



6
WORLD

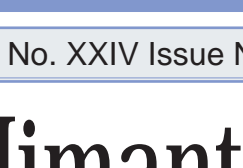


● NATO summit boosted by deal to advance Sweden's bid to join alliance


8
NATION



● Ukrainian minister says he fears Russia has 'no red lines'



● TMC dominates Bengal rural polls by bagging over 3,700 seats



● 'BJP trying to revive NDA as winning in 2024 will not be easy'

# Himanta announces ₹ 100 cr grant for Samannay Kshetra development

## CM visits Chaolung Sukapha Samannay Kshetra

HT Correspondent

**JORHAT, July 11:** Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday announced a ₹ 100 crore aid for the development of Chaolung Siu-Ka-Pha Samannay Kshetra in Jorhat.

Sarma, who was in Jorhat to attend the 9th convocation ceremony of Assam Kaziranga University, made the announcement while addressing a public meeting at the Samannay Kshetra.

The chief minister said that the state government is committed to developing the Samannay Kshetra into an iconic tourist destination.

He said that the Kshetra will be developed as a world-class cultural hub, with state-of-the-art facilities for tourists.

Sarma also announced that the second campus of Assam State



Museum will be set up at the Samannay Kshetra. He said that the museum will showcase the rich cultural heritage of Assam.

The chief minister also announced a ₹ 126 crore project for the revamping and beautification of Rang Ghar at Sivasagar. Rang Ghar is a famous Ahom-era monument.

Sarma also spoke about the efforts of the state and central governments to nominate Charaideo Maidams for UNESCO World Heritage Site list. He said that he is hopeful that Charaideo will be able to get the coveted tag.

Chief minister Sarma also announced that a history book on Bir Lachit Borphukan's Gaurav Katha (life and his valour) will be brought out by a Sahitya Akademi recognised writer. The book will be translated into all Indian languages to propagate the valour of the legendary Ahom General and Ahom kingdom. Sarma said that the book is expected to be released by January-February next year. The chief minister also paid rich tributes to Swargadeo Chaolung Siu-Ka-Pha, the founder of Ahom rule in Assam. (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

## 133 people from Bengal have taken refuge in Assam: Himanta

**GUWAHATI, July 11 (PTT):** Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said over 100 people from West Bengal have taken shelter in the state, fearing for their lives because of the panchayat election violence back home.

Stating that the people have been provided shelter in a relief camp, the chief minister assured them of "any humanitarian aid during times of crisis".

While West Bengal BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari thanked Sarma for "providing relief to the tormented opposition party karyakartas of WB", cabinet minister of the neighbouring state Shashi Panja hinted that the Assam CM was "raising a false alarm and creating a sense of panic".

"Yesterday, 133 individuals who

feared for their lives due to violence in the panchayat election in West Bengal sought refuge in Dhubri district of Assam. We have provided them with shelter in a relief camp, as well as food and medical assistance," Sarma wrote on Twitter. Expressing gratitude to Sarma, Adhikari, who is the leader of opposition of West Bengal,

wrote: "I would like to thank the Hon'ble CM of

Assam Shri @himantabiswa Ji for providing relief to the tormented Opposition Party Karyakartas of WB, especially those from BJP, who time & again are subjected to poll-related violence and being in close proximity to the state of Assam, they find it safe to cross over with their families for their safety." (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

Pijush holds meeting with Ahom organisations

## 'Committee to be formed to verify genuineness of caste certificates'

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, July 11:** Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Pijush Hazarika held a crucial meeting with the representatives of four organisations of the Ahom Community on Tuesday at Janata Bhawan, in connection with the issue of caste certificates to genuine members of the Ahom Community.

During the meeting, the representatives apprised the minister that ensuring the rights of the members of the Ahom community is of utmost importance at this juncture.

Addressing the issue, the minister informed that after thorough deliberations with the representatives, a new Committee to address the matter will be formed soon. And it was also decided during the meeting that the Committee will comprise members selected by the representatives of the Ahom organisations, who will be empowered with the right to verify the genuineness of the person who has applied for the caste certificate.

Sharing the news on social media, minister Hazarika tweeted, "I conducted an important meeting at Janata Bhawan in Guwahati with the leadership of four organisations representing the

search operation.

They were returning to Kathmandu from Surke after enjoying a mountain flight. The flight was conducted from Lukla, the gateway to Mount Everest, Sitaula said.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), all five tourists were Mexican nationals and the pilot was Nepalese Captain Chet Bahadur Gurung.

The Mexican victims have been identified as Sifuentes G. Fernando (95) and Rincon Ismael (98), both males, along with three females - Sifuentes Gonzalez Abrie (72), Gonzalez Olacio Luz (65) and Sifuentes G. Maria Jese (52). Gurung, who managed to survive an earlier accident, had flown helicopters for nearly 7,000 hours in the Nepali skies, local media reports said. Local people and (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

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## SC asks Centre, state to ensure safety of citizens in ethnic violence-hit Manipur

NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTT): The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Centre and the Manipur government to take steps to ensure the safety of citizens and public and private property in the ethnic-violence hit state, making it clear that law and order fell within the executive domain and the court cannot decide where the Army and central forces should be deployed.

The top court, while considering the suggestions made by lawyers representing the parties to the case for mitigating the sufferings of the citizens of strife-torn Manipur, had a word of caution for all when said, "We request all the parties to maintain equilibrium in their speeches and steer clear from any sort of hate speech."

Taking strong objection to some of the suggestions, including those for deployment of Army and central forces in areas where the minority

Kukis have been allegedly attacked, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said the top court has not done so in the nation's history of over 70 years as the Army falls under the civilian control of the executive.

"This can't be the tenor of the suggestions. For instance, you are asking the court to direct the Indian army and paramilitary forces to take particular steps. Frankly speaking, in the history of our nation in the last 70 odd years the Supreme Court has not given any direction to the Indian Army. (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

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## Massive eviction drive at Langkaijan KAAC evicts 247 illegal settlements from inter-district border



**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, July 11:** The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) on Tuesday evicted 247 illegal settlements from Langkaijan in the

inter-district border with Hojai.

The eviction drive was carried out by the Forest and Land & Revenue Departments, KAAC with the help of police personnel.

The CEM of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang said that the eviction drive was carried out after getting the final verdict from the Gauhati High Court. "The eviction drive was carried out after getting the final verdict from the Gauhati High Court," said Ronghang. "There were 1,600 families of encroachers settled in Langkaijan, out of which 1,000 families had filed a PIL case in the Gauhati High Court."

Ronghang said that after getting the final verdict from the High Court, a joint eviction drive was carried out in 2019. "The fresh eviction drive was carried out as there was a new illegal settlement in the area," he said. "15 houses in Ambari were left out of the eviction drive as the inter-district boundary demarcation was not clear." Ronghang said that a joint survey team of the Land & Revenue Departments of KAAC and Hojai (CONTD ON PAGE-9)

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## Heroin worth ₹ 16 crore seized



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 11:** In a significant development, a major drug operation was foiled by law enforcement authorities in Assam.

Acting on intelligence information, the police received a tip-off about a potential drug deal between narcotics dealers based in Garigaon and Baihata. The location of the deal was initially believed to be either Amingon or Palashbari, but it was later changed to Sonapur.

A special operation team, led by Kalyan Kr Pathak, additional superintendent of police (HQ), Kamrup, swiftly mobilised to intercept the transaction. The team identified a suspect traveling in a Honda City and attempted to halt the vehicle at the Sonapur Tollgate. However, the individual attempted to evade capture, leading to the discharge of a warning shot.

The suspect, identified as Mafizul Haque (34), a resident of Mollapara in Garigaon, was successfully apprehended. Upon inspection of the Honda City, law enforcement discovered 145 soap boxes containing packets of heroin weighing a total of 2 kilograms. The estimated value of the seized contraband is ₹ 16 crore.

Applauding the swift move by officials, chief minister Himanta Biswa sarma tweeted, "#AssamAgainstDrugs @assampolice STF and @KamrupPolice jointly seized 145 soap boxes containing total 2 kg Heroin from a drug peddler traveling from a neighbouring state at Sonapur Tollgate. The accused has been apprehended. Excellent work. Keep it up! @DGPAssam-Police." The legal formalities are currently being carried out, and further investigation is underway to identify other individuals involved in the drug network.

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## Realme unveils narzo 60 series 5G

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, July 11:** Realme unveiled its latest offerings on Tuesday, introducing the realme narzo 60 Series 5G and realme Buds Wireless 3. These new additions to the realme product lineup are designed to provide users with an unparalleled experience, further solidifying the brand's legacy of innovation.

The realme narzo 60 Series 5G comprises two remarkable smartphones, namely the realme narzo 60 Pro 5G and the realme narzo 60 5G, accompanied by the cutting-edge realme Buds Wireless 3 for an immersive audio experience. Embracing the "Dare to Leap" spirit, realme continuously strives to redefine its brand by pushing the boundaries of innovation and design. Notably, the realme narzo 60 Pro 5G is the first and only smartphone in its segment to offer a massive 1TB storage capacity, surpassing the evolving needs and expectations of Indian consumers in the mid-premium segment.

Complementing the smartphones, the realme Buds Wireless 3 is the next generation of neckband earphones aimed at re-defining users' audio experience with an emphasis on delivering powerful bass.

These earbuds boast a cutting-edge design and exceptional sound quality, immersing users in an audio experience like never before. With impressive sound performance and innovative design, the realme Buds Wireless 3 exemplifies the brand's commitment to delivering top-tier quality and exceptional value, making them a standout choice in the wireless earphone market.

Manish Rana, marketing strategy lead at realme India, expressed his excitement about the launch, stating, "As realme continues to soar to new heights, we proudly present the realme narzo 60 Series 5G and the revolutionary realme Buds Wireless 3 earbuds, a testament to our 'Dare to Leap' spirit."

With relentless commitment to innovation and design, we have created the first-ever 1TB storage smartphone in the segment. This series represents a significant leap forward in technology, delivering unparalleled performance, groundbreaking features, and an immersive user experience.

By democratising large storage and adhering to our Go Premium strategy, we are excited to launch the narzo 60 Series 5G, designed exclusively for the dynamic and tech-savvy Indian Next-Gen. Paired with the realme Buds Wireless 3 earbuds, which offer crystal-clear sound, ergonomic design, and seamless connectivity, users can experience a new level of luxury and embrace the extraordinary features of this next-gen tech pioneer."

## Lohia Hyundai unveils Exter in Guwahati



HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, July 11:** Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) made a grand entrance with the launch of its sporty Entry SUV, the Hyundai EXTER. The event took place at Lohia Hyundai, Sarajai, and was graced by esteemed guests including

Badrinath C U, regional sales head of Hyundai Motor India Ltd, and special guests RJ Mandy, Kaushik Gogoi, and Dhruva J Kalita.

The much-anticipated Hyundai EXTER has hit the market with a starting price of ₹ 5.99 lakh (ex-showroom), aiming to redefine the

standards in its segment. Meticulously designed to reflect unique exteriors, spacious interiors, advanced safety features including six airbags, cutting-edge technology, and exceptional performance, the Hyundai EXTER perfectly embodies the aspirations of India's Gen MZ customers who crave adventure and exploration.

During the launch event, Unsoo Kim, managing director and CEO of Hyundai Motor India Ltd expressed his delight, stating, "Hyundai Motor India has consistently set new benchmarks in the industry through our revolutionary products and technologies. Once again, with the introduction of the EXTER, we take pride in presenting an SUV that encapsulates Hyundai's commitment to innovative design, intelligent technology, and exceptional performance."

# GST Council meet- 50<sup>th</sup> edition gets underway

### Taxation on online gaming, utility vehicles on agenda

**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** The 50th GST Council meeting started on Tuesday and is likely to deliberate on a host of issues including taxation of online gaming, definition of utility vehicles and tightening of norms for registration and claiming of ITC.

At the beginning of the meeting taking place in the national capital, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman released a short film titled 'GST Council - 50 steps towards a journey'.

In 49 meetings held so far, the council has taken approximately 1,500 decisions in the spirit of co-operative federalism, the office of Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted.

"The 50th meeting is a milestone which indicates success of cooperative federalism and establishment of a good & simple tax regime," the tweet said.

Sitharaman also released a special cover and customised 'myStamp', which was presented to her by the chief post master general, Delhi Circle India Post Office, the finance ministry tweeted.

The GST Council is chaired by the union finance minister and comprises ministers from every state and union territory.

The council is also likely to clarify on GST rates applicable on food and beverages sold in multiplexes, exempt GST on import of cancer drug Dinutuximab, and Food for Special Medical Purposes (FSMP) used in the treatment of rare diseases.

It is also expected to finalise contours for setting up appellate tribunal, and demand of the industry for reimbursement of full Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and 50 per cent Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) in



11 hill states under the 'scheme for budgetary support'.

Also, mandatory physical verification of the business premises of "high risk" applicants before granting of GST registration, as well as reduced time for submitting PAN-linked bank account details to GST authorities is expected to be discussed.

A new rule in GST law under which businesses would be required to explain the reasons for excess input tax credit (ITC) claimed or deposit the amount with the exchequer is slated to be discussed.

The Law Committee, comprising tax officers from centre and states, have opined that where the ITC availed in GSTR-3B return exceeds the amount of ITC available in accordance with the auto-generated statement GSTR-2B by a specified threshold, the registered person may be intimated on the portal about such difference and be directed to either explain the difference or pay the excess ITC along with interest.

The committee has suggested that the provision should kick-in, if the difference is more than 20 per cent and more than ₹ 25 lakh. GST Council is likely to take a

final call on the recommendation of the committee in its 50th meeting.

The report of the panel of eight state finance ministers, convened by Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma, on taxation of online gaming, horse racing and casinos is also slated to be discussed in the meeting.

The GoM (group of ministers) had a broad agreement that a 28 per cent GST should be levied on all the three supplies, but a consensus eluded on taxability of online games with Goa suggesting that an 18 per cent tax should be levied only on platform fees and contribution to prize pool should be tax exempt.

A final view on taxation rate as well as whether tax is to be levied on the Gross gaming revenue (GGR) or fees charged by the platform; or on the full face value of bets put in by players of online gaming, horse racing and casinos would be taken by the GST Council.

A clarity on taxation of Multi Utility Vehicles (MUV) or multipurpose vehicles or Crossover Utility Vehicles (XUVs) for levy of a 22 per cent compensation cess over and above the 28 per cent

GST rate is also expected.

The fitment committee, comprising centre and state tax officers, has recommended that all utility vehicles, by whatever name called, would attract a 22 per cent cess provided they meet three parameters -- length greater than 4-metre, engine capacity greater than 1,500 cc and ground clearance in 'unladen condition' of more than 170 mm.

The fitment committee has also suggested to the GST Council to clarify that food and beverages served in cinema halls be taxed at 5 per cent and not 18 per cent as was being done in some multiplexes.

However, if the sale of cinema ticket and supply of eatables such as popcorn or cold drinks etc. are clubbed and sold together, the entire supply should be treated as composite supply and taxed at the applicable rate of the principal supply, which in this case is cinema ticket.

Currently, movie tickets below ₹ 100 are taxed at 12 per cent, while those above the threshold attract an 18 per cent GST.

Import of cancer medicine Dinutuximab (Qaziba) by individuals for personal use attracts a 12 per cent IGST. The fitment committee said that the medicine, which costs ₹ 36 lakh, should be exempted from GST as patients usually raise money through crowdfunding.

Among other things, the Council is also likely to decide on TCS liability of suppliers engaged in e-commerce trading through the government's Open Network for Digital Commerce.

Also satellite launch services by private players are likely to be exempt from GST.

## South Eastern Coalfields plans ₹ 1,218 crore solar projects

**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** As part of its net zero commitments, Chhattisgarh-based mining company SECL has lined up an investment of ₹ 1,218 crore spread up to financial year 2025-26 for setting up solar projects.

South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL), with 67 blocks, is among the top three coal producing subsidiaries of Coal India Ltd (CIL), under the Ministry of Coal. In FY23, CIL's output was 703.21 MT, out of which SECL's contribution was 167 MT.

"SECL aims to become a net-zero energy company. SECL plans to develop solar projects of more than 600 MW in the coming years, and plans to invest more than ₹ 1,000 crore in renewable energy. The investments are part of the company's strategy to expand and diversify its business to achieve net zero commitments," SECL said in a statement. Sharing the break up of the investment plan, SECL said two solar projects of 20 megawatt (MW) each are being set up at Bhatgaon and Bishrampur, and another 0.8 MW at Saraipali Korba area in Chhattisgarh.

## Samsung's next-gen foldable devices are set to launch on July 26

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, July 11:** Samsung Electronics has announced its upcoming event, Unpacked, which will take place in Seoul, Korea, on July 26. The highly anticipated event will showcase a brand-new Galaxy smartphone, as well as other cutting-edge technologies aimed at unlocking possibilities and transforming lives. With the tagline "Join the Flip side," Galaxy Unpacked is set to captivate audiences and generate excitement.

Simultaneously, customers in India will have the opportunity to pre-reserve Samsung's next generation of foldable devices. By paying ₹ 2000 on Samsung.com, Amazon.in, Flipkart, or by visiting Samsung's Exclusive Stores and leading retail outlets across the country, customers can secure their spot. Pre-reserved customers will enjoy benefits worth ₹ 5000 when purchasing Samsung's upcoming foldable devices, which are scheduled to be unveiled globally on July 26, 2023.

## ITC board recommends second term for Sanjiv Puri as company CMD

**KOLKATA, July 11 (PTI):** The board of ITC Limited has recommended the reappointment of Sanjiv Puri as the company's chairman and managing director for a second term of five years.

The resolution seeking his reappointment as chairman and managing director of the diversified conglomerate will be put to vote at the company's annual general meeting to be held on August 11, 2023, according to a notice sent to the shareholders on Tuesday.

The company under Puri drove the 'ITC Next' strategy in the last

four years encompassing digital acceleration, cost optimisation, investing in new growth vectors and ensuring supply chain agility, its officials said.

Revenue from the company's FMCG segment has grown from ₹ 12,500 crore to ₹ 19,123 crore during the period and segment EBITDA margins improved by 7.7 per cent between 2016-17 to 2022-23.

Its other verticals like hotels, agri-business, paperboards, paper and packaging also registered improved performance in the last four years, they added.

## Gold price remains flat at ₹ 59,505/10 gram

**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** Gold price remained flat at ₹ 59,505 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday, according to HDFC Securities.

Silver also ruled flat in the second session at ₹ 72,500 per kilogram. Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹ 59,505/10 gram, unchanged from its previous day close as the strength of the rupee nullified the gains of overseas gold prices, Samuil Gandhi, senior analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

The rupee has appreciated nearly 0.33 per cent against the US dollar in the past two sessions, Gandhi added. In the global markets, gold and silver were trading higher at USD 1,930 per ounce and USD 23.14 per ounce, respectively.

Gold price inched higher amidst a fall in yields and dollar index and as the market participants maintained a cautious stance ahead of US inflation data that could influence the Federal Reserve's rate policy trajectory, Navnet Damani, Senior VP - Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said.

## Markets climb on firm global trends, foreign fund inflows



**MUMBAI, July 11 (PTI):** Equity benchmark indices rallied on Tuesday tracking a positive trend in the global markets and unabated foreign fund inflows.

Buying in index major Reliance Industries, Infosys and ITC also helped markets extend their previous day's gain.

The 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 273.67 points or 0.42 per cent to settle at 65,617.84. During the day, it rallied 526.42 points or 0.80 per cent to 65,870.59.

The NSE Nifty climbed 83.50 points or 0.43 per cent to end at 19,439.40.

From the Sensex pack, Sun Pharma, Maruti, Tata Motors, ITC, Nestle, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, Asian Paints, Titan, Tech Mahindra,

Power Grid and Reliance Industries were the major gainers.

Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, HCL Technologies, State Bank of India, HDFC, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards from the 30-share pack.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green. Equity markets in Europe were trading mostly in the green. The US markets ended in the positive territory on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) continued their buying momentum as they bought equities worth ₹ 588.48 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.18 per cent to USD 77.83 a barrel.

## LOST

Eksoniya Patta of land comprising of 1 bigha 29 lesa, bearing Dag No. 424 and Patta No. 170 is lost. The patta is in the name of Prayad Arjun Chauhan.

Ramanan Chauhan,  
S/o.- Prayad Arjun Chauhan,  
Village- 2 Rongkut Matikhula  
Muza - Phuloni  
PS.- Howraghat  
Dist.- Karbi Anglong, Assam

## ASSISTANCE TO MAINTENANCE OF WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM

**E-Tender Notice No.: LMG/Engg/61 of 2023 Dated: 28-06-2023.** E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Brief Description of Item:** At Lumding- Assistance to maintenance of water supply system at Manderdisa, Hatikhali, Dibolung, Langting, Dihakho, MPP, Maibang, Daotuhaja (BG), Daotuhaja (old), Phiding (BG), Phiding (old), Mahur, Migrendisa, New Haffong, Jatinga Lumpur, New Harangajao Ditokcheria, Damchura under the jurisdiction of DENM/Lumding for a period of 1 (one) year. **Tender Value:** ₹1,08,10,800/-, **Bid Security:** ₹2,04,100/- **Date & time of Closing of Tender:** 15.00 hrs. of 25-07-2023 & opening at 15.00 hrs. of 26-07-2023. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. of 25-07-2023 in website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

DRM (W), Lumding  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

## REPLACEMENT OF LEAKY ROOF & OTHER ANCILLARY WORKS AT MALIGAON HEAD QUARTER COMPLEX

**Tender Notice No.: 22 of 2023; dtd.: 07-07-2023.** E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No.:** LMG-33-2023; **Name of work:** At Maligaon Head Quarter Complex: Replacement of leaky roof at Estate Office, CCM Rates, Statistical Department, Disaster management office etc. including improvement of battery room, Rail Net Office, SSE/Tele/Maligaon and other ancillary works at Head Quarter Complex. **Tender Value:** ₹ 1,25,35,590.93; **Earnest Money:** ₹ 1,2,12,700/-; **Date & time of closing/opening of tender at 13:00 on 31-07-2023.** For details please visit in website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Sr. DE/Co-ord, Maligaon  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

## E-AUCTION FOR AWARDED COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING OVER TINSUKIA DIVISION

E-auction for Awarding Commercial Advertising at Dibrugarh, New Tinsukia, Digboi, Dulaijan, Simaluguri & Jorhat Town Railway Station over Tinsukia Division for 03 (Three) years. Details are as under. **Auction Catalogue No.:** ADVT-OOH-10; **Seq No. AA/1;** **Lot No./Category:** ADVT-TSK-DBRG-OH-216-23-1 (Advertising- Out of Home); **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee; **Trips/Days:** 1096; **Auction Start Date & Time:** 10:00 hrs. on 28-07-2023; **Auction Close Date & Time:** 10:30 hrs. on 28-07-2023; The auction catalogue has already been published on 07-07-2023 through IREPS website.

