



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President and Union Minister JP Nadda meets Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, in New Delhi on Sunday.

61 Heads of Missions to witness mega Jhumoir in Guwahati, along with PM Modi; Check why Assam is showcasing it to the world

MI News Service, Guwahati: Assam is gearing up to showcase its vibrant tea garden community to the world. 61 Heads of Missions, dignitaries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will witness the mega Jhumoir event in Guwahati. But why is Assam showcasing this folk dance to the world? The mega Jhumoir event is part of a larger celebration, which includes the Advantage Assam 2.0 summit. The event will feature over 8,000 Jhumoir artists from across Assam, performing at Guwahati's Sarusajai Stadium. The state government will also provide financial support to the artists and tea gardens to promote the dance form. The chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, confirmed at a press conference on Sunday the total number of Heads of Missions who will be in Guwahati for these two events. They will land at Jorhat airport this evening and then travel to Kaziranga National Park. On Monday morning, they will enjoy the flora and fauna of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is located in the upper Assam districts, some 250 kilometres from the state capital city of Guwahati. The idea behind taking the heads of missions to Kaziranga was to promote Assam's immense tourism potential. From Kaziranga, they will move towards Guwahati to attend the Jhumoir event on Monday evening and the Advantage Assam 2.0 summit starting Tuesday. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has facilitated this visit of the Heads of Missions. Jhumoir is an integral part of Assam's tea garden workers and Adivasi community, and its origins date back to the early 19th century when tea plantations were established in the region. The dance form was a way for workers to express joy and camaraderie after a long day of laborious work in the tea gardens. Today, Jhumoir is synonymous with the identity of Assam's vibrant tea community. "...do you know it has a connection to your cup of tea," Chief Minister Sarma

wrote on X, as he explained the dance form and why his government is showcasing this folk dance to the world stage. The Assam government is celebrating the state's tea industry, which has turned 200 years old. The industry provides livelihoods to millions and is renowned globally for its richly coloured and aromatic tea. As the chief minister put it in his X timeline, the origins of Jhumoir began as an expression of joy and camaraderie after a long day of laborious back-breaking work in tea gardens. "What was once meant to uplift the spirits of workers is now synonymous with the identity of our vibrant Chai Samuday," he wrote. This energetic dance is performed by both men and women who are dressed in traditional ornaments like sitapati, hasuli, jhumka, chandhar and payeri. Its catchy accompanying music comes from dhol, madal, dhamsa and bamboo flute. "Assam's tea community has long been trapped in poverty and neglect. Generations after generations have not escaped this cycle of tough labour work. We want to end this and celebrate their glorious culture in a way not seen before," Chief Minister Sarma further wrote. To uplift the socio-economic conditions of tea garden workers, the state government is building new schools and roads and providing affirmative action in colleges and recruitment. "...we are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that their next generation becomes doctors, engineers and civil servants," the chief minister concluded. Assam's rich cultural heritage is not limited to Jhumoir. The state government has organized similar mega-dance event -- a Bihu performance that entered the Guinness World Record in 2023. Next, they plan to showcase the Bagurumba dance, a traditional dance form of the Bodo community. Over 11,000 artists performed Bihu in the presence of the prime minister. This time, arrangements are being made to ensure that the mega Jhumoir is broadcast

on LED screens or through other modes at all 800 big tea estates across the state so that the village folks can witness this historic event. Over 8,000 Jhumoir artists will demonstrate their folk dance form at Guwahati's Sarusajai Stadium. These artists have been drawn from all the tea-growing districts of Assam. Initially, they had rehearsal sessions at the Assembly Constituency level, then the District, and finally at the Guwahati venue for the past three days. Following the review of preparations at Sarusajai the chief minister yesterday announced that his government will provide Rs 25,000 to each artist and an additional Rs 25,000 for every tea garden to procure Jhumoir-related articles and instruments. The tea community in Assam, which comprises a sizeable portion of the state's population, plays a critical role in dozens of Assembly constituencies. Assam produces nearly 700 million kg of tea annually, accounting for around half of India's overall tea production. Assam is celebrating the plantation industry's reaching a crucial milestone of 200 years. Tea estates around plantations, hitherto unexplored and unpicked, in the state's upper reaches first came to be established in 1823. Renowned globally for its richly coloured and aromatic tea, Assam's tea industry, which is the country's largest, provides livelihoods to millions, with many others directly or indirectly dependent on the plantations. The state is famed for both Orthodox as well as the CTC (Crush, Tear, Curl) varieties of tea. In 1823, Robert Bruce discovered wild tea plants growing in the upper Brahmaputra Valley. Subsequently, the government started a tea garden in the erstwhile Lakhimpur district in 1833. India as a whole contributes 23 per cent to the global tea output and employs around 1.2 million workers in the tea plantation sector. 50 per cent of what India contributes comes from Assam tea gardens.

