

# GOOD MORNING ANDHRA

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## BJP's fake nationalism visible again in new disability pension rules for armed forces: Kharge

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday slammed the BJP government at the centre saying that its fake nationalism is visible again in the new disability pension rules for brave armed forces as the present policy change shall flout multiple past judgements, rules and acceptable global norms.



He also demanded to set up an ex-servicemen commission at the earliest to address the grievances of military veterans. His remarks came in the wake of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has come up with new rules for the grant of disability pensions to armed forces personnel. The new policy changes the definition 'Entitlement Rules for Casualty Pension and Disability Compensation Awards to Armed Forces Personnel, 2023', the new rules will replace all such previous entitlement norms. In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Kharge said: "BJP's fake nationalism is yet

again visible in the new disability pension rules for our brave Armed Forces. Around 40 per cent of army officers retire with disability pension, and the present policy change shall flout multiple past judgements, rules and acceptable global norms." He said that the All India Ex-Servicemen Welfare Association has strongly protested this new policy by the Modi government, which places soldiers at a disadvantage when compared to civilian employees. Kharge said that in June

2019, the Modi government had come out with a "similar betrayal" when they announced that they would be taxing disability pensions. "Modi government is a habitual offender in working against the welfare of our Jawans, ex-servicemen and veterans. Agnipath Scheme: Explicit admission that Modi government does not have funds for our soldiers. Large scale anomalies in OROP-2. Withdrawal of the much deserved 'Non-Functional Utility' (NFU) to ensure automatic time bound pay promo-

tion. Snatching away of medical benefits or pensions to our Jawans, who have valiantly served the Nation under Short Service Commission. Privatisation of Ordnance Factory Board and rationing in CSD outlets," the Congress Chief said. "In this context, Congress party reiterates its demand to set up an Ex-servicemen Commission at the earliest to address the grievances of military veterans," Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha said.

## Jagan has to appear in Court?

Guntur, Sep 30 (GNS) The chief minister of Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has been evading the Kodi Kathi case for many months. He is dragging the case and keeping the culprit Srinivas Rao in jail. Now, Srinivas's lawyer has made an interesting and fitting argument at the Vizag court. "Jagan has the time and resources to go to London to meet his family members. But he doesn't have the time to attend the court hearing in a criminal case against him. The court should order him to attend the court hearing in the case," the lawyer argued.



The primary argument is to get Jagan to record his statement in the case. The lawyer has requested the

court to get Jagan to appear in front of the court at least to get his version of the series of incidents pertaining to the case. Will the court order Jagan to appear in front of them for a hearing on cases that has been going on for many years now.

## 'Uncaring govt' must immediately remove Manipur CM Biren Singh: Kapil Sibal

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Saturday hit out at the Centre over the situation in Manipur and said the "uncaring government" must immediately remove Chief Minister N Biren Singh and not let the state "burn" anymore.



A fresh bout of violence broke out in Imphal on Tuesday, a day after photographs of the bodies of two youths, a man and a girl who went missing in July were widely circulated on social media.

In a post on X, Sibal said, "Manipur: An uncaring government must immediately remove CM Biren (Singh) and not let Manipur burn any more."

"Shutters down on the Internet is no solution. Stop campaigning and deal with Manipur now!" he said. Sibal, a Union minister during UPA I and II, quit the Congress in May last year

and was elected to the Rajya Sabha as an Independent member with the Samajwadi Party's support. He has floated a non-electoral platform 'Insaaf', aimed at fighting injustice.

## KTR Starts Damage Control To Please TDP

Hyderabad, Sep 30 (GNS) A few days ago, KTR came under the radar for the wrong reason as he said it's not right for people to protest the arrest of Chandrababu Naidu in Telangana. He said this is solely an issue related to AP. This led to a commotion that KTR misread the situation as it is common for people to agitate when a leader like CBN is arrested and this can't be confined to one place. The argument was the CBN is a prominent figure for Telugu people and it is common for everyone to protest the same. Now, KTR appears to have started to take damage control action in this context as he tried to appease TDP troops. "NTR is a godly figure for Telugu people. We haven't seen lord Ram or Krishna. We are used to thinking NTR is a representation



## I Won't Contest, Leave Me: Minister To Jagan

Vijayawada, Sep 30 (GNS) Andhra Pradesh cabinet minister Dharma Krishna Das has been in the news for a while now, but for bad reasons. He has been desperately trying to bring crowds to his public meetings, but to no avail. Now, Dharma has revealed that he will not be contesting in the coming election and said the same to Jagan. "I have said to Jagan that I won't contest in the next elections.

of these godly men. It is an honour to share his name. No number of people can match the legacy of NTR." KTR said. KTR was all praises on NTR in his trademark oratory skill set. He is evidently trying to make amends with the TDP troops he irked with aforementioned comments on CBN's arrest. With Telangana elections in a few months, messing with settlers vote bank is not a wise move and KTR appears to have learnt his mistake and is cleverly rectifying the same.



doesn't happen often. This comes after another ex-minister Perni Nani too decided not to contest in the next election. Dies this suggest a downward trend in AP?

## Police Get Complaint About PK's Torn Flexi



Guntur, Sep 30 (GNS) Andhra Pradesh politics is at the center of attention due to the recent arrest of former CM Chandrababu Naidu just months before the elections, which has raised doubts among the public. As the political landscape is rapidly changing, a simple issue has led to a police complaint. Supporters of Pawan Kalyan have filed a complaint alleging that someone tore down the flexi banners of their favorite star and politician in Thotlavalluru Mandal in the Krishna district. They have also reported two similar recent incidents involving Pawan Kalyan's flexies. They have requested the police to review the CCTV footage and take action against the culprits.

## Good For Avinash, Bad For Lokesh

Guntur, Sep 30 (GNS) YCP leaders have their own way of spinning stories that cater to their political interests and they have started to do the same thing with their absurd logic on the anticipatory bail petition filed by Nara Lokesh. Now, Roja has made a wild comment on Lokesh applying for anticipatory bail with regard to the Amaravati Inner Ring Road case. "Lokesh is scared that he will get caught in this scam and that's why he is asking for anticipatory bail



in the case. He has committed fraud and hence the fear." She said. But there's a point to be noted here. If Lokesh applying for anticipatory bail is an indication

## Boyapati Came Out of Syllabus for YSRCP!

Hyderabad, Sep 30 (GNS) It is known that director Boyapati Srinu is an avid admirer of Nandamuri Balakrishna, having delivered blockbuster hits multiple times. He is also a staunch supporter of the TDP and Chandrababu Naidu. Boyapati's recent release, "Skanda," has irked Jagan fans, as evidenced by their reactions on social media. While it's a Ram's film, no one expected political sat-



ires. However, due to the plot involving two CMs in "Skanda," Boyapati penned several hard-hitting dialogues that directly target the current Chief Ministers. This has stirred restlessness among their supporters on social media. Usually, if Balayya is not featured in a Boyapati film, it

## Jagan-Faced Milk Packets Busting Like Bombs

Vijayawada, Sep 30 (GNS) While YS Jagan is fascinated about locking Chandrababu Naidu in jail as long as he possibly can, there's a public outrage on the whole scenario. And moreover, there is a lot of discussion about the own shortcomings of the Jagan government. Now, Nara Lokesh has pointed out the fake and unhealthy that is being circulated in Andhra Pradesh. "Psycho Jagan's thirst for corruption has reached its pinnacle as he is

ripping off lakhs of women with J-brand liquor in the state. Even the milk given to babies and infants is unhealthy and fake and is turning into poison for sinful money." The milk supplied to the Anganwadi centers till now in tetra packs is being supplied in liter polythene pouches with the latest Psycho Jagan face on it are said to have been packed on the 3rd of this month. They have an expiry date of 2nd December, they are bursting like gas bombs within two



days of delivery." Lokesh and food to Anganwadis pointed out. This is one of and new parents. But the proud claims of the Lokesh has pointed out that Jagan is faking this as providing quality nutrients well.



GOOD MORNING ANDHRA  
ENGLISH DAILY

## EDITORIAL

Sunday 01, October 2023

The Glorious  
Universe of Yamapatas

When we think about it today, we lapse into consternation and melancholy. The criminally nonchalant manner in which we have squandered away Bharatavarsha's profound cultural imprint that had exercised an invisible but powerful suzerainty throughout a vast region in Asia. That the squandering occurred after independence magnifies the extent and scale of the crime. For example, Wayang Beber is today an endangered art form in Indonesia because Mankhas have become extinct in the very cradle they were birthed in — Bharata. In fact, the legendary DV Gundappa had castigated the aforementioned cultural squandering way back in the early 1970s in memorable language (emphasis added): "Flirting with Russia and dreading China, India's relations with America are ambiguous; and she must seem all things to all men and nothing in particular to any one, which is her non-alignment! And what gives poignancy to the reflection that we are so miserably incapable of going at least to the moral support of Cambodia is the recollection of the historical fact of our ancient kinship, once upon a time perhaps about the time of the beginning of the Christian era — Cambodia was part of the cultural empire of Hinduism." This is a proven fact of the Hindu cultural history: as long as the tempering, soothing and motherly palm of Sanatana culture exercised its silent influence on alien cultures, they remained largely sober. Despite successive Islamic invasions in many parts of Southeast Asia, the intrinsic Sanatana clime in that region remained unchanged. Even Persia, which had been wholly Islamised centuries ago, continued to draw inspiration from our culture and art forms. But the day India opted for the unwritten religious book of Nehru, known as secularism, the whole thing not only imploded but the loss became irretrievable. The earliest mention of Mankhas occurs in Sage Patanjali's Mahabhasya. The work mentions the display of paintings (citra) depicting Krishna slaying Kamsa. The literal rendering of the text is as follows: "How in respect of the paintings? In the pictures, men see blows raining down upon Kamsa, and how he is dragged about." The clear inference from this is that the tradition of displaying these paintings in public such as in exhibitions, fairs, etc., was already in vogue during Patanjali's era, and Mankhas or picture showmen were already a recognised profession. Jaina Prakrit texts unambiguously define the term Mankha as "a professional picture showman" and he is clubbed in the group of entertainers such as actors, dancers, storytellers, etc. The Bhagavati Sutra mentions the name of Gosala Mankhaliputta (also known as Maskari Gosala, Makkhali Gosala). The Mankhaliputta refers to the profession of Gosala's father, who was a Mankha. A Sanskrit gloss describes Mankhas as citraphalakavyagrakara-bhiksu-visesa meaning, a bhikshu or mendicant who takes alms by exhibiting pictures of deities which he carries with him. In general, there are copious Jain texts mentioning and extolling talented Mankhas.

Long story short, by the post-Gupta era, picture exhibitions as an art form were flourishing. The art form would retain its prime position until the British colonial period. In fact, the story of its evolution is quite thrilling. From exhibiting and narrating picture scrolls showing Kamsa's pummelling at the teenaged Krishna's hands, the focus shifted almost exclusively to something known as the Yamapattaka or Yamapata. The Yamapata showed picture scrolls representing virtuous and evil deeds and the reward and punishment arising therefrom in Yamapuri, the abode of Yama. Major Sanskrit literary works mention Yamapattakas or picture showmen who painted Yamapatas.

In Vishakadatta's renowned play Mudrarakshasa (based on the life and legacy of Kautilya), dateable between the 5th and 9th century CE, Kautilya's spy, Nipunaka disguises himself as a picture showman. He says that men earn their living by portraying the same Yama who kills people. Then he enters Chandanadasa's home, carrying a scroll with figures of Yama upon it. But before he enters, this is the dialogue he utters: "I will enter here, show my pictures and chant my song (yamapatam darshayan gitaani gayami)." After his errand is over, he brings a report to Chanakya saying in Prakrit, "Spreading out the Yama picture scroll, I commenced my song. (jamapatam pasariya pauttohmi gidaim gaidyum).

"Banabhatta's Harshacharita paints a vivid portrait of picture showmen: "Like those who depict Naraka, loud singers paint unrealities on the canvas of the air... In the market street amid a great crowd of inquisitive children, he observed a Yamapattaka in whose left hand was a painted canvas stretched out on a support of upright rods and showing the God of Death mounted on his fearsome buffalo. Wielding a reed wand in his other hand, he was expounding the features of the next world, and could be heard to chant the following verses..." (Verses clipped for this essay) The prolific translator of Sanskrit literary works, MR Kale, in his notes on the Mudrarakshasa, writes, "The exhibition of Yamapata was one of the sources of making money." Likewise, KT Telang's edition of the same play says this about Yamapata: "A series of representations of the exploits of Yama, something like the boxes of sacred pictures which are shown about to this day." And Telang too, gives a reference to the aforementioned passage in Harshacharita. Writing in History and Culture of the Indian People, NR Ray gives us a brilliant description of the Yamapata and its various offshoots

## 'Your Terrorist Is Not a Terrorist': West's False Superiority on Nijjar Row is Unmissable

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) In August 2022, the American intelligence agency CIA conducted a counter-terrorism operation in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. This precision drone strike outed Ayman Al-Zawahiri, the leader of the Islamic terrorist organisation Al-Qaeda. Soon thereafter, the FBI updated its list of most wanted terrorists with the word 'deceased' suffixed to Zawahiri's name. This strike was sanctioned by US President Joe Biden himself who congratulated America over his death while also noting how it will bring a sense of closure to the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

Zawahiri, along with Osama Bin Laden, was the chief plotter of the 2001 terror attacks in the US which had claimed the lives of more than 3000 American citizens. While Biden was breathing a sigh of relief for bringing justice to the victims with this drone strike after almost 21 years, guess who else couldn't contain his jubilation over the death of Zawahiri — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Soon after Zawahiri dropped dead due to the impact of two targeted Hellfire missiles, a tweet from Trudeau's account appeared on the microblogging website 'X' — "The death of Ayman al-Zawahiri is a step toward a safer world. Canada will keep working with our global partners to counter terrorist threats, promote peace and security, and keep people here at home and around the world safe". Now compare Trudeau's reaction to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canada-based Khalistani terrorist who was ambushed and shot down in a fatal incident in the parking lot of a Gurudwara on June 18.

