

WORLD
NATION

- Ex-Prime Minister Thaksin enters prison in Thailand
- Putin stays away over arrest warrant
- Dhankhar says parliamentary disruptions matter of concern
- Congress will conduct caste census in MP: Kharge

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HT BRIEF

One held with heroin

BOKAJAN: In a significant operation, the police in Karbi Anglong successfully intercepted and recovered heroin from a fishmonger who was traveling on a bicycle from Dimapur. The incident took place at Lahorijan, a location situated on the Assam-Nagaland border under the jurisdiction of Khatkhathi police station in Karbi Anglong. The police conducted the inspection after becoming suspicious of the fishmonger's route, as the particular route has a reputation for its involvement in drug smuggling. Upon examination of the fish containers being transported, the police discovered plastic soap cases containing powdery substances, suspected to be heroin, with a total weight of 12.90 grams. Md Sulman Ali (30), a resident of Meleka Dhing under Jura police station in Nagaon district, was arrested in connection with the case. He was identified as the fishmonger involved in the smuggling attempt. A case has been registered, and the investigation is currently ongoing. This incident marks a notable instance of a fishmonger being apprehended for engaging in contraband smuggling, shedding light on the need for vigilance and enforcement in tackling illegal activities in the region.

Touch down near south polar region of Moon at 6:04 pm today

Moon mission: Chandrayaan-3 gets ready to script history

BENGALURU, Aug 22: ISRO's ambitious third Moon mission Chandrayaan-3's Lander Module (LM) is all set to land on the lunar surface on Wednesday evening, as India eyes to become the first country to reach the uncharted south pole of Earth's only natural satellite.

The LM comprising the lander (Vikram) and the rover (Pragyan), is scheduled to make a touch down near the south polar region of the Moon at 6:04 pm on Wednesday.

If the Chandrayaan-3 mission succeeds in making a touchdown on moon and in landing a robotic lunar rover in ISRO's second attempt in four years, India will become the fourth country to master the technology of soft-landing on the lunar surface after the US, China and the erstwhile Soviet Union.

Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 and its objectives are to demonstrate safe and soft-landing on the lunar surface, roving on the Moon, and to



conduct in-situ scientific experiments.

Chandrayaan-2 had failed in its lunar phase when its lander 'Vikram' crashed into the surface of the Moon following anomalies in the braking system in the lander while attempting a touch down on September 7, 2019. Chandrayaan's maiden mission was in 2008.

The ₹ 600 crore Chandrayaan-3 mission was launched on July 14 onboard Launch Vehicle Mark-III (LVM-3) rocket, for a 41-day voy-

age to reach near the lunar south pole.

The soft-landing is being attempted days after Russia's Luna-25 spacecraft crashed into the Moon after spinning out of control.

After the second and final deboosting operation on August 20, the LM is slated in a 25 km x 134 km orbit around the Moon.

The module would undergo internal checks and await the sunrise at the designated landing site, ISRO has said, adding that the

powered descent -- to achieve soft-landing on the Moon's surface -- is expected to be initiated at around 5:45 pm on Wednesday.

A day before the scheduled touch-down, ISRO on Tuesday confirmed that the Chandrayaan-3 mission is on schedule.

The space agency said the Mission Operations Complex (MOX), located at the ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) here, is buzzing with energy and excitement.

"The mission is on schedule. Systems are undergoing regular checks. Smooth sailing is continuing," ISRO said in an update this afternoon, adding that the live telecast of the landing operations at MOX/ISTRAC begins at 5:20 pm on Wednesday.

ISRO's Space Applications Centre Director Nilesh Desai said, "If any health parameter (of the lander module) is found abnormal on August 23, then we will delay the landing by four days to August 27." (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

KA records 129 fresh dengue cases

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 22: The number of confirmed cases of Dengue in Karbi Anglong has shown no decrease, with a total of 129 new positive cases reported on Tuesday, according to recent data.

Despite efforts to combat vector-borne diseases, the figures for Dengue and JE remain consistent. This situation is in contrast to the overall trend of declining cases of vector-borne diseases like JE, malaria, and dengue compared to the previous year, as indicated by available data.

Last year during the same period, the Case Fatality Rate (CFR) for these diseases stood at 20.9%. However, this year, from January 1, 2022, to August 22, 2023, the CFR has significantly decreased to 5.5%. The reported cases of malaria have totaled 281, whereas dengue cases have risen to 3,651 as of August 22.

It's important to note that regions like Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong, which have historically been susceptible to malaria infections, have experienced a substantial reduction in cases. Notably, there have been zero reported cases of malaria in these areas up to August 22. However, the decline in dengue cases hasn't been as pronounced in Karbi Anglong.

The Joint Director of Health Services' office in Diphu remains committed (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Four held with fake currency in Goalpara

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: In a significant development, four individuals have been apprehended in Assam's Goalpara district with fake Indian currency notes (FICN), according to an official statement from the police.

The operation was carried out by the state police's Special Task Force (STF) following credible information about a potential FICN deal in the Krishnai area of Goalpara. A team from the STF embarked on the mission from Guwahati, and around 1 PM, they intercepted a car in Krishnai town.

Three individuals, all of whom are residents of the town, were taken into custody from the intercepted car. During a thorough search, law enforcement discovered 29 bundles of fake Indian currency notes, each with a denomination of ₹ 500, hidden in the vehicle.

"The FICN, the vehicle and four mobile handsets have been seized. All the apprehended persons and seized items have been handed over to Krishnai police station for further investigation," the statement added.

This successful operation by the authorities marks a significant step in combating the circulation of counterfeit (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Ban on polygamy: Ajmal bats for spearing awareness

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: AIUDF chief and Lok Sabha MP Badrudin Ajmal on Tuesday said that the Assam government should spread awareness against marrying more than once rather than imposing a legal ban on polygamy.

He emphasised that polygamy is not 'compulsory' in Islam and questioned what the state government has done for the welfare of Muslim women.

The Assam government has initiated a process for enacting a legislation to ban polygamy and had issued a notification on Monday seeking public opinion on the proposed law.

It had earlier formed an expert committee to study the legislative competence of the Assembly to enact such a law, and the report stated that the state legislature is competent to enact a law to ban the

marital practice.

"Polygamy is not compulsory in Islam. The government has not given a person enough to feed one wife, how can he marry and take care of four wives?" Ajmal said, talking to reporters on the sidelines of a meeting of heads of different religions on 'Peace and Justice'.

While stating that he is against polygamy, Ajmal expressed apprehension that the decision to ban it will go along political lines.

Mentioning of abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir, Ajmal said, "Did peace come to Kashmir? Soldiers are being killed every day. What the families of these soldiers get is so unfortunate that it's best not to speak of it."

"You (government) stopped 'triple talak' but what did you do for women's welfare? Did you

build schools and colleges or develop industries where women will get jobs?" he questioned.

"Nothing was done except that fun of Muslim women was made in front of the world for some days. These women are now starving, dying by suicide. But the government doesn't see them, nobody is bothered about them," the Dhubri MP claimed.

He maintained that the proposed ban on polygamy is another attempt at 'making fun' and if some 'illiterate person' tries to marry more than once, he should be made to understand against doing it.

"There have been so many laws since Independence. A law can hardly help," he added.

On the 'Peace and Justice' programme, Ajmal said it will be held across the country to take 'mohabbat ka' (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

CALL OF DUTY



Tea garden workers defy rain to pluck tea leaves at Keyhung Tea Estate, Tinsukia on Tuesday. UB Photos

Pijush assesses erosion threat on Biswanath-Panpur embankment



HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Aug 22: Pijush Hazarika, the minister of water resources, information, and public relations, conducted a comprehensive inspection of the historic Biswanath-Panpur embankment in the southern part of Sootea on Tuesday. The embankment, which spans from Biswanath Ghat in Biswanath to Panpur in the southern part of Jamugurihat, has recently been facing erosion threats caused by the mighty Brahmaputra River.

Minister Hazarika visited Kumalia, where erosion caused by the Brahmaputra River has posed a significant risk to the embankment and the adjoining areas. He carefully assessed the ongoing construction work on the embankment and took stock of the progress. Notably, a breach had occurred in the Kumalia and Solmari areas of the embankment, leading to concern among local residents due to the

continuous erosion and rising water levels of the river.

In response to the erosion threat, minister Hazarika promptly directed the chief engineer and additional chief engineer of the Water Resources Department to inspect the ongoing construction efforts. The duo has been stationed in Biswanath to oversee the construction works and implement preventive measures. Sootea MLA Padma Hazarika accompanied the minister during his visit.

To counteract the erosion, 10,000 geo-bags have been installed along the embankment to protect the vast area. Minister Hazarika addressed the media gathering and assured that the affected portion of the embankment would be widened and repaired in a timely manner. He emphasised that the department has been working around the clock to address the issue and complete the repairs promptly. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Assam govt staff start 2-day stir against NPS

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Lakhs of Assam government employees started a two-day protest on Tuesday demanding re-introduction of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and said the state government can do it provided it has the will.

Employees under the aegis of the All Assam Government NPS Employees' Association (AAG-NPSEA) started 'Karma Birati' (cessation of work) agitation at

their respective workplaces to protest against the National Pension System (NPS).

"The NPS views the pension system as a business and pensioners as some trading material. It is against the ethos and traditions of our country. We are a welfare state and we cannot allow this foundation to erode," AAGNPSEA president Atulananda Hazarika said.

"We have launched this two-day

protest from today to press for our demand of re-introduction of OPS and if our demand goes unheeded, as it has been so far, we will start more intensified agitations," he added.

Dozens of other associations of government employees from schools and colleges - including faculty and office staff, judicial services, district administrations, trade unions, railways union,

health sector and treasury among others have extended their support to the two-day agitation.

Hazarika said the government assumes its responsibility when it comes to giving pension to MPs, MLAs, journalists, artists, etc., but when it comes to paying pension to its employees, it becomes a 'financial burden'. "The Assam government's refusal to accept our demand (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

PM Modi arrives in S Africa; looks forward to meetings with world leaders during BRICS summit

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he was looking forward to the deliberations and meetings with world leaders during the 15th BRICS Summit as he was accorded a warm welcome upon his arrival in South Africa.

Modi, who arrived here on a three-day official visit, was received by South Africa's Deputy President Paul Mashatile at Waterkloof Air Force Base, where he was given a ceremonial guard of honour.

"Landed in Johannesburg a short while ago. Looking forward to the various deliberations and meetings with world leaders during the BRICS Summit over the next few days," Modi posted on X, formerly Twitter.

Modi is visiting the African country from August 22 to 24 at the invitation of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. South Africa is hosting the first in-person summit of BRICS comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, since 2019.

"PM @narendramodi touches down at the Waterkloof Air Force



Base, South Africa. Warmly received by Deputy President @PMashatile of South Africa. Accorded a ceremonial welcome upon arrival," Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Arindam Bagchi said in a post on X.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to South Africa entails participation in the 15th BRICS Summit and engagements with leaders of BRICS and invited countries in plurilateral and bilateral settings, he added.

A large number of Indian community members, including activists of the Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj and the local chapter of the BAPS Swaminarayan organisation, greeted the prime minister.

Modi then left for Sandton Sun

Hotel in Johannesburg, the venue of the BRICS Summit. At the hotel, he met with local and expatriate Indian community members ahead of the BRICS Business Forum Leaders' Dialogue. The Indian community members carrying national flags and musical instruments welcomed Modi upon his arrival at the hotel with chants of 'Bharat Mata ki Jai'.

"Gratitude to South Africa's Indian community for the special welcome in Johannesburg," Modi posted on platform X along with some pictures of his interaction with the diaspora.

Two women diaspora members tied 'rakhi' around the wrist of Modi ahead of Raksha Bandhan, falling on August 30.

Modi also viewed a model of the huge Swaminarayan Mandir which has been under construction since 2017 and is expected to be completed next year. The new temple at North Riding, north of Johannesburg, will be similar to one in Nairobi in Kenya, which is built entirely of stone. It will also include classrooms and a clinic. Earlier in (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Assam flood scene: Over 43,340 affected in Dhemaji



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: The flood situation in Assam has taken a turn for the worse due to ongoing spells of rain across the entire state. According to an official bulletin from the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), the number of individuals affected across three districts has risen to 43,884 as of Tuesday.

Among the districts facing the brunt of the flooding, Dhemaji remains the most severely impacted, with over 43,341 people affected by the rising waters. To address the

crisis, the administration has established nine relief camps and relief distribution centers in the affected areas. Currently, 97 villages are submerged, and approximately 1,673 hectares of crop areas have sustained damage throughout the state.

The floodwaters have also caused significant erosion in various districts including Biswanath, Bongaigaon, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, and Tinsukia. In Lakhimpur, key infrastructure such as embankments, roads, and bridges have been (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Crompton launches Built-in Kitchen Appliances in Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: India's leading company Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd opened its exclusive showroom of new Crompton built-in kitchen appliances range in Guwahati. The exclusive showroom is located at DSB Estate, 1st Floor, 617, Opp Rajib Bhawan GS Road, Guwahati. During the inauguration Ravi Jain, Dev Jain, Abhishek Mishra (sr sales manager, Crompton Greaves consumer electricals limited), Mona Raipurkar, head brand stores & business development-new businesses, Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd along with other dignitaries were present. Crompton unveils a comprehensive range comprising of chimneys, gas hobs, built-in ovens, built-in microwaves, and dishwashers. These products have been developed based on extensive consumer research that addresses the unmet need to make consumers' life pleasurable and comfortable in kitchens. Crompton's innovation & developments teams have leveraged their expertise in consumer electricals, air management & user experience and user interface to meet the above objectives.



These products are innovative and differentiated from the existing products in the market making them very appealing to the consumers: Such as Low noise and powerful Chimneys that are as silent as an AC (up to ~50% lower noise) and can deliver suction as high as 2000 CMH.

Smart Chimneys with AutoOn and Autoclean features that switch on automatically while cooking and clean themselves periodically.

Gas Hobs equipped with a flame failure safety device for safety and a digital timer that turns off the burner at the end of the stipulated time. Dishwashers that come with Turbo Drying technology for superior drying Built-in Ovens with steam pulse technology enable cooking Indian dishes as well as global cuisines, a PR stated.

Price pressure in food items to be transitory: Fin min Elevated inflation warrant greater vigil



NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The finance ministry on Tuesday said price pressure on food items is expected to be transitory, with tomato prices seeing a decline, but the government and RBI need to step up vigil to deal with elevated inflationary pressure. Enhanced provision for capital expenditure by the government in the current fiscal is now leading to crowding in of private investment, and domestic consumption and investment demand would continue to drive growth going forward, said the ministry's Monthly Economic Review for July.

The consumer price index based retail inflation spiked to a 15-month high of 7.44 per cent in July 2023, with specific food commodities mainly driving the increase. Core inflation, however, stayed at a 39-month low of 4.9 per cent. "The government has already taken preemptive measures to restrain food inflation which, along with the arrival of fresh stock, is likely to subside price pressure in the market soon... The price pressure in food items is expected to be transitory," the report said, adding, global uncertainty and domestic disruptions may keep inflationary pressures elevated for the coming months, warranting greater vigilance by the government and the RBI.

Though food inflation in July is perhaps the third highest since the new CPI series began in 2014, only 48 per cent of food items have inflation of above 6 per cent, and this includes 14 food items with inflation in double digits, it said.

Items like tomato, green chilli, ginger and garlic witnessed inflation of more than 50 per cent. Hence, the abnormal increase in prices of certain specific items led to high food inflation in July 2023.

"Tomato prices are likely to decline with the arrival of fresh stocks by the end of August or early September. Further, enhanced imports of tur dal are expected to moderate pulses inflation. These factors, along with the recent government efforts, can soon materialise moderation in food inflation in the coming months," the ministry said.

Russia's decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain deal, along with dry conditions in major wheat-growing areas, caused the price spike in cereals. While domestic factors like white fly disease and uneven monsoon distribution exerted pressure on vegetable prices in India, it added.

During July, cereals, pulses and vegetables exhibited double-digit inflation compared to the corresponding period last year. Disruption in domestic production also aggravated the inflationary pressures. Interruption in the supply chain of tomatoes due to white fly disease in Kolar district, Karnataka and the swift arrival of monsoon in northern India caused a surge in tomato prices. Tur dal price also inflated due to deficient production in kharif season 2022-23, the ministry said.

The RBI's interest rate setting committee had earlier this month decided to keep policy rates unchanged and remained focused on the withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation progressively aligns with the target while supporting growth.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) expected vegetable prices to correct in the coming months, but flagged the presence of uncertainties on the domestic food price outlook due to sudden weather events, possible El Nino conditions in August and beyond, and the firming up of global food prices. In this context, the MPC revised its inflation projection for current fiscal from 5.1 per cent to 5.4 per cent.

Cumulative rainfall during this year's southwest monsoon season

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Consumer affairs minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday alleged that some "political opponents" are creating a "wrong picture" about the export duty slapped on onion, and urged farmers not to worry as the Centre has restarted procurement at ₹ 2,410/quintal for its buffer stock.

The minister asserted that the decision to impose a 40 per cent export duty on onion has been taken to protect the consumers' interest, but at the same time the Centre has also decided to purchase additional 2 lakh tonnes of onion from farmers to avoid any panic selling.

He also said the government will increase the size of the buffer stock and procure more from farmers if the need arise.

At a media briefing, Goyal announced that additional procurement of 2 lakh tonnes of onion for the buffer stock will be done at ₹ 2,410 per quintal, which he said is an "historical rate" and much higher than the average ₹ 1,800-1,900 per quintal the farmers nor-

mally get from exports.

"Some political opponents have been trying to present a wrong picture (about export curbs). I would urge all farmers in onion producing states not to worry and indulge in any panic selling. NCCF and NAFED have been directed to procure onion from farmers," Goyal said.

On August 19, the central government imposed a 40 per cent export duty on onion to restrict outward shipments and boost the local availability amid apprehension about the kharif output and signs of firming of retail prices. It also decided to increase the size of the buffer stock of onion to 5 lakh tonnes for 2023-24 from the earlier 3 lakh tonnes which has already been procured.

The decision on export duty led to protests by farmers and traders in various parts of Maharashtra, especially in Nashik district.

The National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF) and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Fed-

eration of India (NAFED) have recommended the procurement operations in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh from Wednesday.

"Both consumers and farmers are important for us. ...The government has been taking decisions in the interest of both farmers and consumers," he said.

The minister said the centre is constantly in touch with Maharashtra chief minister and two

deputy chief ministers on this issue.

On export shipments stuck at ports, the directorate general of Foreign Trade (DGFT) will take a call on those shipments whose bills have been generated prior to the imposition of the export duty.

In order to protect interest of consumers from rising prices, Goyal said the government has started releasing the buffer onion

through NCCF and NAFED in the retail markets of Delhi-NCR at a subsidised rate of ₹ 25 per kilogramme from Tuesday.

He also said sowing of kharif onion is underway and if the total coverage remains same at last year's level, the production is expected to be better, he added.

Maharashtra agriculture minister Dhananjay Munde, who was also present at the media briefing, said, "Despite imposition of export duty, the farmers will not be affected. They will get a better price for their produce and at the same time consumers will also get onion at a reasonable rate."

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

Consumer affairs secretary Rohit Kumar Singh, additional secretary Nidhi Khare, NCCF and NAFED officials were also present in the briefing. (PTI)

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District level rally cum awareness programme on child protection held in Haflong

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Aug 22: As part of the 'Suroxito Xaishab Sonali Axom' campaign on child protection, a significant event named the 'District Level Rally cum Awareness Programme on Child Protection Issues' was organised in Haflong. The initiative was undertaken by the District Child Protection Unit, Dima Hasao, in collaboration with the district administration, Dima Hasao, District Legal Service Authority, and AROH Society, Haflong.

The district-level rally was inaugurated by Simanta Kr Das, ACS, district commissioner, Dima Hasao, and commenced from the DC Office, Dima Hasao, proceeding to the District Library Auditorium Hall, passing by the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. The rally aimed to raise awareness about child protection issues.

Following the rally, an awareness program focusing on Child Protection commenced at the District Library Auditorium Hall. The chief guest for the occasion was Col Ghanender Pratap Singh, commanding officer of 32 Assam Rifle, who inaugurated the program by lighting a lamp. He was joined by Shukram Chauhan, ACS, assistant commissioner, district administration,



Nilopal Deka, APS, deputy superintendent of police, Rajat Moni Thaoson, chairman of the Child Welfare Committee, Dima Hasao, and Rajdeep Kemprai, District Child Protection officer (in-charge).

The awareness program featured two key resource persons: Gautam Daimari, AJS secretary District Legal Service Authority, spoke on

'Child Marriage', and Dr Ronald Bathari, an anaesthesiologist and programme coordinator at Holy Spirit Rehab Centre, addressed 'Substance Abuse'. The event also showcased a short video clip highlighting child marriage issues.

The event also incorporated recognition of winners in drawing competitions for students from different schools, including both pri-

mary and high school levels, as well as children residing at child care institutions like Hosanna Orphan Home and Home for Orphan & Destitute Children, Choto Wapu.

The program witnessed the participation of various official dignitaries, teachers, students, NGOs, POSHAN Scheme staff, and the general public.

