

WORLD
NATION

- Biden signs temporary spending bill averting govt shutdown
- Blinken asks China to expect candid talk after Biden calls Xi 'dictator'
- Madhya Pradesh records 71 per cent voter turn-out till 5 pm
- India strongly condemned civilian deaths: PM Modi

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PM flags misuse of AI to create 'deepfake'

I have not done garba since my school days: Modi

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday cautioned that deepfakes created by artificial intelligence can lead to a big crisis and stoke discontent in society, as he urged the media to raise awareness about its misuse and educate people.

Addressing the media at BJP's 'Diwali Milan' programme at the party's headquarters here, Modi said he recently saw a video of him performing garba even though he has not done so since schooldays. Even those who love him are forwarding the video, he said in a lighter vein.

"In a diverse society like ours, deepfakes can cause a big crisis and even stoke the fire of discontent as people generally trust anything associated with the media in the same way anyone clad in 'gedua' (saffron) tends to get respect from others.



"A new crisis is emerging due to deepfakes produced through artificial intelligence. There is a very big section of society which does not have a parallel verification system," the prime minister noted that earlier a movie with some controversial comments would come and go, but now it goes on to become a

big issue. Even screening of such films becomes difficult on the ground that they have disrespected some section of society irrespective of the huge amount of money spent on making them, he said.

Modi said he had recently suggested to ChatGPT professionals that as products like cigarettes come with health warnings, deepfakes too should carry disclosures.

Of late, deepfake videos featuring several celebrities have surfaced online, including one on Rashmika Mandanna, which led to a police FIR and action by the Union IT ministry.

Referring to his resolve for 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047, the prime minister said these are not merely words but a ground reality.

He suggested the 'vocal for local' campaign has found people's support. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

29 more Myanmarese soldiers flee to Mizoram

AIZAWL, Nov 17: At least 29 more Myanmarese soldiers crossed over to Mizoram after their camp in the neighbouring country was overrun by an anti-junta group, a senior police officer said.

With them, a total of 74 Myanmar military personnel had fled to Mizoram due to the recent gunfights with the People's Defence Force (PDF). Several of these soldiers, however, had been sent back.

"Twenty-nine more soldiers today (Thursday) approached the police and Assam Rifles at Saikhumpha in Champhai district near Tiau river, which acts as the border between India and Myanmar," inspector general of police (Headquarters) Lalbiaktanga Khing told PTI.

They fled their camp at Tuibual in Chin state, a few kilometres from the international border.

An Assam Rifles official said these 29 Myanmar soldiers are yet to be sent back to their country.

A total of 45 soldiers, who had fled to Mizoram after the PDF overran two military bases in the neighbouring country's Chin state, were



handed over to Myanmar's military government on Tuesday, an official said. India on Thursday called for cessation of fighting between Myanmar's military and anti-junta groups near the international border that has triggered an influx of Myanmarese people to Mizoram.

Myanmar has been witnessing widespread protests demanding restoration of democracy since the military seized power in a coup in February 2021.

Myanmar's military has been

using airstrikes against its opponents and those involved in the armed struggle against the ruling regime.

Myanmar is one of India's strategic neighbours and shares a 1,640-kilometre border with a number of north-eastern states, including militancy-hit Nagaland and Manipur. More than 31,000 Myanmar nationals have taken shelter in Mizoram since February 2021 after the Myanmar military junta staged a coup in the neighbouring country. (PTI)

HT BRIEFS

Spectacular performance

DIPHU: Throwing a pleasant surprise Kendriya Vidyalaya, Diphu, students show a spectacular performance in the recently held National Sports Meet (NSM) 2023 from November 02 to 06 in Lucknow and Mumbai, organised by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, New Delhi. Students had won a total of 05 medals which includes 03 silver and 02 bronze. The participation of students was ensured under leadership of sports in-charge, Sohan Lal Beniwal. The students participated in the Athletics and rope skipping event. The names of the Silver medalists are Sengmei Taropi, Manoh Sil and Erisim Taro. The Bronze medals are won by Anjali Hansepi and Jesika Teronpi. One student, Erisim Taro remarkably qualified for SGFI (School Games Federation of India) level also. Students gave the credit of their excellent performance to their parents and teachers. Principal of the Vidyalaya, Dr. Surender Singh felicitated the students upon reaching their school campus. He admired the students for their exemplary and morale boosting performance. He said sports not only increase physical fitness it also imparts the values of unity, discipline, socialisation and patriotism. Sports not only make our present but also have the potency to shape one's future.

Pig Mission

KOKRAJHAR: The government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) conducted a public meeting and training session with pig rearers at the Mushalpur cultural complex, Baksa as a culmination of the five-day training programme from 13th - 17th November. The training programme was organised under the Bodoland Pig Mission in collaboration with PUM (Programma Uitzendend Managers), Netherland. Martijn Steenwaert, a veterinarian by profession, conducted a two-day training session with farmers selected under the mission and talked to them about the importance of farm economics for profitable pig farming, the need for biosecurity measures to prevent and control diseases, the causes of diseases among pigs & discussed methods of maintaining farm records.

Manipur govt condemns ITLF call for 'self-ruled separate administration' in tribal areas

IMPHAL, Nov 17: The Manipur government has strongly condemned the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum's (ITLF) call for "self-governed separate administration" in districts dominated by members of the Kuki-Zo community and termed it as illegal.

State government spokesperson and education minister Th Basantakumar Singh told reporters on Thursday night that "the irresponsible statements appear to be motivated and aimed at vitiating and disturbing the law and order situation in the state."

"Meeting of the ruling party legislators held on Thursday strongly condemned the statement and appropriate legal actions is being initiated against ITLF and persons concerned," the minister said.