Trudeau not only used Nijjar's death to point fingers at India for breaching Canada's sovereignty but he also addressed him as a 'Canadian citizen' and not what he actually was — a terrorist who was reviving a terror outfit in the form of Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) to carry out attacks against India. He had fled India and settled in Canada on the basis of forged documents in 1996. In 2012, he trained in Pakistan alongside Jagtar Singh Tara, a Pakistan-based Khalistani terrorist who had helped him become an ISI asset. Later in 2015, when Thailand deported Tara to India, Nijjar became the new KTF chief. Even as the Trudeau government was failing to back up the allegations against India with credible evidence, the official Canadian narrative was painting a man as dangerous as Nijjar as a 'Sikh activist', a truck driver and a plumber who was an 'innocent' and 'religious' Sikh, one who served as the head of a Gurudwara in Surrey, Canada. It is a different matter that his foray into Gurudwara politics was just a pretext to save himself from the Interpol Red Corner notice that India had secured against him. Under him, the Gurudwara had also become a place for frequent Khalistani activities with many meets of the separatists taking place in the premises. In tribute to him, the same Gurudwara where he had served as the President has also put up a banner calling him "Shaheed Jathedar" or "Martyr Leader".

Meanwhile, Trudeau isn't alone in white-washing Nijjar as a mere Canadian citizen. A slew of Western commentators, desi think-tanks in the West as well as politicians of both liberal and con-

servative hue have actively defended Nijjar and other Khalistanis as Sikh activists in the last ten days. Some of them including Greg Pence, brother of Mike Pence, former Vice President of the US, have even gone to the extent of comparing the murder of Nijjar as an act of state-sponsored violence against the Sikh community. Pence is currently serving as the US representative for Indiana's 6th Congressional district where his constituency is also home to members of the Sikh community.

Just like Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh, head of the Canadian New Democratic Party in Canada, appeasement politics has corrupted the mindset of many leaders in the United States as well who are not able to make a simple distinction between a Sikh and a terrorist. The entire Khalistani gang is making full use of this fact by alluding to their Sikh identity even as they have picked up arms and are openly calling for the exodus of Hindus from Western countries. The political calculations of Western leaders are allowing the Khalistanis to spread their agenda across the world but what's truly ironic is that the same leaders are ready to celebrate the deaths of Islamic terrorists such as Zawahiri and Osama Bin Laden because according to them, they are not doctors or religious scholars but terrorists unlike Nijjar, who is a Sikh activist, a plumber or anything else but definitely not a terrorist. It is this mindset due to which Western countries including Canada have not acted against the Khalistani elements despite repeated follow-ups by India in the form of dossiers. The most stringent action that Canada had taken against Nijjar was to



put him on a No-Fly list.

The entire series of events in the past few days has exposed many key aspects of West's thinking. The issue with a rising India is that if China is suffering from the middle kingdom syndrome and is forcing India into a tributary-like behaviour instead of treating it like an equal civilisational state, the West is still suffering from its colonial-era hangover and the urge to civilise the entire world by making them follow the superior Western values. For the West, especially Canada which is a pigmy state in comparison to the giant that India is — population-wise as well as economically — schooling natives into how a particular community should be treated is very important. It doesn't matter that Sikhs and Hindus have co-existed for many decades in India. It also doesn't matter that the wedge being driven between the Sikhs

and the Hindus by the Khalistani project is an artificial one. All that the West wants is to civilise the savages through condemnation of their objection to the Khalistanis. In fact, forget independence of action, the West does not want India to even have the authority to define who is a threat to the Indian state and who is not. If it has been decided by the West that Khalistan is a freedom of speech issue and not one of a violent challenge to India's territorial integrity, then so be it. Instead of questioning this framing, India must bend the knee and accept its fault. While the brown sepoys in the Western countries have made peace with this kind of behaviour towards India, the truth is that Indians themselves are not willing to accept this framing at all. The backlash by the English-speaking educated population of India on social media is a fantastic example of the

same. West's allegations have instead accomplished the unachievable by bringing a voice of unity across the political spectrum in India. It was a sight worth marvel when Omar Abdullah, an Opposition politician from Kashmir backed the government's stand and rebuked the West. Ironically, Kashmir had also been a site of Western lectures to India on the right of the separatists to unleash violence but now the situation is completely flipped.

A few years down the line, the same story will be true of Khalistan as well. India's continuous rise has ensured that Sikhs also prosper, leading them to be one of the wealthiest social groups in the country. The Khalistani project is completely dead in India. There are more odds of Khalistan becoming a reality in a Canadian neighbourhood today and the West only will be responsible for it.

## Women's Reservation Bill: Empowerment beyond the elite, says actor Kangana Ranaut

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) India, known for its rich cultural heritage and diversity, reached a historic milestone on the day when Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, or the Women's Reservation Bill, was introduced in Parliament, marking a monumental step towards women's empowerment. The day will remain etched forever in India's political history.

As a witness to this momentous occasion, I could not help but feel a sense of pride and hope for a brighter future for women. This landmark move, spearheaded by the BJP government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sends a powerful message: women's empowerment is not just a promise but a commitment etched in legislative action.

For years, promises had been made by governments regarding the Women's Reservation Bill, but action remained elusive. It was only under the visionary leadership of PM Modi that these promises were transformed into reality. This achievement serves as a testament to the government's unwavering dedication to women's empowerment, a cause deeply rooted in the ethos of our nation. In a world where women continue to face various forms of discrimination and violence, this bill emerged as an urgent need,



reflecting the reverence for women ingrained in Indian culture.

The journey of the Women's Reservation Bill had long been characterised by discussions and debates with little substantive action to show for it. However, the BJP government broke this pattern and set a precedent for the entire nation. In the field of politics, women often struggle to establish their presence and have their voices heard. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam promises to be a transformative force, providing a platform for women determined to bring change.

The benefits of this bill extend beyond urban areas and elite circles. It is designed to empower women from diverse backgrounds. It

sends out a strong message that women's empowerment is a tangible commitment to create a more equitable society.

PM Modi has stated that the special Parliament session would be historic, marking the beginning of a new era, and it has been proved as well. The nation witnessed the inauguration of the official proceedings in the new Parliament building with a bill deeply rooted in Indian culture. I cannot express my gratitude enough to the government for granting me the privilege of witnessing this historic moment.

The contrast between the old Parliament, which stood for nearly a century, and the new building is symbolic of India's transforma-

tion towards self-reliance or Aatmanirbhar Bharat. The former represented an era of colonial subjugation, while the latter symbolises a self-determined and sovereign India. Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, the new Parliament structure not only embodies the physical prowess of the nation but also encapsulates the journey of Indian democracy, rich in art and culture. The new building incorporates the specialties of different parts of the country and has the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.'

One striking feature of the new Parliament that I found inspiring is the gold-plated scepter known as Sengol, positioned close to the Speaker's podium. Derived from the Tamil word

'Semmai,' meaning righteousness, Sengol epitomises the essence of true leadership. As asserted by PM Modi, its presence will serve as a reminder of the moral and ethical principles that should guide those who hold power in our democracy. The choice of Ganesha Chaturthi as the auspicious day for the first session of the new Parliament is symbolic. Lord Ganesha is a symbol of prosperity and success in Indian culture. It is befitting that on this auspicious day, we witnessed the passage of the Women's Bill.

As we look back on this momentous occasion, we are reminded that the new Parliament building represents not only the physical progress of India but also its commitment to its cultural

roots and democratic values. It stands as a testament to the nation's resilience and the collective effort to move forward into a future that is defined by self-reliance, inclusivity and progress. The nation will remember that the official proceedings in the new Parliament building started with a bill that has its roots at the core of Indian culture.

The passage of the Women's Bill is a watershed moment in India's journey towards gender equality and women's empowerment. It not only empowers women but also benefits society as a whole by amplifying diverse voices, addressing critical issues, and inspiring future generations. It is a time for celebration, reflection and action, as we take another significant step towards a more just and equitable society where women's voices are heard and respected in the corridors of power.

'New Parliament building symbolises self-reliance'

The contrast between the old Parliament that stood for nearly a century and the new building is symbolic of India's transformation towards self-reliance or Aatmanirbhar Bharat. The former represented an era of colonial subjugation, while the latter symbolises a self-determined and sovereign India.



## 'Time Muslims unite and speak for themselves': Maulana Azad Vichar Manch president Hussain Dalwai on quota demand



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

With the Maratha versus OBC protests over reservation taking centre stage in Maharashtra, the issue of reservation for Muslims has also made a comeback. In an interview with Shubhangi Khapre, Maulana Azad Vichar Manch president Hussain Dalwai, a former Congress MP, explains why the demand for Muslim reservation is justified and required for the upliftment of the community. Dalwai: Muslim reservation is not a new issue. The demand for Muslim reservation has been voiced in the past. I believe if there is any community that is justified in demanding reservation, it is Muslims. I personally support reservation for socially and educationally backward segments within Marathas. In the same way, Muslims also have the right to reservation.

Q: But critics argue that reservation based on religion will not withstand legal and constitutional scrutiny.

Dalwai: Now, this is the argument often given by the right-wing but the point here is we are not seeking Muslim reservation based on religious criteria. What we want to assert is the socio-economic and educational backwardness, which has been established through studies and commissions, as premises that qualify us for reservation. Now, the basic criteria for reservation is social backwardness which applies to the Muslim community. The Sachar Committee, Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission Report etc. have highlighted the socio-economic and political backwardness among Muslims.

Q: How will you explain Muslim reservation scrapped by courts in states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh etc?

Dalwai: In 2014, the then Congress-Nationalist Congress Party government had given Marathas 16 per cent reservation. It also gave 5 per cent reservation to Muslims in government jobs and educational institutions. The Bombay High Court did not approve of reservation in jobs but upheld quota for Muslims in education. Unfortunately, the government failed to take it to its logical end and it was aborted.

Q: What are your plans for getting Muslim quota?

Dalwai: On October 22, we have convened a Maharashtra State Muslim Reservation Akrosh Parishad in Mumbai. Through Maulana Azad Vichar Manch, we will tour Maharashtra and make an ardent appeal to Muslims to unite and organise to fight for their rights. We don't want any violence or protests. We believe in dialogue to put forth our views but it is time Muslims unite and speak for themselves. Whether it is education, employment or

living standards, Muslims are lagging. The school drop-out rate among Muslims is 75 per cent. Only 2 to 2.5 per cent of Muslim students pursue and qualify for higher studies. In employment, their representation in government jobs is less than 2 per cent. In private jobs, it is at 3 per cent. The largest population in slums belongs to Muslim communities. It is a fact that post Independence, Muslim backwardness in education, employment and livelihood index is below that of Dalits and tribals. I am not saying all is well with Dalits and tribals; the point I am trying to make is that compared to the progress of Dalits or tribals, Muslims rank much lower.

Q: What about the Sachar Committee recommendations during UPA-1?

Dalwai: During UPA-1 led by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the Sachar Committee had clearly stated the objectives and reforms that were needed to bring Muslims into the mainstream. The then government had initiated some positive reforms and had come out with a 15-point agenda but the recommendations have still not been implemented in totality. For example, increasing Muslim representation in public sector undertakings, reconstituting Muslim-majority constituencies which must not be reserved for Scheduled Castes, stopping communal clashes, taking steps to link madrasa education with higher secondary boards etc.

Q: Is this failure of elected governments at the Centre and state?

Dalwai: I do not want to get into a blame game. That is not our agenda. Our simple concern is the upliftment of the poor amongst the Muslim communities. They should have easy access to schools and higher education. There are several welfare schemes extended for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes by the government. We believe these should be applicable to Muslims also. Poor literacy among Muslims is our main concern. And we believe the government should give 5 per cent quota to Muslims in education. The total Muslim population in Maharashtra is 11.5 per cent.

Q: Often, mainstream political parties hold Muslims responsible for backwardness. Your thoughts?

Dalwai: I admit that 20 per cent Muslims who are economically and politically empowered have failed the poor within the community in speaking for their rights and struggles. There are a handful of politicians who pursue hardline politics and whip up fanaticism for electoral success. But all this is short-lived. A majority of Muslims are moderate and want to live in peace. Our effort is to ensure the upliftment of the oppressed and deprived segments within Muslims. While I admit our shortcomings, I would like to emphasise that established political parties, especially BJP and RSS, are promoting divisive politics. The communal clashes and hatred against Muslims are detrimental in a progressive state like Maharashtra. It was in this land of social reforms where Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Dr B R Ambedkar gave the message of social equality and individual dignity. Today, even in the most historically prosperous and progressive districts of Kolhapur, Satara and Sangli, we have seen hate rallies against Muslims in the name of 'love jihad'. Atrocities against Muslims and Dalits are still taking place, which is a shame.

