

PM Narendra Modi meets Maldives President Muizzu



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu at Hyderabad House in Delhi on Monday. Muizzu, who is known for his China tilt, is on a five-day trip to India to mend the island nation's ties with New Delhi, months after a diplomatic fiasco triggered by his ministers' objectionable remarks against PM Modi. Muizzu's India trip coincides with the Maldives' financial crunch, which is exacerbated by the country's

dwindling foreign currency reserves. Mohamed Muizzu met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar after arriving in India on Sunday.

"Jaishankar expressed his pleasure in welcoming the President to India, for the state visit. President Dr Muizzu conveyed his gratitude to the Indian government for the warm welcome extended to him and his delegation upon arrival," according to the press release from the President's Office of Maldives.

BJP Pulls Off Haryana Hat-Trick, J&K Picks National Conference-Congress

"Wherever BJP forms government, the people choose them for a long time," : Modi

New Delhi: The BJP won a historic third straight term in Haryana and did well in Jammu. Kashmir voted overwhelmingly for National Conference, leaving the Congress with another lacklustre performance in this round of assembly polls.

and the National Conference-Congress alliance blanked out opponents in Jammu and Kashmir's first assembly elections in a decade and first as a Union Territory, marking a significant verdict with national ramifications. The results of the assembly elections – the first since the Lok Sabha polls this summer – buoyed the BJP ahead of crucial contests in Maharashtra and Jharkhand



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets (BJP) workers at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI)

later this year, and sent the Congress back to the drawing board even as it held encouraging signs for entrenched regional outfits such as the NC. Both elections witnessed largely bipolar contests, squeezing the space for independents and smaller parties. Prime

Minister Narendra Modi hailed the victory in Haryana and said it will "resonate far and wide".

"On such a holy day, the sixth day of Navaratra, lotus has bloomed for the third consecutive time in Haryana. Truth has triumphed in the land of the [Bhag-

wad] Gita. Development and good governance have won," Modi said. Addressing party workers and supporters at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, Modi also criticised the Congress for its "negative" politics. "Conspiracies are being hatched globally to weaken India's economy, democracy, society. Congress and its cronies part of this game," Modi said. Complimenting the NC on its performance, Modi said the elections in the UT were a huge success for the Union government. "The election in Jammu & Kashmir was historic in many ways. This election was the first to be held after the complete implementation of India's Constitution. Modi Said

Tragedy strikes Airshow event in Chennai 5 dead



Chennai: A day meant to mark a moment of national pride for the Indian Air Force (IAF) turned into a nightmare at Chennai's Marina Beach, when a crowd of more than 12 lakh people surged toward exits, leaving five dead and many hospitalised.

The October 6 air show, held to commemorate the IAF's 92nd anniversary, was the first such event in Chennai in over two decades. What was intended to be a spectacle of military aviation ended in chaos as the sheer size of the crowd overwhelmed both organisers and local authorities. A senior police officer said that by late Sunday evening, five deaths had been

confirmed and 40 people were in hospitals. "Over 150 people have received first aid in various parts of the city due to the dehydration and stress they faced. One death was reported on the beach, another near Napier Bridge. Other victims died on their way back home at different places. It was not a stampede situation at one particular place," the officer said. The event, widely publicised by both the IAF, attracted more than 12 lakh spectators to the sprawling Marina Beach. By 7 am, people had begun assembling at the two-kilometre stretch of coastline to secure vantage points for the 11.30 am to 1 pm air show.

TIRUPATI LADDU ROW

SC orders CBI-monitored SIT probe

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday ordered a new "independent" Special Investigation Team (SIT), monitored by the Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), to probe into the allegations of adulterated ghee being used in laddus distributed at the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh's Tirupati under the previous YSRCP government.

The new SIT team will comprise two officers each from the CBI and Andhra Pradesh state police, and a senior officer of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), according to a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan. "It will be appropriate that the investigation is carried under the supervision of the Director of CBI... We therefore dispose of the petition with the following direction. The SIT appointed by the state government is substituted as under. Two officers of the CBI nominated by the



Director CBI, two officers of the Andhra Pradesh state police nominated by the government of Andhra Pradesh, a senior officer of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) nominated by its Chairperson," the bench ordered. Directing the investigation by the new SIT, the bench clarified that it has not gone into the allegations and counter allegations in either of the petitions or the stand of the respondent. "We clarify that we will not permit the court to be used as a political battleground. However, in order to assuage the feelings of the crores of people, we

find that the investigation should be conducted by an independent SIT..." it said. The Supreme Court further added, "We, however, clarify that our order should not be construed as any reflection on the independence or fairness of the SIT. We are passing the order of entrustment to independent agency consisting of the aforesaid only to assuage the feelings of the crores of people having faith in the deity". The controversy began when the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led government in Andhra Pradesh raised doubts about the "purity" of the ingredients used in the Tirupati laddoo.