Kokrajhar to introduce VCDC Day for grievance resolution

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Aug 22: In a progressive move, the Kokrajhar district administration has announced the launch of VCDC Day (Village Council Development Committee Day), an innovative initiative set to address public grievances every Thursday, commencing from August 24, 2023, and continuing until October 2023.

During a press conference conducted at the conference hall of the DC office, district commissioner (DC) Pradeep Kumar Dwivedi stated that officials from the district administration will establish a direct link with each VCDC to address issues and grievances at the grassroots level within the district. Dwivedi elaborated that on each Thursday, officials will visit 10 VCDCs to listen and address a spectrum of concerns spanning developmental and welfare-related matters at the local level.



The district commissioner underlined that the district administration is well-prepared to extend its outreach throughout the district's grassroots. He warmly ex-

tended an invitation to all individuals to actively participate in this platform and voice their concerns directly, fostering a more participatory approach to governance.

Aaranyak equips forest department volunteers and VDP members for wildlife protection



lights, raincoats, and gum boots took place during a formal event at the divisional forest officer (DFO) office in Biswanath. The DFO, Khageswar Pegu, received the equipment, expressing gratitude for the aid. These resources will greatly aid the volunteers during patrolling activities, working in tandem with forest department field staff to protect the national park areas under the forest division.

The provision of field equipment was accompanied by discussions between forest officials and Aaranyak representatives about the organisation's proposed initiatives for the socio-economic development of communities residing near the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

In a separate event held at Makowa Chapori, within the Nag Shankar Range of the Biswanath Forest Division, Aaranyak furnished field equipment to around 20 members of the VDP who work closely with the forest department in the region. Additionally, an awareness meeting was conducted at Makowa Chapori, bringing together VDP members, Nag Shankar range officer Debojit Saikia, Saidur Rahman, president of Upatyaka (an NGO), Arif Hussain of Aaranyak, and Ram Bhakta Chetri.

Aaranyak's ongoing efforts aim to enhance wildlife protection by fostering collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including local communities. By assisting the forest department in equipping and supporting volunteers and VDP members, Aaranyak strives to enhance grassroots-level conservation efforts for the benefit of wildlife and ecosystems.

33rd state level children's science exhibition inaugurated in Jorhat



HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 22: Ranaj Pegu, the minister for education and welfare of plain tribes and backward classes, inaugurated the 33rd state-level children's science exhibition (Bal Vaigyanik Pradarshini) during a two-day event held at the Post Graduate Training College (Institute of Advanced Studies in Education) and Normal School in Jorhat.

In his inaugural address, Pegu expressed his hope that the exhibi-

tion would play a crucial role in fostering scientific and innovative thinking among the students of the state, inspiring them to aim high. He also discussed the various initiatives undertaken by the government to further enhance the education landscape in Assam.

The event was attended by Jorhat MLA Hitendra Nath Goswami, director of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Assam, Dr. Niroda Devi, as well as offi-

cials from the Education department, educationists, and teachers.

Organized by SCERT, Assam, in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the exhibition featured participation from over 100 students from across the state. More than 50 science models created by the students were displayed during the event.

The five best models will qualify to participate in the national-level children's science exhibition scheduled for November-December 2023. Additionally, Dr. Binoy Kumar Saikia, a Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize awardee and Principal Scientist at CSIR NEIST, Jorhat, will deliver a popular talk on "Scientific Innovation for a Sustainable Future." The exhibition also included various competitions aimed at engaging participants in a creative and educational manner.

National Lok Adalat scheduled for Sept 9 in Hojai

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Aug 22: Following the directive of the Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA), the District Legal Services Authority of Hojai is set to organise a National Lok Adalat at Sankardev Nagar in Hojai district on September 9, 2023. The National Lok Adalat aims to facilitate the prompt resolution of various cases that fall under the jurisdiction of judicial courts, encompassing criminal, civil, family, motor accident claims, tribunal, check bounce, and revenue cases, among others. Importantly, these resolutions are provided at no cost to the involved parties.

The District Legal Services Authority of Hojai has extended an appeal to the citizens of Hojai district, urging them to actively cooperate and participate in the forthcoming National Lok Adalat.

Transformative workshop revolutionises skill development at Tezpur University

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Vantage Circle, a prominent leader in HR Tech solutions, has successfully orchestrated a transformative workshop at Tezpur University. Geared towards furnishing students with indispensable skills essential for triumphing in the fiercely competitive job arena, this workshop was a resounding success. Guided by a cadre of experts and professionals from Vantage Circle, the event provided priceless insights into the nuances of interview preparation, crafting compelling resumes, and overarching strategies for job-market readiness.

The pivotal objective of the workshop was to equip students with pragmatic knowledge and proficiencies that extend well beyond the confines of the classroom, thus harmonising them with the imperatives of the contemporary job landscape. By seamlessly melding real-world acumen with scholastic resources, this initiative stands poised to exert a substantial influence on the career trajectories of the students. Encompassing a broad spectrum of vital subjects, the workshop delved into topics ranging from honing communication finesse and navigating challenging questions and stress to mastering the art of constructing impactful resumes and post-interview etiquette.

Anjan Pathak, the CTO and co-founder of Vantage Circle, shared his perspective on the initiative, stating, "Our engagement with the students of Tezpur University through this workshop fills us with enthusiasm. Seminars and workshops, as we are all aware, offer students a unique opportunity to assess, stay abreast of current affairs, grasp concepts, and expand their networks. This workshop endeavour was undertaken with the aim of empowering these budding intellects with tangible proficiencies that will not only bolster their prospects of securing their dream vocations but also enable them to thrive in their chosen career paths."



Dongkamukam celebrates 11th birth anniversary and establishment of Khangar Basti



HT Correspondent

DONGKAMUKAM, Aug 22: The 11th birth anniversary and establishment of Khangar Basti, a village straddling the inter-district border between Hojai and Karbi Anglong districts near Lumding, were commemorated on Tuesday. Organised by the Khangar Arong Servankep Committee (KSC), the event was held under the aegis of the Lumbajong MAC constituency.

During the event, an advisor to the committee underlined the paramount importance of the area's residents in safeguarding it against

encroachments. In his speech, he stated the imperative of vigilance to ensure the region's territorial integrity.

Ex-MAC Seema Ronghangpi, in her address, underscored the pivotal role of the inhabitants in protecting the borders from external encroachments and securing a brighter future for the upcoming generations. She highlighted the significant demographic shifts that have occurred in the area over the past decade. Ronghangpi expressed concerns about the evolving landscape and hinted at the potential acquisition of land for an

airport in the near future.

Ronghangpi also alluded to speculations that emerged last year about the potential land acquisition for an airport.

Advisors, including Songbijit Kathar (formerly associated with militants), in their speeches, advocated for equitable compensation in case of land acquisition for the proposed airport. They also stressed the need for proper alternative rehabilitation measures for residents living in and around Khangar Basti.

The event encompassed a briefing on the village's history from its establishment to the present stage, followed by tributes paid to departed leaders who had significantly contributed to the community's growth and well-being.

The gathering was presided over by the president of the Khangar Arong Servankep Committee, Lawrence Kro, and was attended by committee advisors, local leaders, and community members.

Halting of Rajdhani Express by herd of wild elephants in WKA

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Aug 22: A sizeable herd of wild elephants brought the Rajdhani Express to a standstill in West Karbi Anglong. The incident took place at the Hawaipur Railway Station in West Karbi Anglong, where the elephants were in the midst of crossing the train tracks as the Rajdhani Express approached. Fortunately, the train was able to halt in time, averting any collision with the elephants.

The elephants were in the process of traversing from West Karbi Anglong towards the Lumding Forest. This region has already witnessed the unfortunate loss of several wild elephants due to collisions with moving trains.

NFR implements initiatives to enhance customer interface

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: The North East Frontier Railway (NFR) has been actively pursuing various measures to enhance freight transportation and provide a more efficient customer interface. These efforts aim to streamline the movement of goods and improve services for customers. During July 2023, NFR has undertaken several initiatives to expand the handling capacity of stations and facilitate smoother transportation of goods.

As part of these initiatives, multiple stations have been designated for both inward and outward goods traffic, contributing to the ease of transporting a diverse range of commodities. The Dhamalgaon station under Tinsukia division is now operational for the handling of all goods traffic, including sand, ballast, coal, and crane consignments, with the exception of certain categories like POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants), livestock, and explosives. This change came into effect from July 12, 2023. Similarly, the Lakwa station, also under Tinsukia division, has been assigned the task of handling inward iron and pipes consignments for a period of three months, starting from July 14, 2023. Previously, this station was operational for both inward and outward goods traffic, including coal and crane consignments, as of January 3, 2023. Enhancing the customer interface and expanding the network of operational terminals leads to increased loading and unloading of freight trains. As a result, the revenue of the North East Frontier Railway is expected to witness substantial growth in the upcoming years. The implementation of these measures reinforces NFR's commitment to enhancing efficiency and customer satisfaction in the realm of freight transportation.

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: "Nobody can choose music as a profession, it chooses you," this is how child prodigy Gyaan Bhuyan on Tuesday described his journey into the elite Royal College of Music (RCM) in London.

Hailing from a cultural family of Guwahati, the 19-year-old boy is one of the rare students from the Indian music tradition getting a chance to study at one of the world's great conservatories.

Having a gifted baritone voice, this western classical singer is in the second year of the Bachelors of Music and plans to join the Masters programme thereafter.

The country's largest lender State Bank of India on Tuesday announced to extend an education loan to Bhuyan for his studies at the RCM, opened in 1883 by the then Prince of Wales (later Edward VII).

"RCM is a highly selective institution. It

considers itself elite, but not elitist. RCM has a great history and legacy. It's a pleasure to be a part of this world class institution," the student said during a felicitation ceremony by the PSU lender here.

Bhuyan joined the RCM after completing his class 12 from a private school in Guwahati. He is one of the rare Indian talents, and first after several years, getting a coveted spot at the prestigious institute.

Talking about his journey in the field of music and eventually into the RCM, Bhuyan quoted Russian-American cellist Gregor Piatigorsky's words, "Nobody can choose music as a profession, it chooses you."

He also appreciated the SBI for taking the initiative in supporting his studies at RCM, where only a handful of music talents from around the world get a chance.

"I shall be grateful to the bank forever for making this possible. There are only a few

financial institutions, which support studying liberal arts, especially in undergraduate studies. I believe this is a first for the SBI to support an Indian to literally study music abroad. This is something you don't get to hear quite often," the music prodigy said.

SBI chief general manager Vincent MD (Guwahati Circle) handed over the loan offer certificate to Bhuyan and his parents during the programme held at SBOA Public School, which is managed by SBI Officers' Association (NE Circle).

"We are immensely proud of Gyaan Bhuyan's exceptional achievements and are honoured to felicitate him for securing a place at the prestigious RCM. This recognition reinforces our commitment to nurturing talent and supporting excellence across diverse fields," he added.

SBOA educational society secretary and correspondent Rupam Roy said as a Pidem

Scholar, Bhuyan's remarkable talent has been rewarded with a scholarship covering over 50 per cent of his tuition fees.

"He has scored first class with a high distinction on his singing assessments during the first year at the RCM. His presence at SBOA School inspired our students to pursue their dream with dedication and sincerity," he added.

Talking about his son's musical journey, theatre personality Sattayakee D'Com Bhuyan said Gyaan started singing at the tender age of seven seeing his mother, who is a choir singer.

"His association with the Christ Church Guwahati Choir paved the way for his awe-inspiring ascent. From his initial role as a choir boy soprano to his current prowess as a lyric baritone, Gyaan's dedication and passion for music have consistently shone through," he added. (PTI)

Assamese musician joins London's Royal College of Music; SBI supports his education

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.
- Alfred Lord Tennyson

Moon landing: Countdown begins

Russia's first moon landing attempt since the 1970s failed on Sunday (August 20, 2023) as the Luna-25 lander crashed into the lunar surface after losing contact with Earth controls, said Russia's space agency, Roscosmos. Launched on August 11, Luna-25 was in a race with India to become the world's first mission to land in the lunar south pole region. But India now has the opportunity to place the first probe near the lunar south pole with its Chandrayaan-3 mission, launched on July 14 last. Chandrayaan-3, ISRO's highly ambitious mission, is in its final phase. The Indian spacecraft aims to achieve a gentle touchdown on the Moon's surface after a similar attempt by Chandrayaan-2 on September 7, 2019. It has chosen a lengthier—but more fuel-conserving—route to the Moon and its landing is scheduled for Wednesday. A successful Chandrayaan-3 mission would position India as the fourth nation to achieve the feat of softly landing a robotic lunar rover on the Moon's surface, following the US, China and the erstwhile Soviet Union. The mission, launched as a follow-up to Chandrayaan-2, aims to showcase the full process of safe landing and rover movement on the lunar surface.

On August 17, the Indian spacecraft had effectively detached the Lander Module, housing the Vikram lander and Pragyan rover, from the Propulsion Module. It successfully adjusted its orbit to 113 km x 157 km on August 18, through effective deboosting after launch on July 14. India is poised to set a new record with a soft landing on the Moon's southern polar region. So far, soft landings have been accomplished exclusively in the Moon's equatorial zone by the US, China and Russia. Lunar missions have historically focused on the equator due to its favourable topography and operational circumstances. The southern polar area of the Moon poses distinct challenges owing to its markedly different terrain. India has chosen to explore the Moon's southern pole due to its larger expanse in comparison with the northern pole. The presence of water is a potential consideration in the perpetually shaded zones around this region.

The lunar South Pole experiences unique conditions, where the Sun remains close to the horizon, leading to temperatures surpassing 54°C during periods of sunlight. Despite the illumination, certain craters contain permanently shadowed areas that have remained devoid of sunlight for billions of years, causing temperatures to plummet to as low as -203°C. Despite employing sophisticated sensors, discerning the lunar south pole's terrain and appearance will be challenging for a descending vehicle due to the interplay of landscape and lighting conditions. The extreme and contrasting conditions found on the lunar south pole present difficulties for humans. Yet, they also hold the promise of containing valuable insights into the early solar system. Many government space initiatives and private organisations across the world are intrigued by this area of the Moon, as they believe it may contain water ice that could prove invaluable for future astronauts. From Chandrayaan-3 to the Luna-25 mission and NASA's Artemis II, lunar exploration has consistently captivated space scientists for centuries. What drives the strong interest of major powers on the Moon?

No normal ties with China without resolving LAC standoff

By: Dipak Kurmi

The recent series of talks involving senior military commanders from India and China, aimed at resolving the standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, have not produced an immediate breakthrough. Nevertheless, both parties have jointly announced their commitment to swiftly address the outstanding matters. In a shared statement on Tuesday, following the conclusion of the 19th round of discussions between India and China's Corps Commanders on August 13-14, held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side, it was affirmed that the two nations intend to find prompt solutions to the remaining concerns along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. The dialogue was described as positive, constructive, and comprehensive, focusing on resolving the lingering issues along the LAC's Western Sector. Guided by their leadership, both sides engaged in candid and future-oriented discussions, as highlighted in a press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

The upcoming BRICS Summit, set to convene in Johannesburg, South Africa, is being perceived as a positive indicator following the recent developments between India and China. Despite the ongoing standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, China is exhibiting eagerness to reestablish regular bilateral relations with India. However, India remains steadfast in its position, asserting that the resolution of border issues is a fundamental prerequisite for normalized relations. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has reiterated this stance multiple times; underscoring that rectifying the border situation is a critical precursor to fostering normalcy.

Amid the latest round of discussions, China appears to be intensifying its efforts to decouple border deliberations from the broader bilateral relationship. Though there has been no official announcement from Beijing, a piece published in China's state-

backed media outlet, The Global Times appears to misinterpret the term "positive" from the joint statement. This article conveys the perspective that China and India are realizing the border issue does not define their entire relationship and that the border dispute should not impede the development of their ties. This perspective, potentially aimed at garnering global support for China's stance, might be further echoed by the Chinese foreign ministry in the lead-up to the BRICS Summit. China seems to be signaling that the responsibility for restoring normalcy in relations lies with India.

The prevailing reality places the responsibility squarely on China's shoulders. The absence of concrete progress in the recent dialogue stems from Beijing's hesitance to mend the situation along the border. India must assert this message in a unequivocal manner. It's encouraging that officials are disregarding the article as a vehicle for China's self-serving perspectives. There are signs that India is prepared to counter such an agenda from China if it becomes official. New Delhi should persistently reiterate to China that any notion of a "normal relationship" remains out of reach until normalcy is re-instated along the LAC. In forthcoming discussions, China must take the step of publicly declaring the restoration of the status quo ante as of April 2020.

This has been India's consistent stance, and it will continue to adhere to it in the future. The conflict at the border in 2020 led to a freeze in bilateral relations. While China characterizes the border tensions as a historical matter, it has advocated for segregating border discussions from the broader bilateral dialogue.

However, India has firmly rejected this approach, asserting that the resolution of all LAC-related issues is a prerequisite for restoring normalcy in relations. China's eagerness to reestablish normal ties must be understood in the context of its economic strategy, aiming to access Indian markets and reinstate comprehensive trade to bolster its own economy. (The writer can be reached at dipaknewsline@gmail.com)

CBI seeking cancellation of Lalu Yadav's bail is politically motivated



In their quest to dissipate the INDIA alliance and ensure that no dissent surfaces even inside their own party BJP, the Narendra Modi and Amit Shah combination has decided to take on the sturdiest opposition face Lalu Yadav, the RJD supremo. The design got manifest in the recent move of the CBI to seek cancellation of Lalu Yadav's bail in fodder scam case.

Apparently, it appears to be the shrewd move of Modi-Shah duo. While it aims at the breaking the morale of the opposition leaders and Modi-Shah detractors in Bihar, it also aims at restraining the BJP dissidents, who in recent months have been feeling quite restless, from raising their voice.

After preferring to stay in amnesia for long, the CBI has suddenly realised the urgency of sending back Lalu Yadav to jail well before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Though the CBI had challenged the bail granted by the Jharkhand high court on April 22, 2022, it refrained from pursuing it and did not press for urgent hearing. On Friday it came alive of its moral responsibility and approached the apex court, which posted it for hearing on August 25, by a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud. The urgency shown by CBI sends a loud and clear message that it had pushed the matter at the behest of its political masters.

The duo is ignoring the adverse political impact this action would have not only in Bihar, but also in Uttar Pradesh. Lalu has family relation with Mulayam Sing Yadav. His daughter is married into the family of Netaji. This action would not only enrage the Yadavs of Uttar Pradesh they will revenge it at the elec-

tions. After the death of Mulayam Singh Yadav, he is the only living link of the socialist lineage of Ram Manohar Lohia.

Lalu Yadav was convicted in five fodder scam related to Deoghar, Dumka, Chaibasa and Doranda treasuries during his tenure as chief minister in Bihar. CBI has sought the cancellation of bail granted to Lalu in the Doranda treasury case related to the fodder scam. Lalu Yadav was sentenced to five years in prison and slapped with a fine of Rs 60 lakh by a special CBI court in Ranchi in connection with the fifth fodder scam. He was earlier sentenced to 14 years in jail in four other cases related to Dumka, Deoghar and Chaibasa treasuries in Jharkhand.

Lalu's farsightedness could be understood from the simple fact that he dared to arrest Hindu nationalist L.K. Advani and stop his Rath Yatra. He took the step at the time when most of the leaders, either belonging to Congress or from opposition rank, were scared of laying their hands on him. Through his action of arresting Advani, he not only in one stroke finished the upper caste political hegemony but provided a major boost to the backward caste rising. This step of Lalu helped him to form the famous coalition of Yadavs and Muslims.

Lalu not only symbolises the caste politics, he finished the legacy of the upper caste political hegemony. Of course the emergence of the backward caste politics was the primary reason for disintegration of the social base and turning irrelevant the politics practiced by the Con-

gress, Lalu provided a new platform and vision to these people, who till then owed their loyalty to Congress. The backward caste politics provided a new forum for these people and they abandoned Congress.

The caste politics of RSS and Mohan Bhagwat, which is being implemented and practiced by Modi, does not have a socio-economic relevance and impact. Its effect is temporary. It is simply election oriented. Bhagwat must do some introspection and also carry out some studies. The section of the society which is denied of political space and platform accept Hindutva as an instrument for access. These people are vulnerable to shifting their loyalty at the very next available opportunity.

Modi-Shah cracked their whip against Lalu only after he became political active after his kidney transplant. The duo are apprehensive of the possible fall out. In fact Lalu showing keen interest in formation of INDIA and providing it an institutional shape and character has also un-

nerved them. His being constant touch with Sonia Gandhi and Rahul has panicked them.

The Modi government during the last four years after the 2019 Lok Sabha elections has used its agencies the CBI and the ED against Tejashwi. But it failed to tame him. The CBI has also questioned RJD leader Rabri Devi, Lalu's wife. ED even raided the house of Tejashwi Yadav in Delhi and other family members and associates in 24 locations. This is the modus operandi – the CBI files an investigation report and leaning on this, the ED gets into the act by invoking the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The PMLA provisions are draconian and give the ED sweeping powers to arrest, search and seize property and keep people in jail with their getting bail extremely difficult.