Dhami prays at Mahasu Maharaj temple

MI News Service, Hanol: Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday prayed to the world-famous Mahasu Maharaj and Bashik Maharaj Mahendrarath located in Hanol and wished for prosperity, progress, and development in the state. On this occasion, he visited the temple, met the local people, and took feedback on the development schemes being run by the

state government, according to the official statement. The Chief Minister also took suggestions from the local villagers regarding the reconstruction of the Mahasu Maharaj temple complex. He said that the temple will be redeveloped in accordance with the sentiments of the local people. The Chief Minister also observed the temple master plan layout of Mahasu Maharaj, Pavasi Maharaj, and

Bashik Maharaj in the Mahasu temple complex. He said that we have to make the complex of Mahasu Maharaj grand and divine so that devotees from all over the country can easily reach it in the future. He said that the temple of Mahasu Devta is a prominent centre of our faith. It is also our duty to convey the glory of Mahasu Maharaj to the people, he said in a statement.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath waves to the gathering during a program organised on the occasion of the 149th birth anniversary of Sant Gadge Maharaj during Mahakumbh, in Prayagraj on Sunday. BJP leader Rita Bahuguna Joshi, State Cabinet Minister Nand Gopal Gupta and others are also seen.

"BJP's agenda is to transform Delhi into developed capital": Virendra Sachdeva

MI News Service, New Delhi: As the party meeting concludes before the commencement of the assembly session, Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Virendra Sachdeva on Sunday said that the ruling party was working with an agenda to transform the national capital into a developed space. Talking about the party meeting held today, he said that the BJP MLAs gave inputs regarding carrying out development works in their constituencies to assist people. "Tomorrow, the Delhi assembly session will commence. BJP MLAs often meet before the assembly session starts. We met with the Delhi Chief Minister, the entire cabinet, and party MLAs.



Our government is working only on one agenda: to transform Delhi into a developed capital. In today's meeting, all participants gave inputs on how to progress with development works in their areas, to assist people. We need to move in this direction," Sachdeva told reporters during a press conference. In a veiled attack against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Sachdeva said that the BJP government's work will shun those who "looted Delhi". Highlighting the efforts of the newly appointed cabinet is taking, he added that the government will focus on completing unfinished works in the national capital.

After today's meeting, it is clear that our government in Delhi will finish (the incomplete works). You have seen that our ministers, including the Chief Minister, have taken stock of the works in the last four days. It is our responsibility to fulfil people's expectations. Along with this, our work will also shun those who looted Delhi. Meanwhile, on Sunday, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal congratulated former Chief Minister Atishi for being elected as the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Delhi legislative assembly. Atishi was chosen as the LoP at a meeting of AAP MLAs. Senior AAP leader Gopal Rai made the announcement at a press briefing after the meeting.

The assembly session will commence on February 24. CM Gupta will move a motion to elect BJP MLA Vijender Gupta as the speaker of the legislative assembly. According to the List of Business, BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa will second the motion. In the meantime, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena appointed BJP leader Arvinder Singh Lovely as the protem speaker.

The election of the legislative assembly speaker will be held at 2:00 PM, while the newly elected MLAs will participate in the oath-taking ceremony at 11:00 in the morning. According to the Delhi assembly bulletin, LG Saxena will address the assembly on February 25, after which the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports will be tabled. Later in the day, the assembly will be open for motion of thanks at LG's address.

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The 2ND Edition of French Film Festival inauguration at Nandan, Kolkata on Sunday

AAP ran honest government, Delhi budget increased by 2.5 times : Atishi

MI News Service, New Delhi: Former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Sunday said that Delhi's budget increased by more than 2.5 per cent during the AAP rule and challenged the BJP to name any of the states ruled by it where the government's budget has increased by 2.5 per cent in 10 years. Atishi said people of Delhi experienced an "honest" government under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal for ten years. "... In 2015, when the AAP government was formed in Delhi, the national capital's total budget was only Rs 30,000 crore. For 10 years, AAP ran an honest government in Delhi under the leadership

of Arvind Kejriwal... In the year 2024-25, Delhi's budget increased from Rs 30,000 crore to Rs 77,000 crore, i.e., increased by more than 2.5 times in 10 years ..." Atishi told reporters here. "The Budget of Delhi is made up from its own revenue, GST...Delhi does not get a penny from the Central government. I challenge the BJP to name any one of their ruled -states where their government's budget has increased by 2.5 per cent. There is not a single government of the BJP," the AAP leader said. BJP is set to table the CAG report in the Delhi assembly on February 25 during the three-day session of the Legislative As-

sembly. It will be the first session of assembly under BJP government. Party leader Vijender Gupta said that tabling the CAG report is the foremost agenda item of the government, as decided in the cabinet meeting held on Thursday. The session will continue till February 27. BJP leader and Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa attacked AAP, saying CAG reports mention irregularities in the liquor policy of the previous government. "The CAG report was withheld for the last three years. They (AAP government) did not want to bring the CAG report before the public," he said.

CAG reports to be tabled at assembly session, says Delhi CM

MI News Service, New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday announced that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports would be tabled at the assembly session, which is scheduled to begin on February 24. The Chief Minister accused the previous government of "misusing" people's "hard-earned" money and said that they would have to account for every penny. "We remain true to the commitments we made for Delhi and they will be fulfilled," Gupta added. "The most important thing is going to come. We said that we should put the CAG report on the House table in the first session. This is people's hard-earned money which the previous government misused. They will have to account for each penny before the people," CM Gupta said in a presser.

