OPINION 6

UNIFIED ELECTORAL SYSTEM

KEY REFORMS NEEDED FOR BRITAIN'S LABOUR PARTY GATHERS

WORLD 8

AFTER ROCKY START IN GOVERNMENT

Emirates

FLY BETTER

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR

*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

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INDIA LIFTS MAIDEN GOLD AT CHESS OLYMPIAD

RISHABH MALIK NEW DELHI

In the battle of black and white India rose to the crown, the country's men's and women's contingent both have made the country proud by creating history, clinching the gold medal at the Chess Olympiad 2024 on Sunday. This is the triumph of India's first ever gold medal for the nation in the highly regarded chess tournament.

India's chess grandmaster D Gukesh beats Vladimir Fedoseevo from Slovenia and Arjun Erigaisi, who has also had a outstanding feat in Budapest picked up a win over Serbian Jan Subelj on the final

day of the event.

The Indian team for the open category included Gukesh, Erigaisi, Praggnanandhaa R, Vidit Gujrathi, Pentala Harikrishna and Srinath Narayanan(Captain). The team who had a unbeaten streak in the tournament with incredible performances against Fabiano Caruana of United States(2.5-1.5) on Saturday day before the final round of the event which gave confirmation of gold medal. India despite having 19 points on the tally(table topper) only China is right after the India in points tally with 17 points which gave the medal confirmation, if somehow



Gukesh D of India, during the final round of the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary, Sunday

Gukesh old Dommaraju hails from Chennai marks his presence on the world stage after the historic India's maiden gold medal in the 45th Chess Olympiad, along with with women's success with Harika Dronavalli, R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agarwal and Tania Sachdev is leading against Azerbaijan in the final by 1-0 gave India double joy with another gold medal in

china takes 2 points in the final 11 round both teams going to share the gold medal.

Gukesh personify a character who knows how to control his nerves in the tense situation in

their category.

the crucial moments which The legendary Viswanathan helps him during the Anand, held the FIDE(The helps him during the tournaments. International Federation Congratulated the

team's success on platform X

Congratulations to Gukesh D,

Praggnanandhaa R, Arjun

Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi,

Pentala Harikrishna and

Srinath Narayanan (Captain),

anand Mahindra gave his wishes on X Indian Women and Men.. Both WORLD CHAMPIONS extraordinary feat May this inspire future generations of Indians to always keep the

Chess. Swagatam.

crown in the place where Chess Began. Welcome home, baton

International Federation)title from 2000 to 2002, and the unified title from 2007 to 2013.

Gukesh D (challenger) and Ding will face each other again in the FIDE World Championship Match 2024, which is going to happen between November 20 and December 15 this year in Singapore.

This victorious moment has opened the doors for young minds for increased participation all across the nation and will work as the for the future

Kejriwal returns, attacks PM, RSS



AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal addresses as Delhi CM Atishi party leader Manish Sisodia and others at Janta Ki Adalat at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, Sunday

Days after stepping down from his chief his ministerial post, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying that he had entered politics to change it and he resigned because he was hurt by the corruption allegations levelled against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) to intimidate or lure

leaders. In his first 'Janta ki Adalat' public meeting at Jantar Mantar following his resignation as Delhi chief minister, Kejriwal adopted a new political strategy to counter PM Modi, poising

Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, including if the BJP's rule on age of retirement also applied to Modi as it did for LK Advani.

He asked whether the rule under which several BJP veteran leaders such as Lal Krishna Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi retired from active politics when they turned 75, would apply to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is turning 75 in 2025. September questioned Bhagwat if he agreed with the BJP's politics of calling politicians "corrupt" and then inducting

them into its fold. He demanded answers from the RSS for Prime Minister Modi's actions, in an fold. While Kejriwal was apparent bid to diminish his addressing the gathering, the

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI five questions to Rashtriya stature by implying that the parent Hindutya organisation was the master which should keep its child in control.

> "Has the son become so big now that it is showing attitude to his mother?" Kejriwal said at a rally where he demanded five answers from the RSS chief. The questions he asked were political softballs but the implication of bringing Bhagwat into his new political narrative is new and

> Kejriwal desired to know if the RSS agreed with the BJP's politics of using central agencies to break up parties and topple opposition governments, and inducting "corrupt" leaders into its fold. While Kejriwal was

unusual

BJP held a protest against him and AAP on issues of corruption at Connaught Place, barely a kilometre away from Jantar Mantar. The BJP held another protest against Kejriwal at Rajghat on the same issue. Jantar Mantar, on the other

hand, was awash with AAP's signature blue and yellow colours as hundreds of supporters filled the site with banners that declared Kejriwal as "one of us", affirming their unwavering belief in his innocence.

As Kejriwal took the stage, the site echoed with slogans of "Na rukega, na jhukega..." while some AAP supporters held up posters bearing messages such as "Hamare Kejriwal imaandar hai".

"I resigned because I did not come to do corruption or to earn money. I came to country..." Kejriwal said. The AAP convener said whether it was ethical for Modi to topple governments across the country by using investigating agencies like CBI and ED. He said he would leave the CM's bungalow in a few days.

"I will leave my house soon and give up all the facilities. When I leave the CM house, I won't even have a place to live. I'm getting a lot of calls from people saying, 'Come to my house, live at my house for free," said Kejriwal at the Janta Adalat. AAP Several leaders attended the party event at Jantar Mantar. AAP leader Manish Sisodia, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi also joined the event named the 'Janta Ki

US, India agree on theatre of war

PTI WILMINGTON (US)

S President Joe Biden commended Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic visit to Ukraine last month and his message of peace, as the two leaders held wide-ranging talks that figured pressing global challenges including the situation in the war-ravaged country.

The US President hosted Modi at his personal home in Wilmington, Delaware on Saturday afternoon hours after the prime minister arrived in the US on a three-day visit. Modi's bilateral meeting with President Joe Biden in Wilmington was an emotional one, marking their final meeting in an official capacity as the American leader is not seeking reelection. The US President hosted Modi at his residence in personal Wilmington, Delaware on Saturday and the two leaders held wide-ranging talks

covering various key aspects of

India-US ties. At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, while defusing the Ukraine crisis, said "very important" conversations are underway with multiple people on all sides of the conflict. In the talks, Biden conveyed to the Indian prime minister that the US supports initiatives to reform global institutions to reflect India's important voice, including permanent membership for New Delhi in a reformed UN Security Council, according to a joint

fact-sheet on the meeting. Though the Modi-Biden talks primarily focused on bilateral ties, the two leaders also touched upon key global challenges including the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the situation in the Indo-Pacific that has witnessed increasing Chinese muscle-



President Joe Biden, joined by Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stand for a group photo before speaking about a Quadrilateral Cancer Moonshot initiative on the sidelines of the Quad leaders summit at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Del., Saturday

The fact-sheet said President Biden expressed his "immense appreciation" for India's leading role on the world stage, particularly Modi's leadership in the G-20 and in the Global South and his commitment to a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

It said India is at the forefront of efforts to seek solutions to the most pressing challenges, from supporting the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic to addressing the devastating consequences of conflicts around the world.

'President Biden commended Prime Minister Modi for his historic visits to Poland and Ukraine, the first by an Indian prime minister in decades, and for his message of peace and ongoing humanitarian support for Ukraine, including its energy sector, and on the importance of international law, including the UN charter," it said. It is understood that Modi briefed Biden on his visits to Moscow in July and to Kviv last month.

Foreign Secretary Vikram in areas of semiconductors, Misri, when asked at a media briefing on the extent of discussion on the Russia-Ukraine conflict between the two leaders and whether the Indian side mentioned any kind of peace proposal only said New Delhi is involved in a set of negotiations.

In their meeting, Modi and Biden reaffirmed their support for the freedom of navigation and the protection of commerce, including critical maritime routes in the Middle East where India will assume co-lead in 2025 of the Combined Task Force 150 to work with Combined Maritime Forces to secure sea lanes in the Arabian Sea, the document said.

The leaders voiced their view that a closer US-India partnership is vital to the success of efforts to build a cleaner, inclusive, more secure, and more prosperous future for the planet, it added.

Modi and Biden also deliberated on ways to further bolster India-US cooperation clean energy and defence. In his meeting with Quad leaders both in multilateral and bilateral settings, Modi put forward India's views and commitments for global

and security. Foreign Secretary

Vikram Misri made these

growth developmen

remarks at a special briefing in New York on Sunday. Modi on Saturday had three separate bilateral meetings with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and US President Joe Biden along with the Quad Leadership

Summit in Wilmington, Delaware. Prime Minister Modi reached New York on Sunday after wrapping up the Quad Leaders' meeting in Wilmington, hosted by President Biden. In a rare gesture, Biden hosted Modi for a bilateral meeting in his home, and the Quad summit was held at the Archmere

Academy in Wilmington.

Antiquities of yore back home

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

From standing Lord Buddha in Sandstone from North India belonging 15-16th century CE, Lord Vishnu in Bronze from Eastern India belonging to 17-18th century CE, Anthropomorphic figure in copper from North India belonging to 2000-1800 BCE, Lord Krishna in bronze from South India belonging to 17-18th century CE and Lord Karthikeya in granite from South India belonging to 13-14th century CE are some of the stolen antiquities from India which was handed over to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his ensuing visit to the United States.

The majority of the antiquities are

terracotta artefacts from Eastern India, while others are made of stone, metal, wood and ivory and belong to different parts of the country. These belong to a period of almost 4000 years, from 2000 BCE - 1900 CE and have origins in different parts of India.

According to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) a total of 297 antiquities stolen from India were returned to the Prime Minister on Saturday. With this,



antiquities recovered from the US since 2016 went up to 578, the maximum antiquities returned by any country to According to MEA, the Apsara in sandstone from Central India belonging to the 10-11th century CE, Jain Tirthankar in bronze from Central India belonging to the 15-16th century CE, Terracotta vase from Eastern India belonging to the 3-4th century CE, Stone Sculpture from South India belonging to 1st-century BCE-1st century CE, Lord Ganesh in Bronze from South India belonging to 17-18th century CE were handed over. In previous years, PM Modi's trips to

the US have also facilitated the return of numerous artifacts. In 2021, 157 antiquities were handed over, including a bronze Nataraja statue from the 12th century. Following the PM's 2023 US visit another 105 antiquities were returned. India has also successfully recovered artifacts from other countries, including 16 from the UK and 40 from Australia.

Taking to social media platform Modi said "Deepening cultural connect and strengthening the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural properties. I am extremely grateful to President Biden and the US Government for ensuring the return of 297 invaluable antiquities the return of 297 invaluable antiquities



Modi gifts antique train model to Joe Biden, pashmina shawl to Jill

PM Narendra Modi gifted an antique silver hand-engraved train model which is a stunning tribute to the steam locomotive era, to President Biden and a pashmina shawl to First Lady Jill Biden on the third day of his US visit for the Quad summit. This silver hand-engraved train model - a rare and extraordinary piece,

masterfully crafted by artisans from Maharashtra - is made of 92.5% silver and the model has been customised by inscribing "Delhi-Delaware" on the sides of the main carriage and "Indian Railways" on the sides of the engine in English and Hindi based on the standard format used on passenger trains in India, officials said.

MEA said that the artefacts were returned "in keeping with close bilateral ties and to foster greater cultural understanding". The statement said the pieces will be "shortly repatriated to India." It added that a select few pieces were showcased to Modi and Biden during their bilateral meeting Wilmington, Delaware. The US State Department's

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Archaeological Survey of India, under the Ministry of Culture, Union Government, signed a Cultural Property Agreement in July 2024 to strengthen cultural ties. The agreement aims to fulfil

the commitments made by President Biden and Prime Minister Modi to enhance cooperation in protecting cultural heritage, as stated in the Joint Statement issued after their meeting in June 2023, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

Bangladeshi infiltrators vote bank for Jharkhand's JMM-led alliance: UP DCM

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday alleged that Bangladeshi infiltrators were a "vote bank" of JMM-led alliance in Iharkhand, and the ruling party would not chase them out of the state.

Addressing a public rally in Koderma as part of the BJP's 'Parivartan Yatra', Maurya accused the Hemant Soren government of "failing" to fulfil election promises on all fronts and making Jharkhand famous for "corruption".

"The Bangladeshi infiltrators, who were earlier restricted to West Bengal only, spread across Jharkhand in large numbers, which is a big challenge. The JMM-led government cannot chase them out of the state. The ruling coalition considers infiltrators as their vote bank," Maurya said. The BJP considers illegal immigrants a "blot on Jharkhand's dignity" and is the "only party which can



chase them out of the state", he claimed. Maurya said, 'The Hemant Soren-led government has failed on all fronts and made Jharkhand famous for corruption. I appeal to the people to vote for the BJP in the upcoming assembly polls for the welfare of the poor, farmers, bright future of youths and making

women lakhpati didi.' India is progressing fast under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he claimed. "Our borders are safe now and India is moving towards becoming the world's third-largest economy soon,"

With an eye on the assembly elections due later this year, the opposition BJP in Jharkhand would carry out six 'Parivartan' processions to reach out to the people and 'expose the failures" of the JMM-led government in the state. These marches will cover 5,400 km across 81 assembly segments in 24 districts before concluding on

October 2. Around 50 national and statelevel leaders of the BJP, including chief ministers of several states, are expected to participate in such rallies.

Kharge reaffirms Congress commitment to protecting rights of J and K people

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday reaffirmed the party's commitment to protecting the constitutional rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Kharge said that the Congress' seven guaran-tees for Jammu and Kashmir aim to usher in a brighter future for the region.
"The Indian National

Congress pledges to safeguard the constitutional rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Our progressive development agenda is for everyone," Kharge said social media platform.

Kharge's highlighted a presentation detailing the Congress' seven guarantees for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and said "these guarantees will bring about a brighter future by focusing on social justice and economic empowerment"

The presentation emphasised party's first guarantee, which starts from the restoration of full statehood to the Union Territory.

The party promised free med-



ical treatment of up to Rs 25 lakh for every family and the establishment of a super-specialty hospital in every dis-

The guarantees also include the implementation of former minister Manmohan Singh's plan for the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits and securing constitution-based rights for the OBC community.

Other guarantees include financial protection of Rs 3,000 per month for women heads of families and food security, ensuring 11 kg of grain for every family mem-

ber, he said. The Congress also pledged to provide crop insurance against natural calamities, along with a minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 72 per kilogram for apples. The party promised financial support of Rs 4,000 per year for landless, tenant, and landowning farming households. It also proposed an unemployment allowance of up to Rs 3,500 per month for one year for qualified youths.

The Congress has further committed to fill one lakh vacant government posts by releasing a job calendar with in 30 days.

CJI to lay foundation stone for Bombay HC's new complex on Monday

PNS MUMBAI

hief Justice of India DY Chandrachud will lay the foundation stone of the Bombay High Court's new complex in Mumbai's Bandra East on Monday, an official A Maharashtra government

release on Sunday said possession of 30.16 acre of land will be handed over the High Court in a phased manner, adding the first tranche measuring 4.39 acres has already been given. It will have world class infrastructure, including well-designed and spacious court rooms, chambers for judges and registry personnel, an arbitration and mediation centre, an auditorium, library, as well as a host of features and amenities for staff, lawyers and litigants, the release informed.

The plan is to enable stakeholders to have access to support services such as banking and telecom, medical facilities, digitisation centre, creche, cafeteria, waiting areas, multistorey car park, museum and lawyers' chambers, with the

Himachal Government takes loans, gives

design keeping in mind accessibility features for differently-abled stakeholders, the release added. The land on which the new premises will come up is well located, with proximity to the island city as well as the metropolis' sub-urbs, the arterial Western Express Highway and the Bandra Kurla Complex, among the country's leading commercial hubs. The Bombay High Court,

founded on August 16, 1862, is currently located in a majestic building near Flora Fountain (Hutatma Chowk) that the court has occupied since November 1878, the state government release added. The Bombay High Court exercises jurisdiction over Maharashtra through the Principal Seat in Mumbai and benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad as well as Goa. It also exercises jurisdiction over the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. The High Court has a sanctioned strength of 94 judges, while the current strength being 66 sitting

judges, the release said.

97 per cent cases of atrocities against SCs in 2022 reported from 13 states: Report

About 97.7 per cent of all cases of atrocities against SCs in 2022 were reported from 13 states, with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh recording the highest number of such crimes, according to a new government

According to the latest government report under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the majority of atrocities against Scheduled Tribes (STs) were also concentrated in 13 states, which reported 98.91 per cent of all cases in 2022.

Of 51,656 cases registered under the law for Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2022, Uttar Pradesh accounted for 23.78 per cent of the total cases with 12,287, followed by Rajasthan at 8,651 (16.75 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh at 7,732 (14.97 per cent).

Other states with a significant number of cases of atrocities against SCs were Bihar with 6,799 (13.16 per cent), Odisha with 3,576 (6.93 per cent), and Maharashtra with 2,706 (5.24 Pradesh reported the highest

These six states accounted for nearly 81 per cent of the total cent), the report said. cases. "Thirteen states, cumu-

latively accounting for 97.7 per cent (51,656) of the total cases (52,866) relating to offences of atrocities against members of SCs, registered under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 499 (5.13 per cent). in conjunction with the Indian

Penal Code, during the year 2022," the report said. Similarly, the majority of cases of atrocities against STs were concentrated in 13 states. Of the 9,735 cases registered under the law for STs, Madhya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

sons such as false claims or lack of evidence

By the end of 2022, investigation was pending in 17,166

For ST-related cases, 63.32 per cent resulted in charge sheets being filed while 14.71 per cent ended with final reports. At the end of the period under review, 2,702 cases involving atrocities against STs were still under investigation.

One of the most concerning trends highlighted in the report is the declining conviction rate for cases under the Act. In 2022, the conviction rate dropped to 32.4 per cent from 39.2 per cent in 2020. Moreover, the report pointed

out the inadequate number of special courts set up to handle cases under the law. Of 498 districts in 14 states,

only 194 had established special courts to expedite trials in these cases. The report also identified spe-

cific districts particularly prone to atrocities with only 10 states and Union Territories declaring such districts. The rest said there was no district prone to

sharp drop in tourism. "Wayanad's beauty is undis-

puted, but it is the compassion

and kindness of its people that

has always drawn me to it.

Today, so many of those peo-

ple who rely on tourism for

their livelihood are looking to

you all for help," the former

Congress chief said in a

"Let me assure you, Wayanad

is still vibrant and welcoming,

with its spirit unbroken. I urge

you to visit and experience its

Facebook post.

the highest number of cases of atrocities against SCs, was among the states which said "No atrocity prone areas have been identified in the State of Uttar Pradesh"

The report emphasises the need for targeted interventions in these districts to curb the incidence of caste-based violence and ensure stronger protection for vulnerable communities.

The report also said SC/ST protection cells had been set up in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh Uttarakhand, West Bengal Andman and Nicobar Islands Chandigarh, NCT of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Puducherry.

Special police stations for registration of complaints of offences against SCs and STs have been set up by five states Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala and Madhya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE SHIMI A/CHANDIGARH

 $B^{\mbox{\footnotesize JP MP Kangana Ranaut on}}_{\mbox{\footnotesize Sunday alleged that the}}$ Himachal Pradesh government takes loans and gives it to former Congress president Sonia Gandhi which has made the

state's coffers "hollow".

Addressing people after launching a BJP membership drive at a village here, the actress-turned-politician said, "Everyone is aware that corruption is prevalent and the Congress-ruling state governments have hollowed their respective states." She wondered how the party spends "so much" on elections.

Attacking the Congress gov-ernment headed by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, she said, "They take loans and give it to Sonia Gandhi which has made the state hollow." "Disasters and Congress government have taken the state decades back and I would appeal to people to root out the present government," Ranaut said.

"If we give disaster funds, it



it to Sonia, alleges BJP MP Kangana Ranaut

should go to the CM Relief Fund but everyone knows that it goes to the Sonia relief fund,' she alleged. "Disasters and Congress government have taken the state decades back and I would appeal to people to root out the present government," Ranaut said. "If we give disaster funds, it

should go to the CM Relief Fund but everyone knows that it goes to the Sonia relief fund," she alleged.

Taking a dig at the Public Works Minister Vikramaditya Singh who contested and lost against her in the recent Lok Sabha elections, Kangana said "Acts of the son of a king are known to everyone and people are tired of potholes on roads."

"I would do more than possible for my area but the PWD minister should also do something as well," she said. "Desh ko bachana hai to BJP ko Lana hai", she said and urged the people to take part in the BJP drive in large numbers and become party members.

She said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is 'Yug Purush' and deals with situations at a micro level. The bad situation of Himachal where the salaries and pensions are delayed and facilities of free electricity and water to consumers have been snatched, is not hidden from the rest of the country, she said. Claiming that sports facilities are being stopped at primary schools, she said, "The base of athletes and sports persons is made at a younger age and it seems there is a conspiracy to destroy Himachal". "The state government is trying

to axe the future of the children but it would be my goal to get a big sports centre in Mandi constituency and preference would be given to children who start young in this sports complex", she said.

Health Ministries jointly issue advisory to **Chief Secretaries of** States for implementation of ToFEI manual



Aiming to address the alarming rise of tobacco consumption among youth in the country, the Secretaries of the Union Education and Health Ministries have jointly issued an advisory to Chief Secretaries of states, calling for rigorous implementation of the Tobacco-Free Educational Institution (ToFEI) manual.

Aligning with the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, the advisory highlights the concerning impact of tobacco use, particularly among children and adolescents. According to the 2019 Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), approximately 8.5 percent of school students aged 13 to 15 in India engage in various forms of tobacco consumption.

Alarmingly, more than 5,500 children begin using tobacco every day, and 55 percent of lifelong users start the habit before turning 20. This early exposure often leads adolescents to explore other addictive substances, said an official from the Health Ministry.

To combat these trends, the advisory has called for a united effort from all stakeholders

the dangers of tobacco addiction. It aims to safeguard future generations by raising awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco use.

As part of the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), the Health Ministry has released guidelines for Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) to shield minors and youth from tobacco and electronic cigarette use. Furthermore, the Department of School Education and Literacy launched the ToFEI Implementation Manual on World No Tobacco Day, in collaboration with the Socio Economic and Educational Development Society, said the official.