The Modi government has weaponised the central agencies, particularly the ED. It is purely a mechanism to break Lalu and force him to surrender. There is little doubt CBI's latest move, or the earlier attempt of ED to implicate him in job for land scam, are directly connected to the po-

litical development in the state where the joining of Nitish Kumar and JD(U) in the mahagathbandhan has isolated the BJP. The BJP hopes to use the central agencies on the issue of corruption to try and destabilise the alliance.

The CBI has already filed a chargesheet in an alleged land-for-jobs scam case against Lalu Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, son Tejashwi Yadav and others. Lalu Prasad Yadav is accused of giving employment in the railways in return for land parcels gifted or sold at cheap rates to his family and its associates. He served as Minister of Railways from May 2004 to May 2009. Tejashwi correctly said, "Modi is afraid of Bihar. Their greatest fear is from Bihar and hence these things are happening. It will continue till the elections... We are not scared. We are clear about the way forward. We will fight and win".

While approaching for cancellation of bail, the CBI has blamed of committing error. It told the apex court that the high court committed an error in concluding that Lalu had undergone half the sentence. According to him, Lalu's sentence was to run consecutively, one after the other, which resulted in his sentence being 14 years. At the time of granting bail, Lalu had only undergone about one-year imprisonment, the CBI plea stated. All the five cases are different in nature and if the legal sources are to be believed, there is order that these should run concurrently. These sources maintain that the CBI is twisting the fact. If at all it was true, then in that case it was sitting tight over the case. They became pro active after Lalu became active politically. (IPA Service)

Former PM Imran Khan finds himself out of depth in Pakistani politics

By: Tirthankar Mitra

Chalking out a far reaching political game plan and working step by step to implement it is not former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's forte. His words and actions whether he remains a free man or is behind the bars in Toshakhana case as of now are pointers to the fact that he is short on this quality which has made some leaders of Pakistan as decision-makers of the country.

Khan's penchant for dispensing with a far reaching political strategy can be traced back to his cricketing days. The man who charged down to the bowling crease to deliver an yorker or hit a short ball to the ropes rode the crest of a popularity wave to the prime minister's office preferred to envelop himself in a momentum of motion. Khan wants such momentum to continue in his political career. But politics is a different ball game altogether.

The former Pakistani Prime Minister is at a loss when there is no wind in his sail. He is a square peg in a round hole when he tries to sit down and plan a move after digging in his heels. One wonders whether Imran Khan might bounce back to a posi-



tion of reckoning in Pakistani politics. The possibility cannot be ruled out but political watchers in Pakistan feel it would be nothing short of a political miracle.

But miracles happen only once in a while. Khan was a threat to the Pakistani establishment a year ago and seemed to possess the potential to destabilise the system of which he had been a central cog in not too distant past. The former Prime Minister possessed a popular support base among the common people. Most significant pointer to his extent of support was that it could be traced to the ranks of the

men in uniform—the army.

But an overreach by Khan's supporters after his arrest on May 9 when they vandalized army establishments turned the tide in favour of army chief of staff, General Asim Munir. The cricketing parlance "hit wicket" explains the situation in a nutshell to Khan, an outstanding cricketer and many of his fans whose adulation to the sportsman turned politician emanate from the cricketing exploits of the former prime minister now marking time behind the bars. The successes on the playing fields came to Khan in a flash sans much tweaking of plans and policies. But it is just the other way round in politics which besides waiting and watching, involves thinking of one's next move and that of his opponent the ways and means of which the imprisoned leader is not conversant with.

The attack on army property gave Munir an opportunity he had not bargained for. Moreover, the general had support from Khan's civilian rivals who helped the man in uniform to turn the push into a shove. The army, as always, was well placed to exploit the rifts within the political class. Impulsiveness of Khan's supporters gave it an unexpected opportunity to perpetuate its

centrality in the country's political order.

Khan had overlooked the army's role as a part of the nucleus of Pakistan's power structure. He did not even care to jog his memory to recall that army had rigged the 2018 election after Nawaz Sharif's ouster to install him in the prime minister's office.

It was the army who had encouraged Khan to mount massive street protests against Sharif's regime. But accustomed to attaining quick success by bat or ball in the cricket field and thereafter in politics, the former skipper of Pakistani cricket team took the army's gift as an entitlement. Eventually, Imran Khan was removed from office last year by army chief, Qamar Javed Bajwa. Now Munir is trying to destabilise him in politics. If Khan never let go a loose ball or bowled to the discomfort of the leading batsmen, as a Prime Minister he baulked at going by IMF conditionalities which would impose immense economic hardships on the people of Pakistan. To push through the unpopular economic reforms by the caretaker government, Munir seems set to delay the next election due next year; the man in uniform scores over the individual in mufti in this aspect. (IPA Service)

Jihadi outfits continue to pose grave danger to US, western nations



By: Manish Rai

There is a growing perception that these are the last days of the Islamic State and the United States and its allies war on terror has almost ended in Syria. But still, in one corner of Syria, Jihadists enjoy a safe haven and are even thriving.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), formerly known as al-Nusra Front, once an al-Qaeda branch in Syria has totally consolidated its hold on Idlib province and literally operates as the de-facto state in the tiny statelet to Idlib. HTS subscribes to the Salafist school of thought, which is the same as al-Qaeda's. The group imposed strict Islamic rule in areas it controls and is accused of grave human rights abuses including torture, forced disappearance, rape and other sexual

violence, and killing in detention.

Also, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham hosts many foreign fighters including Arabs, Turks, Chechens, Uzbeks, and from China's Xinjiang province. Moreover, the group's attitude toward heterodox minorities like the Druze, Christians, and Alawites never changed. It will be right to say that HTS in Idlib province acts as a facilitator and provides an ecosystem for the jihadist forces to operate and regroup. But unfortunately, the policymakers in the West remain solely focused on defeating ISIS and have ignored HTS and its acolytes.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in the past tried to showcase through various mergers with other groups that it has ended its affiliation with al-Qaeda but definitely, these mergers did not indicate an ideological split with

al-Qaeda. But it was indeed part of a strategy to increase the group's appeal within Syria. On the ground in Syria, various smaller outfits proclaiming loyalty to al-Qaeda, including some HTS defectors. They came together and formed a group called Hurras al-Din (HD) also known as al-Qaeda in Syria. It was officially announced in late February 2018, although it existed sometime before that. It's the official branch of al-Qaeda in Syria and operates primarily in Idlib province. It will be erroneous to presume that Hurras al-Din somehow exists in isolation from HTS.

Given HTS' dominance of the Idlib Hurras al-Din cannot exist in isolation, nor can it undertake operations without HTS' knowledge. In fact, Hurras al-Din previously had multiple meetings with HTS. These meetings were in regard to a dispute over weapons in HTS custody that Hurras al-Din claims belong to it, and HTS suggestions to form a larger military council. Currently, Hurras al-Din still maintains a constant line of communication with HTS.

Previously in some credible media reports, there have been claims that certain frontline points manned by members of Hurras al-Din are supervised by HTS which is allegedly responsible for providing them with the logistics. Another major concern

is that at present, there are thousands of fighters who after being defeated on other fronts by Syrian government forces were allowed to move to Idlib. These fighters include those associated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State while a significant number of them are prone to be radical Islamists. These fighters based in Idlib are seen as a very attractive source of recruitment by Jihadist outfits.

The controversial HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani is listed as a specially designated global terrorist by the United States. And a reward of \$10 million for information leading to his arrest is still in place. Most of the leaders of ISIS also find refuge in Idlib. And it is evident from the fact that many of its senior and mid-level leaders were killed in the special operations of either the US or Turkey in Idlib including its founder leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in October 2019. Tahrir al-Sham claims to be cracking down on both al-Qaeda and Islamic State cells in its territory. But this claim seems to be a hollow one in fact it seems remnants of ISIS are now regrouping in Idlib.

As per the US Commission on International Religious Freedom report released in November 2022. HTS remains a potent source of Salafi-Jihadism that retracts the religious freedom of non-conforming Sunni Muslims

and threatens the property, safety, and existence of religious minority groups such as Alawites, Christians, and Druze.

Idlib under Hayat Tahrir al-Sham remains a ticking time bomb that arguably poses a greater long-term threat to the region and Syria's stability. Now after one phase of the war on global jihad is over, another phase should start with the sole focus to finish off HTS. The West's own ability to tackle and contain Jihadist elements in northwest Syria is rather limited. This is because the West is excluded from the de-escalation framework in the region agreed between Turkey and Russia and is thus barred, among others, from using the airspace to launch precision strikes against the group.

If the United States and its allies have to coordinate with Turkey and Russia in this regard it should be done without any hesitation. Because Tahrir al-Sham and its jihadi extremist network still pose one of the greatest long-term challenges for the US and other Western countries which are trying to eradicate extremists from Syria. Amid the confusion of Syria's kaleidoscopic and multi-sided conflict, one thing remains certain that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham must be isolated, marginalized, and defeated before a stable peace can emerge in Syria. (IPA Service)

Abortion for survivors of sexual assault: What are the Delhi HC guidelines?

By: Aishani Menon

On 9 August, the Delhi High Court added two important guidelines for officers, doctors, and other authorities in cases of medical termination of pregnancy of sexual assault survivors. The court said:

The medical termination of the pregnancy is to be carried out with "utmost caution" by the medical professional involved.

The investigating officer must ensure that the survivor is taken to the hospital within 24 hours of receiving an order for the medical termination of the pregnancy and ensure that the foetus is preserved (whenever such an order is issued).

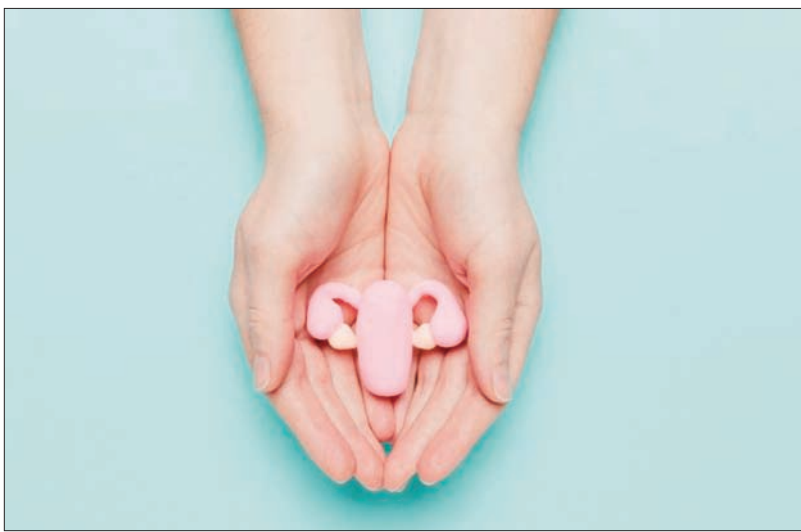
The HC issued these guidelines after a 14-year-old survivor of sexual assault and her mother moved court this year, seeking termination of the pregnancy of the minor. She was over 24 weeks pregnant in January.

However, in August, during the bail hearing of the accused in the case, the court found that despite an order, the termination of the pregnancy of the survivor was not done medically, leading to a loss of crucial evidence.

What are the guidelines when survivors of sexual assault choose to terminate their pregnancy? The Quint explains.

MTP (Amendment) Act, 2021: What Are the Provisions for Survivors of Sexual Assault?

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021 prescribes the rules and regulations for those seeking abortion. Under the Act, a woman is given the provision to ter-



minate her pregnancy up to 24 weeks of gestation, with their due consent or that of her guardian in case she is a minor.

Among other reasons under Section 3 of the Act, there is a provision for the termination of pregnancy by a registered medical practitioner for survivors of sexual assault.

"Wherever the timeline is exceeded which is beyond 24 weeks and there is a minor or adult survivor of sexual assault, they will have to approach the high court seeking permission for the termination," Aishwarya Sinha, a senior social worker at iProbono, told The Quint.

The Act is now to be read with the guidelines issued by the court.

Delhi HC MTP Guidelines to Survivors of Sexual Assault: What Do They Say?

The Delhi HC has issued a comprehensive set of guidelines in two separate judgments announced in January and August 2023, respectively.

Pregnancy Test: The HC has recommended a mandatory urine pregnancy test of the survivor at the time of the medical examination. This step becomes especially important for minors.

"Many children do not realise they have become pregnant. It only happens when they think they have been missing their periods for a long time and they see that this is a matter of concern. It is only on visiting the doctor that the pregnancy is discovered. That is how a lot of cases of sexual assault are reported with minors," Aishwarya Sinha, Senior Social Worker at iProbono.

Consent: The HC has also emphasised the importance of consent and desire to terminate the pregnancy. In the

case of minors, it is important to take the consent of both the survivor as well as the guardian.

Once the consent has been attained, the survivor must be presented before the medical board on the same day, the court has said.

Time Cap: The court has expressed this by directing the authorities that if an order is being sought for termination – especially in the case of the minor – the report has to be presented before the authority concerned to fast-track the process and not lose out on time. Post this order, the survivor has to be taken to the hospital concerned within 24 hours. This applies irrespective of the gestation period.

Constitution of Medical Boards: The HC has asserted the need for the establishment of medical boards in government hospitals in all districts.

Currently, there are only four hospitals in Delhi where the medical board has been constituted in accordance with the MTP Act – namely, AIIMS, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Safdarjung Hospital, and Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital.

The court has given the responsibility of the same to the state government/Union Territory.

Preservation of Foetus: It is the responsibility of the doctor in-charge to ensure the preservation of the foetus and to ensure that the patient is not released in a hurry.

"After the termination is done the investigating officers have to collect the fetus, and then send the sample to the forensics laboratories to be matched with the DNA of the alleged accused person. It is a part of the medical evi-

dence and strengthens the case," explained Aishwarya.

"The DNA sample is only handed over to the investigating officer (IO)," added Shivangi Goenka, Lead Social Worker, Survivor Support Team, Counsel to Secure Justice.

Detailed Records by Doctors: The responsibility of the discharge sheet and post-procedure care have been given to the doctor in-charge. They must ensure it contains all the details. In case the survivor has been discharged without termination of pregnancy, the reason for the same has to be mentioned.

Medico-Legal Case Report: Along with this, the Delhi High Court has directed the doctors to ensure that with the original discharge sheet, a typed copy of the same has to be provided to the investigating officer within a week.

MTP Act and Child Welfare Committee: How are minors being addressed?

While the MTP Act has provisions for minors, there is also a Child Welfare Committee (CWC), constituted under the Juvenile Justice Act 2015, which helps minors with such procedures.

"It has become a customary practice in Delhi that the CWC writes an order requesting the IO to take care of the documentation as required, and also direct the hospitals, to take up the case; and make sure the procedures are done," says Shivangi.

The CWC only issues orders for MTP in cases where the gestation period is within the prescribed norms.

"When the child is pregnant because of abuse, the CWC issues guidelines to

the concerned hospital to facilitate the procedure at the earliest. This has been helpful so far. With the order, the children get treatment on priority, especially in government hospitals which are typically busy," shares Aishwarya.

The court recommends that while dealing with cases with minors, the doctors must reflect the highest standards of medical ethics, professionalism, and compassion and prioritise the well-being of the survivor.

It has also stressed the importance of post-procedure care and follow-ups in the case of minors to ensure that they are recovering emotionally and physically.

MTP act & guidelines: are they enough?

Having worked with over 250 minors closely, who have been survivors of sexual assault, Aishwarya says she has found the provisions to be effective.

"These guidelines, in my experience (with regard to Delhi), are effective and they have been followed. The practices are in place. And with CWC and bodies like these, there is a better system in place, because a child survivor of sexual assault can get help."

"Even after the termination procedure, the children continue to receive support from the CWC, or even the courts. There is a provision of interim compensation for children under the POCSO Act," says Aishwarya.

"We have seen in the cases where children get pregnant because of abuse, the courts are very prompt in granting the compensation which is required for the medical treatment," she further added. (Courtesy: The Quint)

Comparing premenopause and perimenopause

By: Rachel Nall

Perimenopause means "around menopause" while premenopause means "before menopause." However, doctors often use the term perimenopause to refer to the years before menopause.

Menopause occurs when the ovaries stop making estrogen and other sex hormones. A healthcare professional will confirm menopause after a female has had no periods for 12 months in a row. After this, they will no longer be able to become pregnant without assistance.

Sex and gender exist on a spectrum. This article will use the term "female" to refer to a person's sex assigned at birth. The changes that lead to menopause happen gradually. Estrogen levels start to fluctuate in the years before menopause. In time, there will be disruption in the menstrual cycle, and other changes may follow. Periods may continue for several years before menopause begins.

This time is known as perimenopause. Some people call it premenopause, but perimenopause is the standard term within the medical community. Some females do not experience perimenopause, instead moving straight into menopause. Undergoing chemotherapy, having surgery to remove the ovaries, and other factors can all cause hormone levels to fall rapidly or suddenly.

Premenopause vs. perimenopause

People sometimes use the terms premenopause and perimenopause interchangeably, but premenopause is not a scientifically accepted term.

The term "pre" means "before," while the term "peri" means "around." However, healthcare professionals use the word perimenopause to refer to the time before menopause. They do not use premenopause.

The two stages of menopause are perimenopause and postmenopause. Menopause is the point at which a female moves from one stage to the next.

In most cases, each stage is a gradual change that usually takes place over several years.

Perimenopause and beyond

It is not possible to pinpoint when perimenopause starts. For most females, it will be sometime around their mid-to-late 40s.

It usually lasts for around 4 years, but it can last for 2–8 years, according to the Office on Women's Health. During this time, the ovaries start reducing the amount of estrogen they produce.

The menstrual cycle will become variable and eventually stop completely. When no periods have occurred for 12 months, a healthcare professional will confirm menopause. In the United States, the average age at menopause is 52 years. However, the age range for this can vary widely. A female may know that they are starting perimenopause if their menstrual cycle varies by 7 days or more but they still have at least one period in 3 months.

During perimenopause, a female may start to experience:

- a longer or shorter menstrual cycle
- missing periods
- heavier or lighter periods
- hot flashes and night sweats
- sleep problems
- mood changes, including depression and anxiety
- vaginal dryness, leading to painful intercourse



These symptoms may become more noticeable as menopause approaches, though they will not affect everyone.

Menopause

Menopause occurs when there have been no periods for 12 months. It is a moment of transition rather than a stage. At this point, the ovaries no longer release eggs, and estrogen production in the ovaries has fallen significantly.

The transition from perimenopause to postmenopause happens when a female stops ovulating.

However, experts point out that there is no clearly identifiable moment when this happens. They can only say that it occurs at some point during that transition.

Early postmenopause

When menstruation has not occurred for 12 months, early postmenopause begins.

The following changes may occur during this time:

- hot flashes and night sweats
- difficulty sleeping
- a reduced sex drive
- problems with thinking and memory
- vaginal dryness, leading to pain during sex

- headaches
- mood changes
- an irregular heartbeat, or palpitations
- pain and stiffness in the joints
- reduced muscle mass
- more frequent urinary tract infections

If hormone levels change abruptly, menopause can start suddenly. This can happen naturally or as a result of surgery or another treatment.

Postmenopause

After around 3–6 years, most females enter late postmenopause, though this can vary widely. Vasomotor symptoms, such as hot flashes, can continue for several years. The symptoms of menopause usually resolve over time, but some changes may be long-lasting.

Lower estrogen and progesterone production can increase the risk of:

- osteoporosis, or weakening of the bones
- heart disease
- weight gain
- loss of muscle mass
- vaginal dryness
- a reduction in the size of the vagina and urinary tract, or urogenital atrophy

Falling estrogen and progesterone levels can trigger some of these changes, but aging may also play a role.

Treating perimenopause symptoms

At-home, over-the-counter (OTC), and medical treatments can help manage the physical and mental impact of menopause.

Help for hot flashes

Hot flashes result when hormonal factors affect the circulatory system. These

are known as vasomotor symptoms.

Some ways of managing them include:

- avoiding triggers, such as spicy foods, hot drinks, and overheated rooms
- breathing deeply and slowly
- wearing loose-fitting, layered clothing that is easy to remove
- keeping a fan nearby, especially at night
- drinking cold liquids when a hot flash occurs

If hot flashes occur, they usually continue for 1–2 years, but they can last for 10 years or longer. Without treatment, they can last for 7.4 years, on average. For some females, they will never go away.

Oral birth control pills

Irregular periods, heavy bleeding, and cramping are common during perimenopause. Taking a low-dose oral birth control pill may help manage this.

According to one 2018 review, taking combined oral birth control pills may also help reduce the risk of:

- irregular periods
- heavy bleeding during menstruation
- vasomotor symptoms, such as hot flashes
- ovarian, endometrial, and colorectal cancers

However, there is some evidence to suggest that these may slightly increase the risk of breast cancer, blood clots, and heart attack.

Females can ask a healthcare professional about suitable options.

Medical treatments

Hormone therapies can help some females manage hot flashes and other symptoms. These may contain estrogen, progesterin, or a combination of these hormones. Some options combine estrogen with other drugs.

Hormone treatment is available in the form of pills, patches, vaginal rings, sprays, and more. A healthcare professional will look at the female's medical history and their symptoms to help them decide if hormone treatment is suitable for them. They will offer the lowest possible dose because hormone treatment can have adverse effects.