BRIEF NEWS

India played the role of first responder for Maldives: Modi

■ **New Delhi:** PM Modi in a joint press conference with President Muizzu said, "India has always been the first responder for the Maldives." "India and the Maldives share centuries-old ties. India is the Maldives' closest neighbor and trusted friend," said PM Modi.

Terrorist abduct Indian Army Soldier in J&K



Srinagar: The bullet-ridden body of a Territorial Army (TA) soldier, who was abducted by terrorists in South Kashmir's Anantnag district, was recovered by security forces on Wednesday.

Indian Army to commemorate 62nd Walong Day with month-long events

Itanagar: The Indian Army is all set to commemorate the 62nd Walong Day with a series of grand events, paying homage to the indomitable courage and sacrifice of the soldiers who fought valiantly during the Battle of Walong in the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

The celebrations are set to begin on October 17, 2024 with a solemn opening ceremony and wreath-laying at the Walong War Memorial, the place of remembrance of the brave hearts who laid down their lives defending our motherland.

The 62nd Walong Day will not just be a tribute to the past but a vibrant celebration of gallant spirit of the Indian Army.

The meticulously planned month-long celebration includes battlefield treks, car rally, medical and veterinary camps, adventure treks, cycle and motorcycle expedition, and the Half Marathon finishing at Walong. Each event symbolizes the indomitable spirit of the Indian Army and its dedication to keep



the memory of the fallen heroes alive.

The Indian Army's involvement in the Battle of Walong stands as a testament to the sheer bravery, dedication and unwavering spirit of its soldiers.

Facing severe logistical challenges in the harsh terrains of Arunachal Pradesh, the soldiers of the 6 KUMARON, 4 SIKH, 2/8 Gorkha Rifles, 3/3 Gorkha Rifles, and 4 DOGRA fought with unparalleled gallantry, making the enemy pay dearly for every inch of ground. Their courage, even in the face of overwhelming odds, re-

mains etched in the annals of Indian military history.

The upcoming events reflect the Army's commitment to not only remember the sacrifices of the past but also to engage with the local community, fostering a spirit of unity, resilience, and patriotism.

As the celebrations unfold, the Indian Army invites everyone to gear up and join them with renewed 'josh' to celebrate their hard work, to honour the legacy of those who made the supreme sacrifice, and commemorate their contributions towards the nation.

Tripura gears up for peaceful Durga Puja

Our Bureau

Agartala : In anticipation of the vibrant Durga Puja celebrations from October 9 to 13, the Tripura Police have rolled out extensive security measures to ensure the festivities are peaceful and enjoyable for all. With preparations underway for several days, law enforcement agencies are committed to maintaining order throughout the celebrations. Amitabh Ranjan, the Director General of Police (DGP), shared insights with ANI, stating, "We have been preparing for the Puja for the last few days. Recently, the honorable Chief Minister convened a review meeting where we thoroughly discussed security management for the upcoming festivities. Strict instructions have been issued to ensure safety and security so that we can all enjoy a peaceful Puja Celebration

The initiative includes increased soil testing labs and agriculture knowledge centres

Assam govt to give 10 lakh soil health cards to farmers



Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday kick-started distribution of Soil Health Cards (SHC) to more than four lakh farmers across the state.

At an official function here, Sarma said the government will distribute around 10 lakh SHC and four lakh of them are already ready to be distributed. "Our Krishak bandhus are the anchors in our mission of Atmanirbhar Assam. I am dedicating several initiatives for our farmers today," he added. The number of laboratories to test soil quality has been increased to 26 from five

earlier in the state, Sarma said.

Along with distribution of the SHC, agricultural machinery was handed over to farmers and agriculture knowledge centres were inaugurated by the chief minister in the presence of Agriculture minister Atul Bora. "We are in the process of establishing 816 village agriculture equipment banks. Earlier, we had only 80 such banks in the state," Sarma said in his speech. He said that the government is also launching 96 agriculture knowledge centres and 93 agriculture development offices.

Security forces recover improvised canons in hill and valley districts



Imphal: Security forces in Manipur intensified search operations across fringe and vulnerable areas in both hill and valley districts. During an operation in Donjang village, Churachandpur District, security personnel recovered three improvised medium-sized canons, known locally as "Pumpis," along with two unexploded Pumpi shells. The recovery highlights the ongoing efforts to stabilize the region amidst heightened tensions.

