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Prez Murmu described as 'President of Bharat' ● Himanta says it is "Republic of Bharat"

G20 dinner invite triggers political slugfest

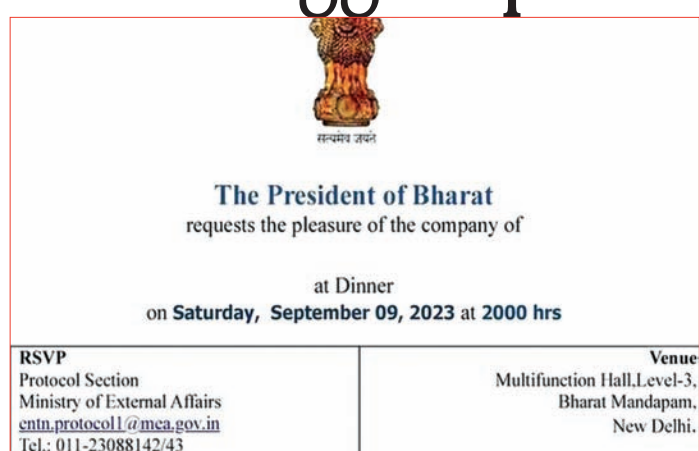
NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Invitations for a G20 dinner have been sent out by President Droupadi Murmu describing her position as 'President of Bharat' instead of the customary 'President of India', triggering a massive furore on Tuesday with the opposition alleging that the Modi government is planning to drop India and stay with just Bharat as the country's name.

Confirming that Bharat has been used as the name of the country in some of the documents relating to G20, sources said it was a conscious decision.

"Bharat is the official name of the country. It is mentioned in the constitution as also in the discussions of 1946-48," a booklet prepared for G20 delegates said.

The booklet titled 'Bharat The Mother of Democracy' also said, "In Bharat that is India, taking the consent of the people in governance has been part of life since earliest recorded history."

As Union ministers Dharmendra



Pradhan and Giriraj Singh shared on X their respective G20 dinner invitations from Murmu for Saturday at Bharat Mandapam, the venue for the G20 summit of world leaders, the Congress alleged that the government was trying to destroy history.

Senior BJP leaders and ministers also cheered the move by Rashtrapati Bhavan with Union minister

Rajeev Chandrasekhar asking what is the problem with using 'President of Bharat' as our country is also Bharat.

The move also further fuelled the speculation that the issue of changing the name of the country could come up during the five-day special session of Parliament beginning September 18.

As no specific agenda has been

announced yet for the Parliament session, speculations regarding its agenda ranging from simultaneous polls to women's reservation bill are doing the rounds.

The invitation, which was widely shared on social media, led to a storm of reactions with the opposition alleging that the move was reflective of the BJP being scared of the INDIA bloc and the ruling party asserting that there was nothing wrong in using Bharat as it is part of the Constitution.

Several opposition leaders shared Article 1 of the Constitution which states that "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States" and also the provision that refers to the country's president as "President of India".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X, "So the news is indeed true. Rashtrapati Bhavan has sent out an invite for a G20 dinner on Sept 9th in the name of 'President of Bharat' instead of the usual 'President of India'." (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Patient has made a full recovery: Doctor Silchar lady undergoes complicated surgery at NEIGRIHMS

SHILLONG, Sept 5: A very complicated surgery was successfully performed at NEIGRIHMS by a team of surgeons led by Professor Ranendra Hajong. The team included Dr Dathiadam Tongper, Dr K Kamtha N and Dr Pinky Rabha – all from the department of General Surgery with the assistance of Dr Priyanka Dev from the department of Anaesthesiology.

Senior Radiologist Dr Donboklang Lynser contributed by confirming the diagnosis.

The patient, a 23 year old lady from Silchar, Assam, is recovering well and is expected to be discharged from the hospital in a few days. She had approached the department of General Surgery, NEIGRIHMS, with severe pain in her upper abdomen which she had been suffering on and off for over a year. She was diagnosed having a choledochal cyst, which is a congenital abnormality of the duct

(tube) that transports bile from the liver to the gall bladder and small intestine, and in her case it was choledochal cyst type 4a. This is a rare condition in which the bile ducts inside and outside the liver are abnormally dilated. Patients with choledochal cysts are at risk of developing complications such as jaundice, liver damage, and cancer.

Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography was performed at NEIGRIHMS for better planning of the surgery. The surgeons were very of the fact that the patient's blood group was 'B Negative', a rare blood group found in less than 2% of the world population, which made it difficult to arrange for compatible blood for transfusion in case of any complication arising during or after surgery.

"We are very happy that the patient has made a full recovery," said Prof. Hajong. "It was a very challenging case, but our team was able to successfully remove the cyst and (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Assam government honours teachers on Teachers' Day

GUWAHATI, Sept 5: The Assam government honoured 36 teachers and nine college teachers and principals on the occasion of Teachers' Day on Tuesday. They were honoured for their contribution in the field of education.

State education minister Ranog Pegu gave away the awards at a programme organized to celebrate the 62nd Teachers' Day in Guwahati on Tuesday. While the teachers were felicitated for their services, the college teachers were felicitated for achieving patents for their research outcomes.

Speaking on the occasion, Pegu said the relationship between a teacher and a student should not be of fear, but should be based on respect. "Teachers play a vital role in developing a positive-minded society. Colleges should in fact, act as mentors for schools in their respective areas," said Ranog Pegu.

Pegu called upon teachers, especially those heading different educational institutions, to develop their schools (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

People losing land yet to be compensated

HT Correspondent
BOJAKAN, Sept 5: Former president of Karbi Students Association (KSA), Bijoy Bey said that the people will benefit from the Land Owner Right Protection Committee (LORPC) as many people are facing difficulties due to the construction of a four lane road from Doboka via Manja and Lahorijan in Karbi Anglong.

Bey said this while attending the foundation day of LORPC at Silonjan Lamps Inspection Bungalow in Bokajan.

Bey said LORPC can take up the matter to ensure that people who lost their lands are duly compensated by the department concerned.

Former leader of Karbi Longri NC Hills Liberation Front (KLNL), Songia Timung said, "In the ongoing construction of the four lane road on NH 36, a few people who lost just a small part of land have (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Police constable goes missing

GUWAHATI, Sept 5: An Assam Police constable posted in Guwahati, who was purportedly suffering from serious physical and mental health issues, has been reported missing, leading the city police commissioner to launch a search operation, an official statement said on Tuesday. Some of her personal items, including a mobile phone, were recovered from the old Saraihat bridge in the morning on Tuesday.

The statement issued by the Guwahati police commissioner said that Gayatri Hazarika was reported to be unreachable since 6 pm on Monday by her roommate Juri Baishya, also a police constable. Baishya said that Hazarika was suffering from 'serious health issues and was depressed' and had left their rented house on the pretext of going to Amingaon on some official duty.

As Hazarika was not present at Paltan Bazar Police Station where she is posted, and also not contactable over the phone, Baishya lodged the missing person report at the same police station late on Monday night. When police teams were activated to trace the missing constable and at around 8 am on Tuesday, a mobile phone, a pair of spectacles and footwear belonging to Hazarika was found on the old Saraihat bridge.

Amingaon, which falls under the Kamrup district, can be reached from Guwahati (Kamrup Metropolitan district) by crossing the Saraihat bridge over the Brahmaputra river. "Hazarika is still missing and efforts are on to trace the missing constable," the statement said. It also said that though women constables of the police commissionerate were kept as a reserved force for deployment at an eviction drive in the Silsako beel area of the city over the last few days, Hazarika was exempted from the emergency duty due to her 'poor health condition'.

Naga Hobo demands govt support for Nagas from Myanmar

DIMPUR, Sept 5: The Naga Hobo on Tuesday urged the Nagaland government to extend all possible help and support and arrange a border area humanitarian support team with all medical facilities for Nagas coming from Myanmar.

In a memorandum submitted to the Nagaland Chief Minister on Tuesday, the Naga Hobo said, "It is evident that the displacement crisis from Myanmar is expected to further escalate as Myanmar's military junta government continues to unleash its atrocities on its citizens and Nagas in particular. We, therefore, request the Nagaland government to extend all possible support and immediately arrange a border area humanitarian support team with all medical facilities. Shelter should also be provided to them."

The Naga Hobo recommended humanitarian assistance such as providing food and shelter, engaging the diplomatic community in India and the United Nations Human Rights Council for working on the refugee status for the Naga refugees and to grant asylum status to asylum seekers. It also demanded free education in Nagaland for the displaced Nagas of Myanmar. It further recommended providing accommodation for the students and arranging "scholarship programmes" for them to avail higher education. It further recommended that free of cost medical health care facilities be provided in Nagaland for the displaced Nagas. It also said that free passage should be allowed to the displaced Nagas at the border and ensure their security. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Solar mission: Aditya L1 undergoes 2nd earth-bound manoeuvre

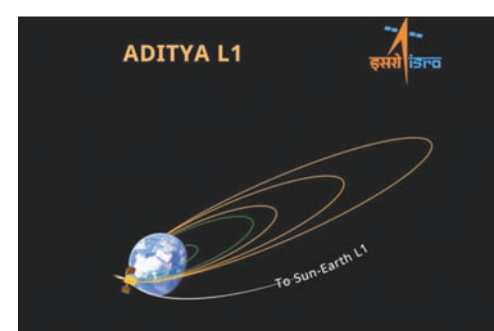
BENGALURU, Sept 5: Aditya L1, the first space based Indian mission to study the sun underwent the second earth-bound manoeuvre successfully, during the early hours on Tuesday, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) said.

ISRO's Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) carried out the operation.

"The second earth-bound manoeuvre (EBN#2) is performed successfully from ISTRAC, Bengaluru. ISTRAC/ISRO's ground stations at Mauritius, Bengaluru and Port Blair tracked the satellite during this operation. The new orbit attained is 282 km x 40225 km," ISRO said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

The next manoeuvre (EBN#3) is scheduled for September 10, 2023, around 02:30 Hrs. IST, it 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), which is located roughly 1.5 million km from earth.

The first earth-bound manoeuvre was successfully performed on September 3.



The spacecraft will undergo two more earth-bound orbital manoeuvres before placing in the transfer orbit towards the Lagrange point L1. Aditya-L1 is expected to arrive at the intended orbit at the L1 point after about 127 days. ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Teachers' Day celebrated in KA

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Sept 5: Teacher's Day was celebrated in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong along with the rest of the country, with government and private schools and colleges across the twin districts joining in the celebrations.

In Diphu town, students of both government and private educational institutions organised several programmes in honour of their teachers. Songs and dances were presented by students and entertaining games were conducted. Students also showered their teachers with gifts and bouquets of flowers to express their love.

Students dressed in beautiful traditional attires could be seen arriving at their schools in the morning to prepare for the day's celebration. Students could be seen offering floral tributes before photographs of former Indian president Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

At Sarsing Teron (Langkung



Habe) Memorial Town Hall, here at Matipung, the department of school education under the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) organized a district level Teacher's Day celebration in recognition of the selfless dedication of teachers in imparting education. During the celebration teachers from 170 schools, lower primary, ME and high schools securing A+ grade in the last Gunot

sav conducted in January and February, 2023 in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong were felicitated. 5 retired teachers were also felicitated for their services.

KAAC's executive member (EM) for education, Richard Tokbi said, "On this day we commemorate the birthday of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and I express my sincere gratitude (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Assam Governor inaugurates PG courses

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 5: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria inaugurated the PG Courses at the Birangana Sati Sadhani Rajyik Vishwavidyalaya in Golaghat on Tuesday and termed that the university's decision to introduce postgraduate courses on the auspicious occasion of Teachers' Day as truly noble.

Speaking on the occasion, "The University's name pays homage to one of the most celebrated queens in the history of Assam, Sati Sadhini. Her unwavering bravery and sacrificial spirit is an example as to what a woman can do while defending her territory country and safeguarding the honor. The university will provide a unique opportunity to educate future generations about Sati Sadhini and her rich contribution." The Governor also (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Assam govt to plant one crore saplings on Sept 17

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said his government will carry out a massive plantation drive of planting on a single day on September 17. One crore saplings will be planted across the state on the occasion. Over 50 lakh people have already registered their names for the programme.

Incidentally, September 17 is also the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There has been no official word whether the event is being organized to coincide with Modi's birthday.

"We are making all-out preparations for planting one crore saplings on a single day on September 17 and are on the verge of creating six to seven world records," Sarma said on the sidelines of a function here on Monday. The Chief minister said for the state government's massive plantation drive of planting one

crore saplings on a single day, more than 50 lakh people have registered their names on the application created for the same.

Earlier, Sarma lauded the initiative of an Assam-based NGO to plant one billion trees in the northeast, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. The Balipara Foundation has joined hands with Conservation International to restore one million hectare of land in the Eastern Himalayas by planting over one billion trees. The initiative is being called 'Great People's Forest'.

Sarma interacted with leaders, conservationists, supporters and other stakeholders on Monday evening and extended his unstinted support to boost the green canopy. Terming the initiative as one of the significant conservation efforts in the history of South Asia, Chairman of Balipara (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

NFR bags PMI South Asia award for 'Micro-project of Year'



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 5: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has been awarded the PMI South Asia award for 'Micro Project of the Year' with its entry "Intrusion De-

tection System for saving elephant lives".

The NFR received the award in a ceremony held at Chennai recently. This is for the first time ever that any zonal railway under the Union ministry of railways has bagged this award since its inception in 2009.

The Bharat Electronics Limited or BEL bagged the runners up award. In 2022, the micro project award was bagged by IBM. Many reputed organisations participate in this prestigious annual award every year showcasing their innovations. PMI South Asia Awards Program is being awarded as a recognition for the project management community in the region.

The intrusion detection system is an eco-sustainable solution to protect elephants and improve mobility in train operations. The system is based on artificial intelligence (AI) and existing optical fibres will be used as sensors to identify movements of wild animals at locations and alert control offices, station masters, gateman and loco pilots.

It uses fibre optic based acoustic system working on the principle of dialysis scattering phenomenon to sense the real time presence of elephants on the track. The AI based software can monitor unusual movements up to 40 km on either side of the main unit with a total stretch of 80 km. It will also help in detecting rail fracture, trespassing on railway track (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Teacher who transformed lives of specially-abled through education Kumud Kalita honoured with National Teacher's Award

PATHSALA, Sept 5: The inspiring life of teacher Kumud Kalita in Assam's Bajali district is a lesson in itself. His commitment to help and nurture the abandoned has transformed the lives of numerous specially-abled children.

From being dismissed by neighbours as a 'lunatic' initially to receiving this year's National Teachers' Award, Kalita has come a long way. His relentless mission of providing a home and education to these children has drawn praise from diverse quarters.

President Droupadi Murmu handed over the award to Kalita at a function held in New Delhi on Tuesday. A teacher in the Pathsala Senior Secondary School, 59-year-old Kalita runs an orphanage-cum-day care centre for children with special needs, registered under the name 'Tapoban'. Built on a land donated by Kalita with an investment of all his earnings and savings, there are about 25 children in the institution, while nearly 90 others with various disabilities from nearby areas attend the daycare facility.

"When I had set about to establish 'Tapoban', many people laughed me off as a lunatic. But now, I am getting help from all quarters. We have patrons who visit us regularly and help in meet-

ing the financial requirements," Kalita told PTI over the phone from New Delhi.

The idea of helping abandoned or orphaned children with special needs germinated in Kalita's mind when he was pursuing his post-graduation at the Gauhati University and came in contact with several organizations helping such children. "People are willing to help physically and mentally sound children, but the same acceptance is missing for the specially-abled ones. Hence, I am trying to do my bit for them," he said.

The first child that Kalita and his wife took in was a two-year girl with cerebral palsy, who was abandoned at the foothills of the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati in 2009. He travelled from Pathsala to Guwahati, a distance of over 100 km, and brought home the baby, naming her Kamakshi.

"She is 16 years old now and stays with me and my wife. Shristi, as we call her, needs constant attention as she cannot do even the simplest things herself. But we are glad to have her in our life," Kalita said.

He added that though confined to a wheelchair, Kamakshi wanted to go to the national capital to cheer for him and it took much convincing



to leave her behind. Kalita said 13 children from Tapoban have also been legally adopted by different people, including one child being taken to Europe by the (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

FM asks financial entities to ensure customers nominate heirs

MUMBAI, Sept 5: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday asked banks and other financial institutions to ensure that their customers update details about their nominees to help address the problem of unclaimed money in future.

"I want the banking system, the financial ecosystem including the mutual funds, stock markets to keep in mind that when someone deals with his (customer's) money, the organisations will have to think about the future and ensure that customers nominate their heirs, give the name and address," Sitharaman said speaking at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) here.

According to a report, the banking system alone has more than ₹ 35,000 crore of unclaimed deposits, while the overall quantum of the unclaimed money is said to be more than ₹ 1 lakh crore.

The Reserve Bank on August 17 launched a centralised web portal UDAM (Unclaimed Deposits - Gateway to Access Information) to help people search and claim unclaimed deposits.

The portal, launched by RBI



Governor Shaktikanta Das, has been developed by the central bank to help the public to facilitate and make it easier for them to search their unclaimed deposits across multiple banks in one place.

The finance minister said that it is essential to build a responsible financial ecosystem, and added that one laggard can cause a disruption, which can lead to trust deficit and the resultant crisis in the financial world.

She also noted that tax havens and round-tripping of money are a

threat to responsible financial ecosystem.

"We equally should talk about the threats to a responsible financial global ecosystem and the global challenges thereof to build a responsible financial ecosystem," she added.

Listing out the threats faced by the financial system, she said there are physical border threats, which are conventional warfare and other things. Then there are cyber threats whose intensity, unpredictability, and also the depth and access have

gone up too high today.

"As much as you build firewalls, there are more and more newer ways in which attacks are being made. Cryptos which are a threat as well as an opportunity is also an example of the urgent need global cooperation because we are not going to be able to have a responsible financial ecosystem which we cannot regulate."

On how the fintech players have helped the country, the minister said in about last four years, the number of demat accounts has increased by 2.5 times from 4.1 crore in 2019-20 to 10 crore in 2022-23.

A record number of mutual fund SIPs are being registered, which helps in generating long-term wealth. Monthly SIP inflows have touched an all-time high of ₹ 15,245 crore in July. When it comes to the assets under management of the mutual fund industry, it has increased tremendously in the last decade, growing more than four-fold from ₹ 10 lakh crore in May 2014 to ₹ 46.37 lakh crore in July 2023, she said.

On the increasing number of income tax return filings, she said

the August data signals that the formalisation of the economy is now really wide and it is accessing so many different areas. Credit facilities, social security, pension, insurance, all of them are getting covered.

Though Maharashtra still continues to be the leader in income tax filing, other states are also moving up. In places like the north-east, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, the new I-T return filings have gone up to two digits, grown by double digits growth. This augurs very well for the financial ecosystem.

She also asked fintech companies to invest heavily in robust security measures, utilising advanced encryption and other measures to protect user data and financial transactions.

A secured system is what will build trust and therefore that is a must for the financial ecosystem to truly flourish, she said, adding, India can lead in making the financial ecosystem inclusive, resilient and sustainable as we have the tools but we have to make it responsible. (PTI)

Markets log gains for 3rd day on buying in Reliance, Infosys



MUMBAI, Sept 5: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher for the third straight day on Tuesday on gains in market heavyweights ITC, Reliance Industries and Infosys amid a bearish trend in global equities.

Besides, robust domestic macroeconomic data added to the positive momentum, traders said.

The BSE benchmark index climbed 152.12 points or 0.23 per cent to settle at 65,780.26. During the day, it gained 203.56 points or 0.31 per cent to 65,831.70.

The Nifty rose 46.10 points or 0.24 per cent to end at 19,574.90.

"Strong domestic factors are providing crucial support for Indian equities, allowing them to maintain their strength despite attempts by weak global peers to disrupt the mood. India's service PMI remains robust at 60.1, indicating sustained demand even in the face of inflationary pressures."

"Notably, small and mid-cap stocks have been standout performers, with both indices reaching all-time highs. Conversely, the weak Chinese service PMI has cast a shadow on hopes of an economic rebound in China, impacting global market sentiments," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

Sun Pharma emerged as the biggest gainer from the Sensex pack, climbing 2.09 per cent, followed by ITC, Titan, Bajaj Finance, Nestle, Infosys, L&T, JSW Steel, Reliance Industries and Kotak Mahindra Bank.

UltraTech Cement, Maruti, HDFC Bank, Wipro, State Bank of India and NTPC were among the laggards.

"Markets held on to gains for the 3rd straight day but strong follow-through buying was, however, missing albeit lack of positive Asian cues. The positive takeaway was that the benchmark Nifty stuck to gains as Nifty Mid-cap and Small-cap indices continued to scale fresh all-time highs."

"The risk mood has improved after Friday's softer than expected US August payrolls report which suggests that September rate hike is off the table," Prashanth Tapse, senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap jumped 1.09 per cent, and smallcap gained 0.61 per cent.

Sectorally, healthcare rallied 1.29 per cent, realty climbed 1.08 per cent, energy (1.01 per cent), consumer durables (0.90 per cent), oil & gas (0.83 per cent) and serv-

ices (0.72 per cent).

Financial Services, telecommunication and bankex were the laggards.

"Global equities mostly fell on Tuesday as higher Treasury yields weighed on growth stocks, while a slow pace of expansion in services activity in China (8-month low) stoked worries over demand in the world's second-largest economy," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In Asian markets, Tokyo settled in the green, while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the negative territory.

European markets were trading on a mixed note in early deals. The US markets were closed on Monday.

