

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI MONDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2024



NATION | 3

Concerted effort in last 10 years to erode democratic institutions, says Cong prez

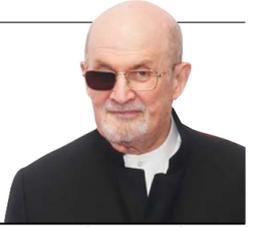


WORLD | 6

56% of Americans back Trump's proposed tariff plans for Chinese imports

DELHI AGE | 10

Knife, Rushdie's memoir about stabbing, nominated for National Book Award



www.asianage.com

RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 31 No. 212 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00



Actress Sophea Pennington attends the world premiere of *The Deb* during the Toronto International Film Festival in Canada on Saturday. — AFP

Poonch firefight ends; fresh one erupts in Kathua

Jammu: A fresh encounter broke out between terrorists and police on Sunday in a forest area in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, while an overnight gunfight in Poonch district ended with one terrorist believed to have suffered injuries. A police search party came under fire from terrorists at remote Nuknali Nalla in Bani area of Kathua district late this afternoon. The officials said the police party returned the fire and an exchange of fire was going on between the two sides when last reports were received. Reinforcements have been rushed to plug escape routes and help neutralise the terrorists. **Full report on Page 4**

Anil Vij throws hat in ring as Haryana CM

New Delhi: Throwing his hat into the ring for the top post in the poll-bound Haryana, veteran BJP leader Anil Vij said that he would stake claim for the chief minister's post if the party returns to power, declaring himself the "best chief minister candidate in the BJP". **Full report on Page 3**

Shah to address 3 poll rallies in J&K today

Jammu: Union home minister Amit Shah will address three rallies in Chenab valley on Monday, the last day of campaigning for the first phase of J&K Assembly polls. Earlier during his two-day visit to Jammu, he released the BJP's manifesto for the Assembly elections. **Full report on Page 3**

COUNTERPOINT



Bail can come later... first I need a bat to kill mosquitoes!

WEATHER

Max: 34°C
Min: 24°C
RH: 67%
Rain: NIL

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrpada Shukla Trayodasi till 3.06 pm
Star: Dhanishta till 4.28 pm
Variyam: 10.53 pm to 12.18 am
Durmuhurtam: 12.35 pm to 1.24 pm; 3 pm to 3.49 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.07 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.03 PM
MOONSET TODAY 3.46 AM

Will ask the people if I am 'honest or guilty' ■ BJP calls it a 'PR stunt'
Kejriwal springs a surprise, says he'll step down as Delhi CM in next 48 hrs

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Turning the tables on his political rivals, particularly the BJP, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal delivered a Sunday shocker by announcing that he will resign from his post in the next 48 hours. The AAP supremo vowed not to sit in the CM's chair till the people give him a "certificate of honesty". The announcement came two days after the Supreme Court granted him bail in the liquor policy corruption case. Mr Kejriwal said that a meeting of AAP MLAs will be held in the next two days to choose his successor. The BJP, which was taken completely by surprise by Mr Kejriwal's manoeuvres, adopted an aggressive stance by describing the announcement as a "PR stunt".

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva challenged him to resign immediately along with his Cabinet. "Why does he need two days? He will make a U-turn after two days and say his MLAs have asked him to continue (as chief minister)."



Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, ministers Kailash Gahlot, Saurabh Bharadwaj and Atishi during AAP workers' meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

The Congress, however, welcomed the move, saying that he should have tendered his resignation six months ago so that the people of Delhi would not have suffered a serious crisis. Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav demanded that a new chief minister should be appointed as soon as possible.

Mr Kejriwal, who reached the party headquarters on Sunday along with his wife Sunita to

I will only sit in the CM's chair after the people give me a certificate of honesty. Want to give 'agnipariksha'...

— **Arvind Kejriwal**
Delhi CM

address party workers, said he would become the chief minister and Manish Sisodia would be

back as deputy CM "only when the people say we are honest".

"The Delhi elections are due in February but I demand that the elections in the national capital be held in November along with Maharashtra... I will only sit in the CM's chair after the people give me a certificate of honesty. Want to give 'agnipariksha' (trial by fire) after coming out of jail," he said. **Turn to Page 4**

Lobbying on for new CM as AAP MLAs to meet soon

Buzz over Sunita, Atishi, Gahlot, Saurabh, others
AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Cautious and measured lobbying has begun for the top post in the AAP's corridors as Arvind Kejriwal announced his decision to resign as chief minister in the next two days.

Mr Kejriwal has also ruled out the second tallest leader of the AAP and his former deputy, Manish Sisodia, as his replacement, saying he will also not hold any post unless given a clean chit by the people of Delhi.

The announcement kicked up a strong buzz on Sunday over the names of his wife Sunita Kejriwal and ministers Atishi, Gopal Rai, Kailash Gahlot, Imran Hussain and Saurabh Bharadwaj as his possible replacement. Mr Kejriwal, however, said he would hold a meeting of all AAP MLAs in the next couple of days and a party leader would succeed him as chief minister.

Though senior AAP MLAs, including sitting ministers, are eyeing the post, insiders claimed that "any kind of lobbying will not be beneficial as only the AAP chief will ultimately decide who will be the next CM after going through the poll prospects that face will bring in".

Speculation is rife that **Turn to Page 4**

Bid for early Delhi polls in Nov

Bid to gain sympathy vote ■ 'Won't sit in CM's chair till people's verdict'

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's move to resign from his post is being viewed as an attempt to force an early election in the national capital. The Assembly elections in Delhi are due to be held in February next year. Making clear his intention of trying to

hold the Delhi elections along with Jharkhand and Maharashtra in November this year, Mr Kejriwal said: "I demand elections be held in November... Till the elections are held, someone else from the party will be the chief minister."

AAP insiders said that by calling for early elections, the AAP chief

intended to play the "victim card" and evoke "sympathy" among the electorate. Making his gameplan somewhat clear, Mr Kejriwal said that he would go amidst the people to seek support. "I will go to every house to seek support. I will not sit on the CM's chair till I get a verdict from the people." The chief minister would also

claim that as one crisis after another hit Delhi, he could not discharge his duties to the "fullest extent" from behind bars. The plea would be: "If voted back to power, Kejriwal will fulfil all his promises", according to an AAP functionary.

It is learnt the AAP is planning a massive outreach campaign in the **Turn to Page 4**

Census soon, caste count undecided

Covid delayed 2021 census ■ 1st digital census to cost ₹12K-cr

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

The Centre has started preparations for conducting the delayed decadal 2021 census soon. However, a decision to include a column on caste as part of the exercise is yet to be taken, the government sources said here on Sunday.

The last census was held in 2011. The census due in 2021 was postponed because of the Covid 19 pandemic in India, the first phase of which was scheduled to begin on April 1, 2020. India has been conducting the census every 10 years since 1881.

The implementation of the Women's Reservation

Act, which was enacted last year, is also linked to the conduct of the 2021 census, as reserving one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies will come into effect after the delimitation exercise is undertaken.

"This is yet to be decided," the source said when asked about inclusion of a column on caste in the decadal census.

The political parties have been making vociferous demands for conducting a caste census.

In the absence of the latest population data available with the policymakers in the government due to the delayed census, all Central and state agencies

THE CENSUS due in 2021 was postponed because of the Covid 19 pandemic, the first phase of which was scheduled to begin on April 1, 2020. India has been conducting the census every 10 years since 1881

are allocating subsidies based on the data of the 2011 census.

The entire census and the National Population Register (NPR) exercise is likely to cost more than ₹12,000 crores to the government exchequer, the sources said, adding that this time it is going to be the first digital census, giving the citizens an opportunity to self-enumerate.

The house listing phase of the 2021 census and the exercise to update the NPR were scheduled to be carried out across the country from April 1 to September 30, 2020, but it was postponed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The NPR has been made compulsory for the citizens, who want to exercise the right to fill out the census form on their own rather than through government enumerators.

For this, the census authority has designed a self-enumeration portal, which is yet to be launched. During self-enumeration, Aadhaar or mobile number will be mandatorily collected. **Turn to Page 4**

Modi will flag off 1st Vande Metro during Guj visit today

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the country's first "Vande Metro" service between Bhubaneswar and Ahmedabad besides several other Vande Bharat trains during his visit to Gujarat on Monday.

The PM's other engagements include the inauguration of "Re-Invest 2024" in Gandhinagar and inaugurating and laying the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth more than ₹8,000 crores in Ahmedabad.

The Vande Metro will start from Bhubaneswar and reach Ahmedabad covering 359 km of distance in 5.45 hours. For passengers, its regular service will start from September 17 from Ahmedabad and the total journey will cost ₹455.

Giving a comprehensive overview of the Vande Metro, the ministry said, "Vande Metro operates at a maximum speed of 110 km/hour, offering faster acceleration and deceleration to passengers. This speed advantage ensures quicker commutes." It added, "With ergonomically designed seats, fully air-conditioned cabins and modular interiors, Vande Metro definitely proves to be superior to the other Metros." **More on Page 3**

Missile fired by Yemen's rebels lands in Israel, sets off sirens

Jerusalem, Sept. 15: A missile fired by Yemen's Iran-backed rebels landed in an open area in central Israel early Sunday and triggered air raid sirens at its international airport, in the latest reverberation from the nearly yearlong war in Gaza. Israel hinted that it would respond militarily.

There were no reports of casualties or major damage, but Israeli media aired footage showing people racing to shelters in Ben Gurion International Airport.

THERE WERE no reports of casualties or major damage, but Israeli media aired footage showing people racing to shelters in Ben Gurion International Airport

The airport authority said it resumed normal operations shortly thereafter.

A fire could be seen in a rural area of central Israel, and local media showed images of what appeared to be a fragment from an interceptor that landed on an escalator in

a train station in the central town of Modiin.

The Israeli military said it made several attempts to intercept the missile using its multi-tiered air defence system but had not yet determined whether any had been successful. It said the missile appeared to have fragmented midair, and that the incident is still under review.

The military said the sound of explosions in the area came from interceptors. — AP **More on Page 6**



An idol of Lord Ganesh being immersed into the Bay of Bengal during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival at Marina Beach in Chennai on Sunday. — PTI

IN BRIEF

Cyber fraud network busted, 2 arrested

Gurgaon: A network of cyber criminals was busted after the arrest of two men who are accused of carrying out fraud in the name of increasing the credit card limit, officials said on Sunday. The duo were primarily operating in Bihar, they said. Besides duping people by claiming to increase the credit card limit, they were allegedly also involved in fraud carried out in the name of installing mobile towers, setting up gas agencies, petrol pumps, Patanjali shops, among others, the police officials added. According to the police, Kundan Patel and Ranjit Kumar, from Bihar's Nawada and Nalanda respectively, were arrested from Udyog Vihar area on Wednesday. The accused confessed to five separate frauds in the name of increasing credit card limit, they said. "We had taken Kundan Patel on police remand after being produced in a city court," said Priyanshu Dewan, ACP. During the police remand, Patel revealed that they commit fraud in villages near Nawada, Nalanda, Sheikhpura town, Warisaliganj and Bihar Sharif town, the ACP said. — PTI

3 associates of Nandu gang held

New Delhi: The Delhi police has arrested three associates of Kapil Sangwan, known as Nandu gang, officials on Sunday said. The accused were wanted and involved in many cases of murder, attempt to murder, extortion, robbery, firing arms in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, police said. The accused were identified as Deepak, Sachin and Shekhar, they said, adding Deepak and Shekhar conducted recce of many targets like property dealers, showroom owners, jewellery and businessmen on the behalf of gangster Kapil Sangwan. The accused during interrogation said that they were planning targets in the area of Uttam Nagar, Najafgarh, Janakpuri and Dwarka area, the police said. "On September 12, information was received about Deepak hiding in Dwarka Sector 9 area. A trap was laid and he was nabbed," said the police.

Delhi registers its 1st dengue death

New Delhi: Delhi has registered its first dengue death of the year amid a rise in cases of the vector-borne disease in the national capital. A 54-year-old man died of it at the Lok Nayak Hospital last week, senior hospital officials said. The man, a resident of Gandhi Nagar in east Delhi, was admitted to the hospital on August 27. He was declared dead on September 8, according to the official records. This year, more than 650 dengue cases have been reported in Delhi. The officials said that as of now nine dengue patients are admitted in the LNJP hospital, out of which four are children.

COPS BUST VISA RACKET, 6 HELD IN TILAK NAGAR

New Delhi: The Delhi police on Sunday said it has arrested seven people and claimed to have busted a gang of counterfeit visa operating in west Delhi's Tilak Nagar area. A substantial quantity of equipment used in manufacturing fake visas along with 14 Nepalese and two Indian passports have been seized from the house of the main accused, they said. The accused have been identified as — Manoj Monga (51), the main accused from Tilak Nagar, Shiva Gautam (42), Naveen Rana (25), Balbir Singh (65), Jaswinder Singh (55), Ashif Ali (27) and a passenger, Sandeep — the police said. On the night of September 2, Sandeep from Haryana went to the departure immigration counter at Indira Gandhi International Airport here with an Indian passport, deputy commissioner of police (DCP) (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said. He intended to depart for Rome in Italy, but during a scrutiny of his documents a fake Swedish visa was found affixed on his passport and he was arrested, Ms Rangnani said. Later, an investigation was launched after registering an FIR, she said.

Plans to make his wife Sunita Kejriwal chief minister: BJP ■ Delhiites will dislodge AAP from power: Pradhan
Kejriwal decision to resign 'drama', says BJPAGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Soon after Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that he would resign after two days as the CM, the BJP on Sunday said instead of enacting a "drama", Mr Kejriwal should immediately resign and recommend dissolution of the Assembly. Reacting to the announcement, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva challenged the CM to resign immediately along with his Cabinet.

"Why does he need two days? He will make a U-turn after two days and say his MLAs have asked him to continue (as the chief minister). I challenge him to resign immediately along with the entire Cabinet and call for early elections," Mr Sachdeva said.

Defending Mr Kejriwal's move, AAP's Goa head Amit Palekar said it was a powerful demonstration of his commitment to honest politics. In a post on X, he said, "Hats off sir @ArvindKejriwal for your decision to step down as CM, placing your political future in the hands of the public, is a powerful demonstration of your commitment to honest politics."

The BJP, however, described Mr Kejriwal's announcement as a "confession of crime" and wondered if he offered to quit because of infighting within AAP. It also claimed he was playing an "emotional card" to make a virtue out of necessity as the Supreme Court, by granting him "conditional bail" in the excise policy case, restricted him from entering his office and signing any files.

"When Arvind Kejriwal



Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal with other leaders during AAP workers' meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

Kejriwal has lost moral right to continue as CM, says Congress

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav on Sunday said Arvind Kejriwal's decision to resign as chief minister is a "political drama" as the Supreme Court has already imposed restrictions on him.

Mr Yadav said that AAP

supremo had lost his moral right to continue as he should have tendered his resignation six months ago. "This looks like a political drama as the Supreme Court has already imposed restrictions on him," Mr Yadav said and demanded that a new chief minister should be appointed as soon as possible.