In a parallel effort, forces

facilitated the movement of essential goods, ensuring the passage of 251 vehicles along NH-37 and 206 vehicles on NH-2. Strict security measures were enforced, particularly in sensitive areas, to safeguard the transit of essential supplies. Additionally, 109 Naka checkpoints were set up across Manipur. Despite these efforts, no violations were reported, and no individuals were detained, marking a successful day in maintaining peace and security in the state.

Australia to provide skill development training to Arunachal Pradesh's youths

Our Bureau

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has called for a strategic partnership with Australia to strengthen skill development efforts across the state. In a meeting with Australian High Commissioner to India, Philip Green, on Sunday, Khandu underscored the pressing need for skilled trainers to support major sectors like construction, infrastructure, and hydropower, vital to the state's growth.

Khandu highlighted the importance of equipping local youth with globally competitive skills, especially as Arunachal Pradesh embarks on ambitious infrastructure and hydropower projects. "Our state requires specialized human resources, and collaboration with Australia could bring in much-needed



expertise," Khandu said. High Commissioner Green expressed Australia's willingness to support these initiatives, commending the state's peaceful environment and cultural richness. He affirmed that Australia is eager to foster partnerships aimed at enhancing skill development and preparing Arunachal's workforce for global opportunities.

Also present at the meeting were Australian Consul General Hugh Boylan and Vice-Consul Harriet White.

The discussions concluded on a positive note, with both sides expressing optimism about future cooperation in workforce training. He also stressed the need for a skilled workforce to support the projects in the hydropower sector.

The chief minister also emphasized the importance of recruiting highly skilled professionals to train the youth of Arunachal Pradesh and equip them with the necessary skills.

Mizo students call dismissal of criminal charges against leaders



Aizawl: The Mizo Students' Union (MSU) has found itself at the center of controversy as police have filed charges related to an alleged abduction and extortion involving workers from M/S Satnam Global Infraproject Ltd. The situation escalated after MSU President Samuel Zoramthapua sent a letter to Home Minister K. Sapdanga demanding action against Aizawl Superintendent of Police, Rahul Alwal, who reportedly led the police team that entered the MSU office. The MSU's predicament stems from a accusations.

SBI General Insurance launches 'SBIG Health Super Top-Up' to address rising medical costs

Mumbai: SBI General Insurance has launched the 'SBIG Health Super Top-Up' policy, a flexible health insurance solution designed to complement any existing base health plan. This initiative comes in response to the increasing financial burden of medical expenses, with medical inflation in India soaring at approximately 14%. The new policy allows customers to enhance their coverage with sum insured options ranging from ₹5 lakhs to ₹4 crores, ensuring financial security during unexpected medical emergencies. It caters to diverse



segments, including individuals and families, as well as High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs) seeking extensive insurance.

Where healthcare costs are on the rise and access to adequate insurance remains a challenge, this super top-up policy is particularly relevant. Residents can now tailor their health cov-

erage to meet specific needs, ensuring they are better equipped to handle unforeseen medical situations. With competitive premiums starting at ₹3,377 for younger individuals, SBI General aims to provide a cost-effective solution that prioritizes customer well-being. Mr. Subramanyam Brahmajoyula, Chief Product & Marketing Officer at SBI General, emphasized the importance of comprehensive coverage in today's healthcare landscape, stating, "This policy is tailored to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families."

Mahindra launches ZEO Electric 4-Wheeler, aims to transform urban logistics

Guwahati: Mahindra Last Mile Mobility Limited (MLMML) has officially launched the Mahindra ZEO, a groundbreaking electric small commercial vehicle (SCV) designed to electrify the sub-2-tonne segment. Priced from ₹7.52 lakh, the ZEO is set to disrupt the market with its high-voltage 300+ V architecture, delivering superior energy efficiency, a real-world range of 160 km, and fast-charging capabilities that provide 100 km in just 60 minutes.



Powered by a 30 kW motor with 114 Nm torque, the ZEO boasts a 21.3 kWh liquid-cooled battery

that meets AIS038 safety standards. Mahindra has equipped the ZEO with features like regenerative braking, Hill Hold Assist, and advanced ADAS safety functions such as Lane Departure Warning and Pedestrian Collision Warning. In Guwahati, the

introduction of the ZEO is expected to significantly benefit the local logistics industry, particularly in managing last-mile deliveries. With its robust 765 kg payload capacity and faster turnaround times, businesses in Guwahati stand to save up to ₹7 lakh over seven years compared to diesel vehicles, positioning the ZEO as a cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative. Mahindra's Managing Director, Suman Mishra, said, "The Mahindra ZEO embodies our vision of electrifying urban logistics while helping customers thrive."

