

6 WORLD

8 NATION

- Ukraine repels large Russian missile and drone attack that injures civilians in Kyiv
- US VP Kamala Harris makes history with tie-breaking votes in Senate
- India has shown it's possible for harmony to exist amid diversity: PM
- SC to hear on Friday AAP leader Manish Sisodia's bail pleas

1 lakh more houses to come up under CM Awas Yojana: Himanta

CM attends Griha Pravesh ceremony of 3 lakh PMAY (G) Beneficiaries ● Another 6 lakh houses to be ready by February

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 13: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that the state government has been taking all measures necessary to give shape to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of ensuring housing for all by 2024.

"In this regard, the Government of Assam has been implementing the provisions of PMAY (Grameen) in letter and spirit, the chief minister said while attending the "griha pravesh" ceremony organised by the Government of Assam's Panchayat & Rural Development Department for as many as three lakh beneficiaries of the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (Grameen) held at the Srimanta Sankardev International Auditorium today.

Addressing the event, Sarma said that with the aim of ensuring



a pucca house equipped with all the basic amenities for all eligible beneficiaries in the rural areas, the Panchayat & Rural Development Department of Assam has been working relentlessly in efficient and time-bound implementation of PMAY (Grameen) scheme.

"Beneficiaries are being provided an amount of ₹1.30 lakh each in three installments through their bank accounts as per the provisions of the scheme," he said. Stating that a total of 19,10,823 houses have been approved under the scheme beneficiaries for which

were selected on the basis of socio-economic caste census (SECC) and Awas+, the chief minister said a total of 12,43,584 houses have already been constructed. By February 2024, construction of another 6 lakh houses would be completed, the chief minister said. With the aim of ensuring the landless population of the State are also able to enjoy the benefits of the scheme, the government took measures such as allotment of land to the landless, the chief minister said.

The chief minister further stated that in line with PMAY, the state government would implement a scheme named Chief Minister's Awas Yojana under which a total of 1 lakh houses would be constructed with entirely state government funds. The event also witnessed the presence of P&RD minister (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

EC's public hearing on delimitation draft from July 19

GUWAHATI, July 13 (PTI): The Election Commission of India (ECI) will hold a three-day public hearing from July 19 on the suggestions/ complaints related to the draft proposal on the delimitation of Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies of Assam, an official release said here on Thursday.

The ECI had issued a notification on June 20 this year, inviting suggestions and objections to the draft proposal on the delimitation of assembly constituencies by June 11 and till the stipulated date about 500 suggestions/objections were received. These suggestions/objections are under the consideration of the Commission and it has been also decided to hold public sittings in the state to hear the suggestions/objections as received from people and organisations on the draft proposal. The public hearing will be held at the Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra from 1500 hrs on the first day and will cover the districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri, Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao.

On July 20, the hearing will begin at 9:30 hours and representatives from the districts of Dhubri, Goalpara, South Salmara, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Karimganj, Hailakandi and Cachar will be heard till 1200 hours, followed by Kamrup, Kamrup(Metro), Nagaon, Sonitpur, Morjiganj and Darrang till 1400 hours.

The Commission will also interact with representatives of national and state-recognised political parties (in alphabetical order) from 1530 hours on the same day. On the final day, the hearing will be from 0930 to 1230 hours with representatives from the district of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar,



Jorhat, Charaideo, Golaghat and Majuli, the release added. The draft delimitation proposal had retained the number of assembly seats at 126 and the Lok Sabha constituencies at 14 in Assam.

The state also has seven Rajya Sabha seats.

According to the draft, the assembly seats reserved for Scheduled Castes would be increased to nine from eight and for Scheduled Tribes to 19 from 16 while for the Lok Sabha constituencies, two have been proposed under the ST category and one for the SC community. The commission had also proposed to alter the geographical boundaries of most of the assembly and the Lok Sabha constituencies. The draft delimitation proposal has come in for criticism from a section of the ruling BJP, its alliance partners and the opposition parties.

HT BRIEFS

Chinthong market shed

DIPHU: Local Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) of Chinthong MAC constituency, Avijit Kro aimed to make Chinthong the land of organics and in his initial task to promote local farmers has started the construction of an organic market shed for sell of organic produce at Long-eh- Lobui, West Karbi Anglong. Kro said, "It is good news for the people of Chinthong constituency. I am constructing a market shed at Long-eh Lobui, where farmers cultivating ginger, chilli, sesame, pineapple, orange etc. can sell their produce." "In Chinthong, there are many agricultural and horticulture products, which are organic, but there is no place to sell them. When the market shed is completed local farmers and cultivators can sell their produce", Kro added.

Plantation drive

DIPHU: 20 Bn CRPF, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, has carried out a massive plantation drive by planting various species of saplings in the premises of Art of Living Foundation, Diphu. The plantation programme was carried out as a part of the mega plantation drive 2023 by Central Armed Police Forces. Unit commandant Swarn Singh led the plantation drive, accompanied by officers, subordinate officers and jawans of the unit. Yoga guru Vishnu Prakash and staff of The Art of Living Foundation also joined the plantation programme.

Computer training

KHERONI: A twenty day computer training is being conducted free of cost, for those students who are unfamiliar with the technology. An NGO, 'Rishab- A social organisation' has organised the computer training from July 11 here, which was inaugurated by the social worker, Tanka Kuwar. Tutu Nigam and Rasmii Bora are teaching the students. 'Rishab- A social organisation' secretary and 'Axomiya Pratidin' correspondent Tutu Nigam said that the students will be taken through familiarisation of computer basics and Microsoft Word. Microsoft Word is a word processing program that allows for the creation of both simple and complex documents.

Assam govt supports UCC, wants to ban polygamy immediately: Himanta

GUWAHATI, July 13 (PTI): The Assam government has already conveyed to the authorities concerned that it is in support of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and wants to ban polygamy in the state immediately, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Thursday. The UCC is a matter which will be decided by Parliament, but the state can also take a call on it with the assent of the President, Sarma said at the sidelines of a programme here.

"UCC involves various issues and the Law Commission as well as the Parliamentary Committee is looking into it. The Assam government has already conveyed that it is in its support," the chief minister said.

Pending the decision on the UCC, "we want to take one of its segments - polygamy - and ban it immediately. We are planning to introduce a Bill to ban it in the next assembly session in September," he said.

Sarma, also a senior BJP leader, said if the state government is unable to table the Bill for some reason, it will be done in the January session.

"In the meantime, however, if the UCC is imple-

mented, we do not have to take this action as it will be merged with it," he said. Regarding the Congress' opposition to the UCC, the chief minister wondered if a leader of that party has a daughter, "will the person marry her off to somebody with two wives".

"The problem is that Congress leaders do not realise the pain of Muslim women. They take their votes but they do not want to give back anything to them", he said.

The Congress wants the votes of both Muslim men and women but they want to serve only the men, Sarma added. "Even Nabi (The Prophet) did not support polygamy as he had said that all Muslims should ideally have one wife. These are the essential points of Islam. The Congress should not support polygamy and stand with Muslim women, even if they lose some votes," he said.

The Congress had opposed the abolition of triple talaq and now the UCC, so in a way the party is "waging a war against Muslim women", he said. "When they (Muslim women) emancipate themselves from the influence of the male, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Pijush Hazarika inspects flood-prone areas



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 13: Assam Water Resources minister Pijush Hazarika on Thursday inspected the embankment along the Brahmaputra River in Gohpur constituency, which suffered breaches resulting in widespread flooding in the region.

The embankment, which was constructed by the District Rural Development Authority (DRDA), stretches for 12 kilometers and is flanked by embankment structures built by the Water Resources Department. These combined efforts significantly contributed to flood prevention.

After inspecting the eroded and breached sections of the embankment, Hazarika decided to complete the construction of the remaining 12-14 kilometers of em-

bankment on both sides of the river. Hazarika also visited the Charang River in Gohpur, which has been responsible for recurrent floods, resulting in damages to the local community. He assessed the riparian areas alongside the river and determined that a guard wall will be constructed to fortify the remaining sections of the riverbank.

In addition, the minister inspected the erosion that occurred in the Kukurjan and Dubia areas. The Water Resources Department has initiated temporary preventive measures in this location.

Minister Hazarika said that the government is committed to providing relief to the affected people and taking steps to prevent future floods. He urged the people to cooperate with the government in its efforts to mitigate the effects of flooding.

PHED, DWSM review JJM, Swachh Bharat Mission status in KA

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 13: PHED, Skill, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Tourism Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah chaired a Review meeting on the status of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and Swachh Bharat Mission (G) in Karbi Anglong District with the officials of District Administration, PHED, and DWSM at the conference hall of Arboretum cum Craft Centre, here.

Later, informing the media, the minister said, "We had held a crucial discussion with the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) authority, District Administration, and officials of PHED on the implementation of JJM in the two hill districts. We have made an important decision to provide 55 litres of water per person to every household every day. We have targeted that by 2024, potable water should reach every household." Baruah also said, "Various issues



and problems in implementing the JJM in the hill districts were discussed. It is our responsibility to provide sufficient potable water to the rural masses."

Baruah requested that the MP and MLAs extend their support for the implementation of JJM.

The meeting was attended by

Chief Executive Member (CEM), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Tuliram Ronghang; MP Horensing Bey; deputy speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly, Nunal Momin; MLAs; executive members of KAAC; Members of the Autonomous Council; and DCs of both districts.

AYUSH has unprecedented potential for expansion of 'Act East Policy' in traditional systems of medicine: Sarba

India to host ASEAN Countries Conference on Traditional Medicines on 20th July

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: The Ministry of Ayush with support from the ministry of external affairs, Indian Mission to ASEAN and the ASEAN Secretariat is gearing up to host the Conference on Traditional Medicines for ASEAN Countries on 20th July 2023.

The Conference on Traditional Medicines aims to strengthen the platform between India and ASEAN Countries to share their best practices and draw a roadmap for future cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicines.

Addressing the Media at the Curtain Raiser event today, union minister for Ayush Sarbananda Sonowal said, "The multi-dimensional relationship between India and ASEAN stands on a strong



foundation of shared geographical, historical, and civilizational links which is far older than goes back to more than two millennia." He continued, "Prime Minister

of India Shri Narendra Modi at the 12TH ASEAN India Summit at Myanmar in November 2014 enunciated 'Act East Policy', giving a new momentum to the strate-

To and fro ferry services to Majuli suspended

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, July 13: To and fro ferry services from Assam's Majuli have been suspended indefinitely amid a rise in the water levels of the Brahmaputra river last night. According to a report, the decision to suspend ferry services in Majuli was taken in view of the safety of passengers. Also, the rising water levels of the Brahmaputra River have led to the ferry ramps getting completely submerged, prompting the authorities decision. According to the Inland Water Transport Department, the decision will remain in force until the water levels subside below the danger levels. Meanwhile, sources informed that ferry services have been suspended at both the Aphalamukh-Nimati and Kamalabari-Nimati ghats.

Peren to act strict against substance abuse among minors

HT Correspondent

DIMPUR, July 13: Concerned over the increasing cases of substance abuse, particularly among children under the age of 18 in the district, Peren deputy commissioner Vineet Kumar has decided to come down hard on those who sell or distribute restricted substances to minors.

In a notification Thursday, the DC, citing Section 77 of the Juvenile Justice Act 2015, reminded that it is an offence to provide any intoxicating liquor, narcotic drug, tobacco product, or psychotropic substance to children, unless authorised by a qualified medical practitioner. He warned that any shop, institution or individual found selling or distributing restricted substances to minors will face legal consequences as prescribed by (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Protest in front of AGV Bank's Khatkhati Bazar branch

Manager, agent assure to return siphoned off money

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, July 13: Hundreds of women of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) gheraoed the Assam Gramin Vikash (AGV) Bank's Khatkhati Bazar branch in Karbi Anglong alleging misappropriation of their money by an agent in collusion with unnamed bank officials.

Pandemonium prevailed as they alleged that the JLG Microfinance Bank agent, Pinki Das Mech in collusion with AGV Bank officials si-

phoned off their money to the tune of ₹ 24 lakh.

The women alleged that as their accounts are linked with their registered phone numbers, they received messages of money being deposited and withdrawn from their accounts. "So, as to determine the facts they got together on Wednesday," they said. As the large group of women refused to disperse, the OC of Khatkhati Police Station, Manjit Terang along with SDPO of Boka-

jan, John Das APS arrived to diffuse the situation. At around 9:30 pm, the manager of the bank B Das and the concerned JLG Micro Finance Bank Agent, Pinki Das were brought to the bank. The manager of the bank and the agent apologised to the crowd and promised to return their money. Later, Das was taken to the police station.

It was not clear whether any legal action had been taken against anyone or not.

Sensex breaches record 66,000-mark

Nifty scales fresh lifetime high as IT, banking shares advance

MUMBAI, July 13 (PTI): Benchmark stock indices hit their record high levels in intra-day trade on Thursday, with Sensex breaching the historic 66,000-mark for the first time following a rally in global markets amid moderating US inflation data.

Buying in market heavyweight stocks Infosys, ICICI Bank and Tata Consultancy Services also helped markets settle in the positive territory.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 670.31 points or 1.02 per cent to hit its all-time intra-day peak of 66,064.21. The barometer settled 164.99 points or 0.25 per cent higher at 65,558.89.

The NSE Nifty went up by 29.45 points or 0.15 per cent to close at 19,413.75. During the day, it rallied 182.7 points or 0.94 per cent to reach its lifetime high of 19,567.

"Today's domestic rally was supported by the contra bet buying of the IT stocks which was supported by stable margins, new generation business opportunities and increase in pricing power due to moderation in USD, as latest US inflation is fast approaching the Fed's target levels," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said.

From the Sensex pack, Tata

Pact inked to connect ONGC's natural gas fields with North East Gas Grid

GUWAHATI, July 13 (PTI): Indradhanush Gas Limited (IGGL) and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) have signed three hook-up agreements to connect the latter's natural gas fields with the North East Gas Grid (NEGG) for transportation of natural gas.

The natural gas will be transported from Jorhat, Silchar and Tripura Assets of ONGC to the consumers, an official release said on Thursday. IGGL is laying a 1,656 km long natural gas pipeline connecting the capital cities and the demand centres of all the eight north eastern states.

These hook up agreements will facilitate connection of the natural gas fields of ONGC with the IGGL's pipeline for evacuation of natural gas, IGGL Director Sanjay Kumar said.

"The hook-up agreements signed with IGGL is a strategic move to enhance the connectivity of ONGC fields with the North East Gas Grid which will benefit both the companies", he said.

It will make domestic gas available to the customers and will contribute to the country's economy as a whole, he said.

By leveraging the NEGG infrastructure, the hydrocarbon potential of the northeastern region can be fully utilised for development of a gas-based economy in line with the Centre's Hydrocarbon Vision 2030, Kumar said.

IGGL is also in touch with other natural gas producing companies to hook up their gas fields with NEGG.

The hook-up agreements will facilitate withdrawal of 1,85,000 SCMD of Natural Gas from Jorhat Asset, 82,500 SCMD from Silchar asset and 7,00,000 SCMD from the Tripura asset of ONGC through NEGG.

The NEGG project being implemented by IGGL has achieved 75.52 per cent physical progress as on date, the release added.

Rupee gains 10 paise to close at 82.08 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): The rupee strengthened further by 10 paise to close at 82.08 against the US dollar on Thursday, marking its fourth straight session of gain following a firm trend in domestic equities and a weak greenback against major crosses overseas.

However, strengthening crude prices in the international market restricted the upside move in the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened sharply up at 81.98 against the US dollar. It lost some ground later to settle at 82.08 (provisional), up by 10 paise over the previous close.

During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 81.95 and a low of 82.14. This is the fourth straight day of rise for the rupee, during which it has gained 53 paise.



Consultancy Services, Infosys, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Wipro and Bajaj Finance were among the major gainers.

TCS climbed 2.47 per cent a day after announcing its June quarter earnings.

The country's largest IT services company on Wednesday reported a 16.83 per cent increase in June quarter net profit to ₹ 11,074 crore but sounded circumspect about growth prospects for the fiscal due to market uncertainties.

Power Grid, Maruti, NTPC, Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever and Nestle were among the laggards.

Official data released on Wednesday showed retail inflation

rose to a three-month high in June on rising prices of kitchen essentials, while the factory output expanded at a faster pace of 5.2 per cent in May.

Retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased to 4.81 per cent in June after declining for four months in a row but remained within the comfort zone of the Reserve Bank.

The broad market was trading positively at all-time high levels in anticipation of buoyant Q1 results and low volatility (VIX). However, a mixed start to bank earnings, coupled with ongoing concerns about domestic inflation, attracted bearish sentiment towards the latter half, Nair said.

In the broader market, the BSE

midcap gauge declined by 0.64 per cent and the smallcap index fell by 0.54 per cent.

Among the indices, IT climbed 1.75 per cent, teck jumped 1.45 per cent, realty (1.04 per cent) and metal (0.49 per cent).

However, among the laggards power declined by 2.16 per cent, utilities fell by 2.09 per cent, oil & gas (1.20 per cent), energy (1.19 per cent) and auto (0.64 per cent).

"Markets traded volatile on the weekly expiry day but managed to end marginally higher. Initially, upbeat global cues triggered a gap-up start in Nifty, which was later followed by range bound move. However, a sharp decline in the second half trimmed the gains," Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green.

Equity markets in Europe were trading with gains. The US markets ended in positive territory on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.27 per cent to USD 80.33 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,242.44 crore on Wednesday after unabated buying, according to exchange data.

HDFC Bank launches UPI QR code interoperable with CBDC

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: In a significant development, HDFC Bank has announced the launch of UPI QR code interoperable with India's sovereign digital currency, Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). This integration positions HDFC Bank as one of the country's pioneering banks to complete the integration process, enabling its merchants to accept payments in the form of Digital Rupee currency through the bank's CBDC platform. This move is expected to boost the usage of CBDC in day-to-day transactions.

Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), also known as Digital Rupee, is a tokenized digital version of the Indian Rupee issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It serves as a sovereign digital currency aimed at promoting digital transactions in the country. The interoperable QR code is a significant development in the adoption of CBDC. It allows basic QR payment acceptance terminals to support the Scan & Pay feature across various form factors and payment options. With this interoperability, HDFC Bank customers can seamlessly transact money in their CBDC wallet across UPI QR codes, eliminating the need to

scan different QR codes at the same merchant.

Parag Rao, country head - Payments, Consumer Finance, Technology & Digital Banking, HDFC Bank, expressed his thoughts on this occasion. He stated, "HDFC Bank has always been a pioneer in applying Digital Banking initiatives, and we are committed to providing a best-in-class and enhanced experience to our customers. Our digital banking solutions are one of the best and most secure in the country. CBDC is a forward-looking initiative, and its QR interoperability with the already accepted and widely popular UPI is going to prove greatly beneficial to its usage."

HDFC Bank customers can transact in digital currency using the 'Digital Rupee' application, which is available for Android Version 10+ users. The bank has plans to launch the application on iOS shortly, expanding its reach to a broader user base. As of now, HDFC Bank facilitates payments in Digital Rupee across several cities, including Mumbai, Delhi, Chandigarh, Bhubaneswar, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, Gangtok, Hyderabad, Indore, Bhopal, Lucknow, Patna, Kochi, Goa, Shimla, Jaipur, Chennai, Kolkata, Ranchi, Pune, Nagpur, Varanasi, Vishakhapatnam, Pondicherry, and Vijayawada.

The 7th Edition of IMC 2023 is to be held in Oct

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: India Mobile Congress (IMC) is Asia's premier digital technology exhibition, organised annually by the department of telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). The seventh edition of IMC is set to take place from October 27-29 at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. With the theme of 'Global Digital Innovation', the event serves as a meeting point for industry leaders, government officials, academics, and key stakeholders in the technology ecosystem.

IMC 2023 aims to bring together over 1,00,000 participants, including 5,000 CXO-level delegates, 350 speakers, and 400 exhibitors. It promises to be a grand affair, featuring engaging ses-

sions, interactive displays, and insightful discussions on cutting-edge technologies. IMC 2023 will focus on various critical areas shaping the digital landscape. The key programs will shed light on topics such as 6G, advancements in 5G networks, the integration of AI in telecommunications and other domains, Edge Computing, Industry 4.0, and the emergence of India Stack.

COAI Chairman P.K. Mittal extends a warm welcome to all the participants of IMC 2023. He assures that this year's event will be a significant milestone for India's rapidly advancing tech industry.

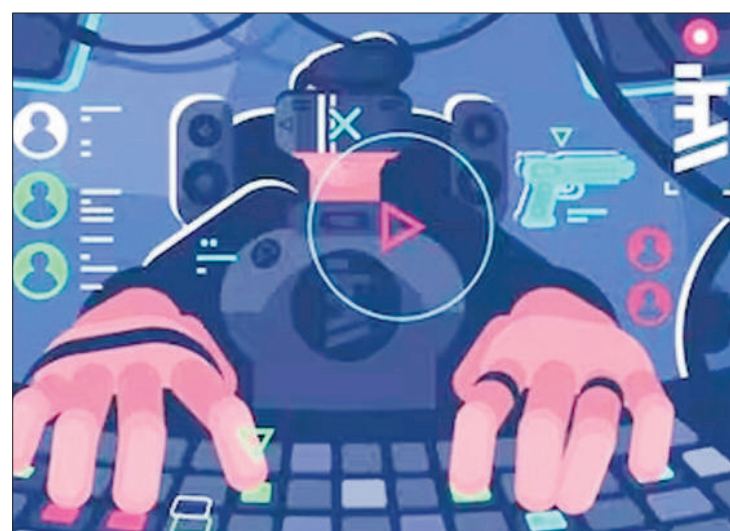
V. L. Kantha Rao, additional secretary, department of telecommunications (DoT), expresses his anticipation for IMC 2023. He

highlights the progress made in the last year, including the launch of 5G in India by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Ashwini Vaishnav, minister for communications, electronics & information technology and railways, government of India, envisions India as a technology developer, telecom manufacturer, and exporter. IMC 2023 aligns with this vision and aims to position India as a technology powerhouse. The theme for IMC 2023, "Global Digital Innovation," encompasses various industries such as drone technology, satellite communication, mobile manufacturing, and cybersecurity startups. The event also plans to engage with international partner countries through consultations with the ministry of external affairs.

Clarificatory amendment to GST Act on online gaming in monsoon session: Revenue Secretary

The online gaming companies have been paying tax at lower rates



game of chance. The Council has only reiterated and confirmed that view that these games are taxable at 28 per cent on the full face value or the payment which is made to the

online gaming platform," he said. So in that sense it is not retrospective, he added.

The online gaming companies, however, have been paying tax at

Gold jumps ₹ 400; silver zooms ₹ 2,300

NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): Gold prices jumped by ₹ 400 to ₹ 60,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid strong global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at ₹ 59,700 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver prices also zoomed ₹ 2,300 to ₹ 75,000 per kg.

