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- Rights group says Saudi Arabian border guards killed hundreds of migrants
- Kim watches cruise missile launches as US, S Korean troops begin annual drills
- Era of 'corruption' before 2014, now every penny going to poor people: PM
- KCR announces first list of BRS candidates for upcoming Telangana assembly polls

Regional panels to meet on Aug 26 ahead of Langpih visit

Assam-Meghalaya border issue



SHILLONG, Aug 21: The regional committees of Assam and Meghalaya will meet in Shillong on August 26 ahead of their joint visit to disputed Langpih along the inter-state border in West Khasi Hills district. This was stated by Meghalaya social welfare Minister Paul Lyngdoh on Monday.

"Both the committees will be meeting here this August 26 as we prepare to go to ground zero and meet

the people in the area," Lyngdoh said.

In the last meeting held in Guwahati, the regional committees of the two states had jointly agreed to visit Langpih in Meghalaya's West Khasi Hills district to meet stakeholders, local representatives and residents before finalizing the interstate border. Lyngdoh heads one of the three regional committees from Meghalaya.

Both Meghalaya and Assam had laid their claim to the Langpih area and four people were shot dead there in 2010 at the height of the interstate dispute in the area.

According to Lyngdoh, the regional committee from Assam had also expressed its "receptiveness" to the proposal that villages, which are identified as problem free and where residents are inclined to be in Meghalaya will be allowed to remain with it.

The two neighbouring states had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Delhi in March last year to formally resolve inter-state disputes in six areas of differences between the two states. The six areas of differences include Langpih in West Khasi Hills district and Mukroh in Block II of West Jaintia Hills, where six died in violence last year. (PTI)

Justice (Retd) Rumi Phukan-led panel gives go ahead to formulate law to ban marital practice

Government seeks public view on law against polygamy

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: The state government has sought public opinion on a proposed law to end polygamy in the state.

The notice published by the principal secretary of the Home and Political Department requested the people to send their opinion by August 30 through email -- lawon-polygamy@assam.gov.in or by post addressing the same to the principal secretary to the government of Assam, Home and Political Department, Assam Secretariat, Dispur- 781006.

Sharing the government notice on 'X', formerly Twitter, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday appealed to the people to send their suggestions on the proposed law against polygamy



The notice mentioned that the Assam government had formed an expert committee to study the legislative competence of the Assembly to enact a law banning

polygamy, and the report stated that the state legislature is competent to enact a law to ban the marital practice.

Sharing the executive summary

of the report, the public notice stated that marriage falls under the Concurrent List, enabling both the Centre and states to pass laws on it. "The Doctrine of Repugnancy (Article 254) stipulates that if a state legislation contradicts a central legislation, the state law will be overridden unless it received the prior assent of the President of India," it added.

Quoting the report, the notice mentioned that freedom of conscience and the right to practice religion under Article 25 and 26 of the Constitution are "not absolute and are subject to public order, morality, health and legislative provisions for social welfare and reform". The courts have clarified that religious practices must be essential and (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

ASDC urges EC, Assam govt to reconsider delimitation of assembly constituencies

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 21: The Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) has made a fervent appeal to the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Assam government to re-evaluate the delimitation of legislative assembly constituencies in the autonomous districts of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

This move by the ASDC aims to ensure fair representation and equitable distribution of constituencies in these regions.

Addressing the media on Monday, former chief executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and party general secretary, Jotson Bey, voiced concerns over the ECI's decision not to accept requests and suggestions from political parties for modifications in the draft proposals for delimitation of legislative assembly constituencies in the autonomous districts.

Bey said, "In the greater interest of the people of the two hill districts, the Election Commission should convene an all-party meeting to discuss the issue. The ECI has not yet accepted ASDC's demand for 8 legislative assembly constituencies."

Bey put forward specific suggestions for the rearrangement of constituencies. He proposed the inclusion of areas like Dolamara and Baguri in the Bokajan (ST) legislative assembly constituency. In the case of No. 111 Rongkhang (ST) LAC, he recommended the addition of the entire area of Socheng Development Block. The new constituency, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Chandrayaan-2 orbiter greets Ch-3 lander module with 'Welcome, buddy!'

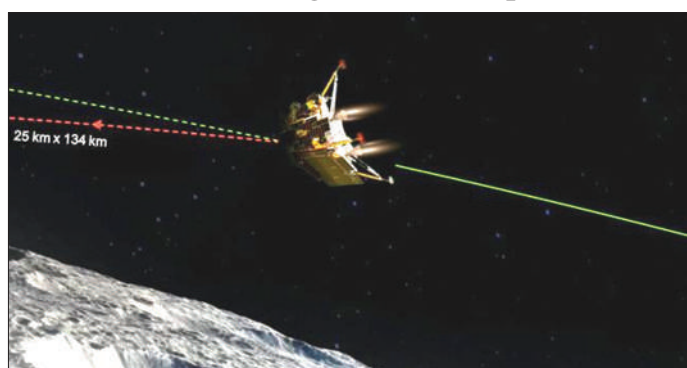
2-way communication established; no contingencies anticipated: ISRO

BENGALURU/NEW DELHI,

Aug 21: Ahead of its planned landing on the moon's untouched south pole on August 23, Chandrayaan-3's lander module has established a two-way communication with Chandrayaan-2's orbiter and the ISRO said on Monday all systems are working perfectly and no contingencies are anticipated.

The two-way contact potentially offers ground controllers more channels for communication with Chandrayaan-3.

"Welcome, buddy!" Ch-2 orbiter formally welcomed Ch-3 LM (Lander Module). Two-way communication between the two is established. MOX has now more routes to reach the LM," the national space agency said in a post on 'X'. The MOX (Mission Operations Complex) is located at ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command



Network (ISTRAC) in Bengaluru.

According to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the LM Vikram with rover Pragyan in its belly is expected to touch down on the surface of the Moon around 6.04 pm on August 23. It also said the live telecast of the historic landing event will begin at 5.20 pm on

that day. The Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft comprising orbiter, lander and rover was launched in 2019. The lander with a rover inside crashed into the moon's surface, failing in its mission to achieve a soft-landing. The ISRO had said that due to the precise launch and orbital manoeuvres, the (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Women safe within BJP: Ajanta Neog

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: Assam finance minister Ajanta Neog on Monday asserted that women BJP members are "completely safe" in the saffron party and are given prominent leadership roles at all levels.

Her assertion came after opposition parties raised questions on the safety of women BJP members following the recent death by suicide of a woman leader.

Neog dared the opposition to win the 2026 assembly polls and then raise women-related issues in the House if they are "genuinely concerned" about the welfare of women.

A BJP Kisan Morcha leader died allegedly by suicide at her Guwahati residence on August 11 after her intimate photos with another

party leader had gone viral. Two persons, including one who was expelled from the primary membership of the party after the suicide, have been arrested by the police so far.

"It is unfortunate that some people are trying to politicize the matter. I express my condolences to the bereaved family and hope that such an incident does not happen again," Neog said.

"As a BJP member, I can say that women members are completely safe in the party. We have seen how the party gives leadership positions to women. For the first time in the country, we have a woman as a Union finance minister. I, myself, hold the same department (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



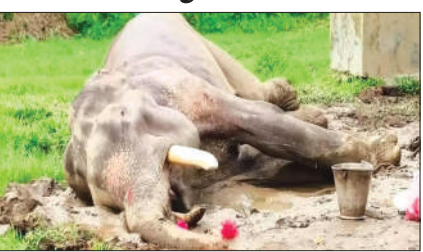
Workshop on law for village officials in Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Aug 21: The Legal Services Authority of Karbi Anglong district organised a comprehensive one-day workshop aimed at enhancing legal awareness and knowledge among village headmen, members of the Village Defence Party, and representatives from Customary Courts. The workshop was held at the Rain Inn Hotel in Khatkhati and covered various aspects of law that are pertinent to their roles and responsibilities. The workshop featured a talk on the "Basics of Procedure of Law", specifically focusing on the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Rani Devi, an experienced legal expert, delivered the informative session, shedding light on the fundamental principles and procedural aspects of these legal frameworks.

Advocate Hafiza Begum, chairman of the Nagarik Committee, was also present at the workshop to provide valuable insights and guidance to the participants. The event attracted the participation of prominent figures such as Sarkari Gaonburas (village headmen) and members of the Village Defence Party, who play crucial roles in maintaining order (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

India's oldest domestic elephant Bijuli Prasad dies at 89



TEZPUR, Aug 21: India's oldest domestic Asiatic elephant died on Monday at the age of 89 in Sonitpur district of Assam, officials said. The majestic jumbo, named Bijuli Prasad, breathed his last at the Behali tea estate of The Williamson Magor Group around 3.30 am due to age-related issues, they said.

Many people who have been associated with Bijuli Prasad such as animal lovers, tea garden workers as well as locals gathered to mourn the death of the pachyderm.

"Bijuli Prasad was a symbol of pride for The Williamson Magor Group. It was first brought to the Bargang tea estate as a calf,

and later shifted here after the Bargang tea estate was sold off by the company," an official of the tea garden said.

The elephant, whose age is estimated to be 89 years, was leading a royal life in the tea estate post-retirement, he said.

Padma Shri awardee and famous elephant surgeon Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma told PTI, "As far as my knowledge is concerned, Bijuli Prasad was the oldest recorded domestic elephant in India." Usually, the wild Asiatic elephants live up to 62-65 years, while the domestic ones survive till around 80 years with proper care, he said.

"After all its teeth fell off around 8-10 years ago, Bijuli Prasad could not eat anything and was about to die. Then I went there and treated him. I had changed all his regular food and started mostly boiled food like rice and soybean with high protein value. This increased his longevity," Sarma said.

An official of the Behali tea estate said that the elephant was offered around 25 kg of food every day. (PTI)

APHLC, AJP join hands to safeguard indigenous communities



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 21: In a significant move to protect the rights and interests of indigenous communities in Assam, the All Party Hills Leaders' Conference (APHLC) and Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) have come together to collaborate and jointly address pertinent issues.

The two regional parties have resolved to work hand-in-hand to safeguard the land, language, culture, and customs of indigenous communities, and to collectively contest the upcoming Parliamentary election in 2024. This decision was announced after a meeting held at Birla.

The alliance signifies a unified effort by APHLC and AJP to strengthen regionalism in Assam and amplify the voices of indigenous communities. Both parties have expressed their commitment to tackle challenges related to education, healthcare, employment, and the deprivation of political rights that indigenous communities face.

Speaking at a press conference following the meeting, JI Kathar, president of APHLC, highlighted the joint commitment of the two parties to safeguard indigenous communities in Assam. He emphasised that this collaboration is open to other (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

National Lok Adalat on Sept 9

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 21: In an effort to promote expeditious dispute resolution and alleviate the burden of pending court cases, the District Legal Services Authority of Karbi Anglong has announced the organisation of a National Lok Adalat. The event is scheduled to take place on September 9, commencing at 10 am, and will be conducted at two prominent locations: the District Judiciary Campus in Diphu and the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate court campus in Bokajan, Karbi Anglong.

The National Lok Adalat will serve as a platform for addressing a diverse range of legal matters, including compoundable pending court cases, civil disputes, matrimonial issues, and pre-litigation concerns pertaining to entities such as banks, APDCL (Assam Power Distribution Company Limited), BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited), and more. This inclusive approach reflects the intent to foster amicable settlements across various spheres of legal contention.

Litigants and parties engaged in these cases, who have received summons or notices, are cordially invited to (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Guwahati's Maligaon flyover to be inaugurated on August 30

2.6 km four-lane flyover set to transform connectivity

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: Guwahati is set to get yet another flyover to ease the woes of commuters. In a significant stride towards enhancing urban connectivity, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday announced the forthcoming inauguration of a 2.6km four-lane flyover soon.

This new flyover links Maligaon Chariali to the Kamakhya Temple Road tri-junction and onward to Pandu.

The unveiling of this remarkable infrastructure feat is scheduled for August 30, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Rakhi Purnima.

Chief minister Sarma revealed that the flyover, crafted over a distance of 2.6 kilometers, is poised to catalyze smoother travel between key areas of the city. This intricate network, bolstered by a four-lane design, will link the Maligaon Chariali vicinity to the Kamakhya Tem-



ple Road tri-junction and further extend towards Pandu. The strategic positioning of this flyover is anticipated to alleviate traffic congestion and expedite transit within these pivotal locations.

The Assam government has invested a total of ₹ 420 crore in realizing this ambitious project, covering various aspects such as

land acquisition and utility relocation. The multi-pronged investment underscores the commitment to fostering enhanced urban mobility, ensuring the seamless movement of vehicles and commuters.

Expressing his enthusiasm through a post on the micro-blogging site X (formerly Twitter), Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Thrilled

to announce the inauguration of the 2.6km four-lane flyover connecting Maligaon Chariali to Kamakhya Temple Road tri-junction and towards Pandu. This incredible infrastructure project, costing ₹ 420 crore (inclusive of LA and utility shifting), will be unveiled on 30th August (on the day of Rakhi Purnima)."

The construction of the Maligaon flyover has been a journey fraught with challenges, including navigating through traffic disruptions and managing unforeseen incidents. Earlier this year, an unfortunate occurrence involving an iron shuttering slab falling on a passing vehicle beneath the under-construction flyover resulted in injuries to two individuals. Chief minister Sarma, keen on upholding progress and ensuring timely completion, personally visited the construction site to assess the ongoing developments. The imminent inauguration of the 2.6km four-lane (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

RNSS announces Nat'l Conference for community empowerment, collaboration



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: The Rachnatmak Nonia Sangyukta Sangh (RNSS) on Monday announced to unveil its forthcoming National Conference, scheduled for September 3, 2023, in Hojai. The event is poised to gather esteemed dignitaries, thought leaders, and influencers from across the nation, all with the common goal

of fostering collaboration and innovation within the Nonia community.

The National Conference is set to witness the presence of the Governor of Meghalaya, Phagu Chauhan, as the chief guest. Joining this distinguished line-up are prominent figures such as Anita Devi, minister of the government of Bihar, Renu Devi, former deputy chief minister of Bihar, Bharti Mehta, ex chairman of Sanskrit Siksha Board, Bihar, along with an array of eminent personalities who have left an indelible mark on society.

The Rachnatmak Nonia Sangyukta Sangh's National Conference is poised to provide a platform for insightful discussions, engaging workshops, and interactive sessions, encompassing a diverse range of topics that are pivotal to the community's growth and development. Attendees can look forward to deep dives into subjects encompassing socio-economic empowerment, education, cultural heritage preservation, and sustainable progress. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Sunny Deol offers to settle dues for his Mumbai bungalow: BoB

MUMBAI, Aug 21: Facing prospects of his bungalow in Mumbai being auctioned to recover unpaid loans, Bollywood actor Sunny Deol has offered to settle all outstanding dues, prompting state-owned lender Bank of Baroda to drop auction proceedings for the property. The lender issued a statement on Monday, saying that Deol has offered to settle the dues, hours after it withdrew the public notice to auction the villa owned by the actor and sitting BJP Member of Parliament, citing technical reasons, a move that was questioned by Congress.

"In the meantime, the borrower has approached the bank for settling the dues as per the sale notice published on August 20, wherein the borrower/guarantors were notified that they are entitled to redeem the securities by paying the outstanding dues/costs/charges and expenses at any time before the sale is conducted," the bank said.

Bank of Baroda said the auction notice was withdrawn after the borrower agreed to settle dues as well as due to certain technical reasons. Explaining the technical reasons, the second largest public sector lender said the total dues did not specify the exact quantum of dues to be recovered. Also, the sale notice was based on a symbolic possession of the property as per Rule



8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

The bank said, an application to the chief metropolitan magistrate sent on August 1, 2023 seeking physical possession of the property is pending. "Since the unit is running as conveyed to us by the borrower, sale/action will be initiated as per the provisions of the Sarfaesi Act, once the physical possession is taken."

Accordingly, the sale notice is withdrawn as per the normal industry practice followed in other cases as well, the lender said in a fresh statement.

In a public notice on Sunday, Bank of Baroda had said it would e-auction 'Sunny Villa' in the Juhu area of the city on September 25.

However, in a corrigendum issued on Monday, the bank said the e-auction notice published on August 20 stands withdrawn due to technical reasons. The Gurdaspur MP, whose latest movie Gadar 2 is a box office success having already grossed over Rs 300 crore since the release last week, has been in default on a ₹ 55.99 crore loan from the bank, interest and penalty, since December 2022. As per Sunday's notice, the bank, which has attached the property, had fixed the reserve price for the auction at ₹ 51.43 crore and an earnest money deposit of ₹ 5.14 crore.

Apart from Sunny Villa, the 599.44-square metre property also houses Sunny Sounds, which is

owned by the Deols, and is the corporate guarantor to the loan, while Sunny's actor-politician father Dharmendra is the personal guarantor of the debt, according to the auction notice.

The notice had further said the Deols had the option of clearing the dues of the bank to prevent the auction under the provisions of the Sarfaesi Act 2002. Deol has been representing the Gurdaspur constituency of Punjab since 2019 when he won the election with a landslide margin against Congress' Sunil Jhakar. The seat for long was represented by another actor Vinod Khanna from BJP.

The matter sparked a political row with opposition Congress raising questions about the Bank of Baroda withdrawing the e-auction notice for the Juhu bungalow.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "Yesterday afternoon the nation got to know that Bank of Baroda had put up the Juhu residence of BJP MP Sunny Deol for e-auction since he has not paid up ₹ 56 crore owed to the Bank. This morning, in less than 24 hours, the nation has got to know that the Bank of Baroda has withdrawn the auction notice due to 'technical reasons'."

"Wonder who triggered these 'technical reasons'?" he asked. (PTI)

Sensex rebounds 267 pts on gains in Infosys, ITC

MUMBAI, Aug 21: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher on Monday after two days of decline, supported by buying in index majors Infosys, ITC and Bajaj Finance amid a mixed trend in global markets.

In a range-bound trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 267.43 points or 0.41 per cent to settle at 65,216.09. During the day, it jumped 387.16 points or 0.59 per cent to 65,335.82.

The NSE Nifty gained 83.45 points or 0.43 per cent to end at 19,393.60.

"Markets started the week with an uptick and gained nearly half a per cent. After the initial choppy, Nifty maintained a positive tone for most of the session however profit-taking in the end trimmed some gains," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Bajaj Finance was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 2.70 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Bajaj Finserv, Infosys, Nestle, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan and Axis Bank.

Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti and State Bank of India were among the laggards.

Meanwhile, shares of Jio Financial Services, the demerged financial services unit of Reliance Industries, listed on the bourses on Monday. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.87 per cent, and smallcap index climbed 0.71 per cent.

All indices ended in the green, with utilities jumping 2.56 per cent, power climbing 2.31 per cent, metal (1.19 per cent), capital goods (1.09 per cent), realty (1.03 per cent), tech (1 per cent), commodities (0.95 per cent), industrials (0.92 per cent), IT (0.88 per cent) and healthcare (0.79 per cent).

"Asian stocks stumbled on Monday after China delivered a smaller cut to lending rates than markets had counted on, continuing Beijing's run of disappointingly frugal stimulus steps. European stocks rebounded from a one-month low as higher energy prices buoyed oil producers," Deepak Jasani, Head of



Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

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

European markets were trading with gains. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Friday.

"A rebound in the global market after a significant correction prompted buying in domestic equities, particularly within the IT sector. However, the potential for volatility to linger in the near term remains due to the increasing dollar index and elevated US bond yields, fuelled by concerns about rate hikes."

"Investors are keenly observing the commentary from the Fed chair during its forthcoming summer conference for interest rate insights," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 266.98 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.60 per cent to USD 85.31 a barrel.

"Positive European market cues triggered a relief rally in domestic benchmark indices as investors resorted to short covering after taking a hit last week on the back of sharp FII selling and weak global cues."

"However, the market may continue to stay wobbly due to weak macroeconomic scenarios and volatility in global currency markets due to uptick in US bond yields," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said. (PTI)

Gold climbs ₹ 50; silver remains flat



NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Gold price climbed ₹ 50 to ₹ 59,300 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had ended at ₹ 59,250 per 10 gram in the previous trade.

However, silver remained flat at ₹ 73,500 per kilogram.

Gold was trading slightly higher amid a weaker rupee and risk-averse sentiments, Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, said. In the global markets, gold was down at USD 1,888 per ounce, while silver was flat at USD 22.75 per ounce.

"Gold traded steady after marking its third straight weekly dip as sound US economic data raised bets for interest rates staying higher for longer."

"Investors' focus will be on the Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell's speech on Friday, as central bankers from around the world assemble in Jackson Hole for their annual conference," said Navneet Damani, Senior vice-president, Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services. (PTI)

Tomato prices cooling down with fresh arrival: Govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: The government on Monday said tomato prices have fallen to ₹ 50-70 per kilogramme with arrival of fresh crops in retail markets and it will continue to sell tomatoes at a discounted rate till rates come down to a normal level.

Tomato prices had skyrocketed to as high as ₹ 250 per kg in the retail markets across the country due to unseasonal rains.

"Tomato prices are ruling in the range of ₹ 50-70 per kg in retail markets across the country at present," Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh told PTI.

Prices have started cooling down with increase in arrival of the fresh crop in states like Madhya Pradesh, he added. (PTI)

NAME CORRECTION

I Rayhan Uddin S/O-Jalal Uddin, resident of Vill-Jaintia Basti, P.O-Nilbagan, Nagaon (Assam). That, My actual and correct name is Rayhan Uddin. But wrongly my passport name has been recorded as Mohammed Rayhan Uddin instead of actual and correct name Rayhan Uddin, bearing the passport No-J4089498. That Rayhan Uddin and Mohammed Rahyan Uddin both are same and one person.