ITLF, a frontal organisation of Kuki-Zo tribes in Manipur, had on Wednesday threatened to establish a "self-governed separate administration" in areas where these tribes have a majority.

The forum said even after more than six months of ethnic strife in the northeastern state, the central gov-



ernment is yet to accept their demand for a separate administration.

"More than six months have passed since the ethnic strife started in Manipur but nothing has been done regarding our demand for a separate administration. If our demand is not heard (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

56 cases of human rights violations in NE states heard

GUWAHATI, Nov 17: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) held a camp sitting in Guwahati and heard 56 cases of human rights violations in north-east valley, said an official statement on Friday.

The NHRC on Friday concluded its two-day camp sitting i.e. November 16 and 17 in Guwahati which was organized to hear the pending cases of human rights violations in eight northeastern states.

It also spreads awareness amongst the officials of state governments, its parastatal organizations and NGOs. The camp sitting was presided over by the chairperson Justice Arun Mishra, Members, Dr. DM Mulay and Rajiv Jain; Bharat Lal, secretary general, Surajit Dey, registrar (Law) along with other senior officers.

While, inaugurating the camp sitting on November 16, the chairperson said that the commission has a wide-ranging mandate for the promotion and protection of human rights in diverse areas and the commission's camp sitting in the concerned states is a unique concept aimed at reaching out to the doorsteps of the victims of human rights violations.

"The commission heard about 56 cases in the presence of concerned officers of the north eastern states and the complainants. These, inter alia, included, alleged arbitrary and unlawful division/partition of the lands of the Chakmas at Anandapur-I and Anandapur-II, Brajapur, Bodhiasatta-II villages in District Changlang, Arunachal Pradesh, alleged rape of a 16-year old tribal girl by a non-tribal person in the area of Kokrajhar town, death of 57 person, injuries to 18 and missing of 04 persons due to negligence of the north east frontier railways while executing a project entailing construction of tunnels and railway tracks to connect Jiribam with Imphal, poor condition of district hospital at Chaurachandpur, Manipur due to non-availability of basic facilities, complaints regarding incidences of violence in the state of Manipur, alleged failure on part of State of Arunachal Pradesh to pay compensation to 108 Chakma and Hajong families of the Changlang District, Arunachal Pradesh who have been affected by "Construction of 132KV T/L from Namsai to Miao" project despite direction/sanction of the central government to pay for the lands acquired and other damages (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Karbi Anglong district marks 72nd foundation day with colorful celebrations

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 17: Karbi Anglong district celebrated its 72nd foundation day with a day long programme at Longnit High School Playground, also known as Batches Aklam.

The celebration headed by Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) was a colourful and vibrant and also coincided with 'Unity, Victory and Prosperity Rally' of Singhason member of Autonomous Council (MAC) constituency.

Taking part in the celebration, deputy speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly, Dr Numal Momin, who is also the MLA of Bokajan, said the district has progressed since its inception.

"The Karbi Anglong we see now is not the Karbi Anglong before. There are many changes and development going on at a fast pace. Under the leadership of chief executive member (CEM) of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang development has been carried out. He has been able to bring State and central sponsored



schemes for the district," said Dr. Momin said. He also expressed hope that under CEM Ronghang, Karbi Anglong will be at par with (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

AQUA SPECTACLE



Participants in the sailing competition during the second edition of the Rising Sun Water Festival organised by the Indian Army at Deepor Beel in Guwahati on Friday. UB Photos

Heroin worth over ₹ 11 cr seized in Assam, 4 held

GUWAHATI, Nov 17: Four persons, including two women, were arrested after heroin worth over ₹ 11 crore was seized from their possession in two separate operations in the state capital region of Assam, police said on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, Special Task Force (STF) and Kamrup district police jointly intercepted a pick-up van, coming from Churachandpur in Manipur, on Thursday night and recovered 98 packets of heroin weighing 1.35 kg from a concealed chamber of the vehicle, Assam Police spokesperson Pranabjyoti Goswami said.

The police team, led by STF deputy inspector general Partha Sarathi Mahanta, put up a check-post at Amingaon in Kamrup district, he said. Two persons hailing from Manipur were arrested from the spot, Goswami said.

"The drug was being taken to a lower Assam district when it was recovered. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

'India's current per capita greenhouse gas emissions are less than one-third of the global average'

India among few big economies on track to meet climate pledges: Bhupender Yadav

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: India has set an example with its robust domestic climate action and stands among the few major economies on track to meet their national plans to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, union environment minister Bhupender Yadav said on Friday.

In his opening address at the environment ministers' session at the second Voice of Global South Summit, Yadav highlighted India's active role in the fight against climate change, despite its historically minimal contribution to global warming.

The minister said India's current per capita greenhouse gas emissions are less than one-third of the global average.

He emphasised that developed



countries are yet to fulfil their commitments to providing sufficient climate finance to developing nations to address climate-change impacts.

Yadav reminded the developed countries of their commitment to mobilising USD 100 billion annually by 2020 for climate finance and doubling their contribution to

adaptation finance from the 2019 level by 2025.

He said 44 per cent of India's total installed electricity-generating capacity now comes from non-fossil fuel sources, surpassing the original NDC target of 40 per cent by 2030.

Yadav highlighted India's adoption of the green credit programme, designed to incentivise voluntary environmental and climate-conscious actions by individuals as well as public and private entities, aimed at accelerating collective efforts toward achieving a sustainable economy.

India, with 17 per cent of the global population, accounted for only 4 per cent of global carbon emissions from 1850 until 2019. In contrast, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

HC quashes Haryana law providing 75% quota in private jobs to residents

CHANDIGARH, Nov 17: In a setback to the Haryana government, the Punjab and Haryana High Court Friday quashed a state government law that provided 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs to the residents of the state.