DCM (IC) / Tinsukia  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

## E-AUCTION FOR PARKING CONTRACT

E-Auction for awarding license of parking contract at various stations over Tinsukia Division. **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee. **Trips/Days:** 1096.

Auction Catalogue No. TSK-Parking-13		
Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	PARKING-TSK-SPK-MX-7-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three wheelers and Four Wheelers at location Sapekhati of Tinsukia Division.
AA/2	PARKING-TSK-MRG-MX-8-22-2 (Parking - Mixed)	Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers at location Margherita of Tinsukia Division.
AA/3	PARKING-TSK-SRTN-MX-4-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three wheeler and Four Wheelers at location Sibsagar town railway station of Tinsukia Division.
AA/4	PARKING-TSK-NMT-MX-10-23-1 (Parking - Mixed)	Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers at location Namtial of Tinsukia Division for a period of 03(three) years.
AA/5	PARKING-TSK-BFD-MX-6-22-2 (Parking - Mixed)	Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three wheelers and Four Wheelers at Borhat of Tinsukia Division for a period of 3(three) years.
AA/6	PARKING-TSK-NCH-MX-9-22-2 (Parking - Mixed)	Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers at Nakachari Rly Station of Tinsukia Division for the period of 03(three) years.

**Auction Start Date & Time:** 11.00 hrs. of 25-07-2023. **Auction Close Date & Time:** 12.20 hrs. of 25-07-2023. Prospective bidders are requested to visit E-Auction Leasing Module on IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Tinsukia  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

# Focussed on scaling up FMCG business: ITC

## The FMCG business comprises branded packaged foods, personal care products

**KOLKATA, July 11 (PTI):** Diversified conglomerate ITC Limited Tuesday said it is focussed on scaling up its FMCG business anchored on strong growth platforms and future ready portfolio.

Categories characterised by low household penetration offer significant headroom for long-term growth, the company said in its annual report released on Tuesday.

The company's addressable market expansion potential is amongst the highest in the Indian FMCG space.

The annual report said that FMCG businesses continue to make strategic investments in building categories for the future.

The company is pursuing 'value accretive' acquisition, joint venture and collaboration opportunities towards accelerating growth and value creation, it said.

The FMCG business comprises branded packaged foods, personal care products, education and stationery products, incense sticks and safety matches. It generated a revenue of ₹ 19,000 crore in the financial year 2022-23, representing an annual consumer spend of ₹ 29,000 crore.

Regarding the FMCG-cigarettes business, the company said after two years of disruptions due to the pandemic, the legal industry recovered during the last fiscal.



Stability in taxes on cigarettes backed by deterrent actions by the enforcement agencies enabled the legal cigarette industry to partially claw back volumes from illicit trade, according to ITC.

The company has over the years made significant investments in setting up state-of-the-art integrated consumer goods manufacturing and logistics facilities (ICML) in close proximity to large demand centers.

ITC recently commissioned a new ICML at Khordha in Odisha, taking their total number to 11, the annual report said.

The company has identified exports as a new growth vector.

The FMCG business expanded its export footprint spanning over 60 countries, with the production linked incentive scheme providing filip to ITC's exports across biscuits, cakes, snacks, dairy and

ready-to-eat categories.

On hotels business, the report said ITC continues to leverage the 'asset-right' strategy with 120 properties and 11,500 rooms.

The segment contributed around ₹ 2585 crore in last fiscal with EBITDA at ₹ 831 crore.

ITC is also making interventions to combat climate change by promoting 'climate smart agriculture', the report said. The programme has benefited over seven lakh farmers in 17 states.

Green house gas emissions of select crops have been reduced by up to 66 per cent and net returns of farmers rose up to 90 per cent from 2016 to 2021.



# BTCLA holds summer session

*House discusses promoting education, road communication, agricultural aspects and more*

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, July 11:** The one-day Summer Session of the Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly (BTCLA) was held at BTC Legislative Assembly House, Bodofa Nwgr in Kokrajhar. The session started with a question hour and was chaired by Speaker of the BTCLA, Katiram Boro.

The House discussed thoroughly on various issues which included educational upliftment, road communication, agricultural aspects, etc. The House also emphasised bringing healthy welfare and development as well as ushering sustainable development across the region.

The opposition MCLAs of the Bodoland People's Front staged a walkout of the House after their demand for a discussion on the publication of draft delimitation of assembly and parliamentary constituencies by the Election Commission of India in the House was disallowed.

However, president of BPF and



former chief of BTC, Hagrama Mohilary remained absent from the session.  
Chief executive member of

Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Pramod Boro said that the session discussed thoroughly over the development and welfare of

the citizens. While highlighting the recent publication of draft constituency delimitation, he said that the BTC region had one Lok Sabha seat reserved for ST and 15 assembly constituencies in BTC of which 6 reserved for ST. He said that UPPL also desired the creation of Udalguri as another parliamentary constituency but the idea of discussion over the issue in assembly was not necessary. He said since it was just draft delimitation, UPPL will move for the same demand and place their claims and objection before the delimitation committee on July 19 and 20 next. He hoped that the Election Commission of India would hear their genuine demands. He also said that the state cabinet has decided to change the name of Darrang parliamentary seat as Bairabkhunda and Gabardhana assembly constituency as Manas. He welcomed the renaming of both seats and said, "Manas is a national park while Bairabkhunda has historical importance."

## CRCCs of Education department meet at Bodofa Cultural Complex

*Meeting focuses on improving educational infrastructure in BTR*



**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, July 11:** A meeting of the Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators (CRCCs) of the Education department was held at Bodofa Cultural Complex, Chandamari in Kokrajhar on Tuesday. The meeting focused on the role of cluster resource centre coordinators of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in delivering quality education in schools. The work and duty of the CRCCs at the

ground level is key to the mission of vastly improving BTR's educational infrastructure and ensuring that students are imparted quality education in their acquiring educational life.

The programme was organised by the department of Education, government of Bodoland Territorial Region to create healthy and quality educational upliftment across the Bodoland region.

Chief executive member of

Bodoland Territorial Region, Pramod Boro, while attending the programme, said that the meeting discussed thoroughly over the educational upliftment aspect with more ushering in the Bodoland region. He said that the educational environment must be healthy as well as quality to meet a prosperous region. He has urged the CRCCs to work hard and dedicatedly while rendering services for bringing quality education at the ground level amongst the region.

Assam cabinet minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma, MLAs Lawrence Islay, Jiron Basumatary, BTR EM Dr Nilut Swargiary, Kokrajhar deputy commissioner Varnali Deka, SSA state consultant Surajit Kalita, Gossagaon B Ed College principal Dr Ajit Boro were prominent attendees at the event.

## Cooperative Society secy suspended for alleged rice theft

**HT Correspondent**  
**MORIGAON, July 11:** Hemant Kumar Nath, the secretary of Charaibahi Cooperative Society Limited (CCSL), has been suspended following allegations of stealing rice provided by the Assam government. The suspension was imposed by the Food & Civil Supply department, Morigaon, in accordance with the order issued by the deputy commissioner of Morigaon.

The suspension of the accused secretary, Hemant Kumar Nath, comes after a comprehensive investigation conducted by the department. The action was taken based on a complaint lodged by the public regarding the alleged theft of rice from the society.

The Food & Civil Supply department has implemented the suspension through Order No MSA/16/2923.

## Newly appointed ACF arrested for accepting bribe

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, July 11:** Nepal Mandal, the newly appointed ACF at Nagaon Forest Division and also the in-charge range officer of Salna Forest Range was arrested by a team from Assam Police Vigilance and Anti-corruption department, Guwahati on Tuesday afternoon at the office of Salna Forest Range here. The forest official was caught red-handed while accepting a bribe of ₹ 5000 from a complainant, sources added.

Sources claimed that the forest official demanded a sum of ₹ 8,000 from the complainant for issuing TP for transporting timbers. The complainant who is a resident of Biswanath Chariali approached the office of Vigilance and Anti-corruption department in Guwahati and filed a complaint in this regard. The officials from Assam Police Vigilance and Anti-corruption department laid a trap at the office of the Forest Range on Tuesday afternoon and finally got the breakthrough, sources added.

It's pertinent to mention here that the arrested forest official was promoted to the post of ACF and posted in Nagaon forest division a couple of months back.

## Dima Hasao DTF gears up for Intensified Mission Indradhanush 5.0

**HT Correspondent**  
**HAFLONG, July 11:** The District Task Force (DTF) of Dima Hasao district convened a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 5.0 and its aim to strengthen routine vaccination and expand immunisation coverage for children and pregnant women in the region. The meeting, held in the Officer's Conference Hall of Dima Hasao Autonomous Council, was chaired by the principal secretary of NC Hills Autonomous Council.

During the meeting, Dr Marina Changsan, the district immunisation officer, shared that the routine vaccination process would be conducted in three rounds, scheduled for August, September, and October 2023. The first round of immunisation under Mission Indradhanush 5.0 is set to begin from August 7 to 12, 2023, followed by the second round from October 9 to 14, 2023, and the third round from October 9 to 14, 2023. These rounds aim to cover children aged 0-5 years and pregnant women in the district.

The meeting witnessed the presence of secretary



Partha Johori, deputy secretaries Rebecca Changsan and Prabhat Pegu, SDM&HO Medical and Health Services Dr Leena Hakmosa, district nodal officer Dr L Veiphei, and other officials who actively participated in the discussions. The District Task Force is committed to ensuring the successful implementation of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 5.0 in Dima Hasao district. Through this initiative, the routine immunisation process will be strengthened, and more children and pregnant women will have access to the necessary vaccinations, safeguarding their health and well-being.

## MBCC voices concerns over proposed delimitation draft

**HT Correspondent**  
**MARGHERITA, July 11:** A delegation from the Margherita Block Congress Committee (MBCC), consisting of president Tara Prasad Dehingia, vice president Toufik Khan, Devendra Pandey, and Margherita Assembly Youth Congress Committee pres-

ident Avishek Beldar, submitted a memorandum to the secretary of the Election Commission of India through the district election officer of Margherita. The memorandum addresses the proposed draft delimitation of the 124th Margherita constituency.

Tara Prasad Dehingia expressed

concerns over the proposed delimitation draft, which would eliminate five panchayat areas within the 124th Margherita constituency. This would not only reduce the number of voters but also impact the unique character and beauty of the Margherita constituency.

*Apex Development Financial Institution highlights projects for rural development*

## NABARD organises AKAM programme in Karbi Anglong

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 11:** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), along with Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Lead Bank Office Karbi Anglong, organised the AKAM programme with the theme 'Achievements @75: Transforming Lives and NABARD's Contribution' in Shibnagar, Dhansiri, Karbi Anglong on Monday. The programme coincided with National Fish Farmers Day arranged by the KVK. More than 50 farmers from Khamaidisa and Shibnagar along with the gaon burhas participated in the programme.

DDM NABARD Karbi Anglong, K Vaiphei, explained the unique role of NABARD as the Apex Development Financial Institution of the country and highlighted various projects sanctioned in Karbi Anglong district for the development of farm and off-farm sectors and rural infrastructural facilities. The DDM enumerated some of the major projects such as wadi-based tribal development projects covering more than 400 tribal families, Farmers' Producer Organisations (FPOs) based on locally suitable agricultural and horticultural crops and animal

husbandry activities benefitting more than 1000 farm families and DPR based projects on dragon fruits, Assam hill goat, integrated farming system. He also mentioned NABARD assistance for training and capacity building of SHG members for enhancement of income under Micro Enterprise Development Programme (MEDP) and Livelihood and Enterprise Development Programme (LEDP) and marketing outlet near KAAC Secretariat at Diphu sanctioned by Dhansiri Cluster Federation for selling the SHG and artisans products under Rural Mart Scheme. The DDM highlighted that under different tranches of Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), 100 projects relating to agriculture and allied, irrigation, rural connectivity, social sector have been sanctioned for the district since creation of the fund in 1995-96.

KVK SMS Lohit Kakoti and Shourav Dutta emphasised on the significance of National Fish Farmers Day which is celebrated on July 10 every year and importance given by governments at the Centre and states for fisheries development for improvement of income levels and expanding

livelihood opportunities of rural people. They encouraged farmers to take up fishery activity sincerely as there is good scope and potential in the area. Fishnets and lime bags were handed over to fish farmers.

Lead district manager N Basumatry explained various low-cost social security schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (PMJJY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) along with procedure for availing benefits. He also explained the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme for fish farmers and encouraged them to avail facilities.

The gaon burhas of Khamaidisa and Shibnagar villages Z Maibangsha and P Thaosan thanked the team of NABARD, KVK, and Lead Bank Office for conducting such a programme which is the first of its kind in the village and expressed their willingness to support the endeavour.

The participants in the programme also deliberated upon developing the Dima Raja Royal Tank built in the 13th century located at Shibnagar as a tourist spot and commercially viable fishing ground for people in the area.

## Renowned educationist and scholar Dr Saradanand Dev Goswami passes away

**HT Correspondent**  
**HOJAI, July 11:** The passing of Dr Saradanand Dev Goswami, a renowned educationist, writer, teacher, scholar, social activist, cultural icon, actor, litterateur, journalist, dramatist, and former vice principal of Hojai College, has deeply saddened people from all walks of life. Dr Goswami breathed his last at Hamm Hospital in Hojai on Monday evening at the age of 80, after battling age-related ailments. His demise has cast a shadow of sorrow over his followers, relatives, students, and the residents of Hojai.

On Tuesday afternoon, his last rites were performed at Shantiban in Hojai, where his eldest son and senior journalist Kishlay Dev Goswami (Munti) performed the final rites. Prior to the cremation, a tribute rally was organised, starting from his residence in Bishnupally. The rally paid homage to Dr Goswami, and several organisations including Ajmal Foundation, Shri Shri Bishnu Mandir, Rabindranath Tagore University, Hojai Press Club, Hamm Hospital, Ankur Sangha, Markazul Ma'arif, and Zakaria Club offered floral tributes. The rally traversed through the town's major thoroughfares and culminated at the Hojai Sahitya Sabha Bhawan at New Market, where Hojai Sahitya Sabha and various other organisations and individuals paid their respects, acknowledging his significant contributions in various fields.

Dr Goswami was associated with numerous social organisations alongside his academic pursuits. He was known for his candor, soft-spoken nature, discipline, punctu-

ality, and down-to-earth personality. Notably, he received the Gyan Malini Award (1986) from Markazul Maarif for his first Assamese novel 'Nishi Shayane Gowai' (published in 1971). He was also honoured with the 'Literary Award' by the government of Assam in 2008 and received a Literary Pension from the government in 2016. In 2018, he was bestowed with the Dr Surya Kumar Bhuyan Award and the Chachar Lifetime Achievement Award by Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha. He held various leadership positions in different organisations, including president of Hojai Press Club (1996-1999), president of Hojai College Management Committee (2009-2016), president of Hojai Sahitya Sabha (1987-1990), and president of Narva Balisatra Management Committee (1991-1995). From 2018 to 2020, he served as the president of Hojai Zila Sahitya Sabha. His immense contributions were recognised with the 'Dekagiri' award for the year 2022-23 by Shrimant Sankardev Krishi Vikas Kendra, Hojai.

The news of Dr Saradanand Dev Goswami's demise has been met with deep mourning and condolences from individuals and various organisations, who have expressed that his contributions will always be cherished and remembered. They consider his death an irreparable loss to society. Prayers have been offered for the eternal peace of his departed soul and for strength to be bestowed upon his grieving family members. He is survived by his wife, sons, and a host of relatives.

## NFR makes significant progress in freight loading

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, July 11:** Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has made significant progress in freight loading, with 0.735 million tonnes (MT) loaded during June 2023 alone. This brings the total freight loading for the current financial year 2023-24 up to 2.579 million tonnes as of June 2023. During June 2023, food grain loading increased by 7.7 percent, while timber loading increased by an impressive 100 percent and ballast loading increased by 76.4 percent. Loading of other miscellaneous commodities also increased by 20 percent compared to the corresponding period of the previous financial year. All divisions under NFR's jurisdiction have achieved progress in loading, resulting in a remarkable amount of goods revenue.

## Demow Press Club, MDJA condemn attack on scribe

**HT Correspondent**  
**DEMOW, July 11:** Upal Borah, Upper Assam's bureau chief of Prag News, was attacked by miscreants at the Prag News Office in Jorhat on Monday. The incident has been condemned by the Demow Press Club, which has demanded that the miscreants be punished appropriately. They have also demanded that the administration provide safeguards for journalists.

## Campaign aims to empower girls and promote gender equality

### Officials initiate 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' awareness rally in Sonitpur

**HT Correspondent**  
**TEZPUR, July 11:** On Tuesday, deputy commissioner Deba Kumar Mishra and MLA Tezpur Prithiraj Rava jointly initiated an awareness rally titled 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao - Walk Towards Dignity of Daughters' from the DC office premises. The event was attended by ADC Kavita Kakoti Konwar, assistant commissioner, and in-charge of district social welfare officer (DSWO) Barsha Talukdar, as well as other officials from the Women & Child Development (W&CD) department and the Department of Health, Education & Welfare (DHEW).

The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign in Sonitpur district during the current financial year. In collaboration with the



district administration and the W&CD department, with technical support from the District Hub for Empowerment of Women in Sonitpur, a mobile van was introduced to promote the campaign and an awareness rally was

conducted by Anganwadi Workers. The primary focus of these initiatives is to achieve the objectives of the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign.

The 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme was launched on January 22,

2015, with the goal of addressing the decline in the Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in the country and related issues of empowering girls and women. The awareness program aims to bring about behavioural and social change in the perception of the girl child by informing, influencing, motivating, engaging, and empowering all stakeholders.

The 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme aims to improve the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), increase the percentage of institutional deliveries, encourage first-trimester Anti-Natal Care (ANC) registration, enhance secondary education enrollment and skill development for girls and women, reduce the dropout rate among girls at secondary and higher secondary levels, and raise awareness about safe menstrual hygiene management.

## NOTICE INVITING AUCTION (NIA) NO. 2 OF 2023 - 24

Online quotations from registered Class-I contractor/firm of Government Departments, Assam as well as reputed and resourceful Contractor Firms/ Business Enterprises are invited against NIA No. 2 of 2023-24 for the following work.

**Name of Work:** Auction sale of unserviceable materials and stores of Bhawanipur Division(I), Sarupeta of Irrigation Department under Nalburi Circle (I), Nalburi, Assam & Assam State Minor Irrigation Development Corporation Ltd., Ulubari, Guwahati-7 on "As is where is & Whatever there is" basis in a single lot.

**Minimum Bid Value:** Rs.7,68,207.00 (Rupees Seven Lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Two Hundred and Seven) only.

Details may be seen at website <http://eauction.gov.in> and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 10-00 Hours of 07.07.2023 & upto 17-00 Hours of 21.07.2023.

Sd/-

Chief Engineer

Irrigation Department, Assam  
Chandmari, Guwahati - 3

Janasanyog /C/6664/23



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pen is the tongue of the mind.  
- Horace

## NaMo against RaGA

As the Vidhan Sabha election to the five states – Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Mizoram – are approaching, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has upped the ante against both the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi, not against any other party or leader in opposition, betraying his heightened political threat perception from, though he had boasted for “Congress Mukh Bharat” and formerly brushed aside Rahul Gandhi as someone politically insignificant and merely a child (pappu). PM Modi has not only made scathing attack on the state government of Rajasthan led by the chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday, but also labelled Congress as “Loot ki dukan, jhooth ka bazaar” (Shop of loot, market of falsehood), and singled out Rahul Gandhi for political attack, apart from severely criticising the Congress leadership in a public rally at Bikaner on Saturday, July 8, 2023.

Meanwhile, while showing BJP the door in Karnataka, not only general and OBC category people, but also the STs and SCs unequivocally showed that they have been deserting the BJP and are no longer mesmerized on the much-touted Modi's charisma. It has necessitated Modi to restore his lost charisma first, before winning any elections. The BJP lost a large number of reserved seats for SCs and STs in Karnataka, and it runs the same risk in all these five states after the incident of a BJP leaders' urinating on an Adivasi in Madhya Pradesh that has angered them across the states. Manipur ethnic riots have further exposed the nefarious design of the BJP and its majoritarian politics that left many dead. Its spectre will be haunting the Adivasi communities across the nation in general and more particularly in Mizoram in the north-east where the lone MP seat is reserved for ST. The seat is presently held by Mizo National Front (MNF) that has been part of NDA since 2014. However, it is most likely that BJP would have to struggle to keep the NDA united there. The term of the Mizoram Vidhan Sabha is to expire in December 2023. The situation was till recently in favour of the NDA, but the situation is fast changing against it.

It is in this backdrop, the unsparing utterance of PM Modi in Bikaner rally against the Congress and Rahul Gandhi could be understood, apart from lashing out at the Gehlot led Congress government in Rajasthan. PM Modi said that Congress is confident of its defeat, but kept silent about his confidence of winning the state election. PM Modi even devoted more than usual time in enumerating the Congress's weaknesses rather than his or BJP's stronger position. He claimed that Congress was suffering from infighting and corruption, and did immense damage to Rajasthan in the last four years of their rule. He even made a series of allegations against the Congress and said it was unstable, when everybody knows that Congress has been firmly ruling the state for its last full term. As far as Rahul Gandhi is concerned, PM Modi attacked him on four counts – farmers' issues, 'mohabbat ki dukaan', Rahul's comments in US and UK, and opposition's including INC's demand for proof of surgical strike by Modi on Pakistan in 2016 and 2019. All these betray Modi's confidence.

# Petrol @ ₹ 15 per litre proposal before election 2024 is another jumla

In a rally organized in Pratapgarh on July 4, 2023 in the poll-bound state Rajasthan, the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India Nitin Gadkari, has said that an innovative proposal has been made to reduce the price of petrol to ₹ 15 per litre. On that day petrol was being sold in Rajasthan at ₹ 113.48 per litre, and hence attracted the attention of the people who understood Gadkari's statement implying that if the Modi government returns to power after the 2024 general election petrol will be sold at ₹ 15 per litre.

Is it an election 'jumla' again? The intention behind this statement seems not only to attract all who use petrol but also the 70 per cent of the population who are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood is clear, since he also said that the petrol prices would be brought to ₹ 15 a litre by producing ethanol from foodgrains and then blending it on an average 60 per cent in petrol. Through it, India would save a massive import expenditure of Rs 16 lakh crore that would be redirected towards the farmers' households.

