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PM calls for unanimity on Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam Govt introduces women's reservation Bill for 33% seats in Lok Sabha, assemblies

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: The government on Tuesday introduced a constitutional amendment Bill reserving 33 per cent seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, reviving a bill pending for 27 years and blending history, politics and societal imperatives on the first day in the new Parliament building.

The women's reservation bill, named Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam and introduced in the Lower House by Union law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, will come into effect only after a delimitation exercise is completed and is therefore, unlikely to be in force during the next Lok Sabha elections in 2024. It was the first bill to be introduced in the new Parlia-



ment building. September 19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, is a date that will be etched in history and God has chosen him for the "noble work".

"The Narishakti Vandan Ad-

hiniyam will further strengthen our democracy... I assure all mothers, sisters and daughters of the nation that we are committed to making this bill into a law," the Prime Minister said in the first speech in the

first session in the new premises amid thumping of desks by members of both treasury and opposition benches.

The government, Modi stressed, wants more and more women to join the development process of the country. "For many years, there have been several debates and controversies around women's reservation. On women's reservation, there have been many efforts earlier also in Parliament. In 1996, the first bill related to this was introduced. During Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure, many times the women's reservation bill was brought, but numbers could not be mustered for it and the dream was left unfulfilled," he said. "For that work of (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Congress dubs women's reservation bill election 'jumla'

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: The Congress on Tuesday termed as "election jumla" and "huge betrayal of hopes of women" the women's reservation bill brought by the government, noting the Centre has stated that the reservation will be effective only after a census and delimitation exercise is conducted post-enactment of the bill.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh wondered whether the census and delimitation will be done before the 2024 elections, pointing out that the Narendra Modi government has not yet conducted the 2021 Decadal Census.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "In a season of election jumlas, this one is the biggest of them all! A huge betrayal of the hopes of crores of Indian women and girls."

"As we had pointed out earlier, Modi government has not yet conducted the 2021 Decadal Census making India the only country in G20 that has failed to carry out the Census. Now it says that the reservation for women will come into effect only following the first decadal Census conducted AFTER the Women's Reservation Bill has become an Act. When will this Census take place?" Ramesh said.

The bill also says the reservation comes into effect only after the publication of the next census and the subsequent delimitation exercise thereafter, he pointed out.



"Basically the bill gets the headlines today with a very vague promise of its implementation date. This is nothing but EVM - Event Management," he said.

In another post, Ramesh said that if the Prime Minister had any real intention to prioritize women empowerment, the women's reservation bill would have been implemented immediately without the ifs and buts and all other conditions. "For him and the BJP, this is only an election jumla that delivers nothing concrete," he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Cabinet decision reflects transparency of govt: Conrad

SHILLONG, Sept 19: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Tuesday said the cabinet decision to approve a ₹ 700 crore tender for implementation of the loss reduction project under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) reflects the transparency that the state power department has.

"Bringing it (tender) to the cabinet is an indication of the transparency that the department has, the minister has where he would like to share the procedure, the process followed, the steps taken in order to arrive to what we have arrived and to allot to work and to move ahead with certain aspects," Conrad.

"You have to understand that it is a ₹ 700 crores tender and when a large tendering process like this happens, it is a basic process that we follow that any large decision,"

he said while adding, "So it is always a culture that we try to bring these kind of decisions to the cabinet for the sake of transparency. We are not trying to hide anything, it has given all details to the cabinet ministers and everything is in the open for people to see."

Recently, the opposition AITC leader and former chief minister Mukul Sangma has questioned the cabinet decision to approve a tendering process proposed by the power department and cautioned the cabinet ministers if it can be a trap against them.

Reacting to this, Conrad said, "It's quite funny that Mukul Sangma has questioned why. That means he is questioning the transparency procedure that we are having. If we wanted to do it quietly or if there was an intention then we would have (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Assam Congress chief urges Singapore institute to withdraw fellowship for CM

GUWAHATI, Sept 19: Assam Congress president Bhupen Kumar Borah on Tuesday urged Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy to "withdraw" the fellowship bestowed on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that the BJP leader "stands for all that is wrong in Indian politics".

In an open letter to the Dean of the institution, Borah said he was 'astounded' that the Lee Kuan Yew Exchange Fellowship, named after Singapore's first Prime Minister, has been awarded to Sarma.

The BJP leader became the first Chief Minister of Assam to be given the honour. The fellowship is conferred on individuals in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the development of their nation and bilateral relations with Singapore.

Reacting to the letter, the BJP said that the honour is for the Chief Minister of the state and not any party leader, but the state Congress president tries to find out negativity even in a positive development.



Borah, in his open letter, highlighted that Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's founding Prime Minister, was an exemplary statesman who demonstrated honesty, hard work and civility all his life. "On the other hand, Himanta Biswa Sarma exemplifies the opposite of everything that Lee Kuan Yew stood for. In fact, he stands for all that is wrong in Indian politics," the Congress leader claimed in the letter.

Citing various news reports,

Borah alleged that Sarma is 'accused of several financial scams' and makes 'highly communalized statements against minorities'.

Claiming that the Chief Minister failed to provide basic services to citizens, while the state has 'gone deeper and deeper into indebtedness', Borah urged the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy to withdraw the fellowship bestowed on Sarma. Reacting to Borah's letter, BJP (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

India expels Canadian diplomat in tit-for-tat move; terms Canada's allegations 'motivated'

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: India on Tuesday rejected as "absurd" and "motivated" Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations of "potential" Indian links to the killing of a Khalistani separatist leader and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in retaliation to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case, in fresh strains to the bilateral ties.

Canadian High Commissioner to India Cameron MacKay was summoned and informed about the decision to expel the senior official with the Union ministry of external affairs (MEA) saying the move reflects New Delhi's growing concern at the "interference of Canadian diplomats in our internal matters and their involvement in anti-India activities."

In a strong reaction to remarks by Trudeau and the Canadian foreign minister, the MEA said such "unsubstantiated" allegations seek

to "shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Though the MEA did not divulge the name of the Canadian diplomat who has been asked to leave India within five days, people familiar with the matter said it is the Canadian intelligence agency's station chief in New Delhi, Olivier Sylvestre.

The Indian action to expel the Canadian diplomat came hours after Canada's foreign minister Mélanie Joly announced that a "top Indian diplomat" has been expelled from Canada in view of the alleged links to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian Khalistani leader. He was shot dead by two gunmen in Surrey in June. Joly's office said the diplomat is Pavan (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Two drowned in Tirap

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Sept 19: Tension prevailed at Jagun in Margherita in Tinsukia district after two youths were drowned in the Tirap river in the afternoon on Tuesday.

The incident occurred when a group of six youths had gone for an outing at the Wara Ghat on the Tirap on Tuesday. Two of them had drowned while having a bath in the river. The deceased have been identified as Avir Sengupta of Ledo Rod Gaon and Gaurav Roy of Bargolai in Margherita.

Meanwhile, after locating the youths, locals fished out their bodies from the river. After the incident occurred a police team from Jagun reached at the spot and began investigations into the incident and sent the bodies to the Tinsukia Civil Hospital for post mortem.

Timber smuggler injured in firing at Dehing-Patkai National Park

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Sept 19: A timber smuggler was seriously injured after forest guards opened fired on a group of such smugglers at Bashabnala under Hokunguri range of the Dehing-Patkai National Park that is located in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.

According to sources, a group of timber smugglers, who were reportedly armed, entered the Dehing-Patkai National Park to chop trees with saw machines in broad daylight.

"The forest official got the information about the presence of the timber smugglers, who had come over from Arunachal Pradesh to chop trees. A team of forest guards went in search of them and soon located them. Soon a firing inci-

dent took place between the smugglers and forest team. During the firing one timber smuggler got seriously injured," said a source.

Division forest officer (DFO), BV Sandeep confirmed the firing incident.

"We have come to know that one timber smuggler was seriously injured during the firing. A team of timber smugglers had come from Arunachal Pradesh to illegally chop trees in the Dehing-Patkai National Park. The incident occurred at Bashabnala, which is a few kilometers away from Arunachal Pradesh border. Wood is smuggled out of the park to be used in plywood factories that have been set in the neighbouring state," said BV Sandeep.

"We have recovered one rifle and one mobile phone from the site of the firing incident. Our forest team has been regularly patrolling the area to prevent such activities," he said.

"We cannot confirm about the death of the smuggler because his companions took him along with them. He was seriously injured," he further said.

Sources said due to the mushrooming of saw mills in Arunachal Pradesh timber smugglers with machines entered Dehing-Patkai to chop valuable trees.

"Most of the time, timber smugglers use elephants to transport the logs from the forest. Basabnala falls along the Assam-Arunachal inter-state border where most of crimes take place," said a source.

KAAC CEM appeals all tribes to reside peacefully



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 19: Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang on Tuesday appealed to all tribes living in Karbi Anglong to reside peacefully and work unitedly despite border issues.

The CEM said this while speaking at the 11th foundation day of the East Karbi Anglong Garo Union held

at Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) memorial town hall in Matipung in Diphu on Tuesday.

Tuliram Ronghang who was the chief guest on the occasion said, "I will never forget the co-operation, love and blessing showered on me by the Garo community. Every tribe living in Karbi Anglong should have the qualities of love and unity. Irrespective of autonomous and border issues or any other issue we all should work together. To make a new Karbi Anglong, every tribe and community living here should join hands and work together."

CEM Ronghang also said that "Rongkhang forest issue remains the top agenda in every election. Leaders have kept their promises of providing free land patta as was done by former leaders such as PA Sangma, Elwin Teron, former MP Birenising Engti, former minister Dhoniram Rongpi and Jayanta Rongpi. I have fulfilled my commitment by providing free land patta to 8712 families including Garo, Dimas and Karbi of that area." The CEM also assured the construction of a hostel and community hall and also provide free land (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Talent hunt auditions held in Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Sept 19: The first round of auditions for the Longbi Chidu Karbi Talent Hunt was held on Tuesday at the Joshep Terang Memorial Hall at Dillai in Karbi Anglong district.

The Karbi Film Society and Karbi Cultural Society organized the Longbi Chidu Karbi Talent Hunt for singing. A total of 43 contestants took part in the audition among whom 20 were selected for the next round of the auditions. The participants could be seen giving their best shot in the hope of winning the first round.

The winner of the contest will participate in the coming 50th Karbi Youth Festival (KYF) to be held at Taralanso in Diphu.

The audition was attended by assistant secretary of Karbi Film Society, Sanjoy Terang, president of Borjan Karbi Cultural Society, Janasing Teron, president of Karbi Students Association, Dillai Head Branch, Brojen Hanse and others.

No Naga territory should be touched: NSCN-IM

DIMPUR, Sept 19: Reacting sharply to the statement made by former Nagaland minister K. Therie on the demand of the Kuki-Zo community in Manipur, the NSCN-IM said that "not even an inch of Naga territory should be touched in the name of geopolitical arrangement for the Kuki-Zo community in Manipur".

"The statement issued by K. Therie on the controversial Kuki-Zo's demand for separate administration in Manipur is not surprising as he is a person who always found himself the odd man out," the NSCN-IM statement issued to Newmai News Network tonight said. According to the NSCN-IM, K. Therie's statement also "reflects his poor knowledge of the geopolitical issue in Manipur".

The statement then said, "Given the sensitivity of the issue involved, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) has stayed away from getting involved in any manner other than to make the stand sharp and clear that not even an inch of Naga territory should be touched in the name of geopolitical arrangement for the Kuki-Zo community in Manipur". The NSCN-IM also said that the "unmerited" concern of K. Therie for the Kuki-Zo community for separate administration is like a "voice crying in the wilderness" for the Kuki-Zo community. It further said that the former minister needs to look at the Kuki-Zo demand for separate administration within the larger context of the Nagas' geopolitical issue and not from the Kuki-Zo geopolitical perspective. (NNN)

Manoeuvre marks beginning of Aditya-L1's 110-day trajectory around L1 Lagrange point Aditya-L1 performs key manoeuvre, gets send off from earth

BENGALURU, Sept 19: Aditya L1 spacecraft, India's first space-based mission to study the Sun, got a "send-off" from the earth after orbiting it since its September 2 launch as it underwent a key manoeuvre in the early hours on Tuesday, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) said.

The Trans-Lagrangian Point 1 Insertion manoeuvre marks the beginning of the spacecraft's about 110-day trajectory to the destination around the L1 Lagrange point, a balanced gravitational location between the earth and the sun.

"Off to sun-earth L1 point! The Trans-Lagrangian Point 1 Insertion (TLI) manoeuvre is performed successfully. The spacecraft is now on a trajectory that will take it to the sun-earth L1 point. It will be injected into an orbit around L1 through a maneuver after about 110 days," ISRO said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

This is the fifth consecutive time the



ISRO has successfully transferred an object on a trajectory toward another celestial body or location in space, the country's space agency said.

Aditya-L1 is the first Indian space-based observatory to study the sun from a halo orbit around first sun-earth Lagrangian point (L1), located roughly 1.5 million km from earth, which is about

one per cent of the earth-sun distance.

The sun is a giant sphere of gas, and Aditya-L1 would study the outer atmosphere of the sun. It will neither land on it nor approach it any closer.

Since its launch, Aditya-L1, during its journey around the earth, underwent four earth-bound manoeuvres on September 3, 5, 10 and 15 respectively, during which it gained the necessary velocity for its further journey to L1.

Upon arrival at the L1 point, another manoeuvre binds Aditya-L1 to an orbit around L1.

The satellite spends its whole mission life orbiting around L1 in an irregularly shaped orbit in a plane roughly perpendicular to the line joining the earth and the sun.

Aditya-L1 is expected to arrive at the intended orbit at the L1 point after about 127 days, ISRO had said soon after the launch.

ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C57) on September 2 successfully launched the Aditya-L1 spacecraft, from the second launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota.

After a flight duration of 63 minutes and 20 seconds that day, Aditya-L1 spacecraft was successfully injected into an elliptical orbit of 235x19500 km around the earth. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Foreign firms in China say vague rules and tensions with Washington hurting business, survey shows

BELJING, Sept 19: Foreign companies operating in China say tensions with Washington over technology, trade and other issues are damaging the business environment and causing some to reassess their plans for investing in the giant market.

The results of surveys released Tuesday by the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China largely concurred in appealing for greater certainty and clarity over China's stance toward foreign businesses.

"For decades, European companies thrived in China, benefitting from a stable and efficient business environment. However, after the turbulent past three years, many have reevaluated their basic assumptions about the Chinese market," Jens Eskelund, the EU Chamber's president said, in a letter that accompanied the report.

Eskelund said that predictability and reliability had been undermined by "erratic policy shifts," hurting confidence in China's growth prospects.

"At the top of a growing list of questions about the Chinese market is, what kind of relationship does China want to have with foreign enterprises?" he said.

The Shanghai AmCham survey showed a continued downgrading of China's importance as an overseas destination for investment, even though two-thirds of the 325 companies responding said they had no immediate plans to

change their China strategy. Just over one in five of the companies surveyed said they were decreasing their investment in China this year, with the top reason being uncertainty about the US-China trade relationship, followed by expectations of slower growth in China, it said. Overall, the survey showed sentiment worsened from last year, when companies were embroiled in disruptions from "zero-COVID" policies that caused parts of entire cities, transport networks and travel to be shut down, sometimes for weeks at a time.

Such disruptions were a major "push factor" that companies cited in expanding their operations outside China, the survey showed.

Asked about the survey, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that Beijing has recently taken measures to attract foreign investment and that China welcomes foreign companies to invest and operate in China.

"What I can tell you is that China's economy is resilient, promising and dynamic, and the fundamentals of long-term development have not changed," said the spokesperson, Mao Ning.

"The outstanding advantages of a super-sized market and a complete industrial system have also remained unchanged," she said.

While 52 per cent of those surveyed by AmCham Shanghai said they were optimistic about their five-year business outlook in China, that was the lowest figure since the group began the annual survey in 1999. Nearly nine in 10



companies said rising costs were a big challenge.

Intensifying competition has also been worsened by policies that favour local companies over foreign ones and courts that tend to favor Chinese companies in decisions on protection of intellectual property such as patents and trademarks, the chamber said.

Companies face a growing threat from "nimble, innovative local businesses and state-owned enterprises, which have enjoyed stronger support in recent years and whose consolidation has made them increasingly competitive with large multinational corporations," the survey said.

Companies that are limiting their commitment to the China market included those selling technology hardware, software and services — an area hit hard by trade sanctions imposed in the name of national security, mostly

by Washington. Others include education and training — industries that have suffered in a crackdown on private education companies, and banking and other financial industries. Southeast Asia ranked as the top choice for the 40 per cent of companies shifting their investments to places outside China, followed by the U.S. and Mexico, the survey said.

In the 2022 survey, 40 per cent of manufacturers surveyed said China was among their top three investment destinations, while this year that dropped to 26 per cent.

American companies also are urging Chinese authorities to clarify various regulations, saying that gray areas leave companies uncertain over what is permitted and what may have been outlawed as rules changed. "Companies are much more hesitant," said Sean Stein, AmCham Shanghai's chairman. He noted that the problem

was acute for financial and pharmaceutical companies.

"What businesses need above all else is clarity and predictability, yet across many sectors companies report that China's legal and regulatory environment is becoming less transparent and more uncertain," Stein said in an online briefing before the report was released.

The survey results echoed those found by other foreign business groups. Foreign companies are on edge following unexplained raids on two consulting firms and a due diligence firm. The expansion of an anti-spying law and a push for self-reliance in technology also are seen as risks. Foreign investment into China fell 2.7 per cent from a year earlier in the first half of 2023, according to official data.

A survey by the British Chamber of Commerce in China found 70 per cent of foreign companies want "greater clarity" before making new investments. The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China said its members are shifting investments to Southeast Asia and other targets.

Despite the relatively gloomy perspective evinced by the survey, some things have improved, American Chamber of Commerce members said. China has extended preferential tax breaks for expatriates, such as tax write-offs for housing and educational expenses until the end of 2027.

A recent overall improvement in China-U.S. relations has occurred since the survey was completed, they said. (AP)

Zubeen Garg inaugurates CareVista & Apollo Sugar Clinic



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 19: In a momentous event that bridges the realms of healthcare and beauty, Assam's renowned music sensation, Zubeen Garg, graced the inauguration of CareVista, a cutting-edge Radiant Skin and Health Clinic, and the Apollo Sugar Clinic, strategically located in the heart of Guwahati. Founded by esteemed medical professionals Dr. Navin Kumar Bansal and Dr. Anita Jain, this state-of-the-art facility promises a transformative journey towards radiant skin and total health.

CareVista offers a sanctuary for those seeking comprehensive care in skincare, diabetes management, and internal medicine. Under the adept leadership of its co-founders, Dr. Anita Jain, a renowned Dermatologist specializing in Aesthetic Dermatology & Lasers, and Dr. Navin Kumar Bansal, MD in Medicine with a Fellowship in Diabetes, CareVista presents a wide array of services tailored to individual needs.

Dr. Anita Jain, MD Dermatology & Venereology, expressed her enthusiasm for the clinic's launch, stating, "At CareVista, our commitment is to enhance our patients' beauty and confidence through advanced dermatological treatments, and to provide the highest quality skincare and health services. Our clinic boasts state-of-the-art laser technologies, including VEGA, one of the world's finest and first dual-wavelength Laser Hair Reduction Technology from Israel, which offers a painless experience suitable for all skin types."

Dr. Navin Kumar Bansal, MD Medicine and Fellowship in Diabetes, conveyed his passion for holistic health, stating, "The grand launch of CareVista & Apollo Sugar Clinic signifies a momentous occasion for the entire North Eastern region, and I am delighted to be part of this endeavor. With my specialization in diabetes management and a strong focus on overall health, I believe we are creating a holistic healthcare destination. The clinic's scope extends to addressing co-morbidities related to diabetes, including eye care and foot care services."

Music sensation Zubeen Garg, a special guest at the inauguration ceremony, shared his thoughts on CareVista and Apollo Sugar Clinic's mission, remarking, "I am thrilled to be a part of this momentous occasion. CareVista represents the perfect fusion of beauty and health, and I believe it will have a significant impact on the lives of Guwahati's residents and the entire North East."

Vishwakarma idol biswarjan avijan under aegis of Topcem Cement, GSMGOA

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 19: Topcem Cement and Guwahati Scooter and Motorcycle Garage Owners Association (GSMGOA) have been advocating the cause for a Clean Guwahati through their initiative — Vishwakarma Idol Biswarjan Avijan every year and have achieved considerable success in generating awareness which has led to greater involvement and more increased participation from different establishments and organisations over the years. Both Topcem Cement and Guwahati Scooter and Motorcycle Garage Owners Association (GSMGOA) have been jointly doing it since 2014.

Topcem Cement and Guwahati Scooter and Motorcycle Garage Owners Association will initiate the activity on 20 September 2023 at 10 am, from Ulubari, Guwahati, near Old ASTC Garage Compound. The activity will continue till 5 pm in the evening.