This manual, disseminated to all states and Union Territories on May 31, serves as a crucial resource for educational institutions to effectively implement anti-tobacco measures, he

The ToFEI manual focuses on raising awareness about the health risks associated with tobacco use and provides information on cessation resources. It also advocates for a healthy, tobacco-free environment within educational institutions, encouraging all schools to become tobacco-free spaces.

number of cases included Maharashtra with 691 (7.10 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh with

The data also provided insight into the status of investigations

number at 2,979 (30.61 per Rajasthan had the second high-

est number of cases at 2,498 (25.66 per cent) while Odisha recorded 773 (7.94 per cent). Other states with a significant

charge sheets being filed while

eader of Opposition in the

Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi

on Sunday urged people to visit Wayanad and experi-

ence its beauty, help to revive

tourism, rebuild livelihoods

and restore its vibrancy.
He stressed that while the

recent landslide tragedy affected only the Mundakkai

area, it has led to a miscon-

ception that all of Wayanad

has been impacted, causing a

and charge-sheeting under the Act. Among the SC-related cases, 60.38 per cent led to 14.78 per cent were concluded with final reports due to rea-

such cases of atrocities. Uttar Pradesh, which reported

Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi urges people to visit Wayanad

beauty, helping to revive tourism, rebuild livelihoods, and restore its vibrancy," he

Earlier this month, Rahul Gandhi said it is imperative to make a concerted effort to revitalise tourism in Wayanad and encourage people to visit the area by dispelling the notion that it is a "dangerous" place in the aftermath of the recent landslides.

Rahul had made the assertion during a virtual meeting with

some Kerala Congress leaders and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. More than 200 people lost their lives in the aftermath of the worst disaster ever faced by Kerala, which has a fragile ecology along its coasts and hilly areas. Rahul won from two constituencies in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls but resigned from the Wayanad seat in Kerala, from where his sister Priyanka Gandhi will contest

ABVP, NSUI engage in extensive campaigning ahead of DUSU polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A head of the highly anticipated Delhi University Student Union's (DUSU) polls, slated to be held on September 27, Congress' National Students' Union of India (NSUI) and RSS affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Sunday engaged in extensive campaigning including interactions with DU students.

ABVP candidates for the elections, including the presidential candidate Rishabh Chaudhary, the vice-presidential candidate Bhanu Pratap Singh, the secretary candidate Mitravinda Karnwal, and the joint secretary candidate Aman Kapasia, engaged in extensive campaign activities in various hostels including Rajiv Gandhi Women's Hostel, Gwyer Hall, Mansarovar Hostel, PG Men's Hostel, Meghdoot, and other accommodations, where they interacted with the students, discussed key issues, and sought

elections. During the interactions, the ABVP panel discussed various issues including improving

their support for the upcoming



more efficient and transparent examination process, need for skill-oriented courses, streamlined grievance redressal systems, and increased scholarships for marginalized students, especially in SC, ST, and OBC categories. Women's safety and hostel allocation for postgraduates were other critical points of discussion. Meanwhile, NSUI hosted a special interaction with Telugu students of DU, under the lead-

ership of its National President

Varun Choudhary where

Telugu students had an oppor-

tunity to share their issues and

suggestions regarding campus

life to the candidates.

actively campaigned across several PGs and hostels, further engaging with students and highlighting the organization's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and progressive campus for everyone at the university. During his address, Varun Choudhary expressed confidence in NSUI's upcoming electoral campaign and stated "We are confident that we will secure a 4-0 victory in the elections. Our manifesto reflects the real needs of students, and we will ensure every promise is fulfilled. NSUI remains committed to protecting the campus from divisive forces and fostering unity, progress, and welfare for all students."

Delhi resident lodges zero FIR alleging harassment by cab driver

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE SHIMLA/NEW DELHI

Delhi resident has lodged A zero FIR alleging that a cab driver harassed and tried to rob him and his friend along with their families in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district, according to the police complaint. The accused also allegedly misbehaved with the women of the two families, it added.

In his complaint to the police on September 20, Mohammad Raahim Rafi, said he and his friend along with their families had come to Himachal Pradesh for a four-day visit and their trip was planned by a travel

agency.
The bookings were made for Rs 36,600 and 50 per cent of the payment was made in advance while the rest had to be deposited after checking in into the hotel, the complaint letter said. Both Rafi and his friend are journalists and working in leading media organisa-

tions in Delhi. The driver who picked us up from Delhi demanded Rs 10,000 to fill petrol at a pump,



Dharamshala, and when we refused saying the required payment was already done, he removed our luggage from the vehicle," the complainant said. Upon complaining to the travel agency, the driver was changed and their journey was resumed, he added in the com-

plaint. However, when the group was returning from Chamba on September 17 night, the driver who had brought them from Delhi allegedly stopped their vehicle near Gaggal airport in Kangra, shut all doors using central locking and took them into a nearby forest area, the

The accused then allegedly misbehaved with some women in the group, manhandled Rafi and demanded Rs 4,000. However, the tourists overpowered the driver and got out of the car. They booked another cab and resumed their jour-

The complainant said that when the travel agency was apprised of the incident, they took no action. When contacted regarding the incident, Kangra SP Shalini Agnihotri told PTI on Sunday that the incident would be looked into and appropriate legal action

Hundreds of AAP supporters throng Jantar Mantar, vow to stand by Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi's Jantar Mantar was awash with the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) signature yellow and blue colours on Sunday as hundreds of supporters filled the site with party flags, banners and slogans, vowing to stand by for-mer chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. He is "one of us", the AAP supremo's supporters declared, affirming their unwa-vering belief in his innocence. The atmosphere was electric as The atmosphere was electric as Kejriwal, in his first 'Janta ki Adalat' public meeting, took the stage, wearing a white shirt. He was greeted with songs such as 'Mera Rang De Basanti Chola' playing in the background.

As Jantar Mantar -- often the epicentre of political demonstrations-- was filled with AAP leaders and supporters, posters reading "Humare Kejriwal imaandar hai" (Our Kejriwal is honest) and "I love Kejriwal" could be spotted everywhere. A few people were eagerly waiting for his address, with one supporter saying, "He (Kejriwal) is currently out on bail and soon the law will fully exonerate him with dignity.... We are waiting for that day."

Among the crowd was 39-year-old Dheenkhar Singh from Janakpuri, who was wearing a Kejriwal topi and holding a 'jhadoo' (broom), the AAP's election symbol.

Singh described Kejriwal as one of them, saying, "I'm here to support him. He is like one of us -- the one who looks like us, dresses like us and understands our demands. Watching him feels like he is our leader.



always be here to support him." Kejriwal was released on bail from Tihar Jail on September 13, after spending over five months in prison in connection with the excise policy

He stepped down as Delhi chief minister last week and handed over the baton to senior party leader and minister Atishi, who took oath for the office on Saturday and requested people to ensure that her predecessor.

Addressing the rally, Kejriwal demanded answers from the RSS for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions, in an apparent bid to diminish his stature by implying that the parent Hindutva organisation was the master which should keep its child in control.

"Has the son become so big now that it is showing attitude to his mother?" the AAP chief asked, demanding five answers from Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat.The questions he asked were political softballs other leaders of AAP feels but the implication of bringing really good."

His words resonate with us. I'll Bhagwat into his new political narrative is new and unusual. Meanwhile, slogans of "Na rukega, na jhukega..." (won't stop, won't bow) rented the air in Jantar Mantar as party supporters, dressed in the signature AAP caps, turned the entire event into a festival of

colour and hope. Rajesh, who came to attend the 'Janta ki Adalat', said, "Kejriwal and his government have a lot of work to do, work for us. He is out on bail, and I believe he will fight for good with even more strength now. That's why I'm here to hear and support

Many supporters also exuded confidence in Kejriwal's win in the upcoming assembly polls, with one of them saying, "This time, the BJP won't get a single seat in the election, as our leader is back and he won't give anyone a chance to take control of Delhi." Kumar added, "Aam Aadmi Party is Kejriwal's party. When he stands with the party leaders, it boosts our morale as well. Seeing him here with the

AAP failed to fulfill promises mentioned in its manifesto: BJP stages protest against former CM

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday staged a protest against former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal at Rajghat and Connaught Place and claimed that the AAP-led Delhi government had "failed" to fulfil none of the promises mennone of the promises men-tioned in its election mani-

Delhi BJP vice-president Kapil Mishra led the protest along with party workers at Rajghat. Mishra even released a report card of the AAP government claiming that none of the 70 promises have been fulfilled by the Kejriwal gov-

Mishra said the AAP made 70 promises in its manifesto 10 years ago that included a pollution-free city and 8 lakh jobs, of which none were fulfilled during Kejriwal's tenure. He promised to bring the Lokpal bill and Swaraj bill, but nothing happened, the BJP leader added.

"The people of Delhi are fed up with Kejriwal, and we will reach out to every household with the AAP's report card and expose him when he will lie to the people of the city," Mishra said.

In another protest at Connaught Place, less than a km away from Jantar Mantar where the Aam Aadmi Party



Kejriwal.

(AAP) was holding a 'Janata Ki Adalat where an exhibition exposing corruption in the Kejriwal government held. Delhi BJP Chief Virendra

Sachdeva accused that Kejriwal has betrayed his mentors, friends, children, ideals, and dreams of honesty. "Why did you betray Anna

Why did you break the trust of Kiran Bedi, Shazia Ilmi, Kumar Vishwas, and Rajkumar Anand?

Why did you betray your children by forming an alliance with Congress despite swearing on them?
You called the Lokpal your ideal, but have done nothing to appoint one. Why did you betray your ideals and You betray your ideals and You

betray your ideals and You entered politics on an anticorruption platform, but your government has hurt public He added that Kejriwal's gov-

sentiment and crushed the hopes of alternative politics. Why have you betrayed the people on corruption ?", he asked five questions to

He alsopraised the youth workers of the party for their efforts to expose Arvind Kejriwal and said the people of Delhi are fed up with the corruption in the Kejriwal government and demand answers. Sachdeva stated that Kejriwal cannot get away by resigning and will have to answer for 10 years of corrupt misgovernance.

Leader of opposition in Delhi assembly Vijender Gupta said the Aam Aadmi Party is a shop of lies, and the people of Delhi want accountability for the last 10 years, which have set the city back by 50 years. ernment is steeped in corruption, and since Kejriwal is the mastermind, one can only imagine where Delhi will go

imagine where Delhi will go under his leadership.
South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said during the COVID pandemic, he had questioned Kejriwal in the Assembly about demolishing his old house and building a new "palace."
We protested outside Kejriwal's house with all the MLAs when the blueprints of the palace, built at a cost of

the palace, built at a cost of ?189 crore, were not made Bidhuri added that Kejriwal's

new residence cost ?52 crore to build, while 21 flats around it were demolished to make room for the mansion.

No permission was taken to demolish these flats, and officials involved in the Commonwealth Games scandal purchased these flats for 6 crore.

BJP MP Yogendra Chandolia said Kejriwal is not an ordinary person but someone who is looting Delhi and filling his own pockets while putting on a show for the

public.
Calling the residence 'Sheesh
Mahal', where Arvind
Kejriwal is living, the Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that it was a perfect example of the AAP leader's

Kejriwal betraying people, then holding adalat, claims Congress

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Slamming AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal for "betray-OArvind Kejriwal for "betraying" people of the national capital and then holding 'Janata ki Adalat', Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav on Sunday said now people will not get swayed away by the former chief minister's "drama" as he has hean "ownered". been "exposed". "A person who is out on bail in

excise policy scam case, now talking about "imaandaari" (honesty) in the "Janata Ki Adalat" in front of hired crowd at Jantar Mantar today, which only exposed his ability to play the victim card and his incorrigible behaviour to mouth blatant lies," he said. Delhi Congress chief said Kejriwal's bid to project himself as a "khattar imaandaar" before the people only made him a laughing stock, as none believed his lies. Mounting the attack on Kejriwal

for corruption in connection with the excise police case, Yadav said: "As far as public consent is concerned, it was the court that stopped you from going to the office and signing any official files. You were forced to resign due to certain conditions set by the Supreme Court, not by the public. Somewhere, the Supreme Court has acknowledged that you are involved in these corruption charges, and that's why these restrictions were imposed," he

BJP asked me to take Kejriwal's name to escape from excise policy case: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader and for-mer Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday alleged that the BJP tried to poach him and asked him to take Kejriwal's name to escape from the alleged Delhi excise policy case. He vowed to return to public office only when the people validate their integrity, emphasizing the unfinished mission of reforming Delhi's education system. Notably, Delhi Chief Minister Atish idd not speak at the Janta ki Adalat

"They used to tell me about this court case and everything

at Jantar Mantar.

will go for very long. , You are in this situation because of Kejriwal. Bolte the aap ki wife bimar hai, beta bahar hai, aap chhodo ye sab (Your wife and son are unwell, you should leave all this). They asked me to take the name of Kejriwal to escape from the case," Sisodia said while addressing at the Janta ki Adalat at Jantar

"I used to smile and tell them (BJP) also, "you are trying to separate Laxman from Ram". "Koshish bhi mat karna, koi ravan kamyab nahi hua. Arvind Kejriwal has been my guru and brother for 26 years,"

"I told my wife about this and asked her what my workers and karyakartas will say about me. How will I show my face to them. My wife said, party karyakarta chhodo, tum mujhe kya muh dikhaoge (Leave it party worker, what face will you show me)," he said. The Former Deputy CM said

that when they couldn't break me from within, they tried to break me from the outside. "They used to send me messages, saying that I didn't realize I had been tricked by Arvind Kejriwal. I would tell them that he had tricked me 26 years ago, and I have been dedicated to the same work ever



since. Their shamelessness reached a point where, after arresting Arvind Kejriwal, the CBI lied in court, saying that he had named me, putting all the blame on me. That same day, the CBI came to me, saying that since Arvind Kejriwal had mentioned my name, it would be better if I also implicated him to save myself," he said "No Ravana in the world can separate Lakshmana from Rama," declared Sisodia, pledging unwavering loyalty to AAP
National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal in their fight against "Ravana of dictatorship."

The AAP Delhi State Convenor and Delhi Minister Gopal Rai held the 'Adalat' in order to said "The BJP first tried to stop

ing six months in jail. It was at Jantar Mantar in 2011 that Kejriwal, then an RTI activist, alongside Anna Hazare, had launched a nation-wide anticorruption movement demanding the creation of a Jan Lokpal to curb corruption. The agitation had received massive public support from across the country and had played a significant role in laying the foundation for the

address the corruption charges

levelled against him in the

excise policy case after spend-

AAP's emergence. The AAP Delhi State Convenor

the work continued. After that, they imprisoned Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain, Education Minister and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, MP Sanjay Singh, and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. When the work in Delhi didn't stop despite these efforts, the BJP thought that, like in other states, it could topple the Delhi government by putting the top leadership of the AAP in jail." He further said, "The BJP may have the power of the ED and CBI, as well as money and influence, but Arvind Kejriwal has the power of public support."

the work through the LG, but

Was drawn to RSS backed student body's discipline: ABVP presidential pick for DUSU polls

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

Hailing from a farmer's from Haryana's Sonipat, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad's (ABVP) presidential pick for Delhi University Student Union (DUSU) polls Rishabh Chuadhary was drawn by the RSS backed student body's discipline and aims to work especially towards the betterment of sports facilities in the campus. Stepped into the Delhi University in 2018 for pursuing History and Political Science from Shyam Lal College, Chaudhary, an outsider in the new city, was welcomed by the workers of the student body, when he also witnessed the problems that such student from other states face including the high rent prices of pgs and vowed to



basic amenities.

"I came to Delhi University in 2018, when I was in my first year. I was among the socially active students and met ABVP workers and leaders then. I was impressed and

attracted by the discipline of the organisation. Gradually, I started working as a student

on the problems I saw and then here I am," he said. "I come from a rural area from Haryana's Sonipat. Since I come from a farming famiMany students come here as students from other states face many problems including many can't pay the rent here. Keeping these problems in mind, we will work on them," he added. The young leader of the stu-

ly, ofcourse,in the beginning,

there are many problems.

dent wing of RSS is highly impressed by the work of senior BJP leader and Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari as he travels across the country whenever he gets a chance. "I[′] like Nitin Gadkari as a leader. See, I have a hobby and like to travel.

When there are vacations in Delhi, university is closed and the campus is empty, I travel on road to the south and visit temples since I am a religious person. When I see his work, I feel very happy,"

Chaudhary said, expressing his happiness on the improvement of roads in the country. Rishabh has a strong interest in volleyball, wrestling and kabaddi, and he has been consistently working towards improving sports facilities at the university. He acknowledged the talent of the students in the university and said, "There is so much talent in Delhi University, you can't ignore it.

I don't know which Olympian will be with us in the future. We will work on the national and international level to make it better.

Also, national and international coaches will be called for some time to give them coaching?

He expressed that the ABVP will win the elections by 4-0 and win the student body elections unanimously.

Focusing on improving basic amenities provided on campus: NSUI's Rounak Khatri

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

The Congress-affiliated National Students' Union of India (NSUI) presidential candidate, for the upcoming Delhi University Student Union (DUSU) polls, Rounak Khatri is famous for his 'matkaman' campaign story and admires Lok Sabha Congress MP Deepender Singh Hooda and Delhi Congress President Devendra

Hailing from Delhi's Narela and a student of Campus Law Centre, the young student leader said that he didn't aim to become one and rather focuses on improving basic amenities provided on the campuses while boasting about installing water coolers and airconditioners in his college.

"I didn't want to become a leader. I wanted to improve the facilities. There are problems with the facilities provided in the campus. If we talk about basic amenities, there is no drinking water and no good infrastructure in the classrooms. There are no benches

or fans," he said. He added that when they demanded AC in his college, the administration denied it and said, "Then we went to the court. After going to the court, we got the order. We got Rs eight crore rupees sanctioned

wants the same things and we will fight for that."

He also recounted that he was

the head boy in his school and that's where the spark to fight for the student's issue started. I was in DAV School, Narela where I was the head boy there. When I came to DU and saw that there were no basic amenities, I started working for their rights and have been associated with NSUI for the past five years," he said.

Elaborating on why he associated with Congress's student body, he claimed that there is freedom in NSUI including the freedom to protest and raise

Nearly 150 sculptures installed in run up to G-20 Summit in excellent condition, being regularly maintained: Raj Niwas

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 150 sculptures and same number of stone fountains installed in the run up to the G-20 Summit here last year are in excellent condition and regularly maintained by the relevant agencies that procured them, Raj Niwas

said here on Sunday. Sharing this information, officials also said even as Delhi decked up unprecedentedly in the run up to and during the G-20 Summit last year, there were many apprehensions and doubts raised about the continuation of the revamp achieved.

Naysayers predicted vandalization of artefacts, drying up of fountains and their ill maintenance and disrepair once the event was over. However, a year down the line status of adornments and arte-

facts that line Delhi's streets have laid apprehensions to rest and proved the cynics

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena chaired a meeting recently to take stock of the status of the artefacts and adornments- their maintenance and upkeep. He also reviewed the ongoing works in this regard.

Nearly 150 sculptures including that of Konark Wheel, Chhatris, Horse Family elliptical fountains, Yakshinis, Vighnaharta, Elephants, Lions, Buddha, Surya and Nandi that were installed along the arterial roads and around tourist spots, continue to be in excellent condition and are regularly being maintained by the concerned agencies that had procured the artefacts. Similarly, around 150 stone fountains brought



ing properly across the city. These artefacts, which were brought from different parts of the country, mainly Rajasthan and Odisha, have been installed in various parts of the National Capital, amply heritage of the nation.

Soon after these sculptures and fountains were installed, the LG had directed the concerned agencies to put in place a proper mechanism for their maintenance, upkeep



fountains are operating on a daily basis barring the days of their scheduled maintenance. The LG, even after the conclusion of the G-20 Summit, continues with his site visits and personally inspects the

these artefacts. In the year that followed September, 2023, LG Saxena has undertaken over 130 field visits spread over 115 days identifying new sites for adornments and keeping an eye on the status of artefacts Saxena, who has always been asking for people's support in the maintenance and upkeep of these artefacts, has thanked the people of Delhi for their

support through owning up the beautification efforts undertaken collectively by the agencies. He reiterated that these artefacts and fountains were not just meant for the G-20 Summit but they aimed at creating permanent assets for the National Capital. Meanwhile, under the LG's

guidance, many more artefacts have been installed in different parts of the city in the last one year. These include a natural stone fountain installed at Vijay Ghat and white marble Elephants family at RML roundabout, both installed in July 2024. A stunning white sandstone chariot, a powerful

symbol of triumph, standing

Boliver Marg junction, installed in June 2024.

Similarly, a 300-KG metal bell, baradari and chhatris and elephants were installed at Vasudev Ghat at ISBT, Kashmere Gate in March 2024. Earlier, two pairs of elephants facing each other have been installed at the junction of Akbar Road and Krishna Menon Marg in December 2023. A majestic Surya sculpture

by sculpted Padma Vibhushan Sudarshan Sahoo and his team in Muguni Pathara (Odia), was installed at DDA's Asita Park in April 2024. Sahoo's another cre-ation, Dharmachakra Pravartana (the setting in motion of the Wheel of Dharma) Bhagwan Buddha at Sarnath has also been installed at Asita Park.

TMC alleges no Parliamentary Committees formed after 100 days of 18th Lok Sabha

Warns Parliament being turned into a deep, dark chamber

NEW DELHI

TMC leader Derek O'Brien on Sunday alleged Parliamentary Standing Committees had not been formed despite the 18th Lok Sabha completing 100 days since its constitution and said Parliament was being turned into a "deep, dark chamber". In a social media post, the Trinamool Congress' (TMC) leader in the Rajya Sabha said seven out of 10 Bills were sent to departmentrelated standing committees of Parliament in the 15th Lok Sabha while only two out of 10 Bills were sent to the panels in the last Lok Sabha. "Parliamentary standing committees have not yet been formed. In the 15th Lok Sabha, seven out of 10 Bills were sent to committees for scrutiny. In the last Lok

Sabha, only two out of 10



"Parliament is being turned into a deep, dark chamber," he added. Parliamentary

Minister Kiren Rijiju said on September

Bills got scrutinised," O'Brien department-related standing committees and consultative committees of Parliament would be constituted shortly. According to data compiled think-tank Legislative Research, 16 per

cent of Bills were referred to standing committees in the 17th Lok Sabha. About 50 per cent of reports on the Bills were presented within 115 days. On an average, standing committees held nine meetings to finalise reports on the Bills.

Apart from the Data Protection Bill, only the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was discussed for at least 15 meetings. The three Bills to reform the country's criminal laws were examined together over 12 meetings. In the 16th Lok Sabha, 28 per

cent of Bills were sent to parliamentary committees while 71 per cent of Bills were sent to the panels in the 15th Lok Sabha. While a majority of the standing committees come under the Lok Sabha Secretariat, some are serviced by the Rajya

Environment Ministry approves 111 urban forests in first 100 days of new Government



NEW DELHI

In the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 Government, the Union Environment Ministry has sanctioned 111 urban forests in six states and one Union Territory against the target of 100 urban forests during the period.