There is a parallel from 2014 election campaign that turned out to be a 'jumla'. The BJP's PM candidate Narendra Modi had promised to bring back all the black money of Indians stashed in foreign banks and deposit ₹ 15 lakh into every citizen's bank account. Later, party chief Amit Shah has said that it was a 'jumla'. In 2018, an RTI was filed in the PMO asking for exact date when the money will be deposited, the PMO said that this cannot be considered "information" under the rules of RTI. Now everyone knows that Modi government has utterly failed in bringing back the black money, and citizens can't even hope for the promised Rs 15 lakh in their accounts.

Then there are other issues involved, such as issue of ethanol blending. As per the "Roadmap for Ethanol Blending in India by 2020-25", India intends to reach a blending of 20 per cent of ethanol by 2025/26. However, the government is even faster than its roadmap, on February 6, 2023, the Centre rolled out 20 per cent ethanol blending at select petrol pumps in 11 states and Union Territories as part of the programme to increase use of biofuels to cut emissions as well as dependence on foreign exchange-draining import of pe-



roleum. Ethanol is produced from sugarcane, foodgrains and other bio-sources. India gives subsidies for agricultural produce in the name of welfare of farmers and the poor people, but the Centre diverts huge amount of "food subsidies" to industries. Poverty stricken people are left in the lurch and subsidies on their foodgrains are actually provided to the business and industries, a fact that cannot be said an 'honest' act for the common people.

There is a recent example of refusing even sale of rice at ₹ 34 per kilogram for Karnataka, the state where the Congress has thrown the BJP out of power. The new Congress government had announced 10 kg rice to all poor households, but the Modi government was not ready to provide the state the subsidized rice at ₹ 20 a kg. The state government then asked for rice from

free market scheme of the government at the rate of ₹ 34 a kg. Even though Food Corporation of India (FCI), after initially agreed, finally refused to sell rice to the state even at the offered price of ₹ 34 a kg intended to feed poor people in Karnataka.

As part of the politics, the Centre has even refused to supply food to some BJP ruled states to balance its act, to appear politically neutral, but it could not veil the cruelty of the government of refusing rice to the poor even at offered price of Karnataka at ₹ 34 a kg, but supplied huge

quantity of rice to industries for ethanol production at subsidized rate of ₹ 20 per kg. Some 81,044 tons of FCI rice was allocated in the ethanol production during ethanol supply year (December-November) 2020-21, as per the data presented by the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and it was priced at ₹ 20 per kg. It should be noted that the foodgrains are procured from the farmers at unfair MSP rates for the purported purpose of food security, but was diverted to industries.

It should also be noted that the Government fixes the prices of ethanol produced from different bio-sources. The Centre had priced the ethanol produced from rice and maize at ₹ 51.55 per litre during 2020-21 for which it had allocated over 81,000 tons of rice. It is simply a fraud against farmers and the people of the country when one procures food-

grains at very cheap MSP in the name of food security but actually divert it to industrial production.

Gadkari said that ₹ 16 lakh crore to be saved from 60 per cent of blending would be transferred to farmer households, why his government is not transferring the profit already being made by ethanol production? Obviously, they don't intend to. They are promising they would do when PM Modi led BJP government would return to power for the third time. It is simply a cheating of the people of the country.

It is irony that the Centre is not even ready to give remunerative MSP to farmers, but promising them ₹ 16 lakh crore if government reaches 60 per cent of ethanol blending. Centre's launching 20 per cent blending for 11 states and UTs now is now several months old, and all India 10 per cent average blending was achieved by June 2022. Government saved lakhs of crore rupees from import of oil, but where the money gone? Of course, not to the farmers, since farmers are still agitating for a fair MSP and its legal guarantee, and the Modi government has been denying it.

Oil companies had procured 80.09 crore litres of ethanol up to January 30, 2023 for blending in petrol during the ESY 2022-23 and 6 crore litres of bio-diesel for blending with diesel during the year. However, the profits went to big business and corporate houses, not farmers.

PM Modi had promised doubling of farmers income by 2022, but it remains a dream. Even in the last crop season, many farmers were compelled to sell their potatoes and onions at ₹ 1-2 per kg, which was a shame. Farmers continue suicides across the country. Poor in extreme poverty are going empty stomach. The latest SDG atlas of the World Bank says that 134 million people were under international poverty line in 2019 and the number exceeded tremendously during the COVID and 800 million people survived on 5kg free rice. The atlas reveals that 68.5 per cent people in India i.e. 973 million were not able to afford healthy diet in 2021.

In this backdrop, the Centre not supplying food for the poor while procuring in the name of food security and diverting to industries at subsidised rate is unethical. The government intends to raise blending to 60 per is therefore dangerous for food security for the people, which Modi government intends to reach in his third term if comes to power after 2024 election.

Modi's three controversial farms laws that intended to bring Corporate to farms, that was fought tooth and nail by the farmers, due to which PM Modi had to withdraw them should now be understandable what the government really wants. Farmers are still demanding remunerative MSP and its legal guarantee, and the people demanding subsidised food, but they are refused while industries are being supplied the same at subsidised rates. (IPA Service)

## Assam Govt's comprehensive approach to tackle unemployment

By: Dipak Kurmi

Unemployment remains a pressing issue in Assam, particularly in rural areas where the male unemployment rate can reach alarming levels. Recognizing the severity of the problem, the Assam government has undertaken various measures to address this issue head-on. By prioritizing skill development, supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), promoting tourism, and encouraging entrepreneurship, the government aims to create employment opportunities and boost economic growth. While these efforts have yielded positive results, challenges such as limited investment, skill gaps, and inadequate infrastructure persist. This article explores the Assam government's multifaceted approach to tackling unemployment, the progress made thus far, and the challenges that lie ahead.

## Skill development and MSME support:

The Assam Skill Development Mission (ASDM) plays a pivotal role in equipping unemployed youth with the necessary skills to enhance their employability. Through comprehensive training programs covering diverse sectors, such as IT, hospitality, manufacturing, and agriculture, the ASDM aims to bridge the existing skill gap and empower individuals to seize employment opportunities.

To foster entrepreneurship and job creation, the Assam government provides financial and technical assistance schemes to MSMEs. By supporting these enterprises, the government not only encourages local business development but also generates employment opportunities for the youth. Such initiatives play a crucial role in the state's economic growth and alleviating unemployment.

## Tourism promotion and entrepreneurship:

Assam's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and historical significance make it an ideal destination for tourism. The Assam government recognizes this potential and has invested in infrastructure development, including roads and airports, to facilitate tourism growth. By promoting tourism, the government aims to create job opportunities in various sectors, including hospitality, transportation, and entertainment.

In addition to tourism, the Assam government actively encourages entrepreneurship among the youth. Various schemes provide financial aid, training, and mentorship to aspiring entrepreneurs, fostering an environment conducive to innovation and business growth. By nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship, the government aims to create a vibrant ecosystem that generates employment and drives economic progress.

## Education enhancement and infrastructure development:

Recognizing the importance of education in improving employment prospects, the Assam government emphasizes enhancing the quality of education across the state. By investing in educational institutions and curriculum development, the government



aims to equip students with relevant skills and knowledge demanded by the job market. Furthermore, the government acknowledges the significance of robust infrastructure for attracting businesses and creating job opportunities. Efforts to improve transportation networks, power supply, and other critical infrastructure elements aim to create an environment that is conducive to business growth and employment generation.

## Challenges and the path forward:

Despite the Assam government's concerted efforts, challenges persist in tackling unemployment. Limited investment hampers the establishment and expansion of businesses, restraining job creation potential. Addressing this challenge requires proactive measures to attract investment through incentives, ensuring a favourable business environment for both local and external investors. Skill gaps pose another hurdle in reducing unemployment. The Assam government must continue investing in skill development programs that align with industry requirements. Collaboration with educational institutions and industry stakeholders can bridge the existing gap and equip the workforce with the skills in demand.

Additionally, improving infrastructure remains essential to facilitate business operations and job creation. The Assam government's ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure must continue, with a focus on transportation, power supply, and digital connectivity, enabling businesses to thrive and contribute to employment growth.

The Assam government's multifaceted approach to addressing unemployment demonstrates its commitment to the welfare and progress of its people. By prioritizing skill development, supporting MSMEs, promoting tourism, and encouraging entrepreneurship, the government aims to create a thriving economy with ample job opportunities. Despite challenges such as limited investment, skill gaps, and inadequate infrastructure, the government remains determined to overcome these obstacles. Continued investment in skill development, education, and infrastructure will contribute to the realization of a prosperous future for Assam, where unemployment rates decrease, and economic growth flourishes. (The writer is a journalist and commentator based in Guwahati, can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)

## China launches mineral war against USA by limiting exports of two products

By: Girish Linganna

China's recent move to limit the export of two minerals crucial for semiconductors, solar panels, and missile systems serves as a significant reminder of its strong control over global mineral resources. This action also serves as a warning, indicating China's readiness to utilize these resources as part of its growing competition and tensions with the United States.

China holds a significant position in the global supply chain for essential minerals used in electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy. Approximately two-thirds of the world's lithium and cobalt, vital for EV batteries, undergo processing in China. The country is also a major source, accounting for nearly 60% of aluminum used in EV batteries and 80% of polysilicon found in solar panels. Additionally, China has a dominant control over rare-earth minerals used in critical technologies such as smartphone touch screens and missile-defense systems, with around 90% of their refining attributed to China, as per the International Energy Agency.

Chinese companies have a strong influence over various processing activities that occur outside of China. For example, a significant portion of the global nickel supply originates from China. Additionally, many Chinese companies have control over the refining process in other countries like Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

Friday, Janet Yellen, the Treasury Secretary, informed American businesses operating in China that the Biden administration was still assessing China's recent announcement to limit gallium and germanium exports. However, this decision served as a reminder of the significance of having diverse supply chains.

China's control over global minerals grants it the ability to potentially disrupt the West's energy transition, chip manufacturing, and defense sectors as its rivalry with the U.S. intensifies. If China were to restrict exports of essential minerals like lithium or cobalt, it would significantly impact non-Chinese automakers, leading to turmoil in the production of electric vehicle batteries.

Implementing extreme measures is improbable in the near future, primarily because they would also have adverse effects on Chinese businesses. However, experts assert that such measures cannot be completely ruled out as a possibility.

According to an expert from the Colorado School of Mines, it would be unwise to believe that such a scenario is impossible. The expert suggests that if the escalating exchange of retali-

tory actions continues, the situation could potentially lead to that outcome.

Following the United States' actions in October to restrict Chinese access to equipment utilized in the production of advanced chips, Beijing has now imposed limitations on the export of gallium and germanium. These restrictions from China are anticipated to accelerate Western initiatives aimed at finding alternative mineral sources.

Gallium and germanium are essential elements in chip manufacturing. Gallium is used in creating high-speed transistors, while germanium acts as a semiconductor material. Both minerals contribute to the performance and efficiency of chips, enabling faster processing speeds and improved electronic devices.

The Biden administration has made it a priority to reduce the United States' dependence on Chinese minerals, particularly through the Inflation Reduction Act, a key green investment program. This law, enacted in 2022, offers subsidies for electric vehicle batteries that utilize minerals sourced and processed within the U.S. and allied countries. The aim is to establish alternative supply chains that are not reliant on China.

In a recent tweet, President Biden expressed concern about China's longstanding dominance in the production of essential raw materials and highlighted the United States' efforts, in collaboration with its allies, to bring the battery supply chain back to the country.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, a recent legislation, allocates substantial funding in the form of grants to promote the mining of critical minerals. It also authorizes federal loans for projects aimed at enhancing the domestic supply of these essential resources.

Under several U.S. policies, funds have been provided to support various initiatives. For instance, TechMet, an Ireland-based company involved in nickel and cobalt mining in Brazil, received \$55 million since 2020 from the International Development Finance Corporation (IDFC), an American agency. In return, the IDFC acquired approximately a 15% stake in TechMet. Recently, TechMet started exporting a nickel product processed in Brazil for use in electric vehicles (EVs) in Western countries. The company is also seeking additional funding, both private and public, to expand its mining operations.

China's export controls are seen as a warning to U.S. industries, according to Brian Menell, the CEO of TechMet. He believes that his company's objective is to assist in the development of self-reliant supply chains aligned with the United States.



Talon Metals in the United States is in the process of obtaining permits to start nickel mining in rural Minnesota. The company has been chosen by the Energy Department to receive a \$114 million grant for a battery-mineral processing facility in North Dakota. This grant covers over 25% of the total project cost, as reported by the company.

Establishing new supply chains is a time-consuming process that cannot be accomplished quickly. Developing mines requires several years, and obtaining environmental clearances in Western countries further extends the lead time. The scarcity of skilled workers poses a challenge. Additionally, many countries abundant in ores face political instability or lack environmental credibility, discouraging Western companies from engaging, while Chinese companies, often supported by Beijing, are more willing to proceed.

Talon Metals intends to commence nickel production in 2027, subject to obtaining the required environmental permits, according to the company. Talon Metals has a supply agreement with Tesla for nickel.

According to Todd Malan, a spokesperson for Talon, there is a strong commitment to maintaining high standards and not taking any shortcuts. He believes that governments in the United States, Canada, and Australia are exploring ways to streamline processes and ensure timely execution of projects.

While the United States and other Western nations search for alternative mineral sources, China continues to strengthen its dominance. Chinese mining companies have traditionally held significant influence in the extraction and refining of cobalt from the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is the world's primary supplier of this mineral for EV batteries. In recent years, Chinese companies have ex-

panded their control by constructing facilities in Indonesia that not only process nickel but also extract cobalt from the ore.

Indonesia experienced a substantial increase in cobalt production, nearly quadrupling its output in the previous year. As a result, it surpassed Russia and emerged as the world's second-largest cobalt source, primarily driven by Chinese firms. Additionally, Chinese companies are intensifying their activities in mining and refining lithium in both Africa and Latin America. A potential worst-case scenario would involve China imposing wide-ranging restrictions on minerals for Western companies. The most significant example of a move to restrict a vital resource from the United States was the 1973 oil embargo. This resulted in long queues at gas stations and a significant downturn in the global economy.

In 1973, the oil embargo imposed by certain countries restricted the supply of oil to the United States. This action had severe consequences, leading to long queues at gas stations and a significant impact on the global economy.

According to analysts, restrictions on key minerals may not have an immediate impact but would have long-term consequences for businesses and consumers. It would essentially exacerbate the effects of the chip shortage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which severely impacted the automotive industry and resulted in significant delays in car deliveries.

Joseph Majkut, director of the energy security and climate change program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, highlights China's readiness to employ export restrictions on minerals and metals. The concern lies in identifying the metals China holds significant leverage over and determining the appropriate response from the United States. (IPA Service)



# Religious personal laws are patriarchal, but is UCC the way to women's rights?

By: Mvthrejee Ramesh

Proponents of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), in the wake of the Law Commission's call for views, cite in chorus that they favour it because it would be the means to guarantee equal rights for women in family law. But it is not that simple and straightforward.

In a civilised society, women should have equal rights in marriage and divorce, maintenance and custody, and of course inheritance.

The advocates see UCC as the only means to guarantee this, as there can be little debate over how discriminatory, patriarchal, and misogynistic India's religious personal laws are towards women.

• Why then are some feminist activists strongly opposing the UCC?

• Who decides what is progressive?

• What is the way forward?

The Quint spoke to experts who break it down.

The history around UCC

In the 1930s, an All India Women's Conference sought equal rights for all women irrespective of their religion, in matters concerning the family law like marriage and divorce – most members were women freedom fighters, across various religions.

Two decades later, in 1950, when the Indian Constitution came into effect, it said that State shall endeavour to secure for all citizens a UCC. Eventually, the UCC was to replace the religion-based laws.

In the 1950s, however, the Nehru government codified and reformed several Hindu personal laws despite backlash – guaranteeing Hindu women some basic rights. Many of these have been amended over the years, but a similar codification of personal laws has not happened for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs or the Parsis.

"When we have failed to successfully promulgate and implement a voluntary gender-just law — are we ready to implement a mandatory uniform family law in the name of gender justice?"

A mandatory uniform code on family laws is against the assurance of Dr BR Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly who envisioned UCC to be 'purely voluntary' in the beginning with it being applicable 'only to those who make a declaration that they are prepared to be bound by it.'

Nabeela Jamil, Practising lawyer in the Supreme Court of India and the Delhi High Court, told The Quint.

The Supreme Court called for UCC in the

1985 Shah Bano Case, later again in 2017. However, in 2018, the Law Commission of India categorically stated that gender equality must be prioritised within religious communities rather than between communities.

"Cultural difference informs people's identity, and its preservation guarantees the territorial integrity of the nation," the Law Commission had said.

"In a utopian world, if UCC is implemented in a manner that is devoid of majoritarianism, then yes, that would empower women. Most of our personal laws are constructed with the view of women being the 'weaker sex', which is why in the early 20th century, women's organisations wanted UCC to be implemented for gender equality. However, it's now become less about gender equality and more about religious identity," explained Radhika Roy, a Law Researcher at the Delhi High Court, told The Quint.

**Why UCC is not the means to achieve women's rights?**

The timing, the context, and the intention are the key reasons why the UCC actually has very little to do with gender justice, experts tell The Quint.

"When 'uniform' was said during the drafting of the Constitution, it actually had to do with getting rid of gender discrimination in specific personal laws. But over the years, the word uniform has come to mean different things politically. It has become an imposition of identity, in the name of uniformity, on minority. Gender has actually vanished from being the crux of it. It has become a competition, rather than about gender," reiterated Kavitha Krishnan, a feminist activist.

"We don't want gender rights to be swallowed up in the politics of Hindu-Muslim. What women suffer, women across the religions suffer. The fact is that polygamy exists across communities. You have to think about how to support women, all of them. Instead of associating one community to one social evil – and make it look regressive to that particular community. No one is saying we don't want gender reforms, but it should not be a transparent pretext at the time of election."

**Kavitha Krishnan to The Quint**

"Gender justice cannot be divorced from justice in general. It is no mystery that in the name of Muslim women's rights, crimes have been committed against the Muslim community at large. This is the legitimate fear of Muslim women. The latest example can be the Triple Talaq Act. It cemented the fears of the Muslim



community of how in the name of gender justice, Muslim men are criminalized. Men and women both make a community," says Jamil.

"If Muslim men are behind bars, it is the Muslim women too who become victims. Naturally, the immediate fallout of the 2019 legislation, in the name of gender justice and the supposed empowerment of Muslim women, has been severely adverse to Muslim women's cause," she goes on, adding that women from marginalised communities have been portrayed as pawns for political vendetta.

Citing an example, Krishnan points media reports on how BJP MP Sushil Kumar Modi, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law, has raised concerns about UCC in tribal areas, including those in the North East, since their customs are different, and how the Constitution grants them protection.

"He has woken up to the fact that there is polygamy in sections of the society that are not Muslim. So what happens now? If you exclude a section of tribals, how is that uniform? What happens to the rights of Hindu women whose husbands engage in polygamy? How will they be supported? What happens to same-sex couples, when the government is not giving them

basic marital rights? How does all of this encompass as uniform?"- Kavita Krishnan to The Quint. For context, according to the National Family and Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), at least 1.4 percent of married Indian women surveyed in 2019-2021 said their husbands had another wife or wives. The NFHS also showed that the rate of polygamy was 2.4 percent among STs, 1.5 percent among SCs, 1.3 percent among OBCs, and 1.2 percent among others.

**There are reasons to engage with UCC...**

But for someone like Zakia Soman, who is a human rights activist and one of the founders of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, this is a chance to gender justice.

"I'm not for a moment suggesting that Hindu women are treated as equal citizens, because all women are victims of patriarchy. But you also cannot ignore the fact that Hindu women have benefited with legal backing because of the codification of laws. They still call the Muslim Personal law as the Sharia law. It has never been reformed, not even to give us the Quranic rights. For example, according to Quran, no wedding can happen without explicit consent. Several minor children are forced into marriage even today." - Zakia Soman to The Quint.

But isn't the politicisation a problem?

"Yes, it is being brought by the BJP because it's part of their electoral pitch and we all know what is what is the commitment to gender justice. But why should we not engage? Marriage for Hindus is considered saat janam (seven years) – and there is no concept of divorce. But they have codified it and borrowed heavily from the Islamic law. Married daughters have complete right to their parental property and are not at the mercy of the male relatives. What majoritarian view can be imposed on Muslim women?" Soman adds.

**What is the way forward?**

Listen to women. Listen to their voices. There is not a uniform problem across laws, but each law comes with a unique set of problems. Such deliberations should be made through active debates, taking into consideration voices of women's rights activists who are working on ground – strengthen personal laws, or have a detailed discussion on UCC when the draft is on the table.

This is not to be implemented in a rush, all experts agree.

"Uniformity will have some value, when you are also looking at a uniform remedy. For example, to create means of support to women who are stuck in polygamy, what do we need? A new law banning it? Or the recognition that women are stuck in such relationships across religions, and create a stream of support system for them?" asks Krishnan.

"If this religious identity aspect is done away with, and UCC is seen once again a women-empowerment tool, then the best way to go about it would be to cull out the most progressive practices of all religions and enmeshing them. In fact, this approach was also espoused in the Law Commission of India's 2018 Consultation Paper. Soman says that there should be active debate between the lawmakers.

"Although although politicking by those in power is always more dangerous. But I would also say that the Opposition is not being convincing by not actively engaging in the debate. Gender justice is India's agenda, it's the constitutional agenda."

**But what if the uniform code does not guarantee implementation?**

"That doesn't mean that we should be denied the protection of laws. Does one out of every 1,000 woman who goes to the court gets justice? She fights it out. Lack of implementation should not be an excuse for denying your legal protection," Soman adds. (Courtesy: The Quint)

## What the murders of two women say about the dangerous, 'heart-broken' young men of India

By: Shannon Philip

Over the past few weeks, two young men in Delhi have made headlines for the gruesome murder of their girlfriends. Both young men, unhappy that their girlfriends wanted to end their respective relationships, responded by murdering the two women. They allegedly wanted to "punish" these women for seeking to break-up with them.

The first young man, Anuj Singh, a 21-year-old final-year sociology student at Shiv Nadar University, shot his girlfriend at close range at the university campus and then proceeded to shoot himself on May 18. The second young man, 20-year-old Sahil Khan, first stabbed his girlfriend 22 times on a crowded street in Delhi and then bludgeoned her to death on May 28. Both men claimed they had allegedly been "wronged" by the two women.

These chilling murders are without a doubt the most gruesome form of men's gendered violence towards women. But what is also an important and equally chilling detail is the galling sense of being "heart-broken victims" that these men espouse in an attempt to justify and account for their violence.

For example, Singh produced a 23 minute video-recording reflecting on his actions, before murdering his girlfriend. In the video he said, "She broke my heart, she will break other people's hearts, someone has to punish her, so I'll do it..." For Singh, it seems justified to "teach" her a lesson.