Onion export duty is 'timely' move to boost domestic supply, check price rise: Govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: The government on Monday said the decision to impose a 40 per cent export duty on onions was not a "premature" but a timely move to boost domestic supply and control retail prices.

The statement comes amid farmers' protest at several places in Nashik district in Maharashtra against the 40 per cent duty imposed on onion exports. Traders are also against the imposition of the duty.

"It is not a premature decision to impose export duty on onion. It is a timely decision taken to increase the domestic availability and check prices," Union Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh told PTI.

Till the situation demands, Singh said the government will intervene with release of buffer onions in both the wholesale and retail markets in select states.

On Saturday, the Centre imposed a 40 per cent duty on the export of onions amid signs of price rise as well as increase in outward shipments.

The decision to impose export duty on onions for the first time ever is also aimed to curbing prices of the kitchen staple ahead of the festive season.

In Delhi, retail prices of onions have touched nearly ₹ 40 per kilogram, as per official data.

Currently, Singh said the government is releasing onions from buffer stocks in Delhi, Telangana,

Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Assam.

In the last two days, 2,500 tonnes of onions were sold at a subsidised rate of ₹ 25 per kg in Delhi-NCR, he added.

The Centre's decision was also prompted by a surge in onion exports.

Between April 1 and August 4 this fiscal, 9.75 lakh tonnes of onions have been exported from the country. The top three importing countries in value terms are Bangladesh, Malaysia and the UAE.

Earlier in the day, traders decided to close onion auctions indefinitely in all the Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) in the Nashik district, including at Lasalgaon, which is the largest wholesale onion market in India. However, APMC sources said onion auctions took place in Vinchur, which is also in the same district.

Apart from the export duty, the central government on Sunday announced it will procure an additional 2 lakh tonnes of onion in order to maintain a total buffer stock of 5 lakh tonnes this year.

For the current fiscal, the target for onion buffer was kept at 3 lakh tonnes, which has already been procured.

Currently, the same buffer stock is being disposed of in the targeted markets in select states to improve the local availability and check price rise. (PTI)

Stock market: Global stocks up as traders await Fed conference for interest rate update

BEIJING, Aug 21: Global stocks were higher Monday as traders looked ahead to the Federal Reserve's summer conference for signs of whether the US central bank thinks inflation is under control or more interest rate hikes are needed to cool inflation.

London, Tokyo, Paris and Wall Street futures advanced. Shanghai declined. Oil prices rose.

Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index declined Friday ahead of this week's closely watched Jackson Hole, Wyoming, conference. Fed officials have used the event in previous years to indicate changes in policy direction.

There "may be rude hawkish surprises" for investors who assume rate hikes are finished, said Tan Boon Heng of Mizuho Bank in a report. Chair Jerome Powell "may allude to structurally higher (and potentially more volatile) inflation being the new norm."

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London rose 0.3 per cent to 7,281.64. The CAC 40 in Paris gained 1 per cent to 7,237.32 and the DAX in Frankfurt advanced 0.6 per cent to 15,672.15.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 future was up 0.3 per cent and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 0.2 per cent higher.

On Friday, the S&P declined 0.1 per cent. The Dow added 0.1 per cent while the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.2 per cent.

In Asia, the Shanghai Compos-



ite Index lost 1.2 per cent to 3,092.97 while the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo advanced 0.4 per cent to 31,565.64. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 1.8 per cent to 17,623.29.

The Kospi in Seoul gained 0.2 per cent to 2,508.80 while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 shed 0.5 per cent to 7,115.50.

India's Sensex gained 0.5 per cent to 65,300.30. New Zealand and Singapore retreated while Bangkok and Jakarta gained.

The S&P 500 soared in the first seven months of 2023 but has given back more than one-quarter of that gain after critics warned the market embraced the notion too early that inflation was under control and rate hikes were finished.

Some investors are shifting money to bonds as higher interest rates make their payout bigger and less risky.

Microsoft slipped 0.1 per cent Friday. Alphabet dropped 1.9 per cent and Tesla sank 1.7 per cent.

Tech and other high-growth

stocks are seen as some of the biggest losers due to higher rates. Several are down more than 10 per cent from this year's highs.

Data indicating US consumer spending and hiring are unexpectedly strong have fueled expectations the Fed might feel pressure to keep its benchmark lending rate higher for longer.

Inflation has declined from its peak above 9 per cent last year but still is above the Fed's 2 per cent target. Consumer prices rose 3.2 per cent in July over a year earlier, up from the previous month's 3 per cent increase.

Economists say the last stage of getting inflation down to the Fed's target may prove the most difficult.

In energy markets, benchmark US crude gained 62 cents to USD 81.28 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, advanced 68 cents to USD 85.48 per barrel in London. (AP)

FINER hosts Ashok Singhal for 'Guest of the Month' event

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: The Federation of Industry & Commerce of North Eastern Region (FINER) orchestrated a triumphant "Guest of the Month" event on August 18, at Hotel Novotel in Guwahati. The event was graced by the distinguished presence of Ashok Singhal, minister of housing & urban affairs and irrigation, government of Assam. The evening commenced with a warm welcome extended by Bajrang Lohia, president of FINER, to all the esteemed guests and members present. Following the welcome address, Rajeev Agarwal, vice president of FINER, delivered an insightful presentation spotlighting the organization's consequential interventions in the region.

In his keynote address, minister Ashok Singhal illuminated the industrial panorama of Assam and the wider North Eastern region. He extolled the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi and attributed the region's consistent development and reduced insurgency to it. The minister underscored the significance of the Bodo Accord, which has facilitated the integration of youth into the mainstream, catalyzing their active participation in the region's advancement.

Ashok Singhal went on to underscore Assam's remarkable growth under the guidance of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. He emphasized that the state has been witnessing unparalleled progress, marked by an average of 20 decisions being taken each week.

Looking for a new car under \$20,000? Good luck. Your choice has dwindled to just one vehicle



said he doesn't know what he'd do if he had to replace it. He would have to buy a used car — if he could find something affordable.

At White Bear Mitsubishi near St. Paul, Minnesota, where Schaeppi bought her vehicle, used cars are the main competition for the Mirage, according to Richard Herod III, the dealership's managing partner. But because so few new small cars were sold in recent years, he said, the used-vehicle selection is low and prices are high.

A new Mirage, which costs about the same as a 4-year-old Chevrolet Cruze or Mazda 3, has a five-year, 60,000-mile bumper-to-bumper warranty. Most used cars that age, Herod said, no longer include such warranties. The Mirage gets roughly 39 miles to the gallon, among the highest of any vehicle in the United States that isn't hybrid or electric.

Still, the horsepower in its three-cylinder engine amounts to a tepid 76.

"It's not going to win any drag races," Herod said. "It's not going to make you more popular at school. It's the last honest affordable car in America."

Despite the low price, U.S. sales of the Mirage have been sluggish. Mit-

subishi sold only 5,316 in the first half of the year — 44% below the same period in 2022.

And it might not be available at all in a couple of years. The trade publication Automotive News reported last week that Mitsubishi will stop selling the Mirage by mid-decade. Mitsubishi, part of the Nissan-Renault alliance, declined to comment. But its website says production of the Mirage in Thailand, where it is built, is ending.

Once the Mirage disappears, Mitsubishi's least expensive vehicle would be the Outlander Sport small SUV. It starts around \$24,600, which includes shipping. Michelle Krebs, an analyst at Cox Automotive, said she thinks sales of the Mirage would be stronger if more customers knew about it.

"There aren't that many Mitsubishi dealers, and they don't have a very loud voice in the advertising world," she said.

In addition, Krebs said, Mitsubishi buyers tend to have lower-than-average credit scores, and many of them have been priced out of the auto market entirely because higher loan rates have sent monthly payments surging.

A buyer who put down a 10% payment at the average Mirage sales price of \$19,205 would owe roughly \$365 each month for 60 months at a 7% loan rate.

The latest data suggests that Mitsubishi's decision to phase out the Mirage might be premature. Overall sales of small cars, after having dropped in seven of the past 10 years, are up 11.7% in the first half of the year. Some of that gain may reflect more interest from consumers concerned about higher gas prices, Krebs said, but

most of it represents fleet sales to rental car companies.

"It's not going to be where it used to be," she said of small-car purchases.

Mitsubishi can afford to sell the Mirage for less than its competitors do for similar vehicles because it's such an old model that money to develop it has long since been spent, said Sam Abuelsamid, an analyst for Guidehouse Insights.

Low-wage labor is another factor: Factory workers in Thailand make only about \$16 a day — far less than unionized automakers earn in the United States and slightly less than in Mexico.

Even as the Mirage appears likely to be phased out, some other cars and SUVs have average sales prices only slightly above \$20,000. They include the Kia Rio, the Nissan Versa, the Hyundai Venue and the Nissan Sentra. According to Cox, their prices range from \$20,157 for the Rio to \$23,994 for the Sentra.

As the sub-\$20,000 new car disappears, Krebs suggests that buyers who need affordable transportation consider certified pre-owned small cars, which can be reasonably priced and include at least a year's warranty.

Krebs said she expects new-auto prices to drop slightly as factories produce more vehicles, likely forcing automakers to offer discounts. Price declines among electric vehicles, led by Tesla, have helped lower overall auto prices, too.

But don't expect the return of the \$20,000 new car.

"I can't imagine that unless a Chinese automaker came in and sold cheap," Krebs said. "Politically, that doesn't seem likely." (AP)

Governor Kataria visits Kokrajhar, advocates nationwide marketing strategies for BTR products

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria embarked on a two-day visit to Kokrajhar district on Monday, where he undertook a comprehensive review of various development schemes at the Bodoland Territorial Council Secretariat. During his visit, the Governor highlighted the importance of equitable development and innovative marketing strategies to uplift the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

Governor Kataria meticulously assessed the progress of Central and State Government Flagship Schemes, as well as initiatives carried out by the Government of BTR for the betterment of the local populace. He stressed the significance of efficient implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and urged officials to exercise vigilant monitoring to ensure timely progress of the schemes.

Notably, the Governor emphasized the necessity of balanced de-



velopment across all four districts of BTR. He underlined the untapped potential in sectors such as Handlooms, Sericulture, Tourism, and Fisheries, and suggested the maximization of these opportunities. To achieve this, Governor Kataria proposed nationwide marketing strategies to amplify the reach of unique products native to the Bodoland Region.

The Green Bodoland Mission, a recent initiative by the BTR Government, also drew the Governor's attention. He highlighted the importance of planting medicinal and economically significant plants

and trees throughout BTR. Acknowledging the area's natural abundance of flora and fauna, he recommended the exploration of Nature and Eco Tourism-based infrastructure.

In line with his commitment to holistic development, Governor Kataria advised the BTR functionaries to conduct consultations at the block level, engaging stakeholders to identify ground-level challenges for the swift execution of the Prime Minister Awas Yojana Housing Scheme. He also emphasized the enforcement of the MN-REGA scheme by the Panchayat

and Rural Development Department to maximize public benefit.

Governor Kataria's engagement extended to the Education Sector, where he applauded the BTR administration for their efforts to improve the system. He proposed the establishment of Model Schools in Tea Gardens across the four districts of BTR to enhance educational access.

Concluding his visit, the Governor extended his gratitude to the elected representatives of BTR and the officials for their dedicated service and commitment to public welfare. His visit encompassed interactions with beneficiaries of Government Schemes, demonstrating his commitment to understanding the ground-level impact of these initiatives.

The Governor's visit to Kokrajhar and his insightful recommendations underscore his dedication to the holistic development of the region, ensuring that the potential of BTR is fully realized while improving the quality of life for its residents.

ABLTMA denies FAITTA's allegation of tea colouring

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Aug 21: The All Assam Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturers' Association (ABLTMA) held a press conference to address the accusations made by the Federation of All India Tea Traders' Association (FAITTA) regarding the alleged practice of adding artificial colour to Assam tea.

Chad Gohain, president of ABLTMA, categorically stated, "We are a manufacturing unit. We don't engage in such practices. Colouring tea is not done in our manufacturing unit. We source green tea leaves from small tea growers, and after processing, we send them for packaging." He stated that any suggestion of colouring tea within their processes was an attempt to tarnish the reputation of Assam tea.

Gohain clarified, "While colour alteration might happen during the packaging phase, we are not aware of it. If traders choose to alter the colour, it's not part of our process." He distanced ABLTMA from any potential colour manipulation.

In a recent meeting organised by

FAITTA on August 18, 2023, concerns were raised about the unethical practice of adding artificial colour to tea, prompting a call for the prosecution of traders involved.

Gohain emphasised, "ABLTMA strongly asserts that no reputable tea manufacturers associated with our organisation indulge in such practices. Our industry thrives on maintaining authenticity and quality. We remain committed to upholding these standards to ensure consumers receive tea products that adhere to regulatory norms."

Gohain further urged, "We earnestly request competent authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into these allegations. Appropriate action should be taken against any individuals or entities found guilty of tampering with tea products. Such actions not only erode consumer trust but also harm the integrity of the tea industry as a whole."

Gautam Beria, secretary of ABLTMA, clarified, "Within a factory, there is no feasible way to

test green tea leaves for potential pesticide residues."

He said, "ABLTMA believes that addressing these challenges requires collaboration among industry stakeholders, government bodies, and regulatory authorities. By working collectively, we can explore avenues to rejuvenate the market, bolster demand, and secure the long-term sustainability of the tea industry."

Beria underscored, "We also acknowledge the concerning dissemination of misleading information from prominent buyers regarding Maximum Residue Level (MRL) breaches within the industry."

He added, "We take this opportunity to appeal to small tea growers to exercise responsible pesticide usage. ABLTMA vehemently opposes the use of banned pesticides in tea plantations. We believe that safeguarding the environment and consumer health is a shared responsibility. We urge all stakeholders to prioritise sustainable and safe farming practices to ensure the tea industry's long-term success and integrity."

Urgent need for marriage officer in Dima Hasao

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Aug 21: The public in Dima Hasao district has expressed an urgent need for a marriage officer in the region. The unfilled position of marriage officer in Dima Hasao district has caused inconvenience for a prolonged period. The role of marriage officer in the district has remained vacant since the transfer of the previous officer. This vacancy has resulted in challenges for residents of Dima Hasao district who wish to register their marriages, a process that has become essential for both service members and the general public.

In light of the difficulties faced by the people of Dima Hasao district, advocate Sumit Das has made an appeal through the district commissioner of Dima Hasao district to the secretary of the government of Assam, personal department in Dispur, Guwahati. The appeal requests that necessary actions be taken to promptly assign a marriage officer for the convenience of the general public seeking marriage certificates after formal registration. Advocate Das has further suggested that the responsibility of marriage officer be entrusted to one of the ACS (Assam Civil Service) officers within Dima Hasao district as soon as possible. This step is aimed at restoring the marriage registration process in Dima Hasao district for the benefit of its residents.

Crackdown on illicit drugs in Margherita

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Aug 21: An intensified campaign against illicit drugs and contraband is in progress across various areas of the 124th Margherita constituency in Tinsukia district. In a recent operation on Sunday afternoon, Hemanta Kumar Boro, the Margherita sub divisional police officer, and Pratap Gogoi, officer in charge of Margherita, acted on secret information and apprehended three individuals who were allegedly involved in the sale of cannabis (bhang) in the Balukhad area of Margherita. The operation resulted in the arrest of two men and one woman on charges related to the buying and selling of cannabis. The woman, in particular, was suspected of being involved in the supply of cannabis in various parts of the Margherita sub-division for an extended period. She was apprehended by the Margherita police while attempting to sell cannabis in the Balukhad area.

Assamese cuisine showcased in three-day food festival

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 21: A vibrant three-day food festival that highlighted the flavours of Assamese cuisine concluded at Assam House on Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Marg in New Delhi. The festival, which commenced on Friday, was a collaborative effort by the ministry of Tourism, Assam Tourism, and the Office of the Resident Commissioner at Assam House.

The festival featured a variety of food stalls that showcased the rich tapestry of Assamese delicacies. Alongside these culinary delights, visitors were treated to displays of handloom and handicraft products, adding to the cultural experience. Stall owners expressed their satisfaction with the positive response received from attendees.

The event was organised in conjunction with the celebrations of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' (India@75) and 'EK Bharat Shrestha Bharat Food Festival'.



The ministry of Tourism partnered with various states and union territories to provide a platform for sharing state-specific cuisines and creating awareness about the diverse culinary heritage across India.

This nationwide endeavour took place at state bhawans or houses representing the participating states. A total of 23 states

and union territories, including Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Gujarat, Mizoram, West Bengal, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Meghalaya, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, and Nagaland, enthusiastically participated in this gastronomic celebration.

Historic moment for Tiwa literature

Dr Virginia Dawson's 'Introduction to Tiwa Grammar' released

HT Correspondent

HAMREN, Aug 21: The release of "Introduction to Tiwa Grammar", a book authored by Dr Virginia Dawson, associate professor of Western Washington University, USA, marked a historic moment for Tiwa literature. The book launch took place at the Shikdamakha Indoor Stadium in Amri, West Karbi Anglong, in a function that celebrated the contribution of Dr Dawson to the development of the Tiwa language.

Dr Virginia Dawson, an Australian national residing in the USA, has been deeply involved in learning the Tiwa language over the past seven years during her visits to Umswai, West Karbi Anglong. Her dedication and efforts have led to the creation of "Introduction to Tiwa Grammar," which is poised to make a significant impact on the preservation and growth of the Tiwa language. The event was graced by the presence of D Upping Maslai, the executive member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), who hailed the release of the book as a historic moment in Tiwa literature. He acknowledged the significance of this achievement, highlighting that it's the second instance of a foreign national contributing to Tiwa literature. The first was Fr M Balawan, who became a French national in 1975 and authored a book in Tiwa.

Dr Virginia Dawson expressed her gratitude to those who assisted her in learning the Tiwa language, includ-



ing Bibiana Maslai, Mary Maslai, Olphindro Malang, and others. She expressed her fondness for the Tiwa people and their language, remarking on the sweetness of the Tiwa language.

"I love the Tiwa people and Tiwa language is very sweet. I want to come back again to take up another project in Tiwa language," said Dr. Virginia Dawson.

The event was attended by various dignitaries, including Dipendra Nath Bordoloi, president of Tiwa Mathonlai Tokhra (TMT), and Bidyut Bikash Senapati, secretary of TMT. Also present were Lalsing Madar, former president of TMT, Bhasha Sanman Awardee Horsing Kholar, and other notable personalities. The release of "Introduction to Tiwa Grammar" not only signifies the dedication of Dr. Virginia Dawson to the Tiwa language but also paves the way for the further enrichment and promotion of Tiwa literature and culture.

Observance of World Entrepreneurs Day at Nowgong College

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 21: The Institution Innovation Council (IIC) of the esteemed Nowgong College (Autonomous) collaborated with its Internal Quality Assurance Cell to commemorate World Entrepreneurs Day in the college's seminar hall on Monday. Dr Sarat Borkatoki, the college's principal, extended a warm welcome to the attendees, while Dr Bhuban Chandra Chutiy, coordinator of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell, facilitated the event. Parag Moni Aditya, chief editor of the local

Assamese satellite channel 'News18', graced the occasion as the chief guest.

In his welcome address, Dr Borkatoki encouraged the student community to foster self-reliance through entrepreneurship instead of solely pursuing traditional employment. Parag Moni Aditya, the chief editor of News18, delivered an enlightening lecture on 'Lean Startup and Minimum Viable Business'. He shed light on the potential of establishing self-reliance through entrepreneurship, particularly in

businesses centred around natural resources across the state. Throughout the program, three students from the college - Tridib Nath, Tinku Moni Bora, and Nishi Naba Bora - shared insights into their own startup journeys that they initiated themselves. With a participation of over 300 students, members of the NSS (National Service Scheme), teachers, and staff, the program was a resounding success in promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship among the college community, as stated in a press release.

AJP Minority Cell holds annual conference in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 21: The annual conference of the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) Minority Cell, known as 'Xangkhyalaghu Xakti', was convened on Sunday at the Sivasagar Yuva Dal Auditorium. The event was attended by the AJP president, Lurinjyoti Gogoi, and the convenor of the Minority Cell, Dulu Ahmed, among others.

During his address, Lurinjyoti Gogoi urged party members to work diligently towards a united and developed Assam by opposing the ruling party, BJP, and other divisive forces. He expressed his concerns about the present political scenario, stating that the current leadership of the BJP lacks propriety, respect for seniors, and knowledge of Assamese values and traditions. He also

criticised the lack of respect for women within the state's administration, referring to Dispur as a "den of dalals".

Addressing recent events, including the attack on Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan's car, Gogoi highlighted that even BJP leaders are not safe in the current state of Assam, which raises concerns about the safety of common citizens.

Prior to the conference, a large procession was organised in the town, leading up to the meeting. The event was presided over by Nandeswari Buragohain, the district president (in-charge), and was attended by central committee leaders such as Raju Phukan, Jibaur Ahmed, Pradip Borgohain, Anjan Konwar, Manik Gogoi, Uddipjyoti Gogoi, and district secretaries Mrinal Chutia and Gobin Dutta.

OBITUARY

Dilip Goswami, a well-respected resident of Magurmara village and a prominent social worker hailing from Diplonga under Biswanath sub-division, passed away this afternoon at the age of 80 due to kidney-related ailments. Known for his dedication and quiet service, Goswami was closely associated with various socio-cultural organisations in the greater Diplonga area.

A committed member of Assam Sahitya Sabha, Goswami's contributions were highly regarded within the literary and cultural circles. He maintained an active association with Biswanath Zila Sahitya Sabha and the Chengamari branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha. His demise is a loss deeply felt by the Chengamari branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha, Biswanath Zila Sahitya Sabha, and several other organisations.