Samsung India empowers young innovators in 'Solve for Tomorrow 2024' competition

New Delhi: In a remarkable celebration of innovation, Samsung India has unveiled the winners of its esteemed initiative, 'Solve for Tomorrow 2024'. This flagship program encourages young minds to address pressing societal challenges through creative solutions. Team Eco Tech Innovator from Golaghat, Assam, shone as the Community Champion in the School Track, earning INR 25 lakh for their impactful proposal on equitable access to pota-

ble water. Team METAL from Udupi, Karnataka, emerged as the Environment Champion in the Youth Track, recognized for their groundbreaking technology designed to remove arsenic from groundwater, securing a grant of INR 50 lakh for incubation at IIT-Delhi.

The event also spotlighted commendable teams receiving Goodwill Awards and the Social Media Champion Award, highlighting the importance of engagement and outreach

in driving social change. Each of the ten finalist teams received INR 1 lakh and certificates, symbolizing their hard work and innovative spirit.

Samsung's initiative reflects a commitment to nurturing the next generation of problem-solvers, providing them with the mentorship and resources necessary to bring their ideas to life. By empowering youth through technology, Samsung aims to inspire impactful change in communities across India.

MMTC-PAMP launches exclusive store in Guwahati, elevates precious metal access

Guwahati: MMTC-PAMP, India's only LBMA-accredited gold and silver refinery, has inaugurated its first exclusive store in Guwahati, marking a significant expansion into Northeast India. This strategic move responds to the region's longstanding cultural affinity for gold and silver, offering 24K and 99.99%+ pure products that reflect the finest Swiss craftsmanship.

The new "Brand Experience Store" will provide residents with a unique op-

portunity to have their old gold expertly evaluated for free, allowing them to sell it back through MMTC-PAMP's transparent process. This innovative evaluation method guarantees accuracy and prevents value loss commonly associated with traditional approaches.

Vikas Singh, Managing Director & CEO, stated, "We're honored to become part of Northeast India's vibrant culture. Opening our first store in Guwahati is a testament to our

commitment to providing world-class precious metal products."

With recent openings in cities like Delhi and Pune, MMTC-PAMP aims to strengthen its nationwide presence and ensure a seamless customer experience. The Guwahati store, located at Avtar Niwas, Ground Floor, G.S Road, Paltan Bazar, will serve as a hub for consumers seeking trusted gold and silver solutions, reinforcing MMTC-PAMP's reputation for authenticity and quality.

Guwahati braces for an exciting shift with Intel's new AI-driven chip portfolio

Guwahati: Intel Corporation has launched its highly anticipated next-generation chip portfolio, which is set to revolutionize the computing landscape across various industries. The company has launched the Intel Core Ultra processors, featuring the new Intel® 7 process technology and Intel® 4 technology, as well as the Intel® Processor Max series. These innovations are designed to elevate user experiences in areas such as gaming, content creation, and AI.



er efficiency. The integration of AI capabilities is aimed at enhancing productivity, making it an appealing option for businesses seeking competitive advantages. In Guwahati, tech enthusiasts and businesses are eager to embrace these advancements. Local retailers anticipate a surge in demand for devices powered by Intel's new chips, foreseeing an

increase in customer interest in gaming and AI-driven applications. The expected influx of innovative devices could also stimulate the local economy, positioning Guwahati as a burgeoning hub for technology and digital transformation. Intel's strategic move signifies a promising future for both the company and the regional market.

RBI raises UPI Lite, UPI 123 Pay limits at MPC

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced significant changes to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system during its latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The central bank raised the transaction limits for two key UPI services—UPI 123Pay and UPI Lite—offering more convenience for millions of users.

"UPI has transformed India's financial landscape by making digital payments accessible and inclusive through continuous innovation and adaptation.

New Nissan Magnite launched at introductory price of INR 5.99 lakhs

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India has officially launched the New Nissan Magnite, now available at a special introductory price of INR 5.99 lakhs. This updated model boasts a bold new design, enhanced safety features, and advanced technology, reaffirming Nissan's commitment to innovation and quality.

The New Magnite features a redesigned exterior with a prominent honeycomb grille, improved ground clearance, and an array of segment-first features, including a floating touchscreen infotainment system compatible with Android Auto and Apple Car-

Play. The interior showcases a premium leatherette finish, ample cabin storage, and a spacious boot that expands from 336L to 540L.

Manufactured at Nissan's Alliance plant in Chennai, the New Magnite will now be exported to over 65 markets globally, marking a significant expansion in Nissan's international presence. "India plays a crucial role in our global strategy," said Mr. Frank Torres, Divisional Vice President for Nissan India Operations, highlighting the model's export potential and its success since its launch in December 2020.