The initiative is part of the Ministry's revised Nagar Van Yojana in 2020 which was

launched to enhance urban greenery, improve the quality of life, and increase social cohesion in cities. The scheme provides financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh per hectare for the creation and maintenance of urban forests, encouraging the involvement of citizens, students and other

these green spaces. The size of the urban forests ranges between 10 and 50

stakeholders in managing

must have at least two-thirds of its area under tree cover and include components such as biodiversity parks, Smriti Vans, conservatories, and herbal

gardens and Matri Vans created under the Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam campaign. Under this mass

plantation special campaign, it is targeted to plant 80 crore trees this year by September

year March end. Provision has been made on portal uploading details plantation done by any individual or institution or organization private or government and tracking plantation efforts. More than

75 crore saplings have been

planted by now under this campaign and detailed information has been uploaded on MeriLiFE portal, said the Ministry. The Nagar Van Ýojana aims to develop 1,000 urban forests by 2027 with financial

support from the National Fund of the National Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority.

This initiative will help protect forest land within and around urban centres from degradation environmental address such as air concerns pollution, urban heat islands, loss of biodiversity, and habitat degradation, said the



SC to deliver verdict on watching child porn not POCSO offence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to deliver on Monday its judgment on a plea challenging a Madras High Court ruling that has said mere downloading and watching child pornography is not an offence under the POCSO Act and the information technolo-

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra is likely to pronounce the

Terming atrocious, the apex court had earlier agreed to hear the plea challenging the mere downloading and watching child pornography is not an offence under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Information Technology (IT) Act.

On January 11, the Madras High Court quashed the criminal proceedings against a 28-year-old man charged downloading

pornographic content involving children on his mobile phone. The high court had also said that children these days are grappling with the serious issue of watching pornography and instead of punishing them, the society must be "mature enough" to educate them.

The Supreme Court had taken note of the submissions made in the matter by senior advocate H S Phoolka, who represented two petitioner organisations, that the high court verdict was contrary to the laws in this regard.

The senior lawyer appeared in the court on behalf of NGOs

Just Rights for Children Alliance, based in Faridabad, and the New Delhi-based Bachpan Bachao Andolan. The organisations work for the welfare of children.

The high court had quashed the criminal case against S Harish under the POCSO Act, 2012 and IT Act, 2000. In order to constitute an offence under section 67B of the IT Act, an accused must have published, transmitted or created material depicting children in a sexually-explicit act or conduct, it had said.

"A careful reading of this provision does not make watching child pornography, section 67B Information Technology Act, 2000," the high court had added.

Even though the said section of the IT Act has been widely worded, it does not cover a case where a person has merely downloaded child pornography in an electronic gadget and watched the same, without doing anything more, it had said.

Admittedly, two videos involving boys downloaded and were available on the petitioner's mobile phone, and those were neither published nor transmitted to others and were within the petitioner's private domain, it had said. The Madras High Court had, however, expressed concern over children watching

pornography. Viewing pornography can have negative consequences on teenagers down the line, affecting both psychological and physical well-being, it had said.

Parliamentary Panel examines Waqf | Railway Ministry launches ticket-checking Bill amid 1.2 crore email responses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

A parliamentary panel examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill has received a staggering 1.2 crore email responses amid campaigns launched by rival groups to ratchet up support for their respective viewpoints regarding

Parliamentary sources said the Joint Committee on the Amendment Bill, chaired by Bharatiya Janata (BJP) Party leader Jagadambika Pal, has also received 75,000 responses with documents to support respective views, prompting the panel to seek additional staff from the Lok Sabha Secretariat. "We have deployed 15 triggered a counter-reaction



additional personnel to go through the email responses and categorise and document those," one of the sources said. Radical Islamic preacher Zakir Naik has appealed to his supporters to oppose the Waqf (Amendment) Bill by sending responses to the parliamentary panel examining the draft law. The appeal from Naik has appeal

and several Hindu groups too have urged their supporters to write emails to the committee in support of the Bill.

Last month, the committee sought written suggestions from the general public, NGOs, experts, stakeholders and institutions on the Bill. In a statement, the committee asked people to send their comments to the joint Lok Secretariat, Room No. 440, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi-110001 or mail lss@sansad.Nic.In.

The committee is also embarking on a five-city tour to seek feedback from government officials, legal Waqf experts, members and community

drive around festive season

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The Railway Ministry has decided to launch a special ticket-checking drive around the festive seasons to keep a check on ticketless travellers, including policemen as they are among the top violators, offi-

The Ministry, on September 20, wrote a letter to the General Managers of 17 Zones asking them to start a special drive against ticketless and unauthorised travellers "for the period October 1 to 15 and October 25 to November 10" and take suitable action as per the provisions of the Railway Act

Railway commercial officers, who are part of the ongoing and Mail trains without any regular drive in various rail ticket. When we imposed a



divisions, say that along with common people, policemen refused to pay and threatened will also be on their radar us with dire consequences. during the festive rush as they We remained undaunted and are among the top violators. made them pay. "In our recent surprise check The response between Ghaziabad and Kanpur, we found hundreds of policemen travelling in AC

passengers was very encouraging as they were happy and surprised to see action being taken against police personnel," railway coaches of various Express

First tri-services Future Warfare course to be conducted in New Delhi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $F^{\text{irst of its kind, a tri services}}_{\text{``Future Warfare'' course is'}}$ scheduled to be conducted in New Delhi from September 23 27 here under the aegis of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, defence ministry said here on Sunday.

A pioneering initiative by Defence Staff(CDS)General Anil Chauhan, this will be a rank agnostic course for Major Generals to Majors and their equivalent level officers from other services. The course intends to acquaint the

officers with the operational and technological aspects of

modern warfare. The course will focus on key areas related to future warfare to develop an understanding on the manner in which future wars will manifest in terms of being contact, noncontact, kinetic, non-kinetic, psychological

informational as also the domains where they will be fought, be it cyber, space or electromagnetic spectrum. It will also throw light on how emerging and disruptive technologies like Artificial

Intelligence,

hypersonics will impact the conduct of warfare.

Course for Tri Services officers arises from the rapidly evolving nature of modern warfare, driven by technological advancements, changing global dynamics, emerging threats. Officers must be equipped to navigate this complex landscape, leveraging new technologies, and adapting to innovative tactics.

The course will foster jointness, and facilitate the development of a cohesive, futuristic, and tech-savvy force, capable of securing national interests in an increasingly uncertain and competitive environment.

The course has been curated by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff with the help of veteran and serving subject matter experts.

Subsequent courses will build upon the curriculum of this course and be of longer duration with the larger objective of making the Indian Armed Forces Indian Armed "FUTURE READY".

Indian Navy to host fifth edition of Goa Maritime Symposium



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $\mathbf{I}^{ ext{ndian}}$ Navy will host the fifth edition of Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS -24) at Naval War College, Goa for two days starting Monday, navy said here on Sunday. Giving details, officials said conceptualised and instituted by the Indian Navy in 2016, the GMS is a forum for collaborative fostering thinking, cooperation and attend the event.

understanding between India and key maritime nations of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The theme for the event is "Common Maritime Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean Region - Progressing Lines of Efforts to Mitigate Dynamic Threats such as Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and other Illegal Maritime Activities". The discussions will dwell on collaborative efforts towards enhancing maritime security in the

region. The symposium will see participation of Naval representatives from 12 Ocean Littoral Indian Bangladesh, countries -Indonesia, Comoros, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Observers from Kenya and Tanzania will also

Congress appoints Uday Bhanu Chib as **President of Indian**

PNS NEW DELHI

Youth Congress

Congress on Sunday appointed Uday Bhanu Chib as the president of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC), replacing Srinivas B V. Chib was currently serving as the general secretary of IYC and is a former president of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Youth Congress.

President Congress Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Uday Bhanu Chib as the president of the Indian Youth Congress immediate effect, a party statement said. The party appreciates the contributions of the outgoing president Srinivas BV, it added.

Congress also appointed M K Bhardwaj and Bhanu Mahajan as acting working presidents of its Jammu and Kashmir unit. The appointments come amid the ongoing assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir. The party in August appointed Tariq Hameed Karra as president of its Jammu and Kashmir unit. He had replaced Vikar Rasool Wani. Kharge had also appointed two working presidents for Jammu and Kashmir — Tara Chand and Raman Bhalla.

phase on September 18. The next phase of polling for 26 seats will be held on September 25. Voting for the third phase would be held on October 1 while results would declared on October 8.

Rhino numbers surge in India amidst climate threats: Report research unit of the PIB said "It is a matter of immense

Machine

robotics and

PNS NEW DELHI On World Rhino Day on Sunday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to visit Assam's Kaziranga National Park, home to one-horned rhinos, a government report has flagged climate change threats, including prolong monsoons that flood critical grasslands and the spread of invasive plant species eating away the native flora essential for rhinos' survival.

The report 'Assam's Role in Protecting the Greater One-Horned Rhino' indicated that while the increase in rhino numbers is encouraging, it necessitates the urgent expansion of habitats to ensure their long-term survival and prevent overcrowding.



population residing in Assam's Kaziranga, this species stands as a testament to India's commitment to wildlife preservation," it said while enlisting several measures

species whose number stood at 3,262 at the end of 2021. The majestic animal remains classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN.

Yet, the greater one-horned

remarkable comeback, thanks to India's proactive conservation policies and the dedicated efforts of Assam's authorities. The report prepared by the

that besides climate change threats exacerbating flooding in the region and the proliferation of invasive species, human-wildlife conflict is a pressing concern, especially as rhino habitats are increasingly adjacent to densely populated agricultural As rhinos venture into these

regions seeking food or territory, they can damage crops and create risks for local communities. Effective management strategies that incorporate engagement and education are essential to mitigate these conflicts and foster coexistence. According to the report, the conservation efforts prioritize habitat

restoration, the creation of wildlife corridors, and the involvement of local communities in protection initiatives.

"Combining traditional knowledge with modern conservation techniques will be crucial for ensuring that both rhinos and humans can thrive together," it said about the conservation measures for these animals that usually weigh around 2,800 kg and live for 45-50 years. The Prime Minister posted on

X: "Today, on World Rhino community Day, let us reiterate our commitment to protect one of our planet's most iconic species—rhinos. Compliments to all those involved in rhino conservation efforts over the last many years.

pride that India is home to a large number of one horned rhinos. I also fondly recall my visit to Kaziranga in Assam and urge you all to visit there as The Indian rhino is the largest

of the three Asian species and shares its single horn characteristic with the Javan rhino. The Sumatran rhino, in contrast, has two horns, a trait linking Asian and African rhinos. Rhinos play a crucial role in

maintaining ecosystems. As mega-herbivores, they shape grasslands by grazing, creating open spaces that benefit other wildlife. Their wallowing behavior also creates waterholes, supporting various species.

Elections in Jammu and Kashmir are being held in three phases. Voting for 24 seats was held in the first

BJP leaders campaign in Jammu ahead of second round of polling

Vow to ensure peace Jammu and Kashmir, promising restoration of statehood, tough stance on terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $B_{\text{troika Home Minister}}^{\text{haratiya Janta Party's}}$ Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Health Singh, Minister and Party President JP Nadda Sunday aggressively campaigned in different parts of Jammu region ahead of the second round of polling on September 25.

The senior BJP leaders restoration of promised soon after the 'statehood' formation of the BJP government in Jammu and Kashmir. They also thrashed alliance partners Congress and the National Conference for promoting the Pakistani agenda, wanting to bring Jammu and Kashmir back to

the status quo and restore families who had 'biryani' Article 370. with terrorists.

Home Minister Amit Shah, addressing a rally in support of Ravinder Raina in Nowshera on Sunday said talks will not be held with Pakistan till terrorism is eliminated. He maintained the BJP must come to power in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure peace and teach the neighbouring country a lesson. The home minister castigated the National Conference, Congress and PDP over the issue of terrorism and said no stone-

released from jail. After forming a government in Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP will issue a white paper to expose the role of the three

pelter or terrorist would be

Shah said he would like to talk to the youths of Jammu and Kashmir whom he referred to as "lions".

"The BJP government is a must in J&K for peace, prosperity and development besides giving a befitting reply to terrorism and teaching a lesson to Pakistan," Shah said, urging them to vote for BJP candidates, especially Raina whom he praised for strengthening the party in the

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addressed three election meetings in Poonch, Rajouri and Sunderbani and one in the RS Pura area of Jammu. Addressing a rally in Poonch in support of BJP candidate

Choudhary Abdul Gani Rajnath Singh said, Pakistan is feeling "pain in its belly" democracy flourishing in the Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370. Singh also accused the National Conference (NC), Congress and People's Democratic Party (PDP) of misleading people by talking about the restoration Article 370 of the Constitution manifestoes and said these parties should stop working as "proxies of Pakistan". "The NC, Congress and PDP are making a lot of noise over Article 370 and have promised to restore it. How will you restore it as only a government at the Centre has the power to do so?" Singh asked.

He said real politics is to tell the truth to people by looking in their eyes, instead of misleading them to secure their votes.
"The BJP is clear in its stand

that we will not allow restoration of Article 370 come what may," the defence minister asserted.

"The first phase of the Assembly election registered more than 61 per cent polling, surpassing the record-breaking 58 per cent polling in the Lok Sabha election. The message has gone to the world that Article 370 was abrogated

for the betterment of India.
Six election rallies were

addressed by these leaders across different assembly segments of Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu on Sunday. JP Nadda also conducted a road show and addressed a meeting of intellectuals in Jammu. Addressing an election rally in

support of BJP candidate Sham Lal Sharma contesting from the Jammu North Assembly segment BJP chief J P Nadda labelled the Congress and the National Conference (NC) as "non-nationalist forces" and said Pakistan's defence minister himself "certified" the two parties for carrying out that country's agenda in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also highlighted the "wave

of change" in Jammu and Kashmir under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and underscored BJP's "deep connection" with the Union Territory.

Nadda claimed terror attacks have significantly reduced and said the lifespan of terrorists under Prime Minister Modi's leadership is "only a few days",

but these parties are trying to

negotiate with them. Accusing the Congress, NC, and PDP of "corruption" and "ruining" Jammu Kashmir, Nadda said, "These three political dynasties – the Abdullah family, Mufti family, and Nehru-Gandhi family have harmed Kashmir.

They brought rampant corruption and destroyed this beautiful state."

Didi 2nd letter to PM on 'manmade' Bengal floods

PNS KOLKATA

Two days after writing a protest letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the Central Government-run Damodar Valley Corporation's alleged "reckless release" of 5 lakh cusecs of water from its dams in Jharkhand causing "massive man made floods" in southern districts of Bengal, State Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday wrote a second letter to him explaining how the DVC had released water without consulting her Government.

To register its protest against the DVC's "reckless act" Bengal which too is a member of withdrew representative from its board making State Power Secretary Shantanu Basuand another Chief Executive Engineer on Sunday to resign from the Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee Regulation (DVRRC). Hours before Banerjee had threatened to snap her Government's ties

Referring to a reply letter from the Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil in which he reportedly said that the State level officials were informed by the DVC authorities about the release of water, Banerjee on Sunday wrote, "all the critical decisions are made unilaterally

with the DVC.



representatives of the Central Water Commission, Government of India

without arriving at a consensus," contrary to the claims made by the Union Minister that "release (of water) from DVC dams was carried out by consensus and collaboration with the Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee, including consultations with representatives of the government of West Bengal." Banerjee told the media how Bengal was informed only little more than three hours before

'They released more than 2.5 lakh cusecs of water" and overall more than 5 lakh cusecs of water released causing it the

the release of water.

"Peak release from the reservoirs lasting for a prolonged period of nine hours were conducted with only 3.5 hours notice which proved insufficient for effective disaster management," she

worst flood" in the southern

districts of Bengal since 2009,

she said.

Four major barrages including those at Panchet, Maithon, Konar and Tilaya are operated by the DVC. Apart from this Durgapur barrage and the canal networks which were originally part of the DVC were handed over to the Bengal Government in 1964. It remains as a part of the total system of water management. There are many minor dams also operated by the two States in Bengal and Jharkhand.

"They are telling that they wanted to save Jharkhand from floods ... I have no problem in that ... I too want the people of other States to be saved but why should the people of Bengal suffer for others ... it is the duty of the DVC to see the interests of the people of Bengal too," Banerjee told reporters.

In his previous letter to the Prime Minister she had said how 5 million people in the state were affected by the floods," requesting him to "immediately sanction and release central funds to address the widespread devastation." However in his reply letter, Paatil wrote that the whole

affair is managed by the which representatives from the Central Water Commission, Bengal, Jharkhand, and the Meanwhile, the flood situation

continued to remain grim in large parts of southern Bengal with several blocks of Hooghly, Howrah, East and West Midnapore districts remaining inundated often under neckdeep or even more water. Not only the villages but urban areas had also been largely affected with the towns like

Ghatal, Panshkura, Purushura

remaining under water for the

past more than 60 hours or so.

Omar Abdullah leads Shikara rally on Dal lake ahead of polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

After leaving no stone unturned on ground zero former Chief Minister and National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah Sunday led a mega 'Shikara rally' on Dal Lake to woo voters ahead of the second round of polling across 26 Assembly segments on September 25. The Election Commission of India has also made special arrangements for a floating booth to allow the Dal dwellers to cast their votes without facing the ordeal of moving out of their floating houseboats.

In the second round, two arch rivals National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party are pitted against each other while the entry of independent and Awami Ittehad party candidates in the fray has made the contest interesting competitive on Assembly segments of the central Kashmir districts of Srinagar, Ganderbal and

Omar himself is facing a tough challenge in the family bastion of the Ganderbal segment.



grandfather Sheikh Mohd Abdullah and Dr Farooq Abdullah represented the seat. Omar tasted humiliating defeat at the hands of a PDP candidate in the 2002 Assembly polls. He later won the 2008 Assembly polls from Ganderbal but decided to move out to Beerwah in Budgam district in the 2014 Assembly polls.

This time Omar is being challenged by the PDP nominee Bashir Mir.

Mir used to contest from the neighboring Kangan constituency but he was shifted from there after the seat was reserved for a Scheduled Tribe candidate. Former NC leader Ishfaq labbar, who is also in the frav

as an Independent, is expected to dent Omar Abdullah's poll prospects.

Last-minute entry of jailed cleric Sarjan Wagay, popularly known as Sarjan Barkati, and Sheikh Ashiq, the candidate of Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid's Awami Ittehad Party, in the fray has turned the poll battle more interesting.

Other prominent candidates in the fray in the second round of polling include Pradesh Congress Committee chief Tariq Hamid Karra, Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina from Nowshera, Pahari leaders including Mushtaq Ahmed Shah Bukhari, and Murtaza Khan from the Pir Panjal region.

Raj Babbar criticizes BJP's civic failures in Gurugram

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Congress leader Raj Babbar here on Sunday said the BJP has been in power for the last ten years, but here in Gurugram, they failed to address the civic issues of the district.

The senior Congress leader was present in Gurgaon to Badshahpur candidate Vardhan Yadav and Gurgaon candidate seat candidate Mohit Grover on Sunday.

While addressing a public meeting, Babbar scorched an attack on the BJP and said that only making a few flyovers is not development. The BJP failed to fix

infrastructure constituency, which, despite contributing a hefty sum to Haryana's coffers, has been given a short shrift. Babbar said this time, people

want Congress to retain the power and correct the wrongdoing of the current state government.

may challenge BJP in upcoming poll

PARVESH SHARMA

The political landscape of the Gurgaon constituency has become increasingly intriguing as independent candidate Naveen Goel, and Congress's increasing vote count may pose a challenge to the BJP in this poll, scheduled on October 5 The notable contender is

Naveen Goel, a BJP rebel, whose participation as an independent candidate has heightened concerns for the ruling party. Mukesh Sharma, the BJP

candidate, faces the daunting task of securing victory this In the assembly elections of

2014, the BJP candidate had secured 84,095 votes while the Congress candidate got just 19.094 votes In 2019, the winning margin of the BJP candidate was



Grover managed to secure over 48,000 votes, and Congress secured third position with 23,126 votes. The contest is primarily seen

as a three-way battle between BJP leader Mukesh Sharma, Congress' Mohit Grover and Independent candidate Naveen Goel.

Naveen Goel, who was previously associated with the BJP has entered the race after he was denied a BJP ticket, making him a formidable challenger with a personal has been pivotal stake in avenging his determining the winner.

The BJP's biggest threat is perceived to be from its Mukesh dissenters. successfully secured his ticket, but he now must contend with the votes that may shift towards Naveen and Mohit, who are both seen as

With a total of 17 candidates in the fray, the real contest remains among Mukesh, Naveen and Mohit. However, Mohit's and Naveen's entries could siphon off crucial votes from the Punjabi and Vaishya communities traditionally aligned with the BJP.

significant contenders.

In the Gurgaon constituency, voter demographics play a critical role in election outcomes. Approximately 50,000 Vaishya, 85,000 Punjabi, and 55,000 Brahmin voters reside in the area. Historically, the Vaishya and Punjabi community's support

Naveen Goel, Congress rising vote count | TMC-compatible Subhankar is new Bengal PCC President

By appointing Subhankar Sarkar a new "Mamata Banerjee-friendly" president of the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee the Congress may have begun to drop its aggressive line --- as was witnessed during the Adhir Chowdhury era --against the Trinamool Congress, sources in the Bidhan Bhavan, the Pradesh Congress headquarters say. When asked to comment on the Congress' future conduct vis a vis the TMC the new PCC president said that he had nothing personal against any outfit or their leaders and that the Congress Party would tow a democratic line commensurate and consistent with its democratic values and traditions. "The Congress is clear about its secular



the Trinamool Congress ... if we see that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is working towards restoring the democratic culture in the State then we will have no reason to be unnecessarily combative," Sarkar comparatively lesser known leader and known for his moderate ways and "workable chemistry with the TMC,"

On what he had to say about

the Chief Minister and her handling of recent affairs Sarkar said he had nothing personal against any leader adding her would work according to the directions received from the high command and as per the wishes and desires of the party rank and file. He tended to remain evasive on whether his tenure would see a gradual distancing from the Left, particularly the CPI(M) in alliance with which it had been contesting election since 2016 Sarkar said Congress was a friend of all secular democratic forces and that he would go by the general will of the people and the party rank and file.

Sarkar was named the PCC president late on Saturday evening. He has formerly been the All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary in charge of northeastern

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy seeks PM Modi's

NHRC seeks Labour Ministry's response on CA death due to work pressure details of the ongoing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The National Human I Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought a detailed response from the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment regarding the tragic death of a young chartered accountant in Pune in July. Anna Sebastian Perayil, a 26-year-old employee at Ernst & Young (EY), had died in July 2024, allegedly due to excessive workload and intense work pressure, according to her family.