He is survived by his wife, a son, and a wide network of relatives and well-wishers.



PUBLIC NOTICE

No. SSA/Esst/Engagement/SMO/151/2023/6848

In response to the advertisement published vide SSA/Esst/Engagement/SMO/11/2007/5421 Date : 06/06/2023, it is for general information of all concerned that the interview for the post of Project Engineer under Samagra Shiksha Axom will be held on 31.08.2023, 01.09.2023 and 02.09.2023 from 9.30 am onwards at the State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19.

The date-wise list of short-listed candidate is uploaded in the official website of Samagra Shiksha Axom at <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>

The short-listed candidates are requested to attend in the interview as per the scheduled date in the State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19 with the original testimonial relating to Educational Qualification, Experience and other documents, etc.



Sd/-Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog /DF/1150/23

ENGAGEMENT EDUCATION EXECUTIVE, VIDYA SAMIKSHA KENDRA (VSK) UNDER SAMAGRA SHIKSHA AXOM

SSA-12020/10/2023-MIS-SSA-SSA/1/254606/2023

The Samagra Shiksha Axom invites online applications from existing teacher working in the Government/Provincialised schools of Assam for filling up Education Executives on attachment basis in Assam Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK). The online applications will be received from 23.08.2023 to 07.09.2023. The selected teachers will be attached at Assam Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) as Education Executive for a period of 3 (three) years only and after completion of 3 (three) years term they shall be reverted back to the parent schools. The attachment of teachers to VSK as Education Executive shall not give rise to any indefeasible right to be permanently absorbed or stay in VSK or continue on attachment as Education Executive.

Sl No	Name of the Post	Eligibility & experience	Age	No. of Posts	Place of engagement	Mode of engagement
1	Education Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers teaching in Govt./Provincialized Elementary/Secondary Schools of Assam for minimum 5 years teaching experience. Teacher working in the schools should be from Assamese, English, Bengali and Bodo medium Science and Mathematics Teachers will not be considered. 	Age should not be more than 40 years as on 01.01.2023	20	Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK), Housefed Complex, Beltola Basistha Road, Dispur, Guwahati-781006	On attachment basis

Important Note

- The attachment of Education Executive will made through the following three stages.
Elimination Stage - Written examination for short listed of teachers.
Class Room Demonstration - The shortlisted teachers have to go through some video recorded classroom transaction and they need to submit their observation in front of Expert Teachers, Educationist, Retired Teachers, Awardees Teacher etc.
Computer skill assessment : The short listed teachers shall have to mandatorily attend a computer skill assessment of basic operation and internet.
- Based on the above, Education Executive will be attached in the VSK.
- All such attached Education Executives will be provided rigorous training on all the activities of a school and on different programmes of Government.
- No additional including financial benefits shall be provided to the Education Executives and they will draw their salary against the parent post of teacher.

N.B.

- The link of the recruitment portal will be available in the Samagra Shiksha website <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>
- Read the User Guidelines carefully which is available on the recruitment portal on how to submit the online application form.
- Before filling the on-line application, applicant has to go through the User Guidelines for online registration and online application.
- Only eligible candidates will have to appear in test/interview, the exact date of which will be communicated separately.
- The office will not be responsible for any non submission of online application due to any error or other problem.



Sd/- Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog /DF/1142/23

Expeditions to Moon: From Neil Armstrong to Lunar Lander Vikram

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

I am abroad in the US right at this moment with my assignment in the Virginia Commonwealth University. I am super excited yet because this glorious moment India is waiting with a throbbing heart to watch Lunar Lander Vikram on the soil of the South Pole of the Moon Chandrayaan-3 successfully completed a second and final deboosting operation bringing its Lander Module nearer to the Moon. The deboosting operation has reduced the orbit of the Lander Module to 25km x 134km. Chandrayaan module will attempt the soft landing towards the lunar surface.

Glory and respect to ISRO Scientists for making India proud, wish successful mission to safely land on the Lunar Surface on the Moon while Russia failed to do that recently. Commander Gene Cernan walked with Lunar Module Pilot Harrison Schmidt during the Apollo 17 mission. "I keep telling Neil Armstrong that 'we painted that white line in the sky all the way to the Moon down to 47,000 feet so he wouldn't get lost,' and 'all he had to do was to make landing sort of easy for him,'" Cernan said during a 2007 interview for NASA's oral histories.

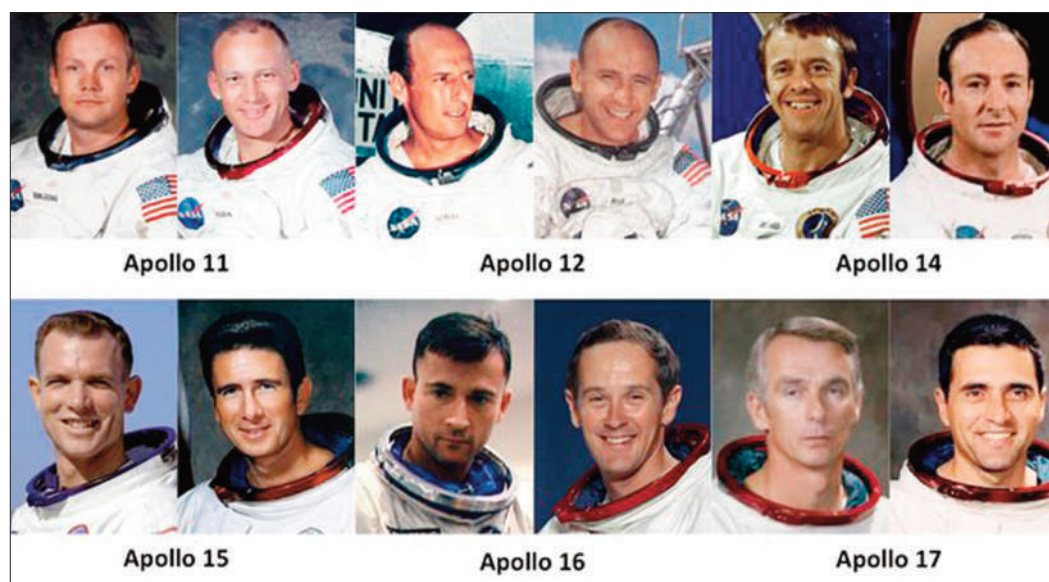
Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin were the first of 12 human beings to walk on the Moon. Four of America's moonwalkers are still alive: Aldrin (Apollo 11), David Scott (Apollo 15), Charles Duke (Apollo 16), and Harrison Schmidt (Apollo 17). Astronaut Eugene Cernan is known to be the last man to walk on the Moon in 1972, and his record is safe for another few years before the first batch of humans returns to the lunar surface to etch their names in the history books. A captain in the US Navy, Cernan launched to the Moon with the Apollo 17 mission on December 7, 1972, which was the sixth and final Apollo Moon

landing mission. Cernan, who was the commander of the mission, landed in the Taurus-Littrow highlands and valley area of the Moon along with Pilot Ronald E. Evans, and Lunar Module Pilot Harrison H. "Jack" Schmitt. Apart from being the last human to leave his footprints on the Moon, Cernan also holds the distinction of being the second American to walk in space.

The Apollo 17 mission, which landed him and returned home from the Moon, was the longest lunar landing flight, clocked at 301 hours, 51 minutes. Twelve men walked on the Moon during six Moon landings of the Apollo program between July 1969 and December 1972. All landed on the surface only once, and five missions consisted of two or more surface EVAs. Four of them are alive as of January 2023.

NASA's first robotic lunar rover is officially coming together and the team building it is over the Moon.

Luna 9 made the first soft touchdown on the lunar surface in 1966, while Luna 16 did the first robotic sample returns in 1970. The first robotic lunar rover, Lunokhod 1, was deployed with Luna 17 in 1970; the successor Lunokhod 2 lasted even longer and drove 24 miles (39 kilometers) on the surface. Lunokhod 1 was the first of two robotic lunar rovers landed on the Moon by the Soviet Union as part of its Lunokhod program. The Luna 17 spacecraft carried Lunokhod 1 to the Moon in 1970. In the early 1970s, both the United States and the Soviet Union sent rovers to the moon, but since then, only two new rovers have successfully explored the lunar surface. The Chinese rover Yutu landed in 2013, followed by Yutu-2 in 2019, which is still on the moon today. Astroble is scheduled to deliver VIPER to the Moon's South Pole aboard its Griffin lander as part of NASA's Com-



mercial Lunar Payload Services. Russia's first lunar mission in decades ended in failure after its Luna-25 spacecraft crashed. Russia was in a race with India to reach the unexplored South Pole, and how the missions could affect the global space race. The crash of a Russian Spacraft left India better poised to become the first country to land on the moon's unexplored South Pole, an achievement that would solidify its position as a major space power amid renewed global interest in lunar exploration.

Chandrayaan-1 was the first Indian lunar probe under the Chandrayaan programme. It was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in October 2008, and operated until August 2009.

The mission included a lunar orbiter and an impactor. India launched the spacecraft using a PSLV-XL rocket on 22 October 2008 at 00:52 UTC from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The mission was a major boost to India's space program, as India researched and developed indigenous technology to explore the Moon.[9] The vehicle was

inserted into lunar orbit on 8 November 2008. On 14 November 2008, the Moon Impact Probe separated from the Chandrayaan orbiter at 14:36 UTC and struck the South Pole in a controlled manner. With this mission, ISRO became the fifth national space agency to reach the lunar surface.

Other nations whose national space agencies to have done so prior were the former Soviet Union in 1959, the United States in 1962, Japan in 1993, and ESA member states in 2006. The probe hit near the crater Shackleton at 15:01 UTC. The location of impact was named Jawahar Point. The estimated cost for the project was Rs. 386 crore (US\$48 million).

It was intended to survey the lunar surface over a two-year period, to produce a complete map of the chemical composition at the surface and three-dimensional topography. The Polar Regions are of special interest as they might contain water ice. Among its many achievements was the discovery of widespread presence of water molecules in lunar soil.

The Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced

the Chandrayaan 1 project on course in his Independence Day speech on 15 August 2003. The mission was a major boost to India's space program.

The mission had the following stated objectives:

1) to design, develop, launch and orbit a spacecraft around the Moon using an Indian-made launch-vehicle

2) to conduct scientific experiments using instruments on the spacecraft which would yield data

3) for the preparation of a three-dimensional atlas (with high spatial and altitude resolution of 5-10 m or 16-33 ft) of both the near and far sides of the Moon

4) for chemical and mineralogical mapping of the entire lunar surface at high spatial resolution, mapping particularly the chemical elements magnesium, aluminum, silicon, calcium, iron, titanium, radon, uranium, and thorium

5) to increase scientific knowledge

6) to test the impact of a sub-satellite (Moon Impact Probe - MIP) on the surface of the Moon as a fore-runner for future soft-landing missions.

In order to reach its objective, the mission defined these goals:

1) High-resolution mineralogical and chemical imaging of the permanently shadowed north- and south-polar regions

2) Searching for surface or sub-surface lunar water-ice, especially at the lunar poles

3) Identification of chemicals in lunar highland rocks

4) Chemical stratigraphy of the lunar crust by remote sensing of the central uplands of large lunar craters, and of the South Pole Aitken Region (SPAR), an expected site of interior material

5) Mapping the height variation of features of the lunar surface

6) Observation of X-ray spectrum greater than 10 keV and stereographic coverage of most of the Moon's surface with 5 m (16 ft) resolution

7) Providing new insights in understanding the Moon's origin and evolution

Chandrayaan-2 is the second lunar exploration mission developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), after Chandrayaan-1. It consists of a lunar orbiter, a lander, and the Pragyan rover, all of which were developed in India. The main scientific objective is to map and study the variations in lunar surface composition, as well as the location and abundance of lunar water.

The spacecraft was launched from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh on 22 July 2019. The craft reached the Moon's orbit on 20 August 2019 and began orbital positioning manoeuvres for the landing of the Vikram lander.

The lander and the rover were scheduled to land on the near side of the Moon, in the south polar region at a latitude of about 70° south on 6 September 2019.

However, the lander crashed when it deviated from its intended trajectory while attempting to land on 6 September 2019.

According to a failure analysis report submitted to ISRO, the crash was caused by a software glitch. ISRO is re-attempting a landing with Chandrayaan-3 which was launched on 14 July 2023 and is expected to land near the lunar South Pole region on 23 August 2023. This attempt was successful. The Chandrayaan-2 is now able to receive signals from Chandrayaan 3 and it can send signals and photos through Chandrayaan 3. It also helps Chandrayaan 3 to select a safer place for landing and that is why ISRO changed the earlier location for landing. This is indeed a great help.

Today we all know that ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 is in the final leg of its moon landing mission. Indian Space Research Organisation said Chandrayaan-3 successfully completed a second and final deboosting operation bringing its Lander Module nearer to the Moon. The deboosting operation has reduced the orbit of the Lander Module to 25km x 134km. Till this writing is prepared we got the information the Chandrayaan is only five miles away from its goal of making India the first nation in the world to keep its flag on the South pole of the moon which seemed more mysterious than ever for all who conducted missions to the moon by man or robot.

India is going to write its name in gold in the history of lunar missions. We are waiting for the moment with a throbbing heart and curiosity. "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind," said Neil Armstrong. It was a Beautiful, beautiful. Magnificent desolation' he added later. This time we wait what message the Chandrayaan 3 Lander Module robot is going to give for mankind on earth. (The author is at present in Virginia Commonwealth University as Affiliate Faculty. He can be reached at bhattacharjr@vcu.edu)

How the world's taste for scotch whisky has grown over 200 years

By: Niall G MacKenzie

Scotch whisky exports grew from £4.51 billion in 2021 to more than £6 billion in 2022, while separate government figures showed a 25% sales increase last year – the biggest for any UK-manufactured product except aircraft parts. Such impressive growth shows how the industry has cultivated its image, appeal and supply networks over 200 years, withstanding pandemics, trade wars and even world wars in the process.

The question of why Scotch whisky has managed to keep its global popularity over a long time period is one I've been researching for several years. Like a good Scotch, the answer is complex and requires time to understand.

Scotch whisky producers have long looked overseas to sell their product. The UK domestic market is not and never has been big enough to meet their aspirations for growth. Some of the earliest records of Scotch being exported date to 1839 with adverts for Ardbeg Scotch from Islay and others appearing in New York publications around this time.

However, it was not until later in the 19th century that the Scotch whisky industry really began to focus on going global. In the mid 1800s, the government relaxed regulations regarding blending. Previously producers were not allowed to mix or blend their individual whiskies, which were often raw and inconsistent. After the rules changed, the industry could produce a consistent and wide variety of flavours to suit different palates, giving whisky the opportunity to appeal more broadly.

Combined with already established global trade routes out of the UK, Scotch whisky blenders such as Dewar's, Buchanan's and Johnnie Walker were able to grow their businesses domestically and overseas.

A global taste for whiskey Today, blended Scotch whisky makes up the majority (59%) of the industry's exports by value. Blended Scotch also achieved the biggest increase in exports in the last year. It grew by 43%, fuelling the overall Scotch export value increase of 25%.

While India and China have



emerged in recent years as key destinations, the early export markets established by Scotch producers such as the US, France, South America, and Asian countries including Singapore and Taiwan, are still the principal destinations for Scotch.

The industry has been subject to close attention from the Westminster government in the form of regulation and taxation for the past 200 years, starting with the Excise Act of 1823. This has encouraged the industry's overseas focus. Tariffs and outright bans such as US prohibition from 1920-1933 did little to dampen thirst for the spirit. In the case of prohibition, the industry used all manner of means to get Scotch into the US including rum runners in the Caribbean and mobster ties through Canada – most recently depicted in the TV show Peaky Blinders.

Since the early 20th century, the UK government has recognised and pushed the export value of Scotch as a benefit to the economy. Winston Churchill a well-known Scotch drinker, recognised its dollar-earning value during the second world war in a 1945 government memo stating:

On no account reduce the barley for whisky. This takes years to mature and is an invaluable export ... Having regard to all our other difficulties about export, it would be most improvident not to preserve this characteristic British element of ascendancy.

But the focus on exports damaged the domestic trade. After US prohibition and the second world war, global Scotch whisky exports grew as a proportion from 50% of total UK production in 1939 to

75% by 1954. The industry has since faced various challenges in international markets, but has still continued to grow.

Rising to the challenge

Scotch exports have been slower in recent years due to the combined effects of free movement (affecting the important duty-free market for Scotch) and trade restrictions arising from the global pandemic, Brexit and the introduction of high tariffs in key markets such as the US and India. But whisky producers have clearly learned lessons from a long history of responding to global challenges.

The industry quickly adapted by focusing on quality and luxury and pushing new products. The emergence of single malts over the past 30 years as a distinct product in export markets is a good example of this. Prior to the early 1990s, single malt was a relatively niche product without significant reach into markets either at home or abroad. Then, a global collapse in demand for blended Scotch led to an overstocking of single malt "fillings" – the ingredients for blended Scotch.

The industry used marketing, branding and distribution strategies to turn this overstock into a luxury product by building the perception of scarcity, and value in age and provenance. Single malts have since grown to comprise around a quarter of the value of Scotch exports.

Ultimately, the Scotch whisky industry's recent success in export growth did not happen overnight. It has taken a long time to develop and mature. Much like a good Scotch whisky. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

This solar cycle, the Sun's activity is more powerful and surprising than predicted

By: Daniel Billett

What do you feel when you see the aurora? Otherwise known as the northern or southern lights, an aurora is light emitted by upper atmospheric particles as they interact with energised ones from the magnetosphere.

It's an awe-inspiring and otherworldly event that those living at high latitudes can experience often. In Cree and Ojibwe teachings, the northern lights are ancestral spirits who remain and communicate from the sky. To scientists, the aurora is an infinitely complex amalgamation of ionospheric dynamics, a manifestation of Earth's intrinsic connection to the sun. To industry, it's a risk factor.

The Starlink destruction event

In February 2022, SpaceX launched 49 Starlink internet satellites into a low-Earth orbit (LEO). This was the 36th Starlink launch that SpaceX had carried out, and one that they anticipated to go off without a hitch, just like the 35 before.

On launch day, a coronal mass ejection – a large burst of plasma expelled from the sun – struck Earth. It caused a geomagnetic storm in the atmosphere between around 100 and 500 kilometres in altitude, the target range for Starlink.

This event injected an immense amount of electromagnetic energy straight into Earth's upper atmosphere. It produced beautiful auroral displays, but the energy also increased the density of the air. A higher air density typically isn't a big deal for LEO satellites, because it's already extremely low at usual operational altitudes (upwards of 400 kilometres).

Starlink, however, was

initially launched into an altitude of 210 kilometres. That's much closer to Earth, with an exponentially higher air density. Thirty-eight out of those 49 initial launch satellites were subsequently lost due to atmospheric drag from the dense atmosphere, pulling them back to Earth.

Surprising solar cycle

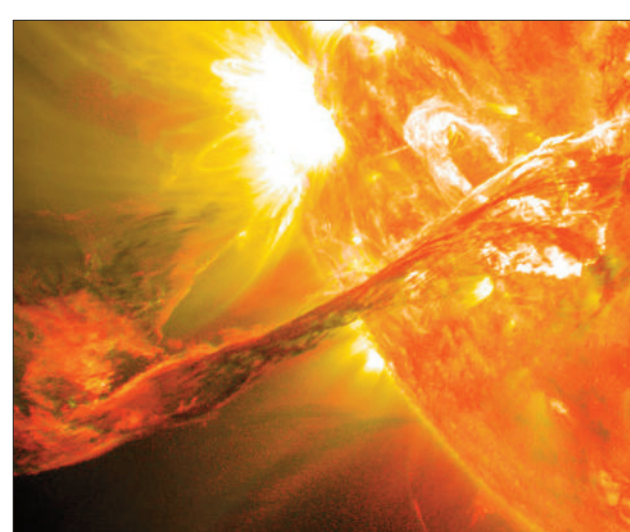
The sun undergoes a cycle – an 11-year one, to be exact – from which its activity increases and decreases periodically. At the peak of a cycle, we see more sunspots on the solar surface, more radiation emitted, and more solar flares. Geomagnetic storms like the one that caused the Starlink destruction event are a relatively common occurrence, especially when the sun reaches the peak of its 11-year cycle of strengthening and weakening activity.

In the previous cycle, which ended in 2019 (the 24th tracked cycle since 1755), there were 927 storms classed as moderate or weak alone – an average of one every five or so days.

We're currently four years into solar cycle 25, but this one has already proven surprising. The maximum activity of the 25th cycle was predicted to occur in 2025, but solar activity has already exceeded that. This means we've been seeing more geomagnetic storms, more auroral displays (and at lower latitudes than usual) and, potentially, more hazardous conditions for LEO satellites.

A plotted graph showing solar cycle sunspots

Solar activity as the number of sunspots visible on the solar surface. The number of sunspots seen is already considerably higher than what is expected from the solar maximum, two years ahead of schedule.



Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Space weather – the unseen force of nature

If geomagnetic storms are so common, why don't they cause more issues? The reality is that they do, but the consequences are much less obvious than satellites burning up in the atmosphere.

When space weather energy enters Earth's upper atmosphere, for example, the ionospheric composition changes in addition to the air getting denser. High-frequency, or "shortwave," radio communication depends on a predictable ionosphere to broadcast long distances.

Geomagnetic storms that affect ionospheric composition can cause radio blackouts, such as a disruption in North America on Aug. 7. Even minor storms can cause the degradation of radio signals used in military and maritime systems, aviation communication or ham radio.