"Gold prices climbed on Thursday, with spot gold prices in the Delhi markets trading at ₹ 60,100/10 gram up by ₹ 400 from its previous day's close," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst, commodities, HDFC Securities, said.

In the global market, both gold and silver were trading higher at USD 1,960 per ounce and USD 24.17 per ounce, respectively.

Comex gold prices extended their gains and traded at a four-week high following softer-than-expected US consumer inflation data which raised expectations that the Federal Reserve's rate hike cycle might be coming to an end, Gandhi said.

Wipro Q1 net profit rises 12 pc to ₹ 2,870 crore

BENGALURU, July 13 (PTI): IT services company Wipro on Thursday reported a 12 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to about ₹ 2,870 crore for the June 2023 quarter.

It had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹ 2,563.6 crore in the year-ago period (Q1FY23).

Wipro's income from operations in the June quarter increased 6 per cent to ₹ 22,831 crore.

"We expect revenue from our IT Services business segment to be in the range of USD 2,722-2,805 million. This translates to sequential guidance of -2 per cent to +1 per cent in constant currency terms," the company said in a statement.

Wipro CEO and Managing Director Thierry Delaporte noted that the company's first quarter results came on a strong backbone of large deal bookings, robust client additions and resilient margins.

"Despite a gradual reduction in clients' discretionary spending, we maintained new business momentum. We earned our clients' trust with strong delivery, innovation and expanded services that strengthen our long-term businesses, and help capture market share," Delaporte said.

On the latest AI strategy, Delaporte said that the launch of Wipro ai360 and the USD 1 billion investment "solidifies Wipro's position as a leading transformation partner that delivers the results and innovation our clients need to future-proof their businesses".

Govt imposes import restrictions on certain gold jewellery, articles

NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): The government on Wednesday imposed import restrictions on certain gold jewellery and articles, a move which would help cut import of non-essential items and contain trade deficit.

Now an importer would need a permission of licence from the government for importing these gold products. However, the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said that the restrictions will not be there for imports under the India-UAE free trade agreement.

In a notification, the DGFT said that the import policy of these products "has been amended from free to restricted with immediate effect".

Imports of pearls, precious and semi-precious stones dipped by 25.36 per cent to about USD 4 billion during April-May this fiscal. Gold imports too contracted by about 40 per cent to USD 4.7 billion in the same period.

Overall merchandise imports during April-May this fiscal declined 10.24 per cent to USD 107 billion. The merchandise trade deficit for April-May 2023 stood at USD 37.26 billion against USD 40.48 billion during April-May 2022.

Generative AI deals expected in next two quarters: TCS CEO



MUMBAI, July 13 (PTI): The country's largest IT services company TCS is expecting some generative artificial intelligence (AI) based deals in the next two quarters, but their sizes will not be big, its top official said on Thursday.

"Those deals will not be over USD 1 billion, TCS Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director K Krithivasan told PTI during an interview here.

"Each organisation will spin out a number of deals, but there may not be a single billion dollar kind of deal in generative AI," Krithivasan said, adding that at present, every organisation is tinkering to assess the possibilities of the new technology.

TCS, which on Wednesday announced its intent to train 1 lakh associates on generative AI and working on 50 proofs of concept, is also gearing up for the changes in the landscape, Krithivasan said.

"The major impact (for) organisations will happen only when they embark on an enterprise-wide programme. As long as they keep doing some use cases here, some use cases there, some pilots here, even they will not see (the gains)," he said.

Businesses need to be sure about the returns on investments on the deployment of such technologies before they move ahead, Krithivasan said, adding that it is important for an IT company to test and understand such technologies.

It can be noted that since the launch of ChatGPT by OpenAI late last year, there has been an increased interest in generative AI in the tech world. In the post-earnings press conference on Wednesday, TCS Chief Operating Officer N Ganapathy Subramanian had said every client conversation is finding a mention on generative AI now.

Krithivasan said on Thursday that training of associates will not extract a significant jump in expenses, as it undertakes training efforts for its employees on a reg-

ular basis.

Meanwhile, on the overall demand environment, he said there is a prevailing softness because of the economic prospects in the US — the major market for the USD 245-billion Indian IT sector — and the IT companies will become more optimistic when they see clarity.

"Optimism or the lack of it (for tech companies) comes from the point that we don't have a certainty on the government's position on how they want to handle... their current belief is that they will prefer some sort of slowing down because the economy is very hot, unemployment rates are also very low," he said.

"If the governments are going to be driving a slowdown, that will have an impact on all parts of the economy, including IT spending. That's where our uncertainty or caution comes from," he said.

Krithivasan said once there is clarity that the US Fed interest rate would not be hiked further, or the government clearly indicates that interest rates will not go up any more, that could be a good indicator for the IT industry, as it will encourage clients to start spending.

All total contract values (TCVs) are not getting converted into revenues in the older signed deals because clients are re-evaluating their priorities on what they need to invest in, he said, maintaining that some projects get delayed or scrapped as a result.

He, however, declined to quantify the dip in the TCV-to-revenue conversion rates.

On Wednesday, TCS had reported a 17 per cent jump in Q1 net profit but pointed towards sluggishness on revenue growth in FY24 because of the ongoing market challenges that have led to minuscule revenue growth on a sequential basis.

The TCS scrip was trading over 2.5 per cent higher at ₹ 3,346 on the BSE in afternoon trade.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT LUMDING DIVISION
E-Tender Notice No.: Sr.DEE/LMG/09 of 2023-24 **Dated:** 11-07-2023. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No. EL/LM/23-24/04.**
Name of work: Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of Diesel Generating sets of different make and capacities for a period of 2 years over Lumding Division. **Tender Value:** ₹96.84.732/-, **Earnest Money:** ₹1,93,700/-. **Date & time of Closing of Tender:** after 15.00 hrs. of 03-08-2023 & opening at 15.30 hrs. of 03-08-2023. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. of 03-08-2023 in website www.ireps.gov.in
 Sr.DEE/G&Op, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
 Serving Customers With A Smile

E-AUCTION FOR THE CONTRACT OF PARKING
 E-auction for the contract of parking at following Railway stations over Lumding Division for the period of 03 (Three) years. **Description:** Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers. **Auction Catalogue No.:** PARK-LMG-03-23. **Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots):** 10:00 hrs. on 27-07-2023. **Auction Close Date & Time:** 13:40 hrs. on 27-07-2023. **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee. **Trips/Days:** 1096.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Stations
AA/1	PARKING-LMG-AGTL-MX-24-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Agartala
AA/2	PARKING-LMG-NKMG-MX-49-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	New Karimganj
AA/3	PARKING-LMG-BLGH-MX-94-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Bishalgarh
AA/4	PARKING-LMG-BHRM-MX-42-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Bishramganj
AA/5	PARKING-LMG-STRB-MX-46-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Santir Bazar
AA/6	PARKING-LMG-ABSA-MX-47-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Ambassa
AA/7	PARKING-LMG-DMR-MX-113-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Dharmaganj
AA/8	PARKING-LMG-LMG-MX-15-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Lumding
AA/9	PARKING-LMG-BENA-MX-48-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Belonia
AA/10	PARKING-LMG-JRNA-MX-12-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Jirania
AA/11	PARKING-LMG-DPU-MX-14-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Diphu
AA/12	PARKING-LMG-THTW-MX-51-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Thailik Tiwasa
AA/13	PARKING-LMG-JID-MX-39-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Jagjiraod
AA/14	PARKING-LMG-UDPU-MX-37-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Udaipur
AA/15	PARKING-LMG-JIBI-MX-50-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Jolaibari
AA/16	PARKING-LMG-KXJ-MX-45-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Karimganj Jn.
AA/17	PARKING-LMG-MUBR-MX-53-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Manu Bazar
AA/18	PARKING-LMG-MANU-MX-36-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Manu
AA/19	PARKING-LMG-KYQ-MX-109-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Kamakhya
AA/20	PARKING-LMG-JRJE-MX-57-22-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Garjee

Prospective bidders are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module of IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in.

DRM (C) / Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
 "SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

CEM Pramod Boro assesses flood situation, assures relief measures in Chirang

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, July 13: Pramod Boro, chief executive member (CEM) of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), visited various relief camps set up in different locations in the Bijni subdivision of Chirang district on Thursday. The region has been experiencing rising river waters from the northern part, leading to the establishment of several relief camps for flood-affected individuals.

CEM Boro, accompanied by senior officials of the BTR government, swiftly responded to the flood situation in Bijni subdivision. They interacted with the inmates of the relief camps to assess the impact of the floods on the Bodoland Territorial Region. Assuring the affected people of the government's commitment to their safety, CEM Boro instructed the concerned departmental officials to continue relief and rehabilitation operations on a priority basis.

During his visit, CEM Boro stated, "Today, I met with flood-affected people, who are mothers and sisters of BTR, and heard about the devastating effects of the floods. I assured them that our government will do everything possible to ensure their safety and that of their



loved ones. I have also instructed senior officials to continue relief and rehabilitation operations on a war footing."

Meanwhile, Raju Kumar Narzary, general secretary (Administration) of the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), along with

several senior party leaders, also visited the flood-affected areas and assessed the situation in Chirang district. The UPPL party leaders are actively involved in extending support to the affected regions by providing relief materials and assisting in rescue and relief operations.

The visit of CEM Pramod Boro and UPPL leaders underscores the government's commitment to addressing the needs of the flood-affected communities and their determination to provide immediate relief measures in response to the challenging flood situation.

Y20 talks promote youth engagement and sustainable living at Haflong Govt College

Minister Nandita Gorlosa encourages youth to embrace sports careers

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, July 13: A one-day program of Y20 talks was organised at Haflong Government College, initiated by the Sports and Youth Welfare department. The event saw the presence of Nandita Gorlosa, Assam minister for Sports & Youth Welfare, as the chief guest, along with Anmol Soviet, chairperson of Y20 India, and other distinguished guests.

Addressing the audience, Gorlosa emphasised the significance of such programs in articulating the role of youth in promoting sustainable ways of life within the G20 summit. She encouraged and empowered the youth to raise awareness about the Y20 summit and highlighted the opportunities in sports careers, particularly in the Dima Hasao district. Gorlosa applauded the achievements of several sports personalities and stressed the importance of sports participation for young boys and girls to discover their potential and thrive.

Renowned motivational speaker Diganta Biswas Sarma delivered a speech on 'The Secret of Eternal Youth', while research scholar Kapil Kempri spoke on 'Climate



Change and Disaster Risk Reduction: Making Sustainability a Way of Life'. The presentations were widely appreciated and well-received by the youth, sports fraternity, students, teachers, and NGOs in attendance.

As part of the event, young achievers who brought honour to the district in various sports and adventure activities were felicitated with prizes and certificates. The participation of school students and teachers from various educational institutions added to the success of the program.

The event was also graced by Devnit Chaudhuri, Y20 delegate, Githartha Goswami, member secretary of the State Level Advisory Committee for Students & Youth Welfare, and Anmol Soviet, Y20 India Chair. Motivational speaker Diganta Biswas Sarma serves as the convener of the Assamese Advisory Board at Sahitya Akademi. Notable attendees included Mayank Kumar, IPS, superintendent of police, Deepmala Goala, ACS, additional deputy commissioner, and members of the general public and media.

CEM Debolal Gorlosa highlights Bhanubhakta Acharya's inspirational legacy at Dima Hasao event

209th Bhanu Jayanti celebrated in several districts



HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, July 13: The 209th Bhanu Jayanti, the birthday of the Nepali pioneer Bhanubhakta Acharya, was celebrated with great zeal by the Bhanu Jayanti Celebration Committee (BJCC) in Dima Hasao. The event saw the presence of Debolal Gorlosa, chief executive member (CEM) for Dima Hasao Autonomous Council, as the chief guest, along with Donphaon Thaoson, president of BJP Dima Hasao district, Ishory Prasad Joishi, Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) Dima Hasao, and other dignitaries.

The day began with the garlanding of Bhanubhakta Acharya's statue at Bhanu Chowk in Upper Bagetar, Haflong, followed by a rally from Bagetar to the District Library Auditorium Hall to mark the occasion.

During his address, CEM Debolal Gorlosa praised Bhanubhakta Acharya not only for his literary contributions but also for his role in unifying the Gorkha community. He said that Acharya's life and work serve as an inspiration for all. On this special day, CEM Gorlosa discussed various issues faced by the Gorkha community, including the introduction of Gorkha language instruction (MIL) at the primary school level in Dima Hasao, and the need for Gorkha language teachers in the future. He ex-

pressed his joy and gratitude for being a part of the momentous birth anniversary celebration of the renowned Nepali poet.

The occasion included a function where floral tributes were paid to Bhanubhakta Acharya's portrait, followed by a discussion on his works and contributions. The event saw the participation of senior citizens, a large number of Nepali people, and individuals from different parts of Haflong and other places.

It is worth mentioning that Nepali people commemorate July 13 every year as 'Bhanu Jayanti' in remembrance of Bhanubhakta Acharya, born on Ashar 29, 1814, in Tanahu, Nepal. Known as 'Nepal ka Adikavi' (the first poet of Nepal), Bhanubhakta Acharya translated the great epic Ramayana from Sanskrit to Nepali, using a simplified language that made it accessible for the common man to learn and understand the epic easily. His contributions continue to inspire and resonate with people to this day.

Our Biswanath Chariali correspondent adds: The 209th birth anniversary of Nepali Adikavi Bhanubhakta Acharya, known as Bhanu Jayanti, was observed with great enthusiasm in different parts of the greater Biswanath area. The Biswanath district committee of Assam Nepali Sahitya Sabha (ANSS) and its branches organised special

events to mark the occasion.

At the Radha Krishna Pranami Temple premises located in Panibharal, Biswanath Chariali, the Biswanath district committee of ANSS in association with the local branch organised a special day. Similarly, the Kauripothar branch also celebrated Bhanu Jayanti with enthusiasm. The Dakshin Nagsankar branch of ANSS arranged a day-long program in the conference hall of Dakshin Nagsankar Higher Secondary School, with Churamoni Dulal, the president of the literary body, presiding over the event. Prior to the open session, Purna Kumar Sarma, a recipient of the translation prize of Sahitya Akademi, planted a sapling. The open session commenced with the lighting of earthen lamps in front of the portrait of Bhanubhakta Acharya, followed by floral tributes. A narration of the Ramayana translated by the Adikavi was presented by Binita Devi, followed by a chorus. Eighteen invited poets shared their self-composed poems, and Anup Sarma, an emerging poet, delivered a speech highlighting the life and literary contributions of the legendary poet. Risiraj Sarma, the secretary of the branch, expressed gratitude in a vote of thanks. The program also featured cultural activities performed by children and invited artists. Similar celebrations took place in the Dipatola branch, Jamugurihar regional committee, Panpur branch committee, and Uttar Jamuguri branch of ANSS, each organising events to honour the poet.

The day-long programs included flag hoisting, ceremonial lamp lighting, floral tributes, and recitations of self-composed poems by poets. Various respected individuals, including artist pensioner Chakrapani Sarma, shared their thoughts and insights during the open sessions. The events were conducted with great fervour and were attended by members of the literary community and local residents.

Nagaon KVK organises field day to promote millet cultivation

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 13: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Nagaon, organised a field day to promote millet cultivation and raise awareness among farmers about its benefits.

The event took place at Niz Khataowal near Samaguri in the district, where farmers had the opportunity to learn about millets and showcase the crop. Dr Niranjana Deka, principal scientist and head of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nagaon, provided valuable information about millets, emphasising their nutritional value. He encouraged the participants to disseminate seeds to fellow farmers in the upcoming season. Dr Deka shared solid data on millets and urged farmers to allocate more crop areas for cultivating different varieties of millets. The program saw the participation of over 25 farmers from the region.

Keshab Bora, agriculture inspector of Rupahi ADO Circle, Monika Hira, gram pradhan of Niz Khataowal, and scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nagaon, also attended the program. Millet promotion initiatives are being carried out by Krishi Vigyan Kendra in collaboration with various line departments such as the District Agriculture department, NABARD, and through mass media, aiming to create awareness about the significant benefits of millets and their consumption.

Child drowns in flooded Brahmaputra River

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, July 13: In a heart-breaking incident, a one-and-a-half-year-old child named Sukhi Mandal lost her life on Wednesday evening at Madanbari Hariapara village, under the jurisdiction of Jagiriad Police Station. The unfortunate incident occurred when Sukhi, while playing at her own house, accidentally slipped into the extensive flood caused by the overflowing river Brahmaputra due to incessant rains. The village, situated near the river, has been grappling with heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding. Despite the vigilance of the family, the young child inadvertently found herself in a perilous situation. Tragically, Sukhi drowned in the floodwaters near her house before anyone could intervene.

NHM holds digital health conclave to enhance online health portals

The state-level workshop reviewed health portals & formulated strategies for data flow



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: The National Health Mission (NHM), Assam, organised a Digital Health Conclave, a state-level review cum orientation workshop on 'Online Health Portals' on Wednesday, at the Assam Administrative Staff College. Dr M S Lakshmi Priya, IAS, mission director of NHM, Assam, Pankaj Chamuah, ACS, OSD, NHM, state program officials, and district health teams from NHM, Assam, were present during the meeting.

The one-day review cum orientation workshop focused on the various health portals and involved participants from all districts of Assam. The main objective of the conclave was to review each portal,

identify any gaps hindering performance, and formulate strategies for smooth data flow and improved data quality.

The meeting commenced with the agenda points and highlighted the significance of health portals in enhancing healthcare services in the state. Subsequently, demonstrations and orientations on the 47 online health portals were conducted by NHM state officials and developmental partners.

The workshop also included a district-wise review of each district's health portals, followed by an interactive session with the district health teams to optimise the operation of the portals. The session focused on identifying gaps specific to each portal, and improvement plans were presented and discussed in detail. During the conclave, Dr M S Lakshmi Priya, IAS, mission director of NHM, Assam, felicitated the best performers from the districts for their hard work and dedication in improving the health system in their respective areas.

The Digital Health Conclave highlighted the importance of online health portals in enhancing healthcare services and streamlining data management in Assam. The workshop aimed to identify and address any challenges or gaps in the portals to ensure the smooth functioning and improved performance of the health system.

NFR initiates measures to enhance freight transportation

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: The NF Railway has undertaken various initiatives to enhance freight transportation and provide a better customer interface. In line with these efforts, several stations have been opened for handling inward and outward goods traffic during the month of June 2023, facilitating smoother transportation of diverse goods for different customer segments.

To improve customer interface and augment freight revenue, New Guwahati station (NGC) under the Lumding division has been opened for handling inward livestock to be transported via parcel vans, effective from June 26, 2023. Additionally, Mirza station under the Rangia division has been authorised to function as an alternative goods terminal for both inward and outward goods to Azara station for a period of six months, starting from June 16, 2023.

As part of an experimental initia-

tive, the Lumding division successfully loaded 200 packets of locally grown pineapples, in high demand across various parts of the country, onto the Tejas Rajdhani Express for transportation from Dharmanagar in Tripura to New Delhi in June 2023. Furthermore, on June 12, 2023, the Tinsukia division conducted a meeting with merchants from the Lakwa, Tuli, Bhojo, and Namrup areas to explore the loading potential of coal and sand, aiming to enhance outward loading.

A separate meeting with merchants from New Tinsukia and Talap was also held on June 28, 2023, to analyse the loading prospects of ballast and sand at the Tinsukia division. The improvement of customer interface and the opening of new terminals are expected to increase the loading and unloading of freight trains, consequently leading to a significant growth in revenue for the NF Railway in the coming years.

Griha pravesh ceremony held for beneficiaries

HT Correspondent

MORIGAOON, July 13: Morigaon district witnessed a joyous occasion on Thursday as the 'griha pravesh' ceremony took place for 12,489 beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G). This auspicious event coincided with the house entry ceremony for over 300,000 beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin across the state. The ceremony was organised to mark the successful implementation of the housing scheme. The event was graced by the presence of esteemed guests, including Morigaon deputy commissioner Devashish Sharma, Morigaon Zila Parishad chief executive officer Kshitish Chandra Pegu, additional deputy commissioner, circle officers, and other senior officers of the district. The chief executive members of the Tiwa Autonomous Council, elected panchayat members, and other community representatives also participated in the housewarming ceremony, symbolising the collective efforts in ensuring affordable housing for all.

Flood preparedness training program on 'Search and Rescue' conducted in Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 13: In an effort to enhance flood preparedness, a comprehensive two-day training program on 'Search and Rescue' was organised by the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) in collaboration with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority. The training took place at the Drill Shed of Nagaon Police Reserve, focusing on Dhing Ghat and aimed to equip over 30 participants, including IWT officials, private boat owners, sailors, drivers, and lessees, with essential skills and knowledge. The training program, which commenced on Thursday, witnessed the active participation of key officials, including additional deputy commissioner cum chief executive officer of DDMA, Debahuti Bora. Other notable figures present during the training included the district project officer of DDMA Nagaon, the senior station officer of F&ES Nagaon, the field officer of Disaster Management from Dhing Revenue Circle, and Aapda Mitra, along with other officials from F&ES Nagaon. The training program focused on imparting effective search and rescue techniques to the participants, ensuring their readiness to handle emergency situations during floods. Notably, DDMA Nagaon is set to organise another two-day training program at the same venue, the Drill Shed of Nagaon Police Reserve, for Kaliabor Ghat on July 15 and 16.

Conservation organisation launches 'Gajah Kotha' campaign

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: Aaranyak, a leading conservation organisation, has unveiled a new outreach campaign called 'Gajah Kotha' (The Elephant Story) to address the growing issue of human-elephant conflict (HEC) in Assam. The initiative aims to foster coexistence between local communities and the majestic elephants that inhabit the region.

Targeting HEC-affected villages in eastern Assam, 'Gajah Kotha' educates community members about the behaviour, ecology, and cultural significance of elephants, highlighting the importance of their conservation. Aaranyak, in partnership with the British Asian Trust and with the support of the Assam Forest department and the Darwin Initiative, is implementing this campaign as part of their efforts to promote harmonious coexistence.

Dr Alolika Sinha, a senior conservationist at Aaranyak's Elephant Research and Conservation Division, stated, "In collaboration with scientists, artists, educators, and con-



servationists, we have developed engaging awareness materials for exhibitions that are accessible to women, men, youth, the elderly, and students within the community."

To date, the 'Gajah Kotha' campaigns have reached over 1,200 individuals affected by HEC in Eastern Assam. Locations where the campaigns have taken place include Haladhibari, Jaborchuk Kathoni, Gaz-

era, Gazera High School, Ujani Majuli Kherkatia High School, Pub Majuli Kherkatia HS School, Jaborchuk Basa, Jopanchuk, Konwabam, Panchukia Bongaon, Nahorjan Lebankula, Nagaghat Tantiptather, Lebankula ME School, Kamargaon ME School, Ujani Sadiya HS School, Padumphula, Chamaraajan, Charaguwa Grant, Majumelia, Charagua ME School, Charagua

High School, Demomukh Gohaingao, Sankardev Janajati ME School, and Bajorchiga.

