

6
WORLD



- Shelling kills civilians in Ukraine's northeast
- Wagner mercenaries face uncertainty after the death of its leader

8
NATION



- Haryana govt orders suspension of mobile Internet in Nuh, imposes Section 144
- In-situ scientific experiments on lunar surface underway: ISRO

Aug 23 to be celebrated as National Space Day

Chandrayaan-3 landing spot to be named Shiv Shakti point: PM Modi



BENGALURU, Aug 26: Conforming to a christening tradition, Chandrayaan-3's landing point on the Moon will be named "Shiv Shakti Point", a convergence of welfare and strength, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Saturday.

Modi flew down to Bengaluru on Saturday morning from the Greek capital of Athens to interact with ISRO scientists on the successful lunar mission and announced the decision to name the spot where the lander 'Vikram' touched down as "Shiv Shakti point". Terming the success of Chandrayaan-3 mission as an 'extraordinary moment' in the history of India's space programme, Modi, who turned emotional, said the place where the Chandrayaan-2 lander crash-landed on the Moon's surface in 2019 would be known as "Tiranga Point".

"There is a scientific tradition of naming the location of touch down.

India has decided to name the lunar region where our Chandrayaan-3 landed. The place Vikram lander descended will be known as Shiv Shakti point."

"In Shiv, there is resolution for the welfare of humanity and Shakti gives us strength to fulfil those resolutions. This Shiv Shakti Point of the moon also gives a sense of connection with the Himalaya to Kanyakumari," the PM added.

He said the new generation should come forward to scientifically prove the astronomical formulae in the scriptures of India and to study them anew.

"It is also important for our heritage and for science. In a way, this is a double responsibility for the students of schools, colleges and universities today. The treasure of scientific knowledge that India has, has been buried, hidden during the long period of slavery. In this 'Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal', we have to explore this treasure too, do re-

search on it and also tell the world about it," he said.

"I was impatient and eager to visit and salute you for your diligence, dedication, courage, devotion and passion," Modi said in his address to team ISRO, his voice choking. "India is on the moon! We have our national pride placed on the moon."

Hailing the role of women scientists in the success of Chandrayaan-3, he said, "the country's Nari Shakti played a big role" in it.

The Prime Minister stated that the point where Chandrayaan-2 left its imprints will now be called 'Tiranga'. This point, he said, will serve as an inspiration for every effort that India makes and remind us that failure is not the end. "Success is a guarantee where there is strong will power." Declaring August 23 as the 'National Space Day', Modi said it will celebrate the spirit of Science. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Govt to launch Mukhya Mantri Lok Sevak Arogya Yojana on Oct 2: CM



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: The Assam government will soon launch the Mukhya Mantri Lok Sevak Arogya Yojana to provide healthcare facilities to state government employees, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

Sarma announced this while addressing the 38th annual general meeting of the All Assam Karmachari Parishad held at the Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati on Saturday.

"We will launch the Mukhya Mantri Lok Sevak Arogya Yojana on October 2. Under the newly instituted health scheme, medical expenses of government employees and their dependent family members will be reimbursed at a much faster process than it is at present," said Himanta. The government will bear 50 per cent of the premium cost of the particular scheme. The chief minister also praised the Parishad for relentlessly working relentlessly for the interests of state government employees.

"The All Assam Karmachari Parishad has always been standing behind the Assamese community during difficult times such as the Asom Andolan (Assam Movement). As many as 68 employees of the Assam government had laid down their lives during that tumultuous period of the state's history," said Sarma.

Chief minister Sarma also cred-

ited all government employees for their sincere attempts at trying to resolve underlying issues and demands through the medium of dialogue. He said that during his tenure as the state's minister of finance in 2003, he took many initiatives aimed at finding solutions to their problems. Steps were taken to ensure employees received their salaries on time, despite the state finances being in less than good state during that period.

"Assam is the first state in the country where government employees received a hike in dearness allowance at par with their central government counterparts. States such as West Bengal and many other states in Northeast do not pay their employees DA in the range paid by the central government," Sarma added. The chief minister further said that government schemes and policies such as Apun Ghar, Apun Bahan, etc., have been designed and formulated with the aim of achieving the overall welfare of all employees.

Tezpur MP Pallab Lochan Das, commissioner and secretary of medical education and research, Sidharth Singh, All Assam Karmachari Parishad president Dipen Sarma, president of Asom Sahitya Sabha Suryakanta Hazarika, president of reception committee of All Assam Karmachari Parishad Bashab Kalita along with other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

Former secy of KAAC suspended following assault allegations

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 26: Startling revelations have come to light as an enquiry report submitted by secretary Rajeshan Terang of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) confirms allegations against former secretary Mukul Kathar. The report unveils a distressing incident where Kathar is said to have physically assaulted a woman and issued threats towards his wife.

According to a recent Government of Assam notification dated August 25, 2023, Mukul Kathar, the erstwhile secretary of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), has been placed under suspension pending the initiation of "Departmental Proceedings".

The said notification explicitly states that an exhaustive enquiry report has been presented by Rajeshan Terang, the current secretary of KAAC. This report

substantiates the claims that Mukul Kathar, during his tenure, resorted to physical violence against Sengpi Teronpi and even brandished a firearm, menacingly targeting his own wife, Lindalee Teronpi. The alarming incident is reported to have taken place on April 22, 2023. On this fateful day, Kathar is also alleged to have discharged his firearm into the ground in Diphu.

The gravity of the situation is underscored by the fact that two separate cases have been formally lodged against Mukul Kathar at the Diphu police station, solidifying the legal actions being taken against him. The findings of this enquiry have prompted swift action. As the dust settles and investigations unfold, it remains to be seen how the authorities will address this distressing breach of conduct by a public servant.



Cabinet is bedrock of governance: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said the cabinet system is the "bedrock of governance", asserting that 98 per cent of the decisions taken by the council of state ministers in the last 27 months have been "implemented".

His comment comes a day after the 100th state cabinet meeting was held in Guwahati. "The cabinet system is the bedrock of our governance architecture and fulcrum of collective decision making. The aim of frequent meetings is to enable greater exchange of ideas and ensure a whole-of-government approach in decision making," Sarma wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

The state government had, in May 2021, decided to hold meetings of the cabinet every week.

Apart from increasing the frequency of meetings, the state government has taken "several measures to augment the transparency and accountability of cabinet decisions", Sarma said.

"With the blessings of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji, Assam's Vikas Yatra has crossed a very significant milestone.

Our cabinet held its 100th meeting yesterday," the chief minister said on the microblogging site.

He also claimed that the decisions taken by the cabinet along with its implementation status have been made public for the first time.

"In the last 27 months, Assam's cabinet has approved 1,238 decisions of which 1,217 or 98 per cent have been already implemented," Sarma said. He said that the state government has taken the cabinet "closer to the people".

"Drawing inspiration from Shri @narendramodiji's tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat, we have taken the cabinet closer to the people. We began the practice of convening the cabinet outside Guwahati," he said.

Sarma also stated that the council of ministers has already met in nine districts, a first in Assam's history. "In these 100 cabinet meetings, we have taken wide ranging decisions to strengthen economic growth, celebrate our culture, reform the administration, strengthen society & contribute to a Viksit Bharat. We will realise our goal to establish Assam among the top five states," he added. (PTI)

TU research scholar to play key role in ISRO's Aditya L1 mission

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 26: Following in the footsteps of Chayan Dutta, a Tezpur University alumnus who oversaw the launch control operations of Chandrayaan-3, another Tezpur University student is poised to play a pivotal role in the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) ambitious Aditya L1 mission.

Janmejey Sarkar, currently pursuing a PhD at the Department of Physics, Tezpur University, has been actively involved in ISRO's Aditya L1 mission since 2021. As a Senior Research Fellow, Sarkar joined the Aditya L1 mission from the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune. Aditya L1 will be India's first space-based mission dedicated to studying the Sun, focusing on various



aspects such as the Sun's corona, photosphere, chromosphere, solar emissions, solar winds, flares, and Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs). The mission aims to conduct continuous imaging of the Sun.

Sarkar, who completed his MSc in Physics from Tezpur University in 2018, is actively in-

involved in developing IUCAA's Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) payload for the Aditya-L1 mission. His responsibilities include optical and mechanical integration, instrument calibration, qualification, and payload testing. This project is an integral part of his PhD, supervised by prof Gazi Ahmed from the Department of Physics at TU, along with prof Durgesh Tripathi and prof AN Ramaprakash from IUCAA in Pune.

Expressing his enthusiasm, Sarkar said, "I have always been intrigued by Solar Physics and Astronomical Instrumentation, and Tezpur University has nurtured my passion. I am delighted to contribute to ISRO's project."

Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University, expressed his satisfaction and noted (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Assam grapples with flooding as rainfall persists

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: The flood situation in Assam has taken a turn for the worse as relentless rainfall continues to pound the state, according to a bulletin released by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) on Saturday.

The number of individuals affected by the flooding has surged from nearly 36,000 on Friday to an alarming count of over 53,340 on Saturday, as reported in the bulletin. Dhemaji bears the brunt of this catastrophe with over 23,940 people grappling with the flood's aftermath. Sonitpur and Lakhimpur are not far behind, with 11,631 and 8,527 affected individuals respectively, according to the ASDMA bulletin.

Over the past 24 hours, moderate to heavy rainfall has drenched most parts of the state. Unfortunately, these weather conditions are predicted to persist for the next



48 hours. The flood's impact has spread across six districts, with Chirang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Udalguri, and Sonitpur being the hardest hit.

In terms of destruction, the deluge has affected a total of 120 villages and caused significant damage to over 2,933.25 hectares of agricultural land, as outlined in the bulletin.

Chirang and Sonitpur's district administrations have taken the initiative to set up 11 relief camps and 10 relief distribution centers. Presently, Sonitpur shelters 182 inmates in its relief camps. As the evening approached on Saturday, water bodies such as the Beki at Road Bridge, Dikhou at Sivasagar, Brahmaputra at Dhubri and Nimatighat. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Mudslide blocks Sonapur tunnel in Meghalaya

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: Relentless rainfall in the past 24 hours triggered a mudslide that blocked the Sonapur tunnel on NH 6 in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district on Saturday. This obstruction disrupted traffic movement towards Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam's Barak valley, according to local police reports. The impact of the mudslide trapped two vehicles, informed Jagpal S Dhanoo, superintendent of police. He stated that the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) was alerted to ensure the necessary clearance for normal traffic flow on the crucial NH 6, which links three northeastern states.

To address the situation, earth-movers and personnel were deployed to clear the debris and extricate the stranded vehicles, as confirmed by an NHAI official. (With inputs from PTI)

Jorhat gets badminton court right below flyover

Jorhat Badminton Association to maintain court

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: Playing badminton in a court with speeding cars zooming right above your head is something few have experienced. Well, such a court now exists right under a flyover in Assam's Jorhat town.

A badminton court under a flyover is a new concept in the state, though common in big cities in the country. Thanks to the initiative of local businessman, MP Agarwalla, this concept has materialized.

The spaces below flyovers, which are generally turned into vehicle parking areas or simply left open, have been utilised in Jorhat district by building a badminton court. Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had inaugurated the first flyover of the district on August 16.

"M P Agarwalla donated the synthetic court along with basic



amenities under the flyover in the Na-Ali area of the town in memory of his father," said Diganta Buragohain, secretary of the Assam Badminton Association (ABA). Posters of star shuttlers of the country, including that of Olympic medalist Saina Nehwal adorn the wall on one side of the

court. Chairs have been installed for players, coaches and others, while the sides of the court have been cordoned off with wire nets.

"It was a unique idea to use the public place for a purpose that will benefit the people, especially the youngsters. The Jorhat Badminton Association will be maintaining

it," Buragohain said. He added that the court will be open for members on payment of stipulated fees and it will start operations soon.

Local sports organisers Raktim Saikia and Tapan Dutta, among others, will be guiding the local players in the unique court.

"The innovative use of space beneath the Railway Over Bridge for a badminton court is a creative way to promote sports and recreational activities. We're glad to be taking such initiatives that contribute to the #KheloIndia movement," Himanta Biswa Sarma had recently written on X. The ABA secretary also said that there are plans to convert more open spaces below the flyover into areas for other sports. "The other spaces below the flyover are not so big for sports like badminton, etc. However, these can (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Will ensure flow of essential commodities to Manipur: Shah assures civil society group

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: Union home minister Amit Shah has assured an influential civil society group in Manipur that proper security will be ensured along the national highway connecting the Imphal valley to ensure uninterrupted flow of essential commodities.

Shah has also assured a delegation of the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) that a firm stand will be taken against all kinds of infiltration into Manipur's territory.

A delegation of influential Meitei civil society group COCOMI met the home minister as well as top officials of the Intelligence Bureau where they had long discussions on various issues concerning the state.

COCOMI was encouraged to initiate dialogues with responsible Kuki leaders and groups to facilitate problem-solving and peace-building, according to a statement released by the group.

The COCOMI strongly pursued that there will be no allowance for separate administrations in Manipur. "The union home minister emphasised a firm stance against all forms of infiltration into Manipur's territory. Measures are being implemented to register immigrants using biometrics, including retina scans. Stringent action will be taken against all forms of in-

filtration into Manipur's territory," the statement said.

To address concerns about mass infiltration, the government is expediting border fencing in the Manipur sector, it added.

COCOMI strongly pursued that there will be no allowance for separate administrations in Manipur and the home minister appealed for peace in the state and requested COCOMI to convey this message to the people, the statement said.

"Ensuring the movement and distribution of commodities in the state can be possibly realised with the support from both sides of the communities. And necessary deployment of convoys to secure the highways shall be ensured in a few days," it said.

In its meeting with Intelligence Bureau director Tapan Deka and security advisor Northeast A K Mishra, COCOMI presented the complexities of issues affecting Manipur, including illegal immigration, cross-border narco-terrorism, exploitation of forest resources, and violations of the Suspension of the Operations agreement. The ethnic violence in Manipur erupted on May 3 after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

EU looking at petroleum products made from Russian crude oil in India finding way to its market

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: The EU on Saturday voiced concerns over "rapid" rise in refined petroleum products made from Russian crude oil in India finding way to the European market, saying it defies the purpose of the sanctions against Moscow that are aimed at reducing its ability to finance the war with Ukraine.

The European Union's Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade, Valdis Dombrovskis, said oil products processed from Russian crude oil are arriving at the European market in "large quantities" and the grouping is looking at ways to deal with it. In an interaction with a small group of journalists, the EU Vice President, currently on a visit to India, accused Russia of using its energy supplies, and food as "tools" of "war and manipulation" to continue its attack on Ukraine.

On the issue of food, Dombrovskis cited Russia withdrawing from the Black Sea grain initiative and blocking Ukraine's export of food grain to the world market.



Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February last year, the Western powers have imposed a series of sanctions on Moscow including a price cap on Russian oil by G7-plus nations, in order to reduce its ability to finance the war on Ukraine.

Notwithstanding the restrictions, India's procurement of discounted crude oil from Russia has witnessed a major upswing in the last over one year.

"We are obviously aware that a number of countries, including China and India have not joined these sanctions. We are aware that Russia is actively seeking alternative markets for the lost European market," Dombrovskis said.

The EU trade commissioner said this while asked about India's increasing trade relations with Russia, especially its procurement of discounted Russian crude oil.

"We indeed see new trade pat-

terns emerging. Those are some issues which are also the new developments which we are currently assessing. For example, what we see is now a rapid increase of refined oil products, so to say, imports in the EU from India.

"But if they are made with Russian oil, in a sense it defies the purpose which we are putting in front of us as the EU, as a Western democratic world, to reduce Russia's ability to wage the civil war," he said. "So this is something which will provide some reflection on that," the top trade official added. Dombrovskis said a series of sanctions were imposed against Russia, including in the area of exports of oil and oil products as energy supply is Russia's "biggest source" of revenue. "We want to reduce Russia's ability to finance the war," he said. On EU's trade ties with India, the Trade Commissioner said the grouping is looking at significantly expanding economic engagement with New Delhi.

"The EU is India's second largest trading partner, accounting

for some 120 billion euros worth of trading last year, which is 10.8 per cent of total Indian trade. "And India is the EU's 10th largest trading partner, accounting for 2 per cent of EU total trade. But at the same time, we see that there is still lots of untapped potential," he said. Dombrovskis said the EU is looking at making sure that its trade and investment cooperation with India becomes "much more intense".

"We know that we are currently working in a conflictual geopolitical situation. And in this context, the value of trust and reliability has increased substantially," he said.

"So, we also see Russia's instrumentalisation of its energy supplies and now food as tools (of) weapons of war and manipulation - there is no such thing as just goods or political trade," the trade official said.

"So it's all linked together, trade matters, geopolitics. But also friendships matter. So that's why the EU-India strategic partnership is so important," he said. (PTI)

PW Ed-Tech company announces PWNSAT '23 scholarship test

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: Physics Wallah (PW), a prominent Ed-Tech company in India, renowned for its significant contribution to democratising education, has revealed its latest initiative - the PWNSAT 2023 (Physics Wallah National Scholarship cum Admission Test). This highly-anticipated exam will be available both online and offline, welcoming students from classes 6 to 12, as well as exam droppers aspiring to pursue JEE or NEET studies. In an impressive commitment to education, PW is offering scholarships worth a staggering 200 crores to high-performing students in the PWNSAT exam. The exam is scheduled to take place on October 1st, 8th, and 15th, 2023 in offline mode, with online mode options available from October 1st to 15th, 2023. Registration is open on the PW website, app, or at nearby offline PW centers until October 15th, 2023, and results are expected to be announced on October 20th, 2023.

Notably, successful students will gain access to Vidyaapeeth centers, where experienced faculty members will provide comprehensive JEE/NEET preparation. These centers are located throughout India and have a proven track record of delivering outstanding academic results. CEO of Vidyaapeeth Offline at PW, Ankit Gupta, stated, "The PWNSAT exam is our way of giving back to our robust student community and helping more students achieve their dreams of studying engineering or medicine. Last year's PWNSAT exam was a tremendous success, benefiting over 1.1 lakh students and distributing scholarships worth over 120 crores. We firmly believe that every student, regardless of their financial background, deserves access to quality education." With high expectations for increased participation this year, Physics Wallah is confident that the PWNSAT exam will continue to make dreams of pursuing engineering and medicine a reality for countless students across India.

NCCF procures 2,826 tn onion from farmers for buffer stock; to scale up buying in coming days



NEW DELHI, Aug 26: The National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF) on Saturday said it has purchased 2,826 tonnes of onion at ₹ 2,410 per quintal directly from farmers in the last four days mostly from Maharashtra as it resumed procurement of the bulb for a higher buffer stock. The govt enhanced the onion buffer stock target from 3 lakh tonnes to 5 lakh tonnes this year.

Two cooperatives, NCCF and NAFED, have been mandated to procure 1 lakh tonnes each directly from farmers at ₹ 2,410 per quintal to avoid panic selling amid the imposition of an export curb to control domestic prices.

The two cooperatives are also disposing of the government's buffer stock of onion in both wholesale and retail markets to control the rising retail prices of onion, which at present are ruling up to ₹ 60 per kg depending on the quality in Delhi and other cities.

Speaking with PTI, NCCF Managing Director Anice Joseph Chandra said the cooperative commenced the procurement directly from farmers on August 22 in both Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Around 12-13 procurement centres have been opened in Maharashtra and more will be set up depending on the demand.

"In the last four days, we purchased about 2,826 tonnes of onion mostly from Maharashtra. The target is to buy 1 lakh tonnes and we may procure more," she said.

NCCF is procuring onion directly from farmers at ₹ 2410 per

quintal, which is higher than the prevailing wholesale rate of ₹ 1900-2000 per quintal, she added.

In order to boost domestic availability and check rising retail prices, Joseph Chandra said NCCF is also selling the buffer onion stock in 11 states and union territory where prices are increasing and so far 6,450 tonnes of onion has been sold in the wholesale markets at the current mandi rates.

The 11 states and union territory include Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab, and West Bengal, she added.

"We are retailing the onion buffer stock both through physical and e-auction mode to bring greater transparency. The first e-auction of onion was done on August 25 in Delhi-NCR and 36 tonnes were sold," Joseph Chandra said. This will be replicated in two cities of Punjab in the coming days, she said and added that the cooperative is also trying to wholesale onion through NCDRI and Bhim portals.

On the retail front, NCCF said it has already started selling onions in Delhi-NCR and Hyderabad on a limited scale. This will be scaled up in the coming week.

"Onions are being sold at a subsidised rate of ₹ 25/kg without quantitative restrictions," she added. On August 19, the government imposed a 40 per cent export duty on onions to restrict outward shipments and boost local availability amid apprehension about the Kharif output. (PTI)

LG Electronics unveils global campaign

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: LG Electronics, a leading innovator in consumer electronics, has launched a sweeping global campaign aimed at revitalising its brand identity and spreading optimism in these uncertain times. In this bold initiative, LG has showcased its dynamic and youthful brand identity through digital out-of-home advertisements at iconic landmarks worldwide. From the Burj Khalifa in Dubai to New York's Times Square and London's Piccadilly Circus, LG's vibrant visuals aim to inspire customers to embrace life with a positive attitude. As the world grapples with post-pandemic changes and increased instability, LG's campaign seeks to uplift and support people globally. The campaign also highlights the company's core philosophy and values, emphasizing its commitment to making "Life's Good" a reality. The heart of the campaign lies in LG's innovative advertisement videos, featuring the

"Face of the Future." This playful symbol, formed by the letters "L" and "G," conveys a range of emotions and exuberance, reflecting LG's core color palette, including the vibrant LG Active Red.

LOST

I Nilima Boro daughter of Deoram Boro and Ranjani Boro have lost my D.El.Ed Consolidate Marksheet and Original Certificate of KKHSOU bearing registration no. 13042849. Anyone find please return to my following address:-

Nilima Boro
Vill + P.O- Kachupukhuri
P.S.- Howraghat
Pin- 782482
Dist- Karbi Anglong

NAME CHANGE

I have Change my name from Mohammed Nur Uddin to Noor Uddin. That Mohammed Nur Uddin and Noor Uddin both are same and one person.

Noor Uddin
Vill-Barhawar
P.O-Barhawar
P.S-Murajhar,
Hojai, (Assam)

NAME CHANGE

I have change my name from Mohammed Rahmat Ali to Rahmat Ali. That Mohammed Rahmat Ali and Rahmat Ali both are same and one person.

Rahmat Ali
Vill-Barhawar
P.O-Barhawar
P.S. Murajhar,
Hojai, (Assam)

G20 Summit DIAL says ample parking space available for planes at Delhi airport airlines plan to cancel 160 flights

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: Delhi airport operator DIAL, on Saturday said it has received requests from airlines for cancellation of 80 departing and as many arriving domestic flights during three days from September 8 in connection with the G20 Summit.

The Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), a consortium led by the GMR Group, also stressed that the airport is fully equipped with ample parking space for aircraft during the summit period.

"We take immense pride in India's role as the host of the G20 Summit 2023. Current news on cancellations of flights has no linkage to the parking of aircraft. We have already provided required parking," it said in a statement.

Further, it noted that the decision on cancellations of flights has been taken by airlines possibly in light of traffic restrictions due to the G20 Summit.

"So far, we have received requests for cancellation of approximately 80 departing and 80



arriving domestic flights over three days, which is a mere 6 per cent of the normal domestic operations at Delhi Airport. The restrictions will not cause any impact on international flights. "While we recognise that approximately 80 arrivals and 80 departures may be affected due to these cancellations, we are committed to working closely with air-

lines to minimize any inconvenience caused to passengers," the statement said.

