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*'The report unanimously said the state govt can frame laws on polygamy'*

## Assam to table Bill to end polygamy: CM

**GUWAHATI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Hours after an expert committee submitted its report on the state's competence to frame laws to end polygamy, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said a legislation on the subject will be introduced within this financial year.

Addressing a press conference here, he said the expert committee, which submitted its report earlier during the day, has unanimously agreed that the state can frame its own laws to end polygamy.

"The report unanimously said the state government can frame laws on polygamy. The only point they said is that the final assent on the Bill has to be done by the President instead of the Governor, who does the final signature on other state laws," he added.

Asked if Assam will bring in a law to end polygamy, the chief minister replied in the affirmative.

"The law will definitely come within this financial year," he added.

Earlier in the day, the expert committee formed by the Assam government to examine legislative competence of the state legislature to enact a law to end polygamy submitted its report to the chief minister.

Sarma shared pictures of the committee handing over the report to him and the cover of the document on Twitter.

"Today, the expert committee submitted its report. Assam is now closer to creating a positive ecosystem for women's empowerment irrespective of caste, creed or religion," the chief minister said.

On May 12, Sarma had announced the formation

of the four-member expert committee headed by Justice (Retd) Rumi Kumari Phukan.

Besides Phukan, the other members of the committee are the state's Advocate General Devajit Saikia, Senior Additional Advocate General Nalin Kohli and senior Advocate Nekibur Zaman.

On July 18, the Assam government had extended the term of the committee by a month with effect from July 13 to August 12.

The committee was initially given a deadline of 60 days to submit its report. It was tasked to scrutinise the provisions of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, 1937 along with Article 25 of the Constitution in relation to the Directive Principles of State Policy for a Uniform Civil Code.

On July 13, Sarma had said the Assam government conveyed to the authorities concerned that it was in support of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and wanted to ban polygamy immediately in the state.

The UCC is a matter which would be decided by Parliament, but the state can also take a call with the assent of the President, he had added.

"We want to take one of its segments, polygamy, and ban it immediately. We are planning to introduce the Bill to ban it in the next Assembly session in September and if we are unable to do so for some reason, we will do it in the January session," Sarma had said.

The opposition parties have slammed the decision of the government as diversionary and communal, especially at a time when suggestions on the UCC are being received by the Law Commission.

### 32 RAILWAY STATIONS TO UNDERGO REDEVELOPMENT IN STATE

## Current railway budget will help transform railway landscape in region: Himanta

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday laid the foundation stones for the redevelopment of 32 railway stations in Assam, which are among the 508 stations across the country that will be modernised under the 'Amrit Bharat Station Scheme'.

The stations in Assam will be modernised at a cost of ₹ 990 crore, a Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) official said.

Among these stations are Amguri, Dibrugarh, Duliajan, Tinsukia, Dhubri, Diphu, Kokrajhar, Jorhat Town, Jagoirad, Lumding Junction, New Haflong, Narengi and New Karimganj.

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who attended the foundation stone laying programme at Narangi station in Guwahati, said the modernisation is being done with future demands in mind.



"The modernisation is being planned in such a way that for the next 25 years, train travel will be a good (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### Diphu station to get a revamp

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Aug 6:** Foundation stone for the redevelopment of Diphu Railway Station was laid through video conference by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. The redevelopment of Diphu Railway Station is part of the 'Redevelopment of 508 Railway Stations' under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme across the nation. In Assam, a total of 32 railway stations will be redeveloped including Diphu Railway Station with a cost of ₹ 990 crore. Diphu Railway Station will be redone with an estimated cost of ₹ 32 crore. In the foundation (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## NDA partner KPA withdraws support from Biren Singh govt in Manipur

**IMPHAL, Aug 6 (PTI):** NDA partner Kuki People's Alliance (KPA) on Sunday announced withdrawal of support from the N Biren Singh government in Manipur.

In a letter to Governor Anusuiya Uiquey, KPA president Tongmang Haokip informed about the party's decision to snap ties with the BJP-led government in Manipur, where ethnic rioting since the last three months has claimed more than 160 lives.

"After careful consideration of the current conflagration, the continued support for the incumbent government of Manipur led by Chief Minister N Biren Singh is no

longer fructuous.

"Accordingly, the support of the KPA to the Government of Manipur is hereby withdrawn and can be considered null and void," Haokip said in the letter.

In the 60-member House, the KPA has two MLAs - Kim-neo Haokip Hangshing from Saikul and Chinlungthang from Singhat.

The development will have no impact on the stability of the government, as the BJP has 37 members in the Manipur Assembly. The NPP has seven MLAs and the NPS has five. The Congress has five legislators.

## Two arrested for involvement in moral policing

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 6:** Two individuals, identified as Pinku Roy (23), son of Siren Roy, and Kaushik Mandal, son of Nimai Mandal, both residents of Magurmari, were arrested on Sunday in connection with a moral policing incident that occurred on August 3. The incident, which took place at Magurmari under Kokrajhar police station, involved the brutal assault of two innocent villagers.

The arrests were made in relation to Kokrajhar PS case no. 270/2023 under sections 143/341/342/386/325/307 IPC. However, three others, including the main accused Rajat Mandal, are currently absconding.

The police administration is taking strong measures to thoroughly investigate the incident and bring the culprits to justice.

In response to the incident, various social organisations and student unions have demanded strict action against those involved and called for the perpetrators to be punished. These social organisations have condemned the incident and urged the district administration to take stern action to address the issue effectively.

## Students drown in Dhansiri River

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Aug 6:** A heart-wrenching incident occurred in Khatkhathi, where two college students lost their lives after drowning in the Dhansiri River. The victims were identified as Sumit Kuri (22) and Abranil Basak (19).

According to reports, the tragic incident took place when a group of six youths, including Sumit and Abranil, came to Khatkhathi from Balijan to celebrate the birthday of one of their friends. While at the Janak Pukhuri area, they decided to take a swim in the Dhansiri River. However, during the swimming session, Sumit and Abranil faced difficulty and eventually drowned.

The local police were immediately alerted and carried out rescue operations. The bodies of the two college students were recovered and sent to Dimapur, Nagaland, where (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Policeman arrested

**DIPHU:** A disturbing incident occurred in Diphu market on the evening of Saturday around 8 pm when a policeman, identified as Pulak Sharma, resorted to firing his weapon during a heated argument with an auto-rickshaw driver over a parking issue near No. 1 police point close to Diphu Post Office. According to eyewitness accounts, the altercation between the policeman and the auto-rickshaw driver quickly escalated, leading to Sharma firing two rounds of shots towards the ground in the vicinity of the driver. Fortunately, the auto-rickshaw driver escaped unharmed from the incident.

#### KNCA reshuffles leadership

**DIPHU:** The Karbi Nimso Chingthur Asong (KNCA), a prominent Karbi women's organization, revealed its newly reshuffled leadership team. During a press conference held at the CPI (ML) office in Diphu, the general secretary of KNCA, Protima Engheepi, announced the restructuring of the organisation's body. The changes were made during the General Conference conducted on August 1, followed by the appointment of office bearers in the Central Executive Meeting on August 5. Taking charge for the upcoming 2-year term, KNCA's new leadership will be headed by president Sukuri Rongpharpi and general secretary, Protima Engheepi.

### FOCUS ON ENHANCED POLICING

## Delhi Police launches initiative to create database for NE, Gorkha, and Ladakhi residents

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** The Special Police Unit for North East Region (SPUNER) under Delhi Police has initiated a drive to create a database of people from the North East region, Gorkhas from Darjeeling, and Ladakhis residing in various locations in Delhi. The purpose behind this effort is to enhance policing and ensure the safety and

security of these communities. Joint commissioner of police, Special Police Unit for North East Region, New Delhi, PN Khirimey, IPS, emphasised that despite a considerable number of North Eastern people, Gorkhas from Darjeeling, and Ladakhis living in the national capital, no specific data have been systematically maintained by any agency or organisation.

To address this gap and facilitate better law enforcement measures, the SPUNER has urged residents from these regions to voluntarily provide their information. The Google form link is being shared widely through social media, community leaders, and student representatives of the North (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Disciples of Guru Upasana Mahanta performing in their Bharatanatyam Arangeetram ceremony at Srimanta Sankardeva International Auditorium in Guwahati on Sunday. HT Photo

## 30 killed, nearly 100 injured in train accident in Pakistan

**KARACHI, Aug 6 (PTI):** At least 30 people were killed and nearly 100 others injured on Sunday when several compartments of an express train derailed in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, in the latest rail disaster to hit the country.

The Hazara Express train travelling from Karachi to Rawalpindi derailed in Nawabshah district near the Sarhari Railway Station, 275 kilometers from the provincial capital Karachi.

Commissioner Benazirabad division Abbas Baloch said in a statement that at least 30 people died in the accident while passengers are still stranded in a bogie.

Sindh chief minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who spoke to the media at People's Medical College Hospital in Benazirabad — the district home to Nawabshah, confirmed the death toll, the Dawn newspaper reported.

He added that the injured could be shifted to Karachi if needed and directed the local administration and health officials to expedite relief and rescue efforts.

Federal railways minister Saad Rafiq earlier told the media that the number of casualties could rise as some of the injured were in critical after being hospitalised.

He said around 10 bogies had derailed and the cause of the accident is being investigated.

Pakistan Railways Sukkur Divisional Commercial Officer (DCO) Mohsin Syal said 15 bodies were retrieved from the wreckage and the rescue work aided by the Pakistan Army was continuing.



Television channels showed the crash site with train compartments badly damaged near the station. They showed rescue workers and police trying to pull out people from the derailed compartments along with civilians who also joined the rescue work.

"Right now, the focus is on rescue work and recovering people from the derailed compartments," Rehman said.

He said that the cause of the accident is being investigated.

The state-run Radio Pakistan reported that the Pakistan Army and Rangers have started relief and rescue activities at the accident site.

The rescue operation has been started on the special directives of Army chief General Asim Munir, it added.

Additional troops have been called in to assist the rescue operation. Army Aviation helicopters are also reaching the spot to rescue the injured people.

"The rescue operation of Pakistan Army will continue till the transfer of the last injured to the hospital and the rehabilitation of the people trapped at the accident site," it said.

A spokesperson of the Pakistan Railways in Karachi said at least eight bogies (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

*The govt tabled the DPDP Bill in LS on Aug 3 with an aim to protect the privacy of Indian citizens*

## Data protection bill can have adverse impact on press freedom: Editors Guild

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6 (PTI):** The Editors Guild of India on Sunday expressed concerns over certain provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill, saying they can have an adverse impact on press freedom.

In a statement here, the Guild said the DPDP Bill creates an enabling framework for surveillance of citizens, including journalists and their sources.

The Guild has asked Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to refer the Bill to a parliamentary standing committee. It has also written about its concerns on the Bill to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and



leaders of political parties in Parliament.

The government tabled the DPDP Bill in Lok Sabha on August 3 with an aim to protect the privacy of Indian citizens while proposing

a penalty of up to Rs 250 crore on entities for misusing or failing to protect digital data of individuals.

The Bill comes six years after the Supreme Court held that the right to privacy is a fundamental right.

Under Section 36 of the DPDP Bill, the Guild said, the government can ask any public or private entity (data fiduciary) to furnish personal information of citizens, including journalists and their sources.

It also voiced concerns over clause 17(2)(a) that allows the Union government to issue a notification exempting any "instrumentality of the State" from the provisions of this Bill, thereby out

of the ambit of data protection restrictions, including internal sharing and processing of data.

Section 17(4) allows the government and its instrumentalities to retain personal data for an unlimited period of time, it added.

"We note, with dismay, that while the Bill, ostensibly to promote data protection, has failed to make any provisions that bring about the surveillance reform that is urgently needed, and in fact creates an enabling framework for surveillance of citizens, including journalists and their sources," the Guild said.

It said it is deeply concerned about the lack of exemptions for journalists (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Manipur reports fresh violence; 15 houses torched, 1 person shot

**IMPHAL, Aug 6 (PTI):** Fifteen houses were set on fire in Manipur's Imphal West district where fresh violence broke out, officials said on Sunday.

The incident happened on Saturday evening at Langol Games village as a mob went on a rampage, they said.

Security personnel fired several rounds of tear gas shells to disperse the mob and bring the situation under control, they added.

A 45-year-old man was shot during the violence. He was admitted to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) with bullet wounds on his left thigh,

and is stated to be out of danger at present, officials said.

The situation improved on Sunday morning, but restrictions remained in place, they said.

Fresh violence was also reported from Imphal East district's Checkon area where a large commercial establishment was torched on Saturday, officials said.

Three nearby houses were also set on fire, they said, adding that firefighters doused the blaze.

Also, a gunfight broke out between security forces and militants in Kangpokpi district on Saturday evening. The incident happened at (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



# Reliance seeks shareholder nod to appoint Ambani as head for another 5 years at nil salary

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company, has sought shareholder's approval to give Mukesh Ambani another five-year term as chairman and managing director of the company till 2029 — a period during which he has opted to draw nil salary.

Ambani, 66, will cross the company law-mandated 70 years age for the chief executive of the company and requires a special resolution by the shareholders for him to be appointed beyond that age bar.

In a special resolution, Reliance sought the nod of shareholders to appoint Ambani as the head of the company till April 2029.

Ambani has been on the board of Reliance since 1977 and was elevated as chairman of the company after the death of his father and group patriarch Dhirubhai Ambani in July 2002.

In the special resolution posted to shareholders, Reliance said its Board of Directors on July 21, 2023 approved "re-appointed Mukesh D. Ambani as Managing Director, for a period of 5 years from the expiry of his present term, i.e. with effect from April 19, 2024." Ambani, it said, had capped his annual remuneration at ₹ 15 crore from financial year 2008-09 (April 2008 to March 2009) to FY20; and since FY21, he opted to forego his salary, due to COVID-19 pandemic, until the company and all its businesses were fully back to their earnings potential.

Accordingly, he has not been paid any salary and profit-based commission for three years in a row beginning FY21.

At the request of Ambani, "the Board has recommended that no



salary or profit-based commission be paid to him for the proposed term from April 19, 2024 till April 18, 2029," the resolution said.

"He shall, however, be entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred for travelling, boarding and lodging including for spouse and attendant(s) during business trips and provision of car(s) for use on company's business and communication expenses at residence shall be reimbursed at actuals and not considered as perquisites," the special resolution said. "The company shall arrange to provide security to Ambani and his family members and the expenses borne by the company for the same shall not be considered as perquisites." Reliance said Ambani will attain the age of 70 years on April 19, 2027. "The company has grown manifold under his leadership and it would be in the interest of the company that he continues to lead the company even after he attains the age of 70 years. Accordingly, approval of the members (shareholders) is sought for passing

the resolution proposed (to give him another 5-year term) as a Special Resolution." Ambani, it said, satisfies all the conditions set out in company law and has not disqualified from being appointed as director.

"In terms of Article 86(1) of the Articles of Association of the company, Shri Mukesh D. Ambani is not liable to retire by rotation. Regulation 17(1D) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 provides that in such cases, the continuation of the director shall be subject to the approval by the shareholders in a general meeting once in every five years," it said, adding he is being sought to be reappointed till April 18, 2029.

Ambani has for a third year in a row drawn no salary from his flagship firm in the last fiscal as he voluntarily gave up remuneration in light of the pandemic hitting the business and economy.

In its latest annual report, Reliance said Ambani's remuneration for the financial year 2022-23

was "nil".

In June 2020, he voluntarily decided to forego his salary for the year 2020-21, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak in India, which exacted a huge toll on the societal, economic and industrial health of the nation.

He continued to forego his salary in 2021-22 as well and now in 2022-23.

In these three years, Ambani did not avail of any allowances, perquisites, retiral benefits, commission or stock options from Reliance for his role as the Chairman and Managing Director.

Prior to that, the Chairman and Managing Director had his salary capped at ₹ 15 crore since 2008-09 in order to set a personal example of moderation in managerial compensation levels. The ₹ 15-crore salary in 2019-20 was the same as in the previous 11 years.

