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Mahavikas Aghadi will form the government in the 2024 assembly elections: Nana Patole

Mumbai

People who engage in politics in the name of religion should adopt the ideals of Gandhi and follow the path of non-violence that he laid down. Everyone should preserve brotherhood instead of fighting amongst themselves. What is happening today between Iran and Israel is being discussed worldwide. In such times, the ideal and path of non-violence shown by Gandhi becomes important. Those who play politics in the name of caste and religion should follow the path shown by Gandhi, said in-charge Ramesh Chennithala. On the occasion of the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, Congress leaders visited Mani Bhavan to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. They also spun yarn on the charkha and sang devotional songs. Present on the occasion were in-charge Ramesh Chennithala, State President Nana Patole, Mumbai Congress President MP Varsha Gaikwad, MLA Bhai Jagtap, MLA Amin



Patel, former minister Suresh Shetty, state vice-president of administration and organization Nana Gawande, Charanjit Sapra, state general secretary Brij Dutt, and others. While speaking to the media, Ramesh Chennithala further said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi often mentions the name of Mahatma Gandhi, but he is not seen following Gandhi's ideals or the path of non-violence that Gandhi advocated. Modi is working to divide people in the name of caste and religion, which is not in the country's interest. For the

development and progress of the country, Gandhi's ideas are crucial, and Modi should adopt them, Chennithala advised. He also mentioned that Union Minister Amit Shah had accepted defeat in Maharashtra even before contesting the assembly elections. BJP's policy is to use and discard, and they are applying the same approach with their allies in Maharashtra, Chennithala said. As the BJP government's final days are approaching, the government is hastily making decisions, but they lack the funds, and with elections around

the corner, implementation will be difficult. The BJP government is making its last desperate efforts to gain votes, but the people of Maharashtra are wise and understand everything, Chennithala added. Speaking to the media, State President Nana Patole said that there are no disagreements in the Mahavikas Aghadi regarding seat allocation. In alliance politics, every party naturally thinks about securing seats for themselves, but look at the chaos over seat allocation in the Mahayuti alliance and ask them who their chief minister will be. Over the past ten years, the BJP government has looted Maharashtra. The BJP government has set records in corruption, employees are not getting paid, farmers have not received compensation for their losses, and inflation has skyrocketed. Despite this situation, the people have decided to oust this anti-Maharashtra, anti-Shivaji government from power. Nana Patole expressed confidence that the Mahavikas Aghadi will form the government in the 2024 assembly elections.

Only people of state can finish us, not Shah: Uddhav Thackeray

Mumbai

Union Home minister Amit Shah has given directions to the BJP functionaries in a closed-door meeting to "finish off" Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and NCP(SP) chief Sharad Pawar, alleged Thackeray on Sunday, saying that only people of the state can do that.

Speaking at Ramtek where he unveiled the statue of Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Thackeray said, "Amit Shah is coming to finish us. But only people can finish us, not Amit Shah. He (Shah) recently came to Nagpur from Delhi and asked the functionaries to break the leaders from opposition parties



to weaken Uddhav and Pawar Saheb in the polls. Why say it in closed-door meetings, come out in public and say it. If the people from Delhi are going to talk about finishing off me, the people will make them sit at home."

Adding that the fight is neither his nor Pawar's, Thackeray said the fight is for saving Maharashtra from being looted

by people from Delhi, he said, "The people of the state will decide who will be finished off in the elections."

Asking RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat if the BJP's "Hindutva" of breaking the Opposition parties and poaching their leaders is acceptable, Thackeray said, "They don't want Shiv Sena and Sharad Pawar because they want to loot Maharashtra. But this Maharashtra belongs to Shivaji Maharaj... if you try to loot it, then people will not spare you."

Thackeray also slammed Chief Minister Eknath Shinde over the collapse of the Shivaji statue at the Malvan fort in Sindhudurg and termed it as an embarrassment for the state.

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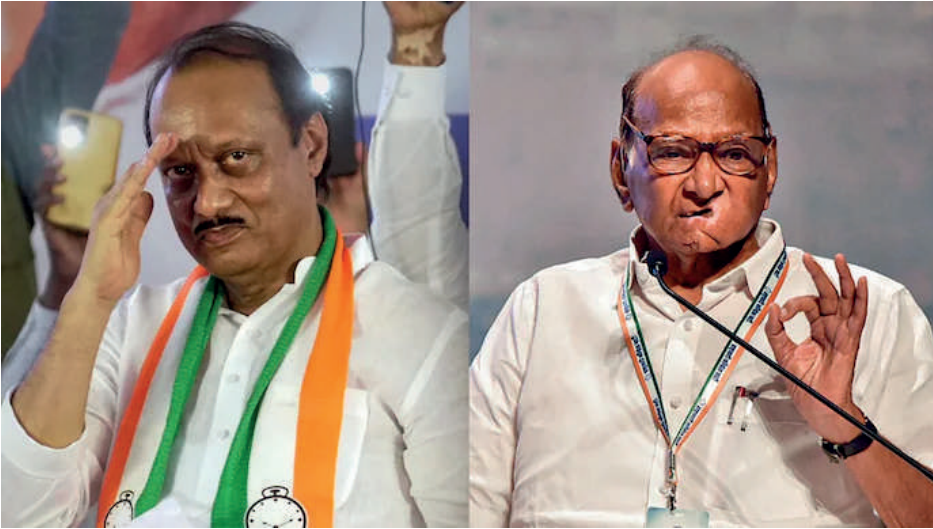
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Pawar vs Pawar Battle In Supreme Court Over Clock Symbol



New Delhi

The battle over the clock - the election symbol of the Nationalist Congress Party - has heated up again ahead of the assembly election in Maharashtra, with the Sharad Pawar faction of the party approaching the Supreme Court. The NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) has filed a petition to stop the Ajit Pawar faction from using the "clock" symbol. The court will hear the petition on October 15.

In the petition, the Sharad Pawar faction has said the use of the clock by the Ajit Pawar faction during the

Lok Sabha election earlier this year had caused considerable confusion among voters. They have appealed that a new symbol be granted to the Ajit Pawar faction.

The NCP name and poll symbol was awarded to the Ajit Pawar faction of the party by the Election Commission after Pawar Junior rebelled against his uncle and joined hands with the ruling alliance in Maharashtra.

But in the recently concluded Lok Sabha election, voters made it clear who they thought was the real NCP.

2 pilots among 3 killed as helicopter crashes in Pune

Pune

Two pilots and an engineer were killed as a helicopter crashed and caught fire in Maharashtra's Pune district on Wednesday morning, police said.

The helicopter belonging to the Delhi-based Heritage Aviation, a private firm, took off from the Oxford County Golf Course helipad here and was heading to Juhu in Mumbai when it crashed at 7.40 am, they said.

The incident took place near a hilly terrain in Bavdhan area, which is close to the golf course, according to police.

"Three persons have died in the helicopter crash. Our teams along with fire department vehicles have reached the spot," Pimpri Chinchwad Commissioner of Police Vinaykumar Choubey said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Vishal Gaikwad said the helicopter took off from the helipad of Oxford County Golf Course and crashed near Bavdhan in the hilly terrain, killing two



pilots and an engineer on board the chopper.

An official from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said the incident took place at 7.40 am and confirmed that the Agusta 109 helicopter which crashed belonged to the Heritage Aviation.

After the crash, the chopper caught fire, police said.

Fire tenders and water tankers were rushed to the spot, according to fire officials.

"The deceased have been identified as Girish Kumar,

Pritam Singh Bhardwaj and Paramjeet Singh," Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation's fire officer Anil Dimle said.

The helicopter took off from the helipad of the Oxford County Golf Course at around 7.30 am, Pimpri Chinchwad's Joint Commissioner of Police Shashikant Mahavarkar said.

Primary information suggested that fog in the area led to the accident.

"A detailed investigation will ascertain the exact cause of the crash," he said.

Bombay HC upholds death penalty for man who killed mother, ate her body parts

Mumbai

The Bombay HC on Tuesday confirmed the death penalty imposed by a Kolhapur court on a man for killing his mother in 2017 and allegedly eating some of the body parts.

A Division Bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan said it was confirming the death penalty on the convict — Sunil Kuchkoravi — and added there was no chance of his reformation.

The Bench said this was a case of cannibalism and it falls under the rarest of rare category. "The case

falls under the rarest of rare category. The convict not only murdered his mother but he also removed her body parts — brain, heart, liver, kidney, intestine and



was cooking them on a pan," the HC said. "He had cooked her ribs and was about to cook her heart. This is a case of cannibalism," it said. There is no chance of reformation of the convict

as there are tendencies of cannibalism, the High Court observed. "If given life imprisonment, he may commit a similar crime in jail," the Bench said.

Kuchkoravi was informed of the decision via video conference. According to the prosecution, Sunil Kuchkoravi gruesomely murdered his 63-year-old

mother Yallama Rama Kuchkoravi on August 28, 2017 at their residence in Kolhapur city. He later chopped the body and ate some organs after frying them in a pan.

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Fadnavis raises alarm over 'vote jihad', Congress says people rejected communal agenda

Mumbai

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has blamed 'vote jihad' for the Mahayuti alliance's defeat in 14 out of 48 seats in the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year.

Fadnavis, who holds the home portfolio in the state, said during a function in Kolhapur on Monday that, "vote jihad was witnessed during Lok Sabha polls. This resulted in Maha Vikas Aghadi getting huge success in at least 14 out of 48 Lok Sabha seats. The consolidation of Muslim votes resulted in the electoral loss of Mahayuti in these seats."

Taking serious objections to Fadnavis's remarks on 'vote jihad,' Dhule MP and Congress leader Dr Shobha Bacchav said, "The BJP's divisive politics is responsible for such results. The fear and hatred spread against minorities resulted in the community reposing their complete trust in Congress-led Mahayuti. The Congress believes in 'sarva dharma samabhava...'"

The Congress leader also dismissed Fadnavis's charge as factually incorrect, arguing, "I have polled sizeable votes in all six Assembly segments. In Malegaon central, I got a decisive mandate of 1,98,869 votes as compared to BJP candidate (Subhash Bhamre)'s 4,542."

"Now, this has been the trend in previous polls. If we look at the last two polls, the BJP candidate always polled 4,500 to 5,000 votes in Malegaon central, which is 80 percent Muslim-dominated while the remaining 20 percent are Hindus," she said. The hate politics saw minorities distancing from BJP not just in Dhule constituency, but across Maharashtra, she said.



Earlier, Fadnavis stoked controversy by citing Dhule Lok Sabha results as a classic case of vote jihad.

According to Fadnavis, "In the Dhule constituency, the BJP candidate led with 1.9 lakh votes in five assembly seats. Unfortunately, our candidate trailed by 1.94 lakh votes because of en mass voting of Muslims in the Malegaon central Assembly segment, losing the election by just 4,000 votes."

The Lok Sabha polls in Dhule saw a straight fight between Congress (MVA) candidate Shobha Bacchav and BJP's (Mahayuti) two-term sitting BJP MP Dr Subhash Bhamre.

Assembly segment-wise, Bacchav polled 75,923 in Dhule rural, 68,424 in Sindhkheda, 72,242 in Malegaon outer, 78,253 in Baglan, 78,438 in Dhule city and 1,98,869 in Malegaon central.

The Assembly seat-wise votes of losing candidate Bhamre was 1,39,721 in Dhule rural, 1,11,849 in Sindhkheda, 1,27,454 in Malegaon outer, 1,00,166 in Baglan, 93,262 in Dhule city and 4,542 in Malegaon central.

Despite taking leads in five Assembly segments, Bhamre

lost the polls because of massive Muslim consolidation translating into huge voting in Malegaon central.

However, Bacchav said, "While I may have polled 50,000 more in Malegaon central compared to past polls, what cannot be overlooked is the fact that the vote share in other five segments is also substantial."

The strategic voting saw Muslims decisively putting all votes behind MVA candidates across 48 constituencies, says Bacchav.

Fadnavis said, "There are more than one lakh complaints received on 'love jihad' conspiracy where Hindu women were being lured into marriage by men using fake identities."

The home minister said, "Initially we dismissed it as a myth. But there are credible documents to substantiate the growing instances of Muslim men trapping Hindu girls into marriage through fake identity. In many cases, the woman are subjected to ill treatment."

Fadnavis also expressed alarm over growing religious conversions. "We notice in some cases people have Indian names. But after they die, they are buried and a cross is installed. The major threat before us is that the number of certain religions looks smaller on paper, but in reality more people have been converted secretly," he said. "It's high time we reconcile to ground realities and spread awareness. We have to protect our rights and religion," he said.

State Congress chief Nana Patole said, "The BJP has a habit of spreading lies. They distort facts and history. Their anti-Muslim and anti-Christian agenda is no secret."

As Amit Shah holds meet, BJP hopes to win Mumbai with development plank



Mumbai

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Tuesday convened a day-long meeting to strategise the party's plan for Konkan region ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls.

During the meeting, Shah, according to party functionaries, stressed the importance of Konkan region, which covers 75 out of the 288 Assembly constituencies.

Earlier, Shah, during his two-day state tour, had held meetings with state units across Vidarbha, Marathwada, North and Western Maharashtra region.

The Konkan region is made up of Mumbai (24 seats), Thane (24) and Konkan (15).

Together the region, along the 720-km coastal stretch, makes up for 75 Assembly constituencies. The region has 12 out of the total 48 seats.

Traditionally, Konkan region was always perceived as the political stronghold of undivided Shiv Sena led by its founder Bal Thackeray. The mantle was later passed to Uddhav Thackeray.

After split in Sena which led to formation of two parties — Shiv Sena led by CM Eknath Shinde and Shiv Sena (UBT) led by Uddhav Thackeray — Konkan is poised for a bitter contest this Assembly polls.

According to party sources, the underlying message of Shah's Tuesday meeting was to optimise the party's outreach to every segment to enhance its overall tally in Mumbai, Thane and remaining Konkan region. In 2019 Assembly polls, BJP

was in alliance with undivided Shiv Sena. Out of total 75 seats in the region, BJP won 27 and its ally Shiv Sena bagged 29.

The Congress won four sets, the undivided NCP secured six and other parties got nine seats.

In Mumbai, BJP had won 16 seats while the Sena secured 14 out of the total 36 seats. This was the first time that BJP's seat tally surpassed that of Shiv Sena on its home ground. The BJP is hoping to secure Mumbai with its development plank.

State BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said, "When the BJP formed the government in 2014 with Devendra Fadnavis as the CM, transformation of Mumbai was an integral aspect of development plank. Several mega projects were fast tracked. From enhancing connectivity to scaling amenities, important initiatives were taken in Mumbai, Thane and Konkan."

However, BJP is confronted with power tussle within the Mahayuti which also comprises Shiv Sena and NCP led by Ajit Pawat.

"CM Shinde is vying for greater control arguing it has always been Shiv Sena bastion, A senior poll strategist revealed," adding that while Thane is his home turf, Shinde will try to retain his organisational base in Mumbai and other regions in Konkan. Shiv Sena's Sanjay Shirsat has repeatedly said that the party will contest from 100 seats. Sources in the Shinde camp the CM known for his perseverance will ensure adequate seats on his terms and conditions.

Nashik court summons Rahul Gandhi in defamation case over Savarkar remarks

Nashik

A magistrate court in Maharashtra's Nashik recently issued a summons to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case over his alleged remarks on Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar.

"Having considered the submissions made before me and considering the record, it appears that the statements made by the accused against patriotic

person prima-facie seem to be defamatory. There are sufficient grounds to proceed in the case," the order passed by an additional chief judicial magistrate in Nashik on September 27 said.

The complainant in the case claimed that he had watched Gandhi's press conference and speech in 2022 in which he made remarks on Savarkar, alleging that they were defamatory in nature.

Swachh Bharat campaign becoming new path to prosperity: PM Modi



New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the Swachh Bharat Mission has become the largest and most successful people's movement with mass participation and public leadership.

Addressing a gathering on completion of 10 years of the Mission here, he said the Swachh Bharat campaign is not just a cleanliness movement but a new path to prosperity.

"Through continuous efforts we can make India clean," he added.