The G20 Summit will be held in the national capital on September 9 and 10. Delhi Airport, also known as the Indira Gandhi International Airport, is the country's largest airport and handles around two lakh passengers daily. (PTI)

West Bengal bags Centre's gold award for trade facilitation

KOLKATA, Aug 26: The West Bengal government on Saturday received a gold award from the ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions for the Suvidha Vehicles Facilitation System, an official said.

The award was handed over by Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh at the valedictory session of the 26th National e-Governance Conference in Indore.

"The award was given by Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh and I was there to receive it," Petrapole land port manager Kamlesh Saini told PTI. Officials from the state IT department were also present at the event.

The award also carries a cash award of Rs 10 lakh for the department. The system significantly reduces time it takes for cargo trucks to cross border and save on demurrage.

The portal was created by West Bengal government in coordination with the Land Ports Authority of India, Indian Customs (CBIC), and Border Security Force

(BSF) for quick clearance and smooth movement of vehicles at various Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) in the state.

The system allows exporters to book slots for truck clearance online to pass through ICP Petrapole.

Exporters must have an e-Suvidha pass and upload driver and vehicle information on the portal digitally. This reduces the amount of time it takes for trucks to cross the border.

The online booking facility helps exporters to check the availability of parking slots and reserve their preferred slot in advance, ensuring that trucks arrive at the check post on the scheduled day. At each stage, the exporter receives a text message with real-time updates.

Previously, drivers had to wait for 30 to 40 days for their turn to enter the ICP.

The award is a recognition of the state government's efforts to improve trade facilitation and reduce the time and cost of doing business in West Bengal. (PTI)

Tata Motors committed to migrate facilities to zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045: Executive Dir

RANCHI, Aug 26: Tata Motors is committed to migrate its facilities to become net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and is working on multiple technologies to achieve this including electric and hydrogen fuel technology, its Executive Director Girish Wagh said. The USD 37 billion organisation which is the country's leading player in the commercial vehicle segment will continue to invest annually over ₹ 2,000 crore in the commercial vehicle business, the official said.

"As a part of sustainable transition which is an irreversible megatrend, Tata Motors is committed to become net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. As a part of that, we have to work towards zero-emission vehicle technologies for our entire portfolio as also ensuring that our facilities emit no Co2 or they become net zero co2 emission...we are working on multiple vehicle technologies," Wagh told PTI in an interview here.

"Today if you see we have five plants at five locations where we have commercial vehicle plants...in two locations we have passenger vehicle plants. As I said most of the facilities will have to be eventually zero-emission technolo-

gies so gradually each of these facilities will start migrating...we have committed to net zero greenhouse gas emission by 2045 so by then you will see our entire facilities being migrated," Wagh said.

He said technologies include battery electric, hydrogen in fuel which can be used in two technologies whether it is internal combustion engine or fuel cell electric.

"As a part of this, we are actually working on all these technologies on our products and we signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government of Jharkhand to put up a manufacturing facility for all these technologies. Our first priority here is going to be hydrogen internal combustion engine, but post that we will also come up with battery electric or fuel cell electric as the technology roadmap takes us," Wagh elaborated.

TCPL Green Energy Solutions plans on Friday inked a pact with Jharkhand government to set up a manufacturing facility in the state wherein it will invest over ₹ 350 crore over the next few years to produce fuel-agnostic powertrain solutions including hydrogen Internal Combustion engine (ICE), battery and fuel cell electric vehi-



cle systems as well as fuel delivery systems. TCPL GES is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Cummins Pvt Ltd. TCPL is a 50:50 joint venture between Tata Motors and the global power technology major, Cummins Inc.

Wagh said as far as Tata Motor's heavy commercial vehicle business is concerned more than 80 per cent of the vehicles get manufactured in Jharkhand at the Jamshedpur plant and there is Tata Cummins Joint venture plant which produces engines for this plant here also.

"You can imagine the bulk of our heavy commercial vehicles and engine production happens in the state of Jharkhand. As we move ahead gradually the penetration of zero-emission vehicles will go on increasing and as a first step we are enabling the Jamshedpur facility to make these technologies as we are able to increase the penetration by working even in the ecosystem development...We are looking forward to good penetration of these zero-emission technologies and will ensure that the plant is fully enabled to meet all

these requirements," he said.

He said in terms of numbers there will be an investment of more than ₹ 350 crore in hydrogen facility in Jharkhand in the first phase which will be towards enabling the plant for manufacturing the hydrogen internal combustion engines wherein the capacity will be around 10,000 per annum.

"As the ecosystem matures in the country and the penetration of zero emission technologies increase we are fully geared up to meet all those requirements and eventually of course the entire facility will migrate to zero emission technology," he said.

On the project timeline, he said: "We are working on a very tight timeline and we would see the first engine to roll out during the next calendar year."

About employment opportunities, he said: "If we employ one in original equipment manufacturer because of its extensive value chain the employment generated in the entire supply chain is almost 10 times. Initially, we will generate the employment of 350 numbers in our engine manufacturing plant but you can imagine the kind of impact multiplier effect it will have on the supply chain for additional em-

ployment generation."

"We have a more than 100-year history and rich association with the state of Jharkhand...This (project) will create several employment opportunities...Our initiative will be to make Jharkhand the hub for green and next-gen technologies. It will become one of the first states in India to open its door for manufacturing of advanced, technology solutions and contribute to reducing the nation's carbon footprint," Wagh said. Wagh said the project is also an endorsement of the company's confidence and commitment to make the 'Make in India' initiative a national priority.

On capex, he said generally in the commercial vehicle business the company's annual capex has been in the area of over ₹ 2,000 crore and it will continue to be in the same range in the next fiscal.

Tata Motors had reported a consolidated net profit of ₹ 3,300.65 crore in the first quarter that ended June 30 while consolidated revenue from operations stood at ₹ 1,01,528.49 crore.

Part of the USD128 billion Tata group founded by Jamsetji Tata in 1868, Tata Motors is among the world's leading manufacturers of automobiles. (PTI)

Organisations seek DEEO, Sonitpur, central committee ABSU and Bodo Sahitya's intervention

Move to merge Bodo medium schools opposed



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 26: Bahbari Primary Bodo Sahitya Sabha and the West Tezpur Anchalick ABSU have strongly opposed the education department's move to merge three Bodo Medium LP schools in Bahbari-Bandarmari area under Balipara Education Block in Sonitpur district with other distant Assamese medium schools.

The duo Bodo organisations have mentioned that in an order issued by the office of the director of elementary education, govern-

ment of Assam it was notified that the three Bodo medium LP schools including Purani Ghatua LP School, No-1 Samukia LP School and Borson LP School have been merged to other schools despite having sufficient enrolment.

The organisations have already approached the DEEO, Sonitpur, central committee ABSU and Bodo Sahitya asking for their intervention in the process.

Alleging it is a gross violation of right to education act-2009, ad-

viser of Bahbari Primary Bodo Sahitya Sabha Sidheswar Rabha and ABSU activist Jiku Bodosa and Rupjyoti Boro respectively mentioned that the process has allegedly hurt the sentiment of the common Bodo populace, since these primary level academic institutions have been playing a pivotal role in the field of development of education, language, culture, tradition and heritages of the Bodo people of the greater area.

"More importantly, dating back

this mentioned schools that came into being during the seventies have till date produced a number of brilliant products reflecting the educational, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic development of the Bodo people of the greater area." They reiterated that the government's move to abolish these ethnically, educationally, historically and linguistically vital institutions by means of merging of these schools has led the common Bodo masses of the greater area into an awkward situation. Urging the government to refrain from this move the trio social workers also stated that as per the Right to Education Act no LP school could be merged with a school with more than one km. distance and other medium schools. However, No-1 Samukia and Purani Ghatua LP Schools are being merged with Bandarmari LP school which is an Assamese medium school and about two km away from both the schools.

Likewise the Borson LP School is also being merged with Khanubari LP School witnessing distance of more than 1 km leading the children and their parents into an awkward situation. The common Bodo people of the area and the mentioned Bodo organisations have now urged the government to reconsider the issue.

Flood water of river Jorakhar and Mansiri inundate Balipara



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, July 26: The rising water of River Jorakhar and Mansiri river following the incessant rain in the neighbouring hill state Arunachal Pradesh in the last few days has flooded many residential areas and agricultural fields again in Balipara area under Chariduar revenue circle in Sonitpur District on Saturday.

The areas which are under the flood water till filing of this report are Balipara center, Bamgaon, Dighaligaon, Dighali Balijan, Ud-

mari Gaon, Dhekerigaon, Bhubula Gaon, Ouhola Gaon, Nagapathar and huge agricultural areas adjacent to these mentioned villages.

Moreover, the floodwater also submerged the entire Balipara centre, government and commercial setups along with the Balipara-Jonai connecting NH-15. After flood water flowed over the NH-15 at Balipara centre area the administration has declared a temporary ban on public use and plying of the vehicles on National Highway 15 as a safety measure of the people.

Meanwhile SDRF, NDRF and concerned government agencies have been busy helping the flood victims and arranging for sheltering them in various high lands and public places. Additional district commissioner of Sonitpur and in-charge circle officer of the Chariduar Revenue Circle Twahir Alom has visited flood affected areas and took stock of the situation. ADC Alom said that along with initiating necessary measures, relief camps had also been set up for the affected peoples of the area.

ATTSA sends memo to the PM demanding ST status for Tea Tribes



the allegedly derogatory comment of the president of Assam Advashis Students Association (AASA) Pradip Nag against ATTSA.

Bhumij in a telephonic conversation told this correspondent that the two students' organisations never had a clash before and now some sectarian sections have been trying to bring in a clash between them.

The ATTSA, district unit through a press meeting in Demow Public Library earlier on Wednesday demanded an unconditional apology from Pradip Nag for his comment in which he allegedly ascribed the ATTSA members as rootless. Other leaders of the organisation attending the press meeting urged the leaders of AASA not to create a Manipur-like situation by making sensitive comments. It was attended by Dipu Tanti, vice president AT-TASU district committee, Mun Rajwar, Bhakta Munda, Bijay Bhumij, Rajiv Karmakar, Bichitra Tanti, Biswanath Nag, and Aman Murdha.

miserable lives in the far-flung areas and depriving them of their rights and privileges. The organisation reminds the BJP government of its pre-election commitment of granting ST status to the community but it is more than nine years now, it said, and the commitment remains a mere commitment.

On the other hand Rajkishore Bhumij, president, Assam Tea Tribe Students Association (ATTSA), Sivasagar district committee, on Saturday condemned

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 26: Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association, Sivasagar district committee sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India recently through the deputy commissioner Sivasagar reiterating their demand for scheduled tribe status on the basis of Article 342 of the Constitution.

The committee, through the memorandum, resented the attitude of the state governments over the seven decades for neglecting the tea tribes who have been living

Lions & Leo Club raises awareness on Cancer

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: The Lions & Leo Club of Guwahati Elite, in its ongoing commitment to community well-being, conducted a Cancer Awareness Programme on Saturday at Happy Child High School. The event brought together around 80 female students of class 9-12, to learn about the importance of cancer prevention and early detection. Esteemed speakers graced the event, including Dr JN Buragohain, senior consultant oncologist and managing director of Kumar Nursing Home; Dr Junamoni Borgohain, senior consultant gynaecologist and managing director of Kumar Nursing Home; and Dr Mahamaya Prasad Singh, a renowned specialist in head and neck oncology, microvascular, and reconstructive surgeries.

Hollong Habi Tea Estate employees set to get bonus

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Aug 26: Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) Margherita Branch recently signed an agreement between Ranjit Baruah proprietor of Hollong Habi Tea Estate and Hollong Habi Tea Estate regarding 20 % Bonus for their employees.

Hollong Habi Tea Estate situated at Digboi which falls under Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha(ACMS) Margherita branch is the first tea estate of Assam to declare 20 % bonus for their employees.

During Durga Puja employees of Hollong Habi Tea Estate will get 14 % bonus and in the coming year, month of January remaining 6% bonus shall be given.

Hari Nanda Goh branch secretary of Assam Chah Mazdoor



Sangha Margherita said that it is very good news that Hollong Habi Tea Estate of Digboi is the first tea estate of Assam to declare

Bonus and we really appreciate Ranjit Baruah proprietor of Hollong Habi Tea Estate for his great work.

Hojai Police recovers 11 ceiling fans



HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Aug 26: Acting on a complaint, Hojai Police arrested two persons and recovered 11 ceiling fans from their possession on Saturday. As per information, Hojai Police conducted an operation after receiving a complaint of theft of ceiling fans, which led to the arrest of two individuals. Additionally, 11 ceiling fans were recovered from their possession. A case has been registered for lawful action.

Nazira police officer allegedly tortures maid-servant

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 26: A sensational report of violence against maid-servant has come to light in Nazira on Saturday. An Additional SP (HQ) Charaideo, residing in Nazira, Subhalaksmi Dutta, allegedly carried on brutal atrocity on her maidservant Anima Praja for five months and being desperate, the maidservant finally escaped from her house today and with the help of AT-TASU members lodged an FIR in Nazira Model PS.

Daughter of Bipin Nayak of Balijan, Silbari, Lakhimpur, Anima told media persons that the police officer often had beaten her, poured hot water, and threatened her not to divulge her condition before anyone. Sivasagar Police Superintendent Subhrajyoti Bora said that the maidservant had been sent to the Jaysagar Civil Hospital for a medical check-up and the physical torture was visible on the maid's body. "The case will be registered only after the medical report comes and that the case will be pursued in real earnest", said Bora.

Meanwhile the ATTSA, Sivasagar district president Rajkishore Bhumij today demanded immediate arrest of the woman police officer who can carry on physical atrocity on another woman in her own residence or the organization will carry out a democratic stir against Sivasagar police.



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 26: NFR has undertaken developmental works between Pathsala - Sorupeta - Barpeta road section under Rangiya division of NF Railway. NFR has cancelled train no 15769 (Alipurduar Jn - Lumding) Intercity Express, train no 15770 (Lumding - Alipurduar Jn) Intercity Express, train no 15753 (Alipurduar Jn - Guwahati) Shifung Express, train no 15754 (Guwahati - Alipurduar Jn) Shifung Express and train no 15928 (New Tinsukia - Rangiya) Express commencing journey on August 26 and 27, September 2 and 3 will remain cancelled.

Train no 15927 (Rangiya - New Tinsukia) Express commencing journey on August 26 and September 2; train no 15967 (Rangiya - Ledo) Express commencing journey on August 27 and September 3 will remain

NFR cancels and reschedules trains for developmental works in Rangiya division



cancelled.

The NFR has rescheduled train no 05801 (New Bongaigaon - Guwahati) passenger, scheduled to leave New Bongaigaon on August 26 and 27, September 2 and 3, will be rescheduled at 6:10 am instead of 4:40 am.

Train no 05810 (Guwahati - New Bongaigaon) Passenger, scheduled to leave Guwahati on August 26 and 27, September 2 and 3, will be rescheduled at 6:30 am instead of 5:00 am.

Train no 22411 (Naharlagun - Anand Vihar Terminal) Express, scheduled to leave Naharlagun on August 26 and September 2, will be rescheduled at 12:50 am instead of 9:50 pm.

Train no 12505 (Kamakhya - Anand Vihar Terminal) Northeast Express, scheduled to leave Kamakhya on August 30 and September 6 will be rescheduled at 1.40 pm instead of 12.40 pm.

NFR has regulated train no 15959 (Howrah - Dibrugarh)

Kamrup Express, commencing journey on August 29 and September 5, will be regulated enroute for 90 minutes. Train no 12506 (Anand Vihar Terminal - Kamakhya) Northeast Express on August 29 and September 5 will be regulated enroute for 60 minutes. Train no 15657 (Delhi - Kamakhya) Brahmaputra Mail commencing journey on August 28 and September 4 will be regulated enroute for 60 minutes.

Further, train no 20503 (Dibrugarh - New Delhi) Rajdhani Express, commencing journey on August 26 & September 2, 2023 will be diverted via Kamakhya - Goalpara Town - New Bongaigaon. Again, train no. 01666 (Agartala - Rani Kamalapati) special, commencing journey on August 27, will remain cancelled due to Non-Interlocking work at Powerkheda station in West Central Railway, a PR stated.

Bijnan Chetana Jatra starts at Rajmai

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, Aug 26: Under the aegis of Assam Science Technology and Environment Council under the department of science, technology and climate change government of Assam, the Assam Science Society Demow Branch organised Bijnan Chetana Jatra against superstition in Sunny Rose English High School Rajmai on Saturday.

As per the schedule on Saturday, the programme started with flag hoisting, the flag of Assam Science Society Demow Branch was hoisted by Arup Kumar Dutta, president of Assam Science Society Demow Branch and the flag of Sunny Rose English High School was hoisted by Puna Gogoi, Principal of Sunny Rose English High School.

The three-day Bijnan Chetana Jatra programme was inaugurated by Bhim Dehingia, retired administrative officer Arunachal Pradesh. A one act play name Ekhoj (one step) was staged on the occasion and was performed by dramatist Prabhat Bania and his

team. A 'Science Behind Miracle' magic show was also staged by Gautam Hira, a magician as well as a media person of Demow.

Dr Surajit Giri, an anaesthesia specialist as well as snake bite specialist doctor of Demow Model Hospital created awareness among the people and students present there on superstition and how to get rid from superstition.

Loknath Gogoi, former president of Assam Science Society Demow Branch, Ghana Kanta Gogoi, Jadab Changmai, Hamida Begum, professor of Demow College, Manju Chetia, principal of Sivasagar Govt Higher Secondary, Dr Wakidur Rahman, librarian of Demow College along with other dignitaries were present in the programme.

On August 28 the Bijnan Chetana Jatra programme will be organised in Bokota Nemuguri Higher Secondary School and on August 29 the Bijnan Chetana Jatra programme will be organized at Bamrajabari High Medium School.

Education is prime driver of sustainable livelihood and happiness: Guv Kataria

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 26: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria said that education is the crucial driver of socio-economic development and creation of sustainable livelihood and happiness.

Attending the 10th Convocation of Assam down town University at the university campus here on Saturday, the Governor said that institutions of higher education should take the lead in being the prime mover in enabling education to bring about socio-economic development along with livelihood and happiness. The Governor said, "Convocation day is a memorable day in the life of every student when one can see one's hard work giving fruits. This is the day when you get the license of entering into the world of endless opportunities. It is the day of taking new resolutions for bringing about positive and tangible changes in the society."

The Governor also said that the present day education system in the country is on the springboard of giving quality education based on Indian values, ethics and knowledge. The National Education Policy 2020 is working in the direction of giving holistic education to promote skill and other important faculties of life. The Governor said that the aim of the policy is to establish universal



high quality education along with fundamental responsibilities, constitutional values and a deep connection with intrinsic values of the country.

Governor Kataria said that the education policy is working as a catalyst to develop world-class competence in areas such as AI and data science. He lauded Assam down town university for its efforts in introducing curriculum to promote knowledge on these areas. Hailing the university for taking a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach towards education, research, technology, innovation, knowledge dissemination and community uplift, the Governor said that it is playing a vital role in nurturing fresh ideas among the new generation. "I hope this ap-

proach of the university will fulfil its social mission of sustaining and keeping intact the rich tradition and cultural heritage of the North East region of the country," the Governor added.

He also said that the university is developing into a contemporary education hub, offering a wide variety of subjects and study opportunities to the students from neighbouring countries as well. India is moving forward during the ongoing Amrit-Kaal with the vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047. Today's young students will build a developed India through the accomplishment of their resolutions. They will fulfil the dreams of making India a prosperous nation again.

While congratulating the graduating students and extending his gratitude to the proud parents, the Governor appreciated Assam down town University's contribution to churning out intellectual minds and creating the much-needed quality in human resources in various fields. He told the students that the titles and awards that they received will get them jobs. At the same time the qualities that they received in the university would take them very far in bringing about fundamental changes in the society.

The Governor during his address to the students also announced that the Gold medal awarded to the best graduate will henceforth be given by the Raj Bhavan Secretariat to public as well as private universities.

It may be mentioned that awards have been given to 1064 undergraduates, 349 post graduates, and 27 PhD scholars. The program also witnessed the conferment of gold medals on the best graduate - Jyotismita Sarma and best postgraduate - Tazmina Sultana Hussain.

The Chancellor of Assam down town University, Dr N. N. Dutta, Vice-Chancellor, Dr N.C. Talukdar, along with dignitaries of the university, faculty members, students and their parents were present at the convocation function.

India's Chandrayaan Mission: Astro-politics wins over geo-politics

By: Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee

Finally when India is able to reach the South Lunar pole, the question is coming from all corners. "Hi, Sky to whom do you belong?" The question is not made by any poet or a romantic lover. This is the most important question today when the countries are all at a fierce competition for the possession of the Space. We have heard of space wars in the game zone or in the Hollywood industry. But after India too joining the lunar missions and especially after the successful Chandrayaan 3 mission the question of astro-politics is gaining more and more significance, Vikram, vikram, vikram – today the whole universe is probably resonant with the name of India's Vikram... Let us go back for a while to look into the history of the lunar expeditions conducted by India.

On September 7, 2019, the Chandrayaan-2 mission encountered a challenge while attempting to land. The Vikram Lander went off course, leading to a loss of communication with the Lander carrying the Pragyan rover. Despite this unexpected turn of events, the Chandrayaan-2 orbiter still works well when Chandrayaan 3 sends Vikram almost to the South pole of the moon to reach. Luna-25, modern Russia's first attempt to land a spacecraft on the Moon, has ended in failure with the spacecraft crashing onto the lunar surface, Russian space agency Roscosmos said on Sunday. The failure once again highlights the risks involved in getting a spacecraft to soft-land on the

Moon. The main purpose of Luna-25 was to test technology for landing on the moon, and the loss of the lander during a less risky phase of the mission will add scrutiny to Russia's space struggles. Luna 25 ends its bid to reach out to the Lunar South pole. This is now being explained as India's victory over Russia in Astro-Politics. It was Russia which sent its first cosmonaut successfully to the moon. Yuri Gagarin from Russia became the first human to journey into outer space.

Travelling on Vostok 1 Gagarin completed one orbit of Earth on April 12, 1961 to achieve the first major milestone for the Soviet Union amidst the Space Race which was basically a 20th century competition between two Cold War rivals, the US and the then Soviet Union which were getting ready with the ballistic missile based Nuclear Arms Race. From June 16 to 19, 1963, Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova from Russia again became the first woman to fly in space. Interestingly enough the space race began when the US started its lunar mission. Kathryn Sullivan was the first American woman to walk in space, the first woman to dive to the Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench (the deepest part of the Earth's oceans), and is the first and only person to do both.

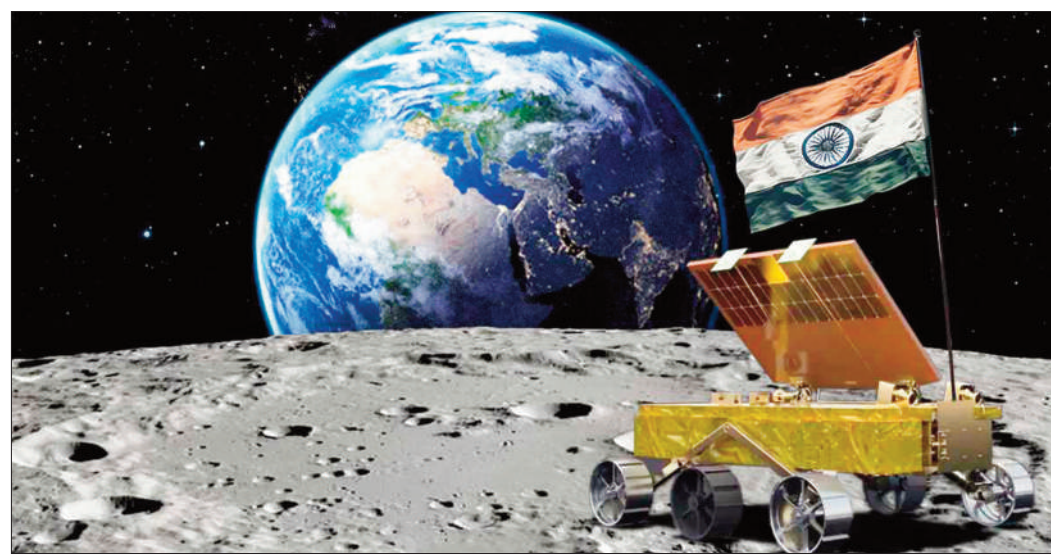
Five national space programs (The Soviet Union, The USA, China, India, Japan and the European Space Agency) have reached the moon with unscrewed missions that achieved varying degrees of success, as well as 2 private/commercial missions from

Israel and Japan.