Ambani has kept salary, perquisites, allowances and commission together at ₹ 15 crore since 2008-09, forgoing over ₹ 24 crore per annum.

The remuneration of his cousins Nikhil and Hital Meswani rose to ₹ 25 crore each, including ₹ 17.28 crore commission (unchanged from previous fiscal year).

Executive Directors P M S Prasad and Pawan Kumar Kapil saw their remuneration rise.

While Prasad drew ₹ 13.50 crore in 2022-23 including performance linked incentives for 2021-22 which was paid in 2022-23. In 2021-22, he drew ₹ 11.89 crore.

Kapil got ₹ 4.40 crore, up from ₹ 4.22 crore in 2021-22. He completed his 5-year term on May 15, 2023 and has since ceased to be a director of the company.

# Dhoot told Chanda Kochhar's husband she would 'land up sharing room with Indrani': Chargesheet in ICICI Bank loan fraud case

**MUMBAI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Videocon Group founder Venugopal Dhoot had during an argument over a flat told Deepak Kochhar, the husband of ICICI bank's former CEO and MD Chanda Kochhar, that she would "land up sharing room with Indrani Mukerjea," as per the chargesheet filed by the CBI in an alleged loan irregularities case.

Deepak Kochhar became very angry and asked Dhoot to listen to his advice, otherwise he would "ruin him", according to the chargesheet.

The claim, citing the statement of a witness, is part of the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) chargesheet filed in the case against Chanda Kochhar, Deepak Kochhar and Dhoot. The Kochhars and Dhoot, arrested in December last year, are currently out on bail. Indrani Mukerjea, the prime accused in the case of murder of her daughter Sheena Bora, was lodged in the Byculla jail here for more than six years following arrest in August 2015. She was granted bail by the Supreme Court in May 2022.

The chargesheet in the Kochhar case, running into more than 10,000 pages was filed recently before a special CBI court here.

As per a witness's statement, there was an altercation between Dhoot and Deepak Kochhar about a flat at the CCI Chambers in Churchgate area here.

Dhoot told Deepak Kochhar that he had paid ₹ 5.38 crore to the State Bank of India Home Finance Ltd and released the title of the flat from a dispute, and that it belonged to him, the witness said in the statement.

"Shri Deepak Kochhar became infuriated and told V N Dhoot to sell all the shares of Quality Appliance Pvt Ltd at face value of ₹ 11 lakh; this way the flat would be transferred to his (Deepak's) family trust Quality Advisor, otherwise Chanda would declare his loan accounts with ICICI Bank NPA (Non-Performing



Assets)," the statement said.

"Shri V N Dhoot told him (Deepak) that don't transfer the flat in such a way (that) Chanda would be in trouble one day and would land up sharing room with Indrani Mukerjea. Shri Deepak Kochhar became very angry and told Shri V N Dhoot (to) listen to his advice, otherwise he would ruin him," it added.

The probe agency said Chanda Kochhar resided in a flat owned by the Videocon Group in Mumbai.

The flat was subsequently transferred to her family trust (Deepak Kochhar being its managing trustee) at a meagre amount of ₹ 11 lakh in October 2016, while its actual value was ₹ 5.25 crore in 1996. She knew it to be inadequate consideration, as per the chargesheet.

The Kochhars were arrested by the central probe agency in December last year in connection with the case. Later, the Bombay High Court granted interim bail to the couple and came down heavily on the CBI for making the arrest in a "casual and mechanical" manner and without application of mind.

# 'Gold plating' of airports should be avoided: Parl panel

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6 (PTI):** The government should ensure that development of infrastructure at airports is cost-effective and the cost of travel remains within the reach of the common man, a Parliamentary Panel has recommended while voting against the concept of "gold plating" of airports. The panel headed by Rajya Sabha MP Sujat Kumar has said that the most important stakeholder in the sector is the common passenger whose aspiration and need to undertake air travel will deepen with the passage of time and growth of the economy. The committee has also

suggested that user charges should remain affordable and competitive as compared to other airports in the Asia Pacific region.

"India is a developing country and passengers are price conscious. In our national civil aviation policy, affordability and sustainability have been emphasised by the government. The Committee observes that maximum people use the airports just for travel, do the baggage check-in, get their baggage on arrival and leave. Other peripherals cannot be given that much importance as could rather be given to the passenger service," the panel

said in its report tabled in Rajya Sabha.

"It is true that the quality of airport infrastructure is a vital component of the overall transportation network as it contributes directly to the country's international competitiveness and the flow of foreign funds. The Committee is, however, of the view that whilst the airport terminals need to be comfortable and facilitate a smoother and hassle free journey, they need not be overly opulent and the concept of gold plating of airports by the private operators should be avoided," it added.

*Contd. from Page 1...*

# Current railway budget will help

experience," he said. A total of 50 stations in the state will be redeveloped under the scheme, and foundation stones for 32 were laid on Sunday. Sarma said the redevelopment work will be completed within two years.

During the ceremony, chief minister Sarma expressed confidence that the redevelopment of these railway stations will provide comfortable and dignified travel experiences for passengers. The transformed stations will fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people of Assam in regard to railway travel.

Highlighting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to celebrate the 25 years from the 75th Independence Day as 'Amrit Kaal', chief minister Sarma expressed his belief that by the 100th year of Independence in 2047, India will achieve the status of a world leader. He credited the visionary leadership of the Prime Minister for India's rapid progress, making it the 5th largest economy globally, with the potential to become the world's third largest economy in the future.

CM Sarma also emphasised that the Prime Minister places great importance on the all-round development of Northeastern India. The allocation of 32 railway stations out of 508 to Assam reflects the Prime Minister's commitment to the state. He also praised the Union government's decision to grant ₹ 10,000 crore for the Northeast Frontier Railway in the railway budget. This funding will expedite ongoing projects in the region, transforming the railway landscape in the Northeast.

The ceremony was attended by Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Members of Parliament Queen Ojha and Pabitra Margherita, Mayor of Guwahati Municipal Corporation Mrigen Sarania, and chief general manager of Northeast Frontier Railway Chetan Kumar Srivastava. (With inputs from PTI)

# Diphu station to get a revamp

stone laying ceremony at Diphu Railway Station MP, Horen Sing Bery; MLAs Bidya Sing Engeng and Darsing Ronghang; the chief executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Tuliram Ronghang and railway officials were present.

# Delhi Police launches initiative to

East, Gorkhas from Darjeeling, and Ladakhi communities to encourage maximum participation. This move is expected to enhance community policing efforts and ensure the safety and well-being of individuals from the North East, Gorkhas, and Ladakhi residing in Delhi.

# 30 killed, nearly 100 injured

derailed and the intensity of the accident increased due to delayed application of brakes. The official said the affected bogies would be lifted off the track in a few hours using heavy machines and added that trains departing from Karachi might face delays. Federal minister for railways and aviation Rafiq said the train, carrying over 1,000 passengers, was travelling at a reasonable speed, which initial investigations showed.

He said an emergency has been imposed in hospitals in Sukkur and Nawabshah. "It was either a mechanical fault or it was developed," he was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper. Shaheed Benazirabad Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Muhammad Younis Chandio termed the incident a "big accident". However, the official refrained from confirming the number of casualties, the report said.

Foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, whose Pakistan Peoples' Party is in power in the province, directed the Sindh government to provide immediate treatment to the passengers injured in the train accident and also called on PPP workers to participate in relief and rescue activities.

Railways accidents occur frequently in Pakistan due to outdated track maintenance systems, signal issues, technical equipment and old engines. Sindh has seen the worst railway accidents with the worst train disaster taking place in 1990 near Sukkur when 307 people were killed. Sunday's accident came just a day after three coaches of Allama Iqbal Express — travelling from Karachi to Sialkot — derailed, but no one suffered injuries.

In April this year, seven people were killed when a fire broke out in a bogie of the Karachi Express travelling from Karachi to Lahore near Tando Masti Khan in the Khairpur district of the southern Sindh province.

On June 7, 2021, 32 people were killed and 64 injured after two express trains collided in Sindh's Ghotki. In February 2020, 19 people were killed when a train collided with a passenger bus near Sindh's Rohri station.

# Students drown in Dhansiri

doctors pronounced them brought dead. Authorities have urged people to take necessary precautions while venturing into water bodies and to be aware of the potential risks associated with swimming in unfamiliar areas.

# Manipur reports fresh violence;

A Mungchamkom in the New Keithelmanbi police station area, officials said. A man was nabbed and an SLR with 50 rounds was seized from him, they said. The incidents of violence were reported amid the 24-hour general strike called by the coordinating committee of 27 assembly constituencies, which paralysed normal life in the Imphal valley on Saturday. The ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3, and have been continuing for the last three months, claiming over 160 lives.

# Data protection bill can have adverse

from certain obligations of the law where the reporting on certain entities in public interest may conflict with their right to personal data protection. The Justice Srikrishna Committee had provided a framework for balance between personal data protection and public interest, which is missing from the current bill, it said.

"This will lead to a chilling effect on journalistic activity in the country," the Guild said. It said certain provisions of the Bill also shift the balance in favour of non-disclosure of information, including information sought by journalists in public interest, thereby reducing accountability.

The Guild has also flagged concerns over the composition of the Data Protection Board and stressed the need for it to be independent of the government. The government has listed the DPDP Bill for consideration and passage in Lok Sabha on Monday.

# Altigreen teams up with Axis Bank to offer tailored financial solutions

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** Leading commercial electric vehicle manufacturer, Altigreen, has joined forces with Axis Bank, one of India's largest private sector banks, to provide customized retail financing options for its customers. This strategic partnership aims to simplify the purchasing process and empower customers in their shift towards electric mobility. Altigreen's customers across India will now have access to Axis Bank's extensive range of financial products.

Shalendra Gupta, CFO of Altigreen, expressed his satisfaction with the collaboration, stating, "We are pleased to bring on board the retail finance facility from Axis Bank. Altigreen's customers now have access to protect and secure financial solution services from one of India's largest banks. With our outstanding after-sales service and Axis Bank's financing service, we will continue to provide excellence for our customers."

Sumit Bali, Group Executive and Head Retail Banking at Axis Bank, also commented on the partnership, "We are excited to partner with Altigreen, with whom we share a common goal of augmenting eco-friendly mobility solutions. Electric Vehicle financing is a priority area for us, and through this partnership, we have taken one more step closer towards our ESG commitments. We will be providing customised financial solutions to Altigreen customers across wholesale & retail verticals. Our aim is to make the transition to electric mobility easy and hassle-free for all customers."

This collaboration brings a unique and compelling funding proposition to the market, and it is expected to generate significant interest among customers looking to make the switch to electric vehicles. With tailored financial solutions, Altigreen and Axis Bank are determined to accelerate the adoption of electric mobility in India and contribute to a more sustainable future.

# No sugar mill in Maharashtra should be without ethanol distillery: Amit Shah

**PUNE, Aug 6 (PTI):** Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said there should not be a single sugar mill in Maharashtra that is not producing ethanol.

He was speaking at an event after launching the digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) office in Pune.

"Huge funding is available under various schemes for cooperative societies which can be utilised for setting up distilleries. Sugar mills in the state should avail of the loan facility. There should not be a single sugar mill in Maharashtra that is not making ethanol. It is an emerging market and rates are also good for the same," Shah said.

On the digital portal of the CRCS office launched by him, the Union minister said, "The digital portal is aimed at increasing the efficiency and transparency. The cooperative sector cannot move forward without modernisation, transparency and accountability."

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who joined the Eknath Shinde-BJP government last month, was present on the occasion.

Shah said, "This is my first public programme with Ajit Pawar. I want to tell him that he is now sitting at the right place after a long time. This was always the right place for you, but you came to sit here very late."

State Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis were also present at the event.

# PAY WHAT YOU WANT

# IIM-Kashipur study finds participative pricing model can make consumers shell out more

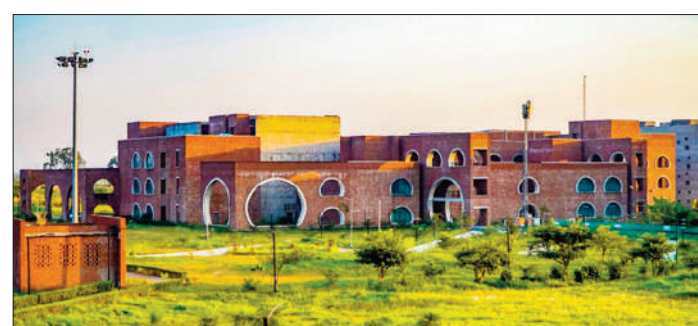
**NEW DELHI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Imagine a scenario where one is asked to set a product's price, paying any amount they wished. This pay-what-you-want pricing model can be a wonderful strategy to make consumers shell out more by offering them control over the pricing, researchers at IIM-Kashipur have found.

The team, led by Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kashipur, Assistant Professor Preeti Narwal, conducted a study to examine how customers lower their motivation to pay more for products offered under the pay-what-you-want model by morally disengaging from reciprocity concerns.

In the pay-what-you-want "participative" pricing model, sellers provide individuals with the opportunity to be actively involved in the price determination process beyond accepting or rejecting the offer. In return, it is expected that the customers would reciprocate the appropriate behaviour by rewarding the seller with higher prices or at least regular market rates.

The IIM-Kashipur team found that the increasing need for creativity in business processes and proliferation of the Internet has led to the extension of participative pricing to a wide range of products and services across industries such as digital products, hospitality, consulting and entertainment, among others.

According to Narwal, the findings indicate that customers' moral disengagement via displacement of responsibility towards reciprocity concerns is negatively associated with the willingness to pay more.



However, the model is likelier to be embraced more by customers who seek great, awe-inspiring happiness and a distinctly perceivable reputation.

Hence, the offerings should be positioned as superior products that satisfy the ego and the status needs of individuals.

"Participative pricing like the pay-what-you-want model has several advantages over regular pricing. Participative pricing leads to higher purchase intentions due to increased perceived control and greater customer engagement. It provides opportunities for price customisation like travel-related booking sites such as Orbitz, price-line.com that target each website visitor with a customised price to match their threshold price," Narwal told PTI.

"Even in the financial services industry, BBVA (Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria) seeks customer participation in pricing to tailor-made interest rates. The other advantage of participative pricing lies in its low implementation cost due to the Internet. The pricing model also helps in differentiating the product or service, thus increasing

the offering's overall attractiveness to the customer," she added.

Narwal said the pay-what-you-want model is one such type of participative pricing that empowers the customers to choose the prices, ranging from zero to any infinite higher amount.

The fundamental essence of the pay-what-you-want model is the complete delegation of price-setting control to buyers, without allowing sellers to withdraw their offer even when they freeride, she said.

"The pay-what-you-want (model) allows the highest degree of control over price setting to the customers by enabling them to estimate their prices themselves. In the case of participative pricing models such as auctions, customers feel restricted and have a lower sense of perceived control with declining purchase and payment intentions," she said.

"Managers should try to increase an individual's sense of control directly through active engagement in setting the minimum and the maximum threshold prices and new product prices," Narwal added.

# HDFC Bank's Jagdishan highest paid bank CEO in FY23 with ₹ 10.55 cr pay

**MUMBAI, Aug 6 (PTI):** HDFC Bank's Sashidhar Jagdishan emerged as the highest-paid bank chief executive in the financial year 2022-2023 with over ₹ 10.55 crore in total pay.

Kaizad Bharucha, deputy managing director, HDFC Bank, drew ₹ 10 crore for FY23 and may be the second-highest-grossing banker in India, as per disclosures in annual reports.

The second-biggest payout was by Axis Bank's Amitabh Chaudhry with ₹ 9.75 crore, closely followed by Sandeep Bakshi of ICICI Bank, who drew ₹ 9.60 crore for the fiscal year.

Uday Kotak continued with his decision to take a token of ₹ 1 as remuneration, even in FY23. He holds over 26 per cent of Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Kotak Mahindra Bank posted a 16.97 per cent rise in the average remuneration of its staffers, excluding managerial talent, at a time when the banking sector is grappling with the attrition problem.