The verdict was pronounced by Justices G S Sandhawalia and Harpreet Kaur Jeevan.

Senior advocate Akshay Bhan, one of the counsels for the petitioners, said the bench quashed the complete act. He said the petitioners argued that the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020 violated Articles 14 and 19 of the Constitution.

"...we are of the considered opinion that the writ petitions are liable to be allowed and The Haryana State

Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020 is held to be unconstitutional and violative of Part III of the Constitution of India and is accordingly held ultravires and the same is ineffective from the date it came into force," according to the court order.

The court had admitted multiple petitions against the implementation of the act that provided 75 per cent reservation in jobs in the private sector to candidates from the state. It came into effect from January 15, 2022.

It covered jobs offering a maximum gross monthly salary or wages upto ₹ 30,000. Advocate Bhan, who was representing the Faridabad Industrial Association, said several industrial (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

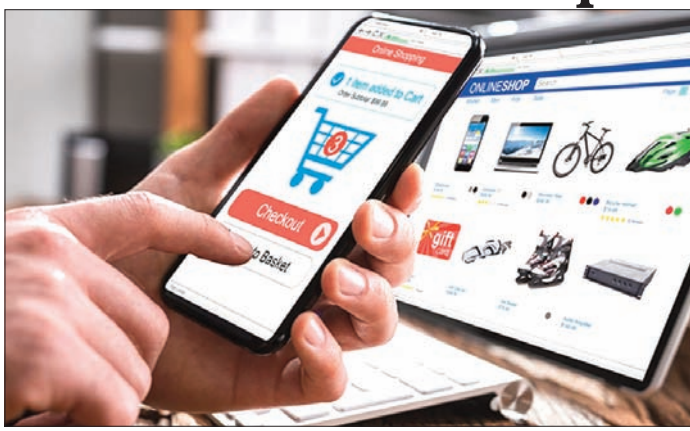
Online sellers seek FDI in inventory-based model of e-commerce for export purposes

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: The e-commerce industry has suggested the government permit foreign direct investment (FDI) in inventory-based model of online trade only for export purposes, a senior government official said on Friday. At present, the country's FDI policy does not permit foreign direct investment in the inventory-based model of e-commerce. It is allowed only in firms that are operating through a marketplace model.

Director General of Foreign Trade (DGT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said that they are working on several steps to promote exports through e-commerce medium. He said that the e-commerce stakeholders have asked the department for the promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) to relook at the FDI policy on this issue.

"For export purposes, if these (rules) could be revisited is something that we are requesting the DPIIT to examine and explore... and this could be one step forward for creating the e-commerce export zones that DGFT and its team has been working on," Sarangi said here at a conference on e-commerce exports. Talking about steps they are working on to promote exports through e-commerce medium, he said many of these exporters even the smaller ones are subjected to a mandatory GST regime, so the directorate is working with the Department of Revenue (DoR) to see if there could be a scheme like 'composition levy scheme' for smaller players so that this mandatory GST could be waived till they attain a certain threshold of export value.

"Similarly, exports through e-



commerce many a time are not getting benefits like duty drawback or DGFT schemes like Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) or Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL). So we are now working with Express Cargo Clearance Systems (ECCS) and postal bill of exports to ensure that the shipping bills flow directly so that these kinds of exports also get covered under these kinds of schemes," he said. He added that the DGFT is also working with the Department of Post to ensure that Dak Niryat Kendras and foreign post offices (FPOs) get strengthened and expanded.

The Department of Post has the objective to open 1,000 such Kendras which will work on a hub and spoke model with the FPOs and they are trying to ensure that the export consignments are reached at the quickest possible time, get the customs clearance and are sent abroad. The department is working with the US Postal services as well as postal

services of other countries to provide a full online tracking mechanism for the e-commerce export consignments, he added.

Further Sarangi said that providing warehousing facilities as well as quick packaging clearance facilities from e-commerce export zones is one of the top priorities. "But the present policy ecosystem does not support creation of this because bit of processing and packaging," he said.

So how do "we implement an EOU model" for e-commerce exports is something that "we are working" on with the Department of Revenue and "hopefully going forward, we will be able to convince DOR on the feasibility of this model," he said adding the DGFT is trying to increase awareness and importance of e-commerce exports in different departments. Until now, the entire orientation for the export ecosystem was modelled on a B2B shipment of goods through air, and ships. "The possibility that our people will be able to sell their

own brand to the entire globe using e-commerce platform is something which would require a lot of mindset change...So we are working with the DoR, RBI, and the DPIIT to see how this mindset change can come," he said.

Within DGFT, he said, they are ensuring that all their regional authorities get acquainted with the nuances of e-commerce and then take this initiative to train potential e-commerce exporters. They are also looking at joining hands with private sector players to promote e-commerce exports and create this awareness at the field level.

"To begin with, we are joining hands with Amazon and we are signing an MoU with them to do a pilot in 20 districts where we will try to train e-commerce exporters. Similarly, we are working with Walmart and Flipkart to do it in a few more districts. We are also in talks with eBay to ensure that we take more and more districts and try this model," he added.

Huge potential is there in the sector as highly educated people are entering this segment and a pool of mentors within India can be created to handhold and guide the potential exporters in the sector, he said.

"In the days to come, we will focus on creating a pool of mentors in our country to provide guidance to e-commerce exporters. I can foresee that the e-commerce ecosystem is going to evolve in a much more rapid manner. It is going to explode and possibly it will be one of the biggest feeders in realising the dream of USD 2 trillion worth of goods and services exports" by 2030, he said. (PTI)

Wheat sowing down 5 pc so far in ongoing rabi season at 86 lakh hectares: Govt data

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: Area under coverage for wheat has fallen 5 per cent to 86.02 lakh hectares so far in the ongoing rabi (winter-sown) season, according to the agriculture ministry data.

