NATIONAL

Rahul Gandhi slams Centre over low GDP growth rate

NEW **DELHI:** Gandhi, leader of opposition in Lok Sabha, took a swipe at the central government on Sunday over the dip in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, which slumped to seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent.

Criticising the government over the concerning GDP data, the Congress leader claimed that the "Indian economy cannot progress as long as only handful of billionaires are benefitted from it, while the farmers, labourers and middle class are struggling with various economic distresses

Rahul Gandhi listed also out the different data to substantiate its claims and said that in the "last five vears, the income of laborers, employees and small businessmen has either stagnated or reduced significantly"

"Retail inflation has ris-



en to a 14-month high of share of manufacturing in 6.21 per cent. The price of the economy has fallen to potatoes and onions has its lowest in 50 years. increased by almost 50 per "Demand has also de-

cent this year compared to October last year. Rupee has reached its lowest level of 84.50. Unemployment has already broken the record of 45 years," Rahul Gandhi wrote on X. Rahul Gandhi claimed

that demand has also taken a hit due to fall in income. He said due to measures like demonetisation and introduction of GST, the

clined due to reduced income. The share of cars priced below Rs 10 lakh in sales has dropped to less than 50 per cent, from 80 per cent in 2018-19. The share of affordable homes in total sales has dropped to around 22 per cent from 38 per cent last year. The demand for FMCG products is already declining," he said. The Congress leader

indicates the growing ac-

ceptance and ease of digital

transactions among citi-

measures included target-

ing low-performing zones

and conducting rigorous

audits to identify discrepan-

cies. Munish Moudgil em-

phasized the importance of

outreach campaigns, partic-

ularly in zones like Dasar-

ahalli, to improve compli-

ance and encourage digital

adoption. "We made signif-

icant progress, but there is

room for improvement. Our

focus remains on transpar-

ency, compliance, and citi-

of property taxes this year

is expected to significantly

bolster the city's financial

capacity to undertake crit-

ical infrastructure projects

and improve civic ameni-

ties. However, challenges

remain in recovering the

pending arrears of Rs 400-

450 crores and addressing

issues in zones with lower

contributions. "By March

The BBMP's proactive

zens," Moudgil told TOI.

furhter wrote: "The share of corporate tax has decreased by $\frac{1}{7}$ per cent in the last 10 years, while income tax has increased by 11 per cent. Due to demonetisation and GST, the share of manufacturing in the economy has fallen to just 13 per cent, the lowest in 50 years. In such a situation, how will new job opportunities be created?" Based on the data he

shared, the Congress leader said the "India's economy needs a new thinking and a new deal as businesses is an important part of it. Everyone will get an equal opportunity to move forward, only then will the wheel of our economy move forward". Data released by the National Statistics Office on Saturday showed GDP grew by 5.4 per cent in the three months to September, slower than the 6.7 per cent in the April-June period and below the 8.1 per cent recorded in the second quarter of 2023-24.

55 Rohingyas among 675 illegal immigrants apprehended in Tripura in 2024: BSF

AGARTALA: A total of 675 illegal immigrants, including 55 Rohingyas, have been apprehended by the BSF's Tripura Frontier so far this year, an official release said on Sunday. The BSF also seized 66,316 bottles of phensedyl cough syrup, over 9,000 kg of ganja and more than six lakh yaba tablets during the period.

"The BSF apprehended 55 illegal Rohingya immigrants, 620 Bangladeshi nationals and 260 Indians in various operations from January 1 to November 30 this year. This is in addition to the BSF's core duty of maintaining strict vigil along the 856-km border with Bangladesh (in Tripura)," the statement, issued to mark the BSF's foundation day on Sunday, said. The BSF Tripura Fron-

THIRUVANANTHA-

tier has undertaken nu-

responsibilities, merous including combating insurgency, maintaining the sanctity of the border, and preventing trans-border crimes. The BSF has also spector generals (IG) of maintained consistently synergy with state authorities and other security and intelligence agencies, safeguarding the borders and

Indian students and workers, providing them with all possible assistance. Earlier, Chief Minisfostering harmony among ter Manik Saha, who adthe local populace, it said. dressed a programme at A border coordination the BSF frontier headquarters at Shalbagan in West conference was held in Shillong in Meghalaya in Tripura, praised the paramilitary force for guarding July this year between in-

The

Earth News

two border guarding forc-

es, promoting the welfare

of border populations and

maintaining ties between

the two friendly nations,'

It stated that during the

recent unrest in Bangla-

desh, the BSF, in coordi-

nation with the BGB and

other agencies, ensured

the safe return of stranded

it said.

the BSF and regional comto the martyrs who laid manders of the BGB. down their lives in the line "Key bilateral issues were discussed to enhance of duty and felicitated the veterans of the 1971 war. coordination between the

> I am being sidelined in

the international border.