ICICI Bank staffers were given an 11 per cent hike, while Axis Bank staffers received an inflation-beating 7.6 per cent average hike. HDFC Bank recorded an average pay rise of 2.51 per cent. South-based Federal Bank, which has among the lowest attrition rates in the industry, had an average pay hike of 2.67 per cent.

With regards to top management remuneration's comparison with average remuneration, Jagdishan was the list topper, drawing 150 times the average HDFC Bank employee. He was followed by Bakshi at 119 times and Chaudhry at 101 times the median salary of staffers at Axis Bank.



# PM Modi virtually lays foundation stones of 32 railway stations across state

## HT Correspondent

**JAGIROAD, Aug 6:** The foundation stone for the redevelopment of Jagiroad Railway Station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme was virtually laid on Sunday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The ambitious scheme aims to redevelop a total of 32 railway stations in the state with modern facilities.

A meeting was held on the occasion at Jagiroad Railway Station, which was attended by Water Resource minister Pijush Hazarika, district commissioner Devasish Sarma, Tiwa Autonomous Council chief Jiban Chandra Konwar, Jagiroad College principal Dr Bhaben Chandra Neog, BJP Mayong mandal president Prabin Deka, and other dignitaries. The meeting was conducted by Jagiroad Railway Station superintendent Prabir Bhowmick.

The redevelopment of Jagiroad Railway Station is estimated to cost Rs 31 crores and will include various modern amenities such as separate entry and exit points, parking facilities for different vehicles, a coffee house, and separate waiting rooms for male and female passengers.

The people of Jagiroad have long demanded more stoppages for long-dis-

tance passenger trains, as Jagiroad serves as the only major railway station in the district of Morigaon, adjacent to Karbi Anglong and Meghalaya. The redevelopment of the railway station is expected to improve connectivity and enhance the overall travel experience for passengers in the region.

**Our Margherita correspondent adds:** The foundation stone laying ceremony of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme was virtually launched at Margherita Railway Station on Sunday. The esteemed presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw, and other higher railway officials marked the occasion.

As part of the Union government's initiative to modernise railway stations across the country, a total of 508 stations have been identified for redevelopment. Among these, 32 railway stations in Assam, including Margherita, are covered under this ambitious scheme. Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally initiated the foundation stone laying ceremony for these railway stations through a video conferencing event.

In connection with this momentous program, art, drawing, and essay competitions were also organised in various



schools of Margherita. The winners were felicitated by esteemed chief guests such as Preeti Kumari (IAS), Margherita sub-divisional officer (civil), Anand Kumar Sharma, chairman of Margherita Municipal Board, Sukhdev Sharma, president of Margherita Anchalik Panchayat, Ananta Deka, senior DEE Tinsukia Railway Division, and several other distinguished and resourceful individuals from the Margherita sub-division.

**Our Jorhat correspondent adds:** Jorhat Town Railway Station and Mariani Railway Junction are set to undergo redevelopment along with 506 other railway stations across the country under the ambitious Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. The scheme was virtually launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, marking a significant step towards modernising railway infrastructure and enhancing passenger amenities.

A brief function was held at the Jorhat Railway Station to mark the occasion, with the presence of Rajya Sabha MP and newly-appointed BJP national secretary Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, Jorhat MLA Harendra Nath Goswami, railway officials, employees, and local residents. Expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister for including 32 stations from Assam in the scheme, Tasa highlighted India's overall progress under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.

According to information from the central government, the extensive redevelopment of the 508 railway stations will incur an estimated cost of ₹ 24,470 crore. The primary objectives of this redevelopment are to provide modern passenger amenities, enhance traffic circulation, facilitate inter-modal integration, and offer well-designed signage for passenger guidance.

One notable aspect of the redevelopment plan is the focus on incorporating local culture, heritage, and architectural elements in the design of the station buildings. This approach aims to create a unique and appealing identity for each station while preserving the region's rich cultural heritage.

**Our Hojai correspondent adds:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment and modernisation of Hojai, Lanka, and Lumding railway stations through a video conferencing event on Sunday. These three railway stations are among the 508 stations across the nation that will undergo redevelopment as part of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. At the Hojai station, MLA Ramkrishna Ghosh inaugurated the foundation stone, while ex-MLA Shiladitya Dev did the honours at Lanka station, and MLA Sibru Mishra marked the occasion at Lumding station.

Speaking at the Hojai event, MLA Ramkrishna Ghosh praised Prime Minister Modi's commitment to development and stated that the saffron party is dedicated to the overall progress of India. He highlighted that under the dynamic leadership of PM Modi, all sections of society are now empowered.

During the ceremonies at these stations, winners of various competitions organised by Railways at different schools were also felicitated. The events saw the presence of distinguished guests, members of different NGOs, school students, and a large number of locals, all joining in the auspicious occasion.

## UPPL holds grand public rally in Bijni, celebrates 8th foundation day



### HT Correspondent

**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 6:** The ruling United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) celebrated its 8th foundation day with a grand public rally at Bijni District Sports Association (BDSA) playground in Chirang district on Sunday. The event witnessed an impressive turnout of over 30,000 party leaders, members, and well-wishers from various parts of Chirang district and its neighbouring areas.

The occasion was graced by AGP president and Assam cabinet minister Atul Bora, who attended as the chief guest. In his address, Bora praised the progress and development taking place in Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) under the dynamic leadership of UPPL president Pramod Boro. He accentuated the commitment of the BJP-AGP-UPPL alliance in

ensuring all-round development and prosperity for all communities in Assam.

UPPL supremo and chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region, Pramod Boro, expressed his gratitude for the support and guidance received from the world's largest political party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in the development activities of BTR. He thanked several prominent leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and Assam Pradesh BJP president Bhabesh Kalita.

Pramod Boro highlighted UPPL's dedication to establishing sustainable peace and socio-economic development in BTR by tackling corruption and resolving long-pending land issues. He emphasised the party's commitment to unity, integrity, justice for all, and rapid development in the region and beyond.

Founding president of UPPL and Assam cabinet minister, Urkhao Gwra Brahma, praised the party for ushering in a new era of sustainable peace in Bodoland and working towards the welfare of the region. The event witnessed the presence of several dignitaries, including working president of UPPL and Rajya Sabha MP Rungwra Narzary, executive members of BTR Dr Nilut Swargiary, Dhananjay Basumatary, Rakesh Brahma, Ukil Musahary, MLAs Jayanta Baumtary, Ajoy Roy, and general secretaries of UPPL Raju Kr Narzary and Madhab Chandra Chetry.

## Teachers meet in Desang Rajabari



### HT Correspondent

**SIVASGAR, Aug 6:** Teachers and CRCC members from Demow, Rajmai, and Desang Rajabari clusters gathered on Saturday for a seminar covering important topics such as fundamental literacy and numeracy (FLN), banking support to teachers, and the New Education Policy, 2020.

The discussion commenced with an inauguration by cluster coordinator Sekharjyoti Duwori, who also distributed the Gunotsav certificates of excellence to school heads. Mauchumi Duwora, consultant of Nipun Axiom, conducted a session where teachers were provided instructions on lessons taught during various training sessions under SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) and encouraged their collaboration to achieve the objectives of FLN.

Presided over by Keshov Deori, head master of Desang Rajabari High School, the seminar had SSA's KRP Manoj Kumar Borthakur as the chief guest. In his address, Borthakur said that FLN is a crucial initiative by the government of India to address issues in primary education. He also highlighted that improving fundamental skills in listening, reading, writing, and mathematics at a tender age from three to eight is essential for achieving universal access to quality education.

CRCC member Hiraikyoti Dutta informed the participants that approximately five crore primary students in India lack fundamental literacy and numeracy skills, necessitating the FLN mission. He urged the teachers to prepare the students for a district-level survey scheduled for August 22.

During the meeting, Ujjal Borah, branch manager of SBI, PPB, Sivasgar, provided a detailed overview of the existing banking support available to school teachers, including the government's Apun Ghar and car loans. The gathering also witnessed addresses by Jogen Shahu and Jiaruddin Ahmed on relevant topics.

## Certain parts of SC verdict on Rahul not highlighted amidst so-called celebrations: Himanta

**GUWAHATI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that certain parts of the Supreme Court's judgment, which stayed the conviction of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case, were not highlighted amidst "so-called celebrations".

The senior BJP leader posted on Twitter parts of the verdict, including the one in which the apex court asked Gandhi to exercise restraint while making public speeches.

"Para 8 -- the Supreme Court states - the utterances by Rahul Gandhi are not in good taste. A person in public life is expected to exercise a degree of restraint while making public speeches and he ought to have been more careful," he tweeted.

Sarma said the order has a "clear reference to Rahul Gandhi's 2019 contempt case in the Hon'ble Supreme Court underlining his credibility as a repeat offender".

He also pointed out that in Para 12, "the Hon'ble SC makes it clear that the stay will not influence the ongoing appeal process at the lower court".

Following the Supreme Court's decision on Friday, Sarma had said in a cryptic tweet, without mentioning Gandhi's name, that the judiciary is abused when convicted but is celebrated when it grants bail.

"Heights of duplicity! You abuse the judiciary when you get convicted, and when the same judiciary grants you bail, you say justice has prevailed," he had said. The Congress had expressed gratitude to the Supreme Court for delivering justice and claimed that it had paved the way for Gandhi to return to Parliament and continue placing the problems of the people before the government.

The Supreme Court stayed a Gujarat High Court verdict which dismissed his plea seeking a stay on his conviction by a lower court in a defamation case over his remark related to "Modi surname".

Former Gujarat minister Purnesh Modi had filed a criminal defamation case in 2019 against Gandhi over his remark made during an election rally in Kolar in Karnataka on April 13, 2019. Besides Purnesh Modi, many other BJP leaders had filed defamation suits across the country.

## Act East policy has changed the face of northeast: Tripura CM

**AGARTALA, Aug 6 (PTI):** Tripura chief minister Manik Saha on Sunday claimed that the Act East policy of the Modi government has changed the face of the northeast as the region has witnessed a much needed connectivity boost over the past few years.

The people of Tripura could not dream that the rail would reach Sabroom, the state's southern-most border town through Agartala when a metre gauge railway station was opened at Dharmanagar in North district in the 1960s, he said.

"Now, it is a reality with trains running between Agartala and Sabroom everyday that are too broad gauge. Currently, 10 to 12 express trains are coming to Agartala. This has been possible because of visionary leaders like Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said at Agartala railway station as the Prime Minister virtually laid the foundation stone for redevelopment of 508 railway stations across the country including three in Tripura.

"The Act East policy has changed the face of the northeast as the region witnessed a much needed connectivity boost since 2014. The chief ministers of north-



eastern states during their conclave said now the northeast has become part of India in true sense," he said.

Saha said the day is not far when the people of landlocked Tripura will be able to reach Kolkata in 10 hours with the railways working on war footing to complete Indo-Bangla (Agartala-Gangasagar) railway. The Indo-Bangla railway link is expected to be commissioned by the end of this year.

Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme,

## Mission Indradhanush 5.0 launched in Morigaon

### HT Correspondent

**MORIGAON, Aug 6:** The fifth phase of Mission Indradhanush, named Indradhanush 5.0, was officially launched in Morigaon with a workshop on media sensitisation held at the DC's conference hall. The campaign is set to begin from Monday in the district and will be conducted in three phases: August 7 to 12, September 11 to 16, and October 9 to 14.

The primary goal of Indradhanush 5.0 is to vaccinate 2,593 unvaccinated children aged two years, out of a total population of 10,86,425 in the district. Additionally, there are 768 children and 598 pregnant mothers between the ages of two and five who have not received the necessary vaccinations. Health workers have already conducted house-to-house vaccination programs and raised awareness about the importance and safety of vaccinations.

The vaccination process for Mission Indradhanush 5.0 has been digitised through the 'U-WIN' portal, making it more efficient and accessible. The campaign aims to ensure that every child and mother in the district receives the required vaccinations to protect them from preventable diseases. The workshop was attended by officials from the administrative and health departments, including additional commissioners Dyotibha Bora, Dr Sangeeta Barthakur, joint director of Health Services Dr Phani Pathak, joint director of Health Service Morigaon, Dr Tapan Saikia, and district project officer of National Health Mission Zulfu Sultana.

## 1,195 looted arms recovered so far: Manipur Police

**IMPHAL, Aug 6 (PTI):** The Manipur police said it has so far recovered 1,195 looted arms from different parts of the state. In a statement, it said 1,057 arms were recovered from the valley districts and 138 arms from the hill districts. Besides, thousands of ammunition were also recovered, mostly from the valley districts.

"Security forces have been continuously raiding the hill and valley areas to recover the looted arms and ammunition," it said in a statement on Saturday evening. Director-general of police Rajiv Singh said strict action will be taken against the people indulging in looting of arms from security forces.

## Five policemen suspended over May 4 Manipur incident; IG rank officer to probe armoury looting

**IMPHAL, Aug 6 (PTI):** Manipur police has suspended five police personnel including the station in-charge of the area where the incident of two women being stripped and paraded by a mob had taken place on May 4, officials said on Sunday.

The officials said immediately after the video of the incident surfaced on July 19, Manipur police decided to suspend the station in-charge of Nongpok Sekmai police station in Thoubal district and four other police personnel. The action was taken promptly and has not been reversed despite daily protests by some sections of people from the majority community for their reinstatement, they said.

The state police has also ordered a time-bound inquiry under an inspector general of police to probe events leading to the looting of an armoury on August 3 in Bishnupur, they said.

Talking to PTI, the officials in the know of developments said that every effort was being made by the Manipur Police to end the cycle of violence in the state which began on May 3 between the majority Meitei and tribal Kuki community.

They said that the police had been working relentlessly to ensure

that the breakdown in law and order was addressed on an urgent basis.

"Now for example, with the help of other agencies including the Army and Assam Rifles, we have managed to keep the essential supplies in surplus quantity."

"This is the season of farming and we can't wait for complete peace to return. So we have to manage it and that means an additional diversion of police force to the foothills where farming is done for the famous black rice," said one of the officials. Around 300 people have been arrested so far in various cases. There have been many zero FIRs registered during the ethnic clashes and every claim has to be cross-checked, they said.

The officials said that a time-bound inquiry has been instituted in connection with the recent looting of arms and around 19,000 bullets from the headquarters of the 2nd India Reserve Battalion (IRB) located at Naransina in Bishnupur district.

An officer of the rank of inspector general is heading the inquiry which will be completed within six weeks, the officials said.

A crowd had gathered there on August 3 to march towards Churachandpur where the tribals were

## Kuki MLAs likely to skip assembly as violence continues in Manipur

**KOLKATA, Aug 6 (PTI):** Most of the Kuki MLAs irrespective of their party affiliations are unlikely to attend the Manipur assembly session slated to be called from August 21 in view of the continued ethnic violence, according to leaders from the community.

An apex Meitei organisation COMI, which has been spearheading demands for an early session of the assembly to "unanimously" reject demands for separate administrative units for Kukis, however, claimed that it would ensure safety of tribal MLAs if "they really want to come".

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

For good measure, Khaute added

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

There are 10 Kuki-Zomi MLAs, including seven from the BJP, two from the Kuki People's Alliance and one independent, in the Manipur House which has a strength of 60 members.

Tongmang Haokip, president of the Kuki People's Alliance (KPA), also told PTI, "The MLAs will not be safe travelling to Imphal ... one BJP MLA Vungzagin Valte who represents Thanlon was badly assaulted there, he is still under medical care."

He added that this apprehension could be addressed only "if there is a guarantee from the state government and the Centre and adequate steps are taken for the safety of MLAs."