"While markets extended gains for the third straight session, the mood was more or less range-bound with a positive bias as US markets were shut on Monday and investors preferred to take selective bets. One needs to be watchful about the sharp volatility in the rupee, which could impact FII flows going ahead," Shrikant Chouhan, head of research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

The rupee plunged by 35 paise to close at 83.06 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, amid a strong American currency and higher crude oil prices.

According to a survey, manufacturing activities in India gained momentum in August.

Meanwhile, GST collections grew by 11 per cent to over ₹ 1.59 lakh crore, and domestic passenger vehicle sales hit a record in August.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.62 per cent to USD 88.45 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,367.67 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

The BSE benchmark had climbed 240.98 points or 0.37 per cent to settle at 65,628.14 on Monday. The Nifty advanced 93.50 points or 0.48 per cent to close at 19,528.80.

"We expect the broader market participation to continue to outperform and sector rotation is helping Nifty to stay elevated. On the upside we expect the Nifty to target levels of 19,650. In terms of levels, 19490 - 19470 shall act as a crucial support and 19650 - 19700 shall act as an immediate hurdle," Jatin Gedia - technical research analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said. (PTI)

Sebi to have 1-hr trade settlements by end of this fiscal before making it instantaneous

MUMBAI, Sept 5: Markets regulator Sebi will introduce one-hour trade settlements by the end of this fiscal, in the run up to making such processes instantaneous, a top official said on Tuesday.

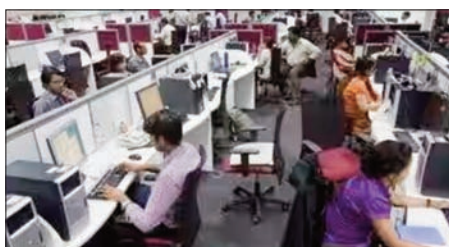
Amid concerns raised by certain foreign portfolio investors on the shortening of the settlement cycles citing forex-related worries, the official made it clear that faster settlements are optional and investors can opt out. Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has adopted a roadmap towards realising its aim of making trade settlements instantaneous, the official told reporters.

"From one day to one hour to instantaneous is the roadmap," the official said, adding one hour settlements are much quicker to implement than instantaneous. The official said technology for one hour trade settlements already exists and the regulator is confident about the same, while the instantaneous settlements need more technology development.

At present, Sebi is thinking of rolling out the one hour trade settlement for all investors by March next year, and is looking at a time frame of 6-8 months more for the instantaneous settlements, the official said.

The Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility for secondary markets will start by January for all investors and it will take another couple of months for the one-hour cycle to set-in after that, the official said. (PTI)

India's services sector activity moderates in Aug; exports expand at series record pace



NEW DELHI, Sept 5: India's services sector activity eased in August but growth rates for new orders remain elevated, as services firms indicated the sharpest upturn in new export business which acted as a catalyst for firms to expand their workforces as well as output, a monthly survey said on Tuesday.

Despite falling from 62.3 in July to 60.1 in August, the seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index indicated one of the strongest increases in output seen since mid-2010.

For the 25th straight month, the headline figure was above the neutral 50 threshold. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"Indian services companies achieved a remarkable milestone in August, as they welcomed a series record surge in new export business. Several regions contributed to the upturn, including Asia Pacific, Europe, North America and the Middle East," Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said.

Lima further noted that this spike in international demand supported one of the best sales performances recorded over the past 13 years, and acted as a catalyst for firms to expand their workforces as well as output.

"Demand strength also fostered a heightened sense of optimism regarding the outlook, boding well for economic growth prospects," Lima said.

On August 10, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left its key interest rates unchanged for a third straight meeting but signalled tighter policy if food prices drive inflation higher. The next meeting of the RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled for October 4-6.

On the prices front, buoyant demand for services meanwhile aided a further upward revision to selling prices. The rate of charge inflation quickened to the joint-fastest in over six years, while input costs rose to a lesser extent.

"... Favourable demand trends also led to the joint-fastest increase in prices charged for Indian services in over six years, which may prompt attention from policymakers and potentially delay cuts to the benchmark repo rate,"

Lima added.

On the jobs front, hiring activity across India's service economy continued to expand. The rate of job creation was moderate, but the strongest seen since last November.

Going ahead, monitored companies firmly believed that output would remain on an upward growth path over the course of the coming 12 months.

Advertising, demand strength, plans to price competitively and a healthy number of client enquiries all boosted optimism in August.

Meanwhile, there was a mild slowdown in the growth of private sector activity across India during August.

The S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index -- which measures combined services and manufacturing output -- fell from 61.9 in July to 60.9 in August. Despite the fall, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index was indicative of a sharp rate of expansion that was among the strongest in over 12 years, the survey said.

The S&P Global India Services PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies. The panel is stratified by detailed sector and company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP. Data collection began in December 2005. (PTI)

Samsung India announces pan-India campus programme Samsung EDGE

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Sept 5: Samsung India on Tuesday announced the eighth edition of its pan-India campus programme Samsung E.D.G.E., inviting young minds from India's premier institutions to work on real-world problem statements, giving them an opportunity to learn from Samsung's top leaders and come up with unique solutions to the problems.

Students from 35 campuses including top B-Schools, engineering colleges and design schools will participate in the event that will be held across campuses.

The programme will take place in three rounds where the first round will focus on ideation. The team members are expected to collaborate and construct an executive case summary based on thorough research and analysis. Following the campus round, 45 shortlisted teams will proceed to the regional round, where they delve into the case study, submitting and presenting detailed solutions. Once the regional round concludes, top 10 teams will be selected and mentored by Sam-

sung leaders on their respective solutions. These final 10 teams will then compete in a National Round and top three teams will be announced as winners.

Each team will comprise a maximum of three students from across specializations. Each team will present their unique solution showcasing cutting-edge innovation and leadership skills. The top three teams have the chance to win cash prizes, a flagship Galaxy smartphone and a potential opportunity to work with Samsung.

"At Samsung, innovation is the cornerstone of our endeavors. Through the years, Samsung E.D.G.E. has proved to be a platform that has empowered students to showcase their creative solutions and effect change in the corporate world. As we step into the eighth edition of the program, we are certain that the budding talent participating in this initiative will build insightful solutions that would help in tackling business challenges", said Sameer Wadhawan, head, human resources, Samsung India.

In 2022, 2620 teams across

India participated in the programme to present the innovative solutions they built. Out of these, team Transcendence of IIM Bangalore secured victory for presenting an innovative and unconventional approach to drive the adoption of IoT devices among consumers in India. Team Srujan from NID Bangalore emerged as the runner-up for showcasing their design solution that leverages gamification through full-motion video to enable contemporary modes of direct communication with consumers. Team G.U.G. hailing from IIFT earned the third spot for presenting a solution that enable consumers to experience the connected devices ecosystem through an in-store smart home model and a Metaverse experience store.

Samsung E.D.G.E., which started in December 2016, is a first-of-its-kind campus program that provides an opportunity for the country's finest talents to come forward and exchange meaningful insights to get a head-start in their careers.

FM asks financial entities to ensure customers nominate heirs

MUMBAI, Sept 5: Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday asked banks and financial institutions to ensure that their customers nominate heirs, which can help reduce the quantum of unclaimed money.

"I want banking system, the financial ecosystem (including) the mutual funds, stock markets... everybody to keep in mind that when someone deals with his (customer's) money, the organisations will have to think about the future and ensure that they (customers) nominate their heir, give the name and address," Sitharaman said at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) here.

As per a report, the banking system alone has over ₹ 35,000 crore of unclaimed deposits, while the overall quantum of the unclaimed money is said to be more than ₹ 1 lakh crore. The finance minister also said that it is essential to build a responsible financial ecosystem, and added that one laggard can cause a disruption.

Sitharaman also said that tax havens and round tripping of money are a threat to responsible financial ecosystem. (PTI)

RBI plans to introduce wholesale CBDC in call money market soon

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Reserve Bank is planning to extend wholesale Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) as token for interbank borrowing or call money market, RBI sources said on Tuesday.

The pilot in wholesale segment, known as the Digital Rupee - Wholesale (e?-W), was launched on November 1, 2022, with use case being limited to the settlement of secondary market transactions in government securities.

"RBI is now planning to go into interbank borrowing market. The purpose of wholesale CBDC has been to try out different technologies...experimenting on technology is relatively easier for wholesale pilot because participants are related," RBI sources said.

The introduction of CBDC was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23, by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and necessary amendments to the relevant section of the RBI Act, 1934 was made with the passage of the Finance Bill 2022.

The RBI began the pilot project wholesale CBDC and picked up nine banks -- State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, YES Bank, IDFC First



Bank, and HSBC.

Besides, RBI has already rolled out a pilot in the retail version of the CBDC (e?-R), on December 1, 2022. The e?-R is in the form of a digital token that

represents legal tender.

It is being issued in the same denominations as the paper currency and coins. It is being distributed through financial intermediaries, i.e., the banks. Users are able to transact with e?-R through a digital wallet offered by the participating banks.

With regard to RuPay, sources said no instructions have been given to promote this.

However, sources said, this has to be popularised by making it attractive.

Asked when CBDC pilot ends, sources said, there is no deadline as of now and 10.83 crore transactions amounting to ₹ 24,000 crore witnessed in August.

Meanwhile, RBI will showcase various digital initiatives in the financial sector at the exhibition pavilion at the G20 Summit later this week.

These include Public Tech Platform (PTP) for Frictionless Credit, CBDC, UPI One World, RuPay On-The-Go, and Bharat Bill Payment System.

At Public Tech Platform, visitors can experience an interactive demonstration of the entire process i.e., from onboarding to sanction and disbursement of the KCC and dairy loans in an entirely digital manner in

a few minutes, revolutionising rural credit.

Sources said going forward this platform can be used for distribution of small ticket loans like MSME, personal loans etc.

Besides, the central bank will showcase an informational video on the RBI's digital rupee and its journey and there would be live digital rupee transactions demonstrated by select banks which are participating in the pilot.

UPI One World would enable visitors to be on boarded to UPI without having a bank account in India.

RuPay On-The-Go would allow customers to carry out contactless payment transactions through accessories they wear (watch, ring) or use (key chain) every day and highlight the adaptability of the domestic card scheme associated products at par with such global products.

BBPS (Bharat Bill Payment System) cross-border bill payment will highlight the adaptability of the BBPS platform to integrate with fintechs and conventional financial players to facilitate domestic as well as cross-border payment transactions. (PTI)

LOST

I lost my original Registration Certificate bearing Registration No. 162912 with Code No.213204 of 2017-18 of Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC), while travelling between Hamren and Tika.

Any finder may kindly contact at the address and mobile numbers mentioned below.

Serlota Timungpi,
D/o- Harsing Timung
Langchingbar, West Karbi
Anglong district.
PO- Tika,
PS- Baithalango.
Pin Code: 782450
Contact No. 60039-
01672/9678-808568.

Teachers' Day celebration across state

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Sept 5: The 62nd Teachers' Day was celebrated with grandeur at the District Library Auditorium in Haflong. The event was graced by the presence of three ministers: Pijush Hazarika (minister for I&PR, Water Resources, etc.), Jogen Mohan (minister for Revenue & Disaster, HAD, etc.), and Nandita Gorlosa (minister for Power, Co-operation, etc.). Also in attendance were Debola Gorlosa, chief executive member of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, council chairperson Ranu Langthasa, and other executive members of the Council.

The ministers praised the teaching community for their selfless contribution to nation-building. Minister Pijush Hazarika highlighted the pivotal role of teachers in shaping students' lives. Minister Jogen Mohan paid tribute to Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and discussed his contributions and achievements. Minister Nandita Gorlosa praised teachers for helping students achieve good results and emphasised the importance of quality education. Debola Gorlosa stressed that teachers should encourage physical fitness among students as it can positively impact their academic performance.

Thirteen teachers received certificates for being awarded the title of 'Best Teachers', covering various levels of education, including lower primary, middle elementary, high school, and higher secondary. Schools that achieved A+ and A grades with a 100% pass rate were also honoured. Retired teachers from the previous year were recognised with certificates. The event was jointly organised by the Education department and the council.

To honour the contributions of teachers in Dima Hasao, minister Nandita Gorlosa sponsored four awards from her MLA fund, including three awards for the best teachers, each receiving Rs 5000, and one lifetime achievement award.

Before the program, the group of ministers held a meeting with a social organisation to discuss their long-pending demands. District commissioner and the superintendent of police were also present at the meeting.

Our Demow correspondent adds: The 62nd edition of Teachers' Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the educational institutions of



Demow and its surrounding areas on Tuesday. The day-long program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of lamps before the portrait of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a philosopher and former President of India, in schools and colleges throughout Demow and its neighbouring regions.

Students and teachers alike spoke about the life and contributions of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, reflecting on his profound impact on education and philosophy. As a token of appreciation, students presented pens to their teachers, acknowledging their dedication and hard work. Cultural programs added vibrancy to the celebrations, with students performing songs and dances in various educational institutions.

Our Sivasagar correspondent adds: The 62nd Teachers' Day was celebrated with fervour in Sivasagar, where 32 teachers from primary, upper primary, and secondary schools were honoured by the Sivasagar district administration at the Yuvadal auditorium.

Aditya Bikram Yadav, commissioner of Sivasagar, highlighted the government's new initiatives aimed at inspiring students, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds. Devajoti Gogoi, inspector of schools for Sivasagar Cir-

cle, delivered the welcome speech.

The chief guest, Professor Hazarika from the department of Education at Dibrugarh University, urged teachers to follow the wisdom of Abraham Lincoln and teach students not to blindly accept everything.

Assistant commissioner of Sivasagar, Sugata Siddhartha Goswami, had the honour of presenting a special felicitation letter from chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to Brajen Bora, the headmaster of Lakhminagar Primary School, in recognition of his distinguished services in the primary education sector.

Our Nagaon correspondent adds: In celebration of Teachers' Day, Pragma Foundation, a leading organisation in the small town, honoured more than 22 prominent educationists and artists from the district at a function held at Nagaon Kiranbala High School.

Naba Kr Mahanta, president of the foundation, chaired the program, and local MLA Rupak Sarma, along with BJP district president Abhijit Nath, attended as special invitees.

The foundation recognised and honoured various individuals, including notable drama activist and playwright Krishna Mohan Sharma, scholar

of Sattriya culture and tradition Tilak Ch Mazumdar, and professor Kalpana Hazarika Gayan.

Our Hojai correspondent adds: Janardhan Sarma, the former headmaster of Islamnagar High School in Hojai, was honoured and felicitated by Shishu Sahitya Uttar Sanstha, Guwahati, for his dedicated service to education and journalism. The felicitation ceremony included the presentation of a certificate of appreciation, a traditional phulam gamosa, and a book.

Janardhan Sarma, known for his dedication and friendly teaching style, had a significant impact on his students' lives. He is not only a skilled educator but also a prolific writer. During his time in Hojai, he served as a local correspondent for various esteemed Assamese daily newspapers.

At the ceremony, a book titled 'Teacher Life and Experience' (Shikshak Jeevan or Abhigayata aru Anubhav) was released, and a total of 30 retired teachers from across the state were honoured for their outstanding contributions to education.

Janardhan Sarma, expressing his happiness on Teacher's Day, compared teachers to burning candles that illuminate the path for their students. He mentioned that many of his former students now hold important positions across the country and contribute to the nation's progress. Janardhan Sarma currently resides in Morigaon.

Our Morigaon correspondent adds: The 62nd Teachers' Day was celebrated with enthusiasm at Morigaon Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School. Devashis Sarma, the district commissioner of Morigaon, addressed the gathering and expressed his appreciation for the dedication and commitment of teachers.

He acknowledged the challenges teachers face, including traveling by boat to reach students in remote char areas. Despite these challenges, teachers have faithfully fulfilled their responsibilities to shape the future generations of the country. The district commissioner praised teachers not only for their curriculum-based teaching but also for their efforts in the overall development of students.

Dr Bishnu Prasad Upadhyay, principal of GKB College, attended the program as the chief guest. He emphasised the importance of teachers in building human resources and shaping students

into good citizens. A total of 43 teachers from lower primary, upper primary, and higher secondary schools in the district were honoured for their outstanding contributions to teaching on the occasion of Teachers' Day. The event was also attended by the superintendent of police, Morigaon district, Hemant Kumar Das, ADCs, and principals.

Our Kokrajhar correspondent adds: The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) districts joined the nation in celebrating the 62nd Teacher's Day to honour the birth anniversary of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a distinguished educationist, scholar, and former President of India.

Across the Bodoland region, educational institutions organised day-long colourful programs to celebrate the occasion. In Baksa district, the Education department of the Bodoland Territorial Region centrally celebrated Teacher's Day at Salbari College. The event saw a grand gathering of teachers, students, and guardians from various educational institutions.

Prominent figures including state cabinet minister Utkarsh Gwra Brahma, chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region Pramod Boro, and Bhawanipur MLA Phanindra Talukdar graced the occasion. They paid floral tributes to Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and presented appreciation certificates from the Department of Education, government of BTR to teachers who have been providing quality education to students.

CEM Boro highlighted the crucial role of teachers in society, describing them as guiding beacons who impart knowledge and shape students into responsible individuals. He extended his Teacher's Day greetings and encouraged teachers to continue their dedicated efforts in educating the youth of Bodoland.

CEM Boro also interacted with teachers, praised their services, and sought their input to further enhance the education sector in Bodoland Territorial Region. He emphasised the importance of reducing C Category Schools and improving their quality to reach A Category status in the next Gunotsav assessment. Boro assured the government's commitment to supporting schools in the region and facilitating efforts to provide quality education.

Diphu KV students shine at RSM 2023 Pijush urges unity for sustainable development in Dima Hasao

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 5: Students from Kendriya Vidyalaya, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, showcased outstanding performances at the recently concluded Regional Sports Meet (RSM) 2023, held from August 25 to September 2, 2023. The event took place at KV IIT, Guwahati, and KV AFS, Digaru, under the auspices of KVS' Regional Office Guwahati.

Under the guidance of sports In-charge Sohan Lal Beniwal, the students achieved an impressive medal tally, securing 23 Gold, 07 Silver, and 03 Bronze medals, totaling 33 medals overall. The students excelled in Athletics and rope skipping events.

The Gold medalists from Kendriya Vidyalaya, Diphu, include Serlika, Serlibon, Jesika, Anjali, Lirmir, Archana, Sengmepi, Rimthika, Manosh, Sar Anongkiri, Bhomkiri, Nayanjyoti, Debojyoti, and Irisim Taro.

The Silver medals were clinched by Holiram, Nisenso, and Sengme, while the Bronze medals were secured by Sar Anongkiri, Manosh, and Irisim Taro.

The successful students attributed their achievements to the support and encouragement of their parents and teachers.

In-charge principal Haitilo Kath felicitated the victorious students upon their return to the school campus. He praised their exceptional performances and highlighted the importance of sports in fostering physical fitness and instilling values such as unity, discipline, socialisation, and patriotism.

The felicitation event was attended by senior teachers, including Parimal Ray, Ajay Kumar, Leonard Bey, Anurag Chaturvedi, Vaseem, HBS Anal, Shatabdi Paul, and Bimla Singh.

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 5: In a significant step towards fostering inclusive development in the Dima Hasao district, minister Pijush Hazarika led a high-profile meeting with representatives from the Indigenous People Forum (IPF) on Tuesday. The gathering, held at the Conference Hall of the Haflong Circuit House, aimed to address the concerns and aspirations of the indigenous communities in the region.

The group of ministers had previously initiated dialogue with the IPF to address their requests, with Tuesday's meeting marking a pivotal moment in the commitment to host the next gathering in Dima Hasao. During the meeting, a comprehensive discussion on various development matters took place, highlighting the importance of

collaboration between the government and the IPF to ensure continued and sustained progress in the district. Minister Pijush Hazarika emphasised the need for unity among various indigenous communities to avoid potential obstacles, such as protests and strikes, that could hinder or delay the district's progress. He urged all stakeholders to work together towards a common goal of development and prosperity.

In addition to the meeting with the IPF, minister Hazarika held courtesy meetings with representatives from various organisations, including the Vishva Hindu Parishad, Dimasas Students' Union, Jadikhe Naisho Hosom, and All Dimasas Students' Union. During these interactions, he actively listened to their grievances and aspirations, demonstrating the



government's commitment to addressing the concerns of all communities in Dima Hasao.

The Tuesday meetings have set a positive tone for future collaborations between the government and indigenous communities, with the hope of achieving comprehensive development and harmony in the region.



Government of Assam
INDUSTRIES, COMMERCE AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISE DEPARTMENT



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Chief Minister, Assam

Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary
Minister, Act East Policy Affairs, Environment & Forests, Welfare of Minorities, Assam

Shri Bimal Borah
Minister, Industries & Commerce and Public Enterprises, Cultural Affairs, Assam

Shri Atul Bora
Minister, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, Implementation of Assam Accord, Border Protection & Development, Assam

Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah
Minister, Public Health Engineering, Skill Development, Employment & Entrepreneurship, Tourism, Assam

Smt Nandita Gorlosa
Minister, Power, Sports & Youth Welfare, Cooperation and Indigenous Tribal Faith & Culture, Assam

Shri Sanjoy Kishan
Minister, Welfare of Tea Tribes and Labour Welfare, Assam

Shri Prasanta Phukan
Member, Legislative Assembly, Assam and Chairman AIDC

Shri Eugene Willemssen
Chief Executive Officer, Africa, Middle East, South. Asia (AMESA), PepsiCo

Shri Ahmed ElSheikh
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QUOTE OF THE DAY

Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.
-William Wordsworth

Unique proposal

Most presidential candidates publish a hagiographic autobiography tying the personal challenges they've overcome to their policy goals and vision for the country. Vivek Ramaswamy's Capitalist Punishment: How Wall Street is Using Your Money to Create a Country You Didn't Vote For, released in April of this year, contains almost no information about who he is and fails to mention that he is running for president. Instead, the 240-page book mainly deals with contemporary issues in corporate governance law which are hard to imagine fitting neatly into a stump speech. But then, Ramaswamy is an unusual presidential candidate running a strange campaign. He appears to be borrowing the strategy pioneered by the likes of Andrew Yang and Pete Buttigieg four years prior: project an image as a whiz-kid outsider, say yes to every media request, and support policies popular with the party base but ludicrous to policymakers. This strategy is serving him well; a recent poll put Ramaswamy in second place at 13 percent of the vote, ahead of household names like Ron DeSantis, Mike Pence, and Nikki Haley. Buttigieg leveraged his long-shot campaign into a cabinet position, and Yang very nearly became mayor of New York. Where will Vivek Ramaswamy be in four years? If a Republican wins the White House, Capitalist Punishment seems to suggest Ramaswamy has his eyes set on an influential position at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or perhaps in the Department of Energy. Should his star continue to rise, Ramaswamy may be among the favorites for the nomination in 2028.