All these were basically a part of the Space Race and the efforts of the countries to grab victory in the Astro-Politics which has outdated the Geo-politics. This Space Race is not limited to the geographical invasion. From the New York Times bestselling author of Prisoners of Geography and leading geopolitics expert Tim Marshall comes a must-read book on today's space including the increasingly tense power struggle between the US, China, and Russia and what it means for all of us here on Earth.

In this gripping work, bestselling author Tim Marshall navigates the new geopolitical landscape to show how we got here and where we're heading. Extensively researched and drawing on the latest information from intelligence, government, and civilian institutions, this book provides a detailed, clear account of the new space race, the power rivalries, and how technology, economics, and war have a ripple effect on everyone across the globe. "Ideals of South-South solidarity continue to motivate space relations between Latin American countries and China," notes Klinger, not to mention the hope of improving their legislative presence through bilateral and multilateral agreements and/or earning esteem via scientific developments.

Geopolitics is the study of how geography and economics have an influence on politics and on the relations between nations. Geopolitics refers to political factors that are between countries/regions. For example, politics



between the US and China or, more recently, Russia and Ukraine. Geopolitical tensions are exactly what they sound like – political issues between or involving two or more countries that cause tension or unrest. The recently published The Future of Geography is an essential read about global power, politics, and the future of humanity.

Intergalactic politics echo world politics: the most recognizable space programs and multilateral agreements China's main interest in space exploration is to deepen asymmetrical power structures. China's continuation of satellite production in South America, say, is a source of stress for Western security interests. As Global Studies scholar Julie Michelle Klinger says, such an endeavor is seen "as a novelty at best, or with passing alarmism at worst. There are plenty of politi-

cal and economic interests in outer space cooperation – particularly given their distance from US influence.

With India's programme of lunar exploration India is now becoming a part of this astro-politics. Russian Luna 25 was trying hard to reach the Lunar Soil much before the Indian Chandrayaan-3. But the race in Astro-politics ended in the Tortoise and Hare tale of Aesop. The slow and steady movement of the Chandrayaan to the South Pole of the moon finally wins. The success of Chandrayaan 3 is expected to build on the success of its earlier Moon missions. It comes 13 years after the country's first Moon mission in 2008, which discovered the presence of water molecules on the parched lunar surface and established that the Moon has an atmosphere during daytime; security is innately connected to the

geopolitics of space exploration. India is now being requested by Russia to use Chandrayaan 3 to give them informations on their Luna 25 which stopped sending any signals and probably got inactive on the lunar soil after crash landing. The new strategic partnership between the United States and India is creating opportunities for security cooperation.

A key element in this partnership – US-India space cooperation – will most likely become the defining relationship for international space cooperation around which other space-faring nations will posture. The Indian space program is rapidly developing world-class capabilities and presents itself as a worthy partner. The US space program should be able to provide innovative ideas for fruitful collaboration.

Despite these propitious circumstances, there are potential

obstacles of cost, security, and risk. The opportunity is here, now, for the United States and India each to add an important new jewel to their crown of international space cooperation activities. Most importantly, this new space partnership should enhance the security and prosperity of the United States, India, and the world.

The politics of outer space includes space treaties, law in space, international cooperation and conflict in space exploration, international economics and the hypothetical political impact of any contact with extraterrestrial intelligence. The expansion of resource extraction in outer space will require development of a legal regulatory framework that adequately governs asteroid mining activities. Given the limitation the Moon treaty place on states, it has not been ratified by key players in the space frontier such as The US, China and Russia.

Now India may join this group. Furthermore, spaceflight as a whole and space law more particularly has been criticized as a post colonial project by being built on a colonial legacy and by not facilitating the sharing of access to space and its benefits. Today Russia is going to take help of Chandrayaan 3 for rescuing their lander Luna 25. It is a glorious moment for India and it can now start thinking of using astro-politics for increasing its impact in world geopolitics what China has already started. *(The author is in Virginia Commonwealth University now as Affiliate Faculty in English who can be reached at email bhattacharjr@vcu.edu.)*

India's Chandrayaan triumphs in soft landing and exploration endeavour

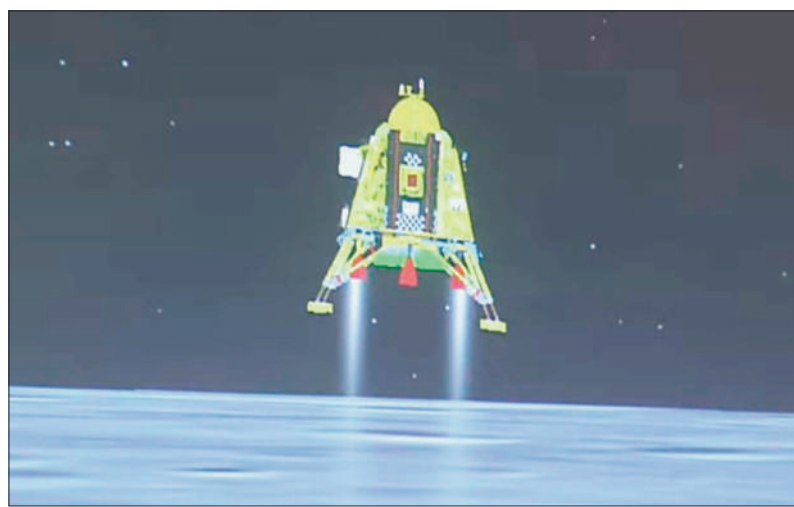
By: Dipak Kurmi

On the notable date of August 23, 2023, India etched its name onto the celestial canvas, orchestrating a masterful achievement that graced the lunar stage. A captivating ballet unfolded as the Chan Lander, a sentient spacecraft, descended with grace and finesse to finally cradle itself upon the Moon's southern polar embrace, a region poetically known as "lunar's heart."

The mission's purpose is to unravel the Moon's enigmas, peering into its very essence, deciphering its secretive compositions and the elusive breath of its atmosphere, which barely dares to stir. In the entourage of this triumph, the Pragyan rover, a six-wheeled wanderer, once nestled within Vikram's embrace now breathes the lunar air. With meticulous steps, it embarks on a voyage of discovery, tracing careful lines across the untouched tapestry of the lunar site.

The propulsion module of Chandrayaan, responsible for ferrying Vikram from Earth to a lunar orbit 150 km above, remains in orbital motion around the Moon. Accompanying it is Chandrayaan-2's orbital module, which has encircled the Moon for the past four years, transmitting extensive data about the lunar realm in all its dimensions.

Simultaneously observing an Indian lander and rover stationed on the lunar terrain, along with two of our spacecraft in lunar orbit, is an extraordinary stroke of luck. This outcome is a direct consequence of the scrupulous planning, unwavering determination, and wholehearted commitment demonstrated by the countless members comprising India's esteemed space community, who understandably revel in this moment of triumph.



The task of landing on the airless expanse of the lunar surface remains undeniably challenging.

This achievement has been realized by only four nations thus far: the former USSR/Russia, the United States, China, and now India. Of particular significance to India is the achievement of a delicate touchdown by Chandrayaan in the Moon's southern polar region, distinguished by its intricate yet captivating landscape. Scientists are deeply intrigued by the potential presence of water ice in this area, alongside remnants from the early solar system, both of which serve as compelling incentives. These factors have collectively rendered the lunar South Polar Region a prime objective for space missions from countries such as India, the United States, Russia, China, and Japan.

In the days preceding Chandrayaan's gentle lunar landing, discussions arose regarding a potential race between Russia and India to reach the southern pole of the Moon. However, India's pursuit of achieving a soft landing in this specific region dates back to the Chandrayaan-2 mission, which unfortunately fell short of completing this objective. Meanwhile, Russia has its distinct motivations for reengaging in lunar exploration, marking a return after a hiatus of 47 years.

A meticulous examination of Chandrayaan-3, with a weight of 3,500 kg, unveils a journey spanning approximately 40 days to its designated destination. This journey showcases the remarkable precision that characterized each planned event, commencing from its launch propelled by our indigenous LVM3 vehicle. The sequence seamlessly progresses to its alignment with the trajectory intersecting the Moon, followed by its successful integration into lunar orbit, subsequent separation, and the flawless landing of Vikram.

Moreover, this narrative underscores both the analytical prowess and adept management of ISRO, exemplifying its capacity to excel in challenging circumstances.

With Chandrayaan-2 having effectively executed all these manoeuvres except for the delicate landing, it was the act of landing itself that held the attention of millions of Indians in suspense. Engaging in any spacecraft operation of this nature tends to evoke a mixture of nerves and excitement among those deeply committed to its success. As the real-time transmission captured the initiation of the 'retro burn,' involving the activation of the four rocket engines on Chandrayaan-3's Vikram Lander, people across India and around the

globe collectively held their breath in anticipation.

Despite the insights gained from Chandrayaan-2 and the extensive measures taken, including design enhancements and the implementation of backup systems, ISRO scientists remained cautious about the landing endeavour. Nonetheless, their unwavering commitment and relentless efforts yielded remarkable results. This dedication bore fruit when Vikram achieved a flawless touchdown within the targeted southern polar expanse of the lunar terrain.

Upon confirming the operational status of the solar-powered Vikram Lander and its accompanying Pragyan rover, the directive was given for the rover's descent. Carrying out its task with fidelity, Pragyan smoothly descended by gliding down an extended ramp.

As Pragyan initiated its traversal across the untouched southern polar landscape, its wheel imprints etched enduring impressions of the national emblem and ISRO logo onto the lunar surface. With this accomplishment, a significant portion of Chandrayaan-3's objectives had been fulfilled.

Having effectively showcased the vital indigenous technologies required for lunar landing and rover operations, ISRO will now shift its attention to-

wards on-site exploration. This will be facilitated through the utilization of the three scientific payloads housed within Vikram, as well as the two within Pragyan. This phase is slated to span the upcoming 14 Earth days, a duration coinciding with continuous solar illumination upon the landing site due to the Sun's presence. This lighting will directly illuminate the solar panels of both Vikram and Pragyan. Historically, ISRO's lunar study was restricted to remote sensing methods, but the current achievement marks a pivotal transition toward on-the-ground exploration.

Vikram comprises three payloads: RAMBHA, L.P. ChaSTE, and ILSA, each tasked with investigating distinct lunar facets. RAMBHA aims to analyze the Moon's sparse atmosphere's density and fluctuations. L.P. ChaSTE will delve into the thermal conductivity properties of the lunar surface. ILSA, on the other hand, will harness lunar seismic activity to unveil insights into the Moon's internal makeup. Pragyan, equipped with two spectrometers, will play a pivotal role in unraveling the chemical, mineralogical, and elemental composition of the lunar surface.

Historically, the Moon has served humanity by aiding maritime navigation and timekeeping. In the modern era of space exploration, it assumes a pivotal role in comprehending Earth and the solar system's evolutionary journey. Its allure extends beyond valuable water, minerals, and fuel resources; the Moon could potentially serve as a launch pad for crewed ventures into distant realms.

Chandrayaan's triumph will undoubtedly establish a robust groundwork for India's forthcoming ambitious pursuits.

'An Ode to Mavericks: The fiery souls who ignited transformation against all odds'

By: Dr. Aniruddha Babar

*In the crucible of conviction, we find our might,
One soul's fervor ignites the darkest night.
Heroes rise, their courage unyielding, firm,
With unwavering character, they reshape the world's term.
Ambedkar, Gandhi, Bose, their stories resound,
Through trials and battles, their voices unbound.
In the heart of one person, the world can be spun,
Passion and purpose unite, a battle is won.*

The annals of history are replete with instances of individuals who, through their unwavering determination and unyielding commitment, have managed to transcend the boundaries of their circumstances and effect profound changes in the world around them. The notion that "one man can change the world" is not merely a platitude, but a veritable reality that has been substantiated time and again. This truth finds its em-

bodiment in the lives of stalwart figures like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, and several others who demonstrated that transformational change can be initiated and sustained through the confluence of military-like discipline and character.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a luminary in the Indian independence movement and a champion of the oppressed, stands as a testament to the power of individual action.

With relentless dedication to the cause of social justice, he endeavored to eradicate the deeply entrenched caste system that had perpetuated inequality and injustice for centuries. Ambedkar's disciplined approach to education, his intellectual prowess, his super-strong commitment to the cause of 'Depressed Classes' and desire to construct a 'New World' in rising Indian nation paved the way for his influential role in drafting the Indian Constitution, laying the foundation for a democratic, modern nation that upholds the principles of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity.

Likewise, Mahatma Gandhi often referred to as the "Father of the Nation," wielded the weapon of nonviolent resistance to dismantle the chains of British colonial rule. His disciplined adherence to Satyagraha, or truth-force, exemplified a military-like strategy that defied conventional norms of resistance. Gandhi's unwavering character and steadfast adherence to his principles galvanized the masses, proving that a single individual's resolute stance could steer the trajectory of an entire nation.

Subhash Chandra Bose, a fervent nationalist and charismatic leader, demonstrated the fusion of military-like discipline with a tenacious spirit. Bose's belief in a 'direct' approach to achieving independence led him to form the Indian National Army (INA), composed of soldiers who exhibited unwavering loyalty and dedication to the cause. Bose's leadership, coupled with his ironclad determination, left an indelible mark on the struggle for freedom, showcasing the immense potential of a resolute individual to reshape the course of history.

These eminent figures, however, are not isolated instances. The world has witnessed numerous other examples of individuals who have harnessed their inherent potential to evoke change. The unassuming Rosa Parks, by refusing to surrender her seat on a bus, ignited the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Malala Yousafzai's steadfastness in advocating for girls' education, even after surviving a near-fatal attack by the Taliban, demonstrates the influence a single voice can wield in altering social norms.

The quintessential trait that distinguishes these agents of transformation is their embodiment of military-like discipline and character. Much like soldiers adhering to a strict regimen, these individuals maintained an unflinching commitment to their ideals and causes. Their actions were guided by an unyielding sense of purpose, compassion and unwavering self-belief. Just as a soldier faces adversity on the battlefield with unwavering determination, these trailblazers confronted obstacles with resilience, resilience born of a character forged in the crucible of conviction.

However, the notion that one man alone can impact global change requires a nuanced perspective. While individual actions can undoubtedly spark transformation, sustainable progress often demands collective efforts. Ambedkar's quest for social justice was complemented by the tireless advocacy of countless others who rallied behind the cause. Gandhi's non-violent movement thrived on the participation of masses across the nation. Bose's INA was a collaboration of dedicated soldiers united by a shared goal. The echoes of change resonate more resonantly when they are amplified by collective voices.

The idea that one individual can alter the world around them is not an idle fantasy but a reality realized through history. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, and other exemplars stand as beacons of how soldier-like discipline and character, fused with a profound commitment to their causes, can transform society. These individuals demonstrate that change is not a distant dream but an attainable reality when embraced with unwavering resolve. Their lives illuminate the potential within each of us to reshape the course of history, proving that even a single person, armed with unassailable conviction, can be the catalyst for monumental transformation.

The time has come for us to take inspiration from the 'Great Mavericks of past and the present' to awaken from our slumber, to rise as individuals with unwavering determination and collective strength. Even if you find yourself standing alone, remember that you are not truly alone- The Constitution-The Supreme Law of land is with all of us.

Do not be discouraged by the seemingly insurmountable odds; your solitary voice for the 'New World' can spark a chorus of effective and positive change that can not only take your community, region, state of Nagaland on a forward march-but will also transform our nation and collective conscience. (The author is an academician in the Dept. of Political Science, Tetso College, Nagaland)



Challenging the stereotypes

By: Asad Mirza

We often hear complaints of objectifying and sexualising women in the advertising world. However, though the advertising world propagates or translates its ideas into the final copy, but the fact remains that it is driven by the client's demands, and in most cases to generate revenues the advertising firms bow down to the client pressure.

In addition, we also bemoan poor performance of India on many social indicators, but it indeed it may hearten you to know that India is perhaps the only country in Asia which has a law in place defining indecent representation of women through advertising.

Policy interventions by the government in India from time to time, on the issue have indeed been progressive. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act was passed in 1986 and it was further amended in 2012 and 2018.

In addition the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), Broadcasting Complaints Council of India (BCCI) and the largest state broadcaster Doordarshan have their own Code for the advertisers besides the industry's self-regulatory bodies, however, most advertisements across brands, defy these norms.

This leads one to the question whether we are fulfilling our duty to stop objectification of women and dis-

crimination to other disadvantaged groups based on their race, skin colour, social status or physical appearances, just in words or are we approaching the issue from a wrong angle.

Recognising this anomaly and addressing the issue from a direct approach, the UN Women launched a new initiative titled Unstereotype Alliance in 2017, underlining the SDG-5, which was aimed to consolidate the activities related to gender issues and women, particularly through advertising and marketing platforms.

The Unstereotype Alliance aimed to address the advertising industry, its leaders and decision makers and the creative teams to aim to end the anti-women stereotypes in advertising. The initiative received the desired support from the industry leaders and corporates around the world and as a result within five years of its launch it is supported by 12 member countries, including the U.S., the U.K. and India across five continents with an impressive 45% growth in industry membership, besides support from international and national advertising bodies.

Coalitions like Unstereotype Alliance provides us an opportunity at the global level to promote gender equality and break the stereotypical notions associated with both genders. In a way Unstereotype Alliance provides us an opportunity to systemati-

cally study and analyse the gender representation in advertising in different countries. Globally, research has found that customers across the world are increasingly responding and rejecting the set stereotypes, which are fed through the advertising industry and they respond in a positive manner to a balanced and representative portrayal of women in advertising.

In a country like India, women are usually portrayed in traditional roles like house makers, teachers etc. engaged in activities which are traditionally associated with them like cooking, cleaning the house and caring for the family besides the traditional beauty products or being showed as fair and thin. In contrast they are negatively

portrayed in advertisements where there is no need for them to be present.

An article in exchange4media.com, a leading platform of industry players related to advertising, marketing and media world, in 2020 found that industry research reveals that as compared to 25% of advertisements which feature men there are only 8% advertisements which feature the women.

However, it is heartening to note that several Indian companies have tried to bust the myth and in the past had launched women-centric advertisements. Several brands like Tanishq, Raaga, Titan, Airtel, Havell's, Tata Tea or Dalda, some of which are owned Un-Stereotype Alliance Champion in India i.e. Hindustan Unilever Limited

have tried to break the stereotypical mould and start a fresh campaign with a newer perspective.

In India, the Unstereotype Alliance could focus on promoting girl education, gender parity, nutrition, skills and empowerment and hygiene management. All these initiatives should try to break the traditional roles of women and instead male leads could be shown to support the message as they are going to be target audience. In addition, the positive outcome of women education, women employability, women breaking the gender barrier, women gaining entry into traditionally male preserved domains like engineering should be given more focus besides highlighting their successes in corporate or other domains.

Also to reach our target audience in rural India, Unstereotype Alliance could focus on promoting the key messages in the vernacular or regional languages as the traditional English-medium advertising retains only the educated class as the main audience, but in order to break that myth and connect with the masses, it is important to connect with them in their language, ensuring a better connectivity and recall of your messages.

Expanding the Unstereotype Alliance is not going to be a challenge but an additional bonus in the sense that Indian advertising industry and advertisers, both are working to negate the traditional stereotypes. There have

been several advertising campaigns initiated in the past, which have been received, positively by the target audience and the industry both.

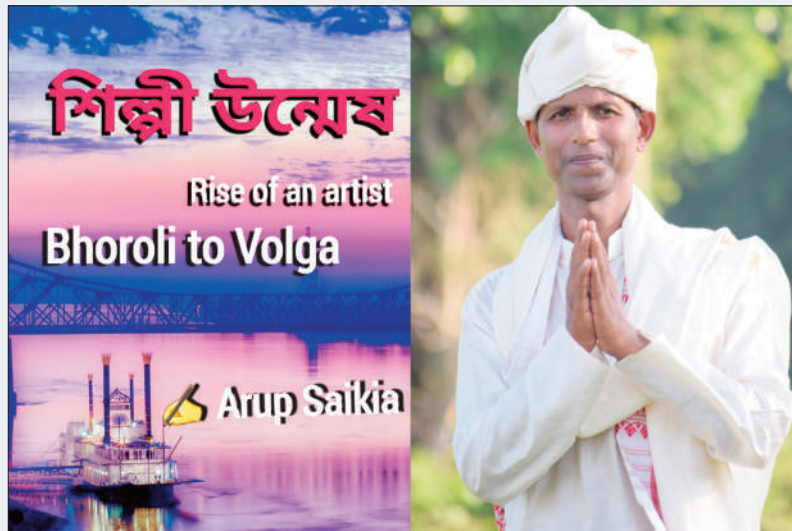
So what we need in the current scenario is perhaps a little push to set the tone and delivery right. Though the research points to the negative results about the portrayal of women in the Indian advertising campaigns. Yet, with little sensitisation and providing the stimuli could work wonders for the Unstereotype Alliance in India, as most of the advertising bodies are already on board to set the tone right in the Indian advertisements.

In this regard a collaborative effort could be initiated with the Government of India, too through its various ministries like Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Minority Affairs. They could be targeted to promote the Prime Minister's campaign: Beti Bachao, Beti Parhao – Save the girl child, educate the girl child.

Additionally, another positive factor working in favour of the Unstereotype Alliance is that currently, a majority of CEO's or MD's of leading Indian advertising firms are women and definitely it would require less of an effort to join the Unstereotype Alliance in its fight against the stereotyping the women. (The author is a Delhi-based senior political and international affairs commentator)

BOOK REVIEW

'Silpi Unmesh': An autobiography of Arup Saikia



By: Samiran Bhuyan

"Silpi Unmesh" or "Rise of an artist" is an autobiography of an Assamese traditional drama (Bhaona) artist Arup Saikia. The experiences writer gained internationally during voyage from the native river Jia Bhoroli (presently watery stream is called) to Euro-Russian river Volga via many countries are expressed in words through "Silpi Unmesh". It's noteworthy that the birthplace of said artist, Arup Saikia, is near the river Jia Bhoroli.

The cultural journey from the Bhoroli to Volga is a true depiction of artist Arup Saikia's assimilation and broader acceptability of fraternity across the globe. The language, community or nationality never matter here at all. The friction and agony an artist always faces is the formative base of this autobiography. This happens during the preaching of the revolutionary artistic genre.

Intuitive reality:
A genuine artist is one who understands the newly sprouted feelings in people's minds in addition to the prevailing trends of society. The artist is a real human being, one who properly cares for people's outlook. This vision of the writer is conspicuously stated in "Silpi Unmesh". Moreover the writer is easily able to feel the motion of time and take everything as inevitable. Therefore the obstacle during novelty of creation is a common phenomenon in society. To fathom or express the cardiac vibration of the new generation, performers have to walk on thorns. Artist Arup Saikia is a performer of this kind. His journey is not a cakewalk. Arup Saikia one hand clearly grasps the degradation or numbness of society also. This is caused by a narrow outlook and wrong meaning of orthodoxy. But the author gained a fiery impulse to write an autobiography. This is for widespread mixed reactions while adorning Assamese traditional drama – "Bhaona" in new linguistic attire (English).