## Guv Kataria attends Shri Jain Shwetambar Terapanthi Sabha program

### HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Aug 6:** Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, accompanied by First Lady Anita Kataria, participated in a program organised by Shri Jain Shwetambar Terapanthi Sabha on the topic - 'How to serve the nation and the sangh' at Fancy Bazaar in the city on Sunday. The event was graced by the presence of Sadhvi Suwamarekhaji, a spiritual leader and disciple of Acharya Shri Mahashraman ji. Addressing the gathering, the Governor expressed his happiness in meeting Sadhvisheerji and listening to her discourse. He emphasised the importance of sacrifice, penance, and non-violence in Jain philosophy. The message of non-violence preached by Acharya Shri Mahashramanji is leading people towards inner peace, and the main goal of his yatra is promoting goodwill, morality, and drug de-addiction, inspiring the young generation of the country.

publication cell is not limited to faculties and researchers but also encourages interested students to contribute and publish their works. The event was graced by other notable personalities such as Dr Khageswar Borkakati, GB president, Dr Khirendra Haloi, Dr Rajan Sarma (assistant professor, Gauhati University), Anju Saikia (librarian, Darrang College), Binita Das (HOD, Zoology department, Darrang College), Prof Abhijit Das, Dr Manoj Kumar Hazarika, Dr Akhil Baruah, Kularam Mili, Dr Dulal Das, Khanindra Kalita, Dr Sanjeeb Chetry, and students and faculties of the college.

The event was conducted by Julee Boiragi (faculty of Zoology department) and concluded with a vote of thanks offered by Parismita Devi (faculty of Darrang College) to all the esteemed guests who attended the program.

## Darrang College releases first publication

### HT Correspondent

**TEZPUR, Aug 6:** Darrang College, a prominent higher educational institute, marked a significant milestone with the launch of its first publication from the college's publication cell. The book, titled 'Recent Advances in Biological Science: Diversity and Human Welfare', was edited by Dr Chitta Ranjan Barua and Dr Rabindra Hazarika from the Zoology department. The inaugural event took place on Saturday at the college premises, graced by the presence of Dr Biren Das, registrar of Tezpur University, among other dignitaries.

Dr Das, while inaugurating the book, praised the efforts of the publication cell and commended the research papers contributed from various esteemed institutions across the country, including IIT Guwahati, Cotton University, Tezpur University, Darrang College, Gauhati University, North Bengal Regional Research and Development Centre, and several others. He emphasised that the book would be highly beneficial to the academic community, especially researchers and students.

Dr Polashmani Saikia, principal of Darrang College, extended a warm welcome to the guests and expressed that the college's





## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Ideologies separate us. Dreams and anguish bring us together. - Eugene Ionesco*

## Gyanvapi-Vishwanath dispute

In the wake of recent developments surrounding the Gyanvapi mosque and Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath's statements have added fuel to the already contentious temple-mosque issue. The situation has escalated to a point where the matter is being dealt with through lawfare, involving legal proceedings and archaeological surveys, despite the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act of 1991. The recent Allahabad High Court verdict allowing the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to survey the Gyanvapi mosque complex further stirs the controversy. The court's decision comes after a series of lawsuits and appeals filed in local courts, aiming to establish the Hindu antecedents of the Gyanvapi complex. This ongoing legal battle has raised questions about the 1991 law, which prohibits the conversion of places of worship that existed on August 15, 1947, into places of worship of a different religion. The Supreme Court, in its landmark Ayodhya dispute judgment in 2019, upheld the 1991 law as a critical element of a secular State. It emphasised that the law prevents history from being used as a tool to oppress the present and future. However, despite this endorsement, the court's silence on intervening in the Gyanvapi mosque complex litigation has left many perplexed. The mosque committee's attempts to seek a stay on the survey through Supreme Court intervention were met with a transfer of their suit to the Varanasi district judge, delaying any definitive resolution. This perceived judicial pusillanimity at the highest level has emboldened Hindutva forces to pursue their interests through lawfare. The lower judiciary's involvement has raised concerns about its impartiality and its potential to facilitate ground-level changes through extra-judicial means.

In this context, it becomes imperative for the Supreme Court to take decisive action and apply the 1991 law, as it wholeheartedly endorsed in the Ayodhya judgment. By doing so, the court can curtail the misuse of lawfare and safeguard the secular fabric of the country. Any attempts to alter the ground realities through extra-judicial means must be thwarted to preserve the nation's harmony and unity. The Gyanvapi mosque and Vishwanath temple dispute is more than a legal battle; it's a test of India's commitment to its secular ideals and pluralistic heritage. The judicial system must ensure that it does not succumb to pressures and maintain its integrity and fairness. At the same time, it is crucial for political leaders to exercise restraint and refrain from making statements that could further polarize communities and aggravate the situation. The need of the hour is for all stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue and seek amicable solutions that respect the sentiments and beliefs of all parties involved. The Gyanvapi mosque and Vishwanath temple hold deep historical and religious significance for their respective communities. As a nation, it is our responsibility to handle this sensitive matter with utmost care, ensuring that justice is served while upholding the principles of secularism and harmony.

The Supreme Court must assert its commitment to the 1991 law and address the Gyanvapi mosque and Vishwanath temple issue decisively. This would set a precedent for handling similar disputes and demonstrate the court's dedication to maintaining India's pluralistic ethos. We must tread cautiously and ensure that the temple-mosque issue does not become a tool for further discord but rather a stepping stone towards fostering unity and understanding.

## NEP challenges and major action points

By: Er. Prabhat Kishore

In course of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, major challenges have been categorized under three broad themes - School, Teacher and Child. Subsequently, during the Chief Secretary conference, 35 priority areas have been identified for major actions to be taken care of by the states.

Parent awareness drives will be conducted so that they can contribute to the quality of their child's education. Twining of private and government schools should be done and private schools should adopt a remote school as part of their social obligation. Activities such as teacher exposure visits between private and government schools, hosting of government school students by private school students and joint sports competitions between private & government schools should be explored to increase exposure for both sets of students.

Optimal utilization of resources should be systematically planned by the States/UTs on the concept of "Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas" (PURA). There should be greater integration between Schools and Anganwadis centres and students from Anganwadis should be taken to nearby primary schools, where they should be given a platform to perform a song and creating confidence to prepare them for school. Also the school teachers should orient the Anganwadi workers on teaching and learning for pre-school children.

Adoption of Anganwadis by nearby schools should be properly planned. Hackathons should be organized, where students should provide innovative solutions to a variety of real-life problem statements created by different departments. Many of these solutions could be adopted to solve long-standing problems. Micro-improvements should be continuously undertaken. Also activation of Tithi Bhojan concept must be activated as "Sabka Prayaas" to ensure supplementary nutrition for the school-going children.

Parents should confirm the teacher's performance on the large photograph of the concerned teachers displayed in the classroom. The Campus-based

recruitment drive, as done in technical colleges, for Teacher Education Institutions should be explored. Regular e-training should be promoted for capacity building of teachers to excel. Retired outstanding teachers should be invited for mentoring a cluster of schools and motivating its teachers. Efforts will be made to do away with single-teacher schools and adequate amenities should also be provided in the school. To make teaching and learning more engaging for TV-driven education, teachers should be encouraged to provide high quality content in various forms like animation, mono-acting, drama, dialogues etc.

To give a boost to access to high-quality content for each grade in the country, setting up of 200 TV channels has been planned. The content of these channels will be sourced by the teachers of the States/UTs. There should be peer-to-peer learning in the classrooms. To improve the learning trajectory of the students, classroom interactions through academic quiz is necessary.

SCERTs have a pivotal role to play in the implementation of NEP 2020 and hence all SCERTs in the country would need to be strengthened. All Teacher Education Institutions across the country have to adhere to certain norms and standards of the NCTE and gradually move towards a multidisciplinary environment.

Under National Mentoring Mission (NMM), a unified learning interface in the form of a portal has been established where all the mentors will remain connected. National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will focus on the preparation, practice and performance improvement of all teachers. Performance Grading Index (PGI) for the Districts, released by the Ministry of Education (MoE), assesses the performance of the school education system across 83 indicators and the report would be used by the States to accelerate the work in a particular district which is lagging behind. The progress with respect to these priority areas will be monitored by the NITI Aayog. (The author is a technocrat & academician. He can be reached at prabhatkishore65@gmail.com)

## The introduction of 'universal basic income' in India has to face a lot of problems

Many economists have been advocating a universal basic income for India, an idea that was mooted even in the official Economic Survey for 2016-17. Of course the practical proposals towards this end have varied, some suggesting a common universal transfer to all persons below a certain income, and others suggesting a graded transfer depending on how badly off an individual happens to be. But the vision is of a society where every citizen has a certain basic minimum level of money income through appropriate government transfers which would give the person command over a bundle of goods that assure a minimum living standard.

There are conceptual objections to this idea, which the Economic Survey had enumerated and dealt with at length. These are objections mainly from the right. The primary objection states that such transfers disincite effort; if one can get a minimum income anyway irrespective of the effort one puts in, then why put in any effort at all to earn an income? This presumes however that we have a society where a person's income is reflective solely of his effort, so that any interference with it (in the form of a universal basic income) can upset the arrangement. But this is absurd because the rich get huge incomes without putting in any effort, while the poor work themselves to death for a mere pittance.

In fact it was John Stuart Mill who had observed that, contrary to Adam Smith's theory that workers in the most exhausting and hazardous occupations got better paid in order to compensate them for the arduousness of their jobs, they were actually among the worst paid. A universal basic income in this case amounts not

to providing an income for no work, but to increasing the wage-rate per unit of work of the poorest workers (which is quite apart from the fact that if a person gets no work at all then his remaining unemployed is the fault not of him as an individual, but of the social arrangement under which he lives).

The claim that a universal basic income disincentivises effort is exactly analogous to the view that a rise in wages makes people lazy, a right-wing "supply side" proposition that the liberal American economist JK Galbraith had mocked as suggesting that the "rich work better if paid more while the poor work better if paid less".

It is both morally reprehensible and analytically unfounded. Against this right-wing stance opposing a universal basic income, the mooted of this proposal represents a progressive liberal assertion. But the problem with what is mooted is exactly the problem with the liberal position in general, namely that it wants to make an omelette without breaking eggs. It wishes to operate within the capitalist system, making it more humane for the working people, without upsetting the capitalists too much. Not surprisingly the amount of UBI that is mooted is invariably paltry.

The Economic Survey 2016-17 for instance had calculated that an annual transfer of Rs 7620 per annum for every person at 2016-17 prices, excluding the top 25 per cent, would cost 4.9 per cent of the country's GDP. A sum equivalent of this at 2011-12 prices, if given to the bottom 75 per cent in 2011-12, would have reduced poverty in that year to a mere 0.5 per cent of the population, that is, virtually eliminated

it. The Economic Survey recommends obliquely that this amount can be financed by cutting down the various subsidies that the government gives at present.

There are two obvious problems with this calculation. First, the actual poverty-line for 2011-12, at which what the Planning Commission itself considered the minimum requisite calorie intake would be ingested, was almost 50 per cent higher. Assuming for simplicity that a proportionate increase in the transfer had to be made to achieve the same objective, of eliminating poverty, under the same assumptions, it would have cost not 4.9 but almost 7.5

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Prabhat Patnaik

per cent of the GDP. Second, if the transfer was to be financed by cutting subsidies, then this very mode of financing would have required an increase in the amount of transfer by making things more expensive. In short, the figure mentioned in the Economic Survey would have been grossly inadequate. Other suggestions for UBI are of course much less ambitious in their scope.

Even more decisive however is another consideration. Even if we assume that the UBI is introduced through a parliamentary resolution which makes it binding on the government to keep providing the stipulated price-indexed transfer every year and not renege on its commitment (as it is doing at present with regard to the MGNREGS), it would typically make this transfer by cutting down on its spending on education, health, and other such heads.

This would mean that while people would have money from the cash transfer made by the government, they would have no proper government schools to send their children to, and no proper government hospitals to

admit their sick relatives to. And if they access private schools or private hospitals, then the transfer amounts, price-indexed on the assumption that people access the same bundle of goods and services as in the base year, will be much less in real terms. In other words, the basic objective of providing a UBI in real terms would have got subverted in the very process of financing it.

Hence, even if the UBI is taken as a universal right that everyone enjoys, with no scope for renegeing on it by the government, the transfers made by the government to achieve the UBI in money terms, will in effect not achieve it in real terms. It follows that it is far better to have legislation ensuring a set of individual rights, such as right to free quality education, a right to free quality healthcare, a right to food, a right to employment, a right to an adequate non-contributory old-age pension and disability benefit, than to institute a portmanteau right to a UBI in money terms. Put differently, a right to UBI in real terms cannot possibly mean anything other than a set of specific constituent individual rights, such as a right to health, a right to education, and such other rights.

The idea of a universal basic income, though well-meaning and laudable, is thus quite meaningless as it stands. If it is interpreted merely as a set of cash transfers, whether uniform or graded across individuals, then it does not necessarily achieve a real UBI which is the objective behind instituting it. On the other hand, if the idea is to have a UBI in real terms, then the only possible meaning one can give to it is in terms of a set of specific rights, to health, education, and such like, which the government has to take on the responsibility for providing.

If India has to build a genuine

welfare state, then it has to guarantee these specific rights to every individual; but that entails much larger expenditure than the Economic Survey had suggested.

It has been estimated for instance that instituting the very five universal rights that we mentioned above, viz. the right to food (so that everybody gets what the BPL population has been entitled to get), the right to employment (or if employment cannot be provided then the payment nonetheless of a statutorily fixed wage), the right to free quality healthcare through a National Health Service, the right to free quality education (at least up to the school-leaving level), and the right to a universal, non-contributory old-age pension and disability benefits, would cost, in addition to what is already spent from the budget on these items, an additional 10 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. To spend this additional amount, the government has to raise extra tax revenue, amounting to about 7 per cent of GDP (the other 3 per cent would come through the tax revenue that would automatically accrue from the increase in GDP caused by the spending of this 7 per cent).

To raise this 7 per cent is by no means difficult, provided the government is willing to tax the rich. In fact just two taxes levied on the top 1 per cent of the population, viz. a wealth tax of 2 per cent and an inheritance tax of 33 1/3 per cent, would be sufficient to garner the requisite resources to introduce a welfare state in the country by guaranteeing these five fundamental economic rights. This however makes the introduction of a welfare state in India a matter virtually beyond the capacity of the bourgeois system, and hence beyond the conception of liberal economists. (IPA Service)

## Recurring floods of Assam - from a political ecology perspective

By: Anushka Saikia

The drama of floods unfolds when the river begins to rise in April; by July it is swollen to its full height and the whole country becomes an inland sea", narrated Scottish army surgeon John M'Cosh in 1837 in Topography of Assam. He also wrote how the sites of large villages are known only by their roofs above the stream. Rightly called the people of the floodplains, the riparian Assamese communities are traditionally adapted to the annual flood since time immemorial. This relationship between flood and the people of Assam can be best described with what Radhakamal Mukherjee in his book The Changing Face of Bengal has described about humans adapting to a flood landscape and that they 'live a more or less amphibious life'. Be it the writings of Sankaradeva, the social-religious reformer of Assam or the British travellers to this region, all very well portrays how the flood is very natural to Assam from yore.

The numerous tributaries of the Brahmaputra continue to change its course over the centuries due to floods, tectonic forces, fluvial activity, river capture, or siltation and change in course of tributaries. This often makes flood a very natural phenomenon in Assam, but it is going to be a same story from the cradle to the grave? Or has it been in fact the same story in all these years?

There is a popular trivia which is often posed to students in Assam during quiz competitions - how many districts in Assam get flooded? Those who have faced this know that this is a tricky question. Because the number of districts keeps increasing almost every year in Assam, it is difficult to keep track of the exact boundaries or the total number. Therefore a very safe answer is 'all districts', which is also the correct answer and precise one too.

And just like an annual festival, like Christmas, Diwali or Bihu, floods occur in Assam, without fail. Affecting millions of people, damaging countless houses, destroying public and private property worth thousands of crore and claiming hundreds of lives annually, floods can be easily described as a bane of Assam. But it is these floods which have also shaped the geography of

Assam, as we see it today. And therefore a good question to ask in 2023, the 76th year of Indian independence, is: what are the different flood control mechanisms that have been in use so far? How effective they have been? And how can we imagine Assam, not without floods, but without suffering, for floods might be inevitable in Assam, but suffering needn't be.

Hence, we can argue that the flood issue in Assam is not merely an environmental disaster but a hybrid of human-environment artefact if seen through the lens of a political ecology framework, as rightly proposed by Gilbert F. White in his paper Human Adjustment to Floods: A Geographical Approach to the Flood Problem in the United States in 1945.

