



সম্পদে জয়তে
Government of Assam
Environment and Forest Department

LAUNCH OF



by

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma
Chief Minister, Assam

Mobile App/Web Portal and WBI Portal
To go live

Government of Assam initiates Amrit Brikshya Andolan - to enrich Assam's beauty, combat climate change, and empower citizens. On 17 September 2023, self-help groups, front-line workers, educational institutes and government personnel will come together to plant 1 crore commercially viable saplings in 3 hours, setting their sights on a place in the record books.

How Does it Work?

- Eligible individuals will have to register on the dedicated ABA app.
- They will receive Saplings via distribution points.
- **They will plant saplings on 17 September 2023.**
- They will capture geo-tagged and time-stamped photos of the sapling and upload on the app.
- The mature saplings can be sold commercially without acquiring any permission from the Forest Department.
- Eligible individuals will receive ₹100 for each successful planting.
- After 3 years, they will receive an additional ₹200 if the sapling survives.

3-PRONGED BENEFITS

A GREENER ASSAM

Providing increased green cover, purifying the air and creating a healthier environment for all.

BATTLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Actively battle climate change by reducing carbon emissions and protecting our planet.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Commercially viable saplings will provide better monetary returns when they mature

ASSAM'S GREEN COVER GETS A BOOST

PLANTING
1 CRORE
COMMERCIAL
SAPPLINGS
IN 3 HOURS
across Assam
on 17 September 2023



Exclusive/ABA/08-2023

Scan to visit
the ABA Portal



Visit the application for complete details.

Link to the web portal : <https://aba.assam.gov.in/>

Issued by Environment and Forest Department, Assam in collaboration with Pollution Control Board, Assam

Published by Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Assam Follow us [f](#) [i](#) [t](#) [y](#) /@diprassam <https://dipr.assam.gov.in/>

Subscribe to Asom Barta [w](#) WhatsApp 'Assam' at 8287912158

Janasanyog/D/8065/23

6
WORLD



- China will always stand firmly with Pakistan: Chinese President Xi

7
REGION



- Russia accuses Ukraine of drone attack on Moscow
- Triple Murder Case: NHRCCB assures full judicial cooperation
- Cong responsible for NE's geographical isolation, political instability: Himanta

Trust surplus today seen in policies, hard work of people in India: PM



PUNE, Aug 1 (PTI): "Trust surplus" is seen today both in policies and hard work of the people in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, as he received the Lokmanya Tilak National Award in Pune.

Development is impossible if there is an atmosphere of mistrust, Modi said in his acceptance speech

at the event, where he shared the stage with NCP chief Sharad Pawar.

Modi spoke of India's journey from "trust deficit" to "trust surplus". Modi cited a survey conducted at an international level and said India is the country where people trust their government the most.

He said in the last nine years, the people of India made big transfor-

mations possible. People of India made the country the fifth largest economy in the world, he added.

Lokmanya Tilak understood the importance of a free press, the PM said. "He changed the course of the freedom struggle. The British called him the father of Indian unrest," he added. Today, the country is believing in itself in every sphere, Modi said. He also said today some people get uncomfortable if a road named after a foreign invader is renamed.

The PM said he feels honoured to receive the award named after Lokmanya Tilak, who was at the forefront of India's freedom struggle.

He said there are several things we could learn from the life of Tilak. "Tilak had great faith in the Bhagavad Gita. The British had sent him to Mandalay prison, but there also he continued his research on the Bhagavad Gita and wrote Gita Rahasya and (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Apex court seeks details of May 4 incident of 2 women paraded naked

Manipur police slammed for 'tardy' probe; DGP summoned

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI): Observing there is complete breakdown of law and order and constitutional machinery in Manipur, the Supreme Court on Tuesday rapped the state police for "tardy" and "lethargic" probe of incidents of ethnic violence, especially those targeting women, and summoned the DGP to answer its queries on August 7.

Excoriating the law enforcement machinery over unbridled ethnic violence, it said the state police have completely lost control over the law and order situation, and sought details from the state government in a "tabulated format" segregating cases involving murder, rape, arson and loot, destruction of house and property, places of worship, and outraging of modesty of women.



The Centre, represented by attorney general R Venkataramani and solicitor general Tushar Mehta, urged the bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud that in-

stead of the two FIRs related to a video showing women being paraded naked by a mob, all 11 out of 6,523 FIRs linked to violence against women and children may be transferred to the CBI and tried out of Manipur.

Hearing a clutch of petitions on the mayhem in the northeastern state, a bench, also comprising justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said it was considering setting up a committee comprising former high court judges to monitor the probe and the subsequent trial in all FIRs as it will be difficult for the CBI to handle them alone. "At the present stage, the material which has been disclosed before the (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

HT BRIEFS

Former ULFA (I) militant nabbed

TINSUKIA: A former ULFA (Independent) militant was apprehended for allegedly recruiting youth for the banned outfit in Tinsukia district, a police officer said on Tuesday. Acting on information that the ULFA (I) had launched a recruitment drive in some districts of the state, the police had launched an operation in Tinsukia last month, additional superintendent of police Bibhas Das told reporters here. The police had earlier arrested two link persons, identified as Juman Bora and Sashanka Rajkhowa, from whom they had recovered a list of 17 names for recruitment to the outfit, he said.

JE claims two

NAGAO: The deadly Japanese Encephalitis (JE) outbreak has struck Nagaon district, resulting in the tragic deaths of two individuals within a span of 24 hours, according to reliable sources. District health services in Nagaon have reported that at least 13 people have been affected by JE in the region. Among the victims, eleven-year-old Taibur Islam from Rupahihat Gunabari village passed away on Monday, while Sofikul Islam from Juria Dighaliati area succumbed to the disease on Sunday while receiving treatment at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital.

Body recovered

BOKAJAN: A male dead body was discovered at Tila Basti in Khatkhathi, under Khatkhathi Police Station in Karbi Anglong on Tuesday. The body was found inside a tea estate by locals around 11:30 am, who immediately informed the police. A police team, accompanied by a magistrate from Bokajan, visited the site. The deceased has been identified as Muksi Ali (28), son of Shiraj Ali, a resident of Salpara, Juria in Nagaon district. To determine the cause of death, the body has been sent to Diphu Medical College & Hospital for a post-mortem examination.

Chandrayaan-3 in 'normal health' as it leaves Earth's orbit

BENGALURU, Aug 1 (PTI): ISRO on Tuesday said the health of India's third lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 is normal - hours after it completed its orbits around the Earth and moved closer to the Moon.

Earlier on Tuesday, a key manoeuvre to slingshot the Chandrayaan spacecraft towards the Moon from Earth's orbit was carried out successfully.

The move put the spacecraft in a translunar orbit in which it enters the Moon's sphere of influence. In about four days from now another crucial manoeuvre will inject the spacecraft into the Moon's orbit. The manoeuvre will be performed when Chandrayaan-3 is at the closest point to the Moon (perilune), ISRO said.

"As it arrives at the moon, the Lunar-Orbit Insertion (LOI) is planned for August 5, 2023," ISRO said, adding that, "A crucial

manoeuvre at perilune would achieve the LOI."

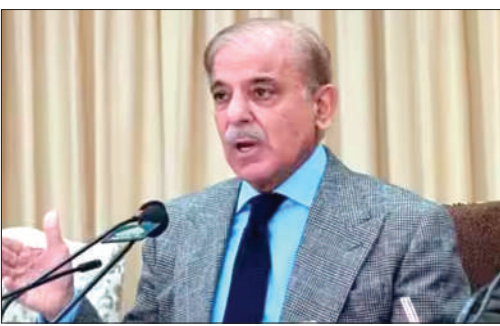
Earlier in the day, ISRO announced the success of the slingshot manoeuvre performed by scientists from the space centre here when the spacecraft was closest to Earth (perigee).

"A successful perigee-firing performed at ISTRAC (ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network). ISRO has injected the spacecraft into the translunar orbit," it said.

After tracking Chandrayaan-3 through the day, ISRO said, "Today's perigee burn has successfully raised Chandrayaan-3 orbit to 288 km x 369328 km".

"The spacecraft's health is normal," ISRO added. An ISRO official told PTI that following the trans-lunar injection, the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft escaped from orbiting the Earth and is now following (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Ready to hold talks with India on all outstanding issues: Pak PM



ISLAMABAD, Aug 1 (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday offered to hold talks with India to address all serious and outstanding issues as he said that "war is not an option" for both countries as they fight poverty and unemployment.

Sharif made the remarks while addressing the inaugural session of the Pakistan Minerals Summit here. The meeting, organised under the slogan of 'Dust to Development', aimed at bringing foreign investment to the cash-strapped country. "We are prepared to talk with everyone, even with our neighbour, provided that the neighbour is serious enough to talk serious matters on the table because war is no more an option," the Prime Minister said, in an apparent reference to India.

Prime Minister Sharif's comments came amid continued strain in ties between India and Pakistan on a number of issues including Islamabad's continued support to cross-border terrorism and the Kashmir issue.

India has been maintaining that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan while insisting that the onus is on Islamabad to create an environment that is free of terror and hostility for such an engagement. India has also asserted that Jammu and Kashmir "was, is and will" always be part of the country.

Prime Minister Sharif's remarks came as his coalition government is getting ready to face an election at the completion of the five-year term of Parliament on August 12. It is expected that the National Assembly, the lower house, will be dissolved a few days before the end of the term to provide more time for the next elections.

The Prime Minister talked about the history of wars between Pakistan and India. The wars in his opinion resulted in an increase in poverty, unemployment, and lack of resources to finance education, health, and well-being of the people. He said Pakistan's nuclear capability was for defensive purposes and not for aggression. "Because if there is any nuclear flashpoint, who will live to tell what happened? So (war) is not an option," he said. Sharif emphasised that Pakistan was well aware of the dark side of a nuclear conflict but India should also realise it. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Pijush inspects erosion prevention work

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Assam water resource minister Pijush Hazarika inspected the successful completion of erosion prevention work in the Gumi Panikhati area of Kamrup district on Tuesday. The project, which covered an area of approximately one kilometer, was executed under four different schemes at a cost of approximately ₹ 11.15 crore to combat the Brahmaputra River's erosive impact.

During his visit, the minister examined the 23-kilometer-long road cum embankment constructed along the Brahmaputra's banks. The embankment serves as a crucial protective measure against erosion and ensures the safety of communities residing in the vicinity.

Minister Hazarika expressed satisfaction with the completed project's outcome and reiterated the government's commitment to safeguarding the region from the destructive effects of erosion.

BJP indulging in religious polarisation to win LS polls: Ripun Bora

GUWAHATI, Aug 1 (PTI): Assam Trinamool Congress president Ripun Bora on Tuesday alleged that the BJP was stirring up emotions by indulging in religious polarisation to sail through the Lok Sabha elections due next year.

He also hit out at police and government machinery's initial silence over arms training at a Bajrang Dal camp in Darrang district, with the incident creating a furore in the state. "It is the modus operandi of the BJP in the country. This time it is the Bajrang Dal here, but they call it the Sangh Parivar. They are all like-minded parties," Bora said at a press conference here.

Referring to the camp in Mangaldai town of Darrang district, he said, "They said it was for self-defence using air guns. But it is still a weapon. A procession was taken out with slogans for forming a 'Hindu



Rashtra' and firing in the air using these guns." "Police stood as silent spectators. Indirectly, the government was promoting it," he added.

A video purportedly showing Bajrang Dal members imparting arms training at a school in Mangaldai went viral on Monday.

Assam Police has registered a case against Bajrang Dal activists for organising the camp while opposition Congress and CPI (M) have demanded an inquiry against the organisers and the role of the district administration.

Lashing out at the BJP governments where it is in power, Bora said, "Wherever there is the 'double engine' government of the BJP, be it in Haryana or Manipur, strife between communities has started. With an eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the party is indulging in a 'one nation, one religion, Hindu Rashtra' slogan to polarise people."

"They want to unite the Hindus through the emotional card and win elections as they have no development to show," the former Rajya Sabha member claimed. Bora also criticised the state government for failing to (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Govt official arrested for bribery



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: In a major development, Subhash Daimary, senior assistant at the office of the district transport officer, Bongaigaon, was arrested by the Directorate of Vigilance & Anti-Corruption, Assam, for allegedly demanding a bribe of ₹ 5,000 to unblock a Pollution Testing Centre's ID, a release stated on Tuesday.

According to the complaint received by the Directorate, Subhash Daimary initially demanded ₹ 6,000 from the complainant, which was later reduced to ₹ 5,000. However, refusing to yield to the demand, the complainant approached the Vigilance authorities, leading to a well-executed trap on Tuesday.

During the operation conducted at the office of the district transport officer & secretary, Regional Transport Authority, Bongaigaon, Subhash Daimary was caught red-handed while accepting the bribe money. The tainted money, along with an additional sum of ₹ 26,500, was seized from the accused in the presence of independent witnesses, the release stated further.

The Vigilance & Anti-Corruption Directorate has registered a case (ACB P.S. Case No. 56/2023) under Section 120 (B) IPC, R/W Section 7(a) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018). Necessary legal action is underway to ensure justice is served.

NCB busts 'biggest' darknet LSD cartel operating in India

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI): The Narcotics Control Bureau on Tuesday claimed to have busted the "biggest" darknet-based LSD cartel operating in India with the seizure of more than 13,000 blots and ₹ 26 lakh in cash and the arrest of three persons.

The cartel named 'Zambada' has a "high volume of business and supply chain" of this hallucinogenic category of drug and is also operating in the UK, the US, South Africa, Canada, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Türkiye, NCB deputy director general (operations and enforcement) Gyaneshwar Singh said.

The cartel was being operated by young educated men in the age bracket of 21-25 years, he said.

It is the second LSD trafficking cartel busted by the agency in the last about three months, officials said.

The federal anti-narcotics agency had seized a cache of 15,000 LSD blots, the highest-ever catch in one operation, and arrested half-a-dozen people in June.

LSD or lysergic acid diethylamide is a synthetic chemical based-drug and is categorised as a hallucinogen. It is abused largely by youngsters and its consumption can lead to serious health issues. It is odourless, colourless and tasteless and it is painted on small squares of paper (blots) that can be licked or swallowed.

In continued operations, it was learnt that the largest cartel operating in LSD on the darknet - Zambada - operates from Delhi-NCR, Singh said.

Two of the ground operators of this cartel were identified through technical and human surveillance and this led to the location of the "mastermind" of this cartel who was operating from Ballabgarh (Faridabad) in Haryana, he said. The NCB Delhi zonal office conducted multiple raids at the

premises of these three persons leading to the seizure of 13,863 LSD blots, 428 grams MDMA (ecstasy), and the freeing of ₹ 26.73 lakh "drug money", agency officials said.

The 'Zambada' cartel, according to the agency, was the "only" cartel in the country with a so-called "5-star rating".

In a statement, the NCB said the drug cartels on the darknet are rated on a scale of 1-5 stars based on the potency of the drug sold through their platform and their "customer service".

Darknet refers to the deep hidden internet platform that is used for narcotics sale, exchange of pornographic content and other illegal activities by using the secret alleys of the onion router (TOR) to stay away from surveillance by law enforcement agencies.

The NCB said the cartel's name is derived from "Ismael-Marlo Zambada Garcia", a Mexican drug lord, and he was the last remaining fugitive on the list of Mexico's 37 most wanted drug criminals.

He carries a reward of up to USD 15,000,000, the agency said. The first time the name of this cartel was reported in the country was in September 2022 when the Hyderabad Police arrested eight people for drug trafficking using the darknet.

Garcia, according to the NCB, declared on the darknet after this interdiction in India that he was safe and will never be caught.

Garcia is stated to be in "close contact" with a darknet operator called- Dr Seuss alias DS and TS (Tribe Seuss) or Gamma Goblin-who is the largest source of LSD across the globe.

'Zambada' intended to open an Indian "outlet" of Dr Seuss with a minimum stock of one lakh LSD blots. It has "outlets" in the UK, USA, South Africa, Canada, Russia, Spain, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

New device detects specific UTI-causing bacteria called 'Klebsiella pneumoniae' within five minutes

IIT Guwahati develops device for fast detection of UTI

GUWAHATI, Aug 1 (PTI): A research team of the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG) has developed a 3D printed cost-effective, accurate and reliable device for rapid diagnosis of urinary tract infection (UTI), an IITG release said on Tuesday.

The device, developed by the research team led by associate professor of IITG's department of chemical engineering Dr Partho Sarathi Gooch Pattader, can measure and identify the type of bacteria in a UTI suspected patient in minutes compared to conventional detection, which uses urine culture that requires a few days.

The estimated cost of manufacturing the device is Rs 608 while testing a single sample will cost Rs 8. It will be useful for rural areas



where most UTI cases remain undetected due to lack of adequate testing facilities, the release said.

The conventional way to diagnose and detect the specific bacteria

is by urine culture, which takes a minimum of two days. Without knowing the specific bacteria responsible for the infection, doctors cannot administer antibiotics to treat

the UTI and this delay creates a problem for a patient.

"Early-stage detection of UTI is important to provide timely treatment. The Point-Of-Care Testing (POCT) prototype developed at IIT Guwahati is a photodetector that detects and quantifies a specific UTI-causing bacteria called 'Klebsiella pneumoniae' within five minutes from a patient's urine sample," Pattader said.

The detection of 'Klebsiella pneumoniae' is important not only because it is responsible for UTI, but also for pneumonia and soft tissue infection, he said. "We have used gold nanoparticles with specifically-engineered aptamers. An aptamer is like a 3D puzzle piece that fits only on the surface of a particular bacteria (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

All human wisdom is summed up in two words; wait and hope.
- Alexandre Dumas

Productive Parl session needed

In the vibrant Indian political landscape, the formation of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) by 26 opposition parties has added a new dimension to the forthcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Amidst this dynamic backdrop, the Lok Sabha Speaker has admitted a notice of no confidence against the Narendra Modi-led government, marking the second such motion faced by the Prime Minister since 2014. However, as the parliamentary arithmetic currently stands, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) holds a commanding majority of 332 seats in the Lok Sabha, well above the required majority mark of 272. The opposition bloc, on the other hand, musters a strength of 142 seats. While it may be evident that the ruling BJP can comfortably win the motion, the opposition claims it aims to win the perception war and compel the Prime Minister to address critical issues plaguing the nation. One of these pressing issues is the violent ethnic clashes in Manipur, which began in early May. The clashes between the majority Meitei group, predominantly Hindus, and the Christian Kuki and Naga tribes have resulted in widespread national and international outrage. The opposition has repeatedly sought answers from the Prime Minister regarding this matter, and after exhausting all other options, they resort to a no-confidence motion to force a response.

However, amidst the din of disruptions and walkouts, the essence of parliamentary democracy, which hinges on constructive debate and scrutiny of laws, seems to be diminishing. Both the government and the opposition must recognise that vibrant parliamentary debates play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and fostering accountability. It is essential to shed the confrontational attitude and engage in meaningful dialogue to effectively represent the views of constituents and subject government policies to critical examination. The present parliament has a golden opportunity to rise above the prevalent disruption and rediscover the spirit of healthy debate and discussion. The lawmakers' primary duty is to debate bills before voting on them, ensuring that necessary modifications are made to achieve the intended objectives and avoid judicial dismissal. Former Chief Justice of India, NV Ramana, lamented the lack of adequate discussions in parliament over scrutinizing laws. The parliament must heed this call and actively engage in thorough and thoughtful deliberations. It is time for both sides to change their approach and prioritise constructive debates and discussions. A thriving democracy demands an effective and robust parliament. While the Modi government boasts a considerable majority, this should not deter the opposition from focusing on the right issues and employing a strategic and practical approach to achieve their goals.

