has also taken steps to make the higher education system more qualitative, autonomous and inclusive as per the NEP 2020.

The NEP has been designed to promote research and innovation through various schemes, practical-based learning and skill development through internships in industry. (PTI)

India emerging as good opportunity market for Sony's gaming biz: India MD

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: India is emerging as a "good opportunity market" in the gaming business for the consumer electronic major Sony, its India Managing Director Sunil Nayyar said.

The company has reported "phenomenal growth" in the gaming business in FY24, with the robust performance of PlayStation 5 and its software peripherals.

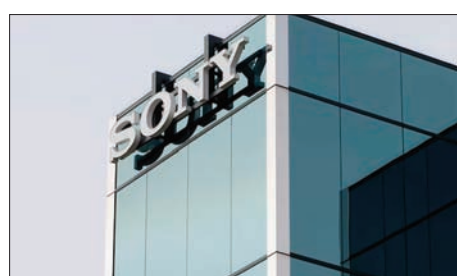
Sony India's PlayStation dominates the console operating gaming system market here with around 95 per cent market share and has almost doubled its revenue in FY 2023-24 from the segment. However, now, it expects a moderation in the growth rates because of the high base, Nayyar said. "Now, the base is very high because we almost achieved the double business last year. So this year, we intend to have modest growth, but we are developing the gaming business market in the country, including software development and peripherals etc," the Sony India MD told PTI.

Sony India last week filed its annual returns to report over 50.1 per cent growth from its 'other business' segment at ₹ 1,363.54 crore, which houses its gaming and B2B business.

"This is largely led by the gaming business. It gave us a phenomenal growth. There is no doubt about it. PlayStation 5 and our software peripherals, everything did very well.

"So, India is now becoming a very good opportunity market for gaming for Sony... We have 95 per cent in the market today as far as PS5 is concerned. We have a very strong brand here for the gaming business," Nayyar said.

Besides, Sony is also doing well in some other niche segments such as medical equip-



ment and its sports business, where it sells Hawk-Eye systems, used in all major sporting events, including cricket, tennis, football, badminton, rugby and volleyball to visually track the trajectory of a ball and display a profile of its statistically most likely path as a moving image. "We are also growing in various niche segments like medical equipment, where we sell a lot of products (such as Microdisplays) and even sports business, where we sell Hawk-Eye. So, even sports business is doing very well," he noted. Sony India's revenue from Consumer Audio and Visuals segment increased 15.7 per cent to ₹ 6,300.20 crore in FY 2023-24 against ₹ 5,445.73 crore a year ago. Its overall profit rose 22.18 per cent to ₹ 167 crore, while revenue from operations surged 20.6 per cent to ₹ 7,663.74 crore.

Nayyar said the over 20 per cent growth in the topline is because of the strategy of premiumisation on which it has been working for the last few years in all product zones, including TV and audio products. "This is the primary cause because of the sales growth because our average sales price has gone up," he said,

adding that "now, we do not rely on selling entry-level or price point models".

Now, in India, everything is being upgraded in the market from content on OTT platforms to everything in the market, he said.

"This is our ongoing journey for selling premium products in the country. So, this strategy, you can say philosophy, is working well for Sony. We have upgraded, and evolved the customer into the premium segments, especially in our television lineup, home theatres and cameras," said Nayyar.

Sony India, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Japan's tech major Sony Corporation, expects to surpass its historic ₹ 11,000 crore revenue, which it recorded in FY15, in the coming years.

Its revenue fell after its parent firm exited the mobile phone and laptop business. From FY22, however, Sony India's revenue stabilised and started to report positive growth numbers. "I cannot peg a time framework, but efforts will be that we should soon become kind of ₹ 10,000 crore company in a time to come," he said.

However, Nayyar also added that the market is a little bit challenging now, and there have been ups and downs.

"We are closely monitoring the situation, but our strategy remains the same, premiumisation and selling more premium products in the country, raising the ASP, giving new technology to our customers every year in all the segments, which we play," he added. On Sony India's ongoing business in the current fiscal, Nayyar said all the categories are showing very positive momentum, especially television, sound bars, and home theatres. (PTI)

UPPL slams BPF as 'aimless' ahead of Sidli by-election

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 10: The ruling United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) has asserted its commitment to work for the all-round development and welfare of the common people in the Bodoland Territorial Region.

Addressing reporters on Sunday at a press conference held at the UPPL central office in Kokrajhar, UPPL vice president and former MCLA of BTC, Afjal Haque Sarkar, stated that peace and tranquility have prevailed in the Bodoland region since the signing of the BTR Peace Accord on January 27, 2020, which witnessed an environment of healthy integration and unity among the communities.

He said that the BTR region is now progressing in various developmental aspects and welfare sectors as people across communities express their faith and belief in the UPPL party and BTR government.

He mentioned that the BTR government, under the leadership of Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of the Bodoland Territorial Region, has launched various missions and visions to drive developmental progress across the region by involving citizens in social welfare initiatives.

Sarkar stated that better govern-



nance is prevailing in the BTR, and accordingly, the developmental issues of society are being addressed effectively. He mentioned that nearly 10,000 women SHGs have received financial support of ₹ 25,000 each across all districts of the BTR in the last four years under the Mainao Swrang Bithangkhi. He also noted that more than 27,600 needy individuals were given financial assistance of ₹ 5,000 each under Onsunghai Bithangkhi, and 21,700 students received financial support of ₹ 5,000 each under Giyan Swrang Bithangkhi from the BTR government.

He stated that over 700 religious institutions received ₹ 2 lakh each under the Alari Swrang Bithangkhi initiative of the BTR

government.

Sarkar said that the BTR government, under Pramod Boro's leadership, has implemented various schemes and welfare initiatives for the common masses since it assumed power in the region.

On the by-elections in Sidli LAC, Sarkar expressed confidence that the UPPL candidate, backed by the NDA alliance, Nirmal Kumar Brahma, is set for a clear victory as people from all communities are coming forward to support and vote for the UPPL candidate. He added that Nirmal Kumar Brahma, the UPPL candidate backed by the NDA alliance, is expected to win the Sidli LAC by-election scheduled for November 13 by a significant margin.

He also said that the UPPL party

and NDA alliance partners are working dedicatedly for the welfare and development of citizens across the region and state. He noted that massive campaign meetings in favor of NDA alliance candidate Brahma are ongoing across Sidli LAC.

In response to a question about the Opposition, Sarkar said that the Opposition BPF party is an aimless entity with no initiatives for human welfare in the current scenario. He remarked that the Opposition party has been unable to present any manifesto or welfare activities during the Sidli LAC by-election. He alleged that the BPF party neglected the welfare and upliftment of the common masses during its 17-year rule in the Bodoland Territorial Council, depriving citizens of essential welfare services.

He stated that the BPF party and Hagrama Mohilary have become irrelevant to citizens, as Mohilary failed to address the grievances and developmental needs of the region.

Sarkar strongly criticised the BPF party and Hagrama Mohilary for their unwarranted and fabricated remarks on BTR's CEM Pramod Boro, saying that the common masses now disregard the influence of Mohilary and the BPF party, leading to frustration among BPF leaders.

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 10: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya stated that civil services are a sacred path to serve the motherland, with civil servants acting as a vital bridge between the government and the public, aiding in the implementation of government policies and schemes to strengthen the foundation of a welfare-oriented nation.

It may be noted that Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya was speaking while attending a counselling and preparatory guidance session for selected civil service examination aspirants of Assam under Governor Assam's Pratibha Protsahan Yojana at the Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University auditorium here on Sunday.

Governor Acharya also unveiled a 12-foot bronze statue of Krishna Kanta Handique and paid floral tributes. He also planted a sapling on the KKHSOU campus as part of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign. The statue has been installed by the university with assistance from the State Bank of India.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said, "When our youth dream of serving the motherland, we must also feel a responsibility to provide them with the opportunity to realise their dream. Through Governor Assam's Pratibha Protsahan Yojana, we are not only offering high-quality coaching to the youth of Assam but also boosting their self-confidence and motivating them to achieve their goals."



The Governor further noted that under the program, efforts are being made to nurture the youth's talents, shape their future and that of the state, and ensure proper guidance in civil service exam preparation by providing financial assistance and mentorship to aspiring candidates. He expressed hope that the program will strengthen the foundation for a developed India by 2047.

Governor Acharya called upon the students to uphold the spirit of 'Nation First'. When the youth of a country move forward with a 'Nation First' mindset, no force in the world can prevent them from rendering their services for the motherland, the Governor said. "At the same time, we must preserve and nurture our culture, civilization, and values. We must work to revive our past glories, enrich our heritage, and continuously strive to modernise our education and technology," advised the Governor.

The Governor congratulated the officials, teachers, and coaching institutions for their role in promoting val-

ues and character development in students, empowering them for competitive examinations.

The Governor further noted that this initiative will empower the state's youth to achieve success, contribute to the state's and nation's development, and become dedicated civil servants with commitment and integrity. He also encouraged the aspiring students to prepare with serious commitment and dedication. He expressed gratitude to mentors Simmi Karan (IAS), Aranyak Saikia (IAS), Aditya Vikram Singh (IAS), and Amit Mahto (IPS).

Commissioner and secretary to the Governor SS Meenakshi Sundaram, KKHSOU vice chancellor Prof Rajendra Prasad Das, executive director of Arya Pratibha Vikas Sansthan Anu Vasudeva, project UPSC coordinator at Paavan Chintan Dhara Ashram Surabhi Sharma, KKHSOU registrar Prof Pranjit Bora, along with a host of other dignitaries, were present on the occasion.

11th Mahendra Kumar Baruah Memorial Lecture concludes successfully

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 10: The 11th edition of the Mahendra Kumar Baruah Memorial Lecture and Tribute event, organised by New Art Players (NAP), a premier socio-cultural organisation of Assam, successfully concluded on Sunday.

The program, held at the upcoming cultural project's auditorium of NAP, began with a special tribute to the organisation's dedicated late members who, despite numerous challenges, brought the organisation to its current position since 1954. At the event, NAP president Ajay Kumar Dutta, along with esteemed guests and family members of the members, offered heartfelt tributes to the departed by lighting lamps and offering flowers.

Following this, NAP general secretary Rathindra Narayan Bhattacharya remembered each of the late members by name and shared memories of them, after which all members and guests present on the occasion observed a moment of silent prayer for the eternal peace of their souls.

In the next segment, Nayan Prasad anchored the 11th Mahendra Kumar Baruah Memorial Lecture, which commenced with a 'Mangalacharan' by Sunayana Goswami Sharma. In his welcome speech, NAP president Ajay Kumar Dutta reminisced about Mahendra Kumar Barua and warmly welcomed the chief guest, recently retired Lt Gen Rana Pratap Kalita, along with other distinguished guests. Following this, the chief guest was honored by NAP and the family of the late Barua. On behalf of Barua's family, Kuljit Baruah extended thanks to NAP for organising this lecture series since 1988. Lt Gen Rana Pratap Kalita (Retd) then delivered a lecture on

the topic 'How Safe Are We from a Fragile Neighborhood?' His compelling and thought-provoking insights captivated everyone present. During the Q&A session that followed, several individuals participated actively.

Retired Lt Gen Rana Pratap Kalita spoke on a very significant and sensitive topic. He stated, "We must work to ensure peace and prosperity continue in our state." His address particularly emphasised the aspect of security, touching upon issues like the development of infrastructure in Assam and the northeastern region, foreign policy, and the ways modern technology is simplifying our lives.

He also highlighted that without border security, it is impossible to envision comprehensive development in Assam and the Northeast. He pointed out the strategic importance of borders in the Northeast, mentioning how certain isolated separatist ideologies exploit the region's distance from the rest of the country and its proximity to foreign adversarial forces.

Kalita noted that the rise of radical Islam is also a threat to India, with the potential to significantly impact Assam and the entire north-eastern region.

Rana Pratap Kalita noted that Myanmar, which has been facing intense conflict since 2022, holds significant implications for India's Act East Policy. Myanmar's situation directly impacts border states like Nagaland and Manipur, leading to increased migration into Mizoram and Manipur and creating social pressures in these regions.

Vice-president Mallika Baruah offered a vote of thanks, and the event concluded with the singing of the state anthem.

Independent candidate for Samaguri by-election found unconscious

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 10: Musabbir Ali Ahmed, an Independent candidate in the Samaguri assembly by-election, was found abandoned in an unconscious state with multiple injuries near Katimari Grant in Nagaon on Sunday.

Sources reported that he was immediately admitted to a local hospital in Nagaon town by his family members and was undergoing treatment at the hospital until the time of filing this report.

Speaking to local media, the injured candidate, Ahmed, stated from his hospital bed that he had been kidnapped by miscreants while attending a closed-door meeting at a house in the constituency. He claimed he was then severely assaulted inside a vehicle by some Congress workers and later dumped near his residence at Katimari Grant.

Ahmed alleged that a youth had called him outside, after which a group of young men picked him up in a vehicle. In the vehicle, they offered him a monetary incentive and warned him not to divide the minority votes in the upcoming Samaguri by-election. When he refused, they reportedly attacked him severely.

On the other hand, in another recent incident, the vehicle of Congress candidate Tanzil Hussain was damaged by a gang of miscreants in the Udmari area under Samaguri PS on Sunday. Congress filed a case at Samaguri PS regarding the incident.

Journalists stage sit-in protest in Samaguri

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 10: Over a hundred journalists from Nagaon and Samaguri staged a sit-in protest on Sunday in front of Samaguri Police Station, condemning the assault on three journalists by Congress workers while covering a firing incident at the Muri Puthikhatia area under Samaguri PS.

The journalists, including Nilutpal Bora from News18 Assam North East, Nava Baruah from NKTv, and another reporter, were attacked by Congress workers while reporting. Congress supporters also attempted to damage a video camera belonging to them.

Journalist unions, including the Journalists' Union of Assam and the All Assam Journalists' Union, denounced the incident, demanding the immediate arrest of the attackers.

A complaint has been filed at Samaguri Police Station in connection with the incident, sources added.

Agriculture director inspects crop cultivation in Morigaon

HT Correspondent

MORIGAOON, Nov 10: The director of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Crops) Department, government of India, Rabindra Prasad, visited Morigaon on Sunday and inspected the agricultural fields in the district. He was led by Dr Arunima Choudhury, state consultant for the National Food Security Mission, government of Assam. He first held discussions with departmental officers and employees in the presence

of district agriculture officer Ashok Kumar Sharma at the Eco Village Camp in Mayang. The meeting reviewed the successful implementation of the National Food Security and Nutrition Mission, one of the Union government's flagship schemes. He also highlighted the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, procurement of paddy and mustard at minimum support prices, and the 'one district, one crop' maize production initiative.

Kokrajhar gears up for National Press Day celebration

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 10: The Information and Public Relations Department, government of Bodoland Territorial Region, in association with the Bodoland Journalists' Association, will host a grand celebration for National Press Day 2024 on November 16 at the auditorium of Kokrajhar Planetarium. The program will be graced by the chief guest, Professor BL Ahuja, vice chancellor of Bodoland University. The keynote address will be delivered by Mrinal Talukdar, consulting editor of Pratinid Time, who will speak on the theme 'Changing Nature of the Press'.

Several distinguished guests will attend the event as guests of honour, including Dr Zakir Hussain, chairman of NEF Group of Institutions and editor of Dainik Gana Adhikar, and Rakesh Sharma, editor of Vikshit Bharat Samachar. In addition, the program will welcome Baburam Basumatary, editor of Bodosa, and Danswarang Daimary, editor of Hayenni Radab, as special guests, who have significantly contributed to the media landscape of the Bodoland Territorial Region.

The program will begin at 9:30 am with a series of ceremonial activities, including flag hoisting, Swahid Tarpan, and plantation under the Green Bodoland Mission to honor the significance of National Press Day. Following these activities, the open session will commence at 11:30 am and will be conducted by Raktim Buragohain, joint secretary of the Information and Public Relations Department, BTC. During the open session, a special felicitation ceremony will honour individuals who have made significant contributions to journalism and media in the Bodoland Territorial Region. The ceremony will recognise three retired journalists, five senior journalists, and one senior newspaper hawk for their invaluable service and dedication to the media industry in the region. The celebration will witness active participation from media personnel across all five districts of the BTR—Kokrajhar, Tamulpur, Baksa, Udalguri, and Chirang.

104th Sri Sri Jagaddhatri Puja in Dipila

HT Correspondent

MANGALDAI, Nov 10: Excitement has been high at the Jagaddhatri Mandir in Dipila, near the historic 'Pothorughat' in the Darrang district, as the 104th celebration of Sri Sri Jagaddhatri Puja begins. The three-day event, starting on Saturday, features an array of social, spiritual, religious, and cultural programs. Under the leadership of celebration committee president Dambaru Dhar Samma, senior journalist Bhargava Kumar Das ceremoniously released 'Jagaddhatri', a commemorative souvenir, at a gathering in a packed pandal.

In his inaugural speech, Bhargava Kumar Das emphasised, "It is imperative that we involve our young people in multi-crop cultivation to create a self-sufficient society." Earlier, in the presence of Oja Pali exponent Drona Bhuyan, journalist Bhaben Barua, and social activist Debabrata Dutta, social activist Akhil Ranjan Bhatta, former journalist and litterateur Mano Ranjan Sarma inaugurated the meeting. Akhil Ranjan Bhatta delivered the welcome speech.

State celebrates linguistic legacy as Bhasha Gaurav Saptah concludes

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 10: The Assamese department of DSK Commerce College here organised a special oration on 'Asamiya Bhasha aru Asamiya Adhunik Sangeet: Oitija aru Uttaranar Parikrama' on Saturday to mark the statewide celebration of 'Bhasha Gaurav Saptah' on the occasion of the recognition of Assamese as a classical language by the Centre.

The oration, jointly conducted in association with the Heritage Club and the Students' Union of the college, was chaired by Sailen Gogoi, principal in-charge of the college.

Participating as the chief orator in the function, Dr Chandanjyoti Chutia, assistant professor at the department of MDK Girls' College, briefly but attractively described how modernity in Assamese music began with the lyrics of Satyanath Borah in his book 'Geetawali', and how it was subsequently enriched by contributions from the great trio of music maestros—Bishnu Prasad Rabha, Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, and Parbati Prasad Baruah—as well as by the legendary Bhupen Hazarika and others. Dr Chutia noted how this musical heritage has evolved to include contemporary artists like Zubeen Garg. However, he also expressed concern over some artists' incorrect use of words and other errors in Assamese song lyrics in recent times.

Anwesha Saikia, another invited speaker, a promising music artist and assistant professor in the department of Economics at MDK Girls' College, delivered a thought-provoking speech, urging greater awareness among artists to prevent a few mistakes from marring the beauty and legacy of Assamese modern music. Saikia also enthralled the audi-

ence—comprised of teachers, students, and employees of the college—by lending her voice to some evergreen Assamese songs in the context of Dr Chutia's speech.

In his presidential address, Sailen Gogoi called upon all concerned to use the Assamese language correctly and consciously in music, literature, and daily life, while expressing gratitude to the Assamese department for organising such an enriching program. Dr Nabajyoti Dutta, head of the department of Assamese, also emphasised the importance of preserving the glory and significance of the Assamese language in literature and music.

Dr Tulika Matak, coordinator of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the college, and Dr Bidisha Mahanta, assistant professor in the Department of Economics, commended the organisers' efforts and highlighted the need for the new generation to respect and use the Assamese language properly.

At the beginning, Nazrana Haque, faculty-in-charge of the Heritage Club, outlined the objective of the oration, stressing the organisers' efforts to remind the audience of the importance of Assamese language and music on the occasion of Bhasha Gaurav Saptah. Sumon Das, president of the Students' Union, anchored the felicitation program, while Nazrana Haque offered the vote of thanks at the end.

Our Hojai correspondent adds: Bhasha Gaurav Saptah, a week-long programme celebrating the recognition of Assamese as a classical language by the government of India, concluded at Bharat Tirtho Bhaban, Rabindranath Tagore University in Hojai on Saturday. Prof Kaushik Chanda, dean of RTU,



graced the occasion as the chairperson of the event. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Chanda encouraged the organisation of similar programmes in the future. He commended the students, teachers, and university administration for smoothly organising the week-long event, which brought together students from all departments to showcase their talents and learn from each other. Prof Chanda added that the event fostered a sense of community and camaraderie among the students, highlighting the importance of language and innovation in education.

In a conversation with this correspondent on the sidelines of the closing ceremony, Dr Sujit Ranjan Acharjee, associate professor of Chemistry and the convener of the programme, shared that Rabindranath Tagore University had the privilege of inaugurating Bhasha Gaurav Saptah at the Conference Hall of Bharat Tirtho Bhaban, RTU, on November 3, to

celebrate Assamese language's classical status conferred by the government of India. He mentioned that the opening ceremony was marked by a grand celebration, with vice-chancellor Prof Manabendra Dutta Choudhury presiding as chairperson and sharing his vision and goals for the programme. Dr Acharjee added that other departments played vital roles in organising the event.

On November 5, RTU hosted centrally organised events, including a letter-writing and a speech competition. The topic of the speech competition was 'Mur Bhasha, Mur Gaurav'. In the letter-writing competition, participants were asked to write a letter expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister of India for conferring classical language status on Assamese. The winning entries in each language category were forwarded to the Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Hojai for submission to the government

of Assam. Additionally, an exhibition celebrating linguistic diversity, ethnic attires, delicacies, and cuisines was held by the department of English on November 6.

Notably, Dr Acharjee pre-arranged the plans for the week in collaboration with all the language departments of the university, namely Assamese, Bengali, English, and Hindi. The opening day featured interactive sessions that offered attendees a preview of the events to come. The final day featured a prize distribution ceremony and a vibrant cultural programme in which students from all language departments participated enthusiastically. Tilak C Kalita (registrar i/c), Dr Amar Gautam (academic registrar i/c), and Dr Abhijit Katak (DSW) also spoke on the occasion, emphasising the importance of language in effective communication and how learning one's mother tongue aids in acquiring other languages.