The Chief Minister stated that the assembly session would last three days and focus on initiating works for the people of Delhi. "All the MLAs will take oath on the first session of the government of Delhi. Both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be elected. The protem speaker will also be sworn in tomorrow morning by the LG,

Manjinder Singh Sirsa will second the motion. In the meantime, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena appointed BJP leader Arvinder Singh Lovely as the protem speaker. The election of the legislative assembly speaker will be held at 2:00 PM, while the newly elected MLAs will participate in the oath-taking ceremony at 11:00 in the morning. According to the Delhi assembly bulletin, LG Saxena will address the assembly on February 25, after which the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports will be tabled. Later in the day, the assembly will be open for motion of thanks at LG's address.

and this is a three-day session, where we will start with the works for people of Delhi, which comes under the purview of their rights," Gupta said. Hitting out on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the CM said, "People of Delhi have seen what they (AAP) are doing, what is their working style? What is their vision? In the last 12 years, Delhi has seen it. Our focus is on the people."

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva apprised about the party meeting held today, saying that the elected MLAs gave inputs regarding carrying out development works in their constituencies to assist people. As this happened, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal congratulated former Chief Minister Atishi for being elected as the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Delhi legislative assembly. Atishi was chosen as the LoP at a meeting of AAP MLAs. Senior AAP leader Gopal Rai made the announcement at a press briefing after the meeting.

The assembly session will commence on February 24. CM Gupta will move a motion to elect BJP MLA Vijender Gupta as the speaker of the legislative assembly. According to the List of Business, BJP MLA

BSF hosts 'Bordermen Marathon 2025' with over 5200 participants

MI News Service, Amritsar: BSF Punjab Frontier organized 'Bordermen Marathon 2025' with the theme 'Hand in Hand with Border Population' in Amritsar on February 23. As per a release from the Punjab Frontier BSF Jalandhar, a large number of professional and amateur runners from all across the country, including personnel from various Central Police Forces, Army, Punjab Police, civilians above 18 years (men and women), and athletes from foreign countries, took part in this mega event, which had three categories of races: Full Marathon (42.195 Km), Half Marathon (21.097 Km), and 10K Run. According to the release, "This Marathon is recognized by the Athletics Fed-

eration of India and the objective of this marathon is to foster the camaraderie between civilians and the troops of BSF by propagating the spirit of fitness among the participants & spectators as well." The release noted, "The Bordermen Marathon-2025 was flagged off by Daljit Singh Chawdhary, IPS, DG BSF at the iconic Golden Gate, Amritsar, at 5:00 AM on Sunday in the presence of Satish S Khandare, IPS, ADG BSF (WC), Dr Atul Fulze, IPS, IG BSF Punjab and Sh S S Chandel, DIG BSF Sector Amritsar and other dignitaries. The DG BSF also subsequently flagged off 21 Km half marathon at 6:00 AM from War Memorial, Amritsar and 10K run at 6:30 AM from Lahoriyal village, Amritsar."

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Railways' bonanza for Maha Kumbh Mela devotees: 1 pair unreserved special train to run between Asansol & Jhusi

MI News Service, Kolkata: The Maha Kumbh Mela, a once-in-12-years celestial event, holds immense spiritual and cultural significance for millions of devotees from across the globe. Recognized as the largest human congregation on Earth, the Maha Kumbh is a celebration of faith, devotion, and tradition. To ensure seamless travel and accommodate the massive influx of pilgrims attending this grand spiritual gathering, Railway is delighted to announce the operation of 01 pair of Unreserved Kumbh Mela Special train which will run between Asansol and Jhusi. This initiative will provide safe, comfortable, and convenient travel options for devotees embarking on their sacred journey.

03513 Asansol - Jhusi Unreserved Kumbh Mela Special will leave Asansol at 20:00 hrs. on 23.02.2025, and 03514 Jhusi - Asansol Unreserved Kumbh Mela Special will leave Jhusi on 24.02.2025. The train will stop at Chitranjan, Madhupur, Jasidih, Jhajha, Kiul Jn., Barauni Jn., Bachhwara Jn., Shahpur Patoree, Hajipur, Sonpur Jn., Chhapra Jn., Ballia, Ghazipur City, Aunrihar Jn., Varanasi Jn., Banaras and Gyanpur Road stations in both directions enroute. The train will have 18 unreserved general class coaches.

Table with 2 columns: Train No., Route. Includes details for 03513 Asansol - Jhusi and 03514 Jhusi - Asansol Unreserved Kumbh Mela Special trains, listing stops and coach types.

Leading Causes of Fertility Challenges in Males and Females

Fertility challenges are increasingly common in India, affecting a significant number of couples seeking to conceive. Understanding the leading causes of infertility is crucial for timely intervention and treatment.