Aaranyak collaborated with various local organisations to mobilise community members and future stewards from each HEC-affected area. These organisations and community members engaged in discussions with Aaranyak's experts to explore innovative approaches for human-wildlife coexistence.

Zakir Islam Bora, an Aaranyak official overseeing the initiative in Eastern Assam, commented, "Our community educators, field staff, and village champions are tirelessly working towards fostering coexistence between communities and elephants in Assam, where a well-established elephant population coexists with escalating conflicts."

The 'Gajah Kotha' campaign strives to create awareness, empower local communities, and promote sustainable solutions that will ensure the peaceful coexistence of humans and elephants in Assam.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

We first make our habits, and then our habits make us.
- John Dryden

BJP leaders' aggressive approach

Bullying political opponents has become a key strategy employed by the top leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This aggressive approach is aimed at suppressing dissent and maintaining control over the political landscape. Recent tweets from Amit Shah, the Home Minister of India and a prominent BJP leader, have shed light on the party's tactics. Shah's tweets, particularly one regarding the Supreme Court's decision on the appointment of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) director, reveal the party's inclination towards intimidation and a disregard for democratic values. In a tweet, Amit Shah emphasised that the person holding the position of the ED director was not important; rather, it was the institution itself that mattered. Shah claimed that the ED's objective was to investigate money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws. His statement suggests that the new director would continue to target those involved in corruption and anti-development activities, regardless of their political affiliation. Shah's remark came shortly after the Supreme Court declared the extensions granted to the former ED director, Sanjay Kumar Mishra, as illegal. The court's decision was a blow to the BJP, as it undermined their efforts to maintain control over the ED and use it as a tool to target political opponents. Shah's tweet can be seen as an attempt to assert the party's dominance and challenge the court's authority.

The appointment of a new ED director raises concerns about the effectiveness and proficiency of the individual in carrying out the government's agenda. With the political landscape shifting against the Modi government, it remains unclear to what extent the new director will be willing to align with the party's objectives. The aggressive posture of the Supreme Court adds further ambiguity to this equation. The upcoming nine months are crucial for the Modi government. The ED's aggressive pursuit of the opposition in states like Maharashtra and Bihar, which together contribute 88 members to the Lok Sabha, highlights the government's determination to undermine its rivals. Despite the Supreme Court's ruling on the illegality of Mishra's extensions, the Modi government justified its decision to retain him as the director. They claimed his services were required for a review meeting related to the Financial Action Task Force, an international organisation combating money laundering. However, other bureaucrats with foreign affairs expertise could have undertaken this responsibility, making the government's insistence on Mishra suspicious.

In a similar case, the Patna High Court declared the extension of an animal husbandry official's service illegal and convicted a politician for granting the extension. The Modi government's endorsement of illegal acts in Mishra's case raises concerns about their commitment to upholding the rule of law. The ED has faced accusations of selectively targeting individuals based on their political affiliations. The BJP's strategy of bullying political opponents through the misuse of institutions like the ED poses a threat to democracy and the rule of law in India. Shah's tweet and the subsequent reactions reveal the party's determination to maintain control and silence dissent. The Supreme Court's intervention and criticisms of the ED's conduct highlight the need for independent oversight and accountability. As the political landscape evolves, it is crucial to ensure that institutions are not exploited for partisan interests but serve the larger goal of upholding democratic values.

SC's final hearing on abrogation of Article 370 has special significance for 2024

By: Sushil Kuttly

Nearly five years after the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35 spoken of in the past tense, the Centre is once again hoping to get electoral dividends out of the abrogation. At least that is the feeling one gets. For the majority, the abrogation of Article 370 was a non-event, an election gimmick and over the next couple of years proof that trusting the Modi regime was a fool's errand.

Now, the Supreme Court is set to hear a batch of petitions on the abrogation of Article 370 and the fear of revoking the abrogation is a disturbing thought for those who took abrogation as medicine. For the vast majority of people from outside the Valley, the Hindutva supporters of the BJP in particular, there is nothing left in Article 370. Whether it stays removed or is returned in whatever form doesn't matter.

The general consensus is the Modi government took the country for a ride on August 5, 2019. Article 370 was and '35' taken away with the caveat that "outsiders" can buy land in J&K only if they had been residents in the Union Territory for 15 years. That effectively sounded the death knell of the abrogation of Article 370. Who was the Narendra Modi government fooling?

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is right. There is something about certain categories of people that sets them apart. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah can be trusted only like the proverbial fox - i.e., the duo cannot be trusted! They speak with forked tongues and their promises are like the banging of empty vessels.

The abrogation of Article 370 was one of the three empty promises in the BJP election manifesto. The other two being Ram Mandir and UCC. Now, the bogey continues to be told that "two done and one more to go". The lie lives on in the minds of millions of BJP supporters but millions more are catching on to the hoax played on them.

The Ram Mandir became reality because of a Supreme Court ruling and would have happened even if Modi had lost the 2014 elections. Today, all that the elec-

torate, aam aadmi, remembers is Prime Minister Narendra Modi sitting cross-legged with a foundation stone, hogging the limelight and taking the credit!

Fact is, the BJP's hoaxes are a conman's delight! Ram Mandir was appropriated without batting an eyelid. Article 370 was the best execution of a sleight of electoral promise. And now the charade played around that "the government shall implement the UCC" contained in the Preamble and in Article 44.

Again, who are Modi & Shah fooling? The rest of the Modi government do not figure because they do the bidding of the Prime Minister alone and nobody else. Already, talk is swirling that the Modi regime has a hidden ace up its sleeve and the UCC will not be anywhere close to uniform. In fact, a lot of the geography of the country will be exempt from the UCC. Also certain categories of the populace, like for example the tribal!

The northeast might also be left out of the UCC's ambit. Winning elections is all that counts for the BJP, as exemplified by the Manipur experiment, along with being the world's largest single political party. The grandeur of the BJP headquarters in New Delhi tells this tale of vanity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi gets his kicks from dotting the countryside with plaques with his name on them.

But it is the empty promises that linger in the mind. Narendra Modi is the only Prime Minister of India who siphons off taxpayer money to serve the electoral objectives of the party he represents. All his 'labarthis' schemes cater to the BJP's electoral goals. Keeping people poor and tied to BJP largesse is BJP strategy. Add to them election manifesto promises such as abrogation of Article 370 and implementing UCC and the picture is complete.

A bench of the Chief Justice of India will take up for hearing the batch of petitions on the abrogation of Article 370 and there will be day to day hearings from August 3 on. Reversing the abrogation could be possible. You never can tell about this central government. Besides, what more is left in the J&K issue that the BJP can squeeze for electoral advantage? (IPA Service)

Fears of an American base at Saint Martin's Island kicks fresh row in Bangladesh politics

In the mid-60s the radical students of the East Pakistan Chattrra (Student) League and also a few leftist elements to arouse dissent against the regime of a military dictator General Ayub Khan of Pakistan said that he has leased Saint Martin's island in the southeast tip of the country to the United States to build a military base to counter India.

After the independence of Bangladesh, the myth loaded with political jargon melted away. A similar story of St. Martin's being given away to America popped up several times since its independence in 1971. A couple of times during the military juntas of a liberation war hero, General Ziaur Rahman (1977-1981) and founder of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and General Hussain Muhammad Ershad (1982-1990), founder of Jatiya Party were in power. They were deliberately blamed for facilitating inroads for America to counter the regional influence of India.

Once again, Bangladesh's only coral island, Saint Martin's is in fresh controversy for being given away to the Americans, this time not to counter India, but China's hegemony in the South Asia region.

This time, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself exploded a bomb, when she asked "How did BNP come to power in 2001?" at the press conference at her official residence Ganabhaban on 21 June.

"They came to power by pledging to sell gas [to India]. Now do they want to sell the country [to the United States] or come to power by pledging to sell Saint Martin's island," she told.

Well, she did not mention the name of any country, but it is understood by political analysts, that she pointed her fingers towards two countries. The export of natural gas through a pipeline to energy-starved West Bengal, India and the coral island to the American for a military base. She was upbeat to politically admonish BNP that the 'Kings party' had negotiated with India, which helped the rightist party leader Khaleda Zia to return to power in the 2001 October elections.

She blames BNP negotiated with Washington DC to give away the 'critically endangered' coral island to America for a military establishment to watch over a huge swath of the Bay of Bengal, which merge with the Indian Ocean in the far south.

Promptly, BNP secretary general Mirza

Fakhrul Islam alleged that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as of her political strategy, provided false information about BNP's stance on St. Martin's Island.

"The remark on St. Martin's island is part of her political strategy. They want to gain an advantage through such statements. No country signs a deal with the opposition, it is signed with the government," he remarked.

The United States State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller scoffed off the rumour centering on the island and the USA.

In a press briefing in Washington last week, he said that the ruling Awami League and its [political] allies have been alleging for the last few days that the US wants to take over Saint Martin's island and the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) wants to come to power by "making a pledge to lease it out".

The US had no intentions to acquire Saint Martin's Island. "We have never engaged in any conversations about taking over Saint Martin's Island," he remarked.

The spokesperson, putting away his diplomatic niceties did not hesitate to comment that in the "last 15 years, she [Sheikh Hasina] is in power without reflection of the will of the people of Bangladesh, though."

The issue was first raised in the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) on 14 June by a left leader, Rashed Khan Menon, president of Bangladesh Workers' Party and an alliance of governing Awami League said the countries that "have the US as a friend, do not need any enemies".

He stressed that the US sought Saint Martin's and Bangladesh's participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), a strategic Indo-Pacific alliance, where Australia, India, Japan and the United States are primary members.

Six days later, another radical politician Hasanul Haq Inu, president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), also an ally of Awami League in his speech in parliament said, "The time has come for us to think about the reason for this over-enthusiasm of the US. Is it democracy or Saint Martin's Island?"

A British team of surveyors in 1900 included Saint Martin's island as part of the British Raj in India and named it after a Christian priest Saint Martin.

The Department of Environment (DoE)

in 1999 declared the 8 Sq. Km island an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA). As per section 19 of the ECA Management Rules 2016, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, the class of land of any ECA cannot be changed without permission of the DoE. Thus, any construction of establishments on the island is illegal and dangerous for saving the coral reef at Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula.

Despite several official notices and high court orders, the island has more than 230 hotels, resorts, cottages and restaurants, either one-storey or multi-storied.

Green activists and researchers say the island is home to several globally endangered marine turtles and birds, including rare Pacific reef-egret, red crab, dolphin and vulnerable olive Ridley sea turtles, which are also on the verge of disappearance.

Professor Kawser Ahmed, dean of the Earth and Environmental Sciences Faculty of Dhaka University in his article published in Ocean Science Journal in 2020 predicts that coral species would completely disappear by 2045.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association's (BELA) chief executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan doubts whether an ecologically threatened island would be suitable for any military purpose.

The longstanding political debate over the island could be understood from a news report on 18 December 1980. The defunct Dainik Bangla published a report under the heading "None will be allowed to establish a naval base at Saint Martin's".

A stern warning was issued in a statement by the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The statement alleged that several political parties claimed that a country [United States] has been allowed to set up its naval base at Saint Martin's island is completely baseless.

However, political historian and researcher Mohiuddin Ahmad quoted in a reputed Bangla-vernacular newspaper Prothom Alo that he first heard in February 1971 about leasing Bhola's Monpura island out to the USA.

The rumour had spread, soon after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman held a parley with the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Joseph Simpson Farland, on 28

February 1971 - a month before the genocidal campaign 'Operation Searchlight' launched by Pakistan military, which sparked the liberation war.

The pro-Chinese left Maoist parties and their affiliated youth organizations printed a propaganda leaflet that Monpura Island will be given away to America, in exchange for US support for the independence of Bangladesh.

The disinformation against Sheikh Mujib died when the United States tilted towards Pakistan's military junta during the bloody war of Bangladesh's independence in 1971.

The blame game by political opponents in Bangladesh is a dilemma alleging the ruling elites are going to lease out Monpura or Saint Martin's Island to the US or going to provide benefit to India are age-old political bashing, said writer Ahmad.

Some political observers believe that the imposition of sanctions by the USA against the anti-crime special unit Rapid Action Battalion's (RABs) seven current and former senior officers were accused of violating human rights including extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances - recent US visa restrictions for officials, the ruling party and opposition, whoever undermines democracy and cause hindrance to a free and fair parliament elections in January 2024, have raised eyebrows among political leaders and government officials.

They did not hesitate to slam the United States' foreign policy and deemed the announcement as interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said this week "We welcome the continuous engagement with the US to wipe off misunderstanding between Dhaka and Washington if there was any." He told reporters when he was asked to comment on the upcoming high-level official visit from the United States.

Dhaka would welcome if the US delegation led by US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland and US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu scheduled in early July came up with a "bright idea" as Bangladesh is committed to hold free, fair and violence-free elections, said Dr Momen. (The author is an award-winning independent journalist based in Bangladesh. He can be reached at saleemsamad@hotmail.com)

Goldman Sachs projection on India emerging as second largest economy by 2075 is a great news

By: Anjan Roy

Goldman Sachs is at its old game again - that is, exceedingly long term projections of the comparative growth of economies and trying to foresee the shape of the global economy over, say, fifty years.

The global investment bank's latest projections show India in an exceedingly happy colour. It will be the second largest economy in the world in 2075 and the size of its GDP should be as big as \$52.5 trillion. The first would be that of China at \$57 trillion. The present day Goliath, United States, should have a GDP of \$51.7 trillion.

The first time Goldman got into this business of projections, it had identified four countries which should become giants of the future. These were Brazil, Russia, India and China. Later on, South Africa had joined the august band, thus BRIC has become BRICS.

That was over a decade back and now it is possibly taking a second look. But going by the present status of the vaunted five, only India and China seem to have borne out the Goldman optimism. India and China are on their way to greatness. The others appear to have somewhat fizzled out. The most spectacular disappointment has been Russia. Despite it having every-

thing on its side to sprint along the growth path, the country had put itself into a vortex of a downward spiral.

Pursuing its vanity of an imperial dream and coveting small little parcels of land when it has almost half the globe in its territory already, Russia has pursued a foolish path towards destruction. Against such reality of a decrepit present, it had everything going for it: its manpower had world beating potentials in innovations and scientific achievements, its resources were immense and far more than any other major economy. Yet, its political leadership had landed it in catastrophe. Next in line is China. Its achievements over the last three and a half decades have been stellar by any yardstick. Never before a country had pulled up its vast poor above destitution as China did with breakneck speed of growth and development.

It built up its economy from the ashes of another ill-conceived political campaign - Mao Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution - when the country had suffered one of humanity's worst mass starvation and death. With its liberal policies after the strangulating regimes of earlier years, Deng Tsiao Ping, had changed the country beyond recognition during his tenure.

Now nearly forty years after its

opening up, China is already the second largest economy in the world. Varying estimates put it that close to 800 million people have been lifted out of abject poverty and the rich Chinese are the largest conspicuous consumers in the world. No large global company can ignore the Chinese market for the incomparably large size of demand.

Along with radical economic reforms, Deng had introduced even more radical political and institutional reforms. Most important, Deng had sought to ensure an institutional mode of rule, against authoritarian control, which is subject to the whims and fancies of an autocrat. Deng had introduced collective rule at the top, thus seeking to rule out individual idiosyncrasies of an autocrat. Thus, a collective decision-making could avoid the errors of a single autocrat. With this system, Deng had introduced a strict rule of time bound offices at the highest level. Thus, the Chinese president was to have only two terms of five years each, as in any other mature large countries, like United States or in Europe.

The current Chinese leader and president, Xi Jinping, had scrapped both these rules and ordained himself with life long tenure at the top. Xi has surrounded himself with sycophants and yes-men thus no

one dares to point out any mistakes in judgment.

These are curious parallels - Russia and China. Both the supreme leaders of the two countries have pursued a strikingly similar paths. Both have captured power which they have sought, by hook or crook, for lifelong tenures. Both have undermined all institutional structure to ensure severely autocratic rules. Above all, both are imbued with past history of national glory and imperial dreams. The Russian autocrat is dreaming of Peter the Great and sprawling empires in East Europe.

The Chinese autocrat is referring to Chinese Imperial glory and always referring to the Chinese rules in expanding concentric circles. According to Xi's views, the current boundaries of China is the first concentric circle of the Chinese historical empires. Then comes the somewhat larger concentric circle, which includes tributary nations, such as, Japan, Korea, entire southeast Asia. Thus, the whole extent of South China Sea, which has served as International seaway for the world, is being claimed as Chinese sovereign territory.

Xi's ambitions do not stop there. For him, China extends into south Asia and large parts of Indian territory belongs to China. Xi is already competing with Russia,

claiming subservience of Central Asia countries, from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and other former Soviet republics.

In no time, the two "best friends" - Russia and China, as announced by them prior to former Ukraine invasion - are likely to cross swords. Russia had occupied north East Asian territories adjoining Chinese borders as large as the size of Ukraine. Vladivostok is claimed by China as its own town.

China is on a global crash course. It is picking up territorial fights with all its neighbours - some fourteen of them. It has the world's largest boundary with neighbouring countries - some 24,000 kilometres long and large claims in the world's seas. China is pursuing to see its imprint across the world and coming close to fighting battles.

In 2075, the terminal year of Goldman Sachs' prediction cycle, India would surely be first or second largest and United States might still be vying for the pride of place with India. Going by this year's economic performance, Indian economy is regaining the poise it had before the pandemic struck. We are almost where we would have reached had the pandemic not played devastation. Hopefully, at least on one count the Gold Sachs prediction will not go astray. India will be at the top. (IPA Service)

Decoding the mystery of space launch windows

By: Girish Linganna

Every journey into the cosmos requires precise calculations and meticulous planning. The celestial dance of the planets and our moon governs not just the tides and seasons, but also the launch schedules of our spaceships. Each space mission begins with the identification of a 'launch window', a specific period ripe for the voyage. As we prepare to explore the mysteries of the moon with India's upcoming lunar mission, Chandrayaan 3, we delve into the intriguing complexities of these essential launch windows.

Launch windows serve as specific time frames during which a spacecraft must embark on its journey to successfully reach the designated destination. These unique moments are derived from numerous determinants, encompassing the spacecraft's trajectory, the positions of the Earth and the destination, as well as mission-specific prerequisites. To bring this into perspective, we'll analyze the forthcoming Chandrayaan 3, the sequel to the lunar mission launched by India in 2019, Chandrayaan 2.

Chandrayaan 3, designed for lunar explo-

ration, required a carefully calculated launch window to facilitate its ambitious journey. Several fundamental factors contributed to the determination of this launch window, including the Moon's position, the trajectory from Earth to the Moon, and the mission's objectives.

* Moon's Position: The Moon's position in its orbit around the Earth is of pivotal importance in determining the launch window. Since the position changes over time, the window for launch is decided when the Moon aligns favourably with the intended trajectory of the spacecraft. For Chandrayaan 3, this had to correspond with the objectives of lunar exploration.

* Earth-Moon Transfer Trajectory: To reach the Moon, a spacecraft must adhere to a distinct trajectory that leverages orbital mechanics. This trajectory and the alignment of the Earth and Moon significantly influence the selection of the launch window. "In the complex process of determining a spacecraft's launch window, we place significant emphasis on delta-v, or the necessary change in velocity, for a successful transition from Earth's orbit to a lunar transfer orbit. The ultimate goal is to select a launch window that

minimizes this delta-v, thereby enhancing the mission's fuel efficiency," shares Srimathy Kesan, CEO of Space Kidz.

* Mission Objectives: The goals of the mission also heavily influence the determination of the launch window. The lack of an orbiter in Chandrayaan 3 necessitates different operational conditions for a successful mission. This changes the factors considered, like lunar surface visibility and landing conditions, for establishing the optimal launch window.

* Launch Vehicle Constraints: "The intricacies of planning a lunar mission go far beyond just plotting a course. One must carefully consider the constraints and capabilities of the chosen launch vehicle - in this case, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV Mk III). Factors such as payload capacity, propulsion capabilities, and overall mission requirements are critical in ensuring a successful transition from Earth to the Moon," explains Kesan.

Once these elements have been thoroughly analyzed and factored into the equation, the optimum launch window can be determined. As with Chandrayaan 2, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) carefully dis-

sected various parameters and fixed a precise launch window for Chandrayaan 3 in July 2023. This selected launch window boasted several optimal conditions, including the Moon's position and the launch vehicle's capabilities.

Launch windows can often be limited and infrequent, constrained by the dynamics of celestial bodies and mission requirements. Sometimes, opportunities may arise only every few days, weeks, or even months, thereby adding to the complexity of mission planning. Delays or technical issues can result in major setbacks or necessitate waiting for the next available window. In conclusion, finalizing a launch window for a spacecraft like Chandrayaan 3 requires meticulous analysis of an array of factors including the Moon's position, Earth-Moon transfer trajectory, mission objectives, and launch vehicle constraints. The finalized launch window for Chandrayaan 3, set for July 14, 2023, optimizes these parameters, setting the stage for a successful mission. The art and science of determining the launch window is a crucial aspect of space mission planning, one that demands extensive knowledge and expertise to ensure mission success. (IPA Service)

How a Boston student's killing sparked a movement against police shooting among South Asian diaspora

By: Upasana Goswami

On July 4, as many Americans celebrated the country's Independence Day, the family and friends of Bangladeshi-origin student Arif Sayed Faisal in Boston commemorated six months since the police shooting that took his life. Faisal's killing has catalysed important conversations among South Asians on policing, racism as well as mental health, often a stigmatised issue in many households.

South Asians are directly affected by the policing of poorer neighbourhoods, associations with Islamophobic stereotypes, lack of cultural awareness, language barriers, and perceptions of security threat, including through associations with Blackness. Anti-Blackness among the community, too, remains a cause for concern.

Shot during mental health crisis

Faisal was killed on January 4 after the police responded to a 911 call about a man jumping from an apartment window with a knife and inflicting self-harm. The Cambridge police officers who arrived pursued Faisal, initially fired sponge bullets, then lethal shots, claiming failed de-escalation.

The officer who fired the shot that killed Faisal has been sent on paid administrative leave while the others involved remain on duty.

Since Faisal's death, organisations have been protesting regularly under the banner of "Justice for Faisal". He was a student at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and was home for the winter break. The Justice For Faisal coalition on January 29 marched to the "Mystic Mural", a community art project on the environment that Faisal had contributed to as a student at Somerville High School.

"Victims of police killings are not just another statistic," said Suhail Purkar, an organiser with the Party for Socialism and Liberation Boston, and Boston South Asian Coalition. "It is important to remember their humanity."

