



6
WORLD
8
NATION

- Zelenskyy visits Sweden for 1st time since full-scale war with Russia
- Ukraine will get F-16 fighter jets from the Dutch and Danes
- 'Cong workers want Rahul to contest from Amethi in 2024 LS polls'
- 'Delhi Police stopped people from attending We20 meeting'

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Five companies poised to infuse around ₹ 3,000 crore into the state economy: CM Assam's business-friendly ambitions embodied in new investment policy

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: In a strategic move to drive economic growth and ensure harmonious development, the Assam government has unveiled the Assam Industrial and Investment Policy (Amendment), 2023, bolstered by a newly formed Empowered Committee. This Committee, led by the industries and commerce minister, will meticulously assess investment proposals under the new policy to ensure alignment with the state's developmental goals.

With its progressive approach, the policy is already yielding positive outcomes, with five companies in the process of establishing units in the state, poised to infuse approximately ₹ 3,000 crore into



the economy. Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, taking to the platform X (formerly known as Twitter) on Saturday, extended an enthusiastic invitation to potential investors. He

affirmed the state's commitment to cultivating a business-friendly ecosystem and spotlighted Assam's array of opportunities. "We are committed to create a business friendly atmosphere in

Assam and welcome potential investors to explore the diverse opportunities that the State offers. We will extend all help required to make the process seamless and rewarding," chief minister Sarma's tweet expressed.

Aligned with this commitment, the Assam government has introduced the Assam Industrial and Investment Policy (Amendment), 2023, envisioning a transformation of Assam into a preferred investment destination, attracting large-scale projects and fostering economic dynamism.

A notable highlight of the policy is the introduction of Customized Incentives tailored for mega projects. To qualify for these incentives, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

NRL registers highest profit since inception at ₹ 3,703 crore

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: The Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) has achieved a significant milestone by registering its highest-ever Profit After Tax (PAT) since its inception, reaching ₹ 3,703 crore compared to the previous year's ₹ 3,562 crore, as stated by chairman Ranjit Rath on Saturday.

Notably, the refinery marked a groundbreaking achievement by surpassing a capacity utilization of more than 100%, processing 3,091 TMT of crude oil since its inception. Rath shared these accomplishments during the post-AGM press conference after virtually addressing NRL's 30th Annual General Meeting.

Moreover, the refinery achieved its highest-ever distillate yield of 87.7%, coupled with a best-ever specific energy consumption (SEC) of 61.7 MBN, Rath disclosed.

The company's financial performance stood out as it reported a record revenue from operations of ₹ 29,786 crore, in contrast to the previous year's ₹ 23,547 crore, highlighting its steady growth trajectory.

The company also recorded an increase in the earning per share (EPS) to ₹ 25.17 from ₹ 24.21 in 2021-22, and the net worth climbed to ₹ 11,427 crore as of March 31, 2023, compared to ₹ 8,388 crore in the pre-



vious year.

During the AGM, a final dividend of ₹ 235.40 crore for the fiscal year 2022-23 was declared, while the company had already paid an interim dividend of ₹ 882.76 crore for the year. This sum equates to a total dividend pay-out of ₹ 1,118.16 crore, representing 30.20% of NRL's profit after tax (PAT) for the year.

Appreciating the efforts of all employees Ranjit Rath said, "Today is truly special because it is the first AGM after the announcement (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Street vendors attack Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Aug 19: The police on Saturday arrested the Dibrugarh Vendors Association's (DVA) leader, Madan Shah after a mob of around 200 street vendors carried out an attack on the car of Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan.

The mob attacked Phukan while he was leaving after attending a meeting of the Dibrugarh Municipal Board (DMB).

The mob led by Shah, who claimed to be the leader of the street vendors of the town, tried to stop the MLA from leaving and started banging on the four-wheeler the latter was travelling in.

The police were immediately informed. Dibrugarh SP Shwetank Mishra and district officials rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

After the MLA left, the mob then turned their ire on the ward commissioner of the town's municipal ward number five, Dibyajyoti Hazarika, physically assaulting him. He sustained minor injuries

during the attack.

They even tried to attack DMB chairman Saikat Patra and vice-chairman Ujjal Phukan. However, the police intervened at the right time and saved the duo.

Following the incident, the DMB chairman lodged an FIR against Madan Shah and others at the Dibrugarh police station. The municipal board also threatened to cease work if the culprits were not arrested within 24 hours.

Meanwhile acting swiftly, the Dibrugarh police arrested Madan Shah and booked a case under sections 143, 147, 341, 352, 353 and 427 of the Indian Penal Code.

The civic body had been carrying out an eviction drive against street vendors for illegally encroaching the footpaths and streets of the town. Specific vending zones have even been provided to the street vendors, but a section of them refuse to move to set up their merchandise in these zones. On the other hand, the accused took to voice (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



Devotees perform 'Deodhani Nritya' as a part of 'Manasha Puja', at Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati on Saturday. HT Photo

DIVINE GRACE

Indian economy shining as beacon of hope in challenging times: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Saturday that India's economy is shining as a beacon of hope in these challenging times.

"With robust growth and resilient spirit, the future looks promising. Let us keep this momentum and ensure prosperity for 140 crore Indians," he said on X, reacting to news portal Money-control's 'Bullish on India' campaign.

The portal, which specialises in reporting on markets and financial sector, had posted on X that the country's economy has not just withstood challenges, but thrived, setting the stage for optimism.

The 'Bullish on India' campaign showcases India's economic resilience and growth potential in various critical sectors, it said.

It aims to analyse the key drivers of India's economic growth while fostering awareness about the unparalleled potential the na-

tion offers at a time of a global economic slowdown, the portal said in a separate statement.

"With detailed analysis of macro-economic factors such as manufacturing, demography, economy, markets and India's rising stand in the global leadership, 'Bullish on India' has been presented as a data backed campaign that underlines India's resilient economic growth," it said. The campaign seeks to analyse key drivers of India's economic growth while fostering awareness about the "unparalleled potential" the nation offers at a time of a global economic slowdown, it added.

"There are various adversities that have shaken economies worldwide in the past few years. However, India is standing tall, retaining its stature as the 'world's fastest-growing major economy'," it said, noting that the country is set to become the third largest economy in the coming years. (PTI)

Public servant arrested on bribery charges

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: A complaint filed with the Directorate of Vigilance & Anti-Corruption, Assam, has led to the exposure of corrupt practices by Achyut Das, Lot Mandal at the office of the circle officer, Guwahati Revenue Circle, Kamrup Metropolitan district. The complaint alleged that Das demanded a bribe of ₹ 9,000 for processing mutation works, which he later reduced to ₹ 8,000.

Refusing to bow down to extortion, the complainant sought legal recourse and approached the Directorate for assistance. In response, an elaborate sting operation was executed on Saturday, with the participation of the Vigilance team. The operation was carried (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

NHAI inks agreement with Assam govt to increase green cover along highways



GUWAHATI, Aug 19: The NHAI signed an agreement with the Assam government's Environment and Forest Department on Saturday to increase forest cover along the national highways in the state. The Memorandum of Under-

standing (MoU) was signed by additional chief secretary (Forest) Ravi Shankar Prasad and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) joint advisor Bikash Brahma.

According to the MoU, four di-

visions will be covered in the first phase - Bongaigaon, Nalbari, Nagaon and Barpeta, an official statement said.

The social forestry division of the department would execute the plan of planting trees on the sides and medians of the highways, it said.

Increasing forest cover in the state, minimising carbon footprints and presenting pleasant driving experiences on the highways are some of the prime objectives of the agreement, it added.

Forest minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said the agreement would pave the way to achieve the target of green highways. He asked the social forestry division to plant local trees, which will grow well in Assam's climate. (PTI)

Remove Biren Singh for failing to restore normalcy in Manipur: CPI (M)

AGARTALA/IMPHAL, Aug 19: Senior CPI (M) leader Jitendra Chaudhury, who is currently visiting Jitendra Chaudhury as member of a party delegation, on Saturday demanded the removal of chief minister N Biren Singh for "failing to restore normalcy".

Chaudhury, the Tripura unit's general secretary and part of the CPI (M) delegation that is on a three-day visit to the violence-affected state, alleged that the ethnic violence in the north-eastern state was part of the BJP-RSS' strategy of engineering division among people across the country.

The BJP, however, dismissed the CPI (M) leader's allegations as baseless and asserted the state was on the path to peace.

"We don't see the strife in Manipur as an isolated situation but as part of the BJP-RSS' pan-India strategy of creating divisions and triggering mistrust among people to rule them. Such incidents are happening everywhere," Chaudhury told PTI over the

phone. The CPI (M) delegation, led by its national general secretary Sitaram Yechury, visited three relief camps in Manipur and also met Governor Anusuiya Uikey on Friday.

"The situation in Manipur is alarming as mistrust is growing with each passing day. The Biren Singh government in the state, instead of bringing peace, has failed to take any visible step in restoring normalcy," he said.

"It was said that the Centre will monitor the situation in Manipur but the reality on the ground is very different. Biren Singh, who has become indispensable after his much-hyped drama of resignation, is running the show to date," the CPI (M) leader alleged.

"We don't demand sacking of the BJP-led government in Manipur but seek the immediate removal of Biren Singh," he said. Tripura BJP chief spokesperson Subrata Chakraborty dismissed Chaudhury's allegations and asserted that peace (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Heroin seized in Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Aug 19: In a significant breakthrough, the police in Karbi Anglong successfully recovered a substantial amount of heroin hidden by drug smugglers within a jungle.

The incident unfolded when an SUV bearing the registration number AS 05 G 0931, traveling from Dimapur, Nagaland, was signaled to halt at a checkpoint in Karagaon on Friday. Instead of complying with the police's instructions, the vehicle forcefully broke through the barricade and fled. Subsequently, the abandoned SUV was discovered in Dillai Tiniali under Dillai police station in Karbi Anglong. However, upon meticulous inspection, no incriminating evidence was found within the vehicle.

Following these events, Sanju Ali (43), the son of Jaynal Ali and a resident of Sarupathar under Sarupathar police station in Golaghat (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Guv advocates for increasing use of renewable sources of energy

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria emphasised the crucial role of engineers in devising sustainable solutions, innovative technologies, and resilient infrastructure to combat the adverse effects of climate change.

Speaking at a seminar on the contribution of Mechanical Engineers in addressing climate change, organized by the Institution of Engineers (India), Assam Chapter, Governor Kataria underscored the engineers' potential to tackle climate challenges. He highlighted their ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience to climate change impacts. Engineers, he stated, could develop cost-effective measures to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Governor Kataria urged engineers to collaborate with other stakeholders, including bureaucrats and policy planners, to devise effective strategies to counter the impact of climate change. He referenced the "Mission Life" flagship program, promoting sustainable lifestyles and consumption patterns to address climate change challenges.

Discussing the long-term impact of climate change, Governor Kataria noted the rise in temperature, altered natural processes, rising sea levels, and extreme weather conditions. These changes lead to human displacement, food insecurity, increased respiratory illnesses, and other challenges. Governor Kataria emphasised that reducing dependence on fossil fuels could (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

The exhibition showcases over 70 artworks by 20 artists Original canvasses of renowned artists provide visual delight to art connoisseurs in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: Stylistic forms, geometrical designs and abstract landscapes of vivid and muted colours were among the myriad original canvasses of renowned artists on display at an exhibition in Guwahati, providing rare visual delight to art connoisseurs.

M F Hussain's 'Devi', 'Horses', 'Gandhiji', 'Women with the Lamp' and 'Lady with the Portrait', Akbar Padamsee's 'Half Moon', K K Hebbar's 'Mahim Darga', N S Bendre's 'Five Women', 'Bengali Lady and Village Scene', S H Raza's 'Suryoday', 'Beej', 'La Terre' and V S Gaitonde's 'Greenscape' were some of the canvasses displayed at the event.

The exhibition titled 'Modern Indian Masters: From Assam and Elsewhere in India' showcases over 70 artworks by 20 artists.



The event commenced at Lalit Kala Bhavan art gallery at the Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra on August 11 and will continue till August 20.

The exhibition is being organised by the Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA), Gauhati Artists' Guild (GAG) and Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra.

Exhibits of artists from Assam, including Ashutosh Dev, Sobha Brahma, Benu Misra, Neelpawan Baruah, Hemanta Misra, Pranab Barua, Madhab

Baishya, Pulak Gogoi, Gauri Barman and Hemangini Bordoloi, were also showcased.

"The idea behind the exhibition was to popularise Assam's artists the way other Indian artists are known. We are presenting all artworks in a grand manner," LKA's editor-in-charge and curator of the exhibition Johny M L told PTI.

Johny said that each region in the country has its unique modernist art practices but "many artists seldom aspire to go beyond their geographical borders and make it to the national scene".

"Internationally-renowned artists have the advantage of being in the financial centres of the country but that does not mean that the visual language they developed was radically different from those of (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Samsung's 'Made in India' foldable phones hit the shelves



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 19: In a much-anticipated release, Samsung's 'Made in India' marvels, the Galaxy Z Flip5 and Galaxy Z Fold5, have officially gone on sale on August 18. These cutting-edge foldable smartphones promise unparalleled experiences, with the former touted as the ultimate pocketable self-expression tool, and the latter as the pinnacle of productivity.

The Galaxy Z Flip5 offers a unique foldable experience in a pocket-sized package, designed for self-expression. Its outer screen is now 3.78 times larger, enhancing

usability. The device boasts IPX8 support, aircraft-grade Armor Aluminum frames, and Corning® Gorilla® Glass Victus® 2 on both the Flex Window and back cover. Notably, it features a new integrated hinge module with a dual rail structure to withstand external impacts.

For those seeking productivity on the go, the Galaxy Z Fold5 shines with its large screen and powerful performance. It is the thinnest and lightest Galaxy Fold to date. Like its sibling, it also comes equipped with IPX8 support, durable materials, and the robust integrated hinge module.

The former commerce and industry minister said the policy has the potential to change the socio-economic dimension of India

New National Cooperative Policy almost ready: Suresh Prabhu

KOLKATA, Aug 19: The new National Cooperative Policy is almost ready, and a 47-member committee is in the process of submitting the draft to the central government, chairman of the panel and former union minister Suresh Prabhu said.

Union home and cooperation minister Amit Shah had last year announced that a dedicated policy will soon be prepared to strengthen the cooperative movement in the country, and that Prabhu will head the national-level committee.

The panel members include experts and representatives of the co-operative sector and officials of central ministries.

"The policy document is almost ready and the submission process is underway. We can now look forward to the release of the policy and its implementation," Prabhu told PTI on the sidelines of an event organised by the merchants' chamber of commerce & industry here.

The former commerce and in-



dustry minister said the policy has the potential to change the socio-economic dimension of India, substantially increasing the share of cooperatives in the total GDP.

Prabhu said the idea behind the policy is to promote a cooperative-based economic development model backed by a legal and institutional framework.

"I have been connected with all

types of national and international cooperatives for a long time, and know their potential. Any economic activity will add value to people's lives, but cooperatives help in spreading and distributing income while creating wealth.

"And, that is the reason the government is thinking of increasing the share of cooperatives in almost all sectors of the economy," he

said. The existing National Policy on Cooperatives was formulated in 2002.

India has around 8.5 lakh cooperative societies with a member base of nearly 29 crore, according to government data. These cooperatives are engaged in varied activities like agro-processing, dairying, fisheries, housing, weaving, credit and marketing.

Prabhu, also a former railway minister, added that the cooperation ministry has decided upon creating cooperative warehousing as well.

"I think this is an amazing idea to further boost cooperatives. Millions of square metres of warehousing are being developed across the country," he added.

In his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that cooperatives are a significant part of India's social economy, and that a separate ministry was created to empower cooperatives and spread their network. (PTI)

BOI issues LoC against Hungarian national for deceiving investors

BHUBANESWAR, Aug 19: The Bureau of Immigration (BOI) has issued a look out circular (LoC) against a Hungarian national and head of a crypto-ponzi firm who is allegedly involved in deceiving investors of their money, the EOW said on Saturday.

The firm, STA Token is accused of operating a ponzi business and collecting around ₹ 1,000 crore deposits from two lakh people across the country without any authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India, it said.

The LoC was issued at the request of Odisha's Economic Offence Wing (EOW), which has been probing the alleged scandal, it said.

The EOW registered a case against the company under different sections of the IPC and The Prize Chits and Money Circulation Schemes-Banning) Act.

The involvement of second forger, a Dutch national, in this scam is under scrutiny, an official said.

The Hungarian David Gez, the head of STA Token, had entered India twice in 2022-23 on a tourist visa and stayed in India for about 25 days travelling to various places like Odisha, Goa, Punjab, Jharkhand and Delhi, in the EOW said. (PTI)

Royal Stag Boombox unveils unique blend of bollywood melody

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: In a groundbreaking musical venture, Royal Stag Boombox has joined forces with Viacom18 to introduce an entirely new genre of music that fuses the melodious tunes of Bollywood with the raw energy of hip-hop, creating what they term as the "original sound of generation large." Recognizing the profound emotional impact of music across generations, Seagram's Royal Stag has positioned music as a significant passion pillar.

The third original track to be released is a remarkable collaboration between music maestro Amit Trivedi and the spirited rapper SlowCheeta. Titled 'Mohabbat', this song is a celebration of love. Amit Trivedi takes on the role of a love guru, encouraging the hesitant newcomer, SlowCheeta, to express his emotions freely. 'Mohabbat' seamlessly blends Desi melodies with hip-hop beats, offering a glimpse into the various stages of falling in love.

This release is part of Royal Stag Boombox's innovative "phygital" format, which combines physical and digital experiences to engage the audience. Rapper SlowCheeta expressed his excitement, saying, "Royal Stag Boombox is an incredible platform where artists like us can come together to collaborate and express ourselves. The opportunity to work with an icon like Amit Trivedi and create something as special as this track is priceless. I am going to cherish this for a



long time."

Renowned music composer and singer Amit Trivedi also shared his enthusiasm, stating, "I had a lot of fun making 'Mohabbat' with SlowCheeta. It's a lovely song that captures the entertaining vibe of Bollywood music combined with the energy of rap. Royal Stag Boombox is doing a great job bringing such fresh new sounds to the audience."

Wall Street's dismal August drags on with 3rd straight losing week

NEW YORK, Aug 19: Wall Street limped to the finish line of its third losing week in a row on Friday.

The S&P 500 barely budged as it ended the week with a loss of more than 2%, like other U.S. indexes. It edged down by 0.65, or less than 0.1%, to 4,369.71. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 25.83 points, or 0.1%, to 34,500.66, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 26.16, or 0.2%, to 13,290.78.

August has been rough for the stock market, which has given back more than a quarter of the S&P 500's torrid gains for the year's first seven months. That's in part because a swift rise in yields has forced investors to reconsider whether stocks got too expensive, particularly after critics warned the market rose too far, too quickly.

Stocks held a bit steadier Friday after yields eased a bit. After topping 4.30% a day before and nearing its highest level since 2007, the 10-year Treasury yield fell back to 4.24%. (AP)

Emerging economies are pushing to end the dollar's dominance. But what's the alternative?

ABUJA, Aug 19: Business has vanished at Kingsley Odafe's clothing shop in Nigeria's capital, forcing him to lay off three employees.

One culprit for his troubles stands out: The U.S. dollar's strength against the Nigerian currency, the naira, has pushed the price of garments and other foreign goods beyond the reach of local consumers. A bag of imported clothes costs three times what it did two years ago. The price these days is running around 350,000 naira, or \$450.

"There are no sales anymore because people have to eat first before thinking of buying clothes," Odafe said.

Across the developing world, many countries are fed up with America's dominance of the global financial system — especially the power of the dollar. They will air their grievances next week as the BRICS bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa meet with other emerging market countries in Johannesburg, South Africa.

But griping about King Dollar is easier than actually deposing the de facto world currency.

The dollar is by far the most-used currency in global business and has shrugged off past challenges to its preeminence.

Despite repeated talk of the BRICS countries rolling out their own currency, no concrete proposals have emerged in the run-up to the summit starting Tuesday. Emerging economies have, however, discussed expanding trade in their own currencies to reduce their reliance on the buck.

At a meeting of BRICS foreign ministers in June, South Africa's Naledi Pandor said the bloc's New Development Bank will seek alternatives "to the current internationally traded currencies" — a euphemism for the dollar. Pandor was sitting alongside Russia's Sergey Lavrov and China's Ma Xiaoxu — representatives of two countries that are especially eager to weaken America's international financial clout.

The BRICS grouping dates to 2009. Originally, it was just BRIC, a term coined by Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill to refer to

the rising economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa joined in 2010, adding the "S" to the name. More than 20 countries — including Saudi Arabia, Iran and Venezuela — have expressed interest in joining BRICS.

In 2015, the BRICS countries launched the New Development Bank — an alternative to the U.S. and European-dominated International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

"Developing nations are itching to loosen the grip of Western dominance and open the door to a new world order where the East commands equal, if not greater, influence," said Martin Ssemu, a Ugandan political activist who has defended a law Uganda passed this year prescribing the death penalty for some homosexual acts.

The legislation prompted the World Bank to announce this month that it was halting new lending to the East African country.

Critics in the developing world are especially uneasy about America's willingness to use the dollar's global influence to impose financial sanctions against adversaries — as it did to Russia after the invasion of Ukraine last year.

They also complain that fluctuations in the dollar can destabilize their economies. A rising dollar, for instance, can cause chaos abroad by drawing investment out of other countries. It also increases the cost of repaying loans denominated in dollars and buying imported products, which are often priced in dollars.

Kenyan President William Ruto has grumbled this year about Africa's dependence on the dollar and the economic fallout from its ups and downs, while the Kenyan shilling plunges in value. He's urged African leaders to join a fledgling pan-African payments system that uses local currencies in a push to encourage more trade.

"How is U.S. dollars part of the trade between Djibouti and Kenya? Why?" he asked at a meeting, to applause.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has supported a common currency for commerce within the South American bloc Mercosur and for trade among

BRICS nations.

"Why does Brazil need the dollar to trade with China or Argentina? We can trade in our currency," he told reporters this month.

But if the dollar's drawbacks are easily apparent, the alternatives to it are not.

"At the end of the day, if you want to keep your reserve safe, you've got to put it in the dollar," said Daniel Bradlow, a senior research fellow at the University of Pretoria and a lawyer specializing in international finance. "You're going to need to borrow in dollars. Everybody can see all the problems with doing this, but if there was an alternative, people would use it."

As it stands, 96% of trade in the Americas from 1999 to 2019 was invoiced in dollars, 74% of trade in Asia and 79% everywhere else, outside of Europe, which has the euro, according to calculations by U.S. Federal Reserve researchers. Still, the dollar's hold on global commerce has loosened somewhat in recent years as banks, businesses and investors have turned to the euro and China's yuan.