NHRC, citing media reports, expressed grave concern over circumstances surrounding Perayil's death. It called on the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment to provide a comprehensive report on the case, including

In a statement issued here, the

investigation.According to the NHRC, the reports surrounding Perayil's death raise serious concerns about the mental and physical toll of corporate work culture on young employees, particularly those in highpressure industries like finance, consulting, and law. Stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, and the relentless pursuit of impossible targets have, the NHRC noted, led to "grave violations of their human

In response to the growing concerns around workplace safety, the NHRC has constituted a Core Group on Business and Human Rights. This body will review current labour legislations and regulations, aiming to create robust recommendations for both central and state

rights."

Triangular contest expected in Haryana Ateli Assembly constituency

PARVESH SHARMA GURUGRAM

Atriangular contest is expected this time in Haryana's Ateli assembly constituency. Here political legacy and caste equations can affect the election result. This time in Ateli, all eyes will be on BJP's candidate Aarti Rao, who is the daughter of six-time MP and Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh. Aarti Rao is contesting her maiden election. This election is no less than a litmus test for

It remains to be seen whether she can carry forward the legacy of her father, who was the most prominent Ahirwal leader of this region.

Meanwhile, Congress has fielded former MLA Anita Yadav against Aarti Rao and another Ahir community leader. Anita Yadav won this seat on a Congress ticket in 2009, but she faced consecutive defeats in 2014 2019 from BJP candidates.

Political experts said that despite losing the last two elections, the Congress party has fielded Anita again. The reason for this is that the BJP is facing an anti-incumbency wave, and Anita Yadav can attract the votes of the Ahir

community. Meanwhile, the locals called Aarti Rao as an outsider. They alleged that Rao doesn't even know the village names of the with BSP can give Atar Lal a

constituency. She is active here in Ateli just to woo "Aarti Rao is fighting the

elections in her father's name. She was not active earlier in the constituency. She won or lost but we know that she will leave the area after the elections are over," a resident alleged. Meanwhile, this election battle has been made more interesting by INLD-BSP alliance candidate alliance candidate Thakur Atar Lal. experienced politician, Atar Lal has been contesting elections in Ateli for the last two decades, but he has not been able to win yet. Rajput voters are 8% in Ateli,

but INLD's pre-poll alliance

chance to woo the 28% Scheduled Caste (SC) vote In the last assembly elections

democratic values ... we have

nothing personal against

BJP had fielded Sitaram Yadav from the Ateli seat, who got 55,793 votes. On the other hand, BSP candidate Atar Lal was in second place with 37,837 votes. Ateli is considered a stronghold of the BJP; in 2014 also, the party's Santosh Yadav easily won this seat. Atar Lal is known for being connected with the voters at the grassroots level. Due to his active presence in Ateli, he also has the support of some Ahir voters. The special thing about the Ateli seat is that the rural population here is very

intervention in Tirupati laddu adulteration issue PIONEER NEWS SERVICE TIRUPATI/ NEW DELHI

Dubbing the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister as a "habitual liar", YSR Congress chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention into the Tirupati laddu adulteration issue and that Chandrababu Naidu reprimanded.

In a letter addressed to Modi. Jagan alleged that CM Naidu has stooped so low as to hurt the beliefs of crores of people purely for political objectives. Detailing the process undertaken at Tirumala Detailing Devasthanams Tirupati



(TTD) the custodian of the super-rich shrine of Venkateswara Swamy for accepting ghee, in an eight page letter, Jagan alleged that Naidu's actions lowered not only the stature of CM but also that of everyone in public life, the sanctity of TTD and its practices. Pradesh Chief Andhra

Minister N Chandrababu

Naidu's claim that animal fat was used in preparing Tirupati laddus during the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government in the southern state has triggered a massive political row, with the YSR Congress Party accusing Naidu of indulging in 'heinous allegations" political gains and the ruling TDP in the state circulating a laboratory report to back its claim.

Amidst the furore over the adulterated Prasad, a public interest litigation (PIL) matter has been filed in the Supreme Court, seeking a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the alleged use of animal fat in Tirupati laddus.

The petition filed by Surjit Singh Yadav, a farmer and the president of the Hindu Sena, has contended that the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), by serving "laddu prasadam" prepared using animal fat instead of ghee to devotees at the Sri Venkatswara Swamy temple, has ridiculed the Hindu religion and outraged the sentiments of Hindus. The controversy surrounding

Tirupati laddus and the demand for "freeing" temples across the country from government control are among the key issues to be discussed at a meeting of the VHP's apex body in Andhra Pradesh on Monday.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Quad is here to stay

PM Modi highlights Quad's role in promoting peace, stability and inclusive growth in Indo-Pacific

The latest Quad Summit in Wilmington, USA, highlights the growing importance of cooperation between the four member nations – India, the United States, Japan, and Australia, especially in a politically volatile Indo-Pacific region. It also underscores the importance of India in attaining peace in the region. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his opening remarks, reaffirmed the group's commitment to ensuring a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, emphasising that this priority is shared by all Quad members. Addressing fellow leaders— US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, PM Modi noted that the summit was taking place at a time of heightened tensions and conflicts globally. His message was clear: the Quad's strength lies in its shared democratic values, its support for a rules-based international order, and its commitment to peaceful dispute resolution. PM Modi's address reflected India's



delicate balancing act in maintaining strategic autonomy while engaging in critical international collaborations. The Indo-Pacific region has become a key area of focus, particularly due to the shifting power dynamics in Asia.

India, with its strategic location and economic influence, sees itself as a natural leader in advocating for an inclusive, prosperous Indo-Pacific. PM Modi emphasised that the Quad is not an exclusive group but one committed to advancing collective interests, particularly in areas of health security, climate change, emerging technologies, and capacity building. India's role in the Quad has grown significantly over the past

few years, positioning itself as a key player in advancing shared objectives in the Indo-Pacific. PM Modi's proposal to host the next Quad Summit in India in 2025 is a further testament to the country's increasing involvement and influence within the group. The Wilmington summit comes at a time when global challenges such as supply chain disruptions and geopolitical conflicts have increased the urgency for international collaboration. India's contribution to health security initiatives and capacity-building efforts within the Quad has bolstered its standing as a critical partner. As the Quad moves forward, India remains committed to working with its allies to ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains a region where the rule of law is respected, and prosperity can be shared by all nations. The Prime Minister's visit to the US was part of a broader diplomatic engagement, which also includs bilateral talks with President Biden and an address at the UN General Assembly's Summit of the Future. This diplomatic push underlines India's active role in shaping global conversations on peace, stability and inclusive growth. In the evolving international landscape, India's leadership within the Quad reflects its commitment to fostering cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, ensuring that it remains a region of stability and shared prosperity.



A one-horn Rhino at the Assam State Zoo on the World Rhino Day, in Guwahati

Key reforms needed for unified electoral system



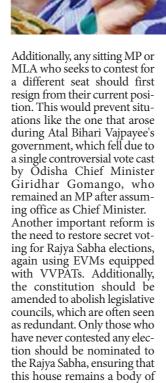
While many proposals offer a streamlined approach, significant reforms are still needed to address gaps, such as mid-term election disruptions

ecently, the Union Cabinet approved the recommendations of the high-level committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind. While many of these proposals are commendable, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. Notably, the plan should encompass not just Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections but also local body elections. The current recommendation to hold local body elections 100 days after the simultaneous Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections falls short of a truly unified electoral system. As a one-time reform, it is necessary to hold all elections, including to local bodies, concurrently.

Another issue that remains unre-solved by the Kovind Committee is the problem of mid-term elections, which arise when a State government or the Lok Sabha falls due to a hung house or the collapse of a coalition. This challenge can be addressed by electing Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers simultaneously with Speakers and Deputy Speakers through a secret ballot, utilising Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) equipped with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs).

Such elections should require nominations signed by at least 34 per cent of members. This system ensures stability, as a Prime Minister or Chief Minister could only be removed through a similar process, but with the mandatory nomination of an alternative leader in the same motion. Failure to vote in this process would result in the loss of voting rights in the House, though membership would remain intact. Implementing this system is crucial for the success of the "One Nation, One Election" initiative, as it would prevent the frequent dissolution of assemblies and the Lok Sabha. Current officeholders could also be re-elected using this

In terms of candidacy rules, a pertest elections from more than one constituency or hold both Parliament and State Assembly memberships simultaneously.



conflicts of interest. Ministerial positions should be limited to 10 per cent of the strength of the lower house, and the post of Parliamentary Secretary should be abolished. Candidates who lose their security deposits in elections should be barred from contesting for the next six years. The None of the Above (NOTA) option, introduced to allow voters to reject all candidates, should be made more effective. Candidates who receive fewer

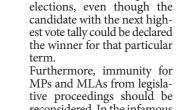
experienced statespersons

rather than active politicians.

MPs and MLAs should also be

barred from holding any party

or social positions to avoid



tive proceedings should be reconsidered. In the infamous JMM bribery case, the Supreme Court was unable to act against guilty individuals due to parliamentary immunity. Parliament's rules should be rewritten to introduce fixed penalties for members who violate norms, removing the discretionary powers of the Speaker. This would prevent lenient punishments like the one imposed on MP Rajesh Manjhi, who faced only a brief suspension for taking his lady friend, pretending she was his wife, on a foreign trip at government expense.

votes than NOTA should be

barred from contesting future

Absconding parliamentarians, if present in the House during sessions, should not be allowed to leave until legal authorities execute pending warrants against them. Additionally, MPs and MLAs with less than 75 per cent attendance should be barred from contesting elections for the next six years. Cases like that of George Fernandes, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha despite losing nis memory, nigniight the need for a minimum medical fitness certificate for candi-

Parliamentarians should also

be required to disclose all details of their assets, including the names of their spouses, to avoid cases of undisclosed multiple marriages, as occurred with actor-turned-MP Dharmendra. All dues, including those for utilities, rent, and government accommodations, should be deducted from their salaries or pensions. Pensions should be withheld until former MPs and ministers vacate government accommodations. Additionally, political parties that fail to contest elections for five consecutive years should

Finally, electoral reforms should

be de-recognised.

be accelerated by empowering the Election Commission to implement reforms with a oneyear notice to Parliament. If Parliament does not disapprove the proposed reforms within this timeframe, they should be deemed approved. To reduce the influence of black money, sections of the Income Tax Act that allow for contributions to political parties should be abolished. Moreover, the controversial MPLADS scheme, which allocates funds to MPs for local area development, should be scrapped. It is time to bring sweeping reforms to India's electoral system to ensure a more transparent, accountable, and stable politi-

> (The writer is Guinness record holder and an RTI consultant, views expressed



MINISTERIAL POSITIONS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO 10 PER CENT OF THE STRENGTH OF THE LOWER HOUSE, AND THE POST OF **PARLIAMENTARY** SECRETARY SHOULD

BE ABOLISHED. CANDIDATES WHO LOSE THEIR SECURITY DEPOSITS IN ELECTIONS SHOULD BE BARRED FOR THE NEXT SIX

THE EDITOR

Social media age limit: Will banning children be enough?



While setting an age limit may seem like a straightforward solution, enforcing it is a much more complex challenge

ustralia's recent proposal to introduce a minimum age for children to use social media has sparked a global debate about how best to protect young people from its negative effects. With the government suggesting an age limit between 14 and 16, the intention is clear: shield children from the social harms linked to excessive screen time, mental health issues, and unrealistic social comparisons. But is an outright ban the answer? Can we expect this move to be effective, or are we merely sweeping the problem under the carpet?

In theory, setting an age limit seems like a straightforward solution to mitigate the risks associated with social media. However, the reality is far more complex. One of the most significant challenges in enforcing an age limit on social media is the sheer difficulty of verifying users' ages reliably. Most platforms already have minimum age requirements. Yet, we all know that younger children are active on these platforms, often bypassing age restrictions by simply entering a false birth date during regis-



It's a loophole too easy to exploit, and without a robust verification system, raising the age limit can't be a solution. Some platforms have attempted to introduce measures such as ID verification or even facial recognition, but these solutions come with their own set of concerns.

For instance, YouTube Kids requires credit card information to verify the parent's identity. While well-intentioned, this method raises privacy concerns and is far from foolproof. Moreover, tech-savvy children often outsmart such measures using VPNs. Banning social media for children without a watertight system to monitor and regulate their access is like locking the front door while open. When discussing social media and its impact on children, parental oversight inevitably comes into play. Parents are expected to monitor and control their children's access to these platforms, but can they realistically do so in this hyper-connected world?

The answer, unfortunately, is no. Even the most diligent parents cannot be expected to oversee every minute of their children's online activity. A well-meaning ban on social media might give parents a false sense of security, but it doesn't change the reality that children will find ways to access these platforms.

If we push them off regulated, mainstream platforms, they may seek refuge in the darker, unregulated corners of the internet-spaces where risks of cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and even predatory behaviour are even greater. Social media is, undeniably, a double-edged

On the one hand, it exposes children to unrealistic portravals of life, leading to anxiety, depression, and a constant need to measure up to leaving the back door wide others. On the other hand, it

provides a space for young people to connect, express themselves, and access educational resources. Banning it outright may remove the toxic aspects but also deny them these valuable opportu-

As parents and educators, our challenge is to strike a balance. Instead of rushing towards a ban, it might be more prudent to focus on equipping children with the skills they need to navigate the online world responsibly. Digital literacy, mental health education, and open conversations between parents and children can go a long way in protecting young minds from the pitfalls of social media. Rather than looking at social media as an enemy to be vanquished, we should view it as a tool that requires careful handling. Age restrictions, when implemented properly, can help shield younger users, but without holistic solutions—ranging from better parental support to more reliable age verification meth-

limited. (The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai. Views are personal)

ods-their efficacy will be

RAHUL'S IRRESPONSIBLE REMARKS

Madam — Your newspaper (September 22) carries several news relating to statements of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, counter allegations by BJP and Congress party's explanations on Rahul Gandhi's asseverations on certain crucial issues in his foreign visits and election campaigns. His assertions on reservations, Sikh community's freedom, abrogation of Article 370 and its standing as alliance partner of National Conference in J&K are drawing flak in the political spec-trum and in public. Weakening the country and painting gloomy pictures while abroad, will not go well for Congress and Rahul Gandhi. Selected foreign media has vested interest in maligning India. Desperation of Rahul Gandhi and his lack of conviction is writ large while his narratives against BJP and PM Modiji are failing in absence of report cards of Congress and allies' ruled states. His statements are also silently

eroding the INDI alliance base. The country is facing tough times and the country needs a committed voice from all political parties against the deep state forces conspiring unrest and anarchy in our country. Our neighbourhood is troubled and no peace and normalcy is predictable in the near future. Apparently, these are the most challenging times since independence and PM Modiji and the bulk of non-BJP political parties have identified, analysed and diagnosed the threats. We need to fight unitedly.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

ADULTERATION IN LADOOS

Madam— After Karnataka's nandi milk, its now the turn of ex Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Jagan Mohan Reddy government, who has been solely blamed for the adulteration of south famous Sri Venkateswara Swami Tirupati prasadam laddus by the ruling Chief Minister N.Chandrababu Naidu.

It came as a shock to devotees that sub-

High voter turnout in J and K



his refers to the editorial, "India wins in J and K" (September 20). Polling for 24 Assembly seats in the first phase of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections held on September 18. Polling was not only peacefully but it witnessed impressive turnout of voters also. People's enthusiasm for polling in the first phase assumes more significance as this is the first Assembly polls after abrogation of Article 370 in the state. People's record participation in the election has

standard ingredients animals fat oil were used in laddus which was confirmed by the Gujarat based livestock laboratory. More than the laddus its the political wrangling between Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and his predecessor Jagan Mohan Reddy which has caused severe damage to the sanctity of prasadam and temple.

Mr Reddy who is the member of TTD (Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam) cannot simply brush the issue under the carpet with an excuse of taking action against the supplier as it was going on since ages under the nose of the temple trust and management. Its good to know that Food Minister Prahlad Joshi has ordered for an investigation through FSSAI (Food Safety and Standing Authority of India) so that further action could be taken after the prasadam controversy came into surface. However, this entire controversy reflects that how devotees emotions are played with in the name of faith and reli-

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

given a befitting reply to the nefarious forces attempting to disrupt the electoral process. People of the state have shown the entire world, their deep trust and confidence in the democratic exercise. It is good that people have realised that no stone and bullet but power of voting is more effective tool to serve their purposes. Demise of Hurriyat Conference, a conglomerate of separatist parties also have contributed to bring peace in the state particularly Kashmir valley. It is evident that separatist groups have been politically marginalised. However, growing support to Sheikh Abdul Rashid's AIP after his shocking win in Lok Sabha polls has made the political pundits to watch

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

final result of Assembly polls closely and

EXPLODING PAGERS

Madam — Israel has been blamed for a recent explosive attack in Lebanon that targeted Hezbollah's communication devices but injured over 3,000 civilians, raising questions about its indiscriminate nature. The operation's extremist-like methods blur the line between state action and terrorism, risking wider conflict. A ceasefire through negotiation is urgently needed. Israel is facing widespread criticism for its alleged role in a recent explosive attack in Lebanon, which targeted Hezbollah's communication systems but left over 3,000 civilians injured. The attack's broad, indiscriminate impact has sparked concern about blurred boundaries between state action and terrorism, resembling extremist tactics more than a conventional military operation. With tensions rising, the conflict risks spreading to a broader regional theatre. Diplomacy is urgently needed to de-escalate the situation. Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

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FIRST COLUMN

HEALTHY SPINE AND WELLBEING

A healthy spine forms the cornerstone of overall wellbeing, enabling us to restore vitality to our bodies



ow many of us get up in the morning and virtually struggle to get out of bed as the body feels sore, the neck remains stiff, knees wobble, and shoulders and feet pain? The entire day is a torturous nightmare. Such individuals run to doctors, seeking a magical cure for the pestilence. Unless the problem is genetic or hereditary, humans get afflicted with such disorders because of a deficient lifestyle, stress accumulated over a period and poor dietary habits. The vertebra and our skeletal frame are an extremely important part of the human body, which we ignore at our peril.

Therefore, a healthy spine leads to a healthy life. Do we recall when a child begins to walk, the preliminary baby steps are raising his/her thumbs; this is called the 'Merudanda Mudra'. The vertebra consists of a series of small bones that form the backbone of the spine, having several projections for articulation and muscle attachment, and a hole through which the spinal cord passes. Office goers who for making a living are programmed to undertake a typical quotidian 9 to 5 routine, and several among them use computers for prolonged hours, or those professionals who are compelled to drive long distances to their places of work from their dwelling paces ought to necessarily know how to protect their backs, necks, and hand muscles.

These days people have become addicted to the usage of smartphones and are constantly fixated on texting messages on WhatsApp, watching various features ending up with stiff necks and sore fingers. Not only do these muscles need to be protected and fortified but the tissues should be sufficiently strengthened. Working men and women should be educated on how to deploy the correct activity posture while executing their professional tasks. Many homemakers at times develop severe middle



or lower back medical problems for a variety of reasons. Continuously undertaking repeated chores and even activities involving the handling of small or no weights, performed with an incorrect posture, damages tissues and muscles, which causes irreparable damage to the back and

The afflicted suffer from infirmity for years together with pain and anguish. Awareness about the structure of the spine and adopting the right postures along with simple strengthening stretches significantly helps to avoid these misadventures in one's life. In the cases these problems assume the shape of chronic disorders the patient suffering can be guided through simple stretching exercises under the supervision of a physiotherapist or an orthopaedic. A special programme has been developed by the Art of Living to ameliorate the condition of those suffering from these debilitating health issues. Those suffering from spondylitis, frozen shoulder, middle and lower back problems, knee problems, and inter disc problems will immensely benefit upon undergoing the rehabilitation process and will certainly see visible dramatic changes in their lifestyle patterns and their daily routine. The programme encompasses the techniques men-

- · Walk: For the alignment of vertebrae to open energy channels
- Posture Awareness and its correction
- Simple but powerful Stretches and Yoga For inner surgical alignment of the spine to release the nerves that were being continually pressed
- Gait Training helps immensely
- Guided Meditation techniques to release accumulated stress
- In-depth knowledge of the spine
- Ancient wisdom and knowledge about acupressure points for overall well being "Total relaxation is the secret to enjoying sitting meditation. I sit with my spine upright, but not rigid; and I relax all the muscles in

my body," writes Thich Nhat Hanh. (The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway and is a faculty of

the Art of Living. Views are personal)

GST cess extension: Is it Justified Beyond 2026?



With loans likely to be repaid by January 2026, the question arises—can the continued levy of the cess be logically justified in light of buoyant tax collections



n its meeting held early this month, the GST Council had decided to set up a Group of Ministers (GoM) to suggest 'how to go about the GST compensation cess, which is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods such as automobiles, aerated drinks and tobacco, after the loans taken to meet the shortfall in revenue of states during Covid-affected years are repaid. The GoM will be headed by Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary and include members from states. The statement 'how to go' together with reports suggesting that the GoM will be reworking the nomenclature for GST compensation cess points towards the intent of the GST Council to continue its levy even after the deadline of March 2026 when it is to be withdrawn as per the subsisting arrangement. The matter requires deeper examination. The key question is: Why should GST Cess be continued? In the follow-up to The Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, which introduced the GST, the Union Government also introduced The GST Compensation Act, 2017. It provided for compensation to the States for five years (2017-18 to 2021-22) for the loss of revenue to be calculated as the difference between their actual collection (including transfer of their share in indirect tax collected by the Centre) and the amount they would have got with annual growth at 14 per cent over the 2015-16 level under the erstwhile dispensation (Central Excise Duty (CED)/service tax/sales tax/Value Added Tax (VAT) plus other local taxes). To discharge this obligation, the Centre also

passed an amendment to the GST Compensation Act (2018) to levy a cess on the so-called demerit goods (those which fall in the highest tax slab of 28 per cent other slabs being five per cent, 12 per cent and 18 per cent besides the exempt category) such as automobiles, tobacco, drinks and so on with a proviso to use the proceeds for compensating States. The cess was to remain in force for five years in sync with the commitment to compensate States for that period.

The rationale behind keeping these arrangements in place for five years was that at the



THE BUOYANCY IN GST COLLECTION SINCE 2022-23 REINFORCES THE CASE FOR WITHDRAWAL

CESS. MEANWHILE, **TAXING PETROLEUM PRODUCTS UNDER GST** HAS BEEN PENDING

FOR LONG

end of this transition, i.e., June 30, 2022, the GST dispensation would have acquired the much-needed "vitality" and "resilience" to yield sufficient resources for the States to meet their budgetary requirements within a prudential limit set under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM) thereby obviating the need for any extra support beyond this deadline. However, even before the June 30, 2022 deadline arrived, the States had been clamouring for continuing the compensation beyond it. So, first, they requested the 15th Finance Commission to extend it for five years not realizing that the mandate for this is with the GST Council. Thereafter, they started pestering the Central Government.