Extreme storms can cause radio blackouts lasting hours, and for an entire side of the globe. Storms that big can also cause more discernible problems, such as the nine-hour electricity outage experienced by

Hydro-Québec in 1989. Space weather warning systems

It's not all doom and disintegrating rockets, however. We can detect when a solar flare leaves the surface of the sun and predict roughly when it will affect the Earth, giving forewarning to certain types of storms and chances to see the aurora.

For many storms however, there is very little or no predictive capability because it depends on how the Earth's magnetic field interacts with the solar wind, which is harder to see.

Nowcasting – using real-time data to understand conditions as they occur – is one of our best tools. With instruments such as ground-based radar and magnetometers on satellites, we can estimate the electromagnetic space weather energy entering the atmosphere almost instantaneously.

As for why SpaceX lost satellites in February 2022 during a minor geomagnetic storm, that was just a matter of timing. The loss of the satellites, however, is a stunning reminder of the power of the universe we live in. (Courtesy: The Wire)

Yemen's war has created what the UN describes as one of the world's worst humanitarian situations

Rights group says Saudi Arabian border guards fired on and killed hundreds of Ethiopian migrants

DUBAI, Aug 21: Border guards in Saudi Arabia have fired machine guns and launched mortars at Ethiopians trying to cross into the kingdom from Yemen, likely killing hundreds of the unarmed migrants in recent years, Human Rights Watch said in a report released on Monday.

The rights group cited eyewitness reports of attacks by troops and images that showed dead bodies and burial sites on migrant routes, saying the death toll could even be "possibly thousands."

The United Nations has already questioned Saudi Arabia about its troops opening fire on the migrants in an escalating pattern of attacks along its southern border with war-torn Yemen.

A Saudi government official, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak publicly, called the Human Rights Watch report "unfounded and not based on reliable sources," without offering evidence to support the assertion.

Yemen's Houthi rebels, who allegedly make tens of thousands of dollars a week smuggling migrants over the border, did not respond to requests for comment.

Some 750,000 Ethiopians live in Saudi Arabia, with as many as 450,000 likely having entered the kingdom without authorisation, according to 2022 statistics from the International Organisation for Migration. The two-year civil war in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region displaced tens of thousands of people.

Saudi Arabia, struggling with youth unemployment, has been sending thousands back to Ethiopia in concert with Addis Ababa.

Human Rights Watch said it spoke to 38 Ethiopian migrants and four relatives of people who attempted to cross the border between March 2022 and June 2023 who said they saw Saudi guards shoot at migrants or launch explosives at groups.

The report said the group also analysed over 350 videos and photographs posted to social media or gathered from other sources filmed between May 12, 2021, and July 18, 2023. It also examined several hundred square kilometres of satellite imagery captured between February 2022 and July 2023.

"These show dead and wounded migrants on the trails, in camps and in medical facilities, how burial sites near the



migrant camps grew in size, the expanding Saudi Arabian border security infrastructure, and the routes currently used by the migrants to attempt border crossings," the report said.

An April 27 satellite photo from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press showed the same tent structures identified by the rights group near al-Raqw, Yemen, on the Saudi border. Two sets of fence lines could be seen just across the border into Saudi Arabia.

The site Human Rights Watch identified as the migrant camp at Al-Thabit also could be seen in satellite images, which corresponded to the group's narrative that the camp largely had been dismantled in early April.

Both areas are in northwestern Yemen, the stronghold of the country's Houthi rebels.

The UN has said that the Houthi-controlled immigration office "collaborates with traffickers to systematically direct migrants" to Saudi Arabia, bringing in USD 50,000 a week.

The Houthis have held Yemen's capital, Sanaa, since September 2014. A Saudi-led coalition has battled the Houthis since March 2015, without dislodging them from the capital.

Fighting has largely halted between the Saudi-led forces and the Houthis as Riyadh seeks a way to end the war. However, throughout the war years, the Houthis claimed multiple incursions across the Saudi border in this mountainous region.

Migrants from Ethiopia have found themselves detained, abused and even killed in Saudi

Arabia and Yemen during the war. But in recent months, there has been growing concern from the UN human rights body about Saudi forces attacking migrants coming in from Yemen.

An October 3, 2022, letter to the kingdom from the UN said its investigators "received concerning allegations of cross-border artillery shelling and small arms fire allegedly by Saudi security forces causing the deaths of up to 430 and injuring 650 migrants."

"If migrants are captured, they are reportedly oftentimes subjected to torture by being lined up and shot through the side of the leg to see how far the bullet will go or asked if they prefer to be shot in the hand or the leg," the letter from the UN reads. "Survivors of such attacks reported having to play dead for a period of time in order to escape."

A letter sent by Saudi Arabia's mission to the UN in Geneva in March said that it "categorically refutes" allegations that the kingdom carries out any "systematic" killings on the border. However, it also said the UN provided "limited information" so it could not "confirm or substantiate the allegations." (AP)

Trump rakes up India tax issue; says would impose reciprocal tax if voted to power

WASHINGTON, Aug 21: Former US president Donald Trump has once again raised the issue of high taxes in India on certain American products, in particular the iconic Harley-Davidson motorcycles, and has threatened to slap reciprocal tax if he is voted to power in the 2024 presidential elections.

During his first term as the US president, Trump described India as a "tariff king" and in May 2019, terminated India's preferential market access -- Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) -- to the United States alleging India has not given the United States "equitable and reasonable access to its markets."

The 77-year-old former president, who is facing a series of court cases and indictments, is leading the Republican presidential primaries and accounts for more than half of the GOP votes according to major national polls.

In an interview with Larry Kudlow of Fox Business News, Trump said came down heavily on India's tax rates, which he alleged were quite high.

"The other thing I want to have is a matching tax where, if India charges us -- India is very big with tariffs. I mean, I saw it with Harley-Davidson. I was saying, how do you do in a place like India? Oh, no good sir. Why? They have 100 per cent and 150 per cent and 200 per cent tariffs," said the former president.

"So, I said, so they can sell their Indian motorbike. They actually make a bike, an Indian motorbike. They can sell that into our country with no tax, no tariff, but when you make a Harley, when you send it over there - because they were doing no business. I said, how come you don't do business with India? The tariff is so high that nobody wants it. But what they want us to do is, they want us to go over and build a plant, and then you have no tariff," Trump said.

"They said, well, that's not good. That's not our deal, OK? That's not our deal. And I came down very hard on them. But India is very big. Brazil is very big on tariffs, I mean, very, very big. We had a couple of people, like the senator from a place called Pennsylvania

that I love. But this guy was just horrendous. I said, let me ask you a question. If India is charging us 200 per cent, and we're charging them nothing for products, can we charge them 100 per cent? No, sir, that's not free trade. Can we charge them 50 per cent? No, sir. Twenty-five, 10, anything? No. I said, what the hell is wrong? There's something wrong. You know what I'm talking about," he said.

"If India is charging us too, so what I want to have is a -- call it retribution. You could call it whatever you want. If they are charging us, we charge them," Trump said in response to a question. (PTI)



Zelenskyy thanks Denmark for pledging to send F-16s for use against Russia's invading forces

COPENHAGEN, Aug 21: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked Danish lawmakers on Monday for helping his country resist Russia's invasion, a day after Denmark and the Netherlands announced they will provide Kyiv with American-made F-16 warplanes. Zelenskyy said that if Russia's invasion is successful, other parts of Europe would be at risk from the Kremlin's military aggression.

"All of Russia's neighbours are under threat if Ukraine does not prevail," he said in a speech in Copenhagen. Zelenskyy portrays Ukraine as defending Western values of freedom and democracy against tyranny and argues that Ukraine needs to be properly provisioned to fend off Russia's much bigger force.

Ukraine has been pressing its Western allies for months to grant it F-16s. Its armed forces are still using aging Soviet-era combat planes, and its counteroffensive against Russian positions is advancing without air support in what analysts say is a major handicap.

Zelenskyy said on Telegram that Ukraine would get 42 jets. Denmark pledged 19 F-16s, which could be delivered around the end of the year when pilot training lasting four to six months is completed. However, getting Ukrainian squadrons battle ready could take much longer.

U.S. Air Force Gen. James Hecker, commander of U.S. air forces in Europe and Africa, said last week that he did not expect the F-16s to be a game-changer for Ukraine. Getting F-16 squadrons ready for battle could take "four or five years," he said. (AP)

Baby killer nurse Lucy Letby sentenced to whole-life term in UK

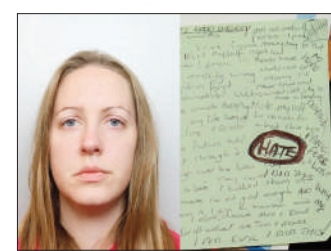
LONDON, Aug 21: Neonatal nurse Lucy Letby, convicted as the most prolific child serial killer in modern British history, was on Monday sentenced to a whole-life term by a UK court for killing seven babies and attempting to murder at least six others while working at a hospital in northern England. Justice James Goss removed any early release provisions from the whole-life sentence order, saying the exceptionally serious nature of her crimes meant that the 33-year-old will spend the rest of her life behind bars.

Letby was last week found guilty of the murder of seven newborn babies and also found guilty of seven counts of attempted murder relating to six other babies at the Countess of Chester Hospital in northern England between June 2015 and June 2016.

In his sentencing remarks, Justice Goss said the nurse had acted in "gross breach of trust" and with "premeditation, calculation and cunning" as he handed down the tough custodial sentence at Manchester Crown Court.

"You acted in a way that was completely contrary to the normal human instincts of nurturing and caring for babies and in gross breach of the trust that all citizens place in those who work in the medical and caring professions," said Justice Goss.

"The babies you harmed were born prematurely and some were at risk of not surviving but in each case you deliberately harmed them, in-



tending to kill them," he said.

On Friday, a jury at the same court had handed down a guilty verdict at the end of a 10-month trial, following which Indian-origin consultant paediatrician Dr Ravi Jayaram spoke out about the alarms he and his colleagues had raised at the Countess of Chester Hospital -- where the nurse committed the crimes. "I do genuinely believe that there are four or five babies who could be going to school now who aren't," Dr Jayaram said after the verdict.

Letby enhanced the anguish of the parents whose babies were murdered or attacked by refusing to attend her sentencing hearing.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak condemned the nurse as "cowardly" for this, adding that his government is looking at changing the law to compel guilty criminals to face their victims after being found guilty.

"I think, like everyone reading about this, it's just shocking and harrowing. Now, I think it's cowardly that people who commit such horrendous crimes do not face their victims and hear firsthand the impact that their crimes

have had on them and their families and loved ones," said Sunak.

"We are looking and have been at changing the law to make sure that that happens, and that's something that we'll bring forward in due course," he said.

The murder trial heard how Letby deliberately injected babies with air, force fed others milk and poisoned two of the infants with insulin. Many of the parents impacted by her crimes addressed the court with their victim impact statements ahead of the sentencing, with tearful mothers speaking of their trauma at discovering how their babies suffered as they breathed their last.

The judge noted that the nurse, now convicted as one of Britain's worst serial killers in history and only the fourth woman to be handed a whole-life term, "relished" being in the intensive care unit where she took an interest in "uncommon" complications and targeted twins and triplets.

"The impact of your crimes has been immense... Loving parents have been robbed of their cherished children. You have caused deep psychological trauma," said Justice Goss. "There was a malevolence bordering on sadism in your actions. During the course of this trial you have coldly denied any responsibility for your wrongdoing. You have no remorse. There are no mitigating factors," he said, explaining the factors that determined her tough sentence without any prospect of parole. (PTI)

NKorea's Kim watches cruise missile launches as US, SKorean troops begin annual drills

SEOUL, Aug 21: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un observed the test-firing of strategic cruise missiles, state media reported on Monday, as the U.S. and South Korean militaries kicked off major annual drills that the North views as an invasion rehearsal.

The North's report on missile tests came three days after the leaders of the U.S., South Korea and Japan held their first stand-alone trilateral summit and agreed to increase their cooperation on their ballistic missile defenses to counter North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats.

During an inspection of a navy flotilla on an unspecified date, Kim boarded a patrol ship to review its weapons and preparations for combat, according to the official Korean Central News Agency. It said Kim later watched the ship's seamen conduct a drill of launching "strategic" cruise missiles, a word implying the weapons were developed to carry nuclear warheads.

A state media photo showed him watching a soaring missile from the patrol ship from another place, not on the vessel. KCNA said the missiles hit designated targets without any errors, demonstrating the ship's readiness and attack capability. Kim said he would bolster efforts to build powerful warships and modernize shipboard and underwater weapons systems for the North's navy.

He called for the country's sailors to build "overwhelming ideological and spiritual strength," saying that is more important than numerical or technical superiority of weapons, according to KCNA.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a

statement North Korea's report on its cruise missile tests contained "an exaggeration" and was "not consistent with the facts." It said South Korea's military will maintain firm readiness based on its capacity to overwhelmingly defeat potential North Korean provocations.

"North Korea's naval cruise missile may appear technologically behind but is still a real threat," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said. "The latest test shows Pyongyang's intention of attacking South Korea from many angles if it believes the Kim regime is at risk."

Launches from North Korea's huge stockpile of ballistic missiles are prohibited by U.N. Security Council resolutions. Its cruise missile tests aren't banned, but they still pose a threat because they fly at a lower altitude to avoid radar detection.

Analysts say North Korea aims to use cruise missiles to strike incoming U.S. warships and aircraft carriers in the event of conflict.

North Korea was widely expected to resume weapons tests in reaction to the U.S.-South Korean military training that began Monday for an 11-day run. The Ulchi Freedom Shield training is a computer-simulated command post exercise.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries said they also plan conduct large-scale field exercises as well. North Korea in past years has slammed major U.S.-South Korean drills as practice for an invasion and has responded to them with missile tests. U.S. and South Korean officials maintain the exercises are defensive in nature and they have no intention of attacking the North. (AP)

Guatemala elects progressive Arévalo as president

GUATEMALA CITY, Aug 21: A progressive from outside Guatemala's power structure was resoundingly elected the country's next president on Sunday in a reprimand to the governing elite over widespread allegations of corruption. Despite preliminary results showing a potential landslide for anti-corruption crusader Bernardo Arévalo, the attention immediately turned to whether he would be allowed to assume power as the Attorney General's Office attempts to suspend his party's legal status.

With 100% of votes counted, preliminary results gave Arévalo 58% of the vote to 37% for former first lady Sandra Torres in her third bid for the presidency. The official results will still have to be certified.

"We know that there is a political persecution underway that is being carried out through the institutions and prosecutor's offices and judges that have been corruptly co-opted," Arévalo said Sunday night. "We want to think that the force of this victory is going to make it clear that there is no place for the attempts to derail the electoral process. The Guatemalan people have spoken forcefully."

Arévalo said outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei congratulated him and told him that they would begin planning the transition the day after the results were certified.

But Guatemalans still remember that an hour before the results from the first round of voting were certified last month, the Attorney General's Office announced it was investigating the signatures gathered by Arévalo's Seed Movement party to register its party's legal status before a higher court intervened. Eduardo Núñez, the Guatemala resident senior director for the National Democratic Institute, expected two trends to continue and intensify in the coming days: the country's polarization and the judicialization of the electoral process. (AP)

Russia, China look to advance agendas at BRICS summit of developing countries in South Africa

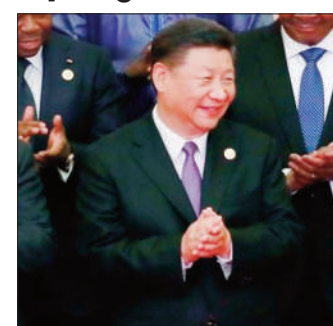
JOHANNESBURG, Aug 21: Russia and China will look to gain more political and economic ground in the developing world at a summit in South Africa this week, when an expected joint dose of anti-West grumbling from them may take on a sharper edge with a formal move to bring Saudi Arabia closer.

Leaders from the BRICS economic bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa will hold three days of meetings in Johannesburg's financial district of Sandton, with Chinese premier Xi Jinping's attendance underlining the diplomatic capital his country has invested in the bloc over the last decade-and-a-bit as an avenue for its ambitions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin will appear on a video link after his travel to South Africa was complicated by an International Criminal Court arrest warrant against him over the war in Ukraine. Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will be at the summit alongside Xi. The main summit on Wednesday -- and sideline meetings Tuesday and Thursday -- are expected to produce general calls for more cooperation among countries in the Global South amid their rising discontent over perceived Western dominance of global institutions.

Africa's wealthiest city to give Xi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who will represent Putin in South Africa, a sizeable audience.

One specific policy point with more direct implications will be discussed and possibly decided on - the proposed expansion of the BRICS bloc, which was formed in 2009 by the emerging



market countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China, and added South Africa the following year.

Saudi Arabia is one of more than 20 countries to have formally applied to join BRICS in another possible expansion, South African officials say. Any move toward the inclusion of the world's second-biggest oil producer in an economic bloc with Russia and China would clearly draw attention from the United States and its allies in an extra-frosty geopolitical climate, and amid a recent move by Beijing to exert some influence in the Persian Gulf.

"If Saudi Arabia were to enter BRICS, it will bring extraordinary importance to this grouping," said Talmiz Ahmad, India's former ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Even an agreement on the principle of expanding BRICS, which already consists of a large chunk of the developing world's biggest economies, is a moral victory for the Russian and Chinese vision for the bloc as a counterbalance to the G-7, analysts say.

Both favor adding more countries to bolster a kind of coalition -- even if it's only symbolic -- amid China's economic friction with the U.S. and Russia's Cold War-like standoff with the West because of the war in Ukraine.

Nations ranging from Ar-

gentina to Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia and United Arab Emirates have all formally applied to join alongside the Saudis, and are also possible new members.

If a number of them are brought in, "then you end up with a bigger economic bloc, and from that a sense of power," said Prof. Alexis Habiaremye of the College of Business and Economics at the University of Johannesburg.

While Brazil, India and South Africa are less keen on expansion and seeing their influence diluted in what's currently an exclusive developing world club, there is momentum for it. Nothing has been decided, though, and the five countries must first agree on the criteria new members need to meet. That's on the agenda in Johannesburg amid Beijing's push.

"BRICS expansion has become the top trending issue at the moment," said Chen Xiaodong, China's ambassador to South Africa. "Expansion is key to enhancing (the) BRICS mechanism's vitality. I believe that this year's summit will witness a new and solid step on this front."

The U.S. has stressed its bilateral ties with South Africa, Brazil and India in an attempt to offset any outsized Russian and Chinese influence emanating from BRICS. In the buildup to the summit, the State Department said that the U.S. was "deeply engaged with many of the leading members of the BRICS association." The European Union also will closely follow happenings in Johannesburg, but with almost sole focus on the war in Ukraine and the bloc's continued effort to draw united condemnation for Russia's invasion from the developing world, which has largely failed so far. (AP)

Nepal's central probe agency interrogates 2 former prime ministers in Lalita Niwas land grab scam

KATHMANDU, Aug 21: Nepal's top probe agency has interrogated former prime ministers Madhav Kumar Nepal and Baburam Bhattarai for the first time for their alleged roles in the high-profile Lalita Niwas land grab scam, the investigative agency said on Monday.

The land grab scam took place during the prime ministerships of Nepal and Bhattarai, as the Cabinet headed by them made policy-level decisions in the matter. Nepal and Bhattarai were interrogated on Sunday night in connection with the ongoing investigation into the scam, the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) spokesperson Navaraj Adhikari said.

It is alleged that a huge area of valuable land belonging to the government was grabbed by some brokers with the help of senior government officials and some politicians by creating fictitious owners.

The CBI officials of the Nepal Police have recorded the statements from Nepal and Bhattarai in connection with the land-grab scam involving valuable land pieces adjoining the Prime Minister's official residence at Baluwatar in Kathmandu, he said.

This is the first time that the CIB has taken statements from the former prime ministers in the case. Madhav Kumar Nepal is currently the chair of the CPN (Unified Socialist) party, while Bhattarai heads the Nepal Samajbadi party. Nepal was prime minister from May 25, 2009 to February 6, 2011,

whereas Bhattarai was prime minister from August 29, 2011 to March 14, 2012.

Lalita Niwas covers some 300 ropanis (around 37 acres) of land and includes the prime minister's residence, Nepal Rastra Bank central office and some other residences of key government officials, according to a report in The Kathmandu Post newspaper.

There are allegations that the Nepal Cabinet had allowed the transfer of government land to individuals. And the Bhattarai Cabinet allowed the registration of the land in the name of a fake trust named Pashupati Tikinchha Guthi.

On February 5, 2020, the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) brought corruption charges against 175 individuals in connection with the land grab.

However, the constitutional anti-graft body had spared a number of key people, including former prime ministers Nepal and Bhattarai, even though it admitted that the decisions to illegally transfer the government land into private hands were taken during their tenures.

The CIAA had said that the former prime ministers were not implicated as the decisions were the Cabinet's policy decisions, over which it has no jurisdiction. Policy decisions refer to decisions made by political parties based on their election manifestos, based on which they contest elections. (PTI)

Take steps for withdrawing cases against Kuki academics, KIM urges PM Modi



IMPHAL, Aug 21: Raising concern over FIRs filed against Kuki academics, the apex body of the community in Manipur wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to take steps to withdraw the cases.

In a memorandum to the prime minister, the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM) alleged that several scholars, writers and leaders of the community are under constant threat and harassment.

"The results of research works, aca-

demetic engagement and exercise of freedom of speech are responded with FIR and cases. Manipur police have booked two Kuki assistant professors of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and a retired Colonel for the book they had edited and authored on the Anglo-Kuki War 1917-19," it said.