Similarly, according to media reports, Khan has been unapologetic showing no remorse for his actions whilst in police custody. He murdered his girlfriend in full public glare, merely 300 metres away from her home, allegedly when their relationship soured and she started "ignoring" his calls

and messages.

Whatever the reasons for their relationship not working out, these young men's entitlement at "teaching" women a lesson is a chilling sentiment that needs to be taken seriously. Media reports in both cases indicated that the young women attempted to distance themselves from the two young men as their relationship was breaking-down – but the men did not like this.

Sneha Chaurasia, for example, reportedly complained to university authorities multiple times about Singh's behaviour, but no action was taken. Likewise, Sakshi had apparently shown Khan a gun, which the police believe was a toy, in an attempt to get rid of him and his unwanted advances and end the relationship. These women were not ambivalent about exiting these relationships, but that seems to have been unacceptable to the young men in question.

As a scholar of young men and masculinities in India, these cases are not simply about one or two bad young men. Rather, they point to the dire state of young men and their warped and dangerous understanding of being a man in India that is linked to the broader gender inequities and sexual culture that prevails. It also reveals the deep sense of entitlement of both men over their girlfriends and their inability to fathom women as sexual citizens.

In a patriarchal and heterosexist social system, women are seen as passive sexual objects, whereas men as active sexual citizens. Men are required to "chase" women, talk to them and coax them into romance and sex. Men decide when to start or end a relationship with women.

Whereas "good" women are not sexually active agents – they do not control and lead their own sexual and romantic lives. Women choosing whom they have sex with or form or end relationships with begins to

threaten the way young men's masculinity and sense of being a man are constructed. Essentially, women have no sexual choice or agency in the eyes of these men.

Hence, ideas of "punishing" women or "teaching them a lesson" start to seem justified for young men who think of these women as "acting out of line". This dangerous and regressive idea can lead to a situation where young men like Singh and Khan think that they are "heart-broken victims", who have been wronged by women.

These masculine forms of power and entitlement over women reveal not just the violence and inequality of the gendered and sexual lives of men and women in India today, but also point to the grave dangers to women entering and exiting sexual or romantic relationships with men.

Young women, in exercising their basic sexual rights to decide when and how to engage with their sexual partners, are deemed "bad girls" with corrupted morals. Feminists have long challenged these ideas and the narrow framing of women's lives. Yet, men like Singh and Khan continue extreme forms of violence towards their intimate partners for the most minor forms of sexual choice.

While such violence is executed by men, it is not merely a problem of the men in question, but something rooted in the wider culture of men and masculinities that legitimise how gender, sex, love and desire operate in Indian society. Thus, women entering relationships with men do so at great personal risk, because a patriarchal masculine culture not only devalues and degrades but also invisibilises gendered and sexual inequalities in India.

Throughout my research with young men in Delhi, this remained a constant theme. More and more young men seemed to get into romantic and sexual relationships with women with ease. Yet, at the same time, women were routinely framed as cheating, unreliable, promiscuous, greedy and untrustworthy. Young men painted themselves as victims who were allegedly under great strain and being taken for a ride by women. In my book, *Becoming Young Men in a New India*, I chronicle the many complexities of young men and their warped sense of being "victims", whilst treating their girlfriends with violence and in appalling and sexist ways. To address these dangerous inequalities, it is important to understand how these complex masculine cultures operate, whom they implicate and why they continue unabated.

While notions of love and dating might be transforming, what is not changing at the same pace are structures of masculine privilege and entitlement. Young men need to fully understand the value and stakes of women's sexual citizenship and agency, whilst redefining their intimate relationships by seeing women as companions and not just mere sex objects. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)



## Sun-tan in Monsoon

By: Shahnaz Husain

Everyone loves the monsoon season. Maintaining beautiful skin when the heaven pours is a challenge. Pollution, dirt, grime and the harmful UV rays of the sun are the main reason why your skin is prone to damage during the monsoon season.

Often we think that if it is raining outside, then what is the use of applying sunscreen, but dangerous rays like UVA and UVB can tan your skin even from clouds.

Since the sun is playing hide and seek these monsoons, our skin is even more susceptible to getting tanned due to the combination of sun and humidity.

Simply put, as long as there is daylight enough to distinguish the time of day from night, there is sunlight. And if there is sunlight, there are sun rays. Clouds do not prevent us from UV rays

Sun tanning is one of the immediate effects of sun exposure during monsoon.

Let's find out some easy ways how to remove tan with these natural remedies that can be easily made at home. They will help repair the affected cells, revive sunburned skin and make it glow as well.

The raw gel from the Aloe Vera plant is immensely beneficial for your skin when you are looking to treat a dark tan. It also soothes sunburn patches and replenishes the skin's natural moisture. Mix two tablespoons of aloe vera gel with 1/2 tablespoon of honey and turmeric and one tablespoon of water. Apply this face pack to your face in a thin layer. Wash it off with lukewarm water after 30 minutes. Use it twice a week for best results.

Apply a thick layer of Aloe Vera Gel before going to bed and wash it off using a mild cleanser in the morning. Repeat this procedure every day to get rid of the suntan at home

Take an Aloe Vera leaf and rub it directly onto the tanned skin. Wash it off with water after a while.

Take one potato juice and Aloe Vera Gel. Apply it on tanned areas of skin and leave it for half an hour. It will give soothing effects from tan and will also lighten your skin

You can apply raw potato slices on the tanned area or potato juice for a few minutes. Potatoes contain an enzyme called catecholase - which helps to lighten skin tone.

Grate half a potato, and mix it with half a teaspoon of turmeric.



Apply the paste to your face and neck, and let it sit for 30 minutes before washing it off. Repeat twice or thrice a week.

Using a facial scrub is useful. You can buy a facial scrub according to skin type. If the skin is dry, a scrub should be used only once a week, but for oily skin, it may be used more often. The scrub should be applied and rubbed gently on the skin with small circular movements. Then wash it off with plain water. This helps to remove dead skin cells, along with their contained pigment. The skin becomes brighter and the tan is gradually removed.

You can make scrubs and packs at home with kitchen ingredients. In fact, many such ingredients can be applied on the skin to gradually remove tan and also soothe the skin, in case of sunburn.

Scrub: Ground almonds (badam) make a good facial scrub. Soak the almonds in hot water till the skin comes out easily. Then allow them to become totally dry. Grind them into a powder, making sure to follow absolute hygiene and cleanliness. Keep this powder in an airtight jar. Every morning, add a little curd or cold milk to two teaspoons of the powder and rub the mixture gently on the skin. Wash it off with water. Mixing rice powder with curd and using it as a scrub helps oily skin.

To remove tan: Add a pinch of turmeric (haldi) to curd and apply daily. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes. Or, mix one teaspoon of honey with two teaspoons of lemon juice and apply daily on the face, washing it off with plain water after 20 minutes.

Take the sandalwood powder and make it into a paste with the help of tender coconut water. Apply it to the tanned skin and wash it off with water after a while. You may replace coconut water with rose water or use the

juice of cucumber instead.

To remove tan on oily skin: Mix cucumber pulp with yoghurt and apply it on the face daily. Wash it off after 20 minutes. It will suit oily skin since cucumber is an astringent.

For oily skin: Mix tomato pulp with one teaspoon of honey and apply daily for 20 minutes.

For sunburn: Cold milk applied daily, using cotton wool, not only helps to soothe the skin but also keeps it soft. It also makes the skin colour lighter over a period of time, if used daily. It would suit normal to dry skin.

To soothe sunburn: Another remedy to soothe sunburn and protect the skin is by using sesame seed, or "til". Take a handful of the sesame seed, crush it and add half a cup of water. Let it stand for two hours. Strain the liquid and use it to wash your face. Cleansing and skin lightening mask: Mix cucumber and papaya pulp with one teaspoon curd, one teaspoon honey, 4 teaspoons oatmeal and one teaspoon lemon juice. Apply on face and neck, twice a week and wash it off after half an hour.

Body: Massage daily with sesame seed oil. Mix besan with curd, lemon juice and a little turmeric. The paste should be thick and should not drip. Apply on the neck, arms and legs three times a week for 30 minutes. Wash it off and then apply the oil, as recommended.

For hands: Take 2 tablespoons of sunflower oil and 3 tablespoons of coarse sugar. Mix together till it becomes a paste. Apply and rub into hands. Rinse off after 15 minutes. For feet: Add lemon juice to water and soak feet in it. Cool clean and removes tan and odour. Rubbing a lemon on the feet also helps.

(The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)



## Rajnath inaugurates HAL's regional office in Malaysia

**KUALA LUMPUR, July 11 (PTT):** Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday inaugurated the regional office of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Kuala Lumpur to facilitate close defence industrial collaboration between India and Malaysia. "In a major defence export outreach activity, the HAL's first ever Regional Marketing Office was opened in the presence of RM Shri @rajnathsingh at Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. This regional office will cater to the South East Asian region and will also assist other Defence PSUs in getting orders," his office tweeted.

HAL is an Indian Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DSPU), akin to GLC in Malaysia. HAL will assume the role of a one-stop agency to facilitate collaboration between Indian and Malaysian companies. "As the first overseas office of HAL, it symbolises the potential for closer defence industrial collaboration between India and Malaysia and also, the South East Asian Region," said Singh, who is here on a three-day visit to Malaysia.

Later, a release issued by the Ministry of Defence said that recognising defence exports as a key pillar of sustainable growth of the Indian defence industry, Singh inaugurated the HAL's Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur.

Singh twice interacted with the Indian diaspora. The first community interaction included ministers and senior officials of Government of Malaysia and eminent personalities from polity, culture and the industry, the release said.

Malaysia is home to the second largest members of the Persons of Indian Origin and has a significant presence of the NRI community.

During the event, Singh appreciated the rich legacy of Indian classical art tradition in Malaysia as witnessed in the presentations of Odissi dance as well as the Carnatic and Hindustani music performances by renowned Malaysian artists.

In a separate event, he interacted with the members of the diverse and vibrant Indian community in Malaysia, including the leaders and members of various Indian community organisations in the country. He appreciated their deep-rooted and close connect with India. Singh acknowledged the role of the Indian diaspora in the growth story of India and encouraged them to work honestly for the shared prosperity of India and Malaysia, underlining the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', the release added. He visited the Ramakrishna Mission in Petaling Jaya and offered tributes to Swami Vivekananda, calling him a 'Global Youth Icon'.

## Saudi Arabia deposits \$2 bn in Pak's central bank as a boost ahead of a key IMF meeting



**ISLAMABAD, July 11 (AP):** Saudi Arabia has deposited \$2 billion into Pakistan's central bank, the government said on Tuesday, a much-needed financial boost ahead of a critical meeting of the International Monetary Fund on the new bailout package for the cash-strapped South Asian country.

In a video statement, Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said the kingdom was making good on its promise to bolster Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. The infusion is not a loan as such but will shore up the reserves and remain with Pakistan's central bank for at least a year.

The development comes on the eve of the meeting of the IMF's executive board which is expected to approve a new and much-needed \$3 billion loan to Pakistan to help the country overcome an economic crisis. Dar said that with the Saudi deposit, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves which dropped to \$9.6 billion last week — barely enough to pay import bills for a month — have gone up to \$11.6. "We thank the Saudi leadership on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan," he said.

He assured the nation that Pakistan would soon return to the path of growth. "God willing, now Pakistan's economy will witness an improvement," Dar said.

## Finland has already become the 31<sup>st</sup> member of the alliance, and Sweden is on deck to become the 32<sup>nd</sup> NATO summit boosted by deal to advance Sweden's bid to join alliance

**VILNIUS (LITHUANIA), July 11 (AP):** NATO's summit began on Tuesday with fresh momentum after Türkiye withdrew its objections to Sweden joining the alliance, a step toward the unity that Western leaders have been eager to demonstrate in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The decision by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a significant move toward Sweden's membership and it will alleviate tension in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. The deal was reached after days of intensive meetings, and it's poised to expand the alliance's strength in Northern Europe.

"Rumours of the death of NATO's unity were greatly exaggerated," Jake Sullivan, the US national security adviser, told reporters triumphantly on Tuesday morning. As part of the deal, Erdogan said he would ask Türkiye's parliament to approve Sweden joining NATO. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, another holdout, is expected to take a similar step. The outcome is a victory for President Joe Biden as well, who has touted NATO's expansion as an example of how Russia's invasion of Ukraine has backfired on

Moscow. Finland has already become the 31st member of the alliance, and Sweden is on deck to become the 32nd. Both Nordic countries were historically non-aligned until the war increased fears of Russian aggression.

Because of the deal on Sweden's membership, "this summit is already historic before it has started," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said. Biden was scheduled to meet with Erdogan on Tuesday evening, and it's unclear how some of Erdogan's other demands will be resolved.

He has been seeking advanced American fighter jets and a path toward membership in the European Union. The White House has expressed support for both, but publicly insisted that the issues were not related to Sweden's membership in NATO.

"I stand ready to work with President Erdogan and Türkiye on enhancing defence and deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic area," Biden said in a statement late Monday.

The phrasing was a nod to Biden's commitment to help Türkiye acquire new F-16 fighter jets, according to an administration official who was not authorised to



comment publicly.

The Biden administration has backed Türkiye's desire to buy 40 new F-16s as well as modernisation kits from the US. It's a move some in Congress, most notably Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez, D-N.J., have opposed over Türkiye blocking NATO membership for Sweden, its human rights record and other concerns.

In Washington, Menendez said he was "continuing to have my reservations" on providing the

fighter aircraft to Türkiye.

If the Biden administration could show that Türkiye wouldn't use the F-16s belligerently against other NATO members, particularly its neighbour Greece, and meet other conditions, "then there may be a way forward," Menendez told reporters.

NATO leaders will still have other big questions to address at their summit, particularly Ukraine's desire to join NATO. The Baltic states — including Lithuania, which is hosting the

event — have pushed for a strong show of support and a clear pathway toward membership for Ukraine.

The United States and Germany have resisted that, and Biden said last week that Ukraine wasn't ready to join. Members of NATO, he told CNN, need to "meet all the qualifications, from democratisation to a whole range of other issues," a nod toward longstanding concerns about governance and corruption in Kyiv.

In addition, some fear that bringing Ukraine into NATO would serve more as a provocation to Russia than as a deterrence against aggression. Stoltenberg wrote in Foreign Affairs on Monday that the alliance would "upgrade our political ties" by forming a NATO-Ukraine Council, which would be "a platform for decisions and crisis consultation."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is expected to attend the summit on Wednesday. He plans to meet with Biden while there, according to two administration officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss plans that have not been announced.

Stoltenberg reiterated that

Ukraine will eventually become a member of NATO, a commitment made in 2008 under President George W. Bush. The NATO chief did not outline more specifics.

However, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said NATO had agreed to forgo requiring a "membership action plan," a decision that he said "shortens our path to NATO." Stoltenberg reiterated that point on Tuesday.

"Ukraine is much closer to NATO so I think the time has come to reflect that in other NATO decisions," he said. Sullivan said allies were debating the "precise nature" of Ukraine's pathway to membership in the alliance. However, he promised that the summit would demonstrate how Putin's hopes for fractures within NATO will be unfulfilled.

"He has been disappointed from every turn," he said. "Vilnius will continue to disappoint him."

Biden spent Monday in the United Kingdom, where he met with King Charles III for the first time since he ascended to the throne. After a royal welcome at Windsor Castle, they discussed mobilizing financial support to combat climate change.

## Ukrainian minister says he fears Russia has 'no red lines' to prevent attacks on nuclear plant

**KYIV, July 11 (AP):** The catastrophic collapse of a dam in southern Ukraine has made Kyiv worried that Russia might stage an attack on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant to foment panic and quell Ukrainian advances on the frontline, Ukraine's energy minister said on Monday.

Herman Halushchenko said the destruction of the dam while under Russian control in the Kherson region proved "there are no red lines" for Moscow.

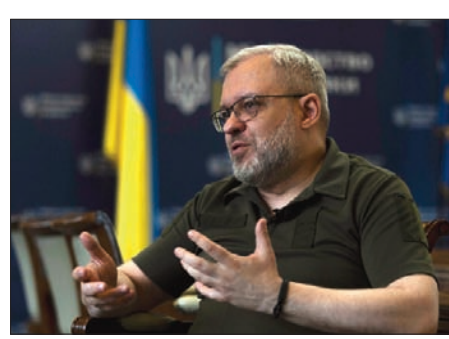
He said it warrants the level of alarm Ukraine's leadership has been raising in recent weeks of an alleged Russian ploy to attack the nuclear plant in a possible false flag operation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alleged last week, citing intelligence reports, that Russian troops placed "objects resembling explosives" atop several power units to "simulate" an attack.

Drone and satellite images obtained by the Associated Press showed unidentified white objects on the roof of the plant's fourth power unit, but Ukrainian leaders have so far been unable to provide further evidence.

While Russia accuses Ukraine of bombarding the Kakhovka dam, Kyiv blames Moscow for the attack on the dam in late May, which triggered a humanitarian crisis and caused widespread ecological devastation. An AP investigation found that Moscow had the means and motive to carry out the attack.

Halushchenko said he and Zelenskyy had



raised alarms as early as October 2022 that the Russians could plant mines to blow up the Kakhovka dam.

"For many many people it sounded ridiculous ... and when it happened everybody understood that there are no red lines for them," he said in a sit-down interview with The Associated Press. "And of course it's all connected to the counter-offensive operation, and after Kakhovka, the one tool which they still have is Zaporizhzhia."

The nuclear plant was seized by Russia in March 2022, in the first weeks of the war in Ukraine, raising fears of a nuclear accident. Over the past year, Russia and Ukraine repeatedly accused each other of shelling the plant.

Ukraine's military intelligence has claimed for weeks, without providing evidence, that Russia is planning a "large-scale provocation" at the nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, in

the southeast of the country.

Around the same time, Ukraine launched the early phase of its much anticipated counter-offensive last month and has reported steady advances along multiple directions of the 1,500 kilometre frontline. An incident at the plant could halt Ukraine's advance, Zelenskyy has said. Ukrainian military intelligence reports have said that Russia placed mines on the roof of the nuclear plant, and put remote-controlled and regular anti-personnel mines in technical and machine rooms.

Image experts the AP spoke to could not identify the objects that have been seen on the roof. Jeffrey Lewis, a professor at the Middlebury Institute and satellite image expert, said the objects appeared to be placed on the roof of the unit's turbine hall, and, if it turns out to be a bomb, is unlikely to cause serious damage to the reactor.

The Russians have cited security concerns in granting only limited access to officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency's Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said recently that the IAEA had recently gained access to more of the site, including the cooling pond and fuel storage areas.

The Ukrainians had said those areas were mined by the Russians, but the IAEA found they were not, Grossi said. The agency has not yet been given access to inspect the roof of the plant.

## Israelis block highways in nationwide protests over government's plan to overhaul judiciary

**JERUSALEM, July 11 (AP):** Israeli protesters blocked highways leading to Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv on Tuesday, at the start of a day of countrywide demonstrations against the government's planned judicial overhaul that has divided the nation.

The demonstrations came the morning after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's parliamentary coalition gave initial approval for a bill to limit the Supreme Court's oversight powers, pressing forward with the contentious proposed changes to the judiciary despite widespread opposition.

The legislation is one of several bills proposed by Netanyahu's ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox allies. The plan has provoked

months of sustained protests by opponents who say it is pushing the country toward authoritarian rule. Anti-overhaul activists have called for nationwide mass demonstrations throughout the day, including protests at Israel's main international airport that could disrupt travel.

Police cleared protesters who blocked a main artery leading to Jerusalem with a water cannon and others arrested several others who had obstructed a highway next to the central city of Modin.

Demonstrators blocked a main highway in Haifa with a large banner reading "together we will be victorious," snarling traffic along the beachfront.

Netanyahu's allies have pro-

posed a series of changes to the Israeli legal system aimed at weakening what they say are the excessive powers of unelected judges. The proposed changes include giving Netanyahu's allies control over the appointment of judges and giving parliament power to overturn court decisions.

Netanyahu put the overhaul plan on hold in March after weeks of mass protests. But last month, he decided to revive the plan after talks with the political opposition aimed at finding a compromise collapsed.

The Netanyahu government, which took office in December, is the most hard-line ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox in Israel's 75-year history.

The report was released ahead of a summit that Guterres has called during the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN General Assembly in Sept

## UN warns its development goals for 2030 are in trouble and 575 million people will remain very poor

**UNITED NATIONS, July 11 (AP):** In a grim report, the UN warned Monday that at the current rate of global progress 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty and 84 million children won't be going to school in 2030 — and it will take 286 years to reach equality between men and women. The report on progress in achieving 17 wide-ranging UN goals adopted by world leaders in 2015 to improve life for the world's more than 7 billion people said that only 15 per cent of some 140 specific targets that experts evaluated are on track to be reached by the end of the decade.

Close to half the targets are moderately or severely off track, it said, and of those 30 per cent have either seen no movement at all or regressed including key targets on poverty, hunger and climate.

The ambitious goals for 2030 include ensuring that hunger is eradicated and nobody lives on less than USD 2.15 a day which is the extreme poverty line, providing

every child with a quality primary and secondary school education, achieving gender equality, ensuring all people have clean water, sanitation and access to affordable energy, reducing inequalities, and taking urgent action to combat climate change.

"Unless we act now, the 2030 agenda could become an epitaph for a world that might have been," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a foreword to the report. "Failure to make progress means inequalities will continue to deepen, increasing the risk of a fragmented, two-speed world."

The report was released ahead of a summit that Guterres has called during the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September, which he said will be "a moment of truth and reckoning." Undersecretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Li Junhua said conflicts including the war in Ukraine, climate change, the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic especially its devastating financial



impact on developing countries, and geopolitical tensions are all "threatening to derail hard-earned progress" toward achieving the goals. He said in a foreword that the pandemic saw the largest decline in childhood vaccinations in three decades, an increase in tuberculosis and malaria deaths, and learning losses in 80 per cent of the 104 countries studied. It also interrupted three decades of progress in reducing poverty, and

produced the largest rise in inequality between countries in three decades, he said.

"By May 2023, the devastating consequences of war, conflict and human rights violations had displaced a staggering 110 million people of which 35 million were refugees — the highest figure ever recorded," the ECOSOC chief said. Li told a news conference launching the report that at the

September summit, the UN would like political leaders to come up with "a new roadmap" to accelerate action at the global, regional and national level to achieve the goals by 2030. With seven years left, the report said achieving the goals is "in deep trouble" and "it is time to sound the alarm."