ICICI Bank partners with PhonePe to offer instant credit on UPI

Guwahati: ICICI Bank has announced a new partnership with PhonePe, enabling its pre-approved customers to access instant credit on UPI transactions. The collaboration allows millions of ICICI Bank customers to activate a short-term credit line of up to ₹2 lakh on the PhonePe app, with a repayment period of 45 days. This offering is set to enhance the personal banking experience, especially during the festive season when customers can use the credit for high-ticket purchases, including electronics, travel bookings, and bill payments.

Niraj Tralshawala, Product Head - Payment Solutions at ICICI Bank, expressed enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "We are delighted to pro-

vide seamless and easy access to credit for our customers, empowering them to meet their festive shopping needs."

Deep Agrawal, Head of Payments at PhonePe, added, "This collaboration is a key milestone in revolutionizing credit access in India, offering a fully digital user experience on our platform." In Guwahati, this initiative is expected to fuel consumer spending, as the region witnesses growing demand for electronics and travel services, especially during the festive period. The instant credit line on UPI offers customers greater flexibility, further driving local commerce. The credit line is interoperable across UPI platforms, making it convenient for users to transact using any app.

Samsung India workers reject settlement as strike enters second month



Chennai: A group of more than 1,000 striking workers at the Samsung Electronics factory in southern India has rejected a settlement offer made by the company on wage hikes, with the sit-in protest entering its second month on Wednesday.

The strike is the biggest such labour dispute in recent years in India and has cast a shadow over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's drive to lure investors to set up local manufacturing. Tamil Nadu state, where many foreign companies including Foxconn operate, has been unsuccessful in resolving the matter so far.

The strikers have disrupted production and protested in a makeshift tent close to the factory near the city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu

since Sept. 9, demanding higher wages and union recognition. The plant is critical to Samsung's ambitions and accounted for roughly one-fifth of its \$12 billion India sales in 2022-23.

Samsung this week made a proposal to provide a monthly incentive of 5,000 rupees (\$60) until March, more air conditioned buses, a diversified cafeteria menu and a gift card of \$24 in case of a child birth, according to the settlement document seen by Reuters. But the labour group backing the protests, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), has rejected the agreement as it doesn't recognise their union. A. Soundararajan, its state president said on Wednesday.

Vi's 'Super Pack' launches at Rs 175: A new era for prepaid entertainment

Mumbai: Vi has unveiled its latest innovation, the 'Super Pack' for prepaid customers, priced at just Rs 175. This exciting new offering opens the door to a world of entertainment, granting access to over 15 popular OTT platforms like SonyLIV, ZEE5, ManoramaMAX, and FanCode, all bundled with 10GB of data. Designed to enhance user

experience, the Super Pack is part of the revamped Vi Movies & TV app, aiming to become the go-to entertainment hub for subscribers. With access to 17 OTT apps and 350 live TV channels, it simplifies the streaming experience for users. Prepaid customers recharging with the Vi Hero Unlimited plans of Rs 449 or Rs 979 can enjoy these

benefits at no extra cost, alongside unlimited calling and exciting data features.

The enthusiasm for OTT services is palpable as more residents seek diverse content options. Local consumers are increasingly embracing digital entertainment, reflecting a growing trend that aligns with the national surge in OTT viewership.

Hyundai Motor India files for IPO worth around 27,000 crore, to open next week

Mumbai: Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), a part of the Hyundai Motor Group has filed for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) worth between 26,519-27,870 crore, which will open up for investors next week. The IPO comprising entirely of an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 142,194,700 equity shares by Hyundai Motor Company (which is the 'Promoter Selling Shareholder'), will open on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, and will close on Thursday, October 17, 2024. The price band is fixed between 1,865-1,960 per equity share, which values it anywhere between 26,519-27,870 crore in total.

Bids can be made for a minimum of 7 equity shares and in multiples of 7 equi-

ty shares thereafter. The anchor investor bidding day comes on the previous day to this, which is Monday, October 14, 2024. "The company will not receive any proceeds from the offer," its statement read.

The Hyundai Motor Group is the third largest auto OEM in the world when it comes to passenger vehicle sales during the calendar year 2023, according to a CRISIL report. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited, Citigroup Global Markets India Private Limited, HSBC Securities and Capital Markets (India) Private Limited, J.P. Morgan India Private Limited and Morgan Stanley India Company Private Limited are the Book Running Lead Managers (BRLMs) to the offer.

Sensex surges 600 points as RBI holds repo rate

Mumbai: Benchmark stock market indices rallied after RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the monetary policy committee decision to keep key interest rates unchanged for the 10th consecutive time on Wednesday. The S&P BSE Sensex added 591.46 points to 82,225.81, while the Nifty50 gained 197 points to 25,210.15 as of 10:55 AM. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has adjusted its stance to a neutral position. Shaktikanta Das said five members of the 6-member MPC voted in favour of keeping the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5%. "After evaluating the macroeconomic conditions and future outlook, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided, with 5 out of 6 members in agreement, to maintain the policy rate at 6.5%," he said. Anu Agarwal, Head of Corporate Banking, Kotak Mahindra Bank said that the RBI's shift to a 'neutral' stance marks a pivotal step in its approach.