On the occasion, Anil Kapur, president (sales & marketing), Meghalaya Cements Ltd, announcing this year's activity said "It is our responsibility to keep the city clean and we are thankful to Guwahati Scooter and Motorcycle Garage Owners' Association in collaborating with us for this mission. These idols will be collected and disposed in areas designated by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation". Topcem Cement and Guwahati Scooter and Motorcycle Garage Owners' Association requests all concerned to extend support to this campaign. Last year more than 3000 idols of various sizes were collected from various locations in the Guwahati metropolitan.

Delhi traders body plans to hold shopping festivals for various products

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: After the Chandni Chowk shopping festival, a section of traders in Delhi are planning to hold such festivals for products like furniture, toys, automobiles and textiles to boost local business.

Local traders' body Chamber of Trade and Industry and Chandni Chowk traders organised a shopping festival at Rangpuri on Sunday. Over 3,000 buyers from Delhi-NCR attended the day-long festival. The Chamber of Trade and Industry in a statement said that traders from local markets like Lajpat Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Sarojini Nagar, and Sadar Bazaar have requested the chamber to hold more such festivals in their respective markets.

The chamber said that it will make a proposal over the same and meet Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for holding such events.

"The CM has advised that festivals based on other markets and sectors, on the lines of Chandni Chowk shopping festival, can also be organised where buyers and sellers come together." (PTI)

Star Cement empowers women through CSR initiative



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 19: In a remarkable display of corporate social responsibility, Star Cement, a prominent player in the Northeast's infrastructure sector, distributed 200 sewing machines to outstanding outgoing trainees of the Star Usha Tailoring School.

The distribution ceremony, part of the impactful 'Srijani' CSR initiative, took place at the NEDFi Auditorium Hall in Guwahati, earned accolades from the Governor of Assam, Gulab Chand Kataria.

The event saw the presence of key officials, including Sajjan Bhajanka, chairman of Star Cement; Pradeep Purohit, chief operating officer; chief manufacturing officer Sundaram Srinivasan, and CSR head Sukanya Goswami, among other dignitaries.

In his address, Governor Kataria lauded Star Cement for its commendable initiative, emphasizing its role in enhancing society's well-being and contributing to national self-reliance. He called upon all citizens to collectively participate in India's development journey, highlighting the importance of empowering women, particularly in rural areas. Governor Kataria underscored the crucial role that tailoring and similar household industries play in providing livelihoods to women in middle-class families, stating that promoting such vocations would empower women to contribute significantly to the country's economic development. He emphasized that sustainable income sources would foster confidence, leadership, and decision-making among women.

Pradeep Purohit, chief operating officer of Star Cement, also spoke on behalf of the company. He highlighted how these CSR initiatives aligned with Star Cement's larger mission of fostering infrastructural growth in the North East while building stronger and happier communities.

During the same event, Star Cement announced another CSR activity, pledging to provide essential school infrastructure items to 15 neighboring schools, shortlisted with the guidance of Sonapur Sahitya Sabha. The donation includes 90 pairs of desks, 22 pairs of tables and chairs, 65 ceiling fans, 20 blackboards, 15 plastic chairs, and 3 room partitions, measuring 8ft by 5ft.

In a separate recognition, Star Cement felicitated 14 local schools from the Sonapur and Chamata areas for their outstanding academic performance in GUNOTSAV, Assam 2023. These schools received an 'A+ Grade' rating, and Star Cement applauded their achievement by offering financial aid to 70 meritorious students from the selected 14 schools.

Staff shortage at DGCA delays issuance of pilot licences

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is taking at least a couple of months to issue licences to trained pilots as the regulator is grappling with the shortage of staff at key positions, according to sources.

After training, individuals need to obtain a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) to be eligible to fly commercial flights.

Sources in the civil aviation ministry said that at present, a pilot has to wait for a couple of months to get his or her licence and the pendency time is likely to go up in the coming months.

"The Directorate of Training and Licensing (DTL), under the Operations Department which deals with licensing, has a total of 129 sanctioned posts of assistant directors. Of those, 92 posts or almost 72 per cent of the total strength are lying vacant," one of the sources said.

Till July 2022, the DGCA had only 72 sanctioned posts of assis-

tant directors. In August 2022, the ministry created 57 new posts and the sanctioned strength rose to 129 positions.

"However, DGCA has failed to initiate any process to fill the 57 newly created posts. As many as 35 old posts out of the 72 that fell vacant due to retirement or promotions of the employees are also lying vacant, the source said.

When contacted, DGCA Director General Vikram Dev Dutt did not offer any comment on the issues.

However, a senior official on the condition of anonymity said that the hiring process is tedious and time-consuming, and that is the reason for the delay in filling crucial posts. As per the DGCA's own 'Standard of Service', after due process, a CPL has to be issued within three days.

Further, the source said the regulator published an advertisement through the Union Public Service Commission (PSC) for filling entry-level posts in airworthiness,



legal and air safety areas. However, no advertisement for filling the posts in the operations cadre at the entry level for assistant directors that deal with the licensing process has been issued, the source added.

The sources at the ministry said that institutes which provide train-

ing for drone flying have to get a licence from the DGCA. Over a dozen such institutes have applied for licences but their applications are lying for approval for a considerable amount of time, they added.

"Companies that sell drones to trained pilots have to obtain a UIN (Unique Identification Number)

from the DGCA for each drone. Similarly, trained drone pilots also have to get a licence from the DGCA to fly drones.

Aviation experts, who are aware of the issue, said that the pendency time in issuing licences to pilots might go up as the operations department under DTL is under the restructuring process due to which the files are moving among DGCA, the ministry and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

"So far as I know, even the higher positions such as the post of Deputy Director General (DDGs) are also facing severe shortage as the DGCA initiated new recruitment rules last year for these posts. Out of total 18 DDGs posts at DGCA, 9 are vacant. As many as 7 out of these 9 posts were created in August 2022," Captain SS Panesar, Ex-Director of Flight Safety and Training at Indian Airlines, said.

According to him, in the absence of recruitment rules, the

Gold rises ₹150; silver climbs ₹400



NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Gold prices rose ₹150 to ₹60,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid strong cues from global markets, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at ₹60,200 per 10 grams.

Silver also climbed ₹400 to ₹74,800 per kilogram.

In the international markets, both gold and silver were trading higher at USD 1,936 per ounce and USD 23.33 per ounce, respectively.

"The Comex spot gold price surpassed resistance of USD 1,935 per ounce, following weakness in the dollar index and expectations that the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates unchanged at its September meeting," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. (PTI)

Jute mills foresee 30-50pc production cuts on low procurement plan for jute packaging

KOLKATA, Sept 19: The jute industry is concerned over a threat of a 30-50 per cent production cut in three months till November, compared to the same period last year, because of a low demand for packaging material for foodgrains from various states, a senior official said on Tuesday.

The Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) has appealed to the Centre for a revision in the sixth (revised) supply plan issued by the Food & Public Distribution department. Foodgrain producers have to use jute as a packaging material to a certain extent.

"In the current jute season from September to November 2023, the actual demand indent placement is lower by 30-40 per cent. In September alone, demand indents are expected to be lower than 2.5 lakh bales against planned 3.21 lakh bales due to slow order placing by Maharashtra," IJMA Chairman Raghu Gupta told PTI.

For the months of October and November, the indents are likely to be about 1.48 lakh bales against over 2 lakh bales as per the August plans, he stated.

"But, in terms of capacity utilisation, our production cut will be to the tune of 30-50 per cent, unless indents are not revised upwards" Gupta said.

Furthermore, the sudden cancellation of indents by the Chhattisgarh government for October and November has dealt a severe blow to the industry, IJMA claimed in its presentation to the government.

As a consequence of the underutilised capacity in jute mills, manufacturers have initiated production

cutbacks, a move that could significantly impact the pricing of raw jute, which is currently hovering below Minimum Support Price (MSP) levels, former IJMA chairman Sanjay Kajari said. The instability in raw jute prices poses a threat to farmers, who may not receive adequate compensation for their produce, especially during the upcoming new jute crop harvest, he said.

In light of these challenges, the IJMA has sought restoration of the cancelled indents by the Chhattisgarh government. The association has also urged the advancement of orders for 2 lakh bales for the upcoming RMS 2024-25 season to November 2023.

These measures are seen as critical to ensuring the uninterrupted operation of jute mills across West Bengal during the festive season of Durga Puja. About 2.5 lakh workers are engaged in mills that produce about Rs 7000 crore worth of jute products and the lion's share goes into food grain packaging. (PTI)

Asian shares weaker ahead of Federal Reserve interest rate decision

TOKYO, Sept 19: Asian shares mostly declined in cautious trading on Tuesday ahead of the Federal Reserve's looming decision on interest rates. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dropped 1.1 per cent in morning trading to 33,177.75. Australia's S and P/ASX 200 lost 0.5 per cent to 7,192.40. South Korea's Kospi edged down 0.3 per cent to 2,568.12.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.5 per cent to 17,835.44, while the Shanghai Composite fell 0.3 per cent to 3,116.98. The Fed is due to wrap up a two day meeting on Wednesday. Japan's central bank will meet Thursday-Friday as observers speculate that it might gradually begin to adjust its longstanding negative interest rate policy. "Market sentiments remained in its usual wait-and-see ahead of the Federal Open Market Committee meeting this week," said Yeap Jun Rong, market analyst at IG.

Monday on Wall Street, the S and P 500 edged up 0.1 per cent to 4,453.53 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose less than 0.1 per cent to 34,624.30. The Nasdaq composite added less than 0.1 per cent to 13,710.24. Stocks have been see-sawing since early August on uncertainty about whether the Fed will finally end its hikes to interest rates. Higher rates have helped cool inflation from its peak last summer, but they also hurt prices for stocks and other investments while slowing the economy.

Traders almost universally expect the Fed to keep rates steady at its meeting this week. Attention will mainly focus on forecasts Fed officials will publish about where they expect interest rates, the economy and the job market to head in upcoming years.

Traders are betting on a roughly 40 per cent chance the Fed will raise rates again in either

November or December, according to data from CME Group. But just as much attention will be on what Fed officials say about next year, when investors expect the Fed to begin cutting interest rates. Investors crave such cuts, which typically loosen up financial conditions and give boosts to financial markets. The big question is by how much the Fed could cut.

Fears are strong that rates may have to stay higher for longer to get inflation down to the Fed's 2 per cent target. That quest has been complicated by a recent spike in oil prices.

Worries about a possible recession persist though they have diminished as reports have shown the economy and job market remain resilient. One worrying factor is where bond yields are, with two-year and other shorter-term yields continuing to remain higher than longer-term yields. (AP)

feeder cadre, -- directors from legal, airworthiness, operations, flying training aircraft and engineering, among other departments, could not be promoted.

"This has also resulted in a roadblock in the career progression of all group A officers in DGCA and in future, will severely impact the aviation industry. The ministry immediately needs to fill all these technical positions with competent and highly skilled professionals," he said.

The operations department, which deals with drone licensing too, has crucial positions such as Deputy Director General (DDG), Director Operations and Deputy Director Operations remaining vacant for more than a year.

"There is pendency in all these services due to lack of officials," one of the sources said.

The sources also claimed that even Air Traffic Controllers Licensing and Aerodrome Licensing processes are also moving at a snail's pace. (PTI)

Minister Nandita Gorlosa leads efforts to foster emotional connection with homeland Haflong unites for 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' awareness drive

HT Correspondent
HAFLONG, Sept 19: In a bid to promote a deeper connection to one's homeland, an awareness program titled 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' was recently organised at the District Library Auditorium in Haflong. Spearheaded by the Dima Hasao district administration, this unique initiative, supported by the central government, aimed to engage the local community.

State minister for Power, Sports & Youth Affairs, Nandita Gorlosa, graced the occasion as the chief guest, accompanied by district commissioner Simanta Kr Das, ACS, SP Mayank Kumar, IPS, SDO(C) Meganjoy Thaosan, ACS, and deputy secretary Rebecca Changsan, ACS, representing DHAC.

Minister Nandita Gorlosa, in her address, emphasised the significance of the program, stressing the



importance of an emotional connection between individuals and their homeland. She outlined the objectives and plans for 'Meri

Maati Mera Desh,' which included a unique campaign scheduled from September 20 to 30, 2023. During this campaign, soil would be collected from every household in the district's villages, transported to the block, and subsequently forwarded to Guwahati and then to Delhi.

ADC Deepmala Goala, ACS, delivered a welcome speech and presented a PowerPoint overview of 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' and 'Amrit Kalash Yatra'. A video message from chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, was also screened, underscoring the theme 'Meri Maati Mera Desh'.

The event witnessed the presence of gaon buras, the Apex body, senior citizens, and various officials, all coming together to support this initiative aimed at strengthening the bond between the people and their homeland.

Launch of 'Naba Borbeel Kani Dhaan': Nagaon district introduces new millet brand



HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Sept 19: In a significant step towards expanding millet cultivation, increasing value addition, and enhancing the marketing of millets, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Assam Regional Office, has successfully implemented a Model Millets Project (MMP) in the Borbeel cluster region of the Kathioli Development Block, Nagaon. This initiative, which focuses on foxtail millet production, processing, and promotion, has been carried out in collaboration with Kolong Kapili, with guidance and support from KVK-Nagaon and the department of Agriculture.

The project was inaugurated in February 2023 by GM-NABARD, Nabin Kr Roy. Following a successful foxtail millet harvest and processing, a dedicated millet brand from Nagaon district called 'Naba Borbeel Kani Dhaan' was officially launched. The inauguration ceremony was conducted by

the district commissioner of Nagaon, Narendra Kr Shah, in the presence of various dignitaries, including DDC-Nagaon Satyajit Chetia, DDM-NABARD Rajendar Perna, and Dr Niranjana Deka, the principal scientist and head of KVK, Nagaon.

Rajendar Perna, DDM-NABARD, explained that around 50 farmers with a minimum of 3 bighas of land each were mobilised for the project based on a baseline survey and their interest in millet cultivation. The selected farmers were provided with vermicomposting units, fertilisers, foxtail millet seeds, super bags, motor pulveriser machines, and dehusker cum polisher machines. The project also included land preparation and capacity-building training for the beneficiaries.

Additionally, NABARD, KVK, Nagaon, and the implementing agency provided continuous support to the farmers until the crop cutting exercise. The harvested millets were processed and pre-

served in a seed bank, serving both as consumable grains and seeds for future sowing by farmers.

Rajendar Perna further revealed NABARD's plans to send selected farmers on exposure visits to reputed institutions to explore various processing options and facilitate the sale of their products through e-commerce portals like ONDC and Amazon.

Dr Niranjana Deka from KVK, Nagaon, along with beneficiary farmers, shared their experiences in implementing the project and appreciated NABARD's vision in launching a distinct millets brand for Nagaon district.

In his remarks, Dr Narendra Kr Shah commended NABARD and the implementing agency for their successful project execution and the introduction of Nagaon district's unique millets brand. He also urged bankers to extend crucial credit support to enable more farmers to engage in millet cultivation and processing, thereby improving their income.

MMIP boosts Koilamati Weekly Market with new market sheds



HT Correspondent
KOILAMATI, Sept 19: The Market Modernisation Improvement Programme (MMIP) has initiated the construction of market sheds for the Koilamati Weekly Market. The foundation stone for this project was laid on Monday by Dr Nimal Momin, deputy speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly, and Pabitra Rongpi, Member of Autonomous Council (MAC), Nilip. The ceremony saw the participation of villagers, shopkeepers, vegetable vendors, and businessmen from the Koilamati Weekly Market. MAC Rongpi expressed his commitment to bringing more development to the area.

Dr Momin emphasised that government welfare schemes are distributed without bias along party and religious lines. He also highlighted various completed projects in Koilamati, including a 10-bedded hospital, an RCC bridge across the Deigrum River, a road connecting Silonijan to Chokihola, a residential school for girls, an auditorium hall, and a boundary wall at Arlong Rupat School. He added that those responsible for incomplete construction of PMAY-G houses will face legal consequences.

International Snakebite Awareness Day observed

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, Sept 19: To mark International Snakebite Awareness Day, on Tuesday, the District Surveillance Unit, IDSP (Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme), Sivasagar, organised an awareness meeting at Khemka Matri Sadan, Doulmukh Chari, Sivasagar. The meeting was led by Dr Gayatri Senapati, the district surveillance officer, along with other officials from the District Surveillance Unit, district media experts, and medical professionals. During the meeting, Dr Gayatri Senapati provided detailed information on the importance of snakebite awareness, the protocol for treating snake bites, and the steps to administer first aid at home before seeking hospital treatment.

Deva Prasad Deori elevated to joint director of I&PR HQ in Dispur

Bijendra Gogoi to assume new role in Silchar

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 19: In a significant development, Deva Prasad Deori, the deputy director of Information & Public Relations, Barak Valley Zone, Silchar, has been promoted to the esteemed position of joint director of Information and Public Relations at HQ Dispur. An official order, bearing reference eFNO.276865/42-A, was issued by the Secretary to the Government of Assam, I&PR and PS department on Tuesday, confirming Deva Prasad Deori's promotion. In line with the reshuffling, Bijendra Gogoi, previously the public relations officer (P.R.O) to the chief minister, has been promoted to the role of deputy di-

rector of Information & Public Relations, Silchar, and is attached to the Chief Minister's PR Cell.

Upon receiving this recognition, Deva Prasad Deori expressed his thoughts, saying, "Upon my previous promotion to deputy director BVR, Silchar, I joined here on November 1, 2013, and served for four years in Cachar. Subsequently, I was posted in Cachar as deputy director on April 10, 2023. Throughout my tenure, I received unwavering cooperation from the staff, and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the staff of this office for their dedicated efforts. I am optimistic that the staff of this office will continue to excel in their duties in the days ahead."

CEM Pramod Boro inaugurates Handloom & Textile Superintendent Office



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Sept 19: Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), inaugurated the newly constructed office of the Superintendent of Handloom & Textiles in Bijni, Chirang district. The inauguration took place during the Ganesh Chaturthi celebration in the presence of officials from the Handloom & Textile department.

The newly constructed office holds significant promise for the promotion of Bodoland Territorial Region's vibrant handloom industry. CEM Boro emphasised the government's commitment to the all-round development of its citizens and its strong initiative to support the handloom sector.

"The newly-constructed office will significantly aid in our mission to promote the beautiful and vibrant handloom industry of BTR," Boro stated. The event was attended by other BTR officials, including EMs Dhananjay Basumatary and Ranjit Basumatary, as well as MCLAs Pradip Kumar Bhayan and Madhab Chandra Chetry.

Apna Manch honours 13 distinguished figures during Hindi Diwas celebration



HT Correspondent
HOJAI, Sept 19: Apna Manch commemorated Hindi Diwas with a two-day extravaganza held at Rashtrabhasha Vidyalaya High School in Hojai. The event featured the felicitation of 13 distinguished individuals who have made significant contributions to Hindi literature, teaching, and reporting. Each honoree was presented with an Assamese phulam gamosa and an appreciation certificate.

The chief guest for the occasion was Saurabh Gupta, superintendent of police, Hojai district, while Dr Manoj Kumar Swami, associate lecturer at Rabindranath Tagore University, graced the event as the chief speaker. Dr Pijush Nandi, associate lecturer at Hojai Girls' College, and Shivsankar Bora, a social worker, were among the esteemed guests of honour. The event was presided over by Ashok Kejriwal, working president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Hojai district, and conducted by Nikhil Kumar

Mundra, the founder of Apna Manch.

The proceedings began with the ceremonial lighting of a lamp and a floral tribute to the late social worker, Pradeep Kumar Sureka. A minute of silence was observed in his memory to wish for his eternal peace.

Vishal Choudhary, co-founder of Apna Manch, delivered the welcome speech. The 13 personalities who were felicitated during the event include: Literary figure Baccha Lal Gupta; poet and former journalist Rajendra Prasad Gupta; Dr Manoj Kumar Swami, associate lecturer, Rabindranath Tagore University (for teaching); Dr Rajen Singh Chauhan, associate lecturer, Hojai Girls' College; Gopi Kanta Das, teacher, Don Bosco High School; Surendra Gupta, teacher, Abdul Hasib High School; Madan Dutta, teacher, Nabakalpa High School; Shioji Prasad, retired teacher, Narsingh Isthian High School; Damodar Mishra, teacher, Gandhi Vidyap-

ith High School; Niranjana Sarawagi, for significant contributions to Hindi journalism; Ramesh Mundra, for exemplary contributions to Hindi journalism; Raj Kumar Chauhan, for commendable contributions to Hindi journalism; Shivdayal Singh, for his dedication to free teaching and contributions in Hindi reporting.

Addressing the gathering, chief guest Saurabh Gupta emphasised that Hindi is not just a language but an emotion deeply ingrained in our culture. Chief speaker Manoj Kumar Swami commended the celebration of Hindi Diwas as a commendable step, highlighting that Hindi serves as a unifying thread for the nation. He stressed the importance of connecting with Hindi at a deeper level, considering it as a part of our body and soul.

Dr Nandi and Ashok Kejriwal also shared their perspectives on the occasion, praising the efforts of Apna Manch in organising such a meaningful program.