For this reason, the book is worth taking seriously. Its primary object of scrutiny is "environmental, social, and governance investing," or ESG. This is a catchall term which has come to refer to everything from racial and gender diversity in boardrooms to investment in renewable energy infrastructure. Although the idea has been around for decades, it came into vogue in the late 2010s, when stock market index providers started creating ESG ratings and indices to entice socially conscious investors. Capitalist Punishment has many villains, the most important of which are the asset managers BlackRock, State Street, and Vanguard (popularly referred to as the "Big Three"). Combined, they own about 20 percent of the average publicly traded company. Ramaswamy accuses these giant asset managers of two sins: greenwashing and the newly coined "greensmuggling." The greenwashing phenomenon has been well-documented and extensively criticized from the left; either to provide a PR boost or to entice socially conscious investors, companies downplay their negative environmental impact and embellish their emissions reductions. Greensmuggling is, according to Ramaswamy, more pervasive and sinister. It occurs when funds not explicitly advertising ESG goals or strategies use their power as investors to implement a pro-ESG agenda.

Much of the book is spent making the case that greensmuggling is illegal for various reasons. Ramaswamy argues that asset managers are violating pension regulations by investing funds for any reason except the financial benefit of their beneficiaries; he claims that the large percentages of firms partially owned by the Big Three constitute an antitrust violation; and he asserts that the Big Three are breaking various SEC rules. Although it is hard to imagine Republican primary voters getting particularly incensed about these technical legal questions, one imagines that BlackRock's lawyers will read these chapters with great interest should Ramaswamy manage to secure a position in the next administration or get a test suit in front of the ultraconservative Supreme Court.

Puthuppally bypoll in Kerala: No cakewalk for Congress

By P. Sreekumaran

Will the Left Democratic Front (LDF) score an upset victory in Puthuppally Assembly constituency, which is going to the polls on September 5? That is the million dollar question agitating the minds of Keralites.

The by-election has been necessitated by the passing away of former Kerala Chief Minister and Congress veteran Oommen Chandy. The Congress has fielded Chandy's son, Chandy Oommen while the LDF has put up Jaick C Thomas, who is trying his luck in the constituency for the third time. It may be mentioned that in the 2021 Assembly election, Jaick gave Oommen Chandy a run for his money, drastically reducing the latter's majority to less than 10,000 votes. While Oommen Chandy polled 63,372 votes (48.08%), Jaick secured 54,328 votes (41.22%).

Oommen Chandy had represented Puthuppally for an astounding 53 years! Therefore, the Congress is counting on the Oommen Chandy factor this time. The massive sympathy wave would carry Chandy's son past the winning post, the Congress and other United Democratic Front (UDF) leaders believe. True, the Congress had a head-start as the party announced its candidate with lightning speed, for a change, this time. But the LDF has caught up with the Congress candidate with a brilliant campaign blitzkrieg. The result: The Congress has been rudely jolted out of its sense of complacency. The party has realized that the battle is not walk in the park. The CPI(M) has launched a disciplined campaign putting the focus on the lamentable lack of development in the constituency although Oommen Chandy represented it for over five decades. In fact, the Congress shied away from a debate on development in the constituency the CPI(M) wanted to conduct. The LDF leaders claim the refusal to have a debate betrays the sense of panic in the Congress camp.

Apart from lack of development, the LDF has other factors in its favour. First and foremost is the fact that out of the eight panchayats in Puthuppally, the

CPI(M) controls six. The CPI(M) is also in control of three block panchayats in the constituency.

The clean image and the excellent record in office of Oommen Chandy would help the party romp home the winner. Congress leaders point out. Forty-five days after his death, thousands of people visit Oommen Chandy's tomb at Puthuppally. The unprecedented crowds show his immense popularity. This will lead to a massive victory for his son. So believe the Congress leaders.

CPI(M) and other LDF leaders, however, disagree. They are of the view that the sympathy factor won't be the decisive factor this time. Even Oommen Chandy had to literally sweat it out against Jaick and scraped through with a narrow margin in 2021. The son has neither his stature nor his calibre. Last time the BJP candidate had polled 11,000 odd votes. Poll observers say the party would manage to poll only half of what it bagged in 2021.

Two other developments have caused deepening of the lines on Congress leaders' foreheads. One, the Orthodox Christian group, to which Oommen Chandy belonged, has given the freedom its followers to cast a conscience vote! This has caused extreme unease in the Congress camp. The decision means the Congress cannot count on the full support of Orthodox Christians. As if this was not enough, the Pentacost Christians, who number around 16,000 in the constituency have indicated that they would favour the LDF candidate. That is another unexpected blow for the Congress candidate. In glaring contrast, Jacobite Christians - Jaick is a Jacobite Christian - have extended unstinted support to the CPI(M) candidate. This last-minute twist could also have a crucial bearing on the result.

Needless to say, the outcome is crucial for the Congress. A defeat here would have disastrous consequences for the party's future and would badly affect its chances in the Lok Sabha elections next year. An upset victory for the CPI(M) would be a shot in the arm for the party and the LDF it heads. It could change political equations in the state. Kerala is waiting with bated breath for the Puthuppally verdict. (IPA Service)

Growing importance of Sri Krishna Janmastami

This is the most important fest of Vaishnavite society all over the world

We are thankful to all Vaishnavite faithfuls and devotees of Lord Krishna all over the world. They preach about the glorious pastimes of the Lord in every village, town and city of the planet Earth.

Keeping in mind the age of deterioration, the celebration of the most auspicious appearance day of Lord Krishna gains momentum. From a spiritual point of view, Janmastami's meaning is deep rooted. It conveys a message that all human beings spend their life engulfed with the darkness of their own vices. We are bound with so many shackles of anger, greed, temptations, attachments and material pangs. But as the Lord takes birth, every bit of the darkness fades away and we are released from all the chains of the so-called worldly pleasures which are very short-lived.

Devotees celebrate Janmastami by fasting and staying awake until midnight. Midnight is significant as Lord Krishna was descended in the cage of King Kamsa at midnight. So, people gather at midnight to celebrate the advent of Lord Krishna by singing devotional songs and reading scriptures. The idol of 'Baal Gopal' or Little Krishna is placed in a cradle as a symbol of his birth. Devotees rock the cradle joyfully while reciting hymns and singing songs. Whenever darkness and evil prevails on the Earth the Lord takes birth

and eradicates all evils. So, Janmastami is also symbolic in this sense. This occasion brings everyone together which encourages unity, faith, firm determination to serve the Lord, et al.

Over 5,000 years ago, Lord Krishna said in the battlefield of Kurukshetra (now in Haryana State of India) that he appears on the Earth to save the saints and wipe out the miscreants. He does it to make the Earth a peaceful paradise to live in. He also emancipates the devotees from the cruel rulers or demonic kings in different regions of the globe.

In fact, our Siksa Gurus (teachers) at the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) advise us to read and study seriously the Supreme Science of Lord Krishna from the verses given in the 'Srimad-Bhagavad Gita As It Is', the 'Srimad Bhagavatam,' etc.

It is very interesting to note that the Lord is coming back once again. If we turn over the pages of the Srimad Bhagavatam with rapt attention, we find that Lord Krishna will descend as 'Kalki' incarnation.

In the 12th Canto, Chapter number two and text number 18 of the Srimad Bhagavatam, it has clearly been predicted that Lord Kalki will appear in the home of the most famous Brahmna of Shambhala



village - the great soul

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Amar Krishna Paul

Siksa Guru His Grace Srijeva Das, Temple President of ISKCON Guwahati, passed a very impressive statement during a discourse session recently. He said that we should fine tune our Krishnatarian activities in such a manner so that the entire world community comes to Guwahati to see our rich and colourful cultural heritage. Importantly, Pre-Janmastami Celebrations under ISKCON Heritage Festival 2023 was started at the premises of Sri Sri Rukmini-Krishna temple, Mount Hare Krishna, South Sarania, Ulubari, Guwahati from August 27, 2023.

This Heritage Fest was organised for children to impart their spiritual knowledge and cultural values through various competitions on Vedic

sociation with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now polluted by material atmosphere. With this polluted concept of life, we are all trying to exploit resources of material Nature. But actually, we are becoming more and more entangled in our complexities. But there is no need of understanding the language of the mantra, nor there is any need of mental speculation nor intellectual adjustment for chanting this maha mantra. It comes automatically from the spiritual platform. And as such any one can take part in this transcendental sound vibration without any previous qualification and dance in ecstasy. We have seen it practically, even a child can take part in the chanting or even a dog can take part. Chanting is exactly like a genuine cry by the child for mother - Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare."

Our Siksa Guru His Grace Gaurdev Das, Vice President, ISKCON Guwahati said to me, "You, just go on practising devotional service under the able guidance of spiritual master in the disciple succession and Lord Krishna, one day you will definitely realise the Absolute Truth - the Supreme Personality of Godhead - Krishna as he is."

ISKCON Founder and Spiritual Master His Divine Grace Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada echoed in a podcast, "This transcendental vibration by chanting of - Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare - is the sublime method for reviving our Krishna Consciousness. As living spiritual souls we are originally Krishna conscious entities, but due to our as-

The Vedas explain that Krishna means 'akarshati iti Krishna' - he is the all-attractive person and most dear friend of everyone. That's why Janmastami is one of the most celebrated events all over the world.

Historically, this festival was spread all over the world by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. In 1966 ISKCON began in New York, the USA, in a storefront and now it is spread practically in every city in the world.

Swami Prabhupada taught that the path to happiness is not found in material pursuits, but in simple living, high thinking, and in awakening love of God - Lord Krishna. Over five decades, ISKCON has grown into an international community with more than 1,000 temples, 100 vegetarian restaurants, and 516 million books in print in 87 different languages.

To sum it up, Lord Krishna taught common masses both the art of living and the art of dying. He showed how to enliven the family way of life, social way of life and spiritual way of life. Only humbleness, dutifulness, pridelessness, simplicity, tolerance, etc. are the basic requisites for a serious devotee of Lord Krishna. (The author is a Guwahati-based writer and analyst on Current Affairs who can be reached at amarkrishnaghy@gmail.com)

Shri Krishna is our true national hero

By: Lalit Garg

Shri Krishna is a wonderful and unique national hero of our culture. The character of Shri Krishna is the popular character of a folk hero. He is also the ruler of Dwarka estate, but never addressed as 'King Sri Krishna,' instead, he is Brajmandan. Symmetry in society and the national system was his duty, that's why he never shirked away from his duty, and then religion became his self-discipline, that's why he never rejected it. He remained conscious in the combination of both Pravritti and Nivritti. Only the ideals of Shri Krishna will pave the way for establishing peace in our nation and the world. This mystery has to be understood as to how Shri Krishna implemented the ideal politics, practical democracy, social harmony, integral humanism and disciplined military and war operations. What kind of policy and intentions are required for the all-round development of any nation? The answers to all these questions are found in the life-story of Shri Krishna.

The entire life of Shri Krishna is synonymous with the cultural nationalism of India. The world has come to know India only through his ideals. With the re-establishment of his ideals the world will know and respect India again. Politically astute vision, suppression of evil people, traitors, criminals and corrupt people, determination to keep promises, vow of surrender for the national interest, liberation of innocent people, elimination of disparities, harmony among differences, prevention of mutual enmity, self-accepted self-restraint, everyone's involvement in the national work. Cooperation, control of religious power on royal power and renunciation of power to fulfill all these etc. qualities of Shri Krishna are the national life and cultural values of India. In fact, Shri Krishna was a thinker of that order, which transcends the limits of time, and reaches the eternal and infinite. Whenever injustice increases, a national leader like Shri Krishna has to incarnate, as Shri Krishna Himself has said in the Geeta - Yada-yada hi dharmasya glanirbhavati bharata, abhyutthanam dharmasya tadatmanam srijamyham.

That is, a national leader needs to be born only to counter injustice. One who arouses the consciousness of the entire public in such a way that the entire society moves like a flood in the desired direction in which he wants to take the entire society and not even the highest mountain peak can stop its strong flow. Shri Krishna was also such a national leader, on whose instructions all the Gop-Gopis left Braj and united against the Demon

King Kansa. Even though Goshwami Tulidas was far away from power in the medieval period, his great work Ramcharitmanas still remains a favourite among the masses and even today Tulsi's name is resonating in most parts of India; more than that of any ruling king, king or emperor.

Similarly, recently Mahatma Gandhi was completely away from power. He did not hold the post of Congress President even once. But during his lifetime, he had given direction to the Congress and to the entire nation. Jayaprakash Narayan had changed the government by calling for a complete revolution in the country; not because he was in power, but he had public power and that is why he was called 'Loknayak'. He had won immense trust of the people. Today world's largest organization Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and its Sangh-Director Shri Mohan Bhagwat are also such folk heroes. Loknayak or Jan-nayak is actually a national leader. Shri Krishna was such a hero during his era. At that time, the rulers of the world used to hover around him in such a way, as if there was a ring of his quadrilateral cycle. Shri Krishna handed over the power to other people, and remained detached from the power. In fact, Shri Krishna could become our national hero only because he played an important role in mobilizing the people's power.

Shri Krishna's personality and his works are multi-faceted and multi-coloured, covering all the characteristics of leadership, i.e. political skill, intelligence, tact, war strategy, personal charm, political charisma, love, gravity, happiness, sorrow and whatnot? For a patriot, Lord Krishna is not only God, but also a teacher who teaches the art of living life as a successful citizen. Due to various characteristics of his personality, he attained the status of a superhero in Indian culture. On one hand, he was a knower of politics, and on the other hand, he was a great scholar of philosophy. Taking leadership in the religious, political and social spheres, he promoted

gion of knowledge-action-devotion. On the basis of his qualifications, he was a Yugapurush, who later on was accepted as Yuvavatar. We remember Him as a great revolutionary hero. He was a philosopher, a thinker, a messenger of Karma and Sankhya Yoga through Geeta and a policy director of the Mahabharata war, but for the simple Brajvasis, he was a music maker, a butter thief, the mischievous Kanhaiya who broke the pots of the Gopis and befuddled Gopis. This is the expression in the Gita - "O Arjuna! The devotee who worships me with the same feelings, I also worship him in the same way. We see the same characteristics in our Prime Minister Narendra Modi also, because by assimilating the life ideals of Shri Krishna, he is creating a strong India - a new vibrant India!

There was such a beautiful coordination of different types of qualities in the life of Shri Krishna that on one hand, he could enjoy the common people; on the other hand, he could uproot and throw away the teeth of an intoxicated elephant like Kunalaya Peed with his own hands. This coordination of amazing abilities puts Shri Krishna in a completely different league from other heroes. The significance of Shri Krishna encompassing ideological and practical ground, which flowed uninterrupted in the Indian society, was implemented by Chanakya through diplomacy, Tulidas through devotion, Gandhi through service, Jayaprakash Narain through the public awareness, Mohan Bhagwat through organizational skills proved the practical usefulness of thinking. Shri Ram, despite being in power, always remained unattached to it in the same way as a lotus leaf remains unattached to it even though it lives in the intoxicating water. Shri Krishna took this tradition of Shri Ram even further. Shri Ram was in power for some time in his life, but Shri Krishna always remained away from political power. He placed other people in power, but continued worshipping himself. His humility was to such an extent that when everyone was assigned work in Rajsuya Yagya, Shri Krishna himself took the responsibility of making people pick up used utensils! Such was his humility! The result of this humility was that the crown jewels of all the kings kept falling at his feet. Because of these qualities, even today we consider him the master-practitioner of sixteen arts. No other person in the whole of India from ancient times to the modern times could receive this honour!

The person who stays away from power, and gives direction to the entire nation, despite being away, is a true national leader. The life of a national leader is one of sacrifice. There is no desire for wealth in his life. Lord Shri Ram was handed over the throne by his father Dasharatha. He could have remained on that throne. But he was detached from power. Shri Krishna also joins the same tradition. Three qualities were especially present in Him - sacrifice, detachment from power and amazing ability to organize people's power. Due to these

three qualities, Shri Krishna succeeded in bringing about the change in the era as per his wish. The ideological level of Shri Krishna was much higher than the practical level. However, he coordinated his ideological and practical plans in such a way that it was not even known where the two streams merged into each other.

The character of Shri Krishna as a national leader is also very divine. Everyone gets drawn towards them. The one who attracts everyone towards himself, paves the path of devotion, removes the sins of the devotees, he is Shri Krishna. He is an ideal character who is a psychologist while diagnosing Arjun's mental distress, an incarnation of Dharma, while killing demons like Kansa, an ideal politician while countering self-interested politics, the best musician in the form of Vishwa Mohini Bansi Bajaiya, the Brijvasi. In front of Sudama, he is Premavata, an ideal friend; in the form of Sudarshan Chakradhari, there is a warrior and pioneer of social revolution. Even the smallest incidents of His life prove that he was blessed with omniscience. He was the embodiment of religion and a skilled politician.

The administrative and political character of Shri Krishna is very super-natural; in short his overall thought philosophy has only one message - Karma. It is only through karma that it is possible to suppress the harmful tendencies of the society, and replace them with noble tendencies. Shri Krishna's personality is full of infinite compassion. But it is rare to find somebody else tougher than Him who opposes injustice and oppression. The same Shri Krishna who used to run barefoot for the sake of the one who loved him, the same Shri Krishna also became extremely harsh and ruthless in punishing the wicked. While preaching Geeta, Shri Krishna had told Arjun that there is no benefit in living under the influence of attachment. All these relatives are worth saying, but you have to emphasize on the delivery of knowledge, action and devotion to achieve your objective. Many legends and myths are prevalent about Shri Krishna. But there is a need to make a proper and rational historical evaluation of them in the contemporary context.

Shri Krishna has become the nurturer of rural culture. He gave unprecedented respect to cows in his time. He was conscious about the health and eating habits of cows and cowherds. While he revered the butter, milk and curd extracted from the hard work of cowherds as health protectors, he also prevented these priceless things from being given to Kansa as 'tax'. They wanted these things to be consumed in villages only. The form of Shri Krishna as a butter thief was not only a direct challenge to the autocratic power, but at the same time, it was also an encouragement to rural culture. Today, on the birth anniversary of Shri Krishna - Janmastami, India is expected to be built on his teachings, life ideals and principles, only then Hindus will be strong, only then India will be able to become a Hindu nation in the true sense. (The author is a journalist, columnist who can be reached at lalitgarg11@gmail.com)



What government expenditure tells us about official attitudes towards women's safety

By: Mampi Bose

Amidst the whole range of gender disparities in India – starting from survival after conception and birth inequality, unequal access to resources, unequal facilities, and so on – the physical victimisation of women is a problem that needs urgent attention.

While comprehensive social reform which ensures access to education and healthcare, equal livelihood opportunities and equal wages is required to arrest the ever-rising incidence of violence against women, a well-thought-out prevention, protection and empowerment mechanism should also be in place to stop such incidents. The political will of the government is of utmost importance in this regard. In the past decade, there have been a couple of government interventions aimed at preventing violence against women. It is instructive to analyse how these schemes have been prioritised by the current dispensation.

In 2013-14, the Union government set up a non-lapsable corpus 'Nirbhaya' for special police helplines, safety in transportation, etc.

In 2013-14, ₹ 1,000 crore was allocated for the 'Nir-



haya' fund, which was then reduced to ₹ 550 crore in 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20. It was further reduced to around ₹ 500 crore in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

In addition, utilisation of the 'Nirbhaya' fund is also very poor. As on April 28, 2023, around ₹ 12,008.5 crore has been appraised under the 'Nirbhaya' project, of which only ₹ 4,923 crore has been released and ₹ 2,521 crore has been utilised (which is roughly around 21% of the appraised amount and 51% of the released amount).

The Union government spent ₹ 160 crore on another important scheme, 'One Stop Centre', in 2020-21. The

scheme, initially under the 'Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women', is now subsumed, with many other pre-existing and new schemes, under a new programme, 'Sambal' of 'Mission Shakti', which is why it no longer is possible to find out how much was allocated for the scheme separately.

'Sambal' subsumes 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', 'One Stop Centre', 'Nari Adalat', 'Mahila Police Volunteer', and 'Women's Helpline'. Of the total allocated amount of ₹ 587 crore for Sambal in 2021-22, ₹ 183 crore, or roughly around 31%, has been used in that particular year. As a result, the allocation for the

scheme was reduced to ₹ 562 crore in subsequent years.

Clearly, these programmes have not received adequate importance in terms of budgetary allocations. Additionally, the underutilisation of the funds was followed by even lower allocations in subsequent years.