But 24 years after the euro was introduced, the world's No. 2 currency still does not rival the dollar for international gravitas: The dollar is used in three times as many foreign-exchange transactions as the euro, Harvard University economist Jeffrey Frankel said in a study last month. (AP)

LOST

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I-T dept notifies rules for valuing rent-free accommodation

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Employees drawing substantial salaries and having rent-free accommodation provided by their employers will now be able to save more and get a higher take-home salary as the income tax department has revised norms for valuing such houses.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified amendments to the Income Tax Rules which will come into effect from September 1.

As per the notification, where unfurnished accommodation is provided to employees other than the central or state government employees and such accommodation is owned by the employer then the valuation shall be: (i) 10 per cent of salary (reduced from 15 per cent) in cities having population exceeding 40 lakh as per 2011 census (earlier, 25 lakh as per 2001 census), (ii) 7.5 per cent of salary (reduced from 10 per cent) in cities having population exceeding 15 lakh but not exceeding 40 lakh as per 2011 census (earlier, 10 lakh but not exceeding 25 lakhs as per 2001 census). (PTI)

Titan to acquire additional 27.2 pc in CaratLane ₹ 4,621 cr to raise stake to 98.28 pc

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Jewellery maker Titan on Saturday announced increasing stake in its subsidiary and new-age jewellery brand CaratLane to 98.28 per cent by acquiring an additional 27.18 per cent share for ₹ 4,621 crore.

The Tata group-managed firm has entered into a share purchase agreement with CaratLane founders -- Mithun Sacheti and Srinivasa Gopalan -- and their family members to acquire all the shares held by them representing 27.18 per cent, taking its total holding to 98.28 per cent, said a joint statement.

"CaratLane is a subsidiary of the company and on completion of the aforesaid share purchase would result in an increase in shareholding of the company in CaratLane from 71.09 per cent to 98.28 per cent on a fully diluted basis," it said.

Over the cost of the acquisition, Titan said it will pay "₹ 4,621 crore towards the purchase of 27.18 per cent equity shares of CaratLane on a fully diluted

basis". CaratLane Trading is an unlisted entity and its turnover in FY23 stood at ₹ 2,177 crore. It also operates in the manufacturing and sale of jewellery.

Titan expects the acquisition to be completed by October 31, 2023, subject to the timely receipt of requisite regulatory approvals from the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

"On acquisition of 27.18 per cent of the shareholding of CaratLane, the company would hold an aggregate of 98.28 per cent of the equity share capital on a fully diluted basis and voting rights in CaratLane," it said.

Titan managing director C K Venkataraman said: "Titan has always prided itself in building strong brands that are amongst the leaders in their categories. We have great faith in the India consumer story and believe that the growth journey of CaratLane has only begun and has a long way to go."

CaratLane founder and managing director Mithun Sacheti said:

"Looking into the future, there couldn't be a more ideal destination for CaratLane than Titan and the esteemed Tata Group who will provide the perfect opportunities for CaratLane to continue to grow from strength to strength." CaratLane was started as a purely online brand in 2008, looking at the fast-growing affordable and accessible jewellery market. Titan first invested in CaratLane in 2016 and over the past 8 years, in partnership with its jewellery brand Tanishq, CaratLane has witnessed substantial growth.

CaratLane also has a presence in the United States through its subsidiary.

Titan, a joint venture between the Tata Group and the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO), operates Tanishq, Mia, Zoya and CaratLane brands.

It started operations in 1987 under the name Titan Watches but in 1994, diversified into jewellery (Tanishq) and subsequently into eye care (Titan Eye Plus) markets. (PTI)

His mother Neelu Pandey admitted that she used to scold her son, as people used to say negative things about PUBG Followed passion for gaming job came as surprise: iQOO CGO Shwetank Pandey

LUCKNOW, Aug 19: For 23-year-old Shwetank Pandey, it was a tryst with destiny as he was appointed the Chief Gaming Officer (CGO) of iQOO, after seeking a year for himself from his family to pursue his passion for gaming, and also bought a smartphone on EMI in this regard.

Describing his journey from a student to a CGO, Shwetank Pandey, who was in Lucknow recently told PTI: "The journey was simply brilliant, because if you are pursuing e-sports in India, then giving time to it and garnering support of the family for this is really very difficult.

"But, thanks to my family, I was able to pursue e-sports, and I started e-sports in 2019, when I was in class 12th. I used to play games with my friends then, but it was not competitive."

"After completing class 12th, I pursued graduation with a focus on communication skills. I also worked for a year, so as to assure my family that the future of their child

is secure, and so that there are no doubts in their mind.

"During the job, I purchased a phone on EMI, and I had told my family members that I had bought the phone with my money, so that I can do proper gaming. This was in 2022," Pandey, who dropped the idea of pursuing an MBA, said.

He added that after this, his parents were assured that their son's future is secured, and they agreed to give him a "last try at gaming."

Expressing his joy over becoming iQOO's chief gaming officer, Shwetank said, "I feel on top of the world right now. When I initially filled out the form, I was reluctant and hoped to be among the finalists. Little did I know that it would lead me this far and eventually result in becoming iQOO's first-ever CGO."

"The finalists I met in Mumbai were all good gamers and great individuals. I am grateful to be chosen amongst them and



thankful to iQOO and the jury for providing aspiring gamers like me with such a big platform."

When asked to comment on the negative side of gaming, Pandey said, "If you are passionate for something, then you see

your mental health, think about your family, and accordingly pursue your passion," and added that on August 16, he was appointed as the CGO.

Welcoming iQOO's chief gaming officer, Nipun Marya, CEO, iQOO in a state-

ment said, "This is an iconic moment in the Indian Smartphone industry and we are over the moon to have found the person who embodies our vision for this role."

"The DNA of iQOO is to bring in 'I Quest On and On' and Shwetank was never short of his peak performance across all rounds of the hunt. With him joining us, we intend to drive a more dynamic and fresher perspective to our products and initiatives for the younger gaming enthusiasts in the country."

Shwetank's father Ram Dayal Pandey who is in UP Police, and posted in Ayodhya, told PTI, "I was confident that whatever he (Shwetank) will do, it will not be a wrong thing."

His mother Neelu Pandey admitted that she used to scold her son, as people used to say negative things about PUBG. "However, we supported him, since he was focused towards his studies and gaming, and did not have many friends." (PTI)

The remembrance marked 23rd death anniversary of former president of Bodo Sahitya Sabha Kokrajhar remembers Subunghthini Thandwi Bineswar Brahma

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 19: The chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Pramod Boro inaugurated the newly installed statue of Subunghthini Thandwi Bineswar Brahma, former president of Bodo Sahitya Sabha while marking the 23rd death anniversary of Brahma on Saturday at his burial place Chandamari in Kokrajhar.

Notably, Bineswar Brahma, who was regarded as a harbinger of peace in the region amongst the Bodos and other down trodden communities across the state, was shot dead by unknown miscreants on August 19 in 2000 at his Guwahati Bhetapara residence.

Brahma was a noted writer and one of prominent intellectuals, social thinker of the Bodo community. He was deputy general manager in FCI for northeast region besides holding president in the Bodo Sahitya Sabha when he was assassinated.

The death anniversary was organised

by Bodo Sahitya Sabha and Bineswar Brahma Charitable Trust (BBCT). Bodo Sahitya Sabha president Dr Surath Narzary hoisted sabha flag at half-mast followed by floral tribute to Brahma by his widow Pushpa Rani Brahma at his tomb.

A souvenir was brought out on the occasion to mark the observation amidst huge presence of gathering.

Members, citizens from all walks of life, apart from many organisations like Bodo Sahitya Sabha, ABSU, ABWWF, All Bodo Primary Teachers Association (ABPTA), Tribal Sangha attended the occasion to pay floral tribute to Bineswar Brahma.

An open seminar on the contribution and life philosophy of Subunghthini Thandwi Bineswar Brahma was held with Dr Surath Narzary, Bodo Sahitya Sabha president in the chair.

CEM Pramod Boro while inaugurating the statue of Bineswar Brahma recalled contributions of Subunghthini Thandwi



Bineswar Brahma, former president of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, towards the uplift and development of Bodo literary and

language in the state; on his anniversary. He said that Bineswar Brahma, who had dedicated and sacrificed his life to-

wards the welfare and upliftment of the Bodos in his days. He was a social thinker and noted writer amongst the Bodos.

He said that Subunghthini Thandwi Bineswar Brahma was the harbinger of peace in the region. He said that Brahma was an extraordinary leader of the sabha as well of Bodo community. Despite, a high official responsibility in FCI, Brahma dedicated his life for Bodo's development.

He said that late Brahma's contribution and dedication was endless who had been stressed to bring healthy and integrated society in the state.

Boro informed that the government of BTR has been decided to set up Subunghthini Thandwi Bineswar Brahma Knowledge centre and digital library in every VCDC across the Bodoland region to explore the ideology and philosophy of Bineswar Brahma. He said that the BTR government has been stepping to work for all round development of the so-

ciety in the region.

'We must keep alive ideology and philosophy of Brahma while building a well development of language and literary of Bodos in the world', Boro added.

Bodo Sahitya Sabha president Dr Surath Narzary said that today the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and Bineswar Brahma Charitable Trust jointly observed the death anniversary and remembered his contributions in the field of Bodo language and literature in his days.

He said that the Bodo Sahitya Sabha has been emphasising to keep alive of ideology and philosophy of Subunghthini Thandwi Bineswar Brahma. He said that Bodo Sahitya Sabha was working for the welfare and upliftment of Bodo language and literary in the country.

Among others, Rwngrwa Narzary, Rajya Sabha MP, Sahitya Akademi award winner Dr Kameswar Brahma, former president of Bodo Sahitya Sabha Toren Boro were prominent attendees in the event.

World Photography Day celebrated in Dibrugarh



HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Aug 19: Along with rest of the world, the World Photography Day was celebrated by the Photographers Society Dibrugarh at the Sahitya Sabha Bhawan in Dibrugarh on Saturday.

State minister of industries and commerce and public enterprises & cultural affairs Bimal Borah inaugurated a photo exhibition or-

ganised on the occasion.

Over two hundred photographs clicked by various photographers were put on display in the exhibition.

A huge crowd of photography enthusiasts were seen thronging the exhibition. The photo exhibition will run till Sunday.

A souvenir titled "Viewfinder" edited by veteran photographers

Saurav Duarah and Pronib Das was also released on the occasion. Apart from state minister Bimal Borah, Dibrugarh Hanumanbax Surajmali Kanoji College principal Dr Sashi Kanta Saikia and Dibrugarh Press Club president Prabir Chakravarty also delivered their speech about the significance of World Photography Day.

On the other hand, the Centre for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication in association with Sony India Pvt. Ltd. organised a workshop on "Modern Filmmaking Techniques", hosted by Punit Sabnani, Senior Product Specialist from Sony, at Indira Miri Conference Hall, Dibrugarh University on August 18.

Sabnani holds two world records in photography in the year 2018 and 2020 respectively.

The workshop was aimed at unveiling the essence of modern filmmaking and critical thinking among the students and other attendees.

DU photo fest 2023 was also organised by CSJMC on the occasion of world photography day.

Three-day training programme on value addition to fish products held

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 19: Kolong Kapili and College of Fisheries, AAU, Raha jointly organised a three day residential training programme on 'Value Addition of Fish Products' to the FPO members of Nagaon, East Karbi Anglong, Biswanath Chari and Sonitpur from August 16, to 18 here at College of Fisheries, Raha with the support of SAFAL, GIZ, India.

In the event, over 40 progressive fish farmers from FPOs such as Janakalyan Producer Society, Nagaon, Dillai Fish Farmers Producer Company Limited, East Karbi Anglong, Soota Farmer Producer Company Ltd, Biswanath and Naduar Min Palon Samabai Samitee Ltd, Sonitpur participated enthusiastically.

In the valedictory programme, Dr Ayub Ali, Dean (I/C), CoF, AAU, Raha; Dr Pranijyoti Sharma, Professor and HoD, Dept of FPT; Dr K Kalita, Professor and HoD, Dept of Aquaculture; Dr Pradip Chandra Bhuyan, HoD, Dept of FEES; Dr Bipul Kumar Kakati, Asst Professor, dept of Fisheries Engineering; Dr Sarifuddin Ahmed, professor, dept of FPT; Inam Akhtar Hussain, Asst Professor, Dept of FPT; Dr Nazrin Sultana Ahmed, asst professor, dept of FPT; Ajimon Nissa, asst professor, dept of fisheries engineering and Jyotish Talukdar, director, Kolong-



Kapili were present.

In his speech, Dr Ayub Ali, Dean, CoF, AAU, Raha (I/C) expressed his heartfelt gratitude and appreciation towards Kolong Kapili, GIZ, SAFAL and dept of fish processing technology for taking such a great initiative to train the local farmers on value added products including the advanced market linkages in this era. He conveyed the message about how vast is the scope for revolution of fish products in the future.

Jyotish Talukdar, director of Kolong-Kapili basically focused on value addition of fish products. He emphasised that value addition can be an alternative livelihood specially for the women and he also requested the women to focus in these activities which can take Assam ahead. He also requested all the stakeholders to develop a patent which will help the farmers

in the near future.

Dr Pranijyoti Sharma, professor and HoD, Dept of FPT acknowledged the participants from different districts with his motivating words that College of Fisheries is willing to help all the farmers in every possible way to take the fisheries sector ahead. All the farmers can reach out to any department if they are in need of any help.

The training consisted of theory as well as practical sessions on concepts and benefits with market trends in value addition, FSSAI, quality aspects of pickle, fish sausages, marketing strategies, market linkages, fish ball and fish finger, packaging and the other related topics. Besides, as an inspiration a certificate on the completion of the programme was offered to each of the participants on the last day of the training programme, an official release stated here.

Head-on collision claims one

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 19: One died on the spot after a head-on collision between a police vehicle bearing registration number AS-30-9028 and CT-100 motorcycle bearing registration number AS-09A-2264 at 9 km Lumding road.

The incident occurred around 8:30 am here. The victim has been identified as Bidya Hansa of 5 km, Lumding Road.

The body has been brought here at Diphu Medical College & Hospital for postmortem report.

Senior secondary school gets sanitary pad vending machine

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 19: The management of JS Academy Senior Secondary School, Bakalia installed a sanitary pad vending machine at the school premise on Friday last. During the installation programme, the school authority said menstrual periods and sanitary napkins are still considered forbidden topics.

The issue becomes more serious in rural areas where young girls are found to be more vulnerable. To address the issue effectively, a sanitary pad vending machine was installed on the school premises. The girl students were educated on using the new device.

Cultural exchange programme between Thailand and NE India

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 19: The archaeology department, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, organised a seven-day cultural exchange programme recently with NE India to promote academic and environmental knowledge exchange in the academic field of India and Thailand. Nagesh Singh, the Indian Ambassador to Thailand, inaugurated the programme. Dr Damronphon Inchan, dean of the archaeology department presided over the inaugural session. A nine-member delegates from Moran Tai Studies Centre took part in the programme and the members were Dr Bipul Gogoi, Basanta Phukan, Gyananda Phukan, Pradip Deodhai Phukan, Atul Baruah, Manokhi Gogoi, Surajit Buragohain, Biplob Gogoi, and Simi Lahan. Delegates presented papers on the cultural linkage between the Tai-Ahoms and the Thais, Manuscript reservation culture, Tai-Ahom Prayer tradition, and cultural similarities between the Tais and the people of NE India.

NFR extends service of special train between New Tinsukia and Dhubri



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: NFR has decided to extend the service of special train between New Tinsukia and Dhubri for another three months in both directions. This extension will serve the purpose of passengers who travel frequently from upper Assam to lower Assam via north bank of Brahmaputra for work and medical emergency.

Accordingly, train no 05922 (New Tinsukia - Dhubri) Special will depart from New Tinsukia at 2:30 am on every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from August 20 till November 19 to reach Dhubri

at 4:30 am on next day. In return direction, train no 05921 (Dhubri - New Tinsukia) Special will depart from Dhubri at 5:00 am on every Wednesday, Friday and Monday from August 21 till November 20 to reach New Tinsukia at 10 pm on the same day.

During it's both ways journey, the special train will run via Dhemaji, Vishwanath Chari, Udalguri, Rangiya Jn., Nalbari, Tihu, Pathsala, New Bongaigaon, Sapatgarh and Gauripur stations. Consisting of 15 coaches, the train will have AC 3-tier, sleeper class and general second-class coaches for the passengers.

Ten varieties of Sali paddy transplanted

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 19: Transplanting of 10 varieties of sali paddy in as part of Rice Varietal Crop Cafeteria was done at Mohongdijua in Lumbajong agriculture development officer (ADO) Circle. On the land provided by the executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Amar Sing Tisso the following variety of paddy were transplanted- Numali (2), Nal bora, CR 309, Ranjit Sub 1, Bokul Joha, Bahadur Sub 1, Bina 17, Keteki Joha, Bina Dhan 11, Swarna Sub 1. The purpose is to see the best variety of paddy that is suited to the area. On the occasion ADO, Bakalia, Rukheswar Timung; farmer Athik Tisso, ADO Lumbajong, Pirbi Tissopi and others.

Japanese Encephalitis claims one in Tezpur

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 19: Japanese Encephalitis claims one in Tezpur on Friday. The deceased Sashanka Das (75) of Ushanagar Bye lane No 21 (B) here was undergoing treatment at Guwahati Medical College Hospital (GMCH). Retired govt officer Sashanka Das was admitted to Baptist Mission Hospital here earlier and later shifted to GMCH for treatment. He died in GMCH at 6 pm on Friday. As per sources this is the first instance of casualties in Japanese Encephalitis in the district this year.

Aaranyak takes up elephants' habitat improvement under Rowta RF to mitigate HEC

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: Habitat replenishment can have lasting impact in favour of mitigation of human elephant conflict (HEC) and serve as the long-term solution to promote coexistence between the wide-ranging wild elephants and people.

Keeping this as the goal, biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) has initiated an ambitious project for improvement of elephant habitat covering an area of 100 hectares in Rowta Reserve Forest under Dhansiri Forest Division in Udalguri district of Assam.

"The Aaranyak team is striving for habitat improvement and restoring degraded areas under the project to secure elephant habitat and facilitate elephant movement for long-term mitigation of human-elephant confrontation," says Dr Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, a senior conservation scientist in Aaranyak.

The area of interest for replenishment is a mosaic of grasslands and woodlands, with different soil substratum ranging from sandy coarse to rocky and swampy areas.

"Since June this year, we have planted over 25,000 saplings of various tree, and shrubs species. It is important to understand and have knowledge on what the land-use pattern is and what species were historically present in the area. Thus, we conducted a



survey prior to the plantation in the nearby forest patches that are still intact, to make informed decisions on what native species to plant," says conservation biologist Dr Aloika Sinha.

The 61st Battalion of the SSB, Dhansiri Forest Division and Dhansiri-Sikaridanga JFMC at Rowta Reserve Forest collaborated

with Aaranyak on the plantation drive carried out on the occasion of World Elephant Day celebrated with the theme 'Safeguarding Elephant Habitats for a Sustainable Tomorrow'. Around 2000 rhizomes of Alpinia spp. were planted on this day for securing the elephant habitat, as it is an important fodder species.

Raj Kumar Xalxo, commandant of 61st Bn SSB helped the initiative by deploying 30 SSB personnel who actively contributed towards the plantation endeavour in presence of the SSB deputy commandant, Sunil Kumar," says Aaranyak field official Rabiya Daimari expressing her gratitude. The initiative is supported by SBI Foundation and UNDP.

Aaranyak officials Rabiya Daimari, Didom Daimari, Reshma Narzary, Mondeep Basumatari, Dibakar Nayak, Bikash Tossa, Bineswar Daimari and Rupam Goyari played key roles in execution of the novel initiative for HEC mitigation.

It may be mentioned Aaranyak has been on an overdrive to empowering local communities and securing habitats to promote human-elephant coexistence.

The Asian elephant being a wide-ranging species needs expansive resources for its survival, and thus comes in close confrontation with people, often resulting in human-elephant conflict (HEC) in the form of crop and property damages, human injuries and deaths and retaliatory killings of the elephants. Raging HEC undermines conservation efforts to safeguard elephants and their habitats and affect the well-being of people. It is a complex issue, and HEC mitigation requires a multi-pronged and multi-stakeholder's approach.

Outrage over the death of a school student in Bechimari



HT Correspondent

DALGAON, Aug 19: Outrage spread over the death of a school student in Bechimari on Saturday. Angry students, including local people, blocked NH 15 for more than an hour. According to information, Mamoni Parbin, a class 8 student studying in Sankadev Jatiya Vidyalaya, while returning home from school, was run over by a speeding ultra bus and fled from the spot. In protest against this painful accident, more than 2 thousand people including students gathered and started protest demanding action against uncontrolled high speed ultra and dumper. Due to the negligence of the traffic police, the loss of controllability of dumpers, including ultra, on the national highway has claimed many lives, due to which there was a lot of anger among the people. The protesters, demanding justice for student's death, to control the vehicles on the highway, continued the demonstration on the highway for about two hours, due to which the traffic was disrupted. However, Dalgaon police station in-charge went to the spot and pacified the situation by assuring the protesters of action.

Flood relief by Sibsagar Commerce College

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 19: Sibsagar Commerce College in association with NSS Unit, banking department and We Care Scheme organised a flood relief camp in the worst flood affected Halmaria Village of Meteka Gaon Panchayat, Sivasagar hit by the recent flood. More than 100 families were offered packets of food and grocery items.

Principal, Dr Saumar Jyoti Mahanta took part in the camp and promised the villagers to extend all possible help for searching a permanent solution to the problem in consultation with the concerned government departments.

The camp was attended by Bijoy Kr Saikia, Dr Prodig Gogoi, Dr Ratul Dutta, Dr Haren Hazarika and other staff members of the college and members of the college students union. The village elders thanked the teachers for their kind gesture.



The flower on lofty height cannot dwindle: The Manipur story retold

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

Invaders or dwellers – all have been charmed by the beauty of Manipur which is burning today in the ethnic clashes and class conflicts. Even St. Clair Grimwood called Manipur as “a pretty place more beautiful than many show places of the world”, Ethel St Clair Grimwood, whose husband tried to invade Manipur was a British woman who became known as “the heroine of Manipur” as she was the only person among the British forces familiar with the terrain. Her role was lionized in the British press though Manipur people did not accept it as a truth. Manipur is called “a flower on lofty height” by the Japanese people but, the most fitting tribute was paid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who called it as the “Jewel of India”.