Vision:
Arup Saikia is genuinely an artist of difference. Basically in the beginning of acting in rural areas, Saikia tried to bring modernity and change of style ignoring the usual accepted trend of traditional drama (bhaona). Bhaona is an art although it was created religiously. Changing is inevitable. Transformation begets beauty and elegance which eventually sustain legacy. Arup Saikia's contribution for cultural transition of "Assamese pride -Bhaona" traversed everywhere.

The author here presents a connecting link among all the major countries

The cultural journey from the Bhoroli to Volga is a true depiction of artist Arup Saikia's assimilation and broader acceptability of fraternity across the globe. The language, community or nationality never matter here at all. The friction and agony an artist always faces is the formative base of this autobiography. This happens during the preaching of the revolutionary artistic genre

or races of the world. The book is worth the reader's time. No unnecessary description is included. There is frequent undertone of drama-poetic monologue. The musical garland of words differentiates the autobiography from the usual one.

The series of pamphlets in 'Silpi Unmesh' that readers go through raises a sense of intellectual independence in the name of culture among them. The visiting places are described in a lovely outline. The type of writing which stimulates intellect with brilliance flashes of wit. Rather than simply performing a show, the author-artist focuses on comparative study of culture from the indigenous river Bhoroli to Volga.

Extensive research has been done of alien culture. It's specially emphasized to know through autobiography whether any particular event owes to our country or has influence to change the stream, vice versa.

Mission:
The narrative of the book is a kind of self investigation. Author Arup Saikia asked and replied to himself the fruit of the mission. What's the necessity of swimming in the opposite direction? Arup Saikia says, "Art is a tree in a porous cage where air can flow uninterrupted without shaking the roots." Once in a chapter, social worker Hemalata Saikia said to the author, "Conflict always increases the circumference. You cross its local boundaries and embrace more avenues."

Author finally says that cultural integration is an unending process. It will continue until a civilized race or country exists. The more we exchange, the more we attain wider acceptability. Protest is another name of recognition. It's published by Gunjan Kakoty. The readers will test mass motivated artistic zeal while reading this book. (The author is a writer, cultural activist and motivational speaker)

Whispers of diligence: Bee's unity, Scorpion's strength

By: Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, 'The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn'. Similarly, in the delicate dance of honeybees and the determined stride of scorpions, we find a profound lessons on unity and diligence that resonates through the tapestry of nature"

In the vast world of insects, honeybees stand out for their remarkable unity and unwavering diligence. These tiny creatures work together in perfect harmony, displaying a level of cooperation that offers valuable lessons for human societies.

Honeybees are known for their complex social structure, with each member of the colony having a specific role to play. The queen bee, as the matriarch, lays eggs and ensures the continuity of the hive. The male drones serve to fertilize the queen's eggs, while the female worker bees are responsible for various tasks, such as foraging for nectar, producing honey, and protecting the hive.

The work ethic of honeybees is truly awe-inspiring. Day after day, they venture out in search of nectar from flowers, tirelessly flying long distances to collect the precious resource. Back at the hive, they convert the nectar into honey, a vital food source for the entire colony, especially during times of scarcity.

What makes honeybees even more remarkable is their cooperative spirit. They communicate through intricate dances, sharing vital information about the location of food sources. The unity of purpose within the hive is evident as they all work towards a common goal – the survival and prosperity of the colony. As humans, we can learn valuable lessons from the honeybee's way of life. The strength of their colony lies in unity, collaboration, and a deep sense of responsibility towards each

other. Similarly, in our societies, when individuals come together, pooling their diverse talents and skills for the greater good, remarkable progress can be achieved.

Just like the honeybees, we should recognize the significance of teamwork and shared responsibilities. When we work in unison, supporting one another through challenges and celebrating collective achievements, we create a harmonious environment that fosters growth and mutual benefit.

Furthermore, the diligent nature of honeybees teaches us the value of hard work and perseverance. Success often comes through consistent effort and dedication to our goals. Just as honeybees diligently gather nectar day after day, we must stay focused on our aspirations, knowing that our efforts will eventually bear sweet fruits of success.

"Cherishing Parents: A Lesson from the Scorpion"

In the vast tapestry of nature, there are remarkable lessons to be learned from even the tiniest creatures. The scorpion, a creature often misunderstood, reveals a powerful message about the value of parents and the reciprocity of love and care.

In the scorpion kingdom, a unique phenomenon unfolds. After giving birth, the mother places her offspring on her back, carrying them with utmost devotion. Astonishingly, these young scorpions feed on their mother's flesh, a symbiotic sacrifice she silently endures. This striking tale of selflessness and endurance bears an uncanny resemblance to certain aspects of today's human society.

In our modern world, parents toil tirelessly, working day and night, regardless of challenges, to provide for their children's needs and dreams. Just like the scorpion mother, they silently endure the trials of life, expecting nothing in return but their children's happiness. However, as children grow, some might unknowingly detach themselves, focusing on their own aspirations without considering the sacrifices made on their behalf.

It is essential to realize that filial responsibility is not merely a cultural norm; it holds deep significance in various religious and ethical traditions. Islam, for instance, places great emphasis on honoring parents, recognizing the profound bond and respect owed to them. In Islamic belief, paradise lies beneath a mother's feet, highlighting the divine importance of caring for parents.

Gratitude and reciprocity towards parents are key tenets not only in Islam but in various other belief systems too. The tale of the scorpion teaches us that by valuing and caring for our parents, we can earn blessings from a higher power, fostering a sense of contentment and harmony in both this life and the hereafter.

It is crucial to remember that the scorpion's tale is not a call for parents to demand obedience or repayments from their

children. Instead, it urges children to recognize the love and sacrifices of their parents and repay them with love, respect, and appreciation. By sharing our goals and achievements with our parents, we invite them into our lives, and in return, they offer guidance, support, and blessings for our endeavors.

Bottom line: The remarkable behavior of honeybees offers profound insights into unity, diligence, and cooperation. By emulating their sense of community and dedicated work ethic, we can create more harmonious societies and achieve extraordinary outcomes together. Let us be inspired by the humble honeybee and strive to build a world where unity and diligence become the pillars of progress and prosperity and similarly the scorpion's unique story carries a profound lesson for all of us. Let us emulate the mother scorpion's resilience and selflessness in our relationships with our parents. By cherishing and caring for them, we not only gain the favor of a higher power but also create a nurturing and loving environment for ourselves and future generations. May we all strive to be like the scorpion in the best possible way - selfless, caring, and grateful to those who brought us into this world.

"As we reflect upon the intricate collaboration of honeybees and the steadfast resolve of scorpions, let us remember that unity and diligence are not mere chance occurrences in nature, but deliberate choices that shape the world around us. Their story urges us to embrace the strength of togetherness and the unwavering commitment to our goals, for it is in these virtues that we too can find our place in the grand symphony of existence." (The author is a renowned Columnist & Motivational Speaker and an Associate Editor of the Weekly Publication 'Education Quill.' He can be reached at Akhoun.aubaid@gmail.com)

Apartment for Vegan

After meat eaters, now tomato turns untouchable

By: Kamal Baruah

When we talk about Gujarat, we see a picture of a business community across India but never go anything deep other than buying from their shop. I had the opportunity to visit great length to discover the lifestyle of Gujju. What many don't realise that Gujaratis have a simple lifestyle. They're friendly, approachable and talk to outsiders with a smile. They love doing business and have business ethics. It's truly a land of Mahatma that makes Gujarat a friendly tourist destination. I adventured once in early 2K to set sail on a treasure hunt. But what truly makes them so good? I reminisce about our time in a city Jamnagar located on the western coast of India.

We were struggling to find a rented apartment. I was shocked to hear a deal with a landlord "are you a vegetarian?" I thought it was kinda funny from the outset. He wore a very serious expression and I knew something was wrong. Eventually I reached a compromise. Yup, we're vegetarian. Gujaratis are strict vegan and even the state has imposed a ban on the cooking

and consumptions of non-vegetarian food in guest houses. I was awestruck by the name of apartment highlighted "for Vegetarians".

There is no unrestricted freedom available to meat vendors, sellers and slaughterhouse owners to do business in meat on the ground of religious occasions. We're amazed to discover that it also prohibit preparation and display of non-vegetarian food in public. The butchers are allowed to open manshani dukan only in authorized areas twice in a week. The local oppose it arguing that displaying meat hurt their sensitivities. Even eggs are not sold in open. Outsiders have been sidelined and barred from visiting locals as they're surnamed machli-khane-wala. It's a wonder that fish are considered to be kide (insects) in water.

Fish is delicious but its pungent smell lingers long. Its delicate flavours and aromas would arrive a bitterly complain from your neighbour. We were forced to eat ghas-phus (plant based food) that caused fatigue and loss of appetite for the weekdays.

Sundays were a special day meat and seafood markets are open so does a day for fresh



shak bhaji bazar (sabji market). Though leafy greens are not produced yet bundles of spinach, methi, coriander are sent in trucks to Gujarat from neighbouring Maharashtra. Fresh onions, tomatoes and capsicums are a bit expensive due to the cost of transportation while potatoes, peas, and cauliflowers are produced there. We would fill a vegetable bag at a paltry '50 then. We enjoyed living life to the fullest during weekend.

All these signs of Pure-Veg across food outlets found us offensive and a caste marker too as localities cater to different food habits on those places only. Onion and garlic are for-

bidden too as they carry the energy of anger. But tomato is loved by all. Even years after leaving from the Saurashtra, old habits die hard. I still carry a jhola bag on Sunday for a bagful of sabji, no matter how much a refrigerator could preserve it or not for the coming week.

The other day evening at super market, while on the way back from office saw eggs and tomatoes are sold side by side from a shop selling puja items. Eggs are no longer untouchable in eastern India but soaring tomato prices have burden common people and turns untouchable nowadays.

It started vanishing from basket of common man. My jhola was also not filled that day. After tomato, onions price also saw a hike. The prices of all commodities are jacked up but I wouldn't mind spending for a tomato-onion-meat recipe for dinner at home, to be honest. Now we no longer live an apartment in Jamnagar.

Much to our surprise, no more tomatoes listed in McDonalds Burger now. In days gone by, meat eaters were labelled untouchables, now tomato turns untouchable. Imagine life without tomato, the indispensable tomato fills in dishes as Gujaratis are strict vegan.

Ukrainian officials say Russian shells have struck a cafe in a key front-line area, killing 2 civilians and wounding a third

Shelling kills civilians in Ukraine's northeast as fears grow of a second Russian takeover

KYIV, Aug 26: Russian forces struck a cafe in a key front-line area in northeastern Ukraine on Saturday, killing two civilians and wounding a third, regional officials said.

The shelling near the city of Kupiansk came as UK officials said that Russia may try to retake the area, which was captured by Kyiv in a lightning counteroffensive last September after more than six months of Russian occupation. Fierce fighting there earlier this month prompted mandatory evacuations and fears of a second Russian takeover.

Russian shells on Saturday morning struck the cafe in Podoly, an eastern suburb of Kupiansk, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said in a Telegram post. He added that rescue teams were working at the site.

UK military intelligence on Saturday assessed that Russia may "increase the intensity of its offensive efforts" around Kupiansk and nearby Lyman in an attempt to take pressure off its forces near Bakhmut and in the Zaporizhzhia region, where a Ukrainian counteroffensive has reportedly made gradual gains.



Earlier this month, Ukrainian authorities ordered a mandatory evacuation of nearly 12,000 civilians from 37 towns and villages around Kupiansk, citing a concerted effort by Russian troops to punch through the front line. After the Russian occupiers left Kupiansk last year, Ukrainian authorities said they found torture chambers and mass graves in the region.

Also on Saturday, a new drone attack on Moscow forced an early-morning temporary shutdown of all three major airports serving the city, Russian state media reported. Officials blamed Ukraine for what appeared to be the latest of near-daily strikes on the Russian capital and the sur-

rounding region.

Kyiv has since early this year sought to take the 18-month-war into the heart of Russia, also saying recently that it was behind strikes on Russian military assets far behind the front lines. Russia's defence ministry and Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyannin said that a drone was shot down over the Istra district of the Moscow region, some 50 kilometres west of Red Square. Sobyannin said in a Telegram post that there were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage. According to Russia's state Tass agency, the Sheremetev, Domodedovo and Vnukovo airports all suspended flights for over an hour early on Saturday, Russian Telegram chan-

nels on Saturday posted videos, some of them apparently from home security cameras, of what they claimed was Russian air defence downing the drone. One video shows a car parked outside what appears to be suburban home, its alarm beginning to blare seconds after two loud blasts sound in the distance. Russia's defence ministry that same day blamed Ukraine for the attack. As of Saturday morning, Ukrainian authorities had not said whether Kyiv had any involvement.

Russia and Ukraine traded multiple drone attacks earlier this week, with Kyiv apparently targeting Moscow and the Kremlin's forces launching another bombardment of Ukrainian grain storage depots in what have recently become signature tactics.

Also this week, Kyiv claimed it had destroyed a key Russian S-400 surface-to-air missile defense system in occupied Crimea. Ukrainian media also claimed that Ukrainian saboteurs coordinated by Kyiv's military intelligence services carried out a pair of recent drone attacks that destroyed and damaged bomber aircraft at air bases deep inside Russia. (AP)

Russia's Wagner mercenaries face uncertainty after the presumed death of its leader in a plane crash

MOSCOW, Aug 26: The Wagner Group's presence extends from the ancient battlegrounds of Syria to the deserts of sub-Saharan Africa, projecting the Kremlin's global influence with mercenaries accused of using brutal force and profiting from seized mineral riches.

But that was under Yevgeny Prigozhin, who in what may have been his final recruitment video, appeared in military fatigues and held an assault rifle from an unidentified dry and dusty plain as he boasted that Wagner was "making Russia even greater on all continents and Africa even more free."

A private jet carrying Prigozhin and his top lieutenants crashed northwest of Moscow on Wednesday, two months after he led an armed rebellion that challenged the authority of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

There is wide speculation that the mercenary leader, who is presumed dead, was targeted for assassination because of his uprising, although the Kremlin has denied involvement.

The crash has raised questions about the future of Prigozhin's private army, which fought alongside Russian troops in Ukraine before his brief uprising against military leaders in Moscow. Russian author-



ities have cited the need to await DNA test results to confirm Prigozhin's death, but Putin expressed condolences after the jet fell from the sky.

The Russian leader also has ordered Wagner fighters to sign an oath of allegiance to the Russian state, according to a decree published on the Kremlin's website late Friday and effective immediately.

The order followed the Kremlin's denial Friday of suggestions from Western officials and news media that the Wagner leader may have been killed on Putin's orders.

In African countries where Wagner provided security against extremist organisations like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group, officials and commentators predicted Russia would likely maintain a presence, placing the mercenaries under new leadership. (AP)

A crush at the opening ceremony of the Indian Ocean Island Games in Madagascar kills 12

ANTANANARIVO, Aug 26: A crush at a stadium in Madagascar left at least 12 people dead and 85 injured as sports fans attended the opening ceremony of the Indian Ocean Island Games, authorities said on Saturday. Government spokesperson Lalatiana Rakotondrzafy said that 33 of the injured remained in the HRJA Hospital.

The crush on Friday at the Mahamasina Stadium in the capital, Antananarivo, happened as people gathered at an entrance for the official opening of the regional multi-sports event. Madagascar Prime Minister Christian Ntsay said Friday that 11 people were in critical condition following the crush, which happened at around 4.30 p.m. Ntsay visited victims at the hospital.

Spokesperson Rakotondrzafy did not give any update on those who were critically injured in her statement posted on Facebook. Rajoelina was at the ceremony at Mahamasina Stadium and asked the crowd to observe a moment of silence. The opening ceremony went ahead.

The stadium, which is built to hold around 41,000 people, has been the site of deadly crushes before. One person died and at least 37 were injured in a crush ahead of a qualifying game for the African Cup of Nations soccer tournament between Madagascar and Senegal in 2018. In 2019, at least 15 people died in a stampede at a music concert at the stadium. (AP)

China sends aircraft and vessels toward Taiwan days after US approves USD 500 mn arms sale

BEIJING, Aug 26: Taiwan's defence ministry said Saturday that China sent dozens of aircraft and vessels toward the island, just days after the United States approved a USD 500-million arms sale to Taiwan.

The defence ministry said in a statement that 32 aircraft from the People's Liberation Army and nine vessels from the navy were detected in the 24 hours between 6 am Friday and 6 am Saturday.

Of these, 20 aircraft either crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait or breached Taiwan's air defense identification zone. In response, Taiwan tasked its own aircraft, vessels and missile systems to respond to the activities, the defence ministry said.

China sees self-ruled Taiwan as a renegade province to be taken by force if necessary. In the past year, Beijing has stepped up military drills around the island in reaction to Taiwan's political activities. The Chinese military launched drills around Taiwan last week as a "stern warning" after Taiwan's vice president stopped over in the US while on an official trip to Paraguay. The State Department said Wednesday it had signed off on the sale of infrared search and track systems for F-16 fighter jets and other related equipment to Taiwan worth half a billion dollars.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang said Friday that China opposed the arms sale, calling it a "gross interference" in China's internal affairs and describing it as a "heinous act" that violates its "One China" principle, as well as three Sino-US joint communiques. Zhang also said that China urged the US to fulfil its commitment of not supporting the independence of Taiwan. (AP)

Singapore ready for non-Chinese PM: presidential candidate Tharman

SINGAPORE, Aug 26: Singapore is ready for a non-Chinese prime minister at any time, presidential candidate Tharman Shanmugaratnam has said ahead of the September 1 election, calling it a marker of the society's progress in the country dominated by Chinese-origin population. Race is a factor in politics everywhere, he said on Friday, citing former US president Barack Obama, who has spoken and written about it.

However, Singaporeans today, unlike 40 or 50 years ago, look at all factors and not just race, said 66-year-old Tharman, a Singaporean of Indian origin.

"They look at people in totality... Singapore is ready at any time. If someone comes up who is a superior candidate for prime minister, the person can be made the prime minister. I believe they can," he said during an election meeting to share his vision for the presidency.

It is a marker of Singapore's progress as a society, added the former senior minister, who resigned from the ruling People's Action Party in July to contest for the presidency. "Singapore is ready any time for a non-Chinese prime minister," The Straits Times quoted Tharman, who

goes by his popular first name, as saying.

Singaporeans are to vote for the 9th President on September 1.

Tharman, an economist, also said that as important as they are, only government policies cannot make Singapore a fairer and better place.

Instead, things must go much deeper, and the next phase of Singapore's development is to pay attention to things that cannot be measured, he said.

Noting that there are many people who are doing meaningful jobs that are not visible, he said, "Every skill and every job deserves respect. Better pay for the low-paid - but (also) respect and dignity."

Chinese-origin Singaporeans Tan Kin Lian and Ng Kok Song, are also contesting the presidential election.

Tan, 75, is a former trade union-related insurance group NTUC Income's chief executive while NG, also 75, is the former chief investment officer at the state-owned GIC.

Chinese people account for about 75 per cent of Singapore's multi-racial population. An estimated 13.5 per cent are Malays and about nine per cent are Indians, with others making up the remainder. (PTI)

Greek fire officials arrest 2 for arson as multiple wildfires continue to burn across the country

ATHENS, Aug 26: Greek fire department officials arrested two men on Saturday for allegedly deliberately starting wildfires as hundreds of firefighters battle blazes that have been blamed for 21 deaths.

One man was arrested on Evia for allegedly deliberately setting fire to dried grass in the island's Karystos area. The fire department said the man confessed to having set four other fires in the area in July and August. A second man was arrested in the Larissa area in central Greece, also for allegedly deliberately setting fire to dried vegetation. Judicial authorities were informed in both cases.

Officials have said arson has been to blame for several fires in Greece over the past week, although it is still unclear what sparked the country's largest blazes, including one in the northeastern region of Evros and Alexandroupolis where nearly all the fire-attributed deaths have occurred, and another on the fringes of Athens.

"Some... arsonists are setting fires, endangering forests, property and above all human



lives," Climate Crisis and Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias said Thursday. "What is happening is not just unacceptable but despicable and criminal."

The minister said nine fires had been set in the space of four hours Thursday morning in the Avlona area in the northern foothills of Mount Parnitha, a mountain on the northwestern fringes of Athens that is one of the capital's last green areas. A major fire was already burning on the southern side of the mountain at the time, and continued burning Saturday.

"You are committing a crime against the country," Kikilias said. "We will find you. You will be held accountable to jus-

tice."

Later that day, police arrested a 45-year-old man on suspicion of arson for allegedly setting at least three fires in the Avlona area. A search of his home revealed kindling, a fire torch gun and pine needles, police said. Greece has been plagued by the daily outbreak of dozens of fires over the past week as gale-force winds and hot, dry summer conditions combine to whip up flames and hamper firefighting efforts.

On Friday, firefighters were tackling 111 blazes, including 59 that had broken out in the 24 hours between Thursday and Friday evening, the fire department said. Most are tackled in the early stages, but some have

grown to massive blazes that have consumed homes and vast tracts of forest.

Storms were forecast for some areas of Greece Saturday, and there were reports of lightning causing several fires near the Greek capital that were being tackled by firefighters.

Greece's largest current blaze, blamed for 20 deaths, was burning for an eighth day Saturday in the country's northeast. Firefighters found 18 bodies in woodland on Tuesday, one on Monday and another Thursday. With nobody reported missing in the area, authorities believe they could be migrants who recently crossed the border from Türkiye. Greece's Disaster Victim Identification Team has been activated to identify the remains, and a telephone hotline set up for potential relatives of the victims to call. One more victim — a man reportedly trying to save his livestock from advancing flames in central Greece — died on Monday.

More than 290 firefighters, backed by five planes and two helicopters, were battling the Evros blaze. (AP)

Power returns to most of Kenya after a 14-hr outage, longest in recent memory

NAIROBI, Aug 26: Electricity was being restored in most parts of Kenya on Saturday, 14 hours after the longest outage in recent memory, the majority government-owned power distributor said. There was still no clear explanation for the outage that hit on Friday night, shutting down the country's main international airport, affecting major hospitals and even the president's office compound.

"I am really sorry for what has happened," Transport Minister Kipchumba Murkomen said in a statement close to midnight.

"There is no excuse worth reporting and there is no reason why our airport is in darkness."



Kenya Power later on Saturday said it had restored service in most areas. The outage came just weeks before Kenya's government hosts the first Africa Climate Summit, where energy will be key on the agenda. Kenya gets almost all its energy from renewable sources, but infrastructure and alleged misman-

agement remain an issue in the country of more than 50 million people. Kenya Power had announced in a brief statement that a "system disturbance" led to the loss of the bulk power supply to parts of the country just before 10 pm Friday. Shortly after midnight, it reported that power had been restored to the Mt. Kenya region, a longtime political stronghold, and added that initial reports indicated a fault in a generation plant.

Around 3 am, Kenya Power said electricity was back up at the international airport in the capital, Nairobi, and other "critical areas" in the capital region. However, three of Nairobi's

largest hospitals as well as the State House, the site of President William Ruto's office, told The Associated Press earlier Saturday they were still using generators. The power outage had lasted for about 14 hours in what Kenyans called the longest blackout in memory. Calls to Kenya Power's communications department did not go through.

Tourism is an important part of Kenya's economy, and stranded travellers quickly posted images on social media of the darkened airport. The Kenya Airports Authority said a generator serving the main terminal had failed to start after the national power outage. (AP)

Mob attack on Christians suspected to be orchestrated as part of hate campaign against minority, says Pak's top rights body



Lahore, Aug 26: The recent mob attack on churches and Christian localities in Pakistan's Punjab province was part of a larger hate campaign against the minority community, an independent human rights body has said, highlighting the involvement of radical Islamists and complicity of the police in the incident.