Almost every day we get to hear a new story of violence against women: the viral video of sexual violence and assault in Manipur; a Delhi University student murdered with an iron rod for refusing marriage; a 17-year-old girl killed in West Bengal after being sexually assaulted, apparently while she was returning from school. Seven women

wrestlers accused the Wrestling Federation of India chief and Bharatiya Janata Party MP of sexual harassment; a school teacher sexually harassed a minor student in Tamil Nadu; a man assaulted a minor while on conditional bail, after being arrested for another sexual assault case in Andhra Pradesh; trespassers barged into a Delhi University women's college and harassed students.

The National Family Health Survey 2019-21 shows a rise in sexual abuse in many states. According to the latest report of the National Crime Record Bureau, the rate of crime against women per lakh population, quite disturbingly, increased to 64.5 in 2021, from 56.5 in 2020. The number of female victims of 'murder with rape/gang rape' was 293 in 2021 in India.

Programmes like 'Nirbhaya' and 'Sambal' have the potential to improve women's safety. However, updating a fully functional safety mechanism with enhanced outreach services is the need of the hour. It is high time that the state starts recognising its past mistakes and takes necessary remedial actions. We look forward to seeing these issues dealt with care in the coming days. (Courtesy: The Wire)

Luis Rubiales & Brij Bhushan: Spain stood by its sportswomen, will India ever?

By: Rohit Khanna

Luis Rubiales, the now-suspended chief of Spain's football federation RFEF (Royal Spanish Football Federation), is today his nation's villain numero uno.

One moment, he was at the pinnacle of his career, as Spain's women's football team won the World Cup. The next moment, at the medal ceremony at Sydney, after the historic win, he planted an 'unwanted' kiss on the lips of Spanish footballer Jenni Hermoso.

And right there, it was all over for him. Since then, no amount of stubborn macho bluster, or even clever attempts to tar Jenni as a liar, has worked for Rubiales.

As he looks for inspiration on how to stay afloat, his search may bring him to Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the now-suspended president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). Rubiales would applaud the man for his survival skills.

Despite facing multiple charges of sexual assault by multiple women

wrestlers, during events in India and abroad, and even at his home, Brij Bhushan Singh has not been dislodged.

Despite allegations that add up to more than a kiss, despite some of India's finest global medal-winning wrestlers – Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshie Malik – protesting on India's streets for months, the powers-that-be in India have not dared to find a replacement for Singh as the head of WFI.

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat, with wrestler Sakshi Malik, reacts during a press conference regarding the wrestlers' protest against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, in New Delhi, Wednesday, 18 January.

So, let's try a straight comparison – Luis Rubiales vs Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Spain vs India. Which country responded better to charges of sexual misconduct against one of its sports czars? Which country backed its women sportspersons, and which country let them down?

I'm afraid, for us Indians, the answers to these questions will not make for good reading.

How the Rubiales incident played out

Rubiales tried hard to play down his offence, going on record to say the kiss was "spontaneous, mutual, euphoric and consensual." He tried brushing it off as a 'mistake'. He got the RFEF to paint Jenni as a liar, and even threaten her with legal action.

But none of this has worked with the Spanish government, the football fraternity, or even Spain's football-crazy public.

Jenni denied that the kiss was consensual, and said that she felt extremely vulnerable at that moment. Like Brij Bhushan Singh, Rubiales also tried talking tough. Addressing the media, he insisted he would not resign, and claimed he was being attacked by 'false feminists'. But he could not contain the outrage, nor the swift and firm institutional response.

He was immediately suspended by FIFA for 90 days, and the fact that he was a vice president of the mighty Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) didn't help him. The Spanish government started legal proceedings against him.

Even the RFEF, that he has headed and controlled since 2018, has had to set up an inquiry into the incident. The Spanish Prime Minister and other ministers have criticised him. Top Spanish football stars, including Xavi Hernandez, Andres Iniesta, Iker Casillas, David De Gea, have spoken up against him.

The whole Spanish women's team is fully with Jenni – they have refused to play for Spain again, unless Rubiales resigns. Spanish La Liga teams and spectators are running banners and sporting wristbands saying 'Contigo Jenni', meaning 'With You Jenni'. The Sevilla men's football team wore t-shirts saying '#SeAcabo, meaning 'It's Over'. Within days of the infamous kiss, it does look like it is over for Rubiales.

The silence surrounding Brij Bhushan

In contrast, look at Brij Bhushan Singh's case. The Prime Minister has not criticised him. Needless to add, nor has any other minister. If anything, they have actually close ranks behind the man.

The Anurag Thakur-led Sports Ministry set up an internal oversight committee looking into the allegations, headed by none other than Mary Kom, arguably India's most iconic sportswoman. But the report, submitted by the committee in April 2023, has not been made public. And Mary Kom herself has been silent. Another huge Indian sports star who could have spoken up was PT Usha, the first woman and cur-

rent chief of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). Instead, Usha ended up criticising the protesting wrestlers, saying they were 'tarnishing India's image' and described the protest as 'indiscipline'.

It's no surprise that both Mary Kom and PT Usha are members of Parliament, nominated by the BJP. It seems party loyalty has trumped their responsibility towards the wrestlers who risked their sporting careers by levelling charges of sexual assault on the man who runs their sport.

Even leading wrestlers like Yogeshwar Dutt and Babita Phogat, both now BJP leaders, preferred to criticise the protesting wrestlers. This, despite the fact that Babita's sister Sangeeta, and cousin Vinesh, were among the leading protestors. Party loyalty ran thicker than blood!

In contrast, take a look at UEFA's big award night on 31 August, where again Rubiales was not spared. Jenni Hermoso's national and Barcelona teammate Aitana Bonmati, while accepting the UEFA Women's Player of the Year award, said,

"These are not good times for Spanish football... as a society we must not allow abuses of power, nor displays of disrespect. To all the women who have been subject to what happened to Jenni, we stand with you."

Bonmati could have felt beholden to football's chieftains, who control her career, her livelihood. But she understood her responsibility as a sporting icon, and used the biggest platform available to her, to support Jenni. It's a lesson for India's many mighty sporting icons, who are often silent when their voices are needed the most.

Political clout does the trick

The images that sum up this ironic situation, are those of Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, and Sakshi Malik being manhandled by the police as they protested peacefully in front of our new Parliament House.

The images contrasted jarringly with those of Brij Bhushan Singh on the steps of the new Parliament, attending its inauguration. The question to ask is – why so much support for a sexual assault accused, even as India's top wrestlers are treated like common criminals?

The answer is simple. Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh is a 'neta'. And not just any 'neta'. In Uttar Pradesh, he can influence the results of upto 6 Lok Sabha seats – Gonda, Shravasti, Kaiserganj, Bahraich, Domriaganj, and Faizabad.

The 6-time Lok Sabha MP and Thakur leader is so aware of his value to the BJP, that he has even had the temerity to criticise Yogi Adityanath in the past. In 2008 he even quit the BJP for a while and joined the Samajwadi Party. He was recently smart enough to hint that he could exit the BJP again.

It's this kind of real political clout that a Luis Rubiales lacks. While politicians running sports is almost the norm in India, in countries like Spain, it's a rarity. With good reason.

Pollsters say the gap between the ruling NDA and the new INDIA opposition coalition is closing, just ahead of the 2024 general elections. Which means the value of the 6 seats Brij Bhushan 'controls' in UP, which was already huge, has now gone up further.

The argument doesn't rest here, there's more – at the upcoming World Wrestling Championships in Belgrade in September 2023, India's wrestling team will NOT be allowed to participate under the National Flag! Why? Because the WFI has been suspended by its world body, United World Wrestling (UWW). And, why is that? Because the WFI has not been able to hold elections to find a new chief.

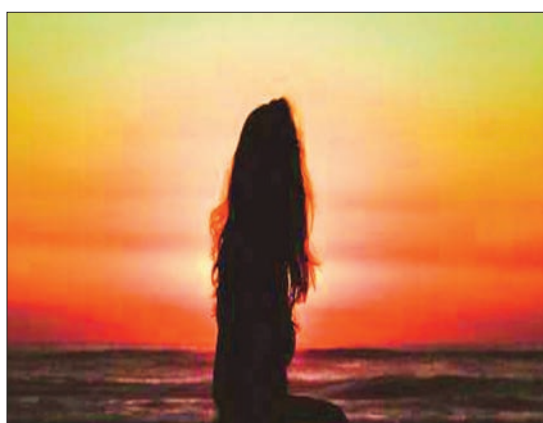
The long overdue elections were postponed multiple times – from 7 May to 6 July, to 11 July, to 12 August. And when even that date wasn't met, the UWW had to suspended the WFI.

In a country where national symbols matters a lot, the Indian government has preferred the national embarrassment of our wrestlers participating without the India flag, over replacing Singh. That's how much he matters. Red tape and an array of legal obstacles ensured the charade of 'tareekh pe tareekh'!

Had the WFI election happened and if the candidate backed by Brij Bhushan had lost, it would have led to a political disaster that the BJP couldn't afford. The challenge will be to keep up the charade till May 2024, so do keep watching this space.

Meanwhile, Luis Rubiales is now left grasping at straws. His latest move is getting his mother to go on a hunger strike in his support. A bit melodramatic, and unlikely to work. The hombre must dearly wish he was in India, and not in Spain. (Courtesy: The Quint)

Women are divine directive



By: Sakshi Sethi

India is the land of powerful women. Since ages, the status of women in society has been determined by several factors including economic, social and political factors. The existence of human life is possible only with the equal participation of both men and women as both of them are equally responsible for the survival of the human race on this planet.

Today, a lot of men aspire to have a good woman in their

lives until it requires them to be a better man. It's time to admire women who take the high to hold their heads high, maximise compliments, focus on their lane and are actively improving not only vulnerably and compassionately but also relatable. These are the real ones who inspire through their actions and words and the day is not far when they will be the only ones who will challenge and change the mindset of the society that a girl is a liability from the grassroots level by spreading awareness about the same.

Today's youth culture encourages females and males to have freedom of expression. In a world that does not sometimes but always glorify negativity or try to bring down the strength of a woman, these women shine as beacons of positivity and resilience. These are the ones who consistently remind us about the incredible strength within while demonstrating the transformative power of kindness and understanding.

It is believed that every woman on this earth is beautiful, no matter how young or old; small or big; short or tall they may be. Every one of them is unique and it just adds to their beauty. There is no denying the fact that a woman of today believes that She is the happiness; She is the sadness; She is the love; She is the lust; She is the one who can turn a house into a home, a hell into heaven and a bad into good. She has the power to organize; the power to change and lead the world as per her terms. In other words, she is an absolute success in all her endeavours taken up. Not only this, a woman is powerful

from her inner side and has the supremacy of being bold and loving nature.

Without a woman, there is no existence in this world. Behind her silence, She has a loud mind that can crush anyone; Behind her beauty, She has dignity and courage that can amaze anyone; Behind her skimpy clothes, She has nerves of steel that can break anyone; Behind her body and mind, She has a spark that can burn anyone and Behind her colour and flesh, She has the wisdom that can confound anyone.

A woman gives protection, nurtures and enriches life. Her love is like an art; like a sculptor applying the chisel or like a skilled painter enlivening the brush. As a woman, one must cherish the very element of being 'A Woman' who is not only independent, courageous, and confident but also at the same time courteous. Every human being- be it a man or a woman, craves attention. Every woman is a unique snowflake in her special way. She is out there to expand her wings, fly high and see the silver lining amongst the darkest cloud. Nothing can stop a woman from following their dreams. What is required is the strength to forget about society and their age-old school thinking and at the same time to start putting themselves first.

Remember, where there is a woman, there is magic. The woman is not an identity. She is a Divine directive; Woman is not a feeling. She is a responsibility and Woman is not a commodity. She is a specific and unique expression of God. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

Skin pigmentation and its home remedies

By: Shahnaz Husain

It is commonly believed that moisture in rainy weather will protect the skin, but that's not true. Our skin often pays the price for the moisture-laden environment. The increased humidity, dampness, and fluctuating temperatures during the monsoon can lead to various skin issues.

Hyperpigmentation is a common problem in monsoons, which causes the darkening of an area of the skin. Hyperpigmentation is a condition that can be caused due to an abnormally high concentration of melanocytes due to the sun exposure.

Skin pigmentation is a common issue faced by most of us in form of sun spots, age spots, freckles, sun damage, or melasma making skin look dull, lifeless uneven and ruins its texture completely. It also starts drying out the skin making it darker and patchy.

It is caused by overproduction of melanin, the pigment that gives you your natural skin tone. When this pigment forms a deposit in the skin, it causes brown or tan spots on the skin which is called pigmentation.

In nut shell any discoloration of the skin is known as pigmentation which is completely harmless and faced by both men and women. Pigmentation can occur to anyone on face, hands or any other body part regardless of one's gender, race, age or geographical locations.

In order to get rid of those stubborn pigmentation spots, we often resort to various BB creams, concealers and many other artificial creams. However, these chemical-based creams can do more harm than good to your skin.

While such skin isn't easy to be repaired to a point where it starts glowing in a short span of time, when dealt with on your own. But experts opinion actually work wonders for such skin types. It is always better to go for natural ways while treating such skin conditions.

The first aspect of the treatment is protection from the sun. Actually, as

part of the treatment, one should try to avoid sun-exposure as far as possible. Physical protection is the only answer by applying a sunscreen before going out in the sun. Select a sunscreen with SPF of at least 20. The sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before sun-exposure, to allow it time to be absorbed by the skin. It should be reapplied if you are in the sun for longer than an hour. The effects of the sun increase near water bodies and snow, as they reflect the sun's radiation. Therefore, it becomes all the more important to protect the skin and re-apply the sun screen after 20 to 30 minutes.

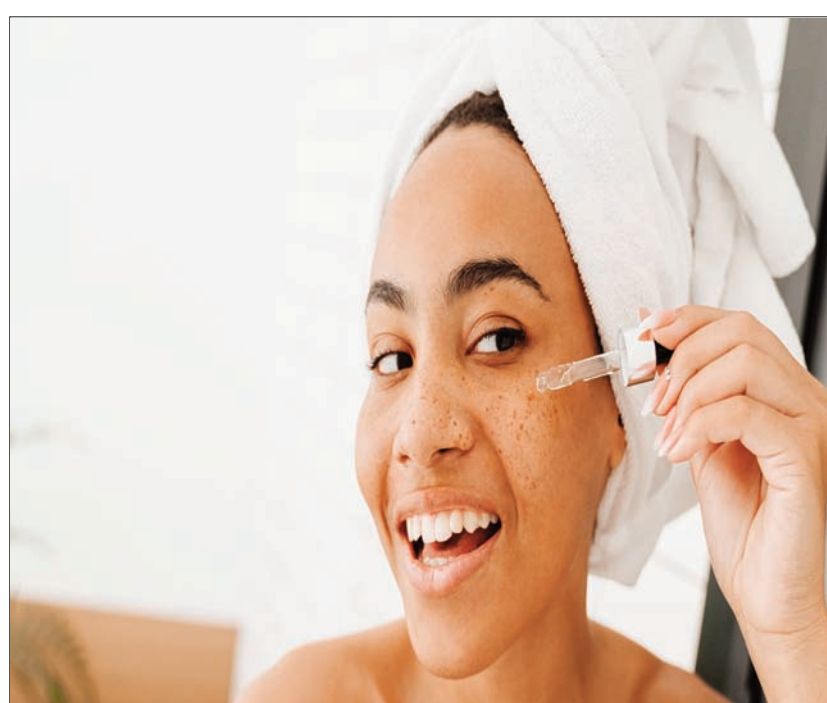
If the skin is dry, it should be kept moisturized at all times. At night, after cleansing, apply a nourishing cream and massage it on the skin with a few drops of water. This helps to improve the skin's ability to retain moisture.

The use of scrubs and masks also help to remove dead skin cells and their contained pigment. This helps the dark patches to gradually become lighter. External care, itself, can remove pigmentation permanently, provided protective care is followed afterwards. Even when the pigmented patches disappear, one should continue to use a sunscreen. In fact, the use of a sunscreen has become an important part of modern cosmetic-care, to protect the skin from problems and premature ageing.

Give the skin some nourishment. As a home remedy, you can try applying a little sesame seed (til) oil and pat the skin with a hot moist towel. Or, apply a little milk, with a few drops of honey, leave it on for 10 to 15 minutes and wash off with water. If you wish to make a cleanser at home, add 5 drops of oil to one tablespoon cold milk. Mix it well. Using cotton wool, use this mixture to wipe the skin. You will find that milk is very soothing to dry skin.

Here are some home remedies for pigmentation (dark patches):

- Mix one part honey with two parts lemon juice and apply. Wash off after 20 minutes.



- Mix ground almonds with curd and apply. Rub the mixture gently over the skin. Leave on for 5-10 minutes and wash off with water.

- Mix rose water and lemon juice in equal quantities and apply on the dark areas. Wash off after 10 minutes, or once it dries.

- Mix besan (gram flour) and curd, with a little turmeric and apply on the dark areas.

- Take some rice flour, add a little curd and use it as a scrub on pigmented skin.

- Scrub: Mix 3 tablespoons almond meal (ground almonds) with half cup yogurt (curd). Apply on the face and neck. Rub gently, especially on the dark patches and wash off. It also helps to remove tan. Scrubs should not be applied on dry or sensitive skin.

- For dry skin, add half teaspoon til oil to a little milk and apply on the face. Wipe off with moist cotton wool after

15 minutes.

- **For sunburn:** Actually, cold milk applied daily, using cotton wool, not only helps to soothe the skin, but also keeps it soft. It also makes the skin colour lighter over a period of time, if used daily.

- **For dark patches:** Mix together a big pinch of coarse salt with a cream. Apply only on the areas with the dark patches or spots and rub gently. Wash off. Then apply cold milk and wash off after 15 minutes. Do this twice a week.

- **For dark spots:** Add a pinch of turmeric (haldi) to curd and apply daily on the entire face. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes.

- **Mask:** Mix 3 teaspoons oatmeal with ripe papaya pulp and one teaspoon curd into a thick paste. Apply and wash off after 20 minutes. This mask suits both dry and oily skin. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)

India rejects 'unwarranted and misleading' comments of UN experts on Manipur

UNITED NATIONS/GENEVA, Sept 5: India has strongly rejected comments by UN experts on Manipur, terming them "unwarranted, presumptive and misleading" and asserting that situation in the Northeast state is peaceful.

In the note verbale issued on Monday to the Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Indian mission underscored that the situation in Manipur was peaceful and stable and the Indian government was committed to taking requisite steps to maintain peace and stability.

"The Government is also committed to protecting the human rights of the people of India, including the people of Manipur," it said.

"The Permanent Mission of India completely rejects the news release as it is not only unwarranted, presumptive and misleading but also betrays a complete lack of understanding on the situation in Manipur and the steps taken by Government of India to address it," said the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva.

India's response came after a group of

UN experts raised alarm about reports of "serious human rights violations and abuses" in Manipur, including alleged acts of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, home destruction, forced displacement, torture and ill-treatment.

Rejecting the news release by the Special Procedure Mandate Holders (SPMH) titled 'India: UN experts alarmed by continuing abuses in Manipur', the Permanent Mission of India expressed disappointment and surprise that the SPMHs chose to issue the press release without waiting for the 60 days period for the Indian government to re-

spond to a joint communication issued on the same topic on August 29, 2023.

The Indian mission expressed hope that in the future, the SPMH would be "more objective" in their assessment, based on the facts.

It hoped that the SPMH would "refrain from commenting on the developments, which have no relevance to the mandate given to them by the Council and abide by the established procedure for issuing news releases and wait for inputs sought from the Government of India before doing so."

The Indian mission reiterated that

India is a democratic country, with an abiding commitment to the rule of law and to promoting and protecting the human rights of our people. "Indian law enforcement authorities and security forces are committed to dealing with law-and-order situations strictly in accordance with the principles of legal certainty, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination," it said.

In their news release, the UN experts had said they were "appalled" by the reports and images of gender-based violence targeting hundreds of women and girls of all ages, and predominantly of

the Kuki ethnic minority.

"The alleged violence includes gang rape, parading women naked in the street, severe beatings causing death, and burning them alive or dead," the experts said.

The experts also pointed to an "inadequate humanitarian response" in the wake of the grave humanitarian situation in Manipur following the latest round of community conflict between the predominantly Hindu Meitei and the predominantly Christian Kuki ethnic communities that erupted in May 2023. (PTI)

Hong Kong's top court rules in favour of recognising same-sex partnerships in a landmark case

Judges call for alternative framework to marriage in partial victory for city's LGBTQ+ community

HONG KONG, Sept 5: Hong Kong's top court ruled on Tuesday that the government should provide a framework for recognising same-sex partnerships in a landmark decision for the city's LGBTQ+ community.

The ruling did not grant full marriage rights to same-sex couples but was a partial victory for prominent pro-democracy Jimmy Sham, who had fought a five-year legal battle over the recognition of same-sex marriage registered overseas.

Sham married his husband in New York in 2013, and argued that Hong Kong's laws, which don't recognise foreign same-sex marriage, violate the constitutional right to equality.

Equality advocates said the judgment was a step forward and will have strong implications for the lives of the LGBTQ+ community and the financial hub's reputation as an inclusive place to stay and work.

Judges at the top court, by a majority, declared in a written ruling that the government is in violation of its positive obligation to establish an alternative framework for legal recognition of same-sex partnerships, such as registered civil partnerships or civil unions.

"The absence of legal recognition of their

relationship is apt to disrupt and demean their private lives together in ways that constitute arbitrary interference," Justice Patrick Keane wrote.

The court suspended its declaration for two years to give the government time to comply with its obligation.