NMBA Vashi announces PEACE-themed Durga Puja 2024: A cultural milestone in Navi Mumbai

Mumbai: Navi Mumbai Bengali Association (NMBA) Vashi has announced its 45th Durga Puja celebration, scheduled from October 9-13, 2024, under the theme "PEACE." As the largest Durga Puja celebration in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), this year's event emphasizes the significance of peace amid global tensions. Ashim Dey, a member of NMBA, emphasizes the significance of this year's theme in fostering unity and harmony within the community. The stunning pandal will feature exquisite decorations crafted from full white Sola wood, creating a breathtaking visual experience. The use of white, symbolizing tranquility and harmony,



aligns with the ethos of Goddess Durga, who represents the destruction of evil and the promotion of respect and non-violence among humanity. Highlighting the event will be an 18-foot idol of Goddess Durga, skillfully crafted by artisans from

West Bengal using biodegradable soil sourced from the holy Ganges. This eco-conscious approach reflects NMBA Vashi's commitment to sustainability and cultural heritage. Set to take place at the fully air-conditioned CIDCO Exhibition Centre in Vashi,

spanning an impressive 1.50 lakh square feet, the event is expected to attract over 800,000 devotees. NMBA Vashi's Durga Puja 2024 promises to be a significant cultural event, fostering unity and celebrating the spirit of community.

Gardening improves balance, walking speed in elderly with dementia

A recent study highlights that gardening can enhance balance and walking speed in elderly individuals with dementia.

Gardening can improve balance and walking speed in older individuals suffering from dementia, according to a new study.

Dementia is a geriatric condition described as a deterioration in memory and other cognitive abilities that impairs daily functioning.

In 2023, more than 55 million people had dementia worldwide, but the inci-

dence of dementia cases will likely grow in the coming decades simply because we live longer. According to some estimates, the number of dementia cases may triple by 2050.

Conducted by researchers from Semmelweis University, the clinical study suggests that horticultural therapy could be a promising non-pharmacological intervention for alleviating symptoms for the elderly with cognitive impairment (CI) and dementia.

The study involved institutionalised elderly participants who took part in hour-long gardening sessions,

twice a week, over a 12-week period.

Activities such as preparing the beds, weeding, trimming, and harvesting were included in these sessions. The participants were compared to a control group that did not engage in gardening but participated in the institution's other social activities.

By the end of the study, the gardening group maintained their baseline performance in static balance, while the control group experienced a decline. Additionally, the gardening group saw improvements in gait speed, a key factor linked to cognitive decline, whereas no such improvement was observed in the control group.

However, no differences were found between the two groups in terms of dynamic balance.

The positive outcomes of the study were attributed to the combination of physical activity and exposure to green spaces, which have

long been known to benefit mental and physical health.

"Horticultural therapy has been shown to reduce neuropsychiatric symptoms like anxiety and depression, but we wanted to see its impact on balance," explained Valéria Farkas, the study's lead author from the Faculty of Health Sciences at Semmelweis University.

Dementia often leads to deteriorating balance and slower gait, issues that can severely affect mobility and safety in elderly individuals. "Maintaining balance and walking requires more cognitive control as we age," noted Eva Kovacs, professor at Semmelweis University and corresponding author of the study.

She emphasised the increased need for attention when performing tasks like walking and talking simultaneously, which elderly individuals often struggle with.

The study also found unexpected social benefits among the gardening participants. Conversations



were more frequent, and participants were more engaged in other community activities.

Caregivers observed a reduction in aggressive behaviour and inappropriate language among the patients during and after the gardening sessions.

With dementia cases expected to rise globally, alternative interventions like horticultural therapy offer promising potential in managing cognitive decline.

"Our results confirm that horticultural therapy can be successfully applied to this task," added Dr Kovács, reinforcing the need for fur-

ther exploration into such therapies.

The quality of family relationships has also positively changed. Participants proudly showed visiting relatives around and told them about their gardening activities. As dementia cases are projected to rise, caregivers are looking at alternative/new interventions to prevent or slow cognitive decline. "Our results confirm that horticultural therapy can be successfully applied to this task," says dr. Éva Kovács adding the faculty has published several highly ranked studies on similar and other topics in recent years.



Study highlights importance of vitamin C in older adults

Banasree Sarkar

A recent study has highlighted the serious health risks associated with vitamin C deficiency in older adults. The research indicates that low levels of vitamin C can lead to abnormal bleeding and fatigue, which can significantly affect the quality of life for seniors.