Govt releases Rs 5.8K cr for 14 flood-hit states

New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday released Rs 5,858.60 crore to 14 flood-affected states as the Centre's share from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and an advance from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

An amount of Rs 1,492 crore has been released for Maharashtra, Rs 1,036 crore Andhra Pradesh, Rs 716 crore Assam, Rs 655.6 crore Bihar,



Rs 600 crore Gujarat, Rs 189.20 crore Himachal Pradesh, Rs 145.6 crore Kerala, Rs 50 crore Manipur, Rs 21.6 crore Mizoram, Rs 19.2 crore Nagaland, Rs 23.6 crore Sikkim, Rs 416.8 crore Telangana, Rs 25 crore Tripura and Rs 468 crore have been released to West Bengal.

These states have been affected due to extremely heavy rainfall, floods and landslides during the southwest monsoon this year.

EC may announce polls for Maha, Jharkhand this week

New Delhi

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is expected to announce the poll schedule for the upcoming Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand later this week, sources aware of the

development said.

A delegation from the ECI, led by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and SS Sandhu, recently visited Maharashtra to assess the

election preparedness.

During the visit, CEC Rajiv Kumar mentioned that Assembly elections in Maharashtra would be held before November 26, as the state Assembly's term ends on that date. The ECI had also visited Jharkhand

earlier to review election readiness there, though the term of its Assembly extends until January 5, 2025. Despite this, it is possible that Jharkhand's elections may be held alongside Maharashtra's in November.

LAC situation stable but not normal: Army Chief on Eastern Ladakh standoff

New Delhi

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Tuesday said the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China was stable, but not normal and remained "sensitive".

The Army Chief was responding to a question at an event held to announce the seminar "Chanakya Dialogue". It is organised by the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, a think-tank under the Army.

When asked if China was the biggest security challenge, the General said, "The situation with China is stable, but is not normal and is sensitive."

"We want the situation to be restored to the pre-April 2020 level," General Dwivedi said, listing several pending issues, including the troops on ground, the buffer zones along the LAC and resumption of patrolling by troops as planned.

"Till the time that earlier status (pre-April 2020) is not restored, the situation will remain sensitive, and we are operationally fully prepared to face any kind of contingency," General Dwivedi said, adding that trust between India and China had become the "biggest casualty".



On how statements from the Chinese side have emerged about "convergence" on issues, the Army Chief said "signalling" was coming from the diplomatic side that gave options and possibilities, but when it comes to the execution on ground, it was dependent on the military commanders on both sides.

On progress of talks between India and China, General Dwivedi said: "Over

a period of time, both sides have been sitting together for diplomatic parleys. We have come a long way since April 2020... whatever that was immediately possible has been already resolved."

"When it comes to difficult situations where we have a different perception, some kind of an indication has been given from the diplomatic side. The military side will sit together and see how this can

be translated on ground," he said.

Specially mentioning the pending disputes at Depsang and Demchok, the Army Chief said: "Whatever one can imagine is on the table (for discussion) along the northern front and that includes Depsang and Demchok."

General Dwivedi said, "China has been intriguing our minds for quite some time. With China, you have to compete, you have to cooperate, you have to coexist and you have to confront and contest."

Asked about China's construction of villages along the frontier with India, the Army Chief said the country was carrying out "artificial immigration". "There is no Chinese or Tibetan population close to the LAC... So they are carrying out this artificial immigration and artificial settlement". "The aspect of model villages may look simple, but it may have a grandiose design behind it," he said. India launched its Vibrant Villages Programme on April 13, 2023, from Kibithoo in far-east Arunachal Pradesh. The Rs 4,800-crore project aims to cover 662 villages.

Prashant Kishor announces political debut, launches Jan Suraaj Party

Patna

Political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Wednesday announced the launch of his political outfit Jan Suraaj Party, a much-anticipated move by which he hopes to take the political landscape in Bihar by storm.

Kishor also named Manoj Bharti, a Madhubani-born former Indian Foreign Service officer, as working president of the party, saying the latter will hold the post till March when organisational polls will be held.

The party was launched at Veterinary College Ground in the state capital in presence of many renowned figures, including former Union minister Devendra Prasad Yadav, diplomat-turned-politician Pavan Varma and ex-MP Monazir Hassan.

The party was floated exactly two years after Kishor had embarked on a more than 3,000-km-long 'padayatra' of the state, from Champaran where Mahatma Gandhi had launched the first Satyagraha in the country, in a bid to mobilise the people for a "new political alternative" that could cure Bihar of its chronic backwardness.

Speaking on the occasion,



the I-PAC founder who gave up political consultancy a few years ago, said, "Jan Suraaj has been a campaign aimed at making the people of Bihar understand that they have not been able to get quality education and job opportunities because they have never voted on these issues. We may be mocked by cynics who will say how will we fulfil promises like putting an end to migration. But we have a blueprint."

"We will need more than ₹4 lakh crore to improve education in the state. We will raise the money by scrapping the prohibition law which is

annually causing losses to the tune of ~20,000 crore. I reiterate that once Jan Suraaj comes to power, the ban on liquor will be scrapped within one hour," said the 47-year-old leader, who is known to be a strident critic of the move by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, his former mentor.

"We do not need empty slogans of special status. But we will compel banks to make available to the state capital in proportion to savings deposited by its people. At present, it seems money saved by Biharis is being put to use elsewhere," Kishor added.

Andhra Pradesh deputy CM Pawan Kalyan renounces 11-day penance at Tirumala

Tirumala

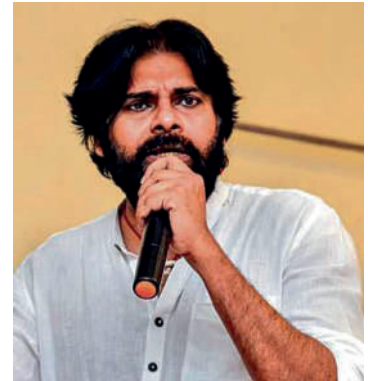
Andhra Pradesh deputy chief minister Pawan Kalyan on Wednesday visited the Tirumala temple here and renounced his 11-day penance (Prayaschitta Deeksha), which he undertook to atone for the alleged sins of the previous YSRCP government at the hill shrine.

The deputy chief minister was accompanied by his daughters Aadhya Konidela and Palina Anjani Konidela.

"Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan who undertook an 11-day penance for the protection of Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) visited Sri Venkateswara Swamy on Wednesday and renounced his penance," said an official press release.

During his visit, the deputy chief minister carried 'Varahi Declaration' book with him to the deity, the contents of which he will reveal in a meeting in Tirupati on Thursday.

"Deputy Chief Minister and Janasena president Pawan Kalyan had Tirumala Srivari (deity) darshanam (visit) today. Pawan Kalyan took Varahi Declaration book along with him," said a Janasena press release.



Currently, Kalyan is on a three-day visit to the temple. Following his visit to the deity, the Janasena founder had lunch at MatrAmritsari Tarigonda Vengamamba Nitya Annadana (blessed food) centre.

Before visiting the temple, Kalyan's youngest daughter, Palina Anjani Konidela, gave a declaration at Tirumala temple that she has faith in Lord Venkateswara.

Palina Anjani Konidela is reportedly a non-Hindu and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) - the official custodian of Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati - rules mandate that non-Hindus have to declare their faith in the deity before making a visit to the temple.

In biggest drug bust in Delhi, 560 kg of cocaine worth Rs 2,000 cr seized

New Delhi

The Delhi Police have made one of the biggest drug busts ever in the city, seizing over 560 kilograms of cocaine estimated to be worth around Rs 2,000 crore, officials said here.

A Delhi Police Special Cell team nabbed four people from South Delhi's Mehrauli and confiscated the consignment weighing over 560 kilograms.

The officials said those arrested had planned to sell the cocaine in Delhi and the National Capital Region.

They said the Special Cell team had been working for over two months based



on a tip-off which led to the bust just before the festive season.

The four people are being interrogated and a probe is on, police said.

Sonam Wangchuk detained again after release, indefinite fast over statehood for Ladakh continues

New Delhi

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and 150 Ladakhis were again detained after they were released by the Delhi Police late Tuesday night, even as their indefinite fast continues at the police stations, officials said on Wednesday.

Wangchuk and other detained Ladakhis were allowed to go on Tuesday night but they were adamant to march towards the central part of Delhi, therefore, they were detained again, said a senior police officer.

Wangchuk has been kept at the Bawana police station along with few others while others have been kept at Narela Industrial Area, Alipur and Kanjhawala

police stations, he added.

Wangchuk and those accompanying him were detained by the Delhi Police at the Singhu



border on Monday night for violating prohibitory orders when they tried to enter the national capital to press for their demands.

He was leading the 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra', which began

from Leh a month ago.

It was organised by the Leh Apex Body, which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance, has been spearheading an agitation over the last four years to demand statehood for Ladakh, its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and others.

A representative of the protesting group on Tuesday said that those who have been detained went on an indefinite fast.

He said if the Delhi Police does not allow them to go to the Gandhi Smriti on Wednesday, they will continue to sit at the police stations even after they are released.

IAF Chief: Tejas jet close to heart, need to focus on 5th-gen fighters



New Delhi

Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, the new Chief of the Indian Air Force (IAF), emphasised the importance of advancing indigenous fighter aircraft programmes, particularly the Tejas.

Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said he has been associated with the Tejas programme from the flight testing and it is very close to his heart.

At the National War Memorial near India Gate, before the wreath laying ceremony, the Air Chief Marshal touched the feet of his mother, Pushwant Kaur.

He highlighted the IAF's commitment to indigenous projects, noting that the Air Force has already placed an order for 83 Tejas Mark-1A aircraft and is in the process of ordering 97 more. The focus is now on developing the Tejas Mark-2 and

advancing the fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft programmes.

One of the key challenges ahead of him is fostering collaboration between the Army, Navy, and Air Force, while continuing his push for indigenisation. Air Chief Marshal Singh is also known for his recent participation in the multi-nation exercise Tarang Shakti in Jodhpur.

Open to stricter laws against substandard seeds: Chouhan

New Delhi

The Centre has expressed its willingness to consider stricter laws aimed at preventing the sale of substandard seeds and pesticides to farmers, which could potentially boost their incomes by 10 to 20 per cent. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated this after a meeting with representatives from the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Independent) in the capital on Tuesday.

Chouhan mentioned that farmers raised several concerns related to their day-to-day operations, including issues surrounding substandard seeds and pesticides, which can negatively impact crop yields and incomes. The minister indicated that the government would explore the possibility of enacting tougher legislation to ensure higher-quality seeds and

pesticides reach the market.

Other issues discussed during the meeting included



the contamination of crops and land from polluted factory waters, delays in replacing burnt transformers affecting irrigation, and the overall reduction of farm input costs. Additionally, concerns were raised about

excessive pesticide use, its health impacts, waterlogging, and farmers' access to government schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

The Seeds Act of 1966 currently governs seed quality in India. A Seeds Bill introduced in 2004 sought to regulate seed quality further and mandate the registration of all seed varieties for sale, but it remained unimplemented. The Seeds Bill of 2019, drafted to replace the 1966 law, has also been stalled due to opposition from farmers, who fear losing seed sovereignty and becoming dependent on patent-owning companies.

"We will resolve issues falling under the Central government's jurisdiction, while those related to state governments will be referred to the respective authorities," the minister said.

SC to lay down guidelines to stop 'bulldozer justice'

New Delhi

Amid allegations that unauthorised properties belonging to a particular community were being demolished in BJP-ruled states, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will lay down pan-India guidelines for all citizens on the issue even as it made it clear that it will not protect any unauthorised construction on roads, government land or forest.

"Whatever we are laying down, we are a secular country. We are laying it down for all the citizens, for all the institutions, and not for any particular community," a

Bench led by Justice BR Gavai said, reserving its order on petitions against demolition of properties, including those belonging to persons accused of crime.

"We are going to make it clear that merely because somebody is an accused, or even if somebody is a convict, can't be a ground for demolition," said the Bench, which also included Justice KV Viswanathan. "Even if it's not authorised... it's not a happy sight to see women and children on the road. Elders coming out on roads... suppose, they want to make alternative arrangements..." it

noted. The Bench, however, made it clear that it would not protect any unauthorised construction on roads, government land or forest; and unauthorised construction made by any person, irrespective of his or her religion or belief, has to be removed. "We will take care to ensure that our order does not help the encroachers on any of the public places," the Bench said. "On the first day, we had pointed out if there is any religious structure in the middle of a road, may it be a 'dargah' or temple, it has to go because public safety and public interest is paramount," it clarified.

Monsoon ends with 7.6% surplus rainfall



New Delhi

The 2024 monsoon season has ended with 7.6 per cent more rainfall than normal, the India Meteorological Department said on Tuesday. Rajasthan, Gujarat, west Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh got excess rainfall, according to the IMD data.

The 2024 southwest monsoon season officially ended on Monday, with India recording 934.8 mm of rainfall — 107.6 per cent of the long-period average and the highest since 2020. Central India received 19 per cent more rainfall than the long-period average for the region, the southern peninsula recorded 14 per cent more than normal, and northwest India saw 7 per cent more than usual.

In contrast, east and northeast India registered 14 per cent less rainfall than normal, according to the data. The country experienced an 11 per cent rainfall deficit in June, followed by an excess of 9 per cent in July, 15.3 per cent in August, and 11.6 per cent in September. Only three meteorological subdivisions

recorded deficient rainfall this monsoon season.

India's geographical area is divided into 36 meteorological subdivisions. Twenty-one subdivisions recorded normal rainfall, 10 experienced excess rainfall, and two saw large excess rainfall.

The monsoon is critical for India's agricultural sector, with 52 per cent of the net cultivated area dependent on it.

This primary rain-bearing system is also essential for replenishing reservoirs that provide drinking water and support power generation across the country. Meanwhile, as many as 1,492 people died in the country during extreme weather events in the 2024 monsoon season, according to data compiled by the IMD.

Meanwhile, amid grim flood situation in Bihar impacting 11.84 lakh people, Union Minister Chirag Paswan, who hails from the state, visited the affected areas and said that he would share details of the "frightening" conditions with PM Modi. 16 teams of NDRF have been deployed.

Outrage As Congress Man Takes Off Siddaramaiah's Shoes Holding Tricolour



Bengaluru

A video showing a Congress worker taking off the shoes of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with the Indian flag in his hand has prompted an attack from the BJP, which has accused the Congress leader of "insulting the nation's pride". Mr Siddaramaiah is already under fire from the BJP and its ally, the Janata Dal (Secular), over his alleged involvement in the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) 'scam'.

The video has also sparked outrage among some people on social media, who said it was distasteful and called for the flag being respected.

During an event in Bengaluru on Wednesday to pay respect to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary, Mr Siddaramaiah, 76, stood waiting as a Congress worker took off his shoes. A video showed the worker holding a small Tricolour in his left hand as he did so and a person, who appears to be part of Mr Siddaramaiah's security team, can be seen taking the flag from him.

Reacting to the incident, senior BJP leader Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy said it was an insult and showed the Congress' "culture".

"It's an insult to the Nation's pride, this is the culture of Congress party leaders, they must apologise to the Nation," Mr Reddy wrote on X.

Mr Siddaramaiah is facing cases from the Lokayukta and the Enforcement Directorate after an activist complained that the allotment of plots of land in a

prime area of Mysuru to the chief minister's wife as compensation for land in a village nearby caused a loss of ₹ 45 crore to the state.

The 14 plots of land were allotted to BN Parvathi in Mysuru's Vijayanagar Phase 3 and 4 by the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) as compensation for the use of 3.16 acres of land in Kesare village near the city.

On Tuesday, MUDA said it had agreed to take back the plots from Ms Parvathi after she offered to give them up, stating that she was following her conscience.

MUDA Commissioner AN Raghunandan said instructions have also been given to cancel the sale deeds. "This has no link with the investigation. We will inform the investigators if there is a probability of allotting this to someone else. There are provisions in the law. We will inform the Lokayukta and other investigating officers," he added.

Mr Siddaramaiah has maintained that the land was gifted to his wife by her brother. "When I have done no wrong, why should I resign? The land was de-notified by senior BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, not by me. My legal team will fight this," the chief minister said on Tuesday.