Additionally, prizes for the Recitation and Quiz Competition were distributed to the deserving winners. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Mayank Kayal. Members Rohit Choudhury and Nikhil Beriwal, along with school staff and students, collaborated effectively to ensure the smooth execution of the program. Many distinguished guests attended the event and expressed their appreciation for the social initiatives undertaken by Apna Manch.

Ayushman Bhava campaign launched in Morigaon

HT Correspondent
MORIGAON, Sept 19: The Ayushman Bhava campaign, aimed at promoting awareness of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), ABHA ID generation, and services related to the screening and management of non-communicable and sickle cell diseases, officially commenced in Morigaon recently. This initiative, designed to ensure the delivery of comprehensive healthcare services to every panchayat line, ultimately reaching the last mile of society, was formally announced by district commissioner Devashis Sarma during a press conference held at the DC's conference hall. The event saw the presence of joint director of Health Dr Phani Pathak, DIPRO Pompy Devi, and DPM of NHM Zulfan Sultana.

Speaking to the media, district commissioner Sarma explained that the Apke Swar 3.0 initiative involves the distribution of Prime Minister Jay cards and ABHA IDs through the diligent efforts of frontline workers, including ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, multipurpose workers, and swasthya karmis. Furthermore, Ayushman Melas will be conducted weekly at Sub-Health and Primary Health Centers (Se-HWC, PHC-HWC) and Urban Primary Health Centers (UPHC-HWC) throughout September. A total of 133 Ayushman Melas are scheduled to be organised across Morigaon. Additionally, Ayushman Sabhas will be convened in 85 Gram Panchayats and 11 urban wards within the district as part of this comprehensive healthcare initiative.

Discovery of deceased woman in disturbing state shakes Morigaon

HT Correspondent
MORIGAON, Sept 19: A sense of shock and disbelief gripped the residents of Morigaon as the lifeless body of a 25-year-old woman was discovered lying in a rented house on Monday night, raising suspicions and concerns throughout the district. The distressing incident unfolded at Ward no 2, located approximately 300 meters from the office of the superintendent of police (SP) in Morigaon.

The lifeless body of the woman was found within a rented residence in Pachtia Ward 2, situated within Morigaon town. Distressed relatives who entered the house were confronted with the unsettling sight of the deceased woman lying unclothed on the floor.

The victim was identified as Nikita Devi. Tragically, a one-month-old infant was also injured during the incident.

According to available information, the victim's husband is employed as a security guard at the Morigaon Cinema Hall. He reported that the tragic incident occurred during his absence from home last night. In response, the police have initiated a thorough investigation into the case, aiming to unravel the circumstances surrounding this distressing incident.

Gagana organises Bhado Mahor Naam

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 19: On Sunday, 'Gagana', the Assamese People's Association, organised a reverent celebration of 'Bhado Mahor Naam' at 'Lodha Aqua', Mira Road, Mumbai. For the Assamese people, the month of Bhado holds profound significance as it marks the birth of Lord Krishna and the death anniversaries of the revered Mahapurush Sri Sri Sankardev and Sri Sri Madhavdev, both of whom made immense contributions to the social, cultural, and religious fabric of the Assamese community.

Under the guidance of Namacharya Anil Das, all religious rituals were conducted with utmost sincerity. The Dihanam, presented by Minakshi Borah, Sneha Borah, Angana Saikia, and Runa Sharma, captivated hundreds of Assamese women, immersing them in deep Bhakti Raas. The melodious sounds of the flute, nagara, and taal created an enchanting atmosphere.

The entire program was skillfully managed by Madhurya Narayan Borah and Hemanta Bhuyan, ensuring its success. The event concluded with 'Maah Prasad' distribution and a special meal, as Runa Sharma, representing Gagana, informed in a press release.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

Women are the real architects of society.
- Cher

Women's quota Bill

In an unexpected turn of events, the Modi Cabinet approved the long-dormant Women's Reservation Bill during an unscheduled meeting on Ganesh Chaturthi morning, marking a significant milestone in India's political landscape. The decision, which had languished for years, left misogynists disappointed and underscored the government's commitment to women's empowerment. This development harks back to the days when Rahul Gandhi faced ridicule for repeatedly citing "women's empowerment" as the cornerstone of India's progress during a 2014 interview. Today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi proudly declared himself the torchbearer of this vital legislation, claiming that he was destined to fulfill the promise that had eluded his predecessors, HD Deve Gowda and Atal Behari Vajpayee. The bill was aptly named the "Naari Shakti Vandhan Adhiniyam." Despite the aura of destiny that the Prime Minister invoked, his unilateral decision to push the Women's Reservation Bill without collective cabinet deliberation raised concerns about the sacred principle of collaborative decision-making. The special session of the New Parliament on September 19 was marked by uproar and controversy surrounding the bill, prompting Congress MP Sonia Gandhi to call for its immediate reconsideration.

In the lead-up to the special session, the Modi government had maintained secrecy around the agenda, allowing misinformation to spread like wildfire. Some news anchors, now dubbed "blacklisted," exploited the speculation by suggesting the session revolved around "One Nation, One Election" or "India that is Bharat," diverting attention from the impending women's reservation bill. The urgency of the cabinet meeting demonstrated the bill's status as an afterthought, despite being a prominent BJP campaign promise in both the 2014 and 2019 elections. This amnesia regarding election pledges was emblematic of the Modi government's tenure. The Women's Reservation Bill is now poised for consideration, though it will require time, likely until after the delimitation process, which is expected in 2029. By then, the New Parliament will have ushered in its second Lok Sabha. To see this historic legislation through, Prime Minister Modi must secure a third term in 2024. Failure to do so could result in another Prime Minister overseeing its implementation.

Nonetheless, it's worth noting that Prime Minister Modi has demonstrated a commitment to women's issues through initiatives such as the criminalization of triple talaq and support for the transgender community. The "beti padhao, beti bachao" campaign, championed by former Lok Sabha MP Maneka Gandhi, is another testament to the government's focus on women's welfare. Among these initiatives, the Women's Reservation Bill stands out as the most transformative, with the potential to reshape India's political landscape. On September 19, Prime Minister Modi emphasized fulfilling "Indian aspirations" without referencing "Bharat," suggesting a momentous shift after "1000 years of ghulami" (subjugation). While the INDIA grouping may not be unduly concerned about Modi's political maneuvering, the implications of this bill are substantial.

Kashmir terrorism will end only by breaking Pakistan's back

S mouldering in jealousy against Bharat's spectacular and historic success of G-20 event, Pakistan has carried out a despicable and dastardly terrorist attack, and has taken lives of two senior officers of our brave army, a Deputy Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police in this terrorist attack in Anantnag in Kashmir.

Pakistan is not only a disgraceful stain on Islam, but also at the height of violence and madness. In the economic plight and misery that Pakistan is facing today, giving support to such a dastardly terrorist attack will only push Pakistan into the dark abyss. Perhaps, Pakistan has still not understood how important good relations with its neighbours are; only by strengthening them, its political and economic position in world politics can be strengthened. With India's growing reputation in the world and its strengthening economic conditions, no sensible country can think of enmity with her.

All the prominent countries of the world, including superpowers, are seeing their own benefit in striding along with India, then why has Pakistan resorted to foolishness. The people of Pakistan also understand this very well, but its policy-makers and rulers are not able to understand this. Now the time has come that some more drastic measures will have to be taken to teach Pakistan a befitting lesson.

Certainly, the sacrifice of Army Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Ashish Dhaunchak and Jammu and Kashmir Police DSP Humayun Butt, while fighting terrorists in Anantnag is a big and irreparable loss to the country. All three officers were known for their bravery and had successfully conducted many anti-terrorist operations in the

past. Their sacrifice should not go in vain and along with selectively eliminating the terrorists, Pakistan should be taught a fresh lesson, because our brave officers were martyred in the ambush by Pakistani terrorists. He calls himself a local, but he has every kind of cooperation and support from Pakistan based terrorist organization Lashkar. India will definitely avenge dastardly deaths of these brave martyrs and this time such revenge will be taken that Pakistan will think a million times before making such a mistake in future. If India is determined, it can break the back of Pakistan and control terrorism, as the Modi Government has achieved, so far.

At a time when terrorism seems to be taking its last breath in Kashmir, life there is experiencing peace and tranquility, all round development is taking place there, G-20 summit was also organized peacefully and successfully there, then came the Anantnag incident. The way terrorism has been brought under control after Jammu and Kashmir was made a Union Territory, it has uprooted terrorism in the region. This incident is the result of this panic which shows that Pakistan supported terrorists are trying their best to keep Kashmir disturbed by any means. That is why they are becoming active in new areas which were free from their activities for the past long time. They are increasing their activities in South Kashmir as well as Jammu division. This is evident from the fact that so far this year, around 26 terrorists have been killed in the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch. Terrorists are also choosing

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new routes for infiltration from across the border. It is clear that there is a need to increase vigil on Pakistan border with Punjab

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Lalit Garg

along with Jammu and Kashmir, the anti-terrorism campaign is expected to be strengthened further, and strictness should be exercised. Similarly, the campaign against the hidden supporters of terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir should also be intensified. Again, attention will have to be paid to ensure that security forces do not suffer losses in any operation to eliminate terrorists.

Undoubtedly such operations are risky, but we need to be more careful as to how to protect our brave soldiers from dangers. There have been some anti-terrorist operations in the past, in which our soldiers had to suffer losses while trying to quickly eliminate the terrorists. We have to eliminate the terrorists and also protect the precious lives of our soldiers, while doing this we should create such a security circle that they cannot commit such audacity in future.

According to intelligence reports, the restlessness of the Pakistani Army has to be understood seriously. To bring back the declining morale of the terrorists, the Pakistani Army is continuously pressurizing them

to carry out big conspiracies and attacks and for this, it is providing every kind of help to the terrorists, including the special commando group. The Pakistani Army has also provided weapons and other military equipment received from China to the terrorists, which also includes night vision cameras. With the help of these means, they were able to attack and escape even in nights' darkness, and our soldiers had fallen victims to these gory machinations.

India believes in the motto Surva Bhavantu Sukhinah, it is from this Bharat bhoomi that Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam was proclaimed, which recently during the Indian presidency of G-20 has created an environment for the entire world to develop as one family. Even though India believes in peace, co-existence and non-violence, when those who attack it become too many, it knows how to take up weapons, attack inside and take revenge.

When the trend of overall development has started in Kashmir, then a befitting reply must be given to those elements who are challenging peace and development. It is time to show zero tolerance with the remaining satanic maniacs and terrorist elements in Kashmir. They should not be given a chance to set up base or hide at any place in Kashmir. The terrorists have

carried out this encounter with a lot of conspiracy.

Generally, if the army's activity increases in an area, the terrorists leave that area, but if the terrorists have dared to have an encounter, then a serious assessment of the entire conspiracy behind it becomes necessary. In view of the upcoming elections, terrorists will become more active, and would strive to spread anarchy and unrest in the country. Elections in Kashmir can be announced any time. In such a situation, the terrorists and their nefarious masters must be in trouble. Terrorists from Pakistan must have been signalled to do something so that the issue of Kashmir, which was completely missing during the time of G-20, comes back into discussion. It is also suspected that the terrorists who showed audacity in the latest encounter are foreigners, if so, then a warning should be given to the enemies with proof. It is a big truth that just as love for peace does not run on its own, it has to be run, in the same way terrorism also runs on the feet of others, the day its feet are taken away, and it will become paralysed. Pakistan may or may not benefit from terrorist attacks, but it's sympathizer China will definitely see its own benefit in it. In such situations, for the Indian Army, the answer to violence can only be violence; direct war is the only way. Only a direct attack will break the back of the terrorist network.

Now the time has come when the army and police forces should fully control their shortcomings and weaknesses, and give the best results by using their best resources to end the remaining terrorism in Kashmir. *(The author is a journalist, columnist who can be reached at lalitgarg11@gmail.com)*

Making India a developed country by 2047 as projected by PM is a challenging task

By: Arun Kumar

The Prime Minister has set the goal of India becoming a developed country by 2047. On the way, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is soon going to surpass that of Germany and Japan, if the current official rates of growth are maintained. In today's world, projecting five years or 24 years ahead is fraught with challenges. Who could have foreseen the Covid pandemic in 2020 and the war in Ukraine in 2022?

Successful landing of Chandrayaan 3 near the South Pole of the Moon is undoubtedly a great achievement for the nation. But that does not make India a developed nation. Major challenges confront the nation, such as providing good education and healthcare. This can only be achieved if the number of schools and health facilities in rural and semi-rural areas is increased substantially.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s success shows that India can achieve much more if it sets its mind to it. ISRO's success also implies that even though we focus on going to the Moon, we neglect day-to-day things that are necessary to become a developed nation - like providing clean drinking water and sanitation to all.

Suppose nothing untoward happens on the road to 2047, our official GDP will keep rising. Before the pandemic, the official growth rate had dropped sharply from 8 percent to 3.9 percent, for an average of 6 percent. If the growth rate continues to hover around the 6 percent mark till 2047, India's GDP will become 4.05 times the current official GDP of US \$3.7 trillion, that is, US \$15 trillion. Still much behind US and China's current GDP.

In the meantime, the world's two largest economies would have continued to grow. India's population is expected to reach 1.65 billion by 2047 so the per capita income will become US \$9,000 by that year. The current World Bank benchmark for a high-income country is a per capita income of US \$14,000. So, India will only transit from a lower-middle to an upper-middle income category country. Only if the average rate of growth becomes 8 percent now will the per capita income reach US \$14,000 by 2047.

Growing at 6 percent over 24 years will be a challenge - 8 percent appears like a far-fetched dream. The current high levels of inflation, slow growth of major world economies and supply bottlenecks will be the major impediments in achieving a 6 percent growth rate. Further, current poli-



cies which marginalise the unorganised sector would need to be changed substantially.

Even if India's per capita income reaches US \$14,000 by 2047, would that make India a developed nation? Oil producing nations such as Kuwait and Brunei have for long enjoyed high per capita incomes. They are characterised as rich but not developed nations. A developed nation is one that is technologically advanced and is able to move along the technology frontier to stay competitive. It has to be dynamic to take care of its problems and has to be able to compete on equal terms at the global stage.

India does not fit that bill, as it is heavily dependent on import of high technology products. Granted it has done better than most developing world nations but it mostly functions with intermediate and low technologies. Consequently, India mostly exports low value-added items while importing higher value-added items. The result is a large trade deficit. Countries that possess high technology do not share it. So India has to develop it on its own.

Multiple factors underlie technological dynamism. First, as data from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) shows, the quality of school education is not very good. On the other hand, only a few institutions of higher learning are involved in advanced research. Poor school education results in a weak base which makes students less capable of undertaking advanced research. Sub-standard advanced research means both educators and the knowledge base for school education continue to be of a deficient quality.

Second, given India's poverty (India is the poorest G20 nation), adequate expenditure on public education is a crucial factor in nurturing talent and for employing talented researchers and teachers. Third, commitment is crucial for good teaching and research and that to a large extent depends on society's commitment to promoting knowledge generation. Fourth, technology itself creates multiple possibilities at the technical and so-

cial levels, which makes it impossible to plan the future precisely.

Before 2000, people wrote letters and sent telegrams but that is largely history now. One visited a bank branch for transactions but now they are carried out via the internet and machines, such as ATMs. E-commerce has spread to the detriment of the neighbourhood stores.

As of 2022, 'large learning models' are posing an unprecedented challenge. Large learning models are a fundamental algorithm in generative artificial intelligence that have transformed the artificial intelligence (AI) development landscape, providing developers with unparalleled capabilities in a fraction of the time previously required.

Even those who are at the frontiers of AI are asking for a moratorium on further research because it poses an existential challenge to human kind. AI, automation and mechanisation are not only posing challenges to semi-skilled jobs such as those of vehicle drivers and workers in business process outsourcing (BPOs) but also to skilled jobs of technicians and army men. It is said that in five years even many skilled jobs such as those of teachers may be impacted by AI.

Technology development requires investment in research and development (R&D). But it is risky because there is no guarantee of success and there is a chance of obsolescence due to the acceleration of technical change. So, investors may not be able to recoup the investment made.

For example, data storage has transitioned from five-and-a-quarter inch floppies to three-and-a-half inch ones to compact disks to pen drives to the cloud. Investment in R&D is even more risky in developing countries. Their R&D efforts may be undermined by import of more advanced technology. This has repeatedly happened in India with nascent R&D nipped in the bud.

For example, Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)'s efforts were undermined by import of the large digital exchanges in the

early 1990s. The role of policy is crucial in promotion of R&D. It can provide a stable environment and public funding. This requires the nation to have a strategic vision that can help identify the sectors to be defended against external pressures and those that can be let go off?

A strategic vision requires a political consensus. In the prevailing environment of cronyism, consensus has proved to be elusive since suspicions run deep. The vision must take into account the concerns of the marginalised sections that may be adversely impacted by technological changes.

Given the aforementioned factors which create considerable uncertainty and make it difficult to plan, the best one can do is to learn to cope with rapid changes. Everyone needs to be prepared for change. Society will be required to anticipate the social impact of technical changes through generating new knowledge.

Technology is knowledge. Its advancement requires generation of new knowledge. This happens largely in institutions of higher learning and during production. Typically, the latter depend on the former to produce new knowledge which can be commercially exploited. Take, for instance, the development of vaccines against coronavirus or of advanced semiconductor components for faster computers and mobile phones. So, society needs to create an environment for innovation and new knowledge generation. This can only happen when researchers are given freedom to generate new ideas, that is, autonomy to pursue ideas, even if they fail.

The success of Chandrayaan 3 was based on the learning from the failure of Chandrayaan 2. Truncation of autonomy through bureaucratic control frustrates researchers and kills their initiative. When that happens, work is done mechanically, which undermines creation of new knowledge. Unfortunately, few institutions of higher learning and research provide teachers and researchers with the autonomy they need.

Various committees that have proposed reforms in higher education have treated autonomy as a slogan to be bandied while actually their proposals would result in greater bureaucratisation of the institutions which would undermine autonomy. So, India may do well in select areas, like space exploration, but not in general, and that makes the task of becoming a developed country difficult even with a higher per capita income. *(IPA Service)*

The reforms in the country beginning to yield the result

By: Er. Rajesh Pathak

Like steel, energy and minerals, now semi-conductor also has gained the status of the primary industry, without which many sectors would not be able to function. After Micron Technology of America, Japan will also invest 5 trillion Yen in the manufacturing units of semiconductor chips in India. Semiconductor design- their manufacturing- equipment research- talent development - bringing resilience to the semiconductor supply chain: on these five levels the work-plan will move forward in the process.

Likewise, Germany is also going to join those who are looking at India as an attractive investment destination. The Ukraine-Russia war taught a lesson particularly to European countries that to be dependent upon any one country for the needs of petrol or for anything else is no wise move. Therefore Germany is beginning to think to come closer to India, without decoupling from China of course. And so was expressed by the Vice-Chancellor of Germany, Robert Habeck, who came to join the meeting of G-20 with his labour minister, Hubertus Hell. This business-bonhomie would go to yield employment opportunities to India, too.

Latest to come in the trail is the Indian nurses reported to be provided job in Germany soon. One more reason is there that served as a catalyst behind the deal. And that is, the worldwide speculation of India to be 4th economic power in the future, leaving Germany behind, thus bringing plenty of opportunities in economic field subsequently. Today Germany is facing an acute shortage of skilled work-force. So much so that 1.74 million posts are lying vacant there. India enjoys the advantage of having the biggest young population in the world. Germany also knows that. However, last month only a defence deal has been signed between Germany-India under which 6 submarines will be built.

This is the story of today. Last year in 2022 India got as high as 49 billion dollars, which is 8th biggest investment in the world. Increasing proficiency in the technical-skill and hike in purchasing power; more than 100 unicorns, with thousands of start-ups; the allocation of 1.97 lakh crores to 14 industrial sectors; abolition of 1500 out-dated rules, and 40,000 so-called regulations so far prevailed to serve more the pockets of bureaucracy; reformation in GST and bankruptcy code; many provisions of laws being kept out of the category of criminal offences- all this business friendly steps taken by the Modi government consists in highly responsive FDI that flowed into our economy.

More are the causes. But, the disillusionment with the China of investors emerged as the major one. Barack Hussein Obama was said to have fulfilled a great role to cause the intrusion of China into the research domain of America, bringing about favourable atmosphere for the American companies working there (China) in return. And thus the rest of world followed the suit as a natural offshoot.

But today China is facing the loss of 9 trillion dollars in the real estate, which controls 30% GDP of the country. Bullet trains were unpragmatically plied in those remote regions



where the local people were not capable enough to bear the expensive journey of such trains. These trains running vacant have caused the loss of 1 trillion dollars to railways so far. China Airways also has got to be bankrupt. Country, as also, loses 1.50 trillion dollars in Bank default due to the projects like CPEC and its engagement into countries like Syria and Pakistan. Biden so far held Russia as a grave threat to America, but he has understood that the real enemy is China. Hence the steps taken by him led the semiconductor chips factories in China to the threshold of getting shut down. Now its export from China greatly suffered, and the dream to be AI (Artificial Intelligence) super power received a big jolt at last now.