Unfortunately politicians are trying to give the clashes a communal colouring for reaping electoral benefits in the forthcoming elections. Manipur became a princely state under British rule in 1891 after the Anglo-Manipur war, the last of the independent states to be incorporated into British India. Manipur is not only famous for its rich culture and traditions but also for its vibrant dance forms and music, scenic landscapes and delectable local cuisines.

Magnificent Manipur, literally meaning a “jewelled land” is studied with lush hills, emerald green valleys, turquoise lakes, cascading rapids and deep dark woods. Its amazing beauty has won admiration from every visitor Lord Irwin described it as the ‘Switzerland of

India’. St. Manipur literally meaning “A jewelled land” nestled deep within a lush green corner of Eastern India bordering Myanmar. It is surrounded by blue hills with an oval shaped valley at the centre, rich in art and tradition and surcharged with nature’s pristine glory.

The people of Manipur believe in simplicity and are extremely friendly, making it a must-visit destination in India. It is an undeniable fact that with the emergence of channels like Korea’s KBS World Airrang Tv, the popularity of Korean popular culture became more widespread, and Manipur soon started to resemble a mini-Korea. Long ago, the British army attacked the palace of Manipur and killed many innocent Manipuris on 24 March, 1891 for arresting the Prince.. Subsequently, those British officials were murdered leading to the declaration of war on 31st March, 1891 against Manipur.

As per the Aadhar Statistics the Manipur population in 2022/2023 is 3,008,546 (3.01 Millions) as compared to last census 2011 is 2,855,794. Growth rate of 5.35 percent of population increased from year 2011 in Manipur, till 2018. As per latest census, Hindu are majority in Manipur state. Hinduism constitutes 41.39% of Manipur population. In all Hindu form majority religion in 4 out of 9 districts of Manipur state. The data for 2022 & 2023 is under process and will be updated in few weeks. Hinduism is practiced by 41.39% population of the Manipur according to 2011 census of India. It is in plurality with Christianity

(41.29%). Hindus are mostly Meitei people (Manipuris), who are concentrated in the Imphal Valley and other plain districts of Manipur.

The Kuki ethnic group, which originated in the Mizo hills, includes the Chins of Myanmar, the Mizos of Mizoram, and the Kukis of Bangladesh. All three groups share the same ancestry. The collective name for them is the Zo people. Mar 19, 2023 The Kukis—almost all of them Christians—have not discriminated between Christian or Hindu The Kuki-Chin languages (also called Kuki-Chin-Mizo, Kukish or South-Central Tibeto-Burman languages) are a branch of 50 or so Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in northeastern India, western Myanmar and southeastern Bangladesh. Most speakers of these languages are known as Mizo in Mizoram and Manipur.

Kuki, a Southeast Asian people living in the Mizo (formerly Lushai) Hills on the border between India and Myanmar (Burma) and numbering about 12,000 in the 1970s. They have been largely assimilated by the more populous Mizo (q.v.), adopting their customs and language.

The Kukis as an ethnic group including multiple tribes originally inhabit the Northeastern States of India, including Manipur, Mizoram and Assam; parts of Burma (now Myanmar), and Sylhet district and Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh on Jun 19, 2023. The Kuki constitute one of several hill tribes within India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. Most of the people live below poverty line. The upper



class and the lower class divide is too sharp to be ignored. Comparatively the tribal people are poorer. They are marginalized for ages. Women are the bread winners for the family in most cases and they are usually the first hit by any trouble that occurs in this land.

The violence that broke out in Churachandpur, a town just south of the state capital Imphal, on May 3, was not basically a religious clash. It is an open secret that it was more ethnic than religious. A Kuki-led tribal solidarity march occurred in ten of the state’s sixteen districts.

As the Meitei organised counter-protests and blockades, clashes spread across Manipur. Women were part of some of the mobs The COCOMI has been alleging that many Kukis are illegal migrants from northwestern Myanmar where racially similar Chins live and that many Kuki villagers cultivate poppies in hillside farms. Women came to the forefront be-

cause Meitei women are known for their unique roles and their status in history. Women in Manipur are known for their active economic participation as well as their contribution towards political reforms in Manipur.

Despite the patriarchal society women, they enjoy freedom and equal rights with men. Chin-Kuki group consists of Gangte, Hmar, Paite, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, Aimol, Chiru, Koirang, Kom, Anal, Chotho, Lamgang, Koirao, Thangal, Moyon and Monsang. The term Chin is used for the people in the neighboring Chin state of Myanmar whereas Chins are called Kukis in the Indian side. Irom Chanu Sharmila known as the ‘Lady of Manipur’ or “Mengoubi” (“the fair one”) is an Indian civil rights activist, political activist, and poet from the Indian state of Manipur, which is located on the north-eastern side of India.

Meiteis were carrying out strikes against the majority community

(Meiteis) of Manipur. It is alleged that Kukis have targeted Meitei Christian churches and razed them some in Manipur have been trying to portray the conflict between Meiteis and Kukis in Manipur as a Hindu-Christian strife. This narrative has been given a big publicity by a group of politicians and organizations in the West purposefully and this is maligning the name of India.

Although there has been a perception that the tensions are religiously based, this is not in fact the case: the tensions are ethnically rooted. For example, two tribal groups, the Meitei, who make up more than half of Manipur’s population, and the Naga have clashed often. Although there has been a perception that the tensions are religiously based, this is not in fact the case: the tensions are ethnically rooted. Before the advent of Christianity, the Meiteis had embraced Hinduism and the tribals practiced animistic religion. Manipur and its people were almost unknown to the outside world until the arrival of the Western Missionaries. An archbishop in the troubled Indian state of Manipur has said that around 249 churches belonging to one ethnic group were destroyed in the first 36 hours of a wave of violence in May.

Still this is not the outcome of any religious violence as is explained by over implication. Why the churches were burnt proper investigations need to be made. Shouting on Manipur without delving deeper into the ethnic issues is like seeing an elephant by the blind men of Hindustan. Some who touched the ears of the ele-

phant and some who touched the tail of the elephant and some who touched the legs of the elephant were all giving a wrong account. This tale should not be repeated in Manipur when we come out to shout for Manipur.

Only then the proper solution can be found and truth will be out. Recently the U.S. ambassador to New Delhi expressed sorrow over the ethnic violence in India’s northeastern state of Manipur while noting it was an Indian matter. It is truly tragic that nearly 120 people have been killed in clashes between members of the Kuki tribes - who live in the hills, and receive economic benefits and quotas for government jobs and education - and the Meiteis - who control the more prosperous lowlands. The class conflicts are always at the root of the ethnic clashes and we have seen this when we go to analyse the reasons for communal clashes too in Bengal and other parts of India as Irfan Habib or Romia Thapar and other modern historians showed it in their analysis of the communal riots in India since the pre-independence days.

Rumours spread in India faster than the wind as George Orwell showed it in ‘Shooting an Elephant’. The flower on the lofty height cannot be allowed to dwindle. We cannot for any price lose this jewel of India. We should rewrite the story of Manipur anew. *(The author is an Affiliate Faculty in Virginia Commonwealth University and a multilingual columnist may be reached at profdratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)*

From words to rights: The quest to translate the Constitution of India into Naga languages

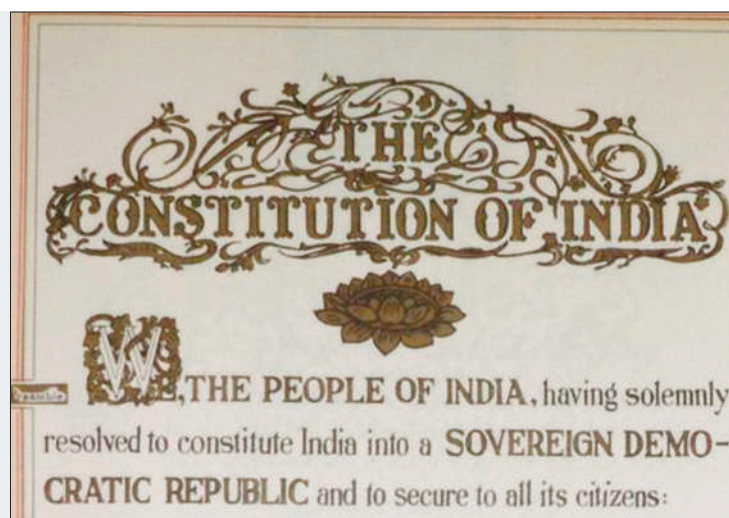
By: Dr. Aniruddha Babar

India’s rich cultural tapestry is woven with the threads of countless languages, each representing a unique facet of its diverse society. Among these, indigenous Naga languages stand as reservoirs of history, tradition, and identity for their respective communities. At the heart of this linguistic diversity lies the Indian Constitution, a document that shapes the nation’s legal framework, principles, and values. However, as India continues its journey towards inclusivity and preservation of its indigenous languages, the need to translate the Constitution into Naga languages, exemplified by the context of Nagaland, emerges as a milestone in the preservation of these languages and the cultures they represent.

The Naga communities of Nagaland have a distinctive cultural identity that is deeply intertwined with their language. Language is more than just a means of communication; it serves as a repository of cultural nuances, social practices, and historical narratives. These languages encapsulate the essence of their heritage, carrying the wisdom of generations and reflecting their symbiotic relationship with nature. In a globalized world, the homogenizing forces of modernity threaten the very survival of these languages, urging for measures that can safeguard and rejuvenate them.

One powerful step towards the preservation of indigenous languages is the translation of the Constitution. The Constitution is not just a legal text; it is a social contract that outlines the rights, responsibilities, and aspirations of citizens. By translating it into Naga languages, a direct link is established between the foundational principles of the nation and the languages that are integral to the identity of indigenous communities. This serves to bridge the gap between the official legal framework and the lived experiences of these communities, fostering a sense of ownership and inclusion.

Nagaland, with its distinct history and challenges, exemplifies the significance of translating the Constitution. The translation of the Constitution into all the Naga languages would not only empower Naga people to comprehend their rights but also instill a renewed sense of pride in their heritage. Moreover, this act acknowledges the historical injustice suffered by the Naga tribes in the Eastern part of Nagaland under fractured governance and systematic apathy towards the ground realities of the region exhibited by



the successive state governments of Nagaland and also their local legislative representatives which came to the throne from time to time in the last 60 years as knowledge of Constitutional Law empowers an individual to ask questions to the administration, their elected representatives in state legislative assembly and the ruling government to get their rights (if violated) restored through constitutional mechanisms.

The imperative to translate the Constitution into Naga languages like Tikhir, Khiamnungan, Sangtam, Chang, Konyak, Phom, Yimchung, Sumi, Zeliang, Rengma, Angami, Lotha, Aoetc, emerges as a crucial shield against the potential exploitation of the marginalized by the powerful echelons and chameleons of society. The linguistic divide has historically been exploited as a tool of control and manipulation, with the elite exploiting the information asymmetry to further their interests.

By rendering the Constitution accessible in Naga languages, a transformative shift occurs, empowering the common Nagas to navigate the intricate legal landscape independently. This equips them with the knowledge of their rights, safeguards, and entitlements, which were once enshrouded within the realm of the privileged few. In a society often characterized by imbalances in access to resources and opportunities, this translation initiative bridges the gap, catalyzing a level playing field. The translated Constitution becomes a potent instrument of empowerment, dismantling barriers that had perpetuated the cycle of exploitation.

As the common Nagas grasp the legal avenues at their disposal, they can confront exploitation, demand accountability, and participate actively in shaping their collective destiny. This pursuit not only safeguards their socio-economic interests but also revitalizes

indigenous languages, ensuring that these languages thrive as vessels of knowledge and empowerment. By amplifying the voices of the common Nagas and neutralizing the asymmetric power dynamics, this translation endeavor transcends linguistic realms, metamorphosing into a formidable bastion against exploitation and a cornerstone for a more just, equitable, and inclusive society.

Beyond the realms of identity and empowerment, translating the Constitution into Naga languages holds pragmatic value. It enhances access to justice and information for those who might not be fluent in the dominant languages like English or Hindi. It diminishes barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in governance, education, and other essential aspects of modern society. This linguistic inclusivity aligns with the ideals of a democracy that strives to leave no citizen behind.

Furthermore, the translation of the Constitution can serve as a catalyst for revitalizing endangered Naga languages. It can spark interest among the younger generation to engage with their linguistic heritage, reversing the trend of language shift towards dominant languages. Educational institutions could integrate these translations into their curricula, fostering a holistic learning environment that nurtures both indigenous languages and the broader curriculum.

Challenges, however, lie on this path towards linguistic preservation. The task of translation demands careful consideration to ensure that the nuances of legal and constitutional language are accurately conveyed in Naga languages. This requires collaboration between legal experts, linguists, and community members, alongside an appreciation for the cultural contexts that shape these languages. The translations must be dynamic, adapting to evolving language norms while retaining the essence of the original

text.

The translation of the supreme law of land-the Constitution in all the Naga languages will bring a new dawn in the life of the Nagas, especially among those who have been thrown to live on the margins, hence badly exploited by the highly educated, powerful elites and taken advantage of. The time has come to empower the most backwards, the most suffered, the poorest among the poor, the most disadvantaged among disadvantaged, the most forgotten among forgotten. Through translation of the Constitution of India in all the Naga languages, let us give power to the powerless and make them understand and believe that ONE PERSON IS ENOUGH TO CHANGE THE WORLD. The Constitution of India gives enough power to an individual to change his own life as well as the world he lives in.

Furthermore, as we all know, the complex texts of the Holy Bible have been successfully translated in all the Naga languages. Here, I wish to state that the translation of the Bible into all Naga languages highlights the dedication to preserving cultural and spiritual heritage. Similarly, if this commitment extends to religious texts, it is equally pertinent to translate the Constitution of India into Naga languages.

Just as the Bible serves as a gateway-through the wisdom of GOD to heaven in the afterlife, the Constitution of India acts as a gateway to a fulfilling life on Earth, ensuring rights, opportunities, and justice. Both translations reflect a society’s reverence for its values and its constituents’ needs. The Constitution, a guiding document shaping the lives of citizens, should be accessible to all, fostering empowerment and inclusivity akin to the spiritual empowerment derived from religious texts.

In conclusion, the translation of India’s Constitution into Naga languages, as exemplified by the context of Nagaland, represents a significant milestone in the preservation of indigenous languages and the cultures they embody. This endeavor intertwines linguistic inclusivity, cultural revitalization, and democratic ideals. By empowering indigenous communities with access to their legal rights in languages they understand best, India takes a step forward in bridging historical gaps and fostering a more equitable and culturally rich society. This journey, though challenging, heralds a future where linguistic diversity is celebrated as a cornerstone of the nation’s unity. *(The author is an academician in the Dept of Political Science, Tetsu College, Nagaland)*

The real religion: The path to happiness and peace

By: Lalit Garg

Today religion is being considered as a commodity, it is being sold and marketed. Religion is starting to get away from nature. Because of which we could not trust our brightness. As a result, we are scared and apprehensive all the time. Our love or anger is all becoming artificial. In the desire to get along with others, it is becoming difficult to spend some time with yourself. Despite working day and night, our work does not give happiness. All this is the result of the changing nature of religion.

The birth of Lord Mahavira is true - Dhammo Shuddhas Chittai. Religion resides in the pure soul, and another name for the pure soul is Raman in its nature. This is a revolution of continuous personal development. There is no one else but himself responsible for the success of life, failure, happiness and sorrow and happiness. The important stage of religion is that we think right is right and wrong is wrong. This development of Samyaktva vision is a sign of successful and meaningful life, not just liberation. The learning of three monkeys of Gandhiji also gives a meaningful interpretation of religion that 'Do not look bad, do not say bad, and do not listen to bad'.

Today, Dharma is working as a blank sheet. Wear it and get religious. Now it seems that some words, some good deeds are just worthy of being embedded in the golden frame, not the object of grace, but of behavior. Religion is the idea of seeing the world from a holy perspective, a window of pure air and light. Then writer and biochemist Isaac Asimov has said, 'Our thinking is the windows that show the world. Keep them clean, otherwise the light will not come on.'

Like scientists, the masters of spirituality also discovered eternal laws. Today scientific discoveries are going on, but the door to find rules in the field of religion is closed. This is the root of the problem. The problems of the present are therefore not absorbed by religion. Religion cannot be made effective and executive by disarming it. Be it religion, or object, we look at things in two ways. Sometimes we have glasses of love and sometimes fear. Our entire thinking changes as the lens changes. Fear is giving things a form, so love is a different plane. Writer and speaker Gabriel Bernstein says, "We are not responsible for what our eyes see?" We are responsible for how we adopt it.'

Unless there is a change in the consciousness of the person, it is difficult to change the person and the social system. We should consider all the problems afresh and find solutions. Till the time the remedy is not discovered and we will not understand the demand of the era, let it go as it is going on, till then neither religion will become glorious, nor religious will become glorious, only the trade of words will continue.

We must keep in mind that every seed has its own potential. Some things are out of our control and some are based on our own decisions. Connecting your decisions with your nature and real religion is the way to lasting happiness. For which it is necessary to know oneself. Like this, everyone’s work is done. Fat-thin, dark-white, introverted and extroverted, all have their own strengths. But, the problem is that we do not give time to ourselves in our desire to know others and to look into the field of others. Cannot live in himself.

Claire Hogson says 'If you are unhappy for most of your life? Stressed in stress and diseases? If it is getting difficult to spend every-day’s life, then look into yourself. Ask what is important for me? How should my life be working by recognizing our natural values never disappoints. But the real identity of life has started to get hampered as religion has become a profession. Because fraud in the commodity market and religion market has increased a lot, there is a need to be cautious in both places. Real-fake identification is needed. When it comes to money between religion and religious, understand that there is a deal. Now it is up to you that you will try to buy religion by considering it as a commodity or try to live it as a conduct? We need to be careful about religion.

The real meaning of religion is the awakening of the inside. Insight awakens only when the person’s mind is clear, the senses are introverted, and the subject is relaxed. Religion is awakened only in those who search for truth, religion comes. Such people only know the inner, know the cause of sorrow, sorrow and the remedy of sorrow. That is why happiness and sorrow are not gratified, they are self-centered, and this realization is received. Nobody knows more than one’s own self in the language of spirituality. Wherever we go wrong, the mind will testify to be wrong. Even if we make a hundred lies in the safety of our image, why not make a meaningless attempt to create an impenetrable armor. Religion is the language of the soul when Rumi says, 'It doesn’t matter how many languages you know. Knowing the language of the heart makes you priceless.'

Religion is uninterrupted; it is free from all varna, caste, sect and creed. Even though we have divided it into temples, gurudwaras, mosques, churches, it is another unbroken one. Religion never binds to principles, rituals, customs, and traditions. That is why an atheist who does not believe in God also respects moral values in life, has faith in Good and dares to fight against Evils. He also knows that religion cannot be separated from life. Religion is no cloth that we wore only when I wanted to; otherwise I hung it on the peg. Religion runs simultaneously like a breath. *(The author is a journalist & a columnist)*



Villages moving towards digital India

By: Vijay Garg

Our writers, thinkers and politicians have always spoken about two Indias—one that lives in our cities and the other in our villages. Both are integral to the nation yet are deeply divided in culture, income, technology, and access to resources. The technological gap, however, is gradually fading thanks to a digital revolution bubbling at the heart of our nation. According to a 2022 study by Nielsen, rural India's internet presence is 20 percent higher than urban India.

The penetration of smartphones, UPI [Unified Payments Interface], and government schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan, have enabled Internet access in remote parts of our country.

As a result, untapped human potential is

finding space

to realise itself. Numerous corporates, non-profits, and educational startups are reaching rural India with skill training, health and nutrition awareness, self-help group (SHG) empowerment programs, and more, by leveraging video conferencing and other technological platforms.

I share a few key sectors that are enabling rural populations with opportunities for a better tomorrow.

1) Education

The Indian edtech market is gaining a strong foothold. The heartwarming story of Ranjitsinh Disale, a government school teacher in Maharashtra and winner of the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize, is particularly poignant. Disale revolutionised the use of QR codes in textbooks by embedding them with audio poems, video lectures, assignments, and more, allowing students to ac-

cess an interactive school environment, especially for girls, on days they missed school. As a result, the Ministry of Education soon announced that all NCERT textbooks would embed QR codes.

Similarly, the Indian government has also introduced free digital e-learning platforms such as Diksha and E-Pathshala. Diksha offers engaging learning material, relevant to the prescribed school curriculum, to teachers, students and parents.

Similarly, E-Pathshala, developed by NCERT hosts educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of print and non-print materials through website and mobile app. Collectively the available apps offer host explanation videos, e-books, interactive lessons, in 12 to 15 Indian languages. This is a significant step towards better and more inclusive education.

2) Health

The healthtech market will likely be worth \$50 billion by 2033 (RBSA Advisors Report). It is a sector that uses the agency of NGOs, the private sector and government initiatives through a competent network of ASHA workers. The eSan-

jeevani app (a national browser-based application facilitating doctor-to-doctor and patient-to-doctor tele-consultations) has facilitated over five million tele-consultations and was a boon during the pandemic, especially in rural areas.

Through eSanjeevani OPD, one can seek medical advice as well as medication through audio and video. The Since the pandemic, a few NGOs have built effective virtual clinics to cater to antenatal and pediatric care after hospitals were converted to Covid-19 care centers. In addition, startups' digitisation of single medical stores enables patients in remote areas to access medicines outside their village limits.

3) Agriculture

Around 70 percent of India's rural households depend on agriculture according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Therefore, agritech is naturally drawing interest from farmers, governments, and private startups. One such is the Karnataka government's e-Sahamathi app. The e-governance department has developed the e-Sahamathi app with the help of National Informatics Centre (NIC).

Under this app, farmers must agree to share their crop information with the aggregator which will in turn share details such as a farmer's name, his crop, landholding etc. with the retailer. In essence, allowing the farmers to list their produce and directly sell it to retail chains—giving them the power to

negotiate a fair price for their harvest.

Multiple startups have created similar marketplaces. Bain & Company's research shows that the Indian agritech sector got \$1 billion in funding from 2017 to 2020. Many startups are developing AI-enabled technology and apps to provide end-to-end solutions, which include soil testing, microfinance, weather updates, and more.

4) Economic Empowerment

The Ministry of Labor and Employment's e-Shram portal, a digital database of unorganised workers, is a fine example of a digital upgrade. For the first time e-Shram allows construction and migrant workers to access job opportunities in an organised fashion. Additionally, as per the ministry, it is to provide social security to workers, offering a pension after the age of 60 Years if you have a Shramik Card along with insurance benefits.