"Initiating legal suit against Kuki scholars is a clear reflection of the bleak state of academic freedom in India. The charges against our scholars are politi-

cally motivated, an attempt to erase Kuki history. Besides, other Kuki leaders, social activists, students' organisation and scholars who write and speak for the Kukis on different platforms are being booked in an attempt to gag and stifle any voices from the Kukis," it added.

KIM alleged such cases are part of a ploy to keep the Kukis under subjugation.

"Things which are purely academics should be responded with the same approach and academic freedom which plays a vital role in strengthening democratic society should be protected," it said. The KIM demanded that the cases filed against writers, scholars, academicians and leaders of the community on the basis of complaints by Meiteis with "malicious intents" be withdrawn immediately.

It also urged the prime minister to act against "Valley Based Insurgency Groups (VBIGs)", their frontal organisations and politicians who have nexus with them. Ethnic clashes between the Kuki and Meitei communities broke out in the state on May 3, and have been continuing for over three months, leading to the deaths of over 160 people. (PTI)

Despite cabinet recommendation, Manipur assembly session not held yesterday



IMPHAL, Aug 21: Despite the Manipur cabinet recommending Governor Anusuiya Uikey convene an assembly session from August 21, the House did not sit on Monday as "no notification" has been issued by Raj Bhavan so far, officials said, creating a dilemma of sorts.

This comes after 10 Kuki MLAs, cutting across party affiliations, had expressed their inability to attend the assembly session as violence in the northeastern state continued. "For a normal assembly session, a notification has to be issued 15 days before the beginning of it. No such notification has so far been issued by the Governor's office," an official told PTI.

The state government had, however, asked for the session after a cabinet meeting held earlier this month.

"The state cabinet has recommended to the Hon'ble Governor of Manipur for summoning the 4th session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly on the 21st August, 2023," an official statement said on August 4. The previous assembly session was held in March, and violence broke out in the state in May.

"The last assembly session was adjourned sine die in March. It is a constitu-

tional obligation that the next session must be held before September 2," another official said.

Meanwhile, Congress Legislature Party Leader O Ibobi Singh on Sunday said that "no assembly session has been convened even after the Manipur cabinet decided to hold it", adding that it is "mandatory for the state assembly to hold a session every six months".

However, it is unclear whether Kuki MLAs will agree to join the session.

"In view of the prevailing law and order situation, it will not be possible on my part to attend the upcoming session," LM Khaute, BJP MLA for Churachandpur, one of the worst-hit districts by the ongoing race riots, had earlier told PTI in a telephonic interview.

For good measure, Khaute said that violence and the lack of a resolution to demands made by the Kukis for a separate administration "will not make it possible for all the Kuki-Zomi-Hmar MLAs to attend the session".

Naga MLAs had also said they would not be attending the session as they felt Naga peace talks were being hindered by the state government.

Responding to a media query, Chief Minister N Biren Singh had earlier said that the assembly session would be convened before September 2.

The violence in the state erupted in early May after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Since then more than 160 people have died and several hundreds were injured in ethnic clashes in Manipur.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the hill districts. (PTI)

Dimapur DC reiterates suspension of physical classes till August 26

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 21: Deputy commissioner Dimapur Sachin Jaiswal has reiterated that suspension of physical classes in the district which began from Monday will remain till August 26, considering the health of the students in particular and the public at large. Responding to a representation submitted by the Nagaland Private Schools' Association (ANPSA) Central to allow schools to remain open voluntary, Jaiswal, said, the suspension of physical classes is intended to break one of the cycles

of transmission and to prevent exponential surge of eye flu cases not only among students, but also among teachers and parents. To this, the deputy commissioner said it was decided that partial opening of schools or classes would be unadvisable. He further acknowledged that the concerns of ANPSA Central are genuinely focused towards timely completion of syllabus and examination as per the schedule. Jaiswal, however, maintained that considering the health of the students and the public, physical classes will remain suspended.

Girl cadets require no reservation to march ahead

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Aug 21: With the induction of girl cadets in Sainik Schools as the high point, Sainik School Punglwa in Nagaland organised a series of fortnight-long activities from August 5 to August 19 in commemoration of the 77th Independence Day.

Gracing the Independence Day celebration in the school, Lt Col Leena Bajaj, the officiating principal of the school, highlighted the induction of girl cadets in the sainik schools across the country as a landmark change in bringing gender equality.

She said the girl cadets require no special treatment, no reservation and no separate contingent to march ahead.

"They march shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts in all spheres of activities," Bajaj said.

Bajaj also spoke about the infrastructure and aesthetic changes taking place in the school. She said the school is excelling in the sports and cultural competitions in the entire North East region. However, she said more efforts are needed in the academic sphere.

Bajaj asserted that Sainik School



Punglwa, the pride of Nagaland, would strive hard in the spirit of the school motto "We Learn We Serve".

An ex-student of Sainik School Imphal Lt Col Kiran Meitei gave a motivational lecture on joining the Indian Army on August 12.

The 15-day activities included a programme on the importance of food safety and good food safety habits, motivational lecture on duty towards learning, online training on leveraging digital technology for school and teachers education, lesson on importance of discipline, motivational trip of cadets of Class VI to Zoological

Park and Green Park in Dimapur, Meri Mati Mera Desh and Har Ghar Tiranga campaigns, online training programme on Pradhanacharya Yojna for Growth for implementation of academic reforms in CBSE schools, talk on health and hygiene, visit of Class VII cadets to Kohima War Cemetery and World War II museum at Kisama, Sadbhavana Diwas observance and tree plantation drive among others.

Two cadets of the school qualified level online NDA WIZQUIZE 2023 to the zonal round, conducted by NEXUS Consultancy on August 16 and August 19.

Gorkha community of Kohima celebrates 32nd Nepali Bhasa Manyata Diwas

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 21: Gorkha community of Kohima celebrated the 32nd Nepali Bhasa Manyata Diwas (Nepali Language Recognition Day) under the aegis of Gorkha Public Panchayat Kohima (GPPK) at its Multi-Utility Hall in Chandmari on Sunday. Chairman of Tsütuoouomia Khel of Kohima Village, K. Neibou Sekhose gracing the occasion as the special guest, asked the community to be proud for get-

ting the Nepali language included in the 8th schedule of the Constitution of India. Saying that language is a vital part of human connection, he said although all species have their ways of communicating, humans are the only ones that have mastered cognitive language communication. Also saying that today one of the biggest threats in Nagaland is 'ism', he said it can destroy the relationship between two communities if they are not careful.



KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL-A
KAAC::SECRETARIAT
DIPHU::782460



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No.KAAC/G-Essst./P(A)/RB(Prt.6)/2022/ 16

Dated Diphu the 21st August, 2023

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from intending and eligible candidates who are permanent resident of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong district for filling up the following posts under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council in Standard Form as prescribed in Assam Gazette of Part-IX.

1. 1 (one) post of Block Primary Education Officer (BPEO) , PED, KAAC.

- Scale of Pay:-** Pay Band (PB-3) @ Rs.22,000-87,000/- and Grade Pay of Rs.9,700/- p.m plus other allowances as admissible under rules.
- Age:-** Must not be less than 21 years and not more than 38 years as on 01-01-2023 (Relaxable for SC/ST as per existing rules).
- Minimum Educational qualification:** Graduate from any recognize institute with B.Ed degree.

2. 1 (one) post of Urban & Regional Planner, Personnel (A), KAAC.

- Scale of Pay:-** Pay Band (PB-3) @ Rs.22,000-87,000/- and Grade Pay of Rs.9,700/- p.m plus other allowances as admissible under rules.
- Age:-** Must not be less than 21 years and not more than 38 years as on 01-01-2023 (Relaxable for SC/ST as per existing rules).
- Minimum Educational qualification:** Graduate in Planning (Urban & Regional) from a recognized university/institute along with certificate/diploma in GIS, preferably Post Graduate in the said subject.
- Work experience :** Minimum 1(one) year experience on Planning and GIS (Master Plans, GIS mapping, etc. including Planning and GIS application associated with Govt. Projects/Schemes/Mission related to Urban/Rural Sector, etc.

3. 1 (one) post of Exploration Officer under Art & Culture, KAAC.

- Scale of Pay:-** Pay Band (PB-3) @ Rs.22,000-87,000/- and Grade Pay of Rs.9,700/- p.m plus other allowances as admissible under rules.
- Age:-** Must not be less than 21 years and not more than 38 years as on 01-01-2023 (Relaxable for SC/ST as per existing rules).
- Minimum Educational qualification:** Graduate Degree in Ancient Indian History or Archaeology or Sanskrit or Anthropology with Pre-History as one of the subjects, preferably post Graduate in the said subject.

4. 2 (two) posts of Junior Administrative Assistant (JAA), Personnel (A), KAAC.

- Scale of Pay:-** Pay Band (PB-2) @ Rs.14,000-49000/- and Grade Pay of Rs.8,700/- p.m plus other allowances as admissible under rules.
- Age:-** Must not be less than 21 years and not more than 38 years as on 01-01-2023 (Relaxable for SC/ST as per existing rules).
- Minimum Educational qualification:** Graduate from any recognized institute with 1(one) year Computer Diploma.

5. 2 (two) posts of Junior Engineer (Civil), Works Department, KAAC.

- Scale of Pay:-** Pay Band (PB-2) @ Rs.14,000-49000/- and Grade Pay of Rs.8,700/- p.m plus other allowances as admissible under rules.
- Age:-** Must not be less than 21 years and not more than 38 years as on 01-01-2023 (Relaxable for SC/ST as per existing rules).
- Minimum Educational qualification:** 3 (three) years Diploma in Civil Engineering from any Institute recognized by AICTE.

6. 1 (one) post of Electrician, Environment & Forests Department, KAAC.

- Scale of Pay:-** Pay Band (PB-2) @ Rs.14,000-49000/- and Grade Pay of Rs.5,600/- p.m plus other allowances as admissible under rules.
- Age:-** Must not be less than 21 years and not more than 38 years as on 01-01-2023 (Relaxable for SC/ST as per existing rules).
- Minimum Educational qualification:** 1 (one) year Diploma in Electrical Works from any recognized institute.

7. 2 (two) posts of Cook cum Helper, Karbi Bhawan, New Delhi, KAAC.

- Scale of Pay:-** Pay Band (PB-1) @ Rs.12,000-37,500/- and Grade Pay of Rs.3,700/- p.m plus other allowances as admissible under rules.
- Age:-** Must not be less than 18 years and not more than 38 years as on 01-01-2023 (Relaxable for SC/ST as per existing rules).
- Minimum Educational qualification:** Read upto Class-VIII.

General Instruction

- The candidate must be permanent resident of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council areas comprising of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong district.
- Duly filled up application Form must be addressed to the Secretary, Department of Personnel (A), KAAC, Diphu alongwith Council money receipt of Rs.20.00 only in case of General category and Rs.10.00 only in case of SC/ST candidates.
- The application will be received from 23/08/2023 last date of submission of application form is on 07/09/2023.
- Self attested copies of all certificate in support of the following must be submitted alongwith the application form.
 - Education qualification.
 - Age proof (HSLC Admit Card)
 - Caste certificate.
 - Current Employment exchange registration.
 - 1(one) Passport size photo copy.
 - Incomplete and defective application will be summarily rejected.
 - No application will be accepted/entertained after last date.
 - Canvassing directly or indirectly will lead to disqualification.
 - The application must be legibly filled up in all respects by the candidate with his/her own hand writing and should be submitted in sealed envelope written on it as " Application for the post of"
 - No TA/DA will be provided by the KAAC authority.
 - The Competent authority also reserves the rights to reduce or increase the numbers of posts and also to cancel/postpone the interview at anytime without assigning any reason thereof and without any intimation to the candidate.

Sd/-
Secretary
Department of Personnel (A)
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,
Diphu
Dated 21 /08/2023

Memo No.KAAC/G-Essst./P(A)/RB(Prt.6)/2022/ 16 (A)

Era of 'corruption' before 2014, now every penny going to poor people: PM

'People are moving from lower income group to upper-income group'

BHOPAL, Aug 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the era of "corruption and scams" prevailed before 2014 when the rights of the poor and their money were robbed, but now every penny is directly reaching their bank accounts.

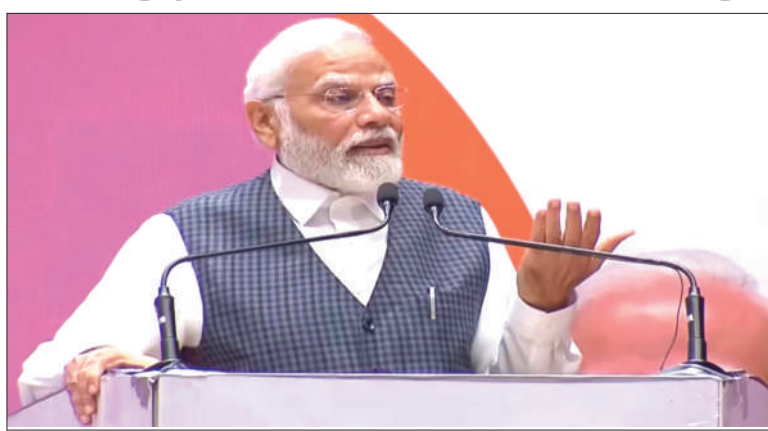
Citing a NITI Aayog report, Modi said 13.50 crore Indians have come out of BPL (below poverty line) category in five years.

The data shows an increasing number of people are paying taxes, which shows their trust that the government is putting their money to good use, he said.

The Prime Minister was virtually addressing the training-cum-orientation programme of newly-appointed teachers at the CM Rise Government Mahatma Gandhi Higher Secondary School in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal.

He said positive news started coming up in the first year of "Amrit Kaal" itself, which shows the increasing prosperity and decreasing poverty.

"The NITI Aayog report said that 13.50 crore Indians have come out of BPL (below poverty line) category in five years. The number of Income Tax



returns shows that the average income of Indians has increased during the past nine years to ₹ 13 lakh from ₹ 4 lakh in 2014," Modi said.

People are moving from lower income group to upper-income group, he added.

Modi said data shows all sectors are gaining strength and generating employment opportunities.

"The faith of citizens has been increasing. They are coming up to deposit their tax with the faith that their every penny will be spent on the coun-

try's development," he said.

The country's economy has now reached the 5th spot in the world from the 10th position in 2014, he said.

"The rights of the poor and their money were being looted even before reaching their accounts before 2014 in the era of corruption and scams. Now, every penny is reaching their accounts directly," the prime minister said.

He said the plugging of "leakage in the system" means more money being spent on the welfare of the poor.

The PM said investment has gener-

ated employment, and after 2014, five lakh new common service centres have been set up in India, providing employment to several people.

"The teachers getting their appointment letters today are joining the important responsibility of teaching in this historic period. They will hold the responsibility of moulding the future generations of India, modernizing them and giving them a new direction," he said.

He said the new teachers will play a key role in the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) as they will make a huge contribution to fulfilling the resolve to make a developed India.

An equal importance has been given to traditional knowledge as well as future technology in the NEP, Modi said, adding a new curriculum has been prepared in the field of primary education while progress has been made regarding (providing) education in the mother tongue.

He said great injustice was caused by not imparting education in the mother tongue to students who did not know English.

Modi said his government empha-

sises books in regional languages in the syllabi which will become the basis of a big change in the education system of the country.

"When decisions are made with positive thinking, right intention, and full integrity, the whole environment gets filled with positivity and the announcement of the PM Vishwakarma Yojana is a reflection of this vision," he said.

The Prime Minister had announced Vishwakarma Yojana during his Independence Day address from Red Fort with an outlay of ₹ 13,000 to ₹ 15,000 crore, to boost livelihood opportunities for people engaged in traditional skills, including carpenters, masons and goldsmiths.

"The scheme has been formulated to adapt the traditional skills of Vishwakarmas to the needs of the 21st century. An amount of about ₹ 13,000 crore will be spent on this scheme which will benefit those associated with 18 different types of skills," Modi said.

During the training-cum-orientation programme, Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan handed over appointment-cum-congratulatory letters to 10 teachers. (PTI)

KCR announces first list of BRS candidates for upcoming Telangana assembly polls

HYDERABAD, Aug 21: BRS President and chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Monday announced the candidate list for 115 of 119 seats for the upcoming assembly polls.

Rao, who is also known as KCR, will contest from Gajwel and Kamareddy constituencies in the state assembly polls expected to be held towards the end of the year.

According to KCR, candidates have been changed in only seven assembly constituencies.

The BRS chief also said that the party would release its manifesto on October 16 in Warangal.

"BRS will win between 95-105 seats out of the total of 119 in the upcoming assembly polls," Rao told reporters at a press conference. He asserted that the BRS's friendship with Hyderabad Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM will continue.

Posting on X (formerly Twitter) after the release of the candidates' list, BRS MLC K Kavitha, who is the daughter of Chandrasekhar Rao, said it reflected the people's faith in the chief minister's leadership and the BRS's governance.

"Our leader KCR Garu announced 115 exceptional candidates for the forthcoming Assembly elections out of 119 seats. It truly is a testament to the people's faith in CM KCR Garu's courageous leadership and the impactful governance of the @BRSparty. We humbly seek the blessings of people of Telangana!!," the tweet said. (PTI)

India has 'open mind' for expansion of BRICS: Foreign Secy Kwatra

NEW DELHI, Aug 21 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Wednesday commenced hearing on a batch of petitions challenging abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution that bestowed special status on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud will conduct day-to-day hearing in the matter beginning Wednesday.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who will lead the arguments on behalf of petitioners challenging the abrogation, said he will continue his submissions till Thursday.

Chief Justice Chandrachud said the court will allow the lead counsel from the petitioner's side to argue on all aspects and rest of the counsel can add on certain aspects, so that there are no overlapping arguments.

The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai and Surya Kant, had earlier said the hearing in the matter will be held on a day-to-day basis except on Mondays and Fridays, which are days for hearing miscellaneous matters in the apex court. Only fresh petitions are taken up on these days for admission hearing and regular matters are not heard.

The top court had earlier said the Centre's affidavit with regard to the conditions prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir after the August 5, 2019 notification repealing Article 370 will have no bearing on the constitutional issue to be adjudicated by the five-judge bench.

On that day the Centre had stripped the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir of its special status and bifurcated it into two union territories.

Several petitions challenging abrogation of the provisions of Article 370 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which split the erstwhile state into two union territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh - were referred to a Constitution bench in 2019. (PTI)

Nine members of Rajya Sabha take oath

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was among nine MPs who took the oath as members of the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

The oath was administered by Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar in the Rajya Sabha chamber in Parliament House.

Jaishankar took the oath in English. This is his second term as a Rajya Sabha MP. He was first elected in 2019.

Besides Jaishankar, the other BJP members who took the oath are Babubhai Jesangbhai Desai (Gujarat), Kesridevsinh Digvijaysinh Jhala (Gujarat), and Nagendra Ray (West Bengal).

Five Trinamool Congress MPs -- Derek O'Brien, Dola Sen, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, Prakash Chik Baraik and Samirul Islam -- also took the oath.

O'Brien, Sen, Islam and Ray took the oath in Bengali.

Of the nine members who took oath on Monday, five are newly elected -- Nagendra Ray, Prakash Chik Baraik, Samirul Islam, Kesridevsinh Digvijaysinh Jhala and Babubhai Jesangbhai Desai.

Four members took the oath in Bengali, three in Hindi and two in English, a statement from the Rajya Sabha secretariat said.

Leader of the House and Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha P C Mody and other senior officials of the secretariat were also present on the occasion. (PTI)

SC to issue guidelines on summoning of govt officials to courts across country

'The appearance of government official in cases as pro forma party should be avoided'

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: The Supreme Court said on Monday it will lay down the broad guidelines to be followed by courts across the country while summoning government officials.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said there must be different sets of procedure to deal with contempt proceedings arising out of non-compliance of final judgements and the interim orders passed in pending cases.

In pending cases, the affidavits of officials may serve the purpose, while in contempt cases, arising out of non-compliance of court orders, the presence of government officials concerned may be necessary, the bench said.

"We will lay down some guidelines for summoning of government officers. There must be bifurcation of matters pending and the ones in which adjudication is complete. For pending (cases), summoning officers is not needed but once adjudication is complete then contempt steps in," it said.

While reserving its order on framing the guidelines for summoning government officials, the bench said it will set aside the two orders of the Allahabad High Court which had led to the arrest of two secretaries of the Uttar Pradesh government's finance department.

The officials were taken into custody on the orders of the Allahabad High Court in a contempt case.

As the proceedings commenced, the bench took note of the draft standard operating procedures (SOPs) submitted by the Centre on the issue and observed that

some of them cannot be acted upon.

"We have gone through the draft SOP. It is more in relation with as to how judicial review powers should be exercised," it said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said even he will not press for some of them (the proposed SOPs).

However, the law officer said if an appeal by the government and its officials are filed against orders summoning them in contempt cases, then the court below should wait for the final outcome on the appeal before proceeding with the case.

The bench then said it will frame a "broad" SOP on the issue. The court was hearing a case involving the summoning of two government officials by the high court for contempt.

Earlier, the central government had submitted to the apex court the draft SOP containing suggestions which could be followed by courts while summoning government officials. Appearance through video conferencing, refraining from making comments on the physical appearance and educational background of government officials and reasonable time frame for compliance of judicial orders are some of the suggestions that have been included in the SOP.

The SOP submitted for the apex court's consideration is intended to be applicable to all proceedings in government-related matters before the Supreme Court, high courts and all other courts that are hearing matters under their respective appellate and/or original jurisdiction (writ petitions, PIL etc.) or proceedings related

to contempt of court.

As per the SOP, in case of proceedings related to government matters where the personal appearance of a government official is involved, in-person appearance of government officials should be called for only in exceptional cases and not as a matter of routine.