BY Vijayendra, who is the Karnataka BJP chief and son of BS Yediyurappa, hit back and said that the fact that the plots were being returned was like Mr Siddaramaiah admitting his mistake.

Defence medical wing gets first Tri-service woman chief

New Delhi

Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin has made history by becoming the first woman officer to take the reins as Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS), effective October 1. In this pivotal role, she will oversee the medical wings of all three services, marking a significant milestone in the Indian Armed Forces.

As the 46th DGAFMS, Vice Admiral Sarin brings an impressive 38-year career spanning prestigious academic and administrative appointments. Her distinguished service includes roles such as Professor and Head of Radiation Oncology at Army Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi, and Southern Command Hospital in Pune. She has also served as Commanding Officer, INHS Asvini, and Command Medical Officer in the Southern and Western Naval Commands.



Notably, Vice Admiral Sarin has the rare distinction of serving in all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces, having held positions in the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force. Her exemplary service has earned her the Ati Vishist Seva Medal, and she has been appointed to the National Task Force by the Supreme Court to formulate safe working conditions and protocols for medical professionals.

This historic appointment follows closely on the heels of Lt Gen Sadhna Nair's ground-breaking appointment as Director General Medical Services (Army) on August 1. Currently, three woman officers hold the rank of Lieutenant General and equivalent in the defence services, with eight having reached this rank in the medical stream.

"Avoid Non-Essential Travel": India's Advisory Amid Iran-Israel Conflict

New Delhi

Indians have been asked to avoid travelling to Iran after they launched a massive missile attack on Israel. The government said Indian nationals who are already present in the country must stay vigilant and stay in touch with its embassy in Tehran.

The war situation in the Middle East saw a sharp escalation yesterday after a barrage of hypersonic missiles lit up the night sky above Israel - an offensive that Iran said was to avenge the recent killings of top Hamas and Hezbollah leaders.

The Indian government is closely monitoring the recent escalation in security situation in the region, the foreign ministry said in a statement shared online by spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal.

"Indian nationals are advised to avoid all non-essential travel to Iran. Those currently residing in Iran are requested to remain vigilant and stay in contact with the Indian Embassy in Tehran,"



the travel advisory read.

The Indian embassy in Tel Aviv had yesterday asked Indians in the country to exercise caution, avoid unnecessary travel and stay close to the safety shelters.

"The Embassy is closely monitoring the situation and remains in regular touch with the Israeli authorities to ensure the safety of all our nationals," the embassy said in its advisory.

Foreign Minister S Jaishankar yesterday expressed concern at the possibility of the Middle East crisis growing into a larger regional conflict. "We

are very much concerned at the possibility of a broadening of the conflict, not just what happened in Lebanon, but also, you know, I referred earlier to the Houthis and the Red Sea, and, you know, to some extent, everything that happens between Iran and Israel," he said.

Tuesday's attack marked a massive escalation in the Israel-Iran ties that had worsened after the October 7 Hamas attacks. Iran backs the Hamas and the Palestinian cause. Israel is also fighting the Iran-backed Hezbollah, which runs Lebanon.

PM Pays Tribute To Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri On Birth Anniversary



New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, the most iconic figure of India's

freedom movement, on his birth anniversary.

In a post on X, PM Modi said the revered Bapu's life and ideals based on truth, harmony

and equality would always be an inspiration for the country's people.

Mahatma Gandhi, hailed as the father of the nation, steadfastly followed the principles of truth and non-violence, inspiring generations of politicians and activists around the world.

PM Modi also paid tribute to India's second prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was also born on this day.

He dedicated his life to the country's soldiers, farmers and pride, Modi said of Shastri, who raised the slogan of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" and whose simplicity and honesty earned him wide respect.

'Can Give Up Ministerial Post For Principles, As Father Did': Chirag Paswan

Patna

Union minister Chirag Paswan has caused a flutter by stating he would choose to give up his ministerial berth instead of a compromise on his principles, in keeping with the precedent set by his late father Ram Vilas Paswan.

Mr Paswan, who heads Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), made the remark at a function of the party's SC/ST

cell here on Monday evening, even as he maintained that he "will be in the NDA till Narendra Modi is my Prime Minister".

Responding to questions from journalists about his cryptic remark in his speech, "I will not hesitate to renounce my ministerial berth as my father did", the young leader claimed he was speaking about the Congress-led UPA.

Rape Convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Walks Out Of Jail On 20-Day Parole

Chandigarh

Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh on Wednesday walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak after he was granted a 20-day parole.

During his temporary release period, Singh will stay at the Dera ashram in Barnawa in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat.

He came out of jail under tight security this morning after his release on parole, an official said. The Haryana government has granted a 20-day parole to Singh while barring him from taking part in election-related activities, making speeches

and staying in the state during the period. Singh is serving a 20-year sentence given in 2017 for raping two of his disciples. The Dera chief and three others were also convicted in 2019 for the murder of a journalist more than 16 years ago. He had sought a 20-day parole ahead of the October 5 Haryana Assembly polls. According to the parole conditions, the sect chief will not take part in any election-related activity or deliver public speeches and will stay out of Haryana during the period.

He will stay at Dera ashram in Uttar Pradesh's Barnawa (Baghpat) during the period.

98% Of ₹ 2,000 Notes Have Been Returned Since Withdrawal Order: RBI

Mumbai

The Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday said 98 per cent of the ₹ 2,000 denomination notes have been returned since its May 2023 move to withdraw the currency notes.

The total value of notes of the denomination has reduced to ₹ 7,117 crore from ₹ 3.56 lakh crore on May 19, 2023, the central bank said.

"98 per cent of the ₹ 2000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, has since been returned," the RBI said.

On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced a surprise decision to withdraw the ₹ 2,000 currency



notes. The move was prompted by quality concerns and the denomination introduced after the demonetisation of November 2016 fulfilling its purpose.

The central bank said ₹ 2,000 notes continue to be legal tender and can be exchanged at 19 issue offices of the RBI either physically or sent by post for credit into bank accounts.

Soldier's Body Found 56 Years After Plane Crash In Himachal

Saharanpur

After a 56-year-long wait, the body of Sepoy Malkhan Singh, who went missing in a 1968 aircraft crash at the snow-clad mountains of Himachal Pradesh's Rohtang, will be arriving at his home here, officials said here.

Army officials said the bodies were found by a joint team comprising personnel from the Dogra Scouts of the Indian Army and Tiranga Mountain Rescue.

Additional SP Sagar Jain said the body is expected to reach here from Ladakh by October 3. Singh's last rites will be performed by the family after the body reaches his native Fatehpur village in the Nanauta area.

Singh's family members were informed about the recovery of the body by the Army recently and they are engaged in preparing for the last rites, the officer said.

Around 56 years after an ill-fated AN-12 aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed over the Rohtang Pass in Himachal Pradesh, the bodies of four victims were recovered, marking a significant success in one of India's longest-running



search operations.

The twin-engine turboprop transport aircraft, carrying 102 people, had gone missing on February 7, 1968, while flying from Chandigarh to Leh.

"In an extraordinary development, the ongoing search and rescue mission to recover the remains of personnel from the AN-12 aircraft, which crashed on Rohtang Pass in 1968, has achieved significant breakthroughs," an official said. For decades, the wreckage and remains of the victims remained lost in the icy terrain.

It was only in 2003 when mountaineers from the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of

Mountaineering discovered the wreckage, sparking multiple expeditions over the years by the Indian Army, especially the Dogra Scouts.

Only five bodies of the victims were recovered by 2019 given the treacherous conditions and unforgiving terrain of the crash site, according to officials.

The three out of four bodies found are of Malkhan Singh, Sepoy Narayan Singh and Craftsman Thomas Charan, the officials said.

The documents recovered from the remaining body have not conclusively identified the individual. However, the details of the family members were found, the officials said.

Israel reinforces military presence in Lebanon as Hezbollah reports clashes with troops

The Israeli military said on Wednesday that regular infantry and armoured units were joining its ground operations in Lebanon, stepping up pressure on foe Hezbollah, as it prepared to retaliate against Iranian missile strikes.

Already battling Hamas in Gaza, Israel is beefing up its presence in south Lebanon in its conflict with Hezbollah a day after it was attacked by Iran, raising fears the oil-producing Middle East could be engulfed in a wider conflict.

Iran said on Wednesday the attack - its biggest assault on Israel - was over barring further provocation, but Israel and the United States promised to hit back.

Meanwhile, the violence continued on the Israeli-Lebanese border on Wednesday.

Israel's addition of infantry and armoured troops from the 36th Division, including the Golani Brigade, the 188th Armoured Brigade and 6th Infantry Brigade, suggests that the operation may move beyond limited commando raids.

The military has said its incursion is largely aimed at destroying tunnels and other infrastructure on the border and there were no plans for a wider operation targeting Beirut or major cities in southern Lebanon.

It issued new evacuation orders for around two dozen towns along the southern border.

Border clashes

Despite calls for a ceasefire from the United Nations, the United States and the European Union, fighting between Israel and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah has continued.

Hezbollah said on Wednesday it was clashing with Israeli troops in the border town of Maroun el-Ras after it had pushed back forces near another border town. The group said it had also fired rockets at



military posts inside Israel.

The group's media chief Mohammad Afif said those battles were only "the first round" and that the group had enough fighters, weapons and ammunition to push back Israel.

There was no immediate comment from Israel.

Israel renewed its bombardment early on Wednesday of Beirut's southern suburbs, a stronghold of the Iran-backed group, with more than a dozen airstrikes against what it said were targets belonging to Hezbollah.

Lebanon's telecommunications minister Johnny Corm said on X that a cellular transmission tower had been destroyed.

Nearly 1,900 people have been killed and more than 9,000 wounded in Lebanon in almost a year of cross-border fighting, with the most in the past two weeks, according to Lebanese government statistics. More than a million people have been forced to flee their homes.

Malika Joumaa, from Sudan, was forced to take shelter in Saint Joseph's church in Beirut after being forced from her house near Sidon with her husband and two children.

"It's good that the church offered its help. We were going to stay in the streets, where would we have gone? We were (sheltering) under the bridge, it is not safe, if we go back home, it is not safe, they are striking everywhere."

Fears of further violence

The Islamic Republic described Tuesday's assault as a response to Israeli killings of militant leaders, including Hezbollah chief Hassan NAMritsarallah, and attacks in Lebanon against the group and in Gaza.

Iran's ally, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, was assassinated in Tehran on July 31. The attack was widely blamed on Israel, which has not claimed responsibility.

Ibrahim Jafari, an advisor to the General Commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, said a cyber-operation was

launched along with the missile strikes which reached their targets, which the state news agency said were three Israeli military bases.

Like a similar attack in April, the latest strikes caused minimal damage. One Palestinian was killed.

The general staff of Iran's armed forces said any Israeli response would be met with "vast destruction" of the latter's infrastructure.

US news website Axios reported that a retaliation within days that could target oil production facilities inside Iran and other strategic sites.

On social media, Iranians were apprehensive about Israeli retaliation and said past wars, such as the eight-year conflict with Iraq in the 1980s that killed about one million people, would only bring more suffering.

"The destruction of generations, young people being cannon fodder, the enrichment of generals and elites, and the empowerment of extremists? Leaders will not pay for dragging Iran into war," said Nima Mokhtarian, who works at an NGO.

Iran's missile strikes and Israel's operations in Lebanon have caused alarm around the world, as Tehran's Middle East proxies—Hezbollah, Yemen's Houthis and armed groups in Iraq—show no let-up in attacks in support of Hamas.

China called on global powers to play a constructive role to avoid an escalation, while Saudi Arabia is hoping for de-escalation and dialogue, Economy Minister Faisal al-Ibrahim said.

In Egypt, the cabinet condemned what it called a "dangerous" Israeli escalation in southern Lebanon and rejected any attempts to impose a "new situation" on the ground that violates Lebanese sovereignty

US condemns Iran's 'unacceptable' attack on Israel, pledges support

The Iranian missile attack on Israel appears to have been defeated and ineffective, US President Joe Biden said, hours after Tehran fired nearly 200 missiles at Israel.

The Israeli military reportedly said there were no news of injuries from the attack.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Biden said, "At my direction, the United States military actively supported the defence of Israel. We are still assessing the impact but, based on what we know, the attack appears to have been defeated and ineffective and this is a testament to Israeli military capability... (It is) also a testament to intensive planning (between) the United States and Israel to anticipate and defend against a brazen attack." "Make no mistake, the United States is fully supportive of Israel. And I just spent the morning and part of the afternoon in the situation room, meeting with my whole national security

team... The national security team, as I said, is in constant contact with Israeli officials and counterparts...", he added.

Biden directed the US military to aid Israel's defence against Iranian attacks and shoot down missiles targeting the country, the White House said.

While most of the missiles were destroyed before reaching their target, some did impact and cause minimal damage, the Pentagon press secretary Major General Patrick S Ryder said.

Two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers -- the USS Cole and USS Bulkeley -- deployed in the eastern Mediterranean fired a dozen interceptors at the incoming Iranian ballistic missiles as part of its defence of Israel, he added.

Condemning the attack, Vice-President Kamala Harris said, "I condemn this attack unequivocally. I am

clear-eyed -- Iran is a destabilising, dangerous force in the Middle East and today's attack on Israel only further demonstrates that fact." Iran is not only a threat to Israel but also to American personnel in the region, American interests, and innocent civilians across the region who suffer at the hands of Iran based and backed terrorist proxies, she added.

"We will never hesitate to take whatever action is necessary to defend US forces and interests against Iran and Iran-backed terrorists. And we will continue to work with our allies and partners to disrupt Iran's aggressive behaviour and hold them accountable," Harris said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken noted that this was Iran's second direct attack on Israel in five months.

"This is totally unacceptable and the entire world should condemn it," he said.

Well done, J&K

THE conclusion of the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) poll campaigning marks a significant milestone, underscoring the successful efforts of both the administration and security forces. As the region navigated a high-stakes election after a decade, the seamless coordination between election officials, security agencies and local authorities ensured that the campaigning ended on a peaceful note. In this first Assembly election since the abrogation of Article 370, political parties freely campaigned across both Jammu and the Valley, a testament to the tight security that kept terrorism at bay. The key poll issues include the abrogation of Article 370, with debates on the restoration of statehood, and the focus on development in the region. Parties like the BJP emphasised the benefits of Article 370's removal, citing peace and integration, while the Congress and regional parties like the NC and the PDP rallied for

statehood restoration and protection of local identity.

With 40 seats up for grabs in the final



phase, the competitive spirit between major players — the BJP, Congress, NC and PDP — is palpable. And what has stood out is the high voter enthusiasm and turnout, encouraged by the election arrangements, enabling widespread public participation. The Election Commission, in tandem with the police and armed forces,

managed to maintain order and ensure safety despite the looming threats from across the border. Areas near the Line of Control and the International Border, usually vulnerable to disruptions, remained calm, with polling stations set up in even the most sensitive regions. Kashmir Zone IGP VK Birdi praised the coordination and intelligence-gathering by local officers, which helped prevent any law-and-order breakdown.

This successful election campaign has not only fortified faith in the region's governance but also shown the world that democracy can thrive in J&K against all odds. A well-deserved pat on the back is due to all those involved.

// satyasya paramam nidhanam //

We would like to hear from you. Please share your comments on editor.acrossstate@gmail.com

You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us. And the world will live as one.

-John Lennon

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Wary of Wangchuk

India's Olympiad golden double a great feat

WHO is afraid of Ladakhi activist Sonam Wangchuk? His 'Dilli Chalo Padyatra',

which began from Leh a month ago, was stalled at the Singhu border on Monday night. Wangchuk and his supporters, who are demanding Sixth Schedule status for India's youngest UT, were detained by the Delhi Police. The ostensible reason was a six-day ban on protests and the gathering of five or more persons in the central and border areas of the national capital. However, the grounds on which the ban has been imposed — 'heavy movement of VVIPs' on Gandhi Jayanti as well as the J&K and

Haryana Assembly elections — are unconvincing. The restrictions appear to be a



pre-emptive move to deter Wangchuk and his fellow protesters from gaining nationwide traction for their

pressing issues.