## US Calling: Jaahnavi Kandula's death triggers nationwide outrage, body cameras, and Biden's 'Whole of Government Approach' to equity

Jaahnavi Kandula was a bright, energetic 23-year-old student at Northeastern University Washington. She was fatally struck down by a patrol car driven by Kevin Dave, a Seattle Policeman, at a pedestrian crossing over 9 months ago. Priyanka Chopra has written on her Instagram story, "It's appalling to learn that such a tragic incident that happened 9 months ago is only coming to light now..."

Kevin Dave was apparently speeding at 74 mph in an area with a 25 mph speed limit, responding to a drug overdose priority one call when he struck Jaahnavi in the crosswalk. She was taken to the hospital where she died from injuries sustained in the accident. The Office of Police Accountability (OPA) assigned Daniel Auderer, a drug recognition Officer, to examine if Dave was impaired at the time of the accident. Auderer, when reporting to Mike Solan, President of the Police Officers Guild, regarding his examination, left his body camera on. The recording was released by the police department in response to Fox 13 News' public records request. The body camera recording has Auderer laughing and suggesting that Kandula's life had "limited value" and the city should "just write a check - eleven thousand dollars. She was 26 anyway." The Police Officer's Guild has stated that the recording and viral videos failed to provide context and explain the full story. The Associated Press, who reported it, could not immediately verify the details of Auderer's statement. However, a radio host on KTTH-AM Seattle's leading Conservative Talk Radio, Jason Rantz, reported that he had obtained a written statement Auderer provided to the city's Office of Police Accountability. In it, Auderer said that Solan had lamented the death and that his own comments were intended to mimic how the city's attorneys might try to minimize liability for it. "I intended the comment as a mockery of lawyers," Auderer wrote, according to KTTH. "I laughed at the ridiculousness of how these incidents are litigated and the ridiculousness of how I watched these incidents play out as two parties bargain over a tragedy." The station reported that Auderer acknowledged in the statement that anyone listening to his side of the conversation alone "would rightfully believe I was being insensitive to the loss of human life." The comment was "not made with malice or a hard heart," he said, but "quite the opposite."

Jaahnavi would have graduated with a Masters in Information Systems in December 2023. Her mother was waiting for her daughter to support her but instead received her body in a casket. Her Uncle Ashok Mandula of Houston, who made the arrangements, has said, "the family has nothing to say." "Except I wonder if these men's daughters or granddaughters have value." Indian American community leaders describe uneasiness in the community after the incident. Niranjana Srungavarapu, President of the Telugu Association of North America, said

South Asians were "...surprised and shocked to hear that kind of treatment of a young girl."

There have been rallies and candlelight vigils all across the country, from New York City to California, as reported by CNN, ABC, NBC, etc., and there are several videos on YouTube demanding justice for Jaahnavi. On 16th September, the Asian charity 'Utsav' brought together Seattle residents and South Asian community members, where Vandana Slatter, a Washington State Democratic house representative, addressed the gathering. Seattle residents also met Police Chief Adrian Diaz, Mayor Bruce Harrell, and Council member Lisa Herbold, who serves as Chair of Public Safety. Mayor Harrell has sent an apology letter to Jaahnavi's family. Democrat Ro Khanna, who represents California's 17th congressional District (Silicon Valley), has articulately said, "Anyone who thinks that a human life has 'limited value' should not be serving in law enforcement. Lilly Singh, a popular television host, has called Auderer's video "disgusting" and "inhumane." Priyanka Chopra wrote on Instagram that "...A life is a life. One cannot put a value on it." It's now learned that the Indian Government has requested President Biden, who has assured a fair investigation. The case is designated as classified before the Office of Police Accountability and is under review by the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

The incident has mobilized outrage in the Indian diaspora and touched a raw nerve in the Asian community. The world's largest Boy Band, BTS or Bangtan Boys, and UN Youth Ambassadors called on President Biden to highlight anti-Asian hate crimes and discrimination in May, which is observed as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The 'Stop AAPI (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) Hate' forum, a nonprofit that tracks incidents of hate and discrimination, STAATUS Index Report, found 78% of respondents felt unaccepted, and 52% felt unsafe because of their race or ethnicity. Time Magazine named STOP AAPI's founders Manjusha Kulkarni, Cynthia Choi, and Russel Jeung among the 100 influential people for 2021.

The Jaahnavi Kandula investigation has already resulted in a review of a policy that allows a Police union official to be involved in an investigation of an officer they represent since Auderer was an elected Vice President of the Seattle Police Officers Guild. Jaahnavi Kandula will be remembered for having brought about this review in policing, and her 'legacy' will hopefully be a part of the Police Department's responsiveness to equity in community policing.

And while there's nothing that can bring solace to her grieving mother, in what is a measure of Jaahnavi's popularity and the grief of those she left behind, a GoFundMe initiative for her mother, a teacher in India, has surpassed its goal of \$125,000.

## Chandigarh set to halt registration of fuel-based two-wheelers by October first week



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Chandigarh administration is all set to halt the registration of fuel-based two-wheelers from first week of October, as the targeted number of such vehicles in the current financial year (FY), as fixed under the 2022 Electric Vehicle (EV) policy, is expected to be over by first week of October. As per the targets set in EV policy, the registration of four-wheelers will be stopped in December this year. This financial year 12,076 fuel-based two-

wheelers are to be registered in the city till December this year. Following this, the registrations would be put to a halt till the end of the financial year on March 31. Only electric two-wheelers will be registered.

According to the data, since April this year, as many as 11,254 two-wheelers have been registered till date. The RLA stated that in the given circumstances, only 822 non-electric two-wheelers can be registered now. Four-wheelers' registration to be stopped in Dec

By December, the UT administration will stop the registration of four-wheelers running on internal combustion engine (ICE) (petrol/diesel) once the target for this FY - which is likely to be attained by December - is achieved. According to the target set by the Chandigarh Administration this year, only 15,465 fuel-based four-wheelers are to be registered by the end of this FY. After this, their registration will be stopped and only electric four-wheelers will be registered. As many as 12,937 four-wheelers have been registered till date in the city and around 2,528 non-electric four-wheelers can be registered in the given time.

## Labourer, wife found dead in UP's Basti; video recovered from mobile phone says neighbours raped her

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

A 35-year-old daily wage labourer and his wife allegedly died by suicide at their house in Uttar Pradesh's Basti district after claiming in a video that their neighbours had raped the woman. One person has been arrested and a minor detained in connection with the incident. According to officers, a video was recovered from the cell phone of the deceased in which the duo alleged that two of their neighbours raped the labourer's 32-year-old wife. On the basis of a complaint filed by the labourer's elder brother, the police lodged an FIR against the two neighbours, aged 40 and 17, on charges of rape.

Superintendent of Police (Basti) Gopal Krishna Choudhary said one of the accused was arrested and

the minor was detained. According to the police, on Thursday they got information that a couple had tried to kill themselves and were rushed to a hospital. On reaching the hospital, the police found that the labourer had died, while his wife had been referred to a hospital in Gorakhpur. She died during treatment the next day. The couple is survived by their three children, the police said. "The victims' younger son told the police that his parents had recorded a video on their cell phone and asked to show it after they died. We have found the video in which they alleged that their two neighbours had sexually assaulted the woman on the intervening night of September 20 and 21. They also claimed that they were forced to take the extreme step because of social disgrace," the station house officer of the local police station said.

## Attack on Kerala-born artist Sajan Mani in Berlin 'shocking', says German Embassy spokesperson

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Reacting to the alleged racial attack on Kerala-born Berlin-based artist Sajan Mani in Germany, the German Embassy spokesperson in Delhi, Sebastian Fuchs, Friday said, "It is shocking to learn what happened to Sajan Mani. We express our strong solidarity and we wish for a very speedy recovery." An intersectional artist who explores questions of caste and colour through his work, Mani Thursday alleged he was injured in a racially motivated attack in Berlin. Mani, 41, was waiting at a bus shelter with artist Mila Panic when he was attacked by a man and hit repeatedly on the back of his head with a stick. "It was unprovoked. I did not know this person. I was screaming for help," Mani told The Indian Express from a hospital in Berlin.

He added, "Luckily, some people came and the police also reached the spot." Mani said he has multiple injuries, "I have got 30 stitches on the head and also one ear. There are also several bruises." Immediately after the attack, in the ambulance on the way to the hospital, Mani had shared details of the incident in a video on Instagram. "This is the everyday reality of a migrant artist in Germany," he had stated. He added, "Me and artists I know have experienced discrimination and racism before, but not like this." Mani said a police complaint has been filed and the attacker has been identified. He is deliberating further action.

Based in Germany since 2016, Mani was awarded



the Berlin Art Prize in 2021 and the 2022 Prince Claus Mentorship Award. His works often use his own "Black Dalit body" as a socio-political metaphor. "I am interested in the body and the concepts of time and space - the body and its limits, endurance and a black Dalit body's existence.

My performances attempt to evoke pain, shame, power and fear... I am looking for erased histories and non-archived histories of the Dalit and non-indigenous bodies," he had said in an interview with The Indian Express in February 2023. Born into a family of rubber tappers in Kerala, Mani also worked for two years as a migrant labourer in the Gulf, before practising as a visual design artist in Bengaluru. He was associated with the first edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012 as a member of the editorial team.

## VBU, Centre not the only stakeholders in Santiniketan, ICOMOS also has stake now: Visva Bharat V-C

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

In a conversation with The Indian Express, VBU Vice-Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarti speaks on various aspects as the university town of Santiniketan, which Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore established in West Bengal's Birbhum district nearly a century ago, has been included in UNESCO's World Heritage List. With the UNESCO recognition, the university and the central government are not the only stakeholders in the Santiniketan World Heritage Site from now as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) also has a stake in it. They have laid down some conditions which we have to follow. One of them is to protect the Asrama area (open-air classrooms and hostels) which means no new structure can come up there. Secondly, we have to maintain the existing structures. Thirdly, we have to reduce the tourist flow to the campus as the presence of a large number of people in the Asrama area will have an impact on the fragile buildings. If we reduce the tourist flow, we will have to adopt a new mechanism so that people can see the heritage. We cannot allow tourist activities in every heritage property or those which are in a fragile condition. We have identified such places and have taken the approval of ICOMOS.

When can people expect the varsity to take steps on this?

Our heritage committee will comprise experts and members from ICOMOS. We are yet to receive the official document from the UNESCO. Once we get it, we will understand to what extent things will be managed in this regard. A team from UNESCO and ICOMOS will visit the university within three months from now. Once we hold a meeting with them, we will be able to understand what steps should be initiated and how they will be implemented.

Will this tag have any impact on the economy of Santiniketan and its people?

We have to keep in mind that the World Heritage tag has not been bestowed upon the Visva-Bharati Univer-

sity but on Santiniketan where it is located. Yes, a large part of the core area is part of the campus but it is the historical significance of Santiniketan which has received the recognition. It will be expensive to maintain such a large area. Now the Centre and the state government should take the responsibility to look into these aspects and promote the place for a wider audience. I will visit New Delhi by month-end as Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji (who is Chancellor of VBU) has convened a meeting following UNESCO's recognition. I will place in the meeting as how much financial support the place requires to maintain its heritage and protect it. Also, we need a mindset more than financial assistance.

There is demand from ex-faculty, students and residents of Santiniketan to reopen heritage complexes. What's your take?

The central government has a policy on protecting heritage paintings. We have digitalised versions of the paintings by Rabindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Benode Behari Mukherjee, and other noted painters. We cannot allow people to see them physically as they are in a fragile condition. Several heritage complexes are also in a fragile condition. There are some mud houses where we cannot allow people to enter as the structures might collapse if pressure is created. The heritage complexes were taken over by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for renovation works. They have the final say on this. Even we have to get permission from ASI to visit such places. That also applies to the Vice-chancellor.

When can these complexes be reopened for public?

This is a temporary embargo. The ASI took over these places in 2020 for renovation. Tourists were allowed to visit them earlier. But we also have to keep in mind that sometimes tourists act irresponsibly. They put their names on paintings and sculptures. Some tourists also damage fragile structures. They are supposed to conclude the renovation work by the end of this year and hand over the complexes to us in December. Before that, an inspection will be conducted by ASI officials.



## Tenure of UCC draft committee in Uttarakhand extended by 4 months



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

With the five-member panel formed to prepare a draft for the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand yet to submit its report to the government, the tenure of the committee has been extended by four months. This is the third extension given to the panel as its tenure was to end on September 27. Earlier on June 30, Ranjana Prakash Desai, head of the committee and a former judge of the Supreme Court, informed the media that the drafting of the proposed Uniform Civil Code of Uttarakhand was complete and the report of the expert committee along with the draft will be printed and submitted to the Government of Uttarakhand soon. The report and draft however are yet to be submitted.