The Union Labour Minister has shared that the portal has received registrations for over 400 occupations. Given the unregulated nature of these markets, this is a great way to ease the process of seeking and employing skilled labor. Besides employment creation, the digital revolution has created opportunities for economic activities in rural India by making them an integral part of the market value chain for products and services—both as suppliers and consumers. This was further aided by the Jan Dhan Account-Aadhaar-mobile connectivity or JAM trinity as it is popularly called, which brought crores

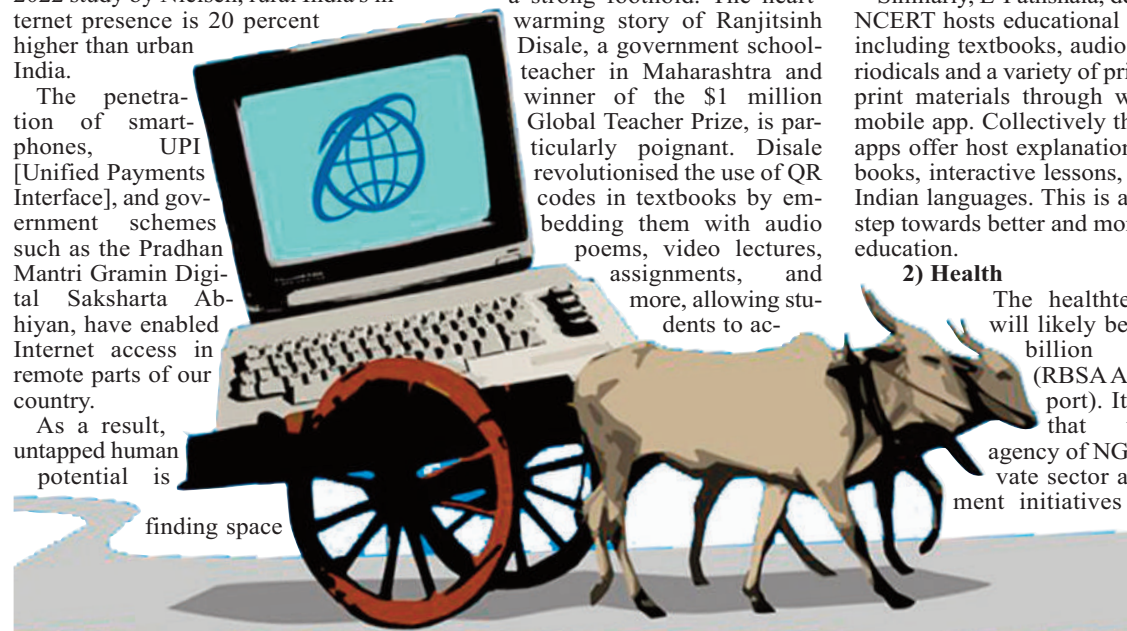
of people into the banking system and transparency in transactions.

5) Women Empowerment

My experience with rural communities has convinced me that our women are a formidable force and can uplift their communities if given an opportunity. For example, Angrekond, a village in Raigad, has raised self-help groups comprising 30 women thanks to digital and financial literacy programs.

Once homemakers, they are now self-made entrepreneurs. Many non-profits are partnering with tech companies to empower rural communities, especially women. These networks are introducing communities to online skill training via YouTube and social messaging apps, leading them to become entrepreneurs and manage small businesses.

According to a survey by McKinsey, the digital economy could create 60 million jobs by 2025, and many of these would require functional digital skills. Technology is key to making a level playing field for the two Indias and opening a treasure trove of opportunities for rural communities. As we walk from 75 years, towards our next milestone as a nation—100 years of independence, I hope to see a digitally forward, enabled, and inclusive India—where the rural communities retain their distinct identities and are deeply connected with urban centers and the world. (The author is a retired principal & an educational columnist based in Malout)



On tasty colours

By: Kamal Baruah

It's all about the colours of freedom. 'Har ghar tiranga' campaign created awareness and generated support for the tri-colour, the symbol of national integrity and aspirations of India. The flag just couldn't confine home this time. The roads flooded with jubilant citizens mounting national flag atop their vehicles to celebrate Independence Day. After watching those fanfares, I too felt inspired to do it in a different way. So I got into my SUV and drove off on the National Highway to Tezpur in the wee hours of the day. It was no drive aimlessly for hours but the reason I rushed there to pick up our daughter from her hostel on a short vacation.

Papa wants to move from caring father to full-time buddy. I discover the streaming services of Spotify from her favorite numbers. The subwoofer reinforced the bass and richness of music while I set the cruise control on 80 kmph. The seat at co-driver had a day of relaxing after her didactic lectures, laboratory sessions and clinical postings. Their classroom presents a cheerful busy atmosphere but she is tired of boring mess food and kept reminiscing about hostel without mentioning food miseries. Puris aren't always crispy, fluffy or soft but a hard rectangle chapatti lookalike.

Love them or hate them,



but there is no ignoring potatoes. The humble ingredient is readily available at all times.

So she toyed with the idea of spending a full mug of chai and her favorite non-vegetarian recipes during stay at home. A vegan diet at grandma's lunch followed by a leg of mutton at her cousin passed the first day. She got together with her friends at City Center on the next day and tantalized their taste buds with imaginative pizzas in scrumptious flavors. We booked our table for Chinese sizzler at dinner. We heard a loud hiss and crackle and there was so much smoke coming off loaded platters. It was a most loving dish served on hot sizzling plate.

Who wanted to forgo the McDonald's Burger and leaves Guwahati these days while one had a vacation. The digital transformation from the drive-thru to self-service kiosks had interacted with virtual reality in restaurant dining. Youngsters find it most fashionable and exciting. But my wife took it in another way. The pizza is all

about flour, yeast and water-and burger is all about a sandwich of cooked patties placed inside a sliced bread bun. South Indian Dosa makes India's wholesome fast food obsession so does with. Pav Bhaji placed in Mumbai for the ultimate street food. Then why Assamese couldn't think of making our own desi recipe at home.

And finally a dinner served at home. It was sweet and salty recipe from Kola Joha (black Joha rice). No matter what the colour does. Black doesn't always signify bitter but the taste of another kholasapori Pitha (a rice pancake), outsiders called it Assamese Dosa. It was a simply desi menu at home after tasting food one after another restaurants. For a tea lover, it was another full mug of heavenly delight. We had kadhak chai (masala chai). Is drinking tea right after meals good or bad? No matter what green tea or herbal tea give benefits either. The desi pithas from Kola Joha have colourful tastes too.

Technology with impacts

By: Farheen Wani

All of the biggest technological inventions created by man - the airplane, the automobile, the computer - says little about his intelligence but speaks volumes about his laziness. - Mark Kennedy

Society gives purpose to technology, for technology is made to help man—for better or for worse. From the moment man picked up the first tool in his hand to aid him in his task, to where he is today with all the advancement he has accomplished, technology has always been there at man's disposal.

The symbiotic union of society and technology has led the world to improvements beyond expectation, and yet, the future still holds an untapped growth potential, especially in the area of digital technology.

Digital technology gives birth to making our world reachable with its augmenting information highways like the Internet and the net. Across it, we have reinvented the way we interact and communicate with emails, conference calls, and social media apps, among others. It has improved the lives of students and teachers with digitization in the education sector. It has saved thousands upon thousands of lives with advanced machinery and innovations that have been introduced to the health industry.

We could go on and on, but the baseline is that digital technology and society are in this synergistic relationship that will get stronger further into the future as we dive deeper into the 21st century. Technology is around us everywhere, from simple devices like our smartphones, laptop, and TV to background tech that we don't notice. It isn't taking off anywhere anytime shortly, we hold to get familiarized with it. Once we get the hang of manipulating technology in a privileged manner, it can enhance our vitalities.

On the other hand, tech can also make our lives harder. Whether tech has

a positive or negative effect on our lives, it all depends on how we use it.

Positives impacts of technology on our lives

Technology has, without a doubt, made all our lives easier over the past two decades. From connecting with people across the globe from the comfort of your home to running a full-fledged business without a physical space, technology has impacted our lives positively in several ways.

1. New technology continues to come out faster than we can keep up with. The purpose is to boost business and make the daily management of enterprises more systematic, structured, and successful.

Tech has boosted businesses by improving the hiring process, error-free collection and analysis of business data, and better communication with clients and partners.

Additionally, tech has also changed the way we work remotely for the better. It is now commonplace for people to work from home. However, certain tech, like the cloud, has made it easier than ever to work whether you're at the office or not.

2. Advancements in tech have made it easier for more people to access the internet, resulting in online shopping being more popular now than ever.

Currently, most people prefer to shop online without leaving the house because of its sheer convenience. Instead of wasting hours in the shopping mall, tech makes shopping simple. A few of the benefits of online shopping include cheaper products, saved time, fuel, and energy, easier-to-find items, a wider variety online, and no added pressure.

3. One of the most downplayed areas of technology that has dramatically improved over the past few years is education. Technology has been beneficial for those in the business world, but it has impacted education in a big way. A few examples include the availability of online courses, accessibility of web semi-

nars, and unlimited online resources for research. Before tech, you'd have to physically go to class, attend a meeting or go to the library to do research. Now, education is easier for everyone, no matter where you live. Online classes have made it possible for all students to enroll without leaving their homes.

Today, you can find several great sites for free college courses online, such as Udem— a fantastic website that offers thousands of free and paid-for courses to choose from. Whether you want to create virtual reality games or become a yoga instructor, Udem has a course that's perfect for you.

In terms of technology, Udem also offers a wide variety of great tech-related online courses. The categories available range from IT hardware and software to operating systems and network and security. So tech can help you master your chosen path and possibly broaden your career opportunities.

4. Most technology these days is created to improve businesses and generate profit. However, tech can also make our daily lives so much better. Tech has made an immensely positive impact on the daily lives of everyday people. Some positive examples include improvements in the transportation system.

Negative impacts of technology on our lives

As much as we appreciate technology for the convenience it brought to our lives, several aspects of it have impacted our society negatively in more ways than one.

1. As technology advances, we are connected now more than ever, and it has become a huge part of our lives. That's why technology negatively impacts physical health.

These physical health problems can be severe. Nevertheless, you can avoid most of them by creating healthy tech habits instead of bad ones.

Apart from creating unhealthy sleeping patterns, electronic devices can cause digital eye strain, poor posture,

and increased inactivity, leading to health problems like obesity.

Taking regular breaks from these devices can help you avoid these health problems. You can find a range of apps that remind you to take frequent breaks.

2. Job loss and downsizing are two significant adverse effects of technology. Because of advances in the tech field such as AI integration, automating and accomplishing tasks have become easy. In this day and age, most companies need to stay up to date with the latest technology, but in the process, low-skilled employees, like factory workers and cashiers, will be replaced.

Machines can now carry out tasks that only humans could do so far, which creates a massive shortage of jobs. The bottom line is that people aren't necessarily needed for work tasks anymore because of how efficient tech has become.

3. Technology grows incredibly quickly, so the digital devices and gadgets that we use have a short lifespan and become outdated in a matter of months. Since these devices are so important in our daily lives, we need to maintain and upgrade them regularly. Besides maintenance and upgrades, these pieces of tech may just become outdated and pushed aside by newer, more advanced versions.

Technology is a boon and bane to society

Overall, tech is amazing, and it has changed the world for the better, from improving our daily lives to building better businesses. The majority of the adverse effects of technology stem from its misuse.

The way we choose to utilize tech can help or harm ourselves and others. Instead of blaming the tool, we need to use technology in a healthy, more disciplined way. By doing this, technology can continue to benefit our lives. (The writer is a journalist and can be reached at farheenwani47@gmail.com)

Whispers Of The Unknown

By: Karan Chetri

In life's grand tapestry, uncertainty weaves, A dance of shadows, where no one perceives. Paths twist and turn, fate's secrets concealed, Moments of joy, in sorrow, are revealed.

Tomorrow's horizon, a canvas unknown, With dreams that flourish and seeds yet unsown. Embrace the journey, though veiled it may be, For within the unknown, our spirits roam free.

Through twists and turns, we find our own way, Navigating uncertainty, night and day. In life's intricate web, we boldly explore, Embracing the mystery, forevermore.



This Is A Life

By: Otteri Selva Kumar

No more word's
No more worries
No for silence...

I want silence
About with me and you

What happened with
About your unless speak

So I want
No worries
About no more word's

Did you get angry?
I'm sorry about...

Now my
More questions
Is there for you
I don't ask for...

About my word's
About with I love your
Inner peace ...

That's what
I'm doing fine with me
Wrong about you?

So ... what can I do?
For me and for You?

This Is a life!!!!

Mild Excursions

By: Mowsam Hazarika

All you need is
It's a gentle path
A mild excursion.

With one of them
The other meets
The drops of sweat.

They embrace you
It flows like a river

It's a gentle path
A mild excursion.

There is only one goal
A beautiful novel

Where it is hidden
Secret whirlpool

The riddle of dense breathing.
To unravel the mystery
All you need is it

It's a gentle path

A mild excursion.



Silence Listens To Me

By: Bipul Chandra Kalita

I stoop to silence for a while
Requesting it
To be patient

To lend me its disturbed ears;
Its firmness shakes me a lot
Its hatred to gawky air disciplines me
As I hesitate not to stand in full sunshine
To speak up untold stories of sufferings.

It listens to me very gently
As gently as the leaves
Of the roadside trees,
Standing motionless like rocks.

My sweating face neglects its body
It tortures its limbs
The limbs that can't tolerate patience;
Silence talks a lot silently
About the silently tolerant globe
The globe that shades sweats and tears.

I am burning along with the globe:
Bloods are boiling
Stained hands are boiling
Geographical locations fail to locate
Human beings
My rational origine
To define or redefine my dry existence.

Silence pats on my balding head,
I close my eyes
I pay much attention to ears
Trying to hear its strange voice;
It seems to say silently:
'Dig your history of civilization,
Unfold your comfort zones
That distorts your limbs and minds
And, perturbs the globe's silence!'

Meanwhile, Putin visited top military officials in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don near the Ukrainian border

Zelenskyy visits NATO candidate Sweden for 1st time since full-scale war with Russia

STOCKHOLM, Aug 19: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is visiting Sweden on Saturday — his first visit to the country since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, the Swedish government said.

It said Zelenskyy will meet Swedish government officials in Harpsund, about 120 kilometres west of Stockholm. He will also meet Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia at a palace in the area.

Sweden abandoned its longstanding policy of military nonalignment to support Ukraine with weapons and other aid in the war against Russia.

It also applied for NATO membership but is still waiting to join the alliance.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited top military officials in the Rus-



sian city of Rostov-on-Don near the Ukrainian border.

The Kremlin said that Putin listened to reports from Valery Gerasimov, the commander in charge of Moscow's operations in Ukraine, and other top military brass at the headquarters of Russia's Southern Military District.

The exact timings of his visit were not confirmed, but

state media published video footage that appeared to be filmed at night, showing Gerasimov greeting Putin and leading him into a building. The meeting itself was held behind closed doors.

Putin's visit was the first since the Wagner mercenary group's attempted mutiny in June, which saw the group's fighters briefly take control of

Rostov-on-Don.

During June's short-lived revolt, Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin repeatedly denounced Gerasimov, who serves as chief of the general staff of the Russian armed forces, and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu for denying supplies to his fighters in Ukraine.

Prigozhin claimed that the uprising was not aimed at Putin but at removing Gerasimov and other top brass who he claimed were mismanaging the war in Ukraine.

Ukraine this week has claimed counteroffensive gains on the southeastern front, regaining control of the village of Urozhaine in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region on Wednesday.

The leader of the Russian battalion fighting to maintain control of Urozhaine called for

"freezing the front" on Thursday, claiming his troops "cannot win" against Ukraine.

"Can we bring down Ukraine militarily? Now and in the near future, no," Alexander Khodakovskiy said in a video posted to Telegram.

Overnight into Saturday, Ukraine's air force said, it shot down 15 out of 17 Russian drones targeting Ukraine's northern, central and western regions.

The deputy governor of the western Khmelnytskyi region, Serhii Tiurin, said two people were wounded and dozens of buildings damaged by an attack.

In the northwestern Zhytomyr region, a Russian drone attack targeted an infrastructure facility and caused a fire, but no casualties were reported, said Gov. Vitalii Bunechko. (AP)

Ukraine will get F-16 fighter jets from the Dutch and Danes after the US agrees to allow transfers



A coalition of 11 Western countries — the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom — pledged in July to train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16s.

Denmark will hand over some of its F-16s only after receiving its new F-35 jet fighters. The first four F-35s are due to be delivered on Oct. 1. Washington's blessing for the plane donations to other countries is needed because the aircraft are made in the United States.

Ukraine's Western allies have at times moved slowly on granting Kyiv the military support it has requested.

President Joe Biden's authorization last May for allies to train Ukrainian forces on how to operate the warplanes, and eventually to provide the aircraft themselves, was preceded by months of debate in Washington and quiet talks with allies, officials said.

The administration had concerns that the move might escalate tensions with Russia. Also, U.S. officials argued that learning to fly and logistically support the advanced F-16 would be difficult. Though delivery is likely months away, Washington says the F-16s — like the advanced U.S. Abrams tanks — will be crucial for Ukraine's long-term security.

Ukraine has been relying on older aircraft, such as Russian-made MiG-29 and Sukhoi jets. F-16s have newer technology and targeting capabilities. They are also more versatile, experts say. (AP)

of better fighter jets could dramatically shift the balance of power Kyiv's way.

Ukrainian air forces supporting infantry are using decades-old Soviet-era planes, which are vulnerable to air-to-air missile attacks from Russian fighter jets, Capt. Yevgen Rakita, a spokesman for the 18th Army Aviation Brigade, told The Associated Press.

"A modern war cannot be won without aviation" capabilities, Rakita said.

In making the decision on F-16 deliveries, Washington aims to ensure warplanes can be provided to Ukraine as soon as its pilots complete training, according to a U.S. administration official who was not authorized to comment and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken sent a letter to his Dutch and Danish counterparts earlier this week, offering formal assurance that the U.S. would fast-track approval of all requests from third parties to transfer F-16s to Ukraine. Danish Defense Minister Jakob Ellemann-Jensen said Friday that the training of Ukrainian pilots is starting this month.

Sri Lanka to review national security strategy amidst growing international rivalries: President

COLOMBO, Aug 19: President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Saturday highlighted the need for a comprehensive review of Sri Lanka's national security strategy to chart a course devoid of entanglement in the emerging international rivalries and maintain neutrality in the Indian Ocean region.

The review will include a broad range of factors, emerging economic trends and the impacts of climate change, Wickremesinghe said, addressing a Naval gathering in the southern district of Galle. The President has already appointed a team led by a retired Major General to report to the National Security Council for formulating contemporary security policies.

He said the dynamics of today's landscape witness the encroachment of global power struggles into the Indian Ocean's realm.

"On one front, a contest for supremacy unfolds between the United States and China across the expanses of the Pacific Ocean. Si-

multaneously, a power struggle emerges between the Western nations and Russia in the context of Ukraine. This competition for influence extends even to remote reaches such as Niger in Africa," he said. Wickremesinghe said Sri Lanka should maintain neutrality in the Indian Ocean region.

"Undoubtedly, the Indian Ocean hosts the world's pivotal trade routes, making Sri Lanka an integral player at this stage. As we navigate these waters, it is imperative that we chart a course devoid of entanglement in these international rivalries, maintaining an impartial stance. Our foremost concern must be the safeguarding of our security within this sphere," the president said. He said the utilisation of submarines in the Indian Ocean has increased. In light of this, the island nation's maritime security strategy should be directed towards the development of a robust programme tailored to submarine surveillance and control. (PTT)

Pak ex-PM Imran Khan can be poisoned in Attock jail, says wife Bushra

LAHORE, Aug 19: Imran Khan's life is still in danger and he can be poisoned in Attock jail, his wife Bushra Bibi has said as she demanded better prison facilities for the incarcerated former Pakistan prime minister.

In her letter to the Punjab home secretary on Saturday, the 49-year-old wife of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman wrote that the court had directed the authorities concerned to shift her husband from Attock jail in Punjab to Adiala prison in Rawalpindi.

"My husband has been imprisoned in Attock jail without any justification. According to the law, my husband should be transferred to Adiala jail," she said. She demanded that the 70-year-old PTI chief be provided B-class facilities in the prison given his social and political status, Geo News reported.

Bushra said Khan "can be poisoned" in Attock jail, the report said. She said two assassination attempts have been made on Khan's life and those involved in them are yet to be arrested.

"His life is still in danger [and] there is a fear that my husband will be poisoned in Attock jail," she wrote in the letter. Earlier this month, Bushra met her husband for half an hour, and after seeing Khan, had said that he was being kept in "distressing" conditions and provided "C-Class jail facilities".

Khan, the cricketer-turned-politician, was arrested from his Lahore house shortly after an Islamabad trial court found him guilty of "corrupt practices" in the Toshakhana corruption case and has been incarcerated since August 5.

He was sentenced on charges of unlawfully selling state gifts acquired by him and his family during his 2018-2022 tenure.

Khan has also been barred from politics for five years, preventing him from contesting an upcoming election. He has denied any wrongdoing. Bushra said in her letter that Khan should be allowed to eat home-cooked food at the prison.

She said as per the jail rules Khan should have been provided all the facilities within 48 hours but has not had access to them even after over 12 days. (PTT)

Chinese military launches drills around Taiwan as 'warning' after top island official stopped in US

BEIJING, Aug 19: The Chinese military launched drills around Taiwan on Saturday as a "stern warning" over what it called collusion between "separatists and foreign forces," its defense ministry said, days after the island's vice president stopped over in the United States.

Taiwanese Vice President William Lai's recent trip to Paraguay to reinforce relations with his government's last diplomatic partner in South America included stops in San Francisco and New York City. The mainland's ruling Communist Party claims democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and says it has no right to conduct foreign relations.

A spokesperson for China's Eastern Theater Command said in a brief statement that the military exercises involved the coordination of vessels and planes and their ability to seize control of air and sea spaces.

It was also testing the forces' "actual combat capabilities," Shi Yi said. The drills were a warning over provocations



from pro-Taiwan independence forces and foreign forces, he added.

The command released footage of the drills online that showed soldiers running, as well as military boats and planes. State media CCTV reported that missile-equipped boats and fighter jets were involved in the operation and that units worked together to simulate the surrounding of Taiwan.

Taiwan's defense ministry strongly condemned what it called "irrational, provocative moves" in a statement. It said it would deploy appropriate forces to respond to the drills and take action to "safeguard freedom and democracy." It said its military would stand ready in the face of the threats posted by the Chinese army, adding that its forces have "the ability, determination and confidence to safeguard national security."