Key Findings:

- **Health Risks:** The study found that inadequate vitamin C can weaken the immune system, making elderly individuals more susceptible to infections. Common symptoms of deficiency include tiredness, weakness, and unusual bleeding, such as easy bruising or bleeding gums.

- **Importance of Vitamin C:** This essential nutrient is crucial for maintaining healthy skin, blood vessels, and cartilage, as well as aiding in wound healing and iron absorption from plant-based foods.

- **Dietary Sources:** To prevent deficiency, it's vital for older adults to con-



sume foods rich in vitamin C. Recommended sources include fruits like oranges, strawberries, and kiwis, and vegetables such as bell peppers, broccoli, and spinach.

- **Nutritional Awareness:** The study emphasizes the need for caregivers and family members to be aware of the nutritional requirements of elderly individuals. Ensuring a diet that includes adequate vitamin C can help avert health complications.

- **Supplementation Recommendations:** If dietary

intake is insufficient, experts suggest discussing vitamin C supplements with healthcare providers to ensure safety and effectiveness.

Our bodies don't produce or store vitamin C, so it's important for older adults to include this nutrient in their diet. For adults age 50 and older, the recommended dietary intake of vitamin C is 90 mg / day for men and 75 mg / day for women, with an upper limit of 2,000 mg / day. This recommended intake generally does not

increase as we get older. Certain populations may be at greater risk for not getting the amount of vitamin C they need.

It's important to understand that most seniors get sufficient vitamin C from a healthy, well-balanced eating plan. In conclusion, maintaining adequate vitamin C levels is essential for the health and well-being of elderly individuals. By focusing on nutrition, families can support their loved ones in leading healthier, more active lives.

Fungal diseases impacting global health



Banasree Sarkar

Scientists are warning about a serious increase in deadly fungal infections, which they call a "silent pandemic." Infections like *Candida auris* are becoming more common, especially among patients in hospitals or those with weak immune systems. These infections can lead to severe health problems and higher death rates, raising concerns for public health.

Climate change is

contributing to this issue, as warmer temperatures help fungi grow and spread to new areas. This makes it harder for hospitals to control outbreaks, putting patients at risk and complicating their care. Experts are urging more awareness and funding to fight these infections. They stress the importance of better testing, treatments, and infection control in healthcare settings. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensuring the safety and health of the public.

India pacer Arundhati Reddy reprimanded for breach Code



New Delhi: India pace bowler Arundhati Reddy has been officially reprimanded for breaching the ICC Code of Conduct during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match against Pakistan. Reddy was found guilty of breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code, specifically violating Article 2.5, which relates to "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon their dismissal during an International Match." While Reddy was not handed a formal penalty, the

reprimand serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining sportsmanship on the field. As per ICC official release, the incident occurred in the final over of the first innings, wherein Reddy gestured toward the pavilion after dismissing Nida Dar. India eventually took the game by six wickets, with Reddy winning the Player of the Match award for her career-best 3/19. "In addition to the reprimand, one demerit point has been added to the disciplinary record of Reddy, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period.

India will travel to Pakistan for Champions trophy, says a confident PCB Chairman

Mumbai: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Monday said that he was confident that India will participate in the Champions Trophy even if it is played in Pakistan. "The Indian team should come. I don't see them cancel or postpone coming here and we are confident we will host all the teams in the Champions Trophy in Pakistan," Naqvi said. The 2025 Champions Trophy is scheduled to start on February 19 with the final set to take place on March 9. Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi have been earmarked as the venues. India hasn't sent its team to Pakistan since July 2008 due to tense political relations between the two countries. Naqvi also stated that the preparations for the tour-



nament were on schedule. "The stadiums will also be ready to host the matches on schedule and any remaining work would be completed after the tournament," he said.

Asked about Babar Azam's resignation from captaincy and who is going to replace him, the PCB chief said he had told the selection committee to take their time and make a long-term decision. "I have told them to take a decision after careful consideration because the captain's position is important." Naqvi also said he had inquired from the selection committee including the captain and head coach of the teams whether it was the right time to introduce some fresh blood in the national sides.

India's star gymnast & Olympian Dipa Karmakar announces retirement



New Delhi: It was widely known as the 'vault of death' but Dipa Karmakar made the dangerous Produnova vault a household name in India. Fans in the country may not have known much about gymnastics or the intricacies of the vault but they were glued to their television screens when a young girl from Tripura finished fourth at the Rio Olympics in 2016 with a score of 15.966, just 0.15 points behind the bronze winner.