At current rates, it said not only will 575 million people still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 but only about one-third of countries will meet the target to reduce national poverty levels by half. "Shockingly, the world is back at hunger levels not seen since 2005, and food prices remain higher in more countries than in the period 2015-2019," the report said.

In 2021, the number of people suffering from hunger was close to 800 million, far above pre-pandemic levels, and in 2022 an estimated 45 million children under the age of 5 suffered from wasting and 148 million had stunted growth while 37 million were overweight, it said.

## China signs pact with Solomon Islands to boost cooperation on 'law enforcement and security matters'



**BEIJING, July 11 (AP):** The Solomon Islands has signed an agreement to boost cooperation with China on "law enforcement and security matters," in a move likely to raise concerns among the South Pacific island's traditional partners including Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The agreement, details of which were not immediately released, was contained in a joint statement made public on Tuesday following a meeting Monday in Beijing between Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare.

As part of efforts to build a "comprehensive strategic partnership" the sides agreed to: "Enhance cooperation on law enforcement and security matters. The Chinese side will continue to provide support and help to Solomon Islands as needed in strengthening Solomon Islands' police law enforcement capacity."

Located 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) northeast of Australia, Solomon Islands has been China's biggest success in a campaign to expand its presence in the South Pacific. Sogavare's government switched official recognition in 2019 to Beijing from Taiwan, the self-governed island democracy China claims as part of its territory.

The Solomon Islands signed a secretive security agreement with Beijing in 2022 that might have allowed Chinese military forces in the South Pacific. However, Sogavare rejected suggestions his government might give Beijing a military foothold in the region. The nearby island nation of Kiribati also switched official relations to Beijing in 2019.

China has already provided the Solomons with police training and donated replica guns and riot-control equipment such as water cannon vehicles. A country of 700,000 people made up of six major islands and some 900 smaller ones, the Solomons has seen periods of ethnic tension, during which Australia, New Zealand and other Pacific island nations have committed forces to help restore order.

In the wake of Sogavare's warming relationship with Beijing, the U.S. has committed to reopen an American Embassy in the capital Honiara and it and its allies have increased their engagement with the region as a whole. Biden convened a summit of Pacific Island leaders in September to unveil a strategy that included cooperation in climate change, maritime security and preventing overfishing. His administration has also promised \$810 million in new aid for Pacific Island nations over the next decade, including \$130 million to address the effects of climate change.

Sogavare also met with president and head of the ruling Communist Party Xi Jinping on Monday, and the joint statement included a reference to "high-quality" cooperation under Xi's signature "'Belt and Road" blueprint that aims to build ports, highways, power stations and other infrastructure financed by Chinese loans.



# NHIDCL, BRO, PWD (NH) to submit report on monsoon preparedness to Nagaland gov

## July 4 rockslide incident keeps officials on their toes

HT Correspondent

**DIMAPUR, July 11:** Following the July 4 rockslide incident near the old police check post on NH-29 at Chumoukedima, Nagaland deputy chief minister TR Zeliang directed the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL), BRO and PWD (NH) to submit a detailed report on monsoon preparedness to ensure public safety on or before July 21.

Two persons were killed and three others injured while three vehicles were crushed when boulders fell on them from above NH-29 at the stretch of the road.

Addressing a press conference after holding a monsoon preparedness meeting with PWD (NH), NHIDCL, BRO and contractors at Chumoukedima police complex on Tuesday, Zeliang, who is also the minister in charge of national highways in the state, said safety measures



to be taken not only on NH-29 (Dimapur-Kohima road) but also along all roads across the state were discussed at the meeting. He stressed that safety measures should be the top priority in any road construction project.

"In the initial stage at the landslide-prone areas, they should not cut down the whole hill from top to

bottom and construct the road," he said. Zeliang stressed that there should be bench-cutting of hills and bridge wall construction first before construction of a road.

When asked who is responsible for the July 4 incident, he called it a "natural calamity".

"We have underlined some important points the implementing

agencies should take up at their end at the meeting," he said.

Zeliang stopped short of blaming the NHIDCL for the July 4 incident, saying it is only an implementing agency and not a technically expert organisation.

He said he pointed out at the meeting that the July 4 incident was not the first incident and said four vehicles were damaged and the occupants were seriously injured due to rock-falling along the same stretch. He added that the NHIDCL was asked to intimate what action it took or why no action was taken on the letter written by the Nagaland Pollution Control Board on September 25, 2020, and February 4, 2021, to it to refrain from using dynamites for blasting of rocks in the area for fear of destruction of environment, injury to travellers and damage to vehicles.

Zeliang also said it was questioned whether the hilly portion

from Patkai Bridge along the stretch was cut according to the specification in the DPR and why sufficient space was not made available so that rock fall does not land directly on the road.

He asked the NHIDCL to desist from questioning the state government on safety measures taken along other roads in the state and instead focus on its assigned job.

"This is not the way to deal with issues where precious lives have been lost," he maintained.

Zeliang directed that henceforth the name of each appointed firm or contractor should be displayed in the form of a signboard within the portion of every package on every National Highway in Nagaland.

He also reminded all government department officials and public undertaking corporations entrusted to supervise any road project that "we are all answerable as the road belongs to the people of the state".

## Deputy commissioner orders shops to shut at 10pm in Shillong

**SHILLONG, July 11 (PTI):** Following the attack on a police station in Meghalaya capital Shillong recently, the East Khasi Hills district administration has asked shop owners to down their shutters by 10pm, officials said on Monday.

In an order, deputy commissioner RM Kurbah said, "Preventive measures need to be taken to ensure the safety and security of the public and to maintain peace and tranquility within the city. In exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Section 144 CrPC, I do hereby prohibit opening of shops will be restricted up to 10 pm."

She also prohibited consumption of intoxicants and engaging in any unlawful activities in vehicles besides playing loud music near educational/religious institutions, hospitals and residential areas after 10 pm.

The order was issued in view of the various incidents of violence that took place in and around Shillong which had also led to law and order situations particularly during the night, she said, warning that violators will be punished as per penal provisions under Section 188 of the IPC.

Last week, a police station here



was attacked and four vehicles parked inside the compound were torched after an unruly mob ransacked the police station when two groups of drunken people had an altercation outside the police station.

He said the scuffle between the two groups of people started off as a minor incident in which only a few drunken people were involved in the altercation.

At least 5 persons involved in the drunken brawl were arrested and police are on the lookout for the others in the crowd who were involved in the arson, district SP Sylvester Nongtynger said.

## Arunachal forest department seizes more than 15 illegal timber mills

"The Hills Times" impact

HT Correspondent

**MARGHERITA, July 11:** The Arunachal forest department on Tuesday conducted raid and seized more than 15 illegal timber mills located at Chowkham under Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh.

"The Hills Times" published reports on nefarious incidents of rampant illegal trade at Assam Arunachal Pradesh border forest reserve areas. Devid Phukan vice president of Assam Pradesh Youth Congress Committee said that the committee had already sub-

mitted a complaint to the forest department of Itanagar Arunachal Pradesh regarding the ongoing illegal timber syndicate at Chowkham, Namsai, Nampai, Jairampur, Miao and Medu which "The Hills Times" had serially published the news against illegal timber syndicate for which on Tuesday officials from Itanagar forest department seized more than 15 illegal timber mills at Chowkham. One 16 wheeler and one 6 wheeler illegal loaded timber vehicle were also seized during this raid said Devid Phukan.

## Clothes worth over ₹ 13 lakh seized from international border in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, July 11 (PTI):** The BSF seized clothes worth over Rs 13 lakh from Pyrdiwha near the Indo-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district, an official said on Tuesday.

Acting on a specific tip-off, troops of the BSF thwarted attempts to smuggle clothes, mostly sarees, to Bangladesh on Monday, a BSF spokesperson said.

The troops noticed some movements close to the International border on Monday night and when confronted, the smugglers fled away taking advantage of the thick vegetation leaving behind the huge consignment of clothes, he said.

The seized items were later handed over to the customs office for further action, the officer said.

## Body of missing IRB jawan found in West Sikkim



**GANGTOK, July 10 (PTI):** The body of the missing India Reserve Battalion (IRB) jawan was recovered in West Sikkim district, police said on Monday.

A police team recovered the body of the 29-year-old Passang Tshering Bhutia along with his two-wheeler from a nullah near a private girl's school, they said.

The deceased IRB jawan was a native of West Sikkim and had gone missing three days ago about which a complaint was registered by his family members, they said.

An investigation in this matter was on, police added.

## Tripura heading towards debt trap, says Congress

**AGARTALA, July 11(PTI):** Tripura Pradesh Congress on Tuesday termed the state budget as anti-people and said it has failed to address the genuine concerns of citizens. Tripura finance minister Pranajit Singha Roy had presented ₹ 27,654-crore deficit budget in the Assembly on Friday.

"The budget neither promised dearness allowance for government employees nor new jobs. It will not benefit the people in any way," TPCC president Asish Kumar Saha told reporters here.

Saha alleged the BJP government in the state and the centre has been pushing Tripura towards

a debt trap and its debt burden has already touched ₹ 24,832 crore.

"The Left government's had amassed a debt of ₹ 13,500 crore during its 25 years rule, but the BJP government pushed it to ₹ 24,832 crore in six years," he said.

"Where is the slogan of Atmanirbhar Tripura! In every budget, the finance minister announces some new schemes, but nobody knows the status of these programmes," he said.

Claiming that the government had reduced the budgetary outlay for a few departments, Saha said development will not be possible without adequate funds.

## Meghalaya providing shelter to 77 people from Manipur: Official

**SHILLONG, July 11 (PTI):** Meghalaya is now providing shelter to 77 people who fled from the ethnic strife-hit Manipur, an official said on Tuesday.

East Khasi Hills deputy commissioner RM Kurbah said that initially, about 365 people from Manipur had taken shelter in various parts of the city. "Majority of them have left for Aizawl, Guwa-

hati, Bangalore, New Delhi and some have returned to their home state and only 77 are still taking shelter here," she said.

The migrants have informed the authorities at the respective localities about their stay, the DC said.

The district administration has held meeting with these people residing in the state capital for their safety and security, the DC added.

## Review meeting for aspirational district Kiphire

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, July 11:** A review meeting for the Aspirational District Kiphire was held from July 4 to 6, followed by the Special District Planning & Development Board on July 7 2023 at Commissioner's & Circuit House, Nagaland Kohima.

The meeting was chaired by MLA C Kipli Sangtam, chairman DPDB Kiphire. The meeting was also attended by advisor S Kiusemew Yimkhung, fire & emergency Services, home guards civil defence, and relief & rehabilitation. At the outset, the chairman welcomed all the members and appreciated them for their

services and understanding of their own duties. He also stated that having the DPDB meeting in Kohima for the Kiphire District is the first time in history, and added that the meeting will be fruitful. He urged all the HoOs to give their suggestions and opinions for the betterment of the district. He also inquired about the progress and status of departmental works in the Kiphire District. Advisor S Kiusemew Yimkhung encouraged all the HoOs to provide their best service to the district and stressed the importance of the aspirational district, seeking suggestions from the members regarding the district.

## Foundation stone of memorial to pay tributes to freedom fighters in Tripura

**AGARTALA, July 11(PTI):** On the occasion of 75 years of Independence, Tripura chief minister Manik Saha will lay the foundation stone of a memorial to pay tribute to 50 freedom fighters of the state, an official said on Tuesday.

This will be the beginning of the state government's month-long programme of '75 Border Village Krantibiro ki Naam' as part of the Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav.

"On July 14, chief minister Manik Saha will lay the foundation stone of the memorial in South Tripura's Nabincherra to mark the start of the month-long '75 Border Village Krantibiro ki Naam' programme," District Magistrate, South, Saju Vaheed told PTI.

The programme will be held in 13 villages in the South district to pay tribute to the freedom fighters, he said, adding a bicycle rally, a marathon race and a cultural programme will also be organised on the occasion.

Vaheed, who visited Nabincherra in Sabroom subdivision on Monday to take stock of the preparations, said the month-long programme will conclude on August 15.

The programme will be held in all the selected 75 border villages to promote nationalism among people, said vice-chairman of information and cultural affairs department Subrata Chakraborty.

## Ten people arrested, 885 gm of heroin seized in Mizoram



**AIZAWL, July 11 (PTI):** Ten people were arrested in connection with the seizure of 885 gm of heroin by Mizoram Excise and Narcotics department and police from three different places in the state.

The Excise and Narcotics department said in a statement that 826 gm of heroin was seized from Keifang in Saitual district about 75 km from Aizawl on Tuesday.

Four people, all residents of Mizoram, have been arrested for possessing the contraband, the statement said.

Besides, three Assam residents, who tried to take the seized heroin from the four, have also been arrested, it said.

In another operation, the department officials also seized 22 gm of heroin from the possession of a local resident at Aizawl's Bawngkawn area on Monday.

A team of Serchhip district special branch (DSB) of police also seized 37.42 gm of heroin concealed in 3 soap cases from the possession of two peddlers in Serchhip on Monday, police said in a statement.

He also asked the scouts and guides to create awareness about health issues, environment, cleanliness and civil sense amongst citizens.

Earlier, the governor was inducted into the Bharat Scouts & Guides organization, by administering the 'Scout Promise' by state chief commissioner, BSG State Association, and was presented a Scout scarf and state BSG Patron medallion.

State education minister Taba Tedir, who is also the president of Bharat Scouts & Guides State Association and director of School Education Marken Kadu also spoke on the occasion. Chanyan Lowang, SOC (Guides) said scouting in the north-eastern state started in 1948 with 24 boys in Pasighat and at present there are 877 Scouts and Guides units in 439 schools with 12,352 members.

## Three illegal coke plants demolished in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, July 11 (PTI):** Meghalaya government on Tuesday said it has demolished at least 3 illegal coke plants in West Khasi Hills district in compliance with a high court order and arrested five people involved in running these plants, officials said.

"Till Monday, three illegal coke plants have been demolished and more such plants will be demolished by July 20," a senior government official told PTI.

According to the official, the demolition and arrests were made in compliance with the Meghalaya High Court order in December last year.

He said the process of dismantling the beehive coke ovens have begun to ensure that they do not become operational again.

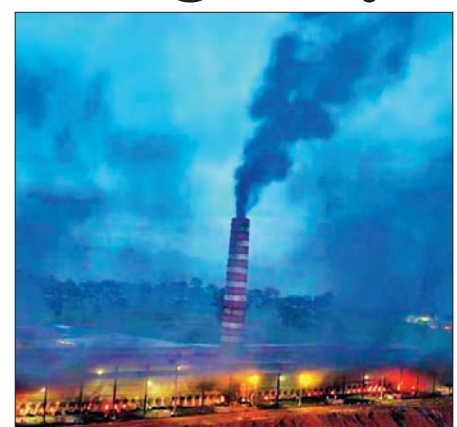
He said the eradication of illegal coke plants is an essential step towards restoring the region's ecological balance.

Acting on a PIL, the Meghalaya High Court had sought the state government's action on shutting down the illegal coke plants in remote West Khasi Hills district to prevent illegal mining and transportation of coal.

The National Green Tribunal had in 2014 issued a blanket ban on unscientific mining and transportation of coal in this hill state resulting in the Supreme Court also monitoring the transportation of already mined coal.

Despite the ban, chief minister Conrad K Sangma had told the Assembly last year that 1,652 cases had been registered for illegal transportation of coal in the state and 109 cases registered against illegal mining and extraction of coal.

Of this, 1,354 have been chargesheeted and 472 convicted, he had informed the House.



During the past 9 years, several accidents were also reported in illegal coal mines across the state in which over 20 miners have lost their lives.

Last year, a coal mine collapsed in West Khasi Hills district in which 2 miners died and one was injured.

An illegal coke plant was dismantled by the district administration of West Khasi Hills of Meghalaya on Saturday, according to a delayed report.

This came after five persons were recently arrested for running illegal coke plants in the district.

The administration had informed that there are over 61 coke plants at Shallang of which 4 have proper documents while the remaining are all illegal.

It said that all illegal coke plants have been shut down and an investigation to nab the owners is going on.

TE[Ex] Admn-6/2022/479

### EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

#### ADMISSION FOR STATE QUOTA OF OUTSIDE ASSAM FOR DIPLOMA COURSES FOR THE SESSION-2023-24

Candidates who are permanent resident of Assam and appeared in Polytechnic Admission Test (PAT)-2023 and also interested to study Diploma Courses in the institutions located outside Assam against reserved seats for the session 2023-24 have to report for selection in the Office of the Director of Technical Education, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, as per the schedule and terms & conditions given below:-

Date of counseling : 20/07/2023

Time : 10.00 a.m.

No. of Diploma Seats offered by Ministry of Human Resource Development[MHRD] : 30 Nos.

No. of Diploma Seats offered by the Regional Institute of Printing Technology, Kolkata: Printing Technology : 6 Nos. & Photography : 3 Nos.

MHRD's seats:-

Sl.No.	Name of courses	No. of seats	Qualification	State
1.	Printing Technology	4	50% in H.S.L.C.	Tamil Nadu
2.	Cinematography	1	50% in PCM in H.S.	Karnaaka
3	Electronics & Comm.Engg.	5	50% in H.S.L.C.	Tamil Nadu
		2	50% in H.S.L.C.	Gujrat
4.	Interior Décor [for Girls']	3	45% in H.S.L.C.	Chandigarh
5.	Commercial Practice [for Girls']	2	45 % in H.S.L.C.	Gujrat
6.	Man-Made Fibre Technology	4	50% in H.S.L.C.	Tamil Nadu
7.	Fisheries Technology	1	50% in H.S.L.C.	Tamil Nadu
8.	CA-CD-DM [for Girls']	2	50% in H.S.L.C.	Gujrat
9.	Architectural Assistantship	2	50% in H.S.L.C.	Delhi
		1	50% in H.S.L.C.	Chandigarh
10.	Textile Process	3	50% in H.S.L.C.	Tamil Nadu
	Total MHRD's seats	30 Nos.		

Sl.No.	Name of courses	No. of seats	Qualification	State
1.	Printing Technology	6	50% in H.S.L.C.	Kolkata
2.	Photography	3	50% in H.S.L. C.	Kolkata
	Total RIPT's seats	9 Nos.		

Interested candidates are requested to report with all original documents of HSLC/ HSSLC passed certificates, H.S.L.C. Admit Card for age proof, permanent residential certificate (PRC) from the Competent Authority, Gap Certificate (if required), and attested copies of mark sheet , PAT-2023 score card etc.

N. B:- Candidates once admitted in the Polytechnics of Assam for the session 2023-24 may come for counseling for the above seats subject to the condition that they have to surrender the already admitted seat prior to taking admission in these seats if selected.

Sd/-

Director of Technical Education, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19.

Janasanyog /D/6644/23

## Imbibe 'work is worship' spirit: Arunachal Governor

**ITANAGAR, July 11 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik on Tuesday exhorted Scouts and Guides in the state to imbibe the spirit of 'work is worship' and dedicate themselves to meaningful activities that enhance governance and creates a conducive environment.

Presenting the state awards to 45 scouts and 59 guides at a function at Raj Bhavan, Parnaik urged them to always be prepared to accomplish their missions.

The governor is the patron of the state association of Bharat Scouts and Guides (BSG).

He congratulated the awardees and inspired them to give their best to be selected for Rashtrapati Puruskar.

Commending the state association of Bharat Scouts and Guides, the governor said it reflects the true process



of how young minds can be nurtured to become responsible citizens and good leaders.

"The United Nations has declared Scouts and Guides as Honorary Peace Messengers," he said.

Parnaik advised the Scouts and Guides masters to consider focusing on education in rural areas by motivating children and sensitizing the parents and guardians to cooperate, for better results.



# TMC dominates Bengal rural polls by bagging over 3,700 seats

**KOLKATA, July 11 (PTI):** Marching ahead of its rivals, the Trinamool Congress secured victory in over 3,700 gram panchayat seats and was leading in another 3,167 seats in West Bengal, while the opposition BJP bagged 673 seats and led in 782 others out of 63,229 gram panchayat seats across the state, according to data released by the State Election Commission.

The CPI(M) has won 241 seats and is currently leading in over 627 gram panchayat (GP) seats, followed by its ally Congress which won 107 GP seats and was leading in 241 others, it said. Counting of votes for the three-tier panchayat polls to nearly 74,000 seats which besides the gram panchayat seats, also includes 9,730 panchayat samiti seats and 928 zilla parishad seats, began at 8 am on Tuesday peacefully amid tight security, officials said. There are around 339 counting venues spread across 22 districts. The maximum number of counting centres is in South 24 Parganas at 28, while the minimum is in Kalimpong at four. Some northern districts are also facing inclement weather.

"Counting began at 8 am and is likely continue for the next two days. It will take time for the ballots to be counted and the results to be compiled," an SEC official said.

In Darjeeling hills, out of the 598 seats in Darjeeling and 281 in Kalimpong, the BGPM was leading in 21, whereas the BJP was head in one, and the independents were leading in four.



All the counting venues are manned by armed state police personnel and central forces, with prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC being imposed outside the venue to avoid any untoward incidents. There are a total of 767 strong rooms across 22 districts.

Large crowds of supporters of various candidates gathered at various centres to ensure that counting was conducted correctly.

In various districts, TMC supporters celebrated their victory by dancing and smearing each other with green gull.

As initial trends started pouring in, a war of words broke out between the TMC and the BJP, with the latter accusing the ruling party of "making last desperate attempts to loot votes by blocking opposition agents from entering counting centres."

"TMC goons are making desperate attempt to steal the elections by obstructing the counting agents and candidates of the BJP and other op-

position political parties from entering counting centres. They are being restricted from going towards the venue, and bombs are being hurled to intimidate counting agents," leader of the opposition, Suwendu Adhikari, said.

Refuting the allegations, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "sensing defeat, they are making baseless allegations."

"Rejected by people and sensing humiliating defeat, this is BJP's last attempt to come up with lame excuses to make up for its own organisational failures," he said.

Violence had rocked West Bengal's rural polls on Saturday, leaving 15 people dead while ballot boxes were vandalised, ballot papers torched, and bombs thrown at rivals in several places.

Of those killed, 11 were affiliated with the TMC. The total death toll in the state since the poll process began on June 8, when the dates were announced, has crossed 30.

A voter turnout of 80.71 per cent was recorded on Saturday, whereas a vote percentage of 69.85 was recorded till 5 pm in 696 booths across West Bengal, where re polling was held on Monday.

The decision for re polling was taken after reviewing reports of violence and tampering with ballot boxes and ballot papers on Saturday.

A total of 5.67 crore people living in the state's rural areas were eligible to decide the fate of 2.06 lakh candidates in 73,887 seats of the panchayat system.

Saturday's violence was in keeping with the state's history of violent rural elections, including the 2003 panchayat polls, which gained notoriety for its cumulative death toll of 76 during the poll process, with nearly 40 killed on the day of polling.