"Fertility challenges can arise from various factors in both males and females. In females, common causes include ovulation disorders, such as PCOS, blocked fallopian tubes, and endometriosis. For males, issues like low sperm count, poor sperm motility, and hormonal imbalances are primary contributors. Age, lifestyle factors like smoking or obesity, and underlying medical conditions can also affect fertility in both genders. Early diagnosis and targeted treatments are essential for addressing these challenges effectively," says Dr. Sonali Mandal Bandyopadhyay, an IVF specialist at Birla Fertility & IVF in Howrah. In females, several factors contribute to fertility



issues. Ovulation disorders, such as Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), are among the most prevalent. PCOS affects hormone levels and can disrupt regular

ovulation, making conception difficult. Other common causes include blocked fallopian tubes, often resulting from pelvic inflammatory disease or

endometriosis, a condition where tissue similar to the uterine lining grows outside the uterus, causing pain and fertility challenges. For males, the situation is

equally concerning. Key issues include low sperm count, poor sperm motility, and hormonal imbalances, which can significantly impede fertility. Recent studies indicate that environmental factors, such as exposure to pollutants and chemicals, alongside lifestyle choices like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, are also detrimental to male reproductive health.

Age is another critical factor affecting fertility in both genders. Women over 35 and men over 40 face declining fertility rates, with advanced age linked to decreased egg and sperm quality. Lifestyle factors such as obesity and sedentary behavior further exacerbate these challenges, as they can lead to hormonal changes that impact reproductive capabilities. Recognizing the diverse causes of fertility issues can empower couples to seek appropriate medical assistance and improve their chances of conception.

Weight loss surgery is more effective in controlling hypertension rates: Study



LOS ANGELES [US]: According to a study published today in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, bariatric surgery is more effective at controlling hypertension rates, or high blood pressure, in people with obesity and uncontrolled high blood pressure, than blood pressure medication alone.

People who had bariatric surgery had a lower BMI and were on fewer drugs after five years while maintaining normal blood pressure levels than those who solely used antihypertensive medications.

According to the CDC, the U.S. obesity and hypertension rates in adults are 41.9 per cent and 45.4 per cent, respectively.

Obesity is a proven risk factor for cardiovascular disease and a key contributor to high blood pressure, both of which can increase the chance of a heart attack, stroke, and heart failure.

"In clinical practice, obesity is an overlooked condition. As a consequence, there is a frequent failure in approaching obesity as a crucial step for mitigating the risk of important cardiovascular risk factors including hypertension," said Carlos Aurelio Schiavon, MD, FACS, lead author of the study and a surgeon specializing in bariatric surgery at Heart Hospital and BP Hospital in Sao Paulo.

Researchers in this study looked at the impact of treating obesity to lower high blood pressure. While there are new medications to treat obesity, long-term adherence to medication can be challenging.

This study looks at bariatric surgery as a better long-term solution to control obesity and, as a result, high blood pressure.

The GATEWAY trial included 100 people (76 per cent of which were female) who had a body mass index (BMI) of around 36.9 kg/m². All participants had hypertension and were using at least two medications.

People with previous cardiovascular events and poorly con-

trolled Type 2 diabetes were excluded. Subjects were assigned to either Roux-en-Y gastric bypass with medical therapy or medical therapy alone and the primary outcome was reduction of at least 30 per cent antihypertensive medications while maintaining blood pressure levels less than 140/90 mmHg at five years.

At five years, BMI was 28.01 Kg/m² for those who received bariatric surgery and 36.40 Kg/m² for those on medical therapy alone. People who had bariatric surgery had an 80.7 per cent reduction in the number of medications they were taking compared to a 13.7 per cent reduction in those only using medical therapy.

Hypertension remission, defined as controlled blood pressure without medications, was 46.9 per cent in those who underwent bariatric surgery compared to 2.4 per cent in those on medical therapy alone.

"Our results underscore the importance of approaching obesity in reducing hypertension rates," Schiavon said.

Limitations of the study included that it was a single-centre, open-label study with a small sample size and there was loss of follow-up in some patients.

In an accompanying editorial comment, Michael Hall, MD, MSc, professor and chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, said the study provides important long-term data on the benefits of gastric bypass on weight loss and blood pressure control, but questions remain.

"Further studies assessing the threshold for bariatric surgery in people with obesity, optimal timing of bariatric surgery in obese people with cardiometabolic diseases, type of bariatric surgery and comparative studies of obesity pharmacotherapies and bariatric surgery are needed to clarify the optimal treatment pathways for this common and growing disease," he said.

Males born to obese moms more likely to develop health issues as adults: Research



WASHINGTON DC [US]: Males born to obese mothers are more likely to be overweight at birth and suffer metabolic issues later in life, such as liver disease or diabetes.

The way that male sex hormones activate pathways in the developing liver is partly to blame.

That's the finding from a new study led by University of South Australia (UniSA) researchers looking at the impact of maternal obesity on fetal liver androgen signalling.

Male fetuses of obese pregnant women have different signals that are activated by male sex hormones in the liver, which encourages them to prioritise growth at the expense of their health.

UniSA researcher Dr Ashley Meakin says androgens give men their male characteristics and are crucial in their development, but if there are too many, male fetuses grow too large, causing not only problems at birth, but impacting liver function as an adult.

Female fetuses exposed to excess testosterone from an obese pregnancy are wired to switch off the androgen pathway in the liver, restricting their growth and lowering the risks of metabolic disorders in adulthood.

"We know there are sex differences in metabolic disorders in later life in response to maternal obesity," Dr Meakin says.

"Men are more prone to non-alcohol fatty liver diseases and diabetes as an adult if their mother is obese during pregnancy and their birth weight is above 4 kg (9 lb 15 oz).