Manisha Saikia, assistant professor, department of Assamese, anchored the event, and the vote of thanks was delivered by Dr Sujit Ranjan Acharjee.

Our Tezpur correspondent adds: In celebration of the auspicious moment of the Assamese language being recognised as a classical language, the Bhasha Gaurav Saptah was celebrated throughout the state from November 3 to 9. In Sonitpur district as well, it was observed with great enthusiasm. Thus, at the appeal of the district administration, inspired by Dr Palashmoni Saikia, principal of Darrang College, through the efforts of Dr Dhrubajit Sarma, head of the department of Sanskrit, and with the support of the faculty and students of the Sanskrit department, the Bhasha Gaurav Saptah was celebrated.

As part of the week-long celebration, on November 8, a captivating competition was held among the college students on the first ten verses of the twelfth chapter, i.e., the Bhaktiyoga of 'Srimadbhagavadgitanisad', and also on the eternal poem 'Asomia Dekar Ukti' by Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. Students participated from various departments, including Physics, History, Geography, and Commerce, not just from the Sanskrit department. Dr Nanda Nath, head of the Bangla department, was present at the program. The panel of judges included Khanindra Kumar Kalita, secretary of the Darrang College Teachers' Unit and former head of the Assamese department, along with Dr Dhundi Raj Upadhyaya, a former student of the department and recipient of the Sahitya Akademy 'Travel Grant' 2023 and the 'Asom Sahitya Bota' 2023.

In the competition, Jialina Daimari, a first-semester student of the Sanskrit department, won the first prize; Rudraksha Bibhusan, a fifth-semester student of the department, secured the second prize; and Kaustabh Borthakur, a third-semester student of the Physics department, received the third prize. The prizes were distributed in the presence of Dr Sweta Mahanta, coordinator of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), along with IQAC members Dr Pallabika Sarma, Dr Rajib Basumatary, Gulap Sonowal, and others. Finally, a vote of thanks was delivered by Nil Kamal Pandit, faculty of the Sanskrit department, and concluding remarks expressing gratitude to all stakeholders were offered by Dr Dhrubajit Sarma, HOD of Sanskrit, marking the end of the program organised by the Sanskrit department of Darrang College.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Research is what I'm doing when I don't know what I'm doing.
-Wernher von Braun

Expectations from COP29

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is getting itself ready with its agenda at UN Climate Change Conference COP29 with its key message that transition policies must prioritize labour rights and decent work and to highlight the critical role of social dialogue and labour protection so that no one is left behind. COP29 will be taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 11-22 November 2024, which amid global conflicts and economic challenges, will focus on advancing inclusive climate solutions that ensure a just transition for all. As a UN observer at COP29, the ILO will be providing technical expertise and facilitating knowledge exchange. Through events such as the Just Transition Pavilion, the ILO will offer guidance on integrating these principles into climate commitments, reinforcing that inclusive policies and sustainable job creation are central to a fair and resilient future. The ILO in partnership with the European Union, is establishing a Just Transition Pavilion at COP29. The Pavilion is a venue for delegates to carry formal and informal consultations, to convene thematic events, and to network. In addition, Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Clinics are available to interested constituents to learn more about how just transition principles can be further and successfully integrated into the next edition of their NDC.

For developing countries in particular, climate impacts threaten efforts in realising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As countries undertake efforts to address the climate crisis, such measures can have both positive and negative implications for jobs, livelihoods, poverty, inclusion and equality. A just transition is hence crucial to harness the benefits of a resilient low carbon economy, create decent work, and ensure no one is left behind. This conference is set against a global backdrop of interlinked crises marked by conflicts, socio-economic fragility, and the need to build social consensus for climate action that leaves no one behind. The need for ambition and action is more critical than ever to preserve the 1.5-degree target and move the world towards a climate-resilient pathway while ensuring a just transition for all. Throughout the conference, the UN's labour agency will ensure that workforce perspectives are integral into climate discussions. This includes advocating for social protections and adopting policies that empower marginalized groups, including women, and indigenous communities.

ILO's climate action for jobs initiative emphasises that Climate and employment goals can and must go hand in hand. The Paris Agreement on climate change, adopted in 2015, highlights the imperatives of a just transition and the creation of decent work as essential dimensions of climate change. While some important progress has been made, the required scale of efforts needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 is not yet enough. The Climate Action for Jobs Initiative will contribute to a Decade of Action, accelerating climate action through a just transition.

Germany heading for early national elections in 2025 after Scholz govt loses majority



By: Satyaki Chakraborty

Germany, the biggest economic power of the Western nations in Europe was plunged in a major political crisis as the shaky three party coalition led by the Chancellor Olaf Scholz of SPD became a minority in the Parliament on Wednesday night after the partner Free Democratic Party withdrew its support to the Scholz government.

The Scholz coalition has been ruling by taking support of 91 members of FDP and 117 members of Green Party. SPD has its own strength of 207 members. So, in a house of 733 members, the three party coalition had a clear majority. Now with the withdrawal of FDP's 91 members, the Scholz government has the support of only 324 members as against the needed majority of 367 members.

Right now, in German Parliament, the opposition CDU/CSU has got 196 members while the far right AfD which is a surging force in the latest provincial elections, has 76 seats. The Left group led by Die Linke has got 28 seats while the split away group of Die Linke has got 10 seats. There are eight non-attached members.

Chancellor Scholz has assured to seek no-confidence motion on January 15 next year and seek national elections in March 2025 pre-empting it from the original schedule of September 28, 2025. The opposition parties, especially CDU are not agreeable to that. They are demanding elections in January next year itself since the present state of instability is bad for the German economy at this stage. The political commentators also share this view since there is little hope of a stable government in Germany even if the Scholz regime wins the no-confidence vote.

Whatever be the decision finally about the date of the next national

elections, the political turmoil is going to stay and this has given a fresh opportunity to the far right AfD to expand its base and going to the German people with its campaign plank against refugees and immigrants as also the promise of creating jobs for the German youth.

The CDU/CSU which ruled Germany for many years led by prominent chancellors like Angela Merkel is preparing for the coming elections Friedrich Merz, the CDU leader is aspiring to contest for the chancellor's position. He is trying to see that the elections are held early and the Scholz coalition faces more embarrassment in the coming days so that he can emerge stronger in the election campaign.

Chancellor Scholz needs the support of other opposition leaders to approve his budget and some other immediate issues related to expenditure including defence payments. Merz and other opposition leaders may approve this only with the condition that Scholz will have to call elections in January and not March. This development may force the chancellor to agree to call elections in January next year instead of March planned by him.

In the recent opinion polls, the Christian Democrats did well compared to SPD but the AfD and the left wing BSW did much better. In the latest provincial elections, the AfD increased its vote share along with the BSW. The SPD which was the dominant ruling party in these provinces earlier is now working for a coalition with other parties to prevent AfD from taking reign of the state governments.

In sum, the election season has started in Germany but the uncertainty for the German people persists as the economy is in a bad state and there is no guarantee that a stable government will emerge out of the next year's elections. (IPA Service)

Trump's return: A new chapter for America and the world

The 2024 United States presidential election has concluded, with Donald J. Trump securing a remarkable victory. Despite ongoing counts and official declarations, Trump has already declared himself the winner. This result marks a significant shift in American politics, bringing a mix of continuity and radical change to both domestic and international affairs.

The election was driven by critical issues that resonate deeply not only within the US but across the globe. Economic concerns, particularly high inflation and recovery from the pandemic, dominated voters' minds. With cost-of-living issues, job security, and healthcare access at the forefront, Trump campaigned on a platform of fiscal conservatism, promising lower taxes, reduced government spending, and deregulation to stimulate growth and combat inflation. His promises to invigorate the economy through a pro-business agenda found a receptive audience among working-class Americans, who felt neglected by the current administration's handling of economic recovery.

Immigration policy was another contentious issue, with Trump doubling down on his signature proposals for stricter border controls and enhanced enforcement measures, framing immigration as a matter of both national security and economic stability. He emphasized the need for stronger physical barriers at the US-Mexico border, a position that resonated

with voters concerned about the perceived strain of illegal immigration on public services and job opportunities for American citizens.

On healthcare, Trump called for a rollback of the Affordable Care Act, advocating for a more market-driven approach with tax credits and increased competition among providers. However, his position has drawn criticism for potentially reducing access to affordable care for vulnerable populations. Additionally, Trump's climate policy, focused on energy independence through expanded oil and gas production, stands in stark contrast to calls for robust climate action, raising concerns over the long-term sustainability of his environmental stance.

However, perhaps the most consequential aspect of Trump's return to power will be his approach to foreign policy. Trump's "America First" ideology has long emphasized reducing US involvement in foreign conflicts and renegotiating international agreements to safeguard American interests. His return to office is likely to bring a more transactional approach to global relations, where alliances and trade deals will be evaluated through the lens of immediate national benefit.

The implications for global security, particularly in relation to Russia and China, are profound. Trump's stance on the Ukraine war, which had already been characterized by skepticism during his first term, may shift US support

away from Ukraine. His potential withdrawal of military and economic aid could embolden Russia's territorial ambitions, altering the security dynamics in Europe and beyond. Similarly, Trump's skepticism towards NATO may prompt European nations to reconsider their security arrangements without relying on American guarantees.

In the Middle East, Trump's hawkish foreign policy is expected to align closely with Israeli interests, particularly in Gaza and Lebanon, and could lead to increased support for aggressive Israeli military actions. His stated support for Prime Minister Netanyahu could significantly impact the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Trump's approach to Iran also poses a major question: his presidency could either accelerate Iran's nuclear ambitions or prompt a renewed arms race in the region, potentially encouraging other Middle Eastern countries to pursue their own nuclear capabilities.

On trade, Trump is likely to resurrect his protectionist policies, focusing on tariffs as a means to revive American industry. His previous administration's tariffs on Chinese imports are expected to continue, with the potential to extend to other countries like India. While this approach remains popular with his base, the economic consequences—particularly for American consumers—could

prove more damaging in the long term.

For India, Trump's return presents a paradox. While he has often expressed admiration for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his "America First" doctrine could clash with India's economic and trade policies. Issues such as the high tariffs India imposes on US goods and the future of the H-1B visa program, which many Indian professionals rely on, are likely to remain points of contention. However, Trump's personal rapport with Modi may provide a diplomatic cushion, easing tensions over trade and other bilateral matters.

Domestically, the Democratic Party faces a challenging road ahead. Kamala Harris' candidacy failed to inspire significant voter support, particularly in swing states, where Trump's appeal to disaffected voters proved decisive. Harris, despite her progressive credentials, struggled to overcome the economic and security concerns that dominated the race. Her inability to connect with key demographics, especially the working class and moderate voters, left her vulnerable to Trump's populist campaign.

As the Republican Party solidifies control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, Trump will enjoy a more favorable political environment than during his first term. This consolidation of power gives him the leeway to

push through his policy agenda, but it also raises concerns about the impact of his sometimes erratic decision-making on the international stage.

Trump's victory in 2024 signals a departure from the more traditional, predictable foreign and domestic policies that characterized previous administrations. The world now faces a new phase of geopolitical uncertainty, where longstanding alliances and global norms may be reshaped by a president who views international relations primarily through a transactional lens. In this unpredictable landscape, India, like many other nations, will need to navigate a complex relationship with the US, balancing economic opportunities with the challenges posed by Trump's unorthodox approach to diplomacy and trade.

Ultimately, Trump's return to power is both a triumph for his supporters and a source of deep concern for his critics. His victory has realigned the political landscape in the US, reshaping the discourse on domestic issues like healthcare, immigration, and the economy. On the global stage, his approach to foreign policy promises to be equally transformative, but also fraught with risks. The coming years will test whether Trump's maverick style of governance can bring stability to a polarized US and the wider world—or whether his presidency will further unravel the global order. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

Dipak Kurmi

BJP desperate to get back lost tribal support before Jharkhand polls

By: Rabindra Nath Sinha

Outfits of social activists in Jharkhand have been active in countering the highly divisive campaigns by Bharatiya Janata Party leaders for the impending Assembly elections as the partners of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led coalition lagged behind the BJP-led Opposition in concluding seat-sharing deals for the 81-member House and selection of candidates. BJP was able to launch its campaign almost two weeks back and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already addressed meetings in two places. But, the ruling side has just managed to release its composite manifesto. Although the first of the two-phase election is scheduled for November 13, it is yet to start its campaign on a serious note.

The pivot of BJP's campaign is how illegal infiltration from Bangladesh is distorting the state's demography, particularly in the Santal Pargana division. The sufferers are the tribals, the BJP speakers have been stressing in their speeches some of which are inflammatory. Seasoned political observers see in BJP leaders' campaigns a clear attempt to target Muslims, although they are not directly referring to the community, which accounts for some 15 per cent of the Jharkhand's population.

What is more intriguing is that BJP has opted for this strategy although Jharkhand does not share any international boundary. The frequency of the reference to illegal immigration by senior BJP leaders who include, among others, Amit Shah, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Himanta Biswa Sarma and Nishikant Dubey has left some politicians wondering whether the BJP leaders have forgotten that they are campaigning in Jharkhand and not in Assam or West Bengal.

The 30 plus organisations of social activists, which function in the format of a campaign under the name and style of Loktantra Bachao Abhiyan (LBA), some time back undertook a fact-finding study and veered round to view that there is practically no basis for BJP to make such sweeping allegations. There may be a few stray cases but generalisation is not warranted. An overwhelming view in political quarters is that by this tactics, BJP is aiming to win back the support of the tribal community, which is a determining factor in 28 Assembly constituencies, that is, over 30 per cent of the seats.

In the 2019 Assembly elections and in this year's Lok Sabha elections the party fared poorly and that marked a setback to the party's aim of creating a solid support base among the tribals on a pan-India basis. Lending credibility to this premise is the party's declaration that when the NDA government moves to introduce Uniform Civil

Code (UCC) in Jharkhand, it will ensure provision for immunity to tribals. While time will tell how BJP negotiates this tricky path, the declaration does speak of the party's disregard for the premise of UCC that stresses the need for formulation of a common set of laws for the entire nation.

The issue is already before courts of law. Providing some comfort to BJP is the Jharkhand High Court's decision to constitute a fact-finding team comprising state and Union government officials. This has been challenged by the Jharkhand government. Also mention worthy in this context is the Jharkhand government's special leave petition filed before the Supreme Court, wherein it has been pointed out that the Centre has failed to provide any data to "support the claim that illegal immigration is causing a reduction of the tribal population in Jharkhand's Santal Pargana region". [Extracted from the first part of a report published in The Hindu edition of October 26, 2024 edition].

A public manifesto released a few weeks back by LBA has demanded setting up of a displacement and rehabilitation commission to take care of the people whose existence is at stake after their land was requisitioned for

projects but did not receive adequate compensation for resettlement. The Jharkhand Land and Acquisition Act,

2017, which diluted provisions of the original Central legislation in the interest of industrialists should be repealed. Rules should be formulated under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996 and arrangements according to the Sixth Schedule should be made in the tribal-dominated areas, such as, Kolhan and Damini.

The manifesto also calls for serious efforts by the new government to tone up the state's weak education and public health infrastructure within a pre-determined timeframe. A demand has also been made for setting up a high-level judicial commission to close cases against tribals, indigenous people and the marginalised who are trapped in false cases. Release of under-trial prisoners who have already spent a long time in jails should be favourably considered. The manifesto notes that Jharkhand's admin-

istrative and police systems "often operate with a communal and anti-people mindset" and expresses the hope that the in-coming government will pay attention to this humanitarian issue.

Meanwhile, when asked about BJP's thrust on the illegal immigration issue, CPI-ML (Liberation) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya told IPA they already have under their control Chhattisgarh and Odisha and now they are eyeing Jharkhand. All three are very rich in mineral resources and they will explore all avenues to allocate mineral resources to their topmost favourite - the A Group. Also, if BJP uses the communal card beyond a point in Jharkhand where Adivasis matter the most, the state may run the risk of having to witness a Manipur-like situation, Bhattacharya observed. A victory for the JMM-led alliance is a must in the interest of this backward state. CPI-ML (L) has put up four candidates, including two of erstwhile Marxist Coordination Committee. He has already held workers' meetings and would camp in Jharkhand from November 11-18 for campaigning.

Social policy researcher Siraj Datta, who is actively associated with LBA, told IPA LBA, is anti-fascist and anti-Sangh Parivar. It is

kept on return of the ruling alliance. "See, in electoral politics if as a matter of principle you are against a party or a formation,

you automatically favour a party or coalition which works to strengthen democracy and raise the living standards of the poor and downtrodden". That explains the campaign's stance, Datta added. Social activist Afzal Anis, who is also associated with LBA, told IPA that in his assessment BJP's divisive and communal gameplan won't find many takers among the electorate. "I don't think Muslim voters will give undue importance to BJP's communal rhetoric. Events and incidents have enlightened them. But, yes, the election is most likely to be closely-fought battle", Anis observed.

In the 81-member assembly, nine seats are reserved for SCs and 44 are general category seats. Further, 28 seats are reserved for STs. There are this time 2.6 crore electors of whom 11.84 lakh are first-timers. (IPA Service)

One third of persons globally are in unpaid care work, in India 54.1 per cent

By: Dr. Gyan Pathak

One third of the working-age persons of the world aged 15 or older outside the labour force in 2023 were engaged in unpaid care work, while in India they were 54.1 per cent, the new estimates presented in the ILO Statistical brief revealed. The share of women in India in unpaid care work is 53 per cent while it is only 1.1 per cent for men.

Worldwide, in 2023, 2.4 billion people aged 15 and above were not participating in the labour force, among whom around 1.6 billion (66 per cent) women and 800 million men are outside the labour force, with 45 per cent of these women and 5 per cent of these men, citing care responsibilities as the reason for their non-participation.

The ILO Statistical brief titled "The impact of care responsibilities on women's labour force participation" released on the occasion of the International Day of Care and Support has estimated 748 million working age persons were not participating in the global labour force because of care responsibilities, of these 708 million were women and 40 million were men.

This stark gender discrepancy highlights the disproportionate role that women take on in child-rearing, care, and support for persons with disabilities and those in need of long-term care, house-keeping, and other care responsibilities. The share of women outside the labour force due to care responsibilities is 45 per cent globally, with the highest shares in Northern Africa (63 per cent) and the Arab States (59 per cent). The data derived from 125 countries indicate that care responsibilities present chief barrier to women entering and staying in labour force, while men (58 per cent) are more likely to cite other personal reasons for being outside the labour force, such as education and health issues.

In fact, according to data from 108 countries, 60 per cent of men citing personal reasons were in education, compared to only 22 per cent of women. This suggests that other personal reasons beyond education may be limiting women's participation in the workforce, such as cultural norms and societal expectations that discourage women from being in the labour market.

Notably, the personal reasons category includes those whose partners do not want them to engage in paid work, as well as other involuntary reasons.

Among women aged 25 to 54, the proportion citing care as the reason for being outside the workforce rises to two-thirds (379 million women). Women with lower education and those in rural areas also face higher barriers to workforce participation due to care re-

sponsibilities.

In 2023, women's global labour force participation rate stood at 48.7 per cent, significantly lower than the rate of 73.0 per cent for men - a gap of more than 24 percentage points. This disparity varies across regions.

In some high-income European countries, the gap tends to be smaller with women's participation exceeding 70 per cent, while men's rates are only slightly higher.

However, in some parts of the world, such as the Arab States, Northern Africa, and Southern Asia, the gender gap widens dramatically, ranging from 46 to 54 percentage points.

The gender gap in labour force participation in many parts of the world is often linked to societal expectations, gender norms and gender stereotypes around caregiving and work, where women are still considered the main "caregivers", and men "breadwinners".

As such, women are often expected to prioritize family over employment. Data clearly shows that the presence of children, especially young children (under the age of 6), significantly decreases women's likelihood of being in the workforce.

For women with young children living in couples or extended families, labour force participation is 12 to 14 percentage points lower than among those without young children.

Meanwhile, men's participation is largely unaffected by the presence of young children and may even increase. The net result is stark gender gaps in participation - 38 percentage points for couples and 36 percentage points for extended families with young children, compared to a 23-percentage point gap for those without children. This unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men hinders women's economic inclusion and effective labour market participation and widens gender gaps in the world of work, says the ILO brief.

ILO data show that since 2018 many countries have made progress in promoting the participation of women careers by increasing investments in early childhood care and education. However, in a world being reshaped by demographic shifts, with ageing populations, and climate change, which intensifies unpaid care work, the demand for care services is likely to increase.

Therefore, ILO calls for urgent action to ensure decent work in the care economy and to promote decent work by ensuring access to care for all, by giving effect to the ILO Resolution adopted by governments, employers' and workers' organizations at the International Labour Conference in June 2024. (IPA Service)

What are the physical symptoms of anxiety?

By: Zia Sherrell

There are many physical symptoms that can result from anxiety. These can include sweating hands, shaking legs, and a fast heart rate.

Moderate anxiety levels are part of the human survival instinct. When someone has exposure to a perceived threat, their body triggers a response to help them focus and spur them into action.

However, some people struggle with constant or overwhelming anxiety during their daily lives when there is no threat. They may feel nervous, worry about everyday events, and experience physical symptoms of anxiety that make life challenging.

This article explores anxiety and how it affects the body. It looks at the physical symptoms of anxiety and why they happen. It also discusses some potential treatments and when to get advice from a healthcare professional.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is the body's response to a stressful situation, such as attending a significant event or speaking in public. It is normal to feel nervous, tense, or apprehensive in these circumstances.

However, some individuals experience these emotions in situations that are not typically stress-inducing. They may have feelings of extreme and overwhelming anxiety, which may cause heart-pounding panic and irrational fears. These people may have an anxiety disorder.

Anxiety disorders are common. They are more prevalent among females than males.

Types of anxiety

Anxiety is a common compo-

nent of several different anxiety disorders, including:

1. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD): OCD is characterized by repetitive irrational thoughts that cause an individual to repeatedly perform specific behaviors in a particular way.