Saha also paid tributes

are trying to the target of "We achieve 95:95:95 by 2025. The first part of this intends to make the affected persons realise their condition." The second goal is to ensure Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) treatment to 95 per cent of people, found to be infected by HIV, and the third is to control the spread of virus among them, he added. Citing the statistics of

2024, the CM said Kerala has already achieved the second and third targets and the first goal has reached 75 per cent. The objective of the government is to make the comprehensive project a great success. The CM further said that though Kerala is a state where the density of HIV-affected persons is low, the chances of getting the infection is very high there.

Odisha BJP: Mishra BHUBANESWAR: For-

mer Odisha minister and BJP MLA Jaynarayan Mishra has alleged that he has been sidelined in the saffron party and feels like having no significance in the organisation. Mishra, while speaking at a meeting to condole the demise of veteran BJP leader Samir Dey on Saturday evening alleged that he was being neglected by the party. He said Dey during his lifetime was denied due importance in the party and he also facing a similar situation."I am being treated in a similar manner,' Mishra said, adding that he was thrown out from ABVP in the past. He claimed that for the party he has been of "no significance now." The Sambalpur MLA also alleged that leaders in the party are using henchmen to put him into trouble.

Bengaluru witnesses record property tax collection for 2024-25

BENGALURU: The BBMP achieved a remarkable milestone in property tax (PT) collection for the financial year 2024-25, with a total collection of Rs 4284.16 crores recorded between April 1 and November 30, 2024.

The collection includes Rs 521.35 crores through offline payments and a staggering Rs 3762.81 crores through online transactions, highlighting a significant shift towards digital payment modes.

Munish Moudgil, the Special Commissioner for Revenue, BBMP, attributed this success to enhanced efficiency in tax administration, improved digital platforms, and proactive measures to address arrears and tax revisions. "We took concentrated efforts to streamline tax collection and expand the taxpayer base through systematic revisions and enhanced digital accessibility," he said.

As of April 1, 2024, the city had arrears amounting to approximately Rs 1000 crores. Over the months, the Bruhat Bengaluru Ma-

hanagara Palike (BBMP) identified 6,000 to 7,000 new cases for property tax revisions, adding Rs 150-175 crores to the pending amount. Despite the backlog, the BBMP successfully collected Rs 750 crores from arrears, with Rs 400-

450 crores still remaining. Among the city's zones, Mahadevapura stood out as the largest contributor with a total collection of Rs 1,148.35 crores, which includes Rs 171.63 crores in offline payments and Rs 976.72 crores through online platforms. East Zone followed with Rs 710.31 zen convenience," he said. The successful collection crores, and Bommanahalli Zone recorded Rs 418.78 crores. On the other hand, Dasarahalli Zone registered the lowest collection at Rs 136.20 crores, raising concerns about potential inefficiencies or a smaller taxpayer base in the region.

"The numbers reflect not just the volume of collections but also the efficiency of our digital platforms. The overwhelming preference for online payments,

Delhi man arrested for running international drug ring via dark web

NEW DELHI: A 32-yearold man has been arrested for allegedly running an international drug trafficking operation that used the dark web and cryptocurrency to smuggle high-grade marijuana worth over Rs 20 crore. The arrest followed months of investigation by the Delhi Police's crime branch, which uncovered a network used by the accused, Lokesh Dhingra. He used fake SIM cards, encrypted calling apps and privacy-focused technologies to evade detection.

The case began on Oct 18 when police intercepted a parcel containing 1.5 kg of hydroponic weed worth Rs 1 crore at the RK Puram post office. "The police team found that the parcel was part of a syndicate importing marijuana by using the dark web for transactions.

An FIR under the NDPS Act was registered, leading to further investigation that revealed more parcels worth Rs 2 crore in transit at the foreign post office

PURAM: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday said though the southern state has low density of HIV-affected persons, the odds of contracthigh there.

activities and awareness programmes have great significance and the state government is making various interventions to keep the disease at bay, he said in a Facebook post marking the "World AIDS Day" today. The CM said the day was

a reminder to ensure public participation in the rehabilitation of HIV-infected persons across the world and to contain the spread of the disease. He pointed out that as

per the United Nations Sustainable Development

Mahayuti partners to jointly decide on swearing-in modalities for Dec 5: Alliance leader

MUMBAI: The Mahayuti constituents in Maharashtra will sit together and decide whether only chief minister and deputy CMs will take oath on December 5 or ministers will also be sworn in, a senior leader of the alliance said on Sunday. The oath-taking ceremony of the new Mahayuti government in Maharashtra will take place on December 5 evening at the Azad Maidan in south Mumbai and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend it, state Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said on Saturday. While there was no announcement vet on who would be the chief minister, BJP sources said Devendra Fadnavis, who has been chief minister twice and was deputy CM in the last Eknath

Shinde-led government. was the frontrunner for the post. The Mahayuti allies Shiv Sena and Nationalist

"But the BJP legislature party leader hasn't been appointed yet. We will sit together and decide whether only chief minister and depvillage in Satara district, is uty chief ministers will take recovering and will return to oath or ministers will also Mumbai on Sunday evening, be sworn-in," the Lok Sabha an associate said earlier in member from Raigad said. the day.

us any information." he said. Maharashtra's caretaker Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who took ill at his native



Despite low density of infected people, chances

of getting HIV high in Kerala: CM Vijayan

Goals, it is necessary to create a situation where there are no new cases of the disease by 2030.