But the judges unanimously dismissed Sham's final appeal on other grounds related to same-sex marriage and recognition of overseas same-sex unions.

Currently, Hong Kong only recognizes same-sex marriage for certain purposes such as taxation, civil service benefits and dependent visas. Many of the government's concessions were won through legal challenges in recent years and the city has seen a growing social acceptance toward same-sex marriage.

Surveys showed 60 per cent of the respondents showed support for same-sex marriage in 2023, up from 38 per cent in 2013, according to a report issued by researchers at The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of North Carolina School of Law in May.

In a previous hearing, Sham's lawyer Karon Monaghan argued that the absence of



same-sex marriage in Hong Kong sent a message that it's less worthy of recognition than heterosexual marriages.

Jerome Yau, a co-founder of non-governmental organisation Hong Kong Marriage Equality, said the ruling sent a clear signal that same-sex relationships deserve some form of recognition and that it would help enhance Hong Kong's reputation.

"This judgement, we believe, will go a long way in attracting young talent coming to Hong Kong to work and live," he said.

Hong Kong resident Travis Chow, who has a same-sex partner, said he had won-

dered about their future but the judgement prompted him to think seriously about the option of staying in Hong Kong in the long run.

"This is absolutely happy and encouraging," he said.

The court decision was an important step for equality for the LGBTQ+ community in Asia, said gender studies scholar Suen Yiu-tong at the Chinese University. But Suen admitted he was disappointed that the court did not recognize same-sex marriage.

Sham has been in custody after being charged under a Beijing-imposed national security law following massive pro-democracy protests in 2019. The law has been used to arrest and silence many other pro-democracy activists as part of a crackdown on dissent in the former British colony.

Sham is the former convenor of Civil Human Rights Front, which was best known for organizing the annual protest march on the anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997, for years.

The group also organised some of the biggest political protests that roiled the city in 2019 but was disbanded in 2021 under the shadow of the security law. (AP)

UK's Oppn Labour Party pledges to cut hidden remittance fees

LONDON, Sept 5: Britain's

Opposition Labour Party has pledged to clamp down on costly hidden fees associated with international remittances from the UK to countries such as India as it makes its pitch to voters in the lead up to a general election, expected next year. Shadow foreign secretary David Lammy hosted a special "Connecting Communities" reception here Monday evening where he hailed the contributions made by Indian businesses to the UK economy as a "huge success story". Joined by shadow women and equalities secretary Anneliese Dodds, the senior shadow minister of Guyanese heritage highlighted the contribution of Britain's diverse diaspora communities, through business, culture, art, food and music, social action and community engagement. "Unlike the Tories who seek to pit communities against each other in divisive culture wars, the next Labour government will value the enormous contribution of Britain's diverse communities both at home and abroad," said Lammy.

"The positive impact of diaspora communities to fighting poverty and inequality through remittance payments is too often overlooked. Costly hidden fees on these payments put financial pressure on families in Britain already struggling to make ends meet in the Conservative cost of living crisis. In government, Labour will set the goal of reducing the obstacles and costs to cross border payments, keeping money in the pockets of Britain's communities and allowing



them to build on their contribution to Britain's impact in the world," he said. Remittance payments are defined as international transfers sent from households in the UK, typically to support friends and families overseas. The World Bank has estimated the value of these payments from the UK at USD 10.7 billion in 2022. According to the Labour Party, hidden fees estimated to cost nearly half a billion pounds a year are putting additional pressure on families in the UK already struggling with the cost-of-living crisis.

Reducing transfer costs on remittances to 3 per cent globally was one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) member states signed up to in 2015. International payments involving foreign exchange rates are expensive, with many involving hidden fees averaging at 5-6 per cent in the UK.

The shadow minister pointed out that the amount of remittances flowing out from the UK's diaspora communities dwarfs the country's aid budget, which a Labour-led government wants to return to the 0.7 per cent of national income target. (PTI)

First lady Jill Biden tests positive for Covid-19

WASHINGTON, Sept 5: First lady Jill Biden tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday but is experiencing only mild symptoms, her spokeswoman said.

President Joe Biden was tested for the virus following his wife's positive test, but his results were negative.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the president would continue testing regularly and would be monitored for symptoms.

Jill Biden will remain at the couple's home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, for the time being, communications director Elizabeth Alexander said.

The first lady had planned to start the new school year Tuesday at Northern Virginia Community College, where she teaches English and writing.

Due to her condition, she was working with school officials to arrange substitute teachers for her classes, Alexander said. The first lady had travelled with her husband to Florida on Saturday to inspect the damage from Hurricane Idalia.

President Biden then spent part of the Labor Day weekend at the Delaware beach house before traveling Monday to a union event in Philadelphia and then back to the White House. (AP)

Ready to work with all parties for success of G20 Summit hosted by India: China

BEIJING, Sept 5: China on Tuesday said it has supported India in hosting this year's G20 Summit and it's ready to work with all parties to push for the success of the high-profile global conference in New Delhi this week. A day after the Chinese foreign ministry announced that Premier Li Qiang will represent China at the G20 Summit instead of President Xi Jinping, the ministry spokesperson told reporters here at a regular briefing that China always attaches high importance to the G20 grouping and actively participates in relevant activities.

"We support India in hosting this year's summit and stand ready to work with all parties to make the G20 Summit a success," she said on the conference to be held in New Delhi on September 9-10. The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation, she said. Without mentioning the boundary dispute, the spokesperson said that China-India relations have been stable on the whole and "our two sides have maintained dialogue and communication at various levels".

"The continued improvement and growth of China-India relations serves the common interests of the two countries and two peoples. We stand ready to work with India to further improve and advance bilateral relations," she added.

The ties between India and China have been under severe strain since the deadly clashes in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley in June 2020.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

India has been consistently maintaining that peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were key for normalisation of overall ties. Premier Li will be representing China at the ASEAN Summit in Indonesia from September 5 to 8. He will travel to India after attending the East Asia summit in Jakarta.

US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are among the G20 leaders who have already confirmed their participation in the G20 Summit. The G20 member countries represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the world trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

The grouping comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the European Union. (PTI)



Myanmar won't be allowed to lead ASEAN in 2026

JAKARTA, Sept 5: Southeast Asian leaders decided that Myanmar won't take over the rotating leadership of their regional bloc as scheduled in 2026, Asian diplomats and a leader said on Tuesday, in the latest blow to efforts by its ruling generals to gain international recognition after violently seizing power in 2021.

Western governments led by the United States have condemned the Myanmar army's ouster of Aung San Suu Kyi's democratically elected government in 2021 and have demanded her immediate release from yearslong detention along with other officials.

The Philippines agreed to take over the regional bloc's chairmanship in 2026 at an ASEAN summit hosted by Indonesia on Tuesday, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said in a statement, citing what he told fellow leaders in the closed-door meetings.

Marcos did not explain why Myanmar lost the prestigious yearlong ASEAN chairmanship, but two ASEAN diplomats told The Associated Press that it was related to the civil strife in the country and fears that the bloc's relations with the United States and the European Union, among others, might be undermined because of their non-recognition of the military-led government in Myanmar. (AP)

Kenya's leader: Climate change is eating away Africa's GDP, calls for talks on global carbon tax



NAIROBI, Sept 5: Climate change is "relentlessly eating away" at Africa's economic progress and it's time to have a global conversation about a carbon tax, Kenya's president declared on Tuesday as the first Africa Climate Summit began.

"Those who produce the garbage refuse to pay their bills," President William Ruto said. The African continent of more than 1.3 billion people is losing 5 per cent to 15 per cent of its GDP growth every year to the widespread impacts of climate change, according to Ruto. It's a source of deep frustration in the region that contributes by far the least to the global problem.

The summit's opening speeches included clear calls to reform the global financial structures that have left African nations paying five times more to borrow money than others, worsening the debt crisis for many.

Africa has more than 30 of the world's most indebted countries, Kenya's cabinet secretary for the environment, Soipan Tuyu, said.

The US government's climate envoy, John Kerry, acknowledged the "acute, unfair debt." He also said 17 of

the world's 20 countries most impacted by climate change are in Africa — while the world's 20 richest nations, including his own, produce 80 per cent of the world's carbon emissions that are driving climate change.

Kenya's president said Africa's 54 countries "must go green fast before industrialising and not vice versa, unlike (richer nations) had the luxury to do." Transforming Africa's economy on a green trajectory "is the most feasible, just and efficient way to attain a net-zero world by 2050," he said.

Climate finance is key, speakers said, with richer nations' promise of USD 100 billion a year in climate finance to developing countries still unfulfilled. Ruto said the summit declaration will "firmly encourage" everyone to keep their promises.

The United Arab Emirates, which will host the next United Nations climate meeting, announced it plans to invest USD 4.5 billion in Africa's "clean energy potential."

The African continent has 60 per cent of the world's renewable energy assets, and more than 30 per cent of the minerals key to renewable and low-carbon technologies. One goal of the summit is to transform the narrative around the continent from victim to assertive, wealthy partner.

Africa's GDP should be revalued for its assets that include the world's second-largest rainforest and biodiversity, said the president of the African Development Bank, Akinwumi Adesina.

"Africa cannot be nature-rich and cash-poor," he said.

But divisions are evident around the issue that was little mentioned in the opening speeches and yet at the heart of the tough conversations ahead: Fossil fuels.

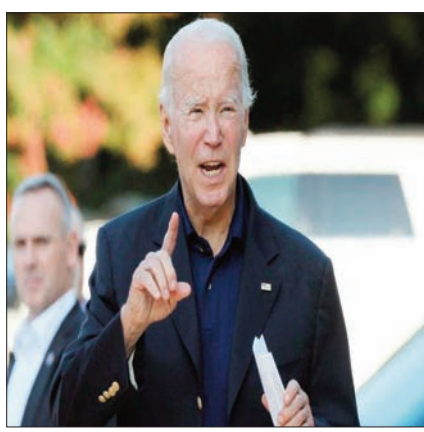
The African Development Bank president said Africa must use its natural gas resources along with renewable energy sources. "Give us space to grow," he said. (AP)

Biden will nominate longtime aide to become US ambassador to UNESCO

WASHINGTON, Sept 5: A longtime aide to President Joe Biden who is a senior adviser in Vice President Kamala Harris' office is Biden's choice to represent the United States at the United Nations agency devoted to education, science and culture.

The U.S. recently rejoined the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization after a five-year hiatus initiated by Biden's immediate predecessor in the White House, Donald Trump. The Democratic president's choice to become the U.S. permanent representative to the Paris-based UNESCO, with the rank of ambassador, is longtime aide Courtney O'Donnell, according to a White House official, who spoke Monday on the condition of anonymity to discuss the nomination before a formal announcement. O'Donnell currently wears two hats: She's a senior adviser in Harris' office and acting chief of staff for Harris' husband, second gentleman Doug Emhoff, and lends her expertise to a range of national and global issues, including gender equity and countering prejudice against Jews, a top issue for Emhoff, who is Jewish.

O'Donnell also was communications director for Jill Biden, when she was second lady during Joe Biden's vice presidency when Barack Obama was president. O'Donnell helped Jill Biden raise awareness and support for U.S. military families and promote community colleges. She has extensive experience in developing global partnerships, public



affairs and strategic communications, having held senior roles in two presidential administrations, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, national political campaigns and the private sector, according to her official bio.

O'Donnell most recently oversaw global partnerships at Airbnb.

Former White House chief of staff Ron Klain said O'Donnell is trusted by colleagues worldwide.

"This is a fantastic pick and she will do a fantastic job at UNESCO," he said in a statement.

Cathy Russell worked with O'Donnell in the second lady's office and said she is skilled at developing global partnerships, creating social impact campaigns and providing strategic

counsel on a range of issues.

"Everyone who knows Courtney knows she is committed to the value of global engagement and strengthening American leadership around the world," Russell said.

The Senate must vote on O'Donnell's nomination. The first lady attended a ceremony in late July at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, where the U.S. flag was raised to mark Washington's official reentry into the U.N. agency after the absence initiated by Trump, a Republican. She spoke about the importance of American leadership in preserving cultural heritage and empowering education and science across the globe.

The United States announced its intention to rejoin UNESCO in June, and the organization's 193 member states voted in July to approve the U.S. reentry. The ceremony formally signified the U.S. becoming the 194th member — and flag proprietor — at the agency. The U.S. decision to return was based mainly on concerns that China has filled a leadership gap since Washington withdrew, underscoring the broader geopolitical dynamics at play, particularly the growing influence of China in international institutions.

The U.S. exit from UNESCO in 2017 cited an alleged anti-Israel bias within the organization. The decision followed a 2011 move by UNESCO to include Palestine as a member state, which led the U.S. and Israel to cease financing the agency. The U.S. withdrawal became official in 2018. (AP)

Tripura bypolls: 76 pc voter turnout recorded till 3 pm, 6 injured in stray violence



AGARTALA, Sept 5: An average voter turnout of 76 per cent was recorded till 3 pm of polling in the by-elections to Dhanpur and Boxanagar assembly seats in Tripura's Sepahijala district on Tuesday, an official said.

Voting began at 7 am in 59 booths in Dhanpur assembly constituency and 51 in Boxanagar, and was scheduled to continue till 4 pm.

Police said six persons were injured when they were allegedly attacked by some villagers at

Mohanbhog in Dhanpur Assembly constituency.

The villagers set fire to five motorcycles, triggering tension, but the situation was brought under control, a police officer said, adding, the injured have been admitted to hospital and are out of danger.

"I urge the people to maintain peace during the polling and repeat the precedent of peaceful voting like of last assembly elections," Chief minister Manik Saha said in a Facebook post.

BJP's Tafajjal Hussain, who unsuccessfully contested the last assembly election from Boxanagar, is contesting against CPI(M) nominee Mizan Hussain from there.

The Boxanagar assembly segment has 66 per cent minority voters of a total of 43,087 electors.

In the last assembly elections in February, the CPI(M) retained the seat. The Dhanpur assembly constituency, once considered a stronghold of the Left, witnesses a fight between the BJP's Bindu Debnath and Kaushik Debnath of the CPI(M). There are 50,346 voters.

The BJP won the seat for the first time in the assembly poll held seven months ago.

The Congress and the Tripura Motha did not field their candidates in the two seats for the bypolls.

The by-election to the Boxanagar constituency was necessitated by the death of CPI(M) MLA Samsul Haque.

Union minister Pratima Bhoumik's resignation as the MLA of Dhanpur necessitated the by-election to that seat.

Votes will be counted on September 8. (PTI)

Heroin worth over ₹ 16 lakh recovered from Mizoram-Myanmar border



AIZAWL, Sept 5: Heroin worth ₹ 16.73 lakh was seized from a Mizoram village close to the Myanmar border, an official statement said on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, personnel of Assam Rifles in collaboration with the state excise department recovered 23.9 gram of heroin at Zote village in Champhai district on Monday, the paramilitary force said.

No person has been arrested in connection with the seizure.

The recovered heroin, which was concealed in two soap cases, was handed over to the excise and narcotics department, the statement added. (PTI)

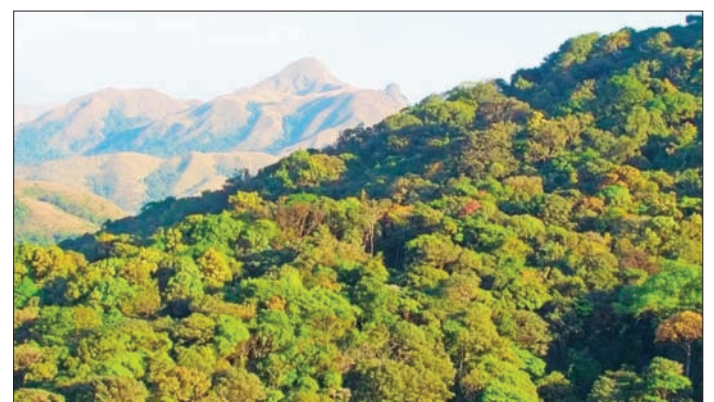
Arunachal undertakes afforestation in 16,560 hectares of land under CAMPA during 2022-23: Minister

ITANAGAR, Sept 5: The Arunachal Pradesh government has carried out afforestation programme in 16,560.46 hectare of land in the state during 2022-23 under Compensatory Afforestation Fund and Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) scheme, the state assembly was informed on Tuesday.

Responding to a question raised on the second day of the monsoon session of the assembly by Congress MLA Wangling Lowangdong, environment and forest minister Mama Natung informed that, an amount of ₹ 196.93 crore was sanctioned by the national authority (CAMPA) under the environment, forest and climate change ministry to the state for the year 2022-23.

The minister informed that under the compensatory afforestation component, preparatory works were undertaken in 2,986.23 hectare, creation of plantations in 4,459.16 hectare and maintenance of plantations in 24,177.35 hectare of land in the state during 2022-23.

Under the catchment area treatment plan component, the creation of plantations was carried out in 1,200 hectares while maintenance of plantations was done in 6000 hectares, Natung said, adding that



under the net present value component, plantations were carried in 10,901.61 hectare during the year.

The minister said that the allocation of fund to the forest divisions are based on the compensatory afforestation schemes, integrated wildlife management plans and catchment area treatment plans as approved by the Centre.

"Compensatory afforestation component is taken on identified land as per approval of the Centre while integrated wildlife management plan is based on the approved 10 years wildlife conservation and mitigation plans," the minister said.

The catchment area treatment plan is based on an approved plan against the Kameng Hydro electric

project under the Bomdila forest division in the West Kameng district and the Pare hydro project under the Sagalee forest division in the Papumpare district of the state, Natung said, adding that funds are allocated to the officers for taking up activities under the Annual Plan of Operation (APO) through the executing agencies including the range officers.

Responding to a supplementary question from Lowangdong regarding the disparity in distribution of CAMPA fund, the minister informed that fund under the scheme is provided only to those areas where deforestation is going on due to major projects like road construction, setting up of transmission lines and installation of power projects. (PTI)

Nagaland celebrates Teachers' Day by honouring 18 teachers

KOHHIMA, Sept 5: Nagaland on Tuesday celebrated Teachers' Day by honouring 18 teachers for their dedicated and sincere service in moulding students.

Of the total, 13 teachers were from government schools and five from private schools were honoured during the state-level Teachers' Day function, commemorating the birth anniversary of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the first Vice-President and second President of India.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA and Advisor for the School Education department and SCERT, Dr Kekkriehoulie Yheme said that today teachers are the most unrecognised people and most underappreciated.

"We all have to understand the role of teachers," he said.

Teachers are not slaves and being a Christian state, people go to church on Sundays and so as teachers, they do not get off-days, he said.

In this, he declared all Saturdays as holidays for all schools functioning in the state with immediate effect and it will be strictly observed. He said that this would also help students to have time and environment that is outside the classroom for holistic development.

On the complaints of shortage of teachers in government schools, he informed that the department will soon issue orders for rational redeployment of teachers and the teachers will have to mandatorily go to their places of posting, lest the stringent action would be initiated.

Affirming that the department is working towards bringing total reformation, he said a comprehensive survey has been conducted on various issues affecting the department and the process of streamlining



those are in progress which cadre review, seniority list, proxy teachers, shortage of teachers, upgradation and downgrading of schools, etc.

The Advisor also announced that starting next year, it will be mandatory for all to have a School Children Health Card, which will be introduced in collaboration with the Department of Health and Family Welfare. This will allow every child to get medical attention at the doorstep of their schools, he said.

Lauding the hard work of teachers, Advisor Yheme declared September 6 as a general holiday for all educational institutions in the state.

"While celebrating Teachers Day, we pay our respect to all teachers who have walked the extra mile to transform the lives of the learners and who have contributed to the development of the state," said Commissioner and Secretary of School Education, Kevileno Angami on

the occasion.

The messages of Governor La Ganesan and Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio were also read out on the occasion.

"The teachers are undoubtedly the backbone of the society and nation builders. They not only impart knowledge but inspire dreams in us and mould our future. They are our mentors, counsellors and also play the role of parents sometimes. They inspire and motivate us to believe in ourselves and encourage us to pursue our dreams. They instil within us valuable life skills and moral values of honesty, integrity, hard work and empathy," said Ganesan.

Rio extended warm greetings and said teachers are at the heart of training, education and guidance.

He hoped they uphold the noble profession of teaching by demonstrating the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. (PTI)

Mizoram court sentences PWD engineer to 4 years imprisonment

AIZAWL, Sept 5: The special court (prevention of corruption Act) on Tuesday sentenced a junior engineer (JE) of Mizoram public works department to four years imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹ 2 lakh in a graft case.

Special judge HT Lalrinchhana had convicted C Lal-fakawma under Section 409 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and under Section 13 (2) read with 13(1)(a) of (Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 on Monday.

The special court sentenced Lal-fakawma under Section 409 of IPC to two years in jail with a fine of ₹ 1 lakh.

It also sentenced the convict under Section 13 (2) read with 13 (1) (a) of PC Act, 1988 to four years of imprisonment with a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

"Since he has no previous criminal records, both the sentences except the fines shall run concurrently. Period of detention of the offender in judicial custody, which he had already undergone (if any), shall be set off as enjoyed by Section 428 of CrPC," the judgment said.

The convicted person was remanded to judicial custody and sent to the Aizawl Central Jail after pronouncement of the quantum of punishment.



Criminal cases against Lal-fakawma was initiated on May 20, 2020 when a deputy secretary of PWD submitted a complaint to Mizoram Lokayukta to investigate allegations that he had taken money from contractors while he was posted at Khawzawl subdivision.