As a result, unemployment had gained a deep root in the main cities. And who has job, he is bound to live on highly underpaid wage. Household demand suffered a great blow, consequently. One child policy has also begun to show its ill-effect on demographic balance. All these factors has begun to take toll on China's business partners, and on those countries that have been depended upon it excessively. But this taught the world a lesson. And that is, to be dependent upon any one country is not in the interest of anybody in the long run. It is due to this that the investors are seen to be heading also towards India, along with other investment destinations.

The one of causes that led China to this crisis is also its greed to increase the growth rate to fast increase its export. In most of the countries the national income is distributed between household needs and businesses' requirements. But the share of the amount that was to go into the pockets of the consumers that also made restricted to divert it into investment. This dealt blow to the household purchasing power, ultimately making investment unproductive. Above this covid was there to play its part to make the things worse. The property sector constitutes 25-30% share in China's GDP, which is notably twice than the other countries. Low-consumption, therefore, affected it more.

The step is required to be taken towards the demand side. Problem will remain unaltered, no matter what so ever done on the supply side. But if it (China) goes towards increasing household demands, the export sector would suffer. Like China, Japan also has been export oriented economy. And, it has been struggling with the same kind of problem since so many years back.

In Assam, Muslim women cautiously welcome move to outlaw polygamy

By: Rokibuz Zaman

In the first week of September, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Assam government announced that it was forming a three-member panel to draft a law to outlaw polygamy in the state. The development follows the greenlight by an expert committee constituted by the state government to examine if it had the legal standing to enact such a law.

Marriages in India are governed by a slew of laws. Apart from the Special Marriage Act that regulates interfaith marriages, there are community-specific personal laws.

The Hindu Code Bill, which applies to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists, prohibits polygamy as do the Parsi and Christian personal laws. However, under Muslim personal law, men are permitted to have up to four wives simultaneously. Special Constitutional protections accorded to Scheduled Tribes include some amount of legal sanctity to polygamy.

In its report, the expert committee had concluded that the Assam legislative assembly has “the legislative competence to enact a law to end polygamy”, adjudicating that “polygamy is not an essential religious practice under Islam”. It, however, struck an ambiguous note on whether

the proposed law could include the state’s tribal communities which account for nearly 13% of Assam’s population.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who has long advocated a ban on the practice often framing it as a practice exclusive to the Muslim community, has declared that Assam will now see the “end of polygamy by December this year”. In the past, Sarma has said the intended ban on polygamy was to empower Muslim women in the state.

Scroll spoke to several activists, scholars, and ordinary women from the community. While most of them welcomed the move to ban the practice in principle, many were apprehensive about it being another stick to criminalise the community. Many of them pointed out how women from the community bore the brunt of a sweeping statewide crackdown on child marriage, also framed as an altruistic move meant to benefit them.

What the numbers say
The Assam government’s move to criminalise polygamy is part of a larger push by the BJP in the last couple of months to replace personal laws with a uniform civil code. Such a code would mean that matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, currently governed by personal laws, would be under a



common legal framework applicable to all communities. Polygamy among Muslims, which the Hindu right incorrectly links to higher fertility rates in the community, is at the heart of the current push for a common civil code. This despite the fact that official data suggest its rather limited – and consistently declining – prevalence in the community. In Assam, the pattern is no different. While India does not directly record polygyny rates, the National Family Health Survey asks married women whether their husbands are married to more than one person. While 6.5% of Muslim women from the state who responded in the 2005-06 edition of the survey said their husbands had multiple wives, the number dramatically dropped to

3.6% in 2019-21. On the other hand, 2.1% Hindu women reported polygyny in 2005-06; the number dropped to 1.8% in the subsequent survey.

Focus on Muslims
Yet, the focus of the report of the Assam expert committee, which was headed by a retired Gauhati High Court judge, was almost entirely the Muslim community. While the committee notes that “the practice of polygamy is prevalent among Assam’s tribal communities”, it does not delve deeper into the matter. Nationally, the prevalence of polygyny is the highest among tribal women, analysis of the NFHS data shows.

The omission has left many observers surprised. “Since there are tribal-majority districts in

Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh where the prevalence of polygamy is among the highest in the country, surely, the experts could have spent a little more time to understand the practice among our tribal fellow citizens in Assam instead of dismissing it,” pointed out political scientist Sanjib Baruah.

Malafide intent?
Women activists from the community said the Muslim-centric approach of the report, which mirrors the government’s stance on the matter, seemed to suggest bad faith.

“The special committee’s observation engaged only with the probable impact of a law banning polygamy on Muslims while dismissing non-Muslim stakeholders,” said Parvin Sultana, who

teaches political science at a college in Dhubri’s Gauripur. “Such an approach will fall short of addressing the exploitation of women caught in such marriages and just become another political ploy to further polarisation.”

The Assam government’s crackdown on child marriage earlier this year had already set a bad precedent, said Sultana.

In February, the Assam police arrested hundreds of people in a sweeping crackdown on child marriage in the state. Critics claim that the police action disproportionately targeted people from the Bengali-origin Muslim community, often vilified as “illegal migrants” in Assam.

Voices of endorsement

Yet, many women from the community said it was a welcome move. While instances of polygyny may be on the decline among Assam’s Muslims, it is still one of the highest in the country. Many women from underprivileged backgrounds continue to suffer because of it.

Take, for instance, Mehana Khatun, a 36-year-old woman, who works as a domestic worker in Guwahati. Khatun, a mother of three, was deserted by her husband three years ago who married another woman. “I think it will be good if the law protects women like us,” Khatun said. “I support the law because as a woman I had

to suffer a lot because of such marriages.”

Nafisa Younis, who teaches history in a college in the town of Kalgachia, also expressed her support for the proposed law. She said, “There are pros and cons of everything. In my opinion, polygamy has more cons. Poor underprivileged women are the worst sufferers because of polygamy.”

Mission ‘polarisation’, says Opposition
The Opposition parties, though, have hit out at the government, accusing it of communalising the matter.

“No one supports polygamy,” said Congress parliamentarian Abdul Khaleque. “We are opposing the BJP government’s intention as they are polarising the society in the name of banning for political gains.”

Many have also questioned the intent to criminalise polygyny given it was already on the wane. “With education and women empowerment, it will become redundant,” said Sultana.

HK Ahmed, a Guwahati-based advocate, invoked the NFHS data. “Polygamy was prevalent at one point in time but now it’s rare,” Ahmed said. “This is totally a move against Muslims; it is going to be a diabolical tactic, a draconian law.” (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Twenty seven years in the making, a guide to the Women’s Reservation Bill’s tortuous history

By: Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty

At any given point of time, several draft legislations listed under the category of ‘pending bills’ in the Lok Sabha exist. One of them, however, has been pending since 2010 given the patriarchal tendencies of most political parties that share power in the country and the indifference of successive governments towards the political empowerment of women.

In fact, on September 12, the 108th Constitution Amendment Bill, or what is popularly known as the Women’s Reservation Bill, completed 27 years of being in existence – while managing to get only the assent of the Rajya Sabha, thus far. In the last two decades the Bill has seen much drama in both houses of parliament, clearly aimed at scuttling the measure, with some members even attempting to physically attack the then Rajya Sabha chairman Hamid Ansari, to disrupt its tabling.

The bill’s journey began on September 12, 1996, when it was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the United Front government of H.D. Deve Gowda. The bill called for reserving 33% of the seats in the Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies for women. As per the draft, the seats were to be reserved for women on a rotation basis and would be determined by draw of lots, in such a way that a seat would be reserved only once in three consecutive general elections. It said reservation of seats for women would cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of the amendment Act. The bill, however, failed to get the approval of the house then and was instead referred to a joint parliamentary committee. The committee submitted its report to the Lok Sabha two months later.

In 1998, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who headed the first National Democratic Alliance government, reintroduced the Bill in the Lok Sabha. After Vajpayee’s law minister, M. Thambidurai introduced it in the house, a Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP snatched it from the speaker and tore it into bits. Thereafter, the Bill lapsed and was reintroduced – in 1999, in 2002 and 2003.

The parliamentary impasse
Even though the Congress, the Left and the BJP were heard openly pledging support for the Bill, it just couldn’t be passed in the Lok Sabha. In 1998, the Vajpayee government was certainly dependent on other parties for survival which many political observers often suggest was a reason for not being able to “assert” itself. After the 1999 mid-term polls, even though Vajpayee returned to the saddle, the mandate was for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which won 303 of the 544 Lok Sabha seats – yet again a situation where he “had to keep” all the parties together. However, given the support pledged by the Congress and Left, the Bill would have sailed through the house had it been formally put to vote.

In 2008, the Manmohan Singh government introduced the bill in the Rajya Sabha. Two years later on March 9, 2010, a huge political barrier was overcome when it was passed by the house in spite of high drama and scuffles between members. The BJP, the Left and some other parties came together with

the ruling Congress to help pass it in the upper house.

Six years have passed since that moment when top women leaders from three major parties – Sonia Gandhi, Sushma Swaraj and Brinda Karat – gave a rare moment to media photographers by walking hand in hand in impromptu celebration of that ‘historic occasion’. And yet, in 2016, it has still not seen the light of the day, simply because the political will to help make it a law has been lacking in the lower house. The UPA II government, in spite of having 262 seats in the Lok Sabha, too couldn’t make it happen, citing the same excuse of being in a coalition.

Grounds for opposition
One of its coalition partners – the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) – has been one of the three most vocal opponents of the bill. The other two have been the Janata Dal (United) and Samajwadi Party (SP). It was JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav who infamously used the term “par-kati mahilaen (short-haired women) in Parliament in June 1997, to ask how would short-haired or urban women would be able to represent “our women”, meaning women from rural areas.

Some of the common points of concern for the parties opposing it, as per PRS Legislative Research, has been that “it would perpetuate the unequal status of women since they would not be perceived to be competing on merit.” Furthermore it said, “They also contend that this policy diverts attention from the larger issues of electoral reform such as criminalisation of politics and inner party democracy.”

Another concern was, “Reservation of seats in parliament restricts choice of voters to women candidates. Therefore, some experts have suggested alternate methods such as reservation in political parties and dual member constituencies.” Also, rotation of reserved constituencies in every election may reduce the incentive for an MP to work for his constituency as he may be ineligible to seek re-election from that constituency.

It was also pointed out that “the report (of the joint committee) that examined the Bill recommended that reservation be provided for women of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) once the constitution was amended to allow for reservation for OBCs. It also recommended that reservation be extended to the Rajya Sabha and the legislative councils. Neither of these recommendations has been incorporated in the Bill.” However, many women activists backing the bill have gone on record saying patriarchal thinking has actually been behind the opposition to it. Well-known activist, Aruna Roy, in an article in The Hindu Business Line in March this year, also argued that “India ranks well below the global average in terms of women’s representation in parliament, as well as amongst countries which have mandated the minimum representation of women in parliament through law. Poor participation of women in parliament has a direct impact on the priorities and assumptions of policies and legislations.”

She wrote, “Political parties will have to, or will soon be forced to, recognise that if parliament does not reflect con-

temporary trends in women’s education and excellence in varied fields, they will face a crisis of credibility.”

Shifting allegiances
Interestingly, the earlier stance of JD (U) on the bill seems to have changed now. Attending an event to mark 20 years of the bill by the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) in New Delhi on September 12, JD(U) general secretary K. C. Tyagi pledged his party’s support to the Bill.

“I have come to say that from today onwards you can remove the name of JD(U) as one of the parties opposed to the women’s reservation bill,” Tyagi said at an event. He, however, also said a quota for women from backward classes should be given within the bill. When he was asked whether a ‘quota within a quota’ would be a pre-condition for the JD(U)’s support to the Bill, Tyagi reportedly said, “It should be passed without ifs and buts. If there are any conditions, then people will get an excuse to delay it. This (sub-quota) is our wish, not our condition.”

Certainly, this is a ray of hope for a bill that could help change the gender composition of parliament and the state assemblies. Even though the 2014 Lok Sabha elections saw the highest ever presence of women in parliament, it still stands at 61 (11.23%) among 543 seats. After the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, there were only 59 women members.

Support from staunch opponents aside, finally, what will lead to the passage of the bill in the Lok Sabha is not their political will, but the attitude of the ruling dispensation, which has an overwhelming majority in the house anyway – a unique position none of the earlier dispensations enjoyed.

“We are happy that the JD (U) has changed its stance on the bill, but what would matter the most is if the ruling party (BJP) expresses its willingness on the issue. The writing on the wall is clear, the present government doesn’t need any political party to pass the bill if it wishes,” said Kiran Moghe, national general secretary of All India Democratic Women’s Alliance (AIDWA), one of the core forces behind the bill. Referring to BJP women leaders like Sushma Swaraj’s continued support to the bill, Moghe said, “But top women leaders of the party will also have to push to pass it in the Lok Sabha. Mere support for it is not enough. After all, it was one of the BJP’s women members (Uma Bharati) who stalled it in the house along with some other party members.”

Speaking about the bill in 2010 as the leader of the opposition in the Rajya Sabha, BJP’s Arun Jaitley said he had a feeling of “being a party to history in the making” when he came to the house that day. Jaitley is now one of the most important players in the Narendra Modi government but has not been heard talking about making that “history” complete in real terms.

While Prime Minister Modi has maintained a studied silence on the matter for the past nine years despite repeated calls by Opposition parties like the Congress and the Left for its immediate passage, there is finally the possibility that his government has decided to push the long-pending measure through. (Courtesy: The Wire)

Natural remedies to reduce hair growth on the upper lip

By: Shahnaz Husain

We all pray for our hair to grow luscious unless it’s over our eyebrows, lips, or forehead. It is quite natural for both men and women to have some upper lip hair, but noticing a few tufts of upper lip hair sends most women into panic mode. Stress, bad diet, or hormonal fluctuations can result in more hair growth than usual. Removing hair from your upper lip can be challenging. Techniques that may be used on other parts of the body may be too harsh for this area. There are several natural remedies that may help reduce hair growth on the upper lip.

1. Mix 1 tablespoon of turmeric and 1 tablespoon of milk in a small bowl to make a Paste. Apply this paste gently to your upper lip through your fingers. Allow this mixture to dry naturally and then gently rub your upper lip with wet fingers in the direction opposite of your hair growth until the dried paste is completely removed. Rinse the area with cold water. This remedy will not only get rid of the hair but will also make your skin clean and glowing

2. The second natural way to remove unwanted facial hair is to use lemon and sugar paste. Lemon juice is hailed for its bleaching properties. Lighten the hair on the top of the lip and sugar aids in skin exfoliation and loosens hair follicles, making it simple to pull them out.

Sugar is used for waxing and you can use it to remove upper lip hair. It is a painless method and it will also help prevent hair growth. Add two tablespoons of sugar, one lemon juice, and 1 tablespoon of water into a bowl and heat it up till it reaches a golden brown colour and form a thick, sticky paste. Spread this ‘sugar wax’ over your dry skin. Put a piece of cloth on the area where you have applied the sugar paste. Gently apply pressure in a circular motion against the direction of your hair growth. You can do this once a week or as needed.

3. Turmeric has been traditionally used to slow down hair growth. Take one teaspoon of turmeric and one tablespoon of milk. Mix the two to make a paste. Apply on the area to the upper lip and let it dry for 40 minutes. Once it has dried, remove it by gently rubbing it off with lukewarm water. Do this once every two weeks for

the best results.

4. Mix one 1 tablespoon of honey and ½ tablespoon of lemon juice in a glass bowl. Apply the mixture to your upper lip. Leave it on for 30 minutes. Gently wipe off the paste using a washcloth and rinse the area with cool water. Honey acts as an exfoliant and lemon juice has bleaching properties. Repeat this procedure once a week to get effective results

5. Mix 1 tablespoon of yogurt, half a tablespoon of honey, and ¼ tablespoon of turmeric powder in a bowl. Use a circular motion to apply this paste to your upper lip area, and then wait 30 minutes for it to dry. Then rub it off gently to get rid of the facial hair, and wash it off with cold water.

6. Potato juice is a bleaching agent that can be used to remove unwanted hair. You must use it on a regular basis to notice a difference. You can squeeze the juice from the grated potato. Before retiring to bed, apply one teaspoon of potato juice to the upper lip area and leave it overnight, and then wash it off in the morning. It’s suggested to perform the same process three times per week. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)

What to know about dry eyes during pregnancy

By: Zawn Villines

People may experience dry eyes during pregnancy due to fluctuating hormone levels. These hormone changes can impact tear production and reduce moisture levels in the eyes, causing dryness. The overall rate of dry eyes is higher during pregnancy. Doctors do not fully understand what causes this phenomenon, but hormonal shifts may make it more difficult for the eyes to produce enough tears. Dry eyes in pregnancy can be uncomfortable, but several treatments can help.

Symptoms of dry eyes during pregnancy
An individual may notice the following dry eye symptoms:

- eyes that feel dry, itchy, or uncomfortable
- feeling the need to blink frequently
- sensitivity to light
- watery eyes
- dried mucus or stringy fluid in the corners of the eyes
- red eyes
- trouble putting in or taking out contact lenses, in those who wear them
- changes in vision
- a sensation of the eyes feeling tired or droopy
- feeling as though something is in the eyes

Causes
Researchers do not yet fully understand why pregnant people commonly experience dry eyes, but several studies support this finding. For example, a 2019 study of 134 pregnant people in Nigeria found that dry eyes peaked in the third trimester, with the lowest rates at 6 weeks postpartum. Females are more likely than males to have dry eyes, espe-

cially when hormonal changes occur, such as during pregnancy or menopause or when taking some forms of birth control.

Males have higher levels of hormones called androgens, which include testosterone. These hormones may protect them from dry eyes because they support tear production from the lacrimal glands. Although females also have these sex hormones, their levels are lower, which might explain why they have higher rates of dry eyes than males. Androgens alone cannot explain dry eyes during pregnancy, as these hormones usually increase during pregnancy. For example, testosterone levels rise by about 70% during pregnancy.

However, the levels of estradiol — a hormone present in higher levels in most females — also increase with pregnancy. Estradiol may counteract the protective effects of androgens by suppressing genes that help with tear production. This action might explain why more people experience dry eyes as their pregnancy progresses. Aside from hormone fluctuations, various other health conditions and lifestyle factors can cause dry eyes. People should, therefore, see a doctor for an evaluation. Other potential causes of dry eyes include:

- allergies
- vitamin A deficiency
- spending prolonged periods using computer or phone screens
- autoimmune diseases, such as lupus
- medications, such as antihistamines and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs

People may find that skin

issues such as rosacea and eczema cause dry eyes. These skin conditions may worsen during pregnancy and further compound the problem of hormone-associated dry eyes.

Home remedies

Some home remedies may help ease symptoms of dry eyes. People can try:

- drinking plenty of water to prevent dehydration
- using a humidifier to prevent the air from becoming too dry
- applying over-the-counter artificial tears
- taking a fatty acid supplement, such as fish oil or an omega-3 supplement
- wearing sunglasses outside to minimize sun damage to the eyes
- trying warm compresses or eyelid massage
- avoiding fans or heaters near the face, which can further dry the eyes

People should also avoid using potential irritants, such as certain lotions and creams, around the eyes. If an individual uses several products, they can try eliminating one product at a time and logging their symptoms. For example, a person might find that their eyes only become dry when using a specific brand of mascara.

Medical treatments

Doctors must determine the cause of dry eyes before they can treat them. If someone has an underlying illness, such as an autoimmune disease, a doctor may refer them to a specialist while offering prescription eye drops or other treatments.

Medical treatment options include:

- **Prescription drops:** A doctor might prescribe pre-

scription-strength artificial tears or eye drops to reduce inflammation.

• **Tear plugs:** A doctor can fit removable tear plugs into the tear ducts, which help the tears remain in the eyes for longer.

• **Steroids:** Steroids can help treat some types of eye inflammation. A doctor may recommend using steroid creams on the eyelids or trying steroid eye drops.

• **Moisture goggles:** Wearing moisture goggles at night can help keep the eyes lubricated. A doctor may recommend using the goggles alongside eye drops or ointments.

• **Antibiotics:** Some antibiotics have anti-inflammatory properties and may help relieve the symptoms of dry eyes. However, these treatments may not be suitable during pregnancy.

• **Surgery:** A doctor may recommend surgery if other treatments do not alleviate the symptoms. One option is to seal the tear ducts permanently, keeping tears in the eyes for longer. Another procedure, called tarsorrhaphy, sews parts of the upper and lower eyelids together to narrow the eye opening and reduce dryness. Skin grafts may also help.

Outlook

For most people, dry eyes are a minor annoyance rather than a serious medical condition. People who notice dry eyes for the first time during pregnancy may find that their symptoms improve after delivery.

Pregnant people should talk with a doctor before trying home remedies, as some options may not be safe during pregnancy. (Courtesy: MNT)

Normal life affected in Imphal Valley as Meira Paibi, local clubs call for 48-hr bandh



IMPHAL, Sept 19: Normal life was affected in Imphal Valley districts on Tuesday as Meira Paibi, a collective of Meitei women, and five local clubs called for a 48-hour bandh from midnight demanding the release of five youths who were arrested for carrying firearms and sporting camouflage uniforms, officials said.

Markets and commercial establishments remained closed and few vehicles plied the roads on Tuesday morning.