As the PM prepares to respond to the upcoming no-confidence motion, it is paramount for him to address the concerns raised by the opposition. This debate presents a significant opportunity for the government to clarify its stance on critical matters. The Indian parliament must reinvigorate its commitment to parliamentary democracy by embracing constructive criticism and allowing robust scrutiny of government policies. Meaningful debates, devoid of disruptions, can pave the way for a stronger, more responsive, and accountable government. It is high time for both the government and the opposition to steer away from the disruptive norm and embrace the essence of parliamentary democracy. By doing so, they can effectively contribute to a thriving democracy and uphold the spirit of inclusivity and progress that India aspires to achieve.

BJP's outreach to Pasmanda Muslims will remain a hollow gesture

By: Jehosh Paul

The Supreme Court is soon scheduled to hear a case on the issue of imputation of caste system in Islam and Christianity in order to determine whether reservation benefits can be extended to Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims. It becomes crucial to examine the previous stance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Union government, keeping in mind its outreach efforts towards Pasmanda Muslims as part of the BJP's 2024 general elections preparation.

During a previous hearing, the government, in its affidavit, denied the demands of reservation to Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians by submitting that Christianity and Islam do not practice untouchability and Christians or Muslims have never experienced backwardness or oppression. The government further emphasised that the petitions seeking reservation were devoid of merit.

However, the arguments advanced by the BJP-led government are inconsistent with the BJP's action of outreach programmes in favour of Pasmanda Muslim under which it has explicitly acknowledged the presence of caste-based stratification within the Muslim community.

During the national executive meetings of the BJP held in Delhi, in January 2023 and Hyderabad, in July 2022, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi called upon the party to reach out to the marginalised sections within minority communities.

In the words of PM Modi, "A section of their own religion (Islam) has exploited Pasmanda Muslims, something that has not been discussed in the country. Several generations have had to suffer. But the BJP works in the spirit of SabkaSaath, SabkaVikaas." Subsequently, an extensive outreach programme was launched by BJP President J.P. Nadda in Uttar Pradesh, aiming to engage Pasmanda Muslims and bestow them with "sammaan" (respect) and "sneh" (affection).

Jamal Siddiqui, national president of the BJP's minority morcha, has stated that the party has identified at least 61 constituencies that have a population of more than 25 percent Muslims to carry forward the message of GaribKalyan from PM Modi to them. Reports suggest that the BJP is planning to identify financially weaker families in these constituencies so that Pasmanda Muslim families can benefit from some of the Union government's flagship programmes such as toilets for all; subsidised cooking gas cylinders; access to bank accounts through the Jan Dhan programme; housing for all, both in rural and urban areas; and easy loans under the Mudra scheme for women. It is worth noting that Pasmanda Muslims, comprising approximately 85 percent of India's Muslim population, have the potential to be major beneficiaries of welfare schemes implemented by the Modi government. PM Modi's Pasmanda outreach has garnered praise from individuals such as Tariq Mansoor, former vice-chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University and a member of the legislative council in Uttar Pradesh. Mansoor commended the BJP for exhibiting not only a better sociological understanding of the heterogeneity of Muslims but also for offering political expediency to address the void in Pasmanda politics that the non-BJP parties have failed to accommodate. Wasim Raini, the state president of All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaj, has said that PM Modi is the first prime minister to openly address the problems faced by the Pasmanda Muslims and express commitment to their welfare. Raini added that the Pasmanda community now looks towards the BJP with hope.

However, it is crucial to recognise that true inclusivity and social justice require more than opportunistic gestures. The BJP's Pasmanda outreach efforts ring hollow due to the party's reluctance to support reservation benefits for Dalit Muslims (and Dalit Christians).

While welfare schemes and outreach programmes targeting the Pasmanda community are commendable, they fall short of addressing the deep-rooted systemic discrimination that reservation benefits aim to rectify. To demonstrate genuine inclusivity and commitment to social justice, the BJP must reconcile its Pasmanda outreach with consistent support for reservation benefits for the marginalised communities, irrespective of their religion. (IPA Service)

Manipur riots: Eroding the foundations of the basic structure doctrine

Despite facing a second no-trust motion, the Narendra Modi government is expected to prevail once again, just as it did in 2018, owing to its significant parliamentary majority with 303 MPs. However, it is crucial to remember that governments are elected to uphold law and order, and their failure to do so undermines the fundamental framework of the Constitution.

Consequently, the ongoing genocide in Manipur can no longer be considered solely India's "internal matter"; it has now evolved into a matter of global concern, exemplified by the European Parliament's active discussion on the issue. The right to life of the tribals in Manipur is explicitly safeguarded by Article 21 of the Constitution, making it imperative for action to address this serious human rights violation.

The incident of two women being recorded on video and paraded naked was met with serious concern, prompting the 50th CJI Dhananjaya Chandrachud to issue a warning to the government, urging them to apprehend the perpetrators. Adding to the gravity of the situation, a 20-year-old woman who was subjected to rape revealed that the police themselves handed both women over to the mob, resulting in further sexual assault and brutality. This appalling incident not only violated their right to life but also exposed a complete mockery of justice and protection by the authorities. The accusation made by Opposition leader Mallikarjun Kharge against the government, alleging that his microphone was intentionally turned off when he attempts to speak, is a grave and significant charge. In another concerning incident, authorities have been accused of charging a Manipuri Ph.D. student with sedition after he accused the N. Biren Singh government of being involved in the riots. The prolonged 85-day duration it took the government to control the chaos in Manipur further emphasizes the notion that those entrusted with upholding the Constitution have, in fact, undermined its fundamental structure.

Critics and clerics have written about the N. Biren Singh government's alleged plan for a demographic experiment aimed at replacing the tribals (a majority of whom are Christians) with a influx of migrants. According to these sources, the government has been accused of supporting and sponsoring most of the riots in the

region.

Riots, such as the 1992 Mumbai riots that claimed the lives of 575 Muslims and 275 Hindus, the Gujarat riots in 2002 resulting in the deaths of over 1000 Muslims, and the Delhi riots in 1984 and 2020 where Sikhs and Muslims died alongside Hindus, are believed to be fueled by state complicity.

The Opposition's dissatisfaction with the lack of discussion on Manipur during Parliament's monsoon session led to continuous slogans being raised on the fifth day. This came after the Speaker accepted two no-confidence resolutions against the Modi government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose not to stay in Parliament to respond to the charges brought forward by the I.N.D.I.A. alliance, leaving Home Minister Amit Shah to address the concerns on his behalf.

Several months ago, there was a distressing incident where an 18-year-old woman was subjected to rape and brutal assault. According to media reports, the victim identified a group of women known as Meira Paibis (also known as Mothers of Manipur) who allegedly handed her over to four men dressed in black. These

DEGREE OF THOUGHT
By: Dipak Kurmi

Constitution's integrity might continue to be compromised, given the government's expected success in the face of such motions.

The government's actions have withheld information about the border situation with China, citing national security concerns, thereby depriving the people of their right to be informed. However, in a contrasting approach, the government has seemingly allowed the situation in Manipur to spiral out of control, resulting in rampant chaos and violence.

Consequently, the fundamental right to life, which is enshrined as an integral part of Article 21, has been effectively negated. Both Article 21 and the independence of the judiciary are vital components of the Constitution's basic structure. Regrettably, the ongoing riots in Manipur have left the very essence of this Constitution defiled and destroyed. The stark disparity in the government's actions raises serious questions about the upholding of constitutional principles and values.

The Supreme Court has consistently emphasized that "informed consent" is a crucial aspect of democracy and, akin to judicial independence, constitutes an inte-

the maximum brunt, losing their homes, loved ones, and even their means of livelihood.

Communalism also presents a challenge to the internal security of the country because both the instigators of communal violence and those who suffer from it include the citizens of the country. The police need to be well-equipped to prevent communal violence. Local intelligence networks can be strengthened to prevent such incidents. To prevent communal violence, peace committees can be set up in which persons belonging to different religious communities can work together to spread goodwill and remove feelings of fear and hatred in riot-affected areas. This will prove helpful in preventing not only communal tension but also communal riots.

Value-based education should be given to the common people of the country so that they cannot be swayed easily. On value-oriented education, focusing on inculcating in children noble values in schools and colleges/universities based on the values of peace, non-violence, compassion, secularism, and humanism as well as scientificity (enshrined as a fundamental duty) and rationality there is a need to stress which can prove to be instrumental in curbing communal feelings.

The existing criminal justice system should be reformed to provide speedy trials and adequate compensation to the victims. Globally, practices prevalent in countries like Malaysia can be followed by the Government of India to prevent communal violence. Strong laws are needed to prevent communal violence. Along with this, the citizens of the country need to understand that-

* When Geeta said this, she said where is Quran.

Make the earth bleed in the name of religion.*



gral part of the basic structure of the Constitution. However, the recent incidents of widespread destruction of churches and homes in Manipur, along with marauding mobs invading a women's hostel in search of victims to rape, have severely undermined the fundamental principles of the Constitution. These horrifying events have, in essence, buried the very essence of the basic structure doctrine, as the sanctity of "informed consent" and the right to safety and security have been gravely violated. The disturbing developments in Manipur serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to safeguard and uphold the core values that define the constitutional framework of the nation.

In the previous year, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar raised a pertinent question concerning the Supreme Court's exercise of jurisdiction when it introduced the basic structure doctrine through the 1973 Kesavananda Bharati case. The Vice President expressed concerns over the Court's imposition of limitations on Parliament, asserting that certain inalienable rights were beyond Parliament's authority to abrogate. This action of placing fetters on Parliament gave rise to doubts regarding the true essence of our democratic system. The Vice President's inquiry brought into question the extent to which we can genuinely claim to be a democracy when core aspects of legislative authority seem to be constrained by judicial interpretation.

In a speech delivered last year, the Vice President expressed his disapproval of the judiciary's decision to invalidate the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2015, and the 99th amendment, which had received ratification from 16 out of 29 state legislatures. According to Vice President Dhankar, Parliament, as the representative of the people,

should not be subjected to limitations imposed by the judiciary through the evolution of the basic structure doctrine. He opined that such actions hinder the autonomy of Parliament and the power vested in it to serve the interests of the nation and its citizens. By raising these concerns, the Vice President highlighted the delicate balance between the roles of the judiciary and the legislature in upholding the democratic principles of the country. The Bombay Lawyers' Association had filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court seeking the disqualification of both Vice President Dhankar and former Law Minister Kiren Rijiju for their criticism of the judiciary's evolution of the basic structure doctrine.

As expected, the Supreme Court rejected this PIL, asserting that the government maintains its authority over the country, even if certain situations may seem to lead democracy towards mobocracy, as seen in Manipur. This dismissal by the Supreme Court reaffirms the principle that the government continues to function and govern the nation, upholding its responsibilities, despite any criticism or challenges posed in the democratic process.

The current turmoil in Manipur has left our Constitution, much like the basic structure doctrine, in shambles and disarray. The ongoing mayhem and chaos have taken a toll on the very fabric of our nation's governing principles, leaving them in tatters and severely compromised. The situation in Manipur serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need to address the prevailing unrest and uphold the sanctity of our Constitution, which is the bedrock of our democracy and ensures the protection of fundamental rights and values. (The writer is a journalist and commentator based in Guwahati, can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)

Why bleed in the name of religion

By: Dr Satyawan Saurabh

India is a country of diversity, unity in diversity only provides the basis for the golden dignity of the composite culture here. Since the Vedic period, the difference in the composite culture and the interweaving of external ideas have been the specialty here, so the assimilation of any cultural diversity is easy in India.

In this perspective, religious cooperation has also been one of these characteristics, its unique example can be seen in Sufism, where Islamic monotheism and some characteristics of Indian religions were combined and as a result, a synthetic religious ideology was successfully followed. But in recent years India's cultural diversity is being transferred into cultural heterogeneity, which is harming the cultural specialty along with the decline in harmony among the people.

Communalism as a political philosophy has its roots in the religious and cultural diversity of India. Communalism in India has always been used as a political propaganda tool to create division, dissension, and tension between communities based on religious and ethnic identity, based on communal hatred and violence. Communal violence is a phenomenon in which people belonging to two different religious communities mobilized by feelings of hatred and enmity attack each other.

Social media has played an important role in promoting communalism due to the rapid spread of fake news in the country. The dissemination of audio-visuals of riots and violence has become much easier and faster through social media violence. These inhuman graphic depictions of violence add to the hatred of other communities in the general public.

Instead of adhering to journalistic ethics and neutrality, most of the media houses in the country seem to be particularly inclined towards one or the other political ideology, which in turn widens the social divide. At present, communalism is resorted to by various political parties for their political gains. Communalization of politics as a process has been promoting communalism in India as well as increasing the intensity of communal violence in the country. The lack of value-based education is generally seen in Indian people, due to which they blindly fall into anyone's words without thinking.

Factors like unequal levels of development, class division, poverty, and unemployment create a sense of insecurity among the common people. Due to the feeling of insecurity, people lose their faith in the government; as a result, people resort to various political parties, which have been formed on communal lines, to fulfill their needs/interests. Due to a lack of trust and mutual understanding between two communities or persecution of members of one community by another community, etc., fear, suspicion, and a sense of danger arise in them.

Due to this psychological fear, an atmosphere of discord, hatred towards each other, anger, and fear arises among the people. Innocent people are trapped in uncontrolled situations during communal violence, which leads to widespread human rights abuses. Communal violence causes huge loss of life and property. Communal violence gives rise to vote bank politics and social cohesion is affected. It causes serious damage to communal harmony in the long run. Communal violence affects constitutional values like secularism and fraternity. The families of the victims of communal violence bear

Rahul- Mamata jugalbandi in Bengaluru conclave on India has significance

By: Harihar Swarup

India, the new name of the opposition alliance, has got widespread coverage in the news already. But, the inside story of how the leaders of 26 opposition parties who gathered in Bengaluru for a two-day meeting on July 17 and 18 arrived at the name Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance is full of twists and turns. It is learnt that name was originally the idea of former Congress President Rahul Gandhi. According to sources, on the evening of July 17, at the dinner hosted by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for the opposition leaders attending the conclave, Rahul told a senior party leader that he was keen on the name INDIA, but he wanted West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee to consider it first.

For Rahul to route the name through Mamata was an extremely interesting move and also significant. The Congress state unit is up in arms against the Trinamool in West Bengal, especially with regard to the violence that took place during the recent panachayat elections. Mamata and Rahul have not had a particularly cordial relationship in the past. However, during the opposition meeting in Patna, Mamata helped calm down matters when the Congress and Aam Aadmi Party got into an altercation over the Centre's ordinance on Delhi's bureaucracy. This gesture was appreciated by Rahul. Mamata suggesting the name was also perhaps intended to convey the impression that the leaders were to rise over differences. Mamata was agreeable to the INDIA acronym. The left leaders then pitched in, saying that they too had a name in mind. While they said INDIA was alright, it would be better if it was called, We for India or V for India. The other parties disagreed, saying it sounded more like slogan than a name of a group of political parties. At this juncture, Peoples Democratic Party President Mehbooba Mufti, gladdened the hearts of Congress leaders in the meeting with her suggestion. As per sources, she said that since the Bharat Jodo Yatra was a huge success, the alliance could be called Bharat Jodo Alliance. On expected lines, the other parties did not agree. National Conference leader Omar Abdullah is learnt to have told the meeting that the name should be in Indian. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, according to sources, said the name of alliance was not such a big issue. He said the main issue is that of seat sharing and suggested that talks for seat sharing should begin at the earliest. At this, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren is learnt to have said that if name is not so important, why can't the alliance simply be called United Progressive Alliance-3. This suggestion, however, did not favour with other leaders.

Nationalist Congress Party President, Sharad Pawar, conveyed another opposition leader's suggestion for a name to former Congress President Sonia Gandhi, who in all probability was aware of Rahul's idea, said she would prefer to let the other leaders decide. Ultimately, Rahul spoke on the issue and supported the name INDIA. He said it was a great idea which Mamata had suggested. He said it was apt since it carried in it the essence of the purpose for which the opposition parties were coming together. He said that if the fight was to safeguard the idea of India, the name conveyed it adequately. He also said he was confident that it would lend itself well to the slogans such as 'INDIA' vs NDA. In the end, every participant came on board and accepted the name INDIA to challenge BJP and NDA. (IPA Service)

The problems with our language for sexual health and abuse

By: Mrinal Pande

Have you who do not read or write in the vernaculars, ever wondered about the semantic problem faced when writing about sexual abuse in Hindi?

Working on a book on the reproductive health of India's rural women a decade ago, I was taken aback by our vernaculars' near uniform lack of a clear terminology for feminine reproductive organs, feminine hygiene, or clinically graphic discussions on women's reproductive rights and wrongs.

Like Hindi, in Marathi, Tamil, Kannada, Punjabi and Haryanvi, I was told the only commonly used terms for 'sex' and 'sexual pleasure', were available in a crude gutter language, straight out of all-male gatherings, street sex and our traditional country and pop songs, all of which celebrate male sexuality and see women as a sum total of their private parts.

Obviously one cannot use that kind of language without belittling the importance of health issues and women's self esteem. That leaves women health workers and Hindi writers like me feeling both needy and also embarrassed and angry.

A few years later all hell broke loose when an unsuspecting couple — husband, a doctor and wife, a psychiatrist — running an NGO in Uttarakhand, published a Hindi version of their handbook on the state of reproductive health in the

area and (given the large male migration) how to prevent women from catching sexually transmitted diseases or STDs and AIDS.

The Hindi translator had used several terms that may be acceptable and normal in the English, but in the terminology used in the Hindi version, they were deemed rude and highly offensive by the locals. Since the couple that headed the organisation was also trying to create an outreach for Dalit women and talked of the need to rise above the caste system, the local priests had also harboured a deep anger against them. Encouraged by them, the villagers informed the police and asked that they be charged for discussing obscene defamatory material with simple hill folk. It took a lot of effort from friends and family to help get the couple out of jail after several months, during which time their eight-year-old daughter had to be escorted to their home in Kolkata to be cared for by her grandparents.

Just what is it about a frank discussion of unequal sexual relationships and sexual abuse of women that leads to red faces and/or an outburst like we witnessed in the parliament recently?

In a country where a male political leader can publicly boast of the size of his chest as proof of his virile leadership qualities and be applauded, can a woman display her body and assert her claim to being an influencer? Can she do so without being labeled as immoral? And while a troll army is



let loose on her, won't the political leadership try to hush and ridicule her defenders and lead the debate into the dense maze of whataboutery? Some academics who stand by the government, consider mere anecdotal or video clippings of sexual abuse inadequate without statistical evidence and hard data. But given the push-back on data gathering by recognised governmental bodies, the stance is questionable.

By now we have multiple graphic and well researched media stories about female victims like Geetika Sharma, Jessica Lal, and the six women wrestlers who filed sexual harassment cases against the powerful politicians with a record of intimidatory past with many criminal cases filed against them and then mysteriously dismissed. But upon casting a dispassionate look at the statements made on various fora, including state assemblies and the parliament, it appears that many of our public leaders, law enforce-

ment authorities and even media reporters, are convinced that a woman's sexuality does not belong to her the way a man's does. It is family property and a man (father, brother, husband or fiancé) is the prime custodian. If ever she is sexually abused, her being out alone becomes an acceptable point to blame the victim for. Ultimately, police and authorities all consider it normal that her male guardians take the matter to the law courts and report it as an issue involving their family's good name. The victim herself thus becomes, not a jure but de facto, only half a witness.