This article, therefore, aims to examine the recurring issue of flood and resultant damage in Assam through four main theses of political ecology.

**1. Political objects and actors-** This thesis attempts to explain the socio-political conditions of a system. It is contentious to call the floods of Assam a natural phenomenon any longer since there are several loopholes on the part of the government and its administration.

The major gaps are the lack of coordination between the state and centre. Flood control is more of a reactionary response rather than a preparatory one and the timing of the reactionary response itself is delayed, which further worsens the situation. This feedback mostly comprises building an embankment with no steps taken to protect against erosion. Breaches have been reported from Brahmaputra and Solongi river embankments in Gohpur in 2013 as per the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) flood report of 2013. This was due to the negligence in essential river protection post building an embankment for Rs 5 crores. More than half of the embankments stay in a dire strait almost the whole year because there is always a huge contractor-administration nexus that makes a seasonal benefit from a flood situation, and hence the 'recurring floods'.

**2. Conservation and control-** The relevance of this thesis lies in the usually viewed cordial efforts at environmental conservation which has detrimental effects in the long run and fails hugely as a



conservation effort. There are instances of mockery as to how control mechanisms and structures like embankments and dams end up causing more floods. The Ranganadi Hydroelectric Plant in the district of Yazali in Arunachal Pradesh by the North East Electrical Power Corporation (NEEPCO) since its functioning in 2001 has been creating big trouble to the districts of Lakhimpur and Dhemaji as the dam water released by NEEPCO just takes three hours to reach North Lakhimpur. This sudden torrential inflow of water swells the water level of the Ranganadi river submerging several villages in the river banks.

A similar situation is also faced by the people of Golaghat in Upper Assam since 2000 due to the functioning of another NEEPCO dam in the Doyang River that flows through Nagaland and Assam. We see how a certain class of environmental victims are created through the act of flood-control measure itself and this pushes a certain section of people to the margins.

**3. Degradation and marginalisation- Flood spells disaster** - but not equally for everyone. Often it is seen that the majority of the low-income individuals who rely chiefly on agriculture are highly very likely to dwell in the most vulnerable and remote locations that are surrounded by nature and hence are disproportionately affected by natural hazards and disasters. Thus, populations chiefly dependent on agriculture, livestock production and fishing, when affected by yearly floods, end up abandoning their lands and homes in search of work by migrating to many South Indian cities in the country. All these have been a cause of growing out-migration in the state leaving behind an older generation and thus limited availability of farmers to sustain good

likely to migrate long distances, so they always feel a threat within themselves. Social activist, Sanjoy Ghose writes how the people of Majuli, particularly the river-dwelling Mising tribe explains the insecurity of not knowing whether there will be any Majuli left at all.

Majuli district in Assam is the largest river island in the world. "Floods we've learned to live with, but the loss of the land which nurtured us has made survival difficult", recounts an inhabitant of Majuli in the book Sanjoy's Assam: Diaries and Writings of Sanjoy Ghose. These are the River People; the name "Mising" comes from mi (man) and asi(water), or "man of the water". They build Kare Okum, a traditional Mising chang ghar (sometimes spelt changkar) which is a wooden house built on bamboo stilts with mud foundations and a bamboo thatch roof.

However, several factors have threatened the identity of these people who have been resiliently living in harmony with the river for centuries. The traditional way of living in a chang ghar is not much welcomed by the younger generations. The people of these tribes who have a timeless bond with nature do not easily out-migrate but are also embracing newer technologies and ways of living, somehow giving up their traditional adaptive methods of living with the flood. This, in the long run, tends to threaten their communal customs and practices which otherwise hold these small societies together.

The recurring flood problem in Assam, when apolitically viewed, seems like a natural disaster that generates heterogeneity in the riverine ecosystem, influencing the distribution, composition and abundance of organisms. But when politically viewed, the flood problem is so much more than just a natural disaster which along with the heterogeneity in the riverine landscape also brings heterogeneity in the lives of people across populations. Floods in Assam are more of a socio-economic production of nature and their annual occurrence depends hugely on the way we administer the relationship between society and the environment. (The author is a wildlife biologist, Elephant Research and Conservation Division (ERCD), Aranyak, Guwahati, Assam who can be reached at anusha-saikia5@gmail.com)



# Frontotemporal dementia: What's to know?

By: Hannah Nichols

Frontotemporal disorders involve damage to parts of the front and side, or temporal area, of the brain, resulting in dementia. Depending on the type, these can lead to changes in language use, behaviour, and other aspects of well-being.

Types of frontotemporal dementia (FTD) include Pick's disease, primary progressive aphasia, and semantic dementia. As well as affecting behaviour and language use, they can impact a person's posture and gait and increase the risk of falling.

FTD is the third most common cause of dementia among people aged 65 years and over, and it is the second most common in those aged under 65 years. It usually appears between the ages of 45 and 65 years. However, it is rare, accounting for fewer than 5% of all dementia cases.

In this article, learn more about the types, what to expect, and treatment options.

**Types**  
There are two main types of FTD: the behavioural variant and the language variant. However, a person may have symptoms of both.

FTD affects the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain. The frontal lobe is at the front of the brain, and the temporal lobe is at the side. These areas play a role in behaviour, language, and the ability to plan and organize.

Damage to neurons, or brain cells, in these parts of the brain can result in a range of symptoms.

The symptoms and lobes the condition affects will determine the precise diagnosis a person receives.

**Behavioural variant**  
Around 60% of people with FTD have the behavioural variant, and around 40% have the language variant. The behavioural variant can lead to:

- a loss of empathy and emotional reactions
- changes in dietary behaviours
- apathy
- a loss of inhibition, leading to inappropriate behaviours
- problems with abstract thinking
- difficulty planning and carrying out tasks
- an inability to resist touching and picking things up
- repeating words and activities for no apparent reason
- Memory problems may occur at a later stage.

The person may also be unaware that their behaviour is unusual. This can make it difficult to help them.

**Language variant**

The language variant can be either progressive, non-fluent aphasia or semantic aphasia. In progressive, non-fluent aphasia, the person has difficulty producing speech. They may produce jumbled words, have difficulty understanding complex sentences, and be unable to name objects. In the early stages, the person may still be able to calculate, remember things, and think abstractly.

In semantic dementia, the person may have difficulty understanding single words and recognizing familiar faces and objects. Speech may sound fluent but make no sense to a listener. In time, this type can also affect memory.

**Complications**  
A person with FTD may also experience:

- insomnia, which affects 48% of people with the condition
- breathing problems while sleeping, which affect 68% of those with FTD
- restless legs syndrome, which occurs in 8% of cases
- a higher risk of falling
- a higher sex drive
- eating disorders, such as overeating, not eating, or developing specific food preferences

erences

- changes in stride length, step cycle, balance, posture, and gait, which can lead to falls

- conflicts with loved ones if they do not understand the reason for the person's behaviour

Some movement disorders can occur alongside FTD. These include:

- motor neuron disease
- amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- progressive supranuclear palsy

**Stages**  
There are three general stages of FTD: early, middle, and late. The following sections will look at each of these in more detail.

**Early stage**  
In the early stage of FTD, a person may not experience any memory difficulties. For this reason, some doctors may overlook the condition or misdiagnose it as a psychiatric one.

**Middle stage**  
In the middle stage of FTD, the condition starts to appear more similar to other types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease.

People in the middle stage of FTD may start to need more help with simple daily tasks, such as dressing and grooming. Family members and caregivers may also notice that behavioral disturbances happen more often and more consistently.

**Late stage**  
In late stage FTD, people often experience difficulties with both language and behaviour, and their memory usually starts to deteriorate. Some people with this stage of the condition need 24-hour care.

**Causes**  
FTD seems to result from degeneration in the brain cells in the frontal and temporal lobes due to damage from proteins collecting in those areas. In most cases, it is unclear why a person develops FTD. However, around 40% of people with

the condition have a family member with FTD. Head injuries and thyroid disease may also increase the risk.

**Symptoms**  
FTD symptoms vary between individuals and depend on the subtype. Broadly speaking, the condition can affect language, behaviour, or both, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Depending on the type of FTD a person has, symptoms may include:

- inappropriate social behaviours
- impulsivity
- boredom and listlessness
- a lack of empathy and difficulty understanding other's emotions
- distractibility
- a reduced insight into their own behaviours
- an increased interest in sex

- changes in eating habits
- either agitation or blunted emotions
- a loss of interest in personal hygiene
- repeated or compulsive behaviours
- reduced energy and motivation
- speech and language difficulties

- changes in gait
- other physical symptoms, such as stiffness
- difficulty swallowing
- dystonia, or holding a part of the body in an unusual position
- weakness, rigidity, and cramping in the muscles
- an inability to carry out movements such as brushing the hair
- tremor and a tendency to drop things

In the later stages, FTD may also start to affect memory.

**Diagnosis**  
Diagnosing FTD can be challenging because various conditions have similar symptoms. These conditions include bipolar disorder, supranuclear palsy, Alzheimer's disease, and

other types of dementia.

A number of tests can help identify a diagnosis and rule out other potential conditions.

**A doctor may:**

- consider the symptoms
- assess the person's ability to think and reason
- perform a physical examination

- review personal and family medical history
- order blood tests to rule out other conditions, such as thyroid problems
- conduct brain scans to detect any loss of brain cells in the frontal and temporal brain regions
- do laboratory tests of cerebrospinal fluid

Research is ongoing to find a more accurate way to diagnose conditions like this at an earlier stage.

**Treatments**  
There is currently no cure for FTD and no way to slow the progression of the condition. However, some treatment options can help manage the symptoms.

**Behavioural symptoms**  
Behaviour-related approaches and medications may help manage agitation and behaviours that may pose a threat to the well-being of the individual or another person. For example, a doctor may prescribe antidepressants or antipsychotic drugs.

Various drugs are available, but they may have adverse effects. The person or their caregiver can talk with the doctor to find a suitable option for them.

**Language symptoms**  
A speech therapist can help the individual maintain their language skills and find new ways to communicate. This could include using a notebook, photos, gestures, sign language, or drawings.

Caregivers can help by speaking slowly and clearly, using simple sentences, and waiting for a response.

The individual and their caregiver may need to find alternative strategies as new

challenges arise over time.

**Caring for a loved one**

Some tips for keeping the person safe and maximizing their quality of life include:

- helping them manage their finances and apply for disability payments, if appropriate
- preempting any physical, social, or psychological risks they may face
- making adaptations to reduce the risk of falls
- seeking counselling for depression and anxiety, if applicable
- maintaining a regular routine
- helping them avoid triggers of hypersexuality, overeating, and other behaviours that can lead to problems

The National Institute on Aging recommends accepting unusual statements rather than challenging them, as arguing is not usually helpful. It suggests that the caregiver takes "time out," such as counting to 10, to help manage any frustration they have.

**Outlook**  
FTD is progressive. Progression can be rapid, ranging from 2 to over 10 years, but the outlook can vary significantly.

For most people, the condition will affect the functions they use in everyday life. They may eventually need around-the-clock care at home or in a residential care facility. Caregivers may also need support from other family members, friends, and support groups.

FTD is a type of dementia that can affect speech, behaviour, and other aspects of a person's well-being. The symptoms are progressive and tend to worsen with time. The condition can affect life expectancy. There is currently no cure, but treatment and support can help manage the symptoms and enhance a person's quality of life while living with FTD. *(Courtesy: Medical News Today)*

# Microplastics can alter gut microbiome, cause intestinal inflammation: FAO

By: Himanshu Nitnaware

Microplastics and nanoplastics considerably impact human and animal gut microbiomes as well as the environment, noted a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Though the effects of its exposure to other plastic chemicals in the gut microbiome are still unexplored, instances of alteration in the intestinal structure and the functioning of the gastrointestinal tract have been observed. FAO noted in its report Impact of Microplastics and Nanoplastics on Human Health.

After examining various literature on the topic, researchers found that exposure to plastic has led to intestinal inflammation and gut dysbiosis - changes in the gut microbiome and microbiota. The findings stood true for aquatic species and rodents as well.

The findings of the study are crucial as microplastics and nano plastics are known to affect larger soil microorganisms and penetrate the entire food web.

Evidence suggests that microplastics found in water bottles and food items such as sugar, honey, sea salt, tea and others have eventually deposited in human lung tissue, placenta, stool, blood and meconium.

Microplastics (0.1 to 5 000 µm) and nanoplastics (0.001 to 0.1 µm) are ubiquitous contaminants of emerging interest due to their potential effects on the environment, animals and human health. Their capacity to release plastic additives or adsorb, transport and release environmental contaminants (e.g. heavy metals and organic pollutants) and modify the exposure and toxicity of these contaminants have not been well studied.

Further research is required to understand how microplastic exposure or co-exposure with other chemicals affects the host and the gut microbiome.

When plastic spreads in the environment, they undergo ageing, weathering and deterioration. Such changes cause mechanical abrasion, breakage, fragmentation and photo-oxidation, which involves chemical release or adsorption, the report stated.

Plastics eventually break into different sizes and shapes and undergo changes during interactions with microorganisms and other substances in their surroundings.

Another point to note is how the plastic's surface properties interact with the environment, whether they release chemicals or bind to other particles.

Plastics of hydrophobic nature, for instance, can adsorb hydrophobic chemicals or persistent organic pollutants from the environment (for example, polychlorinated biphenyls, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and dichloro diphenyl trichloroethane), the document noted.

"The interactions between environmental contaminants and microplastics and their transfer from the environment to living organisms are complex and challenging to understand, as many factors (microorganisms, sediments, pH, etc) will influence these processes," it added.

After examining 146 articles, the report's authors observed that most studies depicted limited evaluations of the effect of microplastics on the gastrointestinal tract and gut microbiota.

The authors considered parameters such as accumulation of microplastic in the gut, changes in the mucus layer and gut permeability, alterations of the mucosal structure, oxidative stress and immune response. Every study showed some level of alteration in the host to the microplastic exposure. In some instances, alterations of gene markings and biochemical markers were also observed.

Physical abrasion of microplastic and its accumulation in the gut can lead to satiety in the organism and even reduce food consumption. It may eventually lead to weight loss and metabolic changes. A few studies indicated the impact of microplastics on liver function and metabolism.

The analysis highlighted that the severity of the impact was proportional to the concentration and particle shape of microplastics. Microplastics act as stressors and cause inflammatory responses in the host, affecting certain microorganisms and resulting in microbial dysbiosis.

However, despite increasing interest in the topic, many knowledge gaps regarding micro and nano plastic consumption and its effects on gut microbiome and human health remain unfilled.

"There are questions concerning the gut microbiome's sensitivity to chronic exposure to microplastics and low concentrations of chemical residues, and whether microbial disturbances lead to short and long-term effects on human health," it said. *(Courtesy: Down To Earth)*

# Does exercise actually help you lose weight and keep it off? Researchers have mixed opinions

By: Donald M Lamkin

The global fitness industry will generate over \$80 billion in revenue in 2023, estimates suggest. And why not, given the many excellent reasons to exercise? Better cardiovascular health, lower risk of Type 2 diabetes, stronger immune system – the list goes on.

One of the biggest reasons many people choose to exercise is to lose weight. As a biobehavioral scientist, I study links between behavior and health, and I heed the time-honored advice that eating less and exercising more are necessary to lose weight. But a recent debate in the scientific community highlights the growing suspicion that the "exercising more" part of this advice may be erroneous.

that exercise won't help you burn more calories overall because your body will compensate by burning fewer calories after your workout. Thus, exercise won't help you lose weight even if it will benefit your health in countless other ways.

Obesity researchers take issue with this hypothesis, because it's based on observational research rather than randomised controlled trials, or RCTs, the gold standard of scientific evidence.

In RCTs, participants are randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group, which allows researchers to determine whether the treatment causes an effect. Randomised controlled trials have shown that exercise causes weight loss.

The verdict is actually more mixed when considering all the gold-standard evidence available.