Karmakar, who was the first Indian female gymnast to qualify for the Olympics, came agonisingly close to

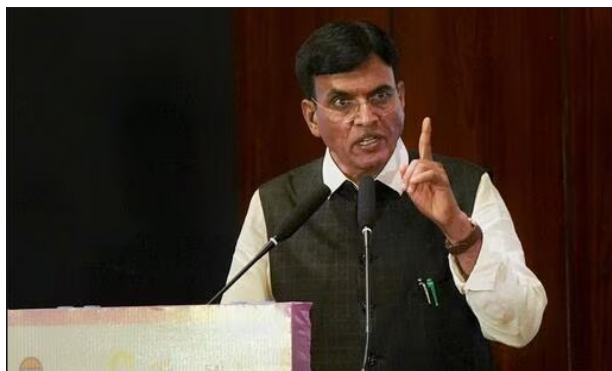
a medal in a sport that had no pedigree in India. That alone made her a special existence in India's sporting firmament. Even to think of an Indian gymnast executing the dangerous Produnova vault at the Olympics was scarcely believable. But that night in Rio, Dipa dazzled with power, poise, grace and a fearless streak. She took a front handspring off the vault, followed by two and a half somersaults, and almost nailed one of the toughest routines in gymnastics that only four other gymnasts in the world before her had dared to attempt.

Sports minister announces Draft National Sports Policy

New Delhi: The government on Thursday released a Draft National Sports Policy (NSP) aiming to align sports with the broader objectives of economic and social progress and leveraging sports as a powerful tool for nation-building.

"The policy adopts a multi-faceted strategy that addresses critical areas such as infrastructure development, talent identification, nurturing, governance reforms, and enhancing mass participation," according to the NSP that was released by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya for public consultation.

Taking into account India's recent performances in major international competitions, including the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Commonwealth Games, and Asian Games, the NSP recognizes the need to build on these achievements and create a sustainable system for long-term success in sports. Some of the key features of the NSP are creating a robust competitive struc-



ture, implement physical literacy initiatives, develop a robust talent identification and development system, strengthen governance and institutional frameworks, and to develop sports and physical literacy as major subjects in educational institutions in alignment with National Education Policy 2020.

As India has shown the ambition to host the 2030 Youth Olympics and 2036 Summer Olympics, the policy aims to prepare "a roadmap for organizing major sporting events, involving various stakeholders such as the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), NSFs, state

governments, and private organizations". The policy aims to position India as a "global sports tourism hub" by capitalizing on hosting of major international sporting events. "It can generate substantial revenue and enhance the country's global image, attract international participants and spectators, and significantly boost its tourism sector, create jobs, and stimulate local economies." In order to strengthen the National Sports Federations and other sports bodies, the policy wants to focus on "operational efficiency, professional management, transparency, and financial sustainability."

Messi pens message to Andres Iniesta on retirement

New Delhi: Lionel Messi shared a heartfelt message for his former FC Barcelona teammate Andrés Iniesta, as the legendary Spanish midfielder announced his retirement from professional football. The duo, who created many unforgettable moments on the pitch together, remain close friends off the field, and Messi's tribute highlights the respect and admiration they share. Iniesta revealed that he will retire at the end of the season with UAE club Emirates. On his Instagram story, Messi posted a picture of the two from their Barcelona days, praising Iniesta's brilliant career. The two legends formed a pivotal partnership during their time at Barcelona, and their chemistry was instrumental in the club's success. Messi's warm words reflect their enduring bond. "One of the teammates with the most magic and one of those I enjoyed playing with the most". The ball is going to miss you, and so will all of us.

Manchester United's Erik ten Hag asks for 'trust in process' after Porto scare

Manchester: Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag once again called for patience and trust from fans, despite the club's recent struggles, including a 3-3 draw against Porto in the Europa League on October 4. United squandered a two-goal lead, with early strikes from Rasmus Hojlund in the 7th minute and Marcus Rashford in the 20th, but defensive lapses allowed Porto to equalize and eventually take the lead. A stoppage-time header from Harry Maguire salvaged a point for United.

After the match, Ten Hag urged fans not to judge the team based on their current difficulties but to evaluate their progress at the end of the season. He emphasized that his process is still ongoing, and it is crucial to give it time to show results. Despite a busy summer transfer window, United have managed just three wins from their nine matches across all competitions this season. "We will get there. Don't judge us in the



moment. Judge us at the end of the season. We are in the process and we will improve. We are now two seasons where we achieve finals. We have to develop and progress this team," Ten Hag said.

"We started the game very good, we dominated, scored two good goals, but then we lost control. So the start was good, the middle part was not good, and then we finished very good," Ten Hag added.

United's draw against Porto marks a four-match winless streak, adding pressure on Ten Hag and the club. The Dutchman's future at the club is becoming more uncertain.