Where are your videos, audios and incriminating messages to substantiate your charges against the perp? The police had asked Olympic medal winning wrestlers. Even a suicide note by Geetika Sharma, an air hostess, detailing how she was harassed, stalked and repeatedly molested by her employer, was considered inadequate evidence and the perp

has had charges against him dropped.

Rape, when all is said and done, is a sex crime. Most perps get away with it because if it can be made to look like consensual sex it is not regarded as a crime. The male perp can then claim an ungendered neutral ground for affirming (heterosexual) sex and rejecting charge of violence. No wonder there is talk of banning live-in relationships. As we know, these can lead to many jilted females, or, after they are found murdered, can lead to cases filed against the male partner.

In Maharashtra, Dr Rani Bang, a Harvard educated gynaecologist long working in a remote tribal area, Gadchiroli, handed me a booklet titled Kanosa ('heard in whispers'). It is a painstaking compilation of terms gathered from her female tribal patients. These terms had been, she told me, invented by generations of women to whisper many sordid and worrisome facts about their sexual lives, along with long term humiliations and sexually transmitted diseases, otherwise suffered in silence.

The details I gathered and documented finally showed how our girls are systematically deprived of the language of sex and sexuality and lacking any basic self-affirming sense of their own vital role as a partner in sex, give predatory men a huge advantage.

This, together with available hard data from NCRB, reveals enquiry into rape, sexual harass-

ment, incest and child sexual abuse all show that politics is power and that males have co-opted an inordinately large part of it through tradition and male bonding. We must remember also that such power is a diffused entity. It is not lodged in any one place in particular. It is everywhere from sleazy red light areas to board rooms, from school buses to university seminar halls and to highways where raped women are paraded with impunity.

From various instances of rape used as a revenge weapon, it is clear how eroticised dominance — political, domestic and professional — defines masculinity in India. And the permissible ways for treating women deferentially (like the sniggering 'ladies first!' and gallant opening of doors, or offering help in banks and shops to compute the bills assuming women are techno duffers) are also located in underlying male sexual interests. They function on the unstated requirement that women must play dumb and compliant. I watch TV debates carefully for the semantic clues that they provide to the Indian mind. Even among the liberals, sexual freedom is increasingly being interpreted in TV debates as women being allowed to express their sexuality freely, like men. Despite women being largely deemed male property, most men do not treat women in law or life, with the same tender solicitude with which they care for their other

properties. So in the Hindi media, euphemisms are used copiously for victims of rape — uski izzat lut gayi (her honour is looted), uski zindagi tabaah ker di (ruined her life), usko kahin ka nahin chhoda (made her unacceptable anywhere), or uske sath munh kaalaa kiya (blackened his/her faces by copulating with her), and so on.

Men who sexually harass women often defend themselves by saying women are temptresses. They harass them first, by dressing provocatively or laughing in their face or making fun of them while refusing their proposal or sexual advances. What they really mean is that they are aroused by women who defy them. The assumption that what women really want from men is what men want from women makes male force against women excusable if not invisible.

If we are to really understand and address the phenomena of sexual violence against women, we need to go beyond happily accepting (usually useless) sops such as knives with three-inch blades or cans of chilly powder or tin whistles. We need to ask a different set of perilous questions. Does sexual mechanism in our society have a theory? If yes, how did it get scripted? What can self-respect and pride come to mean to a constantly targeted species in a rape culture?

And finally we must stand the Freudian question on its head: what do men want? (Courtesy: *The Wire*)

5 menstruation myths you must leave behind

By: Maria Cohut

As of 2017, the world's population numbers 7.53 billion people, of which 3.73 billion are born with female genitalia.

Virtually all of them do, have, or will go through menstruation (period), the part of the menstrual cycle in which the uterus sheds mucosal tissue alongside blood through the vagina.

Periods can last between 3 and 7 days and usually occur every 28 days, though menstrual cycle lengths can vary. Although this biological process affects about half of the world's population, many myths and misconceptions about it persist.

Cultures around the world still vilify menstruation, and consider period blood "dirty" and "impure," and menstruation itself as a taboo topic. For instance, although this practice is now mostly illegal, some communities — as a series of recent tragedies in Nepal suggest — still have the so-called menstruation huts, in which women on their period spend the days in which they bleed in complete isolation. Though this is an extreme example, there are many smaller myths and misconceptions related to menstruation that remain in circulation across the globe.

1. Sex on your period

Some of the most widespread myths regarding menstruation gravitate around sex while on your period, with the top contender likely being that you cannot get pregnant while menstruating. You can absolutely get pregnant if having unprotected sex on your period. However, this idea is entirely false. While it is true that, in many individuals, menstruation is the period when they are least fertile, it really depends on the length of their monthly cycles. Peak fertility occurs during the ovulation stage — which usually kicks in approximately 12 to 16 days before the start of the next period — when the ovaries produce and release fresh ovules (eggs).

And while most menstrual cycles last about 28 days, some cycles can be as short as 21 days, which also impacts when ovulation takes place. Moreover, sperm can live inside the genital tract for up to 5 days or, according to some sources, even 7 days.

Thus, having unprotected vaginal sex during your period could mean that the sperm gets to linger for just long enough to coincide with ovulation and fertilize an egg, resulting in pregnancy.

Moreover, if you have sex during menstruation without using a condom, the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI) — including HIV — or yeast infection increases, due to the hormonal changes that occur at this time. Vaginal-penile sex during a period can also, in some cases, cause inflammation of the penis head — a type of infection called "balanitis."

Still, as long as you take all necessary precautions to avoid an unwanted pregnancy and the transmission of STIs, there is no reason not to enjoy sex while on your period — to the contrary, in fact, as sex can help relieve cramps and improve your mood.

2. Unsafe to keep skipping your period?

Another widespread misconception is that it is unsafe to use birth control pills to enable you to skip your period for a prolonged period. Skipping your periods for a prolonged time is safe. However, recent guidelines from the National Women's Health Network indicate that it is just fine to suppress menstruation through birth control pills, and most gynecologists agree that this approach is typically safe. Some people even argue that, outside of their role in reproduction, periods are unnecessary, and can be more trouble than they are worth.

For instance, James Segars, from the department of gynecology and obstetrics at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, told *The Atlantic* that, "Having a monthly period is reassuring, but it is certainly not necessary."

"And with these long-term, reversible contraceptives, the failure rate is really, really low so women can benefit a lot from them." - James Segars For many individuals, menstruation symptoms can be severe and interfere with their normal functioning and quality of life. They may experience heavy bleeding, disabling pain, and other unpleasant symptoms, such as migraines and nausea.

Those with dysmenorrhea (painful periods) or certain conditions that cause troublesome symptoms, such as endometriosis, may decide, in agreement with their doctors, that skipping several periods, or skipping menstruation continuously, is the best option for their health and productivity.

3. Shouldn't have a bath

Some think that having a bath or even taking a shower during your period is unsafe. This is either because hot water stimulates bleeding, or because the water stops you from bleeding, which can have ill effects.

Go ahead and enjoy that bath without worry! It will make you feel better. While hot water can help stimulate blood flow, this can actually help relieve menstrual cramps and ease muscular tension.

Bleeding does not stop following full immersion in water. However, the pressure from the water may temporarily prevent the blood from flowing out of the vagina. There is no reason not to have a bath or shower during your period. Most likely, relaxing in a bubble bath and feeling cleaner as a result of it will improve your mood and help you cope with menstruation symptoms a little better. Furthermore, it is better and healthier to use water and mild, unperfumed soap to clean the vulva than wipes or other products. This is because many intimate care products can disrupt the delicate bacterial balance in the genital area, making it easier for infections to take hold.

4. Syncing periods

One pervasive question surrounding periods is whether can they actually sync. For example, if two or more women spend enough time together, perhaps as roommates, will they have periods at the same time? One person, speaking to MNT, said that she was even taught about period synchrony in school, and was still wondering whether the notion was accurate. She told us: "I heard about period syncing a long time ago when I studied in an all-girls' school. Then, when I started living with [my two female roommates], I noticed we often had periods around the same time. [Another friend] says that this is due to an alpha-female releasing hormones that affect the period cycles of other women around her."

So is any of this true? After all, many of us are likely to have experienced "period syncing" at some point, in a school, work, or home-sharing environment. The notion of "period synchrony" first appeared as a scientific idea in a 1971 *Nature* article. This article argued that women who lived in close quarters — roommates in a college dorm — or who were close friends, experienced increased menstruation synchrony.

The study's authors believed that this probably happened because the women who lived so closely together "exchanged" pheromones over time, which eventually led to this phenomenon. However, later studies cast doubts on the methodology researchers used for the 1971 research. The later studies highlighted numerous shortcomings and modifying factors that the original researchers had not accounted for. They also noted a "lack of empirical evidence for synchrony in the foregoing studies of both Western and non-Western populations."

Moreover, studies that followed were never able to replicate the findings of the initial research, convincingly. Research published more recently did not find that college roommates experienced menstrual synchrony.

Investigators have since become more inclined to believe that the notion is nothing but an enduring myth, with any synchrony being purely coincidental. Alexandra Alvergne, who is an associate professor in biocultural anthropology at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, told the BBC that, "As humans, we always like exciting stories. We want to explain what we observe by something that is meaningful. And the idea that what we observe is due to chance or randomness is just not as interesting."

5. Tampon myths

Finally, some of the most persistent misconceptions refer to the use of tampons to absorb period blood. Because a person has to insert a tampon in the vagina, some people may worry that this may cause some damage. Inserting a tampon in the

vagina will not break the hymen. One primary worry is that inserting a tampon can break the hymen, which, as popular misconception has it, is a "mark of virginity."

In reality, the hymen is a stretchy membrane that lines the opening of the vagina and does not ordinarily cover the vaginal opening. If this were the case, the hymen would block menstrual blood and other types of discharge from leaving the body. This would be dangerous, requiring surgical intervention to correct.

Because the hymen is stretchy, inserting an object as small as a tampon will not cause any tears. And since, during menstruation, the blood lubricates the vagina, inserting a tampon should not be uncomfortable, if done correctly. If still uncomfortable, try using a lubricant to help slide the tampon in. A person should always change tampons regularly, as recommended, about every 4-8 hours. It is essential that a person does this otherwise the accumulated blood, tissue, and bacteria could cause toxic shock syndrome.

A second myth that many first-time tampon users have encountered is that a tampon could get lost inside the vagina. This is just not true because there is nowhere for the tampon to go. The cervix is at the top of the vagina, and its opening is much too small for a tampon to penetrate.

Moreover, vaginas are only about 3.77 inches (9.6 centimeters) deep, on average, and tampons come with strings that aid removal. So, if the tampon does happen to ride up somewhat, you can always easily search for the string and pull the tampon out carefully. Should you ever encounter a piece of information that you are unsure about, or which you find alarming, speak to a nurse or a doctor, who will be able to fact check it for you. Myths and misconceptions have no place in healthcare. (Courtesy: *Medical News Today*)

Monsoon skin care tips

By: Shahnaz Husain

We all love monsoons for varied reasons, don't we? The arrival of the monsoon ushers a wave of delight among all of us. As much as we love the monsoon, for making everything around us pleasant and snugly, our skin feels differently about this season. Change of season affects your skin more than you think.

As the weather gets unpredictable and humidity levels rise, a summer skincare routine that works during the hot and dry months will do little to keep your skin safe from sweat, humidity, and sticky feeling.

Do you suffer from any monsoon-related skin issues such as dullness, acne, blackheads, whiteheads, itchiness, rashes, and even infections? If so, check out some easy-to-follow monsoon skin care remedies and tips on how to care for your skin during the rains. As a starting point, switch your summer skincare routine products for monsoon-friendly ones depending on the changes you notice in your skin. While the key to an effective summer skincare routine is using heavy, extremely hydrating products, monsoon skincare demands lightweight products

1. Use a Moisturizer

While many people believe that your skin doesn't need a moisturizer during monsoon, to keep skin hydrated from inwards, you must stick with a moisturiza-

tion regimen as humidity can dehydrate the skin and make it appear dull and oily. Pick a serum and moisturizer as per your skin type. Don't go for heavy cream-based moisturizer during hot and humid weather. Using a lightweight, non-greasy moisturizer, humectants-rich moisturizer, and water-based moisturizer can hydrate the skin. Applying a good serum ensures your skin gets the right nutrition and a moisturiser locks in the benefits.

For clear skin, follow a good and regular CTM routine, twice a day even if it's pouring outside. Invest in a good serum depending on skin type that can further benefit your skin. If you have normal, combination, or dry skin type, go for light hydrating moisturizers or face serums. It will keep your skin hydrated and healthy without causing oiliness. People with oily skin should select a mattifying moisturizer, which helps to control excessive sebum production and provide a matte finish look. Make sure that the product is oil-free, non-comedogenic, locks in moisture and gives a glowy look.

2. Use soap free cleansers

Cleansing is essential during monsoons as dust, grease, and oil accumulates excessively during the monsoon season. With cleansing, you don't need to be harsh on your skin. While you cleanse your face, the intention is to clean not to dry out the skin, use soap-free cleansers that contain no fats or alkalis and mostly

plant-based ingredients. It will help gently wash away the oil and dirt without leaving your skin dry.

During the monsoon season, switch to a face wash without soap to remove dirt and oil without drying out your skin, regardless of your skin type. It can help remove dirt and oil keeping skin moisturised and hydrated. Also, make sure that you do not wash your face more than 2 to 3 times a day, even if it feels oily. Sebum production can increase due to over washing, resulting in clogged pores and breakouts.

3. Include Vitamin C in the diet

Vitamin C is an antioxidant that keeps the skin healthy during the monsoon season. Citrus fruits like lemons, oranges, and grapefruits are excellent sources of vitamin C. Kiwis, bell peppers, and broccoli are also rich in this essential nutrient.

Vitamin C helps in the production of white blood cells, which are crucial for fighting off infections and boosting your body's defenses. Vitamin C serum can maintain the skin's glow. It eliminates microorganisms, prevents the onset of age-related changes, and lessens scars and blemishes to give you clear, flawless skin.

4. Exfoliating regularly

Choose a gentle scrub to exfoliate at least 2-3 times every week to deeply cleanse the stubborn dirt deposit and remove any excess oil. Exfoliation removes dead skin cells from the top,

making your skin brighter and lighter. Exfoliating regularly to keep your skin glowing and soft. This will prevent clogged pores during the monsoon season and help you avoid breakouts. It improves skin radiance and helps get rid of dead skin cells. It removes dead skin cells from the top and lets brighter and fresher skin appear. Additionally, it prevents the clogging of pores with dirt and sweat. Thus, you can also avoid blackheads.

5. Clay mask

When your skin appears flaky, dull, uneven, or even dry or oily, clay face masks have medicinal and cosmetic properties beneficial for any skin type. Use a face mask at least twice a week to draw out impurities, absorb excess sebum, and tighten your pores in addition to following a standard skincare regimen.

Selecting the right clay mask depends on your skin type. If you have oily skin, opt for a bentonite clay mask as it excels at absorbing oil. Those with dry or sensitive skin may find kaolin clay to be gentler and more suitable.

Acne-prone individuals can benefit from a turmeric clay mask, which works wonders for all skin types. In addition, the clay mask also aids acne and balances sebum production. Regular use of clay masks will leave your skin refreshed, balanced, and less prone to breakouts. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)

China will always stand firmly with Pakistan: Chinese President Xi

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pak's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through Pak-occupied Kashmir

BEIJING, Aug 1 (PTI): China will continue to work with its all-weather ally Pakistan to take their strategic ties to new heights, Chinese President Xi Jinping has said as the two countries celebrated the 10th anniversary of the launch of the ambitious CPEC infrastructure projects in the South Asian country for regional connectivity.

In his congratulatory message to the 'Decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' (CPEC) celebration event held in Islamabad on Monday, Xi said the USD 60 billion CPEC infrastructure programme is an "important pioneering project" of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The event was attended by Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, who is on a three-day visit to Pakistan.

"China will work with Pakistan to aim for high-standard, sustainable and livelihood-enhancing outcomes and further build the CPEC into an exemplary project of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation," Xi said.

"Since its launch in 2013, China and Pakistan have been advancing CPEC under the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and have achieved a number of early harvests," he was quoted as saying by the



state-run Xinhua news agency.

Xi, also the General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China, said the CPEC has added new impetus to the economic and social development of Pakistan and laid a good foundation for regional connectivity and integration.

He said the project is a "vivid testament to the all-weather friendship between China and Pakistan", and provides an important underpinning for building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Stressing that China and Pakistan will continue to improve overall planning and expand and deepen cooperation, Xi said no matter how the international landscape may change, China

will always stand firmly with Pakistan, the report said.

"China and Pakistan will continue to work hand in hand and forge ahead in solidarity to carry forward the ironclad friendship, coordinate development and security," Xi said.

He said the two countries will continue to "pursue the cooperation of higher standards, broader scope and greater depth, and take the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to new heights, so as to make an even greater contribution to peace and prosperity in the two countries and the broader region".

The key agreement for the CPEC projects was agreed in 2013 but it was formally launched when President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in 2015.

The BRI was launched by Chinese President Xi in 2013. It aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.

The BRI is seen as an attempt by China to further its influence abroad with infrastructure projects funded by Chinese investments all over the world.

The initiative also led to allegations of smaller countries reeling under mounting Chinese debt after Sri Lanka gave its Hambantota port in a debt swap to China in 2017 on a 99-year lease.

Russia accuses Ukraine of drone attack on Moscow, hitting a tower for the second time in 3 days

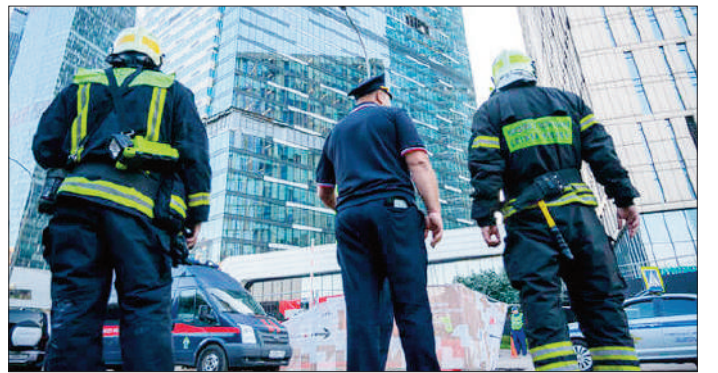
TALLINN (ESTONIA), Aug 1 (AP): Russian authorities early on Tuesday accused Kyiv of yet another attack on Moscow and its surroundings with drones, one of which hit a building in the capital that was damaged by a drone just days ago in a similar attack early on Sunday.

Russian officials have claimed that the intensified attacks on the capital region reflect failures in Ukraine's counteroffensive, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said over the weekend that "the war is gradually coming back to Russian territory," but stopped short of taking responsibility of the attacks.

The repeated drone strikes underscore Moscow's vulnerability as Russia's war in Ukraine drags into its 18th month.