The States gave two reasons for their demand (i) they continued to face a shortfall in tax revenue and (ii) The - pandemic had severely COMPENSATION impacted their revenue - both their tax collection as well as transfer from the Centre - pushing them behind the curve. We need to look at the factual position on the quantum of shortfall in tax revenue experienced by the States during those five years and the extent to which collections from the cess plugged it. From the time GST was introduced on July 1, 2017, till March 31, 2019, collections from the Cess exceeded the shortfall resulting in a surplus of about Rs 47,500 crore in the pool. However, the equation changed in the subsequent years. During 2019-20, the cess proceeds were Rs 95,000 crore against a shortfall in tax collection of Rs 165,000 crore resulting in a deficit of Rs 70,000 crore.

Even after using the surplus from the previous two years, the unmet deficit carried forward to the next year was Rs 22,500 crore.During FY 2020-21, the shortfall in tax revenue zoomed to over Rs 300,000 crore; courtesy, of the devastating effect of Covid pandemic. Against this, cess proceeds were

only Rs 65,000 crore, leading to an unmet deficit of Rs 235,000 crore. During FY 2021-22 also, the collections in the Cesspool couldn't fully meet the shortfall in tax collection though the deficit was much less. To make up for the deficit, the Centre, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set up a special window for borrowings at a "low" rate of inter-est and transferred the funds to states as back-to-back loans. Under this window, it borrowed a total of Rs 270,000 crore including Rs 110,000 crore during 2020-21 and Rs 160,000 crore during 2021-22. To generate the required money to repay the loan and interest, the GST Council decided to extend the cess till March 2026.

The necessary amendment was made to the GST Compensation Act (2018) to give effect to this decision. According to the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the entire loan of Rs 270,000 crore would be fully serviced by January 2026, two months ahead of the March 31, 2026 dead-

As per estimates, the collections from GST compensation cess in February and March 2026 are expected to be about Rs 40,000 crore. How this surplus money would be apportioned between the Centre and States is a task the GoM will have to carry out. The States want the GST compensation cess to continue even beyond March 31, 2026.

Naturally, its continuation can't be justified in terms of the need to service loan liabilities from the past; those would have already been extinguished before that. they have any logical argument?To say that they require more revenue

reported, is plain rhetoric. Tax collection is far from being a con-Only a couple of years ago, top officials in the Department of Revenue used to gloat over a collection of GST Rs 150,000 crore if achieved in any given month. Since, the beginning of FY 2022-23, monthly GST collections have been more than Rs

In fact, during FY 2023-24, the average monthly GST collection

was even higher at Rs 168,000

150,000 crore.

crore. Therefore, Cess's continuation on the basis that there could be a shortfall in tax collection is The raison detre behind giving the States a buffer (read: compensation) over a fairly long period of 5 years (2017 – 2022) was to ensure that they get adjusted to the new dispensation and are in a position to garner enough revenue thereby obviating the need for any further support. At the end of this transition, it is only apt that the buffer should go The buoyancy in GST collection since 2022-23 reinforces the case for withdrawal of compensation cess. Meanwhile, taxing petroleum products under GST has been pending for long. Currently, these are taxed under the pre-GST regime entailing a much higher level of levy. For instance, in Delhi, the taxes (central excise duty or CED plus VAT) account for about

price of petrol. Taxing it under GST will result in lowering this to 28 per cent (even if it is put in the highest slab). This will end up reducing tax collection in the States by over one-third. To help them make up for this loss, the GST Council may consider extending the Compensation Cess with a sun-set rider of say five years.

80 per cent of the ex-refinery

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Nostalgia meets new age storytelling in India's diverse cinematic landscape

Beyond merely providing convenient access, OTT platforms have revived iconic shows and introduced regional cinema to the global audience

n recent years, the rise of over-the-top (OTT) plat-■forms has dramatically transformed the way we consume entertainment. These platforms have revived classic content and introduced regional gems into mainstream media, offering a broad spectrum of India's diverse cinematic landscape to a global audience. Moreover, OTT has changed the way we socialize, becoming a central part of conversations, from casual chats to virtual gatherings. Where once people exchanged pleasantries with questions

like "Aur Batao" (What's up?),

today, the perfect response is

often about the latest series or

film one is watching. Virtual

watch parties have emerged as

popular avenues for friends



CHAITANYA K **PRASAD**

tance, to connect and share viewing experiences in real time. OTT platforms cater to diverse tastes, ensuring there's But what makes people subscribe to one OTT platform

something for everyone. after another? The simple answer is content. OTT platforms have built vast libraries of classic shows and films, making iconic series easily accessible. Shows like "Malgudi and families, separated by dis Days", celebrated for its story-

telling and memorable music, and "Fauji", featuring Shah Rukh Khan's debut, are just a click away. This accessibility allows viewers to journey back in time, relive cherished moments, and introduce younger generations to timeless narratives that shaped Indian television during the Doordarshan era.

Contemporary creators are also blending nostalgia with new storytelling. Content like 'Laapata Ladies", "Heeramandi", "Guns and Gulaabs", "Jubilee", "Bambai Meri Jaan", and "Rocket Boys" weave retro elements into engaging plots. These narratives are often set in simpler times, free of modern technol-

ogy, offering viewers a respite

from the chaos of the modern

world. They transport audi-

ences to the past, making the stories richer and more captivating. Take "Laapata Ladies", for

instance. Set in the early 2000s, its storyline is centered around a lost bride, but what captivates viewers is its charming simplicity. Scenes featuring a tea stall on a forgotten railway station or a sketch of the bride being shared in the absence of digital photos transport viewers to a different era. Such moments invite the audience to reminisce about their own memories, perhaps recalling special moments from railway journeys or simpler times in their lives.

The use of cultural symbolsretro fashion, old advertisements, vintage phones, cars, and even homes-evokes a sense of nostalgia. Everyday



objects like tape recorders, old computers, and the way people socialized in the past contribute to the surreal experience of OTT content. It's a reminder of how far society has come, while also showcasing the beauty of the past. This emotional connection enriches the overall viewing experience and keeps viewers coming back for more.

OTT's appeal to nostalgia has also fueled the popularity of the "OTT and Chill" culture. A recent example is Manoj

Tiwari's rendition of the famous Bhojpuri Sohar "Hind Ke Sitare" for an OTT show, which became an internet sensation. The track went viral, with people of all ages singing along, demonstrating how content that resonates with simpler times can bring generations together.

In addition to revisiting the past, OTT platforms continuously release new content, often with extensive promotional efforts that make certain shows highly popular. Red carpet events for premieres, media coverage, and articles listing the "10 best OTT shows to watch" have all become part of the cultural zeitgeist. Even major events like the Indian Premier League (IPL) stream on OTT platforms, drawing massive audiences.

OTT also champions diverse talent. Independent filmmakers and regional storytellers, who might have been overlooked in traditional media, now have a platform to showcase their work to a global audience. This has led to the discovery of fresh voices and unique stories, breaking down geographical barriers. OTT's ability to feature content in multiple Indian languages has helped regional films and series gain national and international recognition.

According to a FICCI-EY report from 2023, regional content on OTT platforms overtook Hindi language content for the first time, with the share of regional language titles rising from 47% in 2021 to 52% in 2023. Stars like Mohanlal, Junior NTR, Vijay

Sethupathi, and Fahadh Faasil, once confined to regional industries, have now become household names across India. thanks to the reach of OTT. Films like "RRR" (Telugu), "Pushpa" (Telugu), "KGF" (Kannada), "Kantara" (Kannada), (Kannada), have found new audiences through OTT platforms. Actors like Vijay Sethupathi, who gained prominence in Tamil cinema, have become pan-Indian stars, appearing in films like "Jawan" and "Merry Christmas". This cross-cultural fusion, accelerated by the pandemic, reflects the growing demand for diverse content.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI. Research and Inputs by Priya kamra, Views

Israel raids, shuts down Al Jazeera bureau in West Bank

Israeli troops raided the offices of the satellite news network Al Jazeera in the Israeli-occupied West Bank early Sunday, ordering the bureau to shut down amid a widening campaign by Israel targeting the Qatar-funded broadcaster as it covers the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza

Al Jazeera aired footage of Israeli troops live on its Arabic-language channel ordering the office to be shut for 45 days. It follows an order issued in May that saw Israeli police raid Al Jazeera's broadcast position in East Jerusalem, seizing equipment there, preventing its broadcasts in Israel and block-

ing its websites. The move marked the first time Israel has ever shuttered a foreign news outlet operating in the country. However, Al Jazeera has continued operating in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, territories that the Palestinians hope to have for their future state.

The Israeli military acknowledged conducting the raid 12 hours later, alleging without providing evidence that the newsroom was "being used to incite terror, to support terrorist activities and that the channel's broadcasts endanger security and public order".

Al Jazeera denounced Israel's "unfounded accusations" as it continued broadcasting live from Amman, Jordan, even as Israeli troops welded shut its office doors in Ramallah and confiscated its equipment.

"Al Jazeera will not be intimidated or deterred by efforts to silence its coverage," it said. Armed Israeli troops entered

the office and told a reporter live on air that it would be shut down, saying that staff needed to leave immediately. The network later aired what appeared to be Israel troops tearing down a banner on a balcony used by the Al Jazeera office. Al Jazeera said it bore an image of Shireen Abu Akleh, a ist shot dead by Israeli forces in

Al Íazeera's local bureau chief. Walid al-Omari, later told the AP that the Israeli military cited laws dating back to the British Mandate of Palestine to support its closure order.

The Palestinians secured limited self-rule in Gaza and parts of the occupied West Bank through the 1993 Oslo agreements. While Israel occupies and controls vast areas of the West Bank, Ramallah is under full Palestinian political and security control, making the Israeli raid on the Al Jazeera office that much more surprising. Journalists criticise raid and closure order The Palestinian Journalists

Syndicate denounced the Israeli raid and closure order.

'This arbitrary military decision is a new aggression against journalistic work and media outlets," it said.

The Palestinian Authority administers parts of the West Bank. Its forces were driven from Gaza when Hamas seized power in 2007, and it has no power there. The Authority's Foreign Ministry condemned

Communication Israeli Minister Shlomo Karhi later described the raid as affecting "the mouthpiece of Hamas and Hezbollah", the Shiite militia in Lebanon that Israel targeted with strikes on Sunday after cross-border fire from the mil-

"We will continue to fight the enemy channels and ensure the safety of our heroic fighters," Karhi posted on X. Neither he nor the Israeli military addressed what legal authority Israel had to order the bureau closed.

Israel's Foreign Press Association said it was "deeply troubled by this escalation, which threatens press freedom, and urges the Israeli government to reconsider these

actions".
"Restricting foreign reporters and closing news channels, signals a shift away from demo-



Hospital staff and soldiers move patients and equipment to the underground ward at Rambam medical center as fighting escalates between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. in Haifa, Israel, on Sunday

cratic values," it said.

The Israel-Hamas war has been extensively covered by Al Iazeera

The network has reported on the Israeli-Hamas war nonstop since the militants' initial crossborder attack on October 7. Al Jazeera has maintained 24hour coverage in the Gaza Strip amid Israel's grinding ground offensive that has killed and wounded members of its

It remained unclear whether the Israeli military would tarthe Israeli military would target Al Jazeera's operation in Gaza as well. While including on-the-ground reporting of the war's casualties, Al Jazeera's Arabic arm often publishes verbatim video statements from Hamas and other region-

al militant groups. That has led to Israeli claims by officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, that the network has "harmed Israel's security and incited against soldiers".

Those claims have been vehemently denied by Al Jazeera, whose main funder, Oatar, has been key in negotiations between Israel and Hamas to

reach a cease-fire to end the war. An order closing Al Jazeera in Israel has been repeatedly renewed in the time since, but it hadn't as of yet ordered the Ramallah offices closed.

The Israeli government has taken action against individual reporters over the decades since its founding in 1948, but broadly allows for a media scene that includes foreign bureaus from around the world, even from Arab nations. It also blocked the foreign broadcasts of the Hezbollahaffiliated, Beirut-based Al Mayadeen news channel at the start of the war.

Criticism of Al Jazeera isn't new. Washington singled out the broadcaster during the US occupation of Iraq after its 2003 invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein and for airing videos of the late al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden.

Al Jazeera has been closed or blocked by other governments in the Middle East.

Most notably in 2013, Egyptian authorities raided a luxury hotel used by Al Jazeera as an operating base after the military takeover that followed mass protests against President Mohammed Morsi. Three Al Jazeera staff members received 10-year prison sentences, but were released in 2015 following widespread international crit-

The Israel-Hamas war began when Hamas-led fighters killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in an October 7 attack on southern Israel. They abducted another 250 people and are still holding around 100 hostages

hostages.
Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed at least 41,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between fighters and civilians.

The closure of Al Jazeera's Ramallah office also comes as tensions continue to rise over a possible expansion of the war to Lebanon, where electronic devices exploded last week in a likely sabotage campaign by Israel targeting the Shiite mili-tia Hezbollah. The explosions Tuesday and Wednesday killed at least 37 people — including two children — and wounded

Hezbollah fires over 100 rockets across Israel

Hezbollah launched more than 100 rockets early Sunday across a wider and deeper area of northern Israel, with some landing near the city of Haifa, as Israel launched hundreds of strikes on Lebanon. The sides appeared to be spiralling toward all-out war following months of escalating tensions. The rocket barrage overnight The rocket barrage overnight set off air raid sirens across northern Israel, sending thousands of people scrambling into shelters. The Israeli mil-itary said that rockets had been fired "toward civilian areas," pointing to a possible escalation after previous barrages had mainly been aimed at military targets. Lebanon's Health Ministry

said that one person was killed and another wounded in an Israeli strike near the border. Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said that it treated four people for shrap-nel wounds, including a 76year-old man who was mod-erately wounded in Kiryat Bialik, a community near Haifa where buildings were damaged and cars set on fire. It wasn't immediately clear if the damage was caused by a rocket or an Israeli interceptor. The barrage came after an Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Friday killed at least 45 people, including one of Hezbollah's top leaders as well as women and children. Hezbollah was already reeling from a sophisticated attack that caused thousands of personal devices to explode just days earlier.

The Israeli military said that it carried out a wave of strikes across southern Lebanon over the past 24 hours, hitting

about 400 militant sites. including rocket launchers. Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said those strikes had thwarted an even larger attack. "Hundreds of thousands of civilians have come under fire across a lot of northern Isreal They spent the night and now the morning in bomb shelters," he said. "Today we saw

Israel's Health Ministry said that all hospitals in the north would begin moving operations to protected areas or shelters within the medical centres.

fire that was deeper into Israel

than before."

In a separate development, Israeli forces raided the West Bank bureau of Al-Jazeera, which it had banned earlier this year, accusing it of serving as a mouthpiece for militant groups, allegations denied by the pan-Arab broadcaster. Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire since the outbreak of the war in Gaza nearly a year ago, when the militant group began firing rockets in solidarity with the Palestinians and its fellow Iran-backed ally Hamas. The low-level fighting has killed dozens of people in Israel, hundreds in Lebanon, and displaced tens of thousands on both sides of

the frontier. Neither side is believed to be seeking a war. But in recent weeks, Israel has shifted its focus from Gaza to Lebanon, and vowed to bring back calm to the border so that its citizens can return to their homes. Hezbollah has said that it would only halt its attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which appears increasingly elusive as longrunning talks led by the United States, Egypt and

Qatar have repeatedly bogged

down. The war in Gaza began with Hamas' Oct 7 attack into Israel, in which Palestinian militants killed about 1,200 people and took around 250 others hostage. They are still holding around 100 captives, a third of whom are believed to be dead. Gaza's Health Ministry says that more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed. It doesn't say how many were fighters, but says women and children make up more than half of the dead.

Families of the hostages have raised fears that a war in the north would distract from their plight and further complicate the negotiations over their release.

Israeli media reported that rockets fired from Lebanon early Sunday were intercepted in the areas of Haifa and Nazareth, which are further south than most of the rocket fire to date. Israel cancelled school across the north, deepening the sense of crisis.

Hezbollah said that it had launched dozens of Fadi 1 and Fadi 2 missiles - a new type of weapon the group hadn't used before - at the Ramat David airbase, southeast of Haifa, "in response to the repeated Israeli attacks that targeted various Lebanese regions and led to the fall of many civilian martyrs". In July, the group released a video with what it said was footage it had filmed of the base with surveillance drones.

Hezbollah also said it had tar geted the facilities of the Rafael defence firm, which is headquartered in Haifa, calling it retaliation for the wireless devices attack. It didn't provide evidence, and the Israeli military declined to comment on the statement.

Britain's Labour Party gathers after rocky start in government

 $T^{\text{his should be a time of celebration}} for \ \ Britain's \\ \text{Labour Party, which opens its}$ annual conference Sunday less ning power in a landslide after 14 years in opposition.

But it's no victory lap for Prime Minister Keir Starmer. His government is facing a reckoning with a battered economy and an electorate impatient for change. The mood among Labour members gathering in the northwest England city of Liverpool has been further dampened by a tempest over Starmer's acceptance of freebies at a time when the millions of people are struggling with the cost of living.

Starmer insists he followed the rules when he took clothes and designer eyeglasses from Waheed Alli, a media entrepreneur and longtime Labour donor. But after days of negative headlines, the party now says Starmer won't accept any more free outfits.

"I get that people are angry," said Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, who also accepted donations to pay for clothing.

"But donations for gifts and hospitality and monetary donations have been a feature of our politics for a very long time," she told the BBC. "People can look it up and see what people have had donations for, and the transparency is really important." Starmer won the July 4 election on a promise to "restore politics as a force for good" after scandal-tarnished years under the Conservatives. He vowed to get the country's sluggish economy growing and restore frayed public services such as the state-funded

Since then, he has struck a gloomy note, saying there is a 22 billion pound (\$29 billion) "black hole" in the public finances left by the Conservative government, and warning that "things will get worse" before they get better. One of the government's first major acts was to strip millions of retirees of a payment intended to help heat their homes in

National Health Service.

Starmer also had to deal with anti-immigrant unrest that

erupted after three children were stabbed to death in Southport, near Liverpool in July. Starmer responded firmly, pledging swift justice and tough sentences for rioters. legacy of the last government, meant hundreds of inmates had to be freed early to make way for the newly convicted rioters. Then came the clothing scandal, dubbed "frockgate" after

dresses gifted to the prime minister's wife, Victoria Starmer. Keir Starmer is also facing

grumbling among his own employees over the salary of his chief of staff, Sue Gray. The BBC disclosed that she is paid 170,000 pounds (\$225,000) a — about 3,000 pounds more than the prime minister's salary. The government says it wasn't involved in setting the pay scale for political advisers. Labour says that the criticism is being whipped up by the Conservatives and their media supporters. But polls suggest it has hurt. An Ipsos poll released Friday found 25% of respondents thought Starmer was doing a good job – down from 36% in July — while 42% thought he was doing a bad job, up from 14%. The firm interviewed 1,082 adults by telephone and the margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points. "He promised to be different, but he hasn't been," Conservative lawmaker Chris Philp told the BBC. "He is not running a government of service, he is running a govern-

The diet of bad news has alarmed many Labour members, who worry worse is to come in the form of tax increases and spending cuts when the government announces its first budget on October 30.

ment of self-service.

Labour leaders will try to convey a more positive message when Treasury chief Rachel Reeves makes a televised conference speech on Monday, followed by Starmer on Tuesday. They're hoping to inject some cheer into the four-day conference, a blend of pep rally, policy forum and boozy bash that plays a key role in maintaining morale among party activists.

Dissanayake to become **Sri Lanka President**

Marxist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake rose from a humble background to the pinnacle of leadership in Sri Lanka, presenting himself as a transformative leader to young voters and "corrupt politics" of the traditional politicians. Dissanayake, 56, popularly known as AKD, was on Sunday declared the winner of Saturday's presidential elec-

The election on Saturday was the first to be held since mass protests unseated Gotabava Rajapaksa in 2022 after the country suffered an economic crisis.

His accession to the post is a remarkable turnaround for his half-century-old party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which had long remained on the margins. He is Sri Lanka's first-ever Marxist party leader to become head of state.

The leader of the JVP's broader front, the National People's Power (NPP), Dissanayake's anti-corruption message and

his promise of a change in political culture resonated strongly with young voters who have been demanding system change since the economic crisis.

The NPP's popularity has risen sharply since 2022 after securing only around three per cent tial election in 2019.

"In our country, only an uncorrupt force will take action against the corrupt. The slogan of punishing the corrupt has been echoed on stage since 1994 under Chandrika (Kumaratunga), Mahinda (Rajapaksa), Maithripala (Sirisena) and Gotabaya (Rajapaksa). The corrupt will never punish the corrupt. The corrupt always protect the corrupt. It is the NPP's priority to end corruption," he said in an interview with Daily Mail online in August.

Dissanayake, during another event in March, passionately asserted that the political struggle is not merely about a change of government but an endeavour to usher in political, economic, and social transformations of paramount importance in Sri Lanka's history. Dissanayake, who hails from rural Thambuttegama in the North Central province, is a science graduate from the Colombo suburban Kelaniya University.

He joined the JVP, the moththe height of their anti-Indian rebellion. The JVP eliminated many activists of all democratic parties that supported the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987. The Rajiv Gandhi-J R Jayawardena pact was the direct Indian intervention to solve the Tamil demand for political autonomy in the country. The JVP dubbed the Indian intervention as a betraval of Sri Lanka's sovereignty.

However, Dissanayake's visit to India in February this year is seen as a change in the NPP leadership's approach towards India, expressing alignment with foreign investment interests. With JVP's taking up democratic politics in the late 90s, Dissanayake got a place in the JVP central committee.

4 killed, many hurt in Birmingham late night shooting

 $F_{\rm more\ than\ 20\ were\ wound-}^{\rm our\ people\ have\ died\ and}$ ed in a shooting in a nightlife Police said the victims found according to police and news reports.

There were multiple people shot on 20th Street near Magnolia Avenue in the Five Points South area on Saturday, the Birmingham Police Department said in a social media post.

Birmingham Officer Truman Fitzgerald said the shooting with up to 21 people wounded happened shortly after 11 pm in the 2000 block of Magnolia Avenue South, AL.COM reported.