He also wondered why Kejriwal did not resign when he was arrested in connection with the alleged scam. Another BJP national spokesperson Shehzad

Maulana Azad medic kills self in hostel room

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

A 25-year-old trainee doctor allegedly hanged himself in his hostel room at the Maulana Azad Medical College in central Delhi, the police said on Sunday.

Around 7:10 pm, an incident of suicide of a second-year MD (doctor of medicine) student of Maulana Azad Medical College was reported. The victim was identified as Navdeep Singh, a senior officer said. His parents had asked his friend to check on him after Navdeep failed to answer their calls, the officer added.

Navdeep's hostel room door was found locked from the inside. He was expelled from the hostel for celebrating a birthday party.

Some of his classmates reportedly raised slogans against the varsity administration.

Sources said that the student was upset after he

talked about resigning, it became a confession of his crime. He accepted that the charges levelled against him were such that he could not continue as chief minister," BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said.

Poonawalla said, "Mr Kejriwal is enacting the resignation drama because the court did not acquit him in the (excise policy) case and instead granted him conditional bail, which turned him into a ceremonial minister from chief minister."

Termed Mr Kejriwal's move a "PR exercise and a drama", Mr Poonawalla alleged that the AAP chief's announcement was a part of his plan to make

his wife Sunita Kejriwal the chief minister. "Arvind Kejriwal has done a PhD on how to make a virtue out of necessity." "The emotional and PR cards that he is playing are aimed at creating a Manmohan Singh-like system in Delhi as (former Congress president) Sonia Gandhi did," the BJP leader charged.

In the Lok Sabha polls, people ensured the defeat of Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress in all seven seats despite the Kejriwal-led party's "jail ka badla vote campaign", he added.

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan also slammed Mr Kejriwal and said the people of Delhi would "certainly" dislodge his party from power in the Assembly polls.

"I haven't heard his statement. But what's there in what Kejriwal says? People will certainly out him from power in the Delhi Assembly polls," he said.



People take part in a protest organised by Delhi Meitei Co-ordinating Committee at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Sunday over the recent violence in Manipur. — ASIAN AGE

'Faridabad SUV driver ignored warning and crossed barriers'

Faridabad, Sept. 15: The driver of a car that got stuck in the flooded Old Faridabad Railway underpass leading to the death of its two occupants had disregarded the barricades put up to prevent people from going to the inundated area, a police official has claimed.

Viraj (26), a cashier at a private bank branch here, and Punyashray Sharma (48), the manager, were returning home in Greater Faridabad from Gurgaon on Friday night when their sports utility vehicle (SUV) got stuck in the flooded underpass around 11:50 pm, the police said.

The XUV 700 entered the underpass ignoring all warnings and water gushed into the vehicle,

"A BARRICADE was put up at the entrance of the underpass since it was waterlogged. The occupants of the SUV were told by the police officers to take a different route," police sub-inspector Rajesh Kumar said.

They said. According to police, rains throughout Friday inundated the underpass and cars were warned against entering it.

"A barricade was put up at the entrance of the underpass since it was waterlogged. The occupants of the SUV were told by the police officers to take a different route," police sub-inspector

Rajesh Kumar said. "But they removed the barricade and attempted to go through the underpass. The car's doors got locked as it got stuck in the water and the duo died by drowning," he said.

A colleague of the two deceased said Viraj and Sharma left the bank at a night. Viraj was driving. He was new in Delhi-NCR and maybe he didn't know that the route was waterlogged," Arjun Singh, the colleague said.

Inspector Samer Singh, the SHO of the NIT Faridabad police station, said the families of the deceased have been informed about the incident and the bodies will be handed over to their kin after post-mortem. — PTI

CM quitting post may hurt Congress in Haryana polls

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's resignation may impact Congress' prospects in poll-bound Haryana, potentially giving an edge to the BJP. Hailing from Hisar in Haryana, Mr Kejriwal plans to leverage the sympathy factor in his home state. Shortly after his release from jail, Mr Kejriwal held a meeting with senior leadership to strategise AAP's campaign for Haryana, emphasising their achievements in Punjab and Delhi.

AAP, seeking to expand its presence, has decided to contest all 90 seats solo after failing to reach a seat-sharing agreement with the Congress.

Former Haryana chief minister and Congress leader Bhupinder Hooda downplayed the resignation's effect, affirming that the Congress remains strong and will emerge victorious. He rejected the idea that Mr Kejriwal's move could undermine Opposition unity. However, Congress insiders claim AAP lacks a significant presence in Haryana, as evidenced by its performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections. They insist the upcoming election will be a direct contest between Congress and BJP, arguing that a vote for AAP indirectly supports the BJP.

"The security of the Delhi Metro is looked after by the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) and the Delhi police. While the CISF does frisking and checking, the city police register FIRs, conduct probes and also do patrolling inside the Metro premises.

This is a separate unit of the Delhi police, with sixteen Metro police stations located at the Metro premises in different parts of the city. A DCP-level officer

heads the unit. JCP Singh said the enhanced security measures will include increased visibility of female officers on platforms and trains to address concerns about women's safety. Additionally, the police will leverage the technology to monitor suspicious behaviour and identify potential threats, the JCP added.

By proactively addressing these issues in the Metro, the police aim to maintain the Delhi Metro's reputation as a reliable and secure public transportation system, Mr Singh said. — PTI



AAP supporters gather outside the party office in New Delhi on Sunday. — ASIAN AGE

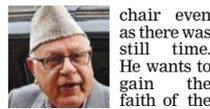
'CM is not hungry for power, wants to gain faith of people'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's announcement of resignation shows he is not hungry for power and wants to go back to the people "who will either make or break him". "He wants fresh elections in Delhi so that he goes back to the people and it is the people who will either make or break him," Mr Abdullah told reporters.

The National Conference (NC) president said the charges have not been proved against Mr Kejriwal in the liquor scam and so he wants the people to decide.

"They have not been able to prove charges on him, that is why he wants to go to public so that the people decide. It is a very good thing that he is not hungry for power, he has left the



Farooq Abdullah chair even as there was still time. He wants to gain the faith of the people and it is a huge thing in a democracy," he added.

Meanwhile, when asked about many independent candidates contesting the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, Mr Abdullah said it was for the people to decide whether they like someone or not.

"Let 4,000 come, let them contest. It is a democracy, let them go to the people and tell the people what they want to do. It is the people who will decide whom to like or not," he said.

When asked about PM Narendra Modi's jibe on Abdullahs, Muftis and Gandhis, he questioned the former on his statements made during the Lok Sabha elections campaign.

Undercover cops to strengthen Metro security

New Delhi, Sept. 15: To combat rising crime rates and ensure the safety of passengers travelling in the Delhi Metro, the city police has implemented a new security strategy under which they will deploy officers in plain clothes at vulnerable metro stations during peak hours. The step was taken after the city police conducted a temporal and spatial analysis to review its security plan as the national capital has witnessed a surge in ridership in recent months, leading to a corresponding increase in crime reports, official sources from the

police said. The "temporal and spatial", are terms that refer to time and space. The data was collected from 190 Metro stations to determine the time at which crime incidents remained high at stations.

By analysing data from these 190 stations, the police identified 32 Metro stations susceptible to theft, harassment, and other offences.

Among these 32 metro stations were Kashmiri Gate, Rajiv Chowk, Seelampur, Anand Vihar and Kalkaji.

safer environment for commuters," joint commissioner of police (transport range) Vijay Singh said.

"By blending in with the crowd, our officers can more effectively deter criminal activity and respond to

incidents promptly," he said, adding "you can call them like our undercover officers".

The security of the Delhi Metro is looked after by the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) and the Delhi police. While the CISF does frisking and checking, the city police register FIRs, conduct probes and also do patrolling inside the Metro premises.

This is a separate unit of the Delhi police, with sixteen Metro police stations located at the Metro premises in different parts of the city. A DCP-level officer

heads the unit. JCP Singh said the enhanced security measures will include increased visibility of female officers on platforms and trains to address concerns about women's safety. Additionally, the police will leverage the technology to monitor suspicious behaviour and identify potential threats, the JCP added.

By proactively addressing these issues in the Metro, the police aim to maintain the Delhi Metro's reputation as a reliable and secure public transportation system, Mr Singh said. — PTI

safer environment for commuters," joint commissioner of police (transport range) Vijay Singh said.

"By blending in with the crowd, our officers can more effectively deter criminal activity and respond to

incidents promptly," he said, adding "you can call them like our undercover officers".

The security of the Delhi Metro is looked after by the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) and the Delhi police. While the CISF does frisking and checking, the city police register FIRs, conduct probes and also do patrolling inside the Metro premises.

This is a separate unit of the Delhi police, with sixteen Metro police stations located at the Metro premises in different parts of the city. A DCP-level officer

heads the unit. JCP Singh said the enhanced security measures will include increased visibility of female officers on platforms and trains to address concerns about women's safety. Additionally, the police will leverage the technology to monitor suspicious behaviour and identify potential threats, the JCP added.

By proactively addressing these issues in the Metro, the police aim to maintain the Delhi Metro's reputation as a reliable and secure public transportation system, Mr Singh said. — PTI

safer environment for commuters," joint commissioner of police (transport range) Vijay Singh said.

"By blending in with the crowd, our officers can more effectively deter criminal activity and respond to

incidents promptly," he said, adding "you can call them like our undercover officers".

The security of the Delhi Metro is looked after by the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) and the Delhi police. While the CISF does frisking and checking, the city police register FIRs, conduct probes and also do patrolling inside the Metro premises.

This is a separate unit of the Delhi police, with sixteen Metro police stations located at the Metro premises in different parts of the city. A DCP-level officer

heads the unit. JCP Singh said the enhanced security measures will include increased visibility of female officers on platforms and trains to address concerns about women's safety. Additionally, the police will leverage the technology to monitor suspicious behaviour and identify potential threats, the JCP added.

By proactively addressing these issues in the Metro, the police aim to maintain the Delhi Metro's reputation as a reliable and secure public transportation system, Mr Singh said. — PTI

safer environment for commuters," joint commissioner of police (transport range) Vijay Singh said.

"By blending in with the crowd, our officers can more effectively deter criminal activity and respond to

incidents promptly," he said, adding "you can call them like our undercover officers".

The security of the Delhi Metro is looked after by the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) and the Delhi police. While the CISF does frisking and checking, the city police register FIRs, conduct probes and also do patrolling inside the Metro premises.

This is a separate unit of the Delhi police, with sixteen Metro police stations located at the Metro premises in different parts of the city. A DCP-level officer

heads the unit. JCP Singh said the enhanced security measures will include increased visibility of female officers on platforms and trains to address concerns about women's safety. Additionally, the police will leverage the technology to monitor suspicious behaviour and identify potential threats, the JCP added.

By proactively addressing these issues in the Metro, the police aim to maintain the Delhi Metro's reputation as a reliable and secure public transportation system, Mr Singh said. — PTI

safer environment for commuters," joint commissioner of police (transport range) Vijay Singh said.

"By blending in with the crowd, our officers can more effectively deter criminal activity and respond to

incidents promptly," he said, adding "you can call them like our undercover officers".

The security of the Delhi Metro is looked after by the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) and the Delhi police. While the CISF does frisking and checking, the city police register FIRs, conduct probes and also do patrolling inside the Metro premises.

This is a separate unit of the Delhi police, with sixteen Metro police stations located at the Metro premises in different parts of the city. A DCP-level officer

heads the unit. JCP Singh said the enhanced security measures will include increased visibility of female officers on platforms and trains to address concerns about women's safety. Additionally, the police will leverage the technology to monitor suspicious behaviour and identify potential threats, the JCP added.

Man slits 27-yr-old wife's throat in Geeta Colony

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

A 27-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her husband in the Geeta Colony area of Delhi's Shahdara, the police said on Saturday. The police received a call early on Saturday about a woman being found in her home with her throat slit.

A police team reached the house but the door was locked from inside. Kishan Lal (32), the woman's husband, was inside the house at the time. The police broke the

lock and nabbed Lal while also taking custody of the woman's body. An officer said the woman had been living separately from her husband. Lal came to meet her on Saturday and allegedly slit her throat.

Interrogations revealed that Lal had grown suspicious of his wife's character, the officer said.

review meeting with senior police officials in Chandigarh to enhance women's safety system. Mr Kapur also released a video message, especially for the working women, talking about the new services in the system. The meeting focused on the trip-monitoring service, creation of databases for auto-rickshaws and working women as well as the operational review of Haryana '112'.

Since introducing the 'Dial 112' project in July 2021, the average response time has reduced from 16 minutes and 14 seconds to 7 minutes, the officer said, adding that the police teams now reach out to

distress callers faster quickly or long-press '5' or '9' key on a feature phone. They can also email an SOS alert to the state emergency response centre or use the 112 India Mobile App.

Haryana director general of police Shatrughan Kapur recently held a

review meeting with senior police officials in Chandigarh to enhance women's safety system. Mr Kapur also released a video message, especially for the working women, talking about the new services in the system. The meeting focused on the trip-monitoring service, creation of databases for auto-rickshaws and working women as well as the operational review of Haryana '112'.

Since introducing the 'Dial 112' project in July 2021, the average response time has reduced from 16 minutes and 14 seconds to 7 minutes, the officer said, adding that the police teams now reach out to

distress callers faster quickly or long-press '5' or '9' key on a feature phone. They can also email an SOS alert to the state emergency response centre or use the 112 India Mobile App.

Haryana director general of police Shatrughan Kapur recently held a

review meeting with senior police officials in Chandigarh to enhance women's safety system. Mr Kapur also released a video message, especially for the working women, talking about the new services in the system. The meeting focused on the trip-monitoring service, creation of databases for auto-rickshaws and working women as well as the operational review of Haryana '112'.

Since introducing the 'Dial 112' project in July 2021, the average response time has reduced from 16 minutes and 14 seconds to 7 minutes, the officer said, adding that the police teams now reach out to

distress callers faster quickly or long-press '5' or '9' key on a feature phone. They can also email an SOS alert to the state emergency response centre or use the 112 India Mobile App.