This year, with more than 30 killed since polls were announced earlier last month, the toll remained almost equal to that of the previous panchayat elections in 2018.

However, this time, the opposition had fielded candidates in more than 90 per cent of seats, unlike in 2018 rural polls, when the ruling TMC had won 34 per cent of the seats uncontested.

In the 2018 rural polls, the ruling TMC had emerged victorious in 90 per cent of the panchayat seats and all the 22 zilla parishads. The elections were marred by widespread violence, with the opposition alleging they were prevented from filing nominations in several seats.

## BJP's Sadanand Shet Tanavade files for Raja Sabha seat from Goa

**PANAJI, July 11 (PTI):** Bharatiya Janata Party's Goa unit president Sadanand Shet Tanavade on Tuesday filed his nomination papers for the election to the lone Raja Sabha seat from the coastal state.

The Raja Sabha election would be held on July 24.

BJP's Vinay Tendulkar is currently a member of the Upper House of Parliament from Goa and his term is expiring this month-end.

Tanavade filed his nomination papers before returning officer Namrata Ulman at the Goa Assembly complex in the presence of chief minister Pramod Sawant and other MLAs.

"I am thankful to BJP president J P Nadda, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, union home minister Amit Shah, BJP general secretary B L Samthosh, Goa chief minister Dr Pramod Sawant and my party for giving me this opportunity," Tanavade said after filing the form.

He claimed all MLAs of the BJP and supporting parties were present during filing of the nomination.

Tanavade said he will request even the opposition MLAs to vote for him. The BJP and its allies have 33 MLAs in the 40-member Goa Assembly. The opposition Congress has three MLAs, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has two members, and the Goa Forward Party and the Revolutionary Goans Party have one legislator each.

# 'BJP trying to revive NDA as winning in 2024 will not be easy'

**BJP 'did not honour friendship' with its allies anywhere: Omar**

**SRINAGAR, July 11 (PTI):** The BJP is trying to revive the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ahead of the 2024 general election as winning the polls will not be as easy as it wants to project, National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah claimed here on Tuesday.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister alleged that in the last 5-8 years, the BJP "did not honour friendship" with its allies anywhere but is now seeking rapprochement "out of compulsion".

On the issue of a Uniform Civil Code, Abdullah said it is the BJP's right to raise its agenda.

He said the NC does not support the BJP's agenda but if such a statute is implemented, there should not be any exemption for any community, not even tribals.

"I think our focus should be on the way the BJP is trying to revive the NDA. This is proof that the BJP feels that the ground is not in its favour," Abdullah told reporters here while replying to queries on the party raising "core" issues like UCC.

"One by one, its friends left. Their oldest friends like Shiv Sena or Akali Dal or other parties. So, what has changed is that it has become the BJP's compulsion that it is again offering the hand of friendship, that they are trying to revive the NDA," the NC vice president said.

He said in Andhra Pradesh, the BJP is talking to Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and in Punjab attempts are being made to get Akali Dal back.

"They are talking to Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. So, let us leave the BJP's core agenda, the ground which the BJP says is in their favour, the reality is that 2024

(polls) will not be as easy for them as they want to portray to the people through you (media)," Abdullah added.

On the BJP raking up the plans to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said, "Every political party has the right to place its agenda before the people and seek votes."

"We have done it, other political parties have done it as well. It is another matter that we do not personally like the BJP's agenda."

"But, it is their democratic right and I do not have any objection that they are placing their agenda before the people. Let them do it, then we will see to it," he said.

Abdullah said there was no proposal yet about the UCC, so there was nothing to oppose or support.

"I should have something first like a document or a proposal. Since there is no proposal yet, we are only talking in the air. Let the proposal come, let it be presented in the Parliament, then if there is something which is against a community, we will oppose it. But, what will we oppose when there is no proposal?"

"It is the media which is discussing it. Prime Minister Narendra Modi perhaps talked about the UCC in one of his speeches, saying this should happen. But, there is no agenda, no proposal. Yes, it is the agenda of the BJP, and we do not support the BJP's agenda," he said.

He, however, said if there is UCC, it has to be uniform and for everyone.

"Uniform means uniform for everybody. If you are taking out the rest one by one, then what does it mean? That it is only for one community? Is it that it is for changing the personal laws of Muslims only?"



"If it is uniform, then it should be applied to all. If you give exemption to anyone - be it Christians or Dalits or Tribals or Sikhs - then it is obvious that the Muslims not only will seek an exemption but will achieve the exemption as well," he said.

To a question on whether the NC would attend the upcoming meeting of the opposition parties in Bengaluru on July 17, Abdullah said the party has the intention to go to the meeting.

On the issue of a split within NCP, Abdullah said the process has been going on and will continue.

"One party has broken, and it is not for the first time. The parties have been broken before this as well. The Congress was broken in MP. Was an opposition meeting needed for that? This process has been going on and will continue," he said.

He, however, said he does not think the split would make NCP chief Sharad Pawar weak politically.

"In fact, I think he has become stronger, especially the way statements by Ajit Pawar came like on Sharad Pawar's age, saying he should have retired before."

"I think the people of Maharashtra would not have liked this. The results will come when the people will get an opportunity to vote," he said.

## MP Assembly adjourned for day amid ruckus by Congress on urination incident, tribal 'atrocities'

**BHOPAL, July 11 (PTI):** Madhya Pradesh Assembly was adjourned for the day on Tuesday after Congress created a ruckus seeking a discussion on the Sidhi urination incident and "atrocities" on tribals through an adjournment motion.

A man had urinated on a tribal youth in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh, triggering a national outrage. The accused, Praveesh Shukla, was arrested and booked under the stringent National Security Act (NSA), SC/ST Act, and various sections of the Indian Penal Code.

As the monsoon session of the Assembly began earlier in the day, Congress member Kantilal Bhuria raised the urination incident but Speaker Girish Gautam asked him to wait for the customary Vande Mataram national song to play.

Later, MLAs of Congress raised the urination issue again but the speaker and parliamentary affairs minister Narottam Mishra reminded Congress of the legislative tradition that the House pays homage to departed leaders and victims of major accidents during the first sitting of a session.



**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** The Supreme Court Tuesday said it will commence day-to-day hearing from August 2 on a batch of petitions challenging abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution that bestowed special status on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, which passed several procedural directions, fixed July 27 as the deadline for filing of written submissions and convenience compilations by different parties.

The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjiv

Khanna, BR Gavai and Surya Kant said hearing on the clutch of petitions will be held on a day-to-day basis except on Mondays and Fridays, which are days for hearing miscellaneous matters in the apex court. Only fresh petitions are taken up on these days for admission hearing and regular matters are not heard.

It appointed two lawyers -- one each from the petitioner's and the government side -- to prepare convenience compilation and file it before July 27, and made it clear that after the said date no documents will be accepted. A convenience

note gives the court a snapshot of the entire case to assist it in quickly appreciating the facts.

The five-judge bench said that Centre's affidavit filed on Monday with regard to the conditions prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir after the August 5, 2019 notification will have no bearing on the constitutional issue to be adjudicated by the five-judge bench. Senior advocate Raju Ramachandran, who is leading the petitioners challenging the constitutional validity of abrogation of Article 370, said two petitioners -- IAS officer Shah Faesal and Shehla Rashid Shora -- have filed an application for withdrawal of their names from the list of petitioners. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said he has no difficulty if anyone wishes to withdraw his or her name from the list of petitioners.

The bench then allowed Shah and activist Shora to delete their names from the list of the petitioners. At the end of the hearing, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said Shah Faesal's withdrawal from the list of petitioners will create a problem as far as the case title is concerned since he was the lead petitioner.

## Electoral Bonds form over half of donations to political parties: Report

**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** More than half of all donations received by political parties between 2016-17 and 2021-22 were through Electoral Bonds and the BJP received more funds than all other national parties put together, a report by think tank Association for Democratic Reforms said.

According to the ADR, donations worth around ₹ 16,437 crore were received by the seven national parties and 24 regional parties in India between 2016-17 and 2021-22. Of this, ₹ 9,188.35 crore -- around 56 per cent -- were received through Electoral Bonds.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) declared donations worth ₹ 10,122.03 crore between 2016-17 and 2021-22, followed by the Congress (₹ 1,547.43 crore) and the Trinamool Congress (₹ 823.30 crore), the report said.

The total donations declared by the BJP is more than three times the total donations declared by all the other national parties, it said.

Donations worth ₹ 4,614.53 crore, about 28 per cent of the total, were received from the corporate sector and ₹ 2,634.74 crore (16.03 per cent) were received from other sources. More than 80 per cent of the donations, around ₹ 13,190.68 crore, were received by the national parties, and ₹ 3,246.95 crore (19.75

per cent) by regional parties, the ADR said.

For the national parties, there was a 743 per cent increase in donations from electoral bonds between 2017-18 and 2021-22, while corporate donations increased by 48 per cent.

The highest donations were received in 2019-20, the year of general elections (₹ 4,863.50 crore), followed by ₹ 4,041.48 crore in 2018-19 and ₹ 3,826.56 crore in FY 2021-22.

The BJP, which got three times more donations than all other national parties put together, got over 52 per cent of it through Electoral Bonds. Around 32 per cent of the donations to the BJP came from corporate houses.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Communist Party of India (CPI) received 100 per cent donations from "other" sources, which means donations less than Rs 20,000 for which political parties do not need to declare the details of the donor. Among the regional parties, more than 89.81 per cent of the BJD's total donations came from Electoral Bonds worth ₹ 622 crore, the DMK declared the second highest donations from bonds of ₹ 431.50 crore, followed by the TRS which declared ₹ 383.65 crore and YSR-C which declared ₹ 330.44 crore.

# Yamuna swells further in Delhi, Old Railway Bridge shut for traffic

**'Only those living in the affected areas have been shifted to camps on higher grounds'**

**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** The Yamuna in Delhi has exceeded the evacuation mark of 206 metres, prompting the relocation of people residing in flood-prone areas to safer locations and a closure of the Old Railway Bridge for road and rail traffic, officials said on Tuesday.

The river crossed the danger mark of 205.33 metres in Delhi on Monday evening, much earlier than anticipated.

According to the Central Water Commission's (CWC) flood-monitoring portal, the water level at the Old Railway Bridge rose from 205.4 metres at 5 pm on Monday to 206.38 metres at 12 noon on Tuesday with Haryana releasing more water into the Yamuna from the Hathnikund barrage in Yamunana-gar.

It is expected that the river will rise to 206.75 metres by 6 pm.

According to the officials, road and rail traffic at the Old Yamuna Bridge has been suspended as a precautionary measure.

With floodwaters entering the low-lying areas, videos of Yamuna Bazar residents wading through knee-deep water made their way to social media.

Addressing a press conference



on Monday, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said a flood-like situation is unlikely in Delhi, but the city government is prepared to tackle any eventuality.

Kejriwal had said the evacuation of people from low-lying areas will start once the river breaches the 206-metre mark. An official from East Delhi district said the evacuation process began on Monday night after floodwaters entered some areas. "Only those living in the affected areas have been shifted to camps on higher grounds," he said.

According to the CWC, the flow rate at the Hathnikund barrage increased to 3,44,035 cusecs at 10 am and further to 3,59,760 cusecs

at 11 am. Normally, the flow rate at the barrage is 352 cusecs, but heavy rainfall in the catchment areas increases the discharge. One cusec is equivalent to 28.32 litres per second. The water from the barrage takes around two to three days to reach Delhi.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heavy rain pounded several places in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh overnight, raising concerns about a further rise in the water level in rivers.

The Delhi government issued a flood warning on Sunday. Authorities have been instructed to stay

vigilant and take necessary action in vulnerable areas. Quick response teams and boats have also been deployed. The Delhi government has set up 16 control rooms to monitor the flood-prone areas and the water level of the Yamuna. More than 50 motor boats have been deployed for rescue-and-relief operations, and diving and medical teams have been readied with all the necessary materials and equipment.

Northwest India has seen incessant rainfall over the last three days, with many areas in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan recording "heavy to extremely heavy" precipitation. This has resulted in overflowing rivers, creeks and drains that have massively damaged infrastructure and disrupted essential services in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab.

Delhi witnessed its highest rainfall (153 mm) in a single day in July since 1982 in the 24-hour period ending at 8:30 am on Sunday. The city received an additional 107 mm rainfall in the subsequent 24 hours, exacerbating the situation.

The heavy rain transformed roads into gushing streams, parks

into watery labyrinths and market-places into submerged realms.

In response to the torrential rain, the Delhi government announced a closure of all schools on Monday and cancelled the Sunday leave of government officials, instructing them to be in the field.

The Yamuna river system's catchment covers parts of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.

The low-lying areas near the river in Delhi are considered prone to flooding and are inhabited by around 41,000 people.

Encroachments on the river floodplain have occurred over the years, despite the land belonging to the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), revenue department and private individuals.

The Yamuna breached the danger mark twice in September last year, with the water level reaching 206.38 metres.

In 2019, the river witnessed a peak flow rate of 8.28 lakh cusecs on August 18-19 and the water level rose to 206.6 metres. In 2013, it reached a level of 207.32 metres.

The river had swollen to an all-time record water level of 207.49 metres in 1978.



*Amendments to the CVC Act, which were duly passed by Parliament, have been upheld: Shah*

## SC holds Centre's order of extensions to ED chief Sanjay Kumar Mishra 'illegal'

**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** The Supreme Court on Tuesday held as "illegal" two successive extensions of one year each granted to Enforcement Directorate chief Sanjay Kumar Mishra, holding that the Centre's orders were in "breach" of its mandamus in its 2021 verdict that the IRS officer should not be given further term.

The order of the top court in which it also curtailed Mishra's extended tenure to July 31 came as a setback to the Centre even as it upheld the amendments under which a maximum of five-year tenure can be given to directors of the ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The amendments were made to the Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Act, 2021 and the Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Act, 2021 as well as to the Fundamental (Amendment) Rules, 2021.

At the same time, a bench of Justices BR Gavai, Vikram Nath and Sanjay Karol said in view of the peer review being conducted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) this year, and to enable smooth transition, Mishra's tenure will be till July 31. FATF is a global body that leads action to tackle money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing.



"The impugned orders dated November 17, 2021 and November 17, 2022 granting extensions to the tenure of the respondent No.2- Sanjay Kumar Mishra for a period of one year each are held to be illegal," the bench said in its 103-page verdict, while partially allowing the writ petitions challenging the extension given to the officer. It said the orders are not "valid in law".

The 1984-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer was otherwise to remain in office till November 18, 2023, according to the notification issued by the government.

The bench gave the verdict on a batch of petitions, including those filed by Congress leaders Randeep

Singh Surjewala and Jaya Thakur, and TMC leaders Mahua Moitra and Saket Gokhale challenging the extensions granted to Mishra.

Mishra, 62, was first appointed the ED director for two years on November 19, 2018. Later, by an order dated November 13, 2020, the central government modified the appointment letter retrospectively and his two-year term was changed to three years.

The government also promulgated an ordinance last year under which the tenure of the ED and CBI chiefs could be extended by up to three years after the mandated term of two years.

The Congress said the court ver-

dict is a vindication of its stand and a slap on the government's face.

The opposition party also demanded that an independent investigation be instituted to scrutinise all actions taken by the ED after November 17, 2021.

"This (verdict) is a victory of justice and vindication of our stand on brazen misuse and compromise of ED for political vendetta as also the blatant pursuit of Modi government's desperate and obvious agenda," Surjewala, who is also an AICC general secretary, said on Twitter.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) hit out at the Centre and demanded a probe into the "deeds" done during the tenure of Mishra as ED chief.

Union home minister Amit Shah, however, said those rejoicing over the verdict are delusional for various reasons: the amendments to the CVC Act, which were duly passed by Parliament, have been upheld.

He said the powers of the ED to strike at those who are corrupt and on the wrong side of the law remain the same as the central agency is an institution which rises beyond any one individual and is focused on achieving its core objective - i.e., to investigate offences of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws.

## Congress showing dual character on incidents of tribal, Dalit atrocities: MP home minister



**BHOPAL, July 11 (PTI):** Madhya Pradesh home minister Narottam Mishra on Tuesday accused the Congress of showing dual character by taking different stand on incidents of atrocities on tribals and Dalits in the BJP-ruled state and said the party was practising politics of appeasement. He said while the opposition party sought to vociferously raise Sidhi district's urination incident and atrocities on tribals in the Assembly, it conveniently ignored a degrading episode involving a Dalit in Shivpuri district where he was allegedly forced to eat faeces by members of a minority community.

While the accused in the urination case, Praveesh Shukla, was arrested after a video of the incident went viral, seven members of the minority community were also taken into custody by the police for the Shivpuri episode.

"This is the Congress' double character as on the same day two videos went viral - one of Sidhi (urination incident) and the other one of Shivpuri (where a Dalit was subjected to humiliation). They took up Sidhi's video, but avoided mentioning the incident in Shivpuri, where faeces was stuffed in the mouth of a Dalit person. This was because there was Shaakeel in that episode (referring to Shivpuri incident), while in Sidhi it was Shukla...this reaction

(based on identity of accused) shows their appeasement policy," Mishra told reporters in the Assembly complex.

The BJP minister, who also holds the parliamentary affairs portfolio, asserted the ruling party will not get deterred by the Congress's threats.

Earlier in the day, the Madhya Pradesh Assembly was adjourned for the day after noisy scenes in the House following the Congress's demand for a discussion on the Sidhi urination incident and atrocities on tribals.

The home minister said in the Sidhi incident, the police have already arrested the accused and booked him under the stringent National Security Act (NSA), while local authorities have pulled down "illegal" portions of his family home.

Mishra said the Sidhi matter was already over but the Congress wants to raise this "three-year-old" issue in the Assembly through an adjournment notice because of their vested political interest.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has washed the tribal victim's feet and also apologised to him over the horrifying incident, but the opposition wants to still exploit the issue for political gains, he said.

Mishra criticised Congress MLAs for violating laid down traditions of the house by raising the Sidhi issue during rendition of the national song Vande Mataram, saying this shows their disrespect for national symbols.

"We are not against discussions (on matters of public interest), but there is a proper way to raise such issues (in Assembly)," said the parliamentary affairs minister.

He said the Congress does not want to raise issues of excess rainfall, flood-like situation and damage to crops and just wants to indulge in politics on certain matters.

## India likely to firm up procurement of Rafale jets for Navy, 3 Scorpene submarines from France



**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** India is finalising the ground work for firming up procurement of 26 Naval variant of Rafale jets and three Scorpene submarines from France in the run-up to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Paris this week, people familiar with the

development said on Monday.

The two sides are also inching closer to seal a deal under which French defence major Safran and an Indian entity will jointly develop an aircraft engine in India, the people said.

It is learnt that the Defence Procurement Board (DPB) of the Ministry of Defence cleared the proposals.

The procurement proposals will be taken up soon by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by defence minister Rajnath Singh.

The people said India and France may announce the big-ticket defence projects during Modi's visit to France.

Modi will attend the Bastille Day Parade in Paris on July 14 as the guest of honour.

Some of the defence procurement projects may be announced this week, the people said when asked where the mega acquisition will be sealed following talks between PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron. They, however, said that some issues are yet to be thrashed out.

The Indian Navy is looking for procurement of 26 deck-based fighter jets for indigenously-built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.

After a lengthy process, the Navy had narrowed down on Boeing's F/A-18 Super Hornet and French aerospace major Dassault Aviation's Rafale-M aircraft for the procurement. It is learnt that Rafale-M emerged as the winner in the tight race. India has already procured 36 Rafale jets from France for the Indian Air Force.

The Rafale jets are India's first major acquisition of fighter planes in 23 years after the Sukhoi jets were imported from Russia.

ister, building a cyber-safe India is one of the top priorities of the ministry of home affairs, it said.

The conference is envisaged as an opportunity to forge a global partnership to build safe cyberspace and prioritise cybersecurity concerns, according to a statement.

The proceedings will focus on cyber security and measures to counter cybercrimes in the context of new and emerging technologies like NFT, AI and Metaverse, it added.

Cybersecurity has become an essential aspect of security-related affairs internationally and requires adequate focus owing to its economic and geopolitical implications. An enhanced focus on cybersecurity at the G20 forum can positively contribute to ensuring the security and integrity of critical information infrastructure and digital public platforms, the statement said.

The deliberations on cybersecurity and cybercrime prevention at the G20 forum will also help in the development of an information-sharing framework. The conference will provide a platform for cutting-edge ideas, knowledge exchange and networking with vi-

sionaries around the globe, it added.

Globally acclaimed cyber experts and guest speakers representing the legal fraternity, academia, training institutions, financial intermediaries, fintech, social media intermediaries, information and communication technology, cyber forensics, regulators, start-ups, OTT service providers, e-commerce companies and others will participate in the conference, the statement said.

Representatives from all central ministries, organisations and agencies and chief secretaries, administrators and DGs of police of all states and Union territories will also participate.

During the two-day conference, there will be six technical sessions. Alongside the conference, there will be exhibitions to showcase national and international products and services being offered by organisations and industries working in the ICT space.

The conference will conclude on July 14 with a valedictory session, which will be addressed by Union minister of electronics and information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw.

*Contd. from Page 1...*

## KAAC evicts 247 illegal

will be created to demarcate the exact boundary. "If the 15 houses are found to be within the jurisdiction of Karbi Anglong, they will be evicted immediately," he said. Ronghang said that the KAAC is always trying to keep the 10,434 sq. km of both Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong intact and free from encroachers.

"After getting the final verdict from the Gauhati High Court in favour of KAAC, eviction will be carried out immediately in Khan Basti and Klurung," he said. The eviction drive was monitored by the executive member (EM) of KAAC, Amarsing Tisso and Madhuram Lekthe; MLA Dorsing Ronghang and local Member of Autonomous Council, Lumbajong Johnny Timung.

The SP, Karbi Anglong, Sanjiv Kumar Saikia and additional deputy commissioner (ADC), Tingku Rani Bora, ACS and Chandan Borgohain were also present. The eviction drive was met with resistance from some of the encroachers, who tried to prevent the authorities from demolishing their homes. However, the police were able to disperse the crowd and the eviction drive was completed successfully. The eviction of the illegal settlements is a major victory for the KAAC and the state government in their efforts to protect the land and resources of Karbi Anglong. It is also a clear message to those who try to encroach on land illegally that they will not be tolerated.