As instructed by the Lokayukta, the state Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) registered criminal cases and began investigations into allegations that the accused took ₹ 17 lakh from a contractor constructing a PMGSY road between Rabung and Aizawl and ₹ 3 lakh from a sub-contractor in 2018. Though the contractor and sub-contractor were declared as hostile prosecution witnesses by the prosecutors, the contractor admitted that he deposited ₹ 17 lakh in the bank account of the accused as a loan.

The sub-contractor said he borrowed ₹ 8 lakh from the JE and paid back ₹ 11 lakh as Lal-fakawma required another loan of ₹ 3 lakh. (PTI)

Congress harmed India more than British had done: Union minister

AGARTALA, Sept 5: Union minister Pratima Bhoumik on Tuesday alleged that the Congress harmed the country more than the British had done.

Bhoumik, union minister of state for social justice and empowerment, also claimed that the way the erstwhile UPA government "indulged in corruption", people would not vote for the opposition bloc INDIA.

"The way the UPA had indulged in corruption, the people will never vote for the Congress. The Congress did more harm to the nation than the British rulers had done," she said.

The minister also exuded confidence that her party BJP would win by-elections to the Dhanpur and Boxanagar assembly constituencies in Tripura.

"We are sure of winning by-elections with huge margins. The electors of Dhanpur blessed me in the February assembly elections (2023) for the first time. This time too, there will be no exception", the Bhoumik said.

She was speaking to reporters after casting her vote at a booth in Barnarayan HS School under the Dhanpur constituency.

Bhoumik, as a BJP candidate, had won the seat for the first time in the last assembly elections.

Her resignation as the MLA of Dhanpur necessitated the by-election to that seat.

Speaking on the Boxanagar assembly constituency where voting for the by-election was being held during the day, Bhoumik said, "In the last assembly elections, the CPI(M) had misled voters, especially minority ones but this time, we were able to remove their misconception about the BJP. We are confident of winning the seat this time," she said.

The minister also asserted that the country has emerged as a global leader after the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon.

"The successful lunar mission is the testimony that the country is moving towards growth and prosperity," she said.

The present government has "created an environment on all fronts to transform India into a global leader", Bhoumik added. (PTI)

'Play to Learn' summit organised in Shillong

The summit highlighted crucial role of play in young children's overall development

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Sept 5: The first 'Play to Learn' Summit was successfully organised in Shillong on Tuesday, highlighting the crucial role of play in young children's overall development.

The summit was presented by government of Meghalaya, Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission (MECDM) and Meghalaya Health Systems Strengthening Project (MHSSP) in collaboration with Sesame Workshop India Trust with funding support from SBI Foundation and the Indian Institute of Banking & Finance.

The state of Meghalaya is carrying out an Early Childhood Development Mission (MECDM), which is the first of its kind initiative in the country. The main goal of the mission is to maximize the lifelong potential of children by providing the key development support required in the critical "early years": from conception to eight years of age. The expected beneficiaries of the mission are caregivers, children between the ages of 0-8 years (including those with disabilities), pregnant women and lactating mothers. The Mission will convert all Anganwadi Centers into ECD Centers to provide comprehensive support to children, including nutrition, cognitive development, socio-emotional learning, and the foundational development they will need to succeed later in school and in life. Additionally, there is a significant focus on community based and home-based ECD activities. For instance, women's self-help groups and father's circles will receive training so that they can act as support groups to caregivers and can coach caregivers on simple activities they can do at home to promote the cognitive development and overall well-being of their children.

As part of this initiative, Sesame Workshop India, with support from the

MHSSP, is providing technical and implementation support to the ECD Mission in designing and developing an integrated ECD model to improve outcomes as envisaged in the state's ECD mission.

Sesame Workshop India is a global leader and innovator in play-based pedagogy as an effective approach to teaching and learning, with a strong track-record of impact for caregivers and children in India and all over the world.

In a video message to the organisers of the summit, Conrad Sangma, chief minister of Meghalaya gave an inspiring oration in which he said, "I firmly believe in the importance of play in early childhood education. The Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission is dedicated to nurturing a child's holistic growth during their formative years." He emphasised the incorporation of evidence-based methods such as positive parenting and joyful learning, complemented by enhanced nutrition and cognitive stimulation.

Sangma further highlighted the synergy of government initiatives, all with the common aim of propelling Meghalaya to the ranks of the country's top 10 states. He called upon all stakeholders to adopt a mission-oriented approach in the implementation of the ECD Mission, viewing it as the cornerstone for shaping the future of the state through its youngest citizens.

Paul Lyngdoh, minister of the social welfare, government of Meghalaya said, "As we gather here today at the 'Play to Learn' Summit, it is heartening to witness the collaborative efforts of Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission, Sesame Workshop India Trust, and our esteemed partners. Play is meaningful; it's a pathway to nurturing young minds and building a brighter future for Meghalaya."

Sampath Kumar, principal secretary,



government of Meghalaya, echoed this sentiment, remarking, "Children are inherently inclined towards play and it is imperative that we acknowledge the intrinsic role of play in their comprehensive development. The Meghalaya Government remains firm in its commitment to endorsing initiatives that contribute to realizing our vision of delivering quality early childhood education."

Simultaneously, Sesame Workshop India has been working closely with the Social Welfare Department to carry out "Learn Play Grow" in 4 districts of Meghalaya. Supported by the SBI Foundation since 2020, this initiative is benefiting 90,000 children in 3000 Anganwadi Centres by training Anganwadi workers to provide child-centered, play/activity-based curricula, pedagogical processes, and effective techniques, which can be further developed to support the Early Childhood Development Mission throughout the state.

Sanjay Prakash, managing director, SBI Foundation, lauded the significance

of play-based learning as a cornerstone of early childhood education. He said, "SBI Foundation takes immense pride in its commitment to the state of Meghalaya and its Government over the last 3 years along with our partners Sesame Workshop India to strengthen ECCE in the state. We are committed to the state to ensure that the young minds studying in the anganwadi centres get the best start in life and these children will progress through primary into secondary education and contribute to the Indian growth story in the future."

Tusharendra Barpanda, head- Professional Development Centre, eastern zone, Indian Institute of Banking & Finance said, "We believe that holistic early childhood development is key, and IIBF is proud to support efforts to promote the efforts undertaken for early years in Meghalaya. I am confident that our continuous engagement will generate new ideas and strategies to support government of Meghalaya's efforts in promoting play-based learning in Meghalaya."

Sonali Khan, managing trustee,

Sesame Workshop India Trust asserted, "Partnering with the Government of Meghalaya, SBI Foundation and IIBF to support early childhood development in the state of Meghalaya is a great honor for Sesame Workshop India. I acknowledge the innate potential of play as a platform for exploration, critical thinking, and innovation. Sesame Workshop has integrated play-pedagogy globally over the last 50 years and has proven impact. It rests upon us, as adults who are primary caregivers, to endorse and exemplify playful learning for holistic development of child."

Since its launch, the ECD Mission has carried out "block conventions" in 10 blocks of the state, to sensitize community leaders and front-line workers, as well as government functionaries, about the importance of early childhood development, and to invite the full ownership and engagement of communities in rolling out ECD Mission. A unique component of these conventions has been the participation of social We, highlighting the cross-sector nature of ECD and the importance of joint action to achieve the goals of the mission. A further unique component of the mission is the focus on community leadership and participation through a convergence of various departments: Social Welfare, Health & Family, Education, Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS) and State Rural Employment Society (SRES). The Mission recognizes that success will depend upon a true sense of ownership by communities, from leadership to the household level.

As of September, the ECD Mission has developed a set of Mission Guidelines which will be disseminated to all localities of Meghalaya to enable ordinary individuals, community leaders, and community institutions such as self-help groups, to carry out ECD activities. The

Mission is now engaged in rolling out training for Master Trainers at the Cluster Level. On August 24, 2023, the first batch of training were conducted, equipping lady supervisors, cluster coordinators, ASHA facilitators, Cluster resource persons, Gram Sevaks/Sevikas, Anganwadi workers, ASHAs, Community Gender Health Activists (CGHAs), School teachers, Caregivers (mothers, father and other caregivers at home), Self Help Group members and Village Organizations (VO) to be able to train their fellow cluster level colleagues, and to start training community level functionaries and community leaders. The next stage of the process will be the initiation of the core activities of ECD Mission at the community level: activities at the Anganwadi

Centres, home-based activities to be done by caregivers, and community events to sensitize and mobilize all community members.

The summit highlighted the importance of integrating local culture and folklore practices to develop contextualized teaching learning materials for ECCE as aligned with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, Oct 2022) and New Education Policy 2020. Discussions explored evidence-based initiatives to enhance children's skills, the role of community engagement in culturally tailored play-oriented education, and the value of research in play-focused approaches. The summit showcased the work of ECD Mission, and the contribution of vital partners such as Sesame Workshop India in connecting play-based learning with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and NEP 2020. Caregivers were also highlighted for their crucial role in supporting children's play by creating a safe and playful environment, providing easily available materials, and fostering independent and creative play.

Udhayanidhi Stalin's 'Sanatan Dharma' remark amounts to 'hate speech': Eminent citizens write to CJJ

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Over 260 eminent citizens, including former judges and bureaucrats, have written to Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud urging him to take cognisance of DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's eradicate "Sanatan Dharma" comment, calling it "hate speech".

In a letter to the CJJ, the signatories, including former Delhi HC judge S N Dhinra, said not only did Udhayanidhi Stalin make a hate speech but refused to apologise for his remarks.

The letter, signed by 262 people including 14 retired judges, 130 former bureaucrats and 118 ex-armed forces officers, said they are deeply concerned over the remarks made by the Tamil Nadu minister which undeniably amount to "hate speech" against a large population of India and strike at the very core of the Constitution of India which envisages a secular nation.

The letter said action is needed in order to preserve the secular character of the country.

Any delay on the part of the administration in taking action on very serious issues will invite the court's contempt, it said.

The letter said the state government has refused to take action and acted in contempt of the court's orders and "gravely undermined or rather made a mockery of the rule of law".

"We urge the Supreme Court to take suo moto (on its own) notice of contempt, ensuring accountability for the inaction of the State Government of Tamil Nadu, and take decisive steps to prevent the inducement of hate speech, preserving public order and peace and we request you to take immediate appropriate actions.

"We sincerely hope for the thoughtful consideration of our plea and implore immediate measures to ensure justice and rule of law to prevail," it said. The letter referred to a Supreme Court order wherein it had asked the authorities to take action in cases of hate speech on its own without waiting for a complaint to be filed.

In his address at a meeting of the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers



and Artists Association in Chennai on Saturday, the DMK leader, a film actor and son of Chief Minister M K Stalin, had likened Sanatan Dharma to coronavirus, malaria and dengue and said such things should not be opposed but destroyed.

As a massive controversy erupted over his remarks, Udhayanidhi Stalin stuck to his guns and said he will continue to speak out against caste discrimination in all religions.

The letter stated that the rule of law was undermined when the Tamil Nadu government refused to take any action against Udhayanidhi Stalin and rather chose to justify his remarks.

"In the case of Shaheen Abdullah v. Union of India and Ors, the Supreme Court of India observed that there cannot be fraternity unless different religious communities are amenable to live in harmony.

"The Supreme Court has expressed concern over the growing incidents of hate speeches in the country and has directed the governments and police authorities to take suo moto action in such cases without waiting for the lodging of formal complaints," the letter said.

In Shaheen Abdullah case, the apex court held that the Constitution of India envisages a secular nation and directed state governments to come down hard on hate speeches.

"Thus, cases should be suo moto registered and the offenders should be proceeded against in accordance with law. Any hesitation to act as per the directions would be viewed as contempt of court," it said. (PTI)

75 teachers bag national award for their achievements

Library automation, setting up science museum, 100 pc attendance since 11 years

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: From library automation to setting up science museum, not missing school even a single day for 11 years to cleaning school campus and toilets themselves -- these are some of the feats achieved by those who are among the 75 National Teacher awardees.

The awardees include 50 school teachers, 13 teachers from higher education institutions and 12 from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Mujib Rahiman from Kendriya Vidyalaya in Kerala's Palakkad developed a software in 2007 which provides free access to many school libraries in India.

"He has designed library websites and a mobile application for easy access to online services. As an IT expert, he has successfully trained 600 librarians through 11 Inservice Training courses," Rahiman's award citation read.

Netai Chandra Dey from Ramakrishna Mission school in Arunachal Pradesh has attended school on all working days for the past 11 years.

"Dey has put tremendous efforts to set up a science museum and a

science laboratory in the school. He has attended school on all working days for the past 11 years. He is working hard towards character building of students in addition to imparting formal education," the citation said.

Ningthoujam Binoy Singh from Chingmei Upper Primary School in Manipur himself cleans the school campus and toilets regularly.

"Singh revived his school which was in an inhospitable condition when he joined. He was instrumental in transforming the infrastructure, some of it even by spending his own money, which brought students back to school. He motivated the parents of the dropouts to send them back to school by visiting their homes," it said.

Reyaz Ahmed Sheikh from Government Middle School in Kashmir's Anantnag took initiative to start an enrolment drive in which door to door visits were made resulting in bringing 30 students back to school. He motivated and counselled the parents through regular capacity building to allow girls to attend school regularly.

Dinesh Babu J, associate profes-



or at the International Institute of Information Technology, Bengaluru, has developed an innovative UPSC virtual reality interviewing platform.

"This cutting-edge technology employs AI and virtual reality, featuring five virtual interviewers who evaluate candidates online. These interviewers skillfully probe candidates on diverse subjects such as Indian history, Constitution, and

current affairs, incorporating follow-up questions. An IAS academy has collaborated with IIITB paving the way for its real-world application," the citation read.

Suman Chakraborty, Professor, IIT, Kharagpur, built the first-ever Microfluidics Lab in India which is one of the celebrated labs, globally.

The MoE has been organising a national level function on Teach-

ers' Day every year to confer the National Awards to the best teachers of the country, selected through a rigorous, transparent selection process. The awards are conferred by the President.

Starting this year, the ambit of the National Teachers' Award has been expanded to include teachers of the Department of Higher Education and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

"The purpose of National Teachers' Award is to celebrate the unique contribution of teachers in the country and to honour those teachers who, through their commitment and dedication, have not only improved the quality of education but also enriched the lives of their students," a senior MoE official said.

"Each award carries a certificate of merit, a cash award of Rs 50,000 and a silver medal. The awardees also get an opportunity to interact with Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the official added.

Among the selected teachers, the maximum are from Gujarat (5) followed by Karnataka and Maharashtra with four awardees each, officials said. (PTI)

Search operation extended to neutralise terrorist in J-K's Reasi

JAMMU, Sept 5: Security forces on Tuesday extended the search operation to adjoining villages to track down a terrorist who managed to escape from a remote village in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, officials said.

While one terrorist was killed and two security personnel injured in the initial gunfight at Gali Sohab village in Tuli area on Monday, the second terrorist slipped out from the cordoned house located on a slope, taking advantage of rough terrain, the officials said. They said the security forces stormed the house early this morning amid intense firing but there was no trace of the second terrorist who was believed hiding inside. However, the search parties comprising police, Army and CRPF retrieved the body of the slain terrorist and also recovered an AK assault rifle, two magazines, a rucksack, a pocket diary and some medicines and eatables.

The officials said reinforcements were rushed to the

area and nearly half-a-dozen adjoining villages in the forested area were sealed and a search operation is underway to neutralize the fleeing terrorist. Jammu-based defence PRO Lt Col Suneel Bartwal said the Army along with police has been continuing relentless operations in the forest areas of Reasi district to scuttle nefarious designs of the terrorists.

"A joint operation was launched based on specific information about the presence of two armed terrorists. The dynamic counter terrorist grid was established with extensive deployment in the area of responsibility," he said in a statement here. The defence PRO said the terrorists trapped inside the cordoned house opened fire on the security personnel deployed outside and in the ensuing heavy gunfight, one terrorist was neutralized.

"A detailed search of the house and the surrounding areas after the encounter resulted in the recovery of one terrorist's body along with other warlike stores.

Search operation is in progress," Lt Col Bartwal said. He said the Army successfully demolished an improvised explosive device (IED) in the same region on September 3.

"A major incident has been averted in the region by these two consecutive actions by security forces. The presence of these heavily armed terrorists in the hinterland indicates sustained attempts by inimical forces to destabilize the South of Pir Panjal Region," the defence PRO said. The officials said the encounter in the village broke out around 2 pm on Monday when the joint troops zeroed in on the house where the terrorists had taken shelter at gunpoint during the intervening night of Sunday and Monday.

After getting information about the presence of the terrorists, security forces after trekking for over four hours reached the village and cornered the terrorists who opened indiscriminate firing in a vain bid to escape the security dragnet, the officials said. (PTI)

Gyanvapi management opposes ASI plea for more time to complete mosque survey



VARANASI (UP), Sept 5: The Gyanvapi mosque management committee has objected to the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) seeking eight more weeks to complete the survey of the complex.

The Varanasi district court had on July 21 directed the ASI to conduct a "detailed scientific survey" -- including excavations, wherever necessary -- to determine if the Gyanvapi mosque located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple is built upon a temple.

The Muslim side in the case has claimed the ASI is digging in the basement and other places in the Gyanvapi complex without permission, and is removing the debris next to the western wall, endangering the structure.

Government counsel Rajesh Mishra said the ASI has given an application in the court of District Judge A K Vishvesh seeking an eight-week extension for the survey.

The Anjuman Intejamia Masjid Committee filed its objection on Monday.

According to Mishra, the Muslim side has objected to the ASI seeking extra time for the removal of debris and garbage and argued that the court only ordered it to survey the premises through scientific methods.

The ASI team is not authorised to survey the premises by removing debris or garbage, the Muslim side has claimed.

The court has fixed September 8 as the next date of hearing the ASI's plea seeking extra time to complete the survey and submit its report. (PTI)

WB by-poll: 75.82 pc votes cast till 5 pm in Dhupguri; outside BJP leaders found during polling



JALPAIGURI (WB), Sept 5: Around 76 per cent of 2.6 lakh eligible voters exercised their franchise in the by-election to the Dhupguri assembly seat in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district till 5 pm on Tuesday, an official said.

Two BJP leaders including an MLA, who are not residents of the constituency, were found in a party office. One of them, the BJP district president, had to leave as he could not show any document allowing him entry into Dhupguri during the voting.

"Till 5 pm, 75.82 per cent of votes were cast. Tight security measures are in place and there is an adequate number of forces," the Election Commission official told PTI.

All the booths are manned by central paramilitary forces, and the casting of votes will continue till 6.30 pm, he said.

Meanwhile, Falakata BJP MLA Dipak Barman and district party president Bapi Goswami were present at an election office in the constituency though they are not residents of Dhupguri. As per the rules, outsiders are not permitted to

enter the constituency during voting.

Acting on a tip-off, the police reached that office and sought to know whether they had permission to stay in Dhupguri during voting.

Goswami had to leave as there was no official document allowing his entry.

Barman said, "We have papers but the police are saying those papers should have been sent 48 hours ago."

He also alleged that several TMC leaders who are not residents of Dhupguri are also staying in the constituency.

Polling began amid tight security at 7 am across 260 booths in the constituency, he said.

All the booths are manned by central paramilitary forces, and the casting of votes will continue till 6.30 pm, he said.

CPI(M)'s Ishwar Chandra Roy is contesting as the candidate of the Congress-Left alliance, while the ruling TMC has fielded Nirmal Chandra Roy, a teacher by profession.

The BJP has nominated Tapasi Roy, the widow of a CRPF jawan who died fighting terrorists in Kashmir a few years back.

The bypoll to the seat was necessitated due to the death of sitting BJP MLA Bishu Pada Ray earlier this year.

Left-Congress alliance candidate Ishwar Chandra Roy exercised his franchise at a booth in Barogharia Gram Panchayat, while Trinamool Congress nominee Nirmal Chandra Roy did it at a booth in Jhar Alta Gram Panchayat.

BJP candidate Tapasi Roy cast her vote at Kamat Primary School in Kayet of Gadong Gram Panchayat.

Dhupguri, a scheduled caste-reserved seat, has nearly 50 per cent Rajbanshi people and 15 per cent minority population.

The BJP had snatched the constituency from the TMC in the 2021 assembly polls. Votes will be counted on September 8. (PTI)

Congress focuses on minority appeasement, Modi govt on welfare of tribals, Dalits and poor: Shah

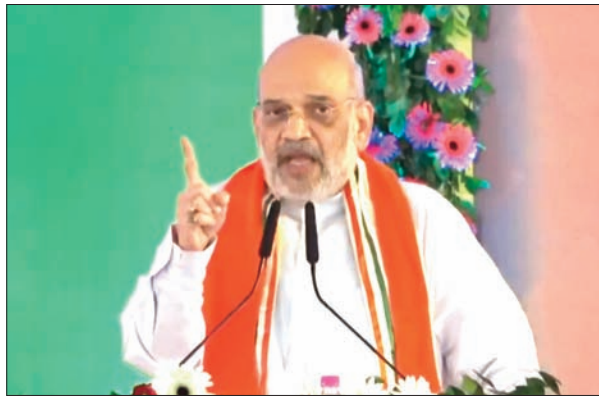
MANDLA (MP), Sept 5: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday accused the Congress of resorting to "minority appeasement" and said the BJP government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in contrast focuses on the welfare of tribals, Dalits, the poor and backward classes.

Shah also expressed confidence that his party will win more than 150 seats in the Madhya Pradesh assembly elections, which are due in November this year.

He was addressing a public rally during a function organised to flag off the BJP's 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra', a mass-contact programme, in Mandla of Mahakaushal region.

Quoting former PM Manmohan Singh's statement that minorities must have the first claim on resources, Shah said the Congress was too much into "appeasement of minorities" but the situation changed when Modi became the PM in 2014.