It posted a video on Facebook that showed previous military drills and said the Chinese military exercises reflected a militaristic mentality. Taiwan and China split in 1949 following a civil war that ended with the ruling Communist Party in control of the mainland. The self-ruled island has never been part of the People's Republic of China, but Beijing sees Taiwan as a break-

away province to be retaken by force if necessary.

China's official Xinhua news agency on Saturday reported that an unnamed official in China's Taiwan Work Office strongly condemned what it called further collusion between Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party and the U.S. and said it was a "new provocative move."

The official pointed to the stopovers in the U.S., an interview Lai gave to news outlet Bloomberg and his meeting with U.S. officials in Paraguay, the report said. The official said Lai had used "Taiwan independence" rhetoric in the interview.

The official also accused Lai of using his stopovers in the U.S. to sell out the interest of Taiwan to seek gains in the island's election and described him as a "troublemaker who will push Taiwan to the dangerous brink of war," the report added.

Lai is his party's candidate for the 2024 presidential election in January. (AP)

Japan's Kishida to visit Fukushima plant before deciding date to start controversial water release

TOKYO, Aug 19: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he will visit the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant on Sunday before setting a release date for its treated radioactive wastewater, as his government continues working to promote understanding over the controversial plan at home and abroad.



contaminated and needs further treatment.

The release "cannot be postponed," Kishida said. Japan has obtained support from the International Atomic Energy Agency to improve transparency and credibility and to ensure the plan by TEPCO meets international safety standards. The government has also stepped up a campaign promoting the plan's safety at home and through diplomatic channels.

IAEA, in a final report in July, concluded that the TEPCO plan, if conducted strictly as designed, will cause negligible impact on the environment and human health, encouraging Japan to move ahead. While seeking understanding from the fishing community, the government has also worked to explain the plan to South Korea to keep the issue from interfering with their relationship-building. Japan, South Korea and the U.S. are working to bolster trilateral ties in the face of growing Chinese and North Korean threats.

A massive March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and contaminating their cooling water, which has since leaked continuously into reactor basements and mixed with groundwater.

The water is collected, filtered and stored in around 1,000 tanks, which will reach their capacity in early 2024. (AP)

Kishida said the outreach efforts have made progress, but he did not mention a starting date for the water release, which is widely expected to be at the end of August. He said the decision will factor in safety preparations and measures for possible reputation damage on the fisheries. Japanese media reports say his ministers will decide the date at a meeting next week.

"Before making a final decision, I want to have a first-hand look on the ground and see if utmost safety measures are taken for the release, and if everyone involved is committed with a strong sense of responsibility for the project," Kishida said. He added that he wants to make sure TEPCO executives share a strong commitment to the plant's decommissioning and Fukushima's recovery.

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The water is collected, filtered and stored in around 1,000 tanks, which will reach their capacity in early 2024. (AP)

Dominican officials: Plastics company to blame for explosion that killed 31

SANTO DOMINGO, Aug 19: Dominican authorities announced on late Friday that they are pursuing a criminal case against a plastics company based on evidence found during an investigation into a powerful explosion this week that killed at least 31 people.

Police and the Public Ministry issued a joint statement saying the blast occurred at a business called Vidal Plast, rather than at a bakery as authorities had said initially. The explosion occurred Monday afternoon in a bustling commercial center in San Cristobal, a city just west of the capital of Santo Domingo. "The Public Ministry has evidence that compromises the criminal responsibility of those responsible who, with their actions, caused the death of dozens of people and caused millions in losses," the statement said, citing prosecutor Fadulisa Rosa Rubio.

The ministry said it was investigating several people, but did not identify them. The owners of Vidal Plast could not be immediately reached for comment. The company recycles, buys and sells plastic materials, officials said. Authorities also said they have evidence that there was a fire at the business in March caused by a spark and a chemical substance and that the company did not take any measures "despite knowing the high risk of its operations."

Victor Bisono, the minister of industry and commerce, told reporters that the municipality had closed the factory in the past, but he did not provide more details. N Digital, a respected online newspaper in the Dominican Republic, reported that the company was founded in 2003. It quoted one of the company's founders as saying that the factory was not operating and that two of its employees were simply removing material from the site when the explosion occurred, with one of them being killed.

Officials on Friday also raised the number of dead to 31 from 28. They said seven of the dead had been identified so far. On Thursday, the government said it could take up to three months to identify all those killed in the blast. (AP)

Hurricane Hilary threatens 'catastrophic and life-threatening' flooding in Mexico and California

CABO SAN LUCAS, Aug 19: Hurricane Hilary headed for Mexico's Baja California Saturday as the US National Hurricane Center predicted "catastrophic and life-threatening flooding" for the peninsula and for the southwestern United States, where it is forecast to make land as a tropical storm on Sunday.

Officials as far north as Los Angeles scrambled to get the homeless off the streets, set up shelters and prepare for evacuations.

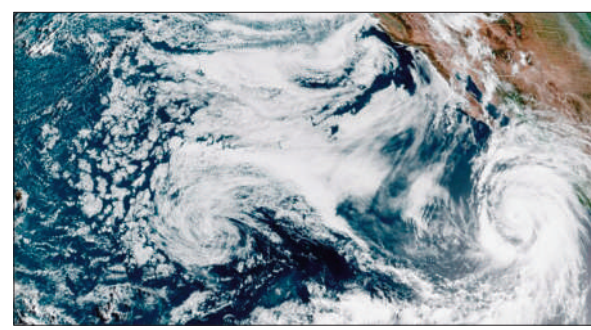
Hilary is expected to plow into the Mexican peninsula on Saturday night and then surge northward and enter the history books as the first tropical storm to hit Southern California in 84 years.

The US National Hurricane Center issued a tropical storm watch for a wide swath of southern California from the Pacific coast to interior mountains and deserts. Officials talked of evacuation plans for California's Catalina Island.

"I don't think any of us — I know me particularly — never thought I'd be standing here talking about a hurricane or a tropical storm," said Janice Hahn, chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

After rapidly gaining power on early Friday, Hilary slowed some later in the day but remained a major Category 4 hurricane early Saturday with maximum sustained winds of 130 mph (215 kph), down from 145 mph (230 kph).

Early Saturday, the storm



was centered about 260 miles (415 kilometers) west-southwest of the southern tip of the Baja peninsula. It was moving north-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph) and was expected to turn more toward the north and pick up speed.

The latest forecast track pointed to Hilary making landfall along a sparsely populated area of the Baja peninsula at a point about 200 miles (330 kilometers) south of the Pacific port city of Ensenada.

It is then expected to continue northward, raising fears that its heavy rains could cause dangerous flooding in the border city of Tijuana, where many homes in the city of 1.9 million cling precariously to steep hillsides.

Mayor Montserrat Caballero Ramirez said the city was setting up four shelters in high-risk zones and warning people in risky zones.

"We are a vulnerable city being on one of the most visited borders in the world and because of our landscape," she said.

Concern was rising in the U.S. too.

The National Park Service

closed Joshua Tree National Park and Mojave National Preserve to keep people from becoming stranded amid flooding. Cities across the region, including in Arizona, were offering sandbags to safeguard properties against floodwaters. Major League Baseball rescheduled three Sunday games in Southern California, moving them to Saturday as part of split-doublesheaders.

Deputies with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department took to the road to urge homeless people living in riverbeds to seek shelter. Authorities in the city were arranging food, cots and shelters for people who needed them.

SpaceX delayed the launch of a satellite-carrying rocket from a base on California's central coast until at least Monday. The company said conditions in the Pacific could make it difficult for a ship to recover the rocket booster.

President Joe Biden said the Federal Emergency Management Agency had pre-positioned staff and supplies in the region.

"I urge everyone, everyone in the path of this storm, to take precautions and listen to the guidance of state and local officials," Biden told reporters Friday at Camp David, where he is meeting with the leaders of Japan and South Korea.

Officials in Southern California were re-enforcing sand berms, built to protect low-lying coastal communities against winter surf, like in Huntington Beach, which dubs itself as "Surf City USA."

In nearby Newport Beach, Tanner Atkinson waited in a line of vehicles for free sandbags at a city distribution point.

"I mean a lot of people here are excited because the waves are gonna get pretty heavy," Atkinson said. "But I mean, it's gonna be some rain, so usually there's some flooding and the landslides and things like that."

Some schools in Cabo San Lucas were being prepared as temporary shelters, and in La Paz, the picturesque capital of Baja California Sur, police patrolled closed beaches to keep swimmers out of the whipped-up surf. Schools were shut down in five municipalities.

It was increasingly likely that Hilary would reach California on Sunday while still at tropical storm strength, though widespread rain was expected to begin as early as Saturday, the National Weather Service's San Diego office said. (AP)

BSF lodges protest with Manipur Governor over alleged blockade on movement of troops by locals



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 19: Perturbed over alleged "blockade on movement of troops" by locals in various parts of the state the border security force (BSF) has lodged a protest with Manipur governor Anusuiya Uikey.

Apprising the Manipur governor about the prevailing security situation in the state, BSF ADG Sonali Mishra said that there has been "resistance against security personnel in some areas by local people, mostly by women folks", sources said.

"But the central forces are in touch with the local populace and making them aware of the need to create a congenial atmosphere for restoration of peace and normalcy (in Manipur)," she said.

This remark by the BSF ADG came after many women blocked the movement of security vehicles

in Bishnupur district of Manipur on Friday (August 18).

BSF ADG Sonali Mishra said that 51 companies of BSF are currently stationed in nine districts of Manipur to assist the administration in maintaining law and order.

She informed that maximum deployment of BSF troopers is in Imphal and areas that connect the valley and hills (buffer zones).

Strict vigil is being maintained to prevent any untoward incident, the BSF official said.

Advocating the need to deploy a specific force to a specific area, ADG said, the security forces will help to chalk out plans to face any eventuality in the area.

Notably, BSF ADG Sonali Mishra along with other senior officers of the force met Manipur governor Anusuiya Uikey at Raj Bhawan in Imphal on Friday.

CPI(M) delegation meets Manipur Gov, discusses situation of displaced people



IMPHAL, Aug 19: A CPI (M) delegation led by its general secretary Sitaram Yechury called on Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey at Raj Bhawan here and held discussions on the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently sheltered in various relief camps, a statement said.

Yechury informed Uikey that the CPI(M) team on Friday visited relief camps in Churachandpur and Moirang, where they found that the "arrangements made by the state government or local bodies in maintaining and running the relief camps were not satisfactory", the statement issued by the governor's secretariat said.

The former Rajya Sabha member also said that "IDPs, especially children and lactating mothers, are deprived of nutritious food and babies are being born in the camps".

"Under such a situation, how long can the IDPs survive with hope?" he asked.

The delegation arrived in Manipur on Friday on a three-day visit.

Yechury said that only a political solution can bring peace to the ongoing crisis, while also raising

concern over the looting of firearms from various police stations. Uikey informed the delegation that political parties, cutting across party lines, need to cooperate with the government in bringing an amicable solution to the ongoing conflict.

"Violence will not bring any solution," Uikey remarked, adding that appeals have been made to both the two communities to shun violence and come forward for talks.

The governor informed the CPI (M) team that she has personally met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other central leaders and urged them to find ways to bring an end to the conflict at the earliest possible time.

Ethnic clashes between Kukis and Meiteis broke out in the northeastern state on May 3, after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals -- Nagas and Kukis -- constitute little over 40 per cent and reside in the hill districts. (PTI)

Nagaland govt buildings, public spaces inaccessible for PwDs: Disability commissioner

KOHIMA, Aug 19: Nagaland State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (SCPWD) Dithono Nakhro lamented that many government offices and public spaces in the state have not built the infrastructure necessary to make them accessible for persons with disabilities.

Nakhro said the Public Works Department of the state government in a notification on February 5, 2019, had stated that all public buildings and spaces in the state should be made accessible to the PwDs.

"Many government buildings are still inaccessible for PwDs. We cannot continue to deprive the disabled community of our state," said Nakhro while addressing a workshop on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the engineers and officials of the Public



Works Department (Housing) here on Friday.

"It is a sad reflection of our society that all our new public buildings and spaces are having to go through retrofitting processes to make them accessible when they should have been necessarily designed and planned inclusively for

Dimapur schools ordered to close from tomorrow to contain conjunctivitis

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 19: With rising cases of conjunctivitis among school children, the Dimapur district administration has ordered suspension of physical classes in schools in the district from August 21 to August 26.

In an order on Saturday, deputy commissioner Sachin Jaiswal said in the light of reported spike in conjunctivitis cases among school children in the district and in consultation with the district officials of the health and family welfare department and school education department and considering the severity of the spread of the infection and number of cases, it has been decided that the physical classes in schools will remain suspended from August 21 to August 26 to contain the spread of the in-



fection among the school-going students.

The DC has requested the schools to explore alternate options like online classes during the period.

On August 17, Dimapur chief medical officer (CMO) Dr Limatula Aier raised concern over the rise in conjunctivitis cases in

Dimapur, especially among school-going children.

Aier said they had been receiving reports of a lot of conjunctivitis cases from hospitals in Dimapur, which is a health concern.

The CMO also held a meeting with the district administration, school education department and teachers' association on August 17

to apprise them of the matter and on how best to tackle this issue.

Aier said more information and data will be collected from all the educational institutions in the coming days.

Senior specialist of Dimapur district hospital Dr Asongla Chang said more than 700 cases were reported from the hospitals since the last week of July.

She said taking into account the number of cases being reported at the district hospital, the total number of cases in Dimapur could be much higher if the tally from private hospitals is added.

Chang also made mention of the occurrence of pharyngoconjunctivitis cases among children. The symptoms pharyngoconjunctivitis include fever, sore throat and cough, she said.

Nagaland likely to experience moderate to heavy rainfall in coming week



HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 19: Nagaland is likely to experience cloudy weather with moderate to very heavy rainfall activity in the coming week, the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) said in its weather update on Saturday.

The NSDMA predicted that the state is expected to witness varying weather conditions over the upcoming week and a significant increase in weather activity, featuring frequent rainy spells, starting from August 20.

The update said thundershowers, accompanied by heavy rains and cloudy conditions, are forecasted for the districts Kohima, Phek, Wokha, Zunheboto, Mokochung, Mon, Kiphire, Tuensang, and Shamator from August 19 to August 24. During this period, the minimum and maximum temperatures in the state are expected to range between 14°C and 34°C.

The NSDMA advised the public to exercise caution and take necessary precautions to avoid any untoward incidents during this weather event. Additionally, the NSDMA directed all district disaster management authorities and relevant line departments to remain on high alert to safeguard lives and properties throughout the monsoon season.

Manipur students' body stages rally over Shah's 'illegal immigrants' remark

CHURACHANDPUR/IMPHAL, Aug 19: Manipur's Joint Students' Body (JSB) on Saturday staged a rally in Churachandpur in protest against Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement in Parliament that the state's present crisis was due to influx of illegal immigrants from Myanmar.

The JSB, which comprises the Zomi Students Federation (ZSF), Kuki Students Organisation (KSO) and Hmar Students Association (HSA), requested the home minister to clarify his stand.

Shah had told the Parliament on August 9 that problems started in Manipur with the influx of Kuki refugees from neighbouring Myanmar after the military rulers there started a crackdown against militants in 2021.

The Kuki refugees started settling down in the jungles in the Manipur valley, raising fears of a demographic change in the region, Shah had said, adding that the un-



rest began when rumours started circulating that refugee settlements had been declared as villages.

The student's body also expressed its unhappiness on the

statement of India's Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that most of the bodies lying at RIMS and JNIMS hospital morgues are that of illegal immigrants.

Happy that Meghalaya's pineapples are getting recognition in the world: PM

SHILLONG, Aug 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday expressed happiness that Meghalaya's pineapples are getting the recognition they deserve in domestic and international markets.

He said it is also empowering the farmers of the state.

"Happy to see Meghalaya's Pineapples receiving the recognition they deserve both domestically and internationally. Such endeavors not only celebrate our diverse agricultural heritage but also empower our farmers," Modi said in X, formerly Twitter.

Earlier Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma had tweeted that pineapples from the state are on display at the Dilli Haat.

According to the chief minister, pineapples from the state having high brix value are sought after in the markets.

"Pineapples with its sweetness measuring high brix value of 16-18 is gradually making it a sought after fruit by retailers like Reliance apart from being exported to other countries," he tweeted.

"This is opening bigger markets for farmers who are getting the fruit of their hard labour," he added.

Several tonnes of pineapples from Meghalaya are also available at the Pineapples Festival held at Dilli Haat in the national capital in which farmers, craftsmen, and self help groups from different parts of Meghalaya are showcasing their products. (PTI)

Meri Maati Mera Desh prog held at GHSS Noklak

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: Under the banner of 'Meri Maati Mera Desh,' a special programme took place at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Noklak on August 19, 2023. The event featured several significant activities. During the ceremony, Arikumba, the deputy commissioner of Noklak, hoisted the National flag and led the pledge on 'Meri Maati Mera Desh,' which includes commitments to contribute to India's development, eradicate the slave mindset, preserve India's rich culture and traditions, work for national unity and integrity, fulfill civic duties, honor defenders of the nation, and strive to realize the dream of a developed India by 2047. Furthermore, the deputy commissioner unveiled a memorial plaque (Silphalakham) bearing the quote, "Dedicating every minute of our life and every ounce of our energy for our motherland is the true tribute to our freedom fighters," attributed to the Prime Minister.

"This has been taken very seriously by the Kuki-Zo tribals and they demand the solicitor general to come up with valid proof," the JSB said.

Mehta, appearing for both the Union and Manipur governments, on August 1 told the Supreme Court that "most of the unclaimed bodies are of infiltrators."

The protesters also said filing of FIRs against Kuki-Zo tribal intellectuals and leaders is an attempt to silence their voices.

The rally, which started from Lamka public ground and culminated at the Wall of Remembrance, passed through Tipaimukh Road, IB Road and Tedim Road.

Meanwhile, chairing a meeting with the commissioners and officials, Chief Minister Biren N Singh discussed a comprehensive overview of the economy of Manipur, highlighting key growth opportunities, challenges and proposed strategies. (PTI)

Five NLF militant surrender in Tripura

AGARTALA, Aug 19: Five militants of the outlawed National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLF) BM group surrendered before police in Tripura's Dhalai district, a senior police officer said on Saturday.

The five militants identified as Kanta Mohan Tripura (45), Nakshatra Debbarma (32), Emang Debbarma (20), Getajoy Tripura (23) and Mansubar Tripura (25) surrendered before police on Friday, Superintendent of Police, Dhalai, Avinash Kumar Rai told PTI over the phone. (PTI)

Aloka Vision Programme by ZEISS hosts eye testing camp for Army professionals and civilians in Arunachal Pradesh

Nafra, West Kameng has a total population of 2500-3000 (approx.)



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 19: The Aloka Vision Programme by ZEISS, a social initiative focused on providing quality vision care to semi-urban, rural, and remote regions in India and SAARC countries, hosted a three-day eye testing camp in Nafra, West Kameng and Misamari, Assam, with immense support from Indian Army. The camp, extended for both army professionals and civilians, emphasized the importance of eye health.

Speaking about the initiative, Dr Premjeeth Moodbidri, head of Aloka Vision Programme by ZEISS said, "We are honoured to organise this eye testing camp in Nafra and Misamari. We extend our gratitude to the army professionals for their continued support

in planning and conducting this eye-testing camp. Aloka Vision Programme by ZEISS has consistently endeavoured to serve communities in need. We believe that every individual, regardless of their geographical location, profession, and financial circumstances, deserves access to quality vision care. By providing comprehensive eye examinations and necessary support, we hope to make a meaningful impact on the lives of the people we serve."

The eye testing camp in Nafra and Misamari brought together a team of experienced ophthalmologists, optometrists, and volunteers from ZEISS, who worked tirelessly to provide comprehensive eye examinations, detect vision-related issues, and offer appropriate solutions to the attendees.

Ratan Tata conferred with 'Udyog Ratna' award



MUMBAI, Aug 19: Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata was on Saturday conferred the first ever 'Udyog Ratna' award instituted by the Maharashtra government. The award was presented to the 85-year-old chairman emeritus of Tata Sons by chief minister Eknath Shinde and deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar at the industrialist's home in Colaba, south Mumbai. The honour comprised a shawl, a citation and a memento from the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC).

Talking to reporters afterwards, Shinde said honouring Tata as 'Udyog Ratna' has enhanced the prestige of the award. "The contribution of the Tata group in all sectors is immense. Tata means trust," he said. The steel-to-salt group operates in more than 100 countries across six continents. In 2021-22, the collective revenue of Tata companies stood at \$128 billion. (PTI)

Kejriwal announces 10 guarantees, promises free electricity; allowance for women, unemployed

RAIPUR, Aug 19: Seeking to make inroads in Chhattisgarh, Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced ten "guarantees" for the upcoming assembly polls in the Congress-ruled state including free electricity, monthly 'samman rashi' for women and ₹ 3,000 monthly allowance for the unemployed.

Addressing an AAP workers' convention here, the Delhi chief minister said his party's governments in Delhi and Punjab have fulfilled the guarantees given to people, and if it comes to power in Chhattisgarh, it would do the same thing.

"Today I am giving you ten guarantees which are not like a fake manifesto or 'sankalp patra'. Kejriwal will die (if it comes to it) but fulfill these promises," he said.

The guarantees included 24-hour uninterrupted power supply - free upto 300 units -- to every household, waiver of pending electricity bills till November 2023, ₹ 1,000 monthly 'samman rashi' (honorarium) to all women aged above 18 years and free quality education to school children, he said.

As in Delhi, an AAP government will also provide free and better health treatment to every citizen of Chhattisgarh, mohalla clinics in every village and ward in



cities, employment and allowance of ₹ 3,000 per month to those unemployed, free pilgrimage for senior citizens, corruption-free Chhattisgarh, ₹ 1 crore to the kin of personnel of state police and army jawans (who belong to Chhattisgarh) martyred in the line of duty as 'samman rashi' and regularize contractual employees, Kejriwal said. The tenth guarantee is about farmers and tribals but he will reveal it during his next visit, he said. Kejriwal was accompanied by AAP leader and Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann.

Kejriwal had addressed a public rally in Bilaspur last month. In March, he had attended an AAP workers' convention in Raipur.