The Russian Defence Ministry said in the early hours of Tuesday that it hit down two Ukrainian drones outside Moscow and jammed another, sending it crashing into a skyscraper in the Moscow City business district and damaging the building's facade.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said the drone crashed into the same building that was damaged in a similar attack early Sunday, IQ-Quarter, located 7.2 kms (4.5 miles) from the Kremlin, houses a number of government



agencies, including the headquarters of the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications, and the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Sobyenin said the Tuesday attack didn't result in any casualties.

It wasn't clear why the same building was hit twice in a row. In both incidents, the Russian military said the drones that hit the skyscraper were jammed before crashing.

Sobyenin said the drone that struck the building Tuesday hit the 21st floor, one of the floors housing the Economic Development ministry. Photos from the site of the crash showed several panels of glass missing, exposing charred insides of the building, and about a dozen more damaged. According to the mayor, 150

square metres of the building's glass facade was damaged.

Zelenskyy's advisor Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted that Moscow "is rapidly getting used to a full-fledged war, which, in turn, will soon move to the territory of the authors of the war" to collect all their debts", without confirming or denying Kyiv's involvement in the attack.

The Russian military also said that Kyiv's forces tried to attack two of its warships in the Black Sea overnight, using maritime missiles. Three drones targeted two patrol vessels, Sergei Kotov and Vasily Bykov, 340 kilometers southwest of the Russian-controlled city of Sevastopol on the annexed Crimean peninsula, the Defence Ministry reported. All three drones were destroyed, the report said.

At least 20 dead and 27 missing in floods surrounding China's capital Beijing, thousands evacuated



BEIJING, Aug 1 (AP): Days of unusually heavy rains around China's capital, Beijing, have flooded houses, torn apart roads and left at least 20 people dead and 27 missing, state media reported on Tuesday.

The flooding prompted authorities to close train stations and evacuate people in vulnerable areas to school gyms. Cars were washed away and piled into stacks by the rushing waters.

The level of rainfall is rarely seen in Beijing, which generally enjoys moderate, dry summers but has experienced record-breaking extended days of high temperatures this summer. Flooding in other parts of northern China that rarely see such large amounts of rain have led to scores of deaths.

Seasonal flooding hits large parts of China every summer, particularly in the semitropical south, while some northern regions this year have reported the worst floods in 50 years.

Indicating the level of urgency, President Xi Jinping issued an order for local governments to go "all out" to rescue those trapped and minimize the loss of life and damage to property.

State media reported that 11 people died and 27 are missing in the mountains to the west of Beijing's city center. Nine other deaths were reported in Hebei province, just outside the metropolis and the source of much of its food and labor. More than 500,000 people have been impacted by the floods, state broadcaster CCTV said, without saying how many had been moved to other locations.

In early July, at least 15 people were killed by floods in the southwestern region of Chongqing, and about 5,590 people in the far northwestern province of Liaoning had to be evacuated. In the central province of Hubei, rainstorms trapped residents in their vehicles and homes.

China's deadliest and most destructive floods in recent history were in 1998, when 4,150 people died, most of them along the Yangtze River.

In 2021, more than 300 people died in flooding in the central province of Henan. Record rainfall inundated the provincial capital of Zhengzhou on July 20 that year, turning streets into rushing rivers and flooding at least part of a subway line.

Niger crisis deepens as France plans evacuation and coup leaders get support from neighbouring juntas

NIAMEY (NIGER), Aug 1 (AP): France prepared to evacuate French and European nationals from Niger on Tuesday, telling them to carry no more than a small bag, after a military coup there won backing from three other West African nations ruled by mutinous soldiers.

The French Foreign Ministry in Paris cited recent violence that targeted the French Embassy in Niamey, the capital, as one of the reasons for the decision.

The closure of Niger's airspace also "leaves our compatriots unable to leave the country by their own means," the ministry said.

The evacuation comes amid a deepening crisis sparked by the coup last week against Niger's democratically elected president, Mohamed Bazoum. It was starting Tuesday for French and European citizens who wish to leave, the French ministry said in a statement. It gave no other details.

The West African regional body known as ECOWAS announced travel and economic sanctions against Niger on Sunday and said it would use force if the coup leaders don't reinstate Bazoum within one week. Bazoum's government was one of the West's last democratic partners against West African extremists.

In a joint statement, the military governments of Mali and Burkina Faso said that "any military intervention against Niger will be considered as a declaration of war against Burkina Faso and Mali."

Col. Abdoulaye Maiga, Mali's state minister for territorial administration and decentralisation, read the statement on Malian state TV Monday evening. The two countries also denounced the ECOWAS economic sanctions as "illegal, illegitimate and inhumane" and refused to apply them.

ECOWAS suspended all commercial and financial transactions between its member states and Niger, as well as freezing Nigerian assets held in regional central banks.

Niger relies heavily on foreign aid, and sanctions could further impoverish its more than 25 million people.

Pak's Parliament amends the Army Act to jail up to five years for disclosing sensitive information

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1 (PTI): Pakistan's Parliament has amended the army laws to jail up to five years for disclosing sensitive information about the security of the military and the country.

The outgoing National Assembly on Monday endorsed the proposed amendments to the stringent Pakistan Army Act, 1952, after the same bill was passed by the Senate last week.

After endorsement by the two houses, the bill would become an act after being signed by President Arif Alvi.

The move comes amidst efforts by the current government to bring to justice the supporters of former prime minister and opposition leader Imran Khan who attacked several key military installations on May 9 following his arrest in an alleged corruption case. Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party was released later.

The Dawn newspaper reported that the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Act, 2023 proposes adding Section 26-A to the act under which "anyone who discloses or causes to be disclosed any information... shall be [...] punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years".

If the information is approved by the army chief it would not be considered a violation.

The bill also proposes introducing Section 26-B, which forbids any person subject to the army act from engaging in any political activity for two years from the date of their "retirement, release, resignation, discharge, removal or dismissal from the service".

It further proposed that those who "remained posted, employed, seconded, tasked or otherwise attached on sensitive duties" were forbidden from taking part in "political activity of any kind, during five years from the date of his retirement, release, resignation, discharge, removal or dismissal from the service".

In case of violation, a court constituted under the army act can punish them with "rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years".

Section 55-A forbids any person subject to the Army act in the past five years from "directly or indirectly enter[ing] into employment, consultation or other engagement with an entity having a conflict of interests" with the activities of the army or its affiliates.



Mali and Burkina Faso have each undergone two coups since 2020, as soldiers overthrew governments claiming they could do a better job fighting increasing jihadi violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. ECOWAS has sanctioned both countries and suspended them from the bloc, but never threatened to use force.

Also on Sunday, Guinea, another country under military rule since 2021, issued a statement in support of Niger's junta and urged ECOWAS to "come to its senses."

"The sanctions measures advocated by ECOWAS, including military intervention, are an option that would not be a solution to the current problem, but would lead to a human disaster whose consequences could extend beyond Niger's borders," said Ibrahima Sory Bangoura, general of the brigade, in a statement from the ruling party. He added the Guinea would not apply the sanctions.

In anticipation of the ECOWAS decision Sunday, thousands of pro-junta supporters took to the streets in Niamey, denouncing France, waving Russian flags along with signs

Aung San Suu Kyi has some of her prison sentences reduced by Myanmar's military-led government



BANGKOK, Aug 1 (AP): Myanmar's military-led government has reduced the prison sentences of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a clemency connected to a religious holiday in the Buddhist-majority country, state media said Tuesday.

Former President Win Myint also had his sentence reduced as part of the clemency granted to more than 7,000 prisoners.

But Suu Kyi, 78, still must serve a total of 27 years out of the 33 she was originally imprisoned for.

The head of Myanmar's military council, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, granted the clemency order to reduce the sentences in five cases against Suu Kyi in which she was convicted for violating coronavirus restrictions, illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies and sedition, according to a report on state MRTV.

She was initially sentenced for 19 offenses that her supporters and rights group say were attempts to discredit her and legitimise the 2021 army takeover while preventing her return to politics.

The clemency was announced a day after Myanmar's military extended the state of emergency it imposed when it seized power from Suu Kyi's elected government 2 1/2 years ago, forcing a further delay in elections it promised when it took over.

Several of Suu Kyi's cases are

awaiting final appeals.

Min Aung Hlaing pardoned a total of 7,749 prisoners and commuted the death sentences of others to commemorate the day the Buddha gave his first sermon, the MRTV report said.

The army leader also granted amnesty to 125 foreign prisoners and 22 members of ethnic armed groups, it added. The announcement said he dropped cases against 72 people connected to ethnic armed groups.

It wasn't immediately clear if any of the released prisoners included the thousands of political detainees locked up for opposing army rule.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights monitoring organization, 24,123 people have been arrested in Myanmar since the army takeover. At least 3,857 civilians have been killed by security forces in the same period, the group says.

MRTV said it was necessary to extend the state of emergency for another six months because there is still a lot of work to be done to return the country to normalcy and time is needed to prepare for an election.

The clemency also came three weeks after Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai met Suu Kyi in prison, becoming the first foreign visitor to be granted access to her since she was detained. Don told journalists she was in good health and conveyed her willingness to engage in talks to resolve the crisis gripping her strife-torn nation.

Suu Kyi has been unable to give her version of the July 9 meeting, said to have lasted about an hour-and-a-half. Myanmar's military confirmed the meeting had been held, but said it had no details because it was one-on-one between the ousted leader and the Thai diplomat.

Taiwan amends laws on sexual harassment after recent #MeToo wave

Taiwan has 3 laws governing sexual harassment: one for the workplace, one for schools and one that covers spheres outside those two domains

TAIPEI (TAIWAN), Aug 1 (AP): Taiwan amended three laws governing sexual harassment in a special session of the legislature, after a wave of #MeToo accusations hit the island in June.

The changes approved on Monday include higher penalties and longer periods for victims to come forward and report an incident to authorities. The changes are an attempt to address the issues raised by the recent accusations of sexual violence in Taiwan.

Taiwan has three laws governing sexual harassment: one for the workplace, one for schools and one that covers spheres outside those two domains.

Under the workplace law, employers can now be fined up to 1 million New Taiwan Dollars (USD 31,680) if they fail to address sexual harassment complaints. Employers are also required to report cases to the local division of their labour department.

The education law, amended last Friday, explicitly makes it illegal for educators to have a romantic relationship with students



under the age of 18. Further, principals and teachers who fail to report to the Ministry of Education a sexual harassment allegation within 24 hours can be fined.

Legislators also extended the penalty for

sexual harassment to three years in jail under the Sexual Harassment Prevention Act, and raised the heaviest fine to 600,000 New Taiwan dollars (USD 19,000).

Taiwan's #MeToo movement was

reignited in May when a young woman who worked for the ruling Democratic Progressive Party accused film director Hsueh Chao-hui of groping her and making unwanted sexual advances.

Chen Chien-jou, who identified herself publicly while making the accusation, wrote that she did not just want to let it go, quoting a line from a Taiwanese TV show called Wavemakers. More accusations of sexual harassment followed from other Taiwanese women against politicians, before spreading to other areas including entertainment, music and schools.

The new amendments also plug in certain loopholes, such as requiring small businesses and companies with fewer than 30 people but more than 10 to set up mechanisms for reporting sexual harassment. Small businesses were previously exempt from such a requirement.

More than 90 per cent of businesses in Taiwan have 30 people or fewer, said Chen Wan-hui, a legislator in the Taiwan People's Party.

Triple Murder Case: NHRCCB assures full judicial cooperation as team meets Ankita Ghosh

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Aug 1: The National Human Rights and Crime Control Bureau (NHRCCB) team visited Ankita Ghosh, who was mentally distressed after the shocking triple murder case that recently occurred in the state. As per the telephonic instruction from Nisanth Thard, president of NHRCCB, the team met Ankita at Swaid Kusal Konwar Hospital in Golaghat.

In a press release by Minmay Kr Nath, state media officer of NHRCCB, it was revealed that the victim's family had previously appealed to the concerned authorities multiple times. The NHRCCB state chairman stated that Nazibur Rahman took advantage of the administrative weaknesses, which led to the brutal daylight murder of three people.

The victims of this heinous crime were three members of Sanjeev Ghosh's family, who were killed on July 24. Nazibur, the culprit, brutally murdered his wife



Sanhamitra Ghosh, father-in-law of the victims, and NHRCCB team members during a meeting.

police station along with his nine-month-old child. The NHRCCB has strongly condemned this act and demanded a

speedy investigation and the strictest punishment for the culprit. Manish Kumar Gupta, secretary of state (Youth Wing) of NHRCCB, assured Ankita Ghosh of full legal cooperation. State secretary (General Wing) Guddu Prasad Barma and district secretary (Women Wing) Gayatri Baruah were also present during the meeting.

The NHRCCB further demanded that despite placing the 9-month-old child in Child Home Care, the Assam government must provide all necessary assistance in the days to come. They stated that this triple murder case is not just the loss of three lives within the same family but a dreadful chapter that sends an unimaginable message to the entire Assam.

Additionally, the National Human Rights and Crime Control Bureau urged the government of Assam to enact strict laws against such brutal mentality to ensure that culprits like Nazibur cannot escape the law and prevent such incidents from happening again in the future.

Bajrang Dal camp organisers booked for imparting arms training



GUWAHATI, Aug 1 (PTI): Assam Police have registered a case against Bajrang Dal activists for organising an arms training camp at a school in Darrang district.

The case was registered with Mangaldai police station under Section 153A/34 IPC (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, and doing acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony).

"Reference video related to training by Rashtriya Bajrang Dal at Maharishi Bidya Mandir, Mangaldai, a case has been registered vide Mangaldai PS case no 357 U/S 153A/34 IPC," Darrang Police tweeted.

Assam director general of police GP Singh had directed the Darrang district superintendent of police to register a case and take lawful action against those allegedly involved in organising an arms training camp as seen in a video that has gone viral.

"Reference Mangaldai video-SP@ Darrang_Police has been instructed to register a case under

appropriate sections of law and investigate the matter and take lawful action," the DGP tweeted.

A video purportedly showing Bajrang Dal members imparting arms training at the school went viral on Monday.

Bajrang Dal said 350 youths were trained in handling guns, performing martial arts, besides learning lessons on arts, politics and spirituality at the camp organised in Mornoi village in the district.

A Bajrang Dal spokesperson claimed that such camps are organised at regular intervals to "counter security threats from illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries".

Congress legislature party leader Debabrata Saikia, in a letter to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday, had demanded action against the organisers and inquiry into the role of the district administration in either being unaware or giving permission to the organisers to hold a camp where the members were given arms training.

Saikia had urged the CM to take legal action against the organisers

of the camp as well as the officials of the state, while alleging that "this is intended to create a divide among people of different communities, religion and linguistic affiliations".

"This is not the first time that such camps have been organised, as in 2017 also the Bajrang Dal had organised a camp where arms training was imparted and the Congress had protested against it while in 2019 they had again organised similar training programmes in different parts of the state," the opposition leader said.

He said that at a time when measures are being taken to maintain peace and harmony in the state, a section of "reactionary forces are out to whip up religious frenzy to create a law and order situation in the state".

The CPI(M) also demanded that the police immediately conduct an inquiry into how the Bajrang Dal members could freely use firearms. The Left party described it as a "conspiracy to create communal tensions in the state".

CPI(M) state secretary Suprakash Talukdar said in a statement that these incidents are a "threat to the peace and harmony in the state and is a matter of great concern".

"Such incidents have increased since the BJP has come to power and the chief minister who has often attempted to thwart protests by opposition parties, is silent on such blatant communal activities by the Bajrang Dal," Talukdar added.

Mother and child electrocuted in Moran Khatkhathi

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 1: A heart-wrenching incident of electrocution in Moran Khatkhathi has claimed the lives of a mother and her eight-year-old child. The unfortunate incident occurred when the child, Riyansh Karmakar, accidentally touched a snapped low transmission line in front of their house on Sunday afternoon, leading to his instantaneous death. In a brave attempt to save her child, the mother, Rima Karmakar (29), rushed to the spot but also got electrocuted in the process. Unfortunately, both mother and child lost their lives in the tragic mishap.

The child's grandfather attempted to rescue them from the entangled cables but survived the electrocution. Despite the efforts of the locals, the mother succumbed to her injuries while being taken to the hospital.

The incident has triggered outrage among the community, with people raising slogans against the alleged negligence of the APDCL (Assam Power Distribution Company Limited) authority and the Moran Tea Estate. They demanded the suspension of the APDCL SDO (sub-divisional officer) of the Moran sub-division.

Various student leaders and organisations, including ATTSA and Adivasi students, have called for adequate compensation for the grieving family. Additionally, the women of the locality criticised the Moran Tea Estate authority for not providing an ambulance at all times and for the lack of medical staff in the hospital.

Cong responsible for NE's geographical isolation, political instability: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Aug 1 (PTT): Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has alleged that the north-east region has suffered from "geographical isolation, political instability and imbalanced development" for 70 years due to the previous "Congress governments' intentional ploys to divide and rule".

He also claimed that several conflicts in the region that lasted for 70 years were "resolved" in nine years of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

"Be it the Bodo, Karbi conflict in Assam; the issues of Brus in Mizoram or the NLFT insurgency in Tripura, many such discords have been extinguished under leadership of Hon PM," Sarma said on Twitter.

In the last nine years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has "extensively focused on connecting and uniting the region", he said.

"The relentless focus on connectivity is not restricted to building physical linkages but winning the faith of the people by cementing emotional linkages," the chief minister said in a series of tweets.

Sarma also said PM Modi visited the north-east region "60 times and his council of ministers 400 times" in the last nine years.

"No Central government, since 1947, has invested so much political capital in a region, where some states send just one MP to the Lok Sabha", he wrote on the microblogging site.

"For 70 years, North East suffered from geographical isolation, political instability and imbalanced development, intentional ploys to divide and rule by Cong govts," he alleged.

He also referred to Union Home minister Amit Shah's visit to the



Himanta Biswa Sarma speaking at a podium during a press conference.

border village of Kibithoo in Arunachal Pradesh in April, where he launched the 'Vibrant Village' programme. "In 2023, for the first time a Union HM (Home minister) stayed overnight in an Arunachal town close to the China border and spent a night in Nagaland," Sarma said.

During the current NDA rule, the "culture of flying visits has ended and so has the culture of NE leaders travelling to Delhi asking for funds", he claimed.

"Since 2014, ₹ 3.64 lakh crore has been spent on the region under the Gross Budgetary Support Scheme of the Union Budget", he said.

Sarma, the convenor of the BJP-led North East Democratic Alliance, asserted that boundary issues among the states in the region are "nearing amicable resolution".

"Not just insurgency, we had infighting. Ad hoc formation of northeastern states by the Congress meant states were fighting with states on boundary issues for 50 years or more. Most such matters involving Assam, Arunachal, Meghalaya & Nagaland are nearing amicable resolution," he said.

During the last nine years, there

has been a "74 per cent reduction in insurgency" and an "89 per cent drop" in civilian deaths in the north-east, he claimed.

"Geographical application of AFSPA (The Armed Forces Special Powers Act) has been greatly reduced, not due to a cottage industry agitating against it but due to an improved security climate," he said.

From 1947 to 2014, expenditure on infrastructure projects in the north-east was ₹ 2 lakh crore but from 2014 till date, this figure stands at ₹ 7 lakh crore, Sarma claimed.

The national highway network has expanded 86 per cent in the last nine years, the allocation for rail expansion in the region has increased by 263 per cent and for the first time ever, all seven sister states will be connected by a common rail network with 2000 km of tracks either being laid or upgraded at a cost of ₹ 75,000 crore, he said.