On August 16, an enraged mob attacked scores of churches and Christian localities over blasphemy allegations against a Christian man in Jaranwala town of Faisalabad district, 130 km from Punjab's provincial capital Lahore. They also attacked a Christian cemetery and vandalised the office of the local assistant commissioner. Till now, police have arrested over 200 people including the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) activists in connection with the mob attack.

"The attack on the minority community cannot be entirely deemed as random or spontaneous, with a suspicion that it was orchestrated as part of a larger hate campaign against the local Christians while the role of police and its abil-

ity to effectively mitigate and control the situation is questionable," the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's (HRCP) fact-finding mission said in the report released on Friday. At least 24 churches and several dozen smaller chapels as well as scores of houses were torched and looted in a series of brutal mob-led attacks against the local Christian community, the report said. According to Punjab police, 20 churches and 86 Christian houses were burnt down by the mob. The findings by the non-profit organisation state that it was not a spontaneous or random Muslim crowd that attacked the churches and homes but they were part of a larger campaign of hatred against local Christians. (PTI)

Pope warns of social media perils: relationships reduced to algorithms, partisan propaganda, hatred



ROME, Aug 26: Pope Francis on Saturday warned against the danger of reducing human relationships to "mere algorithms" and urged lawmakers to be vigilant against "partisan" propaganda and divisiveness on social media.

In a speech to participants of the International Catholic Legislators Network, who were holding their annual conference in the Rome area, Francis noted that social media networks can be a way to help people realize they are part of something larger than themselves.

"Indeed, that is the stated aim of many social media platforms, and certainly much good takes place through these means of communication," Francis said. Still, the pontiff said, vigilance was needed, "for sadly many dehumanizing trends resulting from technocracy are found on these media." He cited the deliberate spread of false information about people, fake news and the promotion of hatred and division. Francis further decried what he called "partisan propaganda and the reduction of human relationships to mere algorithms."

Another peril on social media networks is "a false sense of belonging, especially among young people, that can lead to isolation and loneliness," he said.

As a remedy, Francis advocated a "culture of authentic encounter, which involves a radical call to respect and to listen to one another, including those with whom we may strongly disagree." (AP)

Another NASA astronaut will launch to the station from Kazakhstan in mid-September under a barter agreement, along with two Russians

New crew for the space station launches with 4 astronauts from 4 countries

CAPE CANAVERAL (US), Aug 26: Four astronauts from four countries rocketed toward the International Space Station on Saturday.

They should reach the orbiting lab in their SpaceX capsule on Sunday, replacing four astronauts living up there since March.

A NASA astronaut was joined on the predawn liftoff from Kennedy Space Center by fliers from Denmark, Japan and Russia. They clasped one another's gloved hands upon reaching orbit.

It was the first US launch where every spacecraft seat was occupied by a different country - until now, NASA had always included two or three of its own on its SpaceX taxi flights. A fluke in timing led to the assignments, officials said.

"We're a united team with a common mission," NASA's Jasmin Moghbeli radioed from

orbit. Moghbeli, a Marine pilot serving as commander, said her crew's makeup demonstrates "what we can do when we work together in harmony." With her on the six-month mission are the European Space Agency's Andreas Mogensen, Japan's Satoshi Furukawa and Russia's Konstantin Borisov.

"To explore space, we need to do it together," the European Space Agency's director general, Josef Aschbacher, said minutes before liftoff. "Space is really global, and international cooperation is key."

The astronauts' paths to space couldn't be more different.

Moghbeli's parents fled Iran during the 1979 revolution. Born in Germany and raised on New York's Long Island, she joined the Marines and flew attack helicopters in Afghanistan. The first-time space traveller hopes to show Iranian girls that



they, too, can aim high. "Belief in yourself is something really powerful," she said before the flight.

Mogensen worked on oil rigs off the West African coast after getting an engineering degree. He told people puzzled by his job choice that "in the future we would need drillers in space" like Bruce Willis' character in the killer asteroid film "Armageddon." He's convinced the

rig experience led to his selection as Denmark's first astronaut.

Furukawa spent a decade as a surgeon before making Japan's astronaut cut. Like Mogensen, he's visited the station before.

Borisov, a space rookie, turned to engineering after studying business. He runs a freediving school in Moscow and judges the sport, in which divers shun oxygen tanks and

hold their breath underwater.

One of the perks of an international crew, they noted, is the food. Among the delicacies soaring: Persian herbed stew, Danish chocolate and Japanese mackerel.

SpaceX's first-stage booster returned to Cape Canaveral several minutes after liftoff, an extra treat for the thousands of spectators gathered in the early-morning darkness. Liftoff had been delayed a day for additional data reviews of the capsule's life-support system.

Another NASA astronaut will launch to the station from Kazakhstan in mid-September under a barter agreement, along with two Russians.

SpaceX has now launched eight crews for NASA. Boeing was hired at the same time nearly a decade ago, but has yet to fly astronauts. Its crew capsule is grounded until 2024 by parachute and other issues. (AP)

Arunachal cabinet's nod to boost healthcare services in state

ITANAGAR, Aug 26: The Arunachal Pradesh government has approved a number of proposals of the Health and Family Welfare Department to enhance healthcare services in the state.

This initiative aims to reinforce nursing services at various healthcare levels with a strong emphasis on disease prevention, a cabinet statement informed here on Saturday.

Addressing the increasing demand for secondary healthcare services, the cabinet chaired by chief minister Pema Khandu on Friday has approved the creation of 623 positions within the Hospital Nursing Cadre.

This cadre includes Group B non-gazetted, Group B gazetted, and Group A positions, all geared towards enhancing curative care, covering both definitive and emergency interventions.

In response to the shortage of skilled nursing professionals, the state has taken steps to address the issue. The cabinet has also sanctioned the establishment of five associate professors (Nursing) and eighteen assistant professors (Nursing) positions, bolstering the

delivery of high-quality nursing education.

The state has made strides in offering free diagnostic laboratory services across the region. Equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic and medical equipment, these modern laboratories are now being extended to Primary Health Centres and Sub-Centres, benefitting residents even at grassroots levels.

To support the effective functioning of these laboratories, the cabinet has approved the addition of 192 laboratory technician positions, the statement said. In the realm of medical education, the lone medical college – Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHS), has reached a milestone by successfully graduating its inaugural batch of final-year MBBS students.

To further strengthen medical education, the government aims to increase the college's intake capacity from 50 to 110 MBBS students. TRIHS has also introduced advanced services such as the Cardiac Cath Lab, expanding critical care provisions.

Recognizing the crucial contributions



of lady health visitors and health assistants in healthcare delivery, the cabinet has endorsed revised recruitment rules for these positions, to enhance recruitment processes and career progression. As part of a comprehensive strategy to augment healthcare human resources, the cabinet has approved the creation of 28 nursing tutor positions, replacing outdated clinical instructor posts. The state cabinet also accorded approval

for the creation of 1,632 new positions across diverse departments, with the overarching objective of augmenting productivity and refining service delivery.

The lion's share of these positions, numbering 1,588, will be allocated to the department of Health and Family Welfare, alongside the TRIHS.

Under the purview of the department of Law, Legislative, and Justice, the nod has been granted for the establishment

of technical roles dedicated to the Gauhati High Court Itanagar Permanent Bench, in consonance with the E-Court project.

Furthermore, the green signal for a post of record keeper and an LDC skilled position (contingency) for the Papum Pare district judiciary has been obtained.

Additionally, the seal of approval for two contractual law clerk positions for the Gauhati High Court Itanagar Permanent Bench has also been secured.

The cabinet has also given the go-ahead for the establishment of a District and Sessions Court at Seppa in East Kameng district.

This pivotal step is poised to furnish timely judicial services to the denizens of Hitherto, the adjudication of all cases in the district was conducted by the District and Session Court in Bomdila, situated 150 kilometres away from Seppa.

"This geographical impediment had led to delays in trial proceedings, inflicting hardships and inconveniences upon litigants, coupled with considerable financial ramifications. The cabinet's de-

cision aims to mitigate these challenges and address security concerns associated with the transit of under-trial prisoners," the statement said.

Furthermore, the cabinet's imprimatur extends to the allocation of resources imperative for the seamless operation of the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women (APSCW).

In a separate resolution, the cabinet has sanctioned the establishment of a circle headquarters in Changku, entailing the bifurcation of Pipu circle from the Chayangtajo administrative centre.

Additionally, a new circle headquarters will take shape at Sapapu in East Kameng district, complemented by the approval for a circle headquarters at Khazalang under West Kameng district.

Concurrently, the cabinet has endorsed the proposition for the enactment of the Arunachal Pradesh Court Fees Bill and the Arunachal Pradesh Goods and Service Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

These bills are slated for presentation in the forthcoming Assembly session from September 4. (PTI)

Amit Shah encourages COCOMI for dialogues with 'responsible' Kuki leaders and groups

IMPHAL, Aug 26: Union home minister Amit Shah has urged the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) to initiate dialogues with 'responsible' Kuki leaders and groups to facilitate problem-solving and peace-building, according to the COCOMI. Amit Shah reportedly told the COCOMI leaders during a meeting in New Delhi.

The 15-member delegation of the COCOMI held a meeting with the union home minister at his official residence in New Delhi today, at 10.30 am. The COCOMI team led by its coordinator Jitendra Ningomba dashed to Delhi on Thursday on the invitation from the union home minister.

During the meeting, the union home minister emphasised a firm stance against all forms of infiltration into Manipur's territory, said a press release of the COCOMI.

Shah also informed the COCOMI that measures are being implemented to register immigrants using biometrics, including retina scans. Stringent action will be taken against all forms of infiltration into Manipur's territory.

To address concerns about mass infiltration, the government is expediting border fencing in the Manipur sector, the COCOMI was informed by the Home minister.

The union home minister further said that there will be "no allowance for separate administrations" in Manipur, while appealing for peace in the state, the COCOMI statement added.



Shah also requested the COCOMI to convey this message to the people, the COCOMI statement signed by its media coordinator Somendro Thokchom stated.

On the matter of ensuring the movement and distribution of commodities in the state, the Union Home minister said that it can be possibly realized with the support from both sides of the communities.

Shah also assured that necessary deployment of convoys to secure the highways will be ensured in a few days.

"COCOMI was encouraged to initiate dialogues with responsible Kuki leaders and groups to facilitate problem-solving and peace-building," the press release said.

After the meeting, the COCOMI delegation engaged in a detailed discussion with top officials of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), as per the minister's instructions.

In the meeting in which director

of the Intelligence Bureau and security advisor (Northeast) AK Mishra, COCOMI presented the complexities of issues affecting Manipur, including illegal immigration, cross-border narco-terrorism, exploitation of forest resources, and Suspension of Operation (SoO) rules violations.

The ministry of home affairs (MHA) officials acknowledged and took note of these critical points, the COCOMI stated.

The IB director provided insights into the current crisis in Manipur and its understanding of critical issues. After thorough discussion, the officials urged the COCOMI to prioritize the immediate measures outlined in the letter.

"They also emphasized the importance of continued engagement and cooperation with the government and stakeholders to facilitate a quicker resolution of the crisis," the press release further said. (NNN)

Manipur Legislative Assembly to hold assembly for a day

IMPHAL, Aug 26: The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, in its meeting held in Imphal on Saturday, decided to hold the upcoming session of the Assembly only for a day.

After the Manipur Governor has summoned the 4th session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly at 11 am on August 29, the Speaker of Manipur legislative Assembly convened the meeting to decide the number of sittings of the session today, an official source said.

Meanwhile, the opposition Congress strongly condemned the decision of holding the session only for one day and demanded increasing the number of sittings.

Leader of the opposition Congress and former chief minister O Ibobi Singh who attended the meeting as a member of the Business Advisory Committee expressed unhappiness with the decision to hold the session for a day only.

Addressing a press conference at Congress Bhavan here, the former three times chief minister raised a strong objection to the decision.

In protest against the decision, he is likely to abstain from attending

the session, he hinted, saying that it is early to say whether he would attend the session on August 29 or not.

As a member of the Business Advisory Committee, he attended the meeting convened at the committee room of the state Assembly and strongly suggested to at least five sittings so that the issues in the fore of the state and the prevailing crisis can be deliberated thoroughly, he said.

However, without any consideration to his suggestion, the meeting decided to hold the session only for a day, he said.

Holding only one sitting is not enough as most of the time of the house would be consumed while taking obituary reference for the former members of the house demised during the mid of the session, Ibobi also said.

There would be little time for the members of the house to speak on the prevailing crisis in the state which the Congress considered as the most important agenda for convening the session, he said.

He said that if there is no opportunity to express their opinions and comments to the members of the

house, it would amount to violation of the rights of the members.

Besides, it will happen to go against the wishes of the people of the state, Ibobi further added.

The opposition leader alleged that considering the manner in which the government decided to hold the session for only a day, it would not be wrong to say that the session is to be held only to avoid a constitutional crisis.

He said that the session to be held on August 29 would not be in the public interest. It will also be the first time in the history of Manipur that such a session would be held only for the name sake to avoid a constitutional crisis, he added.

Reiterating that he strongly opposed the decision taken by the committee, Ibobi said that he walked out of the meeting after submitting a dissent note to the Speaker. Apart from the CLP leader, sitting Congress MLAs including MPCC president K Meghachandra were also present in the press conference and expressed their opposition to the decision of the Business Advisory Committee while alleging the session is to be unconstitutional. (NNN)

Bhupender Yadav undertakes visit to Oil Plam Field in Nagaland

DIMAPUR, Aug 26: Bhupender Yadav, the union minister of environment, forest & climate change, and employment for the government of India, undertook a visit to the 'Oil Palm Field' in Ngawla, Peren district, Nagaland recently. During his visit, he engaged with the village council, interacting on several crucial topics.

The union minister inquired about the status of the Jal Jeevan Mission, particularly whether the villagers had gained access to water tap connections. Additionally, he discussed the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), a flagship scheme aiming to provide clean cooking LPG gas to rural Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. The Ngawla Village Council apprised the union minister that every household within their jurisdiction has been successfully connected to these initiatives.

They also shared information about their village's progress, including the registration of 632 job cards, development projects such as approach roads and fishery as well as extensive tree plantation efforts. (NNN)

Manipur education department issues advisory to schools

IMPHAL, Aug 26: In view of the reports of the spread of viral conjunctivitis in Manipur, the Education department issued an advisory to schools and hostels today.

The advisory said, if one or two students are infected with the conjunctivitis in a school, the infected student may be given leave for 10 days.

If three or more students are infected in a class in a school, then the whole class may be dosed for 10 days. In a school, if three or more students are infected in three or more different classes, the school may be closed for 10 days.

In case of hostels, if any inmate of the hostel is infected, the inmate may be sent home for 10 days. If more than three inmates are infected in a hostel, the hostel may be dosed for 10 days.

Proper hand washing practices should be encouraged among the students and teachers alike, the advisory said.

The advisory issued as per the suggestion from the

director of state health services further stated that proper safety measures should be taken to control the spread of the viral conjunctivitis among the school going population at the school level which will go a long way in controlling the epidemic at the state level.

All Zonal Education officers were also instructed to circulate the advisory to all schools under their respective jurisdiction immediately.

The advisory came in the backdrop of reports of outbreak of contagious eye flu in Ukhrul district of Manipur. According to the district health service authority, altogether 89 cases have been reported in the district so far.

Out of the 89 people infected, around 50 were from Jessami, a village bordering Nagaland.

Most of the patients were school-going children, which has prompted the district health authority to direct its actions towards school students to contain the spread of the viral eye disease. (NNN)

Loaded dumper runs over motorcycle in West Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent
KHERONI, Aug 26: A loaded dumper runs over a motorcycle with two riders on Umrangso-Lanka road in West Karbi Anglong.

The motorcyclists were coming from Umrangso, Dima Hasao and going towards Lanka in the nearby Hojai district. The dumper (AS09 7957) drives over the two men as well as the motorcycle (AS 09G 8416) as a result both of them died on the spot.

The deceased has been identified as Roklarsan Hanse (17) of Umrangso, Chikilangso and Pabitra Bey (39) of Kheroni, Chengbeng.

Bodies were taken into the custody of Umrangso police and the dumper has been seized.

NPOK takes strong exception to the Kuki-Zo memo to PM

IMPHAL, Aug 26: The Naga People's Organization, Kangpokpi district (NPOK), Manipur, said that it took strong exception to the memorandum dated August 16, 2023, submitted by ten Kuki-Zo MLAs to the Prime Minister of India demanding immediate appointment of separate chief secretary and DGP for the five hill districts of Churachandpur, Chandel, Tengnoupal, Kangpokpi and Pherzawl in Manipur and immediate release of ₹ 500 crores from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to rehabilitate the internally displaced Kuki-Zo people in the wake of the "worst communal carnage" since May 3, 2023. The NPOK, in a statement made available to Newmai News Network tonight, said the NPOK in Kangpokpi district having 13 tribes, "the native people of the bifurcated district, deeply deplored the move of the ten Kuki-Zo MLAs asking for a separate Chief Secretary and DGP".

The NPOK also said the "Indige-

nous Nagas who happened to be first and original settlers of the district have been reduced to minority groups completely outnumbered by the influx of illegal immigrants from across the international border triggering host of problems like demographic imbalances, ethnic conflicts, recognition and identification of villages and land disputes".

The NPOK then said there are also issues of unrecognized villages pending in the Revenue department of the state. The NPOK also said the interest of the Nagas shouldn't be ignored and overlooked by the Government of India as the district of Kangpokpi has a fairly large population of Nagas apart from the Gorkhas and other minuscule ethnic groups. The NPOK further said the internally displaced persons shouldn't be allowed to relocate to the district of Kangpokpi and no new semi permanent houses for the IDPS should be built within the district. It further said the National Highway 02 and 37 which passes

through the district has come under illegal, unauthorized and unabated collections of ransom and taxes by the Kuki militants.

The NPOK then made it clear that the Nagas of Kangpokpi district have not been associated with the activities of the "so called COTU" since its formation. The NPOK further said the Nagas in Manipur are not a part of this body from day one. On the other hand, the Kukis of the hill districts of Manipur should not defile or desecrate the name "tribals" as a whole in their demand as the Nagas are not involved in the ongoing ethnic conflict, the NPOK asserted. The statement then said, "In the light of the above facts, if and when the Kukis and their civil society organisations consider Kangpokpi district, a break away from the previous unaltered Senapati district, as their own disregarding the sentiments of the indigenous people, then it will not remain a mute spectators but hit back hard with historical facts". (NNN)

Meghalaya approves setting up of three medical colleges

SHILLONG, Aug 26: Meghalaya government approved the setting up of three medical colleges of which two are government and one private, with a capacity intake of 140 to 340 seats within the next 2-5 years.

The major decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Conrad K Sangma.

Addressing the media, health & family welfare minister Ampareen Lyngdoh said, "We have finalized the roadmap for the immediate setting up of three medical colleges in the State of Meghalaya. We will have one in Shillong, one in Tura and one in Ri Bhoi district."

"We will immediately start the process. We may have in the next 2-5 years, at least 140 good seats for the State of Meghalaya. This will increase proportionately every time. We are looking at a target of 240 or maybe 340 seats," she added.

Principal secretary in-charge health & family welfare, Sampath Kumar said out of the three proposed medical colleges, one is already in the pipeline. The construction of the Tura Medical College is going on.

"The Tura medical college (however is facing) the challenges related to faculty. The Cabinet has asked the department to explore how actually that can be run using PPP mode by identifying reputed medical institutions to help in terms of operationalizing the college," he said.

For setting up of the Shillong medical



college, Kumar said the government has decided to leverage on the existing resources and infrastructures like the Shillong Civil Hospital, Ganesh Das Hospital and by leveraging the human resources, especially the specialist doctors, who can become potential faculty of the Shillong medical college.

"A committee has been constituted in this regard and based on that the proposal has been made for setting up the Shillong Medical College within the next 2-3 years. We will start with 50 seats in Shillong and over a period of time, once we bring our own faculty that will be upgraded to 100 seats" he said.

Further, Kumar said that the setting up of a private medical college has been proposed by the University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya (USTM), which has requested for financial assistance in the form of a repayable loan to the tune of ₹ 230 crore.

"That has been considered to go on a switch challenge mode, which is a unique proposal. Once we examine the entire proposal, we will put it in the public domain and ask everybody if there are any other better proposals that are there then accordingly the government will take a decision," he said.

He also informed that "USTM have offered about 40 seats free and concessional

seats and also about 25 PG seats. It is a very good offer they have given to us."

The principal secretary said that ₹ 247 crore was sanctioned for the construction of the Tura Medical College and the Central government is also funding ₹ 180 crore for the project.

"Whereas, the Shillong medical college, since we already have existing infrastructure and around 550 beds are there besides having existing faculty that are going to be trained in the next 2-3 years to become the faculty – the projected cost would be around ₹ 114 crore," he added.

He said that the government is planning to execute the decision in a mission mode to ensure the medical colleges are set up within 24 to 36 months.

Kumar said, "For Tura medical seat, since we don't have enough faculty there, we have to look for partnership because to run a 100 seats medical college you require 106 faculty members whereas Shillong medical college, there is already faculty to start with 50 seats and in the years to come, once we get our own faculty members, more and more doctors will get specialization, Shillong will also become 100 seats." Earlier, the health minister has also informed that the State government is also negotiating with the Government of India not to stop allotting medical seats to Meghalaya. (NNN)

Former MP HC judge to oversee Meghalaya state reservation policy

SHILLONG, Aug 26: Former Judge of Madhya Pradesh High Court Justice (retired) Mool Chand Garg has been appointed as chairman of the Expert Committee constituted by the Meghalaya State government for reviewing the State Reservation Policy.

The names of the five members of the Expert Committee were approved by the Meghalaya State Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma.

Former Judge of Allahabad High Court Justice (Retired) Dr Satish Chandra was also appointed as an expert member in Constitutional law. Justice Chandra is also a former president of the Custom, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal.

The other three expert members are Prof DV Kumar from the Department of Sociology, NEHU, Shillong as an expert member in Sociology, Prof Chander Shekhar from Department of Fertility and Social Demography, Indian Institute of Population Sciences (deemed to be University), Mumbai as an expert member in population studies and Prof Subhadip Mukherjee, Assistant Professor of Economics and Public Policy in

IIM, Shillong as expert member in Economics.

Meghalaya Law Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh said that the terms of reference of the Expert Committee will be to study the current reservation policy and recommend modifications, if necessary and to undertake wide-ranging consultations with all stakeholders and visit various locations of the State to solicit the views of all stakeholders.

"The timeframe to be given to this committee will be 12 months to complete its task," said.

Lyngdoh said, "Once you announce the constitution of this committee then all political parties will have to step up and NGOs, civil society and everybody will be called by the expert committee. Their terms of reference are very clear. They will look at these suggestions, views, and opinions of stakeholders across the state and accordingly submit these suggestions and views to the government of Meghalaya for further action."

She however said that the government has nothing to say to people, who want to participate in giving their views and suggestions to the expert committee. (NNN)

9 killed in TN train fire mishap; officials blame cylinder 'illegally' taken inside for blaze

MADURAI (TN), Aug 26: At least nine pilgrims bound for Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu met with a tragic end on Saturday when a fire broke out inside a stationary train compartment at the railway station here in the small hours of Saturday, the Southern Railway said.

It also said a gas cylinder "illegally" taken inside the coach led to the blaze.

They had embarked on the pilgrimage from Lucknow last week in a private party coach, and most of them hailed from the Uttar Pradesh capital and its nearby areas.

Six of the nine deceased have been identified. They were three men and women each.

According to one of the survivors, only after a locked door was broken open could many even run towards safety, possibly avoiding a bigger tragedy.