"They are genetically wired to prioritise androgens because it supports the development of male characteristics - including size - but too much androgen is bad."

Study lead author Professor Janna Morrison, Head of the Early Origins of Adult Health Research Group at UniSA, says it's a fine balance for women getting the right nutrition in pregnancy to ensure optimal conditions for their unborn child to flourish.

"There are also risks for offspring being malnourished during pregnancy," she says. "If you are too little, too big, born too early, or a male, you are more vulnerable to negative outcomes later in life. You need the Goldilocks pregnancy: you must be the right size, born at the right time."

Prof Morrison says unless society changes its approach to nutrition, it will be an uphill battle to reduce obesity and associated health issues, from the womb into adulthood.

"As a society, we urgently need to address obesity. If children were taught early on about the importance of healthy eating, it would carry through into adulthood, including during pregnancy, where the right nutrition is so important."

Dr Meakin says in the intervening period, supplements that address nutritional imbalances in pregnancy could provide the fetus with the best chance of optimal development.

The liver androgen signalling study, recently published in Life Sciences, is among a series of studies by Prof Morrison and colleagues that investigates the impact of maternal under- and over-nutrition on the placenta, heart, lung, and liver.

type of cell therapy shows promise for ARDS patients

LOS ANGELES [US]: A study suggested that a new type of cell therapy may improve the prognosis of patients critically unwell with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) caused by severe COVID-19.

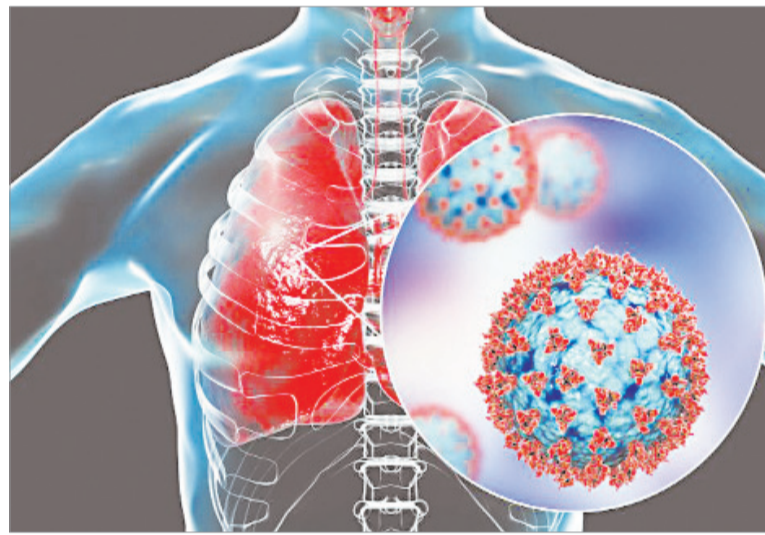
Professor Justin Stebbing of Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) is a joint senior author of a new study published in the journal Nature Communications that looks into the usage of agent-T-797, MiNKTherapeutic's allogeneic, unmodified invariant natural killer T (iNKT) cell therapy.

The iNKT cell therapy has the effect of rescuing depleted T cells and inducing an anti-inflammatory cytokine response, perhaps activating antiviral immunity to assist these patients fight infection while also reducing severe, pathogenic inflammation of the lung.

The new research was carried out at three medical centres and found that agent-T-797, which is also under investigation in cancer trials, could be manufactured rapidly, had a tolerable safety profile and appeared to have a positive effect on mortality among critically unwell COVID-19 ARDS patients receiving intensive care.

The exploratory trial included 20 mechanically ventilated patients with severe ARDS secondary to Covid-19. Of the 20 patients in the trial, 14 survived (70 per cent) at 30 days (compared to a control group of 10 per cent), and there was an 80 per cent lower occurrence of bacterial pneumonia amongst those who received the highest dosage of agent-T-797, compared to those who received fewer cells.

Twenty-one patients were treated overall (the main trial, plus one under compassionate use), which included five who were also receiving venovenous extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (VV-ECMO), known as 'the most aggressive salvage therapy' for critically ill patients with ARDS. In VV-



ECMO, deoxygenated blood is pumped through a membrane lung and returned to the body via a cannula.

This trial is believed to be the first immune cell therapy of any type to be used in critically unwell patients undergoing VV-ECMO. Survival of the VV-ECMO cohort was 80 per cent after 30 and 90 days, and 60 per cent after 120 days. This compares favourably to the overall survival of 51 per cent for patients with Covid-19 who were treated with just VV-ECMO at the same institution, during the same timeframe.

Joint senior author Justin Stebbing, Professor of Biomedical Sciences at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) in Cambridge, England, said, "During this small, exploratory study we observed that MiNK/iNKT cell treatment, which is also being advanced for people with cancer, triggered an anti-inflammatory response in ARDS patients."

"Despite a poor prognosis, critically ill patients treated with this therapy showed favourable mortality rates and

those treated at the highest dose also had reduced rates of pneumonia, underscoring the potential application of iNKT cells, and agent-T-797 in particular, in treating viral diseases and infections more broadly.

"Agent-T-797 was manufactured rapidly and as opposed to using patients' cells, it is 'off-the-shelf' and made from healthy donors' cells. The potential of this therapy to be used across a number of severe infections warrants randomised controlled trials."