**What the evidence says**

Spectators of this hypothesis have emphasised the importance of systematically reviewing the evidence from all gold-standard trials. They pointed to a 2021 review of more than 100 exercise studies that examined the effect on weight loss in adults of aerobic, resistance or high-intensity interval training in combination or alone. The review concluded that supervised exercise regimens do cause weight loss, even if only a modest amount.

So that settles the debate, yes? If you eat too much dessert, then you can just go on an extra run to burn off those extra calories, right?



Well, not exactly.

If extra physical exertion burns extra calories overall, then exercise should also keep the weight from coming back after low-calorie dieting. But keeping those lost kilos off after dieting is a common challenge. The same 2021 review includes the few randomised controlled trials that address the question of whether exercise facilitates weight maintenance.

However, the results weren't as good as they were for weight loss. The researchers found that six to 12 months of aerobic exercise, resistance training or both after dieting did not prevent weight regain in adults.

**Exercise adherence**  
But what about compliance? Did all the people in those studies actually exercise regularly?

The 2021 review found only one randomised controlled trial on weight maintenance that reported an objective compliance rate, meaning each exercise session was supervised by a trainer. This tells us the percentage of time that participants in the study actually exercised as prescribed.

In that trial, the compliance rate was only 64% for 25 post-menopausal women who completed a resistance training programme after diet-induced weight loss. This was for a regimen in which participants had to come in and exercise two to three times per week for an entire year. From the perspective of keeping up with a programme for that long, doing so 64% of the time doesn't seem so bad.

But they still gained back as much weight as the 29 women in the control group who were not enrolled in the exercise programme.

**Energy balance**  
Many people would say that it's

all about balancing energy in from food and energy out from exercise. If exercise didn't keep the weight off, then maybe a bigger dose of exercise was needed.

The American College of Sports Medicine highlighted this issue of exercise dose in its 2009 position statement on physical activity for weight maintenance, stating that the amount of physical activity needed for weight maintenance after weight loss is uncertain.

Moreover, it stated that there is a lack of randomised controlled trials in this area that use state-of-the-art techniques to monitor the energy balance of participants.

Fortunately, some of the authors of the position statement went on to use state-of-the-art techniques to monitor energy balance in their own randomised controlled trial.

In 2015, they enrolled overweight adults into a 10-month aerobic exercise programme and compared the energy intake of those who lost weight with the energy intake of those who didn't lose weight while on the programme. They found that those who didn't lose weight were indeed taking in more calories.

**Mystery of the disappearing calories**

But there's something else in that 2015 study's energy measurements that is quite interesting. By the end of the study, the number of total daily calories the exercisers burned was not significantly different from what the nonexercisers burned. And this was in spite of the fact that trainers verified the exercisers burned an extra 400 to 600 calories per session at their nearly daily exercise sessions. Why didn't those extra exercise calories show up in the total daily calories burned?

The answer to that question may help explain why exercise doesn't always help you keep the weight off: Your metabolism responds to regular exercise by decreasing the number of calories you burn when you're not exercising. That's according to the constrained total energy expenditure hypothesis that spurred the current debate.

Researchers recently tested the hypothesis by measuring the nonexercise calorie burn of 29 obese adults over a nearly 24-hour period, both before and after a six-month exercise programme. They found that the calories they burned

when they weren't working out did decrease after months of regular exercise – but only in those who were prescribed the higher of two different exercise doses.

Those who exercised at the lower dose for general health, meaning they burned an extra 800 to 1,000 calories per week, saw no change in their metabolic rate. But those who exercised at the higher dose to lose weight or maintain weight loss, meaning they burned an extra 2,000 to 2,500 calories per week, had a decrease in their metabolic rate by the study's end.

**Exercise for health**  
Perhaps both sides of the debate

are right. If you want to lose a modest amount of weight, then a new exercise routine might make a modest contribution toward meeting that goal.

However, as others have said, don't fool yourself into thinking you can "outrun a bad diet" by simply exercising more. There is a diminishing marginal return to exercise – you eventually take less weight off for the additional exercise you put in. But even if extra exercise might not help you lose weight and keep it off, there are still the other great health dividends that regular exercise pays out. *(Courtesy: Scrollin)*

# ‘Eating on time & in short breaks key for diabetes care’: A Nutritionist writes

By: Avantii Deshpande

Diabetes, being a global epidemic, has a high prevalence of around 11 percent, affecting 250 million people globally. It is the leading cause of many diseases and metabolic syndromes.

Managing diabetes requires careful attention to various factors like lifestyle, medication, diet, etc. When addressing the diet, one must look for the correct type, time, and amount of foods to be included.

Maintaining regular meal timings plays a pivotal role in the management of type-2 diabetes. Adhering to consistent meal timings helps regulate the timely release of insulin, the main hormone responsible for managing blood glucose levels.

**Meal timings & quality: how to keep your sugar levels controlled**

Along with the timings, the quantity of the meal also matters. Having small, frequent meals can impact glucose levels positively. Smaller meals lead to a slower release of glucose into the bloodstream which further avoids insulin spikes and improves insulin sensitivity and overall glycemic control.

A 2019 Cell study proposed that insulin and IGF-1 (Insulin-like growth factor) are primary signals of feeding time to our cellular clocks throughout the body. There are many researches indicating a relationship between our circadian rhythm (body's clock) and insulin secretion.

And therefore, it is extremely important to periodise our meal timing and portions according to our body's clock. In fact, studies have also found that individuals having circadian disruptions have the highest prevalence of diabetes, impaired glucose toler-

ance, and metabolic syndrome. He further added that disruptions in our body clock further disrupts the secretion of insulin.

**Diabetes & intermittent fasting**

Intermittent fasting is beneficial for reducing weight, waist circumference, and plasma cholesterol levels but actually has a lot of concerns too. Studies have shown that intermittent fasting actually helps in reducing weight but one needs to be concerned about hypoglycemia, ketoacidosis, protein malnutrition, insufficient energy intake, and sometimes the risk of dehydration.

Following are some important reasons why eating on time and eating small meals helps in better managing diabetes:

• **Weight management:** Eating smaller, nutrient-dense portions aids the management of weight.

• It is very essential for individuals with diabetes to maintain a healthy weight as being overweight can lead to Insulin resistance which can thus worsen diabetes management.

• **Energy levels:** Eating meals on time and having smaller meals helps maintain energy levels throughout the day as compared to large meals which would make one feel lethargic and sleepy.

• Properly periodised meals help avoid prolonged hunger and prevent dizziness, fatigue, and weakness which are the consequences of low blood sugar levels.

• **Glycemic control:** Consuming small, frequent meals prevents insulin spikes. Portioned meals lead to a slower release of sugar in the bloodstream and prevents immediate insulin spikes.

• **Medication management:** Many individuals require medications to manage their

insulin or blood glucose levels. Coordinating the meal timings with the medications is very important for a diabetic to ensure that the medications are optimised effectively.

• Skipping meals can throw off the balance between food intake and medications.

• **Improving insulin resistance:** According to a 1996 study in the Journal of Diabetes Complications, starvation diets actually aggravate insulin resistance.

Eating smaller portion sizes actually results in a slow release of insulin. If the meal is smaller, insulin being secreted will be less which would be sufficient to transport glucose across the cell membrane.

A 2022 study published in the Nutrition, Metabolism & Cardiovascular Diseases Journal found an association between food portion sizes and insulin resistance and suggested that portion size is an important determinant of insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome.

• **Nutritional balance:** Eating smaller well rounded meals helps one include a variety of food groups.

This helps promote overall health and provide essential micronutrients as well as macronutrients which would be beneficial for managing diabetes effectively.

It is important to maintain regular meal timings and consume small well-balanced meals. These practices play a crucial role in the regulation of blood sugar levels. Not only this, but it would also aid in weight management, ensure the medication's effectiveness, and maintain energy levels throughout the day. Incorporating these things would make things easier and effortless while managing diabetes. *(Courtesy: The Quint)*



## Deadline arrives for Niger's junta to reinstate President; citizens brace for the future

*The junta has reached out to the Russian mercenary group Wagner for assistance, while severing security ties with former coloniser France*

**NIAMEY (NIGER), Aug 6 (AP):** The deadline has arrived Sunday for Niger's military junta to reinstate the country's ousted president, but the West Africa regional bloc that has threatened a military intervention faces prominent appeals to pursue more peaceful means.

Neighbouring Nigeria's Senate on Saturday pushed back against the plan by the regional bloc known as ECOWAS, urging Nigeria's president, the bloc's current chair, to explore options other than the use of force.

ECOWAS can still move ahead, as final decisions are taken by consensus by member states, but the warning on the eve of Sunday's deadline raised questions about the intervention's fate.

Algeria and Chad, non-ECOWAS neighbours with strong militaries in the region, both have said they oppose the use of force or won't intervene militarily, and neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso - both run by juntas - have said an intervention would be a "declaration of war" against them, too.

Niger's ousted President Mohamed Bazoum said he is held "hostage" by the mutinous soldiers.

An ECOWAS delegation was unable to meet with the junta's leader, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, who analysts have asserted led the coup to avoid being fired.

Now the junta has reached out to the Russian mercenary group Wag-



ner for assistance while severing security ties with former coloniser France.

Hours before Sunday's deadline, hundreds of youth joined security forces in the darkened streets in Niger's capital, Niamey to stand guard at a dozen roundabouts until morning, checking cars for weapons and heeding the junta's call to watch out for foreign intervention and spies.

"I'm here to support the military. We are against (the regional bloc). We will fight to the end. We do not agree with what France is doing against us. We are done with colonisation," said Ibrahim Ndirio, one of the residents on patrol.

Some passing cars honked in support. Some people called for solidarity among African nations.

It was not immediately clear on Sunday what ECOWAS will do next.

The regional bloc shouldn't have given the junta a one-week

deadline to reinstate Bazoum but rather only up to 48 hours, said Peter Pham, former US special envoy for West Africa's Sahel region and a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council.

"Now it's dragged out, which gives the junta time to entrench itself," he said.

The most favorable scenario for an intervention would be a force coming in with the help of those on the inside, he said.

The coup is a major blow to the United States and allies who saw Niger as the last major counterterrorism partner in the Sahel, a vast area south of the Sahara Desert where jihadists linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group have been expanding their range and beginning to threaten coastal states like Benin, Ghana and Togo.

The United States, France and European countries have poured hundreds of millions of dollars of military assistance into Niger.

France has 1,500 soldiers in the

country, though their fate is now in question.

The US has 1,100 military personnel also in Niger where they operate an important drone base in the city of Agadez.

While the junta's leaders have claimed they acted because of growing insecurity, conflict incidents decreased by nearly 40 per cent in the country compared to the previous six-month period, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project.

That's in contrast to surging attacks in Mali, which has kicked out French forces and partnered with Wagner, and Burkina Faso, which has gotten rid of French forces as well.

The uncertainty in Niger is worsening daily life for some 25 million people in one of the world's poorest countries.

Food prices are rising after ECOWAS imposed economic and travel sanctions following the coup. Nigeria, which supplies up to 90 per cent of the electricity in Niger, has cut off some of the supply.

Humanitarian groups in Niger have warned of "devastating effects" on the lives of over 4.4 million people needing aid.

Some of Niger's already struggling residents said military intervention is not the answer.

"Just to eat is a problem for us. So if there is a war, that won't fix anything," said Mohamed Noali, a Niamey resident patrolling the streets.

## Russia promises retaliation after Ukrainian drones hit Russian tanker

**KYIV, Aug 6 (AP):** Moscow promised retaliation on Saturday after Ukrainian drones hit a Russian tanker in the Black Sea near Crimea late on Friday, the second sea attack involving drones in one day.

Ukraine struck a major Russian port earlier on Friday.

Moscow strongly condemned what it sees as a Ukrainian "terrorist attack" on a civilian vessel in the Kerch Strait, said Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova.

"There can be no justification for such barbaric actions, they will not go unanswered and their authors and perpetrators will inevitably be punished," she wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

As Kyiv's naval capabilities grow, the Black Sea is becoming an increasingly important battleground in the war.

Three weeks ago, Moscow withdrew from a key export agreement that allowed Ukraine to ship millions of tons of grain across the Black Sea for sale on world markets. In the wake of that withdrawal, Russia carried out repeated strikes on Ukrainian ports, including Odesa. An official with Ukraine's Security Service confirmed to The Associated Press that the service was behind the attack on the tanker, which was transporting fuel for Russian forces. A sea drone, filled with 450 kilograms (992 pounds) of TNT, was used for the attack, added the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to give official statements.

"The Sig tanker ... suffered a hole in the engine room near the waterline on the starboard side,

presumably as a result of a sea drone attack," Russia's Federal Agency for Marine and River Transport wrote on Telegram, adding that there were no casualties among the 11 crew members.

Vladimir Rogov, a Kremlin-installed official in Ukraine's partially-occupied southern Zaporizhzhia region, said several members of the ship's crew were wounded because of broken glass.

Without specifying that Ukraine was responsible for the drone strike, Vasyl Malyuk, who leads Ukraine's Security Service, said



that "such special operations are conducted in the territorial waters of Ukraine and are completely legal". Any such explosions, he said, are "an absolutely logical and effective step with regard to the enemy".

The attack briefly halted traffic on the Kerch Bridge, as well as ferry transport. Tugboats were deployed to assist the tanker, which is under United States sanctions for helping provide jet fuel to Russian forces fighting in Syria, according to Russia's Tass news agency.

Ukraine's earlier strike on Novorossiysk halted maritime traffic for a few hours and marked the first time a commercial Russian port has been targeted in the nearly

18-month-old conflict. The port has a naval base, shipbuilding yards and an oil terminal, and is key for exports. It lies about 110 kilometres (about 60 miles) east of Crimea.

Shipping expert Jayendu Krishna told The Associated Press that the attacks left Russian shipping activity "largely unaffected". He believes that they may increase the risk of Russian attacks on Ukrainian ports rather than serving as a tool to put pressure on Russia to halt attacks and reinstate the grain deal.

"Every time anything happens to Russia, you see Putin in retaliation mode ... therefore, you may see further attacks on other parts of Ukraine," Krishna said.

"I think it will probably compound the effect and compound the risk in the Black Sea, rather than reducing it," he added. "It is very difficult for me to imagine that Russia will give in, unless and until their banks have smooth operations, and they are able to export their own cargo uninterrupted."

A Telegram post on Saturday by Deputy Chair of Russia's Security Council Dmitry Medvedev implied that Russia would increase its attacks against Ukrainian ports in response to Kyiv's attacks on Russian ships in the Black Sea.

"Apparently, the strikes on Odesa, Izmail, and other places were not enough for them," he wrote. In other developments, Russia's Defence Ministry said on Saturday it captured a settlement in Ukraine's easternmost Luhansk region, most of which is occupied by Russia. "In the area of Kupiansk ... the settlement of Novoselivske was liberated," the ministry wrote on Telegram.

## Philippine military condemns Chinese coast guard's use of water cannon on its boat in disputed sea



**MANILA, Aug 6 (AP):** The Philippine military on Sunday condemned a Chinese coast guard ship's "excessive and offensive" use of water cannon to block a Filipino supply boat from delivering new troops, food, water and fuel to a Philippine-occupied shoal in the disputed South China Sea.

The tense confrontation on Saturday at the Second Thomas Shoal was the latest flare-up in the long-seething territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei.

The disputes in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest sea lanes, have long been regarded as an Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the rivalry between the United States and China in the region.

Philippine navy personnel on board two chartered supply boats were cruising toward Second Thomas, escorted by Philippine coast guard ships, when a Chinese coast guard ship approached and used a powerful water cannon to block the Filipinos from the shoal that China also claims, according to Philippine military and coast guard officials.

The Chinese ship's action was "in wanton disregard of the safety of the people on board" the Philippine navy-chartered boat and violated international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the

Law of the Sea, said the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which did not say if any of its sailors were injured. The "excessive and offensive actions against Philippine vessels" near the shoal prevented one of the two Filipino boats from unloading supplies needed by Filipino troops guarding the shoal onboard a long-marooned Philippine navy ship, the BRP Sierra Madre, the Philippine military said in a statement. It called on the Chinese coast guard and China's central military commission "to act with prudence and be responsible in their actions to prevent miscalculations and accidents that will endanger people's lives."