While the Southern Railway initially put the toll at 10, it later revised it to nine. About 20 people were undergoing medical treatment here.

Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi condoled the deaths and wished for the safety and speedy recovery of injured.

Chief ministers of TN and Uttar Pradesh, M K Stalin and Yogi Adityanath, besides their West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee, expressed anguish over the incident and condoled the deaths. Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and the Railways announced ex-gratia to the families of the victims.

The fire broke out at 5.15 am on Saturday and Fire service personnel who arrived at the spot half an hour later put down the blaze by 7.15 am, a Southern Railway release said.

"This is a private party coach that was attached at Nagercoil Junction yesterday (Aug 25) by train no. 16730 (Punalur-Madurai Exp). Party coach was detached and kept at Madurai Stabling line. The passengers in the private party coach have...smuggled gas cylinder and this has caused the fire," the release said.

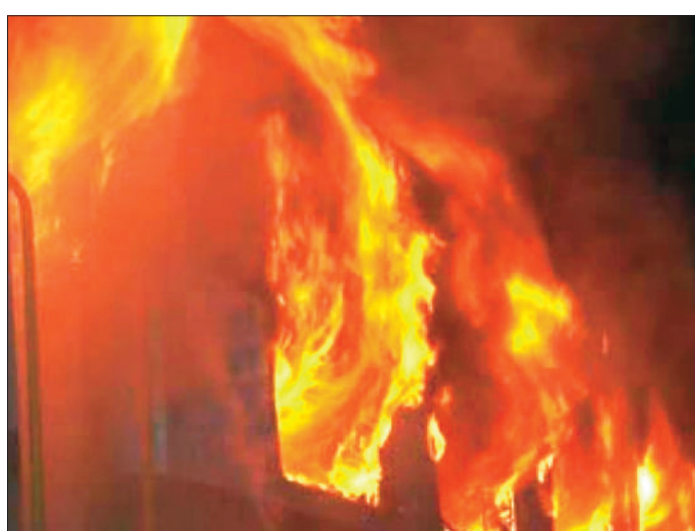
The party coach had started the journey from Lucknow on August 17, scheduled to return to Chennai on Sunday and proceed to the UP capital from there on, it added.

"While the coach was stabled/parked, some members of the party in the private party coach were using the illegally smuggled cooking gas cylinder unauthorisedly for preparing tea/snacks, which caused the fire in the stabled/parked coach. Most of the passengers could get out of the coach on noticing fire. Some passengers had already got down at platform also before detachment of coach," it added.

The private party had illegally carried gas cylinder, stove and other inflammable articles "which led to the freak fire accident," it said.

Among the items found at the spot was an LPG cylinder, bag of potatoes, utensils and wooden logs, giving ample indications of attempts to cook food.

Alka Prajapati, a survivor under-



going treatment at a government hospital here, said those sleeping were woken up by cries of "fire, fire."

"We were sleeping when we heard the cries and tried to escape. The door was locked so we could not escape immediately. Someone broke the lock and we came out. There was thick smoke and I couldn't breathe properly and just took God's name," she told PTI at the hospital. Railway employees arrived there 15-20 minutes after all efforts to put out the flames were taken. "But it (the coach) was blazing," she said, still recovering from the shock.

Some survivors who spoke to the media said they were proceeding to Rameswaram.

In moving scenes at the spot,

women were seen wailing, possibly over the loss of a dear one, while a child recalled the tense moments before fleeing to safety. A local eyewitness, auto-driver Mannan Prakash, said the people in the vicinity rushed to the accident spot soon after hearing a "sound", but could not get near due to the fire.

"Some got stuck inside. They could not get down (quickly) since it was a sleeper coach," he said.

Chief minister Stalin, in a statement, said the victims were proceeding towards Rameswaram for pilgrimage and expressed anguish over the fatal incident. In a statement, he said he immediately directed Madurai district collector MS Sangeetha to rush to the spot. Arrangements were being made for

Haryana govt orders suspension of mobile Internet in Nuh, imposes Section 144

CHANDIGARH, Aug 26: The Haryana government on Saturday ordered the suspension of mobile Internet and bulk SMS services in the communally charged Nuh district till August 28 in view of a call for a 'shobha yatra'.

The government announced the decision, apprehending the spread of rumours through social media ahead of or during Monday's rally.

The Nuh authorities had recently denied permission to hold a religious procession in the district on August 28 after an earlier one in July was disrupted following communal violence. The order to suspend mobile Internet was issued by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) TVSN Prasad on Saturday.

The district administration has also imposed Section 144 of the CrPC, prohibiting the assembly of four or more people in an area, as a precautionary measure. This order will be effective from August 26-28, said officials. During this period, no person will be allowed to carry weapons such as licensed firearms, lathis, axes and others.

The Haryana government had earlier suspended mobile Internet services in Nuh after communal clashes broke out. Six people, including two home guards and a cleric, died in the communal clashes that erupted in Nuh when a religious procession of the Vishva Hindu Parishad was attacked by a mob on July 31.

"...This order is issued to prevent disturbance of peace and public order in the jurisdiction of district Nuh and shall be in force with effect from August 26, 1200 hours, to Au-



gust 28, 2359 hours," the order issued by Prasad read.

On Friday, Nuh deputy commissioner Dharendra Khadgata wrote to Prasad, bringing to his notice that the Sarv Jatiya Hindu Mahapanchayat had called for a Brij Mandal Shoba Yatra in the district on August 28. There is an apprehension about the misuse of social media/bulk messages by anti-social elements to disturb the peace, he had written.

"Therefore, it is necessary to suspend all mobile Internet and bulk SMS services in Nuh district to avoid any untoward situation," Khadgata wrote, requesting Prasad to issue the necessary directions.

In his Saturday order, Prasad said there is a clear potential for the disruption of public utilities, damage to public assets and amenities and disturbance of public law and order in Nuh via the spread of rumours and inflammatory content through the Internet.

He ordered the temporary suspension of the mobile Internet services (2G, 3G, 4G, 5G, CDMA, GPRS), bulk SMS (excluding banking and mobile recharge) and all dongle services provided on mobile networks, except voice calls. (PTI)

CM Gehlot should resign over 'red diary' issue: Shah

JAIPUR, Aug 26: Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday demanded the resignation of Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot over a "red diary" which, he alleged, contained details of corruption and black deeds of the state government.

Addressing a "Sahakar Kisan Sammelan" in Gangapur City in the poll-bound state, Shah said the BJP-led central government raised the agriculture budget by six times and formed a separate ministry for cooperatives, whereas the Congress had done nothing for farmers.

Pointing to a few people who raised slogans during the event, the home minister said, "I want to tell Gehlot saab that you will achieve nothing by sending some people to shout slogans. If there is any shame left in him, he should resign over the 'red diary' issue and enter the election fray."

"Nowadays Gehlot saab is very afraid of the colour red. The colour of the diary is red, but black deeds

are hidden in it. The red diary has details of multi-crore corruption," he said.

Sacked Rajasthan minister Rajendra Gudha had claimed that the red diary which he had secured from the residence of Congress leader Dharmendra Rathore during an income tax raid in July 2020 on the directions of the chief minister had details of Gehlot's financial transactions. Assembly polls in Rajasthan is slated for later this year.

Addressing the event, Shah said the BJP government at the Centre has done a lot for farmers and initiated several schemes for them.

He said that during the erstwhile Congress regime, the agriculture budget was ₹ 22,000 crore and the Narendra Modi government raised it by six times in nine years to ₹ 1,25,000 crore.

Shah, who also holds the Cooperation portfolio, said the BJP government fulfilled the long-pending demand of farmers and constituted a separate ministry for cooperative societies. (PTI)

CM Shivraj expands cabinet by inducting 3 ministers months ahead of assembly polls

BHOPAL, Aug 26: Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday expanded his cabinet by inducting three BJP MLAs as ministers, a move coming just a few months ahead of the state assembly polls and apparently aimed at balancing caste and regional equations in the council.

While one of the three new ministers - Rajendra Shukla - is a Brahmin, two others - Gaurishankar Bisen and Rahul Lodhi - belong to the Other Backward Classes (OBC) community.

With their induction, there are now 34 members in the Chouhan-led cabinet. As per the constitutional provisions, the number could go up to 35.

State Governor Mangubhai Patel administered the oath of office as ministers to Shukla, Bisen and Lodhi at the Raj Bhavan here around 9 am.

Shukla, a Brahmin leader and four-time MLA from Rewa in the Vindh region was a former minister. Bisen, a seven-time legislator from Balaghat in the Mahakoshal region, is also the chairman of the MP Backward Class Commission, while Lodhi is a first-time MLA from Khargapur in Tikamgarh district of the Bundelkhand region.

While Shukla (59) and Bisen (71) took oath as cabinet ministers, Lodhi (46) was sworn-in as a minister of state. They are yet to be allotted portfolios, a Raj Bhavan official told PTI.

Lodhi is a nephew of senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Madhya Pradesh minister Uma Bharti, who has been opposing the liquor policy of the Chouhan-led government and earlier took to the streets over the issue.

Bisen and Lodhi belong to the OBC community that



makes up more than 45 per cent of the population of Madhya Pradesh.

The inclusion of Shukla into the cabinet takes the number of ministers from the state's Vindh region to four, while Bisen's induction takes this count from Mahakoshal region to two. With Lodhi's swearing-in the number of ministers from the impoverished Bundelkhand region has increased to five. BJP sources said the cabinet expansion was carried out on the recommendation of the party's central leadership to beat anti-incumbency, balance caste equations and address regional aspirations.

The last expansion of the Chouhan cabinet took place in January 2021, months after he returned as the state chief minister for the fourth term.

No split in NCP, reiterates Sharad Pawar; In-situ scientific experiments on lunar surface underway: ISRO

KOLHAPUR, Aug 26: Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday once again denied a split in his party, and said while it is true that some MLAs have left, legislators alone do not mean an entire political party. Talking to reporters here, Pawar asserted that he is the national president of the NCP and Jayant Patil heads its state unit.

"NCP has not split. While it is true that some MLAs have left, MLAs don't mean a political party. Why give importance to rebels by taking their names," the former Union minister said when asked if he was being soft on the party rebels.

On Friday, when Pawar was asked about his daughter and party working president

Supriya Sule's statement that NCP has not split and Ajit Pawar continues to be its leader, he said, "Yes...there is no dispute about it." But hours later, Pawar said he did not make any such statement. Ajit Pawar and eight other NCP MLAs joined the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the state on July 2, creating a split in the Sharad Pawar-founded party.

The NCP chief admitted that some MLAs had written to him on joining the Shinde-led government when the one led by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) collapsed following a split in the Shiv Sena. "But no decision was taken," he said.

Targeting the BJP-led central govern-

ment, Pawar said, "I will continue to oppose fascist tendencies. There has been misuse of central probe agencies."

He said a review of the 2024 Lok Sabha election preparations along with joint campaigning will be discussed during the meeting of opposition INDIA alliance scheduled in Mumbai on August 31 and September 1. "I can see a change in Maharashtra. People are disappointed with those who went with the BJP. I am sure people will give a right mandate in the elections and they will show the BJP its rightful place."

"During the upcoming meeting in Mumbai, a review of Lok Sabha elections along with joint campaigning will be discussed," Pawar said. (PTI)



BENGALURU, Aug 26: ISRO on Saturday said two of the three Chandrayaan-3 mission objectives have been achieved while the third -- in-situ scientific experiments -- is underway. The national space agency headquartered here also said all the payloads of Chandrayaan-3 mission are performing normally.

"Chandrayaan-3 Mission: Of the 3 mission objectives, demonstration of a safe and soft landing on the lunar surface is accomplished. Demonstration of Rover roving on the moon is accomplished. Conducting in-situ scientific experiments is underway. All payloads are performing normally," ISRO said on 'X', formerly known as Twitter.

India on Wednesday scripted history as ISRO's ambitious third Moon mission Chandrayaan-3's Lander Module (LM) touched down on the lunar surface, making it only the fourth country to accomplish the feat, and first to reach the uncharted south pole of Earth's only natural satellite.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced the decision to name the spot where Chandrayaan-3 Vikram lander made soft landing as "Shiv Shakti Point" and the site where the Chandrayaan-2 lander crash-landed on the Moon's surface in 2019 would be known as "Tiranga Point".

Also, August 23, the day the Chandrayaan-3 lander touched down on the lunar surface, would be celebrated as 'National Space Day', Modi said. (PTI)

Major step of MoPSW towards Public-Private Partnership with ₹ 4,243.64 crore Mega Terminal Project

Concession agreement signed between Deendayal Port and DP World for Mega-Container Terminal

HT Desks

KANDLA (GUJARAT), Aug 26: A concession agreement signed between Deendayal Port Authority and DP World in the presence of Sarbananda Sonowal, union minister for ports, shipping & waterways and AYUSH, HE Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, group chairman and CEO, DP World; Rizwan Soomar, DP World, CEO & MD, Middle East, North Africa and India, Sanjay Mehta, IFS, chairperson and other senior officials of the ministry in New Delhi.

This state-of-the-art container terminal at Tuna-Tekrawill cater to future trade demand from Northern, Western and Central India, connecting the regions to global markets.

The project involves the construction of a mega-container terminal at Tuna-Tekra near the existing Deendayal Port, at a cost of ₹ 4,243.64 crores (\$510 million) through a Public Private Partnership (PPP). Once completed the terminal will have an annual capacity of 2.19 million TEUs, and will include a 1,100m berth capable of handling next-generation vessels carrying more than 18,000 TEUs.

The Container Terminal is expected to transform the economic landscape of Kutch, with creation of several ancillary services like warehousing, etc. and also result in creation of direct and indirect employment opportunities to hundreds of people.

In addition to increasing the business potential of Kandla, the project will boost the economy and generate employment.



The container terminal will be fully compliant with the green port guidelines ensuring sustainability in port operations by adopting best practices of port environment management contributing towards the long-term sustainability goals set out by the Government of India.

This concession agreement is a part of the union minister Sarbananda Sonowal's mega target of identifying investment

opportunities of more than 10 lakh crores in Indian Maritime Sector for the upcoming Global Maritime Summit 2023 from 17th-19th October 2023 at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi which is being organised by MoPSW.

This Summit will showcase global best practices, foster investment partnerships and chart a new and bright course for our collective future.

The GMIS 2023 will also provide a stage to more than 60 countries, exhibitors and investors from various domains of the maritime sector.

During the event, Sonowal said, "The project for which agreement has been signed on Saturday was approved on PPP model by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by our visionary Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji in October 2022. This project would give impetus to India's containerisation growth".

"This project is aligned with our Prime Minister's Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 and would quadruple port handling capacity and develop multimodal logistics infrastructure to promote economic growth. The project is expected to add operational efficiency to the Port in terms of reduced congestion at Kandla creek, enhanced ability to handle deep draft vessels, reduction of turnaround time to 0.5-1 day and driving Port towards becoming a Mega Port", he added.

The project will entail the following benefits:
Due to its strategic location the Container Terminal will

help in decreasing the cost of container logistics in the country.

With deep draft and latest handling technology, the Container Terminal is expected to set up a new benchmark in productivity and ease-of-doing-business.

The Container Terminal is expected to transform the economic landscape of Kutch, with creation of several ancillary services (warehousing etc.) and direct and indirect employment opportunities to millions of people.

The Container Terminal is also likely to give a major fillip to infrastructure development in Gujarat with major investments needed from NHA, and Railways. These are likely to help the development of other parts of the state as well, apart from Kutch.

The terminal will be well-connected to major road and rail networks, facilitating efficient transportation of cargo to various parts of the country. This connectivity is expected to reduce logistics costs and increase the competitiveness of Indian exports.

Environmental considerations will be at the forefront of the terminal's design. Implementing eco-friendly practices, the terminal aims to minimize its carbon footprint, setting an example for sustainable port operations. The development of the terminal will create a significant number of direct and indirect job opportunities, contributing to local employment and socio-economic development.

SC agrees to hear plea of NGO challenging reduction of age of consent

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea by an NGO against any reduction in the age of consent, saying it jeopardises the interest of a large number of child victims of sexual abuse, especially girls.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Mishra issued notice to the Centre and tagged the plea of 'Bachpan Bachao Andolan' with a pending petition filed by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

The NCPCR had challenged last year's order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which said that a minor Muslim girl can marry a person of her choice. The apex court on Friday sought the Centre's response on the issue.

The plea of the NGO, besides seeking a slew of directions and guidelines, has also sought a directive to the courts to refrain from making observations regarding the minor victim's casual relationship and promiscuous attitude while dealing with the criminal proceedings under the POCSO Act.

It has said that the dissemination of misinterpreted information per-

taining to POCSO cases (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012) as "elopement and romantic relationships" has undermined the spirit and purpose of the stringent legislation. It also challenged the circular issued on December 3, 2022 by the office of the Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu directing the police officials to not show haste in effecting an arrest of the accused in mutual romantic cases, alleging thereby most of them fell category of "mutual romantic relationships".

The NGO also highlighted that despite official facts and figures, various NGOs, governments, and/or law enforcement authorities have relied on flawed methodologies and wrongly interpreted that 60 to 70 percent of POCSO cases are pertaining to consenting minors and fall under the category of "consensual romantic relationship" between teenagers that often get criminalised. It said that the alleged figure of 60-70 per cent is incorrect since the total number of cases between 16-18 years is approximately 30 per cent of the total POCSO cases in the country. (PTI)

Won't bow down to governor's threat: CM Mann

CHANDIGARH, Aug 26: Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday lashed out at Governor Banwarilal Purohit for "threatening" to impose President's rule in the state and asked why his counterparts were "silent" on the law and order situation in BJP-ruled states.

Mann said the "selected" governor does not have any moral authority to "threaten" elected representatives of the people and asserted that he is "not going to bow down".

Addressing a press conference, the chief minister alleged that the governors are acting as "puppets" of the Union government to create hindrances in the functioning of non-BJP governments in states like Delhi, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and said such things don't augur well for the country's federal structure.

"Punjab is most affected in the past due to (Article) 356. So, don't rub salts on our wounds... Governor Sahab, don't try to test the patience and emotions of the Punjabis," Mann said.

The governor has been accusing Mann of not responding to the letters sent to him in defiance of his authority. Purohit had on Friday warned the Mann government that



he could recommend President's rule in the state and also launch criminal proceedings if his letters were not answered. Mann said on Saturday that the governor wrote 16 letters, of which replies have been given to nine and the rest are being followed up. He said replies for the remaining letters are being readied and will be given in the coming week as in some cases detailed information has to be gathered which takes time.

At the same time, the chief minister alleged the letters from the governor reek of "hunger for power".

Taking potshots, he said Purohit

may be feeling "politically irrelevant" and now he can become BJP's chief ministerial face for poll-bound Rajasthan, from where he originally hails, and take power there so that he can freely give orders. He asserted that that "threats" like the imposition of the President's rule won't scare him and the Punjabis.

"The threat which the governor gave to the people of Punjab, peace-loving people of the state, I will call it a threat of imposition of the President's rule," Mann said at the press conference, decrying the governor's "unconstitutional" remarks.

Mann said that while his government had been taking proactive steps to tackle the scourge of drugs, confiscating and raiding properties of smugglers, and going after gangsters with the formation of an Anti-Gangster Task Force, the governor claims law and order in the state is not good.

"I want to ask Governor Sahab, has the Haryana Governor issued any notice to Haryana Chief Minister Khattar regarding what happened in Nuh, communal clashes and violence that took place there and curfew had to be imposed? Did the Haryana governor write any letter to Khattar? No, because their government is also ruling at the Centre," he said.

He said the Punjab governor was concerned about law and order in Punjab, but never gave a statement on Manipur which is reeling from ethnic violence. "Is the Constitution not applicable in Manipur?"

In Uttar Pradesh, a murder takes place in front of journalists, "But will the UP Governor dare issue any letter to Yogi Adityanath questioning law and order" asked the CM, apparently referring to the brazen gunning down of mafia-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed in April this year.

Most people would not know of their governors' names, except those in Punjab, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, because they all are ruled by the non-BJP governments, Mann claimed. Mann said that six bills, two of which are from the tenure of the previous government led by Amarinder Singh, are still awaiting the governor's assent and added that while Purohit expects a reply to be given immediately to his letters, he keeps sitting on the bills on the grounds that he is seeking legal advice.

Questioning the conduct of governors in non-BJP ruled states, Mann said that the Telangana government had to move the apex court against delays by the governor in giving his assent to the bills passed by the assembly.

"We (AAP govt in Punjab) are an elected government with 92 MLAs. The Election Commission held polls as per the Constitution. We pass agenda in cabinet and then bills are introduced, but they get stuck for want of governor's assent," he said.

Mann cited investments in the state during AAP's tenure, saying this would not have been possible if law and order was not good. (PTI)

Pakistan spy arrested in Kolkata, sensitive documents seized

KOLKATA, Aug 26: A 36-year-old man, who was allegedly working as a spy for Pakistan, was arrested in Kolkata and several sensitive documents were seized from his possession, a senior police officer said on Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off, Kolkata police personnel picked up the man from his residence in Howrah on Friday night and arrested him after hours of grilling in the Special Task Force's office in Kolkata.

The accused hails from Darbhanga district of Bihar.

"The arrested man was found directly involved in activities prejudicial to the safety of the country," the officer said.

"Secret information in the form of photographs, videos and online chats were found in his mobile phone. These were sent by him to a suspected intelligence operative of Pakistan," the officer said.

His mobile device has also been seized, he added. Initial investigations revealed that the man was working with a courier service company in Kolkata and he had earlier stayed in Delhi.

"The accused has been living in Howrah area for the last three months after relocating from Delhi. He was picked up Friday from there and after grilling was examined at our office," he said.

A local court remanded him to police custody till September 6.

The man was arrested under various sections of the IPC and Official Secrets Act. (PTI)

Slap video: Muzaffarnagar teacher booked under bailable charges; oppn slams BJP over 'hate politics'

MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP), Aug 26: As outrage poured in from all quarters, including political parties, police on Saturday booked the Muzaffarnagar schoolteacher accused of making communal comments and ordering her students to slap a Muslim classmate for not doing his homework.

The school was also served a notice by the education department in connection with the matter.

The teacher, Tripta Tyagi, was booked on the complaint of the boy's family under IPC sections 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) -- both non-cognisable offences. Such offences are bailable and do not lead to immediate arrest, and require a warrant.

The action comes a day after a video showed her asking her students to slap the Class 2 boy at Neha Public School in Khubapur village and also making a communal remark. The video elicited strong words from several political leaders with National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), the apex child rights body, demanding action against

the accused teacher.

In her defence, Tyagi has said the video has been tampered with in order to stoke tensions. She claimed that the video was shot by an uncle of the boy.

Tyagi said though it was wrong on her part to get a student slapped by his classmates, she was forced to do it as she is handicapped and was not able to stand up and reach the student who had not done his assignment.

Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) of Muzaffarnagar Shubham Shukla said a showcase notice has been served to the school management through the secretary of the management committee, Ravinder Tyagi.

It has been asked to furnish its response by August 28 as to why the school's government recognition not be cancelled.

A criminal case will be registered against the authorities of the school where the incident took place, the BSA said, adding that a team has been sent there. The matter snowballed into a fray between the BJP and the opposition parties, many of which alleged that it was the ruling party's "politics of hate" that prepared the ground for such an incident to happen.

The NCPCR on Saturday said it wrote to the district administration and the Uttar Pradesh Police to file an FIR in the matter.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, in a post on X on Friday, condemned the incident, saying a teacher could do no worse for the country as he accused the BJP of filling people's minds with poison.

"Sowing the poison of discrimination in the minds of innocent children, turning a holy place like school into a marketplace of hatred -- nothing worse a teacher can do for the country."