The organising in Cambridge for police accountability may signify a new moment of anticarceral organising, activism and coalition-building, bringing together the Southasian diaspora with local activists fighting systemic racism and police brutality. On July 8, the Justice For Faisal activists held a rally at Harvard Square.

The groups involved include the Bangladeshi Association of New England, Boston South

Asian Coalition, Safe Schools Somerville, Party for Socialism and Liberation, and Muslim Justice League.

Criminalisation of mental health crises

Faisal is not the first person of colour to be shot dead while undergoing a mental health crisis in the US. There is a long history of criminalising people suffering mental-health emergencies. Between 2015 and 2018, almost a quarter of those killed by the police had a known mental illness. A database compiled by The Washington Post shows that there have been over 1,700 cases of mental illness-related police shootings since 2015.

Only a handful of such cases get public attention. In 2016, Hope Coleman, the mother of Terrence Coleman, had called 911 asking support for her son who was having a schizophrenic episode. He was, instead, shot and killed by the Boston police. "Had I not called 911, my baby would be alive," she said. Coleman has been attending the Justice for Faisal rallies where she shares her own story.

In 2020, the Boston police shot and killed Justin Root after wounding him. He had been suffering from a schizoaffective disorder and had been carrying an unloaded plastic BB gun, a replica gun. The 41-year old was lying "defenceless, on the ground, semi-comatose, and bleeding profusely", according to a statement from the lawsuit filed by his family against the city of Boston. "Justin was not brandishing a firearm nor did he have any firearm in his possession," said the lawsuit. Despite calls to action, little has changed. The Mapping Police Violence portal documents that US police shootings kill nearly 1,200 people every year.

Media portrayal

Purkar pointed to the "dehumanising difference" with which the media tends to portray Faisal compared to the policemen who killed him. This feeds the misperception of Faisal as an "armed man", prompting some to justify his killing. CBS News Boston ran the headline "Man armed with a machete shot and killed by the police" without mentioning Faisal's mental health crisis or that he was inflicting self-harm. Another media report noted that the police official who shot Faisal had seven years of experience on the force, with no complaints.

Activists say that Cambridge police set the narrative because they do not wear body cameras. Of the 1,717 cases of police shooting men-

tally ill people, only in 17.8% (306) of the cases, the police had body cameras, said The Washington Post.

South Asians and policing

The relationship between South Asians and policing reflects the racist structure of US policing and internal differences among South Asians in their experiences with policing. South Asians in the US are stratified by caste, class, religion, language, nationality, ethnicity, and documentation status.

The effects of and responses to policing follow similar lines. Some South Asian individuals and communities, who live in areas similar to the public housing block that Faisal lived in, are more policed than others.

Last November, police in Austin, Texas, killed Rajan Moonesinghe, a Sri Lankan American entrepreneur. The police were responding to a report from Moonesinghe of a possible burglary at his home. The police mistook him for the burglar and shot him before he had the chance to lower his gun.

In 2015, the Alabama police acting on a report about a "skinny Black man" apprehended Sureshbhai Patel, a 57-year-old Indian visiting his family, who was walking around the neighbourhood. Unable to understand what the police were saying, Patel did not follow their commands. "My South Asian friend gets regularly stopped at traffic lights because the police assume he is Black," said Purkar.

Police reforms

Support for police reform is growing among South Asian Americans. A 2017 NPR report said that 44% of Bangladeshi Americans, 50% of Pakistani Americans and 49% of Asian Indians did not believe that the police treat all racial and ethnic groups equally. In 2020, among Asian Indians, 51% strongly agreed and 24% somewhat agreed that local governments should reallocate police funds towards welfare programs, according to AAPI Data. AAPI refers to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

"There is still need for more political education," said Sharmin Hossain, a Bangladeshi-American artist and former Political Director at Equality Labs, a US-based Dalit civil-rights organisation. She said that conservative politics uses Southasian Americans and Muslim Americans, including through "anti-immigrant views that are responsible for policing of other Southasians". Hossain noted that a primary way

South Asians experience policing is through immigration, referring to police apprehending as many as 63,927 Indians at US borders in 2022. Today, many among the older generation of Southasians no longer see the police in America as benevolent.

Community bridges, 'anti-Blackness'

There is clearly a greater need for consciousness raising among the Southasian diaspora, said Cambridge community organisers. Part of the work is "to reflect upon anti-Blackness in our own communities so that our aunts and uncles are not the ones calling the cops on Black folks and on each other", said one activist who did not want to be identified.

Some of those organising in Cambridge said that the South Asian community needs to understand "being a good immigrant does not protect us from racist police violence". The focus, they said, should be on showing up and joining the Black, Latinx and indigenous folks doing this work for decades.

The Justice for Faisal movement is also a movement seeking justice for Tyre Nichols and Terrence Coleman, said the organisers. Unnecessary deaths, like in the case of Faisal and others, are due to continued bad policy choices informed by racist structures. Political will can make all the difference. The organisers also highlighted the need to connect the dots transnationally, as people protesting Faisal's killing in Dhaka have been doing, and to recognise how policing disproportionately affects some communities "back home".

In America, ongoing discussions among the community are highlighting the imperial and military connections of US civilian policing, such as the 1033 program, which transfers Defense Department military equipment to local, state and federal law enforcement.

Movement's demands

The community continues to demand the release of names of the police officials involved in Faisal's murder, the release of the unredacted police report. They have also demanded that the police officials be charged and prosecuted.

"The only reason it would matter if the police official is a South Asian/Black person is to reiterate that bad policing is not an issue of application or representation," said Payal, an activist. "It's systemic." On May 12, City Councillor Quinton Zondervan filed a policy order joining the protestors' demands that the names of the

officers be released. Their names cannot be released because of a judge order until an inquest is completed. The Cambridge police prides itself as being one of the best trained forces in interpersonal dynamics. People, thus, are divided on more police training or changing the nature of training, including training not to shoot at centre mass, or the torso. In June, the city council moved to vote down without discussion a proposal to turn the Police Review and Accountability Board into an elected body. The Justice for Faisal community has also asked for structural changes: disarm and demilitarise the police (including dismantling the 1033 programme), funding an alternative emergency response system separate from the police, and reallocate the budget into community safety and support.

Small wins, ways forward

The activism and solidarity of Black and Brown communities in Cambridge has contributed to Cambridge City Manager Yi-An Huang announcing that the police will use body cameras. Proposals on ways forward include the Cambridge Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team, or HEART, an alternative response system formed after demands to delink police from mental health emergency responses. Elsewhere, non-carceral response teams such as Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets are working with local communities.

These initiatives, centering unarmed but trained civilian crisis response to 911 calls, represent a way forward. However, such initiatives only go half way if they continue to operate as nonprofits and are not built into the public-health system, said Purkar.

Currently, HEART is a subcontractor with the Department of Public Health, substantially underfunded at less than \$2 million. In contrast, the Cambridge Police's 2023 budget is to increase by 7%, from \$68.7 million to \$73.5 million. Organisers note that under current regulations, situations like Faisal's would be categorised as violent and still go to the police.

"At the very minimum, mental health emergency care has to be completely de-linked from incarceration," said Payal, who works in the healthcare system. What emerges in these debates about effectiveness and better alternatives is a consensus across the South Asian diaspora against racist policing, and an emerging allyship with the fight against systemic racism in America. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Decoding Wagner's challenge to Putin SC status: Negating intersectionality of religion & caste isn't the way forward

By: Ankita Dutta

Many assessments in the past week on the developments in Russia seem to indicate that the Wagner mutiny has weakened President Putin and that the outcome of the rebellion is the shattering of the image of invincibility that President Putin had cultivated in the past two and a half decades. If looked at closely, the rebellion highlighted the increasingly problematic relations between the Wagner group and the Russian Ministry of Defence over the course of action in Ukraine. This chain of events between 23-24 June 2023 has raised multiple questions ranging from what led to the mutiny, reactions from within Russian leadership, and its impact on the Ukraine crisis. This article looks at five key questions that emerged from these developments in Russia.

Decoding Wagner's challenge

First is what led to the tensions between the Wagner Group and the Russian military leadership? The differences between the two have been on the rise for some time over a range of issues, including the rationale of war in Ukraine as well as the lack of support for the Wagner Group soldiers from the military leadership. Twofold events preceded the 'March for Justice' - as Yevgeny Prigozhin, leader of the Wagner Group called it - first, was the abject failure of the Russian military leadership to provide the Wagner group with arms and ammunition which resulted in massive fatalities for the group. This was further compounded by the fact that Prigozhin accused the Russian military of striking Wagner's base in Ukraine. Second was the intended plan to bring the Wagner group under the direct control of the Russian military command. President Putin had backed the Ministry of Defence's order for the mercenary groups present in Ukraine to sign contracts with the ministry before 1 July 2023. This order would subsume these groups within the defence ministry's command structures and was vehemently opposed by the Wagner Group leader. This would have meant undermining Prigozhin's influence within the group. The tensions further escalated on 23 June 2023 when Prigozhin stated that the Defence Ministry was trying to "...deceive the public, deceive the president and tell a story that there was some crazy aggression by Ukraine, that - together with the whole Nato bloc - Ukraine was planning to attack us" - thereby vowing to go "all the way" to topple the military leadership. However, one thing that stands out in this is that Yevgeny Prigozhin never claimed to overthrow President Putin, rather the targets of his outburst were Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and the Chief of the General Staff, Valery Gerasimov - whom he accused of failing the Wagner Group. Therefore, it appeared to be a breaking point between the Wagner group and the Defence Ministry to protect his interests in the group.

Second, is reading between the lines of President Putin's two addresses to the citizens of Russia on 24 and 26 June 2023. In his two addresses, the Russian President oscillated between vowing to crush the armed mutiny by the Wagner Group to calling the majority of Wagner Group soldiers and commanders as patriots and loyalists. However, one needs to note that President Putin

did not mention Prigozhin's name even once. In his first address, he said that Russia was facing "treason" due to personal ambitions and interests and "all those who have consciously chosen the path of betrayal... will inevitably be punished" - calling the rebellion a "fatal mistake". However, the tenor of his second speech is completely different. President Putin goes on to reiterate that on his direct instructions, "steps were taken to avoid spilling blood" and offered the soldiers of Wagner group two choices—first, signing the contract with the Defence Ministry or other law enforcement or security agency or returning home; and second, exile in Belarus. Re-asserting his position, he vowed to keep his promise and added that "everyone is free to decide on their own" what path to choose. The two speeches appeared to be an attempt by President Putin to reassert his power, control the narratives, and highlighted that he had been at the forefront of dealing with the situation which had all the makings of spiralling out of control.

Following from the previous point, the third key question is what deal has been brokered by Belarus. So far what is known of the deal is as follows - Yevgeny Prigozhin ordered his troops to halt their march to Moscow and to return to their base in South Russia and further agreed to move to Belarus. Following this, Dmitry Peskov, Kremlin's spokesperson, announced that the criminal charges against Prigozhin will be dropped as he exits Russia. He further added that considering their service to Russia, no charges will be placed against the Wagner troops who were part of the march. What has not been released are the concessions that have been made to Prigozhin. The focus, for now, seems to have shifted from crushing the mutiny to avoiding the bloodshed - a reference that was present in both President Putin's speech of 26 June 2023 and Prigozhin's statement post the deal. What is interesting is the role played by Belarusian President, Alexander Lukashenko in resolving the situation. During the course of the conflict in Ukraine, Lukashenko has emerged to be the strongest ally for President Putin, even allowing Moscow to station nuclear weapons in Belarus. This recent intervention further adds to the increasing influence of Lukashenko in Russia. While the real intentions of what the Belarusian President hoped to achieve by brokering the deal is difficult to ascertain - it could be repaying the favour for President Putin's support to his presidency during the 2020 protests after he was accused of tampering with the elections, however, it remains to be seen what this latest deal entails for Minsk.

Fourth is what is the fate of the Wagner Group in the aftermath of the mutiny. Wagner Group has been a critical part of President Putin's power projection abroad. They have been operating in various countries in Africa, especially in Mali, Libya, the Central African Republic, and Sudan, and have played a very important role in stabilising the Assad regime in Syria. However, their biggest successes have come in Ukraine, where they have been able to register gains in territories where Russian forces have underperformed. During their offensive in Ukraine, they have taken heavy losses, with the Wagner leader estimating the loss of over 20,000 men in the battle for Bakhmut.

Following the "March for Justice", the future of the Wagner group hangs in a delicate balance. So far, Prigozhin has given no intention of disbanding the group and had sent out the message that President Lukashenko was allowing them to remain operational in Belarus. While, according to reports, the Wagner group was still actively recruiting fighters from various Russian cities, however, the impact of the mutiny on the places it has been operating outside Ukraine remains to be seen. Also worth mentioning is their operations in Africa and West Asia, while Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov had said that the Wagner group will not be withdrawn from the countries, very little is known about how these stationed mercenaries have reacted to the developments in Russia or how they are going to impact their larger operations outside Europe.

Finally, what will be the impact of Wagner mutiny on the conflict in Ukraine? Before any assessments of the Wagner group withdrawing from the fighting in the frontlines, it needs to be noted that the troops had already started to withdraw from Bakhmut in May 2023 with Russian soldiers replacing their units. So far, there has been no noticeable impact on their actions in Ukraine, rather the intensive missile strikes across various Ukrainian cities point to the fact that the domestic upheaval will have no bearing on their offensive in Ukraine. Therefore, in the short term, there is unlikely to be a change in their approach towards the war. However, in the medium to long term, since the mutiny exposed the security vulnerabilities, as the Wagner group was able to initiate a mutiny and advance towards Moscow with ease, there may be a significant tightening of the security apparatus both domestically and internationally to potentially stem similar actions.

There is still no clear sense of what exactly happened, but what is clear is that the "March for Justice" by the Wagner group presented one of the most critical challenges to President Putin in his two-and-a-half decade of power. The same could be said of the deal that was brokered by Belarusian President, Alexander Lukashenko which led to the de-escalation of the situation and the eventual retreat of the Wagner group. The intense back and forth by Prigozhin - from his rapid advance towards Moscow to his sudden retreat—has resulted in many questioning his intentions behind the entire episode: Was it to challenge President Putin's power? or was it to capture Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, against whom he had grievances? or was it just a display of discontent over the impending absorption of Wagner group soldiers within the defence forces? In short, it remains a mystery as to why he did what he did and also why he did not go all the way to Moscow. While he clarified that he never intended to challenge President Putin's power - intended or not - the sequence of events did raise some uncomfortable questions about the President's control. The complete fallout of the Wagner mutiny is still unravelling, however, Prigozhin's issues with Russia's military actions in Ukraine and who is responsible for the underperformance of the Russian Army are going to resonate in the near future within Russian leadership. (Courtesy: ORF)

SC status: Negating intersectionality of religion & caste isn't the way forward

By: Sumeet Samos

The recent petition filed by Activist Kudanthai Arasan from Tamil Nadu in the Supreme Court and an article on Halalkhor Muslims by Research Scholar Shireen Azam from Oxford has once again sparked off the heated debate on claims to SC status by Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims (Henceforth, DCs and DMs). Rather than analysing the history of commission reports, petitions, and stances taken by different political parties, already available online, I hope to address four common questions. This is not a comprehensive list but only the fundamental ones that I have come across in the debates. Apart from the Union and State Governments, Hindu Right organisations, the different strands of Dalit/Ambedkarite political community are also engaged with these recurring perspectives.

Religion-based demarcations
1. One often repeated argument is that since Christianity and Islam don't sanction caste and untouchability, there cannot be any claims of caste-based disabilities leading to socio-economic backwardness and therefore, no SC status can be granted.

Response: Religions such as Sikhism and Buddhism (including the Navayana strand propounded by Dr Ambedkar) too do not sanction caste and untouchability in their central tenets, yet the Dalits in these religious communities avail the SC status. One can argue they are under the larger Hindu umbrella as per Article 25 which prescribes caste distinctions, but if such is the case then why did Sikhs and Buddhists get SC status in 1956 and 1990 separately?

Social scientists in the 1950s and 60s often debated on field view and book view of Indian society and even later, scholars like Gloria Raheja and Chris Fuller who undermined the role of Brahmins in caste order have argued that the expressions of caste in social life are different from what Hindu texts prescribe. In fact, it is a well-established fact that caste order in South India is often studied as a three-fold division of Brahmins, Non-Brahmins, and Dalits unlike the North having a Kshatriya Varna followed by the Brahmins. It is a different matter that today many intermediary non-brahmin castes in South India claim a Kshatriya lineage.

This is not just particular to India, but across the globe, religion takes various expressions and divisions according to the cultural surroundings because it involves human being interpreting and materialising it. And in the case of the advent of Christianity and Islam in India, the most dominant factor of their interactive cultural surround-

ing has been that of caste over centuries. Even if not an exact copy of a particular social expression of Hindu caste order, the caste communities in terms of hierarchy, occupations, and endogamy rules have developed along similar lines. In fact, Muslim rulers brought their own descent-based stratification and complemented the caste order here. Resultantly, today we find converts from communities such as Madigas, Doms, Chuhras at the bottom among Christians and similarly Halalkhors and Lalbegis among Muslims facing similar forms of discrimination like their counterparts among the Hindus. To analyse Hinduism through all its various dynamic social practices but restrict Islam and Christianity merely to doctrine is akin to fixing the latter as static objects.

Who can seek a SC status?
2. The Muslims and Christians who claim to be Dalits should seek redressal in their religious educational institutions rather than SC status.

Response: DCs and DMs who are part of their religious communities are also citizens of India which entitles them to certain rights from the state, and to ask them to choose one between the two is basically asking them to come back to the Hindu or Buddhist fold to enjoy certain citizenship rights or be deprived of it by continuing to stay as Christians and Muslims.

This also implies that religion and caste are supposed to be two mutually exclusive compartments when it comes to Muslims and Christians. They live in the same society along with members of different castes not just from their religious communities but also others. It is almost impossible that they could escape caste and live only as religious entities, particularly in a society where caste considerations are so detailed and pervade all spheres of life. Most importantly, minority educational institutions do not have any specific quota for these communities due to their own denial of caste and the burden to figure that cannot be placed on these communities.

Furthermore, SC status is not just about reservation in education, there are other crucial areas such as employment opportunities, welfare schemes, SC/ST sub plans, political representation and protection from atrocities that are beyond the scope of any religious body.

Here, the role of the state becomes extremely important because their material conditions and a significant part of their vulnerability lie in their caste status. Therefore if caste has led to some of these conditions similar to that of their fellow Dalit members from other religions, then that require corresponding provisions and protective

measures that are based on SC recognition in the constitution.

Covered under reservation bracket, then why inclusion into SC?

3. They are already getting reservations under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category in various states, so why demand SC status?

Response: Firstly, in the criterion for OBC classification, caste disabilities arising out of untouchability have not been factored in and consequently the measures and provisions directed towards SC and OBCs differ on many grounds. SC/ST POA is the most important difference and those who are aware of caste atrocities in Karamchedu and Tsundur in Andhra Pradesh in 1985 and 1991, would know that there were many Dalit Christians who were at the receiving end because of their caste identities.

Secondly, be it in terms of habitations or occupations, Dalit Muslims and Christians largely live alongside fellow Hindu Dalits and engage in similar occupations. This is due to their similar caste origin and also the separation by higher caste members from their own religious communities and also those who are caste Hindus.

For example, around Marina Beach in Chennai, among the Catholics most of them are from the fishing communities while among the Pentecostal Christians constitute mostly of Paraiyars who either work as daily wage laborers or sanitation workers. The former are not considered untouchables but lower castes, while the latter are treated as untouchables but both of them are supposed to be under the OBC category. In Bihar and UP, Halalkhor and Lalbegi Muslims are engaged in cleaning occupations just like the Valmikis among Hindus and face the same social stigma.

A study conducted by Srinivas Goli, Fahimuddin, Prashant Trivedi and Surender Kumar in 2014-15 among 7000 households in Uttar Pradesh found out that Dalit Muslims experience caste untouchability which includes them having separate burial grounds, no invitations to wedding feasts by non-Dalits and their children facing segregation in schools. To place them alongside Yadavs and Kurmis in the OBC category is not only a sociological fallacy but also a denial of caste disabilities arising out of their untouchable caste status.

Lastly, in order to compete alongside other OBC groups, they are not equally placed and often at the state level OBC vacancy is filled by few numerically and politically influential castes and in central institutions, the OBC seats are usually far from being filled and more than 2000 castes above DCs and DMs compete for these limited opportunities. (Courtesy: The Quint)

Russian strikes have become a grim part of everyday life in Ukraine over the almost 17 months of the war

Ukraine repels large Russian missile and drone attack that injures civilians in Kyiv

KYIV, July 13 (AP): Ukrainian officials said air defences shot down 20 Iranian-made drones fired by Russia mostly at the Kyiv region early on Thursday, but wreckage fell on four districts of the capital, wounding two people and destroying several homes.

The latest barrage by the Kremlin's forces began shortly after midnight, and explosions shook different parts of the city. Two people were hospitalised with shrapnel wounds, authorities said.

In the capital, rescuers extinguished a fire in a 16-story building, as well as in a non-residential building, the Interior Ministry said. Debris also smashed into the frontage of a 25-story apartment building, it said.

Russian strikes have become a grim part of everyday life in Ukraine over the almost 17 months of the war.

Meanwhile, a senior officer

leading Russian forces against Kyiv's recent counteroffensive in southern Ukraine. Lt. Gen. Oleg Tsokov, was reportedly killed by a Ukrainian missile strike.

Tsokov died when the Ukrainian military struck the city of Berdyansk on Tuesday with UK-supplied Storm Shadow missiles, according to retired Gen. Andrei Gurulev, who commanded the 58th Army in the past and currently serves as a lawmaker.

Russia's Defense Ministry hasn't reported Tsokov's death.

In the aftermath of the nighttime attack on Kyiv, Volodymyr Motus, a 22-year-old resident of the 25-story building, carefully picked his way across the floor of a destroyed apartment, his footsteps crunching shattered glass. The mangled furniture was coated in a thick layer of dust.

"I was in my apartment and suddenly I heard a boom, that's all.



Then the alarm went off and I went down to the shelter."

He said that some people were injured, but they were all alive.

In May, Russia launched dozens of drones and missiles at Kyiv almost every night, forcing its resi-

dents to spend their nights in shelters.

During the summer, attacks came less frequently, but they still strike unpredictably across the country.

Ukraine's human rights chief

Dmytro Lubinets wrote on Telegram, "It should be explained that each air alarm in Ukraine is like playing Russian roulette... It's unknown the number of people who could be affected, and it is uncertain from which part of Ukraine bad news about the strike of an enemy drone or missile will come."

The Ukrainian military said it also intercepted two Russian cruise missiles. The statement said one ballistic missile wasn't intercepted, although it didn't explain what damage the missile caused.

The government of the region of Khmelnytskyi in western Ukraine reported that a cruise missile was intercepted over the region, and reported no casualties.