There has also been a "90 per cent increase in airports in the north-east which has "made our region the fastest growing air traffic zone in the country", he said, adding that, "20 of our rivers are now part of National Waterways, a ₹ 9,000-crore gas pipeline will connect us to the nation's gas grid and months within its launch, we are on the 5G map".

The biggest evidence of the "holistic transformation" of connectivity in the north-east is that for two consecutive times, seven states in the region have voted for the NDA in assembly and parliamentary elections, he said.

"Empty vessels make more noise but action speaks louder than words", the Assam chief minister added.

Media orientation workshop on child rights held in Kokrajhar



HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, Aug 1: A media orientation workshop titled 'Suraksha' focused on the role of media in creating a protective environment for children in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) was successfully conducted at Bodoland Guest House in Kokrajhar on Tuesday.

The workshop was jointly organised by the Centre for Development and Peace Studies (CDPS), Guwahati, in association with UNICEF, aiming to facilitate in-depth discussions on the welfare and protection of child rights in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

The inaugural ceremony was graced by the presence of Pramod Boro, chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), and Deba Kumar Kalita, chairman of Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (ASPCPR).

Distinguished guests included Dr Madhulika Jonathan, chief of UNICEF Field Office; Purvi Malhotra, communication specialist of UNICEF Assam; Laxminarayan Nanda, child protection specialist of UNICEF; Wasbir Hussain, executive director of CDPS and editor of Northeast Live; Dr.

Digambar Narzary, chairperson of NEDAN Foundation, Kokrajhar; and Raju Kumar Narzary, executive director of NERSWN NGO, Kokrajhar. Around 50 journalists and members from civil society organisations (CSO) representing various districts of Bodoland Territorial Region actively participated in the event.

CEM Boro appreciated the efforts of CDPS and UNICEF in initiating discussions on child rights in the Bodoland region. He emphasised the BTR government's commitment to promoting the well-being and development of children throughout the region. He called upon civil society organisations and media fraternities to unite and work together towards sustainable welfare and development of the children.

Eminent journalist and executive editor of The Assam Tribune, Dr Digambar Narzary, chairperson of NEDAN Foundation and senior journalists Malaya Deka and Preetam Brahma Choudhury, attended as panelists for the discussions during the program. The workshop provided a valuable platform for media professionals and civil society representatives to deliberate on crucial issues related to child rights and protection in the region.

Master trainers trained on safety and dignity of sanitation workers

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: In an effort to prioritise the safety and dignity of sanitation workers and to strengthen rural sanitation initiatives under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD) in collaboration with UNICEF organised a training program for master trainers on "Safety and Dignity of Sanitation Workers".

The training program, held at SIPRD Kahukuchi Campus in Guwahati, aims to empower 200 representatives from key departments in four batches. The first batch of training took place from July 26 to 28, 2023, with active participation from 55 representatives. Participants included key departments such as Public Health Engineering department, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, department of Women and Child Development, National Health Mission, Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission, Panchayat and Rural Development, Guwahati Municipal Corporation, as well as Civil Society Organisations and private cesspool service providers.

The objective of this training is to equip master trainers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively train rural sanitation workers across the state of Assam. By prioritising the safety and dignity of sanitation workers, the state is taking a significant step towards achieving the goal of "Sampoorna Swachhata" (comprehensive cleanliness) under the Clean India Mission.

IMCT surveys flood damage sites in Biswanath

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Aug 1: An Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) from the government of India, led by CG Rajni Kaanthan, IAS joint secretary, ministry of Home Affairs, visited flood-affected areas in Biswanath district. The team comprised members from various ministries, including Sanjay Kumar Singh from the ministry of Jal Shakti, Adelbert Sungi from the ministry of Road Transport, and Pooja Jain from the ministry of Power. Protocol officers from the Assam State Disaster Management Authority also accompanied the team. During their visit to Dubia, Paken, and Chattrang areas under Gohpur sub-division in Biswanath, the IMCT assessed the extent of damage caused by the floods. The team was joined by Jay Shivani, IAS, additional deputy commissioner and in-charge of Biswanath, and Lukumoni Borah, ACS, additional deputy commissioner and in-charge of Gohpur (C) sub-division, along with circle officers, assistant commissioners, and officials from various line departments.

School principal sentenced to life imprisonment for raping minor girls

HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, Aug 1: In a significant court verdict in Kokrajhar, a school principal has been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the heinous crime of raping five minor girls.

The convicted individual, identified as David Bright Basumatary, was the principal of a private English medium school located under Gossaigaon police station in Kokrajhar district. The court delivered its judgment on Tuesday, finding him guilty of the rape of five minor girls in 2022.

Under Section 6 of the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act, the special court in Kokrajhar sen-



tenced David Bright Basumatary to life term rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹ 20,000.

Special Judge J Koch pronounced the accused, David Bright Basumatary, guilty of sexually abusing five minor girls in the school hostel, which he ran along with his

wife in the remote Gossaigaon subdivision of Kokrajhar district.

According to the special public prosecutor Manjit Kumar Ghose, the accused, who is in his 60s, committed these heinous acts on multiple occasions, causing immense trauma to the young victims.

World Breastfeeding Week inaugurated in Morigaon

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Aug 1: The World Breastfeeding Week was formally inaugurated in Morigaon district, joining the global celebration. The event took place at the conference hall of S.T.H.E. Morigaon Civil Hospital, with great enthusiasm. Phani Pathak, joint director of Health, Morigaon, led the inauguration in the presence of Dr Arun Nath, superintendent of MCH, DPM of NHM, Morigaon, Zulfun Sultana, and several other district-level health department officials.

The World Breastfeeding Week commenced on Tuesday and will continue till August 7, 2023. Addressing the attending mothers, joint director of Health, Morigaon, Dr Phani Pathak emphasised the importance and benefits of breastfeeding. He highlighted, "There is no substitute for breast milk, as it provides essential nutrition, energy, and protection against diseases for babies. Breast milk is the best and only required food and drink for the first six months of a baby's life, including no need for water." The primary objective of the program is to raise awareness among mothers in the district about the significance of breastfeeding. In Morigaon district, ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists) and other health workers have already taken various practical steps to create awareness about the benefits and necessity of breastfeeding. The health department seeks cooperation from all stakeholders in promoting this essential aspect of infant health.

Lakhimpur forest officials sensitised with legal knowledge in Aaranyak's workshop

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Forest field officials, including beat officers and foresters (Grade I) from the Territorial and Social Forestry Divisions in Lakhimpur, were sensitised on various Forest Acts/Rules and the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in a workshop organised on Sunday in Lakhimpur.

The 'Legal Workshop on Forest Acts/Rules and Wildlife Protection Act 1972, and its application' was organised by the Divisional Forest Office (Territorial Division), Lakhimpur, in collaboration with Aaranyak, a leading research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation in North East India. The workshop took place at the conference hall of the Divisional Forest Office (Social Forestry Division) at Japisajia in Lakhimpur.

The assistant conservator of forest (ACF)



Lakhimpur, Ashok Das, interacted with the participants and shared his varied experiences in dealing with various court cases

throughout his career as a forest officer. Advocate Ajoy Kumar Das, senior law consultant of Aaranyak and a practicing ad-

vocate of the Gauhati High Court, attended the workshop as the keynote speaker and provided detailed insights into the differences and similarities between forest offenses and wildlife offenses.

The workshop was inaugurated by range officer (Protection), Rokibuddin Ahmed, with range officers H Nath, G Talukdar, and B Basumatary also present on the occasion.

ACF Ashok Das, summing up the workshop proceedings, applauded all the participants for actively engaging in the workshop, stating that it would help them discharge their responsibilities in a much better way. The workshop aimed to enhance the knowledge and understanding of forest officials on relevant laws and regulations to improve their efficiency in handling their duties effectively.

Nagaland asks govt docs to stop private practice within 1 month



HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 1: The Nagaland government has directed its in-service doctors, both availing as well as not availing non-practising allowance (NPA), engaged in private practice in their hospitals or in partnership with any other hospital to either close down their private hospitals or to de-associate from such partnership within one month.

The directive comes into effect from the date of issue of the office memorandum dated August 1, 2023.

Declaring the health and family welfare department's office memorandum at the secretariat conference hall in Kohima on Monday, commissioner and secretary of the department Y Kikheto Sema said the office memorandum contains the matters relating to private practice by government doctors and the NPA governed by the finance department's notifications and related instructions issued from time to time.

Sema said it has been observed that in many instances, these laid-down instructions are not being complied with in letter and spirit. The issue has also been adversely viewed by Nagaland Lokayukta, he added.

The in-service government doctors who are availing NPA and involved in private practice in private hospitals/clinics have been directed to either stop private practice or to forgo their NPA within one month from the date of issue of the office memorandum.

21 year-old arrested for raping minor

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: A 21 year old individual has been arrested by Kohima Police in connection with a rape case of a minor. The accused identified as Villie alias Avilie Mere admitted to the commission of the crime. In this connection, Kohima Police said, a criminal investigation is still in progress. Mention may be made that the incident took place on July 9 following which a case was registered at Women Police Station, Kohima.

HC summons Tripura Cricket Association members

AGARTALA, Aug 1 (PTI): Tripura High Court has directed all the office bearers of Tripura Cricket Association (TCA) including the president, secretary and joint secretary to appear before it on Wednesday to make an endeavour to resolve the dispute in the organisation.

Tapan Lodh, who was elected president of the state's cricketing body, was recently ousted from it by his rebel group led by elected secretary Tapas Ghosh. Later, Ghosh also got suspended leading to a stalemate in TCA functioning.

In the wake of the dispute, Partha Sarathi Gupta, a life member of TCA, had filed a writ petition before the high court seeking its intervention.

Arunachal launches mega plantation drive for oil palms

ITANAGAR, Aug 1 (PTI): The Arunachal Pradesh government has launched a mega plantation drive for oil palms in the state, officials said on Tuesday.

During the fortnight-long plantation drive, which got underway on July 29, the state government is targeting to cover about 700 hectares of land in six districts with oil palms, they said.

The programme was undertaken as part of the National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm, which is aimed at meeting the growing demand for edible oils in the country, they added.

Two companies -- 3F Oil Palm Pvt Ltd and Patanjali Foods Ltd -- would participate in the plantation drive, officials said.

"With an aim to increase oil palm cultivation under National Mission for Edible Oils, we have launched a mega plantation drive from July 29 to August 12, in Arunachal Pradesh," chief minister Pema Khandu tweeted.

"Under the dynamic leadership of PM Narendra Modi Ji, this is yet another step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat by reducing

As per the office memorandum, the in-service government doctors who are not availing NPA may be allowed to give private consultations and services to the needy patients with prior approval of the competent authority strictly during non-working hours.

All private hospitals, clinics and nursing homes have also been directed not to engage any in-service government doctors, nurses, technicians and health workers in their establishments. Failure to comply will result in the cancellation of their license, the office memorandum said.

Sema said it has come to the notice of the government that some in-service government doctors/health workers are irregular in their place of posting, which hampers the health care delivery system in their respective health units.

The department reiterated that in the event of a report of absence from the place of posting without proper leave permissions from the competent authority, action will be initiated as per the Nagaland Government Servants Conduct Rules, 1968, and the Nagaland Services (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1967. Sema also announced the change in the timing for the OPD in all the state government health units under the health and family welfare department. The OPD timing has been rescheduled from 8.30 am to 2.30 pm to from 9 am to 3 pm with effect from August 10, 2023.

Manipur Cong demands clarification on BJP MLA's Union territory proposal

IMPHAL, Aug 1 (PTI): Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) on Tuesday sought a clarification from the state government and the BJP state unit in connection with the remarks made by BJP MLA Paolienlal Haokip advocating division of the state into three Union Territories.

MPCC vice-president Harehswor Goswami told reporters that the party strongly condemned Haokip's remark, adding that Kuki outfits KNO and UPF recently held talks with the BJP government wherein the demand of creating Union territories was floated.

"The government and the BJP should clarify on Haokip's separation agenda," Goswami said.

He said Haokip is one of the 10 MLAs who had demanded a separate administration as he was the signatory of the press statement issued in this connection by these legislators on June 12.

Haokip, who shot into the limelight after ethnic violence erupted in Manipur, had said the way forward to finding a solution to the state's racial conflict is by creating three separate Union territories.

Haokip in a recent interview to PTI advocated giving "political and administrative recognition to the ethnic separation" in the state, upping the ante from earlier vaguely explained demands for a "separate administration" for Kuki areas made by fellow Kuki community leaders.

"The way forward, as I see it, is for the Union government to give political and administrative recognition to the ethnic separation, where the state of Manipur is

UNC stresses the need for updation of NRC in Manipur

SENAPATI, Aug 1 (NNN): The United Naga Council (UNC), while stressing the urgent need for updation of National Registration of Citizen (NRC) in Manipur, also expressed its concern on the alleged dictating the government by various civil society organisations in the valley "for convening Special Assembly Session on or before August 5, 2023 to protect the territorial integrity of Manipur state and imposing to all MLAs including the Naga legislators to stand in their interest is highly uncalled for and nonsensical at this fluid situations".

In a statement made available to Newmai News Network on Tuesday, the UNC expressed its concern on the reported influx of illegal immigrants in Manipur and said, "The government of India's insidious devised policy of encouraging cross-border inflow of population from Myanmar should be stopped immediately as continuous influx of illegal immigrants from the porous borders of Indo-Myanmar will create a serious demographic crisis and wide ranging ramifications". The UNC also said, "It is alarming to learn the fresh influx of illegal immigrant, Myanmar national along the Indo-Myan-



mar border in Chandel district to the tune of 718 persons just in a day as per the report of Assam Rifle 29th Sector dated July 23, 2023". According to the UNC, such "diabolical design of the home ministry, government of India is nothing but to crush the indigenous people and to serve their whims

and desires in the region". To this end, the state government should initiate stringent steps to curb the menace, the UNC added.

The Naga body also stated that, in the wake of "ever increasing influx of illegal immigrants in the tiny state of Manipur", updation of National Registration of Citizen

(NRC) is the only feasible mechanism to curb the unwarranted population invasion in the state. Therefore, the UNC said the state government should implement the NRC at the earliest possible.

The UNC also said various unwarranted developments have spiraled with the ongoing conflict of Chin-Kuki-Zo and Meiteis in the state of Manipur.

According to the UNC, various civil society organizations in the valley "dictating the government for convening Special Assembly Session on or before August 5, 2023 to protect the territorial integrity of Manipur state and imposing to all MLAs including the Naga legislators to stand in their interest is highly uncalled for and nonsensical at this fluid situations". The Naga body said it is high time communities living in the state to realize and respect each different position and historical facts. "Naga people will not accept any kind of imposition under any circumstances. Therefore, the UNC is necessitated to direct all the Naga legislators to abstain from such assembly session convening under the dictate of some civil society organisations," it added.

Mizoram cabinet gives nod to set up state university

AIZAWL, Aug 1 (PTI): The cabinet of Mizoram chief minister Zoramthanga has given its nod to set up a state university.

The northeastern state has only one university, the Mizoram University, which is a central government institution.

The meeting chaired by Zoramthanga on Monday decided that the state university will be established as per the requirements of the National Education Policy.

The meeting also approved proposals to amend the Mizoram Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011, and establish a directorate of Nursing.

The meeting of council of ministers also approved proposals to amend the Mizoram State Medical Rules, 2013, implement pharmacy practice regulations, draft rules of Zoram Medical College (ZMC) and restructure Mizoram health services, besides addressing grievances of the Mizoram government doctors' association.

Meanwhile, Mizoram education department and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) on July 29 signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on



telecasting two PM eVIDYA direct to home educational television channels, an official statement said on Monday.

The two educational channels will also be telecast on YouTube.

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from eligible candidates registered in employment exchange in standard form for filling up the following vacant sanctioned **Grade-IV** posts in the Scale of Pay **Band-I, 12000-37500 + Grade Pay of Rs.3900/-** plus other allowances as admissible under rule as per State Govt. norms RoP, 2017 in A.H. & Veterinary Department, Karbi Anglong, Diphu affixing KAAC receipt Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only as per details given below on or before **25th August 2023**.

Sl. No.	Department Name	Name & No. of Post	Qualification
1	District Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department	Chowkider- 4 Nos.	Class-VIII passed
2		Goat Attendant/ Shepherd - 1 Nos.	
3		Handyman -1 No.	
Total		Grade-N- 6 Nos.	

TERMS & CONDITION

- Age of the candidates should not be less than 18 years and not be more than 38 years as on 01/01/2023 with relaxation of 5 years for ST/SC/PWD candidates and 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidates.
- The candidates should apply along with attested copies of testimonials along with complete Bio-data and two self attested passport size photographs.
- All candidates applying for the above posts need to deposit an IPO pledged in favour of the **District A. H. & Veterinary Officer, Karbi Anglong, Diphu** amounting Rs 100 -for General/OBC/MOBC category and Rs. 50/- for ST/SC/PWD candidates along with their application.
- The envelope containing application along with complete testimonials must be mention against the applied post.
- Name of the eligible candidates for Viva-Voce can be seen on the Notice Board on **28th August, 2023** of the District A. H. & Veterinary Office, Diphu; Karbi Anglong and they are requested to collect their calling letters during the office hours i. e. 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. from **29th August up-to 5th September, 2023**.
- The date of Viva-Voce interview for the said posts fixed on **7th September, 2023** at 10.00 AM onwards. Candidates are requested to bring their original testimonial at the time of interview.
- Venue of interview is District A. H. & Veterinary Office, Diphu; Karbi Anglong
- No TA/DA will be provided to any candidate from the department for the same.
- The candidates must be a permanent resident of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council areas comprising of Kerbi Anglong & West Karbi Anglong

N. B. Next working day will be count for interview if some unavoidable holiday/Bandh Call arises.

Sd/-

Member Secretary,
Selection Committee
A. H. & Vety. Department
Karbi Anglong, Diphu.



oil import burden by further augmenting domestic oil palm cultivation (sic)," he added.

3F Oil Palm Pvt Ltd has already started work on its first integrated factory in Arunachal Pradesh with an initial investment of ₹ 250 crores, officials said.

The company, which has similar facilities

in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat, acquired 120 acres of land in the Lower Dibang Valley district in February last year for the project.

The first phase of the factory is expected to be commissioned by September, and would create employment opportunities for 300 people, officials said.

20 dead as girder launcher collapses during construction on Samruddhi Expressway in Thane

MUMBAI, Aug 1 (PTI): At least 20 persons including ten labourers were crushed to death and three others injured as a girder launcher collapsed during the construction of a viaduct for the Samruddhi Expressway in Maharashtra's Thane district on early Tuesday morning, officials said.

The girder launcher along with a segment launcher (crane), weighing 700 tons, came crashing down from a height of 35 metres, the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) said in a release. The deceased included two engineers, said the MSRDC, the executing agency of the expressway project that links Nagpur with Mumbai.

Thane police registered an offence against two contractors for allegedly causing death by negligence following the incident. The incident occurred sometime after midnight at Sarlambe village in Shahapur tehsil, around 80 km from Mumbai. The three injured



persons were being treated at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Hospital at Kalva in Thane. Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis expressed grief over the incident in a tweet. A probe by experts has been ordered, he added. It was a special-purpose "mobile gantry crane" used in bridge construction and to install precast box girders in highway construction

projects that collapsed while being shifted between pier nos 15 and 16 of the viaduct as part of preparatory work for the next day, the MSRDC said.