Supplementary examinations of all subjects of class 10 board exams of Board of Secondary Education, Manipur, scheduled on Tuesday and Wednesday, were cancelled in view of the bandh. Those will be rescheduled at a later date.

On Monday, Meira Paibis blocked several important roads at Khurai and Kongba in Imphal East district, Kakwa in Imphal West district, Nambol in Bishnupur district and parts of Thoubal district demanding the release of the youths.

Police, RAF ward off protesters in Imphal



IMPHAL, Sept 19: Police and Rapid Action Force (RAF) resorted to firing tear gas shells and mock bombs as protesters recently continued to block roads at several places across Imphal East district and parts of Imphal West district demanding immediate release of arrested five village volunteers.

A team of police commandos attached to Imphal East district police arrested the five village volunteers with arms from a place in Imphal East district on September 16. They were currently in the police custody where the Imphal East district magistrate remanded.

The police alleged that the five persons in camouflage uniform were arrested with sophisticated weapons. While demanding the unconditional release of the five persons, protesters claimed that they were village volunteers taking part in guarding the villages in the periphery of the valley districts and the police arrested them on their way back home.

On the night of the same day on which they were arrested, a large number of people stormed the Porompat police station and clashed with the police.

With additional force from the RAF, the police dispersed the people after around three hours of tussle. Several protesters and RAF personnel sustained minor injuries in the melee.

Manipur Police had arrested five persons on Saturday for carrying sophisticated weapons and donning camouflage uniforms. In a statement, police said the five had been produced before the judicial magistrate and remanded to police custody.

Yumnam Hitler, president of All Lanthabal Kendra United Clubs Coordinating Committee, said, "The five arrested youths are civilians and village volunteers who have been guarding their respective villages from attacks by Kuki Zo militants as security forces have failed to do their job properly. We want them to be released unconditionally."

"The agitation will intensify if the government fails to release them," Yumnam added.

On Saturday, protesters had tried to storm the Porompat police station demanding the release of the five youths prompting security forces to fire several rounds of teargas shells. Few protesters and a RAF personnel received minor injuries during the stand-off. (PTI)

Even though the police successfully controlled the people, the people continued to stage protests by blocking roads demanding unconditional release of the five persons.

The road blockade hit normal vehicular movement at several places in Imphal East and some parts of Imphal West district. Despite efforts of the police, normal vehicular movement could not be resumed in most of the main roads in Imphal East district.

RAF personnel had to fire several rounds of tear gas shells and mock bombs in their bid to reopen the NH-102 at Singjamei where protesters blocked the highway.

Earlier in the morning, police officers rushed to the site and tried to convince the protesters to open the highway for normal traffic.

As they refused, the police called out RAF who resorted to firing tear gas shells and mock bombs towards the protesters. Despite the efforts of the police and RAF, the normal traffic along the highway continued to be disrupted for the day.

In the meantime, the Coordination Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) warned of intense forms of agitations while endorsing the demand for immediate and unconditional release of the five village volunteers.

Addressing the media in Imphal today, COCOMI leaders claimed that the five persons were village volunteers who took part in guarding the settlement areas in the periphery of the valley districts where the security forces could not protect the villagers from attacks by armed miscreants from the hill side. (NNN)

POLICE WARNS AGAINST MISUSING UNIFORM

Manipur: One among 5 arrested for extortion member of terror group

NEW DELHI/IMPHAL, Sept 19: In the wake of arrest of five persons for extortion in Manipur including a suspected member of a banned terror group, Manipur Police has again warned of stern action against all those who were misusing uniform for their ulterior motives.

The five persons were allegedly indulging in extortion from the general public and were carrying deadly weapons including AK and Insas rifles, which were looted from the police armoury, officials said.

Among those arrested on Sunday included 45-year-old M Anand Singh, alleged to be a trained cadre of Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) Nyon group, which is banned under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The police had in July issued stern warning asking people to stop misusing police uniform following reports that armed rioters were wearing the outfit to create mistrust.

Some minority groups have been trying to exert pressure on police to release the five men and indulged in vandalism. A 48-hour bandh has been called by some of these groups but senior police officials made it clear that law will



take its own course.

Singh is alleged to be a habitual offender and has been jailed six times in the past which included under the National Security Act (NSA), the officials said.

Manipur Police has circulated throughout all formations to ensure that its uniform is not misused and instructed them to intensify vigil and take strict action against the offenders, they said.

The action also comes a week after three tribals were gunned

down by armed men, dressed in police uniform, in Kangpokpi district on September 12. The incident had taken place between Ireng and Karam Vaiphei villages in the tribal-dominated Kanglui area, located at the bordering districts of West Imphal and Kangpokpi.

The three persons had started their journey from Ponlen in Kangpokpi district and were proceeding towards Lemakong using the hill road when they were stopped by the armed assailants at Ireng near

Singha dam and gunned down.

Later it was known that the armed men, approximately over 20, were wearing police uniform, a disguise created to avoid stopping by central forces who have been manning the buffer zone in the strife torn state.

More than 180 people have been killed and several hundred injured since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur 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.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal valley, while tribals, including Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mostly in the hill districts.

The police have been asked even to check any vehicle carrying security personnel, especially the India Reserve Battalion and Manipur Police, and their identity cards, the officials said.

The 45,000-strong Manipur Police was vertically split after the ethnic clashes, with Meitei personnel in the force moving to Imphal valley for safety and the Kuki personnel escaping to the hills. (PTI)

Heroin worth ₹ 5 lakh seized, two arrested in Arunachal



ITANAGAR, Sept 19: Heroin worth over ₹ 5 lakh has been seized and two persons have been arrested in West Siang district in Arunachal Pradesh, police said here on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted a vehicle at a checkpoint near Darka Bridge in Aalo police station area on Monday night and seized 10.54 gm of heroin from the vehicle and arrested its two occupants, West Siang superintendent of police Abhimanyu Poswal said.

The two accused were transporting the contraband from Likabali in Lower Siang district to Aalo in West Siang district.

A case under sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985 was registered against the duo.

The duo was produced before the court, which remanded them to police custody, he added. (PTI)

PM impressed by BJP's win in bypolls to seats having minority voters: Tripura CM

AGARTALA, Sept 19: Tripura chief minister Manik Saha recently claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was impressed by the BJP's win in recent bypolls to two assembly seats which have sizeable minority voters.

He also said the saffron party won the Boxanagar and Dhanpur seats because of development activities undertaken by the Centre and the state government.

"During my meeting with the prime minister in Delhi recently, Modi ji asked me how the BJP won the

two assembly constituencies with a huge margin as Boxanagar and Dhanpur have a substantial number of electors from the minority community," Saha said at a party programme in South Tripura's Rajnagar, a bordering area.

In the Boxanagar assembly seat with the majority of voters belonging to the minority community, the BJP nominee won the by-election by over 20,000 votes whereas the CPI(M) candidate's deposit money was forfeited.

The BJP retained the Dhanpur assembly constituency with a margin of 18,000 votes, where tribal and Muslim voters are factors.

"We have not heard of such massive wins of BJP in any other state where minority voters are a factor. I told the prime minister that we have won both banking on the mantra- Sabka Saath Sabka Vikash... I have personally visited the Madrasas of Boxanagar and Dhanpur eight to ten times to convince the minority voters that the BJP believes in Sabka Saath Sabka Viaksh. And, we have been successful," he said.

Before the by-elections, the BJP-IPFT coalition had 32 seats of the 60-member assembly, and now the tally has gone up to 34, he said, adding that the bypoll results helped the saffron party consolidate its position further.

"In the midst of the election campaign, the central leadership wanted to know if there was any doubt over winning the bypolls but I told them that the party will secure victory with a comfortable margin," he said.

The chief minister urged party leaders to work for the people, irrespective of their caste and religion, and emphasised on the importance of the door-to-door campaign.

"Many people observed that it is not wise for a chief minister to conduct the door-to-door campaign for the by-elections but I did and the party benefited," he said.

Earlier in the programme, the chief minister welcomed 203 families to the saffron party as they switched from the CPI(M) and Congress at Rajnagar. (PTI)



A five day workshop themed 'Nokpante' on film making, theatre, traditional musical instruments and art in the community starting from September 18 is being organised by the Arts & Culture department at the Tura district auditorium and library. UB Photos

Nagaland observes World Bamboo Day to promote its role in sustainable development

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Sept 19: The Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency (NBDA) observed World Bamboo Day not only to raise awareness about the importance of bamboo but also to promote its role in sustainable development, poverty alleviation, environmental conservation and cultural preservation at Nagaland Bamboo Resource Centre at 6th Mile in Chumoukedima district on Monday.

The NBDA received the Excellent Achievement Award this year at the International Agriculture and Horti Expo held in New Delhi in July this year.

Speaking as the special guest of the occasion, Nagaland principal secretary and development commissioner R Ramakrishnan said the World Bamboo Day aims to promote and increase awareness about the diverse uses of bamboo from construction and furniture-making to textiles and culinary applications. It also emphasises the economic potential of bamboo for communities and businesses and recognises the cultural significance in various societies and its role in traditional crafts, music and rituals, he said.

Ramakrishnan said since bamboo is often a habitat for various wildlife



species, celebrating bamboo further highlights the importance of conserving bamboo forests for biodiversity, encourages research and innovation in bamboo-related industries and fosters collaboration among government institutions, organisations and individuals to promote the responsible cultivation and use of bamboo resources.

He pointed out that bamboo is an important green resource for Nagaland covering every strata of society. Taking cognisance of this important fact, the

NBDA has been taking initiatives to harness the potential of bamboo and its benefits, following the guidelines of the National Bamboo Mission, he said.

Since its inception, Ramakrishnan said, the agency has made substantial progress with all its initiatives with the assistance of the National Bamboo Mission and the National Mission on Bamboo Applications.

"Faced with innumerable challenges during the initial phase, the agency has now become a household name and embraced by many as a viable avenue for building lives," he said.

Saying that the NBDA has achieved a number of commendable milestones within its short period of existence, the officer said it has successfully roped in many entrepreneurs on board in all its major production initiatives, including bamboo handicrafts and furniture, bamboo shoot, bamboo charcoal, bamboo mat, bamboo incense sticks, bamboo blinds, etc.

Through the length and breadth of the state, the agency has been reaching out to local artisans, farmers and various self-help groups through assistance, training and skill-up gradation, he said.

Tripura adopts apical rooted cuttings to produce quality potato seeds

AGARTALA, Sept 19: Tripura's Horticulture department has adopted a new method of potato cultivation by using apical rooted cuttings to produce quality seeds, an official said on Tuesday.

In the northeastern state, the farmers usually import potato seeds from outside the state and are facing challenges due to poor productivity and pest infection.

"To address the perennial problem in potato cultivation, the horticulture department has set up a hi-tech greenhouse to produce quality seeds by adopting apical rooted cutting which has already become popular in Assam and Meghalaya", deputy director of the department, Rajib Ghosh told PTI.

"Initially, we have set a target of producing 50,000 seeds of potato from the hi-tech greenhouse set up at Nagichera Agricultural Research Centre, 17 km from the



state capital", he said, adding that the department has already roped in International Potato Center (CIP) in Peru.

Apical cuttings are rooted transplants produced in a greenhouse

from tissue culture plantlets. Rather than allowing tissue culture plantlets to mature and produce mini tubers, cuttings are produced from the plantlets. Once rooted, the cuttings are transplanted into the

field to produce seed tubers.

Ghosh said the seeds will be distributed among the farmers to grow potatoes in their farmlands.

"The department aims to attain self-reliance as far as high yielding variety of potato seeds by using apical rooted cuttings by next five years because imported seeds from outside the state are not enough to increase the production in the northeastern state. We believe the plan will bring respite to the farmers who are not satisfied with the existing seeds", he said, adding that the new technique if successfully implemented the farmers will be able to sell their potato seeds on a commercial basis.

Ghosh said the department has already initiated training for farmers to adopt the new technique of potato cultivation with active technological guidance from CIP in Peru. (PTI)

SHILLONG, Sept 19: Welcoming the Cabinet decision to reserve 33 per cent of seats in Parliament and state assemblies for women, the state's lone female minister Ampareen Lyngdoh on Tuesday hailed it as a historic decision.

Lyngdoh who is the only woman minister in Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance expressed confidence that the decision will herald a change in the otherwise male-dominated politics of the country.

"I thank the Prime Minister for this historic decision. As women of matrilineal Meghalaya, we are very happy and we support the decision wholeheartedly," Lyngdoh told PTI.

"The decision will herald a change in the otherwise male-dominated politics of the country," she said, adding, "I look forward to seeing 20 women MLAs in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly".



Highlighting the role of women in politics, Lyngdoh said, "We are not short of having women as leaders. In the past, it was more difficult for women to fight against men in politics because women have certain responsibilities (as a mother, wife and daughter) while fighting elections."

She however said that in the past

10-15 years, there have been more women candidates coming forward to contest elections.

"Do not underestimate women candidates. The belief that women belong to the confines of their houses has ended. Our roles are ever increasing and the cabinet decision to reserve women is one more step to that," she said. (PTI)

Women's reservation bill will further strengthen Indian democracy, says PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the purpose of the new women's reservation bill Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam is to expand women's participation in Lok Sabha and assemblies, and asserted it will further strengthen Indian democracy, as he urged MPs of both Houses of Parliament to pass the bill unanimously.

In the first speech in the first session in the new Parliament building, Modi underlined the role of politics in the effective transformation of society and said Indian women have immensely contributed in sectors ranging from space to sports and start-ups to self-help groups.

"The Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam will further strengthen our democracy. I congratulate mothers, sisters and daughters of the nation for Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam. I assure all mothers, sisters and daughters of the nation that we are committed to making this bill into a law," he said, amidst thumping of desks by members of both treasury and opposition benches. Some opposition parties, including the Congress, have been seeking a law to ensure reservation of seats for women in legislative bodies.

The women's reservation bill was given approval in the Union Cabinet meeting on Monday, said the prime minister, who also recalled how the world embraced the concept of India's women-led development during the G20.

Observing the growing contribution of women in every sector, Modi stressed on the need for inclusion of more women in policymaking so that their contribution to the nation increases further. He urged members to open the doors of opportunities for women on this historic day.

"Taking forward the resolution of women-led development, our government is today



presenting a major constitutional amendment bill. The purpose of this bill is to expand the participation of women in Lok Sabha and assemblies," he said.

"I request as well as urge all colleagues in this House, as a pious auspicious beginning is being made, if this bill becomes a law with consensus, then its power will magnify manifold. Therefore, I request both the Houses to pass the bill with full consensus," the prime minister said.

Modi said for many years, there have been several debates and controversies around women's reservation. On women's reservation, there have been many efforts earlier also in Parliament. In 1996, the first bill related to this was introduced, he added.

During Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure, many times the women's reservation bill was brought but numbers could not be mustered for it and the dream was left unfilled, Modi said.

"For that work of ensuring rights of women and putting their power to use, and for many such noble works, God has chosen me. Once again our government has taken a step in this direction. In the Cabinet yesterday, the women's reservation bill was given approval. This date of September 19 is going to be etched in history," he said. Noting that there comes a time in the development journey of any nation when history is created, Modi said today's occasion is India's moment in its development journey when history is being written.

As the Lok Sabha convened in the new Parliament building for the first time, Prime Minister Modi called on MPs to forget all past bitterness and start a new chapter, asserting that whatever they are going to do in the new complex, should be an inspiration for every citizen of the country.

He said the conduct of the members will decide whether they will sit in the opposi-

tion or the treasury benches as proceedings are telecast live.

The prime minister stressed on the need for collective dialogue and action for general welfare as well as unity of goals. "All of us should follow the Lakshman Rekha of parliamentary traditions", he said. The House is not meant for the benefit of any political party, but for the development of the nation, the prime minister said. "The Parliament is the supreme position to serve the country," he said.

As Lok Sabha proceedings began in the new building, Modi addressed the House after brief remarks by Speaker Om Birla.

The Prime Minister said the new Parliament building reflects the aspirations of 140 crore Indians. "When we are starting a new chapter, we should forget all past bitterness," he said.

Modi said that the grandeur of the new building anoints 'Amrit Kaal' and remembered the hard work of 'Shramiks' and engineers who kept working on the building even during the Covid pandemic.

He informed that more than 30,000 'Shramiks' contributed in the construction of the building and mentioned the presence of a digital book carrying the full details of the labourers. He also extended greetings on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi, Samvatsari Parva, a festival of forgiveness, and Michhami Dukkadam, a festival of Jains.

Modi mentioned the presence of the sacred 'Sengol', which was installed on the day the building was inaugurated in May, as a link between the old and the new and as a witness to the first light of freedom.

This sacred 'Sengol' was touched by the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. "Therefore, the Sengol links us with a very important part of our past," he said. (PTI)

Urge parliamentarians to engage in meaningful and positive debates: LS Speaker



NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday urged parliamentarians to engage in meaningful and positive debates while making laws and fulfil the dreams and aspirations of the people of the country to make India a developed nation.

Addressing a function at the Central Hall of Parliament to commemorate the rich legacy of the Parliament of India and dream of making India a developed nation by 2047, he said, "The people of the country are looking towards us with new hopes as we move forward on this dream and we should help realise their aspirations and fulfil their expectations."

"There should be meaningful and positive discussions so that Parliament can play a significant role in making our country more capable and prosperous and take it towards a developed nation," the Speaker said.

Birla said that in the 75 years of the glorious journey of parliamentary democracy, one has seen several revolutionary changes. "But, today the people of the country are aspiring for a new India and people's hopes and aspirations from Parliament have grown," he added.

"In such a situation, it is our responsibility to realise their hopes, expectations and aspirations. Today,

as we move to the new building, this is the occasion to reaffirm our commitment towards making the country a developed nation," Birla noted.

"It is our resolve that we will fulfil these aspirations through collective discussion in this parliamentary democracy and through dialogue, hard work and with the participation of the entire country," the Speaker said.

He said as the world's largest parliamentary democracy, "our responsibility has increased and that is why it is important that our Parliament discusses all issues, makes laws through collective and meaningful discussions and plays an important role in making the country more capable and prosperous to fulfil the dream of a developed nation."

Birla said the historic Central Hall has been witness to several significant and historic decisions relating to freedom and framing of the Constitution.

This Parliament has been witness to several important decisions and has given shape to and strengthened the country's position in the world, he added.

The Speaker further said that in this central hall, "former presidents and several heads of state of the world have addressed us while expressing faith in our democracy."

"Today, from this hall, we enter the new Parliament building with new hopes, expectations and aspirations. On this occasion, I pay homage to our freedom fighters who sacrificed their present for our future," he said.

The Speaker also paid homage to the framers of the Constitution for their invaluable contributions. (PTI)

Country's interests and concerns must be kept paramount: Cong on Canada issue

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: The Congress on Tuesday said the country's interests and concerns must be kept paramount and its fight against terrorism has to be uncompromising, amid a row between India and Canada over the killing of a Khalistani separatist leader in that country.

India announced the expulsion of a Canadian diplomat on Thursday hours after Canada asked an Indian official to leave that country, citing a "potential" Indian link to the killing of the separatist leader in June.

"The Indian National Congress has always believed that our country's fight against terrorism has to be uncompromising, especially when terrorism threatens India's sovereignty, unity and integrity," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on 'X'.

"Our country's interests and concerns must be kept paramount at all times," he added.

India has outrightly rejected as "baseless" and "motivated" Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's claim of a "potential link" between Indian government agents and the killing of a Khalistani separatist leader and sought prompt legal action against anti-India elements operating from Canada.

After Trudeau made the comments in the Canadian Parliament, his Foreign Minister Melanie Joly announced that a top Indian diplomat had been expelled from Canada.

Joly's office said the diplomat is Pavan Kumar Rai, the head of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), according to Canadian broadcaster CBC News. (PTI)

New Parliament building a blend of tradition and modernity

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: The new Parliament building, which had its maiden sittings of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, narrates the stories of India's democratic traditions from the Vedic period to the present day. The growth of democracy in the country is depicted through a series of exhibits in the Constitution Hall of the new building, which itself is inspired by the Sri Yantra, used for worship in the Hindu traditions and considered a source of pure energy.

"Commencing a new chapter in India's vibrant democracy, the new Parliament building stands as a beacon of hope and progress. It symbolises our nation's aspirations and the boundless possibilities of our future," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

The Constitution Hall, which has a digitised copy of the Indian Constitution, has a touch of modernity as it also houses a Foucault's Pendulum to demonstrate the rotation of the earth.

The Foucault's Pendulum hangs from a large skylight from the triangular roof of the Constitution Hall and signifies the idea of India with that of the universe.

The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha chambers boast of a digitised voting system, well-engineered acoustics, and state-of-the-art audio-visual systems to ensure effective legislative proceedings.

The building has three ceremonial foyers where huge brass images of Mahatma Gandhi, Chanakya, Gargi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, B R Ambedkar, and the Chariot Wheel from the Sun Temple at Konark are on display.

The public entrances lead to three galleries -- the Sangeet Gallery which exhibits dance, song, and musical traditions of India; the Sthapthya Gallery depicts the architectural heritage of the country and the Ship Gallery showcases distinct handicraft traditions of different states.