The sowing area of wheat stood at 91.02 lakh hectares in the same period last year.

"About 86.02 lakh hectares area coverage has been reported compared to 91.02 lakh hectare during the corresponding period of last year. Thus 5.01 lakh hectare less area has been covered compared to last year," the ministry said.

Area under coverage for wheat is so far lower in Uttar Pradesh (3.87 lakh hectares), Punjab (2.28 lakh hectares), Haryana (2.14 lakh hectares) and Gujarat (0.71 lakh hectares). The higher wheat area is reported mainly from Madhya Pradesh (3.44 lakh hectare) and Rajasthan (0.68 lakh hectare).

The government has banned exports of wheat and

is offloading wheat in the open market from its buffer stock to boost domestic supply and control retail prices of wheat and atta (wheat flour).

As per the data, paddy acreage is also lower at 7.65 lakh hectares till November 17 in the ongoing rabi season as against 8.05 lakh hectares, while area under coverage for pulses is down at 65.16 lakh hectares compared to 69.37 lakh hectares.

However, the acreage of coarse cereals is higher at 18.03 lakh hectares as against 15.85 lakh hectares.

In the non-foodgrains category, the area under coverage for oilseeds is lower at 71.74 lakh hectares from 73.17 lakh hectares. Mustard/rapeseed acreage is down to 68.55 lakh hectares as compared with 69.31 lakh hectares. Total area under coverage under all rabi crops is lower by 3 per cent to 248.59 lakh hectares till November 17 as against 257.46 lakh hectares in the year-ago period. (PTI)

Hindalco offers VR tour of sustainable mining initiatives at IITF

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: Aditya Birla Group firm Hindalco Industries is offering visitors a virtual reality tour of its sustainable mining initiatives at the mining pavilion of the India International Trade Fair (IITF) here.

The virtual reality tour at IITF captures Hindalco's sustainability initiatives, including sustainable land use, waste management, local economic development, biodiversity, water stewardship, health and safety and decarbonisation.

Hindalco Industries Ltd is showcasing its array of sustainability initiatives through a special immersive virtual reality presentation at the Mining Pavilion of the India International Trade Fair 2023 being held at Pragati Maidan in the national capital from November 14-27. The Ministry of Mines has set up the mining pavilion for the first time.

Seven-year-old Ganeev who was visiting the IITF with her family for the first time found the virtual reality tour quite interesting and informative. "I thoroughly enjoyed it and found it very knowledgeable," she told PTI.

All these initiatives are guided



by Hindalco's Sustainable Mining Charter which is the country's first charter with an aim to maintain ecological balance and give back to the earth, thus benefiting the planet and its inhabitants.

Hindalco Industries Managing Director Satish Pai said, "The special immersive virtual reality presentation captures sustainability initiatives undertaken by Hindalco in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. At its Bagru mine in Jharkhand, Asia's oldest bauxite mine, the company has been using ropeways to transport bauxite in an environ-

ment-friendly way." Hindalco has also set up Birsia Upavan and Nakshatra Garden and is supporting duck farming and pisciculture projects to promote biodiversity and sustainable mining. Further, Kosala, another initiative by Hindalco, strengthens the supply chain of Kosa silk products of Chhattisgarh.

"The presentation also demonstrates use of green energy, water-positive bauxite mine Hindalco Samri in Chhattisgarh, tree plantation initiatives in Chhattisgarh, among other," he explained. (PTI)

Rijiju inspects India-funded key connectivity project in Maldives

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju on Friday inspected the progress of work of an India-funded major connectivity project in the Maldives that is expected to usher economic development and prosperity in the country. Rijiju is here at the invitation of Maldives President-elect Mohamed Muizzu to represent India at the inaugural ceremony of the presidency. Under the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) project, a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link will be built to connect the capital city Male with the adjoining islands of Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi. It is funded under a grant of \$100 million and a Line of Credit of \$400 million from India.

"Glad to witness the progress of works of Greater Male Connectivity Project in Maldives.

Project is being undertaken under the Govt of India's concessional Line of Credit and Grant and is expected to usher economic development and prosperity in the Greater Male Region," Rijiju, posted on X. (PTI)

SBI to soon launch 'Yono Global' app in Singapore and US

SINGAPORE, Nov 17: State Bank of India (SBI) will soon launch its banking mobile app 'Yono Global' in Singapore and the US, offering digitalized remittance and other services to its customers, Vidya Krishnan, Deputy MD (IT), said. "We are continuing to invest in Yono Global to offer the best services available as we want to give superior experience to our customers," Krishnan told PTI at the three-day Singapore Fintech Festival (SFF), which ends on November 17.

Krishnan held talks with Singapore-based digital platform enablers as well as the local regulator and central bank, the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS). "We are constantly working on the remittance story between India and Singapore, given the large number of Indian diaspora in the city state." Currently, SBI offers Yono Global services in 9 countries, start-

ing with the UK operations in September 2019. SBI's foreign operations have a total balance sheet size of USD 78 billion. In Singapore, SBI is integrating its Yono Global app with PayNow and aims to launch it soon.

Meanwhile, speakers at SFF highlighted the importance of emerging technologies, especially artificial intelligence (AI) but conceded the need for human touch and feelings in dealing on a person-to-person basis.

Oscar-nominated film director Shekhar Kapur said, "One thing that AI is going to do, it is going to change everything. Change happens dramatically." In contests held on testing technologies, Indian-origin Nikhilesh Goel, Co-founder and Group CEO of Singapore-based Validus Capital, was named among winners for the Individual Category (in recognition of C-Suite leaders). (PTI)

Physical to digital transition transformed hyperlocal communication: Lokal co-founder Vipul Chaudhary

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: Born with the vision of solving hyperlocal informational needs all across India, multi-language news and classifieds platform Lokal is aimed at finding new ways to bridge the information gap and allowing people to engage with their local businesses online, says co-founder Vipul Chaudhary.