On May 27 last year, the Uttarakhand government formed a five-member expert committee for the implementation of the UCC and to check all the relevant laws that control personal citizen matters for people living in Uttarakhand. The UCC was one of the major poll promises of the BJP in the run-up to the state Assembly elec-

tions held last year. After the first Cabinet meeting of the newly formed Uttarakhand government, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announced the formation of a committee of experts for the implementation of UCC in the state. The committee is headed by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, who currently heads the Delimitation Commission of India. Other members of the committee include retired Delhi High Court judge Pramod Kohli, social activist Manu Gaur, ex-chief secretary and IAS officer Shatrughan Singh, and Doon University Vice-Chancellor Surekha Dangwal.

In the 13 months since its formation, the committee received around 2.5 lakh suggestions and comments. While most of the suggestions, around 2.3 lakh, came to the expert committee through handwritten letters, registered posts, e-mails, and written suggestions on the committee's online portal, sources said that most of the meaningful suggestions came during direct public interactions. The committee held a total of 38 public meetings across the state, taking views and suggestions from the locals. Other than that, it met Hindu religious leaders in Haridwar, and talked to all the Hindu akharas. The committee also held meetings in Muslim-dominated areas like Kaliyar Sharif, Ramnagar, Haldwani, Kashipur, and Vikas Nagar.

The committee also studied laws in other countries on civil matters. This includes countries where there is a uniform law not on a religious basis, and countries where there were laws governed by religion and in which amendments were made later. It also studied personal laws, religious laws, and religious customs, along with different kinds of cases coming to different commissions associated with civil laws.

## 'St Mary changed my disdain for BJP': A K Antony's wife thanks divine intervention for son Anil's rise in BJP



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Congress Working Committee member and former defence minister A K Antony's wife Elizabeth Antony has claimed divine intervention in the sudden rise of their son Anil Antony in the BJP. Elizabeth made the claim at a recent function of Kreupasanam Marian Shrine, a Christian retreat centre under the Catholic diocese of Alappuzha in Kerala. It became public through the shrine's YouTube channel and went viral on social media. She said her disdain for the BJP had gone away (after her son joined the party) thanks to prayers.

In the video, Elizabeth credits the recent accommodation of Antony into the Congress Working Committee, his recovery from various ailments and Anil's joining the BJP to the intervention of St Mary, mother of Jesus. She also said Antony accepted son's BJP entry with composure due to the blessings of St Mary. "St Mary changed my disdain and repulsiveness towards the BJP," she said.

The retreat is known among Christians as a place for making prayer submissions, known as Mariyam covenant prayer, to get their intentions achieved. Elizabeth said she made the prayer submission for the recovery of Antony from various ailments and the rise of their son Anil in politics. She said her son had cherished a dream to enter politics. "It was when I prayed for the entry of my son into politics that the Congress Chintan Shivir passed a resolution against family politics. I realised that my sons could not enter politics. My husband had not tried to initiate our son into politics. I prayed to St Mary. Things went through unexpected ways. There was a BBC documentary controversy... I prayed to St Mary that everything has gone... it was his dream to enter politics. I prayed to St Mary. My son is 39 years old and with tears, I raised his dream before St Mary. Then came a call from the Prime Minister's Office that he was asked to join the BJP. He was told that there would be opportunities in the BJP. I prayed to Mary to show a way for his future... My disdain and disgust towards the BJP are gone. Mary gave me a new heart."

Elizabeth said she had sought the divine intervention of St Mary to avoid "law and order" issues at her home after the son joined BJP. "It was a shock for my husband. I was worried about what would happen when Anil came home after joining the BJP. I prayed to Mary that she should handle the law-and-order situation at my home. Antony calmly accepted it and overcame that situation. Mathavu (St Mary) cooled down the minds of all. I feared a revolt at home. Everything has gone smoothly after the intervention of Mathavu," she said.

## A Goan health centre shows the way in taking patients online

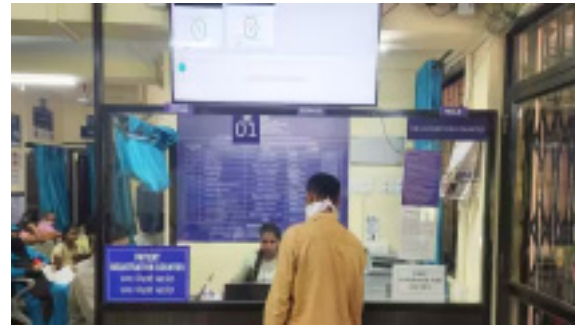
GNS News Agency, Sept 29

When Prem Chand Sharma (24), a carpenter, went to the primary health centre (PHC) in North Goa's Corlim for a check-up after experiencing symptoms of fever, he saw a long queue. Already late for work, he was about to leave when an attendant at the counter asked whether he used a smartphone and was carrying his Aadhaar card. The attendant scanned a QR code, installed an app on his phone and, in minutes, created his Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) ID - a digital health identification number. On the app, he got a token number, and the consultation timing at the OPD popped up on a screen in a waiting room. After seeing the doctor, his diagnosis and prescribed medication were uploaded online and an e-prescription was sent to the pharmacist. At least 100 patients visit this particular Goan PHC in a day on average. At least 100 patients visit this particular Goan PHC in a day on average. (Special Arrangement) Half an hour later, Sharma was at the pharmacy collecting his medicines.

On his next visit to the PHC, Sharma will be able to jump the queue, while doctors can henceforth access his health records online using just his ABHA ID. In April this year, Corlim PHC and Health and Wellness Centre became Goa's first healthcare facility providing end-to-end digitisation for patients, integrated with ABHA as part of the government's digital health initiative. Prem Chand Sharma, a patient, getting his ABHA ID created at PHC Corlim Prem Chand Sharma, a patient, getting his ABHA ID created at PHC Corlim.

The Corlim PHC, in Tiswadi taluka, comprises seven sub-centres in Betim, Divar, Ella (Old Goa), Mangado, Neura, Siridao and Goltim. Catering to a population of over 48,000 people across 10 villages in the taluka, the PHC offers five OPDs (general, ayurvedic, dental, ophthalmic and physiotherapy), a laboratory, an antenatal clinic and a pharmacy, with an average footfall of at least 100 people a day. Officials of the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) said the objective of the project was to provide a "seamless and hassle free experience" for patients - from registration to diagnosis, prescription to lab and pharmacy services. Over four months after its launch, the initiative is helping patients save time, and providing authorities a better understanding of health outcomes.

"Earlier, everything was done manually. But patients would often misplace the documents," said Dr Deval Naik, medical officer in-charge of Corlim PHC. "Now the patient has all the information and medical records on his phone. People with an ABHA ID do not have to wait in long queues. The whole process of information management and prescription tracking has become automated." Dr Kedar N Raikar, the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission nodal officer, explained another advantage of the move: "Now, each patient's medical history, including data of previous visits to the PHC, past diagnosis, treatment, medicines prescribed - all this is available with a doctor during consultation at all ABHA linked places. This helps in retrospective treatment, investigations and prescribing dosage of medicines." Dr Raikar said that in the long run, digitisation of services would enable a more robust and transparent method of record-keeping and data collection, which could help frame policy decisions, build



capacity and identify trends in health outcomes in a particular region. "For instance, if in a particular month, through data, it is observed that a larger proportion of diabetic and hypertension cases are being received from a particular area, we can respond in real time and make informed decisions for treatment accordingly," he said. The Corlim PHC was showcased to delegates during a meeting of the G20 health working group in Goa in April. It also earned praise from Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya after a visit in April. Goa has 24 PHCs, six community health centres, two sub-district hospitals, two district hospitals and over 30 rural medical dispensaries. Officials said the process of digitising two sub-district hospitals and some more PHCs is underway. A patient enquiring about the registration at the Goan PHC. A patient enquiring about the registration at the Goan PHC. Of the 100-110 patients who visit the Corlim PHC in a day, at least 35 are availing the healthcare facilities digitally, said Dr Raikar, adding that the PHC is still operating in hybrid mode due to certain operational challenges. For people who do not use a smartphone or are not tech-savvy, registrations and services are also provided at separate counters manually. "It is a work in progress. Internet connectivity is sometimes an issue since the location is remote. This PHC is near an industrial area and a lot of patients are migrant workers, who may not own a smartphone. Several patients do not have Aadhaar linked to their numbers, which is also a hindrance in creating an ABHA ID. Senior citizens often face difficulty in navigating the digital system. We guide them and are trying to make people aware," said an attendant at the PHC.

Officials said they are also navigating the "behavioural change" needed for patients to transition from a paper-based information system to a digital one. "The health records can only be accessed through an OTP, which is sent on the patient's phone. We take the consent of patients before registration. If the patient has any issues related to privacy, they can avail services through the paper-based traditional system," said an official. Anil Gaonkar (36), who had come for a dental check up, showed a message that he received on his phone app, after registering at the PHC. "You consent to the above information to be shared with Primary Health Centre Corlim. They can use this information for your registration and linking health records," the message read. "I have been coming to this centre for the past several years. Apart from the last prescription, I have misplaced all the documents... I do not have any privacy concerns," he said. In Goa, which has a population of 14.58 lakh as per the last census, 4.2 lakh ABHA IDs have been created and registered so far.

## Simultaneous poll panel to invite political parties, Law Commission for views on synchronised polls

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

A high-level committee on simultaneous elections headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind held its first meeting on Saturday and decided to invite political parties and the Law Commission to seek their views on holding synchronised polls in the country, a statement said. Home Minister Amit Shah, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, former Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Finance Commission chairman N K Singh, former Lok Sabha secretary general Subhash C Kashyap and former chief vigilance commissioner Sanjay Kothari attended the meeting. The committee, the statement said, decided to invite recognised national parties, parties having governments in states, those having their representatives in Parliament, other recognised state parties "for seeking suggestions/view points on the issue of simultaneous elections in the country". In addition, the committee will also invite the Law Commission for its suggestions and view points on the



issue of simultaneous elections, a law ministry statement said. Noted lawyer Harish Salve joined the meeting virtually. Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury was not present in the meeting, the statement noted. After he was named in the committee, Chowdhury had written to Shah "declining to serve on the committee".

## In era of ever-increasing globalisation, role of lawyers evolved to address myriad global challenges: CJI

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said the role of lawyers has evolved to address myriad global legal challenges in an era characterised by ever-increasing globalisation. He said rapid technological advancement has created "complex legal issues", with lawyers leading the way in navigating this landscape. While the judiciary definitely bears the responsibility of administering justice and upholding the rule of law, lawyers play an equally vital role, he stressed. "In an era characterised by ever-increasing globalisation, the role of lawyers has evolved to address myriad global legal challenges," the CJI said while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Bar Council of India's (BCI) 'International Lawyers Conference 2023' here.

He said lawyers ensure that clients and governments adapt to technological changes while upholding legal rights and regulations, covering areas like cybersecurity, data privacy and intellectual property. "Lawyers also bear significant commercial responsibility, driving economic growth by helping clients and governments enhance business efficiency and cross-border operations. Through their role in facilitating international trade, investments, and collaborations, they contribute to nations' economic well-being and global cooperation," Justice Chandrachud said. He said just as the Indian industry has radically altered its footprints from 1980 or earlier by reaching out around the world now, "I believe it's time for our lawyers to reach around the world in a global landscape". The CJI said the government is in the process of building infrastructure and there is a global outreach by it to the rest of the world. "I believe that our legal profession must not be left behind. We cannot look upon ourselves as merely domestic practitioners. Our reach, our vision, our outlook must now become global." Justice Chandrachud said there is often a difference in perspective between him and his colleagues on the bench. "But that is why we are a national court." "However, when the day comes to a close, we come together and share a moment of camaraderie," he said, adding it plays a pivotal role in fostering mutual respect for each other's perspective and acknowledging that there is always something to learn from each other. "Only when we recognise this shared intention to deliver justice, can we sit on the same table to find solutions." The CJI further said, "While none of us have a magic wand to wish away all the challenges to justice delivery, I am certain that the sessions lined up over the



next two days (in the conference) will inspire each of us to collaborate as nations, institutions and individuals to find innovative solutions". Justice Chandrachud was the chief guest of the ceremony which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice of the United Kingdom Alex Chalk KC, Attorney General for India R Venkataramani, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, Bar Council of India (BCI) chairman and senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra and others, including several judges of the apex court, were also present during the event. In a press conference held on September 20, the BCI chairman had said that several issues, including the rules framed by the council regarding entry and regulation of foreign lawyers and offshore law firms, will be discussed during the two-day conference. As per details shared by the BCI, 10 technical sessions on several topics, including 'Artificial Intelligence: Transforming the Legal Landscape', 'Intellectual Property Rights in a Borderless World', and the 'Changing Landscape of Criminal Law', will be held during the conference and several judges of the apex court and others would participate in them.

In March this year, the BCI had taken a significant decision to permit foreign lawyers and law firms to practise in areas such as foreign law, international legal issues and arbitration matters, saying that the legal fraternity here may be left behind if it stays over the matter. The decision to notify the Bar Council of India Rules for Registration and Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India, 2022 had evoked mixed reactions from bar council leaders and eminent lawyers

## 'Have advised Centre to permanently close Free Movement Regime with Myanmar': Manipur CM Biren Singh

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has said the state has advised the Centre to permanently close the Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement with Myanmar. FMR allows citizens living along the border on either side to travel up to 16 km inside the other country, without a Visa. The Chief Minister was addressing the media regarding the priorities to be taken up by the state government to curtail the movement of illegal immigrants and drug trafficking issues confronting the state. He said that the preliminary biometrics for the NRC that was hampered due to the ongoing unrest would be continued for another year. "We have asked the Centre to extend the biometrics scanning to identify illegal immigrants for another year. The scanning was supposed to be complete by September but owing to the unrest, the exercise got delayed," he said.