Several countries expressed concern over the actions of the Chinese ship.

The United States immediately expressed support to the Philippines and renewed a warning that it's obliged to defend its longtime treaty ally when Filipino public vessels and forces come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea. The US State Department said in a statement that "firing water cannons and employing unsafe blocking maneuvers, PRC ships interfered with the Philippines' lawful exercise of high seas freedom of navigation and jeopardised the safety of the Philippine vessels and crew." It used the acronym for the People's Republic of China. It added that

such actions are the latest by the PRC in the South China Sea and are a direct threat to "regional peace and stability."

Australia expressed its concern, describing the actions of the Chinese coast guard ship as "dangerous and destabilizing."

Japan said it supported the Philippines, adding that "the harassment and action, which infringe on lawful activities of the sea and endanger navigational safety," were "totally unacceptable."

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila did not immediately issue any reaction but has filed a large number of diplomatic protests over increasingly hostile actions by China in recent years. Chinese government officials did not immediately comment on the incident.

China has long demanded that the Philippines withdraw its small contingent of naval forces and tow away the actively commissioned but crumbling BRP Sierra Madre. The navy ship was deliberately marooned on the shoal in 1999 and now serves as a fragile symbol of Manila's territorial claim to the atoll.

Chinese ships had blocked and shadowed navy vessels delivering food and other supplies to the Filipino sailors on the ship in the shoal, which Chinese coast guard ships and a swarm of Chinese fishing boats — suspected to be manned by militias — have surrounded for years.

While the US lays no claims to the South China Sea, it has often lashed out at China's aggressive actions and deployed its warships and fighter jets in patrols and military exercises with regional allies to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight, which it says is in America's national interest. China has warned the US to stop meddling in what it calls a purely Asian dispute and has warned of unspecified repercussions.

Additionally, Beijing has criticised a recent agreement by the Philippines and the US, which are longtime treaty allies, allowing American forces access to additional Filipino military camps under a 2014 defense agreement.

## Musk says his cage fight with Zuckerberg will be streamed on X



**NEW YORK, Aug 6 (AP):** Elon Musk says his potential in-person fight with Mark Zuckerberg would be streamed on his social media site X, formerly known as Twitter. The two tech billionaires seemingly agreed to a "cage match" face-off in late June. Zuckerberg is actually trained in mixed martial arts, and the Facebook founder posted about completing his first jiu jitsu tournament earlier this year.

"Zuck v Musk fight will be live-streamed on X," Musk wrote in a post Sunday on the platform. "All proceeds will go to charity for veterans."

Musk said earlier Sunday he was training for the fight by lifting weights.

"Don't have time to work out, so I just bring them o work," Musk wrote on X. Whether or not Musk and Zuckerberg actually make it to the ring has yet to be seen - especially as Musk often tweets about action prematurely or without following through. But even if their cage match agreement is all a joke, the banter has gained attention. It all started when Musk, who owns X, responded to a tweet about Meta preparing to release a new Twitter rival called Threads. He took a dig about the world becoming "exclusively under Zuck's thumb with no other options" but then one Twitter user jokingly warned Musk of Zuckerberg's jiu jitsu training. "I'm up for a cage match if he is lol," Musk wrote late Tuesday. Musk's push to stream the video live on X comes as he's pushing to turn the platform into a "digital town square."

However, his much-publicised Twitter Spaces kickoff event in May with Florida Gov Ron DeSantis announcing his run for president struggled with technical glitches and a near half-hour delay. Musk had said the problems were due to "straining" servers because so many people were trying to listen to the audio-only event. But even at their highest, the number of listeners listed topped out at around 420,000, far from the millions of viewers that televised presidential announcements attract.

## Hiroshima mayor calls nuclear deterrence 'folly' as city marks 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of atomic bombing

**TOKYO, Aug 6 (AP):** Hiroshima officials criticised growing support for nuclear weapons as a deterrent resulting from uneasiness over Russia's war in Ukraine and tensions in the Koreas, commenting Sunday as the city remembered the atomic bombing of 78 years ago.

The observance came two months after Hiroshima hosted a summit of the Group of 7 major industrial nations, at which G7 leaders visited the city's peace park and a museum dedicated to those who died in the world's first atomic attack.

The leaders issued a joint statement calling for the continued non-use of nuclear weapons, but they also justified having such arms to "serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war and coercion."

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui rejected that position in his peace address at the commemora-

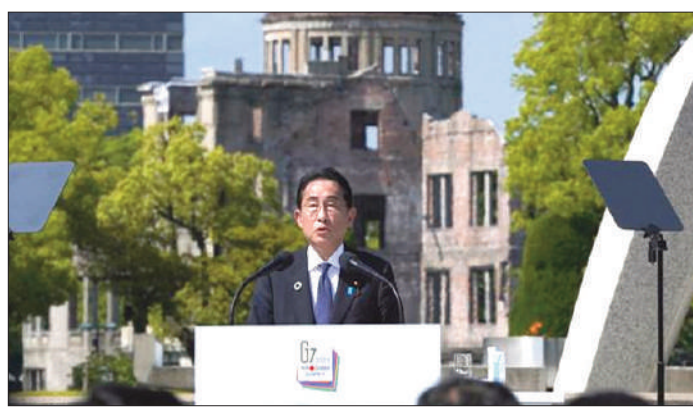
tion.

"Leaders around the world must confront the reality that nuclear threats now being voiced by certain policymakers reveal the folly of nuclear deterrence theory," he said. "They must immediately take concrete steps to lead us from the dangerous present toward our ideal world."

Hiroshima Gov. Hidehiko Yuzai questioned the growing calls for reinforced nuclear deterrence around the world, including in Japan, since Russia invaded Ukraine and warned of possible nuclear weapons use, while North Korea advances its missile and nuclear development.

"Believers of proactive nuclear deterrence, who say nuclear weapons are indispensable to maintain peace, are only delaying the progress toward nuclear disarmament," Yuzai said.

The atomic bomb dropped by



the United States on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, destroyed the city, killing 140,000 people, and a second bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed an additional 70,000. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, ending World War II and Japan's nearly half century of aggression in Asia.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida,

who represents Hiroshima in parliament, has sought to highlight the G7 commitment to nuclear disarmament and a condemnation of Russia's threats to use atomic weapons. But he has been faulted by survivors for refusing to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon.

Arguing the pact is unworkable

because no nuclear-armed state has signed, Kishida has pledged to serve as a bridge between nuclear and non-nuclear states and work for nuclear disarmament. His critics say it is a hollow promise because Japan relies on the U.S. nuclear umbrella for protection and has been rapidly expanding its military.

Japan, the United States and South Korea are stepping up security cooperation in response to a more assertive China and the growing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea. Washington and Seoul have agreed to strengthen their nuclear deterrence cooperation, and Japan also wants stronger protection by U.S. nuclear weapons.

Kishida, who also attended Sunday's ceremony, said the path toward a nuclear-free world has grown tougher because of rising tensions and conflicts. "But the sit-

uation makes it even more important for the world to regain the momentum," he said.

People at the ceremony observed a moment of silence with the sound of a peace bell at 8:15 a.m., the time when a U.S. B-29 dropped the bomb on the city. Hundreds of white doves, considered symbols of peace, were released.

Many survivors of the bombings have lasting injuries and illnesses resulting from the explosions and radiation exposure and face discrimination in Japan.

As of March, 113,649 survivors, whose average age is now 85, are certified as eligible for government medical support, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry. But many others, including those who say they were victims of the "black rain" that fell outside the initially designated areas, are still without support.

## Indian authorities offer to fly home woman student from Hyderabad

**NEW YORK, Aug 6 (PTI):** The Consulate General of India in Chicago has established contact with a woman student hailing from Hyderabad, who was reportedly depressed and starving, and said she was fit and offered help, including medical assistance and travel to India. Syeda Lulu Minhaj Zaidi, who hails from Telangana and came to the US to pursue higher education, was seen on a street in Chicago on the verge of starvation. Her mother had written a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar seeking his help to bring her back home. "Happy that we could contact Ms Syeda Zaidi and offered help, including medical assistance and travel to India. She is fit and has spoken to her mother in India," the Consulate General of India in Chicago posted on platform X, formerly known as Twitter. "She is yet to respond to our offer of support to return to India. We stand ready to extend to her all assistance," it said.



# PM Modi's 'Quit India' reference to target opposition as he launches mega railway station revamp

*'Away from the negative politics, we have taken the task of nation's development as a mission and given it the top priority'*

**NEW DELHI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the opposition of playing "negative politics" and said now the entire country is rooting for corruption, dynasty and appeasement to 'quit India'.

Addressing an event after laying the foundation stone for the redevelopment of 508 railway stations across the country via video conferencing, he alleged a section of the opposition is driven by the principle of neither working nor letting others work.

"Unfortunately in our country, there is a part of the opposition who even today won't do anything themselves and won't allow others to do anything either. They are stuck with this attitude."

"So, concerned about the country's present and the future a modern Parliament building was built, the symbol of democracy which has representation of both the government and the opposition. They even opposed that. We developed Kartavya Path and they opposed that as well," he said.

The PM then went on to refer to the Statue of Unity of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel which is the biggest statue in the world. He said that while all Indians feel proud of it, few opposition party leaders have gone to there to pay homage. But some parties remember India's first home minister only during polls, he alleged.

"In 70 years, they did not construct a war memorial for martyrs but when we built one they did not even feel ashamed of criticising it publicly," he said.

"Away from the negative politics, we have



taken the task of nation's development as a mission and given it the top priority without caring for vote bank and party politics," he said.

At present, the Prime Minister said, the central government is also running a campaign to provide jobs to 10 lakh youth through 'Rozgar Mela'.

"This is the picture of a changing India where development is giving way to new opportunities for the youth, and the youth are giving new wings to the development of the country," he added.

Referring to the Quit India Movement anniversary on August 9, the prime minister said it was a historic day that created new energy in India's struggle for Independence.

Today the whole country is roaring 'Quit India' for every evil, corruption, dynasty and

appeasement, he said.

"Inspired by the Quit India Movement, the entire country is now roaring Quit India for every evil, saying 'corruption, quit India', 'dynasty, quit India', 'appeasement, quit India'," Modi said.

The PM mentioned the upcoming Partition Horror Remembrance Day and acknowledged the contribution of the people who gathered themselves after the shock and are contributing to the development of the country. "This day gives us the responsibility of keeping our unity intact."

"Our Independence Day is the time to reiterate our commitment to our Tricolour and the progress of our nation. Like last year, this time also, we have to hoist the tricolour at every house," he said.

He also said the Modi government has

changed the perception of people on taxes and noted that the number of people paying taxes is increasing due to the increasing facilities and ease of living.

The PM mentioned the time when income of ₹ 2 lakh was taxed in the country while income up to ₹ 7 lakh is not taxed today.

"Despite this the amount of income tax collected in the country is increasing, and sending a clear message that the scope of the middle class in the country is continuously increasing. He informed that the number of people filing income tax returns has increased by 16 per cent this year which shows the growth of trust in the government and the innovation taking place in the country," he said.

The PM also highlighted how the prestige and credibility of the country has increased globally and how the focus of the works is on the country.

"World's attitude towards India has changed. There are two main reasons behind this: firstly Indians elected a full majority government after almost three decades and secondly the full majority government took major decisions and continuously worked for a permanent solution to the challenges before the country," Modi said.

"India, which is heading towards the goal of being developed, is at the beginning of Amrit Kaal. There is new energy, new inspiration and new resolutions and in this spirit, a new chapter is beginning in the history of Indian Railways," he said after laying the foundation for the redevelopment of railway stations.

## Authorities bulldoze structures used for pelting stones during Nuh clashes

**GURUGRAM, Aug 6 (PTI):** Haryana authorities Sunday razed several illegal structures in the violence-hit Nuh district including a hotel-cum-restaurant from where stones were allegedly pelted on a religious procession during the clashes early last week, officials said.

This is the fourth day of demolition drive in Nuh with the district administration saying they have identified 16 illegal structures which will be bulldozed on Sunday. Sub-divisional Magistrate Ashwani Kumar said these structures were built illegally were used by "hooligans" to throw stones during the recent violence.

Nuh District Magistrate Dhirender Khadgata said curfew is being relaxed on Sunday as well and people can buy essential goods from 9 am to 12 noon.

The district administration had on Saturday bulldozed illegal constructions at 12 different places on including on 2.6 acres of land around Nalhar Medical College.

"These were illegal constructions. Notices were already given to owners of the demolished struc-

tures. The owners of some illegal structures were also involved in the violence during the Braj Mandal religious yatra. The demolition drive will continue," SDM Kumar had said on Saturday.

Six people, including two home guards and a cleric, died in the communal clashes that erupted in Nuh when the Vishva Hindu Parishad procession was attacked by mobs on Monday.

A four-member delegation of the Communist

Party of India is, meanwhile, expected to visit the violence-affected areas of Gurugram and Nuh on Sunday.

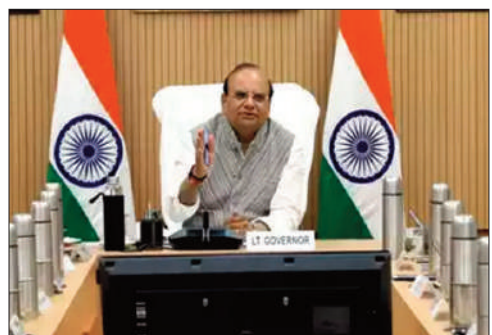
A mahapanchayat of the Hindu community is also underway in Tigr village to protest against the arrest of four youths in connection with the burning of a mosque in Sector-57 of Gurugram and the killing of its Naib Imam during the peak of violence last week.

The participants claim those arrested have nothing to do with the case.

The administration is on high alert and heavy police force has been deployed in the entire area.



## LG Saxena grants sanction to prosecute 6 people related to northeast Delhi riots



**NEW DELHI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has granted sanction to prosecute six people accused in a case related to the death of a man due to gunshot injury during the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, Raj Niwas officials said on Sunday.

The victim, 25-year-old Shahid alias Allah Mehar, a resident of New Mustafabad, was killed on February 24.

During the investigation of the case, it has emerged that a deep-rooted conspiracy was hatched under the garb of democratically opposing the Citizenship Amendment Bill which led to the riots in the North-East district of Delhi, the officials said.

The FIR in the case was lodged on March 1, 2020, at the Dayal Pur police station against Mohd Firoz, Chand Mohd, Rais Khan, Md Junaid, Irshad and Akil Ahmed for the commission of offences punishable under section 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code.

According to officials, the six accused disclosed that they were involved in the riots. They had forcefully entered the building of Saptarishi Ispat and Alloys Pvt Ltd and looted the office of the firm with other rioters.

The victim was shot on the roof of the office. The investigation of the case was transferred to the Crime Branch which examined the witnesses and analysed the evidence collected, including the viral video on social media of a TV Channel.

The Lieutenant Governor has granted the sanction for prosecution under Section 196 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.

## Search continues for missing disaster victims in Uttarakhand's Gaurikund

**RUDRAPRAYAG (U'KHAND), Aug 6 (PTI):** Rescue teams in Uttarakhand toiled for the third consecutive day on Sunday, searching for 20 people who went missing in a landslide triggered by a flash flood in Gaurikund while on their way to Kedamath.

The landslide occurred around 12 am on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, washing away three shops located close to a rain-fed waterfall and around 50 metres above the Mandakini river, which was in spate.

Personnel from the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Yatra Management Force, police and fire brigades searched for the missing people with the help of drones from Dhari Devi to the Kund barrage on Sunday but found no one. District Disaster Management Officer (Rudraprayag) Nandan Singh Rajwar said.

Intermittent rain and falling boulders from hill-sides continue to hamper the rescue efforts. The nearly six-kilometre stretch between Sonprayag and Gaurikund is highly vulnerable to landslides.

Three bodies were recovered from the rubble of the shops on Friday but 20 people remain missing. The spot where the shops stood and the Mandakini river is also being scoured, Rajwar said.