The 2.28 km-long viaduct is being constructed by Navayuga Engineering and VSL India Private Limited, Singapore. Of total 114 segments of the viaduct, 98 were successfully constructed using the

same launcher, MSRDC added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives and announced ex-gratia of ₹ 2 lakh for the next of kin of each of the deceased and assistance of ₹ 50,000 for the injured persons. Union home minister Amit Shah also expressed grief. National Disaster Response Force teams are engaged in relief and rescue work, he said. Chief minister Eknath Shinde condoled the deaths and announced assistance of ₹ 5 lakh each for the families of the deceased. A First Information Report (FIR) under Indian Penal Code sections 304 A (Causing death by negligence) and 337 (Causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) was registered at Shahapur police station against two contractors of the company engaged in the bridge construction work, an official said. Maharashtra PWD minister Ravindra Chavan and Public Works (with MSRDC) minister Dada Bhuse visited the accident site.

Imam killed in attack on Gurugram mosque, Haryana violence toll rises to five

GURUGRAM/CHANDIGARH, Aug 1 (PTI): A mob attacked a mosque in Gurugram and killed its naib imam, taking the toll in the violence that erupted over an attempt to stop a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession in Nuh district to five, police said on Tuesday. Authorities on Tuesday imposed a curfew in Nuh where four people, including two home guards, were killed and many others injured on Monday, as Haryana home minister Anil Vij claimed that the violence was "engineered".

In Gurugram's Sector 57 area, the 26-year-old imam was killed and a mosque set ablaze as the violence spread from neighbouring Nuh, the police said. The mob opened fire in which two people were injured. The imam, identified as Bihar native Saad, died during treatment, a senior officer said.

According to the police, the mob reached the Anjuman Masjid in Sector 57 after midnight. Some people in the crowd opened fire at the people present in the mosque and also set it ablaze.



In Nuh, two more people injured in the violence on Monday succumbed to their injuries. The victims are home guards Neeraj and Gursewak and Bhadas village resident Shakti. The identity of the fourth victim is still to be ascertained. Ten policemen were among 23 injured in the violence in Nuh. The police have registered 11 FIRs in the district and detained 27 people in connection with the rioting.

At least 120 vehicles were damaged during the violence in the district. Of these, 50, including eight belonging to the police, were set ablaze. Vij on Tuesday said a cur-

few has been clamped on Nuh district. Alleging that the violence was "engineered", he told PTI Video, "Somebody masterminded it (the violence) but I do not want to reach any conclusions. We will investigate this and every single person responsible will be brought to justice."

As news of the violence in Muslim-dominated Nuh spread on Monday, mobs in Sohna set ablaze four vehicles and a shop, apparently belonging to people from that community. The situation in Nuh and Sohna continues to be tense. However, there were no reports of any fresh violence on Tuesday. Police and paramilitary forces have been deployed in large numbers in Nuh and the other affected areas, the police said. According to officials, the situation is under control in Nuh. Thirteen companies of central forces have already reached the district, while six others will reach soon. Police conducted flag marches in Nuh and the district administration has appealed to the public to maintain peace.

Bhitarkanika reopens for tourists after croc nesting season ends

KENDRAPARA (ODISHA), Aug 1 (PTI): After remaining out of bounds for tourists for three months, Bhitarkanika National Park in Odisha reopened on Tuesday. The park was closed for the annual census of estuarine crocodiles from May 1 to July 31.

The park will allow day visitors and night stay in cottages and guest houses, said Sudarshan Gopinath Yadav, divisional forest officer, Rajnagar Mangrove (wildlife) Forest Division. Tourists and visitors intending to visit Bhitarkanika should log on to www.ecotourismodisha.com for bookings, the official said. Attracting tourists from across India and abroad, the forest department has rest house facilities in Danganala, Agaranasi, Habalikothi, Gupti and Ekakula, he said. A strict ban has been imposed on use of plastic disposables in protected areas and advised tourists not to carry polythene and

litter plastic bottles and other items in the forest. Green protocol will be strictly implemented, the forest officer added. The park was shut for three months to ensure disturbance-free annual nesting of crocodiles. The reptiles often turn violent and attack intruders during this period. Boat journeys along the mangrove-covered waterbodies are a major attraction for tourists and on any given day, 350 to 400 visitors make trips by boats.

Bhitarkanika is home to 70 percent of India's estuarine crocodile or saltwater crocodiles, conservation of which was started in 1975. According to Bhitarkanika National Park authorities, mammals found in the place are leopard, wild boar, jungle cat, fishing cat, hyena, sambar, striped palm squirrel, gangetic dolphin while reptiles found comprise turtles including Olive Ridley sea turtle, crocodile, lizard, water monitors, python, and king cobra.

Rajya Sabha passes Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI): Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill 2023 which seeks to strengthen cooperatives by making their functioning more transparent, introducing a system of regular elections and prohibiting appointment of related persons.

Minister of State Cooperation B L Verma moved the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2023 for consideration and passage in Rajya Sabha.

The bill, which had been approved by Lok Sabha on July 25, 2023, was passed in Rajya Sabha by voice vote.

While replying to queries on the bill, Verma said that the bill provides for norms for appointment of employees, which ensures that there is no nepotism practices.

He said that India's target of becoming a 5-trillion dollar economy

cannot be achieved without the progressive role of cooperative sector. Noting that there is a limit for the private sector when it comes to employment generation, he said that the cooperative sector can spur jobs as the government is strengthening the cooperatives, by expanding their sphere of work into areas like LPG and petrol pump dealerships.

The bill seeks to establish a 'Co-operative Election Authority' with a view to introduce electoral reforms in the cooperative sector.

It will consist of a chairperson, vice-chairperson and members not exceeding three to be appointed by the central government.

As per the data published by the NCU, there are about 8.6 lakh co-operatives in the country, out of which active Primary Agricultural Cooperatives (PACs) are around 63,000.

In January, the government had

decided to establish three new multi-state cooperative societies to promote organic products, seeds and exports.

As per the statement of objects and reasons of the bill, a new clause has been inserted to set up Cooperative Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Fund for revival of sick multi-state cooperative societies.

The bill also provides for concurrent audit for multi-state cooperative societies, mechanism for redressal of complaints, appointment of one or more cooperative ombudsmen and cooperative information officer.

Further, it provides for an increase in monetary penalties that will be imposed on these societies in case of contravention of the provisions. Another provision is for filing of applications, documents, returns, statements, statement of accounts in electronic form.

Patna HC upholds caste survey

PATNA, Aug 1 (PTI): In a shot in the arm for the Nitish Kumar government in Bihar, the Patna High Court on Tuesday upheld the caste survey ordered by it as "perfectly valid" and "initiated with due competence".

A division bench comprising Chief Justice K Vinod Chandran and Justice Partha Sarathy passed the order rejecting a bunch of petitions challenging the survey, which was ordered last year and began earlier this year. The bench, which had reserved its judgement on July 7, said in its 101-page-long verdict, "We find the action of the state to be perfectly valid, initiated with due competence, with the legitimate aim of providing development with justice." The judgement began with the note: "The action of the state in carrying out a caste survey... and the vigorous challenge raised to it on multiple grounds... reveal that despite attempts to efface it from the social fabric, caste remains a reality, and refuses to be swept aside, wished away or brushed aside nor does it wither away or disperse into thin air." The judgement, which came less than three months after the court had stayed the survey, shocked the petitioners who vowed to challenge the order before the Supreme Court.

"After studying the judgement, we will move the Supreme Court," senior advocate Dinu Kumar, counsel for one of the many petitioners, told reporters soon after the bench pronounced its verdict in an open court. The ruling 'Mahagathabandhan' (Grand Alliance) in the state, which had so far been content with a countrywide caste census being adopted as a key agenda by the opposition grouping INDIA, was predictably elated.

Deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav took to Twitter to reiterate the promised benefits of the survey while taking potshots at the BJP, which rules the Centre, for being reluctant to order a caste census while proffering "false pride of having an OBC prime minister". Statements hailing the judgement and chiding the BJP also came from the JD(U), to which chief minister Nitish Kumar belongs, and the CPI(M) Liberation and the CPI(M), both of which are a part of the ruling coalition but support the government from outside.

Contd. from Page 3...

Trust surplus today seen

introduced people to the power of karma," Modi said. He said Tilak insisted that people believe in themselves.

"He used to make them believe in themselves. When people at that time made up their minds that it was impossible for India to break the chains of slavery, he gave people the confidence of freedom. He had trust in our traditions, he had trust in our people, workers, he had trust in the prowess of India," Modi said. In an atmosphere of mistrust, the nation's development is not possible, he said.

"Yesterday, I got a tweet from one Manoj Pochat, who reminded me of my visit to Pune 10 years ago. I had then spoken at Fergusson College about the trust deficit. Today, he has requested me to speak about a journey from trust deficit to trust surplus," Modi said.

"Today, trust surplus is seen both in policies and hard work of the people in the country," the PM said.

"In the last nine years, the people of India laid the foundations of big developments and made big transformations possible, and that is why India became the fifth largest economy in the world. It is the people of India who made it happen," he said.

Lokmanya Tilak had this unique ability to identify young talent, he said, adding that (late Hindutva ideologue) Veer Savarkar was one such example. Tilak realised the capability of Veer Savarkar and was instrumental in his education abroad, he said.

"When an award is named after Lokmanya Tilak, the responsibility increases," he said.

The PM also said Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was deeply impacted by a speech of Lokmanya Tilak. Tilak had gone to Ahmedabad to address the people. More than 40,000 people came to listen to him, he said. "Among them was Patel, who was deeply impacted by his speech. Later, Patel became president of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Look at his thinking. He decided to install Tilak's bust in Ahmedabad and chose the Victoria Garden, which was made in memory of Queen Victoria, for it," said Modi.

Patel faced a lot of opposition as attempts were made to stop him, but he resolved that if Tilak's bust was not allowed to be installed in the garden, he would give up his position, the PM said. "Finally, the statue was installed and in 1929, Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated the bust of Tilak. While living in Ahmedabad, I got the opportunity to visit the statue numerous times," he said.

Modi said one can imagine that in the times of slavery, Sardar Patel challenged the British Empire for the "son of the country".

"In today's scenario, if a road named after a foreign invader is renamed after an Indian personality, some people make a hue and cry and get sleepless nights," he said. "During the Covid-19 pandemic, India believed in its scientists and they made an Indian vaccine and Pune played a vital role in that. We are talking about 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) because we know India can do it," he said.

Modi said he has given ₹ 1 lakh received with the Lokmanya Tilak National Award to the Namami Gange project. "Today, Mudra loans are being offered to the common people of the country without any guarantee and this is happening as the country trusts their honesty and capabilities. Earlier, (even) for small jobs, people used to face hardships. But today, the majority of work is happening at the tip of fingers using phones."

"Because of this, a different kind of atmosphere, a positive atmosphere is being created. We can see that people who are filled with confidence are coming forward to work for the country," the Prime Minister said as he cited initiatives like Swachh Bharat, surrendering LPG subsidy, and the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign. Modi said one's responsibilities increase after receiving an award and when the award is in the name of Lokmanya Tilak, then that responsibility increases fourfold.

"After 75 years of Independence, India is looking at 'Amrit Kaal' as the 'Kartavya Kaal' where every citizen is working at his level keeping in mind the dreams and resolutions of the country. That's why the world is also seeing the future in India as our efforts of today are becoming an assurance for the entire humanity," he added. Modi also said people will definitely turn the dream of a strong and prosperous India into a reality with the power of Lokmanya Tilak's thoughts and blessings. Speaking before Modi, Sharad Pawar said the first surgical strike in India was during Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's period. The NCP leader said the country had seen two eras: One of Tilak and another of Mahatma Gandhi. Besides Pawar, chief minister Eknath Shinde, his deputies Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, and Congress leader Sushilkumar Shinde were also present on the stage.

Manipur police slammed for

court is inadequate as there is no segregation of 6,523 FIRs into the nature of the offences to which they pertain. The state must carry out the exercise of segregation and inform the court on how many FIRs pertain to cases involving murder, rape, arson and looting, destruction of house property and outraging of modesty and destruction of places of religious worship," the bench said in its order.

"Based on the preliminary data submitted before the court, it does prima facie appear

that the investigation has been tardy. There has been a considerable lapse between the occurrence and the registration of FIRs, recording of witness statements and even the arrests have been few and far between," the order said.

The bench said for enabling it to take stock of all dimensions of the investigation conducted so far, the director general of police (DGP) of Manipur will have to appear on Monday to answer its queries. As the hearing began, the solicitor general, appearing for the Centre and the Manipur government, told the bench the state police have lodged 6,523 FIRs after ethnic violence first erupted in early May.

The moment the law officer opened the submissions by referring to actions taken by the police, the CJI raised a volley of questions on the delay in registering the FIR in the viral video case, recording of the statements of the victim women and other necessary legal requirements which should have been complied with promptly. "We are in the midst of a war of a different dimension. There are incidents in the border areas which are deeply disturbing. We need a calibrated approach in this case," the attorney general said.

The bench, which was in no mood to relent, said, "For two months, the situation was not conducive for even registering FIRs. This gives us the impression that from May towards the end of July, there was an absolute breakdown of constitutional machinery in the state to the point that you could not even register an FIR."

"The police could not make an arrest because the situation was out of control. The police officer could not enter an area to make the arrest. Assuming that to be true, does this not point to the fact that there was a complete breakdown of law and order and constitutional machinery of the state. If the law and order machinery cannot protect the citizens then where the citizens are left," the bench said.

Perusing the status report, the CJI said the zero FIR in the video case was lodged on May 4 and the regular one was registered after 14 days and the statement of the victims recorded on July 26.

"Mr Solicitor, look at the investigation. It is too lethargic. The FIRs registered after two months, arrests not made, statements recorded after so much lapse of time," it said, adding "One thing is very clear that there is a long delay in registering FIR in video cases."

The law officer tried to impress upon the court that harsh observations made by it may impact the prevailing ground situation in the state.

"I am trying to be as impartial as possible and addressing my lords dispassionately only on facts because some of the emotive pleas, if true, would be very very serious and, if not true, then also very very serious as made before the highest court of the country," the solicitor general said. All officers in police stations have been directed to be sensitive to sexual violence reported by women and children, he said.

The court was also critical of the fact that so far only seven people, including a juvenile, have been arrested in 11 cases of violence against women and children in the state. Mehta said considering the situation on the ground some delay may have happened. "But the moment the central government came to know about one incident we took action," he said, adding the situation is now returning to normal.

"The moment we came to know about the first incident (of torture of women), we not only transferred it to the CBI, we requested this court to monitor. There cannot be a more fair and transparent manner under the circumstances," he said.

The court then accepted the submissions of the law officers that they needed time to respond to the queries of the top court after a meeting with the state officials. Tension had soared in Manipur, tormented by unabated ethnic violence, after a May 4 video surfaced recently that showed two women from one of the warring communities being paraded naked by a mob from the other side.

Earlier in the day, the top court directed the CBI not to proceed with recording the statements of the victim women during the day as it is scheduled to hear a batch of petitions on the issue at 2 pm. The bench took note of the submissions by lawyer Nizam Pasha, appearing for the two women, that the CBI has asked them to appear and depose before it during the day.

The top court had on Monday described as "horrendous" the video amid reports that the police handed the helpless women over to the rioting mob. It asked searching questions about delayed registration of the FIR and mooted the idea of setting up a committee of retired judges or an SIT to oversee the probe.

Chandrayaan-3 in 'normal

a path that would take it to the vicinity of the moon. "Chandrayaan-3 completes its orbits around the Earth and heads towards the moon," the national space agency said, adding, "Next stop, the moon."

According to ISRO, it would attempt soft-landing on the lunar surface on August 23. The spacecraft's orbit was progressively increased five times after the Chandrayaan-3 mission to the Moon was launched on July 14.

BJP indulging in religious

check skyrocketing of prices of essential commodities and demanded a white paper

from the Assam BJP government on the state's finances over the last two fiscals. "Two annual budgets have been passed under the current Himanta Biswa Sarma-led regime. We demand that a white paper on these two budgets of 2021-22 and 2022-23 be placed before the public."

"The government has been taking huge amount of loans. We demand that they should make it public on what activities the loan amount is being used. Our suspicion is that the loan money is used only for creating beneficiaries," Bora claimed.

BJP blamed for Manipur violence: Meanwhile, with the opposition bloc INDIA demanding a statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Manipur violence in Parliament, Ripun Bora claimed that the PM was refraining from speaking as the violence is "their (BJP's) own creation" and exposes their failure. He said it was "strategically" decided by the BJP not to make any statement on the ongoing violence in the northeastern state.

The state BJP, however, maintained that the party was ready for discussions on the issue but the opposition has not given it any opportunity. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP have strategically decided not to make any statement on Manipur. They have nothing to say as it is their creation and failure. They will be exposed when they give any statement," Bora, a former Rajya Sabha member, said.

IIT Guwahati develops device

and the gold nanoparticles thus get agglomerated on the surface of the target bacteria giving out a unique signature that can be detected by a UV-Visible Spectrophotometer", he added. The biosensor prototype detects a change in the intensity of light when the aptamer-gold nanoparticles-bacteria come together and the detection time is fast because the aptamer and bacteria instantly combine, Pattadar said.

The developed prototype is also generic, i.e., the process is tunable for different types of bacteria and can contribute significantly to primary healthcare, he said. The details of the POCT prototype have been published in reputed peer-reviewed journal ACS Applied BioMaterials and the paper was co-authored by Pattadar, Aniruddha Deb, Prof Tapas K Mandal from IITG and Dr Swapnil Sinha and Ms Mousumi Gogoi from Altanostic Lab Private Limited, IITG Research Park.

This research was funded by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), government of India.

NCB busts 'biggest'

Portugal, Greece and Turkiye, according to DDG Singh. "He (Dr Seuss) had already started recruiting people for this purpose and had put in place the logistics and space," the NCB officer said.

The NCB said it is working to unearth the third such known LSD cartel operating in the country. As part of the two earlier busts, it has registered a total of six cases in Delhi under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) leading to the arrest of 22 Indians till now. The two operations led to a total seizure of 29,013 LSD blots and 472 grams of MDMA powder and the freezing of ₹ 51.38 lakh cash or "drug money". These cartels collect money in various crypto wallets and then transfer it across through various layers of virtual currencies and finally receive the money in their bank accounts, an NCB officer said.

Ready to hold talks with

He also said that relations would not become normal until the "abnormalities" were removed by addressing the unresolved issues.

"It is equally important that our neighbour has to understand that we cannot become normal neighbours unless abnormalities are removed and unless our serious issues are understood and addressed through peaceful and meaningful discussions," he said. Bilateral relations between Islamabad and New Delhi have been tense since August 2019 when India changed the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. On India's ties with Pakistan, external affairs minister S Jaishankar has said that it is not possible for India to have normal relations with the neighbouring country until the policy of cross-border terrorism is abrogated.

"We can't allow terrorism to be normalised; we cannot allow that to become the basis for getting us into discussions with Pakistan. To me it is a fairly common sense proposition," he said in June.

Earlier, minister of state for petroleum Dr Musadik Malik, inviting foreign investors to invest in the minerals and mining sector, revealed that Pakistan has estimated mineral reserves of USD 6 trillion, which include gold, copper, coal, and other precious metals.

"We want to increase our exports from USD 1 billion to USD 5 billion and employment in the mineral sector from 300,000 to 600,000 in the next few years," he said. Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir also attended the summit along with several national and foreign dignitaries.