2. Panic disorder: Someone may experience random, recurring panic attacks that consist of a sudden period of intense anxiety and fear.

3. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Individuals who have experienced a traumatic event may develop PTSD. PTSD manifests as flashbacks, nightmares, uncontrollable thoughts, and severe anxiety.

4. Illness anxiety disorder: Formerly known as hypochondria, a person may have illness anxiety disorder when they are overly anxious about their health and imagine that they have physical ailments.

5. Phobia: People with phobias experience a high level of fear due to a specific situation, activity, object, or event.

6. Social anxiety disorder: This disorder affects people in and before social situations and interactions with others. It can cause overwhelming fear.

7. Separation anxiety disorder: If someone fears being away from a particular person or place, they may have a separation anxiety disorder. This is prevalent among young children but affects adults as well.

How does anxiety affect the body?

Although anxiety disorders come under the umbrella of mental health conditions, they can also cause physical reactions.

In addition to distress, fear,

and worry, a person may have physical symptoms of anxiety, including:

- a dry mouth
- lightheadedness or feeling faint
- hot flashes or chills
- restlessness
- shortness of breath
- sweating
- tingling or numbness
- an increased heart rate
- shaking
- nausea
- gastrointestinal symptoms, such as constipation, diarrhea, or indigestion
- changes in appetite

Panic attacks can occur suddenly. If a person experiences a panic attack, they may feel that they are in extreme danger or are losing control. People can have strong physical reactions during a panic attack, and they may even feel as though they are having a heart attack.

Some symptoms of a panic attack may include:

- chest pain
- chills
- difficulty breathing
- problems swallowing, or a feeling of choking
- excessive sweating
- a racing heart rate
- feeling faint and nauseous
- feeling that death is imminent
- hot flashes
- hyperventilation
- numbness or tingling in the fingers, arms, or toes
- shaking
- stomach pain
- a feeling of cold in the hands and feet
- feeling detached from the body
- dizziness or lightheadedness
- blurry vision

Why the body responds to anxiety?

Stressful life events can trigger panic attacks. However, panic attacks do not always have an obvious cause. The physical symptoms of panic attacks are due to the body's fight-or-flight response, which generates fear and anxiety.

During the fight-or-flight response, an individual responds to authentic and unreal danger in the same way and with the same physiological reactions. For example, their heart and breathing rates increase, they have a surge of adrenaline, and their senses become hyper-alert.

A person's body responds in this way because it is preparing to either fight the threat or run away from it.

The increase in blood flow prepares the muscles to flee from danger and allows the brain to focus and make quick decisions. The rapid breathing provides the body with more oxygen, ready to escape.

However, these things may cause the individual to feel as though they cannot get enough air, which may result in further feelings of panic.

The long-term effects

Anxiety disorders can cause people to avoid situations that they know trigger negative emotions. They may feel ashamed that they cannot live their lives as everyone else does. In turn, this may lead to increased social isolation and further withdrawal.

When this happens, a person may enter a cycle of living in fear of fear, meaning that the fear of a panic attack causes them to have more panic attacks.

If someone has chronic anxiety, they are always on high

alert. This may negatively affect their cardiovascular, digestive, immune, and respiratory health.

Is it anxiety?

If a person experiences panic and anxiety, they should talk with a healthcare professional. They can rule out the possibility of other conditions and physical causes, such as:

- mitral valve prolapse
- hyperthyroidism, or an overactive thyroid gland
- hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar levels
- stimulant use, such as that of amphetamines, cocaine, or caffeine
- medication withdrawal

Managing physical symptoms

Healthcare professionals can help people cope with the physical symptoms of anxiety by suggesting a combination of medications and psychotherapy. Some research notes that combining these methods can be effective.

Medications

Medications do not cure anxiety, but they help people manage their symptoms more effectively and prevent them from affecting their daily routine. The type of medication a healthcare professional recommends may differ depending on the individual's symptoms and the severity of their anxiety.

One group of medications that healthcare professionals may prescribe to treat anxiety disorders such as social anxiety disorder and panic disorder are benzodiazepines. Examples of benzodiazepines include alprazolam (Xanax) and diazepam (Valium).

Benzodiazepines act as a sedative and slow down a person's bodily functions. They are

a short-term anxiety treatment because they have the potential to become habit forming.

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are antidepressant medications that may also help treat anxiety. SSRIs increase the concentration of the neurotransmitter serotonin by affecting regular serotonin uptake.

Some SSRIs that healthcare professionals prescribe for anxiety include:

- citalopram (Celexa)
- escitalopram (Lexapro)
- fluoxetine (Prozac)
- sertraline (Zoloft)

Beta-blockers such as propranolol (Inderal) are another type of medication that may help treat anxiety, though healthcare professionals most commonly use these to treat heart conditions.

Beta-blockers act on the parasympathetic system to reduce heart rate. This may help in stressful situations, such as when giving a speech or attending an interview, by providing relief from anxiety's physical symptoms.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is an effective form of treatment for many anxiety disorders. Options include cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and exposure therapy.

CBT can help people focus on their fears realistically and overcome their panic. Exposure therapy allows people to experience panic and anxiety in a safe, controlled environment so that they can learn to cope with it.

Anxiety disorder diagnosis

After a healthcare professional rules out any medical cause for the symptoms, they may refer a person to a psychi-

atrist, psychotherapist, or another specialized mental healthcare professional.

They may be able to provide an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan, which may or may not include medications.

The initial examination will investigate:

- the person's medical history
- the symptoms they are experiencing
- any medications they are taking
- any other issues they have that relate to their mental health

The mental healthcare professional will also carry out a routine physical exam.

Outlook

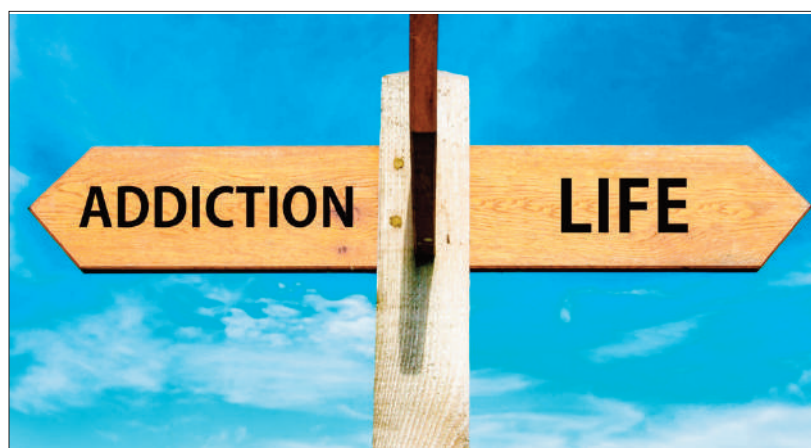
The outlook for people with an anxiety-related diagnosis is often positive. Treatment may incorporate a range of different approaches, such as self-management strategies, medications, and psychotherapy. During their treatment and beyond, people should also try to minimize their stress levels.

These approaches can help people manage their anxiety symptoms more effectively and improve their overall quality of life. However, success rates may vary depending on any coexisting conditions the person has and the severity of their anxiety.

Summary

Anxiety disorders are common. They usually cause feelings of unease and nervousness. They can also cause a mixture of physical and mental symptoms. Managing the physical symptoms of anxiety may require medications (such as benzodiazepines and beta-blockers), a form of psychotherapy (such as CBT or exposure therapy), or a combination of both methods. (Courtesy: MNT)

How to recover from addiction



By: Satyabrata Borah

Recovering from any addiction is a journey that can feel overwhelming, but with the right approach, it is possible. Addiction can take many forms, whether it's related to substances like alcohol or drugs, or behaviors like gambling, internet use, or even food. The process of recovery may be difficult, but it's important to understand that recovery is possible for anyone who is willing to take the necessary steps. What is crucial is commitment, patience, and the right support system.

The first step towards overcoming addiction is recognizing that there is a problem. Many times, people who are addicted might not even realize how deeply their habit has affected their lives or the lives of those around them. It's not uncommon for people to make excuses for their addiction or believe that they have everything under control.

However, the moment someone becomes aware of how their addiction is negatively impacting their health, relationships, or day-to-day activities, the door to recovery opens.

Once a person acknowledges the addiction, the next important step is seeking help. Overcoming addiction alone can be extremely challenging. It's okay to ask for support from family, friends, or professionals. In fact, support is often the backbone of recovery. Having someone to talk to or guide you through difficult moments can make all the difference. There are professionals trained to help people recover from addiction, and they can provide valuable advice on how to manage cravings, understand triggers, and develop healthier habits.

In many cases, a structured program can be very effective. Programs designed to help people recover from addiction often provide a clear plan and resources for managing withdrawal, learning new coping skills, and preventing relapse. These programs could include therapy sessions, group meetings, and even medical support if needed. Therapists or counselors specializing in addiction can help identify underlying issues that may have led to the addiction in the first place, and work through them together.

Another key element in recovering from addiction is learning to manage cravings and urges. Cravings are natural and can be very strong, but they do not last forever. Sometimes, it helps to distract yourself by engaging

in a different activity or reaching out to someone for support. Breathing exercises, mindfulness, or physical activity can help redirect your focus during those challenging moments.

The goal is not to fight against the cravings aggressively, but to let them pass without acting on them.

Changing daily routines can also be very helpful. If certain places, people, or activities are closely linked to your addiction, avoiding them in the early stages of recovery can reduce the chances of relapse. For instance, if someone is recovering from alcohol addiction, it might be a good idea to stay away from bars or parties where alcohol is present, at least until they feel more in control of their urges. Surrounding oneself with positive influences, whether it's a new hobby, supportive friends, or healthier environments, can greatly contribute to the recovery process.

It is also important to take care of both your body and mind during recovery. Addiction can take a toll on physical and mental health, so rebuilding strength is a critical part of the journey. Eating healthy foods, staying hydrated, and getting enough rest are basic steps that help the body heal. Regular exercise can also be a great way to boost your mood and energy levels.

On the mental health side, practicing mindfulness, meditation, or simply talking to someone about your feelings can make a big difference. Many people find that as their body and mind get stronger, their confidence in their ability to stay sober grows as well.

Relapse, or falling back into old habits, can happen during recovery, and it's important to understand that this doesn't mean failure. Recovery is often not a straight path. If someone relapses, it's not the end of the road—it's simply a sign that they need to adjust their approach. What matters most is getting back on track, understanding what led to the relapse, and finding ways to avoid it in the future. It is essential to be patient with yourself during recovery. Overcoming addiction is not easy, and setbacks are part of the process.

Setting realistic goals is another helpful step. Instead of focusing on quitting the addiction entirely right away, it can be useful to set smaller, manageable goals that feel achievable.

For instance, if someone is trying to quit smoking, setting a goal to smoke fewer cigarettes each week can be a

good way to gradually reduce the habit. As these small goals are met, confidence builds, and the bigger goal of quitting completely becomes more attainable.

Finding a new sense of purpose can also aid in recovery. Many people struggle with addiction when they feel lost, bored, or without direction. Exploring new hobbies, skills, or passions can fill that void. Whether it's painting, writing, playing sports, or learning a new language, finding an activity that brings joy can serve as a healthy replacement for addictive behaviors. Over time, these new interests can take center stage in a person's life, making the addictive behaviour feel less significant.

One of the hardest parts of recovery is addressing the emotional and psychological reasons behind the addiction. Many people turn to addictive substances or behaviors as a way to cope with stress, trauma, anxiety, or depression. During recovery, these underlying issues often come to the surface, which can be uncomfortable or even painful to face. Therapy or counseling can be particularly helpful in these moments. Talking to a professional can provide a safe space to explore these feelings and develop healthier ways to deal with them.

While recovery is a deeply personal journey, it's important to remember that you are not alone. Millions of people around the world have successfully overcome addiction, and many of them have done so with the help of others. Peer support groups, where people going through similar experiences share their stories and support each other, can be incredibly valuable. Hearing about other people's challenges and successes can be motivating and provide a sense of community.

It's also important to celebrate progress, no matter how small it may seem. Recovery is a series of small steps, and each step forward is a victory. Whether it's one day sober or one week without engaging in addictive behavior, acknowledging and celebrating these milestones can help build the momentum needed to keep moving forward. Rewarding yourself for reaching these goals can also provide positive reinforcement.

In the end, recovery from addiction is a journey of self-discovery and transformation. It's about learning to take control of your life, your choices, and your future. The road may be long and filled with obstacles, but with determination, support, and patience, it's possible to overcome addiction and build a healthier, happier life. Each person's recovery journey is unique, but the common thread is the courage to keep moving forward, even when it feels hard.

To summarize, recovering from addiction requires recognizing the problem, seeking help, managing cravings, making lifestyle changes, addressing emotional issues, and finding new ways to find fulfillment in life. It's a process that takes time and effort, but with the right support and mindset, anyone can break free from addiction. The journey might be tough, but the destination—a life free from addiction—is worth every step.

Liver transplants for adults and children

By: Dr. Vikram Kumar

When someone's liver is not working well, a liver transplant may be the best option to help them recover. This type of surgery is needed when the liver can no longer do its job - helping with digestion, storing energy, and clearing out toxins.

Liver transplants aren't just for adults; children sometimes need them too.

Why do people need a liver transplant?

Liver failure can happen for different reasons. In adults, it's often caused by long-term alcohol use or chronic diseases. For children, it's usually due to genetic problems or infections.

When the liver isn't working well and there's no other way to treat the problem, a transplant can be a lifesaver.

A liver transplant replaces the damaged liver with a healthy one. Some-

times, the whole liver is replaced, but other times only a part of it is used. In either case, the transplant helps restore the liver's functions and can improve the person's health.

How does a liver transplant work?

There are two main types of liver transplants:

• **Whole Liver Transplant:** This is when the entire liver is taken from a recently deceased donor and transplanted into the patient.

• **Living Donor Liver Transplant:** In some cases, a living person donates a portion of their liver. This works because the liver is unique - it can grow back over time.

So, both the donor and recipient end up with full-sized livers after a while. A smaller liver portion from a living donor can often work just fine for children, as their bodies need less liver tissue than adults.

What is involved in the

process?

Getting a liver transplant isn't a quick process. First, doctors check to make sure the person really needs a new liver and is healthy enough for surgery.

If so, they are put on a waiting list, which can take time since there aren't always enough donors available.

When a donor's liver is found, surgery can begin. The operation itself takes several hours. After the surgery, the patient will spend a few weeks in the hospital.

During this time, they are closely monitored to make sure everything is working well with the new liver.

Recovery and life after surgery

Even after being discharged from the hospital, recovery continues at home. It may take several months to fully recover and adjust. Patients will also need to take medicines for the rest of their lives to prevent their body from rejecting the new liver.

For children, liver transplants often mean they can go back to enjoying activities and just being kids. Adults can also look forward to returning to their routines, although recovery can be different for each person.

The risks and benefits

Liver transplants, like any major surgery, have risks. These can include infection, bleeding, or rejection of the new liver. But many people find that a successful transplant gives them back their health and freedom.

Outlook

If you or someone you know is considering a liver transplant, it's essential to talk with a doctor and learn as much as possible. Liver transplants can give both adults and children a chance for a better, healthier life. (The author is the Principal Consultant, Paediatric Liver Transplantation, Gastroenterology & Hepatology, Max Hospital, Saket)

Chronic pain and mental health: Breaking the pain cycle

By: Dr. Anvesha Banerjee

Chronic pain is a long-term condition that can persist for weeks, months, or even years. It can stem from a variety of sources, such as injuries, arthritis, or nerve damage. But beyond its physical implications, chronic pain has a profound impact on mental health. The connection between chronic pain and mental health forms a vicious cycle where one condition exacerbates the other.

The pain cycle: How chronic pain affects mental health

When someone experiences chronic pain, their daily activities, sleep patterns, and overall quality of life are disrupted. Constant pain leads to fatigue, lack of motivation, and feelings of frustration. Over time, this can develop into depression and anxiety, as the individual feels trapped in their pain.

Studies indicate that people with chronic pain are much more likely to experience depression than those without it. This is because chronic pain and depression share some of the same pathways in the brain, both involving neurotransmitters such as serotonin and norepinephrine, which regulate mood.

How depression worsens chronic pain

As chronic pain can lead to depres-

sion, depression can also intensify chronic pain.

People suffering from depression often report heightened pain sensitivity, a condition known as hyperalgesia. Depression alters the brain's perception of pain, making even mild discomfort feel unbearable.

This creates a negative feedback loop where pain worsens depression, and depression, in turn, intensifies the experience of pain. This cycle can make both conditions harder to treat, leading to a prolonged and difficult recovery.

Managing the pain cycle

Effective pain management is crucial in breaking the cycle of chronic pain and mental health struggles. This often involves a combination of medications, physical therapy, and alternative treatments like acupuncture or massage, with surgical interventions being necessary in some cases.

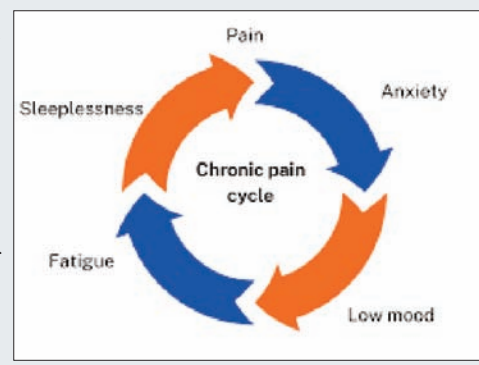
Psychological support, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), helps individuals manage pain by changing how they perceive and re-

spond to it.

Medications like antidepressants or anti-anxiety drugs may be prescribed alongside pain treatments to regulate mood and improve sleep. Lifestyle changes, including regular exercise, a healthy diet, and proper sleep hygiene, also play a vital role in promoting mental and physical well-being.

Activities like walking or swimming can release endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, while simultaneously boosting mood and overall health.

Chronic pain and mental health are deeply interconnected, forming a cycle that can be difficult to break. However, with the right combination of pain management, psychological support, and lifestyle changes, individuals can regain control over their lives. By addressing both the physical and emotional aspects of chronic pain, it's possible to reduce its impact and improve overall well-being. (The author is a Consultant - Pain Management, Yatharth Hospital, Greater Noida)



Military says it only targets militants, whom it accuses of hiding among civilians

Palestinian hospital official says 17 killed in Israeli strike on northern Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Nov 10: An Israeli strike early Sunday on a home sheltering displaced people in the northern Gaza Strip killed at least 17 people, according to the director of a nearby hospital that received the bodies.

Dr Fadel Naim, director of the Al-Ahly Hospital in Gaza City, said the dead include nine women, and that the toll was likely to rise as rescue efforts continue. He said they were killed in a strike on a home in the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya, where Israel has been carrying out an offensive for over a month.

The military said it targeted a site where militants were operating, without providing evidence. It said the details of the strike are under review.

Separately, Lebanon's Health Ministry says an Israeli airstrike on Sunday killed at least 20 people in the village of Aalmaat -- north of Beirut and far from the areas in the



south and east where the Hezbollah militant group has a major presence.

Israeli forces have encircled and largely isolated Jabaliya and the nearby towns of Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun for the past month, allowing in only a trickle of humanitarian aid. Hundreds of people have been killed since the offensive began on Oct 6, and tens

of thousands of people have fled to nearby Gaza City.

On Friday, experts from a panel that monitors food security said famine is imminent in the north or may already be happening. The growing desperation comes as the deadline approaches for an ultimatum the Biden administration gave Israel to raise the level of humanitarian assistance allowed into Gaza

or risk possible restrictions on US military funding.

The northern third of Gaza, including Gaza City, was the first target of Israel's ground invasion and has suffered the heaviest destruction of the 13-month-old war, which was triggered by Hamas' attack into southern Israel. As in other areas of Gaza, Israel has sent forces back in after repeated operations, saying Hamas has regrouped.

The military says it only targets militants, whom it accuses of hiding among civilians in homes and shelters. Israeli strikes often kill women and children.

The war began when Hamas-led militants blew holes in the border fence and stormed into southern Israel on Oct 7, 2023. They killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250. Some 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, about a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's offensive has killed over

43,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities who do not distinguish between civilians and militants in their count but say over half the fatalities were women and children.

Israeli bombardment and ground invasions have left vast areas of Gaza in ruins and displaced around 90% of the population of 2.3 million people, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands of people are living in crowded tent camps with few if any public services and no idea of when they might return to their homes or rebuild.

Cease-fire talks mediated by the United States, Qatar and Egypt have repeatedly stalled since the start of the year.

Qatar, which has served as a key mediator with Hamas, said over the weekend that it had suspended its efforts and would only resume them when "the parties show their willingness and seriousness to end the brutal war and the ongoing suffering of civilians". (AP)

Iranian charged for plotting Trump assassination: US authority



WASHINGTON, Nov 10: An Iranian national charged by the FBI for plotting assassination on president-elect Donald Trump was tasked by the Iranians to target Israeli tourists in Sri Lanka, the Department of Justice has alleged.

Farhad Shakeri, 51, of Iran was charged Friday in a criminal complaint in connection with his alleged involvement in a plot to murder a Trump. Shakeri is an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) asset, remains at large and is believed to reside in Tehran, Iran.

"He was also tasked with targeting Israeli tourists in Sri Lanka," the Department of Justice said. According to documents filed in a federal court, Shakeri was asked by IRGC to target Israeli tourists in Sri Lanka and to plan a mass shooting event on Oct 2024.

On or about October 23, 2024,

the governments of the United States and Israel publicly warned travellers about threats of an attack targeting tourist locations in the Arugam Bay area, and, on or about the following day, Sri Lankan authorities reported having arrested three individuals in connection with the threat.

On October 28, after the public travel warnings issued by the governments of the United States and Israel and after CC-2's arrest by Sri Lankan authorities-Shakeri advised the FBI that he had previously tasked CC-2 with surveilling the Israeli consulate in Sri Lanka, the Department of Justice said.

Shakeri stated that he and CC-2 had served time in prison together. Shakeri informed the FBI that he had provided this surveillance to IRGC Official-I. According to Shakeri, after being provided surveillance on the Israeli consulate, IRGC Official I asked him to identify another target.