## Himanta announces ₹ 100 cr

He said that Chaolung Siu-Ka-Pha was a visionary and a great administrator who laid the foundation of Assamese society. He further added that a second campus of the Assam State Museum would be set up within the Samannay Kshetra premises. Earlier, the chief minister had attended a prayer offered by observing traditional Tai rituals to pay tribute to the founder of Ahom reign. The chief minister on Tuesday was accompanied by Assam cultural affairs minister Bimal Bora, Members of Parliament Tapan Gogoi, Pabitra Margherita, Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, Members of Legislative Assembly Hitendra Nath Goswami, Taranga Gogoi, Bhaben Bharali, Rupjyoti Kurmi, along with a host of other prominent personalities.

## Lakhimpur, Biswanath continue

was reported from Biswanath, Charadeo, Dhubri, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kokrajhar and Sonitpur. Furthermore, floodwaters affected several infrastructures like roads, embankments and bridges at Biswanath, Dibrugarh, Charadeo, Golaghat and Lakhimpur.

Meanwhile, similar weather conditions are likely to continue in the state for the next two to three days.

A CWC advisory said the IMD has predicted very heavy rainfall over Sikkim and Assam districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Barpeta and Bongaigaon for at least another day. The ASDMA has urged people to remain cautious and take all necessary precautions in view of the forecast.

## 133 people from Bengal have

Sarma was also quick to respond to Adhikari on the micro-blogging site and assured of help in all times of need. "We consider the people of West Bengal as our valued and respected neighbours. During the previous assembly election in West Bengal, we extended the same assistance. Please be assured that you can rely on us for any humanitarian aid during times of crisis," the Assam CM wrote.

Trinamool Congress spokesperson and West Bengal minister Shashi Panja hit out at Sarma, bringing in reference to the people left out of the final draft of National Register of Citizens (NRC), which was updated for the northeastern state.

"@himantabiswa must be nauseated from the dizzying heights of self-righteousness & misplaced moral superiority! Before raising a false alarm and creating a sense of panic, he should consider the fate of the 1.9 million residents of Assam who were rendered stateless due to NRC," Panja wrote.

Violence had rocked West Bengal's rural polls on Saturday, leaving 15 people dead while ballot boxes were vandalised, ballot papers torched, and bombs thrown at rivals in several places.

Of those killed, 11 were affiliated with the TMC. The total death toll in the state since the poll process began on June 8, when the dates were announced, has crossed 30.

A voter turnout of 80.71 per cent was recorded on Saturday, whereas a vote percentage of 69.85 was recorded till 5 pm in 696 booths across West Bengal, where repolling was held on Monday.

## 'Committee to be formed

importance of the challenges faced by the members of the Ahom community, the minister further added that to expedite the process, the new Committee will be required to register under the Societies Registration Act, 1960 and a proposal will be submitted to the Cabinet for approval of the same. The minister hoped that this decision will largely benefit the people of the Ahom community in the days ahead in obtaining the caste certificates under a seamless process and that no genuine person will be deprived of their rights. The meeting was attended by Binita Pegu, IAS secretary to the government of Assam, Department of Tribal Affairs (Plain), Kulashree Nath, director, Welfare of SC and other senior officials of the concerned department.

## Cong MP writes to ECI to scrap

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 has 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.

## SC asks Centre, state to

"One of the great hallmarks of our democracy is the civilian control over the Armed forces. Let us not breach that. That is something which is one of the strong points of this nation. We will not do that. We are not going to issue directions to the Indian Army," said the bench, which also comprised justices P S Narasimha and Manoj Misra.

"However, we impress upon the state government and the Union (of India) to ensure there is protection of life and liberty of people in Manipur. Where exactly a particular battalion will be posted etc is a dangerous area for us to get into," the bench said. The court termed as "innuendos" the allegations that certain militant groups, which are allegedly attacking the minority tribals have the support of the governments (at the Centre and in state). "If these are given as part of the suggestions then they (governments) will not be able to make (any headway anywhere...how can they be part of suggestions?" the bench said. The top court considered some of the suggestions, including those related to relief measures, supply of medicines, and dealing with the bodies of the victims, and asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the Manipur government, to consider them and file an action taken report (ATR) within one week.

It also asked the government's law officer to consider disbursing compensation for reconstruction of villages and places of worship, and giving adequate representation to communities in committees set up in seven districts of the state to oversee the relief and rehabilitation work.

At the outset, the solicitor general referred to the certain suggestions by lawyer Nizam Pasha, appearing for one of the petitioners, and said he has no objection to some of them, but with regard to a few others, further consultations were needed. One of the suggestions sought a direction to the state government to designate an officer to identify and hand over the bodies lying in mortuaries in hospitals across Imphal to their relatives for performing the last rites. "There is an acute shortage of doctors in the district hospitals in the hill districts. The doctors deputed by the health ministry and those promised by the Home Minister may be sent to the district hospitals in the hill districts to address this shortage," was another suggestion.

There is shortage of essential medicines, dialysis machines, CT Scan machines in the district hospitals in the hill districts which must be addressed, said Pasha. The state government said it will look into these suggestions and try to resolve the grievances. "It has transpired before the court that most of the suggestions are acceptable to the administration. As regard to some of the suggestions, the solicitor general states that necessary consultations would be held at the level of state administration and such action as is warranted would be taken expeditiously," the bench noted in the order. It would be desirable that steps be taken to build public confidence and there should be representation of communities in such committees, the bench said. During the hearing, there was strong opposition to some of the suggestions put forward by senior lawyer Colin Gonsalves, appearing for the Manipur Tribal Forum, when he sought setting up of an SIT consisting of officers from outside Manipur to probe the attacks on Kukis in the state. "A mentally challenged tribal woman was killed and another was beheaded," Gonsalves alleged, adding "a call for the genocide of Kukis has been given on national television."

The bench was considering the suggestions given by the lawyers for various petitioners who had moved the top court for directions to deal with the ethnic violence in the state. On Monday, the top court, while hearing a batch of petitions on the violence in the state, said it was not a platform to be used for escalating tensions in the state and asked the lawyers representing the warring ethnic groups to exercise restraint during the court proceedings.

It was hearing petitions filed by different NGOs, including the one by 'Manipur Tribal Forum', which has sought Army protection for the Kuki tribe, Dinganglung Gangmei, the chairman of the Hills Area Committee of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, who has challenged the high court's order on designating the Meitei community as a Scheduled Tribe, the high court bar association and others.

## 5 Mexicans, Nepali pilot

the police who reached the crash site reported all six persons including the pilot dead, officials said. Two helicopters of Altitude Air mobilised for the rescue operations could not land at the crash site due to adverse weather conditions, the CAAN said, adding that the helicopters have now landed at Bhakanje of the same district, which is the nearest place to the crash site. Efforts are being made to transport the dead bodies by ground transportation to the helicopter landing area and further to Kathmandu, it said. Prime Minister Pashpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid tributes to the victims of the crash, saying the incident has shocked the country.

All six people aboard the chopper had died in the accident. The Kathmandu Post newspaper quoted operation and safety manager of Manang Air Raju Neupane as saying. District police chief Dipak Shrestha said that the accident is believed to have been caused due to bad weather. Earlier, a senior official at TIA said locals informed him that the helicopter crashed with a loud explosion and they saw fire at the crash site. "The locals discovered the crashed helicopter at Chihandanda," said rural municipality deputy chair Nwang Lhakpa. The last location of the chopper was tracked at 10:12 am in the Lamjura Pass area, said Neupane.

Nepal's tourist and mountaineering season ended in May. The flights carrying tourists to the mountains are less common this time of year as visibility is poor and weather conditions are fickle.

Founded in 1997, Manang Air is a helicopter airline based in Kathmandu. It has been operating helicopters in commercial air transportation within the Nepalese territory under the Regulation of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal. The company provides chartered services and is focused on personalised services such as adventure flights, helicopter excursions or expedition work. Nepal has had a fraught record of aviation accidents, partly due to its sudden weather changes and airstrips located in hard-to-access rocky terrains. In May, a helicopter belonging to private Nepalese helicopter service provider-Simrik Air - crashed in eastern Nepal, killing one person and leaving four others, including the pilot, injured. In January, Nepal's Yeti Airlines twin-engine ATR 72 aircraft carrying 72 people, including five Indians, crashed in Pokhara, killing all on board.



**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** Union home minister Amit Shah will address the inaugural session of the G20 conference on crime and security to be held in Gurugram on July 13, according to an official document.

The two-day 'G20 Conference on Crime and Security in the Age of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), Artificial Intelligence and Metaverse' will bring together over 900 participants from member countries, nine special invitee countries, international bodies and technology leaders and domain experts from India and across the world, it stated.

The home minister will address the inaugural session of the conference on July 13 and flag off 'cyber volunteer' squads from seven premier educational institutions of India, according to the statement.

These specially identified volunteers will work to generate cyber awareness in society, identify and report harmful content and render technical assistance for making the society cyber safe, it added.

Shah will also inaugurate an exhibition and release the conference medallion, the statement said.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of the Union home min-



## LIONSGATE PLAY TO LIVE STREAM 75TH EMMY AWARDS IN INDIA ON SEPTEMBER 19

**MUMBAI, July 11 (PTI):**

The 75th edition of the Prime-time Emmy Awards will stream live exclusively on Lionsgate Play in India, the streamer announced on Tuesday. Lionsgate Play subscribers will be able to watch the annual award ceremony, conducted by the Los Angeles-based Television Academy, from 5.30 am (IST) on September 19, according to a press release.

The Emmy Awards will also stream exclusively on Lionsgate Play in Malaysia and the Philippines, the streamer added. In a first, the nominations for awards will be live streamed on Lionsgate Play's YouTube channel on July 12 at 9 pm (IST).

Amit Dhanuka, Executive Vice President at Lionsgate, said the platform is committed to bringing the best to its audiences across the globe.

"We are delighted to LIVE stream the 75th Anniversary celebration of the Emmy Awards across three territories - India, Malaysia and the Philippines."

"It's a milestone year for the Emmys and we are planning to take things a notch higher with the nominations being live streamed on our YouTube platform. It's an exciting event for fans, and we would like to keep up the spirits to ensure the best viewing experience," Dhanuka said in a statement.



## Jimmy Shergill's Netflix series 'Choona' to release in August



**MUMBAI, July 11 (PTI):** Actor Jimmy Shergill-starrer series "Choona" will premiere on Netflix on August 3, the streamer announced Tuesday.

The heist comedy is written and directed by Pushpendra Nath Misra, known for "Taj Mahal 1989" (2020) and "Ghoomeketu" (2020).

Shergill, who has collaborated with Netflix for the first time, said "Choona" gave him the opportunity to challenge himself as an actor. "I have always been inclined towards stories that push me to explore my capabilities. Also, as an audience, I personally like narratives that are engaging, character-driven and bring out the flavour of our rich cultural backdrop."

"Choona" gave me an opportunity to play a character that's spite-

ful yet appealing, which to me is unique. The story itself is high-spirited, captive and engaging," the 52-year-old actor said in a statement.

The show revolves around six small-time average joes, fuelled by their burning desire for revenge, come up with the plan of a radical heist. "Their target - a powerful politician, who has done them wrong. With unconventional tactics and a highly disorganized plan, the only thing that can make this heist successful is fate," read the official synopsis.

"Choona" also features Aashim Gulati, Vikram Kochhar, Chandan Roy, Namit Das, Gyanendra Tripathi, Atul Srivastava, Monika Panwar and Niharika Lyra Dutt.

The series is produced by Flying Saucer.

## THALAPATHY VIJAY WRAPS UP 'LEO' SHOOT

**CHENNAI, July 11 (PTI):**

Superstar Thalapathy Vijay has completed shooting for his upcoming Tamil movie "Leo".

The project marks a reunion between Vijay and filmmaker Lokesh Kanagaraj after the 2021 blockbuster "Master".

The director shared the news on Twitter on Monday evening, posting a picture with the 49-year-old actor.

"And it's a wrap for our @actorvijay portion! Thank you for making the second outing yet again a special one na! #Leo" Kanagaraj wrote.

Last month, Kanagaraj and his team had unveiled a poster of the much-awaited movie to celebrate Vijay's 49th birthday. They also released the Tamil movie's first song "Naa Ready".

Actor Trisha Krishnan, who earlier worked with Vijay in Tamil hits "Ghilli", "Kuruvu", "Thirupaachi" and "Aathi", features opposite the actor in the film.

Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt also stars in "Leo", which marks his Tamil debut.

Arjun Sarja, Mansoor Ali Khan, Priya Anand, Mysskin and Gautham Vasudev Menon round out the cast of "Leo".

Anirudh Ravichander, who composed music for hit films starring Vijay such as "Kaththi", "Master" and "Beast", is scoring the soundtrack of the movie produced by SS Lalit Kumar.

Besides "Leo", Vijay has another movie in the pipeline.



Venkat Prabhu for an untitled movie, which marks his 68th big screen effort.

Prabhu will be directing the film, backed by AGS Entertainment, from his own script.

In May, Vijay had confirmed that he will be working with filmmaker

## Actor Bhasha Sumbli on her next film: A very different take on Kashmir

**NEW DELHI, July 11**

**(PTI):** Actor Bhasha Sumbli, known for movies "The Kashmir Files" and "Chhapaak", says her next feature film is once again set in Kashmir.

The actor said the movie is titled "Baramulla" and is backed by the production banner of filmmaker Aditya Dhar, known for 2019 hit "Uri: The Surgical Strike".

"I have again done a film on Kashmir after 'The Kashmir Files', named 'Baramulla' in director Aditya Dhar's production. It is a very different take on Kashmir as a subject. It should be released around September or October," Sumbli told PTI.

The actor is also a theatre artist, who divides her time between native Jammu, Delhi and Mumbai. She has her own theatre troupe, directs her own plays and also performs in them.

"Theatre is something I cannot live without. I have done four-five shows of a play which I directed. I am planning to direct some more plays with the National



School of Drama (NSD)," Sumbli said.

The actor said the joy of performing in front of a live audience is "unmatched".

"But when you perform in front of the camera, you know that behind the screen of the camera there is an audience. So, there's not much difference. The difference is between the two worlds. There's a word called filmy and people from theatre don't possess that quality. They are real," she said.

In filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri's 2022 movie "The Kashmir Files", which depicted the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in the 1990s, she played the role of Sharda Pandit.

The actor said the response from people about her performance was "overwhelming".

"The Kashmir Files" gave me everything. The way people loved the character of Sharda Pandit was overwhelming for me," she said.

## Production on Rajkummar, Shraddha-starrer 'Stree 2' begins

**MUMBAI, July 11 (PTI):** The shooting on the sequel of "Stree", starring Rajkummar Rao and Shraddha Kapoor, started on Tuesday, the makers announced. Pankaj Tripathi, Abhishek Banerjee, and Aparshakti Khurana also star in the follow-up to the hit horror comedy, which was one of the most commercially-successful and critically-acclaimed films of 2018. Production house Maddock Films shared the update on its official Twitter page.

"Ek baar phir Chanderi mein phaila aatank! 'Stree 2' filming begins! Aa rahi hai woh - August 2024!" the banner said in the post.

"Stree 2", which sees Amar Kaushik return in the director's chair, promises to bring "an array of other fresh surprises," the makers said in a press release. Also backed by Jio Studios, the sequel is slated to be released next August. "Stree", the first film in the franchise, was set in the small town of Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh, where an evil spirit named "tree" abducts men in the night during festival season.



## R Balki's 'Ghoome' to open Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

**MUMBAI, July 11 (PTI):** Filmmaker R Balki's directorial venture "Ghoome", starring Abhishek Bachchan and Saiyami Kher, will lift the curtain on the 2023 Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) on August 12.

According to the makers, the film narrates "a triumphant story of a paraplegic sportsperson (Kher), who excels as a cricketer under the guidance of her coach (Bachchan)."

The story is co-written by Balki, known for "Cheeni Kum" and "Ki and Ka", with

Rahul Sengupta and Rishi Virmani.

In a joint statement on Monday, Balki and Bachchan said they are honoured to open the IFFM with "Ghoome".

"It's indeed an honour and pleasure for us that 'Ghoome' will be the opening film at the IFFM. Ghoome is a story of turning adversity into advantage. A story of innovation when faced with extermination."

"Ghoome" is a tribute to sport and the reservoir of human resilience. It's only fit-

ting for a film that believes that 'Sport makes life worth living' to be launched in the sport capital of the world, Australia, land of the MCG. Welcome to the first preview of 'Ghoome'," they said.

The 14th edition of IFFM will take place from August 11 to August 20 in Melbourne.

Kher, a cricket enthusiast, said "Ghoome" fulfils her long cherished dream of playing a sportswoman on screen.

"This is a film very close to my heart. Playing a sport on screen was always my dream. I have been manifesting it since

I started acting. I'm so glad it's finally come true. For me this film is much beyond the sport. It's a story of triumph in extreme adversity. It has been the most physically and emotionally demanding film I have done. Feels extra special that people will be watching 'Ghoome' at IFFM for the first time. Couldn't have asked for anything better coming to the land of the great Shane Warne to showcase our film," she added. "Ghoome" also stars Shabana Azmi, Shivendra Singh Dungarpur and Ivanka Das.



253 WEIGHTLIFTERS WILL BE COMPETING IN THE FIVE-DAY TOURNAMENT

# Indian lifters set for rich medal haul despite absence of Mirabai



**GREATER NOIDA, July 11 (PTI):** Hosts India are expected to win a bagful of medals despite the absence of star lifters, including Mirabai Chhanu, when the Commonwealth Championships get underway here on Wednesday.

The Commonwealth tournaments -- Commonwealth Games and the Commonwealth Championships -- are a happy hunting ground for Indian weightlifters, who make the most of the absence of traditional powerhouses like China and North Korea.

Since the 2011 edition of the Commonwealth Championships, India have finished as the best-performing nation every time barring in 2013 and 2021.

In the last edition, Indian lifters reigned supreme, bringing back a haul of 16 medals -- the most by a country in 2021 -- but lost the top spot to Canada owing to an inferior gold medal tally.

And this year, the lifters will be keen to rectify the mistake, especially with the home crowd cheering them on.

Despite the absence of Tokyo Olympic silver medalist Mirabai -- the biggest name in

Indian weightlifting, Youth Olympic champion Jeremy Lalrinnunga, CWG medallists Achinta Sheuli, Bindyarai Devi and Sanket Sargar due to various reasons, the 20-member squad is more than capable of podium finishes.

Several of the lifters in the squad tasted success in 2021 and stood on the podium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Former Asian champion in the 45kg weight class Jhilli Dalabehera and 2022 junior World Championships silver medalist Gyaneshwari Yadav will be competing in the 49kg category in the absence of Mirabai.

Popy Hazarika (59kg) and the CWG bronze-winning duo of Harjinder Kaur (71kg) and Lovepreet Singh (109kg) would like to change the shade of their medals from silver into golds.

Two-time champion Ajay Singh, on the other hand, would like to complete a hat-trick of gold medals.

Asian Games-bound national champion N Ajith (73kg) would be keen to put up a good performance in an international event in the absence of his rival Sheuli, who competes in the same weight class.

India is hosting the tournament for the second time, having successfully organised it in Pune in 2015.

As many as 253 weightlifters, including 52 Indians, will be competing across the senior, junior and youth categories in the five-day tournament.

The tournament, which will take place at the Gautam Budh University, will also serve as a test run for the new venue ahead of the more prestigious AWF Asian Junior and Youth Weightlifting championship, slated to begin later this month.

**Indian Team**

**Women:** Komal Kohar (45kg), Jhilli Dalabehera (49kg), Gyaneshwari Yadav (49kg), Shrabani Das (55kg), Popy Hazarika (59kg), Nirupama Devi (64kg), S Pallavi (64kg), Harjinder Kaur (71kg), Vanshita Verma (81kg), Purnima Pandey (+87kg).

**Men:** Mukund Aher (55kg), T Madhavan (67kg), Shubham Todkar (61kg), N Ajith (73kg), Ajay Singh (81kg), Amarjit Guru (89kg), Vishwakarma Jagdish (96kg), Harshad Wadekar (96kg), Harcharan Singh (102kg), Lovepreet Singh (109kg).

## Rohit gives freedom, he has all traits of great captain: Rahane



**ROSEAU, July 11 (PTI):** India skipper Rohit Sharma gives a lot of freedom to his players and has all the traits of a great captain, said Ajinkya Rahane ahead of the two-Test series against West Indies starting here on Wednesday.

Rahane made a comeback to red-ball cricket after a gap of 18 months when he was included in the World Test Championships final against Australia last month.

A veteran of 83 Test matches, Rahane, who was deputy to former skipper Virat Kohli in the past, has been named the India vice-captain for the West Indies series.

"I am used to this role. I was vice-captain for almost four-five years. I am really happy to be back in the team and really happy to be back as a vice-captain," Rahane told reporters on Monday.

"WTC final was the first game where I played under Rohit Sharma's captaincy. Rohit gives freedom to all the players and those are good traits of a great captain," said Rahane, who had led India to the famous Test series win in Australia in 2019-2020.

Rahane was left a tad irritated when he was asked about his comeback to the national team at the age of 35, insisting he is still young and has a lot of cricket left in him.

"What do you mean by at this age? I am still young year (friend). There's still a lot of cricket in me," he said.

"I had a good IPL and domestic season. I have grown in confidence as a batter but in the past one and half year I have also worked a lot on my fitness."

"I have worked on few aspects of my batting. At the moment I am enjoying my cricket. I am not thinking too much about the future. For now every match is important for me."

Rahane returned to the team on the back of a good Ranji season and his impressive run for Chennai Super Kings during the 2023 IPL.

"In the IPL, CSK has given me freedom. As a player when you have been given a role, you try to fulfil it."

Before this in the IPL my role was to be an anchor but CSK team management gave me the freedom and they wanted me to play my natural game," said Ra-

hane, who smashed 326 runs at a strike rate of 172.49.

"I am a natural stroke player. So just my role has changed. I always look to fulfill the role assigned to me and here also I will look to fulfill the role that Rohit gives me."

India left out Cheteshwar Pujara while senior pacer Mohammed Shami is being rested for the West Indies series and Rahane said it will be a great opportunity for the others to raise their hands.

"It would be great opportunity for that individual who will be playing in place of Pujara. I am not sure who is going to play at No 3 but I am sure whoever will get the chance will do well," he said.

"For the fast bowlers, who are going to play in place of Shami, too will have a great chance. Siraj is there, Jaydev is also experienced. It's an opportunity for everyone to do well."

"Mohammed Shami obviously is a senior bowler, he has done well for us but you need to give rest to him because there is a long season ahead."

Rahane was effusive in his praise for young Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is likely to make his debut at No 3 for India.

"Firstly, I am really happy for him (Jaiswal). He is a really exciting talent. He has done exceptionally well in the domestic cricket for Mumbai and then in the IPL for the Rajasthan Royals."

"Most importantly the way he is batting in the red ball. He did well in the Duleep Trophy last year. His numbers are really good."

"My message to him will be just express your batting, don't think too much about the International cricket. It's all about going out in the middle and playing your game."