For example, it may increase the risk of blood clots, liver problems, and some types of cancer. Minor adverse effects include headaches, painful breasts, and fluid retention.

Postmenopause management

In most cases, the discomfort of menopause will resolve in time. However, some challenges may remain.

Some tips for staying healthy during postmenopause include:

- getting regular exercise
- avoiding or quitting smoking
- consuming a nutritious and varied diet
- attending regular health checkups

For specific problems, such as vaginal dryness, OTC treatments may help. If not, a healthcare professional may prescribe or recommend an alternative. Healthcare professionals can also advise on supplements, dietary measures, and lifestyle choices to help manage these risks as a female moves beyond menopause.

Perimenopause refers to the time before menopause, when hormone changes start to occur but menstruation is also still occurring. When perimenopause ends, menopause occurs and postmenopause follows. The literal meaning of premenopause is "before menopause," but this is not an accepted medical term.

(Courtesy: Medical News Today)

Discrimination in healthcare system in India: 60% women affected

By: Ira Sharma

Complex and continually evolving, India's healthcare system is characterized by a blend of challenges, opportunities, and aspirations. Private healthcare providers cater to different income groups with varying levels of accessibility and quality, while the public sector aims to provide affordable healthcare for the masses. The infrastructure comprises government-run hospitals, primary health centers, private clinics, and advanced tertiary care facilities. However, a socio-economically and culturally diverse population of over a billion people poses unique hurdles that the healthcare sector must cross.

Medicine is as cultural as it is scientific. With various reports of gender-based inequities in healthcare, there is a growing concern that gender bias within the Indian healthcare system hampers efforts to provide high-quality equitable healthcare to all. Societal norms and systemic biases contribute to unequal access, treatment, and outcomes for individuals. Health in India is strongly influenced by gender for both women and men. According to a study published in the British Medical Journal, millions of women are not able to access the health care they need. The evidence further indicates that younger (30 and below) and older (60 and above) women and those living further away from the

hospital face extensive discrimination.

Furthermore, according to the findings of the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), released in May 2022, 60 percent of Indian women are unable to access medical care due to inadequate infrastructure and health personnel. Further analysis of the data indicates that the non-availability of female health providers in primary health centres causes serious apprehension in women with regard to seeking care. Endeavours to reform India's healthcare system and address gender bias require a comprehensive and holistic approach. In order to increase awareness among healthcare professionals, gender-sensitive training must be integrated into medical education.

Gender disaggregated data collection can be the key to identifying disparities and promoting diversity and inclusivity in clinical research. Moreover, encouraging patients to express concerns and preferences can make healthcare more collaborative and inclusive of all genders. Eliminating gender bias in healthcare is crucial for a successful journey toward an equitable and inclusive nation. This journey is not only a moral obligation but an essential one. As the nation strives towards social progress, health equity has become a cornerstone in its commitment to provide fundamental rights to all, regardless of gender identity. (Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)

Beauty benefits of saffron skin care

By: Shahnaz Husain

Saffron, known as "red gold," has been valued for centuries not only for its culinary uses but also for its numerous beauty benefits. Saffron, known to be one of the most expensive spices all around the world not only enhances the flavour and colour of your dishes but also makes your skin glow naturally.

Saffron, also known as the "golden spice," has gained recognition in the beauty industry for its remarkable effects on the skin.

Packed with essential nutrients and potent compounds, it holds a special place in the world of beauty with its potent antioxidants and therapeutic properties. It can relieve common skin issues, including inflammation and acne.

Saffron is known to be one of the most expensive spices all around the world and is a valuable ingredient in the cosmetics industry. Many skincare brands have started using saffron because it contains nourishing and brightening properties for the skin.

In general, saffron is helpful for all skin types but is especially beneficial for sensitive skin. It provides valuable nourishment, protecting the skin and hair from the harmful effects of UV rays, as well as imparting radiance, lustre and beauty. It has a deep orange colour and a lovely aroma.

Actually, saffron has several healing properties for restoring the beauty of the skin. In fact, it is also said to encourage the renewal of healthy new skin cells and also helps cell repair. That is why it is known to delay visible ageing signs and protect the skin's youthful properties. It contains several vitamins and antioxidants, as well as potassium, which also keeps the

skin youthful and healthy. It has anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties too. In fact, it has even been used in the treatment of acne due to its powerful anti-inflammatory properties. It also helps to soothe and heal sun burnt skin.

As far as the skin is concerned, saffron is also known to lighten skin colour and is used over a period of time. It helps to remove the tan caused by excessive sun exposure. That is why it has been used in natural fairness creams. Saffron is very expensive, but just a few strands of saffron are needed for beauty treatments. A few strands can be used to prepare a face pack, to revitalize the skin, and add radiance.

Here are a few home remedies with saffron:

To remove tan: Saffron has been found to have a protective effect against sun damage. It can help to reduce the damage caused by UV rays and protect the skin from further damage.

Twice a week, soak a few strands of saffron in milk and apply it on the face, neck and arms. Leave it on for 20 to 30 minutes and wash off with plain water.

Enriched with essential vitamins and minerals, saffron face cream will heal sun damage and combat signs of premature aging.

For Sunburn: Saffron has anti-inflammatory properties that help in reducing skin inflammation. It can be used to treat skin conditions like eczema, psoriasis, and rosacea. Add a few strands of saffron to a cream of milk (malai) and apply on the face. Leave it on for 20 minutes.

For dry skin: Saffron is a natural moisturizer that helps in keeping the skin hydrated and soft. It contains vitamins and minerals that nourish the skin, preventing dryness, and flakiness. Soak saffron in

a little water overnight. Next day, add this to olive oil or coconut oil and massage lightly on the face. Or, mix the saffron strands with honey and massage it lightly on the skin. Leave it on for 15 to 20 minutes. Wash off with plenty of plain water.

In fact, saffron is so versatile, that it can be soaked in a little water overnight. Add it to a paste of neem leaves or basil leaves and apply on the skin. Leave on for 15 minutes and wash off with water. This helps only skin conditions, like pimples, acne, or rash.

For acne: The antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties in saffron help regulate sebum production, unclog pores, and soothe inflammation, promoting clearer and healthier skin. Add a few strands of saffron to milk and cinnamon powder into a paste. Apply on the eruptions and on dark acne marks. Leave it on for at least 30 minutes. Wash off with plain water. Do this at least three times a week.

Saffron helps your skin lighten naturally. Soak a few strands in milk for 2 hours. Apply this milk to your face and neck. Wash it off after a few minutes. Use this regularly.

Saffron Face Mask: Take a few strands of saffron and soak them in a small bowl of milk for about 15-20 minutes until the milk turns yellowish. Add a teaspoon of honey and mix well to form a paste. Apply the saffron mask evenly on your face and neck. Leave it on for 30 minutes to allow the saffron to penetrate your skin. Rinse off the mask with lukewarm water and pat your skin dry. Indeed, saffron has many benefits for skin beauty, reducing blemishes, removing tan, revitalizing the skin and adding a glow. (The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India)

Trump says he will surrender Thursday on Georgia charges tied to efforts to overturn 2020 election

WASHINGTON, Aug 22: Former President Donald Trump says he will surrender to authorities in Georgia on Thursday to face charges in the case accusing him of illegally scheming to overturn his 2020 election loss in the state.

"Can you believe it? I'll be going to Atlanta, Georgia, on Thursday to be ARRESTED," Trump wrote on his social media network Monday night, hours after his bond was set at \$200,000. It will be Trump's fourth arrest since April, when he became the first former president in U.S. history to face indictment. Since then, Trump, who remains the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, has had what has seemed like an endless procession of bookings and arrangements in jurisdictions across the country. His appearances in New York, Florida and Washington, D.C., have drawn enormous media attention, with news helicopters tracking his every move.

Trump's announcement came hours after his attorneys met with prosecutors in Atlanta to discuss the details of his release on bond. The former president is barred from intimidating co-defendants, witnesses or victims in the case — including on social media — according to the bond agreement signed by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis, Trump's defense attorneys and the judge. It explicitly includes "posts on social media or reposts of posts"



made by others.

Trump has repeatedly used social media to attack people involved in the criminal cases against him as he campaigns to reclaim the White House in 2024. He has been railing against Willis since before he was indicted, and singled out Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp — a Republican who rebuffed his efforts to overturn the election — by name in a social media post Monday morning.

The agreement also prohibits the former president from making any "direct or indirect threat of any nature" against witnesses or co-defendants, and from communicating in any way about the facts of the case with them, except through attorneys.

The order sets Trump's bond for the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations — or RICO — charge at \$80,000, and adds \$10,000 for each of the 12 other counts he is facing. Bond is the amount defendants must pay as a form of collateral to ensure they show up for required court appearances.

Willis set a deadline of noon Friday for Trump and his 18 co-defendants to turn themselves in to be booked. The prosecutor has proposed that arraignments for the defendants follow during the week of Sept. 5. She has said she wants to try the defendants collectively and bring the case to trial in March of next year, which would put it in the heat of the presidential nominating season. (AP)

Putin stays away over arrest warrant as leaders of emerging economies meet in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 22: Russian President Vladimir Putin will be notably absent when Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders from the BRICS group of emerging economies start a three-day summit in South Africa on Tuesday.

The bloc, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is holding its first in-person meeting since before the COVID-19 pandemic, but Putin will participate via video call after his travel to South Africa was complicated by an International Criminal Court arrest warrant issued for him in March over the abduction of children from Ukraine. Xi, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will attend in person as the bloc — home to 40% of the world's population and responsible for more than 30% of global economic output — mulls a possible expansion.

That will top the agenda at Wednesday's main summit meeting in Johannesburg's financial district of Sandton. More than 20 nations have applied to join the bloc, according to South African officials, including Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. The five BRICS countries will have to agree on the criteria for new members before any countries are admitted, but a bigger BRICS is seen as a policy favoured by China and Russia amid their deteriorating relations with the West.

The BRICS group was formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa was added in 2010. (AP)

Thaksin was jailed in absentia for abuse of power, 2 years after the military overthrew him and accused him of corruption and disloyalty to the powerful monarchy, which he denied

Ex-PM Thaksin enters prison in Thailand, as his allies attempt to form govt

BANGKOK, Aug 22: Thailand's Parliament on Tuesday began voting in a second attempt to choose a prime minister, hours after ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra returned to Thailand after years of self-imposed exile and entered prison to begin serving an eight-year sentence.

The Thaksin-linked Pheu Thai Party proposed former property developer Srettha Thavisin as the head of an 11-party coalition that includes two parties allied with its former military adversaries, holding 314 seats in the 500-member House of Representatives.

Srettha also needs support from the non-elected Senate, appointed by a previous military government. Both houses of Parliament vote together for prime minister under a military-implemented constitution, and senators, like the army, see themselves as guardians of traditional conservative royalist values.

Srettha is not a member of parliament and does not appear to be present for the vote. Pheu Thai is the latest in a string of parties formed by Thaksin or his allies, two of which were removed from power by military coups, resulting in years of upheaval and division that pitted a mostly poor, rural pro-Thaksin majority in the north against royalists, the military and their urban backers.

Thaksin has said his decision to return has nothing to do with the Pheu Thai party's bid for power, but many believe the party made deals with pro-military parties to facilitate the 74-year-old billionaire's return.



Thaksin's private jet landed around 9 am local time in Bangkok, where he was welcomed by family and supporters.

After walking out of the airport, Thaksin placed a flower wreath and prostrated himself before a portrait of Thailand's king and queen. He spent a moment greeting supporters and the media waiting in front of the terminal but did not speak. Hundreds of his supporters gathered outside of the airport hours ahead of his arrival, donning red, a colour long associated with Thaksin, and holding signs with welcoming messages. They showed their devotion to him with songs and chants, then raised raucous cheers when he appeared at the entrance.

"I feel fulfilled that I travelled here today to pick him up. If possible I want to hug him. Everyone has tears, tears coming out of their eyes," said Makawan Payakkae, a 43-year-old from Maha Sarakham province.

Decades ago, Thaksin promoted populist policies and used his telecommunications fortune to

build his own Thai Rak Thai party and be elected prime minister in 2001 and easily reelected in 2005, before being ousted in a military coup in 2006 and fleeing into exile a few years later. Thaksin was tried in absentia on corruption charges he dismissed as politically motivated, and sentenced to eight years in prison.

His convoy went from the airport to the Supreme Court, where a special body that handles criminal cases against former officeholders confirmed the sentence. He then left the court and went to Bangkok's main prison.

Correctional officers at Bangkok Remand Prison said in a news conference that following a medical check, Thaksin had been categorised as "vulnerable" due to his age and chronic conditions affecting his heart and lungs, including high blood pressure.

He will be quarantined for at least 10 days as a new inmate, officials said, adding that he is now confined at the prison's medical wing alone and will be monitored at all hours due to safety and health

concerns.

In what could be perceived as a special treatment, officials said Thaksin has not yet received the severe crew cut associated with Thai prisoners.

"The rule for haircuts is they have to be crew-cuts. But if it's not too long, it doesn't need to be trimmed in a hurry. In prison, hair needs to be cut according to the rules but his hair won't be like other typical inmates; we have to also consider his age," said Ayuth Sintoppant, director-general of the Department of Corrections.

It isn't clear yet how long Thaksin will actually serve of his prison sentence. Officials have said he, like other inmates, can apply for a royal pardon from day one.

His daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra, a key figure in Pheu Thai, posted family photos with Thaksin in the middle on Facebook with a message thanking people who went to the airport to welcome her father, saying "me and my family are very grateful."

Less than a week before May elections, Thaksin announced he would like to return before his birthday in July, but the plan was repeatedly delayed, with he and Paetongtarn citing both post-election uncertainties and his health.

Pheu Thai came in second in the elections but took over leadership in forming a new government after the surprise winner, the progressive Move Forward Party, was repeatedly rejected by conservative senators appointed by a previous military government. (AP)

Windows are shattered in a Moscow suburb as Russia says it thwarts latest Ukraine drone attack

MOSCOW, Aug 22: Russian air defence systems thwarted four nighttime Ukrainian drone attacks, Russia's Ministry of Defence said on Tuesday, with the falling wreckage of one drone shattering an apartment building's windows and damaging vehicles in Moscow's western suburbs.

There were no reports of injuries in the latest drone attacks that Russia blamed on Kyiv, as the war approaches its 18-month milestone.

Though the drone attacks on Russian soil have occurred almost daily in recent weeks, they have caused little damage. Even so, they have unnerved some Russians and are in line with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's pledge to take the war into the heart of Russia.

Flights at several Moscow airports were temporarily suspended on Tuesday as a security precaution amid the attacks, authorities said. Two other drones were jammed and crashed in the western Bryansk region bordering Ukraine, the defence ministry said.

Ukraine hasn't acknowledged responsibility for the attempted drone strikes, nor have senior Russian leaders made any comment about the development.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was to speak via video link at a meeting this week in Johannesburg of leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Putin is under threat of arrest if he travels abroad due to an International Criminal Court arrest warrant and won't attend the so-called BRICS talks in person. (AP)

Pak Prez Alvi sacked secretary amid controversy to clear his name: Report

ISLAMABAD, Aug 22: Pakistan President Arif Alvi's decision to sack his secretary after a controversy erupted about the signing of two key bills was made to clear his name, media reports said on Tuesday, as the dismissed official claimed innocence and sought an inquiry.

President Alvi sacked his secretary Waqar Ahmed on Monday, a day after he said he did not personally sign the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023, and the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and had instructed his staff to return them unsigned within the stipulated time to make them ineffective. The President's Secretariat said in a statement that Alvi asked for the replacement of Secretary Ahmed, whose services were "no more required". Ahmed's removal is being seen as a punishment for his alleged impudence, but there was no direct reference to his involvement in the matter, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Meanwhile, Ahmed clarified his removal from the post "not based on justice" and, in a letter, asked Alvi to reconsider his decision to remove the secretary from his post. Ahmed also urged the president to initiate an investigation into the matter through the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) or any other agency to uncover any misconduct. The Express

Tribune newspaper reported.

"I want to set the record straight that I am not responsible for any irregularities regarding the bills," the former secretary stated in the confidential letter. "The decision to surrender my services isn't based on justice," Ahmed stated, claiming that contrary to allegations of delay and insubordination, the documents pertaining to the bills are still present within the presidential chambers. Ahmed said the files related to the Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill were not returned to the secretary's office until August 21.

Stressing that if any wrongdoing is proven, those responsible should be held accountable, Ahmed said, "I am prepared to testify before the Supreme Court or any other court. I will present a record to establish my innocence."

Ahmed clarified that the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was received by the Presidency on August 8 after the official hours, adding that it was forwarded to the president on August 9.

"The President is fully aware of the facts surrounding both bills," he said. Under Article 75 of the Constitution, the president has to approve a bill within ten days, and under the same provision, he can send back a bill to the Parliament for reconsideration within the same amount of days. (PTI)

Fukushima nuclear plant will start releasing treated radioactive water to sea as early as Thursday

TOKYO, Aug 22: Japan will start releasing treated and diluted radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean as early as Thursday — a controversial step that the government says is essential for the decades of work needed to shut down the facility that had reactor meltdowns 12 years ago.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida gave the final go-ahead on Tuesday at a meeting of Cabinet ministers involved in the plan and instructed the operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, to be ready to start the coastal release on Thursday if weather and sea conditions permit. Kishida said at the meeting that the release of the water is essential for the progress of the plant decommissioning and Fukushima prefecture's recovery from the March 11, 2011, disaster.

He said the government has done everything for now to ensure the plan's safety, protect the reputation of Japan's fishing industry and clearly explain the scientific basis to gain understanding in and outside the country. He pledged that the government will continue those efforts until the end of the release and decommissioning, which will take decades.

"The government will take responsibility until the disposal of ALPS-treated water is completed, even if it takes several decades," Kishida said. A massive earthquake and tsunami destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi plant's cooling systems, causing three of its reactors to melt and contaminating their



cooling water. The water, now amounted to 1.34 million tons, is collected, filtered and stored in about 1,000 tanks, which fill much of the plant's grounds and will reach their capacity in early 2024.

The release of the treated wastewater has faced strong opposition from Japanese fishing organisations, which worry about further damage to the reputation of their seafood as they struggle to recover from the nuclear disaster. Groups in South Korea and China have also raised concerns, turning it into a political and diplomatic issue.

The government and TEPCO say the water must be removed to make room for the plant's decommissioning and to prevent accidental leaks from the tanks. Junichi Matsumoto, TEPCO executive in charge of the water release, said in an interview with The Associated Press last month that the water release marks "a milestone", but is still only an initial step in a daunting decommissioning process.

The government and TEPCO say the water will be treated and then diluted with seawater to levels safer

than international standards. TEPCO plans to release 7,800 tons of treated water in the 17-day first round of the release, Matsumoto said. TEPCO plans to release 31,200 tons of the treated water by the end of March 2024, which would empty only 10 tanks at the site. The pace will pick up later.

The seawater and marine life will be tested and the results will be disclosed on government and TEPCO websites.

The International Atomic Energy Agency in a final report in July concluded that the release, if conducted as designed, would cause negligible impact on the environment and human health. After taking into possible bioconcentration of low-dose radionuclides that still remain in the water, the environmental and health impact is still negligible, TEPCO officials said. Scientists generally support the IAEA view, but some say long-term impact of the low-dose radioactivity that remains in the water needs attention.

Kishida's government has stepped up outreach efforts to explain the plan to neighbouring countries, especially South Korea, to keep the issue from interfering with their relationship. Kishida said the effort has made progress and the international society is largely responding calmly to the plan. Still, Hong Kong said it would suspend exports from Fukushima and nine other prefectures if Japan went ahead with the plan, while China has stepped up radiation testing on Japanese fisheries products, delaying customs clearance. (AP)

US court stays extradition of Mumbai terror attacks accused Tahawwur Rana pending his appeal

WASHINGTON, Aug 22: Overriding the Biden administration's appeal, a US court has ordered a stay on the extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, to India where he is facing a trial for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

Rana, 62, has appealed before the Ninth Circuit Court against the order by a US District Court in the Central District of California that denied the writ of habeas corpus.

District Judge Dale S. Fischer of the US District Court in Central California in his latest order said that Rana's "ex parte application" seeking a stay on his extradition is granted.

"The extradition of Rana to India is stayed pending the conclusion of his appeal before the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit," Judge Fischer said in the order issued on August 18. In doing so the judge overrode the government's recommendations that there should be no stay on Rana's extradition. Rana faces charges for his role in the Mumbai attacks and is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

While the Court does not find that Rana "has made a strong showing that he is likely to succeed on the merits" — otherwise the Court would have ruled in his favour in the first instance — he has



certainly raised serious legal questions going to the merits, the judge wrote. "The proper meaning of 'offence' in Article 6(1) of the extradition treaty is not clear and different jurists could come to different conclusions. Rana's position is certainly colourable and could very well be found to be correct on appeal," the judge noted.

"The final two factors 'merge when the Government is the opposing party.' There is value in compliance with India's extradition request, but Rana's extradition proceedings have been going on for more than three years, which suggests that the process has not been rushed so far. Otherwise, the public interest, if anything, favours Rana," the judge wrote.