"Courts should practice necessary restraint while summoning the government officials during the hearing of cases (writs, PILs etc.) including contempt cases.

"In exceptional circumstances wherein there is no option other than the concerned government official to be present in person in the court, due notice for in-person appearance, giving sufficient time for such appearance, must be served in advance to such official," the draft SOP said.

However, in exceptional cases, where in-person appearance of a government official is still called for by the court, the court should allow as a first option to appear before it through video conference, it said.

"The invitation link of VC for appearance and viewing, as the case may be, can be sent by the Registry to the given mobile no/e-mail id by SMS/email/WhatsApp of the concerned official at least one day before the scheduled hearing. The appearance of government official in cases as pro forma party should be avoided," the draft says.

The draft guidelines state that comments on the "dress/physical appearance/educational and social background" of the government official appearing before the court should be avoided. (PTI)

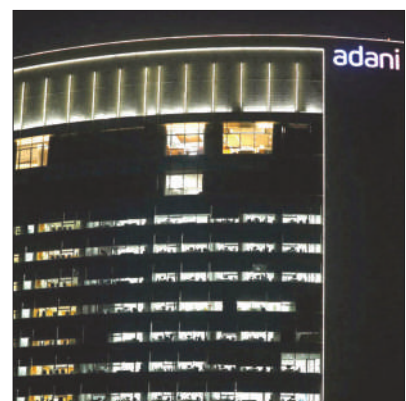
CBI files closure report in case against former NCCF chairman and Adani Enterprises

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: The CBI has closed its case against Adani Enterprises and a former National Cooperative Consumer Federation chairman for alleged irregularities in the award of a contract for supplying imported coal to the Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation, officials said.

The central agency has filed before a special CBI court the closure report in the case registered in 2020 in which it had also booked the then NCCF managing director G P Gupta and senior adviser S C Singhal.

The special court will now take a call on whether to accept the closure, send it back to the CBI for further investigation or proceed with the trial on the basis of the available materials, the officials said.

The CBI had registered the case against Adani Enterprises, former NCCF chairman Virender Singh and others in 2020 after a three-year-long preliminary enquiry on the basis of a complaint from the then deputy secretary of the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Pub-



lic Distribution Premraj Kuar.

Kuar has taken voluntary retirement from service, the CBI told the special court, which has now issued notices to the retired officer and the current incumbent to remain present on the next date of the hearing.

Based on the findings of the enquiry, the CBI had registered a case of cheating and corruption against Adani Enterprises

and the former chairman of the multi-state cooperative NCCF for alleged irregularities in selecting a company for a tender to supply coal to power stations in Andhra Pradesh.

The Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation (APGENCO) had floated a limited tender enquiry for the supply of six lakh metric tonnes (MT) of imported coal via seaports to the Narla Tata Rao Thermal Power Plant in Vijayawada and the Rayalaseema Thermal Power Plant (RTPP) in Kadapa on June 29, 2010, the CBI FIR had said.

The agency had alleged that senior officers of the NCCF had post tender negotiations with Adani Enterprises to give it undue benefits even though the company did not qualify.

It had booked the company and the officials for alleged criminal conspiracy and cheating and under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act for allegedly favouring the Ahmedabad-based company and violating guidelines in the tender process. (PTI)

Delhi govt officer accused of rape with minor suspended

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Delhi government officer Premoday Khakha accused of raping a minor girl has been placed under suspension with immediate effect, according to an order issued by chief secretary Naresh Kumar.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had earlier in the day ordered the Chief Secretary to suspend of the officer.

The order issued by the chief secretary stated that a disciplinary proceeding against Khakha working in the Women and Child Development department on the post of assistant director was contemplated.

"...therefore in exercise of the powers conferred by sub rule (1) of Rule 10 of the Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1965, Premoday Khakha, Assistant Director is hereby placed under suspension with immediate effect," stated the order.

Khakha was arrested by Delhi Police along with his wife on Monday afternoon

after questioning.

According to the order, during the suspension period, the officer is not permitted to leave the WCD department headquarters without obtaining prior permission.

The Chief Minister has also sought a report from Chief Secretary by 5 pm on the matter, officials said.

Kejriwal had earlier in the day, while talking to reporters on the sidelines of an event here, also appealed the Delhi Police to immediately arrest the accused officer.

"I have ordered the chief secretary for suspension of the officer till the inquiry is pending. I have also sought a report from the chief secretary by the evening," he had said. The officer has been booked for allegedly raping his friend's minor daughter several times and impregnating her, police had said on Sunday.

The girl was staying with the accused officer and his family at their house since her father died on October 1, 2020. (PTI)

Glad to be 'Macaulay ki aulad' but also a very proud Indian: Mani Shankar Aiyar

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Often termed elitist and anglicised by his critics, bureaucrat-turned-politician Mani Shankar Aiyar says he is glad to be a "Macaulay ki aulad" but is also a very proud Indian and recounts in his memoir his student days in Cambridge where he gave himself a sobriquet - "a coconut Indian".

The irrepressible Congress leader, whose autobiography "Memoirs of a Maverick -- The First Fifty Years (1941-1991)" hit the stands on Monday, said he was very glad to state that over the next 50-60 years he "broke that coconut".

He also used a cricketing analogy to describe his current state in politics. "I did have a good innings but now I have been sent back to the pavilion. I am all padded up though and ready to bat if I am called in to bat," Aiyar told PTI in an exclusive interview.

The book, published by Juggernaut Books, traces Aiyar's journey from Welham preparatory school to Doon school and then on to St Stephen's College and Cambridge University, and from being a top diplomat handling sensitive assignments to then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's key aide who was dubbed his 'Mani Friday'. Aiyar was part of Rajiv Gandhi's PMO from 1985-1989.

"I have said in the book that as a result of the kind of schooling I had, I found that when I was at Cambridge, I suddenly felt more at home in Cambridge than I was in India. Instead of being thrilled at that, I was shocked and I said that this makes me a 'coconut Indian' -- brown on the outside but white on the inside," the former Union minister in the UPA-1 government said.

"Whatever I absorbed at school, I retain... India's civilisational history is one of absorption, assimilation and finally synthesis. So, I am very glad that I am a 'Macaulay ki aulad' but



at the same time I am not only a 'Macaulay ki aulad', I have lived in India, I am a very proud Indian and I am very sorry to see what is being done now to my India," Aiyar said in an apparent swipe at the Modi government.

Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay is credited with playing a vital role in the introduction of English education in India.

In the book, the 82-year-old dispels several misgivings about himself and his relationship with Rajiv Gandhi. He stressed, however, that a more detailed and in-depth insight into his relationship with the former prime minister would be in subsequent volumes that would be published later.

Aiyar, who quit the Indian Foreign Service and ventured into the uncharted territory of politics in 1989, said he had "no regrets at all" about the decision.

He said he was delighted that Rajiv Gandhi agreed to take him in politics albeit with "great reluctance".

Was going back to the IFS ever an option?

"I realised that having politicised myself as much as I did in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), I would not be regarded with equanimity by the foreign service were I to go back.

"I had also discovered that since I had a maverick mind, I was not in agreement with many key points of the Indian foreign policy...and that if they make the mistake of promoting me on the ladder to secretary or foreign secretary, then they might regret the decision because I may not fall in line," Aiyar responded.

One takes risks in life and sometimes they work out while at other times they don't, he added.

"This is 2023. I have been out of the Rajya Sabha for the last seven years, and I have been without a position in the Congress for the last 10 years. I had not anticipated this. I had thought that I would be without a position for 10 years to start with and maybe after that I would be recognised but in my case it turned out to be the opposite."

Asked how he would like to sum up the first 50 years of his life which the book traces and ends just a tad after he joined politics and lost his mentor-cum-friend Rajiv Gandhi, Aiyar said it had been a fun and exciting time.

"I have not been able to carve a niche into the history books of India but I have enjoyed myself. I have participated in several different ways in India's public life. I am glad I did not go off to become a migrant to the UK or US or Singapore. I am glad I spent all my life either in India or in the service of India

and therefore I am a proud Indian," he asserted.

Another charge often thrown at Aiyar was that he was part of an "elite coterie" -- of English-speaking bureaucrats often having an educational background at institutions such as Doon school and St Stephen's College -- Rajiv Gandhi assembled in his office.

Aiyar, who dispels this notion in the book as well, said he would like to first debunk the Doon school charge because that is what is thrown at him the most.

"The fact is that there was only one Doon school boy (me) among the officers of the ministry. There was another, Wajahat Habibullah, but he had been brought in by Indira Gandhi and therefore he had only a year-and-a-half in Rajiv's period.

"In politics there was Arun Singh who was a school friend of Rajiv's but he was dropped from the PMO in under a year of his induction. So the idea that there was a 'Dosco mafia' is a completely misplaced one," he said. Dosco is what Doon School is sometimes referred to as.

Talking about his flirtations with communism, Aiyar also said he was "probably the poorest boy in the richest school". This led him to question inequalities in the society.

"I began to perceive that there are some answers to these questions being given by the communists, so I became what I have described in my book as a Utopian socialist, which is the most pejorative term in Marxism. I carried that view with me until I got to Cambridge. In St Stephen's, there were a number of my mentors who were dyed in the wool reds and they had a big influence on me," Aiyar said.

In Cambridge, he said, he took tutorials under Maurice Dobb who was highly regarded as Britain's leading Marxist analyst but found he could not answer most of his questions and he was disillusioned with Marxism. (PTI)

Modi fulfilled Kalyan Singh's Ram temple dream, Cong dragged issue since Independence: Shah

ALIGARH (UP), Aug 21: Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday said while the Congress kept dragging the Ram temple issue ever since Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paved the way for its construction and fulfilled former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh's dream.

The Modi government also fulfilled the veteran leader's wish to empower the backward and the poor, Shah said at a function here to mark the second death anniversary of Kalyan Singh.



"The beginning which was made by Babuji (Kalyan Singh) has been given a shape by Narendra Modi, who worked for the holistic empowerment of the backward classes in nine years by undertaking a lot of work," he said.

Singh's death anniversary is being observed by the BJP as the 'Hindu Gaurav Diwas', Shah said, urging party workers to ensure the BJP's victory on all 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh in 2024 as a tribute to Kalyan Singh.

"There can not be a bigger homage to respected Babuji than this. Make Modi the prime minister again and send the message to the

country that Uttar Pradesh is an impenetrable fortress of the BJP," the union minister said.

"When Babuji became the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, he gave momentum to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement, brought the BJP thought of the welfare of the poor to the ground... I am happy Prime Minister Narendra Modi has completed what Babuji had started," he added.

"The Congress party dragged the

Delhi only to pay tributes to Kalyan Singh, Shah said, "Today, I want to tell the people of Uttar Pradesh that there are moments that come in everyone's life which give the actual introduction to their identities. Such a moment came in Babuji's life when Ram devotees thronged Ayodhya and pressure was on him to stop the 'kar sevaks' by firing bullets but Babuji decided at that moment, 'I will not shoot, I will give up the post of chief minister'."

Kalyan Singh was the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh when the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished on December 6, 1992.

Shah recalled how Singh had resigned in the wake of the demolition. The Union minister also said that when he had come to Uttar Pradesh as the in-charge of the BJP's state unit in 2013, "for 11 hours straight, he made me aware of the details of all the districts of Uttar Pradesh".

"Every day till the counting day, he guided twice daily on the elections in UP and the result was that all records were broken and the BJP posted a victory on 73 seats," he said. (PTI)

Rahul moves Bombay HC against lower court order on fresh documents

MUMBAI, Aug 21: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has approached the Bombay High Court against a lower court order allowing an RSS worker to submit fresh and additional documents in a criminal defamation complaint.

In his plea, Gandhi claimed that another bench of the high court in 2021 disallowed the complainant, Rajesh Kunte, from submitting any fresh documents in the case.

However, a magistrate's court in Bhivandi in Thane district of Maharashtra allowed Kunte to submit fresh documents in June this year.

Gandhi's petition claimed the magistrate's order allowing Kunte to submit fresh documents at this stage was "completely illegal and prejudicial".

Kunte in his defamation claim stated that Rahul Gandhi had made false and defamatory statements that the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh) was responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi's petition came up for hearing on Monday before a single bench of Justice S V Kotwal.

Justice Kotwal said that since in 2021, a coordinate bench of the high court heard the plea filed by Kunte seeking submission of additional documents in the plea, it would be better if the same bench hears Gandhi's plea too.

"If you (Gandhi's advocate Kushal Mor) are saying this issue has already been covered by this High Court, it would be better if the same judge hears this petition. There are observations by the judge. Let that judge sit in review instead of me sitting in appeal," Justice Kotwal said.

"Considering the submissions made by Mor, propriety dictates that matter be placed before the same learned judge who heard the matter," the bench said.

The documents submitted by Kunte include parts of a petition filed by Gandhi in 2014 challenging the summons issued to him by the Bhivandi court then.

It includes a copy of the transcript of the speech from the CD containing the purported live telecast of the speech made by Gandhi, which was annexed as an exhibit to the petition.

The high court had dismissed Gandhi's petition in 2015. (PTI)

More than 6,800 corruption cases probed by CBI pending trial in courts, 313 for over 20 years: CVC



NEW DELHI, Aug 21: As many as 6,841 corruption cases probed by the CBI were pending trials in different courts, 313 of them for more than 20 years, according to the latest annual report of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

Of the total cases, 2,039 were pending trials for more than 10 years and up to 20 years, 2,324 for over five years and up to 10 years, 842 for more than three years and up to five years and 1,323 for less than three years, as on December 31, 2022, it said.

"The Commission took note of the large number of cases pending trial in different courts. It was observed that as on 31.12.2022, 6,841 number of cases were pending trial, out of which 313 number of cases were pending (trial) for more than 20 years," the report said.

In addition to these, a total of 12,408 appeals and revisions in the corruption cases were pending in high courts and the Supreme Court, 417 of them for more than 20 years.

As many as 688 such appeals and revisions were pending for "more than 15 years but less than 20 years", 2,314 for "more than 10 but less than 15 years", 4,005 for "more than five but less than 10 years", 2,881 for "more than two but less than five years" and 2,103 for "less than two years", the report said.

It said 692 cases were pending probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), 42 for more than five years, as on December 31, 2022.

Normally, it is required by the CBI to complete

an investigation within one year of registration of a case.

A total of 60 cases were pending probe "more than three years but less than five years", 79 for "more than two years but less than three years", 138 for "more than one year but less than two years" and 373 for "less than one year", said the report released recently.

"Completion of investigation would imply filing of charge sheets in courts, wherever warranted, after receipt of sanction from the competent authority. The Commission has observed that there have been some delays in completing investigations in certain cases," it said.

Some of the reasons for the delay include "delay in investigation due to excessive work", "inadequacy of manpower", "delay in obtaining responses to Letters Rogatory (LRs)" and "time taken in locating and examining witnesses living in distant places" among others, the report said.

There were also 52 cases of departmental action pending against 'Group A' officers of the CBI themselves, it said. Of these, 23 cases were pending for more than four years, five between three to four years, seven between two and three years, nine between one year to two years and eight for less than a year, according to the report.

There were 19 cases of departmental action pending against 'Group B and C' personnel of the federal agency. Of these, three were pending for more than four years, it added. (PTI)

Miscreants vandalise Gandhi statue in Karnataka

SHIVAMOGGA, Aug 21: Unidentified miscreants vandalised and brought down a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at a road intersection at Holehonur in this district in the wee hours of Monday, police said. According to the police, it was the handiwork of two bike-borne youths. A search has been launched to catch them, they added.

Congress workers along with several citizens staged demonstrations demanding immediate arrest of the criminals behind the incident which took place around 1.30 am.

Police personnel too reached the spot and assured the protesters that they will ensure the stringent action against the miscreants. Condemning the incident, chief minister Siddaramaiah said those behind the heinous act will be caught and punished according to law.

"I strongly condemn the anti-patriotic act of vandalising the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Holehonur in Shivmogga. Only those who have no respect for the freedom movement, the constitution and the law can commit such a heinous act. Whoever is behind this heinous act will be caught and punished according to law. I request people not to get agitated and take law into their hands, but cooperate to maintain peace and order," he said in a post on 'X'. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Government seeks public view

integral to the religion to receive protection, it added. "With respect to Islam, the courts have held that having more than one wife is not an essential part of the religion. Legislation limiting the number of wives does not interfere with the right to practice religion and is within the scope of 'social welfare and reform'. Hence, laws favouring monogamy do not violate Article 25," said the notice, which referred to the expert committee's report. "Considering these principles, the State of Assam would have the legislative competence to enact a state legislature to end polygamy," it added. On August 6, the expert committee formed by the Assam government to examine the legislative competence of the state legislature to enact a law to end polygamy had submitted its report to the chief minister, who immediately announced that a legislation on the subject will be introduced within this financial year. He had also claimed the committee unanimously agreed that the state can frame its own laws to end polygamy. Hoisting the National Flag on the occasion of 77th Independence Day on August 15, Sarma in his official address had said that a "strict act" would be brought soon to end polygamy in Assam.

On May 12, Sarma had announced the formation of the four-member expert committee headed by Justice (Retd) Rumi Kumari Phukan.

Besides Phukan, the other members of the committee are the state's Advocate General Devajit Saikia, Senior Additional Advocate General Nalin Kohli and senior Advocate Nekibur Zaman. It was tasked to scrutinise the provisions of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, 1937 along with Article 25 of the Constitution in relation to the Directive Principles of State Policy for a Uniform Civil Code.

On July 13, Sarma had said the Assam government conveyed to the authorities concerned that it was in support of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and wanted to ban polygamy immediately in the state. The opposition parties had earlier slammed the decision of the government to enact a law on polygamy as diversionary and communal, especially at a time when suggestions on the UCC are being received by the Law Commission. (With inputs from PTI)

ASDC urges EC, Assam govt

No. 112 Amri (ST) LAC, according to Bey, should encompass the entirety of Amri and Chinthong Development Blocks. He also pointed out an error where certain areas from the bordering Nagaon district were incorporated into No. 63 Hojai LAC, which contradicts the provisions of Article 332 of the constitution.

Bey further highlighted that certain areas from the so-called Barpathar Gram Panchayat (GP) in Hojai LAC should be removed. These areas, bordering the Nagaon district, were transferred to Karbi Anglong (now West Karbi Anglong) through an Assam gazette notification on September 3, 1975. They have been part of the Baithalangso (ST) LAC and Duar Amla MAC constituency for the past 44 years.

The ASDC's call for a reconsideration of the delimitation aims to ensure that the interests of the residents of the autonomous districts of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong are well represented and protected in the legislative process.

Chandrayaan-2 orbiter greets

mission life of the Ch-2 orbiter is increased to seven years. The ISRO also released images of the lunar far side area captured by the Lander Hazard Detection and Avoidance Camera (LHDAC). The camera assists in locating a safe landing area -- without boulders or deep trenches -- during the lander's descent. The photos come a day after Russia's Luna-25 spacecraft crashed into the moon after spinning out of control, in a setback to Russia's space ambitions. A success for Chandrayaan-3 would make India only the fourth country to successfully land on the moon, after the former USSR, the United States and China and the first to land on the treacherous lunar south pole. India's third lunar mission was launched on July 14 embarking on a more complicated 41-day voyage to the moon. ISRO chairman S Somanath called on the Union minister of state (Independent Charge) Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh in New Delhi and apprised him of the health status and readiness of Chandrayaan-3 for the moon landing.

Somanath informed the minister that all systems are working perfectly and no contingencies are anticipated on Wednesday, according to an official release. In the next two days, the health of Chandrayaan-3 will be continuously monitored, he said, adding the final sequence of landing will be loaded two days ahead and tested out. The mission life of the lander and rover is one lunar day or 14 earth days.

Referring to the expected touchdown, former ISRO chairman G Madhavan Nair said it's a very complex manoeuvre and one has to be cautious as all systems have to work in unison for its success.

Nair, who headed the space agency when Chandrayaan-1 mission was launched in 2008, said a successful landing would herald a big beginning for ISRO's next phase of planetary exploration. "It's a very complex manoeuvre. We narrowly missed it (soft-landing on the Moon in Chandrayaan-2 mission) in the last two kilometres (above the lunar surface)," he told PTI.

"So, there are a host of things that have to work in unison...thrusters, sensors, altimeters, computer software and all those things. Any glitch happening anywhere...we can be in trouble," Nair said. "We have to be really cautious and watch. Of course, I understand that ISRO has done enough simulations and also redundancies have been built in so that chances of such failure are remote. Still, we have to keep our fingers crossed."

Another former ISRO chief K Sivan said the failure of Russia's Luna-25 moon mission will have no impact on the Chandrayaan-3 venture. "It will not have any impact," Sivan, who was heading the ISRO when the Chandrayaan-2 mission was launched in 2019, told PTI when asked if the Indian space agency would be under more pressure ahead of the soft landing, following the Russian setback. Days ahead of Chandrayaan-3's launch, Somanath had said it is loaded with more fuel, a slew of safety measures and a bigger landing site, adding ISRO has opted for a "failure-based design" to ensure that the rover successfully lands on the moon even if some things go wrong. Somanath said instead of a success-based design in Chandrayaan-2, the space agency opted for a failure-based design in Chandrayaan-3, focused on what all can fail and how to protect it and ensure a successful landing.