To check drug trafficking, Singh said border fencing work has started along a total of 79 km stretch by identifying vulnerable areas. Singh said the state government is planning to procure a UAV to carry out a survey of illegal poppy cultivation and subsequent destruction of the plants.

The Chief Minister further said that around 700-800 displaced individuals from Torbung and many from Sugnu have already been resettled in their homes and the process of providing prefabricated houses to more displaced victims is ongoing. He highlighted that the deployment of maximum security in vulnerable areas has significantly reduced incidents of firing and killings. Additionally, the CRPF and BSF troops have been deployed in vulnerable areas such as Narasena, Thampokpi, Torbung, and Koutruk, replacing Assam Rifles troops, he



FMR allows citizens living along the border on either side to travel up to 16 km inside the other country, without a Visa.

said. He added that the rule of law has been effectively implemented in all districts, including Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Moreh. Regarding the recent leakage of mobile data services in Churachandpur district, despite the government's ban, the Chief Minister informed that two officers of Airtel have been suspended in connection with this incident.



## Surgeons perform second pig heart transplant, trying to save a dying man



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Surgeons have transplanted a pig's heart into a dying man in a bid to prolong his life – only the second patient to ever undergo such an experimental feat. Two days later, the man was cracking jokes and able to sit in a chair, Maryland doctors said Friday. The 58-year-old Navy veteran was facing near-certain death from heart failure but other health problems meant he wasn't eligible for a traditional heart transplant, according to doctors at University of Maryland Medicine.

"Nobody knows from this point forward. At least now I have hope and I have a chance," Lawrence Faucette, from Frederick, Maryland, said in a video recorded by the hospital before Wednesday's operation. "I will fight tooth and nail for every breath I can take." While the next few weeks will be critical, doctors were thrilled at Faucette's early response to the pig organ. "You know, I just keep shaking my head – how am I talking to someone who has a pig heart?" Dr. Bartley Griffith, who performed the transplant, told The Associated Press. He said doctors are feeling "a great privilege but, you know, a lot of pressure." The same Maryland team last year performed the world's first transplant of a genetically modified pig heart into another dying man, David Bennett, who survived just two months.

There's a huge shortage of human organs donated for transplant. Last year, there were just over 4,100 heart transplants in the U.S., a record number but the supply is so tight that only patients with the best chance of long-term survival get offered one. Animal-to-human organ transplants have failed for decades. Attempts at animal-to-human organ transplants have failed for decades, as people's immune systems immediately destroyed the for-

eign tissue. Now scientists are trying again using pigs genetically modified to make their organs more humanlike. Recently, scientists at other hospitals have tested pig kidneys and hearts in donated human bodies, hoping to learn enough to begin formal studies of what are called xenotransplants.

To make this new attempt in a living patient outside of a rigorous trial, the Maryland researchers required special permission from the Food and Drug Administration, under a process reserved for certain emergency cases with no other options. It took over 300 pages of documents filed with FDA, but the Maryland researchers made their case that they'd learned enough from their first attempt last year – even though that patient died for reasons that aren't fully understood – that it made sense to try again. And Faucette, who retired as a lab technician at the National Institutes of Health, had to agree that he understood the procedure's risks. In a statement his wife, Ann Faucette, said: "We have no expectations other than hoping for more time together. That could be as simple as sitting on the front porch and having coffee together." What's different this time: Only after last year's transplant did scientists discover signs of a pig virus lurking inside the heart – and they now have better tests to look for hidden viruses. They also made some medication changes. Possibly more important, while Faucette has end-stage heart failure and was out of other options, he wasn't as near death as the prior patient. By Friday, his new heart was functioning well without any supportive machinery, the hospital said. "It's just an amazing feeling to see this pig heart work in a human," said Dr. Muhammad Mohiuddin, the Maryland team's xenotransplantation expert. But, he cautioned, "we don't want to predict anything. We will take every day as a victory and move forward."

This kind of single-patient "compassionate use" can provide some information about how the pig organ works but not nearly as much as more formal testing, said Karen Maschke, a research scholar at the Hastings Center who is helping develop ethics and policy recommendations for xenotransplant clinical trials. That FDA allowed this second case "suggests that the agency is not ready to permit a pig heart clinical trial to start," Maschke added. The pig heart, provided by Blacksburg, Virginia-based Revivicor, has 10 genetic modifications – knocking out some pig genes and adding some human ones to make it more acceptable to the human immune system.

sponded to requests for comment. Chiu said that when the Shandong was out at sea, which Taiwan first reported on Sept. 11, it was operating as the "opposing force" in the drills. Ministry spokesman Sun Li-fang added that China's Eastern Theatre Command forces were the "attacking force", simulating a battle scenario. Taiwan's traditional military planning for a potential conflict has been to use its mountainous east coast, especially the two major air bases there, as a place to regroup and preserve its forces given it does not directly face China unlike the island's west coast. But China has increasingly been flexing its muscles off Taiwan's east coast, and generally displaying its ability to operate much further away from China's own coastline. China normally performs large-scale exercises from July to September, Taiwan's defence ministry has said. On Saturday the ministry said China had largely dialled back its drills, reporting that over the previous 24 hour period it had only spotted two Chinese aircraft operating in its air defence zone. Taiwan has frequently said that it would remain calm and not escalate the situation, but that it won't allow "repeated provocations" from China, whose forces have so far not entered Taiwan's territorial seas or airspace.

## Colombia's Presidential office manipulates video of President Gustavo Petro at United Nations to hype applause



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

The Colombian government manipulated a video of alter the applause received by President Gustavo Petro during his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The Associated Press reviewed the video and was able to verify that it was altered. The recording released by the Presidential office incorporated applause for the U.S. President Joe Biden, who spoke moments before Mr. Petro, making it appear the applause was directed at the Colombian leader. The manipulation was first reported by the Colombian website La Silla Vacía.

The Presidential office was asked for comment by the AP but had not responded by late Friday afternoon. Although Mr. Petro did receive applause, the final clip of

the video posted on Thursday on the government's YouTube channel does not correspond to what was broadcast in the UN video. It incorporates a different shot to the original broadcast and to what was broadcast in the media, making it seem that many more attendees applauded Mr. Petro at the end of his speech. The recording raised doubts among social media users and the media, given that there were several empty seats in the General Assembly during Mr. Petro's speech. At 1.52.39 of the official UN broadcast, the same applause that the Colombian government video shows going to Mr. Petro is heard but it is at the end of Mr. Biden's address. The UN video also shows that three men in the seventh row stand up at the same time and that a woman walks towards the podium between the seats, the same scene that appears in the video released by Colombia's Presidential office.

AP photographer Richard Drew captured the moment of Mr. Petro's speech in a photo and shows that in the seventh row there were only people sitting in three of the 12 seats. In the edited video released by the Colombian government, all those seats look to be occupied. This year's annual meeting of the UN General Assembly brought together heads of state and government from at least 145 countries, including Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

## Thousands of teachers protest in Nepal against education bill, shutting schools across the country

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Schools for millions of students in Nepal were closed Friday as tens of thousands of teachers protested in the capital against an education reform bill in parliament. Teachers have been demonstrating in Kathmandu since Wednesday against the School Education Bill while teachers' groups negotiate with government leaders over changes to the legislation.

The teachers oppose provisions that would shift government-run schools to local control, saying it would lower their status, and that would scrap many temporary teacher positions. The teachers blocked the main street leading from the parliament building to key government ministries, disrupting traffic in the heart of the capital. Hundreds of police in riot gear blocked the road leading to parliament with barbed-wire barricades. The teachers have threatened to bring more protesters to Kathmandu if their demands are not addressed. "Our key demand is we teachers should be kept under the central government like any other government professionals and not in the control of local authorities which are all controlled by



politics," said Badri Dhungel, a high school teacher who was participating in the protest. "We should get equal pay, status and other facilities and benefits like civil servants," he said. The protest had led to the closure of about 29,000 public schools attended by millions of students across the country. Private schools remained open. The protesters briefly scuffled with riot police on Thursday, but no major violence was reported.

## Taiwan raises concerns about situation 'getting out of hand' with China drills

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

The increased frequency of China's military activities around Taiwan recently has raised the risk of events "getting out of hand" and sparking an accidental clash, the island's defence minister said. Taiwan has said that the past two weeks has seen dozens of fighters, drones, bombers and other aircraft, as well as warships and the Chinese carrier the Shandong, operating nearby. China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has in recent years carried out many such drills around the island, seeking to assert its sovereignty claims and pressure Taipei. Asked by reporters on the sidelines of parliament whether there was a risk of an accidental incident sparking a broader conflict given the frequency of the Chinese activities, Taiwan Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng said: "This is something we are very worried about." Warships from China's southern and eastern theatre commands have been operating together off Taiwan's east coast, he added.

"The risks of activities involving aircraft, ships, and weapons will increase, and both sides must pay attention," Chiu said. China has not commented about the drills around Taiwan, and its defence ministry has not re-

sponded to requests for comment. Chiu said that when the Shandong was out at sea, which Taiwan first reported on Sept. 11, it was operating as the "opposing force" in the drills. Ministry spokesman Sun Li-fang added that China's Eastern Theatre Command forces were the "attacking force", simulating a battle scenario. Taiwan's traditional military planning for a potential conflict has been to use its mountainous east coast, especially the two major air bases there, as a place to regroup and preserve its forces given it does not directly face China unlike the island's west coast. But China has increasingly been flexing its muscles off Taiwan's east coast, and generally displaying its ability to operate much further away from China's own coastline. China normally performs large-scale exercises from July to September, Taiwan's defence ministry has said. On Saturday the ministry said China had largely dialled back its drills, reporting that over the previous 24 hour period it had only spotted two Chinese aircraft operating in its air defence zone. Taiwan has frequently said that it would remain calm and not escalate the situation, but that it won't allow "repeated provocations" from China, whose forces have so far not entered Taiwan's territorial seas or airspace.

## Outrage grows over legal cases against Yunus

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

Outrage is growing as Muhammad Yunus, the chairman of Grameen Telecom, faces a barrage of court cases tied to employment-related violations in what rights organisations called harassment of the Nobel laureate by the Bangladesh government. A criminal case that alleges three breaches under the Labour Act has gathered speed and may lead to a jail sentence. Mr. Yunus and three other board members, Ashrafur Hassan, Nurjahan Begum and M Shahjahan, face the same charges. This is just one of more than 150 cases filed against Mr. Yunus after the ruling Awami League party came to power in 2008, according to Amnesty International.

Initiating criminal proceedings against Mr. Yunus and his colleagues for issues that belong to the civil and administrative arena is a "blatant abuse of labour laws and the justice system and a form of political retaliation for his work and dissent", Amnesty said in a statement on September 18. The case is "emblematic of the beleaguered state of human rights in Bangladesh, where the authorities have eroded freedoms and bulldozed critics into submission", said Agnès Callamard, secretary general of Amnesty International. "The abuse of laws and misuse of the justice system to settle vendettas is inconsistent and incompatible with international human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bangladesh is a state party," said Ms. Callamard. "It is time for the government to put an end to this travesty of justice."

In the case, a labour inspector from a government agency primarily alleges that employees of Grameen Telecom were not classified as permanent workers after the probationary period. Employees were not granted annual leave with pay or money against earned leave, according to the second allegation. And the accused failed to establish a worker welfare fund by depositing 5 percent of the company's net profit. The latest development prompted more than 170 global leaders, including Nobel laureates, to write an open letter to Bangladesh



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 28, demanding the immediate suspension of the current judicial proceedings against Mr. Yunus, followed by a review of the charges by a panel of impartial judges. "We are confident that any thorough review of the anti-corruption and labour law cases against him will result in his acquittal," they wrote. "We hope that you ensure the resolution of these legal issues in an expedient, impartial, and just manner while also ensuring a free, fair, and participatory national election in the coming months, and respect for all human rights," they added. The Bangladesh government reacted to this letter, saying an alternative process of reviewing the charges against Mr. Yunus and his "cohorts" is "incompatible with Bangladesh's established judicial system".

"This is not the first time that Dr. Muhammad Yunus and his aides have resorted to international lobbying in the face of legal consequences for their alleged or proven violation of law," the foreign ministry in Dhaka said in a statement on September 1. "The allegations of persecution or harassment seem to follow a pattern that stems from a victim mentality using human rights and democracy as an expedient cover," the ministry said. The government condemned what it said was a veiled threat "under the pretext of promoting democracy and human rights".

## U.S. talking to India about Canada murder, no 'special exemption' -Biden adviser

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

The U.S. is in touch with Indians at high levels after Ottawa said Indian government agents had links to the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in Canada, and Washington is giving India no "special exemption" in the matter, U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. The United States has been seeking to strengthen its relationship with India. President Joe Biden hosted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a state visit at the White House earlier this year. Asked whether U.S. concern over the incident could disrupt that process, Mr. Sullivan said the United States would stand up for its principles, regardless of what country is affected.

"It is a matter of concern for us. It is something we take seriously. It is something we will keep working on, and we will do that regardless of the country," Mr. Sullivan told reporters at the White House.