Dr Marc van Dijk, Chief Scientific Officer at MiNK and co-author of the study said, "These published findings reinforce the unique power and potential of iNKT cells to mitigate severe acute respiratory distress."

"The data demonstrate agent-T-797's encouraging survival benefit, ability to help clear secondary infections, and tolerable administration in ventilated patients and those on VV-ECMO support."

Stress effects brain, psyche through immune system: Study

Zurich [Switzerland]: Chronic stress has far-reaching effects on our bodies. Many stress-related psychiatric diseases, including depression, are linked to immune system abnormalities. However, the basic mechanisms governing how these alterations influence the brain remain largely unclear.

Enzyme from immune cells in the blood affects nerves in the brain

An international research team led by the University of Zurich (UZH) and the University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich (PUK) and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, has now uncovered a novel mechanism. "We were able to show that stress increases the amount of the matrix metalloproteinase-8 (MMP-8), an enzyme in the blood of mice. The same changes were found in patients with depression," says first author Flurin Cathomas. MMP-8 travels from the blood to the brain, where it alters the functioning of certain neurons. In the affected mice, this leads to behavioural changes: they withdraw and avoid social contact.

Potential for new treatments for depression According to Cathomas, the findings are novel in two respects: "Firstly, they indicate a new 'body-mind mechanism', which might be relevant not only for stress-related mental illness, but also for other diseases that affect both the immune and nervous systems." And secondly, says the psychiatrist, identification of the specific MMP-8 protein could be a potential starting point to develop new treatments for depression.

Changes to brain extracellular matrix The researchers were able to use animal models to show that stress increases the



In order to prove that MMP-8 was really responsible for the behavioural changes, the researchers removed the MMP-8 gene from some of the mice. Compared to the control mice, these animals did not display stress-related negative behavioural changes. "Blood analyses of patients with depression indicate that the findings from the mouse models are also relevant for humans: both the monocytes and MMP-8 were increased in the blood of people with depression in comparison to healthy participants."

migration of a specific type of white blood cells called monocytes into the vascular system of the brain, particularly into the reward center regions. These monocytes produce MMP-8.

MMP-8 is involved in the restructuring and regulation of the net-like frame that surrounds neurons in the brain - called the extracellular matrix. "If MMP-8 penetrates the brain tissue

from the blood, it changes the matrix structure and thus disrupts the functioning of the neurons. Mice who are affected by this process display changes in behavior that are similar to those seen in humans with depression," says Flurin Cathomas.

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Clinical studies with patients planned Many more studies are needed before the results can be implemented in clinical practice. Nevertheless, says Cathomas, "our work once again demonstrates the importance of the interaction between the immune system and the brain in the development of psychiatric disorders. These insights are already being incorporated into psychiatric treatment today." On the PUK's special ward for integrative care led by Cathomas, the clinicians take a holistic mind-body approach based on the latest scientific findings when treating their patients.

The research team is now planning clinical studies to investigate the extent to which the immune system can be influenced by stimulating certain areas of the brain. They will also look at whether any changes in the immune system cells of depressive patients influence their behaviour.

Sports Minister Mandaviya leads Fit India Sundays on Cycle with industry bodies FICCI, CII in Delhi

NEW DELHI : Union Sports Minister Manuskh Mandaviya led the Fit India Sundays on Cycle campaign in the National Capital today even as he was joined by members of cycling clubs, Olympic rower Arjun Lal Jat and the special guests of this week - representatives of industry bodies, FICCI and CII as well as members from fitness brand Decathlon, Yoga Bharat and My Bharat.

In its ninth week, the Fit India Sundays on Cycle has emerged as a nationwide fitness event with cyclists in over 1200 locations participating this week alone.

Drawing from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call to fight obesity by reducing oil consumption by 10 per cent, exercising and eating right, the Sports Minister dedicated the Sundays on Cycle initiative to the nation's fight against obesity.

Speaking at the event, the Sports Minister said, "In our fight against obesity, which the Honourable PM has initiated, we must come together to include daily fitness activities in our life. Cycling is the easiest exercise and it has a very positive impact on the environment as well. It reduces carbon footprints and is a solution for pollution," as quoted from a release by Union Sports Ministry.

Fit India Sundays on Cycle invites a special set of people every week and army personnel, postmen, wellness experts have been invited guests in the past editions. In this week's event corporate India stepped forward to support the campaign and participate in it.

Speaking about the importance of the initiative Vidushpat Singhania, Treasurer, Sportscom, CII said, "I congratulate Honourable Sports Minister for launching this initiative. A healthy India is a more successful India as good health is directly linked to better productivity and a higher GDP. As an industry body it is our endeavour to get more corporates to join Fit India Sundays on Cycle and support this movement."

Landing the initiative, Neha Rastogi Mathur, Secretary, Sports Committee, FICCI, said, "This is a great initiative by the Sports Minister, and we are excited to be part of this movement today. Cycling is a great way to stay fit, it's easy, simple and a family activity that people of different generations can do together."