"We appreciate the meticulous work of Ukraine's air defense forces," the regional administration wrote on Telegram.

Recently, a Russian cruise mis-

sile struck an apartment building in the western city of Lviv, resulting in a death toll that reached 10, and leaving dozens injured.

And in the southern and eastern regions of the country, where heavy fighting is taking place on front lines, the intensity of missile attacks has remained high since the beginning of the war.

At least three civilians were killed and 38 more sustained injuries in Ukraine over the past 24 hours, Ukraine's presidential office reported on Thursday morning.

In the partially occupied Donetsk region, Russian forces targeted 13 cities and villages under Ukrainian control with aviation, missiles and heavy artillery.

In the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region, the number of wounded by drone debris on Wednesday rose to 21, and fires broke out in the city of Kherson after Russian shelling.

Biden is closing out his Europe trip by showcasing new NATO member Finland

HELSINKI, July 13 (AP): President Joe Biden will close out his five-day trip to Europe on Thursday standing alongside Nordic leaders in an effort to show NATO's expanding power and influence against a burgeoning Russia.

The brief stop in the shoreline Finnish capital is the coda to a Biden tour that was carefully sketched to highlight the growth of the military alliance that the president says has fortified itself since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Finland joined as NATO's newest member earlier this year, an entry that effectively doubled the alliance's border with Russia.

Biden arrived in Helsinki after what he deemed a successful annual NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, where allies agreed to language that would further pave the way for Ukraine to join the military alliance. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the summit's outcome "a significant security victory" for his country but nonetheless expressed disappointment Kyiv did not get an outright invitation to join NATO.

Biden and other administration officials also held what aides said were pivotal conversations with Ankara shortly before Turkey reversed course and dropped its objections to Sweden joining NATO.

"I'm feeling good about the trip," Biden told reporters shortly before boarding Air Force One for Finland. "You know, we accomplished every goal we set out to accomplish."

The president's trip this week — a meticulously choreographed endeavor meant to showcase international opposition to Russian leader Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine — played out nearly five years to the day since then-President Donald Trump infamously stood alongside Putin in Helsinki and cast doubt on his own intelligence apparatus. That was just days after Trump tore through a NATO summit where he disparaged the alliance and from which he threatened to withdraw the United States. In contrast, Biden has heartily embraced the tenets of multilateralism that Trump shunned, speaking repeatedly of having to rebuild international coalitions after four tumultuous years led by his predecessor.

US Vice President Kamala Harris makes history with tie-breaking votes in Senate

WASHINGTON, July 13 (PTI): Kamala Harris has set another record in US history when she matched a 191-year-old record of casting tie-breaking votes as a vice president and backed the nomination of Indian-origin Kalpana Kotagal to be a member of a federal agency.

Harris, who made history as the first woman or person of colour in 2020, equalled the record held by Senator John C Calhoun, a Democratic-Republican who served as vice president to John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson from 1825 to 1832.

On Wednesday, Harris, 58, cast her vote on cloture for the nomination of Kotagal, a diversity, equity, and inclusion expert to serve as a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

Harris broke a 50-50 tie on a vote in the Senate on the nomination of Kotagal, to bring her total of tie-breaking votes cast as vice president since she assumed office to 31.

That matches the record set by Calhoun, a Democratic-Republican and an avowed proponent of states' rights and slavery.

Under the Constitution, the role of the vice president is to preside over the Senate and break ties in case of a deadlock in the upper house.

In the current 118th Congress,

Democrats hold 51 seats and Republicans have 49 seats.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer hailed Harris's accomplishment on the floor on Wednesday evening.

"I want to note that this is a history-making moment for the United States Senate," he was quoted as saying by the Hill newspaper.

"When it's mattered most, Vice President Harris has provided the decisive vote on some of the most historic bills of modern times, from the American Rescue Plan to the Inflation Reduction Act to so many federal judges who now provide balance on the federal bench."

"She's carried out her duties with supreme excellence," he added.

She voted on June 21 to break a 50-50 tie on advancing Natasha Merle's nomination to serve as a judge for the Eastern District of New York and a 48-48 tie on confirming Araceli Martinez-Olguin to serve as a judge for the North District of California.

In the first two years of Harris's tenure as vice president, the Senate was evenly split, making the nickname of "101st Senator" a reality.

Harris cast her first tiebreakers just three weeks into the job in February 2021. Fifteen tiebreaker votes in her first year as vice president was also a record, passing Mike Pence's 13 in all four years on the job, the Politico newspaper reported. Kotagal, who is the daughter of immigrants from India, is a partner at Cohen Milstein, a member of the firm's Civil Rights and Employment practice group, and co-chair of the firm's Hiring and Diversity Committee.



Thailand's parliament is set to choose a prime minister, but it might not be the election winner

BANGKOK, July 13 (AP): Thai lawmakers are gathering Thursday to select a new prime minister, a process whose outcome is far from certain even though the country's most progressive party won both the popular vote and the most seats in the House of Representatives in the most recent election.

The reformist Move Forward Party's victory in the May 14 election appeared to spell an end to nine years of unpopular army-supported rule. Two months later, it is unclear if that mandate for change will be honoured.

Parliament is due to vote on whether to make Move Forward's leader, 42-year-old businessman Pita Limjaroenrat, the country's prime minister.

His party captured 151 of the 500 House seats and has assembled a coalition government-in-waiting. The eight parties in the coalition won 312 seats combined, a healthy majority.

But on Wednesday, the Election Commission said it concluded there was evidence that Pita had violated election law, and referred his case to the Constitutional Court for a ruling. If the court accepts the case and finds him guilty, he could lose his House seat, get kicked out of politics and face a prison sentence.



As Pita entered Parliament ahead of the vote on Thursday, he told reporters: "I will do my best to live up to the hope and support that the people have given me."

The more immediate roadblock to Pita taking power is that the prime minister is elected through a joint vote of the House and the 250-seat Senate, whose members were hand-picked by the military-backed regime established after a 2014 coup.

Pita, or any other candidate, needs a minimum of 376 votes to become head of government, meaning he would probably have to shake loose a large number of votes from the Senate, many of whose members appear openly

hostile to him.

The biggest hurdle between the liberals backing Move Forward and the deeply conservative Senate is the campaign pledge of Pita's party to amend a law that makes defaming the royal family punishable by three to 15 years in prison.

The monarchy is sacrosanct to members of Thailand's royalist establishment, and even minor reforms that might improve and modernize the monarchy's image are anathema to them. Move Forward's coalition partners also have not endorsed the proposed legal change, and other parties ruled out joining the coalition over the idea.

Chonlanan Srikaew, the leader of the coalition partner Pheu Thai Party, nominated Pita to start Thursday's proceedings, which include six hours of debate before an up-or-down vote for prime minister. If Pita does not get the required number, another round of voting is expected to be held next week.

If Pita cannot win over enough senators, his options appear nil. The options for the eight-party coalition as a whole appear more viable.

One option is for the Pheu Thai Party, which used to be the royalist establishment's top rival, to put forward one of its members as a candidate for prime minister.

China and ASEAN agree to try to conclude nonaggression pact on sea feud in 3 years

JAKARTA, July 13 (AP): China and Southeast Asian nations agreed on Thursday to try and conclude within three years a long-delayed nonaggression pact aimed at preventing the frequent territorial spats in the busy South China Sea from turning into a major armed conflict.

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed on Thursday during a meeting between the 10-nation bloc's foreign ministers and China's top diplomat Wang Yi in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta to guidelines to complete their code of conduct negotiations before fall 2026, a Southeast Asian diplomat involved in the meetings told The Associated Press.

The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity due to a lack of authority to discuss the issue pub-



licly ahead of the official announcement of the agreement.

China and four of ASEAN's member states — Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam — along with Taiwan have been locked in a decades-long territorial standoff in the disputed waterway, a key passageway for global trade that is believed to be sitting atop vast undersea deposits

of oil and gas.

The contested territory has long been feared as an Asian flashpoint and has become a sensitive front in the US-China rivalry in the region.

A joint working group by China and ASEAN "should endeavour to conclude the negotiation of an effective and substantive code of conduct, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UN Convention of the Law of the Sea, within a 3-year timeline or earlier," according to the guidelines, a copy of which was seen by the AP.

The guidelines called for more meetings between the two sides and the start of negotiations for the most contentious issues, including whether the regional code should be legally enforceable and its geographical scope.

Tens of thousands of doctors in England start 'longest' strike in health system's history

LONDON, July 13 (AP): Britain's state-funded health care service is facing what is being described as its longest-ever strike as tens of thousands of doctors in England commenced a five-day walkout over pay on Thursday. So-called junior doctors, those who are at the early stages of their careers in the years after medical school, started their strike at 7 am, with many of them making their case for a 35% pay rise in picket lines outside hospitals across England.

The British Medical Association, the doctors' union, has asked for a 35% pay rise to bring junior doctors' pay back to 2008 levels once inflation is taken into account. Meanwhile, the workload of England's 75,000 or so junior doctors has swelled as patient waiting lists for treatment are at record highs in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Today marks the start of the longest single walkout by doctors in the NHS's history, but this is still not a record that needs to go into the history books," said BMA leaders Dr Robert Laurens and Dr Vivek Trivedi. They urged the government to drop its "nonsensical precondition" of not talking whilst strikes are announced. The government, which is facing an array of strikes by public workers across many sectors, is standing firm on its belief that it won't negotiate while the strikes are taking place. "This five-day walkout by junior doctors will have an impact on thousands of patients, put patient safety at risk and hamper efforts to cut NHS waiting lists," said Health Secretary Steve Barclay. "A pay demand of 35% or more is unreasonable and risks fuelling inflation, which makes everyone poorer."

Hamdan Al Rind is a UAE resident of Asian nationality with over 2.5 million followers on TikTok

Influencer arrested over TikTok video satirizing wealthy Emiratis in Dubai shows limits on freedoms

DUBAI, July 13 (AP): An online influencer has been arrested in Dubai over a satirical TikTok video in which he portrays a brash Emirati on a spending spree inside a luxury car showroom.

The comedic sketch, in which he tosses stacks of bills at bewildered employees and offers to buy the most expensive car — a \$600,000 Ferrari SF90 — poked fun at the lavish lifestyles on display in the city, known for its gleaming skyscrapers and over-the-top tourism attractions.

Dubai is more socially lenient than much of the Middle East, with a relaxed dress code, bars and clubs serving alcohol — and even a local comedy scene. But vaguely worded laws forbid any speech, including journalism and satire, that is deemed critical of authorities or insulting to the United Arab Emirates, the federation of sheikhdoms that includes Dubai.

The influencer, Hamdan Al Rind, who refers to himself as the "Car Expert" online, is a UAE resident of Asian nationality. He boasts over 2.5 million followers on the popular video-sharing site TikTok. His latest video attracted millions of views and was widely shared before being taken down following his arrest.



In the video, he is wearing a kandura, the long white robe typically worn by Emirati men, sunglasses and a surgical mask. He speaks in English with a heavy Arabic accent, shouting clipped sentences at the dealership's employees while his assistants haul around a stretcher filled with stacks of cash.

The Federal Prosecution for Combating Rumors and Cybercrimes says he is accused of "abusing the internet" by posting "propaganda that stirs up the public opinion and harms the public interest." It said the video "promotes a wrong and offensive mental image of Emirati citizens and

ridicules them," the state-run WAM news agency reported on Sunday.

The WAM report described the video but did not identify the influencer or specify his nationality. It's unclear when exactly Al Rind was arrested or what penalties he could face. It's not known whether he has hired an attorney.

Just last month, a UAE resident of Arab nationality was sentenced to five years in prison and a \$136,000 fine for violating hate-speech laws by posting a video ranting against men and domestic workers. Prosecutors had ordered her arrest "in the context of the 'buzz' generated by the posting of

the offending video," WAM reported.

A vaguely-worded cybercrime law enacted in January 2022 heavily restricts expression and assembly, criminalizing virtually any form of political opposition and anything that could harm the reputation of the UAE or its leaders. Fifteen human rights groups have called for the law to be repealed or amended.

Ahmed Mansour, the owner of Luxury Super Car Rentals Dubai, where Al Rind filmed his video, said he thought the man was an Emirati citizen.

"He came in, he wanted to shoot a video, I said 'yes.' If it didn't happen in my showroom, it probably would have happened somewhere else," he told The Associated Press. "Some people thought it was offensive, some people thought it was funny, everyone has their own opinion."

"I thought he understood the law," Mansour added.

Al Rind, who operates his own car dealership in the UAE, has posted satirical videos before — including one that went viral in which he portrays a wealthy Emirati purchasing cars for each of his four wives — besides video tutorials on how to fix vehicles.

Kim vows to boost NKorea's nuclear capability after observing new long-range missile launch

SEOUL, July 13 (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to further bolster his country's nuclear fighting capabilities as he supervised the second test flight of a new, powerful intercontinental ballistic missile designed to strike the mainland United States, state media reported on Thursday.

Kim's statement suggested North Korea would ramp up weapons testing activities to expand its arsenal in response to recent US steps to enhance its security commitment to ally South Korea.

"(Kim) clarified again that there will be no change and vacillation in the strategic line and policy of (the North Korean) government to steadily accelerate the development of more developed, effective and reliable weapon system," the Korean Central News Agency said.

Kim said North Korea is compelled to bolster the country's "nuclear war deterrent" because the security environment on the Korean Peninsula "is being seriously threatened by the hostile forces every moment."

The Korean Central News Agency reported Kim's comments a day after the launch of the Hwasong-18, which was first test-fired in April and which Kim has called the most powerful weapon of his nuclear forces.

The road-mobile ICBM has built-in solid propellant, which makes it more difficult to detect in advance than liquid-fueled missiles.

KCNA said the launch was meant to reconfirm the technical credibility and operational reliability of the missile. Kim called the launch "another important stride" in efforts to boost the North's strategic forces, KCNA said.

According to KCNA, the missile was launched at a high angle to avoid neighbouring countries. It flew 74 minutes and a distance of 1,001 kilometres at a maximum altitude of 6,648 kilometres before landing in a targeted area in the open waters off the North's east coast.

The missile's flight time is the longest recorded by



any weapon launched by North Korea. If launched on a standard trajectory, the missile could fly to the mainland US, though some experts say North Korea still has some technologies to master to acquire functioning nuclear-armed missiles.

South Korea, Japan and the United States criticised North Korea over the launch that they said posed a threat to regional and international peace. Adam Hodge, a spokesperson for the US National Security Council, said in a statement that the US will take all necessary steps to ensure the security of the American homeland and South Korean and Japanese allies.

The United Nations Security Council scheduled an open meeting late Friday afternoon to discuss the ICBM launch at the request of the United States, Albania, France, Japan, Malta and the United Kingdom.

Wednesday's launch violated UN Security Council resolutions that ban any North Korean launches using ballistic technologies. But it's unclear if the council can impose new sanctions on North Korea because China and Russia, both veto-wielding permanent members, had blocked the US and others' previous attempts to do so over North Korea's other recent ballistic launches.

Another bank in Manipur hill district found looted



IMPHAL, July 13 (NNN): In yet another attempt to loot banks, the Kangpokpi branch of Manipur State Co-operative Bank at IT Road was vandalised by miscreants on Wednesday night, official sources here said on Thursday.

No cash was looted as all the cash in the bank had already been shifted at the initial stage of the violence that erupted on May 3 last, the sources said.

However, the miscreants have taken away six computer sets, one canon printer and CCTV camera hard drives after the vandalism in the bank building, a complaint lodged by the deputy manager of the Manipur State Co-operative Bank stated in the complaint to the Kangpokpi district police.

"Cash vault has also been broken, but no cash has been looted as the branch has already taken out all the cash vault as well as from the ATM in the middle week of May as advised by the head office", the deputy manager reportedly stated in his complaint letter.

He added that the said bank branch remained closed from May 4 till July 7 in view of the prevailing law and order situation in the state.

The stealing of the bank property was not the first time in which

banks in violent hill districts were looted by miscreants taking advantage of the closure of the banks following incidents of violence.

Two incidents of looting banks were reported in the violence-hit Churachandpur district since the eruption of the violence more than two months ago.

There was a report of looting the Churachandpur branch of Axis Bank which was closed since May 4. The looting of that bank came to light when the bank branch was reopened on July 10. Sources had said that cash and jewellery items worth over ₹ 2.25 crore were found missing.

The looting incident came to light when the manager of the bank branch went to the bank at 1.30 pm. He found the strong room was broken, reports said.

Further examination found that the looting took place after the miscreants entered the strong room of the bank by breaking the ventilator of the bathroom.

On the night of the very first day of the eruption of the violence, on May 3 midnight, a mob slammed into the Churachandpur branch of Manipur State Cooperative Bank at New Lamka and looted cash worth over ₹ 11 lakh after vandalism, the reports also said.

Centre making efforts to bring normalcy in state: Manipur Guv

'Hatred among the two communities has to be removed'

IMPHAL, July 13 (NNN): Governor of Manipur, Anusuiya Uikey informed on Thursday that "all communities meet" will be held soon at Raj Bhavan in Imphal to discuss the prevailing situation in Manipur. The Governor then said the state government of Manipur with the help of the Centre is "making all out efforts to bring the situation to normal where all the communities including the Meiteis and the Kukis can live together as usual".

The Governor said this while visiting a relief camp opened at Naorem Birahari College at Khundrakpam in Imphal East district on Thursday. She also interacted with the displaced people who have been taking shelter there.

Altogether 296 displaced people are taking shelter in the relief camp. While interacting with the people in the camps, the Governor said she has come to see them and feel shocked to see the aggrieved people in the relief camp.

The Governor also heard about the grievances and hardships faced by the people and assured them to extend all possible help. The Governor also enquired about the facilities/amenities which are being provided to the people and directed the district administration to improve whatever necessary. She informed the people that she has directed the chief secretary for providing all requirements to the dis-



placed people in relief camps. She also asked the district administration to initiate skill training for the displaced people.

The Governor then said that "hatred among the two communities has to be removed and the two communities should stop violence which is the prerequisite for initiating a meaningful dialogue". She added, "Only then will peace and normalcy be restored".

Stating that more than 60,000 security personnel have been deployed to the state, the Governor

said that search operations to nab miscreants have been continuing and large numbers of arms have been recovered. Bunkers have also been removed in many places, she also said.

On re-settlement of the displaced people, the Governor said that as a temporary measure, pre-fabricated houses are being built at Sawombung and the displaced people will be there until the situation permits them to return to their respective places. Adequate compensation will also be given to the people for

their burnt houses and properties, she added.

Condemning all forms of violence, the Governor said that violence will bring no solution and all have to shun violence. She also said that only a meaningful dialogue will bring an amicable solution and therefore all stakeholders will come forward for talks.

She then appealed to all communities/stakeholders to come forward for talks and to co operate the government in bringing normalcy and peace in Manipur.

Arunachal Pradesh has potential to become sports powerhouse: Minister Natung

ITANAGAR, July 13 (PTT): Arunachal Pradesh Sports and Youth Affairs minister Mama Natung Thursday said the northeastern state has the potential to become a sports powerhouse in the country. Speaking at the 5th National Junior Boxing Championship here, the minister thanked the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) for giving the state the opportunity to host the sporting event in the state capital. "I am thankful to the Boxing Federation of India for giving us the opportunity to host the national event in the state and also thank the Arunachal Amateur Boxing Association (AABA) for conducting the event successfully," Natung said.

The minister expressed hope that the state is now capable of hosting any national tournament and termed the boxing meet as a good platform for youngsters.

"We gave our best efforts so that the championship becomes a success. I think this championship has provided a good platform to all the junior boxers of the country who will be representing India in major international tournaments in the future," Natung added. On the sports scene of Arunachal, he said that the state has improved vastly especially after Pema Khandu took charge as chief minister. The players of the state need some technical guidance, he observed.

"I must say, Arunachal has talents in boxing and other sports but what they need is some technical guidance so that they can advance to the next level. Here, I would like to mention that since Pema Khandu took charge of the state as chief minister, our players have won 900 medals and out of those 81 medals came in various international events," he said.

Chief minister Sangma felicitates top ranking students

HT Bureau

SHILLONG, July 13: In accordance with the Meghalaya government's commitment to fostering a culture of educational excellence, the Meghalaya Board of School Education's top-scoring students were honoured at the ongoing Meghalaya Education Symposium in Shillong.

The students were presented mementos by the chief minister Conrad K Sangma, and the cabinet minister for the department of education, Rakkam A Sangma, in a ceremony held at the Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts and Culture. The Meghalaya Education Symposium is one of the many initiatives of the government of Meghalaya to improve educational infrastructure and was attended by dignitaries such as cabinet minister of the department of health and family welfare, Dr Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh, Paul Lyngdoh, cabinet minister of social welfare, government of Meghalaya among others.

Addressing the community of leaders, educators, and future citizens of the state, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, said in his inaugural address, "The Meghalaya Education Symposium 2023 is proud to host such a diverse range of participants, including my cabinet colleagues, senior government officials, educators, and esteemed thought leaders. I am glad for the opportunity to share this platform



with all of you and discuss the crucial reforms that this government has initiated pertaining to the state's education system. We are a state blessed with a vibrant youth population that deserves the best of opportunities, not only for a strong educational foundation but for a holistic and purpose driven approach to their overall development. We have created a youth policy to engage and empower our youth and are actively working on the infrastructural upgrade of nearly 2000 lower and upper primary schools, providing students with enhanced learning environments. Additionally, with a budget of ₹ 920 Crore, we are con-

structing 39 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) to further bolster education accessibility. Understanding the significance of higher education, we have made significant strides in this area. Sanctioning 9 Peoples Colleges across the state ensures quality higher education for the rural masses, fostering equal opportunities for all. In our pursuit of enhancing digital learning, we distributed approximately 26,000 digital tablets to students in the fiscal year 2021-22."

He further added, "The government is keen on including suggestions and recommendations through the education symposium to continuously im-

prove the higher education system. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the bright youngsters who have topped the Meghalaya Board of School Education examinations. I sincerely hope that our educational system can foster in students a healthy sense of competition that will help them succeed in their chosen fields.

Cabinet minister of the department of health and family welfare, Dr Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh, addressed the gathering and emphasised the need for comprehensive education. She noted, "I am glad to have the chance to stand before the future of our state and express pride in their capabilities as bearers of our hopes and aspirations. It is crucial that our educational system equips students with not only academic knowledge but also practical skills and values to navigate the challenges of the real world. Education is the means to transform the future of Meghalaya. We look forward to working together to further enhance the quality of education in our state."

The Meghalaya Education Symposium 2023 served as a forum for meaningful dialogue and collaboration between leaders, educators, and education sector stakeholders. It allowed for the exchange of innovative ideas in an effort to develop a comprehensive plan for the future of education in Meghalaya.