Haryana director general of police Shatrughan Kapur recently held a

SHORT TAKES

Shinde spreading 'fake news': Thorat

Mumbai: Congress legislature party leader in Maharashtra Balasaheb Thorat on Sunday accused chief minister Eknath Shinde and deputy CM Devendra Fadnis of creating religious discord by spreading "fake news". Mr Thorat's comments came a day after CM Shinde said the Congress government in Karnataka was trying to shut down Ganesh festival celebrations. Mr Shinde on Saturday also said the Opposition targeted his government over the collapse of a statue of Shivaji Maharaj (in Sindhadurg), but remains silent on Congress-led Karnataka police putting a Ganesh idol in a police van. Videos purportedly showing Karnataka police taking away a Ganesh idol from protesters and putting it in a police van have gone viral on social media. "The only thing that the CM and deputy CM are doing full time is creating a fake narrative," Mr Thorat said. — PTI

Local Cong leader killed in WB's Malda

Malda: A local Congress leader was killed after gunshots were fired and crude bombs were hurled at him in West Bengal's Malda district on Sunday morning, police said. The deceased was identified as Sheikh Saifuddin, an influential Congress of the Gopalpur area in Manikchak. His family alleged that goons backed by the TMC killed him — a charge dismissed by the state's ruling party. The incident happened at the Dharampur Stand market around 9 am. Saifuddin's family claimed that four-five men with their faces covered opened fire and hurled two crude bombs targeting him. He died on the spot, they said. The incident, which happened at the crowded market, led to tension in the area. Police said they have started a probe. — PTI

Bihar gets 4 more Vande Bharat trains

Patna/Bhagalpur: Bihar got four more Vande Bharat Express trains on Sunday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually flagging them off. These trains will operate on the Tatanagar-Patna, Bhagalpur-Howrah and Gaya-Howrah routes, besides the Deoghar-Varanasi Vande Bharat that would pass through Bihar. These were among six Vande Bharat trains flagged off by the PM from Ranchi. Chief minister Nitish Kumar attended the programme virtually, with his deputies Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, from his official residence at 1, Anne Marg in Patna, a statement issued by his office said. MoS for Railway Raveen Singh Bittu was present at the Bhagalpur station when the trains were flagged off. "It's a new chapter in modern rail travel for Bihar," he posted on X. — PTI

J&K POLLS: SHAH TO ADDRESS 3 RALLIES TODAY

Jammu, Sept. 15: Home minister Amit Shah will address three rallies in Chenab Valley on Monday — the last day of campaigning for the first phase of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls — a BJP leader said. Twenty-four Assembly segments spread across Chenab Valley districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban and south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian are going to polls in the first of the three-phase elections on September 18. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a massive election rally in support of BJP candidates in Doda district on Saturday, Mr Shah is visiting Jammu region for the second time within a fortnight. Earlier during his two-day visit to Jammu on September 6 and 7, he released the BJP's manifesto for the Assembly polls and addressed a workers' convention. Defence minister Rajnath Singh also spoke at two election rallies in Ramban and Banihal on September 8. "The home minister will address three rallies at Ramban, Kishtwar and Padder on September 16," BJP spokesperson Arun Kumar Gupta said. — PTI



Amit Shah

PM to unveil ₹8K-cr projects, launch Single Window IT System

Modi will flag off 1st Vande Metro during Guj visit today

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the country's first "Vande Metro" service between Bhuj and Ahmedabad besides several other Vande Bharat trains during his visit to Gujarat on Monday. The PM's other engagements include the inauguration of "Re-Invest 2024" in Gandhinagar and laying the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth more than ₹8,000 crore in Ahmedabad. The Vande Metro will start from Bhuj and reach Ahmedabad covering 359 km of distance in 5.45 hours. For passengers, its regular service will start



Narendra Modi

from September 17 from Ahmedabad and the total journey will cost ₹455. Giving a comprehensive overview of the Vande Metro and other Metros being operated in the country, the Railway ministry said, "Vande Metro operates at a maximum speed of 110 km/h, offering faster acceleration and deceleration to passengers. This speed advantage ensures quicker commutes and improved efficiency." It added, "With ergonomically designed seats, fully air-conditioned cabins and modular interiors, Vande Metro definitely proves to be superior to the other metros." Highlighting its safety aspects, the ministry said that Vande Metro is equipped with advanced safety systems like

"Kavach" for collision avoidance, fire detection, and aerosol-based fire suppression, along with emergency lights. The prime minister will also inaugurate a 30 MW BESS Solar PV Project at Kutch Lignite Thermal Power Station, Kutch, and 220 Kilovolt substations at Morbi and Rajkot. Mr Modi will launch the Single Window IT System of the International Financial Services Centres Authority, designed to streamline financial services. He will also sanction more than 30,000 houses under the PMAY-Gramin and release the first instalment for these homes, as well as launch construction of houses under the PMAY scheme.

Mr Modi will launch the Single Window IT System of the International Financial Services Centres Authority, designed to streamline financial services. He will also sanction more than 30,000 houses under the PMAY-Gramin and release the first instalment for these homes, as well as launch construction of houses under the PMAY scheme.

Will stake claim for CM's post if party in power: Vij

'It's party's prerogative to decide finally on my claim'

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Throwing his hat into the ring for the top post in the poll-bound Haryana, BJP veteran leader Anil Vij said that he would stake claim for the chief minister's post if the party returns to power, declaring himself to be the "best CM candidate in the BJP". In a post on X, the former home minister of Haryana said, "There is a lot of public pressure on him, and he would stake claim for the post on the basis of his seniority within the party. Whether they appoint him or not is their prerogative," Mr Vij said. The remarks by the six-time MLA from Ambala constituency assumes significance as the party has already announced that the current chief minister Nayab Singh Saini will remain its candidate for the job. Mr Vij's announcement could herald a crisis for the party, which prides itself for its discipline. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been on record saying Mr Saini would be the party's chief ministerial face. Union home minister Amit Shah has also made it clear on Mr Saini's candidature for the top post. The saffron party has been facing squabble in

Saini is BJP's CM face in Haryana, asserts Pradhan

Chandigarh, Sept. 15: Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini is BJP's CM face, and the party will score a hat-trick of wins in the state under his leadership, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan asserted on Sunday, after its senior leader Anil Vij staked claim for CM post if the party returned to power after the October 5 Assembly polls. "Being a party worker, he may have said so but Nayab Singh Saini is BJP's CM face," Mr Pradhan said. — PTI

public for the CM post, with Union minister and party heavyweight Rao Inderjit Singh too calling it "indignation", for not considering him for the top post. On a question on Mr Saini's name being declared as the CM face, Mr Vij responded, "There's no restriction on making a claim. I'll put forward my claim, and then it's up to the party to decide." Vowing to change Haryana's "takdeer and tasveer" (fate and fortune), Mr Vij said, "People come

to me from across the state. People ask me as to why I never became the CM, despite being the senior-most leader. Based on demands raised by the people of Haryana and considering my seniority in the party, I shall stake a claim for the CM's post. It is the party prerogative to make me CM or not. To date, I have never sought any post from the party, but today, I am staking claim for the CM post. If the party makes me the CM, I shall definitely change the face and fate of Haryana."



People take a plunge into the swollen Ganga river following heavy rains in Prayagraj on Sunday. — PTI

'Implementation of 1 nation, 1 poll in current govt's tenure'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

The BJP-led NDA government will implement "one nation, one election" within its current tenure, sources said, expressing confidence that the reform measure would receive support across party lines. "Definitely, it will be implemented in this tenure itself. It will be a reality," a source said on condition of anonymity. As the third term of the NDA government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, completes 100 days in office, sources also said that the cohesion within the ruling alliance will continue for the rest of

the tenure. In his Independence Day address last month, Mr Modi made a strong pitch for "one nation, one election", contending that frequent polls were creating hurdles in the country's progress. "The nation has to come forward for 'one nation, one election'," Mr Modi had said in his address from the ramparts of the Red Fort. He asked the parties to ensure that national resources are used for the common people, and said, "We have to come forward to realise the dream of 'one nation, one election.'" "One nation, one election" is one of the key promises made by the BJP in its manifesto for the

Lok Sabha elections. A high-level panel headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind in March this year recommended simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies as the first step followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days. The Law Commission is likely to recommend holding simultaneous polls for all three tiers of the government — Lok Sabha, state Assemblies and local bodies like municipalities and panchayats — starting with 2029 and a provision for a unity government in cases like hung house or no-confidence motion.

'Anti-constitutional mindset' V-P slams Rahul over his 'ending quota' comment

Mumbai, Sept. 15: In a veiled attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on "ending reservation", vice-president Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said such comments by a person holding a constitutional post shows an "anti-constitutional mindset". Addressing a public event in Mumbai, Mr Dhankhar also said that awareness about India's Constitution is highly needed, as some people have forgotten its soul. "A person holding a constitutional post is saying on a foreign land that reservation should be ended, which underscores the same anti-constitutional mindset. The baton of prejudices against reservation has been handed over. It is the same old anti-constitutional mindset," he said, without taking the name of Mr Gandhi. "Reservation is not against meritocracy, but it is the soul of the country and the Constitution. It is an affirmative action, and is not negative. It is not depriving someone of opportunity, but it supports those who are pillars of strength of the society," the VP said.

Rahul's remark about 50% quota limit, retorts Cong

New Delhi, Sept. 15: Hitting back at Jagdeep Dhankhar for his apparent attack on Rahul Gandhi, over the latter's remarks on reservation, the Congress on Sunday asked the vice-president who he supports, "the one adamantly refusing to conduct a caste census or the one championing the demand for it." Reacting to the VP remarks, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said, "Mr Rahul Gandhi has demanded removal of the 50% limit on reservations for SC/STs & OBCs." — PTI

Cong condemns remark, says Union minister 'talking like a senseless man'

MoS calls Rahul 'No. 1 terrorist', triggers row

Bhagalpur, Sept. 15: Attacking Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi over the statements he made in the US about the condition of Sikhs in India, Union minister Raveen Singh Bittu on Sunday said if those "manufacturing bombs" were supporting him, he is "number one terrorist". Mr Bittu, the MoS for railways, made the remark in Bihar's Bhagalpur where he came to attend

the flagging-off ceremony of a Vande Bharat Express train to Howrah. Condemning the statement, the Congress said he was talking "like a senseless man". Speaking to reporters, Mr Bittu said, "Rahul Gandhi spent most of his time outside the country. His friends and family are there. I think he does not love his country much because he goes abroad and says negative things

about India. I think he is not a Hindustani." "Now, he has got support from separatists, who always talk about dividing

this country. They (separatists) and the most-wanted persons are also appreciating Rahul Gandhi for his remarks against Sikhs," he added. "When such people, who are also experts in manufacturing bombs, are supporting Rahul Gandhi, then he is the number one terrorist of the country. He is talking like a separatist. There should be a reward for catching him as he is the biggest enemy

of the country," the Union minister said. Mr Bittu alleged that Congress earlier tried to "use" Muslims, but as that could not happen, it was now attempting to divide Sikhs. "Gandhi talks about OBCs and other castes. He has not been able to understand the pain of a cobbler, carpenter or mechanic, even after being the leader of the opposition. This is a joke," he said. — PTI



Chief minister Siddaramaiah with ministers and others at the International Democracy Day programme at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Sunday. — PTI

Odisha starts drive to spread awareness on women scheme

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 15

The Odisha government on Sunday flagged off "Subhadra Saptaha" (Subhadra week), just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to the state on Tuesday. The week-long initiative aims to raise an awareness about the newly introduced and widely anticipated "Subhadra Yojana" by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Prime Minister Narendra Modi will formally inaugurate the scheme at a special event to be held at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday morning.

As part of the launch of "Subhadra Saptaha", the state government conducted a symbolic transaction, transferring ₹1 (one rupee) to each woman that had applied for the Subhadra Yojana. This test transaction serves to verify the beneficiaries' bank account details and ensure the authenticity of applications. All eligible women, who applied before or on September 15, will receive their first instalment of ₹5,000 on September 17, coinciding with PM Modi's birthday. Odisha's deputy chief minister Pravatī Parida, assured that the registration and application

process would remain open until every eligible woman is included in the yojana. "Applicants who register after September 17 will also receive the funds. There is no need for concern. The scheme will remain active until the last eligible beneficiary receives the amount credited to her bank account," Ms Parida said. She also encouraged women to apply promptly, noting that approximately 60 lakh women have already registered. The BJP-led government, under chief minister Mohan Majhi, aims to enrol, at least, one crore women in the Subhadra Yojana.

'Fighting polls to stop BJP from burying Kashmir issue'

Kulgam, Sept. 15: People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti Sunday said



Mehbooba Mufti

her party is not contesting the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections only for undertaking developmental works, but to stop the BJP from burying the Kashmir issue and Article 370. "It is a matter of shame for the BJP that has been saying the situation has improved, but they could not hold elections in J&K in the last 10 years. People are annoyed, they are suffocating. They want a government to be formed which can address their concerns and end their difficulties," Ms Mufti told reporters here. The PDP chief said her party is not contesting the elections only for constructing drains and lanes, "we are contesting because the BJP wants to bury Kashmir issue and Article 370, and wants everyone to talk only about election." "But we are adamant that the resolution of Kashmir issue is very important," she added. Asked about PM Modi's jibe at Abdullahs, Mufti said, "He had vowed ₹15 lakhs to people's accounts." — PTI

SHORT TAKES

38 HP roads closed, rain alert in 6 dists

Shimla: A total of 38 roads were closed in Himachal Pradesh following rains and 11 power supply schemes were disrupted, the state emergency operation centre (SEOC) said on Sunday evening. The local meteorological centre issued a "yellow" alert for thunderstorm and lightning at isolated places in six districts of the state on Wednesday. The Met office also predicted a wet spell in the state till September 21. Meanwhile, intermittent rains continued to lash parts of the state, with Kasauli logging the highest rainfall of 53 mm since Saturday evening, it said. During this period, 26 mm rain was recorded in Dharampur, followed by 20 mm in Renuka, 11 in Chamba, 10 in Karsog, 8.5 in Kalpa, 7.9 in Nahan, 6 in Sarahan and 5.8 mm each in Dharamsala and Kangra. — PTI

5 dead, 4 injured in Maha road accident

Mumbai: Five were killed and four others injured after a pick-up van collided with a car in Maharashtra's Dhule district on Sunday, police said. The accident occurred at Dasvel Fata in Shindkheda taluka in the morning, an official said. A pick-up van collided with a car, killing five persons, including three women, he said. Four also sustained injuries and are undergoing treatment at a hospital, official said. As per preliminary information, the driver of the pick-up van was drunk at the time of the accident, and he received minor injuries, he said. The Nardana police are probing the incident, he said. — PTI

Census soon, caste count undecided

Continued from Page 1
The office of the registrar general and census commissioner had prepared 31 questions to be asked. The questions include whether a family has a telephone, Internet connection, mobile or smartphone, bicycle, scooter or motorcycle or moped, whether they own a car, jeep or van. The citizens will also be asked what cereal they consume in their households, their main source of drinking water, their main source of lighting, access to toilet, type of toilet, waste water outlet, availability of bathing facilities, availability of kitchen and LPG/PNG connection, main fuel used for cooking, availability of radio, transistor and television. The citizens will also be asked about the predominant material of the floor, wall and roof of the house, the condition of the house, the total number of persons normally residing in the household, whether the head of the household is a woman, whether the head of the household belongs to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, the number of dwelling rooms exclusively in possession of the household, and the number of married couple(s) living in the household, among others.