"There's not some special exemption you get for actions like this. Regardless of the country, we will stand up and defend our basic principles and we will also consult closely with allies like Canada as they pursue their law enforcement and diplomatic process." Canada said on Monday that it was "actively pursuing credible allegations" linking Indian government agents to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, outside a Sikh temple in June.

## Chroniclers of Uyghur life disappear in Xi's China

GNS News Agency, Sept 29

"There are so few of us left," Ilham Tohti reflected during a walk through the lush grounds of Beijing's Minzu University, which specialises in the study of China's ethnic minorities, during a conversation in 2013. Mr. Tohti, an Uyghur economist and intellectual from China's vast western Xinjiang region, had become among the few minority Uyghur scholars with a wide following in Xinjiang, where independent voices had been gradually stifled, particularly after Han-Uyghur riots in 2009. Mr. Tohti's university lectures and writings focused on ethnic relations, Xinjiang's economy and why, despite the region's energy riches, unemployment was rife among young Uyghurs amid an influx of Han residents. Only a few months after that conversation, Mr. Tohti's apartment that sits right outside the campus gate was raided, and he was taken away. He was put on trial and sentenced to life in prison in September 2014, charged with "separatism".

Over 300 Uyghur intellectuals jailed. According to rights groups, more than 300 leading Uyghur intellectuals have been jailed since Xi Jinping coming to power in 2013. Many were swept up in the extraordinary mass internment of Uyghurs between 2016 and 2018, when hundreds of thousands were sent to detention centres. The Chinese government initially denied the camps, but later claimed they were for "vocational training". The government has never explained why leading scholars, historians, writers and poets were also among those being "trained". Rahile Dawut sentenced to life

On Friday, the Dui Hua human rights foundation reported that Rahile Dawut, another prominent Uyghur intellectual, who like Mr. Tohti had become a rare independent chronicler of Uyghur society, had been sentenced to life in prison "for endangering state security". Ms. Dawut was detained in late 2017 and tried a year later. A renowned anthropologist who studied folk traditions in Xinjiang, she had founded the Ethnic Minorities Research Centre at Xinjiang University College of the Humanities in 2007. Like Mr. Tohti, as an academic at a prominent state-run university, she had worked with Communist



Party administrators through the early 2000s. In Ms. Dawut's case, she was even a Communist Party member and had worked on projects with the Ministry of Culture. For long, Beijing had, to some degree, valued as bridged to the Uyghur community independent voices like Mr. Tohti and Ms. Dawut, who had championed a Uyghur identity within the framework of China's ethnic autonomy laws – which were passed in the 1980s and remain, on paper, guarantors of ethnic rights even if their enforcement has often failed them. However, the shift under Mr. Xi has been so pronounced that even these voices have now been deemed as threats to the state. Friday's news of Ms. Dawut's sentence, observed James Millward, professor at Georgetown University who researches Xinjiang, had clearly rebuffed the Chinese government's "claim that its oppression in the Uyghur region is about terrorism, job creation or poverty."



## Growth momentum in CV industry to continue till next year, says Ashok Leyland MD Shenu Agarwal



GNS News Agency, Sept 29

The all-rounded growth momentum in the commercial vehicles industry is expected to continue till next year due to Centre's unprecedented focus on infrastructure development, said Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) Managing Director and CEO Shenu Agarwal. "The growth is expected to be all-rounded, whether it is buses, heavy duty trucks or light commercial vehicles (LCVs). The growth momentum should continue for at least this year and the next," he said during an interaction.

In line with the industry growth, ALL at the year beginning had estimated 8-10% growth in Medium and Heavy Commercial Vehicle (M&HCV) segment and 5-6% in LCV segment. "In the first five months of the year, M&HCV has grown at a good pace and we maintain our initial estimates for the whole fiscal. The LCV segment, mainly because of the high base last year, has still not caught up. But with the festive season on, we expect the LCV segment also to start growing," he said. While mentioning many of the government's initiatives such as Scrapage Policy, National Infrastructure pipeline, dedicated freight corridors, and multimodal logistics parks

were still in a nascent stage, he said the CV industry would benefit immensely when it starts making full impact.

According to him, the CV manufacturer has set long-term road map envisaging holistic growth in volumes, market share, product portfolio, and technology. "We are expanding and establishing our presence across the country through various touchpoints. To expand our market presence further, we are also evaluating entry in the sub-2.0 tonnes segment targeting 35% of the Indian LCV market, where we are absent right now. Our primary focus remains on profitability – with a clear target to get into double digit EBITDA this year and up to mid-teens in the medium term," he said. Regarding their recent announcement to set up an e-bus facility by investing up to ₹1,000 crore to invest there, he said: "The UP Government is willing to provide us all the necessary support under its Investment Policy framework in setting up this plant, as well as facilitate enough demand of electric and other vehicles for this plant to be viable from the very beginning." In the initial phase, ALL plans to predominantly produce e-buses with 2,500 units per annum encompassing bus chassis assembly and bus body building. It intends to commence production in 18 months from the date of acquisition of land. Besides, the plant will be designed in a way to provide flexibility to assemble vehicles powered by currently available fuels as well as emerging alternative fuels.

Mr. Agarwal said that ALL has been focusing a lot on alternate fuel technologies such as EVs, CNG, LNG, hydrogen-powered internal combustion engines, hydrogen fuel cells, synthetic fuels, methanol, and a higher ethanol blend. Asserting that Tamil Nadu continues to be the cornerstone of ALL's growth and development story, he said "all these vehicles shall be produced in our plants in Tamil Nadu."

## Demand for cement to rise 10-12% this fiscal, says Crisil

Demand for cement is expected to rise 10-12% year on year to 440 million tonnes (MT) in FY24 due to strong off-take from the infrastructure sector, rating agency Crisil said in a report. According to the report, the profitability of cement companies will recover from a multi-year low due to falling energy costs. "Combined with stable cement prices and softening power and fuel costs, operating profit of manufacturers is expected to recover by ₹200 per tonne from a multi-year low of ₹770 per tonne last fiscal," Crisil said.

"This demand growth and margin rebound will spur cash accrual and keep credit profiles stable. A Crisil Ratings analysis of 21 cement makers, accounting for 90% of domestic sales volume, shows as much," it added. According to the rating agency, government spending on infrastructure development, which accounts for 30% of annual cement sales, will drive demand. The housing segment, which accounts for 55% of cement demand, is expected to see steady growth owing to healthy traction in rural housing and urban real estate execution, Crisil said. Continued government focus on affordable housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana will also support demand, Crisil added. "Our channel checks indicate cement demand growth was 13-15% in the first half of this fiscal, driven by a strong first quarter and a healthy second quarter, despite some seasonal weakness due to monsoon," Crisil further said. Koustav Mazumdar, Associate Director- Research, CRISIL Market Intelligence



and Analytics said, "Demand growth may moderate to 7-9% in the second half of this fiscal given the high base and as the Central Government capital expenditure could witness some slowdown with the general elections approaching."

"The delayed and uneven monsoon could cause some pullback in rural housing demand. Constrained availability of labour during the third quarter, as five states go into elections, will also play a role. However, a strong first half will support a robust double-digit growth this fiscal," he said. Rising cement demand will aid revenue growth this fiscal as pan-India cement prices, which dipped 2.5% during April-August 2023, have seen a pullback recently, the rating agency said.

## Does platelet-rich plasma therapy, popular for hair growth, help with hearing loss? Experts weigh in



After hearing was claimed to have been restored with the help of PRP or platelet-rich plasma treatment in a 25-year-old dental surgeon in Pune, we wanted to understand how the treatment, becoming extremely popular for hair growth and youthful skin, is connected to the restoration of hearing loss. In the aforementioned case, the patient was suffering from sensorineural hearing loss from the age of five and her hearing capacity gradually reduced over the years. She managed in school and college with only her left ear. According to her doctor Dr Chandra Veer Singh, consultant otorhinolaryngologist, and head and neck onco surgeon, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai, BERA (Brain Evoked Response Auditory) and PTA (Pure Tone Average) tests were done to confirm the sensory neural hearing loss of the right ear, that is 120 decibels sensorineural hearing loss (SSHL) — manifesting as a swift and significant decline in auditory perception — predominantly affecting one ear.

"Injection of PRP was given on an OPD basis. After 1st PRP injection, her hearing is improved by 30 decibels and she can hear up to 90 decibels. She doesn't want any visible device for her right ear. So, injection PRP was appropriate for her. The hearing will keep improving due to the regeneration of hair cells. The USP of this case is a permanent and long-lasting hearing improvement," Dr Singh said in a statement. Learning from the case, here's what we found.

What is PRP?

In platelet-rich plasma or (PRP) treatment, blood is extracted from the same patient requiring treatment and is centrifuged to separate plasma from whole blood. Plasma is the liquid portion of the whole blood made of water and proteins and platelets are a type of cell known as thrombocytes. PRP is composed of two components: plasma, which is the fluid part of blood, and platelets, a specific type of blood cell that has a significant impact on the body's healing process. "Platelets have alpha and dense granules which contain growth factors that help in nerve regeneration and reduce inflammation," said Dr Anish Gupta, lead ENT consultant, C K Birla Hospital, Gurgaon. The platelets once separated are used in the therapy for various conditions. This is also known as autologous plasma, mentioned Dr Sampath Chandra Prasad Rao, consultant – ENT and skull base surgery, Manipal Hospital, Old Airport Road, Bengaluru.

Can PRP treatment help with hearing loss?

Dr Rao said that it has many roles in medicine from the treatment of hair loss, and acne, to hearing loss. Asserting that research towards effective treatment options for hearing loss has been in progress, Dr Rao said that the treatment options vary depending on the type of hearing loss and the disease. "PRP has been used in some of them recently with good response. PRP treatment can help with hearing loss as has been proven through many studies. It has been used for both conductive hearing loss and also for sensorineural hearing loss," said Dr Rao. PRP has shown promising results in the treatment of certain types of hearing loss. Specifically, it has been found to be effective in cases where hearing loss is a result of damage to the hair cells within the inner ear. "Hair cell damage can occur due to ageing, exposure to

loud noise, or as a side effect of certain medications. PRP works by using a concentrated dose of platelets derived from the patient's own blood and injecting it into the inner ear to stimulate cell regeneration," noted Dr Singh.

How does this particular type of PRP work?

Experts suggest that it can be used in both conductive hearing loss and sensorineural hearing loss. "In conductive hearing loss, we are talking about hearing loss which is caused due to a perforation (tear/damage) to the tympanic membrane/eardrum. When surgery is done to repair the eardrum along with it, PRP can be used to obtain better healing response or in case of very small perforations this alone has been known to help," said Dr Rao. Similarly, in patients with hearing loss due to damage to the nerves known as sensorineural hearing loss, injection of PRP into the middle ear (intratympanic) has been known to have improvement. "It cannot be used in all individuals with hearing loss, as the disease conditions causing the hearing loss are varied. Another factor is the severity of the hearing loss. PRP though is seen to help in some individuals and is a promising treatment option in certain conditions, it can be used for all," said Dr Rao.

What makes PRP particularly 'exciting and promising'?

Dr Singh told indianexpress.com that by utilising platelets and growth factors contained within our own blood, this procedure avoids synthetic substances or foreign materials often used in traditional treatments. "This not only reduces the risk of complications but also stimulates cell proliferation at an accelerated rate. The regenerative potential of PRP holds great promise for those seeking a non-invasive solution to their hearing impairment," said Dr Singh. According to experts, it is its potential as a "non-invasive alternative to traditional treatment options like hearing aids or cochlear implants". "While these devices are effective for many people with hearing loss, they do not address the underlying cause and may only provide partial relief. This innovative approach offers hope for those with sensorineural hearing loss who have not responded well to other treatments," said Dr Singh.

Is it for all kinds of hearing-impaired patients?

The treating doctor will be able to tell if one is eligible for the treatment. "One has to follow instructions given by the treating doctor only," urged Dr Singh, adding that it is important to note that PRP may not work for all types of hearing loss. "It is most effective in cases where there is still some residual function of the inner ear and where there has not been irreversible damage done," elaborated Dr Singh.

How is it better than conventional hearing loss treatment methods?

While conventional treatments such as hearing aids provide temporary relief by amplifying sound levels, Dr Singh said that PRP therapy offers a more transformative approach by targeting underlying issues at a cellular level. "By jumpstarting tissue repair and promoting vasculogenesis which is the formation of new blood vessels, PRP injections help combat neurodegenerative conditions that contribute to diminished auditory function," said Dr Singh.

Risk factors?

According to Dr Gupta, as PRP is autologous that is extracted from the same patient, there is no side effect. "PRP's pH is less than blood so it inhibits bacterial growth as well. The patient may feel slight dizziness for a brief duration after the injection," elaborated Dr Gupta.

Cost Dr Gupta noted that the cost of one injection is around 12 to 15k and a set of three injections are given once a week and the course is completed in three weeks.

## Bengaluru to host World Coffee Conference for first time



Bengaluru is all set to host the 5th World Coffee Conference (WCC), a property of the London-based International Coffee Organisation (ICO), set up under the auspices of the United Nations to highlight the economic importance of coffee grown around the globe.