After this Shakeri then instructed CC-2 to surveil a tourist location in Arugam Bay frequented by Israeli tourists. IRGC Official-I instructed Shakeri to orchestrate a mass shooting at the Arugam Bay location. They planned that CC-2 would supply AK-47s and other weapons for the attack, federal prosecutors said. (PTI)

Drones strike Moscow as top UK official highlights Russian casualties in Ukraine

KYIV, Nov 10: A massive drone strike rattled Moscow and its suburbs overnight into Sunday, injuring a woman and temporarily halting traffic at some of Russia's busiest airport, officials said.

A top U.K. defence official meanwhile said that Russian forces had suffered their worst month of casualties in October since their full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The chief of the U.K. defence staff, Tony Radakin, told the BBC that Moscow's troops suffered an average of 1,500 dead and wounded "every single day," bringing their total losses in the war to 700,000.

Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyanin said a total of 32 drones were shot down over the Russian capital's outskirts. Russia's aviation authority said flights were briefly grounded at major international airports including Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo.

A woman in her 50s suffered burns to her face, neck and hands after drones sparked a blaze in her village southeast of Moscow, local Gov. Andrei Vorobyov reported.

No one was hurt in Moscow itself, according to Sobyanin, although Russian channels on the messaging

app Telegram carried eyewitness reports of drone debris setting fire to suburban homes.

According to Radakin, ordinary Russians were paying "an extraordinary price" for the war, even as a grueling, monthslong Russian offensive in Ukraine's industrial east continues to eke out gains. He did not say how UK officials had calculated the Russian casualty figures.

"There is no doubt that Russia is making tactical, territorial gains and that is putting pressure on Ukraine," he said.

But he said the losses were for "tiny increments of land," and that Moscow's mounting defense and security spending was putting an increasing strain on the country.

Radakin insisted that Ukraine's Western partners should stand by it for "as long as it takes" to beat back Russian aggression, even as allies of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump have signaled that Kyiv may have to cede territory to seek peace.

Both Moscow and Kyiv have kept a tight lid on casualty figures since the start of the full-scale war despite regular reports of Russian forces taking huge losses following "human wave" attacks that aim to exhaust Ukrainian defences. (AP)

Qatar suspends its mediation efforts on Gaza, Hamas office there may have to leave

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Nov 10: Qatar has suspended its key mediation efforts between Hamas and Israel, it said Saturday, after growing frustration with the lack of progress on a cease-fire deal for Gaza.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the remaining Hamas leadership hosted by Qatar must leave, or where it would go. Hamas has good relations with Iran and Turkey, and some of its leaders are now in Lebanon. However, Qatar is highly likely to return to mediation efforts if both sides show "serious political willingness" to reach a deal, according to an official with Egypt, the other key mediator.

Qatar told Israel and Hamas it can't continue to mediate "as long as there is a refusal to negotiate a deal in good faith" and "as a consequence, the Hamas political office no longer serves its purpose" in Qatar, a diplomatic source briefed on the matter said. Qatar told Hamas it will have to leave if it isn't ready to engage in serious negotiations, the source said. In Washington, a US official said the Biden administration informed Qatar two weeks ago that the Hamas office's continued operation in Doha was no longer useful and the Hamas delegation should be expelled.

A senior US official said that after Hamas rejected the last proposal for a cease-fire, Qatar accepted the advice and informed the Hamas delegation of the decision 10 days ago.

A senior Hamas official said they were aware of Qatar's decision to suspend mediation efforts, "but no one told us to leave." Hamas has repeatedly called for an end to the war and a full withdrawal

of Israeli forces from Gaza as a condition for any cease-fire deal. Israel seeks the return of all hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel and insists on a presence in Gaza.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. The Israeli prime minister's office had no comment.

Late Saturday, the state-run Qatar News Agency published comments attributed to Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, confirming that Doha informed parties in the talks 10 days ago that it "would stall its efforts to mediate between Hamas and Israel if an agreement was not reached in that round."

"Qatar will resume those efforts with its partners when the parties show their willingness and seriousness to end the brutal war and the ongoing suffering of civilians," the report said.

There continued to be no end in sight to the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and the Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, where Israel's military said it struck command centers and other militant infrastructure in Beirut's southern suburbs and elsewhere. An Israeli airstrike on the southern port city of Tyre late Friday killed at least seven, officials and a resident said.

Hezbollah "should continue (the fight) and we will continue to back them up even if we lose our families, our homes, and end up in the dirt," said one Beirut resident, Mohammed Mekdad, as people searched the smoking rubble.

In Gaza, Israeli strikes killed at least 16 people on Saturday, Palestinian medical officials said, while Israel announced the first delivery of human-

itarian aid in weeks to the territory's hungry, devastated north.

One strike hit a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City's eastern Tufah neighbourhood, killing at least six people, the territory's Health Ministry said. Two local journalists, a pregnant woman and a child were among the dead, it said. Israel's army said the strike targeted a militant belonging to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group, offering no evidence. Another Israeli strike killed seven people, including two women and a child in the southern city of Khan Younis, according to Nasser Hospital. Israel's army didn't respond to a request for comment. And an Israeli strike hit tents in the courtyard of central Gaza's main hospital, killing at least three people and wounding a local journalist, Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir al-Balah said. It was the eighth Israeli attack on the compound since March.

The Israeli military body in charge of humanitarian aid to Gaza, COGAT, said 11 aid trucks containing food, water and medical equipment reached the enclave's far north on Thursday. It's the first time any aid has reached there since Israel began a new military campaign last month.

But not all the aid reached the agreed drop-off points, according to the U.N. World Food Program. In the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya, Israeli troops stopped one convoy bound for nearby Beit Lahiya and ordered the supplies to be offloaded, WFP spokesperson Alia Zaki said.

Israel's offensive has focused on Jabaliya, where Israel says Hamas had regrouped. Other areas affected include Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun just north of Gaza City. (AP)

China to display new fighter jet, drone ship Bangladesh's interim govt to seek Interpol support to repatriate Hasina

BEIJING, Nov 10: The Chinese military will unveil some of its latest warplanes, including a new fighter jet and a large drone ship known as the "Killer Whale", at its upcoming annual air show in Zhuhai city. The 15th Airshow of China is to be held in Zhuhai at South China's Guangdong province from November 12 to 17. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) every year displays its capabilities at the air show.

The PLA Navy will display J-15T jet designed to be operated from the 3rd aircraft carrier, the Fujian, which is equipped with an electromagnetic catapult unlike the other two carriers, Liaoning and Shandong, which are fitted with ski-jump take-off ramps.

The design of the J-15T is based on the baseline type of the J-15 and was modified to allow it to be launched by an air-

craft carrier's catapult system, official media here reported.

Wang Yanan, chief editor of Aerospace Knowledge magazine told the state-run China Daily that the J-15T can also be deployed on Liaoning and Shandong, both of which have a ski jump method for launching fixed-wing aircraft.

The navy also unveiled a large drone ship known as the "Killer Whale" to be displayed at the air show.

The trimaran is capable of "operating on open sea for a long time", according to Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.

It said the "Killer Whale" has a dual diesel and electric propulsion system, which allows it to reach a maximum speed of more than 40 knots (74km/h) with a range of more than 4,000 nautical miles (7,400km). (PTI)

DHAKA, Nov 10: Bangladesh's interim government on Sunday said it will seek Interpol's assistance in repatriating deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina from India, and other "fugitives", to face trial for alleged crimes against humanity.

Hasina and her party leaders face accusations of ordering brutal suppression of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, resulting in numerous casualties during the July-August protests. The movement later intensified into a large-scale uprising, forcing Hasina to secretly flee to India on August 5.

According to the interim government led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, at least 753 people were killed and thousands injured during the protests, which it termed crimes against humanity and genocide. Over 60 complaints of crimes against humanity and genocide have been filed against Hasina and her party leaders with the ICT and the prosecution team till mid-October.

Officials said a Red Notice is not an international arrest warrant, but rather a global request for law enforcement agencies to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action. Interpol member countries enforce Red Notices according to their own national laws.

The ICT was originally formed by the Hasina-led Awami League government in March 2010 to try the perpetrators of the crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation

War. It later formed ICT-2, and at least six Jamaat-e-Islami and leaders of Hasina's arch rival Khaleeda Zia's BNP party were executed following the judgments of the two tribunals. The tribunal remained dormant since mid-June after its chairman retired. The interim government reconstituted the tribunal on October 12.

On October 17, the tribunal issued arrest warrants against Hasina and 45 others, including her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and several of her former cabinet members. The interim government had earlier said that Hasina and several of her cabinet colleagues and Awami League leaders will be tried in this special tribunal.

However, Chief Adviser Yunus in an interview with the UK-based Financial Times newspaper last month said his government would not immediately seek Hasina's extradition from India, an approach seen as preventing diplomatic tensions between the two countries. (PTI)

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Multilateral banks are key to financing fight against global warming

BAKU, Nov 10: As climate change leads to a seemingly endless stream of weather disasters around the world, countries are struggling to adapt to the new reality. Preparing to better withstand hurricanes, floods, heat waves, droughts and wildfires will take hundreds of billions of dollars.

And then there is confronting the root cause of climate change—the burning of fossil fuels like coal, gasoline and oil—by transitioning to clean energies like wind and solar.

That will take trillions of dollars.

Enter climate finance, a general term that means different things to different people but boils down to: paying for projects to adapt to and combat the cause of climate change. Financing related to climate change is especially important for developing countries, which don't have the same resources or access to credit that rich countries do. International mega banks, funded by taxpayer dollars, are the biggest, fastest-growing source of climate finance for the developing world. Called multilateral development banks because they get contributions from various countries, there are only a handful of these banks in the world, the World Bank the largest among them.

How these banks allocate resources are some of the weightiest decisions made in defining how poorer nations

can respond to climate change. They were a key reason why, in 2022, the world met a goal countries had set in 2009 to supply developing nations with \$100 billion annually to address climate change.

At the annual U.N. climate conference that opens Monday in Azerbaijan, global leaders are expected to discuss how to generate trillions of dollars for climate finance in the years to come. The nonprofit research group Climate Policy Initiative estimates the world needs about five times the current annual amount of climate financing to limit warming to 1.5 C (2.7 degrees F) since the late 1800s. Currently, global average temperatures are about 1.3 C (2.3 degrees F) higher.

A new goal needs to reach higher and hold institutions and governments accountable to their promises, said Tim Hirschel-Burns, an expert at Boston University's Global Development Policy Center.

"The core of it is getting a goal that is going to catalyze the actions that fills the really significant climate finance gap that developing countries face, which is much bigger than \$100 billion," he said.

As the international community has come to accept the reality of climate change, the debate has shifted to the question of where the money to fund



the energy transition will come from, said Dharshan Wignarajah, director of Climate Policy Initiative's London-based office.

"The question is not are we going to transition?", but how quickly can we engineer the transition?" said Wignarajah, who helped lead the climate talks, called the Conference of Parties, when the United Kingdom was host in 2021. "That has forced finance to be ever-more prominent at the COP discussions, because ultimately it comes down to who pays." Developing nations are much more reliant on these banks for financing climate projects than industrialized countries.

In the U.S. and Canada, commercial banks and corporations provided funding for more than half of climate-

friendly projects in 2022, according to Climate Policy Initiative. In sub-Saharan Africa, those private lenders only accounted for 7%. This is because it is harder for developing countries to get low interest rates.

"If you're Kenya, and you want to borrow from private lenders, they might charge you 10% interest rates because your credit rating isn't very good," Hirschel-Burns said.

But the multilateral banks have better credit ratings than many countries do. For example, the International Development Association — an arm of the World Bank and the top international aid provider to Kenya — has the highest possible rating from Moody's Investor Service, while Kenya itself has a junk rating. The banks borrow money

with that better rating, then lend to developing countries in turn, offering a more reasonable rate than governments could get if they borrowed directly from private lenders.

The multilateral banks' development goals are wide-ranging. They seek to improve people's health and the environment, expand energy access and end poverty. Addressing energy access has meant the banks have provided billions of dollars for fossil fuel power plants, according to an AP analysis, though their policies have improved and fewer such projects have been funded in recent years.

Investment in fossil fuels continues to rise worldwide, reaching \$1.1 trillion in 2024, according to the International Energy Agency. And multilateral banks continue to rank among the biggest funders of fossil fuel-prolonging projects, helping to "lock in a high-carbon pathway" for countries, according to a report by the Clean Air Fund, which lobbies for the funding of projects to improve air quality.

"This is development aid we're talking about, and it should be assisting countries to leapfrog," said Jane Burston, CEO of the Clean Air Fund, referring to the idea that developing countries could industrialize with renewable energies and skip over development that rich nations historically

made with fossil fuels.

"It's baffling why development assistance is being given to something that continues to make people unhealthy as well as harms the planet," she added.

Seemingly contradictory actions can be seen in a loan made by an arm of the World Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. It loaned \$105 million toward rehabilitating coal plants in India, with their last loans toward the project going out in 2018, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Coal spews carbon pollution, contributing to climate change and creating breathing problems for people who are exposed. However, the improvements made coal plants more efficient and reduced their greenhouse gas emissions, according to project documents.

The Clean Air Fund's report estimated the World Bank provided \$2.7 billion in "fossil fuel prolonging finance" between 2018 and 2022. During that time, the bank also loaned about 32 times the amount for renewables as they did for non-renewables in India, including \$120 million for rooftop solar.

"Renewable energy support is always our first choice as we work to

provide access to electricity to the nearly 700 million people who still cannot power their homes, schools, hospitals, and businesses," a World Bank spokesperson said in a statement. The bank's policies still "selectively support natural gas as a transition fuel" if its research shows the project is low risk to the climate, the spokesperson said. The bank's recent policies require rigorous vetting for every project to make sure its investments reduce climate impacts.

The World Bank delivered \$42.6 billion in climate finance in its most recent fiscal year, a 10% increase from the year before. And at the most recent COP, the bank promised nearly half of its lending will soon go toward climate finance.

In Vietnam, about half of power generation comes from fossil fuels, primarily coal power. The Asian Development Bank loaned about \$900 million on coal in Vietnam, with their spending on the fossil fuel in the country ending in 2017. The bank's updated climate policies "will not support coal mining, processing, storage, and transportation, nor any new coal-fired power generation," the bank said in a statement. The bank put \$9.8 billion toward climate finance in 2023, and aims to finance \$100 billion in climate-friendly projects between 2019 and 2030. (AP)

British Hindus object to non-veg, alcohol served

LONDON, Nov 10: Some British Hindus have taken to social media to voice their objections over a lack of proper consultation ahead of a Diwali reception hosted by Prime Minister Keir Starmer at 10 Downing Street in London, where reportedly non-vegetarian snacks and alcohol were included on the menu.

While community organisation In-sight UK questioned the "appalling lack of understanding" of the spiritual aspect of the Hindu festival, others pointed out that greater dialogue is required ahead of such religious events.

"Diwali is not just a time for festivity, but also holds a deeply religious meaning. The sacred festival of Diwali emphasises purity and devotion and hence traditionally involves vegetarian meals and strict avoidance of alcohol," Insight UK stated in a post on X.

"The choice of menu at the Diwali celebration hosted by the Prime Minister himself displays an appalling lack of understanding or respect for the religious traditions associated with the festival of Diwali. It also raises the pertinent question of whether Hindu community organisations and religious leaders were consulted for greater cultural sensitivity and inclusivity," it said.

The group urged "greater consideration" at future celebrations intended to promote multiculturalism and inclusivity, mindful of the "cultural and religious practices of the communities they seek to honour".

Pandit Satish K. Sharma, author and Dharmic speaker, noted: "The complete lack of sensitivity and simple consultation, at any level, is of great concern. If accidental, it's still disappointing."

Others have commented on these posts expressing their surprise over the move. Some British Hindu groups have also flagged their lack of invitation to the reception, held regularly over the years at Downing Street and last hosted by Conservative leader Rishi Sunak – the first British Hindu prime minister of Britain. (PTI)

Tripura CM slams attacks on Sanatan Dharma in Bangladesh

AGARTALA, Nov 10: Expressing serious concern over attacks on the believers of Sanatan Dharma in Bangladesh, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said, the Centre as well as the state are aware of the atrocities on religious minorities in the neighbouring country.

CM Saha said these on Saturday expressing his serious concern over attacks on the believers of Sanatan Dharma in Bangladesh.

Recently, Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma voiced concern over the attacks on minorities in Chittagong in Bangladesh bordering Tripura.

While addressing a Sanatan Dharma conference in Tripura's Gomati district, the chief minister said, "We are aware of the incidents of attack on the believers of Sanatan Dharma in Bangladesh."

He said that the attackers should think twice before carrying out such attacks on them.

"There were attacks on Sanatan Dharma in India in the past but the ancient religion remains intact to date," the chief minister said.

Criticising the CPI(M) which ruled the state for 35 years, Saha alleged they had created an atmosphere of atheism across the state as its leaders did not visit even the Tripureswari temple, one of the Shakti Peeths, in Gomati district.

Because of their "nastika" (atheist) mindset, they have become non-entity in Tripura, the BJP leader claimed.

"In the name of religion, they made attempts to engineer riots in the state. Our government respects all religions but will not remain silent if anybody challenges amity among the people of different faiths," he alleged.

Saha also slammed the opposition for questioning the state's prevailing law and order situation.

"Some people are pointing fingers over the state's law and order situation but the truth is it has improved," the chief minister said.

Saha also highlighted how Prime Minister Narendra Modi has developed infrastructure in and around temples across the country since 2014. (PTI)

Saha warns against unrest, celebrates unity across faiths Govt will not tolerate unrest under the guise of religion: Tripura CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 10: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said that a religious atmosphere has been restored in Tripura following the establishment of the BJP government and emphasized that any attempts to incite unrest under the guise of religion will not be tolerated.

The statement was given by the Tripura CM on Saturday.

"An atheistic environment prevailed in the state for 35 years. The religious atmosphere has returned with our government. Attempts to create unrest in the name of religion will not be tolerated in any way," said CM Saha.

CM Saha said this while addressing the Sanatan Dharma at Netaji Subhash College in Udaipur on Saturday.

The Chief Minister expressed his appreciation for the conference, saying, "Human society is a wonderful gift of God, and we have many duties. We are witnessing persecution against Sanatanis in Bangladesh. The Central government is monitoring this closely. I caution everyone involved to be careful. Sanatan Dharma has endured numerous attacks before and



remains steadfast. It is here today, and it will continue into the future," he asserted.

The Chief Minister acknowledged the presence of saints from across the country at the conference.

"On behalf of the Government of Tripura and the people of Tripura, I extend my warm welcome to all and hope that your presence will bring prosperity to our state. We are peaceful people

who desire to live in harmony. Tripura is a state with a mixed population, where people of all castes and religions live together peacefully. We wish to continue this unity," said CM Saha.

He noted that the previous regime of 35 years had maintained an atheistic atmosphere.

"Since our government's establishment, we have fostered a religious environment. We believe that everything is under God's do-

main. Our opposition is now nearly invisible, like trying to find something with a microscope, as they gradually fade away. They are attempting to create unrest by exploiting religion, but our government will not tolerate this. We hold trust and respect for all religions," he stated.

The Chief Minister reflected on the situation in Tripura during the early 1980s, countering recent criticisms.

"Some claim there is no law and order in Tripura now. But in earlier times, there was only an atmosphere of murder and terror here. Today, the law and order situation has significantly improved. The opposition spread lies and try to mislead the public, but people now understand the truth and will not give them a foothold," he said.

CM Saha also highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on public welfare since assuming office in 2014.

"The Prime Minister has prioritized the development of various traditional temples, such as Kamakhya Temple in Assam, Dwarka Temple, Somnath Temple in Gujarat, and Mata Tripura Sundari Temple in Tripura," he added.

Woman gunned down by militants in Manipur



IMPHAL, Nov 10: A woman working in the paddy fields was gunned down by suspected hills-based militants in Manipur's Bishnupur district.

The information was given by the officials on Saturday.

The incident took place in Saiton area when the woman, along with other farmers, went to tend to the crops when militants opened fire from hill-based positions on the low-lying farmlands in Imphal Valley.

The woman died on the spot, the officials said, adding the incident sparked tension in the village with the locals alleging that the central forces deployed in the area were

not taking action to thwart such attacks.

Additional security forces have been sent to the area. The killing came two days after a 31-year-old woman was killed in an attack by unidentified persons on Zairon Hmar village in Jiribam district on Thursday night.

Six houses were burnt in the incident. The woman's charred remains were found by villagers on Friday afternoon.

More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis in Manipur since May last year. (PTI)

4-month-old baby rescued in Tripura

AGARTALA, Nov 10: A four-month-old baby boy was rescued in Tripura following allegations that he was sold by his mother for ₹ 4,000 due to extreme poverty.

The incident came to light after CPI (M)'s Bishalgarh sub-divisional committee secretary Partha Prathim Majumdar in a Facebook post alleged that a worker of the Basumati Tea Estate in Sepahijala district sold her baby for ₹ 4,000 due to extreme poverty. He claimed that the woman has four children and she alone is taking care of them. As the post went viral, the administration swung into action with the help of the child line, and sent personnel to the hutment where the woman lives, officials said.

During the course of the investigation, the baby was found with a couple from Udaipur in Gomati district, they said.

"We rescued the child and returned him to his mother on Wednesday night. The administration has not received any complaint that the child was sold by his mother. It appears the woman is separated from her husband who is also a tea garden labourer. It is also true that her husband was missing when our team visited the place," Additional SDM of Bishalgarh Debjani Chowdhury told PTI. She said the woman's family received a house under PM Awas Yojana, besides a family ration card, but she lives in the hutment inside the tea garden with her four children. "We will extend financial and other support to the woman," she said. (PTI)

NEHU teachers urge Governor to resolve university crisis

SHILLONG, Nov 10: Teachers under the banner of the North Eastern Hill University Teachers' Association (NEHUTA) and Meghalaya Tribal Teachers' Association (MeTTA) sought the intervention of the Meghalaya Governor CH Vijayashankar.