At 17, a majority of the victims were from Nepal. Ukhimath Sub-Divisional Magistrate Jitendra Verma said bad weather and the rise in the Mandakini's water level have made the rescue operation difficult.

With the continuing bad weather posing a threat of more landslides, owners of makeshift kiosks and shops are vacating the sites voluntarily to move to safe locations, he said. The district administration has begun to identify shops and other structures on either side of the road between Sonprayag and Gaurikund that could be endangered by landslides.

The three bodies recovered on Friday have been identified as those of Devi Bahadur, Tek Bahadur and Prakash Tamta -- all from Nepal.

Among the 20 people still missing are Ashu and Priyanshu Chamola from Tilwara, Ranbir Singh from Basti, Nepal resident Amar Bohra, his wife Anita Bohra, their minor daughters Radhika and Pinky and sons Prithvi, Jatil and Vakil. Vinod, a resident of Khanwa Bharatpur, Mulayam of Nagla Banjara in Saharanpur, Sugaram, Bam Bohra, Chandra Kami, Dharamraj, Neer Bahadur, his wife Sumitra Devi, their daughter Kumari Nisha, and Rohit Bisht from Utsuya Chopra are also missing.

## Kerala to launch 'Athidhi Portal' today for reg of migrant workers

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Aug 6 (PTI):** The 'Athidhi portal', a user-friendly web portal to expedite the registration process for migrant workers in Kerala and introduce a unique identification system, will be launched by the state government on Monday.

In the wake of two recent sexual crimes against children, which were allegedly carried out by migrant workers, the Kerala government has decided to speed up the registration of the "guest workers" -- as they are addressed by the Left government.

On July 28, a five-year-old girl abducted from Aluva in Ernakulam District was brutally raped

and killed allegedly by a migrant worker from Bihar. The child's family too hails from the same state. In another incident, on August 4, Malappuram police arrested a 36-year-old man, a migrant labourer from Madhya Pradesh, for allegedly sexually abusing a minor child who also hails from there.

State labour minister V Sivankutty said officials will ensure that no guest worker is left out from the portal.

"The government will also consider setting up help desks at railway stations where guest workers arrive in large numbers," the minister said in a release.

The statewide launch of the portal and registration of guest workers will be held on August 7, the Labour department said.

Contractors, who bring guest workers to the state, and employers can register the workers in the portal. It also allows workers to register themselves individually as well. The enrolling officer will examine the details entered in the portal 'athidhi.kerala.gov.in' and issue a unique ID to each worker, the Labour Department said. The portal will collect information regarding the workers and ensure that they have social security. Labour Commissioner Arjun Pandian said.

passing away of Gaddar. He moved the masses with his voice," tweeted Naidu, and expressed his sympathies to the deceased campaigner's family.

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh said he is devastated to know that Gaddar's voice has been silenced by death. Remembering his stellar contribution in achieving statehood for Telangana through his songs, Lokesh said Gaddar had emerged as the voice of the movement.

A decade ago, his song 'Podustunna Poddu Meeda Nadustunna Kaalama Pooru Telanganama' had become the anthem of Telangana achievement movement. Union minister and Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy said Gaddar, who played a key role in spreading public awareness on various issues, gave an impetus to the Telangana statehood agitation with his songs. Kharage said Gaddar would remain a hope for the aspirations of the weakest sections. Gaddar's poetry, passionate songs and activism espousing the cause of social justice shall always be a source of inspiration for Telangana and its people, the AICC president said.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said Gaddar's "unwavering dedication to social causes and the fight for Telangana's statehood was truly inspiring."

A former naxalite, Gaddar had led an underground life, including in the forests. Subsequently, he had joined the mainstream and voted for the first time in his life in the Telangana Legislative Assembly polls in 2018. Gaddar, who was shot by assailants in the 1990s, had a bullet stuck in his spinal cord till the end.



Reddy called Gaddar a revolutionary man. "He was the voice of the downtrodden and fought for social justice through his inspiring songs," Reddy said in a statement, and conveyed his condolences to the singer's family members. TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu also posted on Twitter about the passing away of the popular singer, who is equally famous in both the Telugu states and popular for his revolutionary ballads. "A prolific chapter in public movement and human rights campaign has come to an end with the



**HYDERABAD, Aug 6 (PTI):** Making no bones about the association with AIMIM party, Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday said BRS's friendship with the Asaduddin Owaisi-led party will continue in future also, and the ruling party will come back to power with 7-8 more seats than it got in 2018 Assembly polls.

BRS (then TRS) won 88 seats in the 2018 Assembly polls and its strength increased to 101 in the due course with several other party MLAs joining the ruling party.

Replying to a discussion on "Telangana State formation-progress achieved in the own state" in the assembly, Rao also known as KCR took potshots at NCP chief Sharad Pawar for saying BRS as "B Team of BJP and straight away associated with the saffron party (in Maharashtra)".

Exuding confidence that BRS will come back to power in the poll-bound Telangana, Rao slammed the Congress party as the state suffered the most during its regime.

This is likely to be the last session of the assembly for the present government as elections are expected to be held at the end of the year.

Rao said, "We ourselves directly declared as a secular party. Both AIMIM and BRS are friendly parties. We will remain together and also in future. We will get good results so that Telangana people or minorities/poor people would benefit."

"I can say with guarantee that we would win 100 per cent seven to eight seats more than we got in the last elections. No one needs to have any doubts about it," he added.

If the rulers are sincere and honest, God and nature will also bless and during the past 10 years in the BRS rule, Telangana is able to generate more hydel power and is selling to Rajasthan on returnable basis, he said.

Hitting out at the Congress and BJP, he said both the parties made innumerable promises during Karnataka Assembly polls.

Quoting media reports, he said the Karnataka government now says the state's financial position is not in a position to support the implementation of some of the poll promises and hence the administration is thinking of "diverting SC/ST funds".

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comments that freebies for votes are "Revdi Culture", KCR said the same party promised free half litre milk to every household in Karnataka during the assembly elections held recently.

Slamming the Congress, Rao said, "During the Indian National Congress rule in the united state (before bifurcation), 30,000 to 35,000 lakes vanished. They were subjected to encroachment."

The Congress party says that it would abolish Dharani portal, an Integrated Land Records Management System when it comes to power. "What do you want to do by abolishing Dharani. Are you thinking of bringing middlemen culture and vultures? Dharani is nothing but empowering democracy and empowering the farming community of Telangana," he said.

Narrating the growth of power capacity in Telangana during the BRS rule, Rao said the state will soon achieve the target of 25,000 MW installed power capacity against the existing capacity of 18,756 MW.

KCR alleged that NTPC which was mandated to set up 4,000 MW plant in the state as per the AP Reorganisation Act, has now taken up only 1,600 MW.

He also said Telangana is in number one position when it comes to per capita power consumption and the national average is nowhere near the state.

Rao said the Centre has declared that Telangana is a zero-Fluorosis state. This is because the state government is providing safe drinking water to people.

On agricultural growth in the state, the chief minister said Telangana currently uses 27-28 lakh tonne of urea for farming activity as against seven lakh tonne earlier.

"During the Congress regime paddy production in Telangana was at 6.8 million tonne. Today it crossed 30 million tonne overtaking Punjab. ... We are aiming to increase the paddy production to four crore (forty million tonne)," he said.

KCR said the state government will soon appoint a Pay Revision Commission (PRC) for employees and would also offer interim relief to them.

## Renowned Telangana folk singer Gaddar no more

**HYDERABAD/AMARAVATI, Aug 6 (PTI):** Renowned Telangana folk singer and balladeer Gaddar, who was popularly known for his revolutionary songs during the 1980s and later during the Telangana statehood agitation, passed away here on Sunday due to ill-health. He was 77.

Born as Gummadu Vittal Rao at Toopran in Medak district in 1949, the renowned folk singer and poet went on to become popular as 'Gaddar'.

Gaddar died at Apollo Spectra Hospital in the city due to lung and urinary problems and advanced age, the hospital said in a statement. He was suffering from severe heart disease and got admitted on July 20. He underwent a bypass surgery on August 3 and recovered from it, the hospital said.

However, he has had a history of lung and urinary problems, which along with advanced age, became aggravated and led to his passing, it said.

His body was taken to L B Stadium in the city to enable people to pay their last respects. The funeral will take place on Monday. Tributes poured in condoling the death of the balladeer.

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, her Haryana counterpart Bandaru Dattatreya, Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, top Congress leaders, including AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as well as TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and several other leaders from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh expressed grief at Gaddar's demise.

Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "Saddened to hear about the demise of Shri Gummadu Vittal Rao, Telangana's

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### NOTICE INVITATION FOR TENDER

Scaled Tenders (Two Bid system comprising of Technical Bid and Financial Bid) affixing court fee of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only are invited from the intending suppliers/manufacturer/firm for Supply of sports and Gym equipments for MBBS students of Diphu Medical College & Hospital. The bidders are requested to submit the tender in separate sealed envelope with seal and signature. The tender documents along with the specification may be downloaded from the office website of DMCH&H ([www.dmeassam.in](http://www.dmeassam.in)) and to deposit the payment of Rs. 2000/- as tender fee (non-refundable) and EMD of Rs. 10,000 (Ten Thousand)/-(refundable) in the form of demand draft in favour of Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent, Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu on or before 28/08/2022 along with the tender documents to be submitted before 1.00 P.M. The tender will be opened on the same date at 2.30 P.M. in presence of the tenderer or their authorized representatives. The tender are to be submitted to the office of the Principal cum Chief Superintendent, Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu on all the working days during office hours.

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# Kuldeep is bowling well and that is why team is backing him: Chahal

**PROVIDENCE, Aug 6 (PTI):** Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal understands why Kuldeep Yadav is playing ahead of him in the ODI format and is not losing sleep over his place in the Asia Cup and World Cup squad.

Chahal did not make the playing eleven in the three ODIs against the West Indies. Featuring in his first game since the IPL, Chahal made his presence felt with a twin strike in his opening over but India lost the game by four runs.

"Team combination is our priority and it is not something new. At 7 we generally play Ravindra Jadeja or Axar Patel. Three spinners can only play if the wickets are spin-friendly," said Chahal ahead of the second T20.

"Kuldeep is bowling really well, he is in a great rhythm and that's why team is backing him. I keep working on nets so that whenever I get the chance I will grab it," the leg-spinner added.

The focus is on ODIs ahead of the World Cup in October-November but Chahal has not been able to get a game since January. However, the 33-year-old is happy as long he gets to be part of



the squad,

"We are professional cricketers. I was playing after two months, last I played was in the IPL. It is all about the preparation. This is not an individual sport, you are

playing here for your team. There are times when players have to sit out for two series, so it doesn't mean that they are not part of the team," said the former state-level chess player.

Chahal said that instead of thinking about missed chances, he considers himself lucky to be wearing the India Blues.

"I am very happy that I am getting to wear the blue jersey every-

day. I am not sitting at home. I am travelling with the team. I am part of the team. "I have played chess, it is an individual game but cricket is a team sport. Out of fifteen people in the squad only eleven can play," he added. Nicholas Pooran has been in menacing form of late and loves smashing the spinners in the corner region. Chahal enjoys his battles against the West Indian.

"I love my battles against Nicholas Pooran. I have got him out a few times and in some other occasions, he has hit me for sixes. I try not to give him freebies or I know he will hit me out of the park."

Having played under multiple captains since his debut under M S Dhoni in 2016, Chahal feels his equation with whoever is leading the team doesn't change much.

"It's like a family where you have four brothers. Mahi bhai was the eldest, then came Virat bhaiya, then Rohit bhaiya and now Hardik. Equations remain the same. At the ground, we all want to win. They (seniors) gave us freedom as a bowler and Hardik also gives that space to the bowlers," he said.

## Prannoy signs off with runner-up finish at Australian Open

**SYDNEY, Aug 6 (PTI):** Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy capped off an impressive week with a runner-up finish at the Australian Open after his gallant fight ended in a heart-breaking loss to China's Weng Hong Yang in a thrilling men's singles final here on Sunday. Following a marathon 90 minutes of play, it was Prannoy who was left to bear the heartache as the 9-21 23-21 20-22 loss against world number 24 Weng robbed him of a chance to win his second BWF title of the season.

With the win, the 24-year-old Weng, who had won the Korea Open last year and 2019 China Masters, settled the scores against Prannoy after going down in three games to the Indian at the Malaysia Masters final in May.

Eight times this year, Prannoy has recovered from an opening game loss and went on to claim the match six times like he did against World number 2 Anthony Ginting in the quarterfinals.

The script seemed to be going the same way before Weng staged a sensational comeback from 14-19 down in the decider.

The 31-year-old from Kerala bounced back from an opening game reversal but squandered a five-point lead in the decider and also a championship point to eventually finish second to Weng.

Prannoy was error-prone in the first game, while Weng used his jump smashes to good effect to pull away from 6-6. With the Indian continuing to miscue his shots, the Chinese grabbed 12 game points when Prannoy again sprayed into net. The Chinese con-

verted it when Prannoy went long.

Prannoy relishes such pressure cooker situation and once again showed his nerves. Weng opened up a 3-0 lead but the Indian made it 2-4 with a booming smash.

Prannoy evened things at 7-7 with a smash and went into the lead after Weng's forehand went wide and Prannoy followed it with another smash. The Indian grabbed a three-point cushion with a forehand jump smash at the break. Weng managed to hang in there with some fine placement but Prannoy kept his nose ahead at 13-11 with another cross winner. The Chinese kept breathing down his rival's neck with another push back at 15-15 with a body smash.

Weng produced a smash on Prannoy's forehand and soon wrested back the lead at 17-16. After a series of intense rallies, the duo was locked at 19-19 when Weng took a medical timeout.

On resumption, Prannoy unleashed a whipping backhand to grab a game point but he went wide. The Indian gained another game point after making a diving save on his left. Weng once again saved it with a deep cross smash.

At 21-21, Weng's forehand smash went wide to hand Prannoy his third game point and this time the Indian prevailed in a flat net exchange to take the match to the decider.

In the third game, Prannoy opened up a 6-3 lead with two precise returns on the backhand of his rival. But a few unforced errors from the Indian helped Weng to narrow it to 6-7.



## Rupjyoti FC beat Demow FCC to lift Inter Club Football league

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, Aug 6:** Under the auspices of the Sivasagar District Sports Association and with the support of the Demow Sub-Sports Association, the Inter Club Football League culminated with a thrilling final match between Rupjyoti FC and Demow Football Coaching Centre at Demow Raichai Rural Stadium on Sunday. The league was kicked off at Demow Raichai Rural Stadium on July 20. The much-anticipated final match was inaugurated by Thowra MLA Sushanta Borgohain, who graced the event with his

presence. The match proved to be a spectacular display of skill and teamwork, with Rupjyoti FC emerging as the undisputed champions, defeating Demow Football Coaching Centre with a remarkable scoreline of 4-1. In recognition of their outstanding performance throughout the league, Rupjyoti FC was awarded the prestigious Late Jugal Chandra Dutta Memorial Trophy, while the runners-up, Demow Football Coaching Centre, were honored with the Late Kanak Chetia Memorial Trophy.

Individual players were also celebrated

for their exceptional contributions to the league. Pradip Gowala, a key player from Rupjyoti FC, was presented with the esteemed Best Player M Hussain Memorial Trophy for his remarkable skills and sportsmanship. Rana Bhumij, the talented goalkeeper from Rupjyoti FC, was lauded with the Krishna Dutta Memorial Best Goal Keeper Trophy for his impressive saves and remarkable performance under the goalpost.

The memorial trophies were donated by generous individuals to honour the legacy of their loved ones. The Late Jugal Chandra

Dutta Memorial Trophy was contributed by Arup Kumar Dutta, the Late Kanak Chetia Memorial Trophy was graciously donated by Pranab Chetia, the M Hussain Memorial Trophy was presented by Manjur Ali, and the Krishna Dutta Memorial Best Goal Keeper Trophy was generously provided by Arup Kumar Dutta.

The prize distribution ceremony was attended by Thowra MLA Sushanta Borgohain, Sarat Hazarika (Joint Secretary of Sivasagar District Sports Association), and other distinguished guests.



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Chief Minister, Assam

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