After becoming PM, Modi said that his government would work for the welfare of



tribals, Dalits, the poor and backward classes who have the right to resources, Shah said.

"Now, you have to choose between these two ideologies," said the Union minister.

Shah said that during 9 years of the BJP rule, the Modi government at the Centre has worked for these sections.

The budget for tribal welfare has been increased to ₹1.19 lakh crore by the Modi government from ₹ 24,000 crore during the Manmohan Singh government, he said.

The BJP is taking out 'Jan

Ashirwad Yatras' from five different places in MP. These programmes will culminate on September 25 in Bhopal with a 'Karyakarta Mahakumbh'. PM Modi is expected to address BJP workers in the state capital that day, party functionaries said earlier.

Following his Mandla engagement on Tuesday, Shah will head for Sheopur in the Gwalior-Chambal region where too he will address a public rally after inaugurating another 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra', according to a party spokesperson. (PTI)

Sarba inaugurates Regional Review meeting of the National Ayush Mission

CHENNAI, Sept 5: The Regional Review meeting of National Ayush Mission was ceremonially inaugurated by the union minister of ports, shipping & waterways and ayush, Sarbananda Sonowal along with the Union minister of State for Ayush & Women and Child Development, Munjipara Mahendrabhai Kalubhai; minister of health & family welfare, Govt of Tamil Nadu, Thiru Ma Subramanian; minister of health & family welfare, Govt of Karnataka, Dinesh Gundu Rao; secretary, ministry of ayush, Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha among other senior officials from governments of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala & Tamil Nadu, UT of Puducherry, UT of Lakshadweep and Ministry of Ayush, Govt of India.

During the meeting, all the participating states & union territories presented detailed presentations on the state of Ayush and progress of leading Ayush programmes under implementation.

Speaking on the occasion, the union minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush, Sonowal said, "Today, we had a very fruitful discussion on Ayush and how the traditional system of medicine can be promoted further towards re-

alising a Swastha Bharat - the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Our rich heritage and potential of traditional form of medicine has withstood the test of time in generations of humanity to live a better, healthier and happier life. We must take full advantage of this generous forms of medicine - be it Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy, Sowa Rigpa, or Homoeopathy. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, we have been working towards scientifically integrate traditional forms of medicine with the modern medicine. This will not only help people heal from ailments but also empower to stay healthy to enjoy a better quality of lives."

He further added, "We must do everything possible to invest, innovate, & integrate traditional system of medicine for enhancing the quality of life of the people."

Highlighting the utility of Ayush system of medicine, the union minister said, "Ayush has some robust programmes like Ayurveda for promotion of healthy lifestyle through Ayush for school children; Supraja: Ayush for Maternal & Neonatal intervention; Vayomitra which is Ayush based geriatric programme; Prevention and man-



agement of Osteoarthritis and other Musculoskeletal disorders, Ayush Mobile Medical units etc. will strengthen the Ayush systems. Our beautiful state of Tamil Nadu with its rich heritage also contributes strongly to the ever growing popularity of Ayush through Siddha... We must work towards promotion of Siddha, not just in & around the periphery of Tamil Nadu but whole of India so that more and more people can avail the wonderful benefits of Siddha to lead a better, healthier and happier life."

The Union Cabinet has approved for operationalised of 12,500 Ayush Health and Wellness Centres (AHWCs) by the Ministry of Ayush through State/UT Governments as a component of NAM by the year 2023-24. The main objectives are to establish holistic wellness model based on Ayush principles and practices, to empower masses for "self-care" to reduce the disease burden, out of pocket expenditure and to provide informed choice to the needy public. Ministry of Ayush has so far released ₹ 719.70 crores to southern states/UTs (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana) under NAM since 2014-15. Ministry has also supported 17 Integrated Ayush hospitals in Southern States and out of that 06 are operational as reported by them. Out of 12,500 AHWCs, Ministry has already supported 2181 AHWCs in Southern States/UTs and out of that 1518 are reported functional by them. Speaking on the occasion, Mahendrabhai Munjipara said, "With the active participation of States, it is expected to ensure better access to Ayush healthcare services, better availability of medicines & trained manpower, improvement in Ayush education through a

well-equipped and added number of Ayush Educational Institutions, reduction in communicable/non-communicable diseases through targeted Public Health Programmes using the strengths of Ayush systems of medicine."

Till 2022-23, 315 Ayush Hospitals and 5,023 Ayush dispensaries have been supported for Upgradation of infrastructure and other facilities. Financial Assistance has also been provided for 13 New Ayush Educational Institutions and 77 Under-Graduate and 35 Postgraduate Ayush Educational Institutes have been supported for upgradation of infrastructure, Library and other things. Under NAM, the ministry is providing support to the States/UTs including Southern States/UTs for Co-location of Ayush facilities in Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs) and District Hospitals (DHs), setting up of Integrated Ayush hospitals, new Ayush Dispensaries, operationalisation of Ayush Health & Wellness Centres by upgrading the existing Ayush Dispensaries and Sub-Centres, upgradation of UG & PG Ayush Education Institutes, so that the people may be able to avail the services from more Ayush healthcare facilities.

CBI arrests GAIL executive director in bribery case

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: The CBI has arrested an executive director and a chief general manager of GAIL along with three others in an alleged bribery case of Rs 50 lakh in which favours were granted to a Vadodara-based company in the contract for two pipeline projects, officials said Tuesday. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) laid a trap after receiving information about the possible delivery of the bribe amount to Executive Director (Projects) of GAIL K B Singh, they said.

During the searches, the agency recovered the alleged bribe

amount from Singh who was taken into custody after initial questioning, they said. Besides Singh, the CBI also arrested Director of Vadodara-based Advance Infrastructures Private Limited Surendra Kumar, Chief General Manager of GAIL Davinder Singh, and two other persons Harsh Yadav and Suryavesh, a CBI spokesperson said in a statement. In addition to the arrested individuals, the CBI has also named Advance Infrastructures Private Limited and Senior General Manager of MECON Limited Sunil Kumar as accused in the FIR. (PTI)



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No. 21 PSC/DR-80/1/2023-2024

Assam Public Service Commission invites application from Indian Citizens as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India for the under-mentioned posts under Assam Government in the scale of pay as indicated below and carrying usual allowances as admissible under Rules of the Govt. of Assam.

- Name of the Post:** Cultural Development Officer under Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Assam under Cultural Affairs Department
- No. of Posts:** 28 (Twenty Eight) Nos.
- Reservation of posts :-**

Name of the Service/Post	Open category		Reserved for OBC/MOBC		Reserved for SC		Reserved for STP		Reserved for STH		Reservation for Ex-servicemen		Grand Total		Post reserved for PwBD & Type of Disability
	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	Total	RFW	
Cultural Development Officer under Directorate of Cultural Affairs	16	05	07	02	01	00	02	00	02	01	00	00	28	08	02 i) Locomotor disability (dwarfism) = 1 ii) Low Vision = 1

*Reservation as per draft advertisement received from Government against total numbers of posts in the cadre.

- Scale of Pay:** - Pay scale + Grade Pay + Other allowances as admissible to the Assam State Government employees from time to time (per month).

Pay scale	Grade Pay	Pay band
Rs. 14,000/- to 60,500/-	Rs. 8,700/-	PB - 2

5. Age:

The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 40 years of age as on 01/01/2023. The upper age limit is relaxable :

- By 5 years for SC/ST candidates, i.e. upto 45 years.
- By 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidates i.e. upto 43 years as per Govt. Notification No. ABP. 6/2016/9 dated Dispur the 25th April 2018.
- For Persons with Benchmark Disability (PwBD) by 10 years irrespective of SC/ST/OBC and General Category of candidate as per Govt. Memorandum No. ABP 180/2017/105 dated Dispur the 7th January, 2019.

The age limit of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the Matriculation /HSLC Admit Card or Pass Certificate reflecting date of birth/age of the candidate issued by a recognized Central/State Board/Council and no other document shall be accepted in lieu of the mentioned documents.

(Upload relevant document reflecting the proof of age)

6. Education Qualification :-

(i) Either (a) or (b) of the following:

- Bachelor Degree in any discipline from any Govt. recognized university
With
Diploma from Govt. recognized institute in Dance/ Drama/Diploma from Govt. recognized institute in Film making for Film Editing/ Motion Picture Photography/Acting/Sound Engineering.
- Bachelor Degree in Music (Vocal/Instrumental/Sattriya) from any Govt. Music College/ Govt. recognized institute.
Or
Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts from any Govt. College of Art & Craft/ Govt. recognized institute.
Or
Bachelor Degree in Cultural Studies from any recognized university/ Govt. recognized institute.

(ii) Preferable Qualification:

- The candidate must possess adequate knowledge on Cultural Heritage of the state of Assam.
- Any candidate having certificate of National/State Level performance may be given preference.

(Upload relevant marksheet/certificate reflecting the subjects)

7. Eligibility Criteria :-

- The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.
- The candidate must produce PRC issued in Assam for educational purpose/ Employment Exchange Registration certificate / Voter ID card of the candidate or his/her parents will be treated as proof of residency along with the application form. State Govt. Employees of Assam need not submit any documents regarding domicile proof, however, they will have to submit No Objection Certificate (NOC) from their respective employer/ copy of the acknowledged intimation letter for the NOC (if under process) from competent authority of the respective Department.

(Upload necessary documents.)

8. Physical Fitness:

A candidate for direct recruitment shall be: a) of sound health, both mentally and physically and free from organic defects of bodily infirmity that are likely to interfere with the efficient performance of his duties and b) required to undergo medical examination before appointment to this service.

The advertisement has been issued as per draft advertisement furnished by the Government.

- (i) **STARTING DATE FOR ONLINE APPLICATION :** 06-09-2023
- (ii) **CLOSING DATE FOR ONLINE APPLICATION :** 05-10-2023
- (iii) **LAST DATE FOR PAYMENT OF APPLICATION FEE:** 07-10-2023

NB: For detail advertisement please visit APSC's official website www.apsc.nic.in (Recruitment Advertisement link).

Sd/-

Deputy Secretary,
Assam Public Service Commission

Janasanyog /D/9976/ 23/6-Sep-23

Contd. from Page 1...

Teachers' Day celebrated

to the teachers for their valuable contribution in our lives. Teachers are the architect of our future. They play a significant role in shaping the life of the future of the children. They are the motivators and guide of every child."

The EM said teaching is not just a job, it is a calling. It requires patience and unwavering commitment. In classrooms teachers are not only educators, they are mentors and role models, where students learn from their mistakes and grow. It inspires children to dream and aim high and to believe in themselves.

On the other hand, teachers of provincialised schools, while celebrating the Teacher's Day have shared the difficulties they are facing. The teachers complained of insufficient and irregular salaries that make it difficult for them to make ends meet. Some of them are also nearing retirement.

"After rendering our service in the education for half of our life we are left with no security. Teacher's Day celebration for us seems to be just an annual affair," said a teacher of a provincialized school on condition of anonymity. The aggrieved teachers have urged the KAAC authority to address the issues faced by them.

Assam Govt inaugurates

threw lights on India's rich legacy where teachers play a crucial role in shaping the humanity and earning admiration worldwide. He referred to the luminaries like Baisistha, Chanakya, Dayanand Saraswati, APJ Abdul Kalam etc who left an indelible mark in the rich tapestry of Indian knowledge.

Assam govt to plant

Foundation, Ranjit Barhakur said they got inspiration from India's hosting of the G20 Summit. "It will involve communities across the northeastern region of India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, who will unitedly work to protect and restore forests for the benefit of local livelihoods and the planet. The Eastern Himalayan region is of vast human, cultural and ecological significance to the planet," said Ranjit Barhakur. (PTI)

NFR bags PMI South

as well as alert about disaster mitigation due to unauthorised digging near railway tracks, landslides near tracks, etc. After success of the pilot project on intrusion detection system undertaken by NFR in the Chalsa - Hasimara section of the Dooars area under Alipurduar Division in West Bengal and Lanka - Hawaipur section under Lumding Division in Assam, it will now be installed in the system gradually in all other elephant corridors spread over the region. The NFR has already received an amount of Rs. 77 crores has already been received for this.

This particular pilot project has been immensely successfully in saving lives of many elephants approaching railway track from being hit by trains. Bhubaneshwar based East Coast Railway (ECoR) has also adopted this successful model for saving elephant over their jurisdiction.

Kumud Kalita honoured

adopted parents. Besides helping the children learn to perform their daily activities, formal education is also imparted to them. "Children staying or learning in Tapoban have been appearing for matriculation examinations for the last few years. Some of them have successfully passed the exam too," Hiren Kalita, a local resident associated with the institution, said. "As people from the area, we are proud of what Kalita is doing and we also chip in with our bit," he added.

Tapoban provides all forms of care, including early intervention, physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, Braille education, and training in music and yoga. Even as praise and recognition started coming in for Tapoban over the last few years, the initial period was challenging for Kalita, especially in meeting financial requirements.

Hailing from a humble family of farmers, Kalita worked in a restaurant to meet his university education expenses. He went about selling books from door to door even after joining the job as a teacher to save enough for his dream project. Along with Tapoban, Kalita has also built a library that annually organizes a week-long book reading programme in January to encourage youths to read books.

Kalita's efforts have also received adulation in the form of different awards, including the Best Community Action Award by the Chief Minister of Assam, Rotary Vocational Excellence Award, Sushibrata Roychoudhury Memorial Award, State Level Best Teacher Award and the Children Champion Award by Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights. He has also been associated with organizations dealing with child rights issues and hopes to form a centre for elderly people with special needs. (PTI)

G20 dinner invite

"Now, Article 1 in the Constitution can read: Bharat, that was India, shall be a Union of States. But now even this Union of States is under assault," Ramesh alleged.

In another post, he said the BJP was the one that had come up with the India Shining' campaign to which the Congress' response was 'Aam Aadmi ko Kya Mila'.

"Also remember that it was the BJP that came up with Digital India, Start-Up India, New India, and so on to which the Congress' response was the Bharat Jodo Yatra, the first anniversary of whose launch is day after tomorrow," he said. In another post, Ramesh said, "Mr. Modi can continue to distort history and divide India, that is Bharat, that is a Union of States. But we will not be deterred."

West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee said, "We all know India is Bharat, but the world knows us as India." What changed suddenly that we should use only Bharat, she asked.

Her Tamil Nadu counterpart M K Stalin also lashed out at the government over the issue, saying that after "non-BJP forces united to dethrone the fascist BJP regime" and aptly named their alliance INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance), now the BJP wants to change 'India' for 'Bharat.'

"BJP promised to TRANSFORM India, but all we got is a name change after 9 years! Seems like the BJP is rattled by a single term called India because they recognise the strength of unity within the opposition. During the elections, 'India' will chase BJP out of power!" Stalin said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asked whether the BJP would change the name of Bharat if the opposition alliance INDIA rechristens itself Bharat.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar said no one has the right to change the country's name.

The BJP reacted with delight to a G20 dinner invitation that described Droupadi Murmu as "President of Bharat", saying the use of the Hindi name for the country underscores its 'civilisation march', and rejected the opposition's objections to it.

"Bharat word is not new. It has been used since ancient times. Bharat Mata and Vande Mataram are in our blood and nothing will happen by your opposition. Bharat word is mentioned in the Constitution. New Khiljis and new Mughals have come who want to remove Bharat," he said.

In a post on X, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "REPUBLIC OF BHARAT - happy and proud that our civilisation is marching ahead boldly towards AMRIT KAAL."

Hitting out at Congress' criticism, he said in another post, "Now my apprehension has proven to be true. The Congress party seems to have a strong aversion towards Bharat. It appears that the name 'I.N.D.I alliance' was intentionally chosen with the aim of defeating BHARAT."

The opposition also claimed that it was reflective of the BJP's "jitteriness" over the INDIA bloc.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad hailed the use of the word Bharat

in President Droupadi Murmu's G20 dinner invitation and said "Let's forget the word INDIA".

The row over the issue erupted four days after Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat made a strong pitch for the use of the word 'Bharat' instead of India.

Addressing an event in Guwahati on September 1, Bhagwat said the country's name as Bharat has been continuing since ancient times and it must be taken forward.

"Our Constitution very clearly says 'India that is Bharat', and our (opposition alliance) tagline says - 'Judega Bharat, Jitega India'...People will snatch away the power that is enabling you to do this, people love both India and Bharat," Jha said.

Reacting sharply, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said the BJP was using its majority in Parliament to treat the entire country as its "fiefdom".

"BJPs aversion to India's foundational principle of unity in diversity has touched a new low. By reducing India's many names from Hindustan and India to now only Bharat shows its pettiness and intolerance," she posted on X.

Congress general secretary K C Venugopal charged that the BJP's destructive mind can only think of how to divide people.

"Once again, they are creating a rift between Indians and Bharatiyas. Let's be clear - we are the same! As Article 1 says - India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States. This is petty politics because they are scared of INDIA," he said.

"Try what you will, Modi ji. Judega Bharat, Jeetega INDIA!" Venugopal said in a post on X.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said while there is no constitutional objection to calling India 'Bharat', he hopes the government will not be so foolish as to completely dispense with 'India' which has incalculable brand value.

Patient has made a full

give her a new lease on life." Prof. Noor Topno, Head, department of General Surgery, said that this was a complex case, and I am proud of the work done by our team of surgeons and other healthcare professionals. We are committed to providing the best possible care to all of our patients, and this case is a testament to our dedication. Prof C Daniala, Medical Superintendent, said that he was delighted to hear that the patient is recovering well after her surgery. He appreciated the skills and dedication of the surgeons and others involved.

"I am proud of the entire team of doctors" said Prof Nalin Mehta, Director of NEIGRIHMS. "This not only speaks volumes of the capabilities of our doctors, nurses and support staff but also reiterates our commitment to providing the best healthcare to the people of the entire North Eastern Region".

Assam govt honours

and colleges as places for all-round growth of students. The principals of Bahona College, Nanda Nath Saikia College and Chandra Kamal Bezbaruah College, Jorhat; Bholanath College, Dhubri; Digboi College, Tinsukia; Furkating College, Golaghat; Jagiroad College and Mayang Anchalik College, Morigaon; Sonapur College, Kamrup (M) were also feted for achieving A+ in National Assessment and Accreditation Council grading.(PTI)

People losing land yet

managed to get significant compensation. However, there are also many who lost significant amounts of land and have not received any compensation from the government. Former leader of KLNLF, P Dili, president of LORPC, Lalsing Engti, secretary Ranjit Hanse and others were present in the meeting.

Solar mission: Aditya L1

(PSLV-C57) on September 2 had 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, Aditya-L1 spacecraft was successfully injected into an elliptical orbit of 235x19500 km around the earth.

According to ISRO, a satellite 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), Bengaluru, and Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), 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 vantage 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. The suits of Aditya L1 payloads are expected to provide the most crucial information to understand the problem of coronal heating, coronal mass ejection, pre-flare and flare activities and their characteristics, dynamics of space weather, propagation of particles and fields.

According to scientists, there are five Lagrangian points (or parking areas) between the earth and the sun where a small object tends to stay if put there. The Lagrange Points are named after Italian-French mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange for his prize-winning paper -- "Essai sur le Problème des Trois Corps, 1772."

These points in space can be used by spacecraft to remain there with reduced fuel consumption. At a Lagrange point, the gravitational pull of the two large bodies (the sun and the earth) equals the necessary centripetal force required for a small object to move with them. (PTI)

Naga Hobo demands

"The arbitrary boundary divided families, clansmen, relatives, tribes, communities and the Naga nation. The Nagas on both sides of the border have been resisting these forceful occupations by India and Myanmar. However, the neo colonial design and brutal militarization by both the countries have only resulted into forceful division among the same people and the land. Due to this the Naga people in Myanmar have suffered more grievously," the Naga Hobo pointed out.

Presently, the Nagas in Burma live in approximately 390 Naga villages. Its population is estimated to be about half a million. There are 7 major Naga tribes in Myanmar - Tangshang, Konyak, Lainong, Nokko (Khamniungan), Makury, Para, Tangkhul and other minor tribes include Anal, Moyon, Lamkang etc. With the formation of states and divisions after Burma attained independence on January 4, 1948, about 40 Naga villages of Tanai Township and Shinbiyang sub-township were included in Kachin State while the rest were included in the Sagaing Region.

The Naga townships in the Naga areas of Sagaing divisions are - Khamti, Homlin, Layshi, Lahe and Nanyun (The constitution of the Union of Burma 1974). However, when Naga Self Administration Zone (NSAZ) was created under the terms of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar and its official name announced by decree on August 20, 2010, it included only the hill townships - Layshi, Lahe, and Nanyun. Lahe was chosen as the administrative seat while the important valley townships Khamti and Homlin were left out, the Naga Hobo added.

The Naga consented neither to the creation of Self-Administered Zone nor the exclusion of the two important Naga townships, Khamti and Homlin. This was clearly mentioned in the memorandum submitted to the chairman of the National Convention Steering Committee on November 1, 2004, where the inalienable and indivisible right of the Nagas to their ancestral homeland was highlighted. The Naga people have a right to determine their own future by themselves, the Naga Hobo also said. (NNN)

Shah Rukh Khan visits Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple ahead of 'Jawan' release

TIRUPATI, Sept 5: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Tuesday offered prayers at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in the hill town of Tirumala in Tirupati district of Andhra Pradesh, days before the release of his much-anticipated film "Jawan".

The 58-year-old superstar was accompanied by his daughter Suhana Khan.



"Jawan" co-star Nayanthara, her filmmaker husband Vignesh Shivan and other members of his team.

In a PTI video, Shah Rukh can be seen inside the temple premises with his security and others managing the crowd as he exits.