The new Parliament building is home to nearly 5,000 artworks, including paintings, wall panels, stone sculptures and metal murals.

The interiors of the Lok Sabha chamber are based on the theme of the national bird peacock, while that of the Rajya Sabha depict national flower lotus.

According to officials, eminent musicians

and their family members including Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Ustad Bismillah Khan, Pandit Ravi Shankar have donated their musical instruments for the Sangeet Gallery.

The four-storey Parliament House has a built up area of 64,500 square metre and has two chambers -- 888-seater Lok Sabha, which can accommodate 1,272 members for the joint sitting of both the Houses, and the 384-seater Rajya Sabha.

The new building opens into a central courtyard with a banyan tree. It also has six new committee rooms and 92 rooms for use as offices for the Council of Ministers.

The material used for the new building has been acquired from various parts of the country.

The teakwood used in the building was sourced from Nagpur in Maharashtra, while the red and white sandstone was procured from Sarmathura in Rajasthan. The sandstone for the Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb in the national capital was also known to have been sourced from Sarmathura. (PTI)

Need to expand canvas to build stronger India: PM HP lawmaker demands shifting of capital from Shimla

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called for expanding the canvas to build a stronger India, and said all reforms and new laws going forward must have rising aspirations of the country as their priority.

Addressing a function in the Central Hall of old Parliament building, Modi said a big picture cannot be painted on a small canvas and the idea of a grand India cannot be envisioned if the members do not think big.

"Is it possible to draw a big picture on a small canvas? No! In the same way, we cannot mark out the picture of 'Bhavya Bharat' if we have a small canvas of thinking," the prime minister said.

"We have a rich heritage! If this rich heritage is joined in by our dreams, our resolutions, and if our canvas of thinking expands, we will certainly be able to paint picture of 'Bhavya Bharat', we will certainly be able to fill colours in this picture, and offer this beautiful, colourful and grand picture of 'Maa Bharti' to our future generations," he said.

Modi urged the members to reaffirm the commitment to make India a developed nation by 2047 and described the move to the new Parliament building as a new beginning towards a new future.

In the new Parliament building, we are going to make new beginnings for a new future, Modi said at the function to celebrate the legacy of the old Parliament building.

He said since 1952, 41 heads of states from across the world have addressed our MPs in Central Hall and more than 4,000 laws have been passed by Parliament in the last seven decades.

"Today, together in the new Parliament building, we are all going to inaugurate a new future," he said.

"Today, we are moving towards the new building here with the intention of reiterating the resolve of a developed India, being determined and working wholeheartedly to fulfil it," he said.

Recounting the laws passed in the old Parliament building, he said Muslim mothers and sisters got justice as the law against 'triple talaq' was unitedly passed from here.

"In the last few years, Parliament has also passed laws giving justice to the transgenders. We have unitedly passed laws that will guarantee a bright future for the specially-abled people. It is our privilege that we got the opportunity to abrogate Article 370," he said.

The prime minister noted that Parliament took an important step to get rid of Article 370 and fight against separatism and terrorism.

"The Constitution made in this House was implemented in Jammu and Kashmir," he said, adding J-K has embarked on the path of peace and development and with a new zeal, enthusiasm and determination, the people there do not want to miss any opportunity to move forward.

Article 370 accorded special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. (PTI)

HP lawmaker demands shifting of capital from Shimla

SHIMLA, Sept 19: Independent MLA from Dehra, Hoshyar Singh, on Tuesday made a strong plea for shifting the capital from Shimla arguing the city was too fragile to withstand vagaries of nature and will lie in ruin if an earthquake hits it. Participating in the debate on a resolution to urge the Centre to declare state floods a national disaster, Hoshyar Singh said "Is Shimla safe? No it is not. Think about smart capital and shift all the government offices out of Shimla."

"Nothing would be left in Shimla if an earthquake of magnitude 5.5 to 6.5 rocks the state capital," he said, as he called for the framing of a policy to ensure that all buildings, both public and private, are mandatorily insured. The legislator also called for training of the reserve force in the state to deal with disasters and evacuations.

Hoshyar Singh said that old trees were responsible for large share of destruction in Shimla and called for their cutting down. He also blamed vertical cutting of hills for road damage.

The Congress government and BJP in opposition should jointly urge the Centre to waive ₹ 50,000 crore of the ₹ 75,000 crore state debt as they both raised this money during previous terms, he said.

Members of the both parties raised slogans in the assembly house when Chief Parliamentary Secretary Sunder Singh gave figures of assistance UPA government given to Gujarat and Uttarakhand during Bhuj and Kedamath tragedies and claimed no such help was extended to the state by the BJP-led Centre.

Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur alleged that Congress came to power by making false promises and the chief minister has ruined the state.

Randhir Sharma from BJP called for a geological survey before the reconstruction work is taken up.

He suggested replacing old trees with fresh plantations, dealing sternly with illegal dumping in rivers, promoting scientific mining, and imposing a ban on blasting and vertical cutting of hills to save money on land acquisition.

Questioning the seriousness of the government towards disaster management, Sharma said that no all-party meeting was held after the disaster struck the state and even the cabinet meeting was held 10 days.

The cabinet ministers are not working in tandem and the chief minister, deputy chief minister, and public works minister are vying with each other to score points, he alleged. (PTI)

Anantnag gunfight over: Police

SRINAGAR, Sept 19: Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Uzair Khan was among the two terrorists killed in a gunfight in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district that ended after seven days, Additional Director General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said on Tuesday.

Four security personnel, including two army officers and a police officer, lost their lives in the gunfight, which Kumar said is over.

"Till now, LeT commander Uzair Khan's body has been recovered. The dead body of another terrorist is visible, but it has not been possible to retrieve it yet," the ADGP told reporters in Anantnag. He said the gunfight, which began in the Gadole forest area of the south Kashmir district on Wednesday last week, is over, but the search operation will continue.

"There is a huge area that remains to be searched. There can be a lot of unexploded shells which will be recovered and destroyed. We appeal to the people not to go to the area," he added. (PTI)

Ganesh festival begins in Maharashtra amid fanfare as people welcome annual homecoming of deity

MUMBAI, Sept 19: The 10-day Ganesh Chaturthi festival started in Maharashtra on Tuesday, with idols of Lord Ganesh, the god of prosperity and wisdom, being installed in homes and at pandals across the state with pomp and gaiety.

The public celebration of the festival in the state dates back to the 1890s when the nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak and others decided to use it to mobilize the masses.

Ganesh mandals in Mumbai and other major cities took large idols in processions accompanied by dhol-tasha beats to their pandals in the last few days.

Household Ganesh idols were brought mostly on Monday night or in the morning on Tuesday with chants of 'Ganpati Bappa Morya'.

Devotees thronged vegetable and flower markets, sweet shops and roadside stalls for buying flowers, puja materials, sweets and decorative items.

Idols in various shapes and sizes were installed at several households and in pandals in Mumbai against the backdrop of elaborate decorations based on myriad

themes ranging from the Chandrayaan-3 launch to Ayodhya's Ram Mandir.

Families, including children as well as senior citizens, stepped out of their homes early morning to bring their beloved "bappa" home amid chants of "Ganpati Bappa Morya" and the beating of drums.

Many people were seen carrying the idols in autorickshaws, cars, and other modes of transport.

Among politicians, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis installed Lord Ganesh's idols at their respective official residences in Mumbai.

In Pune, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat performed "pran pratishtha" puja of Lord Ganesh at the pandal of the famous Dagdusheth Ganpati.

"I have prayed to Lord Ganesh to bring prosperity and peace to the people of the state," the chief minister said after performing puja with his family members at 'Varsha', his official residence.

Fadnis installed Lord Ganesh's idol at his official residence Sagar.



Speaking to reporters later, Fadnis said the blessings of the Lord are with "Mahayuti" (grand alliance led by BJP).

Many film and television personalities also welcomed the deity to their homes.

The Ganesh Chaturthi festival began in Pune amid usual fanfare with prominent Ganesh mandals or the groups, including the five most revered ones, taking out big processions to welcome the lord.

Traditional Dhol-Tasha (drum) troupes

accompanied the processions which began in the morning.

Mumbai's GSB Seva Mandal's 'Mahaganapati', renowned as possibly India's richest idol and always the talk of the city for the opulent way it is decorated, is this year resplendent in 66.5 kilograms of gold ornaments, more than 295 kilograms of silver as well as other precious items.

The Mandal, at King's Circle in the eastern part of the city, is celebrating its 69th year and a first in the installation of facial recognition cameras as part of the security arrangements, a Mandal spokesperson said.

In Mumbai, more than 13,750 police personnel have been deployed for security during Ganesh festivities, an official said.

These comprise 11,726 constables, 2,024 officers from the rank of sub-inspector to the assistant commissioner and 15 deputy commissioners, he said.

While many famous Ganeshas are installed in pandals in the early morning hours in Mumbai, including the most famous Lalbaugcha Raja, many idols were

being taken out from workshops to the pandals in processions.

People will be allowed to take darshan of the deity at pandals after the puja is performed as per the muhurat, an organiser said.

A total of 2,729 'sarvanjanik Ganeshotsav mandals' have been permitted to organise public Ganesh festivities by erecting 'pandals', the city civic body said.

The festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm in the coastal Konkan region comprising districts of Thane, Ratnagiri, Sidhurg, Raigad, and Mumbai.

The Konkan Railway operated special trains to Konkan from Mumbai to Goa to allow people to travel to their native places for the festival.

Jayendra Mungekar, who works at a hotel in Mumbai and is originally from Munge village in Sindhudurg district, said he never misses Ganesh Chaturthi at his ancestral place.

"We have been celebrating this festival for generations and hope that it continues in the same way," he said. (PTI)

Karnataka CM in Delhi today; Cauvery issue on top of the agenda

BENGALURU, Sept 19: Chief minister Siddaramaiah will be holding a meeting with all Members of Parliament and union ministers from Karnataka in the national capital on Wednesday, to discuss a host of issues concerning the state, especially the release of Cauvery river water to neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

Several stalled developmental projects and those waiting Centre's clearances are likely to come up for discussion at the meeting, during which the chief minister is likely to urge the Union Ministers and MPs from the state to use their good offices for intervention of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Government of India on the Cauvery issue.

The meeting has gained significance, with the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on Monday asking Karnataka to continue releasing 5,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for another 15 days. According to the chief minister's tour plan released to the



media on Tuesday, Siddaramaiah will leave for Delhi tonight and will be holding a breakfast meeting with all MPs from Karnataka including Union Ministers on Wednesday. He is later scheduled to meet several other union ministers during the visit, and his return journey has been kept "open".

According to official sources, Siddaramaiah is also likely to meet the legal team, representing the

state in the Supreme Court, ahead of the Cauvery water release issue coming up before the top court, probably later this week.

The chief minister recently has been critical of Prime Minister Modi, for not responding to his letter seeking time to meet an all-party delegation, and to discuss with him on issues concerning the state including Cauvery water release.

Deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar will also be traveling to Delhi, and is expected to accompany the CM at meetings with MPs from the state and Union Ministers.

Shivakumar earlier today said the state is in a "catch 22 situation", following the CWMA direction to release water to Tamil Nadu, and sought the Centre's intervention to resolve the issue.

Also, water resources minister Shivakumar urged the opposition BJP, its leaders and Members of Parliament to prevail upon the Prime Minister to bail out Karnataka, while noting that he will be travelling to Delhi to meet MPs and the Union Ministers during the ongoing Parliament session.

He also defended the state's decision to release water to Tamil Nadu, citing advice of the legal team in view of the case coming up in the Supreme Court for hearing later this week, where non-compliance of CWMA orders may be viewed seriously. (PTI)

Kurmi stir: 11 trains cancelled, 12 diverted in Jharkhand, Odisha

RANCHI/BHUBANESWAR, Sept 19: At least 11 trains were cancelled and 12 others diverted under the jurisdiction of South Eastern Railways (SER) and East Coast Railways (ECoR) in Jharkhand and Odisha respectively in view of an indefinite rail blockade called by Kurmi organisations in three eastern states from Wednesday, officials said.

Several Kurmi bodies have called for an indefinite railway blockade at nine railway stations in Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha from September 20 to press for their demand of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the community and inclusion of Kurmal language in the eighth schedule of the Constitution.

The SER cancelled nine express trains and diverted eight others in the Ranchi railway division, a senior official said.

The official said the trains that were supposed to depart from their respective stations on Tuesday and enter Ranchi rail division the next day have either been cancelled or diverted as a precautionary measure.

The ECoR, on the other hand, cancelled two trains and diverted four others.

Sheetal Ohdar, the president of Totemik Kurmi Vikas Morcha (TKVM), a leading Kurmi body in Jharkhand, said that several organisations including Adivasi Kurmi Samaj of West Bengal and Kurmi Sena of Odisha will participate in the stir. (PTI)

Kejriwal bungalow renovation row: HC reserves verdict on Delhi govt's plea

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: The Delhi High Court Tuesday reserved its verdict on the city government's challenge to a single judge bench order of no coercive action against six PWD officials who were issued show cause notices over "gross violation" of rules in the renovation of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence.

The appeal filed by the Directorate of Vigilance and Special Secretary (Vigilance) Y.V.V.J. Rajasekhar sought setting aside of a September 15 interim order of a single judge of the high court which said no coercive steps shall be taken by any authority against the petitioner PWD officials till October 12. The appeal came up before a division bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sanjeev Narula which reserved its verdict.

The single judge had passed the interim order after taking serious exception to the city authorities failing to exercise restraint and taking contravening steps despite an undertaking given by its counsel that no coercive steps will be taken against the officials.

Earlier, senior advocate Rahul Mehra and Delhi government standing counsel Santosh Kumar Tripathi had given an undertaking to the single judge that no coercive action will be initiated against the petitioner officials.

The Directorate of Vigilance, in its appeal filed through advocates Yoginder Handoo and Mananjay Mishra, contended the order was passed without appreciating the fact that the alleged assurances were

without any authority.

Senior advocate Kirti Uppal, representing the appellants, apprised the division bench of an office memorandum of the Delhi government's Department of Law and Justice according to which "...all Standing Counsel(s)/Additional Counsel(s) and empanelled Counsel(s) to ensure that written and verbal submissions made by them shall have to be strictly in consonance with the written instructions given to them with the approval of the Administrative Secretary of the concerned Department..."

He claimed no statement could be made without written instructions from the competent authority.

On the other hand, Mehra argued they had proper instructions from the PWD minister to assist the court. He said the minister had given them written instructions to defend the case in the high court and to state that no coercive action will be taken against the petitioner officials.

The single judge had earlier issued a notice and sought the response of the Delhi government through the Directorate of Vigilance, Special Secretary (Vigilance) and the PWD on the main petition challenging the show cause notices.

The Directorate of Vigilance had issued show cause notices to six PWD officials over alleged violation of rules in the renovation of Kejriwal's official residence. The notices issued to the chief engineers concerned and other PWD officials asked them to explain their actions.

The single judge of the high court was hearing the petition by the six officials, filed through senior advo-

cate Mohit Mathur, seeking quashing of the show cause notices issued to them on June 19 by the Special Secretary (Vigilance) on the grounds that they were issued by the top officer "without jurisdiction and competence, with premeditation and with closed mind in complete abuse of the process of law".

It said the notices were the "outcome of a political tussle between the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and the ruling party in NCT of Delhi" in which the petitioners were made "scapegoats".

The PWD officials said in their petition they did not violate any rule, statute or office order and the work undertaken with regard to the official bungalow was in full discharge and in due course of their official duties.

"The petitioner(s) followed the instructions of the minister of PWD, GNCTD (Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi) and have consistently performed his duties under his vigilant supervision. It will not be out of place to emphasise that the petitioner all along acted in good faith, with no default, lapse or negligence on his part," their petition said.

The show cause notices to the officials, however, said the old structure was demolished without a survey report and no building plan was sanctioned for the new building constructed by the PWD.

The notices asked the PWD officials to explain their version "as all such acts have been done by them in gross violation of general financial rules, CPWD manual and CVC guidelines". (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Govt introduces women's reservation

ensuring rights of women and putting their power to use and for many such noble works, God has chosen me. Once again, our government has taken a step in this direction. In the cabinet on Monday, the women's reservation bill was given approval," he added. Modi also urged opposition members of both Houses to pass the bill unanimously. Pending since 1996 when the first bill on the matter was introduced, but could not be passed due to lack of political consensus -- several regional parties demanded 'quota within quota' -- it is likely to see smooth passage this time with most parties pushing for guaranteeing women one-third representation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

However, provisions in the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill make it clear the reservation will come into effect only after the delimitation exercise, or the redrawing of constituencies, taking into account data of the census conducted after the bill becomes a law. The issue was taken up strongly by opposition parties, particularly the Congress that claimed credit for the idea of the proposed law and termed the present bill an "election jujitsu". Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also described the bill as a "huge betrayal of the hopes of crores of Indian women and girls". "As we had pointed out earlier, Modi government has not yet conducted the 2021 Decadal Census making India the only country in G20 that has failed to carry out the Census... When will this Census take place?" Ramesh said.

Earlier in the morning, Congress' parliamentary party chief Sonia Gandhi told reporters, "It is ours, apna hai." Women Congress supporters were also seen celebrating the bill at the All India Congress Committee headquarters in Delhi. Data shows that women MPs account for about 15 per cent of Lok Sabha strength and the representation of women is under 10 per cent in many state assemblies, including Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam, and Gujarat. Meghal said the number of women members in the Lok Sabha will rise to 181 from 82 currently after the bill comes into force. The bill proposes that the reservation will continue for 15 years and there will be quota for SC/STs within the reserved seats for women. Seats reserved for women will be rotated after each delimitation exercise. Officials said, according to provisions of Article 368, the Constitution amendment bill will require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the states. Their consent is needed as it affects their rights. There have been several efforts to introduce the women's reservation bill in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies since 1996. The last such attempt was made in 2010 when the Rajya Sabha passed the bill, but it could not be passed in the Lok Sabha. As the day progressed, many parties from across the country spoke up. Addressing a press conference in the national capital, AAP leader Atishi said it was a "Mahila Bewakof Banao" bill. "We demand that the provisions of delimitation and census be done way with and the women's reservation be implemented for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls," she said.

According to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, reservation for women should be a balance of gender justice and social justice and demanded clarity on share of backward, Dalit, minority, and tribals in the seats set aside. BSP supreme Mayawati said her party will support any bill that allows reservation for women in Parliament and other legislatures, even if the party's demand for a quota for the SC, ST and OBC within that quota is not met. "We believe that after discussion the women reservation bill will be passed this time which had been pending since long," Mayawati said. Senior RJD leader Rabri Devi said in a statement that "quota within quotas" was essential for weaker sections of society "since it is only their first generation of women which is becoming educated and aware". Meghalaya's lone woman minister Ampareen Lyngdoh, from the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance, termed it a historic decision that would herald change in the otherwise male-dominated politics of the country. Many women's groups and other experts welcomed the move towards guaranteeing women reservation but also pointed to the challenges that lay ahead. The purpose of the legislation to uplift women would be defeated if the elected representatives under the quota were from the same families where male members are in politics, said Shilpi Jain, a prominent lawyer. "There could be a provision to encourage women who are not from political backgrounds to contest, otherwise the purpose would be defeated by reservation," she said. Shabnam Hashmi, from the Left-leaning NGO Anhad, said, "At the MLA and MP levels, there would be a difference. She would need to establish herself at the constituency level, she will need to be more assertive and more dependent on herself rather than the family," she said. (PTI)

Congress dubs women's

Former law minister and senior Congress leader Veerappa Moily slammed the government, saying bringing the bill at the last minute, the BJP thinks they can get some political advantage. "It has a social aspect, social justice to be given to 50 per cent of the population of the country, that kind of commitment is not demonstrated by the NDA and the BJP government," he said. "We could not get that type of cooperation from BJP (in 2010), they were not willing. Although we called them for a meeting to gather the momentum of consensus, we could not obtain it and that is why we could not get it passed in Lok Sabha and hence, we did not introduce it in the Lok Sabha," said Moily, who was the law minister when the bill was passed in Rajya Sabha. "When the election is approaching, it is absolutely political. They don't have legitimate interest in women as a class, but they are only politically interested to gain power," he alleged. Congress MP Manish Tewari said the bill introduced by the government is a "betrayal of the women's movement".

"The clause 334A says the reservation will come into effect post the first census that is conducted after the constitution amendment is passed and then the delimitation exercise which would follow that. So essentially it means that before 2029 there is going to be no women's reservation," he said. If the government was serious about it, the government should have brought women's reservation now," Tewari said.