They asked for the Governor intervention on Friday who is also the chief rector of NEHU, to end the ongoing impasse and restore normalcy in the university.

This came after the university was brought under total lockdown following the ongoing indefinite hunger strike protest led by the Northeastern Hill University Students' Union (NEHUSU) and backed by the Khasi Students' Union (KSU - NEHU Unit) against the failure of the Vice Chancellor Prof PS Shukla to terminate the Registrar and Deputy Registrar, whose appointment according to them were "illegal".

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, president of NEHUTA Prof Lakhon Pakma said, "We had a long discussion on the issues raised by the NEHUSU and KSU-NEHU Unit as well as teacher associations. We have not arrived at any solution per se, but we appreciate the seriousness of the Governor as chief rector of NEHU as he assured us that he would take all necessary measures to restore normalcy in the university."

4 persons including 3 Myanmar nationals 4 held with heroin

AIZAWL, Nov 10: Four persons, including three Myanmar nationals, were arrested for 3.8 kg of heroin was seized from their possession in three separate operations in Mizoram in the past two days. This was informed by the officials on Saturday.

Officials of the state Excise and Narcotics department assisted by members of Joint Action Committee of Zemabawk seized 3.7 kg of heroin at Zemabawk in the northeastern part of Aizawl in two separate operations early on Saturday, they said.

Two Myanmar nationals and a resident of Assam's Karimganj district, have been arrested for possessing the contraband, they said.

In another operation on Friday, a Myanmar national was arrested for possessing 129 gm of heroin at Zote village in Champhai district near the Myanmar border by Assam Rifles and Excise and Narcotics department, officials said. The contraband was hidden below the footrest of a scooter in which the accused was travelling, they said.

The four accused were booked under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985, officials added. (PTI)



He said that the teachers are very concerned about the health of the students as they have been on a hunger protest for the past 4 days now.

"He (Governor) left it to us to suggest first how to end the hunger strike so that students will go back to their classes and at the same time to look at short-term solutions and long-term solutions. He assured to talk to all stakeholders including students," he added.

Slamming the VC's alleged indifferent attitude, Prof Pakma said, "We know how students have arrived at from asking the registrar and deputy registrar to step down and now asking the VC to step down because they have been on hunger strike for more than 48

hours and he did nothing. At least he should have shown some sense of care for the students."

"Now you are the head of the institute and under your right outside your office young kids are on a hunger strike. When they brought the grievances, he should have immediately reacted with action. You cannot say people are on hunger strike and I will do nothing. That is actually the problem. Why this VC is in trouble is because he has always been like this as he never assesses the gravity of the situation. If anybody who has a sensible mind, if at the very instant people are agitating, he would have been constituted whatever deems fit to address the concerns of the students," he stated.

Further, NEHUTA president said that the allegations against the registrar and deputy registrar are not vague.

"We all know as teachers, and we are the observers over there day in and day out and we know exactly what the registrar and deputy registrar have done. They are incapable. There is no doubt about it. They are incompetent yet he didn't do anything to address the concerns of the teachers and the students. So naturally if I was leading this agitation probably, I would have done the same thing," he added. (NNN)

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12 leaders join Congress in Manipur

IMPHAL, Nov 10: Twelve leaders from different political parties, including two former MLAs, joined the opposition Congress in Manipur.

They joined the congress party on Friday.

They were welcomed to the party by former CM Okram Ibobi Singh at the Congress Bhavan in Imphal. Among those who joined the party were former MLAs Kh Loken Singh and Z Kikonbhou Newmai.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "The politics of Manipur is changing. @INCIndia won both the Lok Sabha seats in the state in June 2024 and now the exodus into the Congress continues. This is perhaps one reason why the non-biological PM is refusing to visit Manipur." (PTI)

BSF detains 52 touts, 623 Bangladeshi and Rohingya in Tripura in 2024

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 10: The Border Security Force (BSF) deployed in the state have apprehended 623 Bangladeshi and Rohingyas and also a detained 52 touts from Tripura till November 9.

BSF informed this during a meeting between Member of the Parliament of East Tripura Lok Sabha Seat Maharani Kriti Singh Debbarma and BSF officials.

In a press statement BSF said that MP Maharani Kriti Singh Debbarma, from Tripura East Constituency visited BSF Headquarters at Salbagan, Agartala.

She met the Inspector General of BSF, Tripura, Patel Piyush Purushottam Das, IPS and had a detailed discussion on various issues pertaining to the border state of Tripura. The IG briefed the MP on the current security scenario and the various proactive measures being taken by BSF.

"The IG has assured the MP that BSF is fully prepared to meet the security challenges in view of current situation in Bangladesh and BSF troops are in a heightened state of alert along international border. He further apprised that BSF during the year 2024 has



thwarted numerous infiltration attempts and has apprehended more than 571 Bangladeshi nationals and 52 Rohingyas till date. BSF is also maintaining excellent synergy with State police, civil administration and other sister agencies and carrying out joint operations in the hinterland in which 52 touts have been apprehended. He also assured the MP that BSF is cracking down heavily on the smuggling of contrabands and narcotics and has so far seized goods and narcotics substance worth ₹ 87 Crores" the press release said.

In the meeting the IG also apprised the various initiatives undertaken by BSF like pre

recruitment training for border youths, medical camps in remote border villages, setting up of skill development centers and distribution of sports goods and other essential items in border belt which has immensely benefited the border population.

"The initiatives of BSF Wives Welfare Association (BWWA) in women empowerment and visits of Mahila Praharis to border villages to motivate the local women to join the forces was highly appreciated by the MP. The MP also commended the various steps being taken by BSF and further assured the IG of all possible assistance from the Government", it added.

The motorcycle rally was informed by the officials on Saturday.

The expedition was organised to honour the soldiers who fought for the nation during the 1962 Sino-India conflict and commemorate the Battle of Walong, defence spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

Dao Division's General Officer Commanding Major VS Deshpande flagged off the expedition on Friday in the presence of Anini MLA Mopi Mihu and state government officers.

The expedition team comprising of 10 personnel of the Army's Spear Corps and 10 civilians have scheduled halts at Roing in the Lower Dibang Valley district and Hayuliang in the Anjaw district.

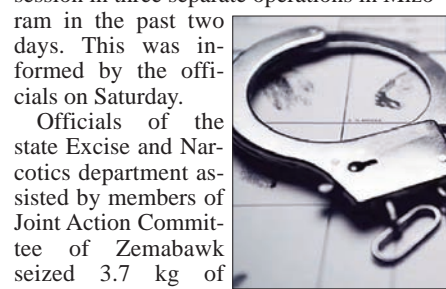
Lt Col Rawat said the motorcyclists will ride through the Mishmi ranges and cross the pristine Dibang and Lohit valleys.

The ride will end at the historic Walong War Memorial in Anjaw district on November 11, he said.

The fierce Battle of Walong unfolded in the unforgiving terrain of Kibithu, Nanti Tri Junction (famously known as Tiger's Mouth), Walong and adjoining features in the easternmost parts of Arunachal Pradesh, according to the Army.

"In October 1962, as Chinese forces advanced aggressively into Indian Territory, the responsibility of defending the strategically crucial Walong sector fell upon the gallant 11th Infantry Brigade of the Indian Army's esteemed 2nd Infantry Division," the Army earlier said.

This brigade, comprising the battle-hardened units of 6 Kumaon, 4 Sikh and 3/3



rested for possessing the contraband, they said.

In another operation on Friday, a Myanmar national was arrested for possessing 129 gm of heroin at Zote village in Champhai district near the Myanmar border by Assam Rifles and Excise and Narcotics department, officials said. The contraband was hidden below the footrest of a scooter in which the accused was travelling, they said.

The four accused were booked under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985, officials added. (PTI)

UNC condemns attacks; urges action in Manipur

SENAPATI, Nov 10: The United Naga Council (UNC) said that it was perturbed by the series occurrence of unwarranted incidences, heavily impacting the "Naga populace" in the recent times of this protracted ongoing conflict especially from the "valley based armed miscreants" is a matter of great concern. "The latest case of abduction and brutally assaulted to one Joshua Kamei belonging to Rongmei community who worked as a driver in a railway company on November 5, 2024 in and around Kheiku Kabui Khul Gate, Imphal East is not an exceptional case," it also said. Whilst condemning "such dastard and coward acts" in the strongest terms, the UNC raised serious questions over the motive behind all these unwanted happenings and disruptions of peace for Nagas living in the state.

In a statement issued to Newmai News Network late tonight, the UNC said, "Enough is enough! Seventeen months have well passed ever since the mayhem broke out on May 3, 2023 and all the ethnic communities living in the state of Manipur including Nagas as the third parties have been suffering untold miseries in every sphere. The patient Naga public is running out to further endure all such hardships and provocations from both the warring communities". The UNC then said the Naga people seriously viewed "these belligerent and provocative actions" that demand prompt and proactive steps from the state authorities and employ necessary policy and actions towards curbing all such criminal activities and acts of dehumanization for ensuring law and order in the state. It also said that prompt delivery of justice to the victims and initiation of exemplary punishment to the culprits as per the law of the land is a must to meet the ends of justice. The concerned civil society organizations are also fervently called to look into the matter earnestly by the UNC and initiate proactive steps to contain all these sporadic incidents before things blow out of proportion. (NNN)

Army bike rally honours 1962 war heroes

Ride follows 'Battle of Walong' route in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Nov 10: A motorcycle expedition organised by the Indian Army was flagged off from Mipi in Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley.

The motorcycle rally was informed by the officials on Saturday.

The expedition was organised to honour the soldiers who fought for the nation during the 1962 Sino-India conflict and commemorate the Battle of Walong, defence spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

Dao Division's General Officer Commanding Major VS Deshpande flagged off the expedition on Friday in the presence of Anini MLA Mopi Mihu and state government officers.

The expedition team comprising of 10 personnel of the Army's Spear Corps and 10 civilians have scheduled halts at Roing in the Lower Dibang Valley district and Hayuliang in the Anjaw district.

Lt Col Rawat said the motorcyclists will ride through the Mishmi ranges and cross the pristine Dibang and Lohit valleys.

The ride will end at the historic Walong War Memorial in Anjaw district on November



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Gorkha Rifles, was tasked with holding their ground against an adversary that was not only numerically superior but also better equipped and entrenched in advantageous positions, it added.

The valiant stand of the 11th Infantry Brigade delayed the Chinese advance, providing a critical morale boost to the nation and demonstrating the unyielding courage of the Indian soldiers, the Army said.

The route, tracing a historic path through the beautiful landscapes of Arunachal Pradesh, symbolises the Indian Army's commitment to fostering unity and promoting adventure tourism in border areas. Lt Col Rawat said.

Each halt will be an opportunity for the riders to connect with the local communities, highlighting the strength, resilience and solidarity that define the spirit of the region, and promote national integration, he said.

The motorcycle expedition is a part of the month-long celebrations that started on October 17 to mark the 62nd anniversary of the Battle of Walong fought during the 1962 Sino-Indian War. (PTI)

'Ek rahoge toh safe rahoge': PM alleges Cong, JMM pitting OBC sub-castes against each other

'Congress and its allies want to bring back Article 370 so that Babasaheb's Constitution is once again out of J&K'

BOKARO, Nov 10: Alleging that the Congress-JMM coalition wanted to divide OBCs by pitting sub-castes against each other, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday told an election rally in Jharkhand 'ek rahoge toh safe rahoge' (be united to be safe).

Addressing the rally in Bokaro, Modi claimed that till there was no unity between OBCs, tribals and Dalits, the Congress kept forming governments at the Centre.

"Beware of Congress-JMM's evil designs and conspiracies. They can go to any extent to grab power. Congress has been an opponent of SC, ST, and OBC unity since Independence. Till there was no unity, Congress kept forming governments at the Centre and looted the nation," he said.

"More than 125 sub-castes are considered OBCs in the Chotanagpur region. Congress-JMM wants to break the OBC unity by pitting sub-castes against each other like Yadav versus Kurmi and Sonar versus Lohar. I warn you, 'ek rahoge toh safe rahoge'," he added.

The PM also attacked the Congress and its allies for seeking to reinstate Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Congress and its allies want to bring back Article 370 so that Babasaheb's Constitution is once again out of Jammu and Kashmir, and our soldiers again face the fire of terrorism," he said.

"Modi buried Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. For seven decades, Ambedkar's Constitution was not in force there," he said.

Uddhav siding with those who insulted Balasaheb, Savarkar: Shah

MUMBAI, Nov 10: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray was siding with the Congress, whose leaders have insulted Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray and Hindutva ideologue Veer Savarkar.

After releasing the BJP's manifesto for the November 20 Maharashtra assembly polls, Shah here also said his party will not allow religion-based reservation in the country.

The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) (comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and NCP (SP) of Sharad Pawar) has no credibility, the senior BJP leader said. "The Maha Vikas Aghadi's trust has gone below 'pataal'. It has no credibility," he said.

The Mahayuti (which includes the BJP, Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar's NCP) faces the challenge from the MVA, whose promises insult ideology and promote appeasement, Shah said.

The Congress reneged on pre-election promises made in states ruled by it now, he added.

"I want to ask Uddhav Thackeray if he can request Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to say two good words for Veer Savarkar," Shah said.

Can any Congress leader say a few words in honour of Balasaheb Thackeray, he further asked.

"It would be good if the people of Maharashtra get to know those who have come out with the dream of forming an alliance government amidst such contradictions," he said.

Shah said the BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' manifesto is a reflection of the aspirations of the people of Maharashtra. "An organisation of Ulemas has demanded reservations for minorities, and state Congress president Nana Patole acknowledged this," Shah said.

"I want to tell Uddhav Thackeray that you are sitting with people who oppose Ram Mandir, Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Uniform Civil Code, Waqf board amendments and abuse Savarkar," he said.

If the Waqf board amendments are not made, it can declare your property as its own, Shah said.

Are the people of Maharashtra in favour of giving their right of reservation meant for the SCs, STs and OBCs to the Muslims? Shah said.

"Our Constitution does not provide reservations based on religion. However, the Congress promised reservations before coming to power, and people should take cognisance of this issue," he said. (PTI)

Time-honoured practice that largest party within alliance gets to name CM: Prithviraj Chavan

MUMBAI, Nov 10: Confident of the MVA getting a majority in the Maharashtra Assembly polls, senior Congress leader and former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan on Sunday asserted that it is a "time-honoured" practice that the party that emerges as the largest within an alliance gets to name the CM.

In an interview with PTI, Chavan (78) also dismissed as "BJP propaganda" suggestions that the Congress' Haryana loss had damaged the opposition alliance's prospects in Maharashtra and taken away the momentum.

"Haryana and Maharashtra are not comparable. If you look at the Lok Sabha poll results, Haryana had a 5-5 result (five seats to the Congress and five to the BJP), but in Maharashtra we (MVA) had 65 per cent 35 per cent result. There is a huge difference," Chavan, who was the Maharashtra chief minister between November 2010 to September 2014, said.

He also asserted that the social dynamics of Haryana are different, and in any case each of Maharashtra's multiple regions has its own social complexion.

On who would be the chief minister if the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) comes to power, Chavan

said, "It is a time-honoured practice that the largest party (post-polls) gets to name the CM. I don't see why it should be different this time. But this time if the three parties together want to change the formula they are free to do that. Leaders can do anything they want."

Chavan pointed out that NCP (SCP) leader Sahrad Pawar has also stated that the party with the highest number of seats among the alliance partners gets to decide on the CM.

Asked if he is in the running for the post of chief minister, Chavan said, "That is a ridiculous question. Don't ask that, first you have to win the election. Our priority is to win the election. As I said, Mr. Pawar has stated the largest party will get to name the CM."

Chavan also dismissed talk of bickering among MVA constituents -- Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SCP) -- over seat-sharing, saying the agreement on nearly all the 288 seats was a "remarkable achievement".

"We are talking about 288 seats primarily between three parties and some other parties as well. There are only 3-4 places where two parties are contesting against



Modi said it was the first time that the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir had taken oath in the name of the Indian Constitution and this was his tribute to Ambedkar.

He said a BJP-led government was needed in Jharkhand to drive out infiltrators and eradicate corruption.

"You are hankering for a handful of sand, they are smuggling it and earning crores. I promise to ensure stringent punishment for the corrupt leaders of the JMM-led coalition," he said.

"Recruitment mafia and paper leak mafia

created by the JMM-led coalition will be sent to jail and those who played with the future of the youth would not be spared," he added.

Modi claimed there was a strong wave in favour of the BJP -- "Roti, beti, maati pukar -- Jharkhand mein BJP-NDA ki sarkar".

The PM said that those who opposed the creation of Jharkhand cannot develop it, asserting, "We created Jharkhand and will give shape to it."

"Ten years ago, there was a Congress government at the Centre from 2004 to 2014.

Madam Sonia Gandhi used to run the government and Manmohan Singh was the prime minister. At that time, the Centre gave ₹ 80,000 crore to Jharkhand over 10 years with great difficulty. After 2014, the government changed in Delhi, you gave your 'sevak' Modi a chance to serve you, and in the last 10 years, we have given more than ₹ 3 lakh crore to Jharkhand," he said.

Modi said the Centre was spending lakhs of crores of rupees to develop highways, railways and airports.

More than 50 railway stations are being modernised in Jharkhand and the airport in Bokaro will be made operational soon, he said.

"It is my dream to ensure that those who wear slippers and are poor travel by air," he said.

The PM said the Centre was reviving closed industrial units in Jharkhand and has already given a new lease of life to the Sindri fertiliser plant, ensuring employment for thousands of people.

He promised to provide employment to the youth, citing the example of Haryana where, he said, soon after the BJP formed government, orders were issued for jobs without 'kharchi-parchi' (bribe).

"It is Modi's guarantee to implement Gogo Didi Yojna in the state to transfer money (₹ 2100 per month) to the bank accounts of women. Modi lives for you. We will provide piped gas connections at affordable prices," he said. (PTI)

Maharashtra polls: MVA promises caste census, free cervical cancer vaccine for minor girls

MUMBAI, Nov 10: The opposition MVA on Sunday released its manifesto for the Maharashtra assembly polls, promising free cervical cancer vaccines for girls aged 9 to 16 and two optional leave days for women employees during menstruation.

The manifesto, titled 'Maharashtranama', also assured a caste-based census, establishment of a separate department for the empowerment of self-help groups, formation of a dedicated ministry for child welfare, and six cooking gas cylinders every year at ₹ 500 each to women.

It also promised to frame a 'Nirbhay Maharashtra' policy and enforcement of the Shakti law for the safety of women and children.

The MVA also assured to provide ₹ 1 lakh each to girls on attaining the age of 18 years.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge released the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) man-

ifesto for the November 20 state polls at a press conference in Mumbai where NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut were also present.

Replying to questions on populist schemes announced by the MVA after criticising the ruling Mahayuti for the same, Kharge said, "Give us government and we will give you the budget."

He said that in Karnataka, ₹ 52,000 crore has been budgeted for the implementation of guarantees and the budget and expenditure details are available.

"We did not lie. If you are determined to help the poor, you will find a way out," he said.

Sule and state Congress president Nana Patole said enough funds will be available if the escalation of cost for infrastructure projects and corruption are stopped.

Kharge denied that some populist schemes, similar to the Ma-

hayuti government's Ladki Bahin Yojana, are meant to influence voters.

"It is about ideology to provide social security," he said.

For farmers in the state, apart from debt waiver up to ₹ 3 lakh and ₹ 50,000 incentive for regular loan repayment, a review will be conducted to improve the existing schemes and provide support to widows and children of families affected by cultivator suicides, the MVA promised.

The manifesto also assured establishment of a Youth Commission for welfare of the youth, ₹ 4,000 per month allowance for unemployed educated graduates and diploma holders and recruitment for 2.5 lakh positions in the state government.

The opposition alliance also promised a new industrial policy and a dedicated ministry for the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). (PTI)

BJP promises strict anti-conversion law, skill census in Maharashtra

MUMBAI, Nov 10: The BJP on Sunday promised to enact an anti-conversion law with stringent provisions in Maharashtra, and also assured a skill census for training as per industry needs as well as free ration to low-income families.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled in Mumbai the 25-point 'Sankalp Patra 2024', as per which the financial assistance component under the Mahayuti government's Ladki Bahin scheme for women will be increased from ₹ 1,500 per month to ₹ 2,100.

The BJP, in its manifesto for the November 20 state assembly polls, also promised to create 25 lakh job opportunities and assured 10 lakh students will get a stipend of ₹ 10,000 every month.

The ruling Mahayuti comprises the BJP, Shiv Sena of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and NCP led by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar.

The BJP's manifesto promised that an anti-conversion law will be enacted with provides for stringent action against forced and deceitful conversions.

Though the skill census, the ruling party assured to ascertain the needs of the industry and upgrade skill training wherever necessary.

Under the Akshay Anna Yojana, low-income families will be provided free food items every month through the Public Distribution System (PDS), as per the manifesto.

The BJP has also planned to develop the state into an advanced robotic and Artificial

Intelligence (AI) training hub.

It also promised to create 10 lakh new business leaders through the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Akanksha centres in each district.

The party promised to create 50 lakh "lakpati didis" by 2027 for which one industrial cluster of 500 self-help groups will be created and an initial corpus of ₹ 1,000 crore will be provided.

The manifesto promised that if voted to power, the Mahayuti will develop Nagpur, Pune, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Nashik and Ahilyanagar as modern aeronautical and space manufacturing centres.

It also promised that the SGST on the purchase of fertilisers will be returned to farmers as grant. (PTI)

Why has PM 'denied' Adivasis their religious identity, refused to enact Sarna code: Cong

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: The Congress hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday by posing questions on Jharkhand, asking why has he "denied" Adivasis their religious identity and refused to enact the Sarna code.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said that as Prime Minister Modi holds poll rallies in Jharkhand, he should answer three questions before seeking a single vote.