Probe agency highlights 'larger conspiracy' in R.G. Kar case
CBI gets custody of WB hosp ex-principal & cop till Sept. 17

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, SEPT. 15

A local court on Sunday sent former principal of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital (RGKMCH) Sandip Ghosh and Abhijit Mondal, who was the officer-in-charge at the Tala police station that covers the hospital, to CBI custody till September 17. The CBI highlighted a "larger conspiracy" at the court into the brutal rape and murder of an on-duty lady doctor at RGKMCH for the three-day custody. On Saturday night, the special crime branch of the CBI arrested Dr Ghosh and Mr Mondal for their role in the main case. While Dr Ghosh has been booked for the destruction of evidence on the pretext of ordering

Clapping, dancing won't lead to success: TMC MLA on stir

Kolkata, Sept. 15: A ruling Trinamul Congress MLA on Sunday courted controversy by lashing out at the movement of doctors and people on the R.G. Kar issue, saying that "mere clapping and dancing to disco beats will not make any movement successful. A true movement is marked by more serious activities." Agitating doctors strongly opposed the remarks, saying it was a people's movement and

should not be trivialised. Rajarhat-New Town MLA Tapas Chatterjee, during a meeting in his locality, was heard saying in a purported video, "Clapping and dancing to disco beats will not make any movement successful. A true movement is marked by more serious activities." PTI could not independently verify the authenticity of the video. — PTI

repair and reconstruction of the seminar hall, the crime scene, on August 10, Mr Mondal faces the charge of delay in registering the FIR apparently

on the instructions of Dr Ghosh. Dr Ghosh, who was earlier arrested by the anti-corruption branch of the CBI for his role in the financial

irregularities at RGKMCH during his tenure, was in jail custody. He was produced at the Alipore court on Sunday from the Presidency Correctional Home. Praying for a three-day remand for Dr Ghosh and Mr Mondal, the CBI counsel submitted that both the accused had a "larger conspiracy" as they spoke to each other many times over the phone on August 9, the day when the crime happened. He also pointed out that the police registered the FIR several hours after the crime to allow the destruction of evidence at the place of occurrence in a systematic way. Both of them tried to "downplay the incident" as well as "shield" the heinous crime, the counsel said in court.

Polls in Maha likely in 2nd week of November: Shinde

Seat-sharing to be finalised in next 8 to 10 days: CM

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, SEPT. 15

Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday said the state Assembly polls are expected to be held in the second week of November and seat-sharing among the ruling allies would be finalised in the next 8 to 10 days. Speaking to reporters at his official residence Varsha, Mr Shinde said, "Elections are likely in the second week of November. A two-phase election would be preferable. Merit and good strike rate will be the criteria for seat-sharing among the Mahayuti allies."

Neither Maha Vikas Aghadi nor Mahayuti have finalised their seat-sharing pact as talks are still underway in the preliminary stage. However, the Maharashtra CM said that the Mahayuti constituents will finalise their seat-sharing in the next 8-10 days. He claimed that women are supporting his



Eknath Shinde

polls could be held in the second or third week of November. The term of the current Assembly will last till the end of November.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat accused the Maharashtra CM and deputy CM Devendra Fadnis of trying to create a communal discord ahead of the Assembly election by spreading "fake news". Mr Shinde on Saturday had alleged that the Congress government in Karnataka was trying to shut down Ganesh festival celebrations.

government, which is the government of the common people. "We have struck a balance between development and welfare schemes. The appointment letters have been given to 1.5 lakh youth for jobs under the skilled training programme for which they will get a stipend from ₹6,000 to ₹10,000. The target is to cover 10 lakh youth," he said.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat accused the Maharashtra CM and deputy CM Devendra Fadnis of trying to create a communal discord ahead of the Assembly election by spreading "fake news". Mr Shinde on Saturday had alleged that the Congress government in Karnataka was trying to shut down Ganesh festival celebrations.

Fresh firebreak out in forest area in J&K's Kathua

Jammu, Sept. 15: A fresh encounter broke out between terrorists and police on Sunday in a forest area in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, while an overnight gunfight in Poonch district ended with one terrorist believed to have suffered injuries, officials said. A police search party came under fire from terrorists at remote Nuknali Nalla in Bani area of Kathua district late this afternoon, the officials said. They said the police party returned the fire and an exchange of fire was going on between the two sides when last reports were received. Reinforcements have been rushed to plug escape routes and help neutralise the terrorists, the officials said.

In Poonch, the officials said the overnight encounter in Pathanateer area near Gursai top in Mendhar sub-division ended around noon. Blood stains were seen near the scene of the gunfight, suggesting that one of the terrorists had got injured, they said, adding the area is still under cordon and a search operation is underway to hunt down the fleeing militants. Acting on a tip-off about the presence of two to three terrorists, a joint operation was launched by the police and Army in the area on Saturday evening. The search party came under fire from the hiding terrorists, triggering a gunfight. — PTI



Rescue operation underway on Sunday, a day after a house collapsed in Meerut. The death toll in the collapse of the three-storey house rose to 10. The district magistrate said a process is underway to provide financial assistance of ₹4 lakhs for each deceased from the natural calamity fund. — PTI

'Faith is shaken': False statements to secure convicts' release irks SC

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

Riled by lawyers repeatedly making false statements before the court as well as in the petitions to secure premature release of the convicts, the Supreme Court has said when it comes across cases like this, "our faith is shaken". In a recent order, a bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Augustine George Masih said: "A large number of petitions are being filed in this court wherein a grievance is made about non grant of permanent remission. During the last three weeks, this is the 6th or 7th case which we have come across where blatantly false statements have been made in the pleadings."

The September 10 order pointed out that on a mis-

statement made in the writ petition filed for seeking remission, but a false statement was made before this court which is recorded in the order dated July 19, 2024. It said the false statements were repeated in the email dated July 15, 2024 addressed by the then advocate-on-record for the petitioners to the jail authorities. "Though he was aware of this factual position, a false statement was made on July 19, 2024 that the period of furlough of all the petitioners (convicts) has not expired," it said. The anguished bench said, "This is a fit case where exemplary costs should be awarded. However, we cannot penalise the petitioners for the mistakes committed by their lawyers."

There are not only false statements made in the writ petition filed for seeking remission, but a false statement was made before this court which is recorded in the order dated July 19, 2024. It said the false statements were repeated in the email dated July 15, 2024 addressed by the then advocate-on-record for the petitioners to the jail authorities. "Though he was aware of this factual position, a false statement was made on July 19, 2024 that the period of furlough of all the petitioners (convicts) has not expired," it said. The anguished bench said, "This is a fit case where exemplary costs should be awarded. However, we cannot penalise the petitioners for the mistakes committed by their lawyers."

Sharad slams Shinde over women scheme

'Dignity more important than ₹1,500'

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, SEPT. 15

NCP founder Sharad Pawar on Sunday slammed the Eknath Shinde government over "Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana" (MMLBY) stating that women need to be provided security and dignity. Mr Pawar said that the security of the women is more important than providing ₹1,500 to the women. He also alleged that the current dispensation has become arrogant stating there is no rule of law in the state. Addressing a rally of farmers at Sindkheda in Dhule district, Mr Pawar said, "This government did not work for cooperatives and industries. They did not provide

employment to youths. After remaining in power for two years, the government announced a scheme to provide ₹1,500 per month to poor women. But the dignity of the women needs to be protected. The sister's respect should be maintained. The government did not pay attention to these issues."

Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), an alliance of Sharad Pawar-led NCP, Congress and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), has got an impetus after the massive victory in the recently concluded Lok Sabha election. The MVA won 30 seats out of 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra. At present, Sharad Pawar has been touring north Maharashtra.

Never aspire to be Maha CM: Uddhav ahead of polls

Ahmednagar, Sept. 15: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said he didn't harbour aspirations to become Maharashtra CM, a remark coming against the backdrop of MVA allies' reluctance to face Assembly polls with a CM face. Addressing protesters in Ahmednagar, Mr Thackeray said he didn't aspire to become the chief minister in (November) 2019 also. "Whether I am in power or not, I feel empowered by the support of the people. Balasaheb (Thackeray) never held a position of power but all powers were wrested with him because of people's support," he said. He was addressing state government employees protesting for the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme. Notably, Mr Thackeray had last month asked the NCP (SP) and the Congress to decide on a chief ministerial face for the Maha Vikas Aghadi but failed to get a positive response. NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, the chief architect of the MVA, had asserted that there was no need for the MVA to declare a CM face. The chief ministerial candidate would be decided based on which party wins the maximum number of seats in the alliance, Mr Pawar had said. Mr Thackeray further said the people of Maharashtra were his strength and power. — PTI

To recover ₹298 crore, case against quarry leaseholders

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 15

The office of the deputy director of mines, Jajpur circle, Odisha, has initiated certificate cases against 18 black-stone quarry leaseholders before the district collector of Jajpur. This legal action, filed under the Odisha Public Demands Recovery (OPDR) Act of 1962, seeks to recover an outstanding penalty of ₹298 crore for the illegal over-extraction of black stones beyond their authorised lease areas. Deputy director of mines (minor minerals),

ODISHA

Jayaprakash Nayak, confirmed the development, stating, "We have filed certificate cases against 18 black-stone quarry leaseholders before the district collector of Jajpur."

"This action comes after they failed to pay the penalty imposed by the revenue department last year. The penalty was levied in response to illegal mining activities carried out at various hills under the jurisdiction of Dharmasala Tehsil."

'JMM siding with B'desh infiltrators'

Continued from Page 1
The PM also virtually handed over keys to 46,000 beneficiaries of PMAY-G across the country. Due to the inclement weather conditions, Mr Modi's roadshow in Jamshedpur had to be cancelled. He also had to reach Jamshedpur from Ranchi via road as his chopper could not fly due to the bad weather. At the rally in Jamshedpur, Mr Modi said, "Jharkhand has three big enemies -- the JMM, RJD and the Congress. The RJD is still taking revenge on Jharkhand for its formation and the Congress outright despises Jharkhand. The Congress party ruled the country for decades, yet they never allowed the dalit, backward, and tribal communities to progress... Just a few days ago, the Jharkhand high court ordered an independent panel to investigate this infiltration. However, the JMM government refuses to acknowledge that infiltration is happening in Jharkhand. Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltration poses a significant threat in Santal Pargana and Kolhan." "In Santal Pargana, the tribal population is decreasing at an alarming rate. The lands of the local people are being seized. Infiltrators are taking control of panchayats and the system and incidents of atrocities against daughters are rising. The truth is, the JMM is siding with these Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltrators," said the PM, promising action against corruption and the corrupts under the incumbent regime. The PM also cited steps taken by the Central government for the tribals, including the PM-Janman scheme, Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on Birsa Munda's birth anniversary, and 400

Eklavya residential schools, among others. Upon reaching Ranchi earlier during the day, Mr Modi posted on X how he was welcomed in the traditional tribal ritual of "Karma Puja". "This morning, when I reached Ranchi airport, a sister welcomed me with a 'Jahva', a sign of Karma Parv. In this festival, sisters pray for their brother's well-being," Mr Modi said. He also extended warm greetings to the people of Jharkhand on this Karma Parv. The Karma festival is celebrated by diverse groups of tribal populations, including, particularly in areas of Jharkhand and West Bengal. "Efforts are being made to reach out to the tribes, who are still lagging, through the scheme. In a bid to provide houses, roads, electricity and education to such families, officers are reaching out to them. Such efforts are part of my commitment to 'Vikshit Jharkhand'. We will fulfill the dreams of Jharkhand," said Mr Modi. The Prime Minister also underlined that many significant steps have been taken to empower the poor, dalit, deprived and tribal families of the country since 2014. Highlighting the rampant corruption in the state, Mr Modi said, "On one hand, the poor and the middle class living in the cities here sweat over every single rupee. On the other hand, hundreds of crores in cash are recovered from the residences of this government's ministers and MPs and from their servants' hideouts. There are scams worth thousands of crores. Remember how mountains of cash were found in Jharkhand? That was your money." Mr Modi promised action against those involved in corruption and misgovernance under the current regime.

Kejriwal says he'll step down as Delhi CM in next 48 hrs

Continued from Page 1
Alleging that the BJP tried to prove him corrupt, Mr Kejriwal claimed the saffron party could not provide good schools and free electricity to people because they were corrupt. "We are honest," he asserted. "They slap false cases against non-BJP chief ministers. If the CMs are arrested, I urge them not to resign but run their government from jail... I didn't resign (after arrest) because I respect democracy and the Constitution is supreme for me," Mr Kejriwal said, and asserted that it was only the AAP that can stand up to the BJP's "conspiracies". While addressing the AAP workers, Mr Kejriwal referred to his quitting the chief minister's post in 2014 over the Jan Lokpal Bill, just 49 days after assuming power, and said: "I resigned then for my ideals. I do not have a lust for power." The excise policy case will drag on for a long time, the chief minister claimed, and said that he wanted to ask the people of Delhi whether he was "honest or guilty". He asked people to vote in his favour only if they considered him honest. "For me, the BJP is not important, the people are important," Mr Kejriwal said. About his time in jail, he referred to letters written by freedom fighter Bhagat Singh while in British captivity, and added: "I wrote only one letter to the lieutenant-governor from Tihar and was issued a warning." He added: "Our freedom fighters were allowed meetings with colleagues but my party colleague Sandeep Pathak was not allowed to meet me in jail," he said.

Bid for early Delhi elections in November

Continued from Page 1
run-up to the polls. Former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who too has decided to stay out of office, will add to Mr Kejriwal's firepower. While the top rung of the AAP leadership seems to be convinced of electoral gain from early polls, some other functionaries are wary of the gamble. For them, it could be a "double-edged sword". An AAP functionary pointed out that the party tried to "milk" the sympathy factor when Mr Kejriwal was released on interim bail before the Lok Sabha polls. The party launched an aggressive campaign with Mr Kejriwal leading the charge. "We were under the impression that we will get at least two of the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi. The BJP won all seven," he observed. Even though the AAP has an edge in Delhi, with Mr Kejriwal credited with the "TINA" (there is no alternative) factor, the "recent waterlogging,

drinking water crisis and even the corruption cases could affect the party", the functionary felt. Mr Kejriwal's offer to resign is also an attempt to counter the BJP charge of his "ineffectiveness" in the face of bail conditions which have put fetters on either attending the CM's office or signing official files. The BJP had been targeting Mr Kejriwal as the only chief minister who did not resign even after his arrest. This will be the second

time Mr Kejriwal will resign from the top post. In 2013, after remaining in power for just 49 days, Mr Kejriwal had no alternative but to resign after the Congress, which had eight legislators in the 70-member Assembly, withdrew its support to his government. The AAP had 28 MLAs. In the subsequent elections, he swept the Delhi polls by securing 67 of 70 seats. The Congress failed to open its account while the BJP got just three seats.

Lobbying on for new CM; AAP MLAs to meet soon

Continued from Page 1
the AAP may bring forward some Dalit or Muslim legislator to hold the top post in view of the Delhi Assembly polls. There are 12 reserved constituencies and nearly half a dozen seats with significant minority populations in the city. The AAP insiders said the surprise candidate could also be a female legislator from a backward community or MLA from the minority community as the party had witnessed a thinning support among the community since the Delhi riots in 2020. Although there is no official comment from the

the CM's post also include the names of ministers like Mr Gahlot and Mr Bharadwaj. Among possible candidates for the CM's post, Atishi was seen as head and shoulders above others for holding a maximum number of portfolios in the Delhi government, including education, finance, PWD, revenue and services, and is considered close to both Mr Kejriwal as well as Mr Sisodia. Mr Rai is one of the senior-most party leaders, commanding respect for being there in government since the AAP came to power for the first time in 2013. Mr Bharadwaj is

also a prominent member of the Delhi Cabinet holding several important portfolios. He too is a well-known face of the AAP, often engaged in defending the party and its leaders and counter-attacking the BJP and its government at the Centre on a range of governance-related and political issues. The shock announcement may reap poll benefits for the AAP as Mr Kejriwal framed his recent announcement on a moral standpoint, suggesting that he will not occupy the CM's chair until he receives a "certificate of honesty" from the electorate.