"This is the same kerosene spread by the BJP which has set every corner of India on fire. Children are the future of India -- we all have to teach them love not hatred," he said.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge slammed the BJP for its "divisive thinking" and said "such incidents tarnish our global image".

TMC leader Derek O'Brien asked why the teacher was booked "under weak sections".

"They have charged the Neha Public School teacher with 'mischief'. What's going on?," he asked in a video message posted on X. (PTI)

'India a laboratory for global good, carries a reservoir of talent'

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: India is a laboratory for global good and carries a reservoir of talent, union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Saturday.

Addressing the B20 Summit India on the theme "Aligning Education to Emerging Imperatives", Pradhan said education is the motherhood that will drive all growth.

"India is a laboratory for global good which comes from our civilizational values of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam ... India's aspirations are for achieving global good and wellbeing. Education is the motherhood that will drive all growth and, as a knowledge civilisation, India carries a reservoir of talent," Pradhan said.

Speaking about initiatives in the education sector, Pradhan said the National Education Policy, 2020, which is rooted both in Indian values and is futuristic, is preparing students for the 21st century.

He spoke about the various initiatives such as integration of education and skill, learning in the mother tongue and efforts to achieve 100 per cent enrolment in the knowledge ecosystem in schools, skill sector and higher education institutions.

"India's strength is its democracy, demography and diversity. India is making rapid progress in the dynamic sectors of energy, agriculture and food security and digitisation," the education minister said.

Calling it a "Modi guarantee", Pradhan said India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi offers unprecedented stability and certainty for businesses to thrive.

"India is future-ready, poised to drive global growth and has very strong macro-economic fundamentals," he said. (PTI)

Adani-Hindenburg row: SEBI's inability to reach final conclusion 'deeply worrying', says Congress

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: The Congress on Saturday said stock market regulator SEBI's inability to reach a conclusive finding on the allegations of round-tripping and money laundering by the Adani Group was "deeply worrying".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has admitted this in its status report to the Supreme Court and added only a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) can examine how the government flouted norms and procedures to help Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "favourite business group".

"The inability of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to reach a conclusive finding on allegations of round-tripping and money laundering by the Adani Group, as it has admitted in its 25th August 2023 status report to the Supreme Court, is deeply troubling," Ramesh said in a statement.

ment.

Sharing the statement on 'X', he posted, "SEBI's inability to reach a final conclusion in the matter of round-tripping and money-laundering allegations against the Adani Group is deeply worrying."

The Congress leader said that of the 24 matters SEBI investigated relating to the matter, two still have interim status.

Ramesh said one of the interim reports relates to the important question of whether Adani violated the Minimum Public Shareholding requirement under Rule 19A of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules.

"In simple terms, did Adani use opaque entities based in overseas tax havens to engage in the kind of round-tripping and money laundering that the PM has always claimed to oppose? SEBI has stated that the reason for delay is that information from external agencies and entities is still

awaited," he added.

The country, Ramesh said, is clearly paying a heavy price for the SEBI's decision in 2018 to dilute and in 2019 to delete the reporting requirements relating to the ultimate beneficial ownership of foreign funds.

The Congress leader noted no less than the Supreme Court's Expert Committee pointed out that the reason the SEBI has failed to identify beneficial ownership of overseas investors in Adani companies was that "the securities market regulator suspects wrongdoing" but is "drawing a blank worldwide" due to its "piquant" decision to remove these stipulations.

"The reintroduction of strict reporting rules following the SEBI board's 28 June 2023 meeting represents a public admission of guilt by the regulatory body, even though the horse has bolted the stable," Ramesh claimed. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Aug 23 to be celebrated as

Technology and Innovation, and inspire us for an eternity. A large number of people, many of them waving national flags, accorded a grand welcome to the PM outside the HAL airport, where he landed straight from Greece, and at Jalalali Cross, close to ISTRAC. He also held a road-show for a distance as people who lined up on either side of the roads cheered boisterously.

At ISTRAC, ISRO chairman S Somanath briefed him about the Chandrayaan-3 mission and its progress. In his address, Modi said in this period of 21st century, the country which takes the lead in science and technology, will move ahead. "Today, the name of Chandrayaan is resonating among children of India. Every child is seeing his or her future in the scientists".

The Prime Minister requested ISRO to organise national hackathons on "Space Technology in Governance" in collaboration with various departments of center and state governments. "I am confident that this National Hackathon will make our governance more effective and provide modern solutions to the countrymen," he said.

Modi also urged students across the country to take part in a huge quiz competition on Chandrayaan mission organised by Government of India portal MyGov from September 1. The soft landing of Vikram lander on the lunar surface was not an ordinary achievement, Modi said adding the feat was a "roaring announcement" of India's scientific accomplishment in the infinite universe. "India is on the moon," he said adding, "we have our national pride played on the moon."

"We reached where no one else had reached. We did what no one else had ever done. This is today's India, a fearless India; India with fighting spirit," the Prime Minister said. "This is an India, which thinks new and thinks in novel ways, which goes to the dark zones and spreads the rays of light. India of 21st century has the capacity to solve major problems of the world," Modi said addressing the space scientists.

"Today, from trade to technology, India is being counted among the countries standing in the first row. In the journey from 'third row' to 'first row', institutions like our ISRO have played a huge role."

Hailing the space agency, the Prime Minister said it has taken "Make In India" to the moon.

On Wednesday evening as the Lander Module of Chandrayaan-3 mission successfully touched down on the lunar surface, Modi had joined the ISRO team at Mission Operations Complex (MOX) at ISTRAC virtually from Johannesburg, where he was attending the 15th BRICS summit. Modi had also flown down to Bengaluru on the night of September six, 2019 to watch the planned touch down of Chandrayaan-2 mission's 'Vikram' lander. But in the early hours of September seven, barely minutes before it was slated to land, ISRO lost contact with the craft, just 2.1 kms above the lunar surface. (PTI)

Assam grapples with

and Sankosh at Golokganj had all crossed the danger level mark. Tragically, five houses were reported to be damaged in Chirang due to the flooding. Throughout the day, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) were actively engaged in rescue operations. Notably, they successfully evacuated 46 individuals in Sonitpur using boats.

The ravaging floods have not spared critical infrastructure either, causing damage to embankments, roads, and other essential facilities in Sivasagar, Karimganj, Dibrugarh, and Udalguri.

Urban areas have also been severely impacted, with reports of flooding surfacing from Udalguri, as stated in the ASDMA bulletin.

In light of increased rainfall in Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Chirang, and Baksa districts, authorities anticipate a rise in water levels in the northern tributaries of the Brahmaputra. This alarming situation extends to the main Brahmaputra river in the middle and lower regions. The Central Water Commission (CWC) advisory has indicated a rising trend in water levels in Dhubri and Goalpara districts along the main Brahmaputra stem.

TU research scholar to

that this achievement underscores the institution's commitment to quality education and research. "The success stories of individuals like Dutta and Sarkar, products of our quality education and research, are inspiring and motivating. They serve as a testament to our commitment to excellence," said prof Singh.

The Aditya-L1 mission is anticipated to be launched in September of this year.

Will ensure flow of essential

Since then, more than 160 people have died and several hundreds were injured in ethnic clashes in Manipur. The Meitei community accounts 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)

Jorhat Badminton Association

be used for promoting other games, like chess, which don't require so much space. We are contemplating using them for such other sports," he said. (With inputs from PTI)

No specific provision under CrPC which requires probe agency to file charge sheet in language of court: SC



NEW DELHI, Aug 26: The Supreme Court has held there is no specific provision under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) which requires the investigating agency to file a charge sheet in the language of the court.

Section 272 of the CrPC, which deals with language of courts, says the State Government may determine what shall be, for purposes of this Code, the language of each Court within the State other than the High Court.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Rajesh Binald gave the ruling while allowing the CBI's appeal challenging the Madhya Pradesh High Court order, which asked the probe agency to provide a copy of the charge sheet to two Vyapam scam accused in Hindi.

The Vyapam or Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board scam broke out in 2013, wherein candidates had bribed officials and rigged exams by deploying imposters to write their answer sheets. The probe into the scam that began in 1995 was taken over by the central agency following an order of the Supreme Court in 2015. The racket involved

politicians, senior officials and businessmen.

The bench said, "Coming to the issue of the language of the final report/charge sheet under Section 173, there is no specific provision in CrPC which requires the investigating agency/officer to file it in the language of the Court determined in accordance with Section 272 of CrPC. Even if such a requirement is read into Section 173, per se, the proceedings will not be vitiated if the report is not in the language of the Court."

It said in a given case, if something which CrPC specifically requires to be done in the language of the Court is done in any other language, per se, the proceedings will not be vitiated unless it is established that the omission has resulted in failure of justice.

The bench said while deciding the issue of whether there is a failure of justice, the Court will have to consider whether the objection was raised at the earliest available opportunity.

"Thus, the power of the State Government is to determine for the purposes of CrPC what shall be the language of the Courts

within the State other than the High Court. The power under Section 272 is not a power to decide which language shall be used by the investigating agencies or the police for the purposes of maintaining the record of the investigation," it said.

The bench dealt with relevant provisions of CrPC and said that under Section 207, it is the obligation of the Judicial Magistrate to supply a copy of the charge sheet and other documents to the accused.

It said that similarly, in a case triable by the Court of Sessions, Section 208 of CrPC empowers the judicial officer to provide copies of the statements and documents to the accused including the statements and confessions recorded under the procedural code.

The bench said when a copy of the charge sheet and the documents are supplied to the accused under Section 207 or Section 208 of CrPC, an opportunity is available for the accused to contend that he does not understand the language in which the final report or the statements or documents are written.

In such a scenario, he must raise this objection at the earliest, the top court said, and added, "if the accused is appearing in-person and wants to defend himself without opting for legal aid, perhaps there may be a requirement of supplying a translated version of the charge sheet and documents or the relevant part thereof concerning the said accused to him."

The bench, in its judgement which was pronounced on Friday, said such a situation is also subject to the accused satisfying the court that he is unable to understand the language in which the charge sheet has been submitted. (PTI)



Sujoy Ghosh's film with Kareena titled 'Jaane Jaan', set for Sept 21 release

MUMBAI, Aug 26: Netflix on Friday announced that filmmaker Sujoy Ghosh's upcoming feature film with Kareena Kapoor, Jaideep Ahlawat and Vijay Verma has been titled "Jaane Jaan".

The streamer shared the news on its social media handles on the occasion of Kareena's 43rd birthday.

The crime thriller movie, based on critically-acclaimed Japanese novel "Devotion of Suspect X" from author Keigo Higashino, is set to be released on the streaming platform on September 21, a press release stated.

"Jaane Jaan" is coming on our very own Jaane Jaan's birthday @ka-

reenakapoor. Mark your calendars for a present like no other. #JaaneJaan arrives 21 September, only on Netflix!" Netflix posted on Instagram.

Ghosh, known for critical hits such as "Jhankaar Beats", "Kahaani" and "Badla", said he had been waiting to adapt Higashino's novel, the love of his life, for a long time.

"From the day I read 'Devotion of Suspect X', I wanted to adapt it into a film. It was the most amazing love story I had ever read and today thanks to Kareena, Jaideep and Vijay that story is alive on screen. We all worked very hard to tell this story and hopefully the audience will love it as much

as we do," the filmmaker said in a statement.

The novel, published in 2005, follows a battle of the wits between a maths genius and his equally talented university batchmate, who is investigating a murder case involving the former's neighbour.

It was earlier adapted into a 2008 Japanese movie "Suspect X", followed by adaptations in Korean and Chinese. The book also served as an inspiration for the 2019 Tamil movie "Kolaigaran".

"Jaane Jaan" is produced by 12th Street Entertainment, Northern Lights Films in association with Kross Pictures and Balaji Motion Pictures. (PTI)

SRK DROPS TEASER OF NEW 'JAWAN' SONG, SAYS FILM'S TRAILER IS READY

NEW DELHI, Aug 26:

With 11 days left for the release of his much-awaited action film "Jawan", superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Saturday promised his fans that the movie's trailer will be launched soon.

The actor conducted yet another Q&A session #AskSRK with his fans and followers on X, formerly Twitter, to promote the upcoming Atlee-directed film. During his chat with fans, SRK also unveiled the teaser of the film's new song "Not Ramaiya Vastaiya".

Shah Rukh was flooded with queries about the trailer of the film, which is scheduled to be released in theatres on September 7 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

The film's team has so far released a 'prevue', a two-minute clip that provided first glimpse of the movie, as well as two songs -- "Zinda Banda" and "Chaleya".

When asked by a fan about the trailer, the 57-year-old actor replied, "Have it ready now! I can't decide should I put a new song or the trailer???" In response to another fan query about the trailer, SRK asked, "Trailer nahi aayega toh picture nahi dekhoge kya???"

Trailer trailer trailer ha ha. Aa jayega bhai saans toh Lele."

Shah Rukh was also at his quintessential witty mode when

another fan asked him whether he should watch the movie if the trailer turns out to be bad.

"Bhai life mein positivity rakha na... Social media wala type lag raha hai negativity negativity. Think positive u will be happier man," he said. Towards the end, the actor dropped the teaser of "Not Ramaiya Vastaiya".

"Ok guys time to go make the trailer as everyone wants that. @TSeries & @anirudhofficial & @Atlee_dir had wanted to put out song. Will leave a teaser now! & get @AntonyLRuben to work on trailer. Song is! Not Ramaiya Vastaiya. Bye for now love u all," SRK posted.

During the session, the actor fielded queries on a range of topics, from working with Amitabh Bachchan for a new project, watching Sunny Deol's blockbuster "Gadar 2" to discussing his various avatars in "Jawan".

There are reports that SRK and Amitabh Bachchan, who have previously worked in many films, including

"Mohabbatein", "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham..." and "Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna", are set to collaborate for a new project. A poster circulating online showed the two actors running alongside each other.

SRK commented on the picture and said, "It was soooooo much fun to work with @SRBachchan after so many years. Came back from the shoot inspired and blessed. And just to let u know he beat me in the run!" (PTI)

Dev Kohli, lyricist of 'Baazigar' and 'Hum Aapke Hai Koun', dies at 81

MUMBAI, Aug 26: Veteran lyricist Dev Kohli, known for his work in films such as "Baazigar" and "Hum Aapke Hai Koun..!", died here on Saturday morning due to age-related ailments, his spokesperson said. He was 81.

Kohli was being treated for age-related issues at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital and brought back to his Andheri home a few days ago.

"He was in hospital for almost three months, he was brought back home 10 days ago. He passed away at 4

am today due to age-related issues at his residence in Andheri." Kohli's spokesperson Pritam Sharma told PTI.

The last rites will be performed at 5 pm at Oshiwara crematorium in suburban Mumbai.

Kohli was born in Pakistan and moved to India post partition in 1948. The family stayed in Delhi for some time and later shifted to Dehradun. He came to Mumbai in 1964 and made

his debut as a lyricist with the 1969 film "Gunda".

In his five-decade long career, Kohli wrote lyrics for more than 100 Hindi films. Some of his most popular songs include "Geet Gaata Hoon Main" from Rajkumar and Hema Malini-starrer "Lal Patthar" and the many tracks of "Hum Aapke Hai Koun..!", the Sooraj Barjatya hit that featured Salman Khan and Madhuri

Dixit. He wrote the film's title song as well as "Maye Ni Maye", "Didi Tera Devar Deewana", and "Pehla Pehla Pyar".

Kohli also wrote superstar Shah Rukh Khan's hit song "Yeh Kaali Kaali Aankhen" from "Baazigar", "Dekho Dekho Jaanam Hum" from "Ishq", and the item song "Saaki Saaki" from "Musafir", among others.

In his career, the lyricist collaborated with music directors like Anu Malik, Raam Laxman, Anand Raaj Anand, and Anand Milind among others. (PTI)



'DREAM GIRL 2' RAISES ₹ 10.26 CRORE ON OPENING DAY

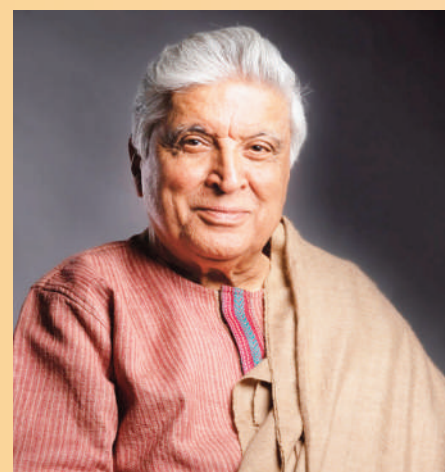
MUMBAI, Aug 26: Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer "Dream Girl 2" has collected ₹ 10.69 crore net on domestic box office on the first day of its release, the makers said Saturday.

Directed by Raaj Shaandilya, "Dream Girl 2" is a sequel to Khurrana's 2019 hit of the same title. The actor reprises his role of Karam, who decides to cross dress as Pooja to make enough money to marry the love of his life, played by Ananya Panday.

In a press note, the makers said the film has turned out to be Khurrana's "biggest opener till date", surpassing the opening day figure of his 2019 movie "Bala" that had earned ₹ 10.15 crore. "It feels amazing to deliver my career's best opening with 'Dream Girl 2'. 'Dream Girl' is a franchise that has given me a lot of love and I'm really happy with the start that 'Dream Girl 2' has got at the box office," Ayushmann said in a statement. "As an entertainer, it feels amazing to bring people to theatres and experience them having a great time. 'Dream Girl 2' is a film that delivers entertainment in spades. It has a big promise that people will laugh their hearts out and it is good to note that the film has lived up to the expectations to take this solid start at the counters," he added. (PTI)



Javed Akhtar, Renuka Shahane, Prakash Raj condemn Muzaffarnagar slap incident



MUMBAI, Aug 26: Veteran screenwriter Javed Akhtar, actors Renuka Shahane and Prakash Raj have called for strict action against a teacher in Uttar Pradesh who allegedly asked her students to slap a boy from a minority community.

A video showing the school teacher in Muzaffarnagar asking her students to slap the Muslim boy and making objectionable remarks against his community has gone viral on social media eliciting strong words from several quarters.

Taking to X, formerly Twitter, Akhtar said he hopes the teacher is "suspended immediately".

"A teacher ordering young children of the class to slap an 8 year child one by one and slap hard is nothing but a show of pure sadism and a perverse mind. I hope she is suspended immediately and an inquiry into is ugly incident has started," he wrote. Shahane, voicing her concern over the incident, posted, "That vile teacher should be behind bars! Instead, she might just get a national teacher's award for promoting national integration! Kafkaesque!! Cry, my beloved country." "The darkest side of HUMANITY we are getting into.. aren't you worried #justasking," wrote Raj.

Actor Swastika Mukherjee and Varun Grover also reacted to the viral video.

"A teacher!!! This is what it has come to. How are we going to recover from this?" Mukherjee wrote. Grover called the incident a "hate crime". "Muzaffarnagar school hate-crime is not a 'new low' and it doesn't exist in a vacuum. Hate-crimes against Muslims have been the 'new normal' for a few years now and the TV news, with active support from the regime, is at the forefront of spreading & shielding this venom," he said.

Reacting to the incident, actor-comedian Vir Das wrote on X, "Historically, globally, people with ancient hatreds will poison young minds. They recognise they live in a world that is increasingly leaving them behind. It's their last desperate shot at feeling valid. They take it, knowing they won't live to see the damage they've done." (PTI)

Amazing to deliver career's best opening: Ayushmann as 'Dream Girl 2' earns ₹ 10 crore on day one



MUMBAI, Aug 26: Actor Ayushmann Khurrana says he is happy that his latest release "Dream Girl 2" has got off to a great start at the domestic box office after the film collected ₹ 10.69 crore net on the first day of its release.

Directed by Raaj Shaandilya, "Dream Girl 2" is a sequel to Khurrana's 2019 hit of the same title. The actor reprises his role of Karam, who decides to cross dress as Pooja to make enough money to marry the love of his

life, played by Ananya Panday.

In a press note, the makers said the film has turned out to be Khurrana's "biggest opener till date", surpassing the opening day figure of his 2019 movie "Bala" that had earned ₹ 10.15 crore.

"It feels amazing to deliver my career's best opening with 'Dream Girl 2'. 'Dream Girl' is a franchise that has given me a lot of love and I'm really happy with the start that 'Dream Girl 2' has got at the box office," Khurrana said in a statement.

"As an entertainer, it feels amazing to bring people to theatres and experience them having a great time. 'Dream Girl 2' is a film that delivers entertainment in spades. It has a big promise that people will laugh their hearts out and it is good to note that the film has lived up to the expectations to take this solid start at the counters," he added.

The 38-year-old actor said he hopes the film continues to get love from the audiences in the coming days.

"I'm delighted that people have also loved my performance. To experience a feeling like this is always special. For an actor, there is no greater joy than being loved for your work," Khurrana said.

"Dream Girl 2" also features Paresh Rawal, Annu Kapoor, Rajpal Yadav, Vijay Raaz, Asrani, Abhishek Banerjee, Manoj Singh and Seema Pahwa. It is produced by Ektaa R Kapoor's Balaji Motion Pictures. (PTI)

Venezuelan triple jumper Yulimar Rojas earns 4th straight world title on final attempt

BUDAPEST (HUNGARY), Aug 26: Yulimar Rojas had an animated pep talk with herself before her final jump and with her rhythm uncharacteristically off.

More than anything, it was a reminder: She was Yulimar Rojas.

That sank in and the Venezuelan triple jumper instantly turned into the version of herself who wins everything in sight.

Rojas jumped 15.08 meters (49 feet, 5 3/4

inches) on her sixth and final attempt Friday night to rally for her fourth straight title at world championships. Add in her Olympic gold medal at the Tokyo Games and that makes her 5 for 5 in major meets since 2017.

"I didn't try to find words but rather think of all those times where I did really well," Rojas said through a translator of her final jump. "It was very difficult. The fact that I won the competi-

tion with my last attempt makes it very special and memorable."

Maryna Bekh-Romanchuk finished runner-up to earn the first medal for Ukraine in Budapest.

Bekh-Romanchuk was in the lead most of the night courtesy of a big opening jump of 15 meters (49-2 1/2). Leyanis Perez Hernandez of Cuba took bronze. "I knew if someone could change the result at the last minute it would be Yulimar

Rojas," Perez Hernandez said. "I was expecting my position to change, but even with this medal I am not satisfied with my performance. ... I have some bitter feelings, but I am proud that I can take a medal home and put it around my mother's neck."

For Bekh-Romanchuk, the silver medal represented something much bigger than herself.

"It's for my country," she said.

Bekh-Romanchuk has

been living and training in Germany since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, one of more than a million Ukrainians that have settled there since the war began.

"The last months for me have been really difficult because I feel some depression, because I'm always alone: just stadium and apartment," Bekh-Romanchuk explained.

This medal, she said, fulfilled "all the really

hard work I did."

"Maybe people saw my calm, focused and confident face, but believe me, nobody knows what I felt deep inside," Bekh-Romanchuk added. "You cannot imagine how many people helped me to step on the podium tonight."

The 27-year-old Rojas is as close to automatic these days as Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt was in his heyday.

She just needed to remember that. (AP)



Shankule weathers hot conditions to lead 1-2 finish by Ethiopia in the women's marathon

'THE BAR HAS BEEN SET VERY HIGH BY US (IN DOUBLES)' FOCUSSED ON SINGLES WAY TO GO FOR INDIAN PLAYERS: PAES AND BHUPATHI

MUMBAI, Aug 26: Tennis legends Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi are not in favour of more Indians choosing doubles over singles, saying the highest accolades in the sport go to individual performers.

"No, why would we do that?" Bhupathi told PTI when asked if Indians should focus more on doubles. "We have not had a quarterfinalist in a Grand Slam of the singles since Ramesh Krishnan (in mid-1980s). I think that is where we should focus," he said, adding, "The bar has been set very high by us (in doubles). If you are going to try and beat that, it is going to take a few decades."