"We looked at very many failures -- sensor failure, engine failure, algorithm failure, calculation failure. So, whatever the failure we want it to land at the required speed and rate. So, there are different failure scenarios calculated and programmed inside." The primary objectives of Chandrayaan-3 mission are threefold, (a) to demonstrate safe and soft Landing on lunar surface; (b) to demonstrate Rover roving on the moon, and (c) to conduct in-situ scientific experiments. Scientists from several space agencies have detected frozen water in the south pole craters. This ice could potentially serve as a reservoir for fuel, oxygen, and drinking water, thereby bolstering future lunar habitation endeavours. (PTI)

Women safe within BJP

in the state," she said. "If they are so concerned about women rights and issues, let them enter the assembly in 2026 and raise these matters in the House," she added. The senior BJP leader also urged women to be more politically active and join politics for "true equal development" of all genders.

In a separate press conference at the same venue, four other women leaders of the BJP also asserted that the party has given them due prominence and responsibilities. They alleged that the opposition parties, especially the Congress, are trying to gain political benefit from the suicide case and have launched a campaign against the BJP. "Women are completely safe in the BJP. In fact, it is the Congress which has faced allegations of women harassment against its leaders over the years," said party state vice-president Bijuli Kalita Medhi, state secretary Aparajita Bhuyan and spokespersons Janaki Khaund and Juri Sharma Bordoloi.

Senior woman leaders of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) had on Friday demanded that the police take strong action against all the persons involved in the alleged suicide of the woman BJP leader. APCC vice-presidents Pranatee Phukan and Bobbeeta Sharma, general secretary Roselina Tirkey and MLA Nandita Das had submitted a memorandum in this regard to Guwahati commissioner of police, Diganta Barah. They alleged that a cash-for-job scam was behind the woman BJP leader's death. (PTI)

APHLC, AJP join hands to

regional parties willing to join hands for the collective welfare of the region. Lurinjyoti Gogoi, president of AJP, stressed that the partnership aims to secure the language, culture, customs, and land of indigenous communities. He noted that a memorandum would be submitted to the President of India and the Governor of Assam regarding rampant corruption within the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and the urgent need for a judicial inquiry.

Gogoi criticised the lack of investigation by the chief minister's Vigilance Cell into the alleged corruption in KAAC and accused the chief minister of exploiting KAAC for personal gain. Gogoi also drew attention to the presence of the Bongo Sena in Karbi Anglong and called for an investigation into their purpose, political involvement, plans, and programs. The joint memorandum by APHLC and AJP would urge the Governor of Assam to address this issue and eliminate the presence of Bongo Sena from Karbi Anglong.

Gogoi further advocated for the appointment of local candidates from indigenous communities in various positions instead of bringing in candidates from outside. He emphasised the importance of upholding the rights and privileges enshrined in the Sixth Schedule provision to ensure the protection of indigenous communities. The collaboration between APHLC and AJP not only underscores their dedication to safeguarding indigenous rights but also showcases the power of unity in addressing pressing issues facing the region.

National Lok Adalat on Sept 9

participate in the National Lok Adalat. The event offers a unique opportunity for individuals to engage in dialogue and reach mutually agreeable resolutions, thereby facilitating the swift conclusion of pending legal matters.

2.6 km four-lane flyover

flyover marks a significant stride towards enhancing Assam's urban infrastructure, accentuating the state's commitment to streamlined connectivity and convenient transit for its residents.

RNSS announces Nat'l Conference

"We are eagerly anticipating this historic gathering, which will bring together some of the most esteemed individuals dedicated to advancing the Nonia community," remarked a representative from the Rachnatmak Nonia Sangyukta Sangh. "Through the exchange of ideas and collaborative efforts, we aim to pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for our community." The conference aspires to offer attendees opportunities for networking, sharing knowledge, and forging meaningful connections with like-minded individuals. With inclusivity at its core, the event extends a warm welcome to all members of the Nonia community, as well as allies and partners who share the vision of progress and empowerment.

Workshop on law for village

and resolving disputes at the grassroots level. The objective of the workshop was to equip village headmen, Village Defence Party members, and representatives from Customary Courts with a solid understanding of the legal procedures, enabling them to discharge their duties more effectively. By fostering legal awareness and knowledge, the Legal Services Authority aims to empower these community leaders to make informed decisions and contribute positively to the legal processes within their respective jurisdictions.

SC to constitute bench to hear Cauvery river water sharing dispute

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: The Supreme Court said on Monday it will constitute a bench to hear the decades-old dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka over sharing Cauvery river water.

The matter was mentioned by the counsel representing Tamil Nadu for urgent listing before a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Tamil Nadu, said an application has been filed by the state seeking release of water for the month of August which has been ordered by the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA).

Rohatgi told the apex court that a bench will have to be constituted to hear the matter.

"Today, I will constitute a bench," the CJ said.

On August 11, Tamil Nadu had said it had no other option but to approach the apex court to get its genuine share of Cauvery water.

It had contended that in a change of stand, Karnataka was prepared to release only a reduced quantum of 8,000 cusecs (cubic foot per second) every day.

Referring to the deliberations of the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) in the national capital in August, Tamil Nadu Water



Resources Minister Duraimurugan had said the requirement for Cauvery water was emphatically put forth by state officials during the discussions.

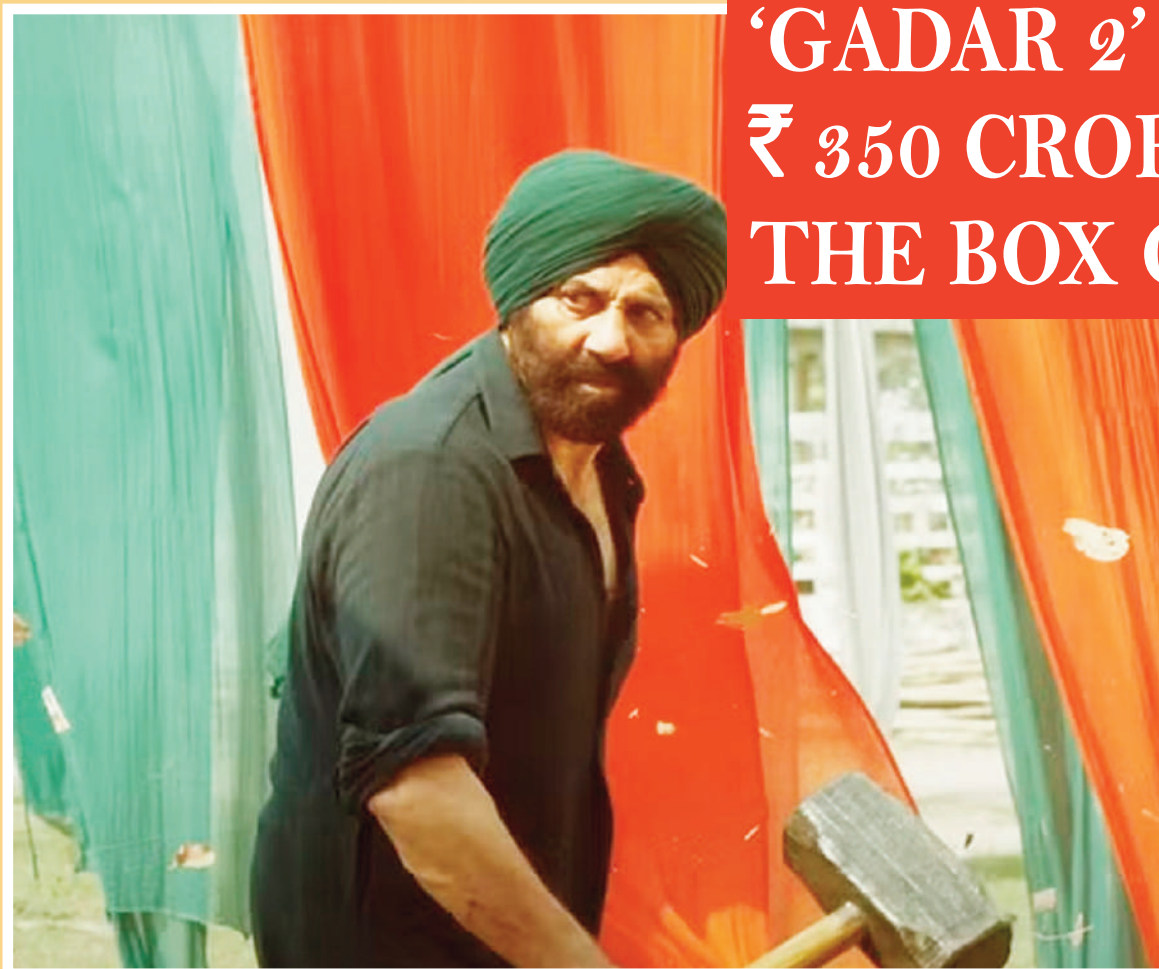
"However, Karnataka as usual changed its stand and categorically said that it could only release 8,000 cusecs and that too only till August 22," he had said. The minister had said it was unanimously decided at a meeting of the Cauvery Water Regulatory Committee on August 10 that 15,000 cusecs per day would be released by Karnataka to Tamil Nadu for 15 days.

"Hence, the Tamil Nadu govern-

ment has no other option but to approach the Supreme Court. Soon, a case will be filed in the apex court. Justice will win and we will get water and chief minister M K Stalin-led government is determined to get water," he had said.

The combined storage capacity of the four dams in Karnataka is 114.571 tmc ft (thousand million cubic feet) of water and it has 93.535 tmc storage, which is about 82 per cent, the minister had said.

Duraimurugan had alleged Karnataka does not 'have a heart' to share water with Tamil Nadu though it had enough water. (PTI)



'GADAR 2' CROSSES ₹ 350 CRORE-MARK AT THE BOX OFFICE

MUMBAI, Aug 21: "Gadar 2", directed by Anil Sharma, has earned ₹ 375.10 crore at the domestic box office, the makers announced on Monday.

Starring Sunny Deol and Ameesha Patel, the Hindi film is a sequel to the 2001 blockbuster "Gadar: Ek Prem Katha". The movie, a Zee Studios production, released in theatres on August 11.

Sharma shared the update on his official X page.

"Banke bihari ki kripa .. #GADAR2 .. RADHE RADHE .." the filmmaker captioned the poster.

According to Zee Studios, the film added ₹ 38.90 for the tenth day, taking up the total of its box office earnings to ₹ 375.10 crore.

In "Gadar 2", Deol's Tara Singh returns to Pakistan in order to rescue his imprisoned son Charanjeet "Jeete" Singh (played by Utkarsh Sharma) during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.

The first film was set during the Partition. (PTI)

Cillian Murphy says Nolan's Interstellar broke his heart



LONDON, Aug 21: Oppenheimer star Cillian Murphy has singled out Christopher Nolan's Interstellar as the film that he wishes he had starred in.

Murphy has been a regular in Nolan's movies from the Batman Begins days in 2005. He appeared in The Dark Knight, Inception, The Dark Knight Rises, Dunkirk before the actor was cast to lead to Oppenheimer, which released in July. In an interview with the British newspaper The Independent, Murphy was asked if there was a Nolan film he wishes he could have featured in.

The actor pointed out the 2014 space epic as the film that left him impressed.

"I adore 'Interstellar' just because I find it so emotional. I remember seeing it in the cinema when I had little kids. It

just had a big impact on me.

"It broke my heart. I love watching his films when I'm not in them because you don't have to freak out about the size of your ears, or whatever," the actor said.

Asked to pick another Nolan film as the double bill with Oppenheimer, Murphy said he would again choose Interstellar and if someone prefers a shorter movie, then the 2017 war drama Dunkirk.

"You could go Interstellar, which is very... explores similar scientific, physic themes. Or you could watch Dunkirk, which is also set in World War II," he said.

"Dunkirk is shorter, so that might be a good match 'cause it's like an hour-and-a-half, and then you can go into (Oppenheimer)." (PTI)

Great move for India, will watch it with my boys: Kareena on Chandrayaan 3 moon landing



NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Actor Kareena Kapoor Khan on Monday said like any other Indian, she too is waiting "with bated breath" for the Chandrayaan 3 to land on the moon's surface and she plans to watch the event with her children.

The actor, who was in the capital to promote a brand, spoke about India's moon mission and how it is a moment of pride for the country.

"It's a great move for India, a proud moment for each and every Indian. You feel that pride in your heart," Kareena told reporters here.

Chandrayaan-3, which was launched on July 14, is expected to touch down on the surface of the Moon around 6.04 pm on August 23, according to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

"You feel that pride in your heart. As Indians, all of us right now, are waiting to watch it. A lot of people are going to be glued watching it. I am going to be doing that with my boys as well, with bated breath," Kareena, who shares sons Taimur and Jeh with actor-husband Saif Ali Khan, said. (PTI)

PANKAJ TRIPATHI'S FATHER DIES AT 99



MUMBAI, Aug 21: Actor Pankaj Tripathi's father Banaras Tiwari has died. He was 99. The "OMG2" star's representative confirmed the news in a statement.

"It's with a heavy heart to confirm that Pankaj Tripathi's father, pandit Banaras Tiwari is no more. He lived a wholesome life of 99 years," the statement read.

The last rites will be performed later in the day in the presence of family in Tripathi's Belsand village in Gopalganj, Bihar. The actor has left for his village. In his interviews, Tripathi has often spoken fondly about his parents and his farming roots. (PTI)

Prakash Raj's tweet mocking 'Chandrayaan 3' goes viral, stirs controversy



MUMBAI, Aug 21: Actor Prakash Raj was trolled on Monday for a post on X, formerly Twitter, viewed by many as mocking India's Moon mission Chandrayaan-3.

On Sunday, Raj shared a cartoon showing a man in a shirt and sarong pouring tea. He captioned the cartoon in Kannada, writing, "Latest news: First view just arrived from the Chandrayaan #VikramLander #justasking".

While the actor did not specify the man in the cartoon, many social media users slammed the actor for making fun of former ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) chief K Sivan. Among them was Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi.

"I condemn Prakash Raj for this shameful tweet. Success of ISRO is success of India," he wrote. Chandrayaan-3, launched on July 14, is ready to touch down on the Moon's south pole on August 23. It will be the first to land on the lunar south pole. On Sunday, India's space agency specified it would do so at 6.04 pm.

A social media user asked Raj, known to be vocal against the government, to keep political hate away from ISRO's achievements. "Prakashji, this Chandrayaan mission is from ISRO not BJP. If it gets succeed, it's for India not for any party (sic). Why you want this mission to fail? BJP is just a ruling party. It will go one day. But ISRO will remain for years and will make us proud (sic)," he wrote on X. (PTI)

Was heartbroken when CBFC gave 'A' certificate to 'OMG 2': director Amit Rai



MUMBAI, Aug 21: Director Amit Rai says he wanted everyone to watch his latest release "OMG 2" in theatres, a wish that remained unfulfilled after the CBFC cleared the film with a few modifications and an 'A' certificate.

The Hindi movie, starring Pankaj Tripathi and Akshay Kumar in the lead, explores various issues concerning teenagers, including sex education. It hit the screens on August 11. After being "heartbroken" over the censor board's decision to limit the viewing of the movie to adults ('A' certification), the filmmaker is happy with the audience's response. "OMG 2" has earned Rs 101.61 crore at the national box office

in 10 days of its release, the makers announced Sunday. "We were heartbroken because we made the film for everyone to watch, now that cannot happen. We begged them to give us a U/A certificate (children below 12 years of age can watch a film under parental guidance) but they didn't. We tried to convince them till the very end... But then they walked some distance, we walked some distance. The film has been released with modifications..."

"We are happy people have loved the film. The intent of the film was pure. Nobody wanted to titillate the audience, hence they liked it. We have dealt with it (the story) in a way that doesn't sound vulgar.

We talk about the reality, but in a sweet and humorous way," Rai told PTI in an interview. Asked if the team would make "OMG 2" available on OTT without any changes, Rai said yes.

"We have decided that we will show the original film (on streaming), a film that the censor never wanted people to see, but... The public has seen the film and given their verdict. If the censor board doesn't understand it, what do we say?"

At the outset, Rai said he had trouble finding a producer for the film. "OMG 2" is produced by Cape of Good Films and Wakao Films, and presented by Viacom18 Studios.

According to the writer-director, best known for 2010's "Road To Sangam", many top producers had refused to bankroll the movie. "I went to almost nine production houses and the majority of them rejected the script on the basis of its boldness. Somebody even said, 'It is crass and gross'. It was surprising for me.

"I was wondering how we will make this film. Luckily, someone introduced me to Ashwin Varde, Vipul Shah, and Rajesh Behl. They took me to Akshay Kumar, who told me 'It is an interesting and important subject'. I believe if you have a producer like Akshay Kumar, things become easy," he recalled. (PTI)

SEN IS THE REIGNING COMMONWEALTH GAMES GOLD MEDALLIST

Prannoy, Sen advance to second round of World Championships

COPENHAGEN, Aug 21: Star Indian shuttlers HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen progressed to the men's singles second round of the World Championships with straight-game wins over Finland's Kalle Koljonen and Mauritius' Georges Julien Paul respectively here on Monday.

Prannoy, the world number 9, who reached the quarterfinals in the last two editions, saw off the left-handed Koljonen 24-22, 21-10 to extend his head-to-head count over the Finnish player to 3-0. Sen, the reigning Commonwealth Games gold medallist, then steamrolled Paul 21-12, 21-7 in 25 minutes to follow Prannoy into the second round.

The Almora shuttler, who had won a bronze in the 2021 edition, is likely to meet

Korea's Jeon Hyeok Jin, while the 31-year-old from Kerala is expected to face Indonesia's Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo next.

The match between Prannoy and Koljonen turned into a tight battle in the opening game with the Finnish player quick to open up a 8-4 lead. But Prannoy reeled off seven straight points to grab a 11-8 lead at the break.

However, an exciting battle ensued after resumption with Koljonen eventually grabbing three game points after pushing one away from the forehead of his opponent. A calm Prannoy, however, saved all three game points before hitting wide to once again hand over the advantage to his rival.



A backhand block at the net helped him save another game point but he sprayed into net next as it was 22-21 in favour of the Finnish player.

However, Koljonen couldn't capitalise as he hit long and lost a net duel to gift the lead to the Indian, who converted with a brutal cross-court smash.

The second game started on an

equal footing with Prannoy marginally leading 6-5 at one stage. However, the Indian soon zoomed away to open up a six-point lead at the break with a straight smash.

The Indian kept moving ahead with Koljonen finding it hard to negotiate the angles and deceptions of Prannoy, who soon gained 12 match points after Koljonen hit wide. Prannoy missed one at the

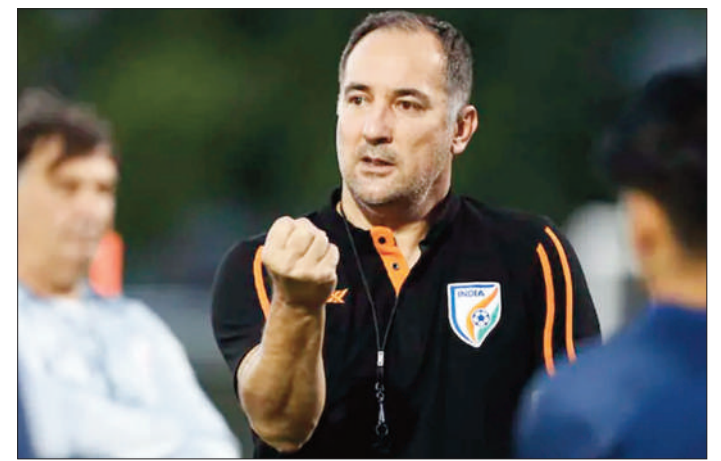
net and Koljonen saved another one before the Indian shut the door with a straight smash.

Sen, who had defeated Paul en route his CWG gold, had no issues in brushing aside his rival. He opened up a 11-3 lead and though Paul managed to make it 8-12, the Indian soon changed gears to seal the opening game.

Sen continued in the same vein

after the change of sides as it turned out to be an extremely lop-sided contest with the Indian gaining 13-2 lead. Eventually, Paul hit out twice to hand over the match to Sen. Earlier, the Indian mixed doubles pair of Rohan Kapoor and N Sikki Reddy, ranked 33rd, lost to Scotland's Adam Hall and Julie Macpherson 14-21, 22-20, 18-21 in a 59-minute contest. (PTI)

India football coach Stimac not ready to predict Asian Games outcome



NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Indian football head coach Igor Stimac is not sure where the country would finish in the Hangzhou Asian Games next month given the U-23 format of the quadrennial showpiece and with very little known about the opposing teams. Asked what finish at the Asian Games would satisfy him, Stimac said on Monday that while India does have a strong team, the fact that it is the only side having "not played a single game with the under-23s in the last two years" made predicting the outcome difficult.

"It's difficult to say (how far India will go in the Asian Games) because it's an under-23 competition, and you don't have much information about all the teams you're going to face there. I think we are the only team that hasn't played a single game with the under-23s in the last two years."

"How much we can do in a short preparation time is a huge question. Obviously, we do have strong under-23 players, who are already a huge part of the senior national team, and it should help us. But as you say, it's a similar competition to the Asian Cup, but different also because you don't have time between the games for recovery."

"We're going to face the biggest opponents in our group, China, in the opening game. And less than 48 hours later we have to play the next opponents (Bangladesh), which is hugely surprising. We're going to put all our efforts into the opening

game and do our best to beat China to make our life easier," added Stimac in an interview to AIFF. With the prestigious King's Cup all set to kick off in Thailand on September 7, Stimac is also looking at options in the likelihood of ace striker Sunil Chhetri not being part of the squad.

The King's Cup will be India's first outing abroad this year following their stupendous performance at home where they have won three consecutive tournaments, are enjoying a 16-match unbeaten streak at home and basking in the glory of re-entering the top-100 of the FIFA Rankings.

The tournament scheduled to be held from September 7-10 will see India, the 2019 edition's bronze medallists, take on Asian powerhouse Iraq in the first match. The other two teams in the competition are Thailand and Lebanon.