What started as an information platform has now expanded to include classifieds such as jobs, matrimony, real estate and business listings, Chaudhary said.

"Owing to a dearth of digital sources of hyperlocal information, we are building a content platform with a high frequency use case of local updates, making users discover and adapt to digital behaviors of discovering local jobs, matrimony and advertising their businesses," Chaudhary told PTI.

According to Chaudhary, the transition from physical to digital has revolutionised hyperlocal communication and classifieds, creating a more inclusive and interconnected ecosystem for the residents of smaller cities and towns in India. Latest cloud technology and managed offerings by Amazon Web Services (AWS) have enabled the Bengaluru-headquartered company to scale without investing a lot of time and people into managing the infrastructure.

Excerpts from the interview:
Q: What was the core idea behind setting up Lokal?

A: Lokal's idea came to us after speaking to hundreds of people about their content consumption. This was the first point in one year of trying to find the idea to work on when we could clearly see a user problem with no existing solutions.

People who live in small towns and villages - which were my relatives, friends, colleagues, acquaintances - had a consumption pattern of reading local newspapers, which was the only place for them to know what was happening around them. While city dwellers were

moving increasingly towards mobile, they lacked any such platform. That is how Lokal was born with the vision of solving hyperlocal informational needs all across India.

Q: How has Lokal grown in the past five years and what are Lokal's future expansion plans?

A: We have made a lot of headway in realising our vision. We now operate in 250 plus districts across eight states and seven languages. Started as an information platform, we now also have classifieds like jobs, matrimony, real estate, business listings. Lokal will continue to find new ways we can bridge the information gap and allow people to engage and transact with their local businesses online.

Q: How has Lokal leveraged technology to drive its operations?

A: Hyperlocal communication and classifieds in tier 2-3 cities in India have experienced a transformative journey, evolving from traditional physical communities and print newspapers to embracing technology adoption.

With the rise of the internet and smartphones, online platforms emerged as game-changers, providing convenient access to localised information. These digital platforms empowered users, offering a wealth of hyperlocal content, including news, events, job listings and more. The transition from physical to digital has revolutionised hyperlocal communication and classifieds, creating a more inclusive and interconnected ecosystem for the residents of tier 2-3 cities in India.

Owing to a dearth of digital sources of hyperlocal information, we are building a content platform with a high frequency use case of local updates, making users discover and adapt to digital behaviours of discovering local jobs, matrimony and advertising their businesses.

We offer unique content-led digital marketing solutions for SMEs and brands targeting tier 2-plus

users of India.

Q: What are the complexities of Lokal's digital infrastructure?

A: Lokal's traffic is very peaky, so whenever a trend breaks out on social media, notifications are sent out and we get a lot of concurrent users on the platform. The challenge is to manage performance and response times during these peaks while keeping the cost controlled and not to run over-provisioned instances.

Majority of the load comes on the application servers and the database powering the information.

AWS's offerings of EC2 (Elastic Compute Cloud) auto-scaling helped us a lot in managing this kind of workload in our initial stages. As we grew, we started building more services and also started breaking down existing monoliths into microservices. We decided to make a move from auto-scaling groups to EKS (managed Kubernetes service from AWS) which provides us easy deployment and quick scaling for microservices.

On the database front, Aurora Postgres gave us the flexibility of 'autoscaling' which is a big boon for us. Aurora gives us higher reliability, higher performance without spending any developer bandwidth on managing databases.

Q: How have you embraced new technologies to stay ahead?

A: For a platform like Lokal, where we study and evaluate user demands and consumption habits and then assign appropriate material, content optimisation is critical. Due to the feature-rich corpus in English, a variety of vectorisation techniques, prebuilt models, NER (Named Entity Recognition) tagging etc are available, unlike in local languages. This is one of the industry's most pressing issues right now. We have been building our own corpus in all these years to help us overcome these challenges and we are now leveraging them to power our personalisation

engine.

The advent of readily available LLMs (Large Language Models) is pushing the industry forward, but their performance in south Indian languages is definitely lagging in our experiments. We are currently trying to train and tune them to function better in Telugu and Tamil. In all these pursuits, there are two major infrastructural needs - data pipelines and storage and model training and inference. For the first problem, AWS has a slew of services that we leverage. These include Kinesis, Redshift and S3 to stream, process and store all the incoming data. Sagemaker, on the other hand, had made our model training and serving absolutely fast without having to worry about provisioning machines, getting GPUs etc.

Q: What did cloud technology allow you to do that you couldn't do before?

A: Latest cloud technology and the managed offerings by AWS enable us to do more, scale much higher without investing a lot of time and people into managing the infrastructure. In fact, we were able to scale to one million daily active users with just three people in the team. This is the single most important leverage that startups should make use of.

Q: What benefits have you experienced running on AWS?

A: There are multiple things that put AWS in front of the other players and helps you run a lean and fast development team. First, the managed services for almost all technologies that you would need. This takes away the requirement for devops and you can focus on your business needs. This also allows you to scale fast.

AWS's generous startup credit programme helps you get off the ground, test out infrastructures, make mistakes while scaling up. Their account management team has customer-first approach.

(This story has been produced by PTI in collaboration with Amazon Web Services). (PTI)

Sensex, Nifty decline on selloff in banking, financial stocks

MUMBAI, Nov 17: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined on Friday, dragged down by heavy selling pressure in banking, financial and energy stocks amid mixed cues from global markets.