But, Kerala is going to achieve this target much earlier, he said adding that the LDF government is making comprehensive interventions through the campaign "Onnayi Poo-jayathilekk" (loosely translated as "Together to Zero") as part of this.

ing the infection is very The disease prevention

which constitutes nearly 88% of the total collection,

2025, we hope to collect Rs 5200 crore property tax,' Moudgil added.

said DCP (crime branch) Satish Kumar.

Adityanath directs officials to adopt sensitive approach to resolve complaints

GORAKHPUR: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday urged officials to adopt a sensitive approach in addressing public grievances, stressing that no injustice would be tolerated.

Addressing people at a 'Janta Darshan' held at the Gorakhnath Temple, Adityanath reiterated the government's commitment to

fairness and transparency in handling public issues, a statement issued here said. "No injustice will be tol-

erated. Every individual will get justice," he said while directing officials to ensure prompt and satisfactory resolutions to complaints.

Adityanath said that the government stands firm in its resolve to address every grievance, the statement

read. He directed officials to adopt a sensitive approach while resolving issues, according to the statement.

The chief minister advised mediation for family disputes, suggesting legal action if reconciliation efforts fail, it said. He also ordered strict action against illegal land encroachments by influential individuals.

Several people sought fi-

nancial assistance for medical treatments. Adityanath assured them of full support and directed officials to expedite the process of estimating treatment costs and forwarding the proposals to the government for approval. For cases involving police and revenue matters, he called for impartial and transparent handling, ensuring that justice is ensured to all.

Congress Party (NCP) have already declared Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar as their legislature party leaders, respectively. However, the BJP, which is the largest Mahayuti constituent, is yet to name its legislature party leader.

NCP chief Ajit Pawar on Saturday said the chief minister will be from the BJP, while there will be deputy CMs from the two allies his party and the Shiv Sena. Pawar was a deputy CM in the last government.

Talking to PTI on Sunday, Maharashtra NCP chief Sunil Tatkare said it has been announced that the swearing-in ceremony will take place on December 5.

A senior BJP leader said A team of doctors it was decided on Saturday checked on Shinde as he developed high fever on Satthat its legislature party leader will be chosen at 1 pm urday. on December 2.

The Shiv Sena leader "But now it looks like the headed to his native village Dare in Satara district on meeting may be postponed to December 3 or 4," said Friday amid speculation that he was not happy with the leader who did not wish the way the new state gov-When contacted, senior

ernment was shaping up. NCP leader Chhagan Bhu-The Mahayuti alliance of the BJP, Shiv Sena and jbal said he was in Nashik and had not been informed NCP retained power with a about the swearing-in cerlandslide victory in the asemony. "Our leaders Aiit sembly elections, the results Pawar, Praful Patel and of which were announced on Sunil Tatkare haven't given November 23.

Overall coal production hits 90.62 million tonnes in November 2024: Coal ministry

NEW DELHI: India's overall coal production reached 90.62 million tonnes (MT) (Provisional) in November this year, compared to 84.52 MT in the same month last year, marking a 7.20 per cent growth, the Ministry of Coal said in a release on Sunday. The ministry said that the coal production from captive and other entities has shown significant progress, reaching 17.13 MT in November 2024, up from 12.44 MT in November 2023, marking an impressive growth of 37.69 per cent. Cumulatively, coal production for FY 2024-25 up to November 2024 reached 628.03 MT, compared to 591.32 MT during the same period in FY 2023-24, reflecting a growth of 6.21 per cent.

Additionally, Coal dispatches in November 2024 showed steady improvement, reaching 85.22 MT,

up from 82.07 MT in November 2023, reflecting a growth of 3.85 per cent. Dispatches from captive and other entities experienced a sharp increase, rising to 16.58 MT in November 2024 from 13.19 MT in November 2023, marking an impressive growth of 25.73 per cent.

Cumulatively, coal dispatches for FY 2024-25 up to November 2024 rose to 657.75 MT, compared to 623.78 MT during the same period in the previous fiscal year, recording a growth of 5.45 per cent.

These figures are provisional, as the the release.