The AAP tried its luck for the first time in the assembly elections in Chhattisgarh in 2018 and fielded candidates in 85 of 90 seats but failed to achieve success. (PTI)

Cong workers want Rahul Gandhi to contest from Amethi in 2024 LS polls: Ajay Rai

LUCKNOW, Aug 19: The people of Amethi want to rectify their "mistake" of 2019 and Congress workers as well as leaders are demanding that Rahul Gandhi contest from the constituency in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the party's Uttar Pradesh chief Ajay Rai said.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi had contested the 2019 general elections from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh and Wayanad in Kerala. He lost Amethi to BJP leader Smriti Irani.

The seat was won by him in 2004, 2009 and 2014, and was considered a Congress bastion. Sonia Gandhi had won from Amethi in 1999. Former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi had also represented the constituency in Lok Sabha.

On the recently formed opposition grouping Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), in which the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress are partners, he asserted that the alliance formed for the parliamentary elections will be successful in Uttar Pradesh in defeating the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Rai added that the Congress-SP tie-up for the 2017 Uttar Pradesh assembly polls should not



be equated with the alliance of opposition parties for the 2024 elections. In 2017, the Congress had won seven seats and the SP 47 in the 403-member Uttar Pradesh assembly. In 2022, the Congress had won just two seats. The party has one member in Lok Sabha (Rae Bareilly MP Sonia Gandhi) from the politically crucial state that sends 80 MPs to the 543-member Lower House of Parliament.

"The party (Congress) workers and leaders are demanding that Rahul Gandhi contest from the Amethi parliamentary constituency, and the public want to

rectify the mistake committed by them, and work with full strength to make him the Lok Sabha MP from Amethi," Rai told PTI in a telephonic interview.

The people of Amethi "feel that they were cheated and misguided", the Uttar Pradesh Congress president said hitting out at the BJP which is in power both in the state and at the Centre.

Asked if the Congress will again field Sonia Gandhi from the Rae Bareilly seat in 2024 or consider her daughter and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as its candidate, Rai said, "They (appar-

ently referring to the party leadership) have to decide this." Every party worker will deliver their best to ensure that the Congress wins Rae Bareilly, he said.

On the chances of success of opposition bloc INDIA, Rai, who was recently appointed as Congress' Uttar Pradesh unit chief, said it "will definitely uproot and overthrow them (the BJP-led NDA)".

Before his elevation to the post, Rai was the Congress' regional chief of the east Uttar Pradesh unit, which among other districts also sees the party's works in Amethi.

On some Uttar Pradesh BJP leaders claiming that the INDIA bloc will not be successful in the state, the five-time MLA from Varanasi asked, "Why was (Suheldev) Bharatiya Samaj Party chief Om Prakash Rajbhar included (in the NDA)? Just find out what all Om Prakash Rajbhar said about the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh (Yogi Adityanath). They (BJP) should introspect."

The SBSP was a BJP ally in 2017 but parted ways ahead of the 2022 assembly polls and had joined hands with the SP. The Rajbhar-led party joined the NDA last month. (PTI)

Delhi Police stopped people from attending 'We20 meeting': Ramesh



Police says no prior permission taken

activists and opposition leaders had gathered to raise people's issues, was being held at the Harkishan Singh Surjeet Bhawan on Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg in a high-security area.

In a post on X, Ramesh questioned the police action against the "peaceful" meeting.

The police said after information was received, it found that people were gathered and a tent was also erected at the building.

The organisers could not produce any valid permission, a senior police officer said, adding that they had not intimidated the police about the programme and the gathering.

DDU Marg is a sensitive zone and in view of the upcoming G-20 event, no gathering without any prior permission or intimation can be allowed, hence the organisers were advised to remove tents and asked not to continue the programme without a valid permission, the officer said.

In the post on X, Ramesh said the meeting was perfectly peaceful with no street protests and while he managed to enter the venue at

HKS Surjeet Bhawan at 10.30 am, it was difficult to get out.

"It is extraordinary that Delhi Police is stopping people from attending the We20 meeting organised by activists representing 'We, The People', inside a building that belongs to the CPM," Ramesh said.

"The meeting is perfectly peaceful. There are no street protests. I managed to enter at 10.30 am before Delhi Police started its operation but finding it difficult to exit now. This is New India Democracy," he said. One of the organisers, Leo Saldanha, said that after the police arrived, participants and speakers were not allowed to enter the building, but they were continuing with the seminar with the people who were already inside. "The seminar is aimed at taking a critical look at the G20," he said.

Ramesh also tagged a post by an activist who claimed that the Delhi Police was trying to shut down the 'We 20' meeting and "preventing" Ramesh from leaving the venue after speaking. (PTI)

BJP MLAs from Gujarat, UP, Bihar and Maharashtra arrive in Bhopal

BHOPAL, Aug 19: Ahead of the Madhya Pradesh elections, BJP MLAs from Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra have arrived in Bhopal as part of the ruling party's programme wherein every legislator will be allotted one assembly seat each that they are supposed to visit to take stock of the ground situation, party leaders said. A training session for these Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators from the four states began in Bhopal on Saturday, a day before they start visiting their allotted assembly seats in the state, where polls will be held by the end of the year. There are 230 assembly segments in Madhya Pradesh.

Union minister Bhopendra Yadav, who is the BJP's election in-charge of Madhya Pradesh, inaugurated the training session for the legislators this morning.

"The BJP's central leadership has decided that the party's legislators from Gujarat, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra will visit different assembly constituencies (in MP) over the next days starting Sunday," Madhya Pradesh Minister for Medical Education and BJP leader Vishvas Sarang told reporters. The visiting legislators will take part in different programmes in their respective assembly segments allotted to them and work with a resolve for the party's victory in the as-

sembly polls, he said.

As part of the programme, they will interact with the party's local functionaries and voters, sources said.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, party chief V D Sharma are scheduled to address the training programme, Sarang said. Earlier on Thursday, the ruling BJP announced its first list of 39 candidates for the state assembly elections, even before the announcement of the poll schedule. In this list, the saffron party has focused on the seats it lost in 2018 and some of them even in 2013, and has reposed faith in 14 candidates, including three former ministers, who lost last time.

In the 2018 assembly polls, the Congress had won 114 seats, while the BJP finished second with 109.

The Congress, which was two short of a simple majority, went on to form a government under the leadership of party veteran Kamal Nath with the support of Independents, the MLAs from the BSP and the SP.

However, the Nath government collapsed after 15 months when a section of Congress MLAs, most of them loyal to Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, quit and joined the BJP. The saffron party returned to power in March 2020 with Shivraj Singh Chouhan as chief minister for a fresh term. (PTI)

CAG report shows UDAN scheme didn't work on 93% routes: Kharage

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday claimed that a CAG report has pointed out that the Centre's flagship UDAN scheme did not work on 93 per cent of the routes, and said that the common people only got "lies" and "jumbas" from the government.

A regional connectivity scheme was launched under the name of UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) on October 21, 2016, by the Union government to stimulate regional air connectivity and make air travel affordable to the masses in tier-2 and tier-3 cities and towns.

In a post in Hindi on X, Mallikarjun Kharge said that the Modi government's promise of enabling those wearing slippers travel by air has not been fulfilled "just like all their promises".

"We are not saying this, the CAG Report is saying this! The scheme (UDAN) did not work on 93 per cent of the routes. Even independent audit of airlines was not done. The much publicized Helicopter services also remained stalled," Kharge alleged.

Delhi HC quashes customs case against woman shooter, says can't be punished for father's acts

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: The Delhi High Court has quashed a criminal complaint under the customs law against a 26-year-old woman national level shooter whose father was found using her licence in the alleged import of firearms, saying she ought not to be punished for the purported acts of her father. The high court said prima facie no case is made out against petitioner Disha Langan under the provisions of the Customs Act as the allegations against her do not disclose the essential ingredients of the offence she is charged with and no presumption can be drawn that she had knowledge of the alleged offences committed by her father.

"Considering the fact that the petitioner is a young girl of 26 years with a bright future ahead and who while studying law is also keeping her aspirations flying high through shooting and bringing laurels for the country, this court is of the considered opinion that she ought not to be punished for the alleged acts of her father solely on the pretext of her license being used by him," Justice Saurabh Banerjee said.

The high court said it is a general practice in most, if not all, Indian families that a student studying in school, college, or university, and that too when it happens to be in another state or country, it is the family, primarily the parents, who play the role of supporting them and fill in for them.

"It is a matter of common knowledge that most of such students are dependent upon their parents. This is more so when the parents are



also involved in the same activity, like in the present circumstances, where the father of the petitioner is himself a shooter.

"Considering the state of affairs involved, this court is of the view that like any other student, the petitioner would have been busy in her studies and like any other sportsperson, she would also have been busy with her shooting practices and therefore her father filled in for making all arrangements qua procuring arms and ammunitions for her shooting practices/competitions," it said.

The high court said the chief metropolitan magistrate was wrong in proceeding to issue summons to the woman.

As per the complaint filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), three persons, including the woman's father, were intercepted

at the Indira Gandhi International Airport on April 29, 2017 on the basis of a specific intelligence information that a syndicate was involved in smuggling of arms and ammunition from Slovenia to India. It said the syndicate members would be arriving at Terminal 3 of the airport carrying prohibited items concealed in their baggage without disclosing them before the customs.

The complaint said the petitioner's father utilised here 'Arms and Ammunition Licence' issued by the Delhi police and the 'Renowned Shooter Certificate' issued by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) for importing weapons using bogus invoices and by suppressing the true value and description of the weapons without the recommendation of NRAI. It was alleged that the members of the syndicate were selling the smuggled weapons of foreign origin in India making huge profits. The weapons were used for hunting wildlife animals, the complaint said.

The woman, in her statement before the DRI, stated that on the date of the incident, she was not in Delhi and was at Gujarat National Law University in Gandhinagar where she was studying at that point of time.

Langan said she never ordered any import of arms and it was her father who procured them on her behalf. She said she was only concerned with the shooting competitions and all arrangements for firearms and their procurement were made by her father. (PTI)

Cong accuses govt of using G20 to run 'election campaign'

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: The Congress on Saturday accused the government of running an "election campaign" using the upcoming G20 meeting in India and said this was being done to divert people's attention from real issues.

The G20 Leaders' Summit is scheduled to be held at the Bharat Mandapam International Exhibition-Convention Centre on September 9-10.

In a post in Hindi on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The G20 was formed in 1999. 19 countries and the European Union are its members. Since its formation, the G20 summit has been held in 17 countries in turns. Now it is India's turn."

"But the kind of election campaign that is being run here and efforts being made to create such an atmosphere around it, has not happened in any other country. In fact, this is being done to divert the attention of the people from the important issues," Ramesh said.

He said India successfully organised the the Non-Aligned

Summit of more than 100 countries in 1983 and after that the summit of Commonwealth countries in New Delhi.

But the then government did not use those opportunities for electoral gains, he said.

"Then I remember that statement of L K Advani. On 5 April 2014, he described Narendra Modi as a great event manager. To divert the attention of the public, the Prime Minister is only doing event management," Ramesh alleged.

The G20 members represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

The grouping comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the European Union (EU).

As the grouping's current president, India will host the G20 summit next month in New Delhi. (PTI)

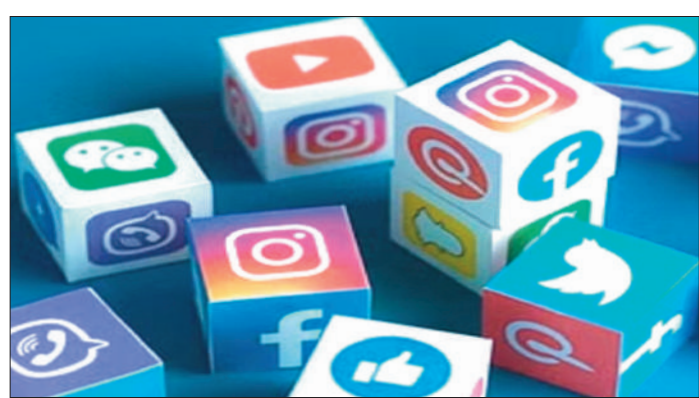
Social media users should be more careful about its impact, reach: SC

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: The Supreme Court has said social media users should be careful about its impact and reach as it dismissed a petition filed by actor and former Tamil Nadu MLA S Ve Shekher who is facing cases for sharing a Facebook post in 2018 allegedly containing derogatory remarks against women journalists.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and P K Mishra was hearing a plea filed by Shekher against the July 14 order of the Madras High Court which had dismissed his petition seeking quashing of criminal proceedings relating to the post shared by him.

"If one uses social media, then he should be more careful about its impact and reach," the bench told the advocate representing the petitioner.

The lawyer argued that Shekher had put some medicine in his eyes



on the date of the incident due to which he could not read the contents of the post which he shared. The bench observed that one has to be careful while using social media.

It said if someone find it is essential to use social media, then he should be ready to face the consequences also.

In its order, the HC had noted Shekher is said to have "published/circulated an abusive, derogatory and vulgar comment in his Facebook account" on April 19, 2018 after which a complaint filed before the Chennai Commissioner of Police.

It had noted that an FIR was registered in the matter and other pri-

vate complaints were also filed against him in various parts of Tamil Nadu.

Before the high court, Shekher's counsel had argued that he was not aware of the contents of the message that was sent to him and had merely forwarded the same from his Facebook account.

His counsel had said that after coming to know of the derogatory remarks contained in the message, Shekher removed the contents within a couple of hours on the same day and had followed it up with a letter dated April 20, 2018 whereby he had tendered an unconditional apology to the concerned women journalists and also to the media.

The high court had noted in its order that the counsel had submitted that during the pendency of matter, the petitioner was directed to file an affidavit tendering an apology which he did. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has referred the three proposed laws that will replace the IPC, CrPC and the Evidence Act to the Standing Committee on Home Affairs for examination and asked it to submit its report within three months.

The bills -- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill -- were introduced in the Lok Sabha by Home Minister Amit Shah on August 11.

The bills, once passed, will replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act respectively. While introducing the bills, Shah said these would transform India's criminal justice system and added the changes were done to provide speedy justice and create a legal system that caters to contemporary needs and



aspirations of the people.

In a bulletin late on Friday, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat stated, "Members are informed that on 18th August, 2023, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha in consultation with the Speaker, Lok Sabha has referred the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023; the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023; and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023, as introduced in the Lok Sabha and pending therein, to the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs,

for examination and report within three months."

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs is of the Rajya Sabha and has members from both Houses of Parliament.

BJP member Brij Lal is the chairman of the Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita provides for several changes in the existing provisions including that of defamation, attempt to commit suicide and expanded the scope of offence against women pertaining to sexual intercourse by employing "deceitful means".

It also lists new offences such as acts of secession, armed rebellion, subversive activities, separatist activities or endangering the sovereignty or unity in the new avatar of the sedition law. For the first time, the word terrorism has been defined under the BNS which was not there under the IPC. (PTI)

Fadnavis became intolerant, arrogant after being made DyCM, claims 'Saamana'

MUMBAI, Aug 19: Shiv Sena (UBT) on Saturday alleged that senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, who was earlier the chief minister of Maharashtra, has become intolerant and arrogant ever since he was made deputy CM, triggering sharp reactions from the saffron party.

Fadnavis was a tolerant person earlier, but his frustration after being made the deputy chief minister resulted in him becoming intolerant and arrogant, the party claimed in an editorial in its mouthpiece 'Saamana'.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), however, objected to the language used in the editorial piece in the Marathi daily, whose editor is Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, while the executive editor is party's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut.

Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said one should maintain decorum while criticising political opponents. He also warned of filing a complaint against 'Saamana', and said its 'vitriol' needs to stop. BJP's youth wing and a few party leaders held



a protest in the evening.

Fadnavis was the chief minister of the state between 2014 and 2019 when the BJP and Shiv Sena (undivided) shared power. After the 2019 assembly elections, the two parties parted ways over sharing the chief minister's post. Thackeray later joined hands with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress to form the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

The Thackeray-led dispensation, however, collapsed in June 2022 after his senior party leader Eknath Shinde rebelled along with 39 other MLAs and joined hands with the BJP. Shinde became the chief minister, while Fadnavis was made his deputy.

Last month, senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar and his party MLAs also joined the Shinde government with Pawar being made the deputy CM.

The editorial said, "Devendra Fadnavis would have returned to power (post-2019 assembly elections) had he not betrayed the Shiv Sena. However, his party's top leaders in Delhi sidelined him and made him deputy chief minister."

"Fadnavis was a tolerant person earlier, but his frustration after being made the deputy CM resulted in him becoming intolerant and arrogant...They made him share the deputy chief minister's post with Ajit Pawar, adding to his woes," it said.

"It was Fadnavis who once said that he would send Ajit Pawar to jail and ensure that he would get rigorous imprisonment. But what is Fadnavis doing exactly now by sharing power with the same Ajit Pawar?" the party asked.

It also said that those having serious corruption charges and facing allegations of assault against women are now the colleagues of Fadnavis, it said adding that he

should take care of himself.

Bawankule hit out at Sena (UBT) over the editorial targeting Fadnavis. He hit out at Uddhav Thackeray, saying that he was out of his senses after losing party and power.

Speaking to reporters today in Nagpur, Bawankule said, "Whenever Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray wants to criticise someone, he either uses the 'Saamana' daily or asks Sanjay Raut to make a statement."

Thackeray is frustrated and bewildered, he alleged.

"He even lost his party symbol. He is pained because he cannot return to power," Bawankule added.

The NCP has joined hands with the BJP and Thackeray has now realised that he made a mistake by backstabbing Fadnavis in 2019, he claimed.

Objecting to the language of the 'Saamana' editorial, he said, "There has to be a limit while criticising political opponents by a newspaper. Our leaders will soon take a decision on this...There could be some protest-like situation in Mumbai." (PTI)

Rahul Gandhi rides motorcycle from Leh to Pangong Lak

LEH, Aug 19: Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday rode a motorcycle from Leh to Pangong Lake in the Union Territory of Ladakh on the eve of his father Rajiv Gandhi's birth anniversary, a party spokesman said. The former Congress president is currently on a tour of Ladakh -- his first since the region was made a Union territory after being carved out of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 -- and is likely to visit Kargil next week.

The erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was also turned into a Union territory and its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution was revoked.

Gandhi reached Leh on a two-day visit on Thursday, later deciding to extend his stay in the region by four more days to cover Pangong Lake, Nubra Valley and Kargil district.

Congress spokesperson and leader of opposition in Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh, Tsering Namgyal told PTI on phone. After covering more than 130 km on motorcycle, Gandhi will stay overnight at Pangong Lake where a token celebration will be organised in connection with the birth anniversary of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on Sunday, he said.



Rahul Gandhi shared several pictures of his motorcycle expedition from Leh to Pangong on his social media account with a caption "On our way to Pangong lake, which my father used to say, is one of the most beautiful places in the world."

"On Sunday, he is leaving for Nubra Valley on the motorcycle for a night stay there. En route, he is likely to meet commoners including shopkeepers and farmers," Namgyal said, adding he will be back in Leh on Monday.

Though the trip was described by his party colleagues in Leh as "non-political" with no consideration of next year's parliamentary elections, Gandhi was given a

warm welcome by party workers on his arrival on Thursday.

He also had a meeting with party colleagues and interacted with the youth besides watching a football match between two local clubs.

Gandhi will be visiting Kargil district either on Monday or Tuesday, the Congress spokesperson said, adding he is likely to interact with party workers and people, especially the youth, there.

The visit of Gandhi to the district assumes significance as LAHDC, Kargil is going to polls on September 10. The National Conference and the Congress have already announced a pre-poll alliance for the hill council elections. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR

Eight states lag behind in achieving targets

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Eight states are lagging behind in meeting objectives under Mission Amrit Sarovar -- a campaign to rejuvenate water bodies -- even as the national target has been achieved, the Union Ministry of Rural Development said in a statement on Saturday.

The states lagging behind in the mission's implementation are West Bengal, Punjab, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Bihar and Rajasthan, it said.

Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2022, Mission Amrit Sarovar aims to rejuvenate at least 75 water bodies in every district. The target was to build 50,000 Amrit Sarovars by August 15. In May, the ministry announced that the national target was achieved ahead of schedule with the completion of 50,071 Amrit Sarovars.

West Bengal, Punjab, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Bihar and Rajasthan, however, are lagging behind in meeting the target of creating 75 Amrit Sarovars in each district, the statement said.

"States have taken efforts to achieve the district-level target of 75 Amrit Sarovars in each district of the states with the exception in case of West Bengal, Punjab, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Bihar and Rajasthan where some of the districts are yet to achieve the target," it said. According to the latest ministry data, of the 1,12,277 (1.12 lakh) Amrit Sarovars identified, work has started on 81,425. A total 66,278 Amrit Sarovars have been constructed or rejuvenated.

The mission involves eight central ministries -- rural development; panchayati raj; forest, environment and climate change; railways and road transport and highways -- and departments, including land resources, drinking water and sanitation and water resources.

The mission works through the states and districts through refocusing of various schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the Fifteenth Finance Commission Grants and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana sub-schemes such as Watershed Development Component and Har Khet Ko Pani and the states' own schemes. It also encourages mobilisation of citizen and non-govt resources for supplementing these efforts. (PTI)

Govt aiming to raise capacity of ports four-fold to 10,000 MTPA by 2047: Sonowal

KEVADIA (GUJ), Aug 19: The government has set itself a target of raising the country's port capacity to more than 10,000 Metric Ton Per Annum by 2047 from the current 2,600 MTPA, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said here on Saturday.

The government will soon set up a Bureau of Port Security to upgrade security across all ports in the country, he said at the 19th Maritime States Development Council meeting at Kevadia in Gujarat's Narmada district near the Statue of Unity.

"The country's total port capacity will increase from existing around 2,600 MTPA to more than

10,000 MTPA in 2047," a government release quoted him as saying.

Sonowal said the country's maritime sector is poised for substantial growth with over ₹ 10 lakh crore worth of investment opportunities identified, with the opportunity to generate employment for over 15 lakh youths. "In alignment with this vision, the role of private players is being progressively augmented, with public-private partnership (PPP) terminals currently handling about 50 per cent of the cargo at major ports and efforts underway to raise their share to approximately 85 per cent in the coming decades," the minister said. (PTI)

HP rain fury: Death toll over past week climbs to 78; more rains forecast



SHIMLA, Aug 19: The death toll in rain-related incidents in Himachal Pradesh over the past week rose to 78 on Saturday with the recovery of another body from the debris of a collapsed temple here, officials said as the local MeT sounded an orange alert for the next two days.

The deceased has been identified as Eish Sharma (28). The body of his father P L Sharma, who was the chairman of the mathematics department at Himachal Pradesh University, was recovered on Thursday, the officials added.

Of the 78 deaths since Sunday night, 24 were in the three major landslides in Shimla alone -- 17 at the Shiv temple in Summer Hill, 5 in Fagli, and 2 in Krishnanagar, Superintendent, Shimla, Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi told PTI on Saturday.