THE ASIAN AGE

16 SEPTEMBER 2024

States in crisis as parties pledge freebies for votes

Give a man a fish and you provide him a meal but teach him how to fish and you give him a livelihood, goes a saying. As another election season is upon us, it only goes to show how far India is removed from the ideal of creating livelihoods through jobs for all its people in the working age group.

In this highly competitive season of laddling out promises of freebies to win votes, each political party tries to outdo rivals by offering to spend freely from taxpayers' money in handing out incentives that may drain the exchequer but may help garner votes for the netas and their parties.

As Jammu & Kashmir prepares to go to the polls in a historic election 10 years after the last one, the competition for wooing the voters with incentives is fierce. With the Congress promising women ₹3,000 a month besides rations and a phenomenal ₹25 lakh health cover, the BJP is inclined to put it all together in a financial package akin to a basic household expenses cover of ₹18,000 a month to be directly transferred to the eldest woman of a household.

Governments that are doling out incentives aimed at empowering women are moving rapidly towards a financial crisis with some states like Himachal Pradesh struggling even to pay government staff their salaries at the beginning of a month.

With the Congress promising women ₹3,000 a month besides rations and a phenomenal ₹25 lakh health cover, BJP is inclined to put it all together in a package akin to a basic household expenses cover

Such a prospect of financial bankruptcy of states that are already swimming against the tide with monthly interest payments running into thousands of crores, however, seems to mean nothing to the netas as they bid for the power to run the states, wooing voters by promising the moon.

As a class, politicians seem impervious to the cost-of-living crisis that the middle class downwards face as sticky inflation rises and rules. It has been pointed out that the gross fiscal deficit of the states is somewhere in the region of Rs 9.4

lakh crores now, having risen to that humongous figure from Rs 3.2 lakh crores in the last 10 years.

The delivery of free electricity, with a ceiling of around 200 units that may define a lower middle family's consumption in a month, has left most state electricity boards with gaping deficits. Free bus rides for women besides a basic payment per month to them are aimed at ideals like women's empowerment, but they come with a cost.

Of course, everything adds more burden to the deficit in state finances. Throw in all loss-making state ventures and the debt of every Indian adds up to just under \$2,000 per person in the \$2.8 trillion national debt (Central as well as of states, municipalities, public sector institutions and social security funds) as computed at the end of 2022.

The point is this competitive culture of freebies for votes is a political phenomenon that is intrinsically dishonest. That all parties are guilty of it absolves none in this deceptive practice of cash and incentives for votes. It may be practised around the world, but it seems to be done with a competitive zeal in India regardless of the effect on public finances.

Arguing over delivered and undelivered poll promises will get people nowhere. The courts too periodically comment on the freebie culture, but there is no mechanism to curb the politician from proclaiming a passage to the promised land so he can rule, no matter what effect freebies have on the collective wealth of a state.

World waits for US Fed to act

In a couple of days, economists and central banks across the world will focus on Washington where the governors of the Federal Reserve will be meeting to review the economic situation in the United States. In view of an underperforming labour market, it is expected to slash interest rates by 25 basis points for the first time in four years. As the United States is still a preeminent financial force in the world, this development will force all central banks, including India, to reassess their monetary situation.

A lower Fed rate would widen interest arbitrage and make investors invest in emerging markets. The speculation has already boosted Indian stock markets to an all-time high. If more dollars enter India, it will strengthen the rupee as against the dollar. If the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) wants to keep the rupee lower, one of the options is to buy dollars from the market. However, it would infuse more rupee liquidity into the market, which will increase inflation. A scenario that inflation-wary RBI may not like to adopt.

Another way to deal with the problem of plenty is to maintain the interest rate arbitrage between the rupee and the dollar by reducing the repo rate. In spite of a relatively stable inflation scenario, the RBI resisted the temptation to cut the repo rate.

If it decides to slash interest rates, it will be the first time in four years. The last RBI had slashed repo rate was in May 2020. After increasing the repo rate for seven times between May 2022 to June 2023, the Reserve Bank kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent. However, excess liquidity in the market kept monetary transmission — RBI's ability to influence bank rate — at suboptimal level. Nevertheless, the Fed rate move could finally nudge the Reserve Bank to cut interest rates when it meets in October.

THE ASIAN AGE

Kaushik Mitter
Editor

K. Sudhakar
Printer & Publisher

The Asian Age office is located at:
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for:
Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.
London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.
RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Subhani



A very Hyderabad boy who became an icon of the Left



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

When he left Hyderabad for New Delhi in 1969, to complete his schooling that was disrupted by the separate Telangana agitation, he was still Y. Sitaram. Just "Sita" for those of us who knew him. He was at All Saints High School and I was at Hyderabad Public School but our friendship was forged at a student debating club that met at Hyderabad YMCA. A Model Lok Sabha brought together students from several schools and we formed a gang of debaters. Sita was always the star — bright, smart, witty and good-looking. He remained that till the very end. In 1966 he won a United Schools Organisation prize that took him to the United States and a breakfast with the President at the White House. The *Junior Statesman*, *JS* magazine, popular in our youth, declared him as a "Future Prime Minister of India".

Sitaram Yechury was the first Hyderabad boy who enrolled at the then newly opened Jawaharlal Nehru University. Many of us had heard of JNU from him and followed in his footsteps. It was on that campus that he emerged as a student leader.

But he was more than that. He was the class topper in the very first batch of M.A. Economics students. Before that he had topped the high school examination and his batch at Delhi's St Stephen's College. At JNU, one of his teachers found his term paper so good that he wished to award more than an "A", and so gave him an "A alpha" grade.

Two things have been said about Sita in all the obituaries of the past few days. That he was a polit-

ical pragmatist and that he was a jolly fellow, always smiling and friendly. Both attributes of a true Hyderabad. Boss, *dil pey mat lo! Chalney do, balkishen*. When he was with friends from Hyderabad, like K.S. Gopal, the "water man" who was his classmate and a close buddy from All Saints, the conversation was always in what we would call "Irani cafe lingo". If his endearing persona was one reason for the warmth of the eulogies of the past few days, his contribution to contemporary national politics is another. Sitaram represented the true spirit of the "Left and democratic" politics of E.M.S. Nambodiripad, Jyoti Basu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet. This pragmatism was in sharp contrast to the more ideologically and organisationally rigid stance of P. Sundaraya and B.T. Ranadive that Prakash Karat came to represent. The two lines clashed on the issue of the CPI(M)'s support to the Manmohan Singh government in 2008.

As I have recorded in my book on those years, Sitaram devoted considerable energy to protect that alliance between the Left Front and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). It was he who articulated in Parliament the 12 points that became the bottom line for Indian diplomats negotiating the India-United States civil nuclear energy agreement during the tenure of UPA-1. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh instructed his negotiators that whatever the final deal with the United States, it would have to meet all the 12 points raised by Sitaram. Even though the final deal satisfied Sitaram, ideological rigidity within the politburo resulted in the

Sitaram Yechury was the first Hyderabad boy who enrolled at the then newly opened Jawaharlal Nehru University. He was the class topper in the very first batch of M.A. Economics students.

CPI(M)'s withdrawal of support to the alliance.

It was Sitaram who made me a member of the Students Federation of India and subsequently of the CPI(M). My first visit to Moscow, in 1987, was thanks to him. I was taken aback by the extent of anti-communism I encountered in Moscow. The Russian party functionary who was my escort and interpreter was himself critical of the party and repeatedly expressed a desire to visit the United States. On my return, I reported all this to Sitaram. We had many conversations in the late 1980s and early 1990s on the events in Russia and China. On the policy direction the world Communist movement was taking, especially Deng Xiaoping's new line, and the lessons and implications for India. India too was taking a new turn at the time under P.V. Narasimha Rao's leadership.

Sitaram was always an interested interlocutor. He heard me patiently even as we drifted apart ideologically. He remained a believer. I had ceased to be. But, we remained friends. That is what made him a truly great political leader. His ability to make and retain friendships across ideological divides. It would not have been easy, especially given the ideologically hidebound and partisan character of most intellectuals and leaders of the CPI(M). It was the Hyderabad boy in him, the feeling that friendship is what counts in life, that endeared Sita to so many.

When P. Chidambaram was to present the first Budget of the UPA gov-

ernment in July 2004, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asked me to check with both Prakash Karat and Sitaram Yechury whether the CPI(M) would vote against the Budget. That, under Indian legislative rules, would have led to the collapse of the Manmohan Singh government. I tried to get an assurance on this count from Prakash Karat and Sitaram. Prakash refused to meet me and I was asked to meet Sitaram. Taking his cue from Prakash's refusal, Sitaram was not willing to give me any firm assurance. But he walked me all the way from his room in the CPI(M) office at A.K. Gopalan Bhavan in New Delhi to my vehicle downstairs, with his arm around me. We stood on the roadside in full view of several people gathered there and he bid me farewell, saying: "Give my regards to Dr Singh".

That was the endorsement needed. Sita was like that. It is this personal disposition and his political conviction and belief that enabled him to become a key architect of the many non-BJP coalition governments of the 1990s and 2000s. He was the true embodiment of the spirit of "Left and Democratic Unity" that EMS and Basu espoused.

Tailpiece: Sometime in the early 1980s Sitaram, Saifuddin Chaudhury (then with the CPI-M) and I were in Khammam to address a student conference. At the end of a long day as we retired to our hotel, Sita suggested we go watch a late night showing of an NTR movie, playing at a nearby cinema. We had to catch an early morning train back to Hyderabad, why go and try to sleep now? Sita loved living life to the full.

What a shame it was cut short so soon.

The writer is an author, a former newspaper editor and adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He has recently edited The Importance of Shinzo Abe: India, Japan and the Indo-Pacific.

LETTERS

KEJRIWAL THE BRAVE

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday announced that he will resign as the CM of Delhi in the next two days. He said that he would accept the CM's post only if people certify his honesty in the Delhi Assembly elections to be held in February 2025. After granting him bail, SC debarred him from entering the office of CM and signing files, and he had no alternative but to resign. Atishi is likely to be his worthy successor. Mr Kejriwal doesn't shy away from a fight. What a brave CM!

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

ABUSIVE NIRMALA

AS IS HER wont, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has again exhibited her undiluted arrogance by making Mr D. Srinivasan, MD of Annapurna Group of Hotels and honorary president of the Hotel Owners' Association, call on her and apologise to her for raising some genuine questions on the tariff of GST in a public meeting chaired by her. The manner in which she referred to the incident in a subsequent press meet made it clear as to how she thought she was going to "teach" Mr Srinivasan a lesson. Though Vanathi Srinivasan, the BJP MLA, has said that Mr Srinivasan himself came to apologise to Ms Sitharaman, people are not ready to buy her weak defence.

Tharcus S. Fernando
Chennai

WHO'RE THE HATERS?

THIS IS in response to article titled "Kolkata, Haryana boiling: but hate isn't the answer" (Sep. 15). Instead of painting Bengalis in "violent" colours, and too by audaciously invoking Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and drawing a contrast with Gandhian non-violence while forgetting the 1948 Chitpavan pogrom in reaction to his death, Ranjana Banerji should focus on India-wide hatred in the name of religion, deadly antics of "cow vigilantes" and the unrest in Manipur making a daily mockery of the so-called peaceful ethos of the country.

Kajal Chatterjee
Kolkata

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Sankar Paul (Sep. 14). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Kishwar Desai
London Diary



Kate's new video captivates UK; 'dynamic pricing' for concerts too

It was only a three-minute video but it has captivated the nation. Katharine, the Princess of Wales was the centre piece when it was shown earlier this week. It may have been short but the TV channels could not stop repeating it as often as they could. It showed William and Kate with their children outdoors, frolicking, relaxing, having fun and it conveyed a sense of family closeness. The point was that the worst seems to be over for the Princess as far as her cancer treatment is concerned but the way back to "normal" will be long.

The video was shot by an ad film maker — more specifically someone who had shot food commercials for TV. And advertisers know how to tell a story in two minutes and make it look good. Of course, anything royal goes down well but then it also provokes a debate. So 'royal' columnists got into the act debating whether this was "over the top" or "heart-warming" or a "cynical ploy", etc.

There were others who commented too — mostly cancer survivors who were more down-to-earth. But all in all, it was good to see a family — whether royal or not royal — enjoy some carefree moments together after an enormous crisis.

Except, of course, famous stars of the stage and screen often have "rude remarks" to make about royalty. Sir Ian McKellen who has been acting for ages suddenly said that the late Queen was rude. This started a heavy debate. How dare he?

However, this was overshadowed by another debate on the late Queen. A statue was unveiled in Antrim castle in Northern Ireland. They already had a previous statue of Prince Philip. Then they added one of Queen Elizabeth II (it is the second anniversary of her passing away) with her favourite corgis playing at her feet. But, unfortunately, no one thinks it looks like her. Rather she looks just about as regal as an ordinary housewife with a scarf around her head going to the super market. And suddenly the insults piled on. The reality is that unless you can get a 3-D reproduced statue by AI (which no doubt is the future) each sculptor will interpret his subject differently — and we should let it be.

And another area to explore through AI or ChatGPT, especially for politicians, can be: How do they maintain their love affair with the public? Within a couple of months of the election, the popularity ratings

of the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer have gone from positive to negative. Being in government is good for the Party but it immediately invites much closer scrutiny by the Press and the journalists spare no effort at mocking the good and the great. So the Labour Party MPs are learning fast how to keep quiet and behave themselves.

On the other hand, some people do manage to improve on their popularity, but it usually is only after they are dead and gone. Sixty-one paintings of Vincent Van Gogh are now being exhibited at the National Gallery. "Van Gogh: Poets and Lovers" as the exhibition is called is said to be the most extensive display of his works — with many paintings appearing together for the first time. The tragedy of course is that the artist was not the recipient of any of these accolades during his lifetime. Yet, the world fell in love with his work, after him — and it is now being sold all over for many millions and is in the hands of a lucky few. Do catch the exhibition as it is also a chance to gaze upon "Sunflowers" on which the "Just Stop Oil" lobby had poured a can of soup. It is now protected by glass — so hopefully no one will attack it again.

While the best things in life may be — if not free, then at least affordable — as the exhibition at the National Gallery certainly is, you cannot say the same thing about pop concerts. Now tickets for pop concerts are ruled by "dynamic pricing". This is when you think you are going to see your favourite pop star perform live for just £150. But just when you are queuing up, the price goes up. In the old days we called it "black marketing" when people would simply sell tickets for a higher price than announced, because demand outshot supply — but now, hey, it is "dynamic pricing".

Recently this hit hard when the Gallagher brothers (who were great hits when Tony Blair had come to power 25 years back) and then had broken apart, decided to reunite and perform live again. The tickets went up to £325 even as the fans were lining up. So if you want attend any concert in London remember either to be an early bird — or wait till it is shown on OTT.

Kishwar Desai is an award winning author and columnist. She is also the Chair of the Partition Museums in Amritsar and Delhi.