Fitzgerald said there were "dozens of gunshot victims" and at least four had "lifethreatening" injuries, AL.COM reported. Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service pronounced the three victims dead on the scene and a fourth

person was pronounced dead at University of Alabama at Birmingham I AL.COM reported. Hospital,

men and a woman, WBMA-ΓV reported. Other victims were transport-

ed to hospitals in private vehicles, police told WBMA. The Birmingham police did not immediately respond to an

email from The Associated Press seeking additional information. The Five Points South area of

Birmingham has numerous entertainment venues, restaurants and bars and often is crowded on Saturday nights. Police said there were no immediate arrests.

'We will do everything we possibly can to make sure we uncover, identify and hunt down whoever is responsible for preying on our people this morning," Fitzgerald told

Social Democrats seek to hold off far right in vote Berlin (AP): A state election is

German chancellor's

taking place in Brandenburg on Sunday, three weeks after a farright party made gains in two other states in eastern Germany. Around 2.1 million people are registered to vote for a new state parliament in Brandenburg, the state that Germany. Sunday's election is being

watched closely for signs about the country's political direction. The latest polls showed the farright Alternative for Germany nēck-and-neck with the Social Democrats, the party that has governed Brandenburg continuously since German reuni fication in 1990. The Social Democrats, the largest party in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's threeway coalition government, are hoping to maintain control of their stronghold in the face of rising support for parties on the extreme right and left. If the Social Democrats lose in Brandenburg, where Scholz himself has his constituency, it would be seen as a bad sign for him a year before federal elections are due to be held.

Outlook gloomy as world leaders gather in NY for UN General Assembly

AP UNITED NATIONS

 $F_{\text{crises across a fragmented}}^{\text{acing a swirl of conflicts and}}$ world, leaders attending this week's annual UN gathering are being challenged: Work together — not only on front-burner issues but on modernizing the international institutions born after World War II so they can tackle the threats and problems of the future.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued the challenge a year ago after sounding a global alarm about the survival of humanity and the planet: Come to a "Summit of the Future" and make a new commitment to multilateralism – the foundation of the United Nations and many other global bodies - and start fixing the aging global architecture to meet the rapidly changing world.

The UN chief told reporters last week that the summit "was born out of a cold, hard fact: international challenges are moving faster than our ability to solve them." He pointed to "out-of-control geopolitical divisions" and "runaway" conflicts, climate change, inequalities, debt and new technologies like artificial intelligence which have no guardrails. The two-day summit starts

Sunday, two days before the high-level meeting of world leaders begins at the sprawling UN compound in New York City. Whether it takes even a first step toward the future remains to be seen. There was no final agreement Saturday on its main outcome document a lengthy pact that requires support from all 193 UN member nations to be adopted. Diplomats said Russia and a few others still had objections to the final text. "Leaders must ask themselves

whether this will be yet another meeting where they simply talk about greater cooperation and consensus, or whether they will show the imagination and conviction to actually forge it," said Agnès Callamard, the secretary-general of Amnesty International. "If they miss this opportunity, I shudder to think of the consequences. Our collective future is at stake." This is the UN's biggest week of the year The summit is the prelude to

this year's high-level meeting, held every September. More than 130 presidents, prime ministers and monarchs are slated to speak along with dozens of ministers, and the issues at the summit are expected to dominate their speeches and private meetings, especially the wars in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan and the growing possibility of a wider Mideast

There is going to be a rather obvious gap between the Summit of the Future, with its focus on expanding international cooperation, and the reality that the UN is failing in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan," said Richard Gowan, U.N. director for the International Crisis Group. "Those three wars will be top topics of attention for most of the week.'

One notable moment at Tuesday's opening assembly meeting: U.S. President Joe Biden's likely final major appearance on the world stage, a platform he has tread upon and reveled in for decades. At the upcoming meetings, US

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told reporters this week: "The most vulnerable around the world are counting on us to make progress, to make change, to bring about a sense of hope for them. To meet the many global chal-

lenges, she said, the US focus at the UN meetings will be on ending "the scourge of war." Roughly 2 billion people live in conflict-affected areas, she said. Last September, the war in Ukraine and its president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, took center stage at the U.N. global gathering. But as the first anniversary of Hamas' deadly attack in southern Israel approaches on October 7, the spotlight is certain to be on the war in Gaza and escalating violence across the Israeli-Lebanon border, which is now threatening to spread to the wider Middle East.

Iran supports both Hamas in Gaza and Lebanon's Hezbollah

militants. Its new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, will address world leaders on Tuesday afternoon. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to speak Thursday morning and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday afternoon.

Zelenskyy will get the spotlight twice. He will speak Tuesday at a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council — called by the United States, France Japan, Malta, South Korea and Britain — and will address the General Assembly Wednesday morning.

Slovenia, which holds the council's rotating presidency this month, chose the topic "Leadership for Peace" for its high-level meeting Wednesday, challenging its 15 member nations to address why the UN body charged with maintaining international peace and security is failing — and how it can do better.

"The event follows our observation that we live in a world of grim statistics, with the highest number of ongoing conflicts, with record high casualties among civilians, among humanitarians, among medical workers, among journalist," Slovenian U.N. Ambassador Samuel Zbogar told reporters. He cited a record-high 100 million people driven from their homes by conflict. 'The world is becoming less

stable, less peaceful, and with erosion of the respect for the rules, it is sliding into the state of disorder," Zbogar said. "We have not seen this high need to rebuild trust to secure the future ever before." A key reason for the Security Council's dysfunction is the

deep division among its five veto-wielding permanent members. The United States, Israel's closest ally, is a supporter of Ukraine alongside Britain and France. Russia invaded Ukraine and has a military and economic partnership with China, though Beijing reasserted its longstanding support for every country's sovereignty without criticizing Russia in a recent briefing paper for the UN

Donald Trump's goal of mass US to return China testing us, Biden caught telling Ouad leaders on bot mice deportations falls short

Donald Trump has long pledged to deport millions of people, but he's bringing more specifics to his current bid for the White House: invoking wartime powers, relying on likeminded governors and using the

Trump's record as president shows a vast gulf between his ambitions and the legal, fiscal and political realities of mass deportations of people in the United States illegally — 11 million in January 2022, by the Homeland Security Department's latest estimate. Former President Barack

Obama carried out 432,000 deportations in 2013, the highest annual total since records were kept Deportations under Trump never topped 350,000. But he and his chief immigration pol-

icy architect, Stephen Miller, have offered clues in interviews and rallies of taking a different approach if they are returned to power in November. They could benefit from lessons learned during their of four years in office and, potentially, from more Trump-appointed judges. "What Trump seems to be contemplating is potentially lawful," said Joseph Nunn, counsel at the Brennan Centre for Justice at New York University's School of Law. "There might not be a lot of legal barriers. It is going to be logistically extraordinarily com-plicated and difficult. The military is not going to like doing it and they are going to drag their feet as much as they can, but it is possible, so it should be taken seriously."

The Trump campaign, asked how his pledge would be carried out, said Trump would begin the largest deportation programme in US history, without elaborating in detail. Karoline Leavitt, a spokeswoman, said Trump "would marshal every federal and state power necessary to institute the largest deportation operation of illegal criminals, drug dealers, and human traf-

How would Trump overcome inevitable legal challenges? Trump has said he would invoke the Alien Enemies Act, a 1798



Matter protests near the White

House, despite the mayor's

opposition. Trump did so with-

out invoking the 18th-century

war powers law, but the District

of Columbia's federal status gives

the president outsized authori-

Trump may also contend with

rights afforded under immi-

gration law and court rulings

that took shape after 1798,

including a right to seek asylum

that became law in 1980. Under

a 2001 Supreme Court ruling,

people in the country illegally can't be detained indefinitely if

there is no reasonable chance

their countries will take them

back. Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and others are either

slow to accept their citizens or

refuse. US Immigration and

Customs Enforcement is fund-

ed by Congress for 41,500 deten-

tion beds this year, raising ques-

tions about where Trump would

house people before they board

deportation flights and how

long they could hold them if

countries refuse to take them

back. Miller floated the idea of

"large-scale staging grounds near the border, most likely in

ICE officers are painstakingly

deliberate, researching back-

grounds of their targets and pri-

oritizing people with criminal

convictions. They try to capture

suspects outside their homes

because they generally work

without court warrants and

A single arrest may require

hours of surveillance and

research, a job that one ICE offi-

cial likened to watching paint

people don't have to let them

ty to act.

law that allows the president to deport any noncitizen from a country that the US is at war

Texas Gov, Greg Abbott has advanced a theory that illegal immigration amounts to an invasion to justify state enforcement measures, so far without success, but legal scholars say judges may be reluctant to second-guess what a president considers a foreign aggression.

The sweeping Alien Enemies Act authority may sidestep a law that bans the military from civilian law enforcement.

Trump has said he would focus on deploying the National Guard, whose troops can be activated on orders of a governor. Miller says troops under sympathetic Republican governors would send troops to nearby states that refuse to participate. 'The Alabama National Guard is going to arrest illegal aliens in Alabama and the Virginia National Guard in Virginia. And if you're going to go into an unfriendly state like Maryland, well, there would just be Virginia doing the arrest in Maryland, right, very close, very nearby," Miller said last year on "The Charlie Kirk Show."

The military has been peripherally involved at the border since President George W Bush's administration with activities that are not deemed to be law enforcement, such as surveillance, vehicle maintenance and installing concertina wire.

Nunn, of New York University's Brennan Centre, said Trump may look to 2020, when he ordered the National Guard to disperse peaceful Black Lives

dry. "On practical level, it will be nearly impossible for (Trump) to do the things he's talking about, even if could bring in the mili-tary," said John Sandweg, a senior Homeland Security Department official in the Obama administration.

Obama's deportation numbers were made possible by local police who turned people over to ICE, but many state and local governments have since introduced limits on cooperation with federal immigration authorities. Obama's presidency also predated a surge of asylumseekers at the border, which drained limited resources of the Trump and Biden administra-

While many support Trump's plans, mass deportation could tear apart families, exacerbate labour shortages and uproot people with deep ties to their communities. Pew Research Centre estimates 70% of households with at least one person in the United States illegally also have someone in the country

Military leaders are likely to resist because it would undercut other priorities and damage morale, Nunn said.

The military is going see this and say this is not the kind of duty that soldiers signed up for, he said. "This is getting the military involved in domestic politics in a way the military does n't like to do.'

Adam Goodman, associate professor of history and Latin American studies at the University of Illinois, Chicago, who has written about deportations, said a threat of a mass expulsion can have a serious impact even if it isn't carried out. He thinks it is highly unlikely that Trump can do what he promises but it can strike fear in immigrant communities.

In June 2019, Trump announced ICE would "begin the process of removing the millions of illegal aliens" the following week. A month later, the agency said it targeted about 2,100 people, resulting in 35 arrests, indicating the president's plans fell far short but only after they generated widespread concern in immigrant

antiquities

Wilmington (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed deep appreciation for US President Joe Biden for ensuring the return of 297 invaluable antiquities to India. Prime Minister Modi is in the US for a three-day visit to "further strengthen India-US Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."
He attended the Quad Leaders

Summit on Saturday hosted by

President Biden in his home town Wilmington, Delaware. "Deepening cultural connect and strengthening the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural properties. I am extremely grateful to President Biden and the US Government for ensuring the return of 297 invaluable antiquities to India. @POTUS @JoeBiden," Prime Minister Modi posted on X. In July, India and the US signed

their first agreement to prevent illegal trafficking of cultural property and return of antiquarian objects to their place of origin. "Preserving heritage and culture: restituting antiq-uities. The US side has facilitated the return of 297 stolen or trafficked antiquities during the visit of PM @narendramodi to US," Ministry of External

Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X. 'PM @narendramodi and @POTUS @JoeBiden witnessed a few antiquities on the sidelines of their bilateral meeting as a symbolic handing over of the artefacts. India and USA recently signed the first ever Cultural Property Agreement to prevent illegal trafficking of cultural property and retrieval of antiquities," Jaiswal posted. After wrapping up the Quad Leaders' meeting in Wilmington, Modi has left for

New York to address a key conclave at the United Nations. In New York, Modi will attend an Indian community event at Long Island on September 22 and address the Summit of the Future at the UN General Assembly the next day.

The prime minister's other engagements include participating in a round table with CEOs of American firms working on cutting-edge technologies such as AI, quantum computing and semiconductors.

telling Quad leaders on hot mic

US President Joe Biden was caught on a hot mic telling leaders of the Quad nations that China was testing them, thus reflecting upon the American seriousness of the emerging Chinese threat. Biden's remark came during the Quad Leaders' Summit on Saturday, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

"We believe Xi Jinping is looking to focus on domestic economic challenges and minimise the turbulence in China, Biden told the leaders at the Summit.

His opening remarks were caught on the hot mic as pool reporters were leaving the Summit venue. Biden was heard saying that Chinese President Xi Jinping is "looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interest.

Biden added that China continues to "behave aggressively, testing us all across the region on several fronts, including on economic and technology issues".

"At the same time, we believe intense competition requires intense diplomacy," he said. Later a senior administration official tried to downplay the error. "I don't think I have

much to elaborate on that. It's consistent with what has been said before, and I don't think it'll be much of a surprise that our inside voice matches our outside voice," the official said. "I think it's not surprising

that China would have been on the agenda. It's an Indo-Pacific convening. This is an Indo-Pacific partnership. China is a major country in the Indo-Pacific. But I think it's also fair to say that there were a number of other topics on the agenda," said the offi-

> China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

> It claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have coun-

> The four-member Quad, or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, advocates upholding a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. China claims that the grouping aims to con-

Over 20 wounded after Russia strikes apartment blocks

 $R^{\mathrm{ussian}\,\mathrm{strikes}\,\mathrm{hit}\,\mathrm{high}\text{-rise}}_{\mathrm{apartment}\,\mathrm{blocks}\,\mathrm{in}}$ Ukraine's Kharkiv, leaving dozens wounded in a second consecutive nighttime attack this week. The bombs fell Saturday night on the district of Shevchenkivsky, in Ukraine's northeast, local Governor Oleh Syniehubov said. Residential 16 and 9-storied buildings were destroyed, and seven more buildings were damaged, he added. Twenty-

one people were wounded, including an eight-year-old, two 17-year-olds and several older adults, according to Syniehubov and Kharkiv mayor Ihor Terekhov.

The attack came after another late Friday that wounded 15 people, including a 10- and 12year-old, as Russian airstrikes hit three Kharkiv neighbourhoods, Terekhov said

According to Ukrainian officials, KAB-type aerial glide bombs were used in both attacks, a retrofitted Soviet

weapon that has for months laid waste to eastern Ukraine. Russia also launched 80 Shahed drones and two missiles at Ukraine overnight into Sunday, the Ukrainian air force said in an online statement. Ukrainian air defence shot down 71 drones, and another six were lost on location due to electronic warfare countermeasures, the state ment said.

Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in Feb

Biden positive about India's plan to procure MQ-9B drones from US

PTI WILMINGTON

US President Joe Biden welcomed the progress towards India concluding the procurement of 31 longendurance MQ-9B armed drones from American defence major General Atomics as he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to boost two-way reciprocal supply of defence hardware amid common concerns over China's growing military might. The US President hosted Modi at his personal home in Wilmington, Delaware on Saturday afternoon and the two leaders held wide-ranging aspects of India-US ties including ways to further ramp up bilateral defence and

military engagement. A joint fact-sheet on Modi-Biden talks said the two leaders recognised the remarkable progress achieved under

LOST & FOUND

Rajwant Kaur W/o late Sh.

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President Biden welcomed domains," it said. India is procuring the 'hunter-

> NOTICE SHAHNAJ BEGUM wife of Late

the US-India defence industrial cooperation roadmap, including ongoing collaboration to advance priority coproduction arrangements for jet engines, munitions, and ground mobility systems.

the progress towards India concluding procurement of 31 General Atomics MQ-9B remotely piloted aircraft and their associated equipment, which will enhance the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities of India's armed forces across all

killer drones (16 Sky Guardian) from US Defence major General Atomics at a

marily to crank up its surveillance apparatus along the frontier with China as well as in the Indian Ocean region. It is learnt that the price negotiations for the procurement have been sealed and both sides are likely to formally con-

cost of over USD 3 billion pri-

clude the deal by next month. The remotely piloted drones are capable of remaining airborne for around 35 hours and can be deployed on a range of missions. However, there was no specific mention of the ambitious plan to co-produce F-414 fighter jet engines in

MOHD. SAMED residence of Q. NO. 1480, TYPE-2, DMW COLONY. PATIALA (PUNJAB) INDIA do

nereby solemnly and declare as 1. That I am permanent resident of bove mentioned address.

. That this is to inform to all that my nusband Late Mr. MOHD. SAMED SUPERTECH GOLF VILLAGE COUNTRY PROJECT AT YAMUNA EXPRESSWAY (U.P.) in 2014. He nas expired on 19.04.2015.

requested to supertech to transfer his property to my only daughter MS. JAINAB SAMAD. 4. That if anybody has objection for

That now after his death

he same he/she may contact in Supertech Head office E-square Plot. No. C2. sector-96. Noida (U.P.) within 15 days of this notice or ca contact on 93100-12345

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the Public at large that Smt. Neha Kawatra Madan Wo. Sh. Karan Madan and Sh. Umesh Kawatra Svo. Late Sh. Krishan Chand Kawatra are the "Title Holders' in possession of "Entire Ground Floor of Freehold Built up Residential Property Bearing Plot No. 111, Block No. B. (Commonly Known as B-111), Malivja Nagar, New Delhi-110017 admeasuring 289.00 sq. yards', hereinafter referred to as 'Schedule Property vide Sale Deed dated 8th August, 2023 duly registered as Regn. No. 8902 Book No. 1, Vol. No. 5571, pp. 113-150 on 11.08.23 in the Office of the Sub Registrar-V-A, Hauz Khas, New Delhi. That original documents i.e. (f) Lease Deed dated 31.10.64, (iii) Death Certificate of Mrs. Ram Rakhi, (iv) Death Certificate of Mrs. Ram Rakhi, (iv) Death Certificate of Mrs. Ram Rakhi, (iv) Death Certificate of Mrs. Ram Prakash Nanda, (vi) Substitution Letter (L& DO) dated 24.06.04, (vii) Substitution Letter (L& DO) dated 25.07.04 and (viii) Substitution Letter (L& DO) dated 150.704 and (viii) Substitution Letter (L& DO) dated 22.09.24 bearing LR No. 2140399/2024 bas been filled with Delhi Police. This notice is thus issued to the Public at large, i.e. any Person(s), Company(ies), Authority(ies), Society(ies), Coganisation(s), Financial Institution(s), Bank(s), HUSses decident of Substitution Letter (L& DO) dated 24.09.04 and institution(s), Bank(s), HUSses decident in Institution(s), Bank(s), HUSses decident in the Schedule Property, by way obsession of the New Schedule Property, by way misplaced/untraceable original documents of wherewise having any claims, rights, title, interests, possession etc. In the Schedule Property, by way, of Ownership, Succession, Inheritance, Sale Mortgage, Exchange, Charge, Lien, Gift, Trust Encumbrance etc. may come forward with supporting documents, to be delivered to the indersigned within 15 days from the date of this Publication, post expiration of which, any laim(s) or objection(s), if raised or received shall be treated as null & void and as waived. Joni Kashvan Advocate.

GICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh. Delhi-110005 PUBLIC NOTICE-TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to Rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable asset(s)

E-Auction Sale Notice for the sale of immovable asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security nterest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

This notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on 'As is where is', 'As is what is' and 'Whatever there is' as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Price Price Earnest Money Deposit	Time of Property Inspection	Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Rajesh Kumar (Borrower), Mrs. Ratnavali (Co-Borrower) LBBWD00002987335	Plot No-178, Plot-S Khasra No-556 557 558 559, Shree Paras Residency Vill Patan Kala Teh Tijara, Bhiwadi, Rajasthan. Area: 908.55 Sq.Ft	Rs. 8,50,774/- as on September 11, 2024	Rs. 4,00,000/- Rs. 40,000/-	October 04, 2024, From 12:00 Noon to 02:00 PM	
The online auction will be conducted on the website (URL Link- https://disposalhub.com) of our auction agency						

M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. The Mortgagors/ Noticees are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest by October 14, 2024 before 05:00 PM else the secured asset(s) will be sold as per schedule. The prospective bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh. Delhi-110005 on or before October 14, 2024 before 05:00 PM Thereafter, they have to submit their offer through the website mentioned above on or before October 14, 2024 before 05:00 PM along with the scanned image of the Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. In case the prospective bidder(s) is/ are unable to submit his/ her/ their offer through the website, then the signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh. Delhi-110005 on or before October 14, 2024 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit

DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of 'ICICI Bank Limited' payable at Delhi For any further clarifications in terms of inspection, Terms and Conditions of the E-Auction or submission of tenders, contact ICICI Bank Employee Phone No. 8657476284/8584874809 Please note that the Marketing agencies 1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited 2. Augeo Asset Managemen Pvt Ltd 3. Hecta Proptech Pvt. Ltd. have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons For detailed Terms and Conditions of the salé, pleaśe visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s Date : September 23, 2024 Place: Delhi and Gurgaon Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

Explosion at coal mine in eastern Iran kills at least 34 workers health, interior and security and ordered that the issues of

⚠in eastern Iran killed at least 34 workers and injured 17 others, officials said Sunday, marking one of the worst mining disasters in the country's history as others remained missing hours after the blast. The blast struck a coal mine in Tabas, about 540 km (335 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran, on Saturday night. By Sunday, weeping miners stood alongside mine cars that brought up the bodies of their colleagues, all covered in coal dust.

Around 70 people had been working at the time of the blast. State television later said that 17 were believed to be trapped at a depth of 200 metres (650 feet) down a 700-metre (2,300-foot) tunnel. However, figures kept changing throughout Sunday regarding the disaster in the rural area with some reports suggesting the death toll was

higher. A provincial emergency official, Mohammad Ali Akhoundi, told the state-run IRNA news agency Sunday afternoon that the death toll had reached at least 34 as rescue efforts continued.