Congress' social media department head Supriya Shrinete said, "Modi ji did not spare even the women of this country with his jujitsu. Their (BJP) dubious intentions have become clear in the Women's Reservation Bill." "If you really wanted to ensure women's participation, you would have brought the bill passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2010 to the Lok Sabha. This jujitsu for half of the population is not right," Shrinete said. The government on Tuesday introduced a constitutional amendment bill to reserve one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women. Making it the first bill to be introduced in the new Parliament building, the government said it will enable greater participation of women in policy-making at the state and national levels and help achieve the goal of making India a developed country by 2047. (PTI)

Cabinet decision reflects

never brought it to Cabinet." He said every detail about how many times the retendering, how many times the extension of the tendering was done it's mentioned in the cabinet note. The cabinet ministers were briefed about it about the fact that the government had written continuously to the REC and informed them about the different kind of issues that came up in the tendering process and sought their approval to go ahead because the tendering process had been extended. (NNN)

Assam Congress chief urges

spokesperson Rupam Goswami said the Congress leader should have been proud that the Chief Minister of his state is being honoured. "He (Sarma) may be from the BJP, but this fellowship is for the Chief Minister and not any party member. Bhupen Borah is a negative person and tries to find out negative things even in a positive development." Earlier, Indian personalities such as former Union Minister Arun Shourie, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and former vice-chairman of Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia received this fellowship. (PTI)

India expels Canadian diplomat

Kumar Rai, the head of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), according to Canadian broadcaster CBC news. The ties between India and Canada have come under strain in view of New Delhi's concerns over increasing activities of pro-Khalistani elements in that country. Last week, the talks on a bilateral free trade agreement were frozen apparently in view of the deteriorating ties. "The high commissioner of Canada to India was summoned today and informed about the decision of the Government of India to expel a senior Canadian diplomat based in India. The concerned diplomat has been asked to leave India within the next five days," the MEA said in a statement. India also described as "absurd and motivated" Trudeau's claim of a "potential link" between Indian government agents and the killing of Nijjar.

"We have seen and reject the statement of the Canadian Prime Minister in their Parliament, as also the statement by their foreign minister. Allegations of the Government of India's involvement in any act of violence in Canada are absurd and motivated," the MEA said before announcing the expulsion of the Canadian diplomat.

The MEA said the "inaction" of the Canadian government on this matter has been "long-standing" and of continuing concern. "That Canadian political figures have openly expressed sympathy for such elements remains a matter of deep concern. The space given in Canada to a range of illegal activities including murders, human trafficking and organized crime is not new," it said. "We reject any attempts to connect the Government of India to such developments. We urge the Government of Canada to take prompt and effective legal action against all anti-India elements operating from their soil," it added. The MEA said similar allegations were made by Trudeau to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and were "completely rejected". Modi and Trudeau had a bilateral meeting on September 10 on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Delhi. "We are a democratic polity with a strong commitment to rule of law," it said. In a statement in the House of Commons on Monday, Trudeau said Canadian security agencies have been "actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar." "Any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty," he said. The CBC news, quoting an unnamed Canadian government source, said Trudeau has briefed the leaders of some of Canada's closest allies about the case, including British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron and US President Joe Biden. (PTI)

KAAC CEM appeals all

patta to those inhabiting the Klurdung area by November. President, East Karbi Anglong Garo Union, Prakash Sangma said, "I extended my heartfelt gratitude to KAAC, CEM Tuliram Ronghang for his assurance to construct a hostel and community in the heart of Diphu. I hope he will also help us by providing land patta to the Garo community living in Borlangpher, Nilalung and Klurdung area." The foundation day celebrations began with the unfurling of the organizational flag by All Assam Garo Union President, Rakesh Sangma followed with prayers for the departed. The program was attended by MLA Bidyasing Englang; executive members of KAAC, Madhuram Lekthe, Richard Tokbi, Kangbura Killing, Prabhat Ch. Taro and member of the autonomous council, Avijit Kro, Prabitra Rongpi, Johny Timung, Karom Terangpi and others.

Aditya-L1 performs key manoeuvre,

According to ISRO, a spacecraft placed in the halo orbit around the L1 point has the major advantage of continuously viewing the sun without any occultation/eclipses. This will provide a greater advantage of observing the solar activities and its effect on space weather in real time.

Aditya-L1 carries seven scientific payloads indigenously developed by ISRO and national research laboratories including Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) at Bengaluru, and Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) at Pune. The payloads are to observe the photosphere, chromosphere and the outermost layers of the sun (the corona) using electromagnetic and particle and magnetic field detectors. Using the special viewing point L1, four payloads directly view the sun and the remaining three payloads carry out in-situ studies of particles and fields at the Lagrange point L1, thus providing important scientific studies of the propagatory effect of solar dynamics in the interplanetary medium. (PTI)

Malayalam cinema set to get its first transgender playback singer

RLV Charulatha, a noted dancer and transgender activist, could not hide her joy and excitement of being part of the tinsel town as a playback singer

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Sept 19: Dancing enthralled her more since her childhood, but it is singing that saw her through her battles with gender issues and identity crisis and eventually led her to fame.

This passionate classical dancer is now in the limelight as the first transgender playback singer in the Malayalam film industry.

RLV Charulatha, a noted dancer and transgender activist, could not hide her joy and excitement of being part of the tinsel town as a playback singer.

She crooned two songs in the upcoming anthology movie "Neethi" (Justice)- one solo and a "jalsa" song which is also considered to be the first such in Malayalam.

"Jalsa" is a ritual performed by the trans community when a person switches to a different gender and the community members in the state have so far used a Hindi or Kannada song during the time of the function as there was no dedicated song in Malayalam.

"I am an accidental playback singer by all means. I have been a dancer since I was young and never imagined that I would ever be known as a singer," Charulatha told PTI.

She said she chanced upon an advertisement inviting transgender singers and had applied for it without any hope.

Directed by Dr Jessy Kuthanur, the movie "Neethi" is an anthology of three films that revolves around the struggle of three marginalised sections- tribals, gay community and transgenders, to get their fundamental rights fulfilled.

The artist said the hero and heroine of the movie are also transpersons and the director of the movie was particular that a TG person should lend voice to the songs.

"Playback singing was not easy for me. Though I have learnt music in my childhood days, I had no formal training in classical music," Charulatha said.

She said it took hours for the music director Krishna Prasad to teach her the nuances of the song and brought out what he really wanted.



"But, when I listened to the recorded song for the first time, my mind brimmed with happiness and pride. My hardwork and that of the entire team paid-off," the dancer-turned-singer said.

A post graduate in dance from the renowned RLV College of Music and Fine Arts in Tripunithura, Charulatha said that she was ready to accept more offers that come her way in the film industry but would not give up dance for any reason.

Even though she had completed her studies years before coming out as a transgender, she was ridiculed and isolated by fellow students.

"I completed my studies in 2015. I joined the institution as a male student. Though I was yet to reveal my gender identity then, my trans persona was evident through my mannerisms. Many fellow students mocked at me," she said.

Fighting all odds, she managed to finish the course by securing first class.

Charulatha recalled that almost a decade ago majority of transgenders in the state did not dare to reveal their identity.

It was only after 2017, following the effective implementation of the state Transgender policy that marginalised groups started coming forward, the transwoman added.

Hailing from Neeleswaram in the northern-

most Kasaragod district, Charulatha has been receiving immense support from her community for her new role as a singer.

But, there are several persons in the society who are still reluctant to accept and recognise her talent just because she is a transperson, the 34-year-old artist added.

At present, Charulatha is running two dance schools under the name "Natya Dharmi" in her home town.

She also built her own house with the hard-earned money.

"Initially, I faced issues in my family when I revealed my gender identity. But, now everyone is very supportive. My mother and I are living in my new house," Charulatha added.

Meanwhile, "Neethi" director Jessy Kuthanur has all praise for Charulatha's work.

"I was not looking for a male or a female voice for this particular song. What I wanted was something in between the two. The song was a lullaby... a communication between a mother and a child," he told PTI.

Charulatha was chosen from over 18 applicants.

The filmmaker also said that the trans singer took pains to bring out her best.

"It took nearly 10 hours to record the song. Her voice used to get modulated due to the hormone medicines she is taking," he said.

Noting that it is a good song and people would like it when the movie is released, the director said the singer has a good chance of winning an award.

The "jalsa" song in the movie was sung jointly by Charulatha and Varshanandhini, another trans woman from Palakkad district.

It has already been accepted as the official song by the transgender community in the state.

The film's premiere would be held on September 28 and it would be released in all major theatres in the state later, he added.

Also an LGBT activist, Kuthanur is a practicing clinical psychologist specialising in issues relating to marginalised group. (PTI)

Atlee on directing SRK in 'Jawan': To get it right, you have to become a fan first



NEW DELHI, Sept 19: If you want to get it right, you have to become a fan first, says filmmaker Atlee, crediting superstar Shah Rukh Khan for trusting his vision for "Jawan", a mass entertainer that is on its way to becoming one of the highest earning movies in Hindi cinema.

Atlee is known for delivering back-to-back hits in the South with superstar Vijay. "Jawan", which has crossed over ₹ 800 crore at the box office since its release on September 7, marks his Hindi debut.

Asked how he managed to direct the superstar without getting overwhelmed by his persona, the 36-year-old director said he simply stayed true to his creative vision.

"I'm a fan of cinema and I'm a fan of Shah Rukh sir, Vijay sir. Whoever I've worked with, I first become their fan because if you want to get it right, you have to become a fan. Even with their beloved actors, a fan can always say about a film that, 'No, it's not right.' 'As a fan, you will know which film is working and which is not work-

ing purely by heart... At the same time, if the actors are fans of a director's work or a cameraman's work and an editor's work, they also come up and say, 'Boss, I think you are not on the right track'." Atlee told PTI in a virtual interview.

The filmmaker said he developed "a give and take" relationship with SRK who protected and guided him throughout the filming of the big-budget movie. "Jawan" was made with a budget of over ₹ 300 crore, the filmmaker had revealed earlier.

"I didn't guide him — he knows much more than what everyone knows in the system — but I said what works for me and what doesn't."

"And he trusted me. He was like, 'Yes, sir. It's not working for you. Let's do one more. Should I do it like this? Should I do it like that?' It was a good give and take. That's why I could give a (film like) 'Jawan' with everyone's 100 per cent," he added.

It was Shah Rukh who reached out to Atlee expressing a desire to work with the film-

maker, who has been praised for showing the actor in a new light with the blockbuster. The film, interestingly, was greenlit over a Zoom call during the pandemic.

Atlee has already established a name in the Tamil film industry courtesy his movies with Vijay — "Theri", "Mersal" and "Bigil".

SRK's idea was to do a quintessential "Atlee film", he recalled.

"I was really surprised and blessed to get a call from Shah Rukh sir's side. When I met him, he said, 'Sir, let's do a film together. I've seen all your films. I love your films. And, I want to do an Atlee film'."

"I said, 'What is an Atlee film sir?' (He said) 'The films that you make, I want to be part of that world'. I said, 'Okay sir, I'll make something and come back'," he said.

The director shared it took him eight months to come up with a story that he could pitch to the actor.

"He didn't even question why I'm delaying. But one day I went to him and I said this is a

(log)line. He said, 'Okay, develop it and tell me.' 'He gave me some time, I developed but unfortunately Covid started. So then I came in and I requested a narration. We did it over a Zoom call. That's where the film got greenlit and started.' A high-octane action thriller, "Jawan" takes on issues like farmers suicide, poor healthcare infrastructure, corruption and the nexus between politicians and businessmen through a father-son story.

Atlee said the intent was never to just entertain as he wanted to appeal to people's "emotions".

"It speaks about your heart and what you feel when you read a newspaper, when you take life seriously and when you are very responsible. As a filmmaker, you have to be responsible. You can't just entertain, go home and sleep. You have to entertain and you have to give something that people take home," the filmmaker said.

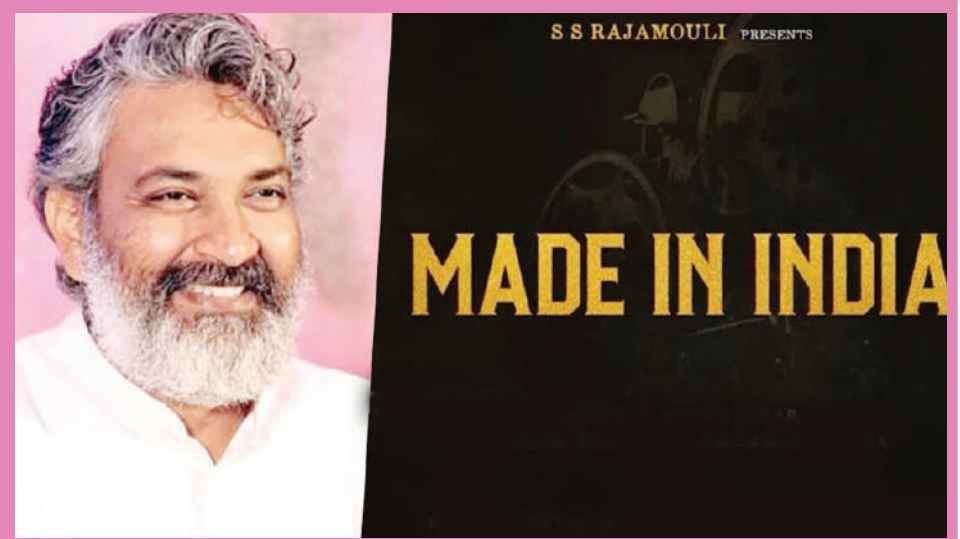
According to him, fans have "cried, hooted and whistled" while watching the film as the story is rooted in human emotion.

"Jawan" is about Indian emotion and I think I have placed it in the right proportion," he added.

Asked how the mammoth success of "Jawan" has impacted him, the director said it has only added a "happy responsibility" on his shoulders. "I've got a lot of footfall (for 'Jawan'). I've explored new territories and it is growing everyday. I think my next film should be bigger than this."

"It adds a happy responsibility and a happy pressure. I take home success along with responsibility. I will work towards it and make something greater for the country," he said.

"Jawan", a pan-India film, also stars Nayanthara and Vijay Sethupathi as well as Deepika Padukone and Sanjay Dutt in special appearances. (PTI)



SS RAJAMOULI TO PRESENT BIOPIC ON 'FATHER OF INDIAN CINEMA'

HYDERABAD, Sept 19: SS Rajamouli on Tuesday announced that he will be presenting the upcoming feature film "Made In India", a biopic on 'Father of Indian Cinema' Dadasaheb Phalke. The "RRR" filmmaker said the script moved him emotionally when he heard the narration.

"When I first heard the narration, it moved me emotionally like nothing else. Making a biopic is tough in itself, but conceiving one about the FATHER OF INDIAN CINEMA is even more challenging. Our boys are ready and up for it.. With immense pride, Presenting 'MADE IN INDIA', " Rajamouli wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

He also shared the announcement teaser, which described the upcoming feature as the "biopic of Indian

cinema". "Made In India" will be directed by Nitin Kakkar, known for films such as "Filmistaan", "Mitron" and "Jawaani Jaaneman". The venture also marks Rajamouli's son SS Karthikeya's debut as a film producer. He was credited as line producer of "RRR".

"It's been years since I wanted to fulfill my dream of becoming a producer. The moment has come. 'MADE IN INDIA'... With utmost responsibility, taking this up as a challenge," Karthikeya wrote on X.

Varun Gupta is also attached as a producer.

Dadasaheb Phalke, referred to as the 'Father of Indian Cinema', made the first-ever full-length Indian feature film titled "Raja Harishchandra" in 1913. Born in Trimbak in present-day Maharashtra, the film-

maker's real name was Dhundiraj Govind Phalke.

He went to London to learn filmmaking from Cecil Hepworth and made his directorial debut in 1913 with "Raja Harishchandra", India's first full-length feature. In his career spanning over 19 years, he made 95 movies and 27 short films.

In 1969, the central government paid homage to the visionary filmmaker by dedicating an award in his name, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, which recognises lifetime contributions to Indian cinema.

"Made In India" marks Rajamouli's first project as a presenter after the global success of his Telugu period action drama "RRR", which won the best original song award for "Naatu Naatu" at the Academy Awards earlier this year. (PTI)

Richard Linklater's movie 'Hit Man', with Glen Powell, sells to Netflix for USD 20M

NEW YORK, Sept 19: The Toronto International Film Festival may be over but it's biggest sale has just gone through. Netflix has acquired Richard Linklater's "Hit Man," starring Glen Powell, for \$20 million.

"Hit Man," which Linklater and Powell co-wrote, stars the "Top Gun: Maverick" actor as a New Orleans psychology professor who also works undercover posing as a hit man for the police in sting operations to

Monthly article from 2001 about faux-hit-man Gary Johnson. In an interview in Toronto, Linklater, the veteran independent filmmaker of "Boyhood" said he and Powell elected to make the film before selling it to a distributor to avoid some of the pitfalls of modern Hollywood.

"It used to be the head of a studio would sit down with you, talk, maybe say, 'I think you've got the movie in you. Let's do it.' Now, they don't even want to hear from you. You're up against algorithms and marketing in advance," said Linklater. "So it was kind of great to go: 'Let's just make the movie and bet on ourselves.'"

That bet has paid off in a fall-festival movie market that's been disrupted by the ongoing SAG-AFTRA and WGA strikes. It's been speculated that, with pipelines potentially drying up, studios and streamers might be more eager to pick up finished films.

But the "Hit Man" sale is the largest yet of the season. Netflix, which also distributed Linklater's previous movie, "Apollo 10 1/2," earlier acquired Anna Kendrick's directorial debut, "Woman of the Hour," following its premiere in Toronto. (AP)



catch would-be murders. The film, a comic, existential riff on the hit-man genre, was one of the breakout hits of TIFF, which concluded Sunday.

Netflix didn't announce release plans yet for "Hit Man," which also played at the Venice Film Festival. The film, which co-stars Adria Arjona as a wife who wants her husband dead, is loosely based on a true story detailed in a Skip Hollandsworth-written Texas

'Money Heist' spin-off series 'Berlin' to premiere on Netflix on Dec 29



LOS ANGELES, Sept 19: "Money Heist" spin-off series "Berlin", centering on popular character Berlin, will make its debut on Netflix on December 29. The streaming service confirmed the release date on its social media handles as it unveiled a teaser of the show, which will see actor Pedro Alonso returning to play Andres de Fonollosa aka Berlin.

"Where others see risk, he sees excitement and adrenaline. From the world of 'Money Heist', 'BERLIN' premieres December 29," Netflix posted on X, formerly known as Twitter.

According to Netflix,

"Berlin" follows one of the most extraordinary heists pulled off by the titular character.

"There are only two things that are sure to turn a bad day into a great one: love, and a payday worth millions. They're what keep Berlin going through his golden years, a time when he still has no inkling of his illness and hasn't gotten trapped like a rat in the Spanish Mint."

"This is where he starts preparing one of his most extraordinary heists: making jewels worth 44 million disappear like some sort of magic trick. To do it, he'll enlist the help of

one of the three gangs he's ever stolen with," the official plotline read. "Berlin" will also feature Michelle Jenner, Tristan Ulloa, Begona Vargas, Julio Pena Fernandez and Joel Sanchez.

Itziar Ituno and Najwa Nimri, the original stars of "Money Heist", also star in the series, reprising their roles of policemen Raquel Murillo and Alicia Sierra, respectively.

"Berlin" comes from showrunner Alex Pina, who is also creator of the parent show, with Esther Martinez Lobato as a writer. The series is directed by Albert Pinto, David Barrocal and Geoffrey Cowper. (PTI)

Hiten Tejwani on reuniting with wife Gauri Pradhan for new TV show: It's just comfortable

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: "Kaala" actor Hiten Tejwani, who is set to re-team with actor-wife Gauri Pradhan for an upcoming TV show, says their real-life equation makes it easy to give 100 per cent to their on-screen roles.

The couple has previously worked in popular shows such as "Kutumb", "Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi", and "Kya Had-saa Kya Haqeeqat". They also participated in the dance reality TV show "Nach Baliye 2" in 2006.

Hiten said the new show is expected to air as early as next month.

"Something is coming up now. Maybe it will be telecast next month. It is in the TV space. It has been shot in a way how we shoot for web series. It is an experiment for us as well as the production team and channel," the 49-year-old actor told PTI in an interview.

With Gauri there is a level of comfort and understanding, he added.

"It's comfortable. It's my job and I give my 100 per cent to my character. With Gauri, there is definitely comfort. You don't have to do anything extra or mechanical. It's just natural. That helps. We know each other so well. I know what she'll do or how she'll react as a character. It becomes easy to work," Hiten said.

The actor currently stars in Disney+ Hotstar series "Kaala", directed by Bejoy Nambiar. The show is described as an "edge-of-the-seat crime thriller" which follows the story of an Intelligence Bureau (IB) officer (played by Avinash Tiwary) and a game of power.

In the series, Hiten plays a character called Bismil. The actor revealed he had initially auditioned to play another part in "Kaala", but Nambiar wanted him to break his positive image through Bismil.

"I auditioned for that character and I was selected. Bejoy liked what I did for that character as



well... But he said 'You should do this'. He wanted me to break that 'good boy' image. It was all his vision. He called me and said 'I think you should do this. This role has a beautiful arc, I think you'll do justice to this one.' I said 'Fair enough,

I'll do it," he added.

The actor has been in the industry for over two decades and continues to audition for roles, a practice he believes is important for longevity.