Nagaland Guv releases postal cover on Naga back basket

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, July 13: Nagaland governor La Ganesan released special postal cover on Naga back basket at Raj Bhavan in Kohima on Thursday. Releasing the postal cover, Ganesan said a Naga back basket holds important relevance in the Naga society.

"It is used not just to carry water, firewood, rice or vegetables by the Naga women but also often gifted to a girl by her parents or beloved as a sign of love and affection," he mentioned.

Saying that more often than not a woman's handworks and contributions to a family go unappreciated, he said the Naga back basket is usually associated with a rural Naga woman, which epitomizes her handwork, responsibility and affection.

The governor appreciated the postal department for releasing this special cover on the Naga back basket, saying it is a tribute to all Naga mothers and Naga women.

Ganesan narrated how the Naga people in the past produced their baskets which are usually woven out of cane or bamboo in most Naga homes for domestic use. He also said baskets are made

by the manfolk during their leisure time after they return home from the field. "In olden days, there were no professional weavers but every man was a professional in basket weaving in his own right and weaves for his family, which signifies economic independence and self-sufficiency," he added. He lamented that though Nagaland has a rich history of culture and tradition the younger generation is losing touch with traditional practices and values with changing times. Expressing his happiness that the older generation is becoming aware of this these days, Ganesan said the Naga civil societies have also taken upon themselves to teach and revive the dying cultural practices and traditional arts.

He said one such society, Lidi Khro Society, from Kohima found mention in the Mann Ki Baat programme of PM Narendra Modi for doing a wonderful job in teaching and promoting Naga arts, including traditional basket weaving, to the younger generation. He added that like Lidi Khro Society, there are numerous other societies doing their bit for promotion of indigenous Naga culture.

Expert committee chairperson to be finalised soon

SHILLONG, July 13 (NNN): Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma on Thursday said the government is still waiting for some more names for the appointment of the chairperson of the expert committee constituted for reviewing the state reservation policy. Sangma told reporters that only one name has come for appointment of the chairperson. "Therefore, we feel that the names should be a bit more broad so we are waiting for about 3-5 names so that the government can examine. Once we get the names for the chairperson we will bring it to the cabinet for its decision," he said.

Ambarish Barman assumes command of controller of defence accounts (CDA)

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: Ambarish Barman picked up the senior administrative grade (SAG) and assumed the command of controller of defence accounts (CDA), at Guwahati.

The organisation of CDA Guwahati is responsible for financial oversight/expenditure management namely disbursements, audit, accounting, and financial advice of armed forces in Northeast region.

Barman joined the 2005 batch of Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS). He is an alumnus of Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi and Delhi School of Economics. He has attended training Programmes at National Law University Delhi, Indian School of Business (ISB) Mohali and National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM) Faridabad. Barman



has also distinguished himself in training exposures at Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley (Mid-Career Training) and Programme on Public Fiscal Management for financial advisors at Duke Centre for International Development, Duke university, North Carolina.

In a career spanning over 17 years he has had wide exposure in various commands, staff and instructional appointments, as a member of Emergency Empowered Committees and Empowered Procurement Committees in Service HQs, member secretary of task forces & high level committees in ministry of defence, central election observer, central nodal officer under Jal Shakti Abhiyan, member (Govt Representative) of the Pension Advisory Committee of Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority (PFRDA), amongst others. He has received the commendation of the chief of Naval Staff in 2016 for displaying 'utmost dedication, commitment and professional competence of a very high order'.

Before assuming command of CDA Guwahati he was on central deputation as director to GoI in ministry of defence.

NO.SSUHS/281/2023/Ex/6741

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE ON COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION FOR SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION INTO B.Sc. MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY AND DIPLOMA IN PARAMEDICAL COURSES IN THE INSTITUTES OF ASSAM UNDER SRIMANTA SANKARADEVA UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES (SSUHS) INCLUDING INSTITUTES RUN BY PRIVATE BODIES

The Common Entrance Examination (CEE) for selection of candidates for admission into B.Sc. Medical Technology and Diploma in Paramedical Courses in the Institutes of Assam under Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences (SSUHS) for the session 2023-24 is going to be held on 20th August, 2023. Online Application Forms shall be available on University website: www.ssuhs.in from 17-07-2023 to 05-08-2023. The online application form must be filled up after carefully going through the instructions given along with the form.

A non-refundable examination fee of Rs. 2000/- (Rupees Two thousand only) is required to be paid through the Payment gateway available on online application page and University website [Application Fee for CEE — (PM), 2023 (Non — Refundable)]. Above Examination fee is exempted to PwD (Divyang) category of candidates having disability of 40% and above.

Details of the Entrance Examination including eligibility criteria and requirements shall be available at the University website: www.ssuhs.in from 17-07-2023.

The Entrance Test is going to be held on 20-08-2023 at Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Silchar, Jorhat, Barpeta, Tezpur and Diphu.

Admit Cards will be available online at www.ssuhs.in from 14-08-2023 which can be downloaded after log in.

Candidates are strictly advised to keep record of the Application Number and Password used by them while submitting the online form, without which they will not be able to download Admit Cards.

However, the applicants may call the Help Line No. 8929207668 for any assistance

Sd/
Registrar
Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health
Sciences

Janasanyog /D/6746/23



অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ

ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.

No.200PSC/DR-71/2022-23

NOTIFICATION

It is for information to all concerned that the Assam Public Service Commission will hold Interview/Viva-Voce for recruitment to the post of Inspector of Legal Metrology under Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department (vide Advt. No. 19/2022, Dated 5th September, 2022) as per programme given below at its office in Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22 as per the detailed programme for the interview/viva-voce is given below:

Name of the post & Department	Date of Interview/ Viva - voce	Time of Document Verification	Time of Interview
Inspector of Legal Metrology under Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department	4 th August/2023 and 5 th August/2023	9:00 AM	10:30 AM

No intimation letter to the eligible candidates shall be sent separately by post. The intimation letters shall be uploaded in the APSC's website (www.apsc.nic.in) on 28/07/2023. The candidates shall have to download their own intimation Letters from the aforesaid website.

Sd/
Joint Secretary,
Assam Public Service Commission
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati - 22

Janasanyog /D/6701/23

No.CHD/SEKI/TN-23/2022-23/3922

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Dated. 11th July/2023

Sealed tenders in Prescribed form (Eventually to be drawn in APWD. "F2" Form) affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and paise twenty-five) only for each group separately are hereby invited from the eligible class-I (A, B, C) and Class-II registered contractors of Irrigation Department for the following work under different Divisions of Irrigation Department in BTC area and will be received up to 2 PM on 28/07/2023 in the office of the undersigned which will be opened on the same date and placed at 3.00 PM in presence of the intending Tenderers or their authorized agents, who may like to be present.

However, in the event of closure of office on the opening/ receiving of tender due to some unavoidable reason the next office working day of office will be considered for the purpose.

NAME OF SCHEME: -

Different works of "Different works of 100 new SMI schemes (BTC) under PMKSY (HKKP) for the year 2021-22".
APPROX. VALUE: - Rs. 2,61,21,458.00 in 12 (Twelve) groups as per group allocation.
TIME FOR COMPLETION: - 12 (Twelve) months from the date of issue of Work Order.
EARNST MONEY: - 2% of tendered value (1% in case of ST/SC/OBC/UGE).

Detail tender papers with terms and conditions may be obtained on request from the office of the undersigned on payment of Rs. 200/- (Rupees two hundred) only I.P.O duly pledged in favour of the C.H.D (Irrigation), BTC, Kokrajhar up to 12.00 Noon on 27/07/2023

Sd/
Council Head of Department
Irrigation, BTC, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)-2023-24/343

India has shown it's possible for harmony to exist amid diversity: PM

The US Congress has consistently extended bipartisan support for elevating our relationship

NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India as the world's largest democracy has demonstrated that it is possible for harmony to exist amid diversity and underscored the natural expectation of adjustments in the international system and institutions to give the country its rightful place.

Modi told French newspaper Les Echos in an interview that India's young and skilled workforce is steeped in openness and democratic values, and is eager to embrace technology and adapt to the changing world.

"When many countries in the world are ageing and their populations are shrinking, India's young and skilled workforce will be an asset for the world over the decades to come. As the world's largest democracy with unparalleled social and economic diversity, our success will demonstrate that democracy delivers. That it is possible for harmony to exist amidst diversity," he said.

The progress of one-sixth of humanity will give the world a more prosperous and sustainable future, he said replying to a question on how India's status changes globally with the country becoming the most populous country.

"Our deeply held values of peace, openness, harmony and co-existence; the success of our vibrant democracy; the extraordinary richness of our culture, traditions



and philosophy; a consistent voice for the cause of a peaceful, fair and just world; and, our commitment to international law and peace, are the reasons that India's rise is welcomed not feared in the world," he said. Modi asserted that he will rather describe it as India regaining its rightful place in the world as, since time immemorial, India has been at the forefront of contributing to global economic growth, technological advancement and human development.

"Our demographic dividend, our deep roots in democracy, and our civilizational spirit will guide the way as we move towards the future. We recognize our responsibility in contributing to addressing global challenges, building a more cohesive world, giving voice to the

aspirations of the weak and advancing global peace and prosperity," he said.

There is a global recognition today that India is a force of good in the world and indispensable for global unity, cohesion, peace and prosperity at a time of great turmoil and risks of fragmentation in the world, the PM said. Our capabilities and resources will continue to be directed towards the larger good of humanity, not to raise claims against others or challenge the international order, he added.

Asked about his views of what are India's soft power, he said the country's exports have never been war and subjugation, but yoga, ayurveda, spirituality, science, mathematics, and astronomy.

"We have always been a contrib-

utor to global peace and progress. We believe that while we progress and become a modern nation, we should take pride and inspiration from our past and that we can progress only if we do it together with other nations," he said.

To a question about the growth in the relationship between India and the US, he said their ties have been growing positively since the turn of the century and have accelerated and reached new levels in the past nine years.

"There is widespread support for deepening our ties, from all stakeholders, in both countries - be it government, Parliament, industry, academia and of course the people. The US Congress has consistently extended bipartisan support for elevating our relationship," he said.

The India-US partnership is perfectly placed in terms of interests, vision, commitments and complementarities to address the challenges of our times and contribute in a significant way to shaping the global order.

"As the challenges to the international order have grown, our partnership is responding with great sense of urgency and purpose. Trust, mutual confidence and belief in the relationship have been key ingredients. Advancing a free, open, inclusive and balanced Indo-Pacific region, is a shared goal. We pursue this with other partners in the region and beyond," the Prime Minister said.

Excise policy case SC to hear on Friday AAP leader Manish Sisodia's bail pleas



NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Friday the bail pleas of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia in the Delhi excise policy case being probed by the CBI and the money-laundering matter arising out of it.

According to the cause list uploaded on the apex court website, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Bela M Trivedi is slated to hear his petitions challenging the separate orders of the Delhi High Court which refused to grant him bail in these cases. On July 10, a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud had agreed to hear the pleas of the former Delhi deputy chief minister on July 14.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, representing Sisodia, had urged the top court to take them up for hearing as the senior AAP leader's wife was seriously ill and hospitalised. Sisodia, who held the excise portfolio among many that he handled as the deputy chief minister, was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

on February 26 for his alleged role in the "scam". He has been in custody since then. The ED arrested him in a money laundering case stemming from the CBI FIR on March 9 after questioning him in Tihar jail. Sisodia resigned from the Delhi cabinet on February 28.

The high court had denied him bail in the CBI case on May 30, saying having been the deputy chief minister and excise minister, he is a "high-profile" person who has the potential to influence the witnesses. On July 3, the high court had declined him bail in the money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the city government's excise policy, holding that the charges against him are "very serious in nature".

In its May 30 order, the high court had said since Sisodia was at the "helm of affairs" when the alleged scam took place, he cannot say he had no role to play.

The high court had said with his party still in power in the national capital, Sisodia, who once held 18 portfolios, continues to wield influence, and since the witnesses are mostly public servants, the possibility of their getting influenced cannot be ruled out.

According to the CBI and the ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours were extended to licence holders. The Delhi government implemented the policy on Nov 17, 2021, but scrapped it at the end of September 2022 amid allegations of corruption.

Yamuna water level in Delhi stabilises, will start receding soon: CWC



NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): The water level of the Yamuna river in Delhi has stabilised and will start receding tonight, a senior Central Water Commission official said on Thursday.

According to the CWC flood-monitoring portal, the water level at the Old Railway Bridge rose to 208.62 metres at 1 pm and remained stable till 4 pm.

"The water level has stabilised and it will start coming down in the next four hours. It is expected to drop to 208.45 metres by 3 am on Friday," Central Water Commission (CWC) Director Sharad Chandra told PTI. He said the rate of water flow rate at the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana dropped to 80,000 cusecs at 4 pm.

The raging river has inundated several areas, impacted public and private infrastructure, road and rail traffic and caused immense hardships to people living near the river. The water level at the Old Railway Bridge crossed the 208-metre mark Wednesday night, with the CWC terming it an "extreme situation". Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday urged the Centre to intervene and the city police imposed Section 144 of the CrPc in flood-prone areas to prevent unlawful assembly of four or more people and public movement in groups.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority on Thursday directed that all non-essential government offices, schools and colleges in the city be closed till Sunday. Private establishments across the city have been advised to work from home.

There are two major barrages on the Yamuna -- Dakpathar in Dehradun and Hathnikund in Yamunanagar -- upstream of Delhi. There are no dams on the river and, therefore, most of the monsoon rain flow remains unutilised, resulting in floods during the season.

Delhi had recorded a rapid rise in the Yamuna's water level over the past four days. It shot up from 203.14 metres at 11 am on Sunday to 205.4 metres at 5 pm on Monday, breaching the danger mark of 205.33 metres 18 hours earlier than expected. The river exceeded the evacuation mark of 206 metres Monday night, prompting the relocation of people residing in flood-prone areas to safer locations and the closure of the Old Railway Bridge for road and rail traffic.

The water level breached the previous record of 207.49 metres by 1 pm on Wednesday and the 208-metre mark by 10 pm. Major floods in Delhi occurred in 1924, 1977, 1978, 1988, 1995, 1998, 2010 and 2013. An analysis of flood data from 1963 to 2010 indicates an increasing trend for floods occurring in September, and a decreasing trend in July, according to research.

Over 300 mail/express, 406 passenger trains cancelled from July 7-15



NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): More than 300 mail and express trains and 406 passenger trains have been cancelled between July 7 and July 15 due to waterlogging on tracks following heavy rainfall over the past few days, officials said on Thursday.

Overall, about 600 mail and express trains and over 500 passenger trains have been affected, including some cancelled, diverted, short-terminated and others short-originated, due to waterlogging, they said.

Northwest India saw incessant rainfall over three days from Saturday, with many areas in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan recording "heavy to extremely heavy" rains.

This resulted in overflowing rivers, creeks and drains that massively damaged infrastructure and disrupted essential services in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab.

The Northern Railway, which caters to this region, cancelled around 300 mail/express trains, short-terminated 100 trains and diverted 191 more. It also short-originated around 67 trains, the officials said.

Due to heavy waterlogging, it has also cancelled 406 passenger trains, diverted 28 trains, short-terminated 56 and short-originated 54 trains, they said.

According to a statement by the

Northern Railway, due to incessant rain and inclement weather in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, train services have been affected on Ambala, Delhi, Ferozpur and Moradabad divisions.

Help desks have been opened at all major railway stations to guide passengers, they said.

Announcements regarding cancellation/diversion/commencing of journey before destination of cancelled trains are being made regularly at stations. Additional counters have been opened at various places over Northern Railway for providing information and refund of tickets to passengers, the statement said.

The supply of food items has been increased. Buses have been arranged to take the affected passengers to their destination stations by road, officials said. The Northern Railway has coordinated with the governments of Haryana and Uttarakhand regarding the installation of buses. For continuous monitoring of the situation, staff has been deployed by the officers at the headquarters and the divisional control offices, they said.

Railway staff has been deployed to inform about waterlogged traffic/passengers and the situation is being regularly monitored. For the convenience of passengers, 18 additional counters have been opened at railway stations, the officials said.

PATNA, July 13 (PTI): A BJP leader in Bihar on Thursday died while taking part in a "Vidhan Sabha march" against the state's Nitish Kumar government, evoking allegations from senior party leaders that he was "killed in a brutal lathi charge". The party's Jehanabad district general secretary Vijay Singh was brought in an unconscious state to the Patna Medical College and Hospital where he died, PMCH superintendent Dr IS Thakur said.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, a former state BJP president, told reporters that the death of Vijay Singh during the protest march was a "sacrificial offering".

"Besides, thousands of BJP workers have been injured, some of them seriously, while lending their voice to the state's students and youngsters. The injured include many women and members of Parliament and the state legislature", alleged Rai, who represents the Ujjaypur Lok Sabha seat.

Officials were tight-lipped about the cause of the death of Singh, who was said to be in his 40s, though the district administration in Patna came out with a brief statement asserting that "no injury marks" were found on his body. The statement claimed Singh was found "in an unconscious state on the roadside in Chhajju Bagh locality" from where he was taken to PMCH, the state's largest government hospital.

"He was admitted to the ICU but died during treatment," the PMCH superintendent said.

The cause of the death could not be ascertained till post-mortem examination is conducted, another PMCH official said.

Scores of BJP workers, including senior lead-



ers like former deputy chief ministers Sushil Kumar Modi and Renu Devi, were rounded up by the police and taken to a police station after they tried to cross the barricades put up at the Dak Bungalow Crossing in the state capital.

The "Vidhan Sabha march", which was organised in support of agitations against the state government's teacher recruitment policy, commenced from the Gandhi Maidan and was stopped a couple of kilometres away from the assembly premises.

Besides batons, the police used water cannons and also took recourse to bursting tear gas shells to disperse the BJP workers who tried to breach the barricades. Maharajanaj Lok Sabha MP Jnanardan Singh Sigrivai, in his 60s, showed a wound on his head to journalists.

BJP president JP Nadda claimed in a tweet that the lathi charge on BJP workers is the result of the failure and indignation of the state government. "The Mahagathbandhan government is attacking democracy to save the citadel of corruption. To save the person who has been charge-sheeted, the chief minister of Bihar has even forgotten his morality," he said.

A successful Chandrayaan-3 mission would place India among top players in space science: Narayanan

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, July 13 (PTI): Ahead of India's ambitious space programme Chandrayaan-3, former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan on Thursday said its successful landing will make India only the fourth nation to achieve this and it would increase the potential for space science development in the country.

Talking to PTI here, he said this will also help India boost its share in the global space business. Currently India's share in the 600 billion-dollar industry is an abysmal 2 per cent.

The former ISRO scientist said that as India is now inviting private participation in technology development, it would also increase the scope for more startups to enter the area. "It means a lot for many players to start their work. For example, I would imagine that many startups will come, and even the startups that we have will have better funding. Many foreign countries may also land here with their startups or add to an existing startup," Narayanan said.

He said a successful Chandrayaan-3 mission would be a big boost for space science and technology as well as the na-



tion's economy. Chandrayaan-2 managed to land on the Moon but failed to do a soft landing due to some software and mechanical issues. Now they have worked on every aspect of it for four years and are hopeful to do a soft landing, the former scientist said.

Narayanan said that indigenously developed technology is essential for a country to survive, and added that ISRO

has been known to use minimum amounts for their ambitious space missions. "When compared to other nations, our spending for such missions is a pittance," he said.

Narayanan said we will have to wait till August 23 or 24 to know the success of the mission as the landing would take place on those dates. He also pressed on the need for establishing something like an Asian Space Agency (ASA) along the lines of the European Space Agency (ESA), with or without China, for taking up such bigger space missions. The whole of Asia would be happy to partner with India, which already has established a space science infrastructure, he said.

The 25.30 hour countdown for the launch of Chandrayaan-3 commenced on Thursday at Sriharikota, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said. Friday's lunar expedition follows the 2019 Chandrayaan-2 mission where space scientists are aiming for a soft landing on the surface of the moon. A successful mission would see India enter an elite club of nations achieving such a feat, the others being the United States, China and the former Soviet Union.

G20 countries should join hands to meet challenges from 'dynamite to metaverse', 'hawala to crypto currency': Shah

GURUGRAM, July 13 (PTI): Warning the global community about security challenges which have evolved from "dynamite to metaverse" and "hawala to crypto currency", union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday asked G20 member countries to rise above conventional boundaries and share information on real time to check all crimes in the cyber space.

Speaking at the "G20 Conference on Crime and Security in the Age of NFTs, AI & Metaverse", he underlined the threats emanating from cyber criminals using darknet, metaverse, deepfakes, ransomware and toolkit-based misinformation campaigns and strategic targeting of critical information and financial systems.

Without taking names, Shah said some anti-social elements and

global forces are using technology to cause economic and social harm to citizens and governments. "The G20 has so far focused on digital transformation and data flow from an economic perspective, but now it is important to understand the aspects of crime and security, and find a solution," he said.

Shah said such activities are a national concern as they directly impact national security, law and order, and the economy. If such crimes and criminals have to be stopped, we have to think and act by rising above the conventional geographic boundaries, he noted.

"Although technology is a positive development in bringing human beings, communities, and countries closer, there are also some anti-social elements and global forces that are using tech-



nology to cause economic and social harm to citizens and governments," he added.

The home minister suggested a

slew of measures to act against cyber criminals operating across borders like bringing uniformity in laws of all countries, developing a

response mechanism under different laws of the countries, harmonising bench marks, best practices and regulations, and greater coordination among cyber agencies of all countries.

"An integrated and stable approach to cyber security policies will facilitate interoperability, increase trust in information sharing, and reduce the agency protocol and resources gaps. The need of the hour is to share 'real-time cyber threat intelligence' among member countries with active support from industry and academia to secure the nation's critical infrastructure," he said.

Cooperation in the investigation of cross-border cyber crimes through joint efforts to build a "peaceful, secure, deterrent and open" information and communi-

cation technology environment is extremely necessary today, the Home Minister said.

Shah said our internet vision should neither be one of excessive freedom threatening the very existence of our nations nor one of the isolationist structures such as digital firewalls. "Many countries have become victims of cyber attacks and this threat is hovering over all the major economies of the world. According to World Bank estimates, cyber attacks could have caused losses of around USD 5.2 trillion to the world during 2019-2023. The use of crypto currency by malicious threat actors further complicates its detection and prevention," he said.

The home minister also suggested that in line with the United Nations Convention on the Crimi-

nal Use of Information and Communication Technology, speedy preservation, investigation and coordination of evidences is essential. He said Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) must be strengthened to deal with emerging technologies. "There should be a 24x7 cyber security mechanism in place for an effective 'predictive - preventive - protective and recovery' action. Time has come to build a "Transparent and Accountable AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Emerging Technologies Governance Framework" to ensure responsible use," he said.

Shah said given the rise in cyber crime involving digital currency, there is a need for a "dedicated common channel" among the nations to prevent such financial irregularities.