"The public has a strong interest in the proper interpretation of extradition treaties, particularly in the interpretation of provisions that provide important individual protections like the one at issue here.

Further, there is a strong public interest in definitive, binding interpretations of treaties. District courts cannot provide those rulings; courts of appeals can," the judge wrote, throwing the legal battle to the Ninth Circuit Court now.

The US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has asked Rana to submit his argument before October 10 and the US Government has been asked to submit its response by November 8. Judge Fischer wrote that Rana has shown that he is likely to suffer significant irreparable harm absent a stay.

He will be extradited to India for a trial on serious crimes with no hope for a review of his arguments or hope for his return to the United States. The government admits this, but then argues that because "this claimed irreparable harm applies categorically to any fugitive who seeks a stay of extradition pending appeal," it does not count,

the judge said.

Earlier the US attorney John J. Lulejian appealed before the District Court to deny Rana's ex parte application for a stay of extradition pending appeal and argued that the stay would cause "unwarranted delay" in the United States' fulfilment of its obligations to India and this will damage its credibility in the international arena and impair its ability to obtain the cooperation of foreign nations in bringing United States fugitives to justice.

Rana, he argued, cannot show a likelihood of success on the merits of his claims or otherwise meet his burden of justifying a stay. "Accordingly, the United States respectfully requests that the Court deny his ex parte application," the US attorney wrote. Lulejian argued that the District Court should deny Rana's request for a stay for the threshold reason that he has failed to demonstrate that he is likely to obtain a reversal of this Court's decision in the Ninth Circuit.

In his ex parte application for a stay, Rana has made no showing whatsoever, let alone a strong showing, that he is likely to succeed on the merits of his appeal, he argued. Indeed, he simply states that he seeks a stay "to permit his non-bis in idem argument to be heard by the court of appeals."

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) is probing Rana's role in the 26/11 attacks carried out by terrorists of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba group. (PTI)

Dubai International Airport now serves 257 destinations across 104 countries

Dubai International Airport sees 41.6 million passengers in first half of year, more than in 2019

DUBAI, Aug 22: Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, announced on Tuesday it served 41.6 million passengers in the first half of this year — exceeding figures for the same period in 2019 as travellers return to the air after the lockdowns of the coronavirus pandemic.

The airport, home to the long-haul carrier Emirates in skyscraper-studded Dubai, long has served as a barometer for the aviation industry worldwide. The new figures at the airport known as DXB reflect figures offered by the International Air Transport Association that traffic worldwide is at 94 per cent of pre-COVID levels.

"Dubai International Airport has once again recorded for the ninth year running that it is the world's busiest international airport with a very, very strong first half," Paul Griffiths, the CEO of Dubai Airports, told The Associated Press.

"The most important part of that is that we've reached 100 per cent of our pre-pandemic numbers, the same numbers as recorded in the first half of 2019."

The 41.6 million passengers is up some 50 per cent from the 27.9 million recorded the same time last year, as airlines now have more planes and routes running again. Passenger traffic this year largely has been driven by the airport's standard travel destinations — India, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and Pakistan. Russia has also been a major market as Dubai remains

one of the few places still open to Russians amid Moscow's war on Ukraine.

Dubai was among the first cities to reopen to tourists in the pandemic. That helped boost the city-state's tourism industry, as attractions like the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, and the sail-shaped Burj Al-Arab luxury hotel draw both visitors and transit passengers out of airport lounges.

Dubai surpassed its pre-pandemic, half-year tourist figures this year with 8.55 million international visitors. Dubai hotels saw an average occupancy of 78 per cent during that period — ranking among some of the world's top destinations.

"What happened pre-pandemic is we saw 60 per cent transit and 40 per cent point to point, but that's actually reversed," Griffiths said. "What we're now seeing is 60 per cent of that traffic number is point to point and 40 per cent is transit. So that's a very notable statistic and underpins the appeal of Dubai as a very, very strong tourist destination."

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport remains the planet's busiest passenger airport overall.

Emirates also saw its most profitable year ever in 2022, earning USD 2.9 billion as passengers returned to its long-haul Boeing 777s and its double-decker Airbus A380s. The return of the A380 has seen the average number of passengers per flight jump at DXB to 214, Griffiths said. (AP)

Justice Mittal panel seeks SC directions to ensure Aadhaar cards for the displaced in Manipur

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Noting that many Manipur residents may have lost their identity documents in the ethnic strife, a Supreme Court-appointed panel has urged the top court to pass a slew of directions to the state government and others including the UIDAI to ensure Aadhaar cards are made available to those displaced and the victims' compensation scheme is broadened.

The all-women committee headed by Justice Gita Mittal that also comprises Justices (ret'd) Shalini P Joshi and Asha Menon, submitted three reports to the apex court on personal documents of the displaced persons, Manipur Victim Compensation Scheme, 2019 and appointment of domain experts to facilitate its functioning.

The panel has been constituted to oversee relief and rehabilitation of those hit by ethnic violence in the border state. The panel of former women judges was constituted days after the apex court had termed as "deeply disturbing" the video of women being paraded naked in the state.

Three separate reports, which were shared with the counsel concerned on Tuesday in pursuance of the apex court's directions, were filed before a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud.

The Justice Mittal panel said among the several gaps, which could impact reaching the benefits

of relief and rehabilitation measures to the victims, the first and foremost would be "non-availability of documents for identification which would include Aadhaar cards, voter I-card/ration cards/BPL cards etc."

It said enquiries have revealed that out of all the above documents, the process of obtaining a copy of the Aadhaar Card may be the simplest as the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has all the necessary information available in digital format.

The panel has sought directions to the deputy director general, UIDAI, regional office, Guwahati as well as the secretary, department of home affairs, Manipur to jointly take all steps to ensure availability of Aadhaar card to the displaced persons whose records are available with Aadhaar authorities.

"Direct the secretary, department of finance to issue appropriate instructions to all Banks in the effected parts of Manipur to make available the details of the bank accounts held by the displaced persons to them. If necessary, the Banks should depute responsible staff members to visit the relief camps and interact with the displaced persons, ensuring continuity of banking service to them," it said. The committee has also suggested urgent steps for issuing the Disability Certificates/Duplicates



of Disability Certificates to specially-abled persons in the relief camps immediately.

On the issue of compensation to the victims, the committee said the Manipur Victim Compensation Scheme, 2019 covers extremely limited number of offences entitling a person to compensation and its outreach needs to be immediately widened.

It said time-bound directions need to be given to National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to examine and make recommendations regarding offences other than those covered and fixation of rates of interim compensation.

Noting the lapses in the scheme, the panel has sought directions to the Manipur High Court and the state government to urgently complete the process of appointing sec-

retaries of the District Legal Services Authorities in all the 16 districts in the state.

The committee urged the top court to direct the Manipur government to make appropriate amendments or modifications in the Manipur Victim Compensation Scheme, 2019 within two weeks.

"Direct the Police Authorities to forward immediately after registration, soft and hard copies of FIRS registered so far or as may be registered hereafter to the concerned District State Legal Services Authority."

"Directions be issued to the Government of India and Government of Manipur to provide information regarding Manipur Victim Compensation Scheme, 2019 as well as any other Special Schemes to the displaced persons under

which they can take benefit," the committee said.

In addition to the above subjects, the committee said special care needs to be accorded to the elderly.

The panel said it is necessary to engage with authorities and officials at all levels of the government machinery located in far flung relief camps as well as the senior most in the bureaucracy.

"Ascertaining their particulars as well as the contact details and contacting them can prove to be difficult. It is therefore, essential to have urgent assistance of an accomplished and efficient former senior bureaucrat who has served in the Manipur Cadre," it said.

The top court, while taking note of the three reports, had on Monday said it will pass "certain procedural directions" on August 25 to facilitate the functioning of the Justice Mittal panel and to deal with issues pertaining to administrative requisitions, funding to meet administrative and other expenses, and setting up a web portal to provide necessary publicity to the work being done by the panel.

More than 160 people have been killed and several hundred injured since ethnic violence first broke out in the state on May 3 when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status. (PTI)

Manipur Guv finally summons Assembly session on August 29

It would not be a normal session: Ex-CM O Ibobi



IMPHAL, Aug 22: Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey finally summoned session of Manipur Legislative Assembly on August 29 barely a day after the state cabinet once again recommended summoning the session. A notification of the Manipur Assembly Legislative Assembly secretariat issued today said that the Governor summoned the session quoting the order of the Governor.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 174 of the Constitution of India, I, Anusuiya Uikey, Governor of Manipur, hereby summon the 4th session of the twelfth Manipur Legislative Assembly to meet at 11 am on Tuesday, the 29th August, 2023 in the Assembly Hall, Imphal," the order of the Governor said.

Earlier, the state Cabinet in its meeting on Monday (August 21), once again, had recommended to the Governor to summon the monsoon session of the state assembly on August 29, an official said. The state cabinet had to re-recommend the Governor as she failed to summon the session even as the state cabinet, in its one of the meetings held on August 4, recommended summoning the session on August 21 with the best reasons known to the government only.

The summoning of the Assembly session came amid the allegations from the Congress that there was a constitutional crisis in the state when the Governor failed to convene the session despite a recommendation by the state cabinet and time for summoning the normal session had already lapsed.

Citing rules under procedure and conduct of business of the state Assembly, Manipur Pradesh Con-

gress Committee (MPCC) president K Meghachandra had said that for convening the normal session which is mandatory to convene once in six months, the members are to be notified at least 15 days ahead of the scheduled session.

He had also observed that as the last session of the state Assembly concluded on March 2, as per norm, the Governor has to notify the summoning of the session on or before August 16. However, it was not done.

Earlier on the day, ahead of the Governor's order summoning the session, former chief minister and opposition leader O Ibobi Singh observed that the scheduled session would not be a normal session.

Talking to reporters on the sideline of a function at Imphal Congress Bhavan to observe the 6th death anniversary of former Manipur chief minister and Congress leader Rishang Keishing, Ibobi observed that as the session is to be convened with a short notice, it will not be a normal session. As the session is to be convened with a short notice, it could not be ascertained whether there would be a meeting of the business advisory committee of the state Assembly, he said.

Whatever the thing it may be, the Congress is ready to table issues in the interest of the people of the state if the session is held, he said.

A meeting of the party legislators will be convened before the session to discuss issues of the state and its people which the opposition can table in the house of the Assembly, the Congress leader also said. (NNN)

Manipur: Blockades on NH-37 almost cleared, obstruction on NH-2 continues

IMPHAL, Aug 22: Blockades by a tribal group on the National Highway-37, connecting Manipur's Imphal with Silchar of Assam, were more or less cleared, as the movement of 171 trucks with essential commodities was ensured, police said on Tuesday.

However, the roadblocks on National Highway-2, which links Imphal with Nagaland's Dimapur, by the tribal outfit continued.

Committee on Tribal Unity had on Monday reimposed blockades at a few places on NH 2 in Kangpokpi and NH 37 in Tamenglong district, demanding adequate supplies of essential commodities in hill areas of Manipur. "Movement of 171 vehicles along NH 37 with essential items has been ensured," police said in a statement. Strict security measures were taken up in all vulnerable locations and security convoy is provided in sensitive stretches to ensure free and safe movement of vehicles, it said.

Six people have been arrested in connection with an incident of arson in which four abandoned houses and a community hall were burnt in Imphal West a day before, while arms and ammunition were seized during search operations across several districts, the police said.

"In the intervening night of August 20 and 21, unknown mis-

creants set on fire four abandoned houses, one hut and one community hall at Langol, Imphal West district. Six people have been arrested in connection with the arson," the police said.

Search operations were conducted by security forces in the fringe and vulnerable areas of Imphal West and East, Thoubal, Kakching, Churachandpur, Tengenoukal Kangpokpi and Bishnupur districts.

"Seven arms and 81 ammunition were recovered from Imphal East, Kangpokpi and Tengenoukal districts," the police said. A total of 129 checkpoints were installed in different districts of Manipur, both in the hills and the valley, and the police detained 1,369 people for violating laws across the state.

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

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

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

Heavy rains cannot be excuse for poor road conditions in state: M'laya high court

SHILLONG, Aug 22: The Meghalaya high court said that it is not acceptable that the excuse of rains is proffered to justify the poor condition of roads.

While hearing a PIL, the division bench comprises of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice B Bhat-tacharjee said generally speaking, the condition of roads in the state is not up to the mark and the standard excuse is that because of the heavy rains, huge maintenance costs are incurred and which is why maintenance works remain suspended during the period of heavy rains.

"It has been repeated in several orders that since this is one of the wettest places on the earth, extra care has to be taken while building roads and the mix of substance has to be chosen, taking into account the heavy rains that the roads will require to endure. It is not acceptable that the excuse of rains is proffered to justify the poor condition of roads," it said.

The bench also directed the PWD (Roads) to keep all the roads in good repair and said, "It is hoped that the PWD (Roads) sits up and takes notice and keeps all the roads in good repair so as to enable free flow of traffic even during the monsoons."

During the hearing, a report was filed by the executive engineer, PWD (Roads), Tura indicating the present status of the AMPT Road.

The order said that at paragraph nine of the report, the executive engineer has referred to three contractors having been engaged for the portion of 33rd to 41st km of the AMPT Road and its maintenance. However, the petitioner, who is particularly affected by the poor condition of such stretches, says that the maintenance work is neither timely nor is it regular. As far as the present matter pertaining to the AMPT Road is concerned, it will appear six weeks hence when a further status report should be filed, it said. (NNN)



Troops of BSF Meghalaya seize saris worth more than Rs 11 lakh from the bordering area of East Khasi Hills on Tuesday. HT Photo

Kuki-Zo demands may face risk direct collision with the Indo-Naga Framework Agreement: NSCN-IM

DIMAPUR, AUG 22: The NSCN-IM bulletin, Nagalim Voice, in its latest edition released on Tuesday, asserted that the "grandiose dream for Zalemang faces the risk of coming into direct collision with the Indo-Naga Framework Agreement" signed between the Government of India and National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM). The NSCN-IM bulletin also said that "Nagas are not oppose to Separate Administration for Kuki-Zo community but it should not touch even an inch of Naga territory for creating separate administrative zone for them".

The latest edition of Nagalim Voice made available to Newmai News Network today by the Ministry of Information and Publicity (MIP) of NSCN-IM said the "never ending Meitei-Kuki ethnic turmoil in Manipur is going the way driving the Kuki-Zo community to an unprecedented geopolitical identity crisis in the midst of the vast scale of devastation, charges and counter-charges of committing crime against humanity, unparalleled in this 21st century in Northeast". The NSCN-IM mouthpiece added, "Amidst the acrimonious upheaval, the Kuki-Zo are desperately trying to reconstruct their social-political and psychological standing from the cobwebs of ethnic violence". It further added, "It was under this sticky situation that Zalemang agenda, that was conceived years ago, surfaced and exploded with catastrophic effects".

In the present context of Meitei-Kuki ethnic conflict, identity means who the Kuki-Zo are as members of socio-political groups in Manipur and how others perceive and label them and how the Kuki-Zo people have been preparing for Zalemang (Kuki-Zo nation) for years through falsehood and concoction of history, the Nagalim Voice also said. "How this is going to be easier said than done as the grandiose dream for Zalemang face the risk of coming into direct collision with the Indo-Naga Framework Agreement" signed between the Government of India and National Socialist Council of Nagalim(NSCN-IM), it stated.

According to the Nagalim Voice, to further their case, the Kuki-Zo leaders went for desperate campaign to establish their ethnic identity. Faced with terror and trepidation in the hands of Meiteis and state police forces, the Kuki-Zo intellectuals hurriedly organised themselves under the nomenclature of World Kuki-Zo Intellectual Council (WKZIC) to present their ethnic root and socio-political status on the strength of their concocted history before the Prime Minister of Israel Netanyahu claiming themselves as descendant of Joseph (one of the lost tribes of Israel). Similar memorandum also submitted to the UN. The two memorandums pleaded for help in establishing Kuki state (Zalemang), the NSCN-IM bulletin also stated.

Aggravating as it is, the Zalemang plan that was leaked out to the media stated that Zalemang-Kukiland has to be propagated by means of concocting the history to brainwash the Kuki-Zo people and others into believing the Zalemang/Kukiland/Zogam ideas, the NSCN-IM bulletin also said. "For this purpose, fund has to be generated by indulging in drug trading and promoting poppy cultivation. To justify their claim, they

have to go for demographic engineering for total area domination and concoct the Anglo-Kuki War, to lend some kind of weight and legitimacy towards creating the Zalemang. But to the many with clear historical knowledge Anglo-Kuki War was found to be nothing less than a misnomer, a claim that finds no historical support/evidence," the NSCN-IM mouthpiece added.

In what can be termed as turning blind eyes to "political correctness", when the situation is going through vulnerable stage, NSCN's name was brought forth by WKZIC as "cessationist militant group" linked with "Ethnic Cleansing", "Kuki genocide", it also said. This offensive (provocative) style of using NSCN's name rendered WKZIC's salvo against NSCN unpalatable as these words are quite toxic and WKZIC made veiled reference to NSCN without having the courage to see through the prism of historical context, the Nagalim Voice further stated. The recorded historical fact, however said it was the Kuki group KNA (Kuki National Army) that placed themselves at the disposal of the government of India as mercenary forces to finish off the Naga political movement within five years, it also stated. "This indelible record will stand as a testimony to prove who the Kuki-zo are against the Nagas, despite their fabricated defence of their ancestry and historical narratives," the NSCN-IM bulletin further added.

By using "cessationist militant group NSCN", the World Kuki-Zo Intellectual Council (WKZIC) proved themselves ignorant of the historical truth of Naga history and political rights as a people and as a nation, it also said. "That Nagalim was never an integral part of India either by conquest or consent is a matter of historical record, acknowledged by the Government of India when it officially granted recognition to the unique history of the Nagas in the Indo-Naga Joint Communiqué, Amsterdam (Netherlands) July 11, 2002 and followed by signing the historic Framework Agreement on August 3, 2015, giving recognition to the sovereign identity of the Nagas on the basis of the unique history of the Nagas," the NSCN-IM bulletin pointed out. The bulletin then said that to claim Zalemang or Kuki state on the basis of concocted history is dangerous in today's context. To use "Ancestral lands" without historical indigenous support are sensitive words and cannot be used for "ancestral glorification" as it involves geopolitical risk, the NSCN-IM bulletin also said. "Poisonous concoction" of history will never find universal acceptance, however impressive it is presented. Such "repulsive concoction" and "bewildering historical claim" will not stand the test of historical scrutiny, the NSCN-IM bulletin added.

The Nagalim Voice then said, "For the same reason the WKZIC's demand for 'Separate Administration' faces the risk of coming into collision course with the Nagas because it is the land that will define the geopolitical and demographic profiling. Identity and land are synonymous. This timeless truth is a universal maxim that should always governs Kuki-Zo's interactions while demanding for separate administration/Zalemang. But in no way it should come overriding the Nagas' geopolitical sentiment". (NNN)

Nagaland min calls for collective efforts to address pressing issues in Mon

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 22: Nagaland health and family welfare minister P Paiwang Konyak called for extraordinary efforts, collaborative manpower and collective action to address and resolve the pressing issues of escalating cases of dengue, scrub typhus, conjunctivitis and broader concerns of the fight against drug abuse, maintenance of law and order and road infrastructure in Mon district bordering Myanmar.

Konyak called an urgent coordination meeting with the district administration, health department, Assam Rifles and civil society organisations at Mon deputy commissioner's office on Monday to address these issues.

In his address, Konyak highlighted the alarming rise in cases of scrub typhus and dengue in Mon. He pointed out that scrub typhus is curable at its initial stages, but dengue has no specific medicine and its treatment is based solely on symptoms such as severe vomiting and headache.

Konyak stressed the importance of sanitation programmes, including mass social initiatives and regular waste collection, to combat dengue. He called upon the district administration to communicate directives through NGOs and church bodies.

Apart from dengue and scrub typhus, conjunctivitis has become a contagious disease of concern, particularly affecting Tizit and Mon area in the district.

It was decided, with the consent of those present, to grant a one-week holiday to schools to contain the spread of conjunctivitis in the district.



Konyak sought assistance from Assam Rifles, Red Cross and NGOs in providing volunteers to support nurses and doctors in managing the situation.

On the war against drugs, he reminded of the pledge taken by citizens on August 15. He inquired about the steps needed to fulfill that pledge.

Konyak noted that these drugs are not locally manufactured but imported, making it crucial to thoroughly inspect and curb their infiltration at border areas. He urged the NGOs, district administrations in this regard.

He also proposed a rehabilitation programme for government servants addicted to drugs, allowing them three to four months to recover.

He underlined the importance of scrutinising all borders, constructing rehabilitation centres and conducting blood tests of inmates to prevent the spread of diseases like AIDS and HIV.

Addressing concerns related to law and order, Konyak called for strict actions against the disruption of law and order. To enhance security, he proposed the installation of CCTV cameras in all border and sensitive areas to improve surveillance.

On road infrastructure, he called for coordinated efforts between the departments responsible for national highways and town roads under the state roads and buildings department. He directed these departments to expedite road repairs in the district.