SHORT TAKES

EIGHT DIE IN BID TO CROSS ENGLISH CHANNEL

Paris, Sept. 15: Eight people have died trying to cross the Channel from France to England, French authorities said. This latest incident follows the deaths of 12 people earlier this month when their boat capsized in the Channel on its way to UK and highlights the pressure on the British and French governments to find ways to tackle the boat crossings. Jacques Billant, the Prefect of the Pas-de-Calais region, said that rescue crews were alerted that a boat with 59 people onboard was in difficulty in waters off the coast.

JORDAN GOVT RESIGNS, HASSAN IS NEW PM

Amman, Sept. 15: Jordan's King Abdullah has designated key palace aide Jafar Hassan as prime minister after the government resigned on Sunday, the royal court said. This development comes days after a parliamentary election in which the Islamist opposition made some gains in the US-allied kingdom. Hassan, now head of King Abdullah's office and a former planning minister, replaces Bisher Khasawneh, a veteran diplomat and former palace adviser who was appointed nearly four years ago, a royal court statement said.

PHILIPPINES SENDS REPLACEMENT SHIP TO SHOAL IN SCS

Manila, Sept. 15: The Philippines said it was sending a vessel to Sabina Shoal to replace a coast guard ship that returned to port on Sunday after a five-month deployment at the contested feature in the South China Sea, in a swap that would likely irk China. Beijing had demanded the Philippines withdraw the 97-metre (318-foot) Coast Guard vessel *Teresa Magbanua* it claimed was "illegally stranded" at the atoll. Beijing asserts it owns the atoll as part of its broader claim to nearly the entire South China Sea.

DEAL WITH PILOTS AVERTS STRIKE AT AIR CANADA

Ottawa, Sept. 15: Flagship carrier Air Canada said on Sunday it has reached a last-minute tentative deal with its pilots, averting a crippling strike that would have grounded flights and risked devastating the economy. It was announced just minutes after a key overnight deadline lapsed that would have seen hundreds of flights started to be cancelled. "Air Canada has reached a tentative, four-year collective deal with the Air Line Pilots Association, representing more than 5,200 pilots at Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge."

EGYPT RAIL CRASH: 2 KIDS AMONG 3 KILLED

Cairo, Sept. 15: Two children were among three people killed when two trains collided on Saturday in northern Egypt, the health ministry and state media said. It was the latest in a series of deadly accidents to hit Egypt's extensive rail network, which has been beset by ageing infrastructure and mismanagement. Another 49 people were injured in the crash, which happened in Zagazig, 80 km (50 miles) north of Cairo, the ministry said on its Facebook page. State-owned newspaper *Al-Ahram* said two children were among the dead.

LEBANESE NOVELIST KHOURY DIES AT 76

Beirut, Sept. 15: Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury who dedicated much of his writings to the Palestinian cause and taught at universities around the world, making him one of Lebanon's most prominent intellectuals, has died. He was 76. Khoury, a leading voice of Arab literature, had been ill for months and admitted and discharged from hospital several times over the past year until his death early Sunday, *Al-Quds* Al-Arabi daily that he worked for said. The Lebanese writer, born and raised in Beirut, was outspoken.



US President Joe Biden introduces V-P Kamala Harris at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation 2024 Phoenix Awards at the Walter E. Washington Convention Centre in Washington, DC. — AFP



TRUMP SHARPS ANTI-MIGRANT ATTACKS AS BOTH CANDIDATES VISIT KEY STATES
Donald Trump doubled down on Friday on his anti-migrant attacks despite facing criticism for amplifying a conspiracy theory targeting Haitian immigrants, as he and election rival Kamala Harris took their presidential campaigns to swing states on opposite sides of the United States.

HARRIS, EYEING MODERATES, TOUTS BEING GUN OWNER AND PRO-RESTRICTIONS
Kamala Harris appealed to moderate voters on Friday in the critical swing state of Pennsylvania, reiterating that she is a firearm owner who wants to preserve Americans' gun rights while maintaining "reasonable" gun safety laws.

HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN US LIVE IN FEAR AMID BOMB THREATS, CONSPIRACY THEORIES
Bomb threats are being called into schools and businesses are closing at sundown in Springfield, Ohio, after the small US town became the centre of conspiracy theories targeting its Haitian immigrant community — leaving some in fear for their lives.

Voters narrowly back tariff pitch of Trump

Washington, Sept. 15: Donald Trump's campaign vow to increase tariffs on imported goods, particularly from China, has the support of a narrow majority of US voters, illustrating his economic advantage over rival Vice-President Kamala Harris, a new *Reuters/Ipsos* poll shows. The Republican former president and his Democratic opponent have both vowed to pursue tax cuts if they win the Nov. 5 election. But voters also credit Trump with being more likely to lower the \$35 trillion national debt — even though independent economic forecasters say his proposals would have the opposite effect. Some 56% of registered voters in the Sept. 11-12 poll said they were more likely to support a candidate backing a new 10% tariff, or tax, on all imports, as well as a 60% tariff on imports from China. By comparison, 41% said they were less likely to support a candidate attached to that proposal. The poll showed Harris

'Sleepy Joe' to 'Comrade Kamala' in GoP rhetoric

Paris, Sept. 15: A "Marxist" and a "radical" who wants to "destroy" America: As Democrats rally around the candidacy of Kamala Harris, Republicans have begun employing significantly more negative and aggressive rhetoric than they had against Joe Biden. After dismissing President Biden as "crooked," "bad" and "sleepy," Trump and his supporters now mock Harris as a "border czar," for what they say is her badly failed work in curbing undocumented migration to the United States. That nickname has popped up 80 times in rallies — once every 14 times the former California senator's name is mentioned. They have repeatedly accused Harris of an "open border" policy, which they say allows "millions of illegal aliens" to flood into the country. — AFP



SIX FOREIGNERS HELD OVER PLOT TO KILL MADURO

Caracas, Sept. 15: Three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech citizen have been detained in Venezuela on suspicion of plotting to destabilise the country, the government said, as the United States and Spain denied Caracas's allegations they were involved. The arrests come amid heightened tensions between Venezuela and both the United States and Spain over Venezuela's disputed July 28 presidential poll, which the country's opposition accuses President Nicolás Maduro of stealing. Interior minister Diosdado Cabello said on Saturday the foreign nationals were being held on suspicion of planning an attack on Maduro and his government. "We know that the United States government has links to this operation," Cabello asserted. Cabello said two Spaniards were recently detained in Puerto Ayacucho in the southwest. He added that three Americans and a Czech national were also arrested and linked the alleged plot to intelligence agencies in the US and Spain, as well as to Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado. Maduro has heaped blame for the tide of adversity his country faces on the "imperialist" US. — AFP

Ukraine downs 10 drones, 1 Russia-launched missile

Kyiv, Sept. 15: Ukraine's air defence units destroyed 10 out of 14 drones that Russia launched overnight targeting its territory, Ukraine's air force said on Sunday. At least 30 people, including three children, were injured when a Russian guided bomb hit a residential building in Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine on Sunday. The Ukrainian air force also said on the Telegram messaging app that Russia launched two Iskander M-ballistic missiles and one Kh-59 guided air missile targeting the southern region of Odesa. The guided air missile was destroyed, the air force said. It did not say what happened to the Iskander missiles. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that during the past week Russia used about 30 missiles of various types, more than 800 guided aerial bombs and almost 300 attack drones. — Reuters



Members and supporters of the LGBTQ community drive cars during the Auto Pride Parade in Kharkiv on Sunday. — AFP

IRAN PREZ TO ATTEND BRICS SUMMIT

Dubai, Sept. 15: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian will attend the upcoming Brics summit in Russia, state media cited Tehran's ambassador in Moscow as saying on Sunday, amid tensions with the West over military cooperation between the two countries. US secretary of state Antony Blinken said on Tuesday that Russia had received ballistic missiles from Iran and was likely to use them in Ukraine within weeks. Cooperation between Moscow and Tehran threatened wider European security. The United States, Germany, Britain and France on Tuesday imposed new sanctions on Iran. — Reuters

BACK HOME Crew hit peak altitude of 870 miles — more than 3 times higher than ISS Historic private astronaut mission splashes down

Washington, Sept. 15: The SpaceX Polaris Dawn mission, which made history when its crew conducted the first spacewalk by non-government astronauts, splashed down off Florida coast on Sunday. The Dragon spacecraft landed in the ocean at 3:37 am (0737 GMT), a webcast of the splashdown showed, with a recovery team deploying in the pre-dawn darkness to retrieve the capsule and crew. The capsule was lifted from the water and onto the recovery vessel half an hour later. After brief medical checks, a smiling and waving SpaceX engineer Anna Menon was the first of the crew to exit, followed by engineer Sarah Gillis, pilot Scott Poteet and commander Jared Isaacman. A helicopter was due to transport them to land. The four-member team led by fintech billionaire Isaacman launched on Tuesday from the Kennedy Space Center, quickly journeying deeper into the cosmos than any humans in the past half century as

they ventured into the dangerous Van Allen radiation belt. They hit a peak altitude of 870 miles (1,400 km) — more than three times higher than the International Space Station and the furthest humans had ever travelled from Earth since the Apollo missions. Then on Thursday, with their Dragon spacecraft's orbit brought down to 434 miles, Isaacman swung open the hatch and climbed out into the void, gripping a structure called "Skywalker" as a breathtaking view of Earth unfolded before him. "SpaceX, back at home we all have a lot of work to do, but from here, Earth sure looks like a perfect world," he told mission control in Hawthorne, California, where teams erupted in applause. He went back inside after a few minutes and was replaced by a second astronaut, SpaceX engineer Gillis, who, like Isaacman, performed a series of mobility tests on SpaceX's sleek, next-generation suits. — AFP

Missile fired by Yemen rebels lands in Israel

Triggers sirens; Israel PM warns attackers of heavy price

Jerusalem, Sept. 15: A missile fired by Yemen's Iran-backed rebels landed in an open area in central Israel early Sunday and triggered air raid sirens at its international airport, in the latest reversion from the nearly yearlong war in Gaza. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday warned Yemen's Houthis rebels of retaliation after the group claimed a missile attack on central Israel. "This morning, the Houthis launched a surface-to-surface missile from Yemen into our territory. They should have known by now that we charge a heavy price for any attempt to harm us," he said at a Cabinet meeting. There were no reports of casualties or major damage, but Israeli media aired footage showing people racing to shelters in Ben Gurion International Airport. The airport authority said it resumed normal operations shortly thereafter. A fire could be seen in a rural area of central Israel. — AP



A first responder puts out a fire in an open in Lod near Tel Aviv, reportedly caused by a missile fired from Yemen on Sunday. — AFP

Israel strike may have killed 3 hostages: Army

Jerusalem, Sept. 15: The Israeli military on Sunday said there was a "high probability" an Israeli air strike was responsible for the deaths of three hostages who were killed in Gaza in November. The bodies of the three hostages, Corporal Nik Beizer, Sergeant Ron She-

rman and French-Israeli Elia Toledano, were brought back to Israel in December. "The probe findings suggest a high probability that the three were killed as a result of a by-product of an IDF air strike, during the elimination of the Hamas Northern Brigade commander, Ahmed Ghandour, on November 10th, 2023." "It is based on the location of where their bodies were found in relation to the strike's impact, performance analysis of the strike, intelligence findings, pathological reports, and Forensic Medicine Institute conclusions." — AFP

Flights grounded in Shanghai as China prepares for typhoon

Shanghai, Sept. 15: All flights at Shanghai's two main airports were cancelled on Sunday as authorities in the Chinese megacity prepared for a strong typhoon bringing high winds and heavy rain. Typhoon Bebinca is expected to make landfall along a swath of China's densely populated eastern seaboard between Sunday night and Monday morning, according to Beijing's emergency management ministry. State broadcaster CCTV reported that all flights at Shanghai's two main airports would be cancelled from 8 pm on Sunday (1200 GMT) because of the storm. "Affected by Typhoon Bebinca, the traffic capacity of Shanghai's Pudong and Hongqiao airports has decreased today," CCTV said. "Flight adjustments at the two main airports will be promptly released to the public in accordance with the impact of the typhoon," it said. The emergency management ministry said that Bebinca would cause "heavy to torrential" downpours with "local heavy or extremely heavy rainstorms" between Sunday and Tuesday. Officials held a meeting on Saturday to "research and deploy flood and typhoon control work in key areas", it said. Bebinca's expected landfall will come during the Mid-Autumn Festival public holiday. — AFP



Firefighters work in a flooded street in Glucholazy, southern Poland, on Sunday. — AFP

FLOODS TRIGGER EVACUATIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE MYANMAR FLOOD TOLL SURGES AS HELP ON THE WAY

Glucholazy, Sept. 15: One person has drowned in Poland and an Austrian fireman has died responding to floods, authorities said on Sunday as Storm Boris lashed central and eastern Europe with torrential rains. Since Thursday, swathes of Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia have been hit by high winds and unusually heavy rainfall. The rains have flooded streets and submerged entire neighbourhoods in some places, while shutting down public transport and electricity in others. Sunday's deaths bring the overall toll from the storm to seven. — AFP

Bago, Sept. 15: Volunteers rushed to areas inundated by floods in Myanmar on Sunday as the country's death toll from the Typhoon Yagi deluge more than doubled and remote areas reported increasing numbers of dead and missing. Floods and landslides have killed almost 350 people in Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand in the wake of Typhoon Yagi, which hit the region. One man told AFP how he had tried to rescue people with ropes, as floodwaters four metres (15 feet) high surged through the hill town of Kalaw in Shan state on September 10. — AFP

AI speeding up climate crisis

Montreal, Sept. 15: If you care about the environment, think twice about using AI. Generative artificial intelligence uses 30 times more energy than a traditional search engine, warns researcher Sasha Luccioni, on a mission to raise awareness about the environmental impact of the hot new technology. Recognised as one of the

100 most influential people in the world of AI by *Time* in 2024, the Canadian computer scientist of Russian origin has sought for several years to quantify the emissions of programs like ChatGPT or Midjourney. "I find it particularly disappointing that generative AI is used to search the Internet," laments the researcher. The language models on which the programmes are based require enormous computing capacities to train on billions of data points, necessitating powerful servers. Then there's the energy used to respond to each individual user's requests. Instead of simply extracting information, "like a search engine would do to find the capital of a country." — AFP



Tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman (C) greets as he gets out of his capsule upon his return with his crew in the Gulf of Mexico, on Sunday. — AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	82,890.94 -0.09
Nifty 50	25,356.50 -0.13
S&P 500*	5,626.02 0.54
Dollar (₹)	83.89 0.10
Pound Sterling (₹)	110.20 -0.55
Euro (₹)	93.06 -0.61
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	73,510*5 0.01
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	72.18 -0.07
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.792 -0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	3.657 -0.023

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Lumax inks pact to acquire stake in Greenfuel

Lumax Auto Technologies on Sunday said it has inked a pact to acquire a majority stake in Greenfuel Energy Solutions from its existing shareholders for an undisclosed amount. The proposed acquisition will enable the company to enter into the green and alternate fuels segment which is expected to witness strong and accelerated growth in the coming years, Lumax Auto said in a statement.