Wangchuk deserves to be present at Raj Ghat today

as he has grittily internalised the Mahatma's spirit of satyagraha. He made a big statement in March when he observed a 21-day fast to highlight two key demands: statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion under the Constitution's Sixth Schedule to help protect the ecologically fragile region from an industrial onslaught. Wangchuk had fittingly chosen the pious occasion of Gandhi Jayanti to conclude his march, but it was abruptly and ruthlessly cut short by

the powers that be.

The Centre has chosen to confine this tireless crusader to Delhi's borders, like all those farmers who stayed put for a year in protest against the farm laws. The creation of new districts is not enough to address the grievances of the Ladakhi people. Their bitter disillusionment with the BJP was evident in its embarrassing loss in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the first after Ladakh became a UT. The saffron party had won the seat in 2014 and 2019, but an Independent, Mohamad Haneefa, triumphed this time. Haneefa has urged the Centre to resume talks with the agitating groups. The onus is on the government to hear out the residents of this long-neglected region, starting with Wangchuk.

Curb cyber slavery

Crime control, job generation equally vital

THE lethal cocktail of human trafficking and cybercrime has taken its toll on tens of thousands of Indians, who are trapped in Southeast Asian countries and are being forced to commit cyber fraud and other illegal activities. No less alarming is the fact that these persons are luring their own compatriots into investing in dubious cryptocurrency schemes. Around 30,000



posts of data entry and call centre operators; once they reach their destination, their passports are taken away and they have no option but to do under duress what their employers want. The inter-ministerial panel set up by the Centre to look into the matter has reportedly identified gaps in the banking, immigration and telecom sectors; thus, inter-departmental cooperation is the need of the hour to tackle this menace. At long last, the Union Ministry of Telecommunications has decided to disconnect around two crore mobile connections that were procured on the basis of forged documents or are being misused for cybercrime.

Such is the audacity of cyber fraudsters that they managed to dupe renowned industrialist SP

of the 73,000-odd Indians who travelled to Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam on a visitor visa from January 2022 to May 2024 are yet to return; more than half of these 'cyber slaves' are in the 20-39 age group, while Punjab tops the statewise list of missing persons, followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

The modus operandi of illegal recruitment agencies is rather simple: job-seekers from India are offered 'lucrative'

Oswal of Rs 7 crore. Crime control is vitally important, but it must go hand in hand with a reality check. The desperation of Indians to take up jobs in other developing countries runs counter to the country's reputation of being the world's fastest-growing major economy. The lofty goal of Viksit Bharat will remain a pipe dream if domestic job opportunities fail to meet the needs and aspirations of skilled young people.

Luxury trumps health

High Court withholds Punjab health officials' pay

THE reprimand by the Punjab and Haryana High Court has exposed glaring mismanagement in the Punjab Government's financial priorities, especially its indulgence in luxury spending while healthcare obligations remain unmet. Despite receiving Rs 350 crore from the Union Government under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, the state has failed to release these funds to hospitals, which



state's apparent disregard for essential services like healthcare, which has been exacerbated by its allocation of resources toward non-essential expenditures such as new cars for politicians, office renovations and costly media advertising. The fact that funds intended to support critical healthcare services have been diverted for lavish expenditures on luxuries not only exposes poor governance but also raises concerns

about the administration's commitment to public welfare.

Punjab's financial troubles are compounded by its massive fiscal deficit, which has already put a strain on essential public services. The state's misallocation of funds signals a broader issue of governance failure. Reports have pointed out that while politicians and bureaucrats benefit from these lavish

outlays, hospitals and healthcare providers are left battling mounting debts and underfunding, directly impacting patient care and public health outcomes. The HC's demand for transparency regarding government spending is a step in the right direction. The state government must prioritise healthcare and social welfare programmes over luxuries.

means it owes medical institutions Rs 500 crore. The state has been unpardonably negligent about public health despite hospitals across Punjab struggling to provide adequate care to patients due to financial constraints.

The court's move to withhold the salaries of senior health officials is a significant step toward accountability. However, the deeper issue lies in the

THE auctioning of the post of sarpanch in Gurdaspur's Hardowal Kalan village is a blatant violation of democratic principles, turning a public election into a financial transaction. A bid of Rs 2 crore for the position undermines the democratic process, where leadership should be determined by merit and the will of the people, not by wealth. This disturbing practice is not isolated. Auctions have also been reported in Muktsar, where bids for the post of sarpanch reached Rs 35.5 lakh, and candidates pledged to fund village development from their pockets.

While these pledges may seem noble, they represent a dangerous trend in which governance is bought, reducing public office to a commodity. The auctioning of leadership posts violates the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which mandates free and fair elections for panchayat representatives, and the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, which explicitly

Bidding for power

Auctions for sarpanch's post threaten democracy

requires voting, not financial bidding.

Atma Singh, the highest bidder in Gurdaspur, defended the auction as transparent compared to bribing politicians. This reflects a deeper disillusionment with a system that has failed to deliver development in many rural areas. However, selling public offices is no solution — it

only exacerbates the problem by opening the door to corruption and the misuse of power by those seeking to recoup their 'investment'. Such auctions have been condemned across the political spectrum, with leaders like Partap Singh Bajwa and Harpal Singh Cheema calling for a probe, labelling this practice a 'murder of democracy'. Similar calls have been made in Muktsar, where videos of auctions have gone viral, sparking public outrage. These auctions, if left unchecked, will erode the very foundation of democracy. Legal action is urgently needed to uphold the rule of law and to stop such practices from taking root in Punjab's governance system.



Censor woes

Allow cinema to play its role

ON the issue of creative freedom, the debate usually centres around who's in favour and who's against, and on what grounds. Freedom of expression is seldom looked at in isolation — political considerations are always at play, only the degree of engagement varies. The film *Emergency* has been mired in controversy ever since its trailer dropped into public view. Indira Gandhi's perceived negative depiction is a cause of concern for some. That BJP MP Kangana Ranaut, who has a questionable sense of history, is playing her role is bothersome for others. Sikh organisations have also raised objections to the manner in which the community has been portrayed. Ranaut, also the film's co-producer, has been spitting fire over the delay. This presents the Central Board



of Film Certification (CBFC) with certain challenges, but should it be

concerned about the noise outside?

The entire premise of certification rests on careful viewing and arriving at an informed decision based on consensus. Films on sensitive topics are bound to raise hackles. That's the purpose of art — to trigger debate,

ask difficult questions and weigh

in on the laudatory or critical reactions. Tinkering with cinema over whimsical demands — and being unnecessarily guarded — runs contrary to the very essence of cinema. Go for a review by a distinguished jury, if need be, and stop at that.

It's encouraging to see the Bombay High Court assert that creative freedom cannot be curtailed and the board cannot refuse to certify a film just because there exists the possible fear of a possible law and order problem. The board now says that *Emergency* will get a theatrical release if certain cuts are made. The makers have other plans. The last word has not been heard. Why doubt the intelligence of audiences? Trust them to form their own opinions.

Israel at it again

World helpless to stop mayhem in Lebanon



A typically belligerent Israel is pulling out all the stops to inflict damage on Hezbollah in Lebanon. The international community, not for the first time, looks helpless to stop the no-holds-barred offensive that has killed hundreds of Lebanese people in a matter of days. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who will address the UN General Assembly in New York today, has told his army to fight on. He has no qualms about creating a mess that he can't or won't clean up. Brimming with overconfidence, Israel feels that it can handle two Iran-backed militant groups — Hezbollah and Hamas — at the same time, like a master juggler. It's another matter that Hamas has proved too hot to handle for Netanyahu since the October 7, 2023, terror attacks. The West lacks the guts to

question Israel's sledgehammer tactics, but it is desperate to avoid the ignominy of being labelled a mere spectator. The US, France and other allies jointly called for an 'immediate' 21-day ceasefire to allow for negotiations. US President Joe Biden was naïve enough to suggest that getting Israel and Hezbollah to agree to a ceasefire could help achieve a cessation of hostilities in Gaza. Does he really believe that this was a 'buy one, get one free' scheme of sorts? Defying its close ally, Israel was quick to burst Biden's bubble of hope by rejecting the truce proposal.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has tried to show the mirror to the powerful but deeply fractured Security Council, lambasting it for its failure to end wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and beyond. Lebanon has been added to this blood-soaked list, but the UN body — tasked with ensuring international peace and security — couldn't care less. Expecting Israel to voluntarily take its foot off the pedal is akin to waiting for the leopard to change its spots. The world must realise that giving Israel carte blanche is a sure-fire recipe for disaster.

Chinese temerity

No LAC trade-off should be acceptable to India



THE irony is not lost on anyone: Chinese negotiators have suggested to India that their troops be allowed to patrol in two sensitive areas along Arunachal Pradesh, even as Chinese soldiers have denied Indian troops access to four patrolling points in eastern Ladakh over the past four years. The Arunachal spots — including one in the Yangtse area north-east of Tawang, where the two sides had clashed in December 2022 — have been under Indian control for decades. Delhi knows very well that if you give Beijing an inch, it will end up taking a mile. The unreasonable demand speaks volumes about China's dubious intentions. No trade-off or quid pro quo of any sort should be acceptable to India.

Trust deficit continues to define the

India-China relationship in the wake of the Galwan clash, even though the two countries have held 21 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks regarding the LAC dispute in eastern Ladakh since June 2020. There have also been 31 meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs. Despite the all-out emphasis on dialogue and communication, disengagement at the friction points of Demchok and Depsang has remained elusive.

The fact that the Chinese have made a demand this time rather than going ahead with a brazen incursion should not lull Delhi into believing that the Dragon has mellowed. India must hold its ground to counter attempts by the People's Liberation Army troops to change the status quo in Arunachal. Beijing's sharp reaction to the naming of an Arunachal peak after the 6th Dalai Lama by an Indian mountaineering team has again laid bare its territorial overreach. Chinese temerity stems partly from a dominant position on the trade front — India seems helpless in reducing its heavy dependence on imports from its northern neighbour. The double challenge for India is to stand up to China — militarily as well as economically.

Gross GST revenue rises 6.5% to Rs 1.73 lakh crore in September

New Delhi

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in September crossed Rs 1.73 lakh crore, indicating a 6.5 per cent year-on-year growth, according to official data.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in September last year was Rs 1.63 lakh crore.

In August this year, the mop-up was Rs 1.75 lakh crore, the fifth highest monthly collection since the new indirect tax regime started in July 2017.

Domestic revenue grew 5.9 per cent to about Rs 1.27 lakh crore in September 2024, while revenue from import of goods was up eight per cent to Rs 45,390 crore. After refunding Rs 20,458 crore out of the Rs 1,73,240 crore gross revenue, the net collection in the month increased only by 3.9 per cent on an annualised basis at Rs 1,52,782 crore.

Refunds in September saw a 31 per cent y-o-y jump,



compared to the Rs 15,614 crore in September 2023.

Experts expressed their concerns for the relatively lower growth in net collections. According to Vivek Jalan, partner, Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP, with the GDP growth at around 6.5 per cent and inflation around 4.5 per cent, the real GDP Growth is around 11 per cent.

“The year, so far, GST growth

is at 9.1 per cent, indicating a tax buoyancy of less than one per cent, which may concern the GST Council,” he said. “Three Group of Ministers are now working simultaneously on real estate, rate rationalisation and insurance. With the tax buoyancy moving southwards, it is expected for the next GST Council meeting to see some far-sighted measures for revenue enhancement.”

Directorate General of Civil Aviation grants approval for AIX Connect-AI Express merger

New Delhi

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted the requisite regulatory approval for the merger of AIX Connect (AIXC), formerly known as AirAsia, into Air India Express (AIX).

Effective Tuesday, all aircraft of AIXC have been transferred seamlessly to the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) of AIX, ensuring that operations of the new combined entity continue without disruption.

The merger entailed the integration of aircraft, pilots, cabin crew, engineers, operational control systems, aircraft maintenance, certification procedures, backend systems, vendors and a wide range of contracts.

Considering the safety challenges that arise during the merger of two running airline systems, the DGCA's role has been pivotal in ensuring that all regulatory and safety

requirements are meticulously complied with and effectively implemented.

Typically, such a transition would require grounding the fleet during the transfer of aircraft from one AOC to another—a process

ensuring smooth transition without grounding of aircraft, the DGCA constituted a dedicated project team which coordinated the necessary actions to secure regulatory approvals in a time-bound manner. The approval process for this merger involved reviewing organisational structures and approvals, ensuring a seamless transfer of aircraft and personnel, and safeguarding the safety of ongoing operations.

The merger also required the alignment of facilities, personnel, procedures, and fleet assets spread across multiple locations. AIXC and AIX worked closely under the DGCA's guidance to develop a unified set of processes, systems, and procedures. Once the harmonised operating manuals were in place, both airlines followed common procedures and conducted the necessary bridge training for their personnel under the DGCA's supervision.

that could cause inconvenience to passengers and impose financial strain on the airlines. To mitigate these challenges, the DGCA was proactively engaged with all stakeholders and initiated continuous extensive discussions aimed at creating a procedure that would ensure regulatory compliance.

In order to achieve the dual objectives of maintaining safety standards while simultaneously



In slow lane, passenger carmakers eye festive booster

New Delhi

Having witnessed subdued sales in September this year, passenger vehicle makers are banking on the festive season for an uptick in demand. Like previous months, SUVs continues to steer passenger vehicle wholesales, with a majority of the manufacturers having wide SUVs portfolio witnessing a positive growth in dispatches despite low

cent. Passenger cars (mini and compact segment) such as Alto, S Presso, Baleno, Dzire, Swift and Wagon R, however, witnessed a decline of 12.4 per cent. Hyundai Motor India registered sales of 51,101 units in September 2024, compared to the 54,241 in September 2023, witnessing a decline of 6.14 per cent. For Hyundai, its SUV sales accounted for 70 per cent sales last month.

DOMESTIC PASSENGER VEHICLE SALES

Name	Sales		% Growth
	Sept 2024	Sept 2023	
Maruti Suzuki	1,44,962	1,50,812	-4
Hyundai Motor	51,101	54,241	-6
Tata Motors	41,063	44,809	-8
Mahindra & Mahindra	51,062	41,267	24
Toyota Kirloskar Motor	23,802	22,168	7.4

market sentiments.

Maruti Suzuki has registered domestic PV sales of 1,44,962 units, compared to 1,50,812 units in September last year, witnessing a decline of 4 per cent. Maruti Suzuki's UV range, which includes Brezza, Ertiga, Grand Vitara, and Jimny, saw a marginal growth of 3.8 per

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) managed to beat Tata Motors in terms of passenger car sales in September 2024.

Tata Motors sales were down 8 per cent this September compared to a year ago, when Tata sold 44,809 units. M&M, however, witnessed a growth of 24 per cent.

600 detained over Samsung protests

Chennai

The police on Tuesday said it has detained around 600 Samsung Electronics workers and union members for organising a street protest, as a strike at the South Korean firm's home appliances plant in Tamil Nadu state entered its fourth week. Charles Sam Rajadurai, a senior state police official, said employees and workers linked to



CITU, which is leading the protest, were detained as their protest march near Chennai was inconveniencing the public. “They are being detained in four wedding halls,” he said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor registers 14% growth in September 2024

New Delhi

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) continues to record positive sales momentum by registering a 14% increase in wholesale sales in September 2024 compared to the same period last year. The company sold a total of 26,847 units, with domestic sales accounting for 23,802 units and exports totalling 3,045 units.

In September 2023, the company had sold 23,590 units.

In the first six months of the fiscal year 2024-2025, TKM achieved a notable increase in vehicle deliveries, reaching a total of 1,62,623 units. This marks the



company's strongest performance ever in India.