First Dimasa feature film 'Waiphri' is all set to release in 4 theatres across state

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 1: 'Waiphri' the first Dimasa feature film is all set to release in 4 theatres across the state on August 4 at Guwahati, Haflong, Diphu and Silchar simultaneously. In Dimasa dialect 'Waiphri' means spark (of fire). The film is made with a budget of Rs. 80 lacs and took nine years to complete. The duration of the film is 4 hours. It is produced under the banner of Kim Daula Media by Swapna Daulagupu and Kukendra Daulagupu, Halfong and directed by Dipankar Mech Diphusa and Ananta Borah.

In a press conference held here at Kala Kendra on Tuesday, the co-producer Kulendra Daulagupu said, "The first Dimasa feature film 'Waiphri' will be releasing in four theatres at Guwahati, Diphu, Halfong and Silchar on August 4."

The film revolves around a young man Sainsring, an honest person, who has love for his village. After completing his studies from outside he returns back to his village to do something good for his villagers. He finds stiff re-

sistance with the CEM of the hills council, Monjoy Daulagupu, for the educational upliftment he is doing for the village. Sainsring sought an RTI, exposing the CEM's wrongdoings. The CEM was then arrested, the co-pro-



ducer said. The romantic part of the film is that the CEM's daughter Barbili deeply falls in love with Sainsring. But when Barbili learned that Sainsring was against her father, she avoided him. At the near end of the film Barbili, after realizing that her father is corrupt, returns to Sainsring.

The films have the elements of romance, action, emotion and suspense, Daulagupu said. The film is shot in the picturesque locations of Dima Hasao. There are four songs altogether. Popular Assamese singer Zubeen Garg has

landed his voice for the songs. There are also local artists like Ringhamdi Phon-glo, Queen Hazarika of Diphu, Arpita Mithers-phangsa and others, Daulagupu said.

The main casts in the film are Nitu Barman Rajya Sabha last week, was approved by the Lok Sabha on Monday. The amendments have led to appreciation from several in the film fraternity including the Producers Guild of India (PGI), censor board chief Praseon Joshi and producer Dinesh Vijan.

Film fraternity welcomes the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill

MUMBAI, Aug 1 (PTI): The Indian film fraternity has welcomed the amendments to the cinematograph act mandating a maximum jail term of three years and a fine of up to five per cent of the production cost of the film for those involved in film piracy and circulation of such content.

The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023, which was passed by the Rajya Sabha last week, was approved by the Lok Sabha on Monday.

The amendments have led to appreciation from several in the film fraternity including the Producers Guild of India (PGI), censor board chief Praseon Joshi and producer Dinesh Vijan.

"We welcome the passing of the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023 by both Houses of Parliament and are especially grateful for the provisions prescribing stricter penalties against piracy," @ianuragthakur @MIB_India," PGI tweeted.

This was the first substantial amendment to the Cinematograph Act 1953 since

1984 when the minimum punishment for an offence relating to a video film was introduced.

The Bill also removes section 6.1 of the Act that granted powers to the Central government to revise the CBFC certification of a film and has provisions to introduce three age-based certifications under the 'UA' category, namely 'UA 7+', 'UA 13+' and 'UA 16+', and to empower the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to sanction a film with a separate certificate for its exhibition on television or other media.

"The Cinematograph (amendment) Bill 2023 is a big step forward to stringently address the issue of film piracy. Holding firm the autonomy of #CBFC's certification the bill also introduces nuances in the certification process with the evolving sensibilities #Cine-matographBill," Praseon Joshi tweeted.

"Kantara" and "KGF" producers Homable Films said the Bill is a step towards bet-

ter film certification, piracy prevention and harmonising laws.

"Embracing positive change in the film industry! The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 is a step towards better film certification, piracy prevention and harmonizing laws. We extend our gratitude to the government for their support and empowering the film fraternity!" the production banner tweeted.

Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films, known for backing movies such as "Street 2" and "Bhedhiya", said the film industry is heading toward a brighter future.

"A huge applause to the Lok Sabha for passing the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023! With age-based certification and robust anti-piracy measures, we're heading towards a brighter future for Indian cinema. Grateful to witness this positive transformation," the tweet read.

"Kabir Singh" producer Ashwin Varde called the Bill a "great initiative".

'Made in Heaven' season two will focus on women, LGBTQ community: Zoya Akhtar

MUMBAI, Aug 1 (PTI): Filmmaker Zoya Akhtar on Tuesday said that "Made in Heaven" season two will continue to train its lens on issues revolving around women and LGBTQ community through its two protagonists, who run a wedding planning agency.

Set against the backdrop of quintessential Indian weddings, the first chapter revolved around two wedding planners — Arjun Mathur's Karan Mehra and Sobhita Dhulipala's Tara Khanna — navigating the big fat and often complicated Indian weddings while balancing conflicts in their own life.

The second season of "Made in Heaven", according to Akhtar, who has created the series with Reema Kagti, will see Dhulipala and Mathur's characters with a strong moral compass.

"The central two characters of the season are Tara and Karan, they are non-conformists and quite grey. They come with a sense of protectiveness, in a sense, about someone that comes to their lives, they have a strong moral compass."

"We also lens this show through women, through LGBTQ community, so it's an expansion of that, thematically. It's been about fitting into a society," Akhtar told reporters here at the trailer launch of the Prime Video series.

Kagti said they are "obsessed" with exploring different experiences of women in society.

"We are trying to explore different aspects of female experience in a society like us, which is rooted in culture and is changing and modernising. I think we are obsessed with exploring different female angles," she added.

The seven-episode season two is directed by Kagti and Akhtar along with Alankrita Shrivastava, Neeraj Ghaywan and Nitya Mehra.

Shrivastava said though they carry forward the core theme of "Made in Heaven" in season two, the scale is bigger.

"We carry forward the things and core of the show but our endeavour with season two was to be more grand with the wedding and deeper with the characters. So, it is a more nuanced and layered look at the themes that we did in season one. It's more of what you saw and is more poignant and more fun," she said.

"There is love, family, togetherness and romance that one holds dear but there is also much to change, (like) actualisation of how women are changing and (we) explore how tradition meets modernity," she added.



The first season of "Made in Heaven" came out in 2019 and received critical acclaim for its storytelling and performances by the lead cast.

The show earned Mathur an International Emmy nomination for best actor for his portrayal of a closeted gay man grappling with a troubled childhood, depleting finances and social stigma around his orientation.

Akhtar said the team didn't expect the first season to be widely loved by audiences and thanked people for patiently waiting for its second chapter.

"Nobody knew how it will land. We were extremely nervous when it came out. But it picked up, and it has got a loyal fandom, no matter what I post, I am asked about 'Made in Heaven'."

"Now, it's been so long, I'm being trolled, so I wanted to drop because they were getting irritated. I'm thankful to them that they have held on to it and haven't forgotten it." For, Mathur, who is also known for "Luck By Chance", "Bara Aana", "My Name is Khan", "Ankur Arora Murder Case", the show turned out to be his big breakthrough.

He said he didn't expect his character to make an impact on the lives of people but it did. He credited the writers for giving him a well-defined role.

"When you start doing something, it is never with expectations of how much the audience will really connect with it or not. I am grateful for that but a lot of credit goes to writers. I didn't expect it to connect the way it did. I was quite overwhelmed."

"All the personal stories that came to me and how it enabled so many people and gave them strength to kind of accept themselves or members of their families," he said.

Dhulipala said it has been a privilege and honour to play a woman like Tara, an ambitious go-getter struggling to navigate her marriage and a fledgling business.

"In the second season, while she continues to fulfil her role as a daughter, daughter-in-law, business partner to the best of her capacity, I do think she is up for a major identity transformation and charting that journey is what we will see in season two. It's her coming-of-age, coming into her own in a new capacity, and that's very thrilling."

Besides Dhulipala and Mathur, the series also features Jim Sarbh, Kalki Koechlin, Shashank Arora, Shivani Raghuvanshi, and Vijay Raaz. The newcomers include Mona Singh, Ishwak Singh and Trine-tria Halder.

JR NTR STARTS FILMING FOR NEXT SCHEDULE OF 'DEVARA'

HYDERABAD, Aug 1 (PTI): "RRR" star Jr NTR has started shooting for the next schedule of his Telugu-language feature film "Devara" here. According to a press note issued by the makers, the schedule involves a massive water sequence which will be filmed in Hyderabad.

"After a short break and some rehearsals to execute the sequence on a massive scale, we are back on sets from today #Devara," a post on the official Instagram page of the film read.

Billed as an high-octane action drama set in the forgotten coastal lands of India, "Devara" is directed by Kortal Siva. It marks the south star's second collaboration with the filmmaker after 2016's "Janatha Garage".

"Devara" also features Saif Ali Khan and Janhvi Kapoor in pivotal roles.

The film is produced by Yuvasudha Arts and NTR Arts and presented by Nandamuri Kalyan Ram. It is scheduled to be released country-wide on April 5, 2024.



Looking forward to shooting rest of Anurag Basu's 'Metro... In Dino': Sara Ali Khan, Aditya Roy Kapur

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI): Actors Sara Ali Khan and Aditya Roy Kapur, who are set to star in Anurag Basu's "Metro... In Dino", said they are excited about finishing work on the upcoming film. The actors were speaking on the sidelines of the FDCI Hyundai India Couture Week, where they walked the ramp for designer duo Shantanu & Nikhil here on Monday.

Aditya said it has been "a fun few days" shooting "Metro... In Dino". He previously collaborated with Basu on the 2020 film "Ludo".

"We have started shooting, the bulk of the shooting is ahead of us... Looking forward to the rest of it. Anurag Basu is always a treat to work with."

It's always fun to work on his sets," "The Night Manager" star told PTI.

"It's been a brief schedule, can't wait to get into more of it and hoping to get on the set with sir soon," said Sara, whose latest release was "Zara Hatke Zara Bachke". While Aditya looked dapper in an ivory sherwani, Sara donned a dust pink lehenga with intricate embroidery.

Shantanu & Nikhil showcased 'Etheria', their 2023 bridal couture collection, where they drew inspiration from the duo's travels across Italy, especially a town called Catania in Sicily.

"Inspired by the grandeur of Roman palaces, a seamless fusion of Indian

and Roman influences creates a tapestry of magnificence that ignites the imagination," the designers said in the collection note. The clothing line for women explored exaggerated ornate veils paired with bejewelled capes and gloves as well as cocktail gowns which the brand revisited with a lens of splendour. The menswear comprised regal three-piece layering with ornated tuxedos, glittering in crystals and beautiful glass beads.

Aditya and Sara walked to Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli's "The Power of Love" and Nikhil said he got the idea to use the song after he came across it on an audio streaming service.

"Music inspires us a lot. In my of-

fice, we sit down and tracks come on Spotify. Andrea Bocelli was playing one day and I was draping a blouse and I said ok let's be the tone for the show. So, that's how that happened," the designer told PTI. The other models, however, walked on the ramp to the dramatised instrumental versions of rock songs such as "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Believer", "Rollin' in the Deep", "Phantom of the Opera: Overture" and "Sweet Child of Mine".

The colour palette of 'Etheria' ranged from black, blue, red, maroon, beige, and nude along with metallic bronze and gold and pastel green.

The fashion gala will come to a close on Wednesday.



WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Lauren James scores twice as England rout China 6-1



SYDNEY, Aug 1 (AP): With two goals and three assists, Lauren James made a big impact as England advanced to the knockout stage of the Women's World Cup on Tuesday with a 6-1 rout of China.

The Chelsea forward scored her second and third goals of the tournament with two wonderful strikes as the European champions finished atop Group D with three straight wins.

Alessia Russo, Lauren Hemp, substitute Chloe Kelly and Rachel Daly also added goals at Adelaide's Hindmarsh Stadium, and China's Wang Shuang pulled one back from the penalty spot.

China's worst-ever loss at the tournament means it failed to advance from the group stage for the first time at a Women's World Cup.

Denmark finished second to England in the group, advancing after a 2-0 win over Haiti.

England next plays Nigeria in the round of 16 on Monday in Brisbane, kicking off three hours before Denmark plays co-host Australia in Sydney. The Lionesses equaled their biggest-ever World Cup win, matching the margin against Argentina in 2007. England also set a World Cup record by scoring in 16 consecutive games at the tournament.

England just had to avoid defeat to be guaranteed a place in the knockout

stage after back-to-back wins of Haiti and Denmark.

Even with a 100% winning start there had still been questions over England's performances, while a knee injury for Keira Walsh raised concerns about how coach Sarina Wiegman would replace one of her key players.

While the loss of Walsh is a setback for England, the emergence of James has made her one of the stars so far in the tournament.

After her brilliant winner against Denmark, she narrowly missed a hat trick against China. A VAR ruling deprived her of a goal just before half-time.

James was the provider as Alessia Russo got England off to a flying start in the fourth minute. With her first goal of the tournament, Russo controlled James' header and fired low past goalkeeper Zhu Yu.

Hemp scored England's second in the 26th, with James the provider again after swift counterattack.

James struck from the edge of the box in the 41st and, after Wang scored from the spot in the 57th, she provided the moment of match with a left-foot volley into the top corner.

James was the provider again with a perfectly-weighted pass beyond China's defense for Kelly to score England's fifth in the 77th. Daly rounded off the scoring in the 84th.

Markande, Rana shine as North Zone crush North East Zone by 9 wickets in Deodhar Trophy

PUDUCHERRY, Aug 1 (PTI): North Zone produced a dominating allround display to hand North East Zone a crushing nine-wicket loss in a round-robin match of the Deodhar Trophy here on Tuesday.

After bowling out North East Zone for a mere 101 in 32.1 overs, the North Zone team knocked off the target in 12.5 overs, scoring 102 for the loss of one wicket.

Spinner Mayank Markande and pacer Mayank Yadav shared seven wickets between them after North East Zone won the toss and elected to bat.

Markande returned with impressive figures of 9.1-1-14-4, while Yadav took 3 for 21 from his six overs to rip apart the North East Zone batting line-up, ably supported by seamers Vaibhav Arora, Rishi Dhawan and left-arm orthodox spinner Nishant Sindhu, who all chipped in with one wicket apiece.

Arora made an early breakthrough when he cleaned up North East Zone opener Ashish Thapa for a duck, and their other opener Palzor Tamang was caught behind the wickets by Prabhsimran Singh for 10 off Dhawan.

North East Zone's Larry Sangma was Markande's first wicket in the 12th over.

But the biggest breakthrough for the legbreak bowler came towards the end when he ended

North East Zone captain Langlonyamba Meitan Keishangbam's resistance for a 69-ball 36 — their highest individual score.

Yadav ran through North East Zone's lower-middle order, dismissing Kangabam Priyotit (1), Kamsha Yangfo (0) and Rex Rajkumar (1) in quick succession to have them reeling at 61 for six in the 17th over.

Markande got two more wickets towards the end to complete his four-wicket haul.

North Zone were jolted early when their opener Shubham Khajuria was run out in the third over for six, but the pair of Prabhsimran and Himanshu Rana joined forces to finish the job.

Prabhsimran struck seven fours and a six in a brisk 35-ball 40 not out, while Rana was more aggressive than his partner, smacking nine fours and a six to reach 52 not out off 33 balls when the winning runs were hit.

Prabhsimran and Rana put on an unbeaten 93-run stand for the second wicket, with the North East Zone using as many as six bowling options but to no avail. The win was only their second in five matches for North Zone in the 50-over competition, taking them to the fourth spot in the points table whereas North East Zone, who have lost all their five games, are languishing at the bottom.



Parag, Muringh fire East Zone to 157-run win over West Zone in Deodhar Trophy



PUDUCHERRY, Aug 1 (PTI): A second century in the Deodhar Trophy for Riyan Parag (102) and a superb five-wicket haul for Manisankar Muringh fired East Zone to a massive 157-run victory over the West Zone here on Tuesday.

After Parag's blitzkrieg — 102 not out off just 68 balls, studded with five sixes and six fours — powered the East Zone to a huge 319/7 in their 50 overs, Muringh ran riot in the West Zone ranks to help his side to a huge win.

Chasing 320, the West Zone side was shot out for a mere 162 in 34 overs with the 30-year-old Tripura all-rounder Muringh returning a stunning spell of 7-1-28-5.

Utkarsh Singh also played an all-round role by scoring a half-century and taking three wickets.

For the losing side, Saurashtra opener Harvik Desai waged a lone battle, scoring 92 (92 balls, 13x4s, 2x6s), but his effort went in vain as Muringh broke the back of their chase.

The right-arm medium fast bowler Muringh struck his first, crucial blow in the fifth over when he plied Rahul Tripathi (1) in front of the wickets.

Earlier, Akash Deep had removed Samarth Vyas (12) in the third over. Muringh piled up further misery on Sarfaraz Khan — who has been struggling for form and runs — when he cleaned up the Mumbai batter for a mere nine-ball three in the seventh over.

West Zone slipped further when No. 5 batter Kathan Patel was caught by Parag off Muringh in the ninth over.

The outcome of the contest was almost sealed in favour of

the East Zone when Muringh struck once again, taking a return catch off Shivam Dube's bat to send him back for a five-ball duck, in the 12th over.

Shams Mulani (12) and Atit Sheth (18) tried to delay the inevitable in the company of Desai, but their resistance did not last long.

Utkarsh then chipped in with a measly spell of 5-1-16-3, maintaining his team's dominance in the contest.

West Zone captain Priyank Panchal suffered an injury during the game and could only bat at No 11.

In the first half of the game, Parag stole the show with his second century in last three matches while Utkarsh and Kumar Kushagra struck vital fifties.

The left-handed Utkarsh scored 50 (52 balls, 7x4s) — his second fifty in the competition — but Abhimanyu Easwaran perished for 38 at the top.

Virat Singh made a fine 42 at No. 3 but Rishav Das (3) and captain Saurabh Tiwary (13) were dismissed cheaply as East Zone were placed precariously at 157 for five at one stage.

But for the second time in the Deodhar Trophy, the pair of Parag and Kushagra (53 from 47 balls, 4x6s) came to East Zone's rescue.

The two batters put on 150 runs for the sixth wicket to revive East Zone once again on Tuesday, having done so earlier in the competition when they amassed 235 runs for the sixth wicket against the North Zone.

The win took East Zone to the second spot in the points table, and they are now tied with table-toppers South Zone with 16 points each.

Netherlands blow out Vietnam 7-0 to win Group E at the Women's WC (A)

DUNDEIN, Aug 1 (AP): Netherlands scored four times in a torrid 15-minute first-half stretch, overwhelming Vietnam 7-0 in the Women's World Cup on Tuesday and sealing first place in Group E.

The Dutch went into the match in second place on goal differential behind the United States. But the blowout win combined with the Americans' 0-0 draw with Portugal made Netherlands the group winner. The U.S. advanced in second place.

Netherlands dominated almost from the start. Lieveke Martens chipped a shot into the net in the eighth minute over 5-foot-4 (1.63-meter) Vietnam goalkeeper Tran Thi Kim Thanh to get the scoring started. Then the rout was on, as goals from three other Dutch players quickly followed.

Esme Brugts scored one in the flurry on a curling ball from outside the penalty area in the 18th minute, then got another from nearly the same spot in the second half. Jill Roord also scored twice.

Vietnam changed goalkeepers at halftime, substituting Khong Thi Hang in for Tran Thi Kim Thanh. It was too late.