"You have got to look at all different disciplines on its own, whether it is singles or doubles or mixed doubles -- it is all a part of tennis. (But) focussing on singles is the way to go because that is where the highest accolades are," added Paes on the sidelines of an US Polo Association event here on Friday.

Paes highlighted the rise of this year's Wimbledon champion, Spain's Carlos Alcaraz - who also became the world No. 1 in a rapid ascent at the age of 20 - even as Indian players are forced to deal with basic issues.

"When you look at preparing youngsters for that (singles), it is very hard. You look at the Al-

caraz of the world -- he is 20-years-old right now and he is already the No. 1. Our kids at 18-19 are still trying to come out of the juniors (level) to decide whether they are going to go to college or going pro -- it is a different world," the tennis legend with a total of 18 grand slam titles in men's doubles and mixed doubles said. Paes said the country will have to be realistic with its aspirations.

"That is where realism has to come in to see the level of support, the level of encouragement, the level of training and the level of dollars that is invested in to nurture talent. It is all relative," he said. Bhupathi said it is wrong to assume that it is going to be a tough time ahead for Indian singles players.

"It is subjective," he said. "Till two years ago, Carlos Alcaraz was... last year he won a championship at the beginning of the year and this year he is No. 1 in the world. So, I do not think it is a fair statement to make," said Bhupathi when asked if any Indian player will be able to play singles at the highest level.

"Anybody can come out of anywhere. There are a couple of 14-15 year old (Indians) who are making waves in the world," he said. Paes said the overall growth of tennis in India had shown im-



provement but it would take time for the country to produce a singles champion.

"The sport as a whole has grown so much in India and you see badminton and shooting

doing so well, even javelin -- a sport that India is not really known for -- doing so well. Hence all the other sports are picking up so well," he said.

"The Tokyo Olympics was a

clear showcase that seven medals in one Olympics is the best we have ever done. Coming back to tennis, people got so used to us winning Grand Slams -- 30 Grand Slams amongst us here --

I think it will take a little bit of time before we produce a singles champion. But at the same time, we have got to be very realistic as well," Paes added.

However, Bhupathi said there was no ready solution to solve the problem.

"If we had a solution we would have already done it, no? I mean, we are tennis players, not tennis creators," he said.

On his part, Paes, named the brand ambassador of the clothing brand along with Bhupathi, said, tapping talent in rural areas would be crucial.

"When you look at Indian sports, there are quite a few people who are doing it brilliantly. Neeraj Chopra is training in Scandinavia and has got a great javelin coach -- honing his skills there and bringing it here," Paes said.

"You look at our cricketers, trained here and playing in so many events. And, that is why cricket is churning (out) so many athletes. Today, you have almost 3-4 national cricket teams? It is incredible. You have the U-19 team as world champions. You have India A and B, I am sure you can have C and D," he said.

Paes continued, "It is just a matter of perseverance, coming out every day and creating opportunities for the youngsters to excel. (PTI)

Aman Sehrawat books World C'ship berth, Olympian Deepak Punia skips trials

PATIALA, Aug 26: Aman Sehrawat asserted his supremacy in the men's 57kg freestyle category as he clinched a World Championship berth while seasoned Olympian Deepak Punia skipped the national trials, here on Saturday. Aman defeated Atish Todkar in the final to make it double joy for him this year.

Besides Aman, Akash Dahiya will be representing India in the 61kg after getting the better of Neeraj, while Anuj Kumar will be seen in action in the 65kg category, where Olympic medalist Bajrang Punia ply his trade.

Bajrang had already decided to skip the world trials to train abroad for the Asian Games.

Bajrang, his close aide Jiten-der Kinha and Olympic medalist Sakshi Malik's husband Satyawart Kadian, all those, who were a part of the sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar demanding arrest of former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on allegations of sexual harassment, didn't take part in the trials. But it turned out to be a double whammy for Vishal Kaliraman as his dreams of representing the country in both Asian Games and World Championships was shattered. Kaliraman won the Asian Games trials but was kept on standby after Bajrang was given a direct entry.

Kaliraman, however, has an outside hope after Bajrang on Thursday said that he would withdraw from the Asian Games if all the panchayats that backed him during the protest at Jantar Mantar ask him to do so during the Kham Mahapanchayat on September 10.

Elsewhere, Abhimanyu beat Mulayam Yadav to seal the world championships place in

the 70kg, while Naveen defeated Sagar Jaglan to win the 74kg trials.

In the 79kg men's freestyle, Sachin More defeated Rohit Guliya to seal his ticket to Budapest. World championships silver medalist and Birmingham Commonwealth Games gold winner Deepak also skipped the trials in the 86kg category after the Sports Authority of India permitted him to train abroad to prepare for the Asian Games.

In Deepak's absence, Sandeep Singh got the better of Jonty Kumar to win the 86kg trial.

Pruthviraj Patil won the 92kg category beating Gourav Baliyan, while Sahil clinched the 97kg spot defeating Vicky.

Sumit Malik beat Akash Antil to win the 125kg freestyle spot.

The World Championships will be held in Belgrade, Serbia from September 16. The two-day trials ended on Saturday. It remains to be seen whether the selected grapplers will be able to don India colours at the Worlds or compete under the United World Wrestling (UWW) banner after the world body banned the Wrestling Federation of India on Thursday.

UWW suspended the WFI for not conducting its elections on time, a development which will not allow Indian grapplers to compete at the World Championships under the Indian flag.

The Indian wrestlers will have to compete as 'neutral athletes' at the Olympic-qualifying World Championships, starting September 16 as the IOA ad-hoc panel for wrestling, led by Bhupender Singh Bajwa, were unable to honour the 45-day deadline for conducting the elections due to matter being sub-judice. (PTI)

Gand Prix Badminton League Season 2 postponed indefinitely

BENGALURU, Aug 26: The second season of the Grand Prix Badminton League (GPBL) on Saturday was postponed indefinitely after several players pulled out of the event, said League Commissioner Prasanth Reddy here. Reddy said the players were forced to withdraw from the GPBL, which was scheduled to begin on Sunday, after the Badminton Association of India (BAI) did not give necessary permission to run the league.

"Our attempts to reach out to BAI thus far have proved futile. We will keep making efforts to reach out to them and find a

way to work together. Though it is a big blow at the moment, GPBL Season 2 is only postponed for the moment, and will be back bigger and grander soon," said Reddy during a press meet.

The Division Bench of Karnataka High Court had given a go-ahead for the GPBL on Friday. However, citing a Supreme Court order dated August 22, the BAI through a circular issued late on Friday night stressed that players, coaching and technical staff should not be a part of any unauthorized tournaments or leagues. In the circular, BAI said the Kar-

nataka HC did not judge the petition on merits and the final hearing has been posted for September 12. The national governing body further underlined that it could take appropriate action against players or other staff in retrospect if the September 12 verdict goes against the GPBL and its organisers.

The tournament was set to see participation from some of the top players in the country such as Mithun Manjunath and B Sai Praneeth. Mithun was bought for Rs 14.5 lakh by Chennai Superstarz in the player auction on August 5,

while Praneeth went to North-east Rhinos for Rs 10 lakh.

While entertaining the hopes of securing a favourable order from Karnataka HC next month, Reddy said they will have to restart the league from the scratch as and when it happens, including a new auction for the players. Former national champion Arvind Bhat, the GPBL Director, too hoped the league will be back on track soon as it gives good exposure to upcoming players. The BAI had earlier issued circulars on April 10 and July 5, warning players not to participate in "un-recognized tournaments". (PTI)

Noah Lyles wins 200-meter world title and looks to become a star at next year's Olympics

BUDAPEST (HUNGARY), Aug 26: When Noah Lyles powered into the straightaway and started pulling away in the 200-meter final, only a few questions remained on a night when track's best sprinters backed up the hype at world championships.

None of them had to do with whether he would win.

The man who wants to someday be more than a mere sports star stayed on that trajectory Friday in a 19.52-second runaway to become the first man to complete the 100-200 sprint double at worlds since Usain Bolt did it for the third time back in 2015. This was Lyles' third straight world championship in his better race, the 200. As for the biggest questions left: Will he meet his stated goal of 19.10 seconds in the 200, and can he reach superstar status at the Olympics -- well, those answers will be teased out over the 11 1/2 months between now and the Paris Games. "I think I've said a lot of times that I want to transcend the sport," said Lyles, who



is currently the subject of two documentaries and arguably the most engaging character in track. "I am the guy who wants to move past just being track famous."

A huge part of that, of course, is getting the work done on the oval. Consider that done, at least for now. The 26-year-old American surprised pretty much everyone

but himself by winning the 100 last weekend. Then, he came out and worked on his specialty, the 200. "The 100 is fun," Lyles said. "But the 200, you know, this one is personal to me."

The same might be said for Jamaica's Shericka Jackson, who ran the second fastest time in history, a 21.41, to win her second

straight title at 200 meters. Four days after taking second in the 100, Jackson beat American Gabby Thomas by .4 seconds and three steps in the 200, with Sha'Carri Richardson taking bronze to go with her gold in the 100.

Florence Griffith-Joyner's record of 21.34 is nearly 35 years old and Jackson has now run in the 21.4s twice -- this adding to the 21.45 she ran at last year's worlds. With Thomas, who has a 21.60 on her resume, and now Richardson there to push her, there's a sense Flo-Jo's mark could be ready to go in Paris.

"When I crossed the line and I saw the time, I was like, Oh, I'm close, I'm close!" Jackson said.

Earlier this year, Lyles went to social media and declared he was going to run 19.10, which would shatter Bolt's world record of 19.19 that felt untouchable when he set it in 2009. It was an audacious goal that fits into the American's overall plan. "There's a whole world out there and the Olympics is something they con-

nect to," Lyles said. "And Usain Bolt is something they connect to. And connecting what you do to something that they love helps bridge that gap."

That chase for the record could make for some great storytelling over the next year.

As for Friday's win -- it played out predictably.

Lyles looked a bit lumbering over the first 50 meters, but after he rounded the bend and moved into the final 80 meters, he overtook and then sprinted away from Erriyon Knighton by .23, holding off any thought of a true rivalry with the 19-year-old American for another year.

Letsile Tebogo of Botswana finished third and adds the bronze to his silver in the 100.

Lyles conceded he wished he'd run faster. But six races over six nights, including all the heats, can get exhausting. The week has been emotional -- he sobbed openly when accepting his 100-meter medal earlier in the week -- and bizarre. (AP)

FIFA suspends Spain soccer federation president Luis Rubiales for 90 days after World Cup final kiss

GENEVA, Aug 26: FIFA suspended Spanish soccer federation president Luis Rubiales from office on Saturday while its disciplinary committee investigates his conduct at the Women's World Cup final, which included kissing a player on the lips without her consent.

The ruling comes six days after Rubiales was accused of becoming a national embarrassment in front of a global audience at the final in Sydney, Australia — overshadowing the enormous accomplishment of Spain women's first World Cup title. Along with kissing star player Jenni Hermoso — who said she did not give her consent — Rubiales also grabbed his crotch in a lewd victory gesture with Spain's Queen Letizia and her 16-year-old daughter Sofia nearby.

FIFA said Rubiales is removed from soccer duties for 90 days

"pending the disciplinary proceedings opened" against him Thursday.

Rubiales refused to resign from his soccer presidency on Friday at an emergency meeting of the Spanish soccer federation's general assembly when he had been expected to leave under intense pressure from the Spanish government, women players plus soccer clubs and officials.

FIFA has given no timetable for a ruling by its disciplinary panel. The body's disciplinary judges can impose sanctions on individuals ranging from warnings and fines to suspensions from the sport.

The move by FIFA came after the Spanish federation had even threatened action against Hermoso for refusing to accept Rubiales's version of the kiss that happened at the on-field medal and trophy presentation after Spain's 1-0 win against England last Sunday.

The suspension should prevent Rubiales working in soccer or having contact with other officials.

FIFA disciplinary judge Jorge Palacio also intervened on Saturday to protect the "fundamental rights" of Hermoso and the integrity of the disciplinary case.

Palacio, a Colombian lawyer and former member of its constitutional court who has worked in women's rights, ordered Rubiales "to refrain, through himself or third parties, from contacting or attempting to contact the professional player of the Spanish national football team Ms Jennifer Hermoso or her close environment," FIFA said in a statement.

"Likewise, the RFEF (Spanish soccer federation) and its officials or employees, directly or through third parties, are ordered to refrain from contacting the professional player of the Spanish national team



Ms Jennifer Hermoso and her close environment," FIFA said.

In a complex situation, Spain's government — via its Higher Council for Sports — filed a lawsuit Friday alleging that Rubiales violated the country's sports laws through sexist acts. Spain's secretary of state for sports, Victor Francos, said on Friday that the government would move to temporarily suspend Rubiales — pending the court ruling — if the court agrees to hear the case.

If found guilty by the Spanish court, Rubiales could be ruled unfit to hold office. Francos said he would ask the court to move its regular Thursday meeting up to Monday.

Local media had originally reported that Rubiales would announce his resignation to Friday's general assembly of the federation. Instead, he defiantly dug in and accused Hermoso of having consented to a "mutual" kiss on the lips. He painted himself as the victim of a "witch hunt" by "false feminists," and received applause from the mostly male crowd.

Hermoso responded in two statements, one through her players' union and one in her name only, that Rubiales was lying and that she had felt intimidated.

All 22 of her Spain teammates, along with more than 50 other players, said in the statement by the players' union that they would not play for Spain again as long as Rubiales stayed in charge. It was not immediately clear whether this situation has now changed after FIFA's latest intervention.

The federation fired back with its own statement, saying that Rubiales was telling the truth and that it would seek legal action against Hermoso.

Messages of support for Hermoso poured in from the world of women's soccer, and beyond.

Real Madrid, Barcelona and other clubs issued statements criticizing Rubiales and backing the government's move to oust him. Political parties from both the left and right in Spain said he was unfit to continue in his post. Iberia airlines and other sponsors for the

federations said they were with the government as well.

On Saturday morning, Spanish sports daily Marca summed up the previous day's events with a front page headline "Global Laughing Stock" over a photo of a smiling Rubiales walking between rows of the general assembly.

Rubiales is a vice president of UEFA, holding the No. 3-ranking elected position at the top of the European soccer body which pays him 250,000 euros (USD 270,000) annually plus expenses.

He was elected to the executive committee by UEFA member federations in 2019 and was within weeks promoted to the vice presidency by UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin.

Neither UEFA nor Ceferin have commented on the Rubiales scandal this week. FIFA has now intervened in the case twice. (AP)

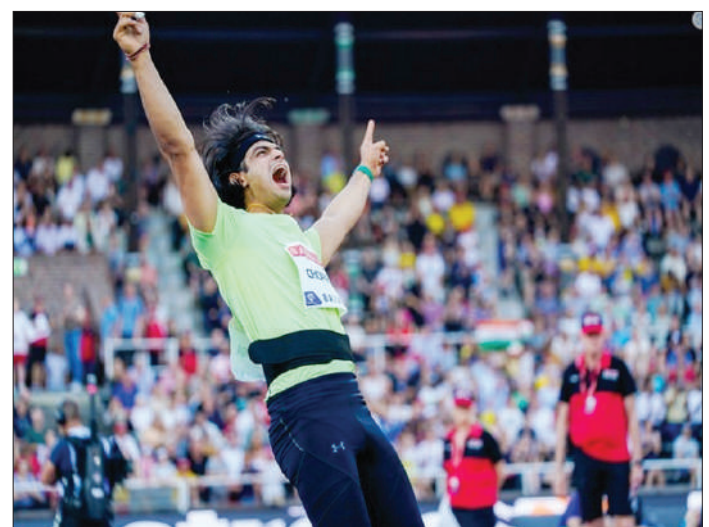
Chopra primed to win World C'ships Gold, Pakistan's Nadeem also in reckoning

BUDAPEST, Aug 26: A single big throw having taken him to the final once again while his close rivals struggled, Neeraj Chopra is primed to nail the World Championships javelin throw gold medal here on Sunday, to lift the gloom in the Indian camp after the country's disappointing campaign so far.

Chopra, who won silver in the last edition, sent his spear to 88.77m in his first attempt in the qualification round on Friday to also qualify for 2024 Paris Olympics. It was his season's best effort and fourth best throw of his career.

The 25-year-old has won gold medals in Olympics (Tokyo in 2021), Asian Games (2018) and Commonwealth Games (2018), besides becoming the Diamond League champion last year.

It is no secret that the Olympic champion prefers to throw big in his first attempt and having done that, he packed up and left the competition arena without making any further attempt to preserve strength for the all-important final on Sunday.



Chopra did the same in the last edition qualification round in USA with a 88.39m — though he finished second behind eventual champion Anderson Peters of Grenada, who threw 89.91m.

The same happened in Tokyo Olympics also, where he won a silver medal.

Even though Chopra has competed in just two top events this season — winning title in both Doha and Lausanne Diamond League Meetings, his top class throw here on Friday showed that he's in great form and rhythm, and on course to win the only yellow colour medal missing in his decorated cabinet.

The absence of defending champion Peters in the final will also make Chopra's job easier though the Grenadian has been struggling for some time. He could not even touch the 80m mark in his three qualifying round throws.

That left only Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic and Julian Weber of Germany from among the throwers Chopra had had gruelling duels in the last two years after Tokyo Olympics as top contenders for the gold on Sunday.

The 32-year-old Vadlejch, who had won silver and bronze in the Tokyo Olympics and 2022 World Championships, had entered the showpiece as the season leader with 89.51m but could only produce a best of 83.50m on Friday. He also admitted that his throws were not "technically ideal".

Weber, who was a notch up to Chopra at second in the season's top list ahead of the showpiece, hinted that he had a "bad technique session" on Friday as he could only produce a best of 82.39m. (PTI)



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Aug 26: In a promising development for the promotion of sepak takraw in India, Dr. Bishnu Ram Nunisa, the Vice President of the Sepak Takraw Federation of India,

paid a visit to Dr. Sujoy Lal Thaoson, IPS, Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), at his Office Chamber in CRPF HQs, CGO Complex, New Delhi. The meeting took place recently,

with discussions focussing around the introduction of Sepak Takraw within the CRPF.

Sepak Takraw, a dynamic and exciting sport that blends elements of soccer and volleyball, has been gaining popularity globally. Dr. Nunisa's visit aimed to explore the prospects of integrating this sport into the activities of the CRPF, a move that could not only foster a sense of camaraderie among the personnel but also promote physical fitness and teamwork.

During the meeting, Dr. Thaoson displayed keen interest and enthusiasm for the idea. He assured full support for the introduction of Sepak Takraw within the CRPF in the foreseeable future. This gesture reflects the CRPF's commitment to promoting a holistic approach to the well-being of its personnel, beyond their traditional duties.

Dr. Nunisa felicitated Dr. Thaoson with a Dimas Risha, a traditional Assamese scarf, and an Assamese Gamusa, a symbolic cloth often presented as a gesture of honour and respect.

Virat Kohli is perfect for No 4 spot: AB de Villiers

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: Virat Kohli would be the perfect answer for India's No.4 conundrum at the World Cup as he can put the innings together and play any kind of role in the middle order, feels South Africa great AB de Villiers.

India have struggled to find a suitable No.4 ever since Yuvraj Singh retired from cricket. With the 50-over World Cup less than two months away, there has been a lot of discussion around who will bat at the spot.

"We're still talking about who will be the No. 4 batter for India. I've heard some rumours about Virat possibly taking up that position. I would be a big supporter of that," de Villiers said on his Youtube channel.

"I think Virat is perfect for No. 4. He can put the innings together, play any kind of role in that middle order. I don't know if he would like to do that.

"We know he loves his No. 3 position;



he's scored all his runs there, but at the end of the day, if the team needs you to do something, play a certain role, you have got to put your hand up and got for it," de Villiers added.

While Kohli prefers to bat one down, he has a decent record coming in at No. 4. In 39 innings, he has scored 1,767 runs at an average of 55.21 and strike rate of 90.66.

However, it has been over three years since Kohli batted in the No. 4 position in January 2020 when he played against Aus-

tralia in Mumbai.

Both Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul have recovered from their injuries and are a part of the 17-member Asia Cup squad.

Iyer has done 20 matches at No. 4, scoring 805 runs at 47.35 with two centuries and five fifties. He is most likely to reclaim the spot.

Earlier this week, skipper Rohit Sharma stressed on the need to have flexibility in the batting order.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal failed to make the India squad for the Asia Cup as the selectors gave preference to wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav and spin all-rounder Axar Patel.

"Chahal has been dropped, selectors making their intentions clear who they will be picking. It's a bit of disappointing drop for me, Yuzi is always very handy and it's great to have the leg-spinning option in your team. We know how skillful he is," de Villiers said. (PTI)

World Cup 2023: Netherlands bank on camps, practice matches in India to make an impact

BENGALURU, Aug 26: Netherlands might be entering the ICC World Cup 2023 as rank outsiders, but their coach Ryan Cook is banking on camps in India and practice matches to make an impact in the quadrennial extravaganza.

Netherlands will arrive in India mid-September to have an acclimatization camp in Bengaluru, where they will play a couple of local sides.

Following that, they will face India and Australia in the pre-tournament warm-up matches at Thiruvananthapuram.

Cook hoped that the time spent in India would blend with his team's inherent desire to win matches.

"We are preparing as hard as we can. There will be a couple of camps and practice matches in India. We hope they will serve us well in the tournament proper. Once you enter the tournament, it will be inspirational for everyone to do well," Cook said on Saturday while addressing a select media gathering.

The Dutchmen qualified for the World Cup earlier in July ahead of teams like two-time champions West Indies.

However, since that day they have not played any international matches, leaving them a tad raw ahead of the big-ticket event to be played in India across October and November.

The furrows on Dutch faces will grow long as they are yet to win a World Cup



match in India despite playing in two editions — 1996 and 2011.

But Netherlands captain Scott Edwards did not read much into the history.

"I don't think it's necessarily something that we look into the past. I think you've got pretty much a completely different squad. So, we're just looking at it from that point of view of the team. You know, we feel like we've put a lot of decent performances on the board over the past two years," said Edwards.

Netherlands will face India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan in the World Cup league stage.

The Orange Army has played against both SL and Pakistan in the last one year, bringing in a bit of familiarity factor.

Cook said while the past experience will stand them in good stead, the team will have to be more clinical in the big tournament, especially against spinners.

"Obviously, they've got quality spinners, and we didn't play that well (in the past). So, for us, we've just got to be more clinical when we get those chances. We've just got to make sure we capitalise on them. We've put processes in place for that. We've been speaking in training for those situations. (PTI)

Let your eyes live after you are gone

Pledge to donate your eyes

Eye donation is a noble deed.

Gift the power of sight to another person after you are gone.

National Eye Donation Fortnight

Observed every year from

25th August to 8th September

Understanding eye donation

- Cornea is the glass-like covering in front of the eyeball
- Corneal Grafting can cure corneal blindness
- Cornea can be replaced only by cornea donation
- Eyes from a donor are collected within 6 hours after death. Contact the phone numbers given below for eye donation
- Corneal Grafting is done free of cost at some Government and Private Hospitals
- Eyes of a deceased person can also be donated by family members

Donate your eyes. You can make a difference.

EYE BANK CONTACT NO.'s

- Gauhati Medical College Eye Bank: 8822377199, 8822380763
- Srimantra Sankardeva Netralaya, Guwahati: 0361 2228922
- Jeuti Eye Bank (Jorhat): 8811040355
- Lions Eye Bank (Jorhat): 8402011044
- Lion KK Saharia Eye Hospital, Dibrugarh: 7399072100

(NHM/D/2023-24/1168)