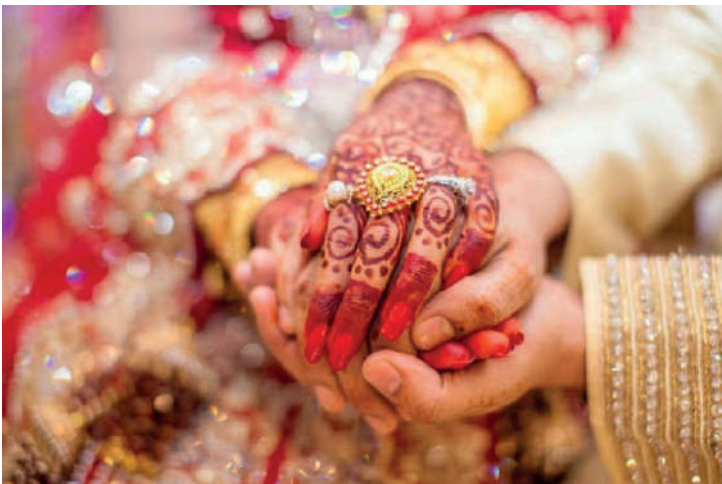
The company had sold 1,23,939 units in the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

Sabari Manohar, Vice-President Sales-Service-Used Car Business, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said, "As the festive

fervour picks up, footfalls and enquiries are charged up, which makes us positive of a very good festive season. Notably, our SUV, MPV, and small car segments have experienced significant growth nationwide, contributing over 90% to our sales in the month of September.

Key to meeting this rising demand has been our strategic operational improvements, such as the introduction of a third shift. This has significantly optimised our supply chain, particularly for high-demand models where waiting periods have been reduced.

48 lakh weddings in November-December to generate record Rs 5.9 lakh crore



New Delhi

India is gearing up for a massive economic boost as the upcoming wedding season is projected to generate Rs 5.9 lakh crore in business, according to a recent study by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

With an estimated 48 lakh weddings taking place nationwide in November and December 2024, merchants and retailers across the country are preparing for an unprecedented surge in demand for wedding-related goods and services.

This year's wedding season is set to outpace last year's figures, which saw 35 lakh weddings and generated Rs 4.25 lakh crore. The increase is attributed to a rise in the number of auspicious wedding dates, from 11 in 2023 to 18 this year.

Delhi alone is expected to host 4.5 lakh weddings, contributing Rs 1.5 lakh crore to the total business, underscoring the capital's significant role in the overall economic boom.

The wedding season, which begins on November 12 and runs until December 16, will feature a series of auspicious dates that are expected to drive up wedding-related spending.

Acharya Durgesh Tare, Convenor of CAIT's Veda and Spiritual Committee, noted that the season kicks off on Dev Uthani Ekadashi and will include auspicious dates spread across both November and December. This extended window is likely to result in increased business activity compared to previous years.

CAIT's National Secretary

General, Praveen Khandelwal, said, "Consumers are increasingly prioritising Indian products, reinforcing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for 'Vocal for Local' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-reliant India).

He added, "Indian products have made significant inroads in the market, and their demand has increased dramatically, overshadowing foreign goods. This indicates a bright future for Indian products in the country."

CAIT National President, BC Bhartia, offered a detailed breakdown of the anticipated wedding expenses across different budget ranges. These expenses range from Rs 3 lakh per wedding for 10 lakh ceremonies, to over Rs 1 crore for high-end weddings. This diverse spending spectrum is expected to fuel growth across various sectors, with significant demand for goods such as clothing, jewellery, electronics, and food items.

Additionally, services like banquet halls, event management, catering, transportation, and photography will also see a sharp rise in business.

Another emerging trend this year is the increased expenditure on social media services for wedding coverage, as more couples look to enhance their digital presence during the festivities.

Sebi clears new investment product targeting high net worth individuals



Mumbai

Markets regulator Sebi's board on Monday cleared a proposal to introduce a new asset class for high-risk profile investors — High Net Worth Individuals (HNIs) — to bridge the gap between mutual funds and portfolio management services in terms of flexibility in asset construction.

In a statement issued after the board meeting, Sebi said its board had cleared a proposal to relax the regulatory framework for the passively managed mutual fund schemes to reduce compliance requirements.

Overall, the board has approved 17 proposals, including amendments to insider trading rules and relaxing eligibility criteria and compliance requirements for investment advisers and research analysts.

This is the first board meeting after the US-based short seller Hindenburg Research and the Congress party made allegations against Sebi's Chairperson Madhbai Puri Buch.

Hindenburg accused Buch and her husband of having investments in offshore funds controlled

by Vinod Adani, the brother of Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, which were allegedly used to round trip funds and inflate stock prices.

Also, it was alleged that Sebi had amended rules pertaining to real estate investment trusts (REITs) in a way that benefited Blackstone, where Buch's husband was a senior advisor. Buchs and Sebi had denied the allegations.

Apart from these, the Sebi board approved a proposal to introduce provisions for 'summary proceeding' in the intermediaries rules to handle certain violations of securities laws by intermediaries more swiftly and efficiently.

Also, it has rationalised the disclosure requirements in the offer document and reduced the rights issue processing time to make it a preferred fundraising route.

Additionally, Sebi has cleared a proposal that would allow promoters to transfer their rights entitlement to select investors during rights issues, potentially attracting more investment into the market.

India has become manufacturing powerhouse: PM Modi hails 'Make in India'

New Delhi

With his government's flagship 'Make in India' initiative completing 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India has become a manufacturing powerhouse and it is because of the country's youth power that the "whole world is looking up to us".

As the 'Make in India' initiative marked its 10th anniversary last week, the prime minister talked about it in his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcast and said the success of this campaign includes the contribution of the country's big industries as well as small shopkeepers.

"Today, it gives me immense joy to see that the poor, the middle class and MSMEs are getting a lot of benefit from this campaign. This campaign has provided an opportunity to people of every class to showcase their talent," Modi said.



"Today, India has become a manufacturing powerhouse and it is because of the youth power of the country that the whole world is looking up to us. Be it automobiles, textiles, aviation, electronics or defence... every sector in the country's exports are constantly on the rise," he added.

The prime minister said the continual rise of FDI in the country is narrating the success

saga of 'Make in India'.

"Now we are mainly focusing on two things... The first is 'Quality', that is, goods made in our country should be of global standards... and the other is 'Vocal for Local. That means, local products should get maximum promotion," Modi said.

"In 'Mann Ki Baat' we've also discussed 'My Product My Pride'.

How the people of the country can benefit from promoting local products can be understood through an example. In Bhandara district of Maharashtra, there is an old textile tradition of, 'Bhandara Tussar Silk Handloom'. Tussar Silk, is known for its colour, design and strength.

"In some areas of Bhandara, more than 50 'Self Help Groups' are working to preserve it. Women have a huge participation in that. This silk is fast becoming popular and empowering local communities... and that is the spirit of 'Make in India,'" he added.

In this festive season, Modi urged people that anything that they buy, should necessarily be 'Made in India'.

"Anything you gift that too should be 'Made in India'. Merely buying earthen lamps is not 'Vocal for Local'. You should promote local products made in your area more and more.

Any such product, that has been made with the sweat of an Indian artisan, that is made on Indian soil, is our pride - we always have to lend glory to this pride," he said.

On the 10th anniversary of his government's 'Make in India' drive, Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday affirmed that the flagship initiative to boost manufacturing has transformed a dream into a powerful movement and its impact shows that "Bharat is unstoppable".

In a blog on LinkedIn, the prime minister had lauded everyone who played a role in making the initiative a "roaring success", saying each of them is a pioneer, visionary and innovator, whose tireless efforts have fuelled the programme's success, making India the focus of global attention as well as curiosity.

Government lifts ban on export of non-basmati white rice

New Delhi

Withdrawing a blanket ban on overseas shipments of non-basmati white rice, the government on Saturday imposed a floor price of USD 490 per tonne and exempted the commodity from export duty.

Exports of non-basmati white rice have been banned since July 20, 2023, to boost domestic supply.

"The export policy for non-basmati white rice (semi-milled or wholly milled rice, whether or not polished or gazed) ...is amended from prohibited to free, subject to MEP (minimum export price) of USD 490 per tonne with immediate effect and until further orders," the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

The measures came at a time when the country has ample stock of rice at government godowns and retail prices are also under control.

The government has exempted non-basmati white rice from export duty, while reducing the levy on parboiled rice to 10 per cent.

The duty cut came within a fortnight of the government's decision to remove



the minimum export price on basmati rice.

In a notification issued on Friday, the revenue department under the finance ministry said it has also reduced export duty on husked (brown rice), and rice in the form of husk (paddy or rough) to 10 per cent.

The export duty on these varieties of rice as well as non-basmati white rice was 20 per cent so far.

These duty changes are effective from September 27, 2024, the notification said.

Earlier this month, the government had scrapped the minimum export price for basmati rice to boost outbound shipments and enhance farmers' income.

The country has exported non-

basmati white rice worth USD 189 million during April-July this fiscal. It was USD 852.52 million in 2023-24.

Though there was a ban on the exports, the government was allowing the shipments to friendly nations like Maldives, Mauritius, the UAE and African countries.

The export permission was granted by the government of India to other countries to meet their food security needs and based on the request of their governments.

This variety of the rice is widely consumed in India and it also has demand in global markets, particularly in nations which have large Indian diaspora.

In 2023-24, the country exported the commodity to 17 nations—Bhutan (79,000 MT - metric tonnes), Mauritius (14,000 MT), Singapore (50,000 MT), UAE (75,000 MT), Nepal (95,000 MT), Cameroon (1,90,000 MT), Cote d' Ivoire (1,42,000 MT), Guinea (1,42,000 MT), and Malaysia (1,70,000 MT).

The other countries are Philippines (2,95,000 MT), Seychelles (800 MT), Comoros (20,000 MT), Madagascar

(50,000 MT), Equatorial Guinea (10,000 MT), Egypt (60,000 MT), Kenya (1,00,000 MT), and Tanzania (30,000 MT).

Certain member countries of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), including the US, have earlier raised concerns over the prohibition on the exports. India has rejected their concerns stating that the export ban on rice is a regulation rather than a restriction and is crucial for securing the food security of the country's 1.4 billion people.

The US had urged India to lift this export ban with immediate effect.

Those countries had argued that such measures had a detrimental impact on nations which are heavily reliant on imports of these agri commodities, particularly during crises.

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine is among one of the factors that have disrupted the foodgrain supply chain. The government earlier this month also scrapped a minimum price threshold for exports of onion as it looked to pass on the benefit of international glut to Indian farmers.

Sino-Indian boundary row: Caution in the face of optimism

The recent optimism about an improvement in Sino-Indian relations should not be overstated. Reports indicate that India and China have “narrowed” their differences, which in diplomatic language means “progress”. In his latest statement, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar said 75 percent of “disengagement” problems are resolved. What this progress

1996 boundary agreement between India and China has 12 articles that address each specific issue. The more salient ones require that each side’s capability not be used against the other. In the event military exercises are conducted close to the LAC with a brigade-size force on one side, the latter has to notify the other. Air intrusions across the LAC are also prohibited. No weapon can be

coercion in Eastern Ladakh along the five friction points that involved the People’s Liberation Army (PLA)’ occupation of territory in the Depsang Bulge, Gogra-Hot springs, Galwan, both South and North banks of Pangong Tso and Demchok worked very effectively. The outcome would be comparable to India’s victory against Pakistan at Kargil without the combat casualties

win for the Modi government.

What does disengagement mean? The possibility of “disengagement” which is now doing the rounds might involve exactly what India and China negotiated in July 2020, August 2021, and February 2021. In early July 2020, a 1.5-kilometer buffer zone on both sides followed a mutual force pullout from Galwan. This was the first of the “disengagements”. Gogra Post-PP-17 was mutually vacated by the PLA and IA in early August 2021 creating a five km buffer zone. A subsequent agreement involved Chinese forces pulling back from both the South and North banks of the Pangong Tso and India’s reciprocal withdrawal from Kailash Range heights which Indian forces seized in late August 2020 and helped perch them on dominating heights. With regard to Pangong Tso, prior to April 2020, the Indian Army (IA) used to patrol right from Finger 1 at the westernmost edge of the Pangong Tso to Finger 8 located at the easternmost edge of the lake. India claims that the LAC runs right up to the Finger 8 which is where its patrolling threshold ends. Before April 2020, Indian troops from their Dhan Singh Thapa post situated close to Finger 3 would patrol right up to Finger 8. China believes the LAC ends at finger 4 against India’s claims that it ends at Finger 8. The February 2021 agreement ended up creating an 8-kilometre buffer zone between Finger 4 and Finger 8 that prevented patrols from both sides with New Delhi also surrendering its occupation of the strategically important Kailash Range heights. Following the latter disengagement, another was completed at Hotsprings or PP-15 in September 2022 following the 16th round of military corps commanders meeting. All these disengagements, due to mutually negotiated buffer zones, wound up giving India no physical access to points up to which it could patrol pre-April 2020.

A subsequent agreement involved Chinese forces pulling back from both the South and North banks of the Pangong Tso and India’s reciprocal withdrawal from Kailash Range heights which Indian forces seized in late August 2020 and helped perch them on dominating heights.

Now if the government proceeds to negotiate “disengagement” from the remaining two friction points at the Depsang Bulge and Demchok, it risks creating the same buffer zones as it did with the other friction points. This fundamentally means there will be no restoration of patrolling rights for Indian forces, let alone the complete withdrawal

of Chinese to their pre-April 2020 positions and Beijing’s commitment that it will honour the 1993 and 1996 agreements. As the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) made clear in its latest statement: “Both sides must [do not yet agree] fully abide by relevant agreements, protocols and understandings reached in the past by the two governments.” In a nutshell, India and China will end up negotiating the same disengagements they did earlier leaving India at best in former IA Chief General V.P. Malik’s words: “non-physical surveillance”.

A solution of this kind will only serve as a palliative because China still has a considerable number of forces deployed both in-depth as does India, but Beijing can mobilise its forces rapidly in the event it wants to seize the territory it has vacated as part of the disengagement. This is exemplified by several infrastructural and logistical measures that the PLA has undertaken that give quick access to the LAC in Eastern Ladakh. Since the Doklam crisis of 2017 and from April-May 2020 onwards, the Chinese upgraded and developed a new rail, road and communication network along the entire contested boundary with India. Adjacent to eastern Ladakh on their side, the Chinese have built up road infrastructure. They have constructed a new G216 highway that gives them easier access to all areas in dispute in eastern Ladakh. The G216 will serve as a parallel or alternative to the current highway—GJ19 where Beijing sees a key vulnerability. Supplementing these two highways is another called the GJ695, which is under construction and roughly 10-15 kilometres from the LAC enabling Chinese forces to rapidly mobilise in a future conflict, but also help them quickly seize territory on the LAC or beyond should they wish to do so, pre-empting resistance from the IA. As if this were not enough, satellite imagery released in July 2024 reveals that the Chinese have now built a bridge that connects the North and South banks of the Pangong Tso. Apart from depriving India of patrolling rights and compelling disengagement that has led to the establishment of buffer zones, the shrinkage in mobilisation time through a massive infrastructure build-up has been among the real gains for the Chinese since April 2020. Regardless of the air of optimism surrounding current negotiations between New Delhi and Beijing, India would be well-advised not to celebrate prematurely, because the definition of disengagement is a band-aid, not a restoration of the status quo ante.



constitutes needs to be scrutinised.

If the record of previous negotiations and “disengagements” is any indicator of things to come, outcomes for India will remain sub-optimal. Indeed, in May this year, EAM S. Jaishankar made clear that there were pending issues such as “patrolling rights” or “patrolling abilities” and that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) must restore the status ante. What this fundamentally means is that the PRC must completely back down and withdraw all its forces to their pre-April 2020 deployments or garrisons, restore patrolling rights for both sides and honour the 1993 and 1996 agreements. Let us consider the 1993 agreement which explicitly sets out terms on which border management on both sides will be executed. The agreement permits both sides to conduct troop patrols right up to their perception of the LAC and if they cross each other’s perception line, both sides should resolve the matter there and withdraw their forces. Where a disagreement emerges about the boundary alignment, both sides are obliged to jointly work out a resolution. Neither side can use or threaten the use of force under the 1993 agreement. The subsequent

fired or explosives used within two kilometres of the LAC. Large forces cannot be deployed close to the LAC and only light patrols are permitted, which was violated when China deployed a large number of troops with heavy equipment occupying tracts of territory on India’s side of the LAC in April-May 2020.

The PRC must completely back down and withdraw all its forces to their pre-April 2020 deployments or garrisons, restore patrolling rights for both sides and honour the 1993 and 1996 agreements.

Restoration of the status quo: Comprehensive win for Modi government?