Survivors interviewed by state TV, still smudged in coal dust,



are seen at the site of a coal mine where methane leak sparked an explosion on Saturday, in Tabas on Sunday

described chaotic scenes after the blast. "We were in the mine, working. Suddenly there was some smoke rising...then I noticed I had difficulty breathing," said one miner, whom state TV did not identify. "I jumped off from the workshop and I scrambled until I reached somewhere (safe). My friends (remained) in there.

sures call for ventilation and

Authorities blamed the blast on a leak of methane gas. Such gases are common in mining, though modern safety mea-

workers. It wasn't immediately clear what safety procedures were in place at the privately owned Mandanjoo Co, which operated the Tabas Parvadeh 5 mine. The firm could not be reached for comment Sunday. Iran's new reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian, preparing to travel to New York for the UN General Assembly, said he ordered all efforts be made to rescue those trapped and aid their families. He also said an investigation into the explosion had begun.

ning reelection, visited the site in Iran's northern Golestan province and angry miners besieged the SUV he rode in, kicking and beating the armored vehicle in a rage. In 2013, 11 workers were killed in two separate mining incidents. In 2009, 20 workers were killed in several incidents. Lax safety standards and inadequate emergency services in mining areas were often blamed for the fatalities. Oil-producing Iran is also rich in a variety of minerals. Iran annually consumes around 3.5 million tons of coal, but only extracts about 1.8 million tons from its mines per year. The

mines. But Iran's mining industry has been struck by disasters before In 2017, a coal mine explosion killed at least 42 people. Then-President Hassan Rouhani campaigning ahead of win-

the injured be quickly resolved,"

Pezeshkian said, according to a

statement from his office. "I

also requested to take measures

to prevent the recurrence of

such incidents by improving

work standards in the country's

rest is imported, often consumed in the country's stee "I spoke with the ministers of mills.

Nepal to organise Yoga Retreat to enhance physical, spiritual health Kathmandu (PTI): In an atte

to promote spiritual tourism, the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) is organising a yoga retreat in western Nepal's Pokhara where renowned yoga enthusiasts from across the world will train in theoretical and practical aspects of the ancient wisdom. The event to be organised in collaboration with Purna Yoga Centre between October 16 and 19 will see the participation of more than 100 yoga enthusiasts in the retreat in the tourist hub Pokhara, according to the organisers. Vegetarian and organic foods will be served and devotional songs as well as relaxing music will be played during the four-day retreat. By organising this event, Nepal aspires to position itself as one of the favourite yoga and spiritual destinations in the global travel market, said Binayak Shah, HAN president. The retreat will be organised annually to promote spiritual tourism, he said. "The art and science of yoga originated from the Himalayas and lord Shiva is the first yogi who taught the ancient wisdom to the humans," he pointed out. "Now we want to cash on this ancient wisdom which is believed to have originated from the Himalayas, the abode of lord Shiva."

other measures to protect Number of rhinos is slightly up but poaching has increased too

AP NAIROBI

The rhino population across I the world has increased slightly but so have the killings, mostly in South Africa, as poaching fed by huge demand for rhino horns remains a top threat, conservationists said in a new report.

The number of white rhinos increased from 15,942 in 2022 to 17,464 in 2023, but the black and greater one-horned rhino stayed the same, according to the report published by the International Rhino Foundation ahead of Sunday's World Rhino Day. Another subspecies, the northern white rhino, is technically extinct

with only two females being kept in a secure private conservancy in Kenya, known as Ol Pejeta. A trial is ongoing to develop embryos in the lab from an egg and sperm previously collected from white rhinos and transferring it into a surrogate female black rhino. A total of 586 rhinos were killed in Africa in 2023, most of them in South Africa which has the highest population of rhinos at an estimated

Union for Conservation of With all five subspecies combined, there are just under were brought into sanctuaries

16,056. The killings increased

from 551 reported in 2022,

according to the International

28,000 rhinos left in the world, from 500,000 at the beginning of the 20th century. Rhinos face various environmental threats like habitat loss due to development and climate change but poaching, based on the belief that their horns have medicinal uses, remains the top threat. Philip Muruthi, the vice pres-

ident for species conservation at the Africa Wildlife Foundation, said protection has played a big role in increasing rhino population. In Kenya, their numbers rose from 380 in 1986 to 1,000 last year, he said. "Why has that happened? Because the rhinos

paign that will end the demand for rhino horn as well as adoption of new technology in tracking and monitoring rhinos for their protection while also educating communities where they live on the benefits of rhinos to the ecosystem and the economy. Known as mega herbivores

Muruthi advocates for a cam-

and were protected."

that mow the parks and create inroads for other herbivores, rhinos are also good for establishing forests by ingesting seeds and spreading them across the parks in their dung. Murithi lamented that the northern white rhino — whose only two females are left in the gotten so close to the brink of extinction. 'Don't get the numbers to where it's very expensive to

world - should have never

recover and we are not even sure that it will happen," he The body of the last male northern white rhino - named

Sudan – that died in 2018 has been preserved and displayed at the Museums of Kenya in Nairobi. A research scientist and curator of mammals at the muse um, Bernard Agwanda, said

preserving Sudan will tell the story of how the species lived among humans and why conservation is important.

Vodafone Idea commits ₹30,000 crore to Nokia, Ericsson, Samsung for network upgrade

 $D_{ ext{on Sunday said it has}}^{ ext{ebt-ridden Vodafone Idea}}$ awarded contracts worth about Rs 30,000 crore to Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung for supply of 4G and 5G network equipment for three

It is the largest deal awarded by any Indian telecom operator during this year. The deal also marks the first

step towards the roll-out of the company's three-year capex (capital expenditure) plan of about USD 6.6 billion or Rs 55,000 crore announced

"Vodafone Idea (VIL) has concluded a mega, about USD 3.6 billion (around Rs 300 billion), deal with Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung for supply of network equipment over a period of three years. The capex programme is directed towards expanding the 4G population coverage from 1.03 billion to 1.2 billion, launching 5G in key markets and capacity expansion in line with data growth," the company said in



The supplies against these new long-term awards will start in the coming quarter. The top priority for the company is to expand the 4G coverage to 1.2 billion Indians, the statement said. VIL CEO Akshaya Moondra said that the company has started the investment cycle

and it is on the journey of VIL

"From hereon, VIL will stage smart turnaround to effectively participate in the growth industry opportunities. Nokia and Ericsson have been our partners since our inception

this marks another

milestone in that continuing partnership

We are pleased to start our new partnership with Samsung. We look forward to work closely with all our partners as we move into the 5G era," Moondra said.

Vodafone Idea (VIL) was the biggest telecom operator formed with the merger of Vodafone India and Idea Cellular in August 2018 with a mobile subscriber base of 40.8 crore. With continuous decline in the subscriber, VIL is now left with 21.5 crore mobile services subscribers as per latest data released by telecom regulator Trai.

VIL had recently raised Rs 24,000 crore through sale of equity and will fund the capital expenditure from the latest capital.

The capex is currently being funded out of the equity raise. For the long-term capex, the company is in advanced stage of discussions with its existing and new lenders to tie up Rs 25,000 crore of funds and Rs 10,000 crore of pon fund 10,000 crore of non-fundbased facilities.

VIL said that it has completed techno economic evaluation of the company's long-term projections

independent third party.
The report has been submitted to all the banks and financial institutions basis which the banks will now progress with their internal evaluation and approval processes. VIL in the last had acquired auction spectrum worth Rs 3,500 crore to increase its network capacity.

The company executed some quick-win capex for the deployment spectrum on existing sites and the roll-out of some new sites. VIL said that the small capex

roll-out boosted its network capacity by about 15 per cent and an increase in population coverage by 16 million by end September, 2024.

The company claimed that it has started witnessing an improvement in customer experience geographies where these rollouts have been completed.

VIL holds a large spectrum portfolio including mid band 5G spectrum in 17 circles and milimetreWave 5G spectrum in 16 circles.

After the Rs 24,000 crore fundraise, including Rs 18,000 crore through a follow-on offer, the company was reeling under the debt of around Rs 2.14 lakh crore.

The company had payment obligations of Rs 2,09,520 crore towards the government as of June 30, 2024, which included the deferred spectrum payment obligations and adjusted gross revenue liability.

Post Rs 24,000 crore fundraise, VIL promoters Aditya Birla Group and Vodafone hold 37.3 per cent and the government 23.2 per cent stake in the company.

Luxury carmakers expect surge during festive season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Luxury carmakers Mercedes-Benz, Audi and BMW are eyeing robust sales during the festive period this year with demand for highend cars continuing to see an upward trend in

In an interaction with PTI, Mercedes-Benz India MD and CEO Santosh Iyer said the luxury car segment is set for its best-ever performance this year with festive season offtakes playing a major role in the overall

He noted that the festive season generally gives high double-digit sales growth, helping the automaker to average out single-digit growth of the earlier quarter.

"So in that sense, on an average, then we are able to get a double-digit growth during the festive season," Iyer stated.

Elaborating on the overall industry, which still remains a very small part of the overall passenger vehicle market in the country, he said the segment is headed for record volumes this fiscal year but not all players are witnessing growth.

"Some (companies) are even degrowing, some are flat and they are facing headwinds, but because we are the primary player in the market, we still feel the luxury car market should cross 50,000-51,000 cars this year," Iyer said. The luxury car market in India currently remains very small accounting for less than 2 per cent of the overall passenger vehicle market in the country.

Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon said the demand in the last few months has grown steadily and the company expects this to continue in the period ahead.



"We are working relentlessly with our HQ to get additional allocations for India, to fulfil this growing demand," he stated.

Having said that, one cannot disregard the fact that the waiting period for Audi cars has gone up owing to demand and supply mismatch, he

"It is also important to mention that the prevailing Global challenges are not only impacting the adequate supply of new cars, but also instilling pressure on the prices," Dhillon stated. With the upcoming festive season, Audi is expecting good growth on the back of sustained demand models like A4, A6, Q5, Q7 and O8. BMW Group India President Vikram Pawah said the fundamentals of the Indian economy are sturdy and consumer confidence in the luxury segment is on the rise.

"For BMW Group India, the order bank is solid and we are trying our best to speed up deliveries for our customers. Along with additional bookings around Diwali and Dussehra, we are confident of closing the year on a high note while clocking impressive growth," he stated.

India, EU to have new round of FTA talks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) will commence the next round of talks for a proposed free trade agreement from Monday here, an official said. The agreement is aimed at

further boosting bilateral investments between the two regions. The two sides are negotiating a free trade agreement, an investment protection agreement and an agreement on geographical indications

"The five-day talks will start from September 23. It will be the ninth round negotiations. stakeholders regarding the EU's sustainability measures, such as CBAM, deforestation and others, will be discussed with the EU," the official said. During the ninth round, both sides will discuss core trade issues covering goods, services, investment and along with necessary rules such as rules of origin, SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary), and technical barriers to

Carbon Border



Adjustment (CBAM) or carbon tax (a kind of import duty) will come into effect from January 1, 2026. It will initially be imposed on seven carbonintensive sectors, including steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium and hydrocarbon

Îndia has raised concerns over these two regulations as it would have an impact on the country's exports to the bloc. According to think tank Global Trade Research ade (GTRI), the Union's Initiative European Regulation Deforestation (EUDR) would hit India's

agricultural exports worth multiple USD 1.3 billion to the EU negotiati starting December 2024. RI said that I firms are concerned about the potential negative impacts of regulations like the carbon tax, deforestation regulation, and supply chain regulation.
"These regulations would

After implementation of the

trade agreement, the EU products will continue to enter India at zero duties, but Indian products may pay 20-35 per cent tariff equivalent as CBAM charges. A suitable text may be inserted in the FTA chapters dealing with this possibility," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. In June 2022, India and the European Union resumed the negotiations after a gap of over eight years. It was stalled in 2013 due to differences over several issues. "Initially, from 2007 to 2013,

rounds negotiations took place but hindered access, intellectual property rights, labour standards, and sustainable development. By 2013, the talks hit a standstill. particularly due to differences on tariffs for automobiles,

wine, spirits, data security for Indian IT firms, and public procurement," it said. It added that one of the major

reasons for the delay is the differing aspirations between the two parties.
The EU seeks

elimination on over 95 per cent of its exports, including agricultural sensitive products and automobiles, while India is comfortable opening up only around 90 per cent of its market and is hesitant to lower tariffs on bulk agricultural products, the GTRI said. Founder

GTRI

Srivastava said that major Indian goods exports to the EU, such as ready-made garments, pharmaceuticals, steel, petroleum products, and electrical machinery, will become more competitive, if the pact gets concluded successfully. Additionally, key services exports telecommunications, other business services, transportation services will also see substantial growth. On the other han will benefit from increased exports of essential goods from India, including aircraft and parts, electrical machinery, diamonds, and

President to inaugurate 16th ASOSAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

President of India Droupadi Murmu will inaugurate the Assembly of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (AŠOSAI) here on Tuesday. The four-day conference will be followed by a

series of discussions on the evolving role of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in fostering transparency and accountability.

'The President of India, Droupadi Murmu will inaugurate the prestigious 16th Assembly of the Asian Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI) here on September 24th, 2024," Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) said in a release. A key highlight of this year's assembly is the

assumption of the chair of ASOSAI by the CAG of India Girish Chandra Murmu for the term 2024-2027. "His leadership is expected to drive the

association towards new frontiers in public audit, particularly in strengthening governance frameworks across Asia," CAG

As part of the programme, the delegates will also participate in a one-day symposium on Digital Public Infrastructure and Gender Divide Issues of Inclusion and Accessibility. The symposium aims to explore critical issues at the intersection of technology, governance, and social inclusion, addressing how digital advancements can bridge the gap between genders in accessing nul

The assembly will witness participation from more than 200 delegates representing 42 countries and international organisations, underscoring the diverse and collaborative nature of ASOSAI.

Delegates will engage in high-level discussions



to enhance the effectiveness of public audit, with a focus on improving accountability and promoting best practices in government

CAG said the conference promises to be more than just a formal gathering -- it will serve as a platform for exchanging innovative ideas and forging stronger regional and global partnerships to fortify the pillars of good

Founded in 1979 with 11 members, ASOSAI has grown to 48 Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), an important regional group under the umbrella of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). ASOSAI plays a central role in promoting

on sharing experiences exchange, and capacity building in the field of public audit amongst its members, as per a statement.

The first ASOSAI Assembly and Governing Board meeting was held in New Delhi in May

undertakings,

run

fees: Report PTI ■ NEW DELHI Around 75 per cent UPI users will stop using it if

quit UPI over

threaten to

any transaction charge is levied on the service, a survey by Localcircles said on Sunday. The survey found that 38 per

cent of users make over 50 per

cent of their payment transactions via UPI instead of debit, credit or any other form of digital transaction. "Only 22 per cent UPI users surveyed are willing to bear a transaction fee on payments, 75 per cent of respondents

stated that they will stop using UPI if a transaction fee is introduced," the survey said. The survey comprising three broad areas claims to have received 42,000 responses rom 308 districts number of replies on each question varied.

The questions regarding transaction fee on UPI received 15,598 responses. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)

posted a record 57 per cent rise in the volume of transactions and 44 per cent rise in value in the 2023-24 fiscal year, compared to the previous fiscal year.

For the first time UPI transactions crossed 100 billion and closed at 131 billion in a financial year, compared to 84 billion in 2022-23.

In value terms, it touched Rs 199.89 trillion, compared to Rs 139.1 trillion, the report said.

The survey found 37 per cent of respondents shared UPI

transaction accounts for more than 50 per cent of their total payment in value terms.

GST rate review meeting scheduled on September 25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The ministerial panel on GST rate rationalisation will meet on September 25 and is expected to discuss tweaking of tax slabs and "The meeting of the GoM on

rationalisation

scheduled for September 25 in Goa," an official told PTI. The six-member Group of Minister (GoM) under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, last met on August 22 and had submitted a status report to the GST Council on

During the August meeting, the panel had tasked the committee comprising tax officers from the Centre and states to analyse the implication of tax

September 9.

and gather more data. Currently, goods and services tax (GST) is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent.

rate change on some items

Under GST, essential items are either exempted or taxed at the lowest slab, while luxury and demerit items attract the highest slab. Luxury and sin goods attract cess on top of the highest 28

per cent slab. There have been talks of merging the 12 and 18 per cent tax slabs, but nothing has

been proposed so far. Around 12 per cent, the average GST rate has fallen below the revenue neutral rate



of 15.3 per cent. This has prompted the need to start discussions on GST rate rationalisation.

States such as West Bengal and Karnataka were not in favour of tinkering with GST slabs for now.

West Bengal Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya had said after the GoM meet in August, "I have said there should be no changes in the GST slab".

Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda had said the GoM has to analyse whether there is need to "disturb" the GST system, which has now broadly stabilised.

'What do you achieve by disturbing it. We said in next meeting we will discuss it (reducing slabs)," Byre Gowda had said.

The six-member GoM also Uttar Pradesh includes Minister Suresh Finance Kumar Khanna, Rajasthan Health Services Minister Gajendra Singh, and Kerala Finance Minister K Balagopal.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commence the exercise to prepare the annual budget for 2025-26 from the second week of next month in the backdrop of the Indian economy recording 7 per cent growth rate for the fourth consecutive year.

The budget for the next financial year would focus on reforms to be pushed to further accelerate growth momentum and measures to generate jobs and boost submitted

Financial that necessary ensure details...Are properly entered in UBIS (Union Budget Information System) before/latest by October 7, 2024," Budget circular 2025-26 issued by the Department of Economic Affairs said.

in Indian polity. "All the ministries/departments should submit details of bodies/ implementing agencies, for

Government to start FY26 budget making exercise from next month

commence from second week of October, 2024 and shall continue till around mid-November, 2024, it said.

meetings requirement of funds for all categories of

revenues, including arrears of non-tax revenue are also assessed during the meetings. The Budget 2025-26 is likely to be presented on February 1 during the first half of the Parliament's Budget session which usually begins in the last week of January every

expenditure estimates on net

basis are discussed. Besides,

receipts of departmentally-

netted against the gross

expenditure and non-tax

commercial

which are

INBRIEF

LIC INDIA CONFERENCE OF CEO AND FOREIGN HEADS

units from UK, Singapore, Bahrain, Kenya, Fiji, Mauritius, Nepal, Sri Lanka & Bangladesh at GIFT city, Gandhinagar on 20.09.2024. LIC of India got an approval from IFSCA, the regulator of GIFT city to open an insurance office

18.10 kgs of Ganja worth Rs. 1.81 lakhs (approx.) from them. Later, the apprehended persons along with the recovered items were handed over to OC/GRP/Lumding for necessary legal action.

NFR TAKING STEPS TO ENHANCE SAFETY MEASURES IN

passengers during their journey they are continuing the effort of modernizing and upgrading its infrastructure to meet the highest standard of safety and

(SOCAR), bp, MOL, INPEX, Equinor, ExxonMobil, TPAO, and ITOCHU, have signed an addendum to the existing Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) for ACG Field in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea

wound up, should be explained," it said. The Budget demand in the economy. verification, it said. "Pre-budget meetings chaired It will be the second budget of The finance ministry will the Modi 3.0 government and by Secretary (Expenditure) Estimates for 2025-26 will be provisionally finalised after 8th straight Budget for shall commence in the second Finance Minister Nirmala week of October 2024. completion of pre-budget Advisers shall Sitharaman, a rare distinction meetings, it said. Pre-budget meeting shall

Hard copies of the data in the specified formats should be for

autonomous fund has been created.

which a dedicated corpus reasons for their continuance and requirement of grant-in-aid support, and why the same should not be ministries/departments and

During the pre-Budget

expenditures along with

GCCI seeks review of SC's mineral taxation ruling PTI ■ NEW DELHI

consequential impact on the

nation's economy," GCCI said

The possible impact would be

a change of goalpost particularly when the auction

regime is in vogue post enactment of MMDR

(Amendment) Act in 2015,

while creating an uncertainty

in the mineral taxation

regime of the country, it said.

It may adversely impact the

in a statement.

The Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industries

(GCCI) has demanded an urgent review of the mineral taxation ruling by the Supreme Court, stating that the increased cost of mining will inevitably lead to higher for essential commodities, including steel, power and cement.

The Supreme Court last month allowed states to collect past dues on royalty on minerals bearing land from the Centre and mining companies from April 1, 2005 onwards.

The imposition of further taxes/ cess/ levies, if any, as permitted by the ruling, will further impact the economics of mining operations possibly making it unviable with its natural consequences.

"Additionally, the increased downstream industries and cost of mining will inevitably lead to mining cost push lead to higher prices for essential commodities e.G., economy steel, power, cement, etc. Further fuelling inflation and

court's decision, it believes that the decision could have devastating consequences in future, for the mining industry in the country as a whole including Goa which is yet to recover from the aftereffects of mining ban in

inflation affecting the entire While GCCI respects the apex

'The iron ore mining in Goa has just begun and/or looking forward to resume its operations after a long gap of GCCI Press 6 years - it is in everybody's Dempo said.

change of mining regulations in 2015, the mining companies are required to pay mining a substantial amount in the form of auction premium for winning the bid, besides other statutory dues like Royalty, DMF/NMET contributions, etc," it said. The imposition of further

knowledge that after the

taxes/ cess/ levies, if any, as permitted by the ruling, will further impact the economics of mining operations possibly making it unviable with its natural consequences. We are compelled to request

the authorities to review the verdict in light of the submissions from industry to find a balanced solution that ensures revenue generation while ensuring the survival of the mining sector," GCCI President Shrinivas

MUMBAI: LIC of India organised a conference of its CEO's & Heads of foreign

RPF RECOVERED SMUGGLED GOODS MALIGAON: On 2nd September, 2024 RPF & GRP of Lumding jointly conducted checking in train no. 01666 (Agartala – Rani Kamalapati Express) at Lumding railway station. During checking, they apprehended four persons and recovered 19.7 grams of Brown Sugar worth Rs. 3.94 lakhs (approx.) and

MALIGAON: N. F. Railway to prioritize the safety and well-being of its

SIGNING OF GAS DEAL IN ACG, AZERBAIJAN NEW DELHI: ONGC Videsh, together with the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan

the pioneer THE MAGIC OF

Millets are a super-food that can bring about a radical change in the health of the people. They can be an answer to malnutrition and an effective

BY DR AVULA LAXMAIAH

illet is a superfood loaded with fiber, protein, essential vitamins, and minerals. One serving of this super grain can meet the daily requirements for several nutrients needed for optimum function of the brain and body. Millets also offer significant ecological benefits. Its ability to thrive in harsh, arid conditions with little maintenance makes it a viable crop option for countries with challenging climates. Furthermore, milletS require less water than other crops making it an environmentfriendly produce with a smaller carbon footprint. Cultivating it also decreases dependence on imported cereal grains and promotes sustainable agriculture practices,

way to fight various ailments

In a conference on Global Millets, Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi while referring to millets as Shree Ann, defined the super food as the core medium to address the nutritional concerns across different population segments as well as an ideal way for a nation to grow exponentially. Millets can collectively bring ample opportunity for the small farmers of the country to scale and offer benefits for a sustainable future.