Where is the Korba-Lohardaga and Chatra-Gaya railway lines, Ramesh asked in a post on X.

He said the people of Lohardaga and Chatra have been demanding better rail connectivity for years as it would improve locals' access to education and employment opportunities.

"Sadly, the Railway Ministry has ignored their demands and made very poor progress on this front. In October 2022, the Railway Ministry sanctioned the Chatra-Gaya rail project but two years later, no progress has been made. There is no word on the Korba-Lohardaga line," he said. "How much longer must the people wait for these crucial rail links? Is the non-biological PM doing anything to ensure the completion of these essential projects?" Ramesh said.

He further asked as to where are the engineering colleges that PM Modi had promised in 2014.

During his campaign for Jharkhand's 2014 assembly elections,

Modi had promised a range of industrial and educational projects, including a premier IT institution and several engineering colleges, Ramesh said.

"However, only two institutions were ever established, NIELIT Ranchi and CIPET Khunti. These too, after 9 and 7 years respectively, do not have a permanent campus. Dr. Manmohan Singh's government, on the other hand, established high-quality institutions like IIM Ranchi and a Central University," Ramesh said.

Why has PM failed to deliver the institutions he had promised ten years ago, the Congress leader asked.

Why has the PM "denied" Adivasis their religious identity and refused to enact the Sarna code, he further asked.

"For years, Jharkhand's tribal communities, followers of the Sarna faith, have sought official recognition of their distinct religious identity in India. However, the recent decision to remove the 'Others' option from the religion column in the census poses a dilemma for Sarna adherents, who must now choose between leaving the column blank or aligning themselves with specified religions," the Congress leader said.

Despite former BJP chief minister Raghuraj Das's assurance of enacting the Sarna Code by 2021, no progress has been made, he claimed. (PTI)

BJP suspends former MLA contesting as independent in Vav



AHMEDABAD, Nov 10: The BJP has removed former MLA Mahavji Patel, who is contesting as an independent in the Vav bypoll in Gujarat, and four others from the primary membership of the party and suspended them.

Patel, a director of Banas Bank, is contesting against the BJP's official candidate Swarupji Thakor. The November 13 bypoll was neces-

sitated after Congress MLA Geniben Thakor was elected to the Lok Sabha.

Patel (73), who comes from the dominant Chaudhary community, aims to cause damage by attracting Chaudhary votes that conventionally go to the BJP.

He won the Vav seat in 1990 as a Janata Dal candidate. He then joined the Congress before switching

to the ruling BJP in 2019 after being denied a ticket from Tharad seat in the 2017 assembly polls.

Patel was the Congress candidate from Tharad in Banaskantha district in the 2012 polls, but lost to the BJP. When he was denied a ticket in 2017 from the seat, he fought as an independent unsuccessfully against BJP's Parbatbhai Patel.

Apart from Patel, the BJP also suspended four other leaders from Banaskantha. They are Laljibhai Chaudhary, Devjibhai Patel, Dalrambhai Patel, and Jamabhai Patel.

In the November 13 bypolls, Thakor is pitted against Congress' Gulabsinh Rajput.

There are 10 candidates in the fray for the bypoll, including seven independents. (PTI)

Maharashtra polls: Families battle their own and others

MUMBAI, Nov 10: Amid parties accusing rivals of promoting dynastic politics, the November 20 Maharashtra assembly polls will see brothers, cousins and father-children in the fray, with members of the same family taking on each other in some seats.

In one constituency, the battle is between husband and wife, while another seat has an uncle and nephew pitted against each other.

In the high stakes battle of Pawars, debutant Yugendra Pawar, the candidate of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP), will take on his uncle and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, representing the NCP, in Baramati seat. Ajit Pawar has won the Baramati assembly poll seven times and also once bagged the Baramati parliamentary seat.

This is the second time that Baramati, the bastion of Pawars, will see a contest within the family. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the deputy CM's wife Sunetra Pawar was defeated by his cousin and NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule in the Baramati parliamentary seat.

In the neighbouring Karjat-Jamkhed, Rohit Pawar, another nephew of Ajit Pawar is in the fray as the NCP (SP) candidate against BJP's Ram Shinde. Rohit Pawar is the grand-nephew of Sharad Pawar.

In the Kannad constituency in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, independent candidate Harshwardhan Jadhav is pitted against his estranged wife and Shiv Sena candidate Sanjana Jadhav, the daughter of BJP leader and former Union minister Raoasheb Danve.

Sanjana Jadhav's brother Santosh Danve is contesting from Bhokardan in Jalna as the BJP candidate. Congress candidates Amit Deshmukh and Dhiraj Deshmukh, sons of former state chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh, are in the poll race from Latur City and adjoining Latur Rural seats, respectively.

Similarly, Nitesh Rane and Nilesh Rane, sons of BJP MP and former Maharashtra chief minister Narayan Rane, are in the fray from Kudal and Kankavli constituencies as Shiv Sena and BJP nominees, respectively.

In Mumbai, the Thackeray cousins are in the fray from different seats.

While sitting Shiv Sena (UBT) sitting MLA Aadiya Thackeray is re-contesting from Worli, his maternal cousin Varun Sardesai is contesting from Vandre (Bandra) East assembly seat on the party's ticket.

Aadiya's cousin Amit Thackeray, the son of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena head Raj Thackeray, is contesting from neighbouring Mahim seat in Mumbai.

Former Maharashtra minister Ganesh Naik is contesting from Airoli seat as a BJP candidate, while his son Sandeep is in the fray from the neighbouring Belapur constituency as NCP (SP) candidate. Similarly, Maharashtra minister Vijaykumar Gavit and his daughter and former MP Heena Gavit are also in the poll race.

While senior Gavit is contesting as the BJP candidate from Nandurbar seat, his daughter is in the fray from neighbouring Akalkuwa constituency as an independent.

In Islampur, NCP (SP) state chief Jayant Patil is in the fray, while his nephew and former Maharashtra minister Prajakt Tanpure is contesting from Rahuri on the party's ticket.

NCP minister Chhagan Bhujbal is contesting from Yevala, while his nephew and former MP Sameer Bhujbal is in the fray from Nandgaon seat as an independent.

BJP's Mumbai president Ashish Shelar is in the fray from Mumbai's Vandre (Bandra) West, a constituency known to be the home of several Bollywood personalities, while his brother and party candidate Vinod Shelar is contesting from Malad West.

BJP's Santukrao Hambarde is contesting the Nanded Lok Sabha bypoll, while his brother and sitting MLA Mohanrao Hambarde is contesting the assembly polls from Nanded South assembly seat as a Congress candidate.

The Nanded Lok Sabha byelection, necessitated due to the death of sitting Congress MP Vasant Rao Chavan, is scheduled on November 20. (PTI)



each other and there are some rebel candidates which cannot be helped," he told PTI.

"Rebel candidates being there is not bickering. The MVA is broadly united," Chavan said. He said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi and other senior leaders discussed and then released the guarantees for Maharashtra.

"We did all the pluses and minuses, we did all the pros and cons, we discussed and then all the parties came to an agreement," he said when asked if the guarantees made by the MVA were financially viable.

The MVA alliance last week unveiled its guarantees, promising ₹ 3,000 per month and free travel on state transport buses for women in Maharashtra.

Under the Krishi Samruddhi

Yojana, farmers will get loan waiver up to ₹ 3 lakh and ₹ 50,000 as an incentive for regular repayment of crop loans, the Shiv Sena (UBT)-NCP(SP)-Congress alliance announced ahead of the November 20 assembly elections.

Allowance of ₹ 4,000 per month for unemployed youth, health insurance up to ₹ 25 lakh and free medicines were the other "guarantees" announced at a gathering addressed by top MVA leaders at the BKC ground in Mumbai.

The MVA has also promised to conduct a caste survey in the state if elected to power.

On how many seats the MVA was likely to get, Chavan said he cannot predict numbers but was confident that the MVA would get a majority.

On Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'ek rahoge toh safe rahoge' (united we remain safe) remarks, Chavan said the BJP was making such statements as it was "desperate" and "panicky".

"Ajit Pawar has attacked the PM's statement that this will not work in Maharashtra. They are panicky. Why is he trying to communalise the election and not sticking to development (conversion). He has failed in develop-

ment that is why he is doing that," the Congress leader claimed.

"Ajit Pawar who is an alliance partner (in Mahayuti) has castigated the PM...He has said 'please don't use such language' in Maharashtra and 'Modi need not come and campaign'. Alliance is already shattered. He (Ajit Pawar) has said Yogi's language is not acceptable here," Chavan said.

He further said the key issues in the Maharashtra polls were unemployment, inflation, farmers woes, attack on Constitution and corruption.

Chavan is eyeing a third term in the Maharashtra Assembly from South Karad. He has also been a member of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and the legislative council.

The ruling Mahayuti alliance comprises Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, the BJP and Ajit Pawar-led NCP. The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) consists of the Congress, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP).

Polling for the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly will be held on November 20. The votes will be counted on November 23, a day before the current Maharashtra Assembly completes its term. (PTI)

ST panel urges Centre, states to take policy action for LWE-displaced Gottikoya tribals

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has asked the Union Home Ministry and Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha to submit a detailed report on the status of the Gottikoya tribals, who were displaced from Chhattisgarh due to Maoist violence and are now reportedly living in neighbouring states in difficult conditions, excluded from social security benefits.

The Commission has requested the presence of the Home Ministry's secretary and the chief secretaries of the states concerned at a meeting scheduled for December 9 to discuss the issue, recommending a prompt policy decision to provide necessary support to the community.

In a letter sent to the ministry and the states on Friday, the Commission said it had received a petition in March 2022 stating that members of the Gottikoya community, who had relocated from Chhattisgarh to neighbouring states in 2005 to escape "violence between Maoist guerrillas and Indian security forces", have been facing significant challenges in their new locations.

According to tribal rights activists who have repeatedly raised the issue with the Commission and the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry, an estimated 50,000 tribals were displaced from Chhattisgarh due to



Left-Wing Extremism. They now live in 248 settlements in the forests of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.

According to some reports, the Telangana government has taken back land from internally displaced persons (IDPs) in at least 75 settlements, jeopardising their livelihoods and increasing their vulnerability, the Commission said, citing the petition.

Some reports also allege that forest department officials demolished the homes of the IDPs and destroyed their crops.

On November 7, 2022, the Commission issued a notice to the district magistrate of Bhadrachalam in Telangana, seeking an action taken report or compliance report on the matter.

In a report submitted on September 9, 2023, the district magistrate

denied the allegations against forest officials, arguing that the Gottikoyas were encroaching on forest land, impacting forest resources and causing "irreparable damage to the environment and ecological balance, which could lead to natural calamities".

The magistrate added that since all the Gottikoyas had migrated from Chhattisgarh, they do not qualify as Scheduled Tribes in Telangana and are, therefore, ineligible for forest rights in the state.

The Commission held a meeting with the district magistrate of Bhadrachalam on September 24 to discuss the matter in detail.

It recommended that the Union Home Affairs Ministry's secretary and the chief secretaries of Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha be requested

to attend a session before the Commission on December 9 and provide a comprehensive action taken report on the issue.

The Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Telangana, along with representatives from the Forest Department, has also been asked to present a report on surveys conducted in Gottikoya settlements in the state.

In July, the government informed Parliament that tribal families displaced from Chhattisgarh due to Left-Wing Extremism were unwilling to return to the state despite the availability of rehabilitation schemes and security measures in place through security camps.

Responding to a question by Congress MP Phulo Devi Netam, Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey told the Rajya Sabha that the state government had organised teams to conduct surveys in the adjoining districts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to identify tribal families displaced from Chhattisgarh due to Left-Wing Extremism.

He said that a total of 10,489 tribal individuals from 2,389 families were displaced from the districts of Sukma, Bijapur, and Dantewada due to Left-Wing Extremism. A total of 9,702 tribal people were displaced from Sukma, 579 from Bijapur and 208 from Dantewada, Uikey added. (PTI)

Higher edu students of madrassas face uncertain future after SC order; demands to accommodate them



LUCKNOW, Nov 10: After the Supreme Court declared higher education degrees awarded by the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Board unconstitutional, there is a demand to accommodate the about 25,000 students who are currently pursuing these courses in any other recognised university.

The state government has also said it will find a way out after considering all the legal aspects of this matter.

In an order on November 5, the Supreme Court declared the Kamil and Fazil degrees -- equivalent to graduation and post-graduation degrees -- awarded by the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Board Board unconstitutional, saying it was in conflict with the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act.

Zaman Khan, the General Secretary of the Teachers Association Madaris Arabia Uttar Pradesh, said the court's decision has created a difficult situation for the thousands of current students as the board will not be able to conduct exams for these courses now.

"The order of the Supreme Court is supreme. But the government must find some way to deal with the situation that has arisen so that the future of the students studying in the Kamil and Fazil courses of the Madrasa Board does not remain dark," he told PTI said on Sunday.

Minority Welfare Minister Om Prakash Rajbhar said the government will definitely find a way out by studying the SC order and discussing its various legal aspects.

On the question of whether the students studying in the Madrasa Board's Kamil and Fazil courses will be

linked to any other university, the minister said, "All aspects will be considered and only after that the government will take any decision."

Madrasa Board Registrar R P Singh said about 25,000 students are studying in the Kamil and Fazil courses run by the board currently, and whatever decision the government takes will be followed.

Meanwhile, former Madrasa Board member Qamar Ali said that the Board's Kamil degree had the status of graduation and Fazil degree had the status of post-graduation, but even earlier they were not recognised for appearing in competitive examinations.

These degree-holders would get jobs only in madrasas which has also ended after the Supreme Court order, he said, demanding the current students be given a chance in recognised universities.

The Madrasa Board had earlier given a proposal to the government to accommodate the students of its Kamil and Fazil courses in the Lucknow-based 'Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu-Arabic-Persian University' but no decision was taken on it, he said.

It is not clear from the order that from when these degrees will be considered unconstitutional, but the government should take steps to affiliate these students with a UGC-recognised university, he said.

There are about 25,000 madrasas in Uttar Pradesh -- 16,500 recognised by the State Madrasa Board and 8,500 unrecognised. A total of 560 of them receive grants from the state government.

In its order on October 5, the SC upheld the constitutional validity of the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Board Act, 2004, overturning an Allahabad High Court order of March 2024 which declared it unconstitutional.

However, the SC declared the provisions pertaining to higher education (Kamil and Fazil degrees) were unconstitutional (meaning the Madrasa Board cannot offer these degrees) as they are in conflict with University Grant Commission (UGC) Act.

"The UGC Act governs the standards for higher education and a state legislation cannot seek to regulate higher education, in contravention of the provisions of the UGC Act," it said. (PTI)

Gunfire rattles Zabarwan forests, shattering peace and creating panic

SRINAGAR, Nov 10: In the first such incident in the past two decades, terrorists exchanged fire with security forces in the dense forests of the Zabarwan range here on Sunday, forcing residents to flee in panic as additional forces were mobilised to strengthen the cordon.

The encounter in the vicinity of Nishat on the banks of the Dal Lake comes close on the heels of a day-long encounter in the Khanyar locality of downtown Srinagar early this month which left a top Pakistani commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) dead.

The encounter in Zabarwan lasted several hours before the guns fell silent but the terrorists managed to flee taking advantage of the thick foliage. However, the search for the fleeing terrorists was continuing when the last reports were received, the officials said.

Eyewitnesses told PTI that the forest area resounded with gunshots shortly after a contingent of Army, police and CRPF personnel appeared there and launched a search operation around 9 am.

The forested area has a cluster of over a dozen houses and many residents fled the locality due to panic. This forest area serves the locals in grazing their cattle and also womenfolk bring firewood from the woods to save themselves from the bone-chilling winter of Kashmir.

"I heard a few gunshots in the morning but I did not know it was happening in the neighbourhood. I have been living here for the past two decades and never witnessed such an incident," Abdul Khaliq, a local resident, said.

"I, along with my wife, immediately left our house and ran for safety. There are at least two dozen houses in this forest area," he added.

Abdul Rashid, another resident of Ishber, has been a fre-

quent visitor to the forest area for quite a long time. This morning, he left his cattle in the forest area and was returning when the encounter started.

"Today, I also took my cow and a few sheep into the woods. While I was coming down, I heard some gunshots. My cattle are still there and I am here waiting at the road for them. This is an unusual sight for us because this is a quiet place otherwise," a visibly disturbed Rashid told PTI.

Soon after the exchange of fire began, additional reinforcements from the Special Operations Group (SOG) of police and the CRPF rushed to the area and placed it under a tight cordon.

The security forces also restricted the movement of civilians in an attempt to prevent any loss of lives. Even media persons, who reached the spot to report the encounter, were kept at a safe distance.

"I, along with other women, went early in the morning in the forest to collect firewood but we did not see anything. Later on, when we reached home, we heard gunshots. I am still wondering what exactly happened. Our relatives are calling us as it is everywhere on social media," a woman, who insisted not to be named, said.

Earlier, police in a post on X said, "A joint police and security forces operation was launched in Zabarwan forest area of Srinagar based on specific intelligence about the presence of terrorists. An exchange of fire ensued during the operation."

Amid escalated terror activities, especially after the formation of the National Conference government on October 16, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha recently directed the security forces to go for hot pursuit of terrorists and ensure that no terror activities are carried out to breach the peaceful atmosphere prevailing in the Valley. (PTI)

Tusker toll at Bandhavgarh reaches 11

UMARIA (MP), Nov 10: An elephant calf that got separated from the herd and was rescued died at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Madhya Pradesh's Umaria district on Sunday morning, an official said. With this, 11 tuskers have died in BTR since last month.

The calf was found ill and abandoned by its herd in the buffer zone of the BTR on Friday, the official said. The reserve has witnessed the deaths of 10 elephants in the last three days of October.

BTR deputy director Prakash Kumar Verma on Sunday said the elephant calf was found unconscious three days ago in the Panpatha buffer range. The forest authorities rescued the calf, aged around three months, and it was being treated at Rama Elephant Camp, where it died around 6 am on Sunday, he said.

He said a post-mortem would be conducted as per the rules.

On October 29, four wild elephants were found dead in Sankhani and Bakeli under the Khalil range of the reserve, while four others died on October 30 and two on October 31. (PTI)

Over 17,600 trees felled for UPs 'kanwar' route construction: Panel to NGT

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: A fact-finding panel has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that over 17,600 trees have been felled in three Uttar Pradesh districts to make way for the upcoming Kanwar Yatra route.

The tribunal was hearing a case related to the alleged felling of more than 1 lakh trees and shrubs in the protected forest area across the three forest divisions of Ghaziabad, Meerut and Muzaffarnagar for the proposed route between Muradnagar in Ghaziabad and Purkaji in Muzaffarnagar.

In an order dated November 6, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava noted that a joint committee formed earlier to ascertain facts had submitted its interim report.

The committee comprised the Forest Survey of India director, a senior scientist from the Union Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, the state's chief secretary or his representative and the Meerut district magistrate. "The interim report states that as per the information furnished by the irrigation department, 17,607 trees have been cut in all three districts till August 9, 2024," said the bench, also comprising judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member A Senthil Vel.

The tribunal noted that while permission was granted to fell 1,12,722 trees, it had later been decided to cut only 33,776 trees.

It said, "The state of UP is directed to clarify if the number of trees to be cut has been calculated strictly in accordance with the provisions of the UP Protection of Trees Act."

The tribunal directed the additional chief secretary of the state's environment department to file an affidavit within two weeks, stating the number of trees that will be cut in the course of the construction of the route.

"It will also be clearly stated if trees have been cut beyond the width of 15 to 20 metres and, if yes, the person responsible for it," it added.

"Considering the fact that the seriousness of the issue relating to a public project, the joint committee is expected to complete the exercise as directed, expeditiously and submit the final report without any delay," the tribunal added.

The tribunal also noted the Surveyor General's earlier statement on October 16 about conducting a drone survey to identify the extent of trees cut on both sides of the canals. It, however, said, "From the report submitted by the Survey of India that information cannot be gathered."

"Hence, we direct the Surveyor General, Survey of India, to trace out the satellite imagery of the stretches under consideration for the year 2024 (till October 2024) and file a fresh report showing the comparative position of trees which were existing in 2023 and trees fell till October 2024 in the stretches under consideration." (PTI)

Second 'Mobile Sanskrit Gurukul' launched in Jammu

JAMMU, Nov 10: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday flagged off the second Mobile Sanskrit Gurukul of Shri Kailakh Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust at Raj Bhawan here, an official said.

Mobile Sanskrit Gurukul is a part of the 'Sanskrit in Every Household' campaign for the promotion of 'Devavani Sanskrit' in the Union Territory.

The first Mobile Sanskrit Gurukul was launched by the Lt Governor in December 2022 to share the treasure of knowledge and wisdom and provide non-formal education of Sanskrit, one of the oldest living languages of the world, at the door steps of the people.

The Lt Governor extended his felicitations and commended Shri Kailakh Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust and everyone associated with the initiative for their constant efforts to popularize Sanskrit language and timeless wisdom of Sanskrit scriptures.

A vehicle for the Mobile Sanskrit Gurukul has been provided by Chairman, S D Memorial Educational Trust, Rakesh Gandotra. (PTI)

Row over students having beard resolved amicably in govt college, says top official

HASSAN (KARNATAKA), Nov 10: A row over students from Jammu and Kashmir studying in a government nursing college in Karnataka having long beard has been sorted out amicably, an official of the institute said on Sunday.

The issue came to light when the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association wrote to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on the "significant challenges" faced by the students at the college at Holenarasipura in Hassan district.

The issue was amicably solved after the students agreed to comply with the directions of the college management, said Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences director Dr Rajanna.

There are about 40 Kashmiri students in the college who alleged that they were facing



"significant challenges". They communicated their concerns to the Srinagar-based Jammu and Kashmir Students Association.

"It has come to our notice that over two dozen Kashmiri students at the college are facing significant challenges due to restrictive policies concerning their personal appearance," the association said.