Indeed, if China were to restore the status ante along the LAC by honouring the 1993 and 1996 agreements, it would mean a comprehensive win for India against the PRC, despite the bloody altercation of Galwan in June 2020 that claimed the lives of 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese soldiers. A restoration of the pre-April 2020 status quo would deliver a massive diplomatic and domestic win for the Modi government. Fundamentally, it would mean that India’s counter-coercion pressure against the PRC’s

and third-party intervention.

However, what would the comprehensive restoration of the status ante mean for the PRC and its leader Chairman Xi Jinping? A climbdown of this magnitude will have repercussions. It would mean a complete loss of face for Xi and his small cohort of loyal lieutenants, potentially threatening the domestic political position of the Xi-led regime. At the very least, it is difficult to imagine his position not being weakened, leaving him considerably weakened. At a maximum, it may mean Xi’s ouster as Chairman of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and leader. Whether such an extreme outcome is in the offing, only time will tell, because Xi Jinping may well survive this loss given his tight grip on the Chinese state occasioned by the extensive purges he has executed during his more than decade-long rule. Yet this scenario or outcome, which would be extremely magnanimous and ideal for New Delhi as it would deliver a massive victory for Prime Minister Modi, is still hypothetical. There is another possibility.

A restoration of the pre-April 2020 status quo would deliver a massive diplomatic and domestic

Hassan Nasrallah: Between politics, terrorism, and grey areas of the Middle East

An Israeli air strike in the densely populated area of Dahieh, a suburb in Lebanon's capital Beirut, targeted and killed Hezbollah's long-time chief Hassan Nasrallah on 27 September. The impact of Nasrallah's death, who not only led Hezbollah but was a towering ideologue and figure within Lebanese polity for over three decades, is bound to be profound. However, for the moment, it leaves behind more questions than answers.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah, designated as a terror group by the United States and others in 1997, is seen as a state within a state. For the Israelis, eliminating most of Hezbollah's top-ranked leadership over the past months was primarily a political decision and not a tactical one. The capacity and ability to conduct these operations are not built in the short term but honed over a long period. Furthermore, it is also a critical attempt to rebuild the sense of security that the country was so known for, which was not just dented, but decimated, after the terror attack by Hamas almost a year ago.

The impact of Nasrallah's death, who not only led Hezbollah but was a towering ideologue and figure within Lebanese polity for over three decades, is bound to be profound.

Nasrallah was not just any movement leader, and Hezbollah was not like Al Qaeda, hiding in caves and fighting guerrilla warfare. Under Nasrallah, who headed the group for over three decades, Hezbollah transformed from a militant movement to a political one. It became a critical part of Lebanon's identity, for better or worse for many, and the group, along with its leader, was core to Iran's own regional designs. Unlike Hamas, a Sunni Islamist group, Hezbollah represented the Shia interest. In the aftermath of the 7 October attacks, Nasrallah came off as an unsarcastically wary actor, not keen to go full throttle against Israel just yet.

The reasons for this hesitancy are of debate even today. Israel has previously assassinated several Hezbollah and Hamas leaders. But it has suffered setbacks and learnings in unravelling the group's military and political intent. This is as much about



Israel's military capacities as it is about its geographic realities. In the past, twice, Israel has tried to hold territories and create buffer zones in southern Lebanon with limited success in 1982 and 2006. Since then, Hezbollah has also upscaled its armoury significantly, adding ballistic missiles, drones, and other similar equipment with the help of Iran. The Qader-1 ballistic missile, first used by the Lebanese group during the ongoing exchanges, targeting Israeli intelligence headquarters in Tel Aviv, is known to be a variant of the Shahad-3 missile, in service with Iran's military.

Under Nasrallah, who headed the group for over three decades, Hezbollah transformed from a militant movement to a political one.

For Israel, and more specifically, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the elimination of the entire current hierarchy of Hezbollah is a tempting opportunity to double down. The US, Israel's security guarantor, has also been boxed in between what it should do and what it would like Israel to do. The American role here is critical, which has shifted from

discussions about Saudi-Israeli normalisation earlier in the year to now having to support its main ally in the region. This is not just for Israel's sake per se, but also to preserve its own dwindling image as a security guarantor. To course correct, and uphold the word of American power and polity, specifically in Asia as a US-China contestation continues to build, abandoning core allies right now could be a costly message to send out. Added to this, the fact that Israel is taking on Hezbollah, a designated terror group, makes it difficult for the US's ability to exert real pressure on Israel. This, however, has translated into Israel at times taking more than its share of advantage with Washington D.C., as civilian casualty numbers pile up and the US reportedly having no prior intimation on Israeli plans to target Nasrallah.

But if Israel has quandaries over 'what next?', so does Iran. One of the core reasons for Iran to embolden the so-called 'Axis of Resistance', where Hezbollah under Nasrallah formed a core, was for it to not have to take on Israel directly and be embroiled in a conventional war. The response from Iran on both the

assassination of the Hamas chief in central Tehran on the sidelines of the swearing-in ceremony of new Iranian president Mahmoud Pezeshkian and now the killing of the Hezbollah chief in Beirut has been uncharacteristically mute. While Hezbollah, which is much more intertwined with Iranian ideology and polity will not break ranks, it could raise questions over the depth of Iranian tutelage and the unity of decision-making moving forward between the state's moderates and the more extreme viewpoints. It's also a grave challenge for Pezeshkian, while not having much sway over either the Ayatollah or the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the new leader's mandate is more representative of pulling the Iranian population towards prosperity and in his words, "justice", than pushing them into a direct conflict.

The American role here is critical, which has shifted from discussions about Saudi-Israeli normalisation earlier in the year to now having to support its main ally in the region.

What would be the consequence of non-action from Iran is an interesting question.

While Tehran did kinetically respond earlier in the year, in concert with its Resistance, including Hezbollah and the Houthis in Yemen, it was due to a direct attack on an Iranian diplomatic mission by Israel in Syria. The fact that Iran mobilised when its direct interest was in the crosshairs but balked in doing so on both Haniyeh and now Nasrallah's killings would indeed raise some interesting conversations within the Resistance leadership, and maybe more consequentially, the lower and mid-level cadres who are on the frontlines.

Overall, the coming months seem unlikely to deliver a peace agreement or even a ceasefire at the current juncture of the conflict. Nasrallah's cousin, Hashem Safieddine, is expected to succeed him. Israel's decision to escalate and to achieve maximalist objectives was something Iran and Hezbollah seemingly did not expect, perhaps due to their prior experiences under similar circumstances. But for the future, when diving into the tough game of predictions, the general thumb rule for the Middle East remains to follow what states and actors do, and not what they say.

National Health Accounts: Public spending finally overtakes out-of-pocket spending

Research studies over the last decade have shown that out-of-pocket expenditures (OOPE) in health push 3 percent to 7 percent of Indian households below the poverty line every year, with rural and poorer states facing a higher impact. Disadvantaged groups bear a greater financial burden from OOPE in health, and therefore, it has lately been a high-focus area of health policy in India. On 25 September 2024, the Government of India (GOI) released the National Health Account (NHA) estimates for India for the years 2020-21 and 2021-22—a period when India saw increased investments being channelled into the health sector—which shows accelerated progress in the reduction of OOPE.

Disadvantaged groups bear a greater financial burden from OOPE in health, and therefore, it has lately been a high-focus area of health policy in India.

The latest NHA estimates, available for 2021-22, show dramatic changes in health financing parameters in the last decade. Between 2013-14 and 2021-22, a sharp decline of OOPE in health is observed, from 64.2 percent in 2013-14 to 39.4 percent in 2021-22, the year for which the latest data was released by the government. While the increased health spending was necessitated by the pandemic, it is clear from historical data that this has been an ongoing trend throughout the decade. During the same period, the Government Health Expenditure (GHE) increased sharply from 28.6 percent to 48.0 percent. The proportion of GHE overtaking the OOPE component is a historic moment for India's health policy, many years in the making.

The past decade has also been a period when the total health expenditure (THE) as a percentage of GDP came down. In other words, increased public spending—from both state and the union governments—was the primary driver transforming the health financing landscape of the country, triggering sharp decreases in the health spending burden on Indian families. At the same time, despite the improvement, 39.4 percent of the total spending still remains out-of-pocket, signifying a major policy challenge for the coming years. Looking at data from 2021-22, India still has a long distance to cover to reach the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 target it set for itself, of reaching 2.5 percent of GDP worth of government expenditure in health by 2025.

Historically, about two-thirds of overall GHE has been borne by the states and one-third, by the union government. As

seen in Figure 3, increased spending by the Union government during the pandemic has altered the composition by a small margin. However, post-2022, utilisation of Union Budget allocations within health has not been reassuring, with large amounts of unspent money remaining at the end of the year compared to the budget estimates. It was observed elsewhere that despite disruptions affecting the actual spending within the health sector, and the need for pandemic-induced emergency funding subsiding, actual allocations by the union government have not gone down to pre-pandemic levels, which is indicative of the possibility of further reductions in OOPE in the future driven by government action. With the ambitious expansion of AB-PMJAY to include all 70+ citizens and the possibilities that the scheme offers for the government hospitals to plough back money into the public system, the capacity to absorb funds in the public sector is bound to improve.

Both state governments as well as the union government will need to make sure that health spending does not slip back to pre-pandemic levels for India to have any real chance of achieving the national target of reaching 2.5 percent of GDP worth of government expenditure in health by 2025. The upward momentum will need to be maintained, whether it is led by the union or state governments, ideally by both. Health is constitutionally the primary responsibility of the states, and the efforts towards tax devolution were expected to trigger large increases in funds for health at the state level. However, fiscal devolution from about 32 percent of overall tax funds during the 13th Finance Commission award period (2010–2014) to 42 percent during the 14th Finance Commission award period (2015–2019) did not quite translate into higher healthcare spending by the state governments. It is hoped that the Indian health system does not fall into the panic-neglect cycle that usually follows pandemics across the world.

In tandem with the transformation of the health financing scene, there have been multiple initiatives contributing directly and indirectly to the reduction of OOPE. Most well-known is AB-PMJAY, a partnership between the union and state governments, which authorised hospital admissions amounting to 69 million across India from its inception in 2018. Across 748 districts running 1,530 centres with more than 10,000 hemodialysis machines, the lesser-known Pradhan Mantri National

Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) has helped around 2.5 million poor patients across the country from its inception in 2016. Launched in 2018, India now has 1.75 lakh functional Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs, earlier called Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres) providing comprehensive primary healthcare, primarily in the rural areas.

Comprehensive primary healthcare near home addresses this issue, simultaneously addressing the financial burden on families and overcrowding of hospitals.

Through upgraded sub-centres and primary health centres, AAMs provide a comprehensive range of services extending beyond maternal and child healthcare to include non-communicable disease management, palliative and rehabilitative care, oral health, eye and ENT services, mental health support, and first-level care for emergencies and trauma. AAMs also include the provision of free essential medicines and diagnostic tests. Historically, many patients visited hospitals only when their situation became unmanageable, for conditions that could have been addressed earlier if there were functional primary healthcare infrastructure in rural areas. Comprehensive primary healthcare near home addresses this issue, simultaneously addressing the financial burden on families and overcrowding of hospitals. As Figure 4 shows, more than 80 percent of existing primary-level public infrastructure has already been upgraded, showing an unprecedented pace.

Another even lesser-known scheme with a major impact on the composition of health financing within India is the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), which remains a low-profile, but high-performing initiative of the NDA government. It was launched in 2008 by the earlier UPA government but had only 80 medicine shops set up till 2015. In recent years, the scheme has expanded aggressively across India (Figure 5), leading to household savings of thousands of crores of rupees. The OOPE decline over the last decade, therefore, had multiple contributors.

Longer-term trends of movements of per capita government spending on health and per capita OOPE in India adjusted for inflation. Over the years, from 2004-05 to 2021-22, there is a considerable increase in public health spending, rising from INR 465 per capita in 2004-05 to INR 2018 per capita in 2021-22, indicating a strengthening of government

investment in health, primarily driven by economic growth expanding the resources available for the sector, and the pandemic necessitating augmented allocations. However, OOPE still remains high, peaking in 2015-16 at INR 2063 per capita before showing a gradual decline, settling at INR 1,657 in 2021-22. The gap between per capita OOPE and GHE narrowed over time, till 2021-22 when per capita GHE overtook OOPE, reflecting government efforts to reduce the financial burden on individuals. As discussed earlier, OOPE remains a significant part of overall health spending, at about 40 percent of overall health spending, signifying a formidable challenge.

It is important that the current momentum in government funding within the health sector is maintained if India has to get near the national goal of the public sector spending 2.5 percent of GDP on health. While there is a range of recent initiatives contributing to the goal of bringing down OOPE further, many challenges remain. For example, while a robust distribution system is now in place for generic medicines, India still has an unfinished agenda of ensuring the quality of medicines and enforcing regulations in pharmaceutical manufacturing. Fake manufacturers are still able to infiltrate the public sector supply chain, as a recent case of spurious drugs in Maharashtra has demonstrated. AB-PMJAY, focusing on secondary and tertiary care, and AAM, focusing on comprehensive primary care, are progressing, however, there is still a long way to go in terms of integrating these two platforms to ensure a continuum of care, connecting public and private infrastructure across levels of care. Rare diseases are another area where India needs policy interventions addressing population needs.

The pandemic has proven to the world that health is a major pillar of national security. Given India's low baseline in terms of health investments, a focused inflow of capital expenditure like in drinking water, sanitation, and housing sectors is needed to make amends for the historical neglect of the health sector. If successful, India will be able to continue the dramatic reduction of OOPE and become a global case study, elements of which will be adapted and scaled in different developing country settings across the world.

Energy consumption and human development in India

According to the medium variant scenario of the UN World Population Prospectus 2024, the world's population is expected to continue growing over the next 50-60 years, reaching a peak of around 10.3 billion people in the mid-2080s, up from 8.2 billion in 2024. After peaking, the global population is projected to start declining gradually, falling to 10.2 billion people by the end of the century. The probability of the world population peaking by 2100 is estimated to be about 80 percent.

Of all the people currently being added to the world, 95 percent live in the Global South. At the beginning of this century, 70 percent of the world population resided in the South. That figure is expected to rise to 90 percent by 2050. The demographic and energy transitions in the Global South, and in India in particular, are not only much larger, but it is quicker, and most importantly, occurring at much lower income levels than the transitions in the Global North. This may compromise prospects for energy consumption and, consequently human development in India even by 2070.

India: Energy consumption and HDI

The population of India is projected to remain the world's largest through 2100 and reach a peak in the early 2060s at about 1.7 billion, under the medium variant scenario. India is projected to contribute most to the urban increment, with the addition of 416 million urban dwellers, nearly doubling the size of its urban population by 2050. India has committed to achieve net zero by 2070. During this period, the World population is likely to increase by 25 percent, while the population of the Global North is likely to fall by 4 percent (medium variant scenario). The population of the Global South is projected to increase by 30 percent, and the population of India is expected to increase by 17 percent. By 2070, India's population is projected to touch 1.69 billion, with the addition of 250 million people. Life expectancy at birth for Indians is projected to increase from about 72 years in 2024 (world average 73) to about 81 years in 2070 (world average: 79). The average fertility rate (live births per woman) is expected to fall from about 1.98 (world average: 2.25) in 2024 to 1.72 (world average: 1.97) in 2070. Population density is expected to increase from about 488 persons per square kilometre (persons/km²) in 2024 (world average: 63 persons/km²) to over 568 persons/km² in 2070 (world average: 78 persons/km²). The median age of the population in India is expected to increase from 24.4 years in 2024 (world average: 30.6 years) to 43.6 years in 2070 (world average: 39 years). For India, most of the demographic features improve in the next four decades, favouring higher levels of human development.

India is projected to contribute most to the urban increment, with the addition of 416 million urban dwellers, nearly doubling the size of its urban population by 2050.

If commercial (not including biomass)

energy consumption per person increases by 3.2 percent per year in India (rate of increase in 2013-23), by 2070 per person commercial energy consumption will increase from 27.3 gigajoules (GJ) to about 116 GJ, just short of China's per person energy consumption in 2023. This would mean that total primary energy consumption will increase 5 times from the current consumption of 39.2 exajoules (EJ). However, a recent study supported by Government institutions observes that a high Human Development Index (HDI) can

high HDI by 2047 is well within reach. However, the above-cited study appears to have set the bar of per person energy consumption level required for high HDI very low. The global average per person energy consumption in 2023 was much higher at 77 GJ, and the per person energy consumption of most countries with very high HDI was above 100 GJ in 2023.