However, Chhetri's wife was admitted to hospital on August 8 because of dengue and the ace striker could miss the tournament. On whether Chhetri would be a big miss, Stimac said, "Absolutely. That's why we are following our boys at the (ongoing) Durand Cup too. And they are doing well. They are showing a good attitude, putting on good performances."

"But you know that we have many things happening in September. So we'll see who will get the opportunity and who will use it in a proper way, I would say." (PTI)

Bishnoi, Om Prakash, Gaurav Pratap lead the field in Coimbatore Open from today

COIMBATORE, Aug 21: Sunhit Bishnoi, who won the India Cements Pro Championship last week, Om Prakash Chouhan and Gaurav Pratap Singh are some of the leading golfers who will be vying for honours when the inaugural Coimbatore Open begins here on Tuesday. The tournament carries a purse of Rs 1 crore, the highest-ever for a men's professional event in Coimbatore. The Pro-Am event will be staged at

the Coimbatore Golf Club on August 26. The event will witness participation by 126 golfers, including 123 professionals and three amateurs.

The leading Indian professionals in the field include Om Prakash Chouhan (TATA Steel PGTI Rankings leader), Aman Raj, Karan Pratap Singh, Sachin Baisoya, Gaurav Pratap Singh and Sunhit Bishnoi, to name a few.

The local challenge will be led by

Coimbatore-based professional Sidhartha Sharathram and amateurs Advay Krishnan and J Vignesh.

The prominent foreign names in the field include Bangladeshis Badal Hossain, Md Dulal Hossain and Md Akbar Hossain, Sri Lankans N Thangaraja, Mithun Perera, Anura Rohana, K Prabakaran, Nepal's Sukra Bahadur Rai, Japan's Makoto Iwasaki as well as Canadians Sukhraj Singh Gill and Min-

woo Park.

Noida-based Gaurav Pratap, a winner on the PGTI this year and one of the top contenders this week, said, "I've had a good run so far this year, so I'm quite confident coming into this week."

"The course conditions are excellent. The rough isn't as challenging as last year but it is the strong winds that will present the biggest challenge at this magnificent venue." (PTI)

SAI wants Bajrang to attend Worlds trials or give fitness certificate

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: The Sports Authority of India (SAI) wants Olympic-medallist wrestler Bajrang Punia to attend the trials for the World Championships or provide fitness certificate if he wants exemption from this week's exercise in Patiala.

Punia is planning to skip the trials for the World Championships on August 25 and 26 and instead wants to train at a foreign location to prepare for the Asian Games in Hangzhou beginning September 23. Bajrang, one of six wrestlers to sit in protest at the Jantar Mantar against outgoing WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, and Commonwealth Games gold-medal winner Deepak Punia (86kg) are not keen to compete in the World Championships in Belgrade from September 16, and instead want to undergo long training stints to prepare of the



Asian Games.

While Bajrang has sent a proposal to train in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan (August 21-September 28), Deepak, on the other hand, wants to train in Khasavyurt (Russia) for five weeks (August 23 to

September 28) to prepare for the Asian Games.

"Yes, we have asked Bajrang why he is skipping the Worlds trials. He said he wants to prepare for Asian Games and train abroad till then. But we asked him to ap-

pear for the trials on August 25 and 26 and leave for training camp abroad on August 27," a SAI official told PTI on condition of anonymity on Monday.

The World Championships is the first qualification tournament for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and SAI is unhappy that two of the country's top wrestlers want to skip the trials and the showpiece event.

While Bajrang, the 65kg grappler, who won the 2020 Tokyo Olympics bronze, has also demanded physiotherapist Anuj Gupta, personal coach Sujat Maan, strength and conditioning expert Kaazi Kiron Mustafa Hasan and sparring partner Jitender Kinha to accompany him. Deepak has requested the services of coach Kamal Malikov and physiotherapist Shubham Gupta for the training stints. (PTI)



Akshat Baruah won 2nd prize under 10 years boys heavy weight category in the 7th Assam Open Full Contact Karate Tournament, 2023 held on August 20 in Morigaon district. The tournament was hosted by KYOKUSHIN KARATE ACADEMY, Morigaon Branch. HT Photo

Mohun Bagan wary of in-form Abahani in crucial AFC Cup clash

KOLKATA, Aug 21: Facing challenges of a demanding pre-season and a revamped team composition, a rusty Mohun Bagan Super Giant will be wary of in-form Abahani Limited Dhaka when they clash here on Tuesday for a spot in the AFC Cup South Zone group berth.

The Mariners are in the midst of a hectic pre-season where they are also competing in the Durand Cup and in the Calcutta Football League Premier Division.

Bagan has assembled a big budget team for the season, and it's no secret that the AFC Cup takes precedence for the Sanjiv Goenka-owned side.

Except for a 5-0 win over Bangladesh Army FT in the Durand Cup opener where they chose a young, all-Indian lineup with Liston Colaco and Manvir

Singh as the only experienced players, Mohun Bagan have struggled to put together their A-game.

The Mariners also saw their eight-match winning streak against arch-rivals East Bengal coming to an end following a 0-1 defeat.

The inclusion of their high-profile foreign signings have not given immediate results as coach Juan Ferrando has struggled to find a perfect balance.

Australian A-League winner Jason Cummings, who played in the 2022 World Cup, has struggled to find his form and create a strong attacking presence up-front.

The lone bright spot has been Anwar Ali, the India centre-back.

Mohun Bagan had Ali's aerial prowess to thank as the defender



grabbed a brace to send his side through to the AFC Cup playoff with a 3-1 win over Machhindra.

Cummings also managed to find the target, which could significantly boost his confidence ahead of facing a stronger oppo-

nent in a knockout fixture.

The pressure was evident on the last two season's Inter-Zone semi-finalists as Ferrando termed it a "final".

"Tomorrow, it's like a final. We try to do everything we can,

give 100 percent," he said.

Ferrando admitted that the hectic schedule made it tough for the team to find the balance.

"The hectic schedule makes it difficult to talk about balance. Pre-season was difficult, (we) didn't get a lot of time to work."

"We tried to give our best in every match. We'll see tomorrow, and then will prepare for the Durand Cup. Some players are playing in the Kolkata league, Durand Cup and AFC Cup."

"Now, we're thinking only about winning the (AFC Cup) match and then the Durand Cup. After that, we will get time to prepare for the season," the Spaniard said.

Mohun Bagan had an easy outing against the Mario Lemos-coached side and won 3-1 last season. (PTI)

Indian junior women's hockey team rallies to hold England 3-3

DUSSELDORF, Aug 21: The Indian junior women's hockey team came from behind to score a creditable 3-3 draw against England in the 4 Nations Tournament here on Sunday.

Hina Bano (6th), Rutuja Dadaso Pisal (49th) and Mumtaz Khan (53rd) scored a goal each for India.

Le Huray Martha (4th, 19th) and Alexander Beth (9th) were on target for England.

England began the match on a strong note with Martha scoring a field goal in the fourth minute of the game.

India, however, responded quickly with an equaliser through Hina who scored a field goal. Beth doubled England's lead after successfully converting a penalty corner.

At the end of the first quarter, England were leading 2-1.

India increased the frequency of their attacks in an attempt to level the score but England extended their lead with Martha finding the back of the net once again. At half-time, England were leading 3-1. There were no goals in the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter, India began making attacking moves to cover the deficit.

Rutuja got India back in the game scoring a fine field goal. The Indian team kept England under pressure by attacking rigorously.

Mumtaz then found the back of the net after successfully converting a penalty corner to make it 3-3. India will next take on Spain on August 22. (PTI)

K L Rahul makes Asia Cup cut with a rider, Iyer and Varma also named in 17-man squad

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: K L Rahul, albeit with a rider, and Shreyas Iyer were on Monday named in India's squad for the Asia Cup beginning August 31 while highly-rated young batter Tilak Varma earned a maiden call-up to the one-day format.

There were question marks over the fitness of Rahul and Iyer, who are making a comeback after undergoing thigh and back surgeries respectively. Iyer last played in March and Rahul in May.

While Iyer was declared fully fit by chief selector Ajit Agarkar, questions remain over Rahul's fitness status.

Wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson has been added to the squad as a back up for Rahul who has developed a niggle recently, informed Agarkar after announcing the squad here.

"It is not the original injury. There is a niggle. That is why Sanju is travelling (to Sri Lanka). We are expecting Rahul to be fit. If not the start of Asia cup may be by the second or the third game. Shreyas Iyer is fully fit," said Agarkar in his first media interaction since taking charge last month.

India will open their campaign against Pakistan on September 2 and Rahul is likely to miss out due to his niggle. Pacer Prasidh Krishna, who made a comeback from injury with the ongoing series in Ireland, has also been included in



the Asia Cup squad. Varma has made the cut on the back of an impressive run in his maiden T20 series in the West Indies. The 20-year-old is currently with the T20 squad in Ireland.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal was a notable omission from the squad, leaving India with only one wrist spinner in Kuldeep Yadav. Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja are the other spin bowling options.

Hardik Pandya, who has been named vice-captain, and Shardul

Thakur, are the two pace bowling all-rounders while Krishna, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammad Shami are the specialist fast bowlers.

X-factor batter Suryakumar Yadav has also found a place despite his underwhelming run in ODIs so far.

All of India's Asia Cup games will be played in Sri Lanka while tournament host Pakistan will get to host four games at home.

Asked about Varma's inclusion

in the squad as he is yet to play ODI cricket, Agarkar added: "In West Indies, we saw some real promise in terms of not just performances but the temperament. And it gives us an opportunity to take him with the team, give him some more exposure; a left-hander again, looks very promising."

"So fortunately we can take 17 here, it'll be 15 at the World Cup. So when the time comes we'll take that decision, but at the moment it, at least, gives the coach and cap-

tain an opportunity to have him with the squad."

Sitting alongside Agarkar, India skipper Rohit Sharma explained the rationale behind Chahal's exclusion leaving the team with no right hand off-spin option.

"We thought about an offspinner as well, Ashwin and Washy (Washington Sundar), but right now you see Chahal had to miss out because we could only pick 17 players," said Rohit during the media interaction.

"The only way we could have picked him was if one of the seamers was missing. We can't do that because seamers are going to play a big role in the next two months. A few of them are coming back after a long time, so we wanted to have a good look at them, get them in and see what they have to offer."

"Having said that, no doors are closed on anyone. Anyone can come in anytime. If we feel like we need Chahal for the World Cup, we'll see how we can squeeze him in, same goes for Washy or Ashwin."

Squad: Rohit Sharma (captain), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, K L Rahul, Hardik Pandya (vice-captain), Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Sanju Samson (back up to Rahul). (PTI)

We don't ask players overnight to bat at any slot, says Rohit



NEW DELHI, Aug 21: Indian captain Rohit Sharma wants his middle order batters to show flexibility as no one in the national team owns any particular batting position.

The Indian captain also said that each and every player who plays or misses out has received clear communication about what role is expected of them and where they stand in terms of their international career. Asked how Ishan Kishan will be placed vis a vis his batting slot if K L Rahul misses out against Pakistan in the Asia Cup opener, Rohit explained the team's thought process.

"Ajit (Agarkar) is new to the picture and he didn't know what was happening before that. I have tried to keep him updated as much as possible," Rohit said while answering the PTI query.

"One thing I need in this team is everyone ready to bat anywhere. Cricket is moving in a different direction. You can step up at any position, no one should say 'I am good at this position and that position'. That is the message that has been conveyed to every individual, not now but that's happening for last two, three or four years," the skipper said.

"I know it's tough for you guys outside to understand that why is a guy who was batting at No. 6 is suddenly batting at No. 4. It hasn't happened overnight. He has been prepared for that role. This is international sport we are talking about. This is not club cricket."

"He should be able to bat anywhere that team requires him to. Not like we go off to sleep at night telling a batter a position and next morning we change that position. It doesn't happen like that," Rohit said in his inimitable style. The Indian skipper seemed a trifle irritated when asked why India doesn't have a settled No. 4.

"We have got guys who can bat at No. 4. It's not about No. 4. It's about top three and there onwards, 4, 5, 6, 7 and there onwards and who can win us game. There have been challenges and guys have been put under pressure and that's a good thing."

"Unfortunately, we had in-

juries along the line and we had to try out different players and keep in mind workload management and see what combination suits us."

"We have 9 ODIs and 2 practice games and we have lot of games where these guys will get a chance to make the position their own," he added.

When a scribe tried to grill him on his flexibility logic asking if random batting position changes create instability, his answer was akin to a pull shot that he plays against fast bowlers.

"When I said flexibility is necessary I never said Hardik (Pandya) will open the innings. Not that. It's not top three but ones batting at No 4 or 5 who need to be flexible to bat up or down."

"No. 5 is Rahul and No. 6 is Hardik, but if there's some change that flexibility is required as we also as youngsters did it. There is a method. We don't do that kind of madness. This is not school rule that numbers 1 to 8 are fixed. It's not about creating mayhem," the sarcasm wasn't lost on anyone.

Yuzvendra Chahal looks likely to miss the World Cup bus and Rohit was very categorical that he couldn't have afforded to miss out on pace bowling option in order to pick him or Ravichandran Ashwin.

"We thought about off spinner Ashwin and Washy (Washington Sundar) but right now you saw Chahal has to miss out and we can't get him in because we can take only 15 and only way we could have done that is by dropping a seamer."

"We cannot do that considering amount of games that is going to happen, some of them coming back after long time and we can have a good look at them. See what they have to offer."

But like any skipper would do, Rohit said that doors are not closed on anyone although it was more of a consolation statement. "No doors are closed on anyone. Chahal has played lot of white ball cricket and if we need him we would find ways to squeeze him in. So is Ashwin or Washy. Option is open for anyone," he concluded. (PTI)

I'll call it brave: Tom Moody on Tilak Varma's Asia Cup selection

CHENNAI, Aug 21: Former Australian all-rounder Tom Moody on Monday hailed young Tilak Varma's call-up to Team India for the upcoming Asia Cup, calling it a "brave" and "smart" decision. On Monday, the BCCI's All India Senior Selection Committee, headed by chief selector Ajit Agarkar, announced the 17-member squad for the continental showdown set to be played in Pakistan and Sri Lanka beginning August 31. Varma was included in the squad as the sixth specialised batter alongside skipper Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer and Suryakumar Yadav.

"I think it's a wonderful selection. I'll call it brave, but I also call it in the same breath smart," Moody told Star Sports. "He is clearly a player on the rise, as I touched on earlier. He's got not only skill but an enormous temperament, and he is showing that on a regular basis." "We have talked about the value of left-handedness in the top order, so him coming in at that number five or six position is going to be valuable for India, particularly to have that balance against spin."

Former India batter Sanjay Manjrekar also echoed Moody's views and credited Varma's blazing form during the West Indies T20s earlier this month in the Caribbean and the United States of America for his call-up in the ODI team. "Look at his domestic career. He's got the numbers to merit a call for India. And also, tongue in cheek, he is also getting ready for 50 overs cricket by failing in his last two matches in the T20 format. It is hard to find a weakness in him, in white ball cricket," he said.

Besides Varma, Moody was also impressed with the overall Indian squad selection for the tournament and felt there was no discrepancy behind the decisions. (PTI)

Sourav Ganguly on No 4 position: 'One batting slot does not make much difference'

MUMBAI, Aug 21: Former captain Sourav Ganguly on Monday said India have a lot of options for the No 4 position in their ODI side, and stressed that one position alone will not win important tournaments like the World Cup. Ganguly said the team management should zero in on one player and give him a long rope at the No 4 slot. "India has enormous talent. I keep hearing about this...we don't have this or that but we have too much and that is the problem that we cannot decide."

"The No 4...Rahul (Dravid), selectors and Rohit (Sharma) need to decide that 'this is my No 4 and I will continue with him'. One batting slot does not make much of a difference," Ganguly told the media here while being appointed as the brand ambassador of the real estate company Casagrand. Downplaying the debate over the No 4 position, Ganguly said any player can be fitted there.

"Number four is just a number and anybody can fit in. I started in the middle-order in one-day cricket and went on to open because I was asked to by Sachin (Tendulkar) as captain. It is the same with Sachin. He batted at six and his captain asked him to open and he became a world-class player. Anybody can play at No 4. There's Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer and K L Rahul," said Ganguly. Promising left-hander Tilak Varma, who impressed all during the T20I series against West Indies recently, on Monday was included in India's squad for the Asia Cup 2023.

It was his maiden entry into India's ODI set-up. Ganguly hoped that the young batsman will make the opportunity count with



big runs. "He is good but I think when you play big tournaments, you need a bit more runs under the belt," he said. Ganguly opined that wrist spinners will be crucial for India in the coming tournaments.

"We have a very good bowling attack... (Jasprit) Bumrah, (Mohammed) Siraj, (Mohammed) Shami, (Ravindra) Jadeja will play the all-rounder's role and then you will have the wrist spinners."

"I will always pick (Yuzvendra) Chahal. I will always pick wrist spinners. I do not know what the selectors think but I will always pick wrist spinners," he said.

However, Chahal was not picked in India's Asia Cup squad but left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav found a place in the Sri Lanka-bound unit. Ganguly backed India to come good in the Asia Cup and in the subsequent World Cup.

Gaikwad to lean on lessons from Dhoni school of captaincy at Asian Games



DUBLIN, Aug 21: Ruturaj Gaikwad feels leading a side is a complicated affair but he will try to make it simple like his Chennai Super Kings skipper M S Dhoni when he captains India at the Asian Games next month.

Gaikwad will captain a side full of youngsters in Hangzhou with the main team busy with World Cup preparations at the same time.

"Leadership role is a very complicated thing to be honest. What Mahi bhai (Dhoni) always says is to take it one game at a time, don't worry about the future."

"Everyone creates hype and whatever it is. I am not the kind of

person who tracks social media and hear things about what anyone is saying about me. "I think this is one of the traits that I have learned at CSK. I am pretty much clear about giving my best in the field, coming back home, chilling with my friends," he told reporters after India's 33-run win over Ireland in the second T20 on Sunday.

The right-hander, who warmed up the bench for the major part of the West Indies tour, is getting to open in the T20s against Ireland. He scored a match-winning 58 off 43 balls after a sedate start.

"Due to the overnight rain, the wicket was slightly damp and on

the slower side. Back of length was difficult to hit on this wicket, even the slower ones and cutters were difficult to hit. "Being an opener I have the luxury to eat up some balls upfront, 10-15 balls and come back and cover. Batters coming in usually have less overs left so you can't have too many dot balls. Being an opener you get enough time to assess the wicket."

As he doesn't get to play regularly, the Ireland series is of extra significance to him.

"It is very important. It is very different when you play from the first game itself (rather than getting an odd game in a series). You come in with lot of confidence, lot of preparation and the right mindset."

"At the same time there is no space in the main team as there are batters doing really well. It is a mixed feeling. It was a great opportunity and one more game to go." IPL sensation Rinku Singh made his much awaited debut in the first T20 but only got to bat on Sunday. He smashed 38 off 21 balls that pushed India past 180. The southpaw took his time initially before going ballistic.

Ruturaj was all praise for Rinku. "He has already become everyone's favourite in the IPL. The way he has batted this year he has shown a lot of maturity and I think the stand out thing is that he doesn't attack from ball one. (PTI)

Rahul's niggle a small setback, hope he and Iyer get enough game time before World Cup: Agarkar



NEW DELHI, Aug 21: India chief selector Ajit Agarkar on Monday said it was important for both Shreyas Iyer and K L Rahul to get enough game time ahead of the ODI World Cup in India.

Both Rahul and Iyer were named in the 17-man Asia Cup squad but the former has developed a niggle unrelated to his original injury, making him a doubtful starter for the opening game against Pakistan on September 2.

Speaking to media, Agarkar did not rule out the possibility of Rahul missing the opening game. Ahead of the selection meeting,

there were questions over both Rahul and Iyer's inclusion in the India squad as they have not played competitive cricket for months. Rahul and Iyer are coming back after undergoing thigh and back surgeries.

"Rahul plays in the team as a wicketkeeper-batter. Hopefully he will be available from the first game itself. Both Rahul and Iyer had long term injuries and they have done really well to get fit. It is a small setback for K L but we are hopeful that will be okay. He is a very important player needless to say," Agarkar said.

"From what we have been told it should not be too bad (in Rahul's case). We still have one month and a half before World Cup, hopefully they (Iyer and Rahul) will get enough cricket before that."

Agarkar also made it clear that at the moment, only Ishan Kishan is being seen as the back up opener to Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill, ruling out a potential comeback for Shikhar Dhawan in the near future.

"Rohit is not a bad player, Shubman has had a phenomenal year. Ishan Kishan (is another

one). Shikhar has been a terrific player for India. At the moment three guys are doing well and you can fit only 15. Unfortunately someone has to fit. At the moment these are our preferred openers," he said.

On not picking leggie Yuzvendra Chahal in the squad, Agarkar said: "He is another terrific performer for India. Sometimes it is the balance of the team or the team combination."

"Axar (Patel) has done really well and he can bat as well. Kuldeep (Yadav) has had a fantastic run so to fit two wrist spinners might be difficult. Kuldeep is little bit ahead of him. So he has to miss out unfortunately."

Dew could play a part in the World Cup that follows Asia Cup. India have picked four specialist pacers for the preceding continental event.

"Dew will play a part (in World Cup in India). We have seen it many times. But it is more about the balance of the team. Good bowler will find a way to bowl in different conditions," Agarkar said.

"Sometimes it is a little bit easier for pacers than spinners to grip the ball. I don't think it was necessarily just the dew. You are trying to get the best balance you can get. When it comes to dew good bowlers find a way." (PTI)