The Government of India has been making tremendous efforts to revive the production and consumption of millets through Minimum Support Price (MSP) schemes that provide financial aid to farmers for cultivating millets, and the introduction of millets in the



IN A CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL MILLETS, HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WHILE REFERRING TO MILLETS AS SHREE ANN, DEFINED THE SUPER FOOD AS THE **CORE MEDIUM TO** ADDRESS THE NUTRITIONAL CONCERNS **ACROSS DIFFERENT** POPULATION SEGMENTS AS WELL AS AN IDEAL WAY FOR A NATION TO **GROW EXPONENTIALLY**

Public Distribution System (PDS) to make them accessible and affordable. This has led to India becoming the world's largest producer and second-largest exporter of millets, today. The nodal nutrition institute in India National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and the Indian Institute of Millet Research (ICAR-IIMR),

in their research studies, have established that consumption has a significant impact on health and nutrition.

Millet, thus, is being promoted as a means of addressing the challenges of malnourishment, which is most prevalent amongst women and children in our country. The government's initiative to add millet to the mid-day meal is a visionary approach to support the POSHAN Abhiyaan 2.0 mission and address the issue of malnutrition, particularly in children. Their food-ontable initiatives such as Take-Home Ration (THR) and Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) are gradually helping to overcome the nutritional imbalance among children, especially in ages

3-6 years. ICMR-NIN has been actively contributing towards the government's initiatives to combat malnutrition by

providing supplementar foods, diversified diets, health check-ups, and community based interventions. Despite significant efforts by the government and various stakeholders, the challenge of malnutrition remains

complex and multirequiring faceted, innovative solutions. It is imperative that the private sector and civil society partner with the government on driving the mission to promote millets to address malnutrition concerns comprehensively. The recent launch of

multi-millet Nutri-bars for pre-school children Anil Agarwal Foundation& Vedanta is one of the first such a unique nutrition program seen after the Union Budget. The organization has piloted a project to provide multimillet bars to 50,000 children every day in

anganwadis in Varanasi district for 6 months, thus aiming to improve the daily nutrient intake of children, boost

cognitive development, and reduce absenteeism while increasing enrolment in pre-

schools. To advance sustainable health with the power of millets, we need to continue taking a holistic approach that involves multiple stakeholders, including government, policymakers, farmers, food manufacturers,

corporations, and consumers. Consumers

need to be educated about the nutritional and

ecological benefits of millet and encouraged to incorporate them into their diets thus creating a healthier and nourished India. Quantified efforts are being observed by corporate to add millet-based products into their portfolio and introduce nutritious food products with millet as the core ingredient, to the community. This paradigm shift by corporate signifies a positive trend in nutrition delivery, reflecting their responsibility to contribute to the welfare of

We have an opportunity to transform the way we approach food, health, and nutrition. Growing and consuming ancient millets will be a key to addressing this transformation, enhancing human health, protecting the environment, and preserving cultural traditions, in times to come!

The writer is Former Scientist G & Head of Public Health Nutrition Division, ICMR-NIN



Training on the Well-being of Individuals with IDD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)

TEAM VIVA

The Manbhavan Mitra Mandali, a Self-Advocacy Group of Manovikas Charitable Society on Saturday organised a training program to augment the well-being of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities

The training included the individuals conditions such as autism, who intellectual disability, learning disability, and cerebral palsy. The training was mostly determined on take charge of their health

, and with intellectual dies! shared that the workshop small steps make a big helped him make a difference in my feelings, decision to improve his and I can do them well-being. Kaka said, independently."

"This program helped me Harsh Bharadwaj, another

Another attendee Deepika



currently undergoing Domestic Data Entry Skill Training at the Aryaman Center of Excellence (ACE Lab) in promoting better well-being and empowering Board Member of individuals with IDD to Manovikas shared how the program helped her open and happiness.

Kaka, a South Asian new ways to well-being.
football player and a 16
her eyes to discovering the new ways to well-being. with an simple things that I can do disability, daily to feel better. These

understand how important boy who attended the my well-being is." He training, also a talented further added that he arts and crafts artist from learned about what makes the Love Arts Training Lab, him feel good and how to spoke about choosing welltake care of himself better. being activities. He said,

"Our activities made me

feel happy and calm." He further added that he knows what to do when he feels stressed or sad, and it helps him stay positive. The event saw the active participation of more than 25 adults with intellectual

disabilities and their

families.

developmental

The training was also attended by the parents and family members of the participants where they were taught about the valuable strategies which will help them to support their loved ones in their well-being and encourage independence. The session also emphasised practical ways to enhance the mental, emotional, and

physical well-being of

people with IDD.

STUDY REVEALS WHY AGING IMPAIRS IMMUNE RESPONSE

Researchers discover metabolic changes that hinder disease treatment in the elderly says KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

here is hope for old-age people suffering from certain ailments from which they had no route to escape hitherto. All treatments had failed to resuscitate them from the octopus-like shackles of the disease. A team of medical and bio-engineering researchers in the University Of Miami Miller School Of Medicine Immunology in the US have found out the reasons behind old men failing to respond to any treatments for a series of diseases. Nay, they have not invented any medicine for such diseases but have made a landmark invention about the reason behind the failure of drugs to cure the medical problems faced by the veterans.

A research paper published in Nature Communications, a widely followed scientific publication after peer review lists the reasons for the failure of medicines among old people. What makes the findings distinct is the part played by Dhananjay Suresh, a 20-year-old bio-medical engineer, and a key team member.

Dhananjay is waiting for admission to a leading medical school in the US for his MBBS course after the four-and-a-half-year-long B Tech course when he joined the team. Suresh is the son of India-born medical microbiologist couple Dr. Suresh Pallikuthu and Dr Ranjini Valiathan.

The researchers led by Dr. Daniela Frasca, principal investigator and associate professor of microbiology and immunology, have successfully proved for the first time in medical history that the aged fails to respond to medicines because of the "inability of immune cells to generate protective immunity".

The metabolic abnormalities in immune cells lead to a reduced ability to generate protective immunity, according to Dr Frasca. Her team identified metabolic changes that decrease the body's



immunity as people age. Dr Frasca explained that aging is associated with elevated levels of inflammation and metabolic

changes. "We have identified and age-associated characterized metabolic changes that may accelerate and exacerbate deficiencies in immune cells from older adults, particularly those responsible for diminished secretion of protective antibodies

against infections and vaccines. The research team also pinpointed the role a metabolic compound long thought to be inessential plays in immunity. Contrary to accepted wisdom, lactate can induce pathogenic B lymphocyte behavior and increase bodily inflammation.

'The metabolite lactate, the end product of anaerobic glycolysis, which has long been considered a discarded metabolic compound, plays a crucial role in ageassociated defects in dysfunctional humoral responses," Dr. Frasca



DHANANJAY SURESH

said. "The effects of lactate, as described in the paper, recapitulate key features of B lymphocytes that infiltrate inflammatory tissues, where lactate-induced signaling may contribute to various pathological features." Lactate can induce pathogenic B lymphocyte behavior and increase bodily

inflammation. With the script ready, medical doctors can step in and start a new

therapy that will spur helpful immune responses in the elderly and keep the diseases at bay.

Now, it is for medical doctors to shape new therapies that selectively target metabolic products involved in the generation of inflammatory pathogenic immune cells to improve antibody responses in elderly individuals who are susceptible to infections and/or do not respond adequately to vaccination.

If the initial response from the world of medicine is any indication, this landmark research will go a long way in helping the aged to remain healthy and guarded against any kind of immune deficiency. In Ayurveda, the Indian system of medicine, there is a treatment that reverses the effects of time and regenerates the entire body, mind, and spirit. It is known as Kaya Kalpa. Is Kaya Kalpa getting Americanized and reappearing as a Metabolic Regeneration Study? Let's wait.

INDIA TRUMPS BANGLADESH WITH ASHWIN'S SIX WICKETS

Teteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's mastery over his craft, underlined by a six-wicket haul, proved too immense for Bangladesh as India cantered to a massive 280-run victory in the first Test with five sessions to spare, here on Sunday.

Maintaining a clean slate against the Asian neighbours, India now lead the two-match series 1-0.

Starting from their overnight 158 for four, Bangladesh were bundled out for 234 in their second innings as Ashwin scythed through their line-up

Ravindra Jadeja supported him with a three-wicket haul

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto waged a lone battle for 82 (127b, 8x4, 3x6), but there was hardly any meaningful support for him from his colleagues.

The day, however, began on a bright note for the Bangladeshis with Shanto and Shakib Al-Hasan (25) extending their fifth-wicket stand to 48 runs, resisting the Indian bowlers in the first

Mohammed Siraj was the standout bowler for India during this phase as he worked up good pace and hit fine lines, but luck was not in his favour as edges eluded him or fell short of fielders. It left the pacer a frustrated man, evidenced in his constant tirade against

Shakib, who played a lovely front foot pull off Siraj for a



boundary, also received a Jadeja when the batter was on reprieve as Rishabh Pant 17.
missed a stumping chance off At the first drinks break of the

day, Bangladesh were 194 for four and they might have hoped to further stretch the

However, the introduction of Ashwin immediately after the resumption of play changed the complexion of the proceedings.

There was nothing much on the surface for the spinners but Ashwin, who possesses a scientist's acumen, does not need such generosity from the deck or conditions.

The Chennai man put into use his ability to find acute angles from around the wicket to left-handers to optimum effect against

Ashwin pushed the ball a bit deep and it hit the handle of Shakib's bat as he attempted a forward defence, and the resultant edge went into the eager hands of Yashasvi Jaiswal at backward short leg. Soon, the star off-spinner completed his 37th fiveAustralian legend Shane Warne, nipping te stay of Mehidy Hasan Miraz (8), who lobbed a catch to Jadeja at

long-on. In the process, Ashwin also went past New Zealand legend Richard Hadlee's fivewicket haul tally - 36. It was also the fourth time the

veteran all-rounder took fivewicket or more in a Test match alongside a hundred. Jadeja, the long-time second fiddle to Ashwin, too had his own moments as he scalped the wickets of Shanto and Litton Das, who edged the left-arm spinner to Rohit Sharma at first slip.

However, Shanto's batting will give a speck of hope for Bangladesh ahead of the next match for the visitors.

While the wickets were on a constant tumble at the other with purpose.

left-hander swept, reverse swept and cut spinners and pacers to collect his runs from all corners of

Chepauk. But the task was way beyond such a one-man show on this day. Given his cavalier methods at the crease, the dismissal was inevitable and it

came in the 59th over. Shanto tried to hoist Jadeja out of the park, but the shot lacked power and timing, and Jasprit Bumrah comfortably settled under the ball near

mid-wicket. The dismissal also ended Bangladesh's hopes to last at least beyond the first session, and now they will have to think of ways to regroup ahead of the second Test at Kanpur, beginning

September 27.

Bumrah, Pant's fitness and form crucial for India's chances in Australia says Chappell

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant must remain injury-free and in top form if India are to achieve a historic hat-trick of series wins Down Under, said former Australia captain Ian Chappell.

One of the most respected voices in world cricket, Chappell feels that five Test matches, including three against New Zealand, is just the ideal build up that Indian team needed before the most high-profile bilateral series in this cycle of the World Test Championship.

...Indîa's priority will be to get as many players as possible into form without suffering major injuries. However, the most pressing matters are to achieve those aims with Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant," Chappell wrote in his column for ESPN Cricinfo

"Pant's ability to bounce back onto the Test scene is quite remarkable given his horrific car accident. He is a crucial wicketkeeper-batter in the Indian line-up and he'd give the team a major boost if he's at the peak of his powers for the Australian tour.

Pant was the hero of India's when he scored 97 at Sydney requirements not only stumps, admirably displayed essential. Of those two, tour," Chappell wrote.

AP BARCELONA

Toan García showed why he

Jis an up-and-coming

goalkeeper - until Vinícius

Júnior got the Real Madrid

scoring machine going. Vinícius went off the bench

one of his own and Kylian

Mbappé added a late penalty

as Madrid topped a tenacious

García made several saves for the visitors before the

pass from his box that ended

with an own goal by

Courtois in the 54th minute.

But García's only slip of the match let Dani Carvajal

equalize four minutes later when Jude Bellingham's low

goalie. The Madrid right back had to only push it over

Vinícius rested in the first

half as Carlo Ancelotti

counterpart

the line for 1-1.

a match-saving effort, while his 89 not out at the Gabba in the decider is now part of Indian cricketing folklore.

One of the most astute readers of the game, Chappell explained why Pant's keeping will also be key to India's fortunes on bouncy tracks. "If Pant can perform at his best, he's the ideal keeper for Australian conditions. If he's able to continue with his agile performance standing back,

that is what is required in

Australia. You need a keeper

who capably covers a lot of territory to both sides of the wicket.

improves the team's fielding but also allows the slip fielders to spread wider to cover extra territory," he elaborated.

Chappell believes that a stern warning from erstwhile head coach Ravi Shastri during his time at the helm might have helped Pant in raising the level of his glovework.

'Pant's keeping standing up to the stumps drastically improved before his serious following injury, ultimatum from coach Ravi Shastri. The fact that Pant progressed from being a dubious keeper against spinners to a very good most successful pace bowlers oveman standing un

Super sub Vinícius leads to Real Madrid comeback win over Espanyol

his willingness to work hard.' The other crucial aspect in

at any given point in time. However, he has also been pretty regular in Test matches playing bulk of the red-ball games against South Africa away and England at home.
"The good form and fitness of Bumrah both

Australia will be Bumrah's fitness and form. Since his comeback post lower back stress fracture surgery in August 2023, the star pacer has managed his workload beautifully across formats focusing on priority format

Mohammed Siraj - the two on the last Australian tour - is

Bumrah is the attack leader.

"A critical part of India's build-up to the Australian tour will be ensuring Bumrah is in form but remains fit to play the bulk of the five Tests." He also cited how during his captaincy years, his lethal weapon Dennis Lillee would always want to play as many games when he was in form rather than being wrapped in

"cotton wool". Chappell also hoped that Mohammed Shami can get fit

by the time series starts.
"It would be ideal if the mercurial Mohammed Shami is fit for Australia but the presence of a good left-arm paceman would also improve India's variety in attack.

The spin bowling is in good hands with Jadeja and Ashwin. Nevertheless I wouldn't discount the importance of Kuldeep Yadav on some Australian surfaces."

For Chappell, Yashasvi Jaiswal has had a good start to his Test career but Australian tracks will demand different temperament from Mumbai left-hander.

"Of the young batters Yashasvi Jaiswal looks very talented but he needs to show good form in Australia. Both Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli should act as guiding lights for the vounger batters on

deflectionTwo

similar goals within three

minutes of one another lifted

Valencia to a 2-0 win over

A pair of shots by Luis Rioja

and Dani Gómez in the 56th and 58th both took deflections off Girona defender Juanpe Ramirez

before skirting past goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga. Gazzaniga was to blame for Girona's loss at Paris Saint-Germain midweek in the Catalan club's Champions League debut. The goalie let a cross slip through his hands in stoppage time in a 1-0 loss

in stoppage time in a 1-0 loss

Sociedad's surprising struggles continued after a scoreless draw at promoted

team from stian, which

consistently finished near the

goingReal

San

in France.

Can't get Sociedad's

Valladolid.

Sebastian,

The

Girona at home.



Indonesia Para Badminton: Umesh clinches gold; Sukant, Sivarajan, Mandeep claim silver

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Umesh Vikram secured gold in the SL3 event, while the trio of Sukant Kadam, Sivarajan Solaimalai, and Mandeep Kaur claimed silver medals in their respective categories at the Indonesia Para-Badminton International on Sunday.

Sukant bagged the silver in the men's singles SL4 event, while Sivarajan won the silver in men's singles SH6 category. Mandeep clinched the silver in women's singles SL3 category. India delivered a stellar

performance in Sarakarta, Îndonesia, winning as many as 34 medals in the International Level tournament.

In men's singles SL3, Umesh triumphed over compatriot and top seed Nehal Gupta, winning the final. Sukant, who had missed out

on a bronze medal in Paris after losing to Indonesia's Fredv Setiawan in the playoff, fell short again in the SL4 final, losing 14-21 14-21 to the Indonesian.

"I gave my best in the final, but Fredy played an exceptional game," Sukant

"It was a great learning experience, and I'll keep pushing to aim for gold in

future competitions."
Sivarajan, who had lost to
Great Britain's Krysten
Coombs in Paris, faced a tough challenge from topseeded Indonesian Subhan Subhan in the SH6 final, ultimately losing 19-21 15-21. bronze. Alphia

Mandeep, who had suffered a defeat to Nigeria's Mariam Eniola Bolaji in Paris, also finished with silver after losing 10-21 5-21 to Indonesia's top seed Qonitah Ikhtiar Syakuroh in the SL3 final. Despite the silver medal

finishes, the Indian contingent's overall performance was strong, with Umesh claiming the lone gold in singles. Jagadesh Dilli added to India's success by securing bronze in the same category, making it a sweep for India with seven players reaching the quarterfinals.

In women's singles SL3, Mandeep's Mandeep's silver was complemented by Neeraj's bronze. In the men's singles SH6 category, Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy also earned bronze, while Sivarajan secured silver.

Among other Indians in Naveen Sivakumar won bronze in men's singles SL4 category, while Ruthick Ragupathi claimed silver in the men's singles SU5. Koshika Devda secured bronze in the women's singles

In the mixed doubles SL3-SL4 $\,$ category, Nehal and Naveen Sivakumar earned silver, while Umesh and Surya, along with Harshit and Kartik, claimed bronze. The doubles SU5 saw men's Hardik Makkar and Ruthick Ragupathi claim gold.

In the women's wheelchair WH1 category, Pallavi Kuluvehalli secured gold, with Prema Vishwas and Anusha Chidananda taking

clinched gold in the women's singles WH2 category, and Shabana took home bronze. The mixed doubles WH1-WH2 category saw Poorna Rao and Munna Khalid win bronze.

In the men's WH1 category Prem Kumar Ale secured bronze, while Neeraj and Arati Patil, along with Vaishali Nilesh Germany's Irina Whalers, claimed bronze in the women's doubles SL3-SU5 category. Additionally, Alphia James and Pallavi Kuluvehalli, along with Anusha Chidananda and Shabana won bronze in the women's doubles WH1-WH2 category.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant seeks first win of season in match against NorthEast United

Kolkata, Sep 22 (PTI) Mohun Bagan Super grab their first win of the season when they clash against NorthEast United in their second home game of the Indian Super League 2024-25 season here on Monday.

The Mariners had shared the spoils with Mumbai City FC in their opening match.

United, NorthEast meanwhile, earned a win in their first game, courtesy a late goal by Alaeddine Ajaraie against Mohammedan debutants Sporting. They will now take on the Mariners whom they defeated a few weeks back in the Durand Cup 2024 final and will be upbeat to land their third successive win in

Arshdeep takes six in India D's consolation win

PTI ■ ANANTAPUR

Arshdeep Singh saved his best for the last game and returned career-best figures of 6 for 40 as India D thrashed India B by 257 runs to end their Duleep Trophy campaign with a consolation victory here on Sunday. Earlier, India D, who started the final day's play

at 244 for 5, ended their second innings at 305, leaving India B with a target of 373 in little over 70 overs.

bowled unchanged for 22.2 overs to bundle out Abhimanyu Easwaran's team for a lowly 115. Arshdeep also recorded his best match figures of

9 for 90, with the distinction of getting out India's T20 skipper Suryakumar Yadav (16) twice in the same game.

India B skipper Easwaran once again failed to deliver when it mattered in the larger context as Arshdeep had him caught by Akash Sengupta managed to cross 100.

score. India B thus ended the campaign with seven points from three games, having won their opening match and then getting a point after conceding the first-innings lead.

India D, who had lost the first two games outright, will finish last despite logging full six Arshdeep, who got pipped by Yash Dayal into

the Test squad as the first-choice left-arm pacer, certainly made an impression as he got to move the ball away from the right-handers and bowled the ideal length to trouble the top-order. At the start of the day, Ricky Bhui (119) duly completed his second ton of the tournament and remained not out, having faced only 125 balls. He hit 15 fours and three maximums in

the process. In the morning, India D batted for 14.3 overs to add another 61 runs to their total as Bhui scored his second successive hundred.

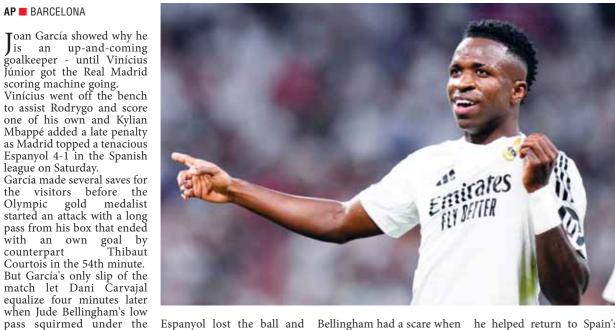
With scores of 56 and 119, the former India U-19 skipper was named Player of the Match. Brief Scores: India D 349 and 305 in 58.3 overs (Ricky Bhui 119, Shreyas Iyer 50, Mukesh

Kumar 4/98, Navdeep Saini 3/58). India B 282 and (target 373) 115 in 22.2 overs (Arshdeep Singh 6/40). India D won by 257

Points: India D 6 India B.

rotated his attacking bunch. But the coach sent the Brazil forward on immediately after Espanyol went ahead. Vinícius then took control, curling in a perfect cross with the outer tip of his left boot for Rodrygo to score in the 75th.

Vinícius beat García in the 78th for his goal after



Espanyol lost the ball and Mbappé played his attack partner clear on the break. Mbappé converted a 90thminute spot kick after Endrick went on late and earned a penalty from Carlos

Romero. "We made mistakes that maybe you can get away with in other games, but not here," Espanyol coach Manolo

González said. Madrid pulled to one point behind leader Barcelona before it plays at Villarreal on

Bellingham had a scare when he fell awkwardly on his right shoulder in the first half, but after briefly being seen by a doctor on the sideline he went back on. Ancelotti said it did not look like the England midfielder was fine. Unsurprisingly, Ancelotti said he was satisfied with the "well-rounded" performance. García in goal After helping Spain win Olympic gold this summer, García was rumored to have been close summer,

to a move to Arsenal before

finally staying put at the club

he helped return to Spain's top flight last season. And he showed his quality at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Garcia made at least eight saves before he turned playmaker with a booming kick from his box that launched Jofre Carreras down the left flank. Jofre won the end line before his low pass hit Courtois' leg and turned into the net. But once Madrid started

top of the table in recent years, has only one victory in seven rounds. Sociedad visits Nice when the Europa League group stage opens next week.

Also, Ânte Budimir earned and converted a penalty and Aimar Oroz took the winner as Osasuna beat Las Palmas 2-1 at home. The team from the Canary Islands remained clicking, even an inspired in last place and without a García couldn't keep them

Arshdeep and Aditya Thakare (4/59) then

for 19. Thanks to Nitish Reddy, who swung his bat around for a quickfire 40 off 43 balls, India B Eight India B batters failed to log double digit

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