"Whoever is thinking that it is easier for us because we are

already known or have been there in the industry, we also have to audition for it. Auditioning is a good process. As an actor also, I get to know what I can do and what I can bring to the character. You have to be flexible," he added. (PTI)

Indian rifle shooter Nischal bags Silver in Rio World Cup



NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Young Indian shooter Nischal has won silver in the Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions at the ISSF World Cup in Rio De Janeiro.

She on Monday gave India its second medal on the concluding day of the tournament. Her achievement becomes even more credible given that this was her very first senior World Cup appearance.

She finished behind Norwegian rifle ace Jeanette Hegg Duestad with a score of 458.0 in the final. Duestad is the reigning Air Rifle European Champion and 300m 3P World Champion and has 12 ISSF World Cup medals to her name including five gold. She was also fourth in the Tokyo Olympics.

Nischal was in supreme shooting form throughout the day, breaking the qualification national record in Women's 3P in the process. "It is my first world cup final and I have a medal, so I am very happy for that," the teenager said in a release.

It all began with the elimination rounds in the morning where a total of 18 shooters were eliminated over two rounds totalling 73 competitors.

She shot a solid 587 in relay one to safely make it to qualification. So did her two countrywomen, previous qualification national record holder Anjum Moudgil and Ayushi Podder, both of whom shot in relay two.

Then in qualification, Nischal shot a sublime 592 including a perfect 200 in the prone position, to erase Anjum's score of 591 shot in the President's Cup in Cairo last year. Anjum herself shot a solid 586, but finished 10th to miss the final by a point. Ayushi was further back in 35th with 580.

The final had a stellar field. Besides Duestad, there was qualification topper (594) and world champion Wanru Miao of China, 2018 Youth Olympic champion Stephanie Grundsoe of Denmark, Italian Olympian Sofia Ceccarello

and senior Polish shooter Aneta Stankiewicz, among others.

Not one to be fazed, Nischal went head-to-head with the Duestad from get go of the 45-shot final. She was 0.1 behind the Norwegian after the first 15 kneeling shots and the same after the consequent 15 shots in the prone position.

By the time, Ukrainian Viktoriya Sukhorukova and Swiss shooter Chiara Leone became first to be eliminated after the first 10-shots in the standing position, Duestad had opened up a gap of 0.7 over the Indian. A 9.4 by the Norwegian for her 41st was cancelled out by a 9.0 from Nischal for her 42nd and the gap widened to 1.1.

An 8.4 for the 43rd almost cost her a medal, but Wanru still fell short of the Indian and bowed out in fourth. Thereafter, Stephanie Grundsoe, who had moved up to second, shot a 7.9 in her 44th shot, assuring Nischal of silver and herself settling for bronze.

Duestad closed out calmly for gold with a 10.2 and a score of 461.5, a clear 3.5 ahead of the Haryana shooter.

Gurpreet Singh was also in action in the other medal event of the concluding day but he could not make much headway, shooting 574 to finish 15th in the Men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol.

The 16-member Indian contingent thus returned with one gold and one silver from the Rio World Cup and a creditable seventh position in the standings. Elavenil Valarivan had also won the Women's 10m Air Rifle gold in tremendous fashion.

Earlier in the week two more Indians missed making the finals by the narrowest of possible margins. Reigning Asian Games champion Rahi Sarnobat, missed making the final of the Women's 25m Pistol by virtue of having lesser shots in the inner 10-ring.

Also on Sunday, another seasoned Indian shooter Chain Singh, missed making the Men's 3P final by a point. (PTI)

Former MotoGP rider Capirossi pleased with BIC ahead of inaugural race

GREATER NOIDA, Sept 19: Former MotoGP rider Loris Capirossi on Tuesday expressed his satisfaction with the quality of the modified race track at the Buddh International Circuit (BIC) for the inaugural round in India from September 22 to 24.

Capirossi, a nine-time race winner in the premier class, is serving as a safety advisor to MotoGP organisers and rights holders Dorna Sports. The BIC track, where Formula 1 took place from 2011 to 2013, has been modified to suit the requirements of two-wheel racing. Gravel traps have been extended around the track to make it safer for riders in case they go off it. Air fences and foam barriers have been installed, again for rider safety.

The Formula 1 track layout had 16 turns but the one for MotoGP had 13. The track has one of the longest straights on the calendar, increasing the possibility of riders touching the record speed of 370kmph. Capirossi went for a ride on the track and was pleased with its layout.

"Everything seems to be going smoothly and I am really pleased with the layout of the track. There are fast corners and good breaking points and it will be interesting to see how each of the riders race here," he said. The Grand Prix of India will feature 82 riders from 41 teams vying for top honours in MotoGP, Moto 2 and Moto 3 over the course of three days. It will be the biggest motor racing event to be held in India after Formula 1.

Capirossi also revealed his favourites to win the race. "The level of MotoGP is really high at the moment as every rider is really close. Marco Bezzecchi and Jorge Martin are also great riders and can win the race, while Brad Binder is also a contender. It's just the conformity of the track that takes you to victory," he said. "Francesco Bagnaia is also someone who can win the race but he is not 100 percent after the crash in Barcelona but it will be interesting to see who wins," Capirossi added. (PTI)

Hermoso criticizes Spanish soccer federation and accuses it of threatening World Cup-winning players

MADRID, Sept 19: The player in the middle of the controversy that engulfed Spanish soccer after she was kissed on the lips by an official has accused the country's soccer federation of trying to intimidate the World Cup-winning players by picking them for the national team even though they asked not to be called up.

Jenni Hermoso, who said she did not consent to the kiss by former federation president Luis Rubiales during the World Cup awards ceremony last month, said in a statement early Tuesday that the federation's decision to call up nearly half of the 39 players who said they would not play for the national team as a protest was "irrefutable proof" that "nothing has changed."

The players had said they wouldn't come back until their demands for deep reforms and new leadership in the federation were met, but new coach Montse Tomé on Tuesday picked 15 of the players who helped Spain win its first Women's World Cup last month. Tomé left Hermoso off the list "as a way to protect her," she said.

"Protect me from what?" Hermoso said. "A claim was made stating that the environment within the federation would be safe for my colleagues to rejoin, yet at the same press conference it was announced that they were not calling me as a means to protect me."

Tomé said she talked to Hermoso and to the other players, and said she was confident



that they would all report to training camp on Tuesday. The players said Monday that they were caught by surprise by the call-up and did not plan to end their boycott.

The squad announcement had been originally planned for Friday but was postponed because no agreement had been reached with the players.

On Monday, the federation released a

statement in which it publicly reiterated to the players its commitment to structural changes. "The people who now ask us to trust them are the same ones who disclosed the list of players who have asked NOT to be called up," Hermoso said. "The players are certain that this is yet another strategy of division and manipulation to intimidate and threaten us with legal repercussions and eco-

nomic sanctions."

According to Spanish sports law, athletes are required to answer the call of its national teams unless there are circumstances that impede them from playing, such as an injury. The players said Monday they would study the possible legal consequences of not reporting to the training camp, but said they believed the federation could not force them to join the team. They argued that the call-up was not made in accordance with current FIFA regulations, and some of the players, especially those abroad, would not be able to show up in time.

"I want to once again show my full support to my colleagues who have been caught by surprise and forced to react to another unfortunate situation caused by the people who continue to make decisions within (the federation)," Hermoso said. "This is why we are fighting and why we are doing it in this way." Among the players' demands was for interim president Pedro Rocha also to resign, and for the women's team staff to be overhauled.

Last year, 15 players rebelled against former coach Jorge Vilda asking for a more professional environment. Tomé, an assistant to Vilda at the World Cup, included in her first list some of the players who rebelled.

Spain will play Nations League games against Sweden on Friday and Switzerland on Sept 26. (AP)

Hudson-Odoi scores on Nottingham Forest debut to help salvage 1-1 draw against Burnley



NOTTINGHAM, Sept 19: Callum Hudson-Odoi marked his first Premier League appearance in 18 months with a goal to help Nottingham Forest rally for a 1-1 draw Monday at home against Burnley, which earned its first point of the campaign. The 22-year-old former Chelsea player spent last season on loan at Bayer Leverkusen but served up a reminder of what he can do as he was Forest's biggest

attacking threat on his debut for his new team following a deadline-day move from Stamford Bridge. He brought his side level with a curling effort in the second half after Zeki Amadou had put Burnley ahead.

It was Burnley's first point after three successive losses, but the visitors were denied a late winner by VAR and finished the game with 10 men after Lyle Foster was sent

off for elbowing Ryan Yates.

Having once been considered one of the brightest prospects in English soccer, with Bayern Munich among the teams reportedly interested in signing him, Hudson-Odoi is now looking to revive his career after Chelsea decided to let him go. Forest manager Steve Cooper coached him when in charge of England's Under-17 World Cup-winning team and has been quick to get him firing at his new club. Hudson-Odoi curled a 20-yard shot in off the far post to level the score in the 61st. Burnley had taken the lead in the 41st when Amadou fired into the bottom corner. Foster thought he had scored the winner for Burnley in the 76th, but Sander Berge was ruled to have used his hand in the buildup.

Forest has seven points from five games. Burnley has only played four as its game at promoted Luton was postponed last month. (AP)

Mumbai City FC lose 0-2 to Nassaji Mazandaran of Iran in ACL

PUNE, Sept 19: Mumbai City FC began their AFC Champions League (ACL) campaign on a disappointing note as they suffered 0-2 defeat at the hands of debutants Nassaji Mazandaran of Iran here on Monday. Ehsan Hosseini (34th minute) and Mohammadreza Azadi (62nd) scored for the visiting side. Mumbai made a bright start and almost opened the scoring in the ninth minute when Jorge Pereyra Diaz slipped the ball through to Lallianzuala Chhangte, who shot from a tight angle and missed the target. With 11 minutes remaining in the half, Nassaji took the lead. Hossein Zamehran picked up possession 20 yards from goal, the playmaker turning swiftly to play Ehsan Hosseini in with a defence-splitting pass, and

he slotted calmly into the bottom corner of the net to put the Iranians in front. Bipin could have ensured Mumbai went into the break level a minute into first half injury time only to shoot off target after being found in space as Chhangte rolled the ball across the face of the goal.

The Iranian outfit rounded the tally when substitute Farshid Esmaili robbed Akash Mishra deep inside his penalty area and had the presence of mind to roll the ball into the six yard box, where Azadi was left with the simplest of finishes. Vikram Partap shot across the face of goal and Chhangte glanced his header wide as Mumbai sought a late lifeline but Nassaji saw out nine minutes of additional time to taste victory in their maiden AFC Champions League appearance. (PTI)



Skipper Pujara suspended for one game after Sussex docked 12 points for 'on-field behaviour'

HOVE (ENGLAND), Sept 19: India international Cheteshwar Pujara has been suspended from one county game after his team Sussex was docked 12 points in the County Championship due to a code of conduct breach during the match against Leicestershire.

Pujara received an automatic suspension after the club reached the threshold of four fixed penalties in the same season and won't be available for this week's game against Derbyshire, according to a report in ESPN Cricinfo. Sussex have also made the decision to stand down three players - Jack Carson,

Tom Haines and Ari Karvelas - for behaviour that in the words of head coach, Paul Farbrace, "tarnished" the dramatic 15-run win over Leicestershire last week, the website reported. "We have made Jack and Tom unavailable for selection for this game at Derbyshire," Farbrace said. "Following the umpires and match referee's decision to charge both players with on-field level one and level two offences, we needed to take a stance, and show them we will not condone such behaviour. Ultimately it has cost us the availability of Cheteshwar and we have been deducted 12 points." (PTI)

Man City looks for rare Champions League repeat after finally winning it for the first time



Those countries have dominated the Champions League era and between them have won all but three editions of the competition since 1993. It could be argued, however, that it is a measure of the competitiveness of European soccer's elite club tournament that only one team has successfully defended the trophy.

"I was incredibly proud at Barcelona to win two in (three) years but we didn't win it in a row," Guardiola said. "If we aren't able to win it, like the previous six seasons, then (we'll have to) qualify for next year and try again." Guardiola finally lifted the trophy for a third time in June after City's 1-0 win against Inter

Milan in Istanbul. He had previously won it with Lionel Messi and Barcelona in 2009 and 2011.

It was City's first European Cup and completed a treble of trophies last season. After June's final, Guardiola set his team the challenge of becoming multiple winners like Europe's greatest clubs. Madrid has won it a record 14 times, including five of the last 10 editions. On Monday, City's manager reiterated the importance of repeating last season's success.

"I'd like to say that for our club to win the Champions League is incredible," he said. "But in perspective for the Champions League, how many teams have won the Champions League once?"

"A lot have won two, three, four, five. In perspective, we did nothing special. Just one." City hosts Belgrade at the Etihad Stadium on Tuesday.

While it is expected to win that match, the competition will be fierce again this year with Bayern Munich having signed England striker Harry Kane and Barcelona looking like a bigger threat after winning the Spanish league last season.

Madrid is regularly a challenger and has added England midfielder Jude Bellingham to its ranks.

Guardiola's success at City, however, has been born out of a seemingly insatiable appetite for trophies.

"The hunger is still definitely in the changing room and I hope the manager still wants to win more," said City defender Kyle Walker. "You can see what he is like in games and training. He doesn't settle for second and we should follow in his footsteps because he has managed some great teams that have won fantastic things. What we have done is in the past... we have won the Premier League and Champions League, but to go again is what separates the good teams from the great teams." (AP)

ICC charges 8 including 3 Indians for corrupt activities during Emirates T10 league



DUBAI, Sept 19: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has charged eight people including players, officials and a couple of Indian team owners, Parag Sanghvi and Krishan Kumar Chaudhary on different counts of corruption during the 2021 edition of Emirates T10 League.

The two Indians were co-owners of the team Pune Devils and one of their players in that edition, former Bangladesh Test batter Nasir Hossain has also been charged for breach of league's anti-corruption code.

The third Indian, who is indulged in corrupt activities, is a little-known batting coach named Sunny Dhillon.

"The charges relate to the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 Cricket League and attempts to corrupt matches in that tournament – these attempts were disrupted. The ICC was appointed by the ECB as the Designated Anti-Corruption Official (DACO) for the purposes of the ECB's Code for this tournament and as such are issuing these charges on the ECB's behalf," ICC said in a statement. Sanghvi has been charged under Articles 2.2.1 and 2.4.6 of the Anti-Corruption code.

The Article 2.2.1 pertains to "Placing bets

on the results, progress, conduct or other aspect of International and Domestic Matches." As per Article 2.4.6, Sanghvi was guilty of "Failing or refusing, without compelling justification, to cooperate with any investigation carried out by the DACO in relation to possible Corrupt Conduct under the Code."

Krishan Kumar was charged under Articles 2.4.5, 2.4.6 and 2.4.7 of the ACU code.

The 2.4.5 clause charges him for "Failing to disclose to the DACO (without unnecessary delay) full details of any incident, fact, or matter that comes to the attention of a Participant that may evidence Corrupt Conduct under the Anti-Corruption Code by another Participant."

Dhillon, whose coaching credentials are bare minimal, has been accused of trying to fix matches and charged under Articles 2.1.1, 2.4.4 and 2.4.6.

He has been accused of "being party to an attempt to fix, contrive or influence improperly matches or aspects of matches in the Abu Dhabi T10 2021."

He has also failed to "disclose to the DACO full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in Corrupt Conduct under the Code."

Nasir, who played 19 Tests and 65 ODIs for Bangladesh was guilty of "Failing to disclose to the DACO receipt of a gift worth over USD 750."

The others who have been suspended, include batting coach Azhar Zaidi, UAE's domestic players Rizwan Javed and Sali Saman and team manager Shadab Ahmed.

Six of the charged, including three Indians have been provisionally suspended and all have 14 days from Tuesday to respond to the charges. (PTI)

We're determined to win WC for fans: Kohli
India will begin their WC campaign against Australia in Chennai on Oct 8



NEW DELHI, Sept 19: Celebrated Virat Kohli says he and his teammates are ready to give their best in the upcoming ODI World Cup at home to make the dreams of Indian fans come true once again. The Men in Blue won the World Cup twice, with their last success coming in 2011 when the competition was jointly hosted by India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. India defeated Sri Lanka by six wickets at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, under the leadership of Mahendra Singh Dhoni. But, Kohli is now eager to end their 12-year-long wait for the title, having missed out on winning the 2015 and 2019 editions in Australia-New Zealand and England, respectively.

"The passion and unwavering support of our fans is what fuels our determination to win the World Cup," Kohli told Star Sports. "The memories of past World Cup victories, especially the iconic 2011 win, are etched in our hearts, and we want to create new memories for our fans. I am thrilled to be a part of this incredible campaign, which perfectly captures the emotions of our fans, and we're ready to give it our all to make their dreams come true," he added.

Kohli's thoughts were echoed by all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja. "As a cricketer, there's nothing more motivating than knowing that millions of fans are standing behind you, cheering for your success," he said.

"This campaign reflects the deep passion and obsession of our fans to see Team India win. It's a journey we're embarking on together with the entire nation, and we're determined to make our fans proud with our performances on the field," Jadeja said. India will begin their World Cup campaign against Australia in Chennai on October 8. (PTI)

ASIAN GAMES

Indian men's hockey team leaves for Hangzhou

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: The Indian men's hockey team will look to extend its impressive run at the Asian Games in Hangzhou beginning on September 23. India will begin their campaign against Uzbekistan on September 24. India are placed in Pool A, alongside Pakistan, Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore, and Uzbekistan. Pool B consists of Korea, Malaysia, China, Oman, Thailand, and Indonesia. The top two teams from each Pool will qualify for the semifinals. Harmanpreet Singh will lead the team once again, with Hardik serving as his deputy. "The team has been rigorously preparing for the Asian Games and we performed well at the recently concluded Asian Champions Trophy Chennai, so the goal is to maintain that level of performance," said Harmanpreet before the Indian team left for Hangzhou. "We have some tough opponents in our Pool, but we are confident in our preparation and hope to finish on the podium." (PTI)

Visa issues hit inaugural MotoGP race in India

GREATER NOIDA, Sept 19: Some of the riders and team officials bound for the inaugural MotoGP round in India, including six-time champion Marc Marquez, are awaiting their visas ahead of the race this weekend.

Sources in Repsol Honda Team confirmed to PTI that the arrival of its riders Marquez and Joan Mir in India has been delayed due to visa issues.

Both the Spanish drivers were scheduled to visit the Honda India factory in Manesar on Wednesday but now that visit stands cancelled.

"The riders are yet to reach India due to visa issues. So there was no option but to cancel tomorrow's event," a source told PTI.

Dorna Sports are the organisers and rights holders of the event.



Fairstreet Sports are the local promoters of the event. Both parties were not reachable to shed light on the extend of visa hurdles faced by the MotoGP paddock.

Race.com also reported that only small number of staff from factory teams were able to enter India due to visa delays.

India is hosting an event of this

magnitude for the first time since the now defunct Formula 1 Indian Grand Prix. The race was dropped from the calendar following the 2013 season due to financial, taxation and bureaucratic issues. Dorna and Fairstreet have signed seven MoU for the race in India but the event's future hugely depends on how this weekend unfolds.

Earlier this year, India hosted its first FIA World Championship status in 10 years when the Formula E race was held in Hyderabad. It is unlikely that the championships will return next year after not finding a place on the provisional calendar for 2024.

Formula E was not pleased with how the local organisers left the preparations to the very last minute. (PTI)

New-look PSG starts its CL campaign against Dortmund

PARIS, Sept 19: Paris Saint-Germain started its previous Champions League campaign with a team featuring Lionel Messi and Neymar and a win over Juventus. The two soccer greats didn't score that night and PSG later was eliminated from Europe's top competition in the last 16 for the fifth time in seven years. The premature exit, once again, highlighted the blatant failure of PSG's strategy of assembling star-studded teams without a real backbone. The owners have changed their master plan during the offseason,

though, and it's a revamped PSG that takes on Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday as the group stage of the elite European tournament kicks off. As usual, the French champions spent a lot of money on new recruits, but they no longer seem obsessed with the need for big names. Taking part in the group stage for the 12th consecutive time, the PSG squad facing Dortmund on Tuesday is radically different from the one that was knocked out by Bayern Munich last season. Up front, Marco Asensio joined from Real Madrid, Gonçalo Ramos arrived from Ben-

fica and Randal Kolo Muani signed to possibly form an all-French attack alongside Kylian Mbappé and Ousmane Dembélé. PSG also transformed its midfield, hiring Kang-in Lee and Manuel Ugarte. At the back, Bayern Munich's Lucas Hernandez was added, as well as Milan Skriniar. In addition to Messi and Neymar's departures, Sergio Ramos and Marco Verratti have also left, while PSG switched to a 4-3-3 formation under new coach Luis Enrique, who does not have to bother with accommodating Neymar, Messi and Mbappé together. (PTI)



**ঐতিহাসিক ভারত ত্যাগ আন্দোলনৰ
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তথা আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

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অসম বাৰ্তা ছবন্ধক কৰিবলৈ ৮২৮৭৯১২১৫৮ ত Assam লিখি বাটছপ কৰক

Janasanyog/D/10710/23/20-Sep-23

Protect and Prevent Continue the fight against Japanese Encephalities

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.

Call 104 for Health related queries

Call 108 for Ambulance Services

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