TMC sweeps Bengal rural polls, consolidates rural hinterland ahead of 2024

Saddened at the loss of lives in sporadic incidents of violence during panchayat elections: Mamata

KOLKATA, July 13 (PTI): The ruling Trinamool Congress on Wednesday steamrolled to a massive victory in West Bengal's violence-scarred rural polls, bagging all zila parishads and leaving its rivals trailing way behind in results declared by the State Election Commission. The TMC won all 20 Zila Parishads in the three-tier panchayat system, winning a straight 880 seats, while its nearest rival BJP won 31 seats out of 928 seats. The Congress-Left front alliance won 15 seats while others won 2 remaining seats.

The TMC has won over 35,000 gram panchayat seats, out of the 63,219 gram panchayat seats.

However though the counting was over exact figures were not known as compilation and dissemination process was not complete said officials.

The ruling party's nearest rival BJP has won nearly 10,000 seats. While the Left-Congress alliance won over approximately 6,000 seats. It was TMC's aim discussed in party inner circles that the party win bigtime in the rural polls but without resorting to violence, in a manner which would help it consolidate its rural base ahead of the 2024 parliamentary elections, while assuring its urban voters alarmed by tales of corruption that it remained a strong yet 'bhadralok' (well behaved) party.

In the 2019 general elections, the TMC had suddenly seen its Lok Sabha seats come down by 12 to just 22, while BJP gained hugely and managed to win 18 LS seats, the equivalent of 164 assembly segments. This was worrying for the regional party with national



ambitions. The 2021 state assembly elections fought on the slogan of 'Bangalana' against the "invading forces of the BJP" reversed the trend and TMC was able to restrict the saffron camp to just 77 assembly seats, winning a massive mandate of 215 seats in a house of 294. TMC concentrated on the districts the BJP had done well in the past - North Bengal's Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar, western Bengal's Jhargram, Purulia, East and West Medinipur where BJP leader Suwendu Adhikary calls the shots as well as pockets in southern Bengal.

The result was TMC now controls most gram panchayats in these districts as well as 20 zila parishads. Two districts - Darjeeling and Kalimpong - do not have zila parishads, but their two tier panchayat system is now controlled by a new Gorkha party-Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha - which is not at odds with the TMC. This happened despite

the BJP increasing its gram panchayat tally from 20 per cent of contested seats in 2018 to 27-28 per cent this time round.

However, in strategically taking on the BJP, the TMC's battle against the Left-Congress combine though fierce in districts like Murshidabad and Malda, has been muted elsewhere, allowing the duo especially the Left to consolidate and clawback from its 2021 position where it won less than 5 per cent of the popular vote and no assembly seats. In all the UPA allies managed to double their gram panchayat seats compared to 2018.

The districts where the BJP thought it was entrenched, that is it was the dominant political party - Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Jhargram, Bankura, Purulia, much of East and West Medinipur, pockets in Nadia, Hooghly, North and South 24 Parganas - it failed to win the majority of the gram panchayats and consequently it did not win the top tier zila parishads.

Counting of votes for the three-tier panchayat polls which began at 8 am on Tuesday at 339 venues spread across 22 districts is over "though it will take some more time to upload the results on the SEC website," an official said.

However, in this high stakes battle all parties indulged in and were victims of violence unleashed by their supporters for the most part without the sanction of their respective party high command, mainly out of local power play compulsions. Violence which began with announcement of elections resurfaced on counting day. In Bhangore in South 24 Parganas, three persons including two activists of the Indian Secular Front (ISF) were killed and several others injured in a clash which took place outside a counting booth late Tuesday night, police said on Wednesday. A 24-year-old Congress worker died on Wednesday while several others were injured after a clash between TMC and Congress supporters in Rampur village in Malda district, police said.

Similarly, a TMC worker from South 24 Parganas district's Chandpasha village was hacked to death by rivals. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday came out after several days of recuperation after an injury sustained while campaigning and said she is saddened by the loss of lives during the rural polls.

"I am saddened at the loss of lives in sporadic incidents of violence during panchayat elections... The polls were held in 71,000 booths, but incidents of violence took place in not more than 60 booths," she said.

CUET-UG results to be announced by July 17, says UGC chief

NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): The results for the CUET-UG will be announced by July 17, UGC Chairman Jagadesh Kumar said on Thursday.

Earlier, the results were expected to be announced by July 15. The undergraduate admission process at over 200 universities across the country will begin post the declaration of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG results.

"The CUET-UG results will be announced latest by July 17. When we announce the results, it should be error free. And look at the complexity of administering the CUET-UG - 841 question papers were used, 214 in different languages, 534 in English and Hindi and 93 in 11 regional languages as the medium. The total number of questions in these papers was 1.48 lakh," Kumar said.

He added, "Candidates were allowed to challenge the keys from June 29 to July 1. About 25,782 answer key challenges were received, of which 3,886 were unique. Processing all this data and finalisation of the results takes time. Once this is over, the result committee will examine the data and give the go-ahead for the result announcement."

Ensure people's needs are met, make govt services available to public, TN CM tells officials

CHENNAI, July 13 (PTI): Emphasising the need to take the government welfare schemes to people at their doorsteps, Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin on Thursday directed the officials to ensure the people's requirements are met promptly and also make the government services available to them.

The volume of petitions received by both the revenue and police departments indicated that the expectations and needs from the public are high with regard to the services of these departments concerned, he said. "Though this government is implementing numerous welfare schemes and several major initiatives with a long-term vision, it is important to fulfill the people's requirements and demands. It is the responsibility of each and every department to make sure the government's services reach the people in a time frame," he said reviewing the status of petitions received from the members of the public, at the secretariat here.

He said people are petitioning the Mudalvarin Mugavari Department, as the department officials or those at state or district levels have not redressed the grievances of the petitioners who sought their help or communicated their response.

The Mudalvarin Mugavari Department (IIPGMS CM Helpline) is an inclusive, integrated and convenient public grievance redressal platform to file and track one's grievances related to government services, schemes and civil issues. Shilpa Prabhakar Satheesh is the Special Officer of the department.

"As a result, the affected people are not reaping the full benefits of the grievance redressal mechanism. Hence, as far as possible, flex the technology to reply to the petitioners and reach out to them," the chief minister said.

The officials should provide an appropriate facility in the e-service for further appeal and take prompt action to provide a proper solution. "Only when the petitions are respected and resolved, our duties shall be deemed to have been duly performed. In the case of the police, the petitions on financial fraud, family disputes, tenant problems, and land disputes should be scrutinised well and proper investigation carried out," Stalin said.



Expressing satisfaction that about 2.94 lakh petitions out of 3.42 lakh petitions received by him from the members of the public during his tour of the districts from January to this June-end have been resolved, the CM said nearly 86 per cent of the petitions have been resolved but a solution should be found to all the grievances. He urged the officials to popularise the toll-free CM grievance cell no. 1100 to help the people to benefit. The chief minister himself interacted with a couple of petitioners to ascertain if the officials have really resolved the problems. Among them were a petitioner from Thanjavur district whose child was sanctioned Rs 22 lakh for liver transplant on June 19, and a student from Thovalai, Kanyakumari district, who was awarded education assistance of ₹ 50,000 for pursuing the degree.

The chief minister also interacted with district officials and urged them to perform more. He lauded the performance of Pennagaram tahsildar H Shaikat Ali and Alangulam Deputy Superintendent of Police J Jayapal for expeditiously settling the grievances.

Revenue minister K K S R Ramachandran, chief secretary Shivdas Meena, additional chief secretary \ revenue commissioner S K Prabhakar, additional chief secretary, revenue, Kumar Jayant, director general of police Shankar Jiwaj, commissioner of land administration S Nagarajan, and other officials participated.

MoD, FSSAI sign MoU to promote use of millets, healthy eating practices among armed forces personnel

NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): The defence ministry and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have joined hands to promote use of millets and healthy eating practices among armed forces personnel, officials said on Thursday. An MoU was signed in the presence of defence minister Rajnath Singh and union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya here.

The two Union ministers also unveiled a book "Healthy Recipes for Defence" to promote consumption of 'Shree Anna' (millets) and its health benefits, the defence

wing of the PIB said in a statement. The MoU aims to promote use of millets and healthy eating practices among the armed forces personnel, and ensure availability of safe and nutritious food to them.

The MoU was signed by director general (Supplies and Transport) Lt Gen Preet Mohindera Singh on behalf of the ministry of defence and CEO, FSSAI, G Kamala Vardhana Rao.

It aims to create awareness about the nutritional benefits of diet diversity and millet-based food products among the personnel. The MoU will also pave the

way for the introduction of millet-based menus in mess, canteens and other food outlets under the defence ministry, the statement said.

This collaboration will also ensure training of food handlers and chefs of mess, canteens of the armed forces and other food outlets on food safety and hygiene as per the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, it added.

The MoU will also encourage the families of the armed forces and the community at large to adopt nutritious diets, make healthy food choices and maintain food safety, the statement said.

Contd. from Page 1...

1 lakh more houses to come up

Ranjeet Kumar Dass, speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly Biswajit Daimary, Members of Parliament Queen Ojha, chief secretary Paban Kumar Borthakur and a host of other prominent dignitaries.

Assam govt supports UCC

they will punish the Congress', Sarma claimed. Regarding opposition by AIUDF's Badruddin Ajmal, Sarma asserted that he is the voice of Muslim men and not women. "We are always interacting with Muslim women and they say that they have a problem as they cannot speak out openly. They also tell us that Allah will always bless Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the BJP leader said. The UCC refers to a common set of laws on marriage, divorce and inheritance that would be applicable to all Indian citizens irrespective of religion, tribe or other local customs. The Law Commission had on June 14 initiated a fresh consultation process on UCC by seeking views from stakeholders, including public and recognised religious organisations, on the politically sensitive issue. Implementation of the UCC has been part of the BJP's election manifesto.

Question of going back

as it is not practical and not realistic. On the demand for winter capital, Sangma said it is a long pending demand and these are all related to economic development.

"I have maintained from day one that every demand that comes in these aspects are related to economics and certain communities in the society do feel that by getting a winter capital, the development aspect will come in. So it is one of the ways that development is expected to come to a certain part or region," he said.

Stating that the government is ensuring that development is spread across the state, the chief minister said for the first time, mini secretariats will be set up in different regions of the state which include Tura, Jowai, Pynursla. "These mini secretariats when they come up act as a unified and consolidated kind of integrated administrative complex which is like a mini secretariat and different departments will function from there," he said while adding, "Hence, these kinds of big administrative reforms and administrative infrastructures are coming up and as we move along based on the development that is there examination of different aspects can be looked into but this is a process and it takes time and we are working towards it but we will see a lot of economic activities taking place in the different regions of the state."

Peren to act strict against

the law. Their trade license may also be revoked, he added. The DC emphasised the importance of complying with these regulations to safeguard the well-being of the younger population. He instructed all tobacco-selling establishments to prominently display a legible notice stating the prohibition of selling tobacco products to individuals under the age of 18. This requirement aims to raise awareness and ensure compliance with the legal restrictions in place, he said. The district administration, through this initiative, aims to curb the rising trend of substance abuse among minors and protect their health and future. It will also serve as a reminder to all stakeholders to fulfill their responsibilities in upholding the law and prioritising the well-being of the youth.

Meanwhile, in response to the escalating cases of drug and intoxicating liquor abuse in Jalukie sub-division under the district, Jalukie additional deputy commissioner TL Kiusumong Tikhir organised a consultation meeting at his Office in Jalukie town on Thursday. The meeting aimed to engage civil society leaders and stakeholders in finding effective measures to tackle this menace.

DC Kumar also attended the meeting to lend support and guidance. Addressing the attendees, the DC pointed out that the rising cases of drug abuse are primarily affecting school children in the fifth and sixth grades. He urged the stakeholders to focus their time and efforts on individuals within the society, taking a public health approach to address the issue. He also exhorted the parents and community leaders to actively engage with children, providing guidance and supervision to fulfill their responsibility in curbing drug abuse.

India to host ASEAN Countries

high quality research on Ayush systems in various Non Communicable disease conditions like Diabetes Mellitus, Cancer, Mental Health as well as infectious diseases like Covid. The ASEAN conference will provide a platform to share the research outcomes of various projects implemented by the ministry of ayush. Similarly, ASEAN countries will also share their experiences." Further highlighting the goals of the conference, the Union Minister added, "The Conference will also provide a platform to share the recent developments in regulatory framework in ASEAN member states for promoting Traditional Medicine."

The ministry of ayush has already established robust International Co-operation in Ayush to boost export of Ayush Products and services and has also successfully signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on 'Cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicines', 'Setting up of Ayush Chairs in Foreign Universities/Institutes and for undertaking 'Collaborative Research' at various levels. This has resulted in Ayush gaining a strong recognition in not only ASEAN but other countries also.

A total of 75 participants - International delegates from 8 ASEAN countries and 2 International delegates through virtual mode will brainstorm and share their ideas on Traditional Medicines during this one day conference which will be held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.

U'khand Cong leaders meet Kharge, Rahul; 2024 LS polls on agenda



NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): The Congress on Thursday said it will establish a dialogue with the people in Uttarakhand through a padayatra as its leaders from the state met party president Mallikarjun Kharge and former chief Rahul Gandhi here to chalk out a plan for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

A similar meeting was held with members of the Maharashtra Congress unit earlier this week. More such meetings with other state units will follow.

The Uttarakhand Congress leaders, who participated in the meeting, included former chief minister Harish Rawat, PCC president Karan Mahara and AICC in-charge for the state Devender Yadav.

Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal and all party secretaries for the hill state were also present at the meeting. In a message to the state unit, Kharge said the Congress is committed to environment-friendly development of Himalayan states. He said the party has pledged to work for flood victims, adding that the Congress will keep raising the voice of the people of the state.

"Devbhoomi Uttarakhand is facing new challenges

today. Our leaders and workers in the state are playing the role of a strong opposition, exposing the anti-people policies of the BJP government. Our endeavour is that all people live together in Uttarakhand, and take the state towards progress. The Congress is continuously raising the voice of the weaker section of society," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

At present, our duty is to help the public in the crisis due to floods and landslides in Uttarakhand and to get help from the government system, he said.

"We are in favour of formulating a concrete policy on Himalayan states on climate change and its side effects, and believe that any development work should be done only with the consent of the local people," the Congress president added. Gandhi, in a Facebook post, said, "The Congress party will establish a dialogue with the people in Uttarakhand through a padayatra and will raise voice against injustice like Agneepath scheme for youth of Uttarakhand and against the crimes against women in the state."

There are five Lok Sabha seats in Uttarakhand and the Congress did not win any in the 2019 parliamentary elections. Yadav later told reporters that during the meeting, all the leaders expressed themselves frankly and discussed the shortcomings and how to move forward. "We have received good guidance from our leadership and we hope that today's meeting will help the party emerge strong to make 2024 a successful year. "We will chalk out a programme to implement the suggestions received," he said.

Mahara said Kharge and Gandhi "guided us on what to do for 2024. We will carry out a padayatra and highlight the loss of dreams of youth due to Agniveer scheme who want to join armed forces. Rahul Gandhi himself will participate in it for a few days and Priyanka Gandhi and other leaders will also participate in this yatra".

The hill state has been battered by recent heavy rains that triggered landslides and flash floods All 256 tourists stranded at Himachal's Chandertal evacuated

SHIMLA, July 13 (PTI): Rescue workers on Thursday evacuated all 256 tourists stranded at Chandertal in Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul and Spiti for five days after snowfall blocked the road leading to the spot, officials said. Authorities claim to have shifted 60,000 tourists in the state to safer areas over the past four days. But 10,000 tourists stuck at different places in Kasol, Kheerganga and adjoining areas are refusing to trek to safety as they do not want to leave their cars behind, the officials said.

The hill state has been battered by recent heavy rains that triggered landslides and flash floods, blocking roads and damaging properties.

Expert drivers were arranged to drive the tourist vehicles in the snowbound area. Food and medical supplies are provided to the tourists at Losar before taking them to Kaza and the superintendent of police is supervising the rescue operation, Lahaul and Spiti Deputy Commissioner Rahul Kumar told PTI.

The distance between Chandertal and Losar is about 32 km. Chandertal Lake in Spiti valley is a much sought after tourist destination where visitors stay in camps. The site has been used for shooting of several movies. Termining the evacuation from Chandertal a "challenging task", chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who did an aerial sur-



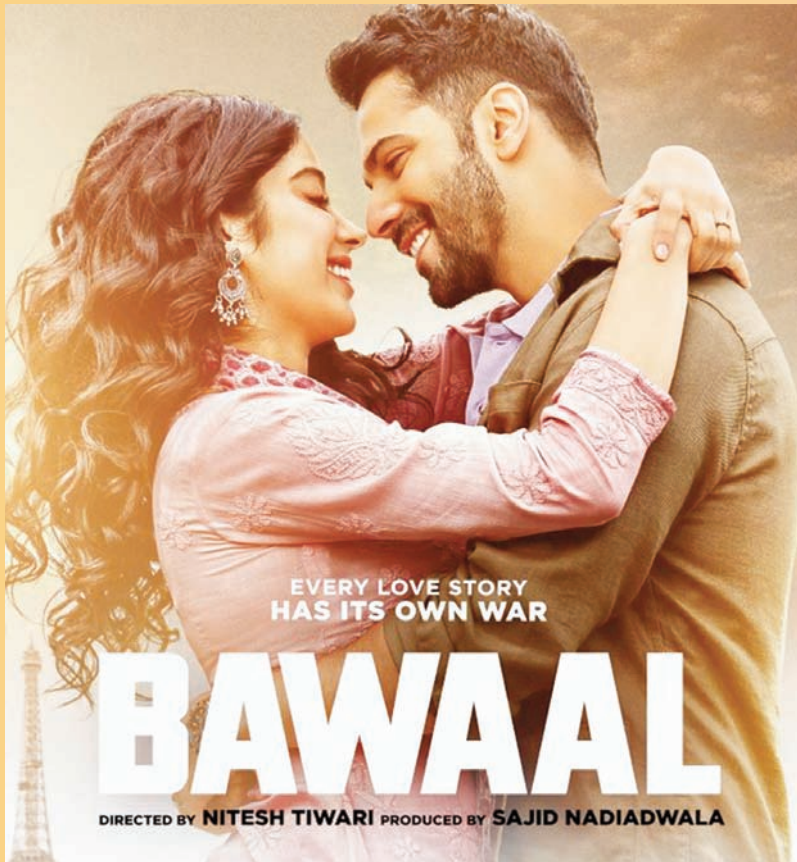
vey of Losar, Chandertal, Sirru and Manali on Wednesday, had tasked revenue minister Jagat Singh Negi to assist the rescue efforts in Chandertal. Negi hails from the tribal Kinnaur district and is acquainted with the harsh topography.

The evacuation started after the revenue minister reached Chandertal early this morning. More than 250 people, mostly tourists, were stranded in Chandertal, while seven sick people, including two elderly and a girl, were airlifted to Bhunter on Tuesday. Due to a heavy landslide near Dunkhara on Kasol-Bhunter road, the vehicles could not be moved and the tourists climbed the slide for evacuation, the officials said. Sukhu on Thursday said the police will pro-

vide the tourists with a slip (receipt) and they can take their vehicles when roads are clear. The CM visited the flood-hit Thunag sub-division in Mandi and announced to provide ₹ 1 lakh each to the affected families and to provide land for the construction of the house which was swept away. He also directed to channelise the Thunag rivulet so as to avoid flooding.

Some videos of tourists, including foreigners, have gone viral, thanking locals and the state government for their evacuation. With recovery of three more bodies, the death toll following recent heavy rains in the state has reached 42. The total death toll due to rain-related incidents and road accidents has risen to 91 so far

IT'S JUST ABOUT GETTING SIMPLE THINGS CORRECT: VARUN DHAWAN ON 'BAWAAL', DIRECTOR NITESH TIWARI



NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): Bollywood star Varun Dhawan says collaborating with filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari on their upcoming project "Bawaal" helped him get back to the basics of his craft that led him to acting in the first place. Dhawan said while trying to "come across a certain way" on screen, actors often forget simple things and "Bawaal" helped him refocus on them. "When you're in a field for a very long time, you often overlook the simple things... Things that got you to the party in the first place. It's just about getting these simple things correct," the actor told PTI in a group interview at an event in Dubai where the team launched the film's trailer.

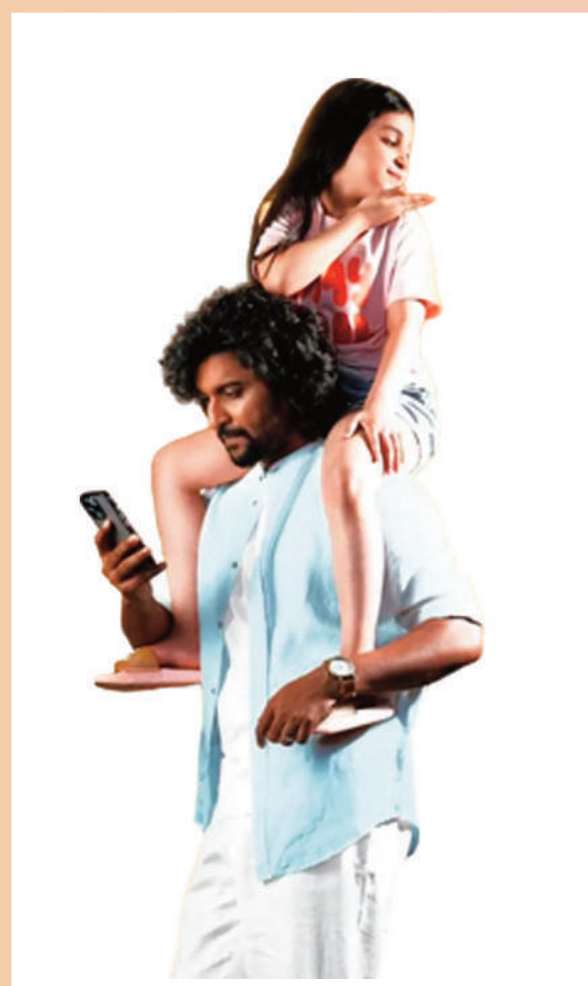
The filming on "Bawaal" started last year in April and during the course of the shooting, Dhawan said Tiwari made him realise his habit of tilting his head like Amitabh Bachchan. "I remember very well, something would happen to me. I don't know why but subconsciously, when shooting a scene, I would become like this (tilts his head). So Nitesh sir would keep telling me 'Brother aapka gardan jhuk raha hai... aap Bachchan ki tarah kyun...?' I also don't know why and what habit that I've formed, that I'm angling myself while talking or wanting to come across a certain way. That was something I had to work on," he said.