India is facing West Indies at a time when their opponents are at an all-time low, having failed to qualify for the ODI World Cup, but Rahane said they are just focusing on their game plan.

"We have played two-day practice game. Preparation wise, we have covered all the areas. It's all about starting well in Test cricket. We respect West Indies. Focus is on our game plan, strength and keep backing our team plan," he said.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> WT20I: B'desh choke in 96-run chase as India annex series winning low-scoring thriller



**MIRPUR, July 11 (PTI):** Spinners Deepti Sharma and Shafali Verma held their nerves during death overs as India pulled off a nail-biting eight-run victory over Bangladesh to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20I series, here on Tuesday.

Off-spinner Sultana Khatun claimed a career-best 3/21 as the hosts grounded a star-studded India to a below-par 95 for 8, their lowest-ever total against Bangladesh in the women's T20I.

However Bangladesh stumbled to 87 all-out in 20 overs as India took a series-clinching lead with an inconsequential third match set to be played on Thursday.

From a comfortable 86 for 5, Bangladesh lost their last five wickets for just one run in a space of eight deliveries in what seemed to be an inexplicable batting collapse.

The two young Indian spinners-- offie Minnu Mani (4-1-9-2) and left-arm orthodox Anusha Baredy (1/20 in 4 overs) made early inroads before the seasoned duo of Deepti (3/12) and Shafali (3/15) pulled off a heist with controlled bowling in the 19th and 20th over.

Shafali in fact got all her wickets in the final over in which she gave away only solitary run when 10 were needed with four wickets intact.

Bangladesh's chase was steered by skipper Nigar Sultana (38; 55b) -- the only batter of their side to reach double-digits.

But the skipper failed to finish it off and was brilliantly stumped by Yastika Bhatia in the penultimate over bowled by Deepti that triggered the collapse.

"Bowlers did well to restrict India. I should have ended the game. I think we didn't get the start we want. Looking forward to the last game," the home team

skipper said after the game.

However credit should be given to skipper Harmanpreet as she has shown a lot of faith in giving full quota of overs to both Minnu and Anusha, who were equal to the task.

"In this series we have a couple of young bowlers who are going to take responsibility and bowl for us. Important for us to trust them. We are not going to hide them in the field," Harmanpreet said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Minnu, the first woman senior India cricketer from Kerala, got Shamima Sultana (5) who swept but only to get a top-edge to be picked by Shafali.

Spin from both ends yielded result as Deepti gave another breakthrough in Shathi Rani (5) with Harmanpreet taking fantastic one-handed catch at the first slip.

But the Bangladesh skipper held fort with some support from Shorna Akter (7 off 17 balls).

The duo added vital 34 runs in the middle as one saw a few drooping shoulders in the Indian ranks.

It was then Deepti turned it around when she induced a leading edge off Shorna to break the partnership, and there was no looking for India from there onwards.

Eying an unassailable 2-0 lead, India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur opted to bat as they were off to a flyer with Smriti Mandhana (13; 13b) and Shafali (19; 14b) adding 33 in 26 balls before visitors lost half of their side for 58 runs just after the 14th over started.

Sultana took the two key wickets of Shafali and Harmanpreet off successive deliveries as Bangladesh fought back after an early assault from the Indian openers.

## Djokovic wants Wimbledon to start matches earlier at Centre Court. Good luck with that

**WIMBLEDON, July 11 (AP):** Novak Djokovic is a bit tired of not getting on Centre Court at Wimbledon until nearly 9 p.m. The waiting. The uncertainty. The rushing to try to finish matches by the 11 p.m. local curfew -- or the annoyance at having to stop midway through a contest and wait until the following day to resume. He offered a solution Monday afternoon after winning his 32nd consecutive match in the grass-court tournament by wrapping up a 7-6 (6), 7-6 (6), 5-7, 6-4 victory over Hubert Hurkacz that began Sunday evening but was halted after two sets: Start play in the All England Club's main stadium earlier than 1:30 p.m. Maybe at noon, say.

"It would make a difference," said Djokovic, who is now into the quarterfinals and three wins away from what would be a fifth championship in a row at Wimbledon, an eighth overall at the place and a 24th career Grand Slam title.

"There are different ways that I'm sure they will address this issue," said Djokovic, whose shoes are stamped with the number "23," a reference to his current major trophy count, "and try to avoid having these kind of problems in the future."

Yeah, Novak, good luck with that. The head of the club made clear there is not much of a chance of such a switch.

"Matches are happening at a time when they're accessible to people. We're seeing (TV) viewing figures that are beyond our expectations and beyond previous



years," club chief executive Sally Bolton said, "so I think they probably speak for themselves."

Play begins on the smaller courts at 11 a.m. and at No. 1 Court at 1 p.m., with Centre Court the last to get play underway. Because the tournament site is right in a residential area, local rules prevent matches from continuing past 11 p.m.; often, if a set ends around 10:30 p.m., the encounter will be suspended until the next day so as not to risk going past the cutoff time.

That happened in Andy Murray's loss to Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second round, which got stretched into a second day after being the last on the schedule at Centre Court.

Djokovic's third-round match, which also was last at that arena, appeared to be headed that way, too, but he managed to finish beating Stan Wawrinka at 10:46 p.m. Djokovic-Hurkacz, again last for the day at Centre Court,

began with the retractable roof shut; they stopped at 10:35 p.m. When action picked up again a little more than 16 hours later, the cover was gone and the wind was whipping.

Djokovic said he warmed up at about 1 p.m. for both of those nighttime affairs and then was left with a key decision.

"Should you go back to the accommodation? The house nearby? Or should you stay (at the club)? Yesterday, I decided to stay," said Djokovic, who will face No. 7 Andrey Rublev on Tuesday for a berth in the semifinals. "I stayed, basically, for seven hours, waiting for my match to start."

Once it did, Djokovic was not quite at his very best against the 17th-seeded Hurkacz, who is best known for being the player to beat Roger Federer at Wimbledon in 2021 in what wound up being the last match of the 20-time major champion's career.

## India still hopeful of good show in Asian Athletics C'ships from today

**BANGKOK, July 11 (PTI):** The build-up was far from ideal with pull-outs and dope flunk but the Indian team, led by shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor and long jumper Murali Sreeshankar, would still look for an impactful show in the Asian Athletics Championships starting here Wednesday.

Shot putter Karanveer Singh failed an out-of-competition dope test and was left out of the 54-member original Indian team which departed for Thailand on Saturday.

Anjali Devi, who won the women's 400m gold at the National Inter-State Championships last month with an impressive time of 51.48 seconds in her first race after an injury lay-off of more than three years, was also caught for doping. A top official of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has confirmed Anjali Devi's dope flunk to PTI.

"Yes, it's correct," said the official, who is currently in Bangkok. National record holder quarter-miler Mohammed Anas Yahya was also left out under mysterious circumstances though he was in the Indian team named on June 22. The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has not given an official explanation for his dropping. When asked about Anas missing out of the team, an official told PTI that the "Asian Athletics Association does not allow replacements". This could mean that Anas was not in the Indian team sent by the AFI before the June 11 deadline. The AFI officially announced the team on June 22. India were also dealt a blow after the trio of world season leader long jumper Jeswin Aldrin, triple jumper Praveen Chitravel -- Asia's best this year -- and medal prospect javelin thrower Rohit Yadav pulled out of the continental showpiece due to their respective injuries. In

Alldrin's absence, Sreeshankar, the world number two this season with his 8.81m effort last month, will be the top contender for the men's long jump gold. He is not short on confidence after finishing third in the Paris leg of the prestigious Diamond League last month. In men's shot put, Asian record holder and defending champion Toor is again the hot favourite to win gold after his 21.77m throw in the National Inter-State Championships last month. "He (Toor) has a bright chance of winning a gold medal," chief athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair had said. At the 2019 edition of the championships in Doha, Toor had won gold with a throw of 20.22m. "Training has been on expected lines. I'm hopeful to improve my performance in Bangkok," Toor said. Despite the pulling out of the Yadav due to an elbow injury, India can still expect at least a medal in men's javelin throw from DP Manu

who is the best in the field with his 84.33m effort earlier this year.

Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, the best among the Asians this season, is not competing as he prepares for the Budapest World Championships in August. Abdulla Aboobacker will shoulder the responsibility of fetching at least a medal for India in men's triple jump, while Tejaswin Shankar, who will be in action on the opening day on Wednesday, will aim for his maiden international podium finish in decathlon.

"The middle and long distance runners (800m, 1500m and 5000m) too have a good chance of podium in Bangkok. Decathlon (Tejaswin Shankar) is also a strong point this time," Nair added. Aboobacker will also be in action in the qualifying round on Wednesday. Among women, India has a chance to win gold in 100m hurdles and long jump.

National record holder 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji will make her continental debut and she is the Asian leader this season with a best of 12.84 seconds.

She has clocked sub-13 seconds a couple of times this season and she is a gold medal contender. She will also compete in the 200m event. India can look for two medals in women's long jump through season leader Shaili Singh (SB: 6.76m) and Ancy Sojan (SB:6.56m). Sojan had beaten Shaili in the National Inter-State last month.

Commonwealth Games bronze medalist javelin thrower Annu Rani, who won a silver in the last edition, heptathlete Swapna Barman and 3000m steeplechaser Parul Chaudhary also have good chances of winning medals.

National record holder Rani could open India's medal account as the final of the women's javelin throw is scheduled on Wednesday.



## Focus on Jaiswal as Team India starts transition phase against wounded Windies

**ROSEAU (DOMINICA), July 11 (PTI):** The Indian team is set to hit the transition button with much-anticipated debut of Yashasvi Jaiswal in the two-Test series against a wounded West Indies, which is searching for a road to redemption.

While the hosts, after their shock elimination from the ODI World Cup Qualifiers would be eager to prove that they are still relevant in world cricket, the Indian team too is beset with certain challenges.

Cheteshwar Pujara's much-debated exit has created a slot in the Indian top-order and the immensely talented Mumbai left-hander will hope that he lives up to his 'name' and promise that he has shown at the first-class level before being thrown at the deep end of the pool.

While the strait-jacketed solution is putting the debutant at one drop but Shubman Gill is more naturally suited in the middle-order. Jaiswal, 21, usually opens for Mumbai, West Zone and Rest of India in red-ball cricket.

But to settle his nerves first up, No. 3 isn't a bad slot to begin with. Against a bowling attack comprising of seasoned Kumar Roach, Shannon Gabriel, Alazarri Joseph and Jason Holder, it will be a baptism by fire for young Jaiswal before he faces South Africa in Rainbow nation at the end of the year and the mighty Australians during the 2024-25 winter.

India's new World Test Championship cycle will be a way tougher assignment compared to the previous two editions, when a set team



reached back-to-back finals riding on a top-notch pace bowling unit.

But in the absence of an injured Jasprit Bumrah, who might find it difficult to play Test matches on a regular basis and the skilful Mohammed Shami, rested for this series, the Indian attack would surely lack the sting that made the current team a world beater.

Of the two others, who were part of the famed quartet, Ishant Sharma will be making his commentary debut in this series while Umesh Yadav at 36, might find it difficult to recall after recovering from a hamstring injury.

Hence the five-man attack, led by 19-Test old Mohammed Siraj and

supported by Shardul Thakur with nine long-form games in his kitty, does look really thin on experience in comparison to the West Indies pace attack.

It will again boil down to how West Indies measure up against the guile and artistry of Ravichandran Ashwin (474 wickets) and Ravindra Jadeja (268), who have close to 750 Test scalps between them.

The choice of four bowlers is automatic but picking one among Mukesh Kumar, Jaydev Unadkat and Navdeep Saini might not be a easy proposition.

Similarly, with two spinners in operation Kona Bharath is a better bet behind the stumps than Ishan

Kishan but the former is on borrowed time due to his performance in front of the wicket. Kishan's flair and being a left-hander can't be ignored for long till Rishabh Pant gets his place back in the side.

The Windsor Park hasn't hosted a Test match in the last six years but this is one format where the assortment Caribbean nations have been at their best in recent years.

It will be foolhardy on India's part to think that West Indies' World Cup qualifier show will impact their Test match performance and that could be a bit of a misnomer.

In their pace attack, the two primary bowlers are Roach (261 wickets), a veteran of nearly 15 years and Gabriel (164 wickets), who has been a potent new ball enforcer. Gabriel doesn't play white ball cricket.

On the Caribbean tracks, both are more than a handful and the 'Holy Trinity' of Indian batting order – skipper Rohit Sharma, the peerless Virat Kohli and comeback-man Ajinkya Rahane, will have more than a job at hand.

All three have to face different kind of challenges.

For Rohit, it is still a sketchy road and his future will only be clear after the 50-over World Cup. He has to win this two-match series first up and also make significant contribution with the bat in order to remain relevant in the longer format post World Cup.

If one is fair, Rohit has looked most assured in this format compared to shorter ones.

Virat Kohli too needs some tall knocks. The canny West Indies pac-

ers could exploit his problems outside the off-stump channel and a string of low scores will again raise questions if yardstick of dealing with a Cheteshwar Pujara is different from dealing with him.

Both Kohli and Pujara have averaged below 30 in the last three years but only the Saurashtra batter copped criticism and eventually got the axe from the side.

For Ajinkya Rahane, the comeback and elevation to vice-captaincy might not give a clear picture as his head would be the first on the chopping block if there are a couple of failures as Ruturaj Gaikwad is considered a ready replacement.

Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul will also comeback at some point.

So the sub-narratives in the main story will be equally intriguing in the next 13 days.

**Squads:**

**India:** Rohit Sharma (Captain), Shubman Gill, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Virat Kohli, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), KS Bharat (wicket-keeper), Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Mohd. Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Jaydev Unadkat, Navdeep Saini.

**West Indies:** Kraigg Brathwaite (C), Jermaine Blackwood (VC), Joshua Da Silva (WK), Alick Athanaze, Rahkeem Cornwall, Shannon Gabriel, Jason Holder, Alzarri Joseph, Raymon Reifer, Kumar Roach, Tagenarine Chanderpaul, Kirk McKenzie, Jomel Warren.

Match Starts: 7:30 pm IST.

## DULEEP TROPHY

### South Zone face West Zone in an all-star final

**BENGALURU, July 11 (PTI):** The South Zone and West Zone players will look to bridge the gap between the common goal of a title win and their personal targets when they face each other in the Duleep Trophy final, starting here from Wednesday.

From a team perspective, West have a proud record to preserve. They have appeared in 34 Duleep Trophy finals so far, winning 19 of them. They are the most successful team in this tournament and South will be eager to end that hegemony by winning a 14th title for themselves.

South might also have a point to prove as they had lost to Ajinkya Rahane-led West Zone by a massive 294 runs in the Duleep Trophy final last year. As it occurs in any team contest, Duleep Trophy also works as a vehicle to achieve certain individual objectives. Cheteshwar Pujara offers the most telltale example.

The veteran India batter was dropped from the India squad for the West Indies tour. The omission might certainly have left him a bruised man. But the Saurashtra star did not confine himself to a dark corner. He flew to Bengaluru and made a solid 133 for West Zone in the semifinal against Central Zone, leading his side's entry into the title clash. He will be eyeing another big outing in the final. That willingness to grind shown by a man, who has played 103 Tests and scored over 7000 runs, will work as a pathway for many others from both the teams.

Mayank Agarwal, vice-captain of South, Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw have come to this match riding on heaps of runs that they have made in the previous Ranji season.

Mayank made two fifties (76 & 54) in the quarterfinals against North Zone but the West pair of Prithvi and Sarfaraz failed to kick on. The trio will seek a better outing this week.

Hanuma Vihari and Washington Sundar too need a serious effort but for a different reason than the aforementioned troika.

Vihari last appeared for India in 2022 during the Birmingham Test against England, while Washington played against Sri Lanka in the white-ball series earlier this year.

However, injuries and competition for spots have curtailed their progress in Test cricket. Now, they would like to dish out an impact performance here, and return among the contenders list.

N Tilak Varma, who has been recently drafted into India's T20I squad to face West Indies, would like to underline his red-ball credentials, as his stated aim is to be an all-format player.

These are all players who have been in the headlines for a while now. But then there are players like B Sai Sudarshan, R Sai Kishore, Vysakh Vijayakumar, Vidwath Kaverappa etc who would be keen to lift the veil of relative unfamiliarity and show their wares in the longer format.

That jostle over the next five days will be an intense watch.

**Teams:** South Zone: Hanuma Vihari (captain), Mayank Agarwal (vice-captain), Sai Sudharsan, Ricky Bhui (wk), R Samarth, Washington Sundar, Sachin Baby, Pradosh Ranjan Paul, Sai Kishore, V Kaverappa, V Vyshak, KV Sasikanth, Darshan Misal, N Tilak Varma.

**West Zone:** Priyank Panchal (captain), Cheteshwar Pujara, Suryakumar Yadav, Harvik Desai (wk), Prithvi Shaw, Het Patel (wk), Sarfaraz Khan, Arpit Vasavada, Atit Seth, Shams Mulani, Kedar Jadhav, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja, Tuskar Deshpande, Chintan Gaja, Arzan Nagwaswalla.

Match starts at: 9:30 AM IST.

## Lord Hanuman is official mascot of Asian Athletics Championships in Thailand

**BANGKOK, July 11 (PTI):** 'Lord Hanuman', one of the most revered Gods in India, will be the official mascot of the Asian Athletics Championships starting here on Wednesday.

The event is being held on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the continental governing body.

"As Hanuman exhibits extraordinary abilities in (Lord) Rama's service, including speed, strength, courage, and wisdom ... Hanuman's greatest ability is, in fact, his incredibly staunch loyalty and devotion," the

Asian Athletics Association explained on its website.

"The 25th Asian Athletics Championships 2023 logo indicates the athletes participating in the games, skills, teamwork of athletes, showcase of athleticism, dedication, and sportsmanship."

India, led by shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor and long jumper Murali Sreeshankar, would look for an impactful show in the Championships. The Indian team left for the five-day Asian Athletics Championships on Saturday night from Delhi and Bengaluru.

## AFI awarded best member federation by Asian Athletics Association

**NEW DELHI, July 11 (PTI):** Athletics Fed-

eration of India (AFI) was on Monday conferred with the best member federation award by the Asian Athletics Association in Bangkok. AFI president Adille Sumariwalla received the award during the function hosted by Asian Athletics Association.

"Great day for Indian athletics. AFI was awarded the best member federation award in Bangkok by Asian Athletics Association today.




The award was received by AFI president Adille Sumariwalla," the AFI tweeted after receiving the award.



Sumariwalla is in Bangkok to attend the Asian Athletics Council meeting.

The Indian team left for the five-day Asian Athletics Championships on Saturday night from Delhi and Bengaluru.

The championships will begin in Bangkok on Wednesday.

## Protect and Prevent.

## Continue the fight against Japanese Encephalitis.

**Shri Keshab Mahanta**  
Minister, Health & Family Welfare, Assam

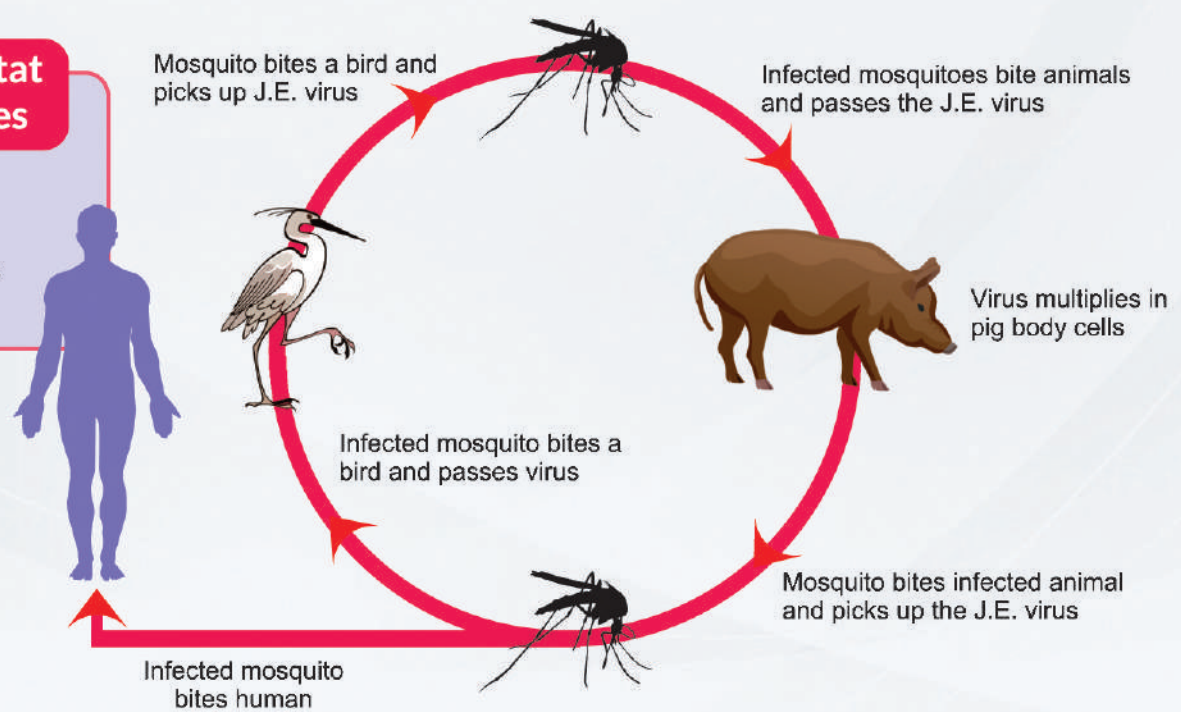
July and August months are considered high transmission time for Japanese Encephalitis.

Stay alert. Protect yourself and your loved ones.

Remember, immediate medical treatment can save a life.

Breeding habitat for mosquitoes

- Paddy fields
- Blocked drains
- Irrigation canals
- Ponds



Protect yourself from mosquito bites

- Avoid going to areas where water is accumulated (example rice fields) during dusk and dawn as the mosquitoes are most active at those times.
- Wear light coloured, long sleeve clothing and trousers.
- Use mosquito net while sleeping.
- Use insecticide or coil to repel mosquitoes.
- Keep the drains around the house clean and do not allow water to accumulate in empty containers.
- Pig rearing should be done 100 meters away from human settlements.
- Use pig nets or mosquito nets for pig sty farms.
- Vaccinate pigs against common diseases at regular intervals.

Hosts

- Birds (herons and egrets) are reservoirs for J.E. virus.
- Pigs act as amplifiers of the virus and produce a high viral load that infect mosquitoes.

Call 104 for any Health Related Queries

Call 108 for Ambulance Services

(NHM/D/2023-24/1006)