The increasing share of urbanisation, along with the rise in population density in India, will facilitate electrification of energy consumption by 2070. The cost

fuels reduced transportation costs and substantially increased the productivity of human labour, capital and agricultural land which facilitated growth of population in the Global North. Major medical breakthroughs reduced death rates, while birth rates continued to be high, resulting in faster population growth. The demographic transition that is currently occurring in the Global South is following a similar course but from a much larger base—more than two-thirds of the world population—resulting in unprecedented growth rates in population. Between 1960 and 2023, it only took 12-15 years for the world's total population to increase by 1 billion, while it took over 120 years for the population to increase by 1 billion between 1800 and 1920.

The demographic transition that is currently occurring in the Global South is following a similar course but from a much larger base—more than two-thirds of the world population—resulting in unprecedented growth rates in population.

The rapid expansion of trade in the second phase of the Industrial Revolution played a significant role in the timing of demographic transitions across countries and thereby been a major determinant of the distribution of World population and a prime cause of the great divergence in income per person across countries in the last two centuries. The underlying theory suggests that international trade affected the evolution of economies asymmetrically. The gains from trade were channelled towards population growth in the Global South, while in the North they were directed towards investment in education and growth in output per person. The demographic transition in the South was therefore delayed, increasing further the abundance of unskilled labour in these economies and enhancing their comparative disadvantage in production and trade. This historic asymmetry is often ignored, and delayed demographic transition and the resultant consumption of resources by the Global South, particularly the consumption of energy is subject to negative interpretations. In the early 2000s, when energy consumption increased by unprecedented rates in the South (notably by China), it was portrayed as a "threat" to the energy security of the Global North. Now, energy consumption by the South is framed as "irresponsible", as it causes a runaway increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emission, levels that is behind climate change. This framing allows the Global North to sustain its luxury energy consumption rather than reduce consumption to make carbon space available for the Global South. It also enables the North to reject any proposal for a small share of wealth to be redistributed to the South, labelling it unfair and unjust. The irony is that redistribution of wealth would increase energy consumption and HDI in the Global South, a public good that will facilitate a reduction in migration—an outcome that the North will actually welcome.



be achieved by increasing India's annual per person energy consumption from 27.3 GJ in 2023 to 29 GJ, and achieving a very high HDI at an annual per person energy consumption of 37 GJ. Specifically, the study concludes that achieving high HDI of 0.7 would require annual per person energy consumption of 31 GJ, while achieving a HDI of 0.8 would require annual per person energy consumption of 39 GJ, and achievement of an HDI of 0.9 (highest so far) would require annual per person energy consumption of 56 GJ. This means that even if total primary energy consumption (TPEC) grows at just 1.2 percent annually, HDI can be increased to 0.7 by 2047. If TPEC grows at an annual average of about 2.2 percent, a high HDI of 0.8 can be achieved by 2047, and if it grows by an annual average of about 3.9 percent, very high HDI of 0.9 can be achieved by 2047, much earlier than the net-zero commitment year of 2070. The co-relation between energy consumption and HDI is ambiguous. India, Bangladesh, and Morocco were all in the medium HDI category in 2022. Morocco had roughly the same per person energy consumption as India but a higher HDI. Bangladesh, whose per person energy consumption was only half that of India, also had higher HDI than India. Venezuela's per person energy consumption was more than 3.5 times that of Morocco, but both countries have the same HDI.

Given that in 2013-2023, TPEC grew by 4.2 percent annually, it appears that the TPEC growth required for achieving a very

of providing electricity supply to dense urban households will be lower than that in the case of dispersed rural households. In a scenario where most households have autonomous energy supply from solar panels, dense urban households will enable electricity trade between households and other buildings. However, the increase in the median age of the population may reduce energy affordability. Energy demand from an ageing population may grow faster than demand from a younger population, especially on account of energy required for space heating and cooling at the household level. But, the ability to pay for energy may decline as the dependency ratio, dependents per worker, may increase. Climate change may aggravate the extent of the challenge.

Issues for thought

According to detailed analysis, the Global North has experienced slow and steady demographic change since the 1700s. In the initial stage, both birth and death rates were high, causing only slow and steady population growth. Death rates began to decline due to three factors, all of which concerned greater levels of production and consumption. The first was the trade revolution, which introduced potatoes and maize from the Americas to Europe. The second was the agricultural revolution, which led higher yields of food production through a variety of agricultural practices. The third was the Industrial Revolution, which increased goods available for consumption. The introduction of fossil

Revolver accident: Crime branch officials meet Govinda in hospital



Mumbai

The Mumbai crime branch personnel have met actor Govinda, who sustained leg injuries after his revolver accidentally went off, and enquired with him about the incident, officials said on Wednesday.

While the local police have been conducting an investigation, the Mumbai crime branch has also initiated a parallel inquiry into the incident.

No one has lodged any complaint so far, police said.

The accident took place on

Tuesday at the Mumbai residence of the 60-year-old actor and he is currently recuperating at a private hospital here.

A crime branch team led by senior police inspector Daya Nayak visited the hospital on Tuesday and spoke to the actor about the incident, an official said.

Govinda was alone when the incident took place at his residence in the early hours of Tuesday, he said.

The actor has a licensed revolver of Webley company and the bullet hit him near his

left knee, the official said.

The revolver, which is an old one, was not locked and got misfired, he said.

The actor's revolver has been seized by police officials for further probe, an official earlier said.

After the incident, Govinda, a favourite with audiences for his impeccable comic timing and dancing skills, issued a statement informing his fans he is doing better.

A ruling star of Hindi cinema in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Govinda has appeared in more than 165 films in his career spanning four decades.

In March, a month before the Lok Sabha elections, Govinda joined the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. This marked Govinda's re-entry into the political landscape after nearly two decades.

The actor won the 2004 poll battle from the Mumbai North Lok Sabha constituency on a Congress ticket before stepping away from politics in 2008.

Women like us must stand up for the vulnerable and the exploited, says Tisca Chopra

Seventeen years on and Tisca Chopra still loves to bring Taare Zameen Par into her conversation. Not just because the Aamir Khan-directorial was India's official entry to the Academy Awards that year and got her the top awards and a score of nominations for her portrayal of Maya Awasthy, but for the lessons the movie imparted and the message it conveyed. The film, overall, made a deep impact on her as a person.

Tisca revived the memory of the beautiful film during her interaction with the students of Chitkara University recently. Among other topics like work-life balance, parenting, integration of theatre in education and mental health, she spoke about how being part of the heart-warming story of a dyslexic child moved her, and made her sensitive to other people's needs and desires.

This trait has been ingrained



in her persona. She is not just sensitive towards others' needs, but vocal too when the situation demands. She recently condemned the Kolkata rape case in strong words. "As the mother of a young girl, how do I feel when another woman is raped? An 'independent', educated working

woman at her place of work, after working a 36-hour shift. A doctor," she wrote in her post. Earlier, she had spoken on the exploitation of women in the film industry. Her outbursts brought her admiration and ire from her fraternity in equal measure.

During an informal chit-chat, she tells us about her activism, both online and on ground. "To be silent when such a heinous crime is committed against a woman, will be no less than a crime. Women like us, who are educated and have a voice, must stand up for the vulnerable and the exploited. Most of the times we remain silent thinking our solitary voice will get drowned in the cacophony of trolls, but speak we must! Even if a few listen to what we have to say and amplify that voice, that's enough. A small step toward the right direction is what I am aiming for," she says.

Coldplay to retire in 2025, Chris Martin says focus on legacy, not stadiums

Coldplay announces retirement amid black marketing of concert tickets in India; cites 'Less is More' philosophy

The highly-anticipated Coldplay concert in Mumbai in January 2025 has been marred by concerns about black marketing ticketing scams, as millions of fans struggle for tickets.

The band has three shows at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on January 18, 19 and 21 next year as part of its "Music of the Spheres World Tour 2025".

Chris Martin, lead singer

that Coldplay will stop recording new music in 2025, adding the band will only tour then and maybe "do some collaborative things".

Coldplay, known for songs such as "Yellow", "The Scientist", "Clocks", "Fix You", "Paradise", "A Sky Full Of Stars" and "Magic", was formed in London back in 1997.

In the new interview, Martin said the members are trying to improve day-by-day instead of "coasting" at this stage of the band's career.

"That will always continue in some way, but there's something about the Coldplay thing. I don't know where the songs come from. I don't know where the ideas come from, but that's just been coming to me for about four or five



of Coldplay said the British band plans to release 12 "proper albums" out of which it has already put out 10, including the upcoming "Moon Music".

The five-member group, also comprising guitarist Jonny Buckland, bassist Guy Berryman, drummer and percussionist Will Champion, and manager Phil Harvey, is currently on its "Music of the Spheres World Tour".

In an interview with Apple Music's Zane Lowe, Martin said it's important to set a "limit" to what Coldplay needs to do as a group.

"We are only going to do 12 proper albums, and that's real... because less is more. And for some of our critics, even less would be even more. It's really important that we have that limit.

"There's only 12 and a half Beatles albums. There's about the same Bob Marley, so all of our heroes. And also having that limit means that the quality control is so high right now, and for a song to make it, it's almost impossible, which is great," the 47-year-old said.

His comments hark back to a 2021 interview Martin gave to BBC Radio 2 in which he said

years now.

"Like, 'You have to finish like this,' and I trust that just like I trust the songs. So if we do something together after that creatively beyond touring, then it'll be something different, or it'll be a side thing, or it'll be a compilation of things we hadn't finished," he added.

Another reason why the singer wants to retire from making albums is because he wants to give "the others some of their life for themselves".

"I don't want to be, when we're 60, be like, 'Will, we need you. Come on! We can do better than this!'"

According to Martin, the quintet is having more fun now "than ever".

"Because of getting older, because of Covid, because of everything going on in the world, because of how lucky we know we are, because of the places we get to go, because of the optimism that it gives us to see all different kinds of people gathering together, because of songs that arrive from nowhere, because we go at a slower pace. All these things mean that we love it," he said.

Superstar Rajinikanth hospitalised, stable



Chennai

The health condition of Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth, admitted to a corporate hospital here late on Monday night, is stable and he is likely to undergo an elective procedure at the cath lab later in the day, a source said.

Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi said in a post on the social media platform X: "I stand with the millions of devoted fans of Thiru Rajnikanth around the globe, in praying for his swift and smooth recovery."

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M

K Stalin wished the superstar a speedy recovery, and scores of the top actor's fans sent their prayers on social media and wishes, too, for his quick recovery.

"His condition is stable following his admission for digestive discomfort. He will undergo an elective procedure in the cath lab to attend to the problem near his abdomen, and will be later shifted to a room," a source at the hospital said.

The 73-year-old actor is likely to be discharged on Tuesday evening, the source added.

Angelina Jolie withdraws lawsuit over 2016 Brad Pitt plane altercation

Actress Angelina Jolie has officially withdrawn her lawsuit against the Department of Justice and the FBI concerning the 2016 plane incident involving her ex-husband, Brad Pitt.

The news confirmed by E! News, marks the end of a contentious legal chapter for the Oscar-winning star.

According to court documents obtained by E! News, the dismissal was finalised with prejudice, indicating that the case cannot be refiled. The agreement stipulates that each party will bear its own legal fees and costs.

The lawsuit was initially filed in April 2022 under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), with Jolie identified in court as the anonymous "Jane Doe." The filing sought the release of documents related to an alleged

domestic violence incident that occurred aboard a private jet.

Jolie's claim detailed that during the flight, Pitt "allegedly physically and verbally assaulted" her and their children, leading to "lasting physical and mental trauma." The allegations mirror details from an FBI report that surfaced following the flight from Europe to Los Angeles on September 14, 2016.

According to E! News, it was earlier reported that during this flight, Pitt was accused of attacking Jolie and one of their six children, Maddox.

Despite the serious nature of the allegations, federal authorities ultimately decided not to pursue any charges against Pitt, who has consistently denied the accusations.

Mithun Chakraborty's name is announced for the Dadasaheb Phalke Award

From art-house cinema to dancing sensation, from lead actor to memorable cameos, Mithun Chakraborty's journey has been a momentous one and decorated too. The Padma Bhushan recipient, former member of Rajya Sabha has been chosen for the highest cinematic honour, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, to be conferred on October 8 during the 70th National Awards Film Ceremony. Despite Mithun's political affiliations (he is currently member of the BJP), few can grudge this latest feather in his cap. Making the announcement when Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnav writes on X, 'Mithun Da's remarkable cinematic journey inspires generations', he is not way off the mark.

Winner of three National Awards, the very first with his debut film itself, the much-acclaimed Mrigayaa, directed by Mrinal Sen, Mithun has indeed delighted cinegoers of nearly every decade. If cinephiles of yore remember him for movies like Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye, Hum Se Hai Zamana opposite Zeenat Aman, and Basu Chatterjee's delectable Pasand Apni Apni, more recently we have seen him etch some memorable parts in films like OMG – Oh My God!, The Tashkent Files and The Kashmir Files. The devious smile playing on his lips in OMG will probably go down as one of the finest portrayals of stylised mannerisms. Umesh Shukla director, OMG – Oh My God!, shares, "Brilliant, versatile actor, a star; you always want to work with such an actor to make your film memorable."

Goutam Ghose calls him a 'director's actor who will deliver exactly what the director desires'. Ghose, who directed him in Gudiya, which was screened in the Un-Certain Regard section at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival, has known Mithun since mid-1970s and recalls how the actor was struggling in those days even after receiving a national award.

Born as Gouranga Chakraborty on June 16, 1950,



in Calcutta, now Kolkata, Mithun has often spoken about his trials and tribulations as well as the 'colour bias', which he faced during the early days of his career in the Hindi film industry. But fame was around the corner and stardom came with Disco Dancer in 1982, which proved to be a true-blue blockbuster — a hit in Soviet Union too! With movies like Dance Dance, Pyar Jhukta Nahi and Commando, the original dancing star rose to greater heights. If back in time India grooved to songs like Jimmy Jimmy and I Am A Disco Dancer, the GenNext rediscovered Jimmy Jimmy during the Covid pandemic. It became a new anthem of protest against the lockdown in China.

Mithun's signature dancing moves are hailed as iconic till date and he is in the Limca Book of Records for a maximum number of movie releases — 19 — in 1989. He acted in over 100 films in one decade.

With stardom, he revealed once, also came loneliness as many feared he might have become too big for his boots. Ghose, however, swears by his sincerity both as an actor and as a person with no starry airs. He shared how Mithun made usal paav for the entire team on the sets of Gudiya. Vivek Agnihotri, his director in The Tashkent Files

and The Kashmir Files, adds, "He is not a typical showbiz person. He loves animals and any animal-lover I believe is a great human being."

But then the actor, who believes in being a good human first, and is today extremely touched by the honour, has never forgotten his humble beginnings. In a recent interview, he talked about how it was unbelievable that a man from the footpath could rise to receive such a great honour.

Any wonder his son Namashi Chakraborty calls him a 'self-made superstar'. But no moniker can define or contain the talent of this Film Training Institute of India, Pune, graduate, whom we have seen dominate both Hindi and Bengali cinema, many mediums from cinema to television. In popular television show Dance India Dance, he was seen as the Grand Master for years. His digital debut in psychological thriller Bestseller in 2022 may not have been a perfect landing, but then the actor of over 350 films in various languages knows too well that not every film makes the cut. Nevertheless, for someone who has reinvented himself time and again, who calls his life 'a hit' will keep making a distinctive mark

Bumrah regains top spot in ICC Test rankings, Jaiswal jumps to No.3



India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah is back at the summit of the ICC Test bowling rankings following his match haul of six wickets in the second Test against Bangladesh in Kanpur.

The 30-year-old replaced his Indian teammate Ravichandran Ashwin — the Player of the Series against Bangladesh — at the top of the chart. Spinner Ravindra Jadeja maintained his sixth place while fellow spinner Kuldeep Yadav stayed on 16th position.