The college administration has reportedly been compelling the Kashmiri students to ei-

ther trim their beards to a '01' trimmer length or be clean-shaven before they could be allowed to participate in college activities or enter the premises, particularly for clinical duties, the association wrote to the CM.

Students who have beards are being marked absent during clinical duties, impacting their academic records and attendance, it alleged.

"The right to personal appearance, including the choice to grow a beard, is fundamental aspect of an individual's freedom and identity," the association said.

"No student should be subjected to such discrimination or forced to compromise their beliefs and practices to access education. Such actions not only infringe upon the rights of these students but also create an atmosphere of fear and exclusion, which is detri-

mental to the spirit of education and democracy," it added.

However, Dr Rajanna rejected the association's charges.

"These students have mistaken the instruction given about the untidy dress and keeping a long beard. During the clinical process they were instructed to keep their dress neat and trim their beards," he told PTI.

Rajanna said that when he came to know about the issue, he had discussed with the students, who later agreed to come with a neat dress, to be punctual and to keep the beard trimmed.

"The issue is now resolved. Right now there are 40 students. The students are happy in their hostels. The faculties and principal have visited their rooms and counseled the students," he explained. (PTI)

Punjab Police arrests two shooters of Arsh Dalla gang for Sikh activist's murder

CHANDIGARH, Nov 10: Two shooters of Canada-based gangster-turned terrorist Arsh Dalla's gang, who were allegedly involved in a Sikh activist's murder last month, have been arrested from Kharar in Mohali, a top Punjab Police officer said on Sunday.

The accused were also allegedly involved in the recent murder of another person in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior. The duo were planning to target more individuals, another senior officer said, adding that at least four target killings of prominent persons in major cities have been averted with their arrest.

Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said the arrests in the murder case of Sikh activist Gurpreet Singh Hari Nau alias Bhodi were made in a joint operation of the state special operation cell, the Anti-gangster Task Force and Faridkot Police.

Pragya Jain, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Faridkot, identified the arrested persons as Anmolpreet Singh alias Vishal, a resident of Bhadorh in Barnala, and Navjot Singh alias Neetu, a resident of Nijjar road in Kharar.

The police also arrested their accomplice Balvir Singh alias Kalu, brother of Navjot, for aiding and abetting the criminals. All the arrested persons have criminal history, Jain said.

The police said they recovered two sophisticated pistols along with seven live cartridges from the accused. Gurpreet Singh Hari Nau was shot dead in Faridkot on October 9 while returning home from the village gurdwara on his motorcycle.

The police had then claimed that gangster-turned-ter-

rorist Arshdeep Singh alia Arsh Dalla was the mastermind behind the murder. They had also alleged that the activist was killed at the behest of Amrpal Singh, who is lodged in Dibrugarh jail in Assam under the stringent National Security Act.

SSP Jain on Sunday said preliminary investigations revealed that Arsh Dalla tasked Navjot to target the Sikh activist, who runs a YouTube channel under the name of "Hari Nau Talks".

Arsh Dalla also asked him to rope in more associates to execute the task, she said, after which Navjot took the help of Anmolpreet, she said.

Jain said Arsh Dalla arranged a pistol along with ammunition and a motorcycle for the duo, who on October 9 went to Hari Nau village and shot dead the activist.

The senior officer said investigation revealed that both the shooters were provided hideouts by Arsh Dalla. After the crime, the shooters were constantly on the move and changed several hideouts in various cities, including Amritsar, SBS Nagar, Himachal-Punjab Border, Chandigarh, Mohali and Kharar.

Jain said the probe also found that the accused also killed Jaswant Singh Gill on Thursday in Gwalior on directions from Arsh Dalla. Both suspects then returned to Punjab after committing the crime, where they were apprehended near Kharar.

In addition to this, these accused were involved in a firing and extortion incident at Zirakpur on October 18, where a businessman was threatened after firing and a poster came up at his building's main entrance with Arsh Dalla's name on it. (PTI)

Inspired by Kashmir, man grows saffron in his Indore house

Aeroponics expert Praveen Sharma said such efforts have been underway in different parts of the country

INDORE, Nov 10: A farmer in Indore in Madhya Pradesh has pulled off a remarkable agricultural feat by growing saffron, among the costliest spices in the world and traditionally associated with picturesque Kashmir Valley, in his room.

Anil Jaiswal, who grew saffron in the second-floor room of his house through the 'aeroponics' method, or one in which soil is not used, told PTI he planned to sell it at ₹ 5 lakh per kilogram in the domestic market, while prices could go up to ₹ 8.50 lakh per kg internationally.

"I had gone to Kashmir with my family a few years ago and felt inspired after seeing saffron fields in Pampore. I then came back, created a controlled environment of temperature, humidity, light and carbon dioxide and deployed advanced aeroponics technology equipment to grow saffron in a room," he said.



The idea was to replicate the climate of Kashmir, said Jaiswal, whose second-floor room is now the cynosure of all eyes because of the beautiful purple saffron flowers. These plants have been kept in plastic trays in vertical racks.

"It cost me ₹ 6.50 lakh to create the infrastructure for saffron cultivation in a 320 square feet room. I ordered one tonne of saffron bulbs from Pampore in Kashmir. I expect to get 1.5-2 kilograms of saffron

from its flowers this season. The saffron bulbs were kept in the first week of September and flowers started blooming by October-end," he informed.

The saffron grown in his room is completely organic, he said, adding his family was lending a helping hand.

Informing that Gayatri Mantra and soothing music is being played in the room, which also witnesses the chirping of birds, Jaiswal's

wife Kalpana said the philosophy behind the effort was that trees and plants too have life.

"We play music so that the plants feel closer to nature even when they are being grown in a room," she said.

Aeroponics expert Praveen Sharma said such efforts have been underway in different parts of the country but profitability and sustainability will come when cost of cultivation is kept low.

"Farming using the aeroponics method requires a lot of electricity. Therefore, people growing saffron using this method should use solar energy as much as possible to reduce electricity bills," Sharma said. Often called "red gold" because of its high prices, saffron is used in food as well as in cosmetics and medicines.

While the demand in India is huge, low production means a lot of saffron is imported from Iran and some other nations. (PTI)

Ricky Kej, Anoushka Shankar earn nominations for 67th Grammy Awards

LOS ANGELES, Nov 10: Ricky Kej and Anoushka Shankar are among the Indians nominated for the 67th Grammy Awards.

Kej, a three-time Grammy winner, earned his fourth nomination for "Break of Dawn" in the Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album category, as announced by the Recording Academy on Friday.

The category, which includes albums featuring more than 75 per cent new vocal or instrumental new age recordings, also features Chapter II: How Dark It Is Before Dawn by sitarist and composer Shankar.

Other nominees in this category are "Warriors of Light" by Radhika Vekaria and "Triveni" by entrepreneur and musician Chandrika Tandon, created in collaboration with flautist Wouter Kellerman and cellist Eru Matsumoto.

Shankar also earned an additional nomination for her featured role on Jacob Collier's song "A Rock Somewhere", which also includes vocalists Varjashree Venugopal, who bagged her first nomination.

Venugopal said it was a "fantastic experience to sing and to melt into the sonic

space of this song".

"Today has been a great day to find out that this song has received an immense recognition of a Grammy nomination. Acknowledgements like these, empower independent artists, energising them to creatively flow and fly beyond boundaries and borders. My hearty congratulations to all the fellow nominees," the singer-flautist told PTI.

The track is nominated in the Best Global Music Performance category, a segment dedicated to "new vocal or instrumental Global music recordings".

Kej first won a Grammy in 2015 for "Winds of Samsara" in the Best New Age category and later for "Divine Tides", with Stewart Copeland in 2022. In 2023, he and Copeland were honoured again for "Divine Tides", this time winning the award for Best Immersive Audio Album.

The 2025 Grammy Awards are scheduled to take place on February 2, 2025, at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. (PTI)



I don't care: Daniel Craig on who he would want to be next James Bond



LOS ANGELES, Nov 10: It's been over three years since Daniel Craig surrendered his 'licence to kill' as James Bond. Even as the search is on, the actor said he doesn't care about who goes on to become the next Agent 007.

Craig, 56, first essayed the character in 2006's "Casino Royale". He went to star in four more movies "Quantum of Solace", "Skyfall", "Spectre", and 2021's "No Time to Die", being the fifth and final one.

In a recent conversation with entertainment news outlet Variety, the actor was asked a question on his preference of the actor to step into the shoes of the much-admired spy agent. "If you were to pass the James Bond torch, who would you love to see play him?"

To which he only had three words to respond with: "I don't care."

He was asked about the number of times he portrayed the character on screen. "I'm going to get it wrong," he said.

"I'd have to count them. I don't know."

Previously, Sean Connery, David Niven, George Lazenby, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton and Pierce Brosnan have played James Bond on screen.

Reports of other actors like Idris Elba, Tom Hardy, Luke Evans, Richard Madden, Theo James, Henry Golding and Cillian Murphy being approached for the role also surfaced but there is no final confirmation. Craig is gearing up for the release of his upcoming rom-com "Queer" which is slated to be out on February 13, 2025. (PTI)

Zendaya and Anne Hathaway join Christopher Nolan's next movie

LOS ANGELES, Nov 10: Hollywood star Zendaya and Oscar winner Anne Hathaway are the latest additions to the cast of Christopher Nolan's upcoming feature film. The untitled project marks Nolan's next offering following the success of the multiple award-winning "Oppenheimer", which also earned him his first Best Director Academy Award.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, plot details are being kept under wraps, but sources say the setting is not contemporary. It is also unclear whether the currently untitled movie is set in the past or future. In the movie, Zendaya will join Tom Holland, her partner and co-star from three "Spider-Man" movies, as well as Matt Damon, who appeared in Nolan's 2014 film "Interstellar" and "Oppenheimer" (2023). Hathaway will reunite with Nolan after working with the filmmaker on "The Dark Knight Rises" (2012) and "Interstellar". Nolan wrote the script and is directing the film, which will be distributed by Universal Pictures.

The filmmaker is also backing the project alongside producing partner and wife, Emma Thomas, for their Syncopy banner. Universal Pictures has set a release date of July 17, 2026, for the movie. (PTI)



VETERAN TAMIL ACTOR 'DELHI' GANESH DIES

CHENNAI, Nov 10: Noted Tamil actor 'Delhi' Ganesh, who essayed a spectacular variety of memorable roles in over 400 films, passed away late Saturday night at his residence here following a brief illness, his family said.

He was 80 years old. The actor's son, Maha Delhi Ganesh, told reporters that his father had age-related ailments and that he was under treatment. "Last night when we tried to give him a tablet, he did not respond. A doctor confirmed that he was dead," he said. Another family member said Ganesh died in his sleep at his Ramapuram residence. In a statement, the family said Delhi Ganesh passed away at 11 pm on November 9. Film celebrities condoled his death. A native of Tirunelveli, Ganesh's acting career began in the 1960's when he performed small roles in dramas in Delhi, where he served the IAF for a decade in a civilian post.

Later, when he shifted to Chennai after resigning his IAF job, he joined actor 'Kathadi' Ramamoorthy's troupe and acted in dramas including 'Dowry Kalyanam'. When legendary director K Balachander made a film (1977) based on the play 'Pattinaprevasam', Ganesh got his first opportunity in the tinsel world and he reprised his role in the movie.

There was no looking back since then and his filmography is impressive with main roles in films of top stars including Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan and Vijayakanth. Ganesh's role as a loyal staff of gangster Velu Naicker, a character made immortal by Haasan's brilliant performance in the Mani Ratnam-directed Nayakan (1987), lent weight to the caring persona of the protagonist. (PTI)

Vidya Balan on how 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' paved way for unconventional roles: 'Ishqiya' came after that

MUMBAI, Nov 10: Actor Vidya Balan, who returned to the "Bhool Bhulaiyaa" franchise with the recently released third part, says the success of the first film helped change the perception of her, as filmmakers realised that she could handle more complex and unconventional roles.

Balan, who starred as Avni/Manjulika opposite Akshay Kumar in Priyadarshan's 2007 hit "Bhool Bhulaiyaa", said the movie opened up new opportunities for her. People realised that there was another facet (to me). I don't know if it was prompted by that, but "Ishqiya" came to me after that. When people see you do different things, their minds open up with possibilities.

"It was a huge commercial success, so I'm sure it must have impacted people's decisions," Balan told PTI in an interview.

The actor said her father still has a complaint -- that Balan didn't win any awards for her performance in the movie.

"I was like, 'It's okay.' But four years in a row after that, I picked up the Best Actress awards in most places. So, things al-

ways balance out," Balan said, referring to her wins for "Paa" (2010), "Ishqiya" (2011), "The Dirty Picture" (2012), and "Kahaani" (2013).

Despite the popularity of the first part, Balan and Kumar did not appear in the sequel, "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2", which was released in 2022. Directed by Anees Bazmee, the movie featured an almost entirely new cast, with Rajpal Yadav being the exception, and became a major box office hit upon its release.

Balan made a comeback to the franchise with "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3", which debuted in theatres on November 1 and has minted over Rs 160 crores at the domestic box office. "Both Priyan and Anees bhai are directors who trust their actors... When I read it, I thought it was so fun. With Anees bhai as director, I knew it could only get better," she said.

Having worked with the two filmmakers, the actor said both of them are "similar in a lot of ways yet they are different." "Both of them do comedy very well. I think Anees bhai is the kind of director

who knows how to grab the audience's attention and keep them engaged in every scene. I've enjoyed watching him work on every scene.

"Even in the edit, he is so gentle, he knows how to keep it tight, and how to keep the audience engaged and entertained. It's been great," she added.

Balan revealed that she re-watched "Bhool Bhulaiyaa" after she was offered the third film.

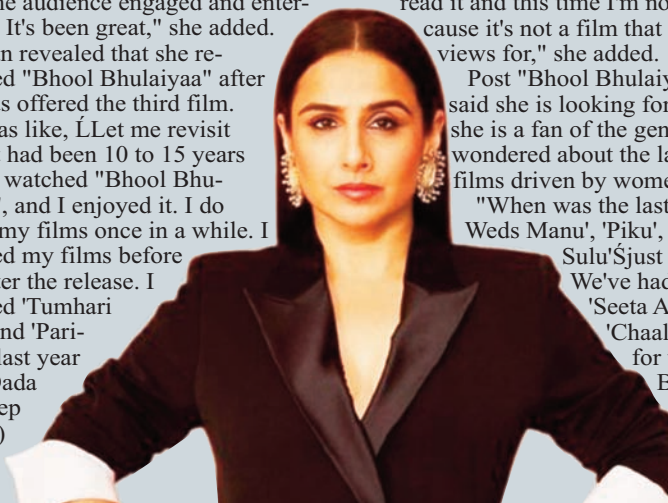
"I was like, 'Let me revisit this.' It had been 10 to 15 years since I watched "Bhool Bhulaiyaa", and I enjoyed it. I do watch my films once in a while. I watched my films before and after the release. I watched "Tumhari Sulu" and "Pari-necta" last year after Dada (Pradeep Sarkar) passed away,"

she said. Asked about the mixed reviews to "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3", Balan said it is not a "critics' film".

"Someone told me, 'Have you read the reviews?' I said, 'No.' Anyway, I didn't read it and this time I'm not reading it because it's not a film that you read reviews for," she added.

Post "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3", the actor said she is looking for a comedy as she is a fan of the genre. She also wondered about the lack of "comedy films driven by women".

"When was the last time, 'Tanu Weds Manu', 'Piku', and 'Tumhari Sulu' just three films? We've had films like 'Seeta Aur Geeta' and 'Chaalbaaz', I'm dying for those films," Balan said, adding that these days "women are not comfort-



able making fun of themselves." "... Especially given the culture that we are in today, the sensitivities are so high. I think comedies require you to bend the rules, you've got to make fun of yourself and therefore of others. We need to take ourselves less seriously."

Balan also called for a shift in the way women-centric films are approached. She believes the current landscape has become somewhat repetitive.

"We girls are having fun and that should be seen on screen. We are stuck in a rut sort of thing in that space, it requires some reinvention... I want us to own our space. I hope there's lots of exciting content, varied characters, and genres, for us to be able to tell our kind of stories."

The actor also said that she often doesn't enjoy seeing women in action avatars.

"If it's part of the story, then it's fine. Anyway, I don't enjoy action films. Women-led action films have to have more substance. Some things are unique to us and we should embrace that," she said. (PTI)

McSweeney to open, Inglis also handed maiden Test call up for BGT opener

SYDNEY, Nov 10: Uncapped Nathan McSweeney won the race to open the batting alongside Usman Khawaja in the first Test against India while Australia also handed a maiden Test call up to Josh Inglis on Sunday.

These two are the new faces in an otherwise expected 13-member squad announced by Cricket Australia just for the series opener starting in Perth on November 22.

The South Australian had emerged as a strong contender for the opener's spot, earning backing from the likes of David Warner and Ricky Ponting. He has been picked ahead of specialist openers Marcus Harris, Cameron Bancroft and Sam Konstas for the spot.

"We are just really thrilled with Nathan's game. I think over the last 12 to 15 months, we have seen a player whose growth is on a great trajectory," Chairman of selectors George Bailey said.

"He is a very organised, composed player at the crease and he's got a game that will really suit Test cricket. He can probably speak more to that but I don't think it's a huge adjustment to go from three to opening," Bailey said.

"I think in the 15 or so games that he's been batting three for South Australia, he's been in before the 10th over about 20 times, so he's had plenty of experience. And as I said, his game and the way he plays, I don't think the adjustment will be too much."

The 25-year-old has been rewarded for his consistent performances in the Sheffield



Shield over the past couple of years, as well as his role as captain and batter during the recent concluded A tour matches against India.

"Nathan has displayed the attributes we believe will equip him well for Test cricket along with a strong recent record in domestic cricket."

"His performances for South Australia and Australia A

weighed in his favour and supports our view he is ready for the opportunity at Test level."

Inglis, whose family emigrated to Perth from Leeds at the age of 14, has been named as backup keeper to Alex Carey. The in-form wicketkeeper batter, who is leading Australia for the first time in the third ODI against Pakistan, has also been rewarded for a fine domestic

season that included two hundreds in the Sheffield Shield.

"Similarly, Josh has been in great touch in the Sheffield Shield competition and deserves his place in his first Test squad," Bailey added.

The pace unit will be led by skipper Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood and Scot Boland takes up the

serve quick's spot, while Nathan Lyon is the lone specialist spin option.

Australia squad for 1st Test: Pat Cummins (capt), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Nathan McSweeney, Steven Smith, and Mitchell Starc. (PTI)

ACT will be start of journey for mission 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics

RAJGIR (BIHAR), Nov 10: Indian women's hockey team has overcome recent setbacks and is set to start a new journey with World Cup and Olympics in mind, chief coach Harendra Singh asserted on Sunday, saying that the performance in Asian Champions Trophy will serve as base for future.

The Indian women's team has endured a very rough and long patch since its historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Games. It could not qualify for the Paris Olympics and lost 13 of the 16 FIH Pro League matches.

Coach Harendra said his team has worked hard to shrug off the lean run and is preparing for a good show at the 2026 World Cup in Netherlands and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"This tournament is a base for our future planning. ACT as on our calendar, what we want to achieve in terms of results. It will be start of journey for mission 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics," Harendra said ahead of India's ACT tournament-opener against Malaysia on Monday. "We have overcome all the setbacks, worked on our mistakes. Everyone realised their role and know their role and understands that. ACT is one of the biggest platforms for the girls to showcase their skill and excel and show that the team is on the right path."

Harendra reiterated that fitness

is an area which impacted the women's team adversely.

"Whatever has happened in the Pro League is a past, we can't keep crying on that. Yes, we know we lost 13 games but there are reasons behind. The reasons are not technical, but tactical, it's about fitness and that's why I took them to Indian Naval Academy. I am looking at the results, I am looking at the progress they are making day after day," he said.

Harendra said together with fitness, mental aspect of the game is also very important.

"Modern hockey doesn't compromise on fitness, if you slightly stray you are going to pay the price. Once you are fit you are mentally strong because you know if you lose the ball you know you have the gas to regain the ball," he said.

"I am not willing to look at the past, that is history for me. Always live in the present and the present is that we have Asian Champions Trophy to defend which can get the entire country out of that setback."

"Deepika and Manisha Chauhan I am working their dragflicks and I am confident about them. I am confident they will deliver."

The coach said he is pinning his eyes on young dragflickers Deepika and Manisha Chauhan to deliver the goods in the tournament. (PTI)

Palak-Amit pair strikes air pistol mixed team gold in World University C'ship

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: The air pistol mixed team of Palak Gulia and Amit Sharma struck gold with a commanding performance against their compatriots as India won five medals, including three silver, on day 2 of the World University Shooting Championship here on Sunday.

The duo of Palak and Amit defeated the pair of Sainyam and Samrat Rana 16-12 as India grabbed the top-two podium spots in the event at the Karni Singh Range. The Hungarian pair of Sara Rahel Fabian and Redecsi Mate took the bronze defeating Chinese-Taipei 16-12.

Earlier, in the qualification round, Sainyam (289) and Samrat (290) had emerged toppers with an aggregate score of 579, while Palak (285) and Amit (293) were placed second with a combined score of 578.

In women's trap, Neeru and Kirti Gupta clinched silver and bronze respectively shooting 43 and 32 respectively in the final. The Czech Republic's Zina

Hrdlickova won the gold with a score of 45.

Kirti had earlier topped the qualification round with a superb 118 out of 125, while Neeru entered the six-shooter final with a score of 115.

Olympian and winner of three gold medals at the 2021 World University Games in China, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar added another silver to India's tally in 50m rifle 3-positions with a score of 458.2 in the final.

Czech Republic's Jiri Privratsky secured the gold medal with a score of 462.9.

Aishwary, who could not make an impact at the Paris Olympics, earlier shot a superb 592 in the qualification to be placed third going into the eight-shooter final.

As many as 220 shooters from across 23 countries are competing in the championship. The event is being hosted by Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies. (PTI)

Vinicius nets hat trick in win as three Real Madrid players go down injured

MADRID, Nov 10: Vinicius Júnior scored a hat trick as Real Madrid achieved a much-needed 4-0 win over Osasuna in La Liga that was marred by teammate Éder Militão tearing an ACL.