Shares of bank and NBFC firms fell after the Reserve Bank tightened norms for consumer credit as it asked them to assign a higher risk weight for unsecured personal loans, a move aimed at making the lenders more cautious about such advances.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 187.75 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at 65,794.73. During the day, it fell 342.74 points or 0.51 per cent to 65,639.74. The Nifty skidded 33.40 points or 0.17 per cent to 19,731.80. Among the Sensex firms, State Bank of India fell 3.64 per cent, followed by Axis Bank (3.03 per cent). Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, Infosys, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Wipro, and Reliance Industries were among the other laggards.

On the other hand, Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, Asian Paints, Nestle and Mahindra & Mahindra were the major gainers.

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

European markets were trading with gains. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Thursday.

"The RBI's action to raise risk weights for unsecured loans dampened banking stocks and caused a temporary disruption in the broader indices' resurgence. Despite this, a positive undercurrent prevails, buoyed by the conclusion of a robust earnings season."

"Investors are awaiting eurozone inflation data later today. Sharp drop in oil prices and the moderation of US yield will help the market to sustain buoyancy in the short-term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.77 per cent to USD 78.02 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were buyers on Thursday as they bought equities worth ₹ 957.25 crore, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark climbed 306.55 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 65,982.48 on Thursday. The Nifty gained 89.75 points or 0.46 per cent to 19,765.20. (PTI)

OFFICE OF THE HEADMASTER THESO HINDI M.E SCHOOL, JENGKHA

Theso Ronghang Gaon, Dist:- West Karbi Anglong (Assam) :: 782448
Estd:- 2005

Ref.No.....

Date:-17/11/2023

VACANCY POST

Interested candidate are hereby invited for the post lying at Theso Hindi M.E School, Theso Ronghang Gaon. The walk in interview will be held on 10/12/2023 at 10:00 am at the school premises.

The post is purely and Vencher basis. The application will be received from 18/11/2023 to 28/11/2023 till 1:00 pm at school premises.

Sl No	Name of Post	Requisite Qualification	No. of post	Remuneration as per KAAC
1	Headmaster	B.A.B.Ed with recognized university	01 (One)	
2	English	B.A.B.Ed with recognized university	01 (One)	
3	Social Studies	B.A.B.Ed with recognized university	01 (One)	
4	Science	B.A.B.Ed with recognized university	01 (One)	
5	Assamese	B.A.B.Ed with recognized university	01 (One)	
6	K L T	B.A.B.Ed with recognized university	01 (One)	
7	Grade IV	HSLC Passes From recognized board	01 (One)	

N.B :-

- Preference will be given to local Candidate.
- Complete Bio- Data, scanned (Xerox) copies of the educational testimonial from HSLC onwards along with original documents on the latest passport size photo should be submitted at the time of the interview.
- The decision of the SMC will be final and binding no other applicant can claim for post
- No TA/DA is admissible at the time of interview.
- Interview time will be commence from 10:00 am onwards.

Sd/-

SMC President

Theso Hindi M.E School
9101563613/ 8761053432

River ghats closed for Chhath puja in Dibrugarh

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 17: The Dibrugarh district administration prohibited youths of or below 18 years of age from visiting a few ghats of the Brahmaputra during Chhath Puja celebrations.

Keeping in view the rising water level of the Brahmaputra, the east revenue circle officer and Dibrugarh Municipal Board (DMB) authority by their respective order issued a circular, directing the complete closure of the Paltan Bazar Ghat, Mohana Ghat and Kachari Ghat for the upcoming Chhath Puja on November 18 to 20.

On the other hand, in view of the public safety, permission has been given only to the devotees to make offering to sun and do the Chhath Puja Panchali only at the Tinkonia ghat, Poolbagan (Kalia ghat) and Majjan ghat.

Recently, two brothers were



washed away at in the Brahmaputra at Mohanaghat area while making offerings to their departed mother.

Due to the rising level of the river, the district administration has taken the precautionary meas-

ures for the safety of the people.

On the other hand, preparations are on in full swing at the ghats where Chhath Puja will be performed.

"Earlier, Chhath Puja was organized in 15 ghats of Dibrugarh, but

this time permission has been given to organize the puja in only a few ghats. Some people also do the Chhath puja at their homes and make offerings in an artificial pond," said Raju Sahu, a local resident.

Vigilance Awareness Week concludes in Bongaigaon



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 17: The Vigilance Awareness Week and the Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers (PIDPI) campaign organized by NTPC Bongaigaon concluded at Salakati in Kokrajhar district on Friday.

The Vigilance Awareness Week was organized with an aim to spread awareness and transparency on various important topics.

A 750 MW (3x250) MW coal-fired power plant of NTPC is located at Salakati.

The power station displayed publicity materials across departments, office buildings, and the township to inculcate the message of good governance. Additionally, a video on PIDPI was also made available on the site internet.

During the concluding ceremony of vigilance awareness week, various audio-visual presentations were made for employees and stakeholders. The presentations covered topics like ethics, morals, integrity, and corruption.

Karunakar Das, the business unit Head of NTPC Bongaigaon

Salakati, emphasized the importance of the topics and underlined that a vigilant society is essential for the nation's development. He has appreciated the efforts of the vigilance wing of the NTPC Bongaigaon in involving employees, family members, and CISF personnel through various activities and competitions.

As part of the vigilance awareness campaign, focus was also placed on frauds happening through UPI to raise awareness among the residents of NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati and the surrounding areas.

More than 200 employees participated in the vigilance awareness competition, including a quiz competition held during the closing ceremony.

The concluding ceremony was attended by K C Muraliedharan, the general manager of O&M, A Biswas, GM (operation), Induri S Reddy, GM (maintenance), Ujjwal Sarkar, DGM (vigilance) along with senior officials of the station, members of the Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club, representatives of the union and association and a large number of employees of the power station.