Olympian Arjun Lal Jat added, "The enthusiasm of the participants is great and as an athlete I am happy to see that so many people have stepped out on a Sunday morning and have dedicated time to fitness. Staying fit is not an option, it is compulsory for everyone and the Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative is a wonderful motivation for people to start their fitness journey."

In Guwahati, doctors from the Indian Medical Association joined the Fit India Sundays on Cycle celebration at the SAI National Centre of Excellence. More than 300 members rode to spread the message of fitness.



India's Hardik Pandya celebrates the wicket of Pakistan's Saud Shakeel during the ICC Champions Trophy 2025-Group A match, at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai on Sunday. (ANI Photo)

Champions Trophy: Virat Kohli surpasses Azharuddin's 156 catches, becomes Indian with most catches ODIs



DUBAI : Indian cricket stalwart Virat Kohli etched his name in the record books by surpassing Mohammad Azharuddin's tally of 156 catches to become the Indian fielder with the most catches in ODIs.

This remarkable feat was achieved on Sunday during the highly anticipated India-Pakistan

clash in the ongoing Champions Trophy in Dubai.

Kohli's record-breaking moment arrived in the 47th over when he took a challenging low catch to dismiss Naseem Shah off Kuldeep Yadav's bowling. The 36-year-old took his 157th and record-extending 158th catch in the ODIs, taking him past

Azharuddin's tally of 156 for the record of most catches taken by an Indian fielder in the format.

With Pakistan tottering at 222/7, Naseem tried to open his arms and flaunt his six-hitting ability. He tried to take on 'Chinaman' spinner Kuldeep Yadav but miscued it to Virat, who held his composure to take a chal-

lenging low catch and script the record to his name. He picked his second of the match on the fourth delivery of the final over.

Harshit Rana hit the deck to invite Khushdil Shah to slog the ball away. The southpaw went for a full swing but only found Virat's safe hands at the deep mid-wicket.

With this achievement, Kohli cemented his position as one of the greatest fielders in Indian cricket history. He is now trailed by Azharuddin (156 catches), Sachin Tendulkar (140 catches), Rahul Dravid (124 catches), and Suresh Raina (102 catches) in the list of Indian fielders with the most catches in ODIs.

On a global scale, Kohli's 158 catches place him third on the list of outfield catches in ODIs, behind only Mahela Jayawardene (218 catches) and Ricky Ponting (160 catches).

Kohli's exceptional fielding display highlighted India's clinical field performance, which restricted Pakistan to a modest total of 241. The defending champions managed to push their way to 241, courtesy of Saud Shakeel's 62(76), Mohammad Rizwan's 46(77) and Khushdil's swift 38(39). The Indian team will now look to build on this momentum as it chases its target in the second innings.

Champions Trophy: Santner assures New Zealand won't take Bangladesh lightly



RAWALPINDI : New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner assured that they won't take Bangladesh "lightly" in their upcoming Champions Trophy fixture. Santner acknowledged Bangladesh's adeptness in orchestrating a victory against top sides and remained hopeful "it's not us."

New Zealand has been in high spirits since landing in Pakistan to bolster its preparations for the ongoing marquee event. After securing the ODI tri-nation title, the Kivis maintained their impeccable performance in the subcontinent. They forced the defending champions, Pakistan, to surrender a 60-run defeat.

If the Blackcaps continue to maintain their hot streak of form, they will march into the final four stages of the Champions Trophy. Ahead of facing a depleted Bangladesh side, Santner believes the Tigers maintain balance in their squad despite their dwindling form in the format. Bangladesh have lost their last five ODIs on the trot.

Even though Bangladesh is lining up without its most experienced all-rounder, Shakib Al Hasan, Santner feels they have enough quality players who can attack with the bat and cause trouble with the ball.

"Yeah, obviously, we've seen how good Shakib has been for a long time. He's proven that he can perform in all conditions. They've obviously got Rishad coming in,

who's a very good leg spinner. Mehidy has done it. Mahmudullah, if he plays, can offer some good overs as well, so I think their balance is good at the moment," Santner said in the pre-match press conference.

"They have guys who can attack with the bat as well. I mean, Hridoy played a great innings last game, and Jaker Ali has come on and done a lot of good stuff already. So yeah, it's a team we're not taking lightly for sure. We know we've got to be on, and on these big events, they can upset any team on their day. So Hopefully, it's not us," he added.

Considering Rawalpindi's high-scoring nature, Santner revealed they have a few plans in store for Bangladesh. With Australia chasing down a record 352-run total at the same venue, Santner feels the key to piling up runs on the board will be forging partnerships.

"Yeah, we've got a few plans for Bangladesh, but I think we obviously - we have to wait and see what the wicket does. If it is pretty flat I think it is probably similar stuff to what we've been operating in Karachi. It's hitting that hard length for a long period of time, and then we know they have some destructive players in their line-up as well. So, I think traditionally, it's quite a high-scoring ground, so we have to be on it. Then, with the bat, we just talk about trying to build partnerships and do that out there," he said.