Vice prez Dhankhar says parliamentary disruptions matter of concern

JAIPUR, Aug 22: Commenting on parliamentary proceedings today, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said the Constituent Assembly faced no disruptions "even for a single day" though it debated more complex issues. Speaking during a programme at Sainik School in Rajasthan's Chittorgarh, he noted that parliamentary disruptions in the present times is a matter of concern.

"As the chairman of Rajya Sabha, I express my pain. The Constituent Assembly that gave us the Constitution held several meetings for around three years. The issues before it were divisive and complex as compared to the matters in the present, but all those were solved by deliberations," Dhankhar said.

"There were no disturbances in the Constituent Assembly even for a single day or moment. In that context, if I see today's condition,



it is a matter of concern and contemplation," he rued.

The vice president also hailed the Indian judicial system and said no one should be allowed to act as a loose cannon and secure justice by taking to streets.

"The tendency to take to streets to secure justice without availing justice as prescribed by law will lead to anarchy.

Our judicial system is very robust. In recent days, important judgments have been delivered

with impartiality. There is no reason that our faith in institutions should shake.

We cannot give the right to anybody to run down the credibility of institutions," he said.

He said India is rising and by the turn of this decade, it will become the third largest economy of the world. Dhankhar, who did his schooling from Sainik School, Chittorgarh, urged the students to always keep national interest above anything else.

"It is not an option. This is the only way. We cannot compromise our national interest.

We should always be a proud Indian," he said.

He also asked them not to have fear of failure and that they should be disciplined.

Recalling his school days, he said studying in Sainik School was like a "rebirth" and that he owed whatever he has achieved in life to the school and its teachers. (PTI)

Congress will conduct caste census in MP after winning assembly polls: Kharage

SAGAR, Aug 22: The Congress will conduct a caste census in Madhya Pradesh after winning the assembly polls in the state, said party president Mallikarjun Kharage on Tuesday, accusing the regime at the Centre of wishing to change the Constitution.

He was addressing a public rally in Sagar in MP's Bundelkhand region.

Assembly polls are expected to be held in the BJP-ruled state at the end of the year.

"Some people are trying to change the Constitution. This is not possible because 140 crore people of the country are in support of the protection of the Constitution," Kharage said remembering Dr BR Ambedkar, who was born in MP's Mhow.

Kharage criticised the ruling BJP for "remembering" Sant Ravidas, a revered figure for Scheduled Castes, during elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation of a ₹100 crore memorial-cum-temple of Sant Ravidas in Sagar district.

As per the 2011 Census, the population of Dalits in MP was 1.13 crore.

"Modi ji is in power for the last nine years while Chouhan (chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan) is ruling the state for the last 18 years. They remembered Ravidas only at the time of the polls," Kharage said.

Citing a newspaper report, Kharage claimed that the BJP demolished a temple of Sant Ravidas in Delhi.

He announced that the Congress will set up a university in the name of Sant Ravidas in Sagar district if voted to power in Madhya Pradesh.

Kharage also said that Congress will conduct a caste-



based census in MP after returning to power.

Referring to the crisis in Manipur, Kharage accused PM Modi of not doing "anything" to control violence in the northeastern state.

He also alleged that the BJP government has not implemented the Bundelkhand package approved on the recommendation of the senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Bundelkhand, in north-east MP, has six assembly seats reserved for SCs, and the BJP had won five of them in the 2018 state polls, namely Bina, Naryoli, Jatala, Chandala and Hattia, while the Congress managed to get Gunnor.

Bundelkhand comprises Sagar, Chattarpur, Tikamgarh, Nimari, Damoh and Panna districts, with 26 assembly seats, of which 15 were won by the BJP in the last state polls, while the Congress got nine and one each was won by Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party. (PTI)

Residents of Raj'n should focus on making it country's leading state by 2030: Gehlot

JAIPUR, Aug 22: Lauding Rajasthan's progress in all sectors, including health and education, chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday said every resident should focus on making it the country's leading state by 2030.

Speaking at a programme to launch "Rajasthan-Mission 2030" at the Birla auditorium here, the chief minister said the 'Mission 2030' should be on everyone's agenda.

Gehlot said under this initiative, views will be sought from people across all sections, subject experts, students, businesses, traders, intellectuals and employees till September 15 to prepare the "Vision 2030" document for Rajasthan by the end of the month.

"The idea of 'Mission 2030' came because we have come to such a situation today where we have progressed a lot. We are to exploit several minerals available here. Crude oil is being explored and a refinery is being set up in Barmer. We are ahead in sectors of education and health," he said.

Gehlot added that Rajasthan was fast surpassing Gujarat in road construction and an excellent network of roads and highways is being laid in the state.

A total of 1.4 lakh kilometres of roads has been laid in the last five years, he added.

"This mission is for all residents of Rajasthan, be it students, authors or opposition parties. This is not a personal agenda, it should be everyone's agenda," he said.

Around 50 years ago, Gehlot said, famines and water crises were frequent but now, things have changed and the state has progressed.

"What do we not have here in Rajasthan? IIT, IIM and IIIT are there. Medical colleges are being set up in every district. We are ahead in education and medical services," he said.

The chief minister said, "It is the duty of everyone to dream and that is why we have launched this to dream of Rajasthan's future."

He also targeted the Centre on the occasion for not giving a national project status to the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP). If the Centre is obstinate, then "I am also determined to complete the ERCP project in the state", Gehlot added.

He urged people from all walks of life to give their suggestions for 'Mission 2030'. (PTI)

27 cases of non-compliance by govt depts to punish corrupt, maximum by railways: CVC



NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Government departments have differed from the Central Vigilance Commission's advice to punish corrupt officials in 27 cases, a maximum of seven such instances by the Ministry of Railways alone, according to an official report.

There were three cases of non-compliance of the CVC's advice to act against the corrupt officials by the CC (India) Ltd and two each by the State Bank of India, Coal Ministry and Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd, it said.

One each such case was by the Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Transco Ltd, Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC), Ministry of Textiles, Bird Group of Companies, Bharat Coking Coal Ltd, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and Industrial Development Bank of India among others, said the CVC's annual report for

2022. There was one each case of non-adherence of the probity watchdog's advice by New India Assurance Company Ltd, V O Chidambaram Port Authority and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, it said.

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), in the exercise of its functions and powers under Section 8(1) (g) of the CVC Act, 2003, tenders advice to the central government, corporations, government companies, societies and local authorities owned or controlled by the central government.

The advice is tendered by the Commission based on a reasoned appreciation of all the facts, documents and records relating to a particular case, which are brought to its notice by the organisation concerned, the report said.

"Non-acceptance of the Commission's advice vitiates the vigilance process and weakens the impartiality of the vigilance administration. However, there are cases of deviation from the prescribed procedure or non-acceptance of the Commission's advice," it said.

The CVC has observed that during the year 2022, there were some significant deviations from the Commission's advice, said the report made public recently.

Mentioning details, it said the then Senior Divisional Engineer (Sr. DEN) failed to investigate into complaints received from Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM) and also failed to exercise due diligence in scrutiny of credential documents of a firm, resulting in

award of contract to a firm on fake/forged credential papers.

The Commission had advised the imposition of a major penalty. However, the railway board imposed only a minor penalty.

"Imposition of only minor penalty by the disciplinary authority i.e. railway board, is a deviation from Commission's advice," the report said.

The acceptance of the CVC's reasoned advice in an overwhelming majority of cases by the disciplinary authorities is an indication of the objectivity and fairness of the Commission's advice, it said.

"However, in some cases of officers covered under the Commission's jurisdiction, either the prescribed consultation mechanism with the Commission was not adhered to, or the authorities concerned did not accept the Commission's advice," the report said.

Further, there have been instances where the advice tendered by the Commission has been substantially diluted without approaching it for reconsideration of its advice, as per extant procedure, it added.

The report, citing another instance, also said that irregularities were noticed in the issuance of a letter of credit (LC) to a private limited company by the State Bank of India officials.

"The estimated loss to the bank was ₹22.04 crore. After the imposition of major penalty on all the 5 officers, the appellate committee modified the penalty to a minor penalty of censure," the report said. (PTI)

Punjab CM launches 'mera bill' app to reward GST payment on invoice

CHANDIGARH, Aug 22: Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann launched a 'mera bill' app under the 'bill liao innaam pao' (bring a bill, get reward) scheme.

The scheme is aimed at enhancing the compliance under the goods and services tax (GST) and thereby the revenue, according to an official release.

The scheme is targeted at motivating consumers to get bills from dealers for their purchases made within the state and thereby forcing the dealers to issue the bills for their sales.

Mann said the consumers will be encouraged to upload bills of their purchases on the 'mera bill' app to be-

come eligible to participate in a lucky draw, which shall be held at 7th of each month.

There will be a maximum 10 prizes per taxation district (29 taxation districts in the state), taking the tally to 290 rewards each month.

The reward will be equivalent to five times the taxable value of goods or services declared in the bill with maximum capping of ₹10,000 for each reward.

He said the list of winners will be displayed on the website of the taxation department and the winners will also be informed through the mobile app.

Mann informed that the bills related

to sale and purchase of petroleum products (crude oil, petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel and natural gas) and liquor as well as B2B (business to business) transactions shall not be eligible for participation in the scheme.

Encouraging the people to get bills of their purchases, the chief minister said the people of the state must participate vigorously in this scheme so that the message of tax compliance can reach each and every doorstep and the state get its due share of revenue for the various social welfare schemes.

Mann said that the scheme will enable the government to check tax evasion. (PTI)

Govt's policy neither beneficial to farmers nor consumers, claims Sena (UBT)

MUMBAI, Aug 22: The Shiv Sena (UBT) on Tuesday slammed the Centre over its decision to impose 40 per cent export duty on onions and claimed the government's policy is neither beneficial to farmers nor consumers.

An editorial in the Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana' further claimed the Modi government gives assurances of doubling the income of farmers, but works in a way that they do not even get the expected income.

On August 19, the central government imposed 40 per cent export duty on onions to restrict outward shipments and boost local availability, amid apprehension about the kharif output and signs of firming of retail prices.

The decision led to protests by farmers and traders in various parts of Maharashtra, especially in Nashik district.

"The policy of the government is neither beneficial to farmers nor consumers," the editorial in Saamana said.

Whenever there is a chance for farmers to earn a little more money, the government either resorts to export duty or ban on exports, the Marathi daily claimed.

This decision to impose 40 per cent duty was announced all of a sudden, and thousands of tonnes of onion are stuck at the country's ports. If it rots, then it can neither be exported nor sold within the country, the Sena (UBT) said.

Consumer affairs minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday alleged that some "political opponents" are creating a "wrong picture" about the export duty slapped on onion, and urged farmers not to worry as the Centre has restarted procurement at ₹2,410 per quintal for its buffer stock (PTI).

ISRO's informal approach on social media to Moon mission win hearts

BENGALURU, Aug 22: As Chandrayaan-3 cruised and orbited through space to reach within sniffing distance of the Moon, ISRO's official social media handles took an informal approach to keep millions of people glued to their screens.

Interspersing their tweets and posts with an occasional "Welcome buddy!" and "Thanks for the ride, Mate!", ISRO's social media handles occasionally departed from using just technical terms to give updates about India's ambitious Moon mission Chandrayaan-3.

On Monday when Chandrayaan-3 mission's lander module established communication with its predecessor Chandrayaan-2's orbiter, ISRO's social media warmed the hearts of space enthusiasts with its post.

"Welcome, buddy!" started the post on ISRO's social media handles, going on to explain that Chandrayaan-2 orbiter formally welcomed Chandrayaan-3's lander module which comprises the lander (Vikram) and rover (Pragyan). "Two-way communication between the two is established," the post said - and quickly lapped up over 3.4 million views on X (formerly Twitter).

Almost a week before that on August 17 when the lander module successfully separated from its propulsion module, ISRO



posted on X: "Thanks for the ride, mate! ' said the Lander Module (LM)."

The post with a hand waving emoji hit the spot, with the number of views for the post on X alone standing at about 5.5 million on Tuesday.

All through Chandrayaan-3's journey, ISRO's social media handles put out posts that informed and delighted its audience.

Chandrayaan-3 posts on social media were punctuated almost always with emojis

of the Moon, rockets and satellites if not a waving hand or a globe - making a connect with the people.

While the reach of ISRO's social media messages rode on the enthusiasm and the general buzz around India's ambitious and most anticipated Moon mission, a post on Tuesday showed that the mood within the scientific community at ISRO mirrored that of the public.

With just hours left for Vikram and

Pragyan's landing on the lunar south pole, scheduled for 6.04 pm on Wednesday, the social media handles of ISRO posted saying that the Mission Operation Complex (MOX) is buzzing with energy and excitement. The post also said that the module was continuing to sail smoothly.

Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-on mission of Chandrayaan-2, which failed in its lunar phase when its lander Vikram crashed into the surface of the Moon following anomalies in the module's braking system while attempting a touchdown on September 7, 2019.

In the previous mission too, ISRO's social media handles had attempted to use lighthearted messaging with a hashtag called #CY2Chronicles. One of the initial posts in the Chandrayaan-2 chronicles series was a comic strip depicting the separation of the propulsion module from the lander module. The post on September 6, 2019 on X (then known as Twitter), Chandrayaan-2's lander module is depicted as saying to the propulsion module -- "It was quite the journey indeed! I will see you around -- in the next orbit."

Quite the journey indeed for Chandrayaan-2's module, having orbited through since then to meet its successor Chandrayaan-3's lander module and greet it with a "Welcome buddy!" (PTI)

EC to visit poll-bound Chhattisgarh tomorrow

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: As it gears up to hold assembly polls in five states, the Election Commission is likely to visit Chhattisgarh for two days beginning August 24, sources said on Tuesday.

The Commission, led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, is likely to visit Mizoram next, most likely at the end of this month, they said. It is usual for the Commission, comprising the CEC and two election commissioners, to visit poll-bound states before announcing the election schedule.

Assembly polls are likely to be held in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Mizoram and Rajasthan in October-November.

The term of the legislative assembly of Mizoram ends on December 17 this year. The Mizo National Front is in power in the northeastern state.

The terms of the legislative assemblies of Telangana, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan end on different dates in January next year.

While the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) rules Telangana, Madhya Pradesh is ruled by the BJP. Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan have Congress governments.

Centre to incorporate rules to check vulgar content on social media, OTT platforms

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: The Centre has assured the Delhi High Court that its policy governing social media platforms and intermediaries will incorporate necessary rules and regulations to ensure the space occupied by them is free from vulgar language and profanities.

The ministry of electronics & information Technology (MeitY), in an affidavit showing compliance of the high court's earlier directions, said it has taken note of the concerns expressed by the high court in its earlier orders.

The high court had earlier said framing rules and guidelines to regulate the content on social media and OTT platforms need urgent attention.

It had underlined the need for taking seriously the use of vulgar language in public domain and on social media platforms which are open to children of tender age.

"It is stated that it is a policy decision and having taken note of the concerns of this court expressed through its directions, the concerned ministry (MeitY), while undertaking its regular exercise of policy making, will incorporate rules/regulations to regulate the social media platforms, intermediaries for making it safer from the use of vulgar language including profanity, bad words, etc., as per the judgment of this court," Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma said in an order on August 17.

Considering the submission of the ministry, the high court disposed of the matter, saying it is a sufficient compliance of its previous orders.

"This court takes note of the fact that it is a policy decision which is to be undertaken by the ministry and the legislature, it is sufficient compliance of the order of this court. This court has been assured that the concerns of this court expressed through the said judgment will be incorporated in the future rules and regulations which will be shortly undertaken," the high court said.

Coming down heavily on the language used in TVF web series 'College Romance', the high court had said the use of obscenities in the form of foul language degrades women so they may feel victims as the expletives and obscenities refer to women being objects of sex.

The high court's March 6 verdict had come while upholding an order of the additional chief metropolitan magistrate (ACMM) asking the Delhi Police to register an FIR against TVF, the show's director Simarpreet Singh, and actor Apoorva Arora under the Information Technology Act.

It had clarified that the direction to register FIR does not include a direction to arrest any of the accused or petitioner.

The court had said the challenge faced by India, as by many other countries, for enacting appropriate law, guidelines and rules to regulate the content on social media and OTT platforms needs urgent attention.

After watching a few episodes of the series, the court had found excessive use of 'swear words', 'profane language' and 'vulgar expletives'.

The judge had said she had to watch the episodes with the aid of earphones in the chamber, as the profanity of language was such that it could not have been heard without shocking or alarming the people around. (PTI)

I am political heir of Ram Vilas Paswan, Chirag will only inherit property: Pashupati Paras

'...Asked me to carry forward his legacy and fulfil his unfinished dreams'

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Union minister Pashupati Kumar Paras on Tuesday asserted that he is the political "heir" of former Lok Janshakti Party chief and his late brother Ram Vilas Paswan, while Chirag Paswan will inherit only his father's financial assets by law.

Ram Vilas Paswan, a veteran Dalit leader and a political heavyweight from Bihar, passed away in October 2020 after prolonged illness. His Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) split into two factions following differences between his son Chirag Paswan and younger brother Paras.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of an event here, Paras also asserted that he will contest the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from the Hajipur seat in Bihar, claiming that Ram Vilas Paswan had asked him to fight from the constituency even in 2019.

He had asked "me to carry forward his legacy and fulfil his unfinished dreams", said Paras, who heads the Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLJP) and represents Ha-



Paras in Lok Sabha.

Staking claim to his brother's legacy, Paras said, "According to law, Chirag Paswan is the successor of Ram Vilas Paswan's property. But I am the (political) heir of my late elder brother as was Lord Ram's brother Lakshman in the Ramayana."

"He (Ram Vilas Paswan) had asked me to contest from his Hajipur Lok Sabha seat after he was elected to Rajya Sabha, saying he

trusted me more than anyone in the family. I was not willing to contest from the seat, but he made me join the fray from his constituency," he claimed.

Paras' assertion comes at a time when his nephew, Chirag Paswan, who heads the LJP (Ram Vilas), has been on contesting from Hajipur in the 2024 general elections.

Both the LJP (Ram Vilas) and the RLJP are part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance.

Asked if there is any possibility of reconciliation between him and Chirag Paswan, Paras said, "Never".

Referred to some past incidents, the RLJP chief said he and his family members will "never forgive Chirag" for the way he treated them when Ram Vilas Paswan was hospitalised and after his death.

"The BJP has brought Chirag into the NDA fold to prevent division of votes. I told them (BJP) that I have no problem with him coming to the NDA," Paras said. There is no relation between political affairs and personal affairs, he added.

"When Chirag came to attend the NDA meeting (last month), he touched the prime minister's feet and received his blessings. He then came to me and touched my feet as well, and I also blessed him from the core of my heart. But, an hour later, he staked claim over the Hajipur seat, saying he will contest from there," Paras said.

He said he will never forgive him for that. (PTI)

Rahul Gandhi's bike odyssey reaches Lamayuru

LEH, Aug 22: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday reached Lamayuru, known for its ancient monastery and incredible landscape, riding a motorcycle from Leh town, a party leader said.

Gandhi, who is currently on a tour of the Union Territory of Ladakh, covered a distance of about 130 km to reach Lamayuru where he will stay overnight before moving to Zaskar, a tehsil of Kargil district, on Wednesday. He will be in Kargil town on Thursday.

The 53-year-old leader returned to Leh from Nubra valley on the motorcycle on Monday and was given a warm welcome by people in the main market in the evening. Congress spokesperson and leader of opposition in Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh, Tsering Namgyal told PTI.

Gandhi reached Ladakh on August 17 and is scheduled to visit Kargil in the next couple of days during his over week-long tour of the region, his first after the region was granted UT status after being carved out from Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019.

"Bharat Jodo is deeply rooted in every Indian's heart and mind. The resonating chant of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' echoing through the streets of Leh serves as a strong example of this unity. No power can suppress this voice, brimming with affection and camaraderie," Gandhi wrote on his social media account.

The Wayanad MP also shared pictures and a video where he was seen holding a tricolour while meeting a group of veterans on the first floor of a building and waving to cheering crowd gathering on the streets of Leh main market.

Namgyal, who took the former Congress president through the main market, said Gandhi walked to some fruit vendors on the roadside to "know about their problems amid inflation".

"The people who gathered around chanted slogans in praise of Gandhi and also took selfies with him," he said, adding Gandhi also interacted with a family living in the town.

On Saturday, Gandhi rode a motorcycle from Leh to Pangong Lake and stayed overnight to celebrate the birth anniversary of his father and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi the next day. (PTI)

Delhi CM Kejriwal inaugurates 5 mohalla clinics; takes swipe at BJP

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: In a veiled attack on the BJP, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday alleged that "these people conspired" against the residents of the national capital and "tried to stop" development works, but asserted that he would not allow any such move.

The AAP national convenor made the comments on the microblogging site 'X' after inaugurating five new mohalla clinics, including a women-only facility fully staffed by women.

A total of 533 Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics (AAMCs) are functional in Delhi at present, Kejriwal said and asserted that even the rich are seeking treatment at these facilities as doctors and services there are good.

The new five AAMCs are located at Keshpur Mandi in Tilak Nagar; Block C, Shahbad Dairy area; Block L, Kalkaji Market; Guru Ravidas Marg, Govindpur; and Block D, Shahbad Dairy area.