1 killed in road accident in Telipara

HT Correspondent

GOSGAIGON, Nov 17: A girl was killed in a road accident on Friday evening after she was knocked down by a speeding car on the national highway 31 at Telipara.

The victim, Dhani Murmu was a resident of the Sarjamghutu village situated along the Assam-Bengal interstate border.

According to the information received, the 23-year-old Dhani was the daughter of Late. Nicholas Murmu. She had reportedly gone to attend tailoring classes at a local tailor's shop in the Telipara area. While on her way back home she had been crossing the national when the speeding four-wheeler knocked her down. The vehicle was on its way to Srirampur in West Bengal. The victim died on the spot.

On receiving information about the incident, police personnel from Gosgaigaon rushed to the spot and sent the dead body to the RNB Civil Hospital for post-mortem. Meanwhile, the police have launched a search operation to track down the driver of the vehicle, which killed the girl.

Wild elephants damage houses in Margherita

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Nov 17: A group of wild elephants created havoc at the Pilkhana line of the Namdang Tea Estate in Margherita in Tinsukia district, damaging six houses of tea garden workers at midnight on Thursday.

Local residents claimed that wild elephants often stray into human habitation in search food, damaging their property. They had even approached the forest department to find a solution to this problem. However, their requests have so far failed to bring forth any response from forest officials.

"It is a regular routine of wild elephants to enter into our areas and vandalize our houses. We have complained about this problem to Margherita west range forest officer Dharma Neog and Digboi forest division DFO TC Ranjith Ram, but they have not shown any kind of response. It also takes years for people whose properties have been damaged by wild animals to get a proper compensation from the forest department," said a local whose house was damaged by wild elephants on Thursday night.

Meanwhile, members of the Margherita regional committee of the Assam Tea Tribes Student As-



sociation (ATTSA) led by the students' union's joint publicity secretary, Pranjal Baraik visited the people whose homes have been damaged.

Pranjal Baraik said, "Due to rampant felling of trees in the reserved forest areas of Margherita, wild elephants regularly enter into areas of human habitation in search of food and vandalized the property of locals. Despite repeated requests, the Margherita West range forest officer and Dig-

boi divisional forest officer have not taken any appropriate steps in this regard."

The students' union also demanded that the state forest minister and the forest department to immediately provide compensation to those whose houses were vandalized.

"The government should take stern action against corrupt forest officials and the timber syndicate who are involved in the illegal felling of trees," Baraik said.

Governor reviews development activities

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 17: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria on Friday reviewed the development activities undertaken by the state housing and urban affairs department in the presence of state housing and urban affairs minister, Ashok Singhal at the Raj Bhawan in the city.

Commissioner and secretary of the department, Kavitha Padmanabhan presented an overview of all verticals of the department. She initiated the proceeding by elucidating the amalgamation of three erstwhile distinct departments, namely urban development department, Guwahati development department, and town and country planning department, a consolidation that happened in 2021.

She underscored the ongoing efforts towards the systematic reassessment of property tax and the department's commitment to enhancing public service accessibility through the development of a unified portal and applications. The commissioner also shed light on the strides in solid waste processing across 103 municipalities and the significant accomplishments in the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban, with the construction of 68 thousand houses since 2021.

Governor Kataria, recognizing the role of well-developed cities in bolstering the tourism sector in Assam, emphasized the need for robust infrastructure and amenities. He particularly stressed on the improvement of the drainage system and waste management projects, especially within the framework of the smart city initiative.

Delving into fiscal matters, the Governor took stock of the department's budget over the past three years, emphasizing the meticulous monitoring of budget utilization and a requisite increase in capital expenditure.



He underscored the indispensability of timely utilization certificates (UC) for securing funds from the central government, thereby urging the department to prioritize the expeditious preparation of such documents.

In another meeting, Governor Kataria also took stock of the activities of the welfare of minorities and development department. Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary outlined various initiatives undertaken by the department for the welfare of religious and linguistic minorities in the state. Secretary to the welfare of minorities and development department, Adil Khan provided an overview, highlighting the department's commitment to addressing the needs of the sizable minority population in Assam.

Kataria also emphasized on the paramount importance of the development of minority communities, advocating for comprehensive measures including education, skill development, and agricultural facilities. He further underscored the need for specialized training, including coaching for UPSC and APSC exams, to empower minority students and contribute to their overall well-being and fulfillment. The meetings were attended by a host of senior officials from the housing and urban affairs department and the welfare of minorities and development department.

NCHAC CEM involved in land snatching : BJYM

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 17: The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha's (BJYM) Dima Hasao district committee has accused the chief executive member (CEM) of NC Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Debolal Garlosa of snatching land of the Karbis in the guise of development under Garampani member of autonomous council (MAC) constituency in Dima Hasao district.

Addressing the media on Thursday, the secretary of BJYM-DHDC, Chandra Engli said, "In the name of development of infrastructure in Karbi inhabited areas like Choto Langpher and Tortelango their land have been snatched away by the DHAC authority led by CEM

Garlosa."

Engli stated that the above mentioned areas of Karbi land have been converted into DHAC reserved forest. With the declaration of reserve forest, the Karbi villagers have nowhere to go. Engli also mentioned that the CEM has assured of compensation for the land, but the DHAC authority has not done it till now. There are historical places in Tortelango like Longku and Longtar Alongri. Longtar water fall has also been changed to some other name. The Karbis of Tortelango were the first inhabitants of the area.

he BJYM secretary further alleged that there is a stark discrimination in the filling up of jobs under

DHAC. In the last term there were 373 vacancies under DHAC. In the document it was stated that three Karbis got appointments, but when checked it was found that only one Karbi got appointment as a peon in the forest department.