JSW Energy arm commissions wind power unit

JSW Energy announced that its step-down subsidiary, JSW Renew Energy Two Ltd, has successfully commissioned a 300 MW wind power plant at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu. The inter-state transmission system wind power project was awarded by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) in tranche X, it said. This marks the first-ever greenfield wind power plant commissioned by the company for the SECI, it noted.

Adani Group wins bid to supply 6,600 MW power

Adani group has won a bid to supply 6,600 MW of bundled renewable and thermal power to Maharashtra for long term after its quote of ₹4.08 per unit beat the likes of JSW Energy and Torrent Power. Its bid for bundled renewable and thermal energy supply for 25 years was almost a rupee lower than the cost at which Mahara-shtra currently procures electricity and will help meet future electricity requirements of state.

Nayara Energy posts 14.3% rise in Q2 fuel sales

Nayara Energy, India's largest private fuel retailer, posted a 14.3 per cent rise in fuel sales for the second quarter of the 2024 calendar year, while exports dropped as the firm met rising local demand for fuel. In the April-June quarter, Nayara sold 75 per cent of all diesel it produced at its Vadinar oil refinery in Gujarat in the local Indian market and 60 per cent of its petrol production locally, Nayara said.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle is prohibited.

Immersive tech spurs sale of audio devices

Consumers seeking cinematic experience, convenience

New Delhi, Sept. 15: The Indian audio devices market is experiencing remarkable growth as offline retail sales hit ₹5,000 crore moving annual turnover (MAT) in June 2024, driven by a 61 per cent YoY volume growth in the personal audio segment, according to a report from GfK.

Growth is driven by rise in immersive sound technologies, enhanced consumer experiences, and a growing demand for high-quality audio products across both home and personal categories, it said. Moreover, a shift towards premiumisation in the category as consumers look towards superior quality and immersive audio experiences also aiding the Indian audio device market.

Indian consumers have a massive appetite for audio devices and are seeking a cinematic experience and convenient listening.



● WITH 70 per cent of loudspeaker sales coming from large retail chains, the south zone, particularly cities like Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad, has emerged as a hotspot for loudspeaker demand.

"With the evolving entertainment landscape, consumers increasingly seek premium, cinematic audio experiences, making the sector ripe for growth and revenue opportunities," said GfK, which is now an NIQ Company, a global market and consumer intelligence firm.

Though the market is still dominated by compact stereo systems, home theatre and smart audio have registered fast growth, it said.

"The personal audio market in India, valued at ₹3,400 crore, experienced a 32 per cent YoY growth

in value in MAT June 2024," it said adding "headphones, headsets and mini/bluetooth speakers have become essential for the Gen Z consumers, who increasingly demand flexibility, affordability, stylishness and quality in audio experiences."

Moreover, this demand is fueled by rise of new content formats such as podcasts and audio series.

MAT is a calculation that measures the average sales over a 12-month period, with the data rolling on a monthly basis.

In the personal audio segment, true wireless

headsets had a significant demand with an increasing share of 38 per cent within headsets category.

"By value, true wireless segment lead the audio market with 50 per cent contribution neckbands continued to dominate the personal audio market by volume, contributing to 55 per cent of sales," it said. Mini/bluetooth speakers also witnessed a 15 per cent YoY value growth, with entry-level products up to ₹2,000 driving 3 per cent of sales by volume.

While the loudspeaker segment, dominated by soundbars, registered a 24 per cent YoY volume growth in MAT June 2024, reaching ₹1,100 crore.

"With 70 per cent of loudspeaker sales coming from large retail chains, the south zone, particularly cities like Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad, has emerged as a hotspot for loudspeaker demand," it said. — PTI

GoM report on GST for health, life covers by Oct. 30

New Delhi, Sept. 15: The GST Council on Sunday constituted a 13-member Group of Ministers (GoM) to suggest a GST rate on premiums of health and life insurance products and submit report by October 30.

Bihar deputy chief minister Samrat Choudhary is the convener of the GoM. The 54th GST Council meet on Sept. 9 had decided to set up a GoM.



Currently, 18 per cent of Goods and Services Tax (GST) is levied on insurance premiums.

The terms of reference (ToR) of the panel include suggesting tax rate of health/medical insurance including individual, group, family floater and other medical insurance for senior citizens, middle class, persons with mental illness. It would also suggest tax rates on life insurance, including term insurance, life insurance with investment plans, group and re-insurance.

"The GoM is to submit its report by October 30," 2024," said the Office Memorandum issued by the GST Council Secretariat on the Constitution of GoM on Life and Health insurance.

West Bengal demanded complete exemption of GST on health and life insurance premiums while other states were in favour of lowering the tax to 5 per cent. — PTI

Reserve Bank to revamp cash management infra

New Delhi, Sept. 15: The Reserve Bank plans to comprehensively revamp its currency management infrastructure over the next 4-5 years, mainly to ensure adequate storage and handling capacity to cater to the future cash needs of the growing economy.

The creation of greenfield currency management centres, the introduction of warehouse automation, the installation of security and surveillance systems, an inventory management system, and a centralised command centre are being mooted to modernise the existing infrastructure, according to an RBI document.

The expected timeline for the whole project is 4-5 years, according to the expression of interest (EOI) issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for procurement of consultancy and project management services for the modernisation of currency management infrastructure.

"Despite moderation in the growth rate of notes in circulation (NIC) in the

● THE RBI said the trend in volume growth is expected to continue, and the rate may even accelerate, such that the value needs of the public are met sufficiently yet conveniently.

last three years, analysis indicates that the growth will continue to be positive over the foreseeable future though the pace thereof is expected to be slower over next decade," the document said.

Further, the central bank said the trend in volume growth is expected to continue, and the rate may even accelerate, such that the value needs of the public are met sufficiently yet conveniently.

NIC, in volume and value terms, have increased considerably over the past two decades. NIC volume stood at 136.21 billion pieces (bpcs) on March 31, 2023, and 146.87 bpcs as of March 31, 2024.

Coins in Circulation (CIC) have also increased in terms of volume and the value. — PTI

GOVT PROPOSES PANEL TO CURB TAX EVASION

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15

In a move to curb tax evasion, money laundering and cyber frauds in online gaming platforms, the government has proposed an inter-departmental panel with representatives from several agencies, including ED, Reserve bank of India, tax and consumer affairs departments among others, is likely to be set up to ensure regulatory compliance.

As per the annual report 2023-24 released by directorate general of GST Intelligence (DGGI), it flagged concerns that online money gaming is a 'high-risk' industry for tax evasion, money laundering, cyber frauds, juvenile delinquency and various socio-economic evils.

The GST intelligence wing of the central board of indirect taxes and customs (CBIC) has initiated the action against 118 domestic online gaming entities, and show-cause notices have been issued to 34 taxpayers involving tax amount of the ₹1,10,531.91 crore.

India to promote domestic shipping

Goa, Sept. 15: India is seeking investments and technology transfer from South Korea and Japan to establish shipbuilding and ship repair clusters to promote the domestic shipping supply chain in the country, according to a senior government official.

Currently, India holds less than 1 per cent of the global shipbuilding market, dominated by China,

South Korea, and Japan. "We are looking at South Korea and Japan for investments and technology transfer for establishing shipbuilding and ship repair clusters in India," TK Ramachandran, secretary in ministry of ports, shipping and waterways (MoPSW), said here.

"We have communicated to them (South Korea and Japan) that you come with your technology and

● UNION MINISTER Sarbananda Sonowal has written to chief ministers of all states to provide land immediately if Japanese or Korean companies express interest in setting up shipbuilding.

investments, we will provide you land for setting up shipbuilding and ship repair clusters," he said. Ramachandran also said

that Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal has written to chief ministers of all states to provide land immediately if Japanese or Korean companies express interest in setting up shipbuilding and ship repair clusters.

"At least three states have expressed interest in providing land for establishing shipbuilding and ship repair clusters," he said. — PTI

Financial institutions add AI

New Delhi, Sept. 15: Ninety per cent of Indian financial institutions are focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) as the primary technology enablers of innovation, according to a PwC India report.

As per the PwC India report titled, "Mapping the FinTech innovation landscape in India" data analytics also continues to emerge prominently across nearly 74 per cent responses, underscoring its integral role in driving insights and decision-making within the finan-



cial services (FS) sector.

It said that 31 financial institutions consisting of banks, insurance firms and fintechs participated in the survey.

"AI and GenAI emerged as the focus area for innovation for Indian financial institutions, with 90 per

cent of the respondents citing them as the primary technology enablers of innovation," it said.

Further, 84 per cent of respondents stated that customer experience and engagement - acquisition, onboarding and servicing was the key area of focus for innovation initiatives.

As the fintech industry continues to evolve, growth must be balanced with the critical challenges of digital security and regulatory compliance, Mihir Gandhi, partner and payments transformation leader, PwC India, said. — PTI

SCREEN | TIME Brands using short videos to plan customer outreach

Reels spur Meta's growth in India

New Delhi, Sept. 15: Social media giant Meta counts India among its key priority markets globally, as the rising popularity of its offerings - from Reels to business messaging - and increased engagement on AI tools is supercharging growth, according to Meta India vice president Sandhya Devanathan.

Devanathan said India is the leading market for short-form video Reels' watch-time on Instagram. The Instagram parent Meta is upbeat about the pace and extent to which Reels has caught on with creators and brands alike. "Reels is big for Meta globally, but Reels is certainly huge for Meta in India," Devanathan said. Having recognised the power of Reels in influ-



● THE OPTIMISM about India is backed by factors like the demographic dividend with Gen Z and youth population, the momentum in the private sector, growth and innovation.

encing buying decisions, brands are including it early in their campaign blueprint and customer outreach plans, she said.

According to her, Reels is now in consideration set for brands as they conceptualise their campaigns, marking a big shift in the way campaigns are being designed. "Not only are we seeing the medium exploding in terms of consumption on our platform, but

we are seeing brands and creators make use of that to get outcomes they want with their businesses and audiences," she said.

India is also the largest adopter of Meta AI, she said and added the company is buoyed by its uptake here, with users turning to the AI-powered chatbot for information on parenting tips to Onam Sadya (traditional vegetarian feast served during

Onam festival).

Describing India as one of the key priority markets for Meta globally, Devanathan said the company is very excited about the prospects here and continues to double down and invest in the country.

Meta's optimistic outlook for the Indian market is supported by multiple factors, mainly the strong growth forecast for the economy. The optimism about India is evident in industry conversations and backed by factors like the demographic dividend with Gen Z and youth population, the momentum in the private sector, growth and innovation, the start-up ecosystem, as also the strength of India's capital markets, she said. — PTI

Epsilon plans ₹9,000-crore anode unit in Karnataka

New Delhi, Sept. 15: Battery materials manufacturer Epsilon Advanced Materials is planning to set up a ₹9,000-crore anode plant in Karnataka with an annual production capacity of 90,000 tonne, an official said.

The investment in the plant would be made in two phases. In the first phase, ₹4,000 crore would be invested and the remaining ₹5,000 crore would be pumped in in the second phase, Epsilon group managing director Vikram Handa said.

"So, we are looking to build a 30,000-tonne anode plant in India by Q4 2026, which will entail an investment of about ₹4,000 crore. The plant will be scaled up to 90,000

tonne (capacity) by 2031. The total capex outlay is ₹9,000 crore for our annual business in next eight years," Handa explained.

With increasing demand of EVs in India, there is a need for Indian cell manufacturing companies to set up battery plants in the country. Epsilon products will act as a sustainable and reliable supplier of anode and cathode material to these cell companies.

The company plans the groundbreaking ceremony for the plant in the next six to eight months, Handa said, adding that the construction of the plant will take a year and a half. "The idea is to have supply in the market by 2026-end or 2027 beginning," he said. — PTI

US Fed, domestic earnings to sway stock markets

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 15

Ahead of the US Fed decision on interest rate scheduled on September 17-18, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have started investing in the Indian market.

Market will be keenly watching quantum of rate cut by US central bank as opinion of 25 to 50 basis points rate cut is being analysed based on recent economic data.

In September, FPIs have invested ₹27,856 crore so far compared to ₹7,320.12 crore in August 2024.

"There are two reasons why FPIs have changed their strategy from selling to buying. One, there is a consensus now that the Fed will start cutting rates from this month onwards pushing the US yields down. This will facilitate fund flows from the US to emerging markets. Two, the Indian market is extremely resilient with strong momentum and missing out on the Indian market would be a bad strategy for FPIs. High valuations in India, however, continue to be a concern," said V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

"A significant trend in the market for the week ended 13th September is that FPIs were buyers of equity in the cash market on all days of the week. It is significant to note that unlike in previous weeks when FPIs were buyers through the primary market, this week they were buyers through the



● THE INDIAN market is extremely resilient with strong momentum and missing out on the Indian market would be a bad strategy for FPIs. High valuations in India, however, continue to be a concern.

exchanges, having bought equity for ₹22,707 crore," Vijayakumar said.

"The market hit a new high as the rate-cut optimism globally (European Central Bank and US Fed) has provided a positive impetus across the global markets."

"Going ahead, market focus will be on the upcoming US federal open market committee (FOMC) meeting, while domestic market direction will also be influenced by domestic corporate earnings, which are expected to improve in second quarter on a quarter to quarter basis," said Vinod Nair, head - Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Monday will be a crucial day for primary market as Bajaj Housing Finance initial public offering (IPO) shares will get listed. Two other IPOs of Kross and Tolins Tyres will also get listed on Monday, another IPO of P N Gadgil Jewellers will get listed on Tuesday.



RELIANCE REVAMPS STORE SPACES FOR GEN. MERCHANDISE

New Delhi, Sept. 15: Reliance Retail has increased the trading area for non-food and general merchandise by almost 50 per cent in its grocery stores in a bid to improve margins.

The move is also likely to bolster the retailer's hyper-local aspirations through its e-commerce platform Jiomart, through which it is connecting its Smart and Smart Bazaar stores providing a wider variety to consumers, according to an industry insider.

As part of that Reliance Retail is now going for space revision at its stores, allocating higher trading areas for non-food and general merchandise items, a segment which offers higher margins than other segments such as grocery and apparel.

The extended retail space would not only allow Reliance Retail to offer a complete range of products for a segment but also fill in the gaps in its offerings, the source said.