The actor wore white kurta pyjama with traditional upper cloth for his early morning visit to the temple. He first paid obeisance to the flag pole and then offered prayers to Lord Venkateswara. "Jawan", a high-octane action thriller, is directed by Tamil filmmaker Atlee. It is set to arrive in theatres on September 7.

The film also stars, Vijay Sethupathi, Priyamani and Sanya Malhotra. Deepika Padukone is making a special appearance. The film will be released in theatres on Thursday in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu languages. (PTI)

Little details matter if one has to create a world for audience director Hemant M Rao

BENGALURU, Sept 5: The devil, as they say, is in the details. Clearly, for Kannada film director Hemant M Rao, little details are what make an ordinary film into an epic.

"I have to create a world for the audience to get lost in. So, details become important. For instance, when it comes to helmets, even the choice of helmet matters," says Rao.

Even with no proper film background, Mysore-born Rao jumped on to the Kannada film industry's nascent 'new wave' scene when he debuted with "Godhi Banna Sadharana Mykattu" in 2016. Post 1990, Kannada cinema often relied on remakes, but the scene changed with the 2013 crowd-funded film, "Lucia".

By going the neo-noir route for his second film "Kavaldaari" (2019), Rao cemented his place among the handful of young directors, who have started forging a new path for Kannada cinema.

Now with his latest film, "Sapta Sagaradaache Eilo" (Side A), Rao has yet again gone on the less trodden path. Romantically, Kannada cinema hasn't seen a compelling film since "Pallavi Anu Pallavi" (1983), which, incidentally, is Mani Ratnam's debut film. (PTI)



Karan Johar's 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' headed to Busan Film Festival

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Karan Johar's directorial "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani" will be screened at the 2023 edition of the Busan International Film Festival, the organisers announced Tuesday.

The romance drama, which released in India in July and amassed over Rs 300 crore at the box office, will be showcased under the 'Open Cinema' segment of the film gala. The Open Cinema section presents a collection of "new and internationally acclaimed films that offer an ideal mix of the popular with the artistic" cinema.

"Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani" will be screened alongside four other titles — Luc Besson's "Dogman" (France), Yukisada Isao's "Revolver Lily" (Japan), Thomas Cailley's "The Animal Kingdom" (France) and Anthony Pun's "One More Chance" (Hong Kong, China).

Directed by Johar in his 25th anniversary year in the film industry, the family entertainer features Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in the title roles and follows the story of Rocky and Rani, a couple from different cultures and social backgrounds.

The filmmaker also shared the news in a post on his Instagram Stories.

"Feeling absolutely blessed and grateful! #RockyAurRaniKiiPremKahaani goes to @busanfilmfest," Johar wrote. "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani" also stars Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan and Shabana Azmi along with Tota Roy Chowdhury, Churni Ganguly, Aamir Bashir, Kshitee Jog, Anjali Anand, and Namit Das.

Indian films will be having a strong presence at the 28th edition of the Busan International Film Festival, which is set to be held from October 4 to 13. (PTI)



FAMILY DIDN'T WANT ME TO BECOME AN ACTOR: RAJVEER DEOL

MUMBAI, Sept 5: Rajveer Deol, the younger son of Sunny Deol, says his family was not in favour of him joining the movie industry because of its unpredictable nature.

Rajveer is making his acting debut with romantic drama "Dono", which also launches veteran actor Poonam Dhillon and producer Ashok Thakuria's daughter Paloma. The film is directed by first-time filmmaker Avnish, who is Sooraj Barjatya's son.

"My parents never wanted me to become an actor. They wanted me to study and do something else. It's because this industry is so unpredictable. You are happy for a second and (feel) miserable the next. In fact, my father got a hit ('Gadar 2') after 22 years. But unfortunately, I fell in love with acting," Rajveer told reporters here at the trailer launch of "Dono", which was attended by his grandfather Dharmendra, uncles Bobby Deol and Abhay Deol and father Sunny Deol. Rajveer said he fell in love with acting because he was surrounded by actors and thought "this is how you got the bread home".

"I was always influenced by movies and loved acting. I felt one could just disguise themselves in the characters. So, this is what I wanted to do. My family advised me to work hard. They told me not to be a star and become an actor first as the characters will get more work and that is what I want to do," he added. Rajveer said his father Sunny Deol taught him to "never give up".

"What dad has taught me is dedication and determination. He has the strongest back ever, he carries his whole life on his back..." Sunny Deol, who was present at the event, said he has seen "Dono" and as a parent he is full of pride, joy and confidence but he also feels scared. Dhillon said both the newcomers look good on the screen. "I was so happy that they were coming together after Sunny and I did such amazing films together, and people liked us onscreen a lot. They too (Rajveer and Paloma) look good together. (PTI)



'Jawan' fever grips Kashmir, almost jam-packed first weekend: theatre owner Vijay Dhar

SRINAGAR, Sept 5: With two days to go for its release, INOX Cinema theatre owner Vijay Dhar hopes "Jawan" is able to replicate the success of the last Shah Rukh Khan-starrer "Pathaan" in Srinagar.

The upcoming pan-India movie marks Shah Rukh's second theatrical offering in 2023, almost eight months after the stellar performance of "Pathaan", which emerged as one of the biggest hit Hindi films of this year.

According to the makers, "Jawan" is a high-octane action thriller that "outlines the emotional journey of a man who is set to rectify the wrongs in the society". Directed by Atlee, the film will hit the screens Thursday in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

"We opened pre-booking two days ago. Thursday, Saturday and Sunday are completely booked. We have only kept two shows for Friday because of the prayers. 'Pathaan' did great business and we are expecting a similar response to Shah Rukh Khan's 'Jawan'," Dhar, a prominent educationist, told PTI.

While he expected "Pathaan" to do well given the fandom of Shah Rukh in the region, Dhar said he was surprised with the way Kashmiri audiences, especially young students, lapped up Hollywood film "Oppenheimer", Christopher Nolan's biopic on the theoretical physicist and father of the nuclear bomb, Robert J Oppenheimer.

"We were not expecting the

film to do so well. That was a real surprise for us," he recalled about the Cillian Murphy starrer.

INOX Cinema is Kashmir's first multiplex — with three screens and a total capacity of 520 seats — was inaugurated in the Sonawar area on September 20, 2022 and showcased "Laal Singh Chaddha" on its opening day.

Three decades ago, there were no cinema halls in the Valley, Dhar said, adding the culture of movie watching is slowly getting established.

"There were no cinema halls 30-32 years ago. There was no online booking earlier, now it has opened and many get their tickets booked, but there are people who prefer to come and buy the ticket

from the ticket window," the self-proclaimed cinema lover said.

Dhar hopes theatrical releases get good response from the local audience, who would earlier travel to Jammu to watch their favourite stars on the big screen.

"Jawan" also features Vijay Sethupathi and Nayanthara as well as Deepika Padukone in a special appearance.

Sanya Malhotra, Priyamani, Girija Oak, Sanjeeta Bhatnacharya, Lehar Khan, Aaliyah Qureshi, Ridhi Dogra, Sunil Grover and Mukesh Chhabra appear in the movie in key roles.

A Red Chillies Entertainment presentation, "Jawan" is produced by Gauri Khan and co-produced by Gaurav Verma. (PTI)



THW WICKET-KEEPER BATSMAN HAS GOT OVER HIS NIGGLE

KL IS LOOKING GOOD, GIVES US THE BEST BALANCE: AGARKAR

PALLEKELE (SRI LANKA), Sept 5: KL Rahul's presence gives India's World Cup squad "the best balance" as he has met all the fitness parameters, chief selector Ajit Agarkar said on Tuesday, clearing the air of uncertainty surrounding the wicket-keeper-batter.

Rahul last played for India in an ODI against Australia at Chennai earlier this month.

Agarkar expressed satisfaction over the fitness levels of Rahul and said the 31-year-old has overcome his niggle that delayed his comeback in the ongoing Asia Cup.

"KL (Rahul) is looking good. We feel this gives us the best balance to try and do well. KL was part of the camp in Bangalore, and he looked really good there and has got over his niggle."

"He played a couple of games over the last two days (at NCA). He kept for 50 overs and batted for around 50 overs too, so we're happy to have him," said Agarkar after announcing India's World Cup-bound 15-member squad in the presence of captain Rohit Sharma.

Earlier, Rahul was included in India's Asia Cup squad but he missed the league stage matches after picking up a fresh niggle that mandated him to go through some more rounds of fitness drills at the NCA.

Ishan Kishan has also been named in the squad and Agarkar said having two excellent wicket-keeper batters will only serve the squad well.

"It's a good headache to have. Kishan played well recently, and he plays well at the top. KL's record in ODIs is brilliant."

"We have two good (wicket-keeper-batter) options. We can pick and choose between the two who will fight for a spot in the team," said Agarkar.

Kishan excelled in the three ODIs against the West Indies recently and then played a mature 82 while batting at No. 5 against Pakistan in the Asia Cup to rescue India from a wobbly position.

Rohit said the team management will certainly explore the possibility of including both Rahul and Kishan in the 11.

Rohit, though, added that the call will be taken depending on the opposition, condition and the fitness levels.

"There will be possibilities. Everyone is available and fit to play. The selection depends on form and the opposition. It's also about how the runs are scored."

"Kishan, how he played in the first game (in the Asia Cup), was brilliant. Given the situation, he did very well. So, it depends on fitness and situation," said Rohit. (PTI)



Sanath Jayasuriya defends Pallekele as Asia Cup venue

MUMBAI, Sept 5 Sri Lanka legend Sanath Jayasuriya on Tuesday defended the choice of Pallekele as one of the venues for the ongoing Asia Cup, saying the city has witnessed "unusual weather" in the past few days.

The organisers have come in for criticism for picking Sri Lanka as the co-host for the Asia Cup and not the UAE, with the second half of India's contest against Pakistan being washed out and the match against Nepal being truncated owing to rain.

Jayasuriya told PTI in an exclusive interaction that while he recalls playing cricket back home in the month of September, the city of Pallekele was not expected to get such rains.

"I think we did, I cannot remember. I played long time ago; we would have played in the months of August and September," said Jayasuriya, who came for the trailer launch of his Sri Lanka teammate Muttiah Muralitharan's biopic '800'. "We never expected this kind of weather. Normally, in Pallekele, it is a dry zone — you do not get much rains and it is

only seasonal rains. In Pallekele, you do not get unusual weather. We cannot help," Jayasuriya added.

Jayasuriya said India have a balanced side in the Asia Cup and their top-order's struggle against Pakistan's pace battery is not to be panicked about.

"They are a very good Indian team. Unfortunately in the Asia Cup (match) it got rained off against Pakistan. Even yesterday's game (against Nepal) was mostly rained off, but they have a balanced team," he said.

"These things happen in cricket — there are days when you will not get runs and there are days when you will. I do not think anybody should panic about it much. This Indian side is good," Jayasuriya said.

The former captain also backed Sri Lanka to excel in the coming assignments. "They are playing well in the Asia Cup and even against Afghanistan they have played well. They need to continue performing during this tournament so that they get more confidence," Jayasuriya said. (PTI)



Asia Cup 2023: Super Four, final matches to stay in Colombo

COLOMBO, Sept 5: The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) on Tuesday decided to keep the Asia Cup Super 4 and final matches in Colombo itself as the weather in the Sri Lankan capital has shown signs of improvement.

It has been speculated over the last few days that the Super 4 and final games of the Asia Cup could be shifted to Hambantota after heavy rains lashed Colombo.

The PTI has been informed that the ACC held parleys with Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), hosts Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the official broadcaster before arriving at the decision to keep the matches in Colombo itself.



The broadcaster too has explained the difficulties to relocate their equipment and staff to Hambantota, a deep Southern district, at such a short notice.

In fact, it was SLC who suggested Hambantota as an alternate venue for the five Asia Cup Super 4 matches and the final as the city has been experiencing a drought over the last few weeks.

The Sri Lanka-leg of Super 4 will be started with a game between India and Pakistan on September 10 at the R Premadasa Stadium.

This will be the second time India will take on Pakistan in the

Asia Cup.

The league match between the two sides was rained off after India made 266 all out, courtesy fifties from Ishan Kishan and Hardik Pandya.

The ACC also briefly dabbled with the idea of shifting the matches to Pallekele and Dambulla only to abandon it later.

While Pallekele too has been experiencing heavy rains, the Rangiri International Stadium in Dambulla is under maintenance to install new floodlights and a few other facilities.

Both of India's group matches were affected by rain.

The much anticipated India-Pakistan clash at the Pallekele stadium in Kandy was called off after one innings due to heavy downpour on Saturday, while India's match against Nepal on Monday was also truncated due to rain. (PTI)

Protea keeper de Kock to retire from ODIs after World Cup in India

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 5: South Africa wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock will retire from ODI cricket after the upcoming 50-over World Cup in India.

The announcement of de Kock's impending retirement from ODIs was made by Cricket South Africa (CSA) in 'X', formerly Twitter.

"Quinton de Kock has announced his retirement from ODI cricket following the conclusion of the ICC @cricket-worldcup in India," the CSA wrote.

De Kock's decision to retire came minutes after CSA named a 15-member South Africa squad for the World Cup, to be led by Temba Bavuma.

The ODI World Cup will be

held in India from October 5 to November 19. The 30-year-old de Kock stunned the cricketing world in December 2021 by announcing his sudden retirement from Test cricket, insisting that he wants to spend more time with his young family.

The left-handed batter was rested from the recently-concluded T20I series against Australia which South Africa lost 0-3. But, he is expected to feature in the five-match ODI series against Australia, starting September 7.

De Kock played 54 Tests and scored 3300 runs with a best knock of 141 not out. He also represented South Africa in 140 ODIs and 80 T20 Internationals, amassing 5966 and 2277 runs respectively. (PTI)



Belgium's Artur Lucas joins Indian hockey as coach-cum-video analyst

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Hockey India on Tuesday announced the appointment of Belgium's Artur Lucas as coach-cum-video analyst for its senior and junior sides.

As per his contract, Lucas will work with all four Indian hockey teams — senior men, senior women, junior men, and junior women at the SAI Centre in Bengaluru. Lucas comes to his new position with a wealth of experience and expertise. The Belgian previously worked for the Royal Belgium Hockey Association as the performance analyst for the U-18 national team from 2018 to 2023. During his tenure, he made significant contributions to the team's development and success.

He also worked as an analytic consultant for Biztory Belgium last year, which allowed him to hone his analytical skills while providing innovative insights to the sport.

Lucas has also been a key figure at KHC Dragons as performance analyst since 2017, providing critical analysis and support to one of Belgium's top hockey clubs.

From 2015 to 2021, he was associated with Victoria Hockey Club, Edegem, in various roles such as youth manager and coach.

On Lucas' appointment, HI president Tirkey said, "We are delighted to welcome Artur Lucas to the Hockey India family. His extensive experience and expertise as the coach, video analyst will undoubtedly improve the performance of our teams. We believe his presence will be invaluable in our pursuit of international excellence." (PTI)

Asian TT: Indian women finish sixth, mixed pairs bow out

PYEONGCHANG (SOUTH KOREA), Sept 5: The Indian women's team finished sixth in the Asian Table Tennis Championships after being blanked 0-3 by Thailand here on Tuesday.

The Indians beat Singapore 3-2 in a 5-8 positions match before going down to Thailand in the fifth-position showdown.

Against Singapore, Manika Batra began well against Jingyi Zhou (11-9, 11-3, 11-6) to put the team on the right path, but Sreeja Akula's loss (7-11, 6-11, 7-11) to Jian Zeng gave the rivals a life-

line.

However, Ayhika Mukerjee's win against Ru Xin Wong provided India a 2-1 lead.

In the reverse singles, Manika failed to overcome Jian Zeng and lost 8-11, 6-11, 7-11, putting pressure on Sreeja to make amends for her earlier loss. And the Hyderabad pulled off a 3-1 (12-10, 11-3, 9-11, 11-6) win over Jingyi to redeem the team's chances.

But the Thai denied the team as Suthasini Sawettabutt accounted for Sreeja 11-6, 11-5, 11-6, then Orawan Paranang downed

Manika 11-4, 8-11, 11-4, 11-6 before Wanwisa Aueawiriyayothin overcame Diya Chitale 15-13, 8-11, 4-11, 11-9, 11-8 to grab the fifth position.

The paddlers faltered in the mixed doubles too.

G Sathiyam and Manika went down 2-3 (11-7, 10-12, 11-6, 8-11, 9-11) in the round of 32 to another Thai pair, Phakpoom Sanguansin and Orawan Paranang.

During the match, Manika seemed to have twisted her ankle and needed a 10-minute medical

attention. But the Indian duo continued and lost.

Harmeet Desai and Sreeja Akula followed suit and lost to the top-seeded Japanese pair of Tomokazu Harimoto and Hina Hayata 6-11, 7-11, 8-11 in another Round of 32 match.

In their first round, the Indian duo beat the Malaysian pair of Shen Qi Wong and Xin Ai Tee 11-7, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9.

The Indian men's team, already assured of a bronze medal, takes on Chinese Taipei in the semifinals on Wednesday. (PTI)

Teams expressed concerns about playing ODIs in UAE heat: Jay Shah defends Asia Cup scheduling

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Asian Cricket Council (ACC) president Jay Shah on Tuesday attributed the body's decision to host Asia Cup matches in Sri Lanka on teams' reluctance to play ODIs in the UAE heat and abrupt changes at the top of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

Shah defended the move after former PCB president Najam Sethi's recent comments in which he mentioned that during his tenure he had suggested that the 2023 Asia Cup be staged in the UAE instead of Sri Lanka, parts of which are experiencing heavy rainfall. In a statement, Shah said: "The Asia Cup 2022 edition was played in the UAE in the T20 format. It's important to emphasize that the dynamics of a T20 tournament cannot be directly compared to those of a 100-over One-day format."

"In this context, ACC members received feedback from

their respective high-performance teams, expressing concerns about playing One-day matches in the UAE in the month of September. Such a schedule could have potentially led to player fatigue and an increased risk of injuries, particularly right before the all-important ICC Cricket World Cup."

The ACC has come under criticism after fans were denied what could have been a thrilling finish to the highly-anticipated match between India and Pakistan at Pallekele on Saturday. Incessant rain led to a washout of the second innings, leaving the two teams to share a point each. "All the full members, media rights holder, and in-stadia rights holders were initially hesitant to commit to hosting the entire tournament in Pakistan. This reluctance stemmed from concerns related to the security and economic situation prevail-

ing in the country," Shah said further. "In my capacity as ACC President, I was committed to finding a viable and mutually agreeable solution. To this end, I had accepted the hybrid model that was proposed by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in collaboration with the ACC management."

"However, it's important to note that the leadership of the PCB underwent several changes, and this resulted in some back-and-forth negotiations, particularly regarding crucial aspects such as tax exemption and insurance for matches," Shah added.

Besides Sethi, former India cricketer Virender Sehwag also appeared to take a dig at the ACC for the scheduling of the tournament. In 'X', formerly Twitter, he had written, "Baarish ke time toh Chai Pakode rakhte hain yaar. Asia cup bhi rakhi diya (We have tea and snacks when it

rains. Asia Cup has also been scheduled)".

Rain had interrupted the proceedings of the much-anticipated Asia Cup clash thrice on Saturday evening after India opted to bat first, eventually leading to an abandonment.

The next day, Sethi slammed the scheduling, saying his suggestion to play in the UAE was turned down and "poor excuses" were made to accommodate Sri Lanka. "Too hot in Dubai, they said. But it was as hot when the Asia Cup was played there last time in Sep 2022 or when IPL was played there in April 2014 and Sep 2020. Politics over sport. Unforgivable!" Sethi had tweeted then. Meanwhile it has been learnt that the ACC decided to keep the Asia Cup Super 4 and final matches in Colombo itself as the weather here has shown signs of improvement. (PTI)

MENDIS SPECIAL TAKES SRI LANKA TO 291/8



LAHORE, Sept 5: Kusal Mendis bossed star spinner Rashid Khan in his stroke-filled 92 before Afghanistan fought back to limit Sri Lanka to 291 for eight in the group deciding Asia Cup game here on Tuesday.

Due to their inferior run rate, Afghanistan will need to chase down the target in 37.1 overs to qualify for the Super 4s from Group B alongside Bangladesh. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, need a straightforward win to advance.

Unlike Sri Lanka's opening game, openers Pathum Nissanka (41) and Dimuth Karunaratne (32) gave a brisk start to the innings before being dismissed by medium pacer Gulbadin Naib.

Rather than the bowlers' skills, it was more about the openers throwing their wickets away after a bright beginning.

Batting at number three, Mendis then put Sri Lanka on course for a 300 plus total with a near flawless effort comprising six boundaries and three sixes.

The highlight of his sublime innings was the comfort with which

he played the wily Rashid, who has built a reputation of foxing the best in the business.

Mendis had no issues picking his googlies and in the 26th over, worked him for three consecutive fours on the leg side. Later in Rashid's spell, Mendis made good contact with the leggies' googly to send it over long on for a maximum.

The Sri Lankan batter deserved a hundred but was run out in an unfortunate way with the ball bursting through bowler Rashid's hands to crash the stumps at the non-striker's end, leaving Mendis well out of his ground.

His 102-run stand with Charith Asalanka (36 off 43) put Sri Lanka on course for a 300 plus total but Afghanistan spinners removed Dhananajaya De Silva and skipper Dasuna Shanaka in a space of six balls to slow down the scoring rate.

In the end, Sri Lanka did well to get close to the 300-mark thanks to a 64-run stand for the eighth wicket between Maheesh Theekshana (28) and Dushith Wellalage (33 not out). (PTI)