Attendance for the match was 8,215, a big drop from the sold-out crowd of 25,947 at the previous match, when co-host New Zealand played Switzerland to a 0-0 draw and was eliminated from the tournament.

Martens and Katja Snoeijis scored within four minutes of each other, setting the tone for the match. Coming into the game in need of goals to catch the U.S. on



goal differential, the Dutch players wasted little time celebrating and put the ball right back into play.

Netherlands will advance to the round of 16 for its third time in tournament history, which includes the 2019 final. It will leave the group stage ranked first in Group E, followed by the defending champion United States.

Tuesday's match was Vietnam's last in this year's Women's World Cup, its tournament debut. The Vietnamese finished 0-3 with no goals and 12 conceded.

"We have been playing with the spirit of Vietnam. We have tried our best. But it is clear that we cannot close the gap between us and the Netherlands." — Mai Duc Chung, Vietnam coach.

US slip into round of 16 of Women's World Cup after scoreless draw with Portugal

AUCKLAND, Aug 1 (AP): A goal post saved the United States from elimination at the Women's World Cup.

Ana Capeta nearly scored for Portugal in stoppage time but her shot hit the left post and the United States escaped with a uninspiring 0-0 draw Tuesday night that got them through — just barely — to the knockout round.

The U.S. won only one game in group play for the first time in tournament history, scoring just four goals over three games. With the scoreless draw, the United States fell to second in the group behind the Netherlands and will head to Melbourne, Australia, for a round of 16 match on Sunday.

"We should have put some in the back of the net and we didn't. We own that," Alex Morgan said. "We're not happy with the performance we put out there. But at the same time, we're



moving on." The Americans, the most successful team ever at the World Cup with four titles, have never been eliminated in the tournament's group stage. But they

"From the very beginning of the preparation time, we were quite convinced we could beat every opponent in this tournament. But of course it helps if you get first in your group. And of course it helps when you win 7-0." — Andries Jonker, Netherlands coach.

Netherlands' first opponent in the knockout round will be determined by the last games in Group G on Wednesday. Sweden currently leads that group, followed by second-place Italy. The Netherlands will face the second-place team.

Vietnam's first Women's World Cup run has come to an end. The Vietnamese are next scheduled to play on Oct. 26 against Uzbekistan in an Olympic qualifier.

MUMBAI, Aug 1 (PTI): Dhawal Kulkarni was on Tuesday named captain of the Mumbai side, which will participate in the upcoming Buchi Babu Tournament in Chennai.

The tournament, an annual invitational event organised by the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, is returning after a gap of six years and will be played from August 15 to September 5.

The Mumbai team's announcement was made after the senior selection committee, headed by Raju Kulkarni, met at the Sharad Pawar Cricket Academy here. Sarfaraz Khan, who has gone without a half-century in the Duleep Trophy and the ongoing Deodhar Trophy, has been named in the 16-member squad, which also features seamer Tushar Deshpande.

The tournament, played in multi-day format, has witnessed

some big names of Indian cricket compete in the past. A regular feature in the domestic circuit, the tournament -- organised to herald the new cricket season -- was last held in 2017.

The competition was not held in 2018 due to domestic fixtures being allotted to the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association.

The advent of the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL), the state's T20 competition, has also resulted in the tournament not finding a place in the calendar.

Mumbai squad: Dhawal Kulkarni (captain), Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Musheer Khan, Jay Bista, Prasad Pawar (wicketkeeper), Suved Parkar, Suryansh Shedge, Sarfaraz Khan, Pragnesh Karpilawar, Shams Mulani, Tanush Khatik, Atharva Ankolekar, Hardik Tamore (wicketkeeper), Tushar Deshpande, Mohit Avasthi, Harsh Tanna.

that it can be better, and has to be better, moving forward," said Megan Rapinoe, who came into the match in the second half as a substitute. "But ultimately, we're on to the next round."

The Portuguese players sobbed on the field after the final whistle after having come oh-so-close to upsetting the mighty United States. Capeta's shot about two minutes into stoppage time looked so good that her coaches started celebrating and the players on the bench jumped to their feet.

"I truly believed that the goal would be in that moment and I was starting to think, 'What can I do to help my players if we're winning 1-0?'" coach Francisco Neto said. "What I said to the girls, I was very proud. Of course, they are very sad because we have huge expectations of ourselves."

Lynn Williams, who started for the U.S. for the first time in

the tournament, had a chance on a header in the 14th minute but Portugal goalkeeper Ines Pereira smothered it. While the U.S. controlled possession and had the better chances, the game could not finish and the match was scoreless at the break.

Rose Lavelle picked up a yellow card in the 38th minute, her second of the group stage, and she won't be available for the team's round of 16 match.

The frustration of the U.S. fans at Eden Park was evident at the break, when there were scattered boos among the crowd as the teams headed for the tunnel. Early in the second half, a fire alarm went off in the stadium but it turned out to be a malfunctioning sprinkler.

The United States had a free kick from a dangerous spot in the 57th minute, but Morgan's header popped up well over the goal. She put her hands to her face in exasperation.

Delhi wrestling chief Jai Prakash in fray for WFI president's post, also applies for VP and secretary-general's post

NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI): Delhi state body chief Jai Prakash has filed nomination papers for three posts, including that of president, in the August 12 Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) elections, according to the official list issued by the returning officer on Tuesday.

Besides Prakash, the other three in the fray for the top post are UP wrestling body vice-president Sanjay Singh, Jammu and Kashmir senior Senior Superintendent of Police Dushyant Sharma and 2010 Commonwealth Games gold medalist Anita Sheoran.

Out of the four, Prakash and Singh are from the Brij Bhushan camp.

Sheoran, one of the witnesses in the sexual harassment case against Brij Bhushan, is representing Odisha, though the 38-year-old hails from Haryana and is employed with the state police.

Returning officer and former J&K High Court Judge Mahesh Mittal Kumar on Tuesday an-

nounced the official list of candidates for 15 posts.

Prakash has also filed his nomination papers for two other posts as well vice-president and secretary-general.

The Brij Bhushan camp had kept Prakash's name a closely-guarded secret on Monday, the last date of filing nominations, portraying only Singh, who is also the WFI joint secretary, as their only candidate for the top post.

It remains to be seen who, if any, decides to pull out on the last date for withdrawal of nominations, which is August 7.

Dushyant had attended the crucial meeting hosted by Brij Bhushan at a five-star hotel here on July 30, where the BJP leader had announced that he had the support of 22 of the 25 state bodies for the WFI elections.

Dushyant has also filed nominations for the post of treasurer.

Three candidates are in the fray for the post of secretary-general, of which Chandigarh association gen-



eral secretary and WFI vice-president Darshan Lal and Prakash are from the Brij Bhushan camp, while Prem Chand Lochab, the Railway Sports Control Board (RSPB) secretary, could be from a rival camp.

Lochab's name figuring in the electoral college had surprised everyone as on July 25 he was not

associated with any existing state body. His name later emerged as a representative from Gujarat.

According to the WFI constitution, only members of the state executive can be part of the electoral college for the elections.

Two candidates -- Satyapal Singh Deshwal and Dushyant Sharma -- have filed nomination papers for the post of treasurer. Deshwal, from the Uttarakhand unit, is from the Brij Bhushan camp.

Elections will be held for the posts of president (1), senior vice-president (1), vice-president (4), secretary-general (1), treasurer (1), joint secretary (2) and executive members (5).

There are four candidates for the post of president, three for senior vice-president, six for vice-president, three for the lone post of secretary general, two for treasurer, four for joint secretary and 10 for executive members' post.

Scrutiny of the nomination papers as well as announcement of

the list of validly nominated candidates will be done on Wednesday.

List of candidates who filed nomination papers:
President: Sanjay Kumar Singh, Jai Prakash, Dushyant Sharma, Anita Sheoran.

Senior vice-president: Asit Kumar Saha, ID Nanavati, Devender.

Vice-President: Hamza-Bin-Omer, Kartar Singh, N Phoni, Asit Kumar Saha, Jai Prakash, Mohan Yadav.

Secretary-general: Darshan Lal, Jai Prakash, Prem Chand Lochab.

Treasurer: Satya Pal Singh Deshwal, Dushyant Sharma.

Joint secretary: RK Purnushotham, Rohtash Singh, Bellipady Gunaranjan Shetty, Kuldip Singh.

Executive members: M Loganathan, Neivikuolie Khatsii, Rakesh Singh, Ummed Singh, Prashant Rai, Rajnish Kumar, J Srinivasa, Ratul Sarma, Ajay Vaid, Kuldip Singh.

Treesa-Gayatri enter second round of Australia Open

SYDNEY, Aug 1 (PTI): Commonwealth Games bronze medalists Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand progressed to the second round of the Australia Open Super 500 badminton tournament with a straight game win over Canada's Catherine Choi and Josephine Wu on Tuesday.

Treesa and Gayatri, who climbed two spots to world number 17 in the latest BWF ranking on Tuesday, registered a 21-16 21-17 win over world number 29 Canadian pair in the round of 32.

The Indian pair have not crossed the second round in any tournament apart from the semi-final finish at the All England Championships and the duo will face a tough task against world number 4 Japanese combination of Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara.

Ashwini Ponnappa, who is playing the tournament after four years, didn't have a good outing as she along with her women's doubles partner Tanisha Crasto lost 11-21 21-14 17-21 to the Indonesian combination of Febriana Dwipuji Kusuma and Amallia Cahaya Pratiwi in the opening round.

Another women's doubles combination of N Sikki Reddy and Arathi Sara Sunil also bowed out after losing 14-21 17-21 to the Taiwanese pair of Hsu Yin-Hui and Lee Chih Chen in their opening match.

PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen and HS Prannoy will be among the star Indian players who will be competition in the tournament, which is the last event before the World Championships in Copenhagen, Denmark.

People make such comments when India lose match: Jadeja on Kapil's 'arrogant' dig

TAROUBA, Aug 1 (PTI): Star India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja responded to former captain Kapil Dev's dig on the team becoming 'arrogant', saying "people make such comments when India lose matches".

Recently, Kapil said that arrogance has crept in the current Indian team and the players feel they know everything.

Talking to reporters on the eve of the series-deciding third ODI against the West Indies here, Jadeja said the players were only focussed on winning for India and have no personal agenda.

"Everyone has their own opinion. Ex-players have full right to share their opinion, but I don't think there is any arrogance in this team," Jadeja said.

"Everyone is enjoying their cricket and everyone is hardworking. No one has taken anything for granted. They are giving their 100 per cent. Such comments generally come when Indian team loses a match.

"This is a good bunch of boys, this is a good group. We are representing India and that is our main aim, there is no personal agenda," he added.

Jadeja said the playing XI for the Asia Cup beginning on August 30 has already been decided despite the experiments in the ODI series against the West Indies.

India rested regular skipper Rohit Sharma and star batter Virat Kohli in the second ODI of the three-match series, which the visitors lost by six wickets. India had won the first match by five wickets.

"This is the series before the Asia Cup and World Cup, where



we can experiment, we can try out new combinations. It will give us an idea about the team's balance, strengths and weaknesses," Jadeja told reporters on eve of the series decider.

India's 50-over assignments after the tour of the Caribbean include the Asia Cup which starts later this month followed by a three-match series against Australia and the all important ODI World Cup in October.

"Captain and team management know what combination they are going to play. There is no confusion at all. We have already decided what is going to be the combination in the Asia Cup, they have already decided that before. But it's more about trying out a particular player or batter at a batting position."

India are expected to continue giving valuable game time to youngsters in the series-deciding third match on Tuesday.

Talking about the loss in the second ODI, Jadeja said, "We were not disappointed with the loss. We didn't lose the match because of experiments, sometimes conditions also matter."

"We are trying different combinations. We can try different batters at different position. This is the series where we can afford to chop and change. Young players also need that international experience, they also need a game time," he said.

Azharuddin will contest for second term as HCA president, promises to end corruption



NEW DELHI, Aug 1 (PTI): Former India captain Mohammad Azharuddin on Tuesday announced that he will stand for the Hyderabad Cricket Association's (HCA) president for a second term and promised to eliminate deep-rooted corruption in the governing body.

Azharuddin announcing his candidature for another term comes a day after Justice (ret'd) L Nageswara Rao, the Supreme Court-appointed administrator of HCA, barred 57 clubs from contesting or casting their vote in the HCA elections due to conflict of interest. The elections are likely to be held next month.

HCA has the reputation of being one of the most corrupt cricket associations in the country.

Azharuddin was appointed HCA president in 2019 but his term, which ended with Rao's appointment earlier this year, was impacted by infighting within the HCA Apex Council and court cases.

If elected to power again, the former India skipper has vowed to lift HCA from the shadows of corruption.

"I will fight the election which is expected to be held by September 15. I am very happy this has happened (bar on clubs) as the situation was prevailing for the last 14 years. The association was not being allowed to work (due to the club nexus). Now the association will improve a lot."

"I am not the owner of any club. As an international player I am allowed to contest the elec-

tion," Azharuddin told PTI.

The HCA has been awarded three ODI World Cup games and the tournament's two warm-up matches.

Azharuddin's main area of focus would be to make HCA financially self sufficient and not overly reliant on BCCI funding.

"The biggest challenge is to improve the game, improve the facilities. We need to be self sufficient financially. The other associations have lot of funds. Hyderabad has been hand to mouth and has to depend on the BCCI, which has been magnanimous and helped in all ways possible."

"We need to have our own funds to be able to pay to the employees. We have only one ground and we must have more grounds like the other associations."

"We spend lakhs of rupees on renting grounds for local league matches and sometimes those ground are not up to the mark. When the facilities are not good the standard of cricket will go down. So we need to fix that," said the 60-year-old.

The corruption is not only confined to the administrative level, it is entrenched in selection matters too.

"All of it will go away when the association works for the welfare of the game. Two years of my last tenure went away in legal battles."

"Despite the problems I tried my best. It is pretty clear that our performance on the field has not been up to the mark," added Azharuddin.

NFR Sports Association win 8 medals in Inter District Boxing C'ship

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 1: Northeast Frontier Railway Sports Association (NFRSA) won 8 medals in the recently concluded 43rd All Assam Inter District (Junior Girls & Junior Boys) and Elite (Men & Women) Boxing Championship held in Guwahati from July 25 to 29. The championship was organised by Ulubari Boxing Club, Guwahati.

NFRSA academy players have got medals in different weight categories. Gourav Mazumdar in 51 kg and Pranta Jyoti Ghatowar in 60 kg weight category Elite (Men) won gold medals. Arfin Ali in 48 kg and Bikash Lama in 67 kg weight category Elite (Men) won silver medals. Abhoy Chetri in 63 kg and Abhishek Pandey in 80 kg weight category Elite (Men) won bronze medals. B. Prabin won Silver Medal in 48 kg weight category Junior Boys and Shreya Chakraborty won Bronze Medal in 52 kg weight category Junior Girls.

Basapi Memorial Basketball Tournament gets underway



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 1: Basapi Memorial Basketball Tournament got underway at Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) stadium, basketball ground here on Tuesday. The tournament is organised by Diphu Mavericks Basketball Club. The tournament is from August 1 to 5. All together there are 9 boys teams. Girl's teams are also participating in the tournament. The boys teams in group A are Diphu Mavericks, Nihang, MID and D'ravagers Youngsters. In the B group are Elite, HBC, d'ravagers, Maligaon NFR and AKU Jorhat.

MLA, Dorsing Ronghang inaugurated the tournament in presence of Executive Member (EM), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Mudhuram Lekthe; Member of Autonomous Council (MAC), Dr. Mongve Rongpi; general secretary, KASA, Dr. Pankaj Teron and District Sports Officer, Rilip Ronghang.

The MLA inaugurating the tournament wished all the participating teams good games.

The president of Diphu Mavericks Basketball Club is Singdon Ronghang, vice president is Hemphu Englang and general secretary is Rahul Teron. Adviser is Chesong Kro.

We need the games: Craig Fulton on ACT being held 5 weeks before Asiad

CHENNAI, Aug 1 (PTI): Malaysian hockey coach Arul Anthoni might be bemused by the Asian Champions Trophy being held so close to the Asian Games but India head coach Craig Fulton on Tuesday said it remains an important event to fine-tune the preparations for the quadrennial continental showpiece.

The Asian Champions Trophy will conclude on August 12, a little over five weeks before the Asian Games commences in Hangzhou, China, raising questions over the timing of the event in Chennai.

"... it's something that you have to do. But we need the games. So, it's important that we play it. It's even better that it's in India," Fulton told reporters.

"We are looking forward to the positives and negatives. But, at the same time, we get to look at a few extra players as well, which is important for us. Injury is never nice for any team or player. So, yes, I understand the clash and the timing."

Malaysian head coach Anthoni was not too happy with the timing of the Asian Champions Trophy, saying it "interrupted" their preparation ahead of the Asian Games, the winner of which qualifies for the Olympic Games.

"I am a bit curious about it because we, as coaches, need 18 to 24 months to plan the team. To organise a tournament five weeks before a major event, I'm curious to know the reason behind it," Anthoni said.

"Hopefully, Asian hockey works closely with FIH (International Hockey Federation) and organises better because our programme was interrupted. We had to tour Europe. We were supposed to have matches against Belgium, Holland (Netherlands),



France and Spain. Everything was in place.

"But, the date and time changed, and it's difficult to get another round of matches again. And, for them to put this tournament in this crucial moment... Yeah, I think in the future, Asian Hockey will have to look into it seriously on the calendar, which is planning the calendar at least a year or two years ahead."

The penalty corner conversion rate has been a topic of debate lately for the Indian hockey team.

However, Fulton believes that the idea of a PC being considered a threat and a great goal-scoring opportunity is still alive "big-time".

"We have a world-class penalty corner (specialists). All the players involved in it are really good. Oppositions know we

have a threat there and try to diminish it by trying to run down or not conceding as many is always something that teams are trying to do, and that's what we try to do," Fulton said.

"I think we can always improve. It's just how much detail we want to go into and how much time we put into improving it."

Talking about PCs being a threat, Fulton said, "Big time. If you look at the last 2-3 games we played, in three games they were all penalty corners. So, it's either a direct (goal) or a rebound, or a variation. It's something to do with a penalty corner."

The ACT will also witness the high-profile clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan on August 9. Besides the Men in Green, four other teams -- China, Japan, South Korea, and Malaysia -- would also be

battling it out.

"Against Pakistan, of course, it is an intense meeting. But, mentally and smartly how you play out is the most important part," Indian skipper Harmanpreet Singh said.

"Of course, the intensity of the match propels you to become somewhat aggressive. But eventually, our focus has to be on the game and identify our roles and responsibilities."

"I believe all the teams are good and competitive. We have seen their contests and also played against them. We will take it on a per-match basis, learn from it and strategise accordingly."

The MRH Stadium in Chennai has had a relaid turf in the form of the new GT turf, which has zero carbon emission and requires a lot less amount of water.

Asked how the team looks forward to playing on the new surface, Fulton said, "We will train tomorrow. If it's playing slower, it is always a challenge for any team. We always like fast pitches. But because it's new, you have to take that into account."

India will face similar opponents at the Asian Games but Fulton said the team is not thinking about anyone else now.

"The main focus is on us. We have a slightly different group. Some new players have joined, which is great. The rest of the guys have come from Spain. We have all the coaches in place for this block. So, we are using this as a platform for training and preparations for the Asian Games."

Fulton said the team for Asian Games will be picked from the 25-member squad that would compete in the ACT.