In batting, the Player of the Match from the Kanpur Test, Yashasvi Jaiswal, moved to a

career-high third position after just 11 Tests. Jaiswal played scintillating knocks of 72 and 51 and helped India win the rain-marred match by seven wickets. With 792 rating points, the 22-year-old is behind second-placed Kane Williamson (829) and Joe Root (899).

Also, veteran Indian batsman Virat Kohli is back in the top 10, gaining six places to rise to the sixth position after knocks of 47 and 29 in Kanpur. Rishabh Pant, too, remained in the top 10, dropping three spots to ninth, with skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill on 15th and 16th, respectively.

As for the all-rounders, there has been no significant change in the rankings, with Jadeja holding the top spot, followed by Ashwin at second and Axar Patel at seventh.

In team rankings, India were in the second spot with 120 rating points, separated from leader Australia by four points, while England remained in the third place with 108 points.

Meanwhile, the Indians continued to rule the World Test Championship (WTC) table, having a point percentage of 74.24 per cent after 11 fixtures, above second-placed Australia (62.50 per cent in 12 Tests).

Tim Southee quits New Zealand captaincy ahead of India tour, Latham to take over

Tim Southee has stepped down from New Zealand captaincy ahead of the three-Test series against India and Tom Latham has been appointed in the veteran pacer's place.

Southee captained New Zealand in 14 Tests in which the Kiwis won six, lost six and drew two.

"I've always tried to put the team first throughout my career and I believe this decision is the best for the team," said Southee in a New Zealand Cricket statement.

"I believe the way I can best serve the team moving forward is focusing on my performances on the field and getting back to my best, to continue taking wickets and helping New Zealand win Test matches."

The 35-year-old right-arm pacer has so far played 102 Tests alongside 161 ODIs and 126 T20Is. With 382 wickets, he is the second-highest

wicket-taker for the Kiwis after legendary Richard Hadlee (431).

"I will, as I've always done, continue to support my teammates, especially the exciting young bowlers making their way on the international stage.

"I wish Tom all the best in the role and he knows I'll be there to support him on his journey, as he has done for me over the years," said Southee.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said Southee took the decision in the best interests of the team.

"Tim's a fantastic player and a very good leader who is held in high regard by the players and support staff." "He's been a great servant of New Zealand Cricket over nearly 17 years playing on the international stage, and I'd like to acknowledge his humility in stepping down from the role as Test captain

Like clockwork: India beat weather and clock to complete series sweep against Bangladesh



India eased to a remarkable seven-wicket victory in the rain-truncated second Test against Bangladesh to complete a 2-0 series sweep.

India spinner Ravindra Jadeja and seamer Jasprit Bumrah wreaked havoc in the extended morning session when Bangladesh lost eight wickets to

at a breakneck pace to inject fresh life into a game that had appeared destined for a draw.

Bangladesh suffered an early blow after resuming on 26/2 on the final day. Ravichandran Ashwin (3/50) claimed his third wicket when he had Mominul Haque caught in the leg slip for two.



Shadman Islam (50) and skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (19) offered resistance with a 55-run stand before poor shot selection and smart bowling changes by India led to their dismissals.

Jadeja (3/34) bowled Shanto after the batter fluffed a reverse sweep and Shadman completed his fifty before edging seamer Akash Deep to Jaiswal at slip.

be bowled out for a paltry 146 in their second innings.

It left India needing 95 and they did it with more than a session to spare. Yashasvi Jaiswal led their chase with a fluent 51 while Virat Kohli remained unbeaten on 29 as India registered a record-extending 18th consecutive Test series victory on home soil.

A remarkable outcome in a Test which lost two and half days to bad weather cemented India's position atop the World Test Championship standings.

India launched a batting blitz on Monday to eclipse Bangladesh's first-innings total of 233 in only 28 overs. They declared on 285/9 after scoring

Left-arm spinner Jadeja removed Litton Das and Shakib Al Hasan in successive overs and Bumrah sent back Mehidy Hasan Miraz.

Mushfiqur Rahim (37) hung around for a bit before Bumrah (3/17) removed him with the final delivery of the session.

India lost captain Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill cheaply but Jaiswal's second half-century of the match sealed victory with a session to spare. India will play a three-Test home series against New Zealand beginning on October 16. Bangladesh, on the other hand, were brought down to earth after their memorable 2-0 series win in Pakistan last month.

Babar Azam resigns as Pakistan captain from limited-overs cricket

Babar Azam has tendered his resignation for the second time as Pakistan's captain with Mohammad Rizwan likely to replace him in limited-overs formats later this month.

Babar released a statement on X around midnight on Wednesday announcing he had informed the Pakistan Cricket Board and team management about his desire to quit sometime last month.

While Babar did not state when he had informed the board and team management about his decision to quit, the 29-year-old said he wanted to focus on his batting while shedding off the workload as a skipper.

"I'm sharing some news with you today. I have decided to resign as captain of the Pakistan men's cricket team, effective as of my notification to the PCB and Team Management last month," Babar wrote.

"It's been an honour to lead this team, but it's time for me to step down and focus on my playing role," he added.

Babar had quit Pakistan captaincy after their dismal show in the ODI World Cup in India 2023 but was reinstated as the skipper in white-ball formats in March this year.

However, his second stint had no change in fortunes for the team and Babar as the leader, as Pakistan performed abysmally in the T20 World Cup in the



Americas in June, losing to the US and India and failing to make it to Super Eight stage.

Babar said captaincy had been a "rewarding experience" but also added a "significant workload" for him.

"Captaincy has been a rewarding experience, but it's added a significant workload. I want to prioritise my performance, enjoy my batting, and spend quality time with my family, which brings me joy," he said.

"By stepping down, I will gain clarity moving forward and focus more energy on my game and personal growth."

"I'm grateful for your unwavering support and belief in me. Your enthusiasm has meant the world to me. I'm proud of what we've achieved together and excited to continue contributing to the team as a player," he added.

Babar was first made the T20 captain in 2019, before taking charge of the Test and ODI teams in 2020.

Babar's resignation adds more to Pakistan's woes as they are set to embark on three away assignments after hosting England for a Test series starting on October 7.

Pakistan will tour Australia for three ODIs and three T20Is in November followed by a tour to Zimbabwe for as many matches later in the month.

Pakistan will then head to South Africa for three T20Is, three ODIs and two Tests in December after which the team will return home for a series against the West Indies and New Zealand. Pakistan are also slated to host the Champions Trophy early next year.

IOA prez Usha slams EC members for ignoring Olympics medallists



New Delhi

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha has slammed the executive committee members for failing to agree to felicitate the Paris Olympics medallists.

In a statement, Usha said she was sad that the EC has not made an attempt to even discuss the subject. "No Indian athlete before this won two medals in a single edition of the Olympics, and I take pride I was able to help Manu (Bhaker) in this journey. It is a matter of pride for me we had medals from Neeraj Chopra, Sarabjot Singh, Swapnil Kushale and the men's hockey team as well but the EC does not want to celebrate their success, which makes me very sad," Usha said.

"These athletes have made the nation proud, and it is the responsibility of the IOA to celebrate their achievements with the respect they deserve. It is deeply concerning that, even after returning home in mid-August, the EC has failed to discuss or take any steps towards organizing a formal felicitation ceremony," she added.

The IOA announced to hand Rs 1 crore to gold medallists, Rs 75 lakh to silver medal winners and Rs 50 lakh to bronze medal winners besides cash prizes ranging from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 25 lakh to their coaches.

Usha revealed that the rift within the IOA stalled a preparatory grant of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 1 lakh to the Paris athletes and coaches, respectively. "I strongly believe that this grant would have given our athletes and their coaches the support they needed in the crucial period leading up to the Olympic Games. The refusal to disburse these funds reflects a lack of understanding of the needs of athletes and shows a complete disregard for their preparation and well-being," she said.

"As someone who has represented India on the world stage, I understand the importance of recognising the hard work, sacrifices, and victories of our athletes. It is disheartening to see that others in positions of power, especially those who have also worn the national colours, are failing to uphold this duty," she added.

Batting risk paid off, says Rohit

India captain Rohit Sharma conceded they took a risk trying to force a result in the rain-truncated second Test against Bangladesh and was pleased it paid off resulting in a memorable victory.

A draw loomed large over the match after two-and-a-half days were lost to bad weather with only 35 overs played in the first three days at the Green Park Stadium.

Even after India bowled out Bangladesh for 233 on Day 4, few expected a result until India came out to bat for the first time. Opener Rohit himself led from front, whacking the first two balls he faced for sixes and India went on to eclipse Bangladesh's total in 28 overs scoring at a rate unprecedented in Test cricket. By the end of Day 4, India declared their innings on 285/9 and even removed both the Bangladesh openers.

On Tuesday, they claimed the remaining eight Bangladesh wickets in an extended morning session bundling out the tourists for 146. Needing 95 to win,

India lost three wickets before overwhelming the target with more than a session to go.

"We had to think a lot how the game can keep moving forward," Rohit said of their race against time to win the match. "When we came on Day 4, we wanted to get them out as early as possible and see what we can do with the bat. The pitch didn't have much for bowlers but to get a game out of that pitch was a great effort from the bowlers, and the batters bought into that thought of ... scoring as quickly as possible," he added.

"It was a risk that we were willing to take... when you are trying to bat like that, it's very easy to get bundled out for a low score as well. Even if we got all out for 150, we wanted to give ourselves a chance to get a result," he added.

It was breathtaking batting on Monday as India reached 50 in three overs, 100 in 10.1 overs, and 200 in 24.2 overs — the fastest ever by a Test team.

Neeraj Chopra set to part ways with coach Bartonietz

The successful partnership between star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and his long-time coach Klaus Bartonietz of Germany is set to end after five years. The 75-year-old has cited his age and family commitments to part ways with Chopra. "He (Bartonietz) is 75 and he now wants to be with his family," an official of the Athletics Federation of India said. The 26-year-old Chopra has been working with Bartonietz, who is a biomechanics expert but doubled up as Chopra's coach, since 2019.

Will create 6 cr jobs in textile sector by 2030, says Centre



New Delhi

The Union Government has prepared a road map for creating 4.5-6 crore jobs in the textile sector by 2030, Union Minister Giriraj Singh said on Friday, adding efforts were being made to take the sector's market size to USD 350 billion from around USD 165 billion at present.

Addressing a press conference on the 100-day programme of the Ministry of Textiles, Singh said, "The 100-day road map we have prepared includes (attracting) investment to the tune of

lakhs of crores (in the textile sector) going forward. We have prepared a road map for creation of 4.5 crore to 6 crore jobs by 2030." He shared the seven PM-MITRA integrated mega textile parks approved earlier would have investment to the tune of Rs 70,000 crore when fully functional, thereby creating 21 lakh jobs.

Notably, India's textiles exports declined for the second year in a row in 2023-24.

The government has set an ambitious target to achieve USD 100 billion export for textile products by 2030.

Exports of textiles and apparel from India during FY24 fell by 3.24 per cent at USD 34.4 billion, as compared to USD 35.5 billion a year ago.

Singh said efforts were underway to promote Make in India for the textiles sector, adding neither Bangladesh nor Vietnam posed a challenge to the domestic industry.

"I Feel Emotional": PM Narendra Modi Writes To Neeraj Chopra's Mother

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday wrote a letter to Indian javelin star Neeraj Chopra's mother Saroj Devi, thanking her for cooking delicious 'choorma' (a popular delicacy from Haryana and Rajasthan), for him. Earlier this year in January, PM Modi had asked Neeraj to bring homemade 'choorma' for him. Responding to the PM's request, Neeraj's mother Saroj had promised to cook and sent special 'choorma' for him. On Tuesday, PM Modi met Neeraj during the Jamaican Prime Minister's visit to India. During the meet, PM Modi got the chance to taste the delicious 'choorma'.

In his letter to Neeraj's mother, PM Modi revealed that he got emotional after eating the 'choorma', admitting that he

couldn't stop himself from writing a letter to her.

me, but today I felt emotional after eating it," PM Modi's letter to Neeraj's mother read.

"Mother is the embodiment of strength, affection and dedication. It's a coincidence that I got this prasada day before Navratri begins. I fast during these nine days of Navratri. In a way, this choorma of yours has become my main food before my fasting period.

"Just like the food prepared by you gives Neeraj the energy to win medals for the country, similarly this choorma will give me the strength to serve the nation for the next 9 days. On this occasion of festival Navratri, I assure you and the women of this country that I will continue to work with more dedication to make the resolution of a developed India a reality. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!" PM Modi added in his letter.



"Respected Saroj Devi ji, Regards! Hope you are healthy, safe and happy. Yesterday at a banquet organized on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister of Jamaica to India, I got the opportunity to meet Neeraj. My happiness went up multiple times when he gave me delicious choorma made by you. After eating this choorma today, I could not stop myself from writing a letter to you. Neeraj has often talked about this choorma with

Across State अक्रॉस मुंबई



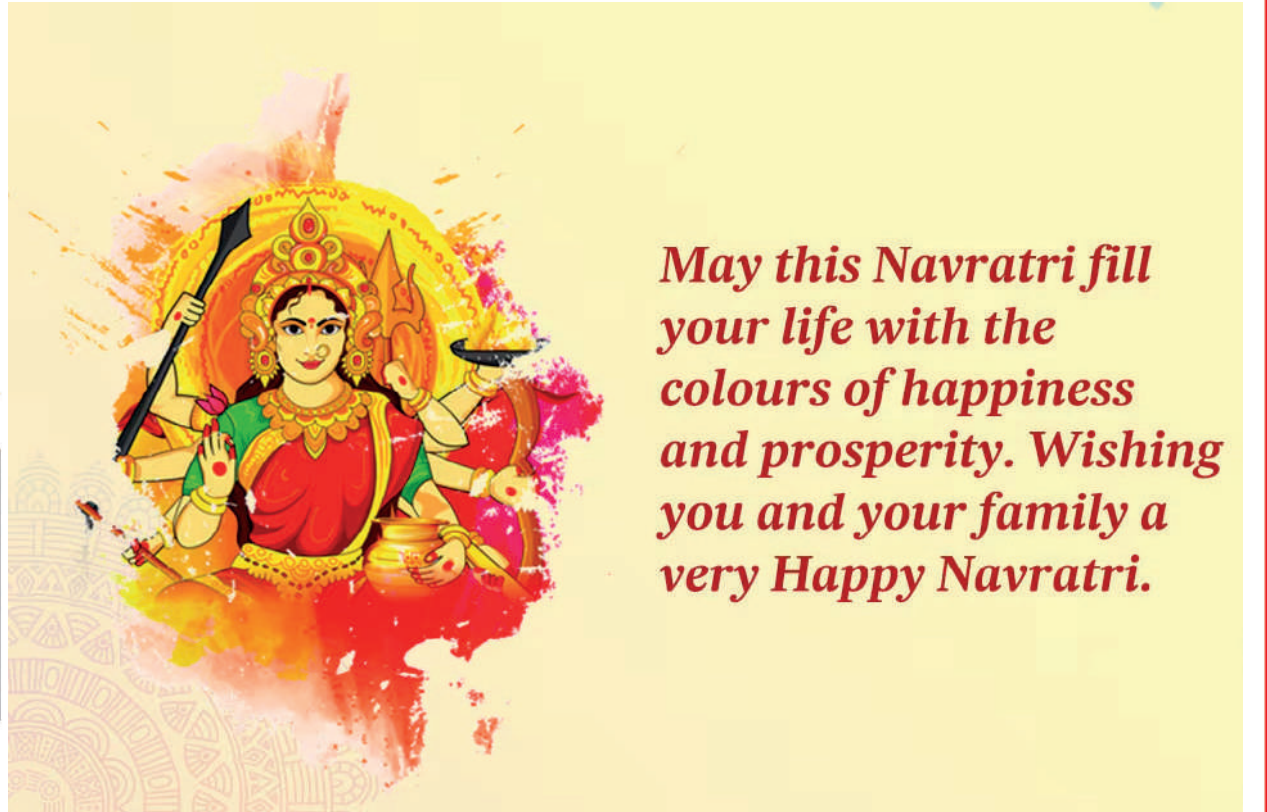
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May this Navratri fill your life with the colours of happiness and prosperity. Wishing you and your family a very Happy Navratri.