Joint operations of the Army, National and State Disaster Response Force, Police and Home Guards are underway to retrieve the bodies from the landslide rubble and at least three persons are still feared buried under the temple debris, the SP

said. Drones are being used for identification of high-risk zones and monitoring of sliding sites in the state capital, he added.

The local MeT office Saturday sounded an orange warning of heavy to very heavy rains on August 20 and 21 and a yellow alert of heavy rains on August 22 and 23. It also cautioned of moderate to high risk of flash floods in Shimla, Sirmour and Chamba districts.

Heavy rains can result in landslides, flash floods and an increase in water level in rivers and drains besides causing damage to the standing crops, fruit plants and young seedlings, the MeT warned.

A red alert is a warning for extremely bad weather conditions that are certainly going to disrupt travel and power and pose a significant risk to life. An orange warning indicates extremely bad weather with the potential of disruption in commute with road and drain closures and interruption of power supply.

On Friday, the Himachal Pradesh government declared the state a "Natural Calamity Affected Area" in view of the damage caused by heavy rains leading to the loss of human life and extensive damage to property.

Since the onset of the monsoon on June 24, as many as 221 persons have died in rain-related incidents in Himachal Pradesh and about 11,900 houses got partially or completely damaged, according to the state emergency operation centre.

Around 560 roads are still closed in the rain-battered state and 253 transformers and 107 water supply schemes have been disrupted, the centre said. (PTI)

SC displeased over Gujarat HC adjourning rape survivor's pregnancy termination plea, says valuable time lost

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: The Supreme Court on Saturday expressed displeasure over the delay by the Gujarat High Court in deciding a rape victim's plea for medical termination of her 26-week pregnancy, saying "valuable time" has been lost during the pendency of the matter.

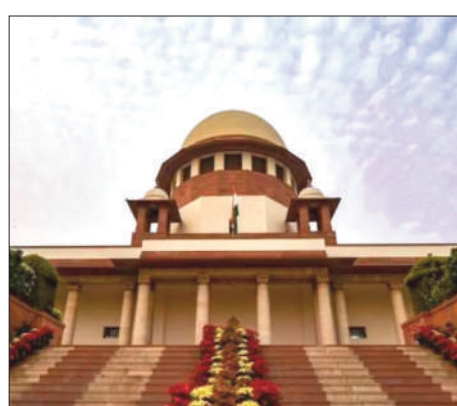
Taking note of the urgency in the matter, the apex court, which took up the woman's plea for hearing on a Saturday, said it would hear the case again on Monday, August 21 as the first item.

In a special sitting on a Saturday, a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan observed that there should be a sense of urgency in such cases and slammed the "lackadaisical attitude" of the high court in treating it as any normal case and adjourning the hearing. The bench also issued notices to the state of Gujarat and others seeking their responses on the woman's plea.

During the hearing, the apex court was informed by the counsel for the petitioner that the 25-year-old woman had approached the high court on August 7 and the matter was taken up the next day.

He said the high court had on August 8 issued a direction for the constitution of a medical board to ascertain the status of pregnancy as well as the health status of the petitioner. The report was submitted on August 10 by the medical college where she was examined, the counsel said.

The top court noted that the report was taken on record by the high court on August 11 but "strangely", the matter was listed 12 days later i.e. on August 23 "losing sight of the fact that every day's delay was crucial and of great significance having regard to the facts and circumstances of the case". The bench also noted that the petitioner's counsel has brought to its notice that the case status



of the matter showed that the petition was rejected on August 17 by the high court, but no reasons were dictated in the court and the order is yet to be uploaded on the high court's website. "In the circumstance, we direct the secretary general of this court to inquire from the registrar general of the High Court of Gujarat and ascertain as to whether the impugned order has been uploaded or not," the bench said. The petitioner has approached the apex court through advocate Vishal Arun Mishra.

The counsel for the petitioner told the bench the woman petitioner was in her 26th week of pregnancy when the medical board was constituted.

"On August 11, it was stand over to August 23. For what purpose?" the bench asked, adding, "By then how many days are lost?"

The petitioner's counsel said the matter was listed on August 17 instead of August 23.

Observing that valuable days have been lost in just postponing the case, the bench said when the

petitioner had sought the termination of pregnancy and had approached the high court, she was already 26 weeks pregnant. "Therefore, we find that valuable time has been lost between August 11, when the report was placed before the high court, and the order stating that the matter would stand over to August 23," it said. "In such cases, there must be, not undue urgency, but at least a sense of urgency in such matters and not a lackadaisical attitude of treating it as any normal case and just adjourning it. We are sorry to say and make this remark," the bench orally said.

The petitioner's counsel told the bench that the petitioner is pregnant for 27 weeks and two days and shortly, would be approaching the 28th week of her pregnancy. He said a fresh report may be sought from the medical board.

"In the circumstances, we direct the petitioner herein to appear before the hospital for being examined once again and the latest status report may be submitted to this court by tomorrow evening at 6 PM," the bench said. During the hearing, the bench said it will wait for the high court's order passed in the matter. "We will wait for the order. How can we consider the correctness of the order in the absence of the order," it said.

The bench also asked about the report filed by the medical board before the high court.

The petitioner's counsel said as per the report, the termination of pregnancy can be done.

Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, the upper limit for the termination of pregnancy is 24 weeks for married women, special categories including survivors of rape and other vulnerable women such as the differently-abled and minors. (PTI)

Assam's business-friendly ambitions

projects must meet specific criteria, including an initial investment of ₹ 100 crore and the creation of 200 permanent employment opportunities, with a reservation of all Grade III and Grade IV employment for state domicile residents.

The spectrum of incentives encompasses:

- Capital Investment/Production Linked Subsidy
- Subsidy on Power Tariff
- Subsidy on Land
- Subsidy on Drawal of Power Lines
- Stamp Duty Reimbursement
- Employment/Payroll Subsidy
- Any other relevant incentives

The confluence of visionary policies and proactive initiatives signals Assam's resolute journey towards becoming an investment haven and a catalyst for holistic progress.

NRL registers highest profit since

of upgrading of NRL from Schedule - B to Schedule A CPSE by the Union government. I take the opportunity to extend my hearty congratulations to all of you for making it possible. This accomplishment has been the fruition of tireless efforts and outstanding achievements in every sphere of NRL's activities in its prolific journey of 30 years."

The company also witnessed improved product sales, with a total of 3,016 TMT sold, compared to the previous year's 2,802 TMT. Sales within the Northeast region displayed a notable rise of over 11%, reaching 1,259 TMT, showcasing a favorable demand scenario in the Northeastern states.

Sales for the year also encompassed 50 TMT of gas oil exported to Bangladesh, according to Rath. Following the inauguration and commissioning of the 'India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL)', Bangladesh has expressed interest in collaborating further to transport fuel to North Bangladesh through waterways during winter. Meanwhile, NRL has successfully entered Bhutan with low pour high-speed diesel, catering to high-altitude regions with low temperatures, as stated by the company's managing director, Bhaskar Jyoti Phukan. Despite its plans to enter Myanmar with its products, the ongoing political situation has led to a halt. However, Nepal remains a prospective market where NRL aims to introduce its products in the near future. NRL is steadfastly advancing several significant projects, including the Numaligarh Refinery Expansion Project (NREP), Paradip Numaligarh Crude Oil Pipeline (PNCPL), Crude Oil Import terminal at Paradip (COIT), and the 2G Ethanol Plant (JV project), according to Rath. During the year, a 360 KtPA Polypropylene project was approved at a cost of ₹ 7,231 crore.

"In the next 5 years, NRL plans to invest more than ₹ 35,000 crore in completing these projects, which will enable long-term business growth, both in terms of revenue and profit," Rath added. (With inputs from PTI)

Street vendors attack Dibrugarh MLA

message to appeal to the members of his organisation to save him. He appealed to all members of the organisation to share his message on different social media platforms.

Public servant arrested on bribery

out at the office of the circle officer, Ulubari, Guwahati Revenue Circle. In a swift turn of events, Achyut Das was caught red-handed around 1:40 PM, immediately after he accepted ₹ 5,000 as part of the bribe demanded from the complainant. The tainted bribe money was recovered from his possession and seized in the presence of independent witnesses. Additionally, during a thorough body search, an extra sum of ₹ 9,500 was found in his pocket and was also seized with proper documentation.

The comprehensive evidence compiled against the accused public servant has led to his arrest by the Directorate of Vigilance & Anti-Corruption, Assam. The case was formally registered in ACB police station on Saturday, under ACB P.S. Case No. 65/2023, invoking Section 7(a) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018). Legal proceedings are currently underway to ensure justice is served, a Directorate release stated.

Remove Biren Singh for failing to

will gradually return to Manipur. "The Union and Manipur governments are trying to restore normalcy in the northeastern state. Even though stray incidents are being reported, the overall situation has improved. The CPI (M) delegation is visiting the state now to fish in troubled waters," the BJP leader claimed.

Ethnic clashes between Kukis and Meiteis broke out in the northeastern state on May 3, after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Meiteis account for around 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals -- Nagas and Kukis -- constitute little over 40 per cent and reside in the hill districts. (PTI)

Heroin seized in Karbi Anglong

district, was apprehended from Barpathar area in Golaghat district. Taking the investigation forward, on Saturday, Ali guided the police to a jungle area under Dillai police station.

Through thorough searching, the police successfully uncovered a substantial haul of 543.60 grams of heroin, valuing approximately ₹ 4 crore in the market. This discovery marks a significant setback for the drug trafficking network operating in the region.

The successful operation and subsequent arrest underscore the dedication and commitment of law enforcement agencies in curbing the menace of drug trafficking, ensuring the safety and well-being of the community.

Guv advocates for increasing use

alleviate the effects of climate change. He encouraged the increased adoption of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower. The seminar's inaugural function was attended by notable figures, including chairman of Institution of Engineers (India) Dr N N Patwary, Assam State Centre Director Operations of Oil India Limited Pankaj Kumar Goswami, professor of Mechanical Engineering of Jadavpur University Prof Sudipta De, and others from various institutions. The seminar served as a platform for fostering awareness and collaboration in addressing climate change through engineering innovation.

Original canvasses of renowned artists

the regional modernists. It was just that the latter did not have the same exposure to the market," the art historian said. GAG general secretary and joint curator of the exhibition, Kishore Kumar Das, said, "For the first time, original canvasses of renowned Indian artists, including those from Assam, have been put on display in the Northeast."

LKA's conservation officer and art historian Dilip Kumar Tripathy said the exhibition will go down the annals of the art history of the country as the exhibited artworks are a testament to the artists' enduring creative vision. Art critic Meghali Goswami said the artworks of 10 pioneering artists from Assam who have created a niche in the art landscape inspire a generation of artists, enthusiasts and collectors.

"The legacy of the great masters and their artworks serve as vivid reminders of the boundless possibilities of human creativity," she added. LKA's coordinator-in-charge Maneswar Brahma said the exhibition has created immense interest among the art fraternity, particularly students, who are eager to view and understand the varied nuances of the style, form and creative sensibilities of the master artists. (PTI)

SHATTERING BO RECORDS!

Sunny Deo's 'Gadar 2' crosses ₹ 300 crore mark at box office



MUMBAI, Aug 19: "Gadar 2", starring Sunny Deo and Ameesha Patel, has crossed ₹ 300 crore mark at the domestic box office, the makers said on Saturday. Directed by Anil Sharma, the film is a sequel to the 2001 blockbuster "Gadar: Ek Prem Katha". The movie, a Zee Studios production, released in theatres on August 11. In a press note, the makers claimed the film has "soared to a remarkable all-time high for any Hindi film", especially in territories like Punjab.

"With a net collection of 20.50 crores on Day 8 and an overall net of 305.13 crores, Gadar 2's cinematic journey is a testament to its enduring appeal and box office dominance," the note read. Set in 1971, "Gadar 2" follows Tara Singh (Deo)'s journey to Pakistan to rescue his son, Charanjeet Singh, played by Utkarsh Sharma, from the Pakistani Army. The original film was set during the Partition. (PTI)

Saw Big B's films, videos of people from '90s for 'Guns & Gulaabs' character, says Adarsh Gourav

MUMBAI, Aug 19: For playing a teenager from the 1990s in "Guns & Gulaabs", actor Adarsh Gourav says he extensively watched videos on the internet and movies starring megastar Amitabh Bachchan to grasp the essence of that era.

Created and directed by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK, the show centres on the life of four protagonists - a mechanic Paana Tipu (Rajkumar Rao), a killer 4-cut Atmaram (Gulshan Devaiah), a cop (Dulquer Salmaan) and Jugnu (Gourav), and reluctant heir of a ruling gang - and how a drug deal puts them at odds with one another.

"I did see a few films of Mr. (Amitabh) Bachchan, when I got the part to understand the styling and all of that," the 29-year-old actor told PTI in an interview.

But the majority of his references came from videos about real people, Gourav said.

"I just liked watching a lot of random stuff on YouTube, and sometimes things just stick with me."

"I saw a video of a person having ice-cream in a very important way, like the timing of it was very odd. In the show, there's an ice-cream scene, where my character was sucking on an orange ice-cream while he was doing something important," he added.

In the show, currently streaming

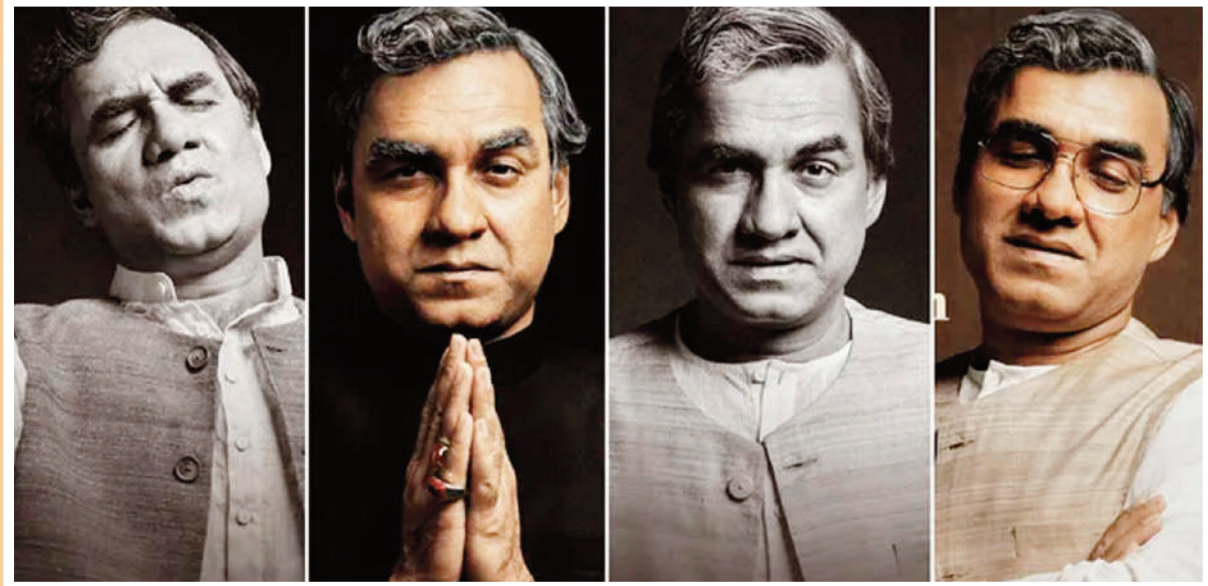


on Netflix, Gourav plays Jugnu, son of Ganchi (played by late actor Satish Kaushik), who runs an illegal opium business in the fictitious town of Gulabganj.

Through his role and Kaushik's character, the actor said that the show's creators, Raj & DK, have portrayed the patriarchal dynamics within Indian families, which Gourav believed were more prevalent during the 1990s. "I guess the 90s were more patriarchal in some ways than right now. He (Kaushik) is the main patriarch of the family and the boss, so it did play in my head, like how open I could be with him."

"When I listen to stories about how my dad and his dad were with each other, versus how I'm with my dad, it is very different." Gourav shot to fame after his breakthrough performance in the 2021 film "The White Tiger" and has appeared in Apple+ climate change series "Extrapolations". The actor said he is willing to work across industries and languages. "It's kind of cool when you work with people from all over because people in America, England or some place else, they have had such different lives and perspectives on things. It becomes really interesting and cool working with them." (PTI)

Difficult to play a public figure on screen, says Pankaj Tripathi on portraying Atal Bihari Vajpayee



MUMBAI, Aug 19: Actor Pankaj Tripathi says it was a challenge for him to portray former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in an upcoming biographical drama movie as he had to accurately capture not only the nuances but also his spirit with the performance.

The biopic, titled "Main Atal Hoon", is written by Utkarsh Naithani and directed by three-time National Award-winner Ravi Jadhav.

Tripathi, who currently features in "OMG 2", said he wanted to

capture the core personality of the character and deliver a performance that would stay with people.

"Doing a biopic is difficult as people have seen this public figure. When people watch the film, they see whether the actor is doing mimicry or not? Or how has the actor captured the nuances, like mannerisms?"

"I believe it is important to get these outer things correct but what is more important is to understand the person's thoughts and his core personality, and get that correct. As

an actor you must tap into it, because that's what stays with people," the 46-year-old actor told PTI.

Produced by Vinod Bhanushali, Sandeep Singh, Sam Khan and Kamlesh Bhanushali, "Main Atal Hoon" will hit theatres in December.

Tripathi has a slew of upcoming projects, with majority of them being sequels -- "Fukrey 3" and "Stree 2", as well as series "Mirzapur 3" and "Criminal Justice 4". (PTI)

KAJOL, KRITI SANON'S 'DO PATTI' STARTS FILMING



MUMBAI, Aug 19: "Do Patti", starring Kajol and Kriti Sanon, has commenced production, the makers announced here on Friday.

Billed as a captivating mystery thriller set in the hills of north India, the movie is directed by Shashanka Chaturvedi, popularly known as BOB.

Sanon, who is turning producer with "Do Patti", took to Instagram to share the news about the film. "Do Patti" begins....! This butterfly is ready to fly-yyy! Need all your love and blessings!! the actor-producer wrote.

The film marks the second collaboration between Kajol and Sanon after Rohit Shetty's 2015 film "Dilwale".

"Do Patti" is the maiden production for writer Kanika Dhillon and Sanon under their newly-launched banners, Kathha Pictures and Blue Butterfly Films, respectively.

It will be a direct-to-OTT release, and will stream exclusively on Netflix. (PTI)

I WOULD LOVE TO DO LONG-FORM STORYTELLING: AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Long-form storytelling is a different grammar altogether, says Bollywood star Ayushmann Khurrana, who is particularly impressed with his brother Aparshakti Khurana's work in Vikramaditya Motwane's series "Jubilee".

Ayushmann, the star of successful Bollywood films like "Vicky Donor", "Dum Laga Ke Haisha", "Andhadhun", "Bareilly Ki Barfi" and "Dream Girl", said he would like to try the series format if a good script comes his way. "Long-form storytelling, I think it's a different grammar altogether. I would love to do long format as long as it gives me something which is different from my core and makes me explore a different side of mine as an actor," the 38-year-old actor told PTI.

OTT platforms have brought in a "renaissance in Indian content creation", believes Ayushmann.

"There's more elbow room for experiments. You can go more zany, more crazy



There's more elbow room for experiments. You can go more zany, more crazy with content. I'm excited to do something which is very unique and crazy on OTT - Ayushmann Khurrana

with content. I'm excited to do something which is very unique and crazy on OTT.

"At the same time, I would love to say that my love for the theatrical is immense. I've grown up watching it. So, I aspire to be on the big screen every single time. But once in a while, I would definitely love to do something on OTT," Ayushmann said.

The actor praised his brother Aparshakti for changing his game with the Prime Video show "Jubilee", which came out in April this year. Aparshakti, who had primarily appeared in comedic roles in movies such as "Dangal," "Stree," "Luka Chuppi," and "Pati Patni Aur Woh," received acclaim from critics for his portrayal of Binod Das, who evolves into a

superstar known to the world as Madan Kumar. "I really believe that 'Jubilee' is one of the best OTT shows ever produced in India. And I'm really proud of my brother. He did such a fantastic job because he was known for comedy parts till now, but he just changed his genre and changed his game with 'Jubilee'," Ayushmann said.

"I think Madan Kumar was actually a superstar in that series. And Vikramaditya Motwane is brilliant as a filmmaker, I would love to work with him," he added.

Ayushmann is currently looking forward to the release of his upcoming movie "Dream Girl 2", a sequel to his 2019 hit "Dream Girl". (PTI)

I am living my mother's dream, says Rinku Singh



DUBLIN, Aug 19: Living his "mother's dream", swashbuckling batter Rinku Singh says a burning desire to give his parents a good life while wading through tough times paved the way for his inclusion into the Indian team.

Rinku was picked by the national selectors for India's ongoing T20I series in Ireland, rewarding him for his excellent showing on the domestic circuit, including the IPL. "A lot of blood and sweat has gone behind to earn this call. My passion for the sport helped me wade through a lack of support and financial hardships," Rinku said during an interview with JioCinema before leaving for Ireland. "One thing that kept the desire burning was to give my family a good life, which was possible if I moved up the ladder in the sport. I had that self-belief and that made me stronger and helped me in my journey which has taken a new turn," he added.

Despite a stellar IPL campaign with the Kolkata Knight Riders, Rinku was not included in the

squad for the preceding five-match T20I series against West Indies. He finished as the top run-getter for KKR with 474 runs at an average of 59.25 and 149-plus strike rate.

His dream was realised before the start of the series against Ireland. However, he was not required to bat in the first game as India won via the Duckworth/Lewis method after rain intervened.

What was his family's reaction to the news of his India call-up?

"They were very happy. My mother always told me to work as hard as I can to earn the India call and that has happened now, so I am living their dream."

Speaking about the difficulties his family faced as he grew up, Rinku said he was desperate to get his parents out of poverty.

"I have seen my family face financial struggles and I wanted to help them overcome through cricket. That desire to get them out of the grind kept me going. It kept me motivated to work hard and keep up my efforts."

"My family had a massive role in my journey to date. When they didn't have enough to fund my career, my mother borrowed money from others to keep me going. Where I am today is because of the support I have got from them."

The 25-year-old has also made the cut for the Hangzhou Asian Games scheduled from September 23 to October 8.

Asked how was he preparing mentally for international cricket, the dashing batter said, "The efforts are same to be honest, but the pressure is a little more. The intention is to continue to do things the same way I did during the IPL, keep my calm during batting and focus on the role I have in the team."