Cinema is a visual medium, and it is important for an actor to connect with the audience, said Dhawan, 36. "So these are things which I

had to work on in terms of my craft... It's like going back and standing in front of a mirror and then trying to say the line straight, again and again." "Bawaal" follows an ordinary but popular high school history teacher Ajay Dixit (Dhawan), fondly called Aju bhैया, who enjoys a mini celebrityhood in his hometown. The film features Janhvi Kapoor as Ajay's wife Nisha. Kapoor said while she always knew working on the film would be a special journey, she never imagined it to be so "simple and joyful". "It's an emotionally layered film and Nitesh sir is such a big director... I assumed that there would be some different directions... It will be complicated. I'd already have to step up, but the simplicity, clarity and the purity of the story made everything easy. 'Bawaal' taught me a lot about how good things don't necessarily have to be complicated," the 26-year-old actor said. Set to premiere on Prime Video on July 21, the film focuses on "a series of events which take place on Ajay and Nisha's trip to the World War II trail in Europe and test their marriage, forcing Ajay to confront the biggest war of them all – the war within", according to the official synopsis.

At the trailer launch of the movie in Dubai over the weekend, Tiwari's wife, writer-filmmaker Ashwini Iyer Tiwari, said the film was also an ode to her father-in-law, who was a history teacher and wanted to visit places affected by World War II.

NANI, MRUNAL THAKUR'S TELUGU MOVIE TITLED 'HI NANNA'



HYDERABAD, July 13 (PTI): Actors Nani and Mrunal Thakur's upcoming Telugu movie has been titled "Hi Nanna", the makers announced on Thursday. Production banner Vyra Entertainments shared the news on its social media handles and also unveiled a teaser of the movie. "Here we go... Unveiling the magical world of #HiNanna to all of you," the studio wrote on Instagram. Nani and Thakur also shared the film's title and an official poster on their social media pages.

"Hi #Nani30 is #HiNanna. She calls me that.. Not the little one," Nani tweeted.

Thakur posted on Instagram, "The wait is over! Here's a peek into our cute little world of #HiNanna. Can't wait for you all to witness this heartwarming story unfold on the big screen."

The family drama is directed by Shouryuv and produced by Mohan Cherukuri (CVM) and Dr Vijender Reddy Teegala. Hesham Abdul Wahab is the music director. "Hi Nanna" will be released in theatres on December 21, 2023.

Anupam Kher's next film, billed as 'India's biggest multi language fantasy'

MUMBAI, July 13 (PTI): Veteran actor Anupam Kher on Wednesday said his 525th film is titled "The Signature". The title announcement comes days after Kher asked fans on social media to select one of the following titles – "The Last Signature", "Sarthak", "Nirnay", and "Dastakhat" – for his upcoming feature.

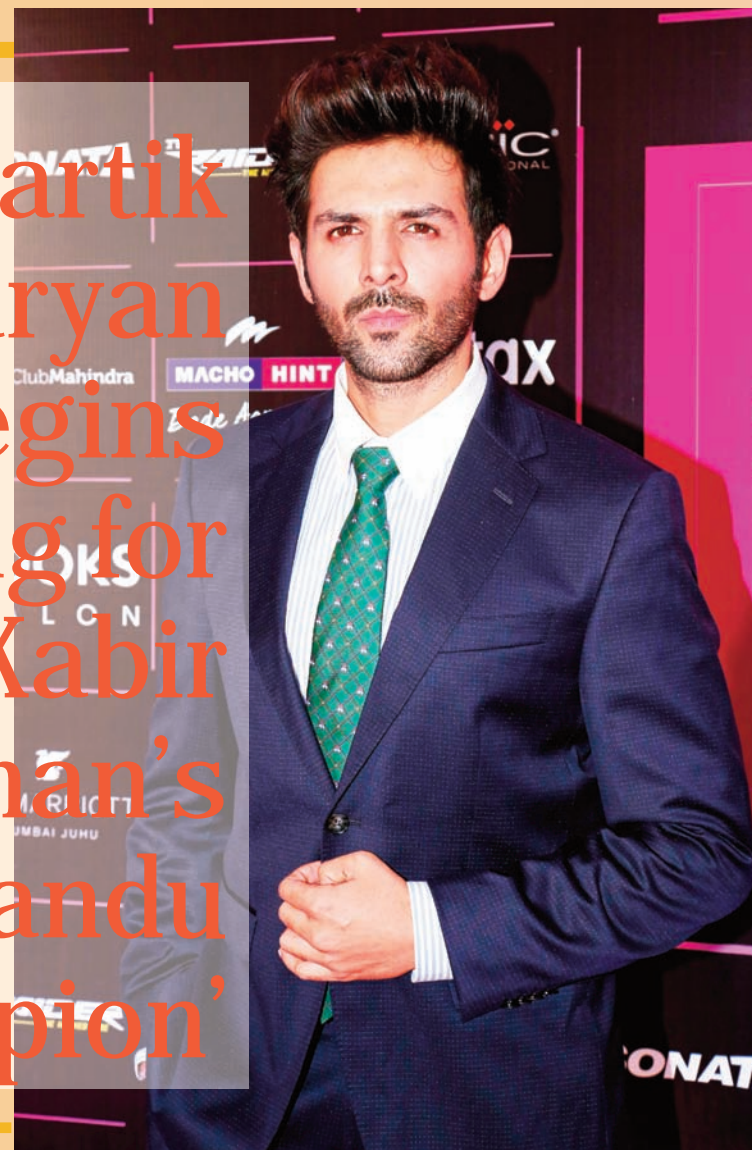


In a Twitter post, the 67-year-old actor thanked his fans for their interest and said the team had zeroed down on "The Signature" for the title of the movie. "THE SIGNATURE! Yes!! The name of my 525th movie is finalised. We got your more than 100,000 responses! The movie is directed by brilliant #GajendraAhire & produced by legendary #KCBokadia ji. Thank you for helping us decide the title of our film!! Jai

Ho! #TheSignature," he wrote.

Billed as a beautiful story of a common man, "The Signature" is directed by Gajendra Ahire, best known for Marathi films such as "Not Only Mrs Raut" and "The Silence". The film is backed by noted producer K.C. Bokadia. Kher has commenced shooting for "The Signature" on June 5, was last seen in "The Kashmir Files"

Kartik Aaryan begins filming for Kabir Khan's 'Chandu Champion'



MUMBAI, July 13 (PTI): Actor Kartik Aaryan has started shooting for his upcoming movie with filmmaker Kabir Khan. Titled "Chandu Champion", the film is backed by producer Sajid Nadiadwala's banner Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment (NGE). Aaryan took to Instagram on Wednesday evening and shared the news along

with a photo with the "83" director. "Shubhaarambh. And the most challenging and exciting journey of my career begins... with the captain @kabirkhankk #ChanduChampion," the 32-year-old actor wrote in the caption. The film will be jointly produced by Nadiadwala and Khan, known for critically-acclaimed films like "Bajrangi Bhaijaan" and

2021's cricket-drama "83".

According to the makers, the film is based on the extraordinary real-life story of a sportsman and his spirit of never giving up. Aaryan's latest theatrical release is "Satyaprem Ki Katha", co-starring Kiara Advani. The film, which released last month, has raised over Rs 100 crore at the global box office.

Now have more face to show: SRK on his bald look in 'Jawan', unveils new poster of movie

MUMBAI, July 13 (PTI): Superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Thursday released a new poster of "Jawan" that shows him in a bald avatar and during a Q&A session on Twitter, the actor said he loved his new look.

Shah Rukh answered fan queries related to the Atlee directorial as part of an #AskSRK session, days after the makers released a short clip, dubbed as 'prevue' by them, of the much-awaited movie.

When one of the fans asked why he didn't share a poster of his second release of 2023, Shah Rukh promised that he will do so as soon as the online interaction ends.

And, the "Pathaan" star kept his word. "As promised sending out the poster for the film and of course lots and lots of love. See u all in the cinemas," he captioned the poster

of "Jawan", in which he can be seen in a bald look with shades, brandishing a gun.

Intrigued fans tweeted about the actor's various avatars as shown in the 'prevue': his face almost covered with bandages, one in clean shave, his face half-covered with a grey mask and a bald look in others.

After an admirer praised his bald look, Shah Rukh said he liked it too. "... now have more face to show na?!! Ha ha," he quipped.

When a fan asked what is the secret to his sexy looks in "Jawan" at the age of 57, the actor said: "Sexy is what sexy does not how one looks. Just do good that's all."

In response to a puzzled fan who asked if it was really him behind all the bandages, Shah Rukh quipped, "Ya toh main hoon ya phir meri mummy hongiiii!" (Either it's me

or my mummy).

According to the 'prevue', Shah Rukh's character in the film is aided by an army of women in his mission and the actor said his wife "loves the fact that it shows a lot of women power".

SRK also shared that his youngest child AbRam loved the title music, especially the whistle, composed by Anirudh Ravichander.

He was all praise for director Atlee, known for films such as "Theri", "Bigil", and "Mersal".

"Atlee is just too cool. Hard working and with a one point agenda to make me look good in the film. He is superb. I wish him and Priya and Meer the best in life," he added.

Shah Rukh also revealed that he watched Atlee's earlier directorials and several actors from South cin-

ema to prepare for the role.

"I watched a lot of films of Atlee. Vijay sir. Allu Arjun ji. Rajni sir. Yash and loads of other stars to understand the language of expression for the world that was being created. And yes then prepped for my own character too," said the actor.

Fans have loved a particular scene from the first glimpse of the movie which shows the star dancing to the classic Hemant Kumar song "Begaraar Karke Humein" from 1962 movie "Bees Saal Baad" in a Metro train coach.

SRK said the sequence was Atlee's idea and he loved it. "I also love it with the dance and all. Too much magic in the idea I think," he added.

The actor also revealed that the first song of the movie will be released soon.



India can be among top five nations in table tennis, feels G Sathiyian

PUNE, July 13 (PTI): Star player G Sathiyian feels India has the potential to be among the top five table tennis nations and the rapid growth of the game can be fuelled further with an elusive medal at the Summer Olympics next year.

Sathiyian said India's young players have the potential to do even better than he and his contemporaries have managed to achieve.

"In the team rankings, right now we are closing in on the top 10, but the way we are playing as a unit, we can be a top five nation in table tennis," Sathiyian told PTI in an exclusive in-

terview on the sidelines of the Ultimate Table Tennis here.

"I see a lot of players who can break into the top 50, we have to have more Indians coming into the top 50 and going closer to that Olympic medal. This Paris Olympics will be a great chance to qualify as a team and get closer to that podium," said the world number 85.

Sathiyian, who was a member of the Indian team which won the gold medal in the 2018 and 2022 Commonwealth Games, said mixed doubles will be India's best chance to win a medal next year in the Paris

Olympics. He will partner alongside Manika Batra.

"We work as a team, be it Manika's (Batra) coach or my coach. We share inputs on which (aspect) can be beneficial, even if I am away. I do practice doubles a lot with other partners. Mixed doubles is the best chance for India in the Olympic games.

"We share a lot of data and ideas. There has been significant improvement but there is always the scope to get better," said Sathiyian, who reached a career high ranking of 24 in 2019.

The 30-year-old was particularly

praiseful of the young Indian players, who have also brought about a change in mindset and approach.

"I could see that they (young players) do not stop in their dreams. The young ones are all fired up, they do not have restrictions now, they are not afraid of the Chinese or the Japanese or the Koreans.

"They are not afraid of the top world ranked players. I could see positivity in them, which is a great

sign that even if it is a top ranked player, they just go all out and exhibit their full talent," he said.

Top countries now fear India

He also feels the top table tennis nations now fear Indian players.

"Certainly, when you start winning... We do have some credit there.

When you start beating the top players, the mindset completely changes that you are not looking at them as someone that you can never beat.



Duleep Trophy: Vidwath's four-wicket burst gives South Zone edge



BENGALURU, July 13 (PTI): South Zone pacers were brilliantly bellicose while reducing West Zone to 129 for 7 and help their team regain some of the lost ground on the second day of the Duleep Trophy final here on Thursday.

West still trail South by 84 runs. Earlier, South were bundled out for 213 in their first innings.

Once Prithvi Shaw and Harvik Desai took West to 97 for 1, they were poised for a romp and the conditions too remained a tad sunny.

Shaw was quite a sight during that phase. The 23-year-old blunted the South pacers in his inimitable way, producing a slew of sparkling shots.

Vidwath Kaverappa pitched the ball on his driving arc, a wowing cover drive followed. Vasuki Koushik marginally overpitched a delivery and Shaw produced a straight drive that is now patented to the Mumbai school of batting carried over by Sunil Gavaskar and Sachin Tendulkar.

Vidwath's delivery that was slanted to Shaw's pads so slightly met with a delectable flick, an uncoiling wrist giving it power and direction.

The three shots were enough to revalidate the class this young man possesses.

It was clear that the South bowlers will have to conjure something exceptional to snap the second wicket alliance. Perhaps, the 65-minute rain break that arrived in the second session gave South a chance to take a step back and revisit their strategies.

Their bowlers took to the field with a marked difference in approach post that break.

Vysakh Vijayakumar came from around the wicket and peppered both Shaw and Harvik with short-pitched balls.

West batters looked to have caught unawares and their reply was jittery.

Shaw, a reluctant player of the upper cut by his own admission, was forced to play precisely that shot by Vysakh. But the ball was too close to his body, and there was not enough room for its execution.

The rather half-hearted shot neither had elevation nor the distance and it ended in the hands of Vidwath at third man. He made a delightful 65 off 101 balls with 9 hits to the fence.

Vidwath was a beneficiary of this tactic at the other end as batters tried to score off him. Unlike his partner, Vidwath resorted to bowling fuller lengths.

Suryakumar Yadav seemed to have pre-programmed his mind to play the T20 brand of cricket here. Suryakumar could have got out to Vysakh but Sai Kishore failed to grab an uppish pull of him at mid-wicket.

However, his stay ended very soon. The Mumbaier could not negate a Vidwath delivery that reared from just short of the good length.

Vidwath soon trapped Sarfaraz Khan plumb in front for zero with a full delivery as the batter played all over it.

Once half of the batting unit was dismissed, it was left to Cheteshwar Pujara to hold the West innings together and get as close as to South's total.

But the man who has scripted several escape stories failed to enact one this time. R Samarth held on to Pujara's flick off Vidwath as West's ship sank further.

tion from the WTC final against Australia.

"There is no cricketer or human being in this world that has gone through the highs without the lows. When you have the lows, it gives you two choices, either you sulk or talk about it and then complain about it and go along with it and go down. Or you learn from it. So I'm someone who's constantly learnt from my lows.

"In fact the best thing that'll happen today after this good day that I've had is that I'll have a good meal, have a good conversation, talk to my family and go to bed and then forget about it.

"When you've had a good day, you know you've had a good day but there are areas you can work on and get better for tomorrow. This constant search for excellence has held me in good stead all the time, but it's also been incredibly draining.

"It's not a journey that's been

T20I: INDIA SEALED THE SERIES 2-1 Indian batters flop again as B'desh pull off consolation win

MIRPUR, July 13 (PTI): Indian batters' struggles against spin bowling continued as Bangladesh held their nerve to pull off a four-wicket consolation win in the third and final women's T20 International here on Thursday. India produced another underwhelming batting performance to end up with 102 for nine after opting to bat.

It seemed Bangladesh, who could not chase 96 in the previous game, had taken the self-destructing route again but managed to cross the line in 18.1 overs.

Opener Shamima Sultana (42 off 46) held the innings together for Bangladesh.

India sealed the series 2-1 but their performance left a lot to be desired. The three-match ODI series between the two teams will begin here on July 16.

Batting on spin friendly wickets was the biggest let down as the batters lacked the firepower to put pressure on the slow bowlers. Barring skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, none of the batters could clear the fence in the three games. The performance of rookie off-spinner Minnu Mani was among the few positive stories to have come out for India.

When the new head coach takes charge of the team, he will have plenty of work to do before the side returns to play the T20 World Cup in Bangladesh next year.

Harmanpreet acknowledged after the game there is scope for a lot of improvement in the following ODI series.

"It will be a low-scoring tournament. We won't get to see 300 scored in an inning. Need to rotate strike and go over by over. Lots of areas to improve as a team and let's see how it goes," she said at the post-match

presentation. On the loss to Bangladesh, Harmanpreet added: "Bangladesh looked very aware today, the way they were batting. Lots of learning for us, the way they took the singles. They did not give us a chance.

"This wicket you need to depend on singles and doubles. Due to our batting collapse, we did not get even 6 runs per over. The gamechanger for us was the last five overs where we did not get what we wanted as we felt the pressure."

The India skipper struck a solid 40 off 41 balls before a batting collapse in the death overs saw India lose their last six wickets for 11 runs. Leggie Rabeya Khan was the stand-out bowler for Bangladesh with three wickets for 16 runs in four overs. Off-spinner Sultana Khatun was impressive in the powerplay, removing the star opening duo of Shafali Verma (11) and Smriti Mandhana (1).

The surface has proved to be "tricky" throughout the low-scoring series and considering that, Harmanpreet opted to bat first. Shafali and Mandhana once again failed to provide a good start to leave India at 27 for two in six overs. Mandhana got herself into an awkward position while trying to work one towards the leg side and ended up getting a leading edge with Bangladesh captain and keeper Nigar Sultana doing the rest.

Shafali was caught at long on, failing to clear the fence. Jemimah Rodrigues (28 off 26) and Harmanpreet stitched a 45-run stand to take the innings forward before the former was stumped off leg-spinner Shorna Akter. Unlike the previous game, Jemimah showed positive intent in her innings and made good use of her feet against the spinners.



Bopanna, Ebden storm into Wimbledon semis, face top-seed Koolhof-Skupski

LONDON, July 13 (PTI): Top Indian doubles player Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden continued their dream run to advance into the Wimbledon semi-final with a hard-fought 6-7 (6-3) 7-5 6-2 win over Dutch duo of Tallon Griekspoor and Bart Stevens.

For the 43-year-old, this will be his third appearance in a Wimbledon semi-final and first since 2015.

Overall, Bopanna, a US Open runner-up in 2010, has made four Grand Slam semifinals in the men's doubles.

The sixth seeded Indo-Australian duo will now be up against the top-seeded Dutch-British pair Wesley Koolhof and Neal Skupski for a place in the final.

The unseeded Dutch duo stretched the opening set to the fullest before wrapping it in the tie-breaker in a 45-minute battle.

They went on to break the Bopanna-Ebden in the first game of the second set. But the Indo-Aussie duo broke back Griekspoor-Stevens and further seized the seventh game.

But Griekspoor-Stevens were not ready to give up easily as they made it 5-5 before Bopanna-Ebden duo got a break in the 11th game and retained their serve in the next to take the second set in 40 minutes.

The third set was a cakewalk for as they broke the Dutch pair twice, in the first and fifth games, before wrapping the match in a one-hour 54 minutes battle.

Zafar pitches for Pak players in HIL & revival of Test series between neighbours

NEW DELHI, July 13 (PTI): Indian hockey legend Zafar Iqbal on Thursday pitched for Pakistan players to be allowed to compete in the Hockey India League (HIL), which is being revived after a gap of seven years.

HIL is set to return in a new avatar next year or in early 2025 with Hockey India setting its sights on reviving the franchise-based league. The HIL, which was suspended in 2017 due to financial issues and non-cooperation from team owners, is expected to be held after the Paris Olympics and will feature an event for the women as well for the first time.

Zafar, a member of the 1980 Moscow Olympics gold medal-winning hockey team, said on the sidelines of the unveiling of the glittering Asian Champions Trophy (August 3-12 in Chennai) at

the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium that there was also no harm in reviving the India-Pakistan hockey Test series, which was held on a home-and-away basis till 2006.

HI has requested the International Hockey Federation (FIH) for a window to conduct the HIL next year and is awaiting a response from the world body.

Asked, when a fresh beginning was being made, shouldn't Pakistan players be allowed in HIL, Zafar said, "Yes, I think, in sports, there should not be any politics."

Nine Pakistani players were part of the first edition of HIL in 2013 but had to leave the country before the start of the tournament following protests from a few political organisations. But after that, no Pakistan player was included till the tournament was discontinued in 2017.

Asked if the traditional India-Pakistan hockey Tests should also be revived, he said, "I think so because there is hardly anything (differences among players). This is the political issue.

"How far I am true or not but the fact is that in sports we should not differentiate," said the 67-year-old hockey great, who was also a member of the two silver medal-winning sides at the Asian Games in 1978 Bangkok and 1982 Delhi.

Asked if he was all for Pakistan players to come to India, he said: "Yes, because people of our country also want to see how they are playing and how they compare with our team. Because, after all, Pakistan was a part of India before, no doubt about it."

Zafar also said that Indian hockey players should also play in Pakistan.

Constant search for excellence has been incredibly draining: Ashwin

ROSEAU (DOMINICA), July 13 (PTI): The constant search for excellence has pushed R Ashwin to new heights but by his own admission, it has also been "incredibly draining".

Ashwin, the world's number one Test bowler, put the disappointment of being dropped from the World Test Championship final with a 33rd five-wicket haul in the first Test against the West Indies here on Wednesday.

The 36-year-old also became the third Indian to reach the 700-wicket milestone in international cricket and is only behind Harbhajan Singh (711 wickets) and Anil Kumble (956) in the all-time list.

After the close of play on day one, the wily off-spinner, who also thinks deeply about the game, was asked about his long journey in international cricket and the ups and downs along the way, including the recent exclu-

very easy. For me, the journey has been draining, but I'm very thankful for all the lows because without the lows there are no highs," said Ashwin in the post day media interaction.

Considering the overcast conditions at The Oval last month, India made the tough call of leaving out Ashwin from the playing eleven for an extra pacer. The decision was widely debated before India came up short in their second successive WTC final.

Ashwin was naturally disappointed.

"I've spoken about it. It's very tough as a cricketer when you have a shot at the WTC final and end up sitting out. But what is the difference between me and another person if I also end up sitting in the dressing room.

"When we went to the WTC final, I was mentally prepared to play. I had prepared physically and mentally, planned for the

game, everything. But, I was also prepared to not play the game.

"If I'm not playing, how do I respond? How do I make sure the dressing room is really up and about. Winning the WTC final is the most important thing, it could be a very high point in my career



and I would have played a good role in it. It was just unfortunate, it didn't pan out. The first day just left us too much behind in the shed.

"All I'd like to give to my teammates and Indian cricket as a whole is some understanding and

able to recollect what has happened, and how it has gone through.

"I've got a lot of gratitude and I'm very grateful for the journey and what the game has given to me. I don't know how many more such moments will come to me, but whatever comes my way, I'll try to enjoy it completely."

The COVID-19 pandemic also changed his outlook towards life and the game.

"After Covid when cricket began again, I promised myself that I'll enjoy whatever happens... whether I'm playing, getting dropped or if I'm retiring. Whatever happens, I will enjoy it," he said.

Ashwin, who was introduced into the attack as early as the ninth over, made full use of the bounce on offer at Windsor Park. The West Indies batters offered little resistance and Ashwin was too good for them.