It is for the first time that India and Asia are hosting this prestigious global coffee event and Coffee Board is currently in the last leg of preparation to host the four-day coffee exposition that is commencing in the City on September 25.

Vibrant eco-system K.G. Jagadeesha, Coffee Board CEO and Secretary, told The Hindu that India receiving the ICO nod to host this mega coffee event itself was the biggest recognition the country received as a major producer of finest coffees with a supportive and vibrant ecosystem. "To make it unique, vibrant and memorable, the board has the active support of 16 coffee committees with each outfit coming with 25 different stakeholders," he said.

However, he observed, even though the country produced the best quality coffees, Indian coffees are yet to be perceived well and this edition of WCC was going to correct this mismatch.

Perception battle "Our robusta, with its undisputed quality, is the best and finest in the world. Our arabica, although considered as second best in the world, fetches a premium on par with Columbian arabica which is rated the finest in the world. What eventually matters is the perception. Columbia has done huge consumer campaigns," he further said. Our coffee exports are currently over \$1 billion. As an immediate incremental effect of the WCC, the Coffee Board is expecting an increase in exports volume and value growth of 10 to 15% for our coffees in the international markets, he anticipated. This will eventually help India build a stand-alone coffee brand in global markets, Dr. Jagadeesha added.

The WCC exposition is expected to boost India's domestic coffee market as well in terms of receiving more focus on technology, investments, entrepreneurship, employment generation and creation of coffee varieties to offer customers a wide range of choice.

Expected to be big draw Some 2,400 people, including coffee growers, roasters, curers, exporters, traders, cafe chain owners, retailers, have already registered to attend WCC. This will comprise over 300 foreign delegates from 60 countries. Some 40 global CEOs and 50 Indian CEOs are participating in the coffee conference. In addition to this, Coffee Board has already distributed 36,000 business delegates while another 15,000 similar passes will also be distributed/sold. The government has permitted Coffee Board to use ₹12.5 crore plus GST from its internal budget to host WCC, while half of the money will be spent by the industry players.

## CCMB ropes in AWS to speed up genomics research in India

The Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), a research organisation focused on modern molecular biology and population-scale genomics, has chosen AWS as its preferred cloud provider to accelerate its genomics research projects. With AWS, CCMB would be able to reduce time taken for genomics analysis by up to 98%, accelerating research efforts on the study of genetics and human diseases, said the cloud provider on Friday. Life sciences and genomics research organisations need to access, store, and analyse large amounts of data, generated from next generation high-throughput sequencers. Previously, these organisations have relied on on-premises servers to meet their storage and compute needs. The data-intensive nature of genomics research meant that CCMB had to procure more on-premises storage frequently to manage petabyte scale datasets, and store the raw data and the resultant output files generated from secondary and tertiary analysis. According to AWS, CCMB was also relying on on-premises high-performance computing (HPC) clusters to perform this analysis, which was prone to downtime, impacting research timelines and output.

## Biswanath Ghat in Assam named 'Best Tourism Village of India 2023'; all you need to know



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday announced that Biswanath Ghat has been selected as the Best Tourism Village of India 2023 by the Ministry of Tourism. "Happy to share that Biswanath Ghat has been selected as the Best Tourism Village of India 2023 by the Ministry of Tourism," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Sarma added, "Selected from amongst 791 applications from 31 States and UTs, Biswanath Ghat's selection reflects the huge efforts that our Govt has taken in promoting rural tourism in Assam."

Located on the banks of the Brahmaputra River, Biswanath Ghat is also popularly known as 'Gupta Kashi' and is named after the ancient Biswanath Mandir. The village is located towards the south of Biswanath Chariali Town. Happy to share that Biswanath Ghat has been selected as the Best Tourism Village of India 2023 by the Ministry of Tourism. The ghat boasts a cluster of temples of different gods. Additionally, a Shiva temple was also situated at the confluence of Bridhaganga (Burigongga) River with the Brahmaputra. But now what is left of it are just some ruins. During summer, this temple remains underwater. It is only during winter that tourists throng the spot and worship by constructing a temporary shed.

Though it is a religious place, Biswanath Ghat makes for a perfect tourist destination during the winter. According to the official website, the best time to visit is from the months of October to April. Tourists avoid the monsoon season because of the torrential, unpredictable downpours that can mar your day. The winter season is comfortable with temperatures ranging from 12 degrees Celsius to 25 degrees Celsius. Some of the places of interest for tourists in Biswanath Town include Biswanath Temple, Nagsankar Temple, Maa Kalyani Mandir, Green Ashiyana Island Resort, Nomara Picnic Place, Monabarie Tea Es-

tate, and of course, Biswanath Ghat. Tourists can also visit an island nearby called the island of Umamuni. It houses a tourist lodge and some remnants of an old temple. On the opposite bank of the Brahmaputra lies the Kaziranga National Park and one can also see the hills of Karbi Anglong in the far distance.

### Gmail to add 'Select all' button on Android to easily clear inbox



New Delhi: Google is adding a useful "Select all" button to Gmail on Android, allowing users to clean up their inbox more easily and quickly. According to 9to5Google, Gmail for Android will start showing a "Select all" button when users start selecting multiple emails at once. This feature has been available on Gmail's web app for quite some time, but has never been available on mobile devices. While the name suggests that this will select every email in your inbox, it is actually limited to 50 — the same as the web version, making it slightly less useful, but it's still a useful feature, the report said. According to the report, the feature is rolling out as a server-side change, meaning users won't see it till it's there. Meanwhile, Google has brought its AI-powered coding assistant called Studio Bot to India, along with other countries. It first rolled out Studio Bot to Android developers in the US in May this year. "Studio Bot is available in more than 170 countries and territories, with support for the English language," the company said in an update. Studio Bot helps developers build apps by generating code, fixing errors, and answering questions about Android.



## FinMin notifies Oct 1 date for implementing amended GST law for e-gaming

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) The Finance Ministry has notified October 1 as the date for implementation of the amended GST law provisions for taxing e-gaming, casinos and horse racing.

According to the changes to the Central GST Act, these supplies will henceforth be treated as "actionable claims" similar to lottery, betting and gambling and subject to 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on full face value of bets. The amendments to Integrated GST (IGST) Act makes it mandatory for off-shore online gaming platforms to take registration in India and pay taxes in accordance with domestic law.

In its meetings in July and August, the GST Council, comprising finance ministers of Centre and states,



had approved amendments to the law to include online gaming, casinos and horse racing as taxable actionable claims, and clarified that such supplies would attract 28 per cent tax on full bet value.

Parliament last month passed amendments to the

Central GST and Integrated GST laws to give effect to the Council's decision.

The Finance Ministry has now notified that October 1 will be the appointed date for implementation of these provisions.

The GST Council in its meeting in August had de-

ecided that the amended provision to classify these supplies as actionable claims and clarifying the taxation provisions would come into effect from October 1.

A review of the implementation was proposed to be carried out after six months, which is April 2024.

## Govt increases windfall tax on petroleum crude, cuts levy on diesel, ATF

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) The Indian government increased windfall tax on petroleum crude, while reduced it on aviation turbine fuel and diesel, according to a government notification on Friday. The windfall tax on petroleum crude will be raised to 12,100 rupees (\$145.65) per ton from 10,000 rupees (\$120.37), effective Sept. 30. The levy has been cut on aviation turbine fuel to 2.50 rupees per litre from 3.50 rupees per litre, while on diesel to 5 rupees per litre from 5.50 rupees.

On Sept. 16, the government had raised the windfall tax on petroleum crude to



10,000 rupees per ton from 6,700 rupees.

India imposed the windfall tax on crude oil produc-

ers in July last year and extended the levy on exports of gasoline, diesel and aviation fuel after private refin-

ers wanted to make gains from robust refining margins in overseas markets, instead of selling at home.

## Weight loss drugs like Ozempic, Wegovy would reduce airlines' costs

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) Airlines and planemakers obsess about reducing jet-fuel consumption by constantly finding new ways to reduce aircraft weight. They may have new allies in Ozempic and other similar slimming medications.

United Airlines Holdings Inc. would save \$80 million a year if the average passenger weight falls by 10 pounds, Sheila Kahyaoglu, a Jefferies Financial analyst, estimated in a report Friday. Her work was part of a broader Jefferies analysis of public enthusiasm for the drug and potential beneficiaries of its use.

There could be a more than \$100 billion global market for such medicines, with sales climbing quickly through the end of the decade, the review concluded. Ozempic is made by Novo Nordisk A/S.

Weight is a major concern for airlines because the more a plane weighs, the more fuel it burns.

Fuel and labor are the two largest expenses for carriers, with fuel accounting for about 25%. Over the years airlines have used a variety of methods to reduce pounds on flights, like removing magazines and switching to lower-weight dishes, utensils and beverage carts.

If the average passenger lost 10 pounds, this would trim 1,790 pounds from every United flight, implying a savings of 27.6 million gallons a year, the analyst estimated. At an average 2023 fuel price of \$2.89 a gallon, United would save \$80 million a year. That equates to 20 cents of earnings per share, or 2% of Jefferies's



full-year earnings estimate of \$9.50 a share, she said.

"This benefit should be recognized similarly across airlines," Kahyaoglu wrote.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says one in three adults and one in five children are obese, or have a body mass index of 30 or higher for adults. And the share of the worldwide population considered overweight is expected to reach 41.5% this year, from 36.4% in 2013, according to the Jefferies report.

Other industries seen benefiting from the growth of weight-loss drugs include pharmaceuticals, apparel — particularly athletic clothing — and cosmetics, the Jefferies report said. A negative effect could hit restaurants and some food and beverage producers if consumers shift to healthier eating or stop buying some products. The high cost of the drugs could lower spending for things like furniture or travel, it said.

Jet fuel prices in New York harbor have climbed

39%, or 89 cents a gallon, over the past three months, reaching \$3.19 Friday. Every 10 cent increase per gallon in jet fuel costs the airlines

\$2 billion annually, according to 2023 estimates from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics and Airlines for America.

## India's relations with Russia 'steady', says Jaishankar

Washington, Sep 30 (GNS) India's relations with Russia may not be "spectacular" but the two countries have a "steady" relationship, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday while predicting that Moscow will focus more on Asia as its ties with the West have "broken up".

Jaishankar said this in response to a question during his appearance at the prestigious Hudson Institute think-tank when asked about India's relations with Russia amidst the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Asserting that every major international relationship in the last 70 years has seen great volatility, the minister pointed out that the relationship between New Delhi and Moscow has largely been stable.

"India, Russia are very exceptional. It's been very

steady. It may not be spectacular. So, it may have stabilised at a certain level," he said.

Commenting on Russia's ties with the world due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, Jaishankar said, "I think as a consequence of what is going on in Ukraine, it seems to be clear that in many ways Russia's relationship with the West has broken up and in that case, it's logical that Russia focuses more on the Asian side of Russia, though historically Russia has always seen itself as a European power.

"I would predict Russia, which would consciously focus on the non-western world, away from Europe, away from the United States, and look much more at Asia, possibly at other regions as well, but Asia is economically the most active," he added.

## Canada's allegations raised during meeting with Jaishankar: Blinken

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated United States' stand urging India to cooperate in the investigation regarding Canadian allegations, adding that the issue was also raised during his meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday.

Stating that the US is "very concerned" about the allegations, Blinken said those responsible behind the incident need to be "held accountable".

Addressing a press briefing on Friday, Antony Blinken said, "As I said before and other colleagues have said before, we are very concerned about the allegations that have been raised by Canada by Prime Minister Trudeau. We have been in close contact with Canada about that". The US Secretary of State affirmed hope that India and Canada should "work together" to resolve the matter. "And at the same time, we have engaged with the Indian government and urged them to work with Canada on investigation

and I had the opportunity to do so again in my meeting yesterday with Foreign Minister Jaishankar and those responsible need to be held accountable. And we hope that our friends in both Canada and India will work together to resolve this matter," Blinken added.

Early last week, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a statement alleging the Indian government of being involved in the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

However, India has outrightly rejected the claims,



calling it 'absurd' and 'motivated'. Notably, the US Secretary of State had also made similar remarks before. Last week, Blinken had said that Washington is "deeply concerned" about the allegations made by the Canadian PM about the Indian government's involvement in the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, adding that the US wants to see accountability and called it "important" that the investigation runs its course and leads to the result.

Notably, Canada has yet

to provide any public evidence to support the claim about the slaying of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

India has suspended its visa services in Canada, following Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's allegations of Indian involvement in the killing.

Amid strained ties, India issued an advisory for its citizens and those who are travelling to Canada to exercise "utmost caution in view of growing anti-India activities and politically-condoned hate crimes and criminal violence" in the country.

## MCX slips 9% as Sebi stops launch of new commodity derivative platform

New Delhi, Sep 30 (GNS) Shares of the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) slipped 9 per cent to Rs 1,914.60 on the BSE in Friday's intraday trade on profit booking after markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) asked the company to put on hold the proposed plan to launch its new commodity derivatives platform (CDP) planned for next week.

The stock had hit a 52-week high of Rs 2,119.60 on Thursday, surging 10 per cent intraday, after MCX announced that the Exchange will go live with the new CDP with effect from Tuesday, October 03, 2023.

It was quoting close to its record high level of Rs 2,134.90, touched on October 14, 2021. That said, despite today's fall, the market price of MCX has outperformed the market in the past one month by surging 20 per cent against 0.95 per cent gain in the S&P BSE Sensex.