Besides, it will also help compete with the growing quick-commerce platforms through its hyper-local model under Jiomart, where it is investing in enhancements to the online platform, supply chain capabilities. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

India lose Davis tie to Sweden

Stockholm: Ramkumar Ramanathan and N. Sriram Balaji could play well only in patches in the do-or-die doubles encounter and later Siddharth Vishwakarma lost on debut as India went down 0-4 to Sweden in the Davis Cup World Group I tie, here Sunday. After losing both the singles on Saturday, India needed to win the third rubber to stay alive in the tie but Ramkumar and Balaji went down 3-6, 4-6 against Andre Goransson and Filip Bergevi in one hour and 19 minutes to concede an unsailable 0-3 lead. India's dismal record against Sweden in the Davis Cup continued as it was the team's sixth defeat in as many ties. The reverse singles were rendered inconsequential and it gave captain Rohit Rajpal chance to test former national champion Siddharth, who lost 2-6, 2-6 to Elias Ymer. It was India's best chance to beat Sweden despite having a depleted squad but the players could not grab their opportunities. India will now compete next year in the Play-offs to keep place in World Group I. — PTI

Oscar wins a thrilling race

Baku, Azerbaijan: Oscar Piastri claimed an impressive second victory of his burgeoning career on Sunday when he drove his McLaren to a well-judged triumph ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in a tense Azerbaijan Grand Prix. The 23-year-old Australian's victory enabled McLaren to replace Red Bull as leaders of the constructors' championship, ending the champions' two-year dominance, in a race of attrition that ended under a Virtual Safety Car following a spectacular late collision between Carlos Sainz of Ferrari and Red Bull's Sergio Perez as they battled for third. George Russell finished third for Mercedes ahead of title-chasing Lando Norris in the second McLaren, who fought from 15th on the grid to beat three-time champion and series leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull, who was fifth. "Well, that was the most stressful afternoon of my life," said Piastri on team radio. "A big move! Thanks for the car! What a day that was! Thanks everyone." — AFP

Maini survives crash in Baku

Baku, Azerbaijan: Indian driver Kush Maini on Sunday survived a horrifying crash after he stalled at the start of the feature race in Formula 2, a support race to Formula 1. The scary incident occurred on the opening lap of the Formula 2 race which preceded the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix. The 23-year-old Indian had nowhere to go at the race start as his car's engine stopped working suddenly. That left fellow drivers Josep Maria Martí and Oliver Goethe unsighted, leading to a massive collision. The rear of Maini's car was totally destroyed by the impact of the crash and fortunately, he came out of it unscathed. Maini's father Gautam confirmed that his son is doing fine. "He is doing okay. As part of the standard protocol all medical check ups were conducted on Kush and all reports are normal," he said. Maini, representing Invicta Racing in his second Formula 2 season, is 11th in the standings. — PTI

First Pak woman named as umpire

Islamabad: Saleema Imtiaz became the first Pakistani woman to be nominated to the ICC international panel of development umpires, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Sunday. Imtiaz's nomination on the panel means she is now eligible to officiate in women's bilateral international matches and ICC women's events. "This isn't just a win for me, it's a win for every aspiring female cricketer and umpire in Pakistan," Imtiaz said. "I hope my success motivates countless women who dream of making their mark in the sport. "This moment reflects the growing influence of women in cricket and the PCB's commitment to fostering that development." Imtiaz's daughter, Kainat played 40 international games for Pakistan. Imtiaz said she had always wanted to make her own name in the field of umpiring ever since her daughter made her international debut against South Africa in 2010. — PTI

BREAKPOINT

Chopra finishes runner-up in DL final despite fracture in hand

Brussels, Sept. 15: Double Olympic medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Sunday revealed that he took part in the Diamond League season finale here despite a fracture in his non-throwing left hand which he sustained during a training session.

On Saturday, Chopra came agonisingly close to winning the Diamond League crown before missing it by a single centimeter to finish as runner-up for the second consecutive year with a throw of 87.86m here.

"On Monday, I injured myself in practice and x-rays showed that I had fractured the fourth metacarpal in my left hand. It was another painful challenge for me. But with the help of my team, I was able to participate in Brussels," the 26-year-old said on his social media handle.

Metacarpals, also known as palm bones, are the bones that lie between the fingers and the wrist in a human hand. There are five metacarpals in each hand, with each bone being associated with a specific finger.

Chopra, who throws with his right hand, was beaten for the gold by two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada who sent his spear to 87.87m in his first attempt. This was Chopra's second consecutive Diamond League runner-up finish after winning the crown in 2022.

He normally falls down with his left palm touching the ground in the follow through after releasing the spear.

On Saturday, in all his six attempts, Chopra avoided falling down and touching the ground with his left palm.

The Haryana athlete had been struggling with his fitness this year and is expected to meet a doctor



Jasmine Camacho-Quinn of Puerto Rico competes in the women's 100 metres hurdles during the Diamond League final 2024 athletics meet in Brussels on Saturday. Jasmine won gold. — AP

soon to rectify a groin injury that has affected him all season and came in the way of his quest to hit the elusive 90m mark.

This hand injury is a new one and he did not elaborate much on it. This fracture may need a few months to heal.

Chopra, who added a silver to his Olympic medal tally in Paris following a historic gold at the Tokyo Games, thus ended his season, he said, "As the 2024 season ends, I look back on everything I've learned through the year — about improvement, setbacks, mentality and more. I want to thank all of you for your encouragement. 2024 has made me a better athlete and person. See you in 2025."

The Haryana athlete remained consistent throughout the season, though he won just one international event this season, the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland on June 18.

He had made the Diamond League final cut after finishing fourth in the overall standings with 14 points from his two second-place finishes in DL one-day meets in Doha and Lausanne on May 10 and August 22 respectively. — PTI

But he admitted that he could not meet his own expectations in the season. "This was the last competition of the year, and I wanted to end my season on the track. While I couldn't meet my own expectations, I feel this was a season in which I learned a lot. I am now determined to return, fully fit and ready to go," he said. Reflecting on his

season, he said, "As the 2024 season ends, I look back on everything I've learned through the year — about improvement, setbacks, mentality and more. I want to thank all of you for your encouragement. 2024 has made me a better athlete and person. See you in 2025."

The Haryana athlete remained consistent throughout the season, though he won just one international event this season, the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland on June 18.

He had made the Diamond League final cut after finishing fourth in the overall standings with 14 points from his two second-place finishes in DL one-day meets in Doha and Lausanne on May 10 and August 22 respectively. — PTI

Gill rested for Bangladesh T20Is

New Delhi, Sept. 15: India vice-captain Shubman Gill is among the prominent players who will be rested for the three-match T20I series against Bangladesh starting October 7 as part of BCCI's workload management policy.

Gill, India's No.3 in Test matches, is a vital cog in the team's top-order alongside Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Yashasvi Jaiswal and is expected to play all 10 Tests this season.

Apart from Gill, a few more important players will also be rested keeping the three-Test series against New Zealand in mind.

India will start their upcoming international season with a two-Test series against Bangladesh in Chennai from September 19 followed by the second match in Kanpur starting September 27.

Ayes, Shubman will be rested for the Bangladesh T20I series. If you look at the fixture, the three T20Is will be played on October 7 (Gwalior), 10 (Delhi) and 13 (Hyderabad). Now first Test vs New Zealand starts October 16.

"So with a turnaround of three days, it is important to give Gill a break," a BCCI source said. Gill has so far played 21 T20Is and has a hundred, three fifties to his credit besides a strike rate of nearly 140. He was recently appointed captain for the five-match series against Zimbabwe in Harare, which India won 4-1.

In the current season, T20Is are least priority for the Indian team with the World Test Championship points with the five-match series against Australia being topmost on the agenda. Also ODIs will be important as there is a Champions Trophy to be played in that format in February-March. — PTI



India's Virat Kohli (left) and Jasprit Bumrah interact during a training session in Chennai, ahead of their first Test against Bangladesh.

Kamboj helps India 'C' take lead

Anantapur, Sept. 15: Pacer Anshul Kamboj ended up with an eight-wicket haul as India 'C' took the lead in the Duleep Trophy standings on the basis of the first innings lead against India B here.

Resuming day four at 309 for seven, India 'B' were dismissed for 332 in 108 overs with Kamboj cleaning up the tail to add to his overnight five wickets. India 'B' skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran remained unbeaten on 157 off 286 balls.

India 'C', who amassed 525 in the first innings, reached 128 for four in their second innings and that was the moment where players decided to shake hands.

India 'C' got three points for the first innings lead, pushing them to top with nine points in two games while India 'B' got a solitary point for a draw. Captain Rituraj Gaikwad (62) stuck his

second fifty of the match while Rajat Patidar was dismissed in the 40s for the second consecutive time in the game. It was only the third time in Duleep Trophy history that a pacer had taken eight wickets or more in an innings. Kamboj was deservedly named player of the match. It was the first ever five wicket haul for the Haryana cricketer in his 15th first class game. He has played for Mumbai Indians in the IPL this season. Another cricketer who

made a statement in the game was Ishan Kishan, who smashed 111 off 126 balls in his return to red ball cricket.

BHUI'S TON IN VAIN AS INDIA 'A' BEAT INDIA 'D'

Ricky Bhui delayed the inevitable with a stubborn hundred, but spinners Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian eventually brought India 'D' to their knees as India 'A' walked away with a 186-run win.

Bhui, starting from overnight 44, made 113 (195b, 14x4, 3x6) but India

'D', overnight 62, were bundled out for 301, chasing 488.

The victory enabled India 'A' to stay in contention for the title with 6 points. But they will have to get a favourable result against table-toppers India 'C' (9 points) in their next match from September 19.

India 'D', out of title race after two successive defeats, will be up against second-placed India 'B', who have 7 points.

On a pitch that gave copious assistance to the spinners, the 'D' batters needed to show tremendous application to hang around. But apart from Bhui none really showed the stomach for a fight. Bhui's second-wicket stand with Yash Dubey (37) was worth 100 runs but Dubey got run out, and in his next over Mulani castled Devdutt Padikkal to push India 'D' to 105 for three. — PTI

BANGLADESH TEAM ARRIVE IN CHENNAI

Chennai, Sept. 15: A confident Bangladesh team arrived in India on Sunday for two Test matches and three T20Is with visiting skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto hoping that their historic 2-0 series win in Pakistan recently would hold them in good stead against the formidable hosts in the coming weeks.

The Bangladesh squad landed in Chennai, the venue for the opening Test beginning on September 19, on Sunday afternoon.

"It's definitely going to be a very challenging series for us," Shanto was quoted as saying at the press briefing at the Dhaka airport.

"After a good series (vs Pakistan) there is definitely an extra confidence in the team, in the people of the country. Every series is an opportunity." — PTI

Mikel Arteta's side were without skipper Odegaard due to an ankle injury suffered on Norway duty, while Rice served a suspension for his red card against Brighton.

Losing two such influential players appeared to make Arsenal vulnerable on their trip up the Seven Sisters Road to face their bitter rivals.

But the Premier League title contenders dug deep with a combative display, benefitting from Tottenham's latest display of wasteful finishing before Gabriel bagged the winner in the second half.

The Brazilian defender's first goal since February made it three wins from four league games for unbeaten Arsenal as they chase a first title since 2004 after two successive runners-

up finishes. Arsenal have now won on their last three visits to Tottenham, losing just once, in May 2022, in their last eight meetings with their hated neighbours.

The second placed Gunners are two points behind Manchester City as they turn their attention to their Champions League opener at Atalanta on Thursday before travelling to face Pep Guardiola's champions next weekend.

The 196th north London derby showed Arsenal have steel and spirit aplenty, but they also needed a dose of good fortune as Tottenham let them off the hook in the first half. Failing to turn dominant spells into goals has been a familiar story for Tottenham this season and once again Ange Postecoglou's men were let down by their lack of cutting edge. Tottenham's second successive defeat leaves them with only one win from four games in a worrying start to the season for Postecoglou after their late swoon last term cost them a top four place. — AFP

ASIAN CHAMPIONS | TROPHY HOCKEY

India favourites against S. Korea

Hulunbuir (China), Sept. 15: Maintaining a clean slate, favourites India will fancy their chances when they take on a below-par but unpredictable Korea in the semifinals of the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Monday.

Paris Olympics bronze medallist India have been in rollicking form in the tournament so far, registering five wins out of five league matches. The Harmanpreet Singh-led side started their campaign with a 3-0 win over hosts China and then trounced Japan and Malaysia 5-1 and 8-1 respectively.

India then beat Korea 3-1 before eking out a narrow 2-1 win over arch-rivals Pakistan.

It has been a commanding performance from the Indians as they excelled in every department - be it forwardline, midfield or defence.

The most promising part of India's performance in the league stages has been the form of the strikers.

Scoring field goals was a major concern in Paris but here the young forwardline comprising Sukhjeet Singh, Abhishek, Uttam Singh, Gurjot Singh, Arajjeet Singh Hundal and others have exceeded expectations.

Young midfielder Raj Kumar Pal, too, has shone bright, scoring some fine field goals. Besides, veteran Manpreet Singh, vice-captain Vivek Sagar Prasad and Nilakanta Sharma have excelled in the midfield.

The Indian defence too has performed stoutly, conceding just four goals with goalkeepers Krishan Bahadur Pathak and Suraj Karkera not letting the team feel the void left by the retirement of the talismanic P.R. Sreejesh.

Harmanpreet, one of the best drag-flickers in the world currently, has led from the front and has continued his good form of Paris, converting as many as five penalty corners. When India struggled for field goals, Harmanpreet stood up with his penalty corner conversions.

Harmanpreet also has an able understudy in young Jugraj Singh, who is right now the fastest drag-flicker in the world. In the other semifinal of the day, Pakistan will take on hosts China. — PTI

Paris Olympics bronze medallist India have been in rollicking form in the tournament so far, registering five wins out of five league matches.

Paris Olympics bronze medallist India have been in rollicking form in the tournament so far, registering five wins out of five league matches.

The Indian defence too has performed stoutly, conceding just four goals with goalkeepers Krishan Bahadur Pathak and Suraj Karkera not letting the team feel the void left by the retirement of the talismanic P.R. Sreejesh.

Harmanpreet, one of the best drag-flickers in the world currently, has led from the front and has continued his good form of Paris, converting as many as five penalty corners.

When India struggled for field goals, Harmanpreet stood up with his penalty corner conversions.

Harmanpreet also has an able understudy in young Jugraj Singh, who is right now the fastest drag-flicker in the world.

In the other semifinal of the day, Pakistan will take on hosts China. — PTI



Arsenal's Gabriel (left) celebrates after scoring against Tottenham Hotspur during their English Premier League match in London on Sunday. — AP

Gabriel strikes as Arsenal pip Spurs

London, Sept. 15: Gabriel Magalhaes headed Arsenal to a 1-0 win at Tottenham on Sunday as the Gunners overcame the absence of key midfielders Declan Rice and Martin Odegaard to extend their north London derby dominance.

Mikel Arteta's side were without skipper Odegaard due to an ankle injury suffered on Norway duty, while Rice served a suspension for his red card against Brighton.

Losing two such influential players appeared to make Arsenal vulnerable on their trip up the Seven Sisters Road to face their bitter rivals.

But the Premier League title contenders dug deep with a combative display, benefitting from Tottenham's latest display of wasteful finishing before Gabriel bagged the winner in the second half.

The Brazilian defender's first goal since February made it three wins from four league games for unbeaten Arsenal as they chase a first title since 2004 after two successive runners-

up finishes. Arsenal have now won on their last three visits to Tottenham, losing just once, in May 2022, in their last eight meetings with their hated neighbours.

The second placed Gunners are two points behind Manchester City as they turn their attention to their Champions League opener at Atalanta on Thursday before travelling to face Pep Guardiola's champions next weekend.

The 196th north London derby showed Arsenal have steel and spirit aplenty, but they also needed a dose of good fortune as Tottenham let them off the hook in the first half. Failing to turn dominant spells into goals has been a familiar story for Tottenham this season and once again Ange Postecoglou's men were let down by their lack of cutting edge. Tottenham's second successive defeat leaves them with only one win from four games in a worrying start to the season for Postecoglou after their late swoon last term cost them a top four place. — AFP