In a post in Hindi on 'X', the chief minister said, "These people hatched big conspiracies against the people of Delhi and tried to stop the work of the people of Delhi. But I assure every Delhiite that I will not let any work get halted."

"Five new mohalla clinics started in Delhi today. In the last one year, more than two crore people got themselves treated at all the mohalla clinics of Delhi. People have benefited a lot from Mohalla Clinics," he added.

There was no immediate reaction from the BJP.

After inaugurating the new Mohalla Clinic at Keshpur Mandi, Kejriwal said the footprint at AAMCs in 2022-23 was over two crore while more than 10 lakh tests were conducted in this period.

Mohalla clinics are one of the flagship initiatives of the Arvind Kejriwal government to boost the primary healthcare system in Delhi. The project was started in 2015-16.

In his address, Kejriwal said that five Mahila Mohalla Clinics are operational in Delhi and there demand is demand for more such facilities. Delhi health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, environment minister Gopal Rai and Tilak Nagar MLA Jarnail Singh were among those present on the occasion.

"Once Saurabh Bharadwaj, who is an MLA from Greater Kailash, asked me that a mohalla clinic be opened in his constituency too. I was wondering if it was needed in that area where the rich and well-off live," Kejriwal said.

Now, there are 11 AAMCs in Greater Kailash, he said.



According to officials, the Delhi government has a target of setting up 1,000 AAMCs in the city while the most immediate aim is to open mohalla clinics at Najafgarh Mandi, Narela Mandi and Ghazipur Mandi. An AAMC is already functional at Azadpur Mandi.

Kejriwal said that the Aam Aadmi Party's government in Punjab has opened 660 Mohalla Clinics in just one and half years.

Bharadwaj said that services at hospitals too are also being enhanced.

"Reference points are being made in the government hospitals as per the chief minister's instructions to monitor their performances. These reference points will give us ideas such as how many surgeries are being done by how many doctors are at a hospital.

"We are going to create a matrix to know which doctor is doing better, management of which hospital is performing better, and understand what needs to be done in other hospitals to bring them to the same level," he said.

Gopal Rai said that recently, a constitution bench of the Supreme Court ruled that the elected government has the right to fulfil the aspirations of the people.

The people of Delhi have repeatedly decided that Arvind Kejriwal "resides in our hearts", he said. "However, the BJP and the central government do not accept this mandate." (PTI)

Direct Delhi Police to allow meeting with minor rape survivor, DSW chief Maliwal in letter to Shah

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: DCW chief Swati Maliwal on Tuesday requested union home minister Amit Shah to direct the Delhi Police to allow her meeting with the minor girl allegedly raped by a senior Delhi government official.

In a letter to Shah, she also urged the home minister to order an inquiry into the delay in arresting the accused and to shift the girl to AIIMS for better treatment.

Premoday Khakha -- a deputy director in the city government's women and child development department -- allegedly raped the girl several times between November 2020 and January 2021, according to the Delhi Police. His wife allegedly gave the girl medicine to terminate her pregnancy.

Khakha and his wife Seema Rani were arrested on Monday.

Maliwal, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chairperson, said that while the police and the hospital authorities prevented her from meeting the girl and her mother, they allowed the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson to interact with the mother.

"It is extremely unfortunate that even though I waited for over 24 hours outside the hospital and even slept there, the Delhi Police and



the hospital authorities disallowed my meeting with the survivor or her family. Despite my repeated requests, I was not allowed to meet with the survivor or her family, which is an illegal act, both by the Delhi Police and the private hospital (sic)," the letter read.

Maliwal on Monday began a dharna at the hospital, claiming she was not allowed to meet with the girl. She alleged that the police and the hospital authorities "misused their power" to stall the commission's functioning.

She urged Shah to direct the Delhi Police to allow her meeting with "the girl or her mother so that the commission can assist them" and that an inquiry be ordered to

ascertain why the Delhi Police delayed the accused's arrest.

Maliwal also demanded that the survivor be urgently shifted to AIIMS for better treatment and care.

"In case the survivor and her family do not want to be shifted to AIIMS, a team of doctors from AIIMS should be sent to examine the survivor and oversee her treatment," the DCW chief wrote.

Maliwal, who began her dharna on Monday morning, left the hospital on Tuesday afternoon after failing to meet the survivor.

A police official said the girl's mother did not want to meet anyone since her daughter is still under observation. (PTI)

Ukhand suffered losses of over ₹1,000 crore this monsoon: CM

DEHRADUN, Aug 22: Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Tuesday said a disaster-like situation prevails in Uttarakhand due to excessive rains and put the losses suffered by the state so far at over ₹1,000 crore.

"Heavy rains this monsoon have destroyed crops, washed away roads, bridges, houses and cowsheds and also claimed the lives of several people and cattle. A disaster-like situation prevails in the state," he said.

"Properties worth more than ₹1,000 crore have been lost and the monsoon is still active," Dhami told reporters after reviewing the rain situation in the state after his return from Delhi.

He said a scheme will soon be introduced by the state government to rehabilitate the affected people and take care of children who have lost their parents in rain-related disasters in Uttarakhand. A team from the Centre has already made a preliminary survey and will make a detailed assessment of the losses caused by the disaster, Dhami said.

Replying to a question regarding the increasing load of tourists in Uttarakhand's cities, he said the state's disaster management authority is already working on carrying out a study of the load-bearing capacity of its major tourist towns. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Touch down near south polar

ISRO on Tuesday also released images of the Moon as captured by the Lander Position Detection Camera (LPDC) of the Chandrayaan-3 mission on August 19, and by Lander Imager Camera 4 on August 20.

LPDC images assist the LM in determining its position (latitude and longitude) by matching them against an onboard moon reference map, according to the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency.

The critical process of soft-landing has been dubbed by many including ISRO officials as "17 minutes of terror", with the entire process being autonomous when the lander has to fire its engines at the right times and altitudes, use the right amount of fuel, and scan of the lunar surface for any obstacles or hills or craters before finally touching down.

After checking all the parameters and deciding to land, ISRO will upload all the required commands from its Indian Deep Space Network (IDSN) at Byalalu near here, to the LM, a couple of hours before the scheduled time touchdown.

According to ISRO officials, for landing, at around 30 km altitude, the lander enters the powered braking phase, and begins to use its four thruster engines by "retro firing" them to reach the surface of the moon, by gradually reducing the speed. This is to ensure the lander doesn't crash, as the Moon's gravity will also be in play.

Noting that on reaching an altitude of around 6.8 km, only two engines will be used, shutting down the other two, aimed at giving the reverse thrust to the lander as it descends further, they said, then, on reaching an altitude of about 150-100 metres, the lander using its sensors and cameras, would scan the surface to check whether there are any obstacles and then start descending to make a soft-landing.

ISRO chairman Somanath had recently said the most critical part of the landing will be the process of reducing the velocity of the lander from 30 km height to the final landing, and the ability to reorient the spacecraft from horizontal to vertical direction. "This is the trick we have to play here," he said.

"The velocity at the starting of the landing process is almost 1.68 km per second, but (at) this speed (the lander) is horizontal to the surface of the Moon. The Chandrayaan-3 here is tilted almost 90 degrees, it has to become vertical. So, this whole process of turning from horizontal to vertical is a very interesting calculation mathematically. We have done a lot of simulations. It is here where we had the problem last time (Chandrayaan-2)," Somanath explained.

After the soft-landing, the rover will descend from the lander's belly, onto the Moon's surface, using one of its side panels, which will act as a ramp.

The lander and rover will have a mission life of one lunar day (about 14 earth days) to study the surroundings there. However, ISRO officials do not rule out the possibility of them coming to life for another lunar day.

The lander will have the capability to soft-land at a specified lunar site and deploy the rover which will carry out in-situ chemical analysis of the lunar surface during the course of its mobility. The lander and the rover have scientific payloads to carry out experiments on the lunar surface.

"After powered descent on to the landing site, there will be deployment of ramp and rover coming out. After this all the experiments will take place one after the other -- all of which have to be completed in just one day on the moon, which is 14 days," Somanath had said.

Noting that as long as the sun shines all the systems will have its power, he said, "the moment the sun sets, everything will be in pitch darkness, temperature will go as down as low as minus 180 degree celsius; so it is not possible for the systems to survive, and if it survives further, then we should be happy that once again it has come to life and we will be able to work on the system once again, and we hope like that to happen."

Polar regions of the moon are a very different terrain due to the environment and the difficulties they present and therefore have remained unexplored. All the previous spacecraft to have reached the Moon landed in the equatorial region, a few degrees latitude north or south of the lunar equator.

The Moon's south pole region is also being explored because there could be a possibility of presence of water in permanently shadowed areas around it.

The LM has payloads including RAMBHA-LP which is to measure the near surface plasma ions and electrons density and its changes, ChaSTE Chandra's Surface Thermo Physical Experiment -- to carry out the measurements of thermal properties of lunar surface near polar region-- and ILSA (Instrument for Lunar Seismic Activity) to measure seismicity around the landing site and delineating the structure of the lunar crust and mantle.

The rover, after the soft-landing, would ramp down of the lander module and study the surface of the moon through its payloads APXS - Alpha Particle X-Ray Spectrometer - to derive the chemical composition and infer mineralogical composition to further enhance understanding of the lunar surface.

The rover also has another payload Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) to determine the elemental composition of lunar soil and rocks around the lunar landing site.

Ahead of its scheduled landing on the moon, Chandrayaan-3's LM has established a two-way communication with Chandrayaan-2's orbiter which continues to orbit around the Moon. The two-way contact potentially offers ground controllers (MOX-Mission Operations Complex in Bengaluru) more channels for communication with Chandrayaan-3. (PTI)

Assam govt directs schools to hold spl

be organised in coordination with the Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan, Assam to facilitate viewing of the event by all school students. The Chief Minister's Office has also posted the letter on X, formerly Twitter. (PTI)

KA records 129 fresh dengue cases

to implementing all possible measures to combat these diseases. Despite their efforts, health authorities attribute the ongoing dengue cases to the continued presence of the Aedes mosquito, the vector responsible for dengue transmission. Authorities have noted that breeding sources for the Aedes mosquito have not significantly reduced in the district. These statistics reflect the collaborative efforts of health authorities and local communities to curb the prevalence of vector-borne diseases in the region.

Ban on polygamy: Ajmal bats

paigam' (message of peace) to the people. "When we have reached the skies, people are still not getting justice. People of one community are being tortured, beaten up, and their women raped.

"The government is silent and not taking any action. Hence, heads of different religions decided to hold these programmes across the country and spread the message of peace," the AIUFD chief added. (PTI)

Assam govt staff start 2-day stir

has led us to this path of agitation. The state government can easily reinstate the OPS if it wants to," the AAGNPSEA chief said, adding that states like Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have already done it.

Hazarika had earlier told PTI that most of the people who have retired under the NPS are getting pensions of ₹ 500, ₹ 600, ₹ 1,000 or maximum ₹ 3,000 a month. He claimed that Assam has around five lakh government employees, out of which around 3.5 lakh are under the NPS. (PTI)

Four held with fake currency

currency in the region. Further investigations are underway to uncover any potential network involved in the production and distribution of fake currency.

Pijush assesses erosion threat on

Minister Hazarika also took the opportunity to assess the erosion impact on a 150-meter area of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve Forest near the Kalia Bhomora Bridge in the Bhomraguri range, Tezpur.

During his visit, Dr Neha Javav, SDO Civil of Biswanath cum ADC, officials from the Biswanath administration, and concerned officials were present. The proactive steps taken by minister Pijush Hazarika reflect the government's commitment to safeguarding vital infrastructure and communities from the erosive forces of the Brahmaputra River.

Assam flood scene: Over 43,340

adversely affected by the flooding. The Brahmaputra river's water level has exceeded the danger mark at Neamatighat, further exacerbating the situation. The flood's impact extends to domestic animals as well, with nearly 26,366 animals affected in the Dhemaji district.

Despite the challenges posed by the flood, there are signs of gradual improvement in the situation, and authorities continue their efforts to provide relief and assistance to the affected population.

PM Modi arrives in S Africa; looks

his departure statement in New Delhi, Modi said BRICS has been pursuing a strong cooperation agenda across various sectors.

"We value that BRICS has become a platform for discussing and deliberating on issues of concern for the entire Global South, including development imperatives and reform of the multilateral system," he said.

This summit will provide a unique opportunity for BRICS to identify future areas of cooperation and review institutional development, he said.

Modi posted on X that he will also take part in the BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogue events. The Summit will give the platform to discuss issues of concern for the Global South and other areas of development. The BRICS bloc - comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41 per cent of the global population, 24 per cent of the global GDP and 16 per cent of the global trade.

Over 20 heads of state from Africa and the Middle East have also been invited to attend. A number of them have applied to become members of BRICS, which is one of the matters on the agenda for the Summit.

Modi said in the statement that he looked forward to interacting with a number of guest countries that have been invited to participate in this event.

"I also look forward to holding bilateral meetings with some of the Leaders present in Johannesburg," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to attend the BRICS summit virtually due to him facing possible arrest in terms of an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant if he lands in South Africa.

From South Africa, the prime minister will travel to Greece on August 25 at the invitation of his Greek counterpart Kyriakos Mitsotakis. It will be his first visit to this ancient land. "I have the honour to be the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Greece after 40 years," he said.

Contacts between our two civilisations stretch back over two millennia and, in modern times, our ties have been strengthened by shared values of democracy, rule of law and pluralism, he said.

Cooperation in diverse sectors such as trade and investment, defence, and cultural and people-to-people contacts have been bringing our two countries closer, he added.

He looked forward to visiting Greece and opening a new chapter in our multifaceted relationship, Modi said, adding that he will also be interacting with the Indian community there. (PTI)



RAGHUBIR YADAV, SEEMA PAHWA-STARRER 'YAATRIS' TO RELEASE IN OCTOBER

MUMBAI, Aug 22: "Yaatriis", featuring Raghavir Yadav and Seema Pahwa, is set to be released in theatres on October 6, the makers announced Tuesday.

The family drama, set in Banaras and Thailand, is directed by Harish Vyas. It also stars Jamie Lever and Anuraag Malhan.

According to the makers, "Yaatriis" revolves around the Sharma family, a relatable middle-class household from Mathura.

"Embarking on an unforgettable adventure, they immerse themselves in a delightful blend of love, humour, and valuable life experiences. This

heartwarming tale captures the essence of unity and togetherness," the press release stated.

Vyas, best known for his 2018 film "Angrezi Mein Kehate Hain", said "Yaatriis" is a heartwarming story that will resonate with the experiences of the middle class.

"The success of any film hinges on the talents of its cast, and 'Yaatriis' is no exception. Raghavir Yadav leads the pack, bringing his impeccable acting skills to the forefront.

"Seema Pahwa, Jamie Lever, and Anuraag Malhan further enrich the narrative with their performances, infusing life into their respec-

tive characters. The chemistry and camaraderie among the cast members add authenticity to the tale, making it all the more relatable," the director said in a statement.

Akion Entertainment's Kuku Mohanka has backed the film, which marks his production debut.

"I am sure our maiden production, 'Yaatriis' with its heartwarming storyline and fabulous performances, will take audiences to the era of feel-good family films, made by masters such as Hrishikesh Mukherjee amongst others," he added. (PTI)

BEAUTIFUL TO SEE WORLD CELEBRATING 'GADAR 2': SUNNY DEOL AT LONDON SCREENING



LONDON, Aug 22: Bollywood star and BJP MP Sunny Deol spoke of his joy over the successful box-office run of his latest release, "Gadar 2", as he introduced a special screening of the film in London.

Organised by the Indian High Commission in London and its cultural wing, the Nehru Centre, the packed screening at Vue cinema Leicester Square on Monday night brought together diplomats, community leaders as well as artists such as filmmaker Shekhar Kapoor. The event opened with the beats of the dhol as Deol made a grand entrance before addressing the gathering.

"Indians all over the world are celebrating this film, I can't tell you how beautiful it is. I never expected it to be what it was, what it is right now," said Deol, who reprised his role of Tara Singh from the 2001 box-office hit "Gadar: Ek Prem Katha" alongside Ameesha Patel as Sakeena.

"I believe that every man wants his wife to be like Sakeena and every woman wants her husband to be

like Tara Singh. And, the family, the way they hold on together and fight off everything, that's the basic USP (unique selling point) of the story," he said.

Deol revealed he was "scared" of taking on a sequel to an iconic film from 22 years ago, but it was during the COVID pandemic lockdown that the idea was crystallised and it "clicked straight away".

"It should remind us again of what our previous generations went through in the struggle for independence and most importantly what cost all communities paid in Partition," said Indian High Commissioner to the UK Vikram Doraiswami.

"The story of the original 'Gadar' is based on a true story, which Sunny Sahib made a giant hit of its times. This is an opportunity to see the next edition of it," he said.

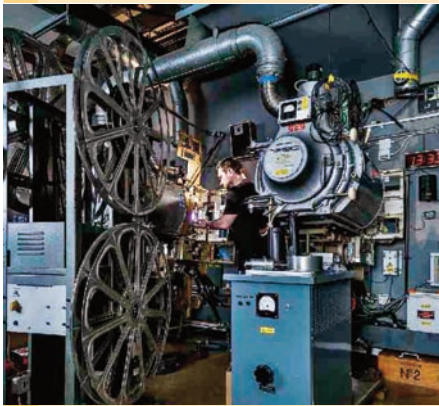
The High Commissioner also shared how the special screening was organised at short notice at the request of the lead actor, who proved to be a "draw card" to pack out one of the large screens at Leicester Square. (PTI)

ALL ABOUT THE MOVIES: Adapting to changing times and tech from the projectionist's perch

MUMBAI, Aug 22: The bulky projectors have given way to computers, the heavy metal reels replaced by a tiny hard drive. Life through their perch in darkened rooms looking into halls cavernous and intimate has evolved but the romance of the movies is intact for projectionists — who were and still are the backbone of the cinema-in-theatre experience.

Mohammed Aslam Fakih and PA Salam, for instance, have been tracking time from the grainy black and white era of films such as Satyajit Ray's 1955 classic "Pathar Panchali" right to the glossy colour era, travelling from the analogue to the digital age while adapting quickly to changing times and technology. As cinema halls adapted to newer technology in the early 2000s, things changed. A lot of physical labour could be done with the push of a button, said Fakih. The 75-year-old has been working as a projectionist at South Mumbai's Regal Cinema for 53 years.

Salam, a projectionist at Pune's National Film Archive of India (NFAI), is 67 and has also been doing the job for at least four



decades — and counting. Representing the many thousands of people who work unseen behind the scenes of the showbiz industry, Fakih and Salam recall vividly days when 35mm or 70mm reels of film, roughly weighing 1.5 kg to 20 kg, respectively, were brought to cinema halls by helpers in the pre-digital era. While Hindi movies consisted of 15-22 reels, English films had about 10-12 reels. Today, an entire film can be stored in a hard drive to be projected on screen. Their job as film projectionists was to load a physical film reel onto a projector, paying attention to the film's progress and changing reels as needed. "I never thought I would operate a computer, but I did and I am still learning. Now, all we have to do is, 'Click a button, start, click a button, stop'. Earlier we had to load the film, there was a lot of physical work that went behind it," Fakih told PTI in an interview here. Following the transition to digital film projection, movies are now shown in cinema halls via a server or a DVD. Regal Cinema is among the many theatres that have installed a digital system alongside the old analogue equipment. (PTI)

Creative people aren't afraid to tell stories they want to: Karan Johar

MUMBAI, Aug 22: There is a "check and balance" happening but creative people aren't afraid of telling the stories they want to, filmmaker Karan Johar said while commenting on navigating the constraints in place in a "changed country".

Johar on Monday was in conversation with Anant Goenka, executive director, The Indian Express, and Shubhra Gupta, film critic, The Indian Express at the Express Adda here.

When asked by Gupta whether he factors in the constraints while making films, Johar said: "At the end of the day, you've got to make a film that you want to make and you believe in. What you are talking about... Constraints have existed, always." "You wanted to make films subjects that were sensitive to issues that perhaps your country is sensitive to. As filmmakers, who now have a legal department in every office, will tell you that 'don't go down this path'. There is that check and balance happening," the 51-year-old filmmaker said at the Express Adda.

Is there fear, Gupta asked Johar, who is basking in the success of his latest release "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani". (PTI)



Dave Bautista, Jason Momoa to star in 'Blue Beetle' director Angel Manuel Soto's next film

LOS ANGELES, Aug 22: Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3 star Dave Bautista and Aquaman star Jason Momoa are teaming up for The Wrecking Crew, to be directed by Angel Manuel Soto. Soto, who just launched the DC superhero movie Blue Beetle fronted by Xolo Maridueña into cinemas, has lined up his next project with MGM Studios.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the script of The Wrecking Crew is penned

by Jonathan Tropper, the creator of the TV series Warrior. He wrote the script and closed the deal before the writers strike began in June, the publication added.