In the past one year, the stock has zoomed 63 per cent as compared to 16 per cent rally in the benchmark index. In an exchange filing, MCX announced today that Sebi has, vide email dated September 28, 2023, forwarded a copy of the letter



dated September 27, 2023 from Chennai Financial Markets and Accountability (CFMA) regarding CDP. It may be noted that writ petitions filed by CFMA on CDP is pending before the Madras High Court for disposal.

"The Regulator has informed that since the matter involves technical issues, the same would be discussed in the Sebi Technical Advisory Committee meeting, which would be held shortly," MCX said.

Thus, Sebi has advised the Exchange to keep the proposed Go-Live of CDP in abeyance. As the Exchange is ready and keen to go-live as soon as permitted, the Exchange will continue to conduct CDP mock tests till

further directions in the matter from Sebi (are received), MCX said. READ HERE

Meanwhile, analysts at HDFC Securities maintain 'buy' rating on MCX with a target price of Rs 2,400 per share. "MCX has witnessed impressive growth in options volume but uncertainty around the technology shift has been the key overhang. The commodity exchange, in a press release, has indicated that the technology shift is underway and might happen three months ahead of the deadline. In the last seven days, MCX has conducted mock trading sessions for 14 hours without any glitches," the brokerage firm said in a stock update.

The brokerage believes

that post the technology transition, investor focus will shift to product launches, volume growth, and improving profitability. Options notional avenge daily trading volume (ADTV) has increased ~3x YoY and is currently more than Rs 1 trillion (~5x of futures). Options growth is driven by a surge in active unique client codes (UCCs) (+126% YoY), and higher activity in crude/natural gas contracts.

The launch of new products like index and mini/weekly options will further boost volumes. The options premium-to-notional ratio will decline gradually but the premium volume will register ~47 per cent CAGR over FY23-26E, it added.

## India's relations with Russia 'steady', says Jaishankar

He added that a "re-invention" of Russia is happening as a consequence of what is happening in Ukraine.

Turning to Indo-US relations, Jaishankar said that there is a powerful case for the two countries to work together.

"At the biggest picture level, I would say there's a very powerful case, really for India and the US to work together. So, if you look even within our systems, historically, it was actually our national security side that had the greatest suspicion of reservations about each other. Today it is the national security side, that is the most enthusiastic about greater bilateral cooperation," he said.

Responding to a question on alleged discrimination against minorities in India and criticism from some

American politicians, Jaishankar said, "I know many of them have strong views, often electorally-driven, sometimes culturally driven. All of that so I'm a little hesitant to address specific examples. So, as broad propositions, all I can say where India is concerned is that the underlying culture of India is deeply pluralistic."

"In every society in the world, at some point, there's been some discrimination on some basis. So, if you look at India today, it's a society today where there's a tremendous change taking place," the minister said.

The biggest change happening today in India is the creation of a social welfare system in a society that has less than USD 3,000 per capita income. Nobody's done that in the world before, he said.

"Now when you look at



the benefits of that, look at housing, look at health, look at food, look at finance, educational access, and health access. I defy you to show me discrimination," Jaishankar said.

Jaishankar is currently on a five-day official trip to Washington DC.

He met US Secretary of State Antony Blinken State Department on Thursday,

which was the highest-level interaction between the two countries after the recent G-20 Summit in New Delhi when President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met.

Jaishankar arrived here from New York on Wednesday after addressing the 78th General Assembly session of the United Nations on Tuesday.



# India ready to look into information related to Canada's allegations on Nijjar's killing: Jaishankar

Washington, Sep 30 (GNS) The governments of India and Canada will have to talk to each other and see how they resolve their differences over the death of a Khalistani separatist, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said, asserting that the larger issue of "permissiveness" must be flagged and addressed.

During an interaction with Indian journalists here on Friday, he said India was ready to look into the information related to Canada's allegations of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on June 18 in British Columbia.

"The issue is as follows, which is that the Canadians have made some allegations. We have pointed out to them that this is not the government of India's policy, but if they are prepared to share with us specifics and anything relevant, we are also open to looking at it. So in that sense, that's where the matter stands," Jaishankar said.

"But what we do not want to see is an incident treated in isolation because then that somewhere does not convey the right picture," he said.

Jaishankar said India has had an ongoing problem with Canada and its government for some years now, and the problem really revolves around the "permissiveness in regard to terrorism, extremism and ballots," he said.

"This permissiveness is also reflected in the fact that some important extradition requests have not been responded to from their side in the fact that there are individuals and organisations who are clearly involved with violence and illegal activities in India who themselves declared it. I mean it is not a secret and that they continue to carry on with their activities in Canada," he said.

Jaishankar said one of the problems is no incident is isolated and the totality as there is a context for everything.

"There are multiple problems out there. So, I guess in the case of individual incidents, the concerned governments will have to talk to each other and see how they sort of take it forward," he said.

"But there is a larger issue. And I think it's important that the larger issue should be flagged. The larger issue is this permissiveness that I have spoken about," he said.



He said he discussed the ongoing diplomatic row between India and Canada with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.

"Most important, the fact that our diplomatic missions and our diplomatic personnel have been consistently and continuously intimidated in Canada to a point where today it is not safe for them really to carry on with their work. Obviously, the fact that we've had to temporarily suspend our visa operations, it's not something we would've liked to do. It is just that they made it very difficult for us to operate those services," Jaishankar said.

Earlier in the day, Blinken told reporters he hoped that this issue would be resolved by Canada and India.

Tensions flared between India and Canada following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's explosive allegations of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar on his country's soil.

India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020.

India angrily rejected the allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.

"We are very concerned about the allegations that have been raised by Canada, by Prime Minister Trudeau. We have been in close contact with Canada about that. At the same time, we have engaged with the Indian government and urged them to work with Canada on an investigation, and I had the opportunity to do so again in my meeting yesterday with Foreign Minister Jaishankar," Blinken said.

"Those responsible need to be held accountable, and we hope that our friends in both Canada and India will work together to resolve this

matter," he said.

When asked if there is a deadlock between India and Canada on resolving the issue, Jaishankar said: "I don't know if I would use the term deadlock."

He said India's point is that there is today a climate of violence and an atmosphere of intimidation.

"Just think about it. We've had smoke bombs thrown at the mission. We've had our consulates, violence in front of them. Individuals have been targeted and intimidated. There are posters put up about people," he said.

"So tell me, do you consider this normal? Would, I mean for a moment, okay, this is about us. If this had happened to any other country, how would they react to it? I think it's a reasonable question to ask. Let's not normalise what is happening in Canada. What is happening in Canada, had it happened anywhere else, do you think the world would've taken it with equanimity?" he asked.

Jaishankar said it is necessary to call out what is happening in Canada. He said a lot of Americans are astonished if they are told what most Indians know that there are people in Canada who are advocating violence and separatism. "I suspect very few Americans notice. So in a way, a lot of what I said at the meetings I think was new to the Americans. When Americans look at Canada, they see something. When

we in India, look at Canada, we see something else. And that's part of the problem. So it's also important that we talk it out with the Americans. After all, they are very close to Canada. They are good friends of ours," he said.

"So it's important that they also have an accurate picture, that they have our point of view on this matter as well. I'm not pre-judging issues. I'm not taking absolutist positions. What we have taken is a very reasonable stance," he added.

Jaishankar said the entire debate should not focus only on issue one and not on issue two and the bigger picture, which has been going on for some time and which is a very serious picture.

"After all, I was thinking back when was the last time that any of our missions was intimidated to a point where it could not continue with its normal function? I will really have to think back. And if someone says this could happen in a G-7 country, in a commonwealth country, it gives you a lot to think about," Jaishankar said.

The former Congress national president will join one of the seven ongoing Jan Akrosh Yatras of the party across the state and address the Jan Akrosh Rally in Polaykalan village falling under Kalapipal assembly constituency of west Madhya Pradesh's Shajapur district.

Earlier, on June 12, Priyanka had addressed Congress' rally in Jabalpur and just a few weeks later addressed another rally in Gwalior. She is scheduled to address another rally in the tribal-dominated Mohankheda area of west MP's Dhar district on October 5.

Rahul Gandhi will return on Saturday to the west MP region bordering Rajasthan, nine months after his Kanyakumari-Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra entered

the state in December 2022 through the same part of the BJP-ruled MP.

Importantly, the Kalapipal seat of Shajapur district was won by Congress' young candidate Kunal Chaudhary in 2018. Two out of the three assembly seats of Shajapur district are currently held by the Congress.

Through Saturday's Jan Akrosh Rally, the Congress aims at boosting its cadres on 20-25 seats of western MP (Malwa region, particularly the Ujjain division) and neighbouring central MP.

With the rally being held under the Ujjain division of west MP, senior Congress leaders, including Rahul, Priyanka and the party's general secretary in-charge

## Madhya Pradesh Minister Yashodhara Scindia opts out of Assembly polls citing health concerns



Bhopal, Sep 30 (GNS) In a significant development ahead of Madhya Pradesh's upcoming assembly polls, state cabinet minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia, who is also the aunt of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, has informed the BJP that she will not contest the elections due to her ill health. Yashodhara, a four-time MLA from Shivpuri and former MP from Gwalior, currently serves as the sports and youth welfare minister. Citing health concerns due to her four past battles with COVID-19, she informed her decision in a letter to the state party leadership.

State BJP President VD Sharma confirmed this decision during a press conference in Bhopal, acknowledging Yashodhara's seniority and respect within the party. This move has opened doors for the Congress to strengthen its position in the Shivpuri assembly seat, which they last won in 1985.

## After Priyanka, Rahul to hit Madhya Pradesh poll campaign trail on Saturday

Bhopal, Sep 30 (GNS) More than three months after his party's national general secretary sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra launched the grand old party's assembly poll campaign, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi will address his first election rally in the poll-bound Madhya Pradesh on Saturday.

Earlier, on June 12, Priyanka had addressed Congress' rally in Jabalpur and just a few weeks later addressed another rally in Gwalior. She is scheduled to address another rally in the tribal-dominated Mohankheda area of west MP's Dhar district on October 5.

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the state in December 2022 through the same part of the BJP-ruled MP.

## Hyderabad: Basheer 'Chacha' detained for waving Pakistan flag at RGIA

Hyderabad, Sep 30 (GNS) Renowned Pakistan cricket fan, Basheer 'Chacha' (uncle), was detained for questioning after he waved the country's national flag during the arrival of the Pakistan cricket team members at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

A septuagenarian, Basheer holds US citizenship and follows the Men in Green in international matches across the globe.

With the Pakistan team scheduled to arrive at the airport, he too came to the city before the team's first warmup match ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup.

Pakistan team members

Shivpuri assembly seat, which they last won in 1985. Former BJP MLA Virendra Raghuvanshi, who recently returned to the Congress after winning the Kolaras seat in Shivpuri in 2018, is a leading contender for the Congress ticket in Shivpuri.

Speculation surrounds the possibility of Jyotiraditya Scindia, Yashodhara's nephew, making his Vidhan Sabha polls debut from her Shivpuri seat or other seats like Bamori or Kolaras in his former Lok Sabha constituency, Guna. However, sources close to the Union minister suggest he is not keen on the assembly polls but will comply with the party's decision if selected.

In BJP circles, there is also speculation about Yashodhara's potential participation in the 2024 general elections from the Gwalior Lok Sabha seat, which she

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## UP: Teen strangled to death after dispute over transaction of Rs 30 escalated in Baghpat

Baghpat, Sep 30 (GNS) A 17-year-old was allegedly strangled to death in a village here after a dispute over Rs 30 with three men escalated, police said on Saturday.

The class 11 student was allegedly killed by the accused on Friday night in Baraut Police Station area, they said.

The deceased was identified as Hrithik, a student of KHR Inter College in the village, police said.

Baraut Station House Officer (SHO) Devesh Kumar Singh told PTI that preliminary investigation into the alleged murder revealed a dispute over Rs 30.

According to the com-

plaint filed by family members, Hrithik had a dispute with three men of the same village regarding a transaction of Rs 30 and the dispute escalated to a point where the accused strangled Hrithik to death.

The incident happened around 9 pm on Friday, police said. The SHO said that family members have said that all three accused knew Hrithik and added that there were no injury marks on his body.

Police said the body has been sent for a post-mortem examination.

An FIR has been registered in the matter and further investigation is underway, they said.

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**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given in terms of paragraph 93 of the Master Direction- Non-Banking Financial Company - Housing Finance Company (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2021, that the branch office of the Company located at **INDOSTAR HOME FINANCE PVT LTD., Shelter No: 306+307, 3rd Floor, KKC Complex, Main Road Ward No: 14, Beside LIC office, Opp: Railway Station, Chirala (M) Prakasam - Dist, Andhra Pradesh - 523155** will be closed with effect from close of business hours of 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2023. In case any assistance is required, you may contact the nearest branch office as mentioned above or send an email to [connect@indostarhfc.com](mailto:connect@indostarhfc.com). This notice may be accessed on the Company's website ([www.indostarhfc.com](http://www.indostarhfc.com)).

For IndoStar Home Finance Private Limited  
 Sd/-  
 Nidhi Sadani  
 Company Secretary

Date: 30-09-2023