On November 12, the ministry stated that the Coal imports for blending purposes decreased to 9.79 MT compared to last year which was 10.70 MT indicating a decline of 8.5 per cent during the same period.

Wadala MLA Kalidas Kolambkar aims to enter **Guinness Book** of World Records

MUMBAI: Officials from the Guinness Book of World Records will visit Naigaum on Sunday, informed newly elected MLA from the constituency Kalidas Kolambkar. He was elected MLA from the same assembly constituency of Wadala for the ninth consecutive term; he has been an MLA for the past 40

years. Kolambkar was a Shiv Sena MLA, then Congress's and now BJP. "My mother had taken me back home to Malwan in the Konkan region when I was little as Naigaum was then a dangerous place. I returned to Mumbai when I was in the sixth-seventh standard. One day I attended a public meeting addressed by Balasaheb Thackeray. I was sitting on the ground listening to him and was so inspired I decided to work for his party," recounted Kolambkar sitting

in his makeshift election office on a pavement in Naigaum.

BJP, SP gear up for Milkipur bypoll

LUCKNOW: With the decks cleared for the bypoll to the Milkipur seat in Ayodhya, the ruling BJP hopes to continue its winning streak while the opposition Samajwadi Party is seeking to retain its hold over the high-profile constituency

The BJP is likely to rely on the Hindu unity pitch through slogans like 'batenge toh katenge' (divided we perish) while the SP is expected to bank on its 'PDA' plank.

PDA is a coinage that denotes the opposition party's plan to connect with 'pichda (OBCs), Dalits, and alpshanyak (minorities)', the mainstays of the SP's impressive show in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in UP, when it won 37 Lok Sabha seats against the BJP's 33.

In the just concluded bypolls to nine seats, the BJP reclaimed its prestige, winning six seats, including the SP's bastions like Kundarki in Moradabad, while its ally RLD won one, making it a hugely impressive 7-2 show.

The two seats that SP retained in the bypolls-the Karhal seat in Mainpuri and Sishamau seat in Kanpur-were won with markedly reduced win margins, which is why the Milkipur contest would be keenly watched.

The seat assumes importance as after victory in the Ayodhya parliamentary seat, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav aggressively attacked the BJP, questioning Hindutva politics of the saffron party, and reached Parliament with Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad, who had vacated the Milkipur seat on becoming MP.

The bypoll of this seat is due after withdrawal of pleas against the 2022 Milkipur poll in the court.

Going by the caste equations of Milkipur, Dalit votes hold the key here. Of the 3.5 lakh voters on the seat, 1.2 lakh are Dalits, around 55,000 are Yadavs (OBCs), and 30,000 are Muslims.

Political experts feel whosoever secures support of Dalits along with 60,000 Brahmins, 25,000 Kshatriyas, and OBCs would emerge a winner.

It is to be seen whether SP's 'PDA' formula would work on this seat in the same way as it did in 2022 UP polls or if the BJP manages to bridge the caste divide to its

advantage.

In 2002, SP's Awadhesh Prasad won the seat, defeating BJP's Baba Gorakhnath. While Prasad had secured 49.99 percent votes (1,03,905), Gorakhnath got 41.83 percent (90,567) votes.

to be named.

While the SP has given ticket to Awadhesh's son, Ajit Prasad, the BJP is yet to finalise its candidate. The BSP has already announced not to contest the bypolls, while Congress is likely to continue its support INDIA bloc partner SP.

Former MLC and head of SP's state backward unit, Rajpal Kashyap said, "Our victory in Milkipur is certain. In the bypolls, official machinery was openly misused. This time our PDA will give a reply to the government. Ayodhya has set an example by discarding communal politics by giving support to Awadhesh Prasad by electing him in Parliament, and the trend will continue." The BJP is, however, confident of winning the seat.

"We have worked not only in Milkipur but in the entire Ayodhya. Due to the work of CM Yogi Adityanath, the people made us successful in the bypolls, and this

trend would continue. Only BJF can ensure the development of Milkipur. Those pursuing caste and dynastic politics will be defeated," Uttar Pradesh BJP secretary Abhijat Mishra told PTI.

"We talk of safety of people and development. The SP supports those who talk against the country. People have understood this difference between BJP and SP," he said.

The Allahabad High Court on Monday allowed the withdrawal of two petitions challenging the election of SP leader Prasad from Milkipur constituency in 2022 assembly polls, paving the way for holding bypoll to the seat.

The Milkipur assembly seat fell vacant after Prasad was elected to Lok Sabha from Faizabad (Ayodhya) in the 2024 parliamentary elections.

Former MLA and BJP leader Gorakhnath and another petitioner had sought permission from the court to withdraw their petitions, which the court granted and dismissed both the petitions.

Date of election on the seat is yet to be decided by the Election Commission.