The Wrecking Crew is billed as a buddy comedy, with other details kept under wraps. Jeffrey Fierston, who worked with Momoa on the TV show Frontier, is producing the film. Soto's Blue Beetle, which released on August 18, is receiving positive reviews as the studio's first live-action superhero movie starring and created by Latinos. (PTI)



Brown community is getting the light it deserves globally, says AP Dhillon

MUMBAI, Aug 22: India-born Canadian artiste AP Dhillon, a rising global star in the hip-hop scene with songs such as "Brown Munde", "Excuses" and "Summer High", believes the brown community is finally getting the appreciation it deserves.

The musician, whose journey from Punjab's Gurdaspur to Vancouver in Canada to finally tasting popularity is the subject of a new documentary series, "AP Dhillon: First of A Kind", said he is proud that the world is taking note of the music created by In-

dians residing in Canada and the US. "We, as a brown community, are getting the light, the appreciation that we deserve, and that our culture is moving forward, like hip-hop music... I don't think the world took us seriously before, and now they are.

"The music coming from India or the Indian people, who are in Canada or in States, is getting recognised. It is amazing to see all these artists now doing different things, trying independently... So it gave people hope that, 'If he can do it, I can do it

too'," Dhillon told PTI in an interview here.

The musician, 30, whose real name is Amritpal Singh Dhillon, moved to Canada in 2015 for his post-graduation course in Business Administration and Management. For about four years, he did odd jobs like working at gas stations and convenience stores, a detail that also features in his 2020 hit "Brown Munde".

While music was always his passion, he initially wanted to become a basketball player.

"Before this I just wanted to be

a basketball player. When I moved to Canada, I was in survival mode. I salute all the students who go there. They work so hard, they go there from such a different culture. They try to fit in, there is pressure of working, making money, and going to school.

"Sometimes you forget about your dreams, you just want to survive. But we didn't stop. Music was always my passion. I wanted to make music, I loved singing, and playing guitar here and there," he said. (PTI)



WORLD CUP CHESS

Praggnanandhaa shocks Caruana, meets Carlsen in final

BAKU (AZERBAIJAN), Aug 22: Continuing his dream run, Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa on Monday stunned world No.3 Fabiano Caruana 3.5-2.5 via the tie-break in the semi-finals to set up a summit clash with world number one Magnus Carlsen of Norway at the FIDE World Cup chess tournament here.

After the two-game classical series ended 1-1, the 18-year-old Indian prodigy outlasted the highly-rated American GM in a battle of wits in a nerve-wracking tie-breaker.

In the final beginning on Tuesday, Praggnanandhaa will take on five-times title winner Carlsen, who beat Azerbaijan's Nijat Abasov 1.5-0.5 in his semifinal.

Praggnanandhaa becomes the third youngest player after the legendary Bobby Fischer and Carlsen to qualify for the Candidates tournament.

"I didn't expect to play Magnus in this tournament at all because the only way I could play him was in the final, and I didn't expect to be in the final. I will just try to give my best and see how it goes!," he said after booking a spot in the summit clash.



"It feels really good to qualify for the Candidates; I really wanted to fix this spot."

With the two 25'+10" games ending at 1-all, Praggnanandhaa prevailed in the first 10'+10" game against Caruana to get within a draw of setting up a final

clash with world No.1 Carlsen.

"Pragg goes through to the final! He beats Fabiano Caruana in the tiebreak and will face Magnus Carlsen now. What a performance!," chess legend Viswanathan Anand posted on social networking site 'X', formerly

Twitter. In the first game of tie-break, the Indian GM withstood a lot of pressure from Caruana and held on for a draw in an exciting encounter. The second rapid game too saw a similar result, pushing the semifinals to the 10'+10" series.

Praggnanandhaa has been in a rich vein of form in the World Cup and his biggest scalp before Caruana was another American Hikaru Nakamura, the world No.2 and second-seed, following which he stopped compatriot Arjun Erigaisi.

"Congratulations @rpragchess for winning against Fabiano and going to the finals at the World Cup in 2023! Proud and happy!," noted chess coach R B Ramesh wrote on 'X'.

Former women's world No.1 Susan Polgar also hailed the young Indian GM.

"Congratulations to GM Praggnanandhaa for reaching the 2023 World Cup final to face Magnus! He defeated world #2 Fabiano in the playoff to earn the coveted spot! He also defeated world #3 Hikaru earlier!"

AICF president Sanjay Kapoor said, "Congratulations to Praggnanandhaa @rpragchess on his amazing victory & making it to the FINALS of @FIDE_chess Chess World Cup. Bravo! Indian chess lovers can't wait for the Final as it promises to be one RED HOT Contest with the World no.1 @MagnusCarlsen on the other side!" (PTI)

Asia Cup will be big part of India's preparations for World Cup, says Tim Southee



MUMBAI, Aug 22: With the World Cup less than two months away, New Zealand pace spearhead Tim Southee says the upcoming Asia Cup will be a big part of India's preparations for the showpiece, while admitting that scheduling of T20 competitions has made it difficult for teams to align resources.

India announced an extended 17-member squad for the Asia Cup starting August 30, including Sanju Samson as travelling standby player since KL Rahul — the preferred wicketkeeper-batter at No. 5 — has picked up a niggle to his original injury.

"I guess ideally you want to play as much as you can together and to lead into a World Cup. But I think you look at the Asia Cup, and what better place to have your team together around that?"

"I'd imagine that is going to be a big part of the Indian team's preparation at the Asia Cup," Southee told the media here on the sidelines of the Ceat Cricket Rating Award on Monday.

Southee also backed the Indian batters to have plans against left-arm pace, while acknowledging the role of compatriot Trent Boult and Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi in causing troubles.

"I don't know what it is, but it was always handy to have a left-arm — something probably people don't face a lot of. Those two guys that you mentioned, Shaheen Shah and Trent Boult, are quality bowlers and have caused a lot of players headaches over the years," said the Kiwi bowler.

"I do not think it is too much of an issue. I'm sure the Indian players — world class players — will have solid game plans to whoever bowler they come up against," he

added. The 34-year-old said New Zealand hope to have a fit Kane Williamson in time for the World Cup.

"Kane is doing everything possible to make sure he's alright for the World Cup. We won't know until we get closer to the World Cup, whether he will be available or not. I guess it is just wait and see with Kane," he said.

"(If) you look at us, with such a small cricketing nation, he's arguably one of our best ever cricketers. Any side that doesn't have him in it is going to miss him. We're hoping his recovery goes well and hoping that he's going to be okay, but if he doesn't, then it presents an opportunity for someone else to step up," Southee said. "Over the last couple of years we've been able to build some depth from some players and I'm sure we'll find someone that can fill that role," he added.

The Kiwi bowler said all teams will look to have their World Cup players spending the coming weeks together in order to finalise their preparations for the mega event. After an away bilateral series for four T20Is and as many ODIs, New Zealand will face England in the World Cup opener in Ahmedabad on October 5.

"It's been tough for all sides at the moment with T20 cricket and juggling the different formats and busy schedules to have your (players) started and living together for a long period of time, but I'd imagine that will change in the next couple of months in the lead up to the World Cup," he said.

Southee also hoped the New Zealand players who were part of IPL this year would use their experience of the pitches and conditions. (PTI)

D Silva's hat-trick helps Hyderabad FC beat Tribhuvan Army FC 3-0

GUWAHATI, Aug 22: Aaren D'Silva scored a hat-trick to guide Hyderabad FC (HFC) to a comfortable 3-0 win over Nepal's Tribhuvan Army FC (TAF) in the final Group E game of the Durand Cup football tournament here on Tuesday.

The Nizams will finish second in the group behind Chennaiyin FC, who topped with a 100 per cent record and nine points.

TAF finished fourth behind third-placed Delhi FC, with one point from the draw against Delhi.

HFC gaffer Thangboi Singto made four changes to his 11 that started the last Chennaiyin game, including bringing in Gurmeet Singh under the bar in place of Anuj Kumar. TAF coach Megh Raj made two in contrast.

The first goal for the Nizams came in the 16th minute. The cross came in from Ramhlunchunga from the left flank. D Silva had to get ahead of his marker and directed his header away from keeper Bikesh Kuthu.

The second goal came eight minutes later when Md Yasir found D'Silva inside the box with a delectable ball that sliced through the TAF defense and the latter returned the compliment with a chip over the keeper.

Sensing trouble, Megh Raj made a double change at the 30-minute mark, bringing in Santosh and Ashish in place of Sehsehng and Tanka Bahadur.

But D'Silva duly completed his hat-trick in the second half. He could have done it a minute earlier than he finally did, missing a free-header. (PTI)

Ashwin, Chahal should have been selected in India squad, feel former cricketers

MUMBAI, Aug 22: India should have included Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal as spinners for the Asia Cup in the lead-up to the World Cup, feel former players Madan Lal and Karsan Ghavri.

While Kuldeep Yadav was picked as the frontline spinner for the Asia Cup, the other spin options in the squad are all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Akshar Patel.

"Australia have played Kuldeep Yadav very well. Yuzvendra Chahal should have got a chance. He is a match-winning bowler," Lal told PTI on the sidelines of Ceat Cricket Rating Award here on Monday night.

"Ashwin is someone who has taken 500-600 wickets... he knows how to take wickets. We did not play him in the WTC final, the team management knows better," added the 1983 World Cup winner.

Ghavri backed Ashwin for the upcoming World Cup, saying he



will be vital in Indian conditions.

"What is Ashwin supposed to prove after taking 712 international wickets? He has not been treated well despite being a senior player," Ghavri said.

"Ashwin is a quality player and he should have been selected for the Asia Cup. He will be a key bowler in the ODI World Cup on

Indian pitches," he said. Lal questioned the fitness of the players such as KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, who are coming back from long injury layoffs.

"More or less it is the same team which we were all thinking about. The only concern is their fitness because both the Asia Cup and the World Cup are big events

and level of fitness is very important," he said.

"If you are not fit physically then you are not mentally fit either — injuries always worry you. Hope the selectors have taken care of that."

Ghavri said India should have picked Yashasvi Jaiswal instead of Tilak Varma.

"Yashasvi did very well in the West Indies. He's in good form and given the way he has been performing, he should have been in the Asia Cup team. He has a bright future with Team India," he said.

"Everybody is rating Varma very highly, but where is the performance? I hope he does well," he added.

Varma was rewarded for his strong performances on the tour of the West Indies with a spot in the squad for the upcoming tournament. The young batter is in line to make his ODI debut, having made waves in the domestic circuit. (PTI)

Rinku Singh's story is of hard work and perseverance: Abhishek Nayar

MUMBAI, Aug 22: Having closely tracked the journey of a 'shy' young boy with 'low self confidence' evolve into a promising player for India, Abhishek Nayar describes Rinku Singh's story as one of hard work and perseverance.

The 25-year-old shot himself into national reckoning ever since he smacked five consecutive sixes to power Kolkata Knight Riders to a shocking win over Gujarat Titans in the IPL this year. On Sunday, he showed he can replicate that at the highest level with a 21-ball 38 against Ireland on his India

debut. "I have seen Rinku evolve as an individual. The first time I saw him in the KKR set up, and spent time with him when he came to Mumbai, he was very shy and a guy with very low self belief," KKR assistant coach Nayar recalled on Tuesday. "Overall, Rinku Singh has been a tremendous story — a rags to riches sort of story — but with a lot of hard work and perseverance," he replied to a PTI query during a chat organised by Jio Cinema.

"But one thing which has been a standout for Rinku is the fact that he is always has this ability to work hard, listen and learn — he has always been hungry to learn." Describing Rinku's personality further, Nayar said, "He is an unbelievable guy to have in the dressing room and in general, he is happy, always smiling, and happy for others' performances."

"He is someone with whom you can share your performances (with). He is always this happy-go-lucky kid and an absolute entertainer," Nayar said not many believed in Rinku after he suffered a knee injury. "Two years back, coming from his knee surgery, it just felt that a lot

of people counted him out did not believe he could do what he is doing today," he said.

"But kudos to KKR management and everyone involved in terms of backing him and a lot of credit goes to Rinku for working hard on his game and achieving what he is achieving today," Nayar added. Talking about his innings on Sunday, Nayar added: "For me, the No 5 position at which he batted in the last game is perfect. He can give himself time and go to play his big shots. He is indeed a finisher but he is also a capable batter who can make runs. (PTI)



players," said Rohit after the squad announcement.

"The only way we could have

picked him was if one of the seamers was missing. We can't do that because seamers are

going to play a big role in the next two months. A few of them are coming back after a long time, so we wanted to have a good look at them, get them in and see what they have to offer.

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

The management has clearly pointed on the superior batting skills of Axar though Chahal has got more wickets in the 50-over format since the start of 2022. Chahal has taken 24 wickets in 16 games since the start of last year

while the more economical left-arm spinner has 13 scalps in 14 games.

However, Chahal's non-selection in the Asia Cup squad was not entirely a surprise as he sat on the sidelines in the ODI series in the West Indies. He got the breakthroughs in the following T20s in the Caribbean but the selectors were not convinced enough.

His unlikely comeback will mainly depend on the performance of the chosen trio in the Asia Cup beginning August 31. But with selectors set to announce the provisional World Cup squad by September 5, is there enough time to change their minds? Perhaps, No. (PTI)

CHAHAL GETS A 'GOOGLY' AGAIN: LEG-SPINNER SET TO MISS OUT ON PLAYING 3 ICC EVENTS IN 3 YEARS

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: It's another ICC event on the horizon and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has once again fallen out of favour with the Indian team selectors.

Chahal was a big name missing from the Asia Cup squad announced on Monday but India skipper Rohit Sharma has left the door slightly ajar for the 33-year-old for the subsequent ODI World Cup at home in October-November.

The wily operator, who was once India's go to bowler in the middle overs, finds himself in familiar territory as another World Cup beckons.

Chahal was controversially excluded from the 2021 T20 World

Cup before returning for the 2022 edition in Australia, where he did not get a game as finger spinners were preferred in the playing eleven. Kuldeep Yadav, one half of the celebrated 'Kul-Cha' duo has left the other half behind in the pecking order. Kuldeep is the sole wrist-spinner in the 17-member squad for Asia Cup with the think-tank going for the better batter in Axar Patel alongside Ravindra Jadeja.

India seem to be banking heavily on the fast bowlers to do the job in the World Cup but in the spin department, can Kuldeep, Axar and Jadeja provide the much needed wickets in the middle overs? Will not picking Chahal

hurt India at the Asia Cup, like it did in T20 format when Varun Chakaravathy, on basis of one season of IPL, was picked ahead of him in what turned out to be a forgettable campaign for the mystery spinner as well as the team.

If the chosen combination doesn't work in the continental event, India will be forced to rethink their options ahead of the 50-over showpiece event at home. Besides not having a right-arm wrist-spin option, there is no off-break bowler in the squad either.

"We thought about an off-spinner as well, Ashwin and Washy (Washington Sundar), but right now you see Chahal had to miss out because we could only pick 17

3rd T20I: Chance to test bench strength as India aim clean sweep against Ireland

DUBLIN, Aug 22: Jasprit Bumrah will have to balance between adding miles to his legs and checking his team's bench-strength as India aim to complete a comfortable clean-sweep against Ireland in the three-match T20 series here on Wednesday. The Indian skipper for the series has looked comfortable in the eight overs across two matches but will need to take an informed call if he intends to play a third consecutive game on the bounce in five days even though it is a T20 affair.

The more Bumrah and Prasidh Krishna bowl, the fitter they will get, better the rhythm will be and greater the pace in their deliveries -- ingredients that are a must to cook a perfect recipe to trouble Pakistan in the upcoming Asia Cup and the marquee World Cup.

However, the skipper along with stand-in head coach Sitanshu Kotak will also have to keep in mind that there is an Asian Games to be played and some of the reserve bench players might just be undercooked. The inconsequential third game gives this think-tank a chance to check out players like Avesh Khan, Jitesh Sharma, Shahbaz Ahmed, who haven't yet got a game in the series.

In fact, Avesh, who was also with the team during the West Indies T20 series has been benched for seven straight matches and if he is again kept on the sidelines, he will go into Asian Games without any game time, which might be detrimental for both him and the team.

It is unlikely that there will be any change in the batting order unless the team management decides to rest Sanju Samson and try out Jitesh before Asian Games.

However, Samson, who is a senior



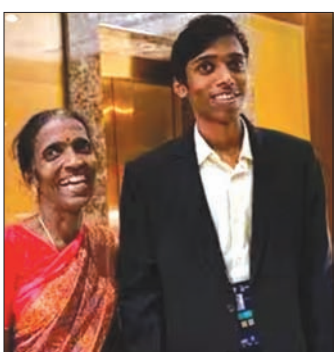
player in this set-up, might not want to sit out as his place in the World Cup squad is far from assured and he would like to carry on from where he left in the second game when he scored 40 off 26 balls.

Arshdeep Singh has got a long rope and his has been a mixed bag so far after he failed to show consistency in nailing the yorkers during the death overs in the past seven T20 games. Avesh with his pace or Mukesh Kumar with subtle variations could be tried out at Malahide, which has been a reasonably okay strip for willow wielders although it does get slower towards the end. With Rinku Singh announcing his arrival on international stage with a 21-ball-38 in the second game, India's T20 squad seems like getting that second finisher after Suryakumar Yadav in shortest format. The likes of Rinku,

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Ruturaj Gaikwad would like to stamp their authority as this will be the last bilateral T20 series before the next one against Australia which will be held in the month of November.

Teams (from):
India: Jasprit Bumrah (C), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed, Ravi Bishnoi, Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan.

Ireland: Paul Stirling (C), Andrew Balbirnie, Mark Adair, Ross Adair, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Fionn Hand, Josh Little, Barry McCarthy, Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Theo van Woerkom, Ben White, Craig Young.
Match Starts: 7:30 pm IST. (PTI)



BAKU (Azerbaijan), Aug 22: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa's incredible run in the Chess World Cup has reminded the legendary Garry Kasparov of his time as the king of 64 squares. Impressed with the teen sensation's win over world No.3 Fabiano Caruana here on Monday, the former world champion Kasparov took to Twitter, formerly X, to laud the 18-year-old's feats and his mother's efforts. "Congrats to @rpragchess — and to his mother. As someone whose proud mama accompanied me to every event, it's a special kind of support! The Chennai Indian defeated two New York cowboys! He has

been very tenacious in difficult positions," Kasparov tweeted. Continuing his dream run, Praggnanandhaa on Monday stunned Caruana 3.5-2.5 via the tie-break in the semifinals to set up a summit clash with world number one and five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway at the FIDE's premier event. Praggnanandhaa defeated Caruana after four rapid tiebreak games and thereafter stormed into the final of the showpiece.

After the two-game classical series ended 1-1, the Indian prodigy outlasted the highly-rated American GM in a battle of wits in a nerve-wracking tie-breaker. (PTI)

It's a special kind of support: Garry Kasparov hails Praggnanandhaa, mother



Protect and Prevent Continue the fight against Japanese Encephalities

July and August months are considered high transmission time for Japanese Encephalities. Stay alert, Protect yourself and your loved ones.

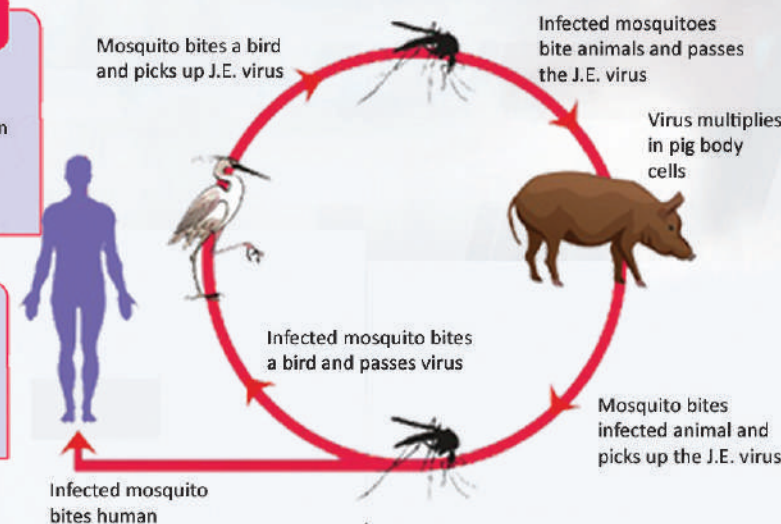
Remember, immediate medical treatment can save a life

Symptoms of J.E.

- High grade fever
- Severe Headache
- Irrelevant Talk & Confusion
- Unconsciousness
- Convulsion
- Unable to speak properly

Breeding habitats for mosquitoes

- Paddy fields
- Blocked drains
- Irrigation canals
- Ponds



Protect yourself from mosquito bites

- Avoid going to areas where water is accumulated (example rice fields) during dusk and dawn as the mosquitoes are most active at those times.
- Wear light coloured, long sleeve clothing and trousers.
- Use mosquito net while sleeping.
- Use insecticide or coil to repel mosquitoes.
- Keep the drains around the house clean and do not allow water to accumulate in empty containers.
- Pig rearing should be done atleast 100 meters away from human settlements.
- Use pig nets or mosquito nets for pig sty farms.
- Vaccinate pigs against common diseases at regular intervals.

Hosts

- Birds (herons and egrets) are reservoirs for J.E. virus.
- Pigs act as amplifiers of the virus and produce a high viral load that infect mosquitoes.

(NHMD/2023-24/1155)

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