Mithali Raj lauds Chinelle Henry's power-packed knock after UP Warriorz's victory

BENGALURU : Former Indian women's cricket captain Mithali Raj showered praise on Chinelle Henry for her fearless batting approach in the Women's Premier League (WPL). "She backed herself to play those aggressive shots. At that stage, with six or seven wickets already down, she knew there was nothing to lose. She decided to go big and play her natural game, showcasing that signature West Indian flair for hitting big sixes," Mithali told JioHotstar. Henry played a pivotal role in UP Warriorz's commanding 33-run victory over Delhi Capitals (DC) on Saturday. The West Indian all-rounder produced a stunning performance, smashing 62 runs off just 23 balls, including two boundaries and eight massive sixes. Her blitzkrieg helped UP Warriorz set a formidable target of 177/9 for the Delhi Capitals.



Apart from her explosive batting, Henry also contributed with the ball, taking a crucial wicket of Marizanne Kapp. Her all-round brilliance ensured UP Warriorz secured their first victory of the WPL season in style. Coming to the match, Delhi Capitals won the toss and opted to field first, a decision that initially worked in their favour as UP Warriorz struggled to build momentum. They lost their first wicket at 17, and Kiran Navgire (17) fell soon after, leaving the score at 38/2.

Captain Deepthi Sharma (13) and Shweta Sehrawat (11) also failed to make a big impact, and with Grace Harris (2) and Uma Chetry (3) departing cheaply, Warriorz were reeling at 89/6. Tahlia McGrath contributed a valuable 24 before falling to Jess Jonassen.

Just when it seemed Delhi Capitals had the upper hand, Chinelle Henry produced a game-changing knock. She smashed 62 off just 23 balls, lifting Warriorz to a competitive total of 177/9. Sophie Ecclestone (12) and Saima Thakor (4) also chipped in towards the end.

Jess Jonassen was the standout bowler for the Capitals, claiming 4/31, while Marizanne Kapp and Arundhati Reddy picked up two wickets each. Shikha Pandey also contributed with one wicket.

Mann Ki Baat: PM Modi lauds 'Khelo India' campaign, appreciates rise of teenage champions in National Games

NEW DELHI : Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded 'Khelo India' for providing a platform to talented champions who were able to rise and perform well in the recently concluded National Games in Uttarakhand. During the 119th Episode of Mann Ki Baat on Sunday, the Prime Minister also appreciated the rise in young athletes, and said that India is rapidly moving towards becoming a "global sporting powerhouse." The 38th National Games were held from January 28 to February 14 in Uttarakhand. "Many of our players are the result of the 'Khelo India' campaign. Sawan Barwal from Himachal Pradesh, Kiran Mate from Maharashtra, Tejas Shire and Jyoti Yarraji from Andhra Pradesh all have given new hopes to the country. Javelin Thrower Sachin Yadav of Uttar Pradesh, high jumper Pooja of Haryana and swimmer Dhinidhi Desindhu of Karnataka won the hearts of the countrymen," PM Modi said. "The number of teenage champions in this year's national games is surprising. I am happy that with the determination and discipline of our young athletes, India today is rapidly moving towards becoming a global sporting powerhouse," he added. He also applauded the 38th National Games, which saw the participation of 11,000 athletes from all over the country, and said it presented a new version of 'Devbhoomi'.

Ben Stokes' absence in ODIs "big loss" for England: Nasser Hussain

LAHORE : After England's loss to Australia in their ICC Champions Trophy campaign opener, former England skipper Nasser Hussain said that the absence of veteran all-rounder Ben Stokes is hurting the Three Lions as his inclusion in the Champions Trophy squad would have made the balance of the team more "comfortable".

Even making 351 runs did not prove to be safe for England as a resilient Alex Carey and explosive pair of Josh Inglis and Glenn Maxwell helped Australia secure a five-wicket win at Lahore on Saturday.

Speaking after the match to Sky Sports as quoted by Wisden, Nasser said that there was not much expectation from Australia as they missed their key players, including frontline pacers skipper Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood, retired all-rounder Marcus Stoinis and all-rounder Mitchell Marsh who is also down with an injury.

"I think England when Duckett was smashing it and got 165, and



Even making 351 runs did not prove to be safe for England as a resilient Alex Carey and explosive pair of Josh Inglis and Glenn Maxwell helped Australia secure a five-wicket win at Lahore on Saturday.

(they were) getting up towards 350-plus, you were thinking maybe England have found a formula. Maybe these conditions will suit England," he added.

Hussain went on to explain how a lack of an all-rounder backfired on England. In order to boost their batting, they placed trust in their all-rounder to play as the fifth bowling option and collectively, Liam Livingstone and Joe Root took 173 in 11 overs with their spin bowling, with Root being a part-timer bowler.

"They cannot work out whether to play the extra batter, which they did today. That means their bowling is a bit short. Or play one of their bowling all-rounders, [Gus] Atkinson or [Jamie] Overton. But then, their batting would have been short," he said.

"I think recent cricket has shown the value of one individual, and that is Ben Stokes. That Ben Stokes character and individual makes your balance of batting and bowling much more comfortable, and I think he's a big loss," he added.

Notably, Stokes has not played any List-A cricket, let alone ODIs, since the 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup, after having made a return to the format in the tournament following retirement from the format in 2022. In 2024, his only white-ball games were three matches for the Northern Superchargers in The Hundred. Coming to T20s as well, he has not played for England since their T20 WC 2022 triumph, in which he played a vital role with a match-winning 50 in the final.