When asked about his personal goals, he said, "I have achieved the first goal I set out to achieve, i.e., to get selected for the Indian team."

"From here on, I will do everything within my capabilities, give my 100% to achieve the team's desired results and be in the mix for as long as I can." (PTI)

Valencia beat Las Palmas to start La Liga with consecutive wins

MADRID, Aug 19: Valencia beat Las Palmas 1-0 at home to make it back-to-back wins to start the Spanish league on Friday, while Villarreal won at Mallorca 1-0.

Midfielder José "Pepe" García, who joined from Levante in the offseason, converted a 73rd-minute penalty after Javi Muñoz was penalized for a handball in the area. Valencia struggled to avoid relegation last campaign and lost several players in the summer. Regular starters Samuel Lino, Edinson Cavani, Yunus Musah, Justin Kluivert, Ilaix Moriba, and Nico González all left the club.

Pepe was among the few signings made by the club owned by Singapore businessman Peter Lim, who is repeatedly criticized by Valencia's fans for his lack of investment in the squad.

That left coach Rubén Baraja, a former Valencia midfielder, with the only choice of giving the club's youth a chance. Javi Guerra, 20, and Diego López, 21, impressed again after their strong performances in a win at Sevilla last week.

Las Palmas goalkeeper Álvaro Vallés saved shots by Diego López and Thierry Correia in the first part when the visitors had more possession and the hosts the best chances.

Earlier, Gerard Moreno scored to give Villarreal its first victory.

The striker tapped in a loose ball for the 63rd-minute winner after Mallorca goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic tamely swatted a header by Alexander Sorloth from a cross by Álex Baena. (AP)

Janmoni Mili wins Bronze in 16th World Dragon Boat C'ship

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 19: The four-member girl's team from Aphala, Desangmukh, that took part in the 16th World Dragon Boat Championship held in Thailand recently was accorded a warm welcome by the villagers in Desangmukh on their return on August 18. Janmoni Mili brought laurels for the state by winning bronze in the MIXED SMALL BOAT category of traditional boat racing. Three other members of the team were Bindia Pangning, Tara Pangning, and Simpy Mili. Aphala Gaon Unnayan Samity and sports lovers in Desangmukh brought the girls on bikes to the meeting and were felicitated by the committee headed by Biren Sing Mili, and Tarun Chandra Mili.

Indian compound archers strike Gold twice at World Cup Stage 4

PARIS, Aug 19: Indian archers claimed a double in the compound events, winning both men's and women's team gold medals in the World Cup Stage 4, here on Saturday.

The fourth-seeded Indian men's compound team of Abhishek Verma, Ojas Deotale and Prathamesh Jawkar downed second-seeded American trio of Kris Schaff James Lutz and Sawyer Sullivan 236-232.

Fresh from becoming world champions earlier this month in Berlin, compound women's team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Swami and Parneet Kaur survived a scare before prevailing over Mexico by one point. India now have two gold and two bronze from the last World Cup of the season, while Jyothi remains in the hunt for a second medal in the individual section, slated later in the day.

Indian men's compound team were trailing by one point after the first end as the American had perfect round of 60. But the Indians kept their consistency with yet another 59 to see them level 118-118 as the Americans dropped two points. The stalemate prevailed in the third end also before the Indians stepped up in style, shooting a perfect 60 in the final end to edge out their higher-ranked opponents by four points.

The men's team had eliminated Korea in the semi-final in a match that went down the wire after the regulation ends produced 235-all. The tiebreaker also produced a stalemate with both teams drilling in perfect 30, but the Indians were adjudged winners by hitting closer to the centre.

The Indian women's team, who got the top-billing by topping the qualifiers, had a 118-117 lead at the halfway stage.

But they slipped in the penultimate end, dropping three points as Andreea Becerra, Ana Hernandez Jeon and Dafne Quintero shot a 59 to take a 176-175 lead. The Indians held their nerves and shot a near perfect 59 with five 10s including one X (closer to the centre) that was enough to seal the gold medal with a 234-233 victory.

India earlier claimed a pair of recurve team bronze medals.

The recurve men's team of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Atanu Das and Tushar Prabhakar Shelke were the first to seal their place on the podium as they came from behind to beat Spanish trio Pablo Acha, Yun Sanchez and Andres Temino. The recurve women's team of Bhajan Kaur, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur then repeated the feat with a bronze of its own, as it beat Mexico's Alejandra Valencia, Angela Ruiz and Aida Roman in a shoot-off after the teams were locked at 4-4. (PTI)

Indian men's skeet, air rifle shooters falter at World Championship after gold triumph

BAKU (Azerbaijan), Aug 19: A day after their fellow shooters won a gold medal, India capped a disappointing show in the men's skeet and 10m air rifle categories of the ISSF World Championship here on Saturday.

The skeet team, comprising Angad Veer Singh Bajwa (121), Anant Jeet Singh Naruka (120), and Gurjot Khangura (115), finished in 14th place with an overall score of 356 after five rounds of qualification spread across two days.

This came a day after their fellowmates, Shiva Narwal and Esha Singh, clinched the gold in the 10m air pistol mixed team event. Team USA's Vincent Hancock (125), Christian Elliott (123) and Dustin Taylor (121) claimed the team gold with an incredible 369, which was 13 shots ahead of the Indians.

Greece bagged the silver medal with an aggregate of 366, while shotgun powerhouse Italy was a close third with a total of 365.

In the individual category too, where the scores from the five rounds of 25 shots each are counted towards qualifying for the six-shooter finals, none of the three Indians were placed in the top-25.

Bajwa (121) finished 29th, while Anant Jeet (120) was 44th and Gurjot (115) was 95th.

India's lacklustre performance continued in 10m air rifle as well where all three shooters --

Divyansh Singh Panwar, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Hriday Hazarika -- failed to fire. Together, they managed to aggregate 1878.4 points to finish 10th in the team category. While Divyansh scored 627.5, Aishwary and Hridaya notched up 627.3 and 623.6.

China took the gold medal with a world record score 1893.3, followed by the Czech Republic (1884.3) and Croatia (1883.5).

In the individual category too, Divyansh finished a distant 28th in the qualification round, while Aishwary and Hriday were 33rd and 68th respectively. Only the top-eight shooters qualify for the finals. Victor Lindgren of Sweden won the gold medal with 251.3 in the finals, while China's Yang Haoran, the multiple-time world champion and winner of the 10m air rifle mixed team gold at the Tokyo Olympics, had to settle for silver with a score of 250.6. Czech Republic's Frantisek Smetana took the bronze with a score of 227.5.

India, after three days of action, are yet to clinch a single 2024 Paris Olympic quota place at the event, though they have won a gold and a bronze medal in team events.

An Olympic quota place can only be secured in individual category. China, with six gold, one silver and two bronze medals, are on top, while India are placed third. (PTI)

MASON (Ohio), Aug 19: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek overcame a rough start and a dispute with the chair umpire to defeat Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova 7-6, 6-1 on Friday and advance to the semifinals of the Western & Southern Open, a tournament she has never won.

Vondrousova was up 5-4 and serving for the first set before Swiatek broke, eventually winning a tiebreaker before cruising in the second.

The Czech's left-handed serve made things difficult for the Polish four-time major singles champ. "It wasn't easy getting used to her lefty spin," Swiatek said. "I practice sometimes with lefties at home. At the beginning it might be a little bit tough. You just have to adjust."

Swiatek had a post-match exchange with chair umpire Marija Cicak after she felt rushed by Vondrousova throughout the match. By rule, players have up to 25 seconds to serve following a point.

"I really respect Marija, but she's also very strict with the rules," Swiatek said. "I have to be ready when (Vondrousova) is ready. She was ready always when there was still 20 seconds. The last two games, we played some long rallies. I'm human, I need to breathe."

At one point in the match, Swiatek seemed distracted by spectators walking to their seats.

"Iga, those people walking around are fine," Cicak told her. "We need to play!"

Swiatek will face seventh-seeded American Coco Gauff on Saturday. Gauff beat Jasmine Paolini 6-3, 6-2. Swiatek has won all seven previous meetings.

"We've played plenty of times, so I can know

Big response for Indian Army's women's cricket league in J&K

SRINAGAR, Aug 19: Seeking to boost the morale of budding female cricketers, the Indian Army on Saturday started a women's cricket league here in which 12 teams from across the valley are participating. Colonel Manoj Dobriyal, who is overseeing the league, said the women's league is being conducted under the Army's Sadbhavana Project and it has attracted good response. "The women's cricket league is being conducted at the Sher-e-Kashmir stadium. Twelve teams are participating in the league and three teams are from Srinagar while the rest of the teams are from other districts of Kashmir," Colonel Dobriyal told PTI. Expressing his gratitude to Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) and civil administration for providing the facilities, Colonel Dobriyal said the situation in the valley has become more conducive to sporting activities. "It is the opportune time (for such events). I can only say to all the youngsters that they must come out and engage themselves in all forms of sports," he said. Sakeena Akhter, coach of the University of Kashmir team, said authorities should come forward to organise more such events.

"Events of this nature should happen more. This is the first tournament I am witnessing such a response. The participants are getting jerseys, ground, accommodation etc of international standards."

"It is encouraging to see more women are coming forward to participate in cricket, and other sporting events," said Akhter. (PTI)

Chess official calls for more research as decision to block transgender women from events draws fire

GENEVA, Aug 19: A top global chess official Friday called for more research into whether factors such as hormone levels and physical endurance might have an impact on players' abilities at the male-dominated game. Her comments came after the world chess federation was heavily criticized for its decision to block transgender women from official women's events.

The Switzerland-based federation FIDE said the decision, set to take place Monday, would stay in effect until the federation does an assessment of the issue. Critics, including advocacy groups and some European players and federations, have derided what they call an unnecessary and discriminatory policy that appears to foster "trans panic," with one former British women's champion calling for the world federation to reverse its decision.

Dana Reizniece-Ozola, the deputy chair of the chess federation's management board, insisted the goal of the new regulations was "actually to increase the rights of the transgender persons and allow them being registered under their new gender" in its official directory.

Tournaments for women only were created in the 1970s as a way

to foster their participation in a sport that has long been dominated by men. Even now only 2% of all players — and 10% of rated players — are women, she said.

The new regulations, which could subject transgender women to a waiting period of up to two years as the issue is examined, was aimed at giving FIDE a "grace period" to sort out the matter of transgender players and men's dominance in the sport. "What is still not clear is if the hormonal levels do influence the competitiveness in chess," Reizniece-Ozola said by video from Latvia's capital, Riga. "There is no serious research or scientific analysis that would prove one or the other way. There are speculations, but no more than that." Many sports involving intense physical activity — which chess does not — have been grappling with how to formulate policies toward transgender athletes in recent years. Cathy Renna, communications director for the U.S. National LGBTQ Task Force, said the new rules appeared to be "a case of trans panic with no justification, not grounded in reality and once again marginalizing trans people."

Reizniece-Ozola, a former Latvian finance minister, said FIDE,

like other sports organizations, needs to balance equality — providing rights to every person to compete on an equal basis — with fair competition. "This is the aspect that really needs more and more research, scientifically based research," she said.

Culture, she said, was "probably" the main reason that women have been less active in chess "because chess has not been regarded as a sport that is appropriate for women in so many cultures. So that ... has created this huge gender gap."

The foundation of chess, which she called an "intellectual sport," is equal: "I mean, there is no difference between men and women at the intellectual part. But still, we see that the statistical data show the differences between men and women." The federation has open competitions that allow all players to take part, as well as specialized categories, such as for young players and even computers. Malcolm Pein, director of international chess at the English Chess Federation, said research has been going on for over a half-century into "what makes chess players better," and he believes "the biological differences don't account for very much." (AP)

To prepare for World Cup, USA Basketball brought some help for practices

ABU DHABI, Aug 19: Among the prized possessions that John Jenkins has collected in his career: a handwritten letter from former USA Basketball coach Gregg Popovich for his role on the Tokyo Olympic team, and a gold medal from those games.

His medal is a replica. His effort was very real. And who knows, another shiny souvenir might be coming his way in a few weeks. As part of its preparations for big tournaments in recent years — such as the World Cup, which begins on Friday in the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan — USA Basketball has been taking a few extra players to help in practices and workouts.

Jenkins, Langston Galloway and Eric Mika were the trio that got the call for this trip; they go home on Sunday, one day before the Americans leave for Manila and their World Cup run.

"To have this opportunity given to me again, I've never been more grateful in my life than now," Jenkins said.

These aren't some guys off the street who were brought in to be tackling dummies. Make no mistake: They all could be on NBA rosters right now. Galloway has appeared in 452 NBA games with seven different franchises. Jenkins has appeared in 171 games with five franchises. Mika had six points and seven rebounds in his only NBA game, more than holding his own on a night where LeBron James and Anthony Davis were on the opposing team.

They were among the 52 players, most of them from the G League, that USA Basketball brought in for the 12 qualifying games — six different teams were assembled to play each of the two-game windows that wound up securing the Americans their spot in the World Cup.

"The people working in USA Basketball, we're just placeholders, right?" said Sean Ford, USA Basketball's men's national team director. "But there's a lot of people that contribute to make USA Basketball what it is. And once you've done it, you own a piece of USA Basketball — and we can never have too many investors. So, they feel a part of it."

As they should. Nobody played in more World Cup qualifying games than Galloway, who appeared in 10 of the 12 contests. On the night when the Americans clinched the World Cup spot in February, Galloway led the charge in an 88-77 win over Uruguay with 21 points — including 11 straight in the fourth quarter to help put the win away.

It's the guys like him that gave the U.S. a chance to win gold this summer. "It'd be a huge accomplishment," said

Galloway, a pro who'll play in Italy this season and has own shoe line — ETHICS, it's called, with one of his latest drops a shoe in the red, white and blue colors of the U.S. flag. "To see them win it all, it'd be a huge moment for me, John, Eric. We helped get them here. Now let's finish the job."

Mika was brought over to work with the U.S. team's big guys, like Walker Kessler and Jaren Jackson Jr. It was also not an accident that USA Basketball chose three players to join the 12-man roster on the trip; that gave the team 15 for practice, or three teams of five.

"It says a lot about their character," Kessler said. "They're unbelievable guys. Obviously, incredibly talented. Eric's a great player, great guy, and it says so much that he wanted to come here and be part of the team and make the team better." (AP)



Confident India eye series win, batters seek more time in middle



DUBLIN, Aug 19: Buoyed by Jasprit Bumrah's impressive return, fancied India will hope for better weather and a chance for the team's young batters to show their mettle in the second T20 International against Ireland here on Sunday.

After the Jasprit Bumrah-led bowling attack impressed to restrict Ireland to 139 for seven in the series opener, incessant rain denied the middle-order batters an opportunity to prove their worth.

India were declared winners by two runs via the Duckworth/Lewis method and both the teams will hope that they get to play a full match in the second game. Expected to lead the Indian batting in the coming years, the likes of Shivam Dube, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Rinku Singh will hope they get a chance to spend sufficient time in the middle.

Having got out after getting a good start in the first match, opener Yashasvi Jaiswal will look for a big score and so will Tilak Varma, who was dismissed for a golden duck days after his stupendous performance in the West Indies.

While the newcomers in international cricket dominate the top-order, veteran wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson lends a bit of experience to the Indian batting order in the absence of people like Suryakumar Yadav, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill and Hardik Pandya.

Though injuries have remained a part of his career, all-rounder Washington Sundar has also gained enough experience at the top level, and he will be pressed into service by Bumrah, who is leading the team in the absence of regular T20I skipper Hardik.

As far as the batting is concerned, India were cruising until Craig Young's two wickets in the last over pegged them a bit.

Leading the side on his return after an 11-month injury layoff, Bumrah claimed 2 for 24 in his first match in almost a year, including bowling nine dot balls while forming a formidable partnership with T20I debutant Prasidh Krishna (2/32) -- also on a comeback trail -- to restrict Ireland to a modest total after opting to bowl.

In these conditions, toss can play a vital role and India were lucky in that as-

pect, and the visitors wouldn't mind if the coin lands in their favour on Sunday, too. In the post-match press conference, leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, who also picked up two wickets in an excellent spell, had no qualms in admitting that India didn't mind winning the toss.

As far as Ireland are concerned, they struggled to recover after Bumrah claimed two wickets in his very first over, setting the platform for his side's win. The home team will have to dish out a much-improved performance with the bat if they are to challenge India who are strong enough even in the absence of the seniors.

Like Bumrah did for India, the seasoned Paul Stirling will have to lead the way for Ireland. The Irish will also look up to men like Andrew Balbirnie, Joshua Little, Barry McCarthy, Ben White, Craig Young, Theo van Wermom.

The series is significant for Bumrah, who gets an ideal opportunity to test himself and get into the groove ahead of the Asia Cup and World Cup, tournaments where his presence will be vital from the Indian perspective.

Teams (from):

India: Jasprit Bumrah (captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed, Ravi Bishnoi, Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan.

Ireland: Andrew Balbirnie (captain), Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Ross Adair, Mark Adair, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Fionn Hand, Josh Little, Barry McCarthy, Ben White, Craig Young, Theo van Wermom.

Match Starts: 7:30 pm IST. (PTI)

There are many unfit players in Asiad-bound Indian team, claims Rani Rampal

NEW DELHI, Aug 19: Indian women's hockey legend Rani Rampal has claimed that there are many unfit players in the team picked for the Asian Games, and asserted that she is in no mood to retire.

As per the provisional squad issued by Hockey India, Rani is not part of the Hangzhou-bound team despite making a strong comeback from a hamstring injury after the Tokyo Olympics, where the Indian women recorded their best-ever performance by finishing fourth under her leadership.

On return, Rani emerged as the top-scorer in the last National Games in Gujarat, scoring 18 goals in Haryana's triumphant campaign.

Despite the snub, Rani doesn't have any regrets and said the sport has given her everything in life.

"I am in that stage of life where I don't have to prove anything. I have achieved almost everything in life through hockey but still I felt the National Games was a chance for me to make a comeback.

"I tried and it happened, I played in the National Games, became the top-scorer but still I was not considered. So there was no performance issue," Rani told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"I had performance, fitness, everything, but somewhere, someone was not secured with me, be it players or coaches.



There might be some jealousy. But I believe in doing my work.

"I know I am not there in the Asian Games team, there are plenty of players in the squad who are unfit, and I don't want to take their names but still they are going for the Asian Games. Fine, it's coach's choice, but hockey gave me a lot in life," she added.

Recollecting her journey after the Tokyo Olympics high, Rani said it was the toughest time of her career.

"The journey after Olympics was really difficult for me. I think it was the toughest time of my career. I have seen a lot of pain and difficulties. I have also

learned a lot off the field about people, about life.

"I used to just hear that in difficult times there is no one with you but I have personally faced the situation.

"I was just determined to get back fit and break into the national team. I worked a lot on regaining my fitness, sometimes alone. I came back after regaining my fitness, but I didn't get any chance since the last two years," she bemoaned. The 28-year-old centre-forward from Shahbad in Haryana, however, doesn't want to quit playing as she aspires to give back to the game both as a player and mentor. (PTI)

Everyone was waiting to see this Bumrah: Ravi Bishnoi

DUBLIN, Aug 19: Everyone was waiting to see this Jasprit Bumrah, leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi said of the India pacer after he shone on his comeback to international cricket following an 11-month injury layoff.

Leading the Indian T20I team in the absence of regular skipper Hardik Pandya, Bumrah claimed two wickets in his very first over, setting the platform for the side's win against Ireland in the opening match here on Friday.

Bumrah registered impressive figures of 2/24, including 16 dot balls in his four-over spell, as India restricted Ireland to a below-par score of 139 for seven.

"It was his first match after nearly 11 months. First ball he bowled was on the legs but after that the five ball he bowled was so good to see. Everyone was waiting for this Bumrah and it was so good to see him back in his rhythm," Bishnoi said at the post-match press conference.

"The type of bowler he is, the whole world has seen his bowling. His first delivery didn't work out but the five balls after that, was fun to watch. Everyone was waiting to see this Bumrah, and it was fun to watch him bowl," added Bishnoi, who also ended with excellent figures of 2/23.

India won the match by two runs via the Duckworth/Lewis method after rain



intervened. The visitors were 47 for two in 6.5 overs when the heavens opened up.

"We were a bit unfortunate that the match was curtailed by the rain. Overall, we have played good cricket. We bowled really well and got a good start from our openers as well. If not for those wickets, we lost in the last over, we might have been in a very good condition," Bishnoi said.

"We won the toss and we got that advantage. If they would have won (toss) the advantage would have been with them. Toss always plays a crucial factor

in such conditions. Today we were lucky," he added.

On Ireland being defensive against him, the leg-spinner said: "It must be their game play. But I was bowling aggressively and was trying to pick more wickets."

Bishnoi, who plays for Lucknow Supergiants in the Indian Premier League, was also part of the white-ball squad in the recently-concluded tour of the West Indies.



"There is lot to learn. I was in West Indies for the five-match series, I played in one match and didn't play the rest four. But I was ready that whenever I will get a chance I will give my 100 per cent. I was ready for that opportunity."

Bishnoi also said that the role of leg-spinner in T20 cricket is not just limited to going for wickets.

"It depends upon the team situation. you can't go with your own theory, a lot depends upon what captain is saying, what the game situation is."

Chasing a tricky target under overcast conditions, India were off to a fluent start with Yashasvi Jaiswal (24; 23b) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (19 not out) putting together 46 runs in 6.2 overs.

But Craig Young produced a double blow, taking the left-handed duo of Jaiswal and Tilak Varma who was out for a golden duck. (PTI)









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Prevention of Mosquito Bites



- ➔ Remove stagnant water from your surroundings to prevent mosquito breeding.
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(NHM/D/2023-24/1152)





Mother and Child Protection (MCP) Card

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- It contains important information regarding care during prenatal and postnatal period, including danger signs during pregnancy and care.
- It contains essential information on newborn care, immunization, diarrhoea, pneumonia and how to prevent diseases for children.
- Information on various Flagship Government Schemes and its benefits.

Importance of MCP Card

- It acts as a ready reference for all Pregnant women to know the required health check-ups and treatments that they should avail.
- All medical records of the Pregnant Women are updated by the ANM on the MCP card.
- During pregnancy it helps the beneficiaries to avail the various health benefits provided by the Government.

- Details of the health records of the newborns are updated in the card so that the parents/guardians can take proper care of the child.
- It helps in availing the birth certificate of the newborn child.
- Anganwadi workers record the age wise height and weight of the children so that timely health interventions can be done whenever needed.





The MCP card should be kept safely. Only one card is issued for each Pregnant Women and her child.



To know more contact ASHA/ANM

(NHM/D/2023-24/1147)