Madrid heard jeers in its previous two home games — a 4-0 loss to fierce rival Barcelona and 3-1 loss to AC Milan — but this easy victory came at a high price.

Militão crumbled to the turf while screaming and clutching the back of his right knee shortly before halftime. The central defender was taken off on a stretcher. Rodrygo and Lucas Vázquez also were unable to continue after apparently sustaining muscle injuries in the first half.

"We played a good game and I am happy for the goals, but sad for the injuries to Mili, Rodry and Lucas," Vinicius said. "I am sad that Mili has to go through this again."

Vinicius, who apparently felt overlooked when the Ballon d'Or went to Spain's Rodri last week, got his second hat trick of the season and took his overall tally to 12 goals. Jude Bellingham's goal made it 2-0.

"Vinicius makes the differ-



ence," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "Not winning the Ballon d'Or is a detail that did not affect him as we can see today."

Madrid is in second place, six points behind leader Barcelona.

Rodrygo was injured early. The forward, who missed the clasico due to another injury, wept as he walked gingerly to the bench, where a team medic put ice on his left leg.

Worse was to come when Mil-

itão went down. He pulled his jersey over his face as he was carried off on the half-hour mark. The club said he ruptured his ACL and would need surgery.

Militão tore an ACL in his other leg, his left, in the opener of last season and was out until March before coming back to help Madrid win the Champions League and La Liga.

"Three injuries in the first half is pretty rare," Ancelotti said.

"The demands of the schedule sometimes does not allow players to get the rest they need, and that increases the risk of injuries. It is a problem for everyone, not just us."

This is the second ACL injury to Madrid's squad in this campaign after Spain right back Dani Carvajal ripped up his right leg last month. Goalkeeper Courtois Thibaut, David Alaba and Aurélien Tchouaméni were also unavailable with their own injuries.

A numbed Santiago Bernabeu Stadium was brought alive by Vinicius when he cut back and curled in the opener in the 34th.

Ancelotti replaced Militão with youth team debutant Raúl Asencio, who delivered a long lobbed pass that Bellingham used, one touch, to chip over goalkeeper Sergio Herrera to double the lead in the 42nd.

Vinicius ran onto another long pass, this time by keeper Andriy Lunin, before rounding Herrera to make it 3-0 in the 61st. His third came after substitute Brahim Diaz stole the ball from defender Flavien-Enzo Boyomo and laid off for his scoring partner in the 69th. (AP)

Coco Gauff wins WTA Finals for the first time by rallying to beat Zheng Qinwen

RIYADH, Nov 10: Coco Gauff won the WTA Finals for the first time by rallying to beat Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (2) in the final.

The 20-year-old American came from 2-0 and 5-3 down in the final set and was two points from defeat at one stage.

Yet she took the set to a tiebreaker and won the first six points. Zheng threatened a comeback but Gauff took the victory off her third match point with a forehand winner as she came into the net. She is the first American to win the Finals since Serena Williams in 2014, and received \$4.8 million in prize money. She also is the youngest player to win it since Maria Sharapova in 2004, the year Gauff was born.

Gauff beat the world's top two players — Aryna Sabalenka and Iga Swiatek — on her run to the final at the season-ending event in Riyadh.

She felt vindicated after that and appeared to take a swipe at observers who wrote her off.

"I just love to say I'm right. Specifically today, I got comments about how I was going to lose badly, so I was just like, 'OK, we'll see,'" Gauff explained. "It's honestly just liking the idea of just proving people wrong and, and letting your racket do the talking. And so, yeah, I use it as motivation."

Zheng was looking to complete a season in which she reached a grand slam final for the first time at the Australian Open and delivered China's first Olympic tennis singles gold medal. "The match today, it's just a couple of important points," Zheng said. "The match was very close." Gauff edged the three-hour final which included 26 break points. Gauff also won their only previous meeting, in the Rome quarterfinals on clay in May. Gauff beat Sabalenka at age 19 in last year's U.S. Open final to win her only major in singles to date. She teamed with Katerina Siniakova to win the French Open doubles this year.

In the WTA doubles final, Gabriela Dabrowski of Canada and Erin Routliffe of New Zealand beat Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic and Taylor Townsend of the United States 7-5, 6-3. (AP)

AIFF's chief refereeing officer Kettle claims standard of referees in India improving

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: Poor refereeing in the Indian Super League (ISL) has long been a source of frustration for many coaches, but the national federation's top officer Trevor Kettle on Sunday claimed that the standard of referees in the country is "improving in many competencies".

Several coaches of ISL clubs, mostly foreign, have in the past talked about the poor standard of refereeing in the top-tier league and even the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) President Kalyan Chaubey had expressed concerns on the matter a few months back.

The most recent incident involved two controversial referee decisions during the Kerala Blasters vs Hyderabad FC match in Kochi a few days ago.

But Kettle, the AIFF's Chief Refereeing Officer (CRO), highlighted the improvements made by the Indian referees when asked about his views in the context of several past and present foreign coaches expressing disappointment on the refereeing standard at the ISL.

"The standards of referees in India are improving in many competencies, including growing confidence to take stronger disciplinary action, improved fitness standards to maintain pace with the game, less prone to being deceived by players simulating or exaggerating, and allowing more game flow," Kettle told PTI.

"The accuracy of Key Match Incident (KMI) decisions is now being accurately monitored as the prime indicator of refereeing performance with a reach target of 85%. Interestingly, the results of the pre-season Head Coach survey on referees, on average, expected an accuracy of 82.5% without the aid of VAR technology. "At present, the KMI % accuracy fluctuates around this level but would improve to approximately 97% with VAR (Video Assistant Referee) implementation." There is no VAR in the ISL and the AIFF is hoping to start the technology from next season onwards.

Asked about the apparent refereeing blunder in the Kerala Blasters vs Hyderabad FC match,



he said, "Each match official's performance, along with the referee assessors' independent report, is monitored with new processes introduced over the past two years. The accuracy of every KMI in each ISL game is checked by a panel of current AFC Referee Assessors and ex-FIFA referees.

"The outcome of these KMI reviews drives the technical training requirement for the elite match officials to further educate with the ultimate aim of continu-

ous improvement. "Referees are not infallible, like players, and will make errors of judgment and at times this unfortunately impacts the result of a game. Referees are held accountable for continued inaccurate KMI decision-making and will not be prioritized for future appointments."

On December 31, 2023, Chaubey, in an unprecedented move, had come down heavily on the referee department for the mounting refereeing errors in the

2023-24 season ISL and I-League, saying there was an "urgent need for accountability".

"A number of video clips were shown which highlighted incidents of perceived errors forwarded by various stakeholders. It was accepted that some of these decisions were incorrect but others were indeed correct," Kettle said when asked about the then meeting of Chaubey with several stakeholders.

"I have created an open dialogue with clubs who now have a direct point of contact in me as CRO at AIFF to express their concerns on refereeing matters."

On the issues he has flagged to the AIFF in this regard, he said, "I have often requested assistance ... to explain refereeing decisions to the wider stakeholders for greater transparency and understanding of the LOTG (Laws of the Game) whilst also displaying empathy with the human error of referees."

"A head coaches meeting for both ISL and I-League is highly recommended every pre-season to improve relationships, mutual

respect and clarification of LOTG interpretation."

He said long-term continued investment in Elite Referee Development Plan, providing necessary technical support to referees and allowing match officials to take on full-time professional contracts is absolutely imperative if refereeing standards are to improve.

"We must understand that refereeing is not yet a highly-paid job in India. In most cases, referees take it up as a part-time profession. However, the AIFF is continuously pursuing the policy of having full-time referees."

"At the moment, there are eight referees and seven assistant referees, who are on a full-time contract with the AIFF. Their contracts have once again been renewed early this month."

"At the same time, we are thankful to the AIFF for working continuously for the referees' development. The Centre of Referees Excellence (CORE) has already been set up in two cities -- Gwalior (MP) and Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)." (PTI)

Captaincy is probably the hardest thing for Bumrah: Ponting ahead of BGT

DUBAI, Nov 10: Australian batting great Ricky Ponting has backed Jasprit Bumrah to shoulder the dual responsibility of spearheading the Indian pace attack as well as leading the team if Rohit Sharma misses the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Perth.

Ponting though added that captaincy will be the "hardest thing" for the premier fast bowler.

Doubts remain over Rohit's availability in the first Test, which will be held from November 22 at the Optus Stadium, with the skipper himself recently admitting that he was "not sure" of his participation.

"Yeah, that (captaincy) is probably the hardest thing for him. I think that was always the question on Pat Cummins when he became the Australian Test captain as well," Ponting said of Bumrah during the ICC Review podcast.

"How much is he going to bowl himself? Is he going to bowl him-



self too much? Is he not going to bowl himself enough?" "But, someone as experienced as Jasprit will understand the times when he

needs to be bowling when he needs to have a spell." If Rohit skips the game, the onus will be on vice-captain Bumrah to lead the side.

Ponting said that the 30-year-old has enough experience to handle the leadership duties while spearheading the Indian pace attack.

"In that Indian team, there's a lot of experience around him. And, it's really important, I think, that you use the experience around you even when you are the captain, and just ask the appropriate questions at the right time because no matter how much cricket we've played, we're not always going to be right," Ponting said.

Bumrah remains India's best fast bowler in the longest format currently, ranked third in the ICC Test chart.

Ponting believed that Bumrah has what it takes to "thrive" in tough situations.

"Guys like that tend to thrive on the extra pressure and the responsibility. He's always been the leader of the attack for a long time anyway. Whether that's red ball, T20 or ODIs, he's the main man," he said. (PTI)

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Pakistan beat Australia by 8 wickets to clinch 3-game ODI series

PERTH, Nov 10: Pakistan achieved its first win over Australia in a 50-overs series in Australia since 2002 when it won the deciding third one-day international Sunday by eight wickets.

Australia's under-strength batting lineup folded in the face of hostile bowling from Pakistan's pace attack and was all out for 140 in 31.5 overs.

The home team was without captain Pat Cummins, Steven Smith, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc and Marnus Labuschagne, all of whom were rested to prepare for the first of five tests against India that begins in Perth on Nov. 22.

Saim Ayub (42) and Abdullah Shafique (37) then gave Pakistan's chase a solid foundation in an 84-run opening partnership before both fell in the same over, bowled by Lance Morris.

That left Babar Azam and captain Mohammad Rizwan to steer Pakistan to an important victory.

The pair put on a further 58 for the third wicket before Babar ended the chase in the 27th over when he hit Adam Zampa for four to take Pakistan to 143-2.

Pakistan won with 139 balls to spare. "This is a special moment for me because we know our nation will be happy," Rizwan said. "They don't always get what they expect from us as a team. Today we are happy as a team because our nation will be happy."

The Pakistan pacemen have dominated the series since Australia won the opening match by two wickets in Melbourne. Pakistan leveled the series when it won the second match by nine wickets in Adelaide when Australia was bowled out for 163 with Haris Rauf taking 5-29.



As a result, Rizwan had no hesitation in choosing to bowl when he won the toss Sunday. Naseem Shah dismissed Jake Fraser-McGurk in the fourth over, Rauf dismissed Aaron Hardie in the seventh and Shaheen Shah Afridi removed Aidan Hardie in the 11th and from there Australian wickets fell at regular intervals.

Shaheen finished with 3-32, Naseem took 3-34 and Rauf took 2-24 from seven overs as Australia was bowled out for its lowest total at home in a decade.

The Australia batters looked particularly vulnerable against the short ball on a lively pitch and all-rounder Cooper Connolly retired hurt on 7 after being struck in the hand by Mohammad Hasnain.

Fraser-McGurk and Short struggled for form in the first two matches, sharing partnerships of 19 in the first match and 21 in the second. They started positively this time, taking 12 runs from the first over but were separated with the total on 20 when Fraser-McGurk was caught at second slip by Rizwan from Naseem's bowling. Hardie reached 12 from 13 balls

when he also edged to second slip from Shaheen, who caused a ball to nip away off the seam.

Josh Inglis captained Australia for the first time in his home town and came to the crease after learning he had been included in Australia's 13-man squad for the first test against India. His celebrations were cut short when he skied an attempted pull off Naseem to Rizwan when on 7.

"It's disappointing. We just didn't get enough runs on the board," Inglis said.

Short grafted his way to 22 from 30 balls and then picked out square leg from Rauf's bowling when Australia was 72-4. Connolly retired hurt with the total on 79 and Glenn Maxwell also fell to Rauf on that total for a duck.

The rest followed in procession but for Sean Abbott who made a defiant 30 from 41 balls and had support from Spencer Johnson who finished 12 not out.

Sunday's win was a major confidence boost to Pakistan as it prepares to host the ICC Champions Trophy tournament early next year. (AP)

India look to defend title on home soil in women's ACT hockey

RAJGIR (BIHAR), Nov 10: Having struggled to win matches the entire year, the Indian women's hockey team will look to start afresh in a new Olympic cycle by defending its Asian Champions Trophy (ACT) title at home, beginning with a clash against lower-ranked Malaysia here on Monday.

India have won the title twice in 2016 (Singapore) and 2023 (Ranchi) in the seven editions of the tournament so far.

After failing to qualify for the Paris Olympics, the Indian team lost 13 matches and won just two (with one draw) out of 16 in the women's FIH Pro League this year, but will hope to make a turnaround in their fortune with a strong performance in the ACT.

India have fielded a mixed team, consisting of youth and experienced players for the tournament under the leadership of Salima Tete. Striker Navneet Kaur will serve as Salima's deputy as India enter the competition with high expectations.

The team will face stiff competition from five other nations, including reigning Olympic silver-medallists China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand, in the battle for continental supremacy. The Indian defence will be anchored by a solid line-up, featuring Uditia, Jyoti, Ishika Chaudhary, Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam and Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke.

In the mid-field, captain Tete will be supported by Neha, Sharmila Devi, Manisha Chauhan, Sunelita Toppo, and Lalremiansi, all known for their dynamic play.

The forward line-up has the likes of Navneet Kaur, Sangita Kumari, Deepika, Preeti Dubey and Beauty Dungdung leading the charge.

The goalkeeping duties will be shared between the experienced Savita -- also former captain -- and rising talent Bichu Devi Khariabam. Sushila and Beauty Dungdung



will be making a return to the team after successfully completing their rehabilitation.

The Indians will definitely start as one of the favourites in the tournament, along with reigning Olympic silver medallist China, who are ranked sixth in the world.

South Korea are the most successful team in the tournament having won it thrice, while Japan had won it twice.

It's the start of a new journey for the Indian women's hockey team after having missed out on qualification for the Paris Olympics.

Salima's team, under new coach Harendra Singh, will aim to bury the ghosts of the past and start a new journey with LA 2028 in focus.

Salima had captained the Indian team in the European leg of the Pro League earlier this year, where it fared poorly.

Salima attributed the team's downward spiral to the lack of fitness and mental toughness.

After creating history in Tokyo in 2021, the team failed to qualify for the Paris Olympics this year and also performed poorly in the last FIH Pro League.

"Yes, of course we were disappointed but we can't think about

the past and need to move forward. We should move on because if we don't move on, we can never win a match," Salima had told PTI.

"We had to start from the beginning. We had to start from the scratch. And fitness was an area that Harendra sir (coach Harendra Singh) had pointed out and which needs a lot of work," she said.

"It was our mistake that we didn't work on fitness. But since sir came, we have worked a lot on our fitness. In today's level, if you don't have fitness, you can't play hockey because it is a fast sport and you need fitness."

Salima said the entire squad now realises the importance of fitness.

In Monday's other matches, Japan will play South Korea in the tournament opener, followed by the game between China and Thailand.

The timings of the matches have been rescheduled in view of potential havoc due to a large insect infestation under floodlights.

As per the revised schedule, the first match of the day will start at 12.15pm, followed by the second at 2.30pm, and the last at 4.45pm.

Previously, the matches were slated for evening slots at 3pm, 5.15pm and 7.30pm. (PTI)

Kokrajhar NCC Half Marathon set to debut on November 17

KOKRAJHAR CITY OF PEACE
NCC HALF MARATHON
17 NOVEMBER 2024
RUN WITH CADETS
RUN FOR PEACE

All are invited

- Half Marathon (21.1 KM)
- 10 KM
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HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 10: Kokrajhar is set to host the much-anticipated inaugural Kokrajhar NCC Half Marathon on November 17, inviting participants from across the nation to run alongside proud NCC cadets from 17 directorates across the Nation. The event is designed to enable participants to engage with cadets, hear their inspiring stories, and gain insight into their aspirations and challenges.

The marathon features three race categories - Half Marathon (21km), 10KM, and 5Km - open to both male and female participants. To accommodate the influx of people, the city administration is ensuring adequate lodging facilities around Kokrajhar, preparing to welcome

between 4,000 and 5,000 people from across the country.

For NCC cadets, this marathon is part of a larger 10-day Special National Integration Camp (SNIC) from November 10 to 19, providing them with the opportunity to interact, share cultural traditions, and forge bonds with fellow cadets from diverse backgrounds. The event, a first-of-its-kind initiative by the NCC, promotes physical fitness and aims to raise awareness through three key themes: the importance of the NCC, Kokrajhar as the "Gateway to the North-East," and the harmful effects of tobacco and drugs.

BTC CEM Pramod Boro and PVS, AVSM, VSM, DG NCC, Lt. Gen. Gurbirpal Singh along with senior dignitaries from the

Army, IOCL, and NTPC, are expected to attend the event. The programme will also feature cultural performances by NCC cadets from seven states, showcasing traditional and folk dances. Additionally, India's first all-girls NCC Band from SF School, Guwahati, will perform during the event.

Various stalls will be set up by the Tourism Department, Self-Help Groups, Kokrajhar Medical College, NIT, and other prominent local institutions. The one-day extravaganza will celebrate physical fitness, cultural heritage, and the talents of India's youth.

For further details and to register for the event, interested participants can visit the official website at www.kokrajharnccmarathon.com, an official press release informed.

Bokakhat lift Sr Inter District Football Tourney (Zone B) in Sivasagar



HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 10: In a keenly contested final match of Assam Football Association's Senior Inter District Football Championship (Group B) played at Peoli Phukan Stadium here on Sunday, Bokakhat lifted the champion's trophy defeating home team Sivasagar by a solitary goal. After the first half ended goalless, Akash Chowra scored the only goal for Bokakhat in the 70th minute.

The chief guest of the presentation ceremony Bhaskar Chowdhury, DGM & Asset Manager, Assam Asset, ONGC Nazira gave away the winner's trophy while Dr Saumerjyoti Mahanta, principal, Sibsagar Commerce College, presented the Runner's-up trophy.

Roshan Barla of Bokakhat was adjudged the best player of the match who received the award from noted entrepreneur Lakhikanta Mahanta. The referee of the match was Parimal Buragohain.

Sprint ace Mark Cavendish ends cycling career in style with Singapore win

SINGAPORE, Nov 10: Mark Cavendish, one of the best road sprinters in cycling history, retired in style on Sunday by winning the Tour de France Criterium in Singapore. The 39-year-old from the Isle of Man broke famed Belgian cyclist Eddy Merckx's long-standing record for most career Tour de France stage wins with his 35th victory in July.

Fittingly, for his final race Cavendish wore No. 35 on his race jersey and won in a dash to the line for the 165th victory overall in his career. "I'm quite emotional actually," Cavendish said. "I realised in the last 5 laps that it was the last 15 kilometers (9 miles) of my career."

He finished just ahead of Belgian riders Jasper Philipsen and Arnaud De Lie. "What an incredible day to share my last race with those riders," Cavendish said. "With the future of sprinting, with this next generation of sprinters."

Nicknamed the "Manx Missile," Cavendish had planned to retire after the 2023 season but changed course and returned with the goal of passing Merckx's Tour stage-win record. (AP)

Formula E makes history with first-ever all-women test session at Circuito del Jarama

MADRID, Nov 10: Formula E on Saturday hosted its first-ever all-women test session for an FIA World Championship at Circuito del Jarama in Madrid.

The event saw 18 elite women drivers test the new GEN3 Evo race car ahead of the 2024-25 ABB FIA Formula E World Championship season.

Abbi Pulling, driving for Nissan, topped the timing sheets during the three-hour session, with the 21-year-old British driver finishing fastest in the afternoon.

Pulling is currently leading the F1 Academy championship and outpaced notable competitors, including three-time W Series champion Jamie Chadwick (Jaguar TCS Racing), who placed second, and McLaren Development Driver Bianca Bustamante, who rounded out the top three.

The GEN3 Evo, which accelerates from 0-60 mph in just 1.82 seconds -- 30% faster



than a current Formula 1 car -- offered the drivers an exciting opportunity to experience the cutting-edge technology of Formula E's Season 11 race car.

"This was a really exciting session," Pulling stated in a release. "It felt amazing to put what I've learned in the simulator into real life and experience the thrill of driving the Nissan Formula E car. Overall, I'm happy with the performance, and I look forward to more opportunities to drive in the future."

The test is a significant part of Formula E's broader long-term strategy to promote gender equality and expand opportunities for women in motorsport.

The session provided a platform for the drivers to showcase their skills, gain valuable track experience, and play an integral role in team preparation ahead of the season. Alongside the driving, the participants

also engaged in engineering debriefs, media opportunities, and team meetings to further raise their profile within motorsport.

Jamie Chadwick, who was representing Jaguar TCS Racing, expressed her excitement after the test: "It was really cool. The highlight for me was the incredible launch of the car -- how quickly it can go from 0 to 100 km/h."

The test session not only served as a milestone for women in motorsport but also allowed teams to gather crucial data to prepare for the upcoming Formula E season, with the first race taking place in Sao Paulo in a few weeks.

"This is just the beginning," said Jeff Dadds, CEO of Formula E. "Today's test has been an important milestone in our goal to provide more opportunities for women drivers, and a first step towards greater equity at the top level of motorsport." (PTI)