He also alleged that in the present term more than 300 job vacancies have been advertised for Grade III and IV posts. However, only one Karbi was given appointment. In Dima Hasao district the Karbis are mostly found in Sangbar and Di-jungbra blocks. Chairmen were given to Karbis in these two blocks, but now it has been denied. In Panimur, land belonging to Karbis has been converted into an eco-tourism spot, Engli said.

Governor flags off North East on Wheels Bike Expedition



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 17: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria flagged off the Season 2 of the North East on Wheels Bike Expedition at Raj Bhawan on Friday. The bike expedition has been organized by the Amazing Namaste Foundation.

A total of 45 bikers from across the country are participating in the North East on Wheels Bike Expedition. They will complete the journey of 40,000 kilometers in two groups, 'Falcon' and 'Myna'. They will pass through about 20 districts in the three northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland. The expedition will promote 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative of the Union ministry of tourism. The riders will also promote the importance of road safety among the public during the expedition. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kataria said, "The northeastern region of the country is very beautiful and full of diversity with many tribal groups. The language, dialect and culture of most of these communities are also different. Despite their differences people live together here, which embodies the feeling of unity in diversity.

The Governor also said that the bike expedition would also help in fulfilling the objective of "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat". The initiative would connect people living in different parts of the country, which would strengthen the bond of unity in the country. The Governor complimented the Amazing Namaste Foundation and wished them a safe journey. He also hoped that during their expedition they would experience and appreciate the warmth of the people of the Northeast and the unique beauty and culture of the region.

Sivasagar DC reviews development activities

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 17: Sivasagar district commissioner Aditya Vikram Yadav took stock of the progress of all development works in the district and issued required directives to expedite their implementations.

He reviewed the development activities during a meeting of the district development committee held at the Siu-Ka-Fa Bhawan in Sivasagar. Yadav especially called upon the public health engineering department, APDCL, Assam Gas Company, and other departments concerned to extend emergency assistance and cooperation to the Lok Nirman department in construction of roads.

In the meeting, Devajyoti Gogoi, inspector of schools of the



Sivasagar circle sought the cooperation of all departments concerned for the successful implementation of the Gnatasav 2024 to be held from January 3 next year.

District heads of the departments of transport, sericulture, rural livelihood mission, water resources, forest, APDCL, Lok Nirman (Building and Road), fishery, public health engineering, social

forestry, education, health and family welfare, food and civil supplies, agriculture, veterinary and industry and commerce presented their development reports before the DC.

The meeting was attended by Sivasagar deputy district commissioner Bitopan Neog, Jila Parishad CEO Aswini Doley, assistant commissioner Bornali Khatiwara and other senior officials.

Bodo Sahitya Sabha celebrates 72nd Foundation Day

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 17: Different Bodo Sahitya Sabha units under the Tezpur district Bodo Sahitya Sabha celebrated its 72nd foundation day and commemorated the martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for the Bodo language, literature, culture and heritage.

Several colourful programmes were organized in different parts of the district on the occasion. The Bahbari unit of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and Tezpur Bodo Society celebrated the day with much pomp and gaiety. President of the Bahbari Unit, Basudev Daimary and vice president, Dhaniram Daimary unfurled its flag and paid homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the Bodo language and literature.

Several noted Bodo litterateurs including Subheswar Kachari, Jaladhar Brahma, Prasanna Rabha and Sidheswar Rabha were present on the occasion.

President and vice president of the West Tezpur unit All Bodo Students' Union, Manash Pratim Daimary and Anthon Bathau Boro, district representative



Rupiyoti Boro and journalist and former ABSU worker Shambhu Boro were also present on the occasion. Later a new committee for the Bahbari unit of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was also constituted, with Dhaniram Daimary as the president and Prafulla Boro as general secretary.

Further, at Tezpur Jaimati Pathar the Tezpur Bodo Society started their day-long events with a cleanliness drive in the morning on Friday, following by unfurling of its flag, guest felicitation, special talk on Bodo language devel-

opment, prize distribution, symposium on the topic 'Development of Bodo language in the age Digitization' and various other cultural activities. A cultural procession was also taken out in the town on the occasion.

The Bodo Sahitya Sabha, which was founded on November 16, 1952 under the chairmanship of Joy Bhadra Hagier at Basugaon in Kokrajhar, has been promoting Bodo language and literature, culture and heritages since its inception. After India attained independence, a critical

mass of Boro intellectuals realized the need for the preservation of Bodo language. Meanwhile many early Bodo authors studied in schools and colleges, where the medium of instruction was either Assamese or Bengali. However, after realizing that education was the key component to the overall development of a nation and its language and culture, after a prolonged struggle and determination of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, the Bodo language was introduced as a medium of instruction at primary level in 1963 and then at secondary level in 1968.

The Bodo language has now been recognized as one of the major Indian languages in Gauhati, Dibrugarh and North-East Hill Universities. In 2004 Bodo was recognized as an associate state official language of Assam. Moreover, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha has to its credit a large number of literary works including creation of prose, poetry, drama, short story, novel, biography, travelogues, children's literature and criticism.



Assam trade fair blends tradition and style in fashion showcase. UB Photos.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.
- William Blake

BJP strengthening grip over NE

The BJP's rise in Assam and Tripura faced initial scepticism due to regional concerns, but now, in power, it prioritizes maintaining dominance. Critics argue favouritism in promoting states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh for investments. The BJP strategically secures international financial aid, with Assam and Tripura receiving substantial support, fuelling opposition claims of bias. The World Bank approved \$391 million for Assam and Tripura, focusing on public health, infrastructure, and agriculture. Other Northeast states also receive aid, but BJP-controlled areas secure larger shares. Meghalaya gets \$40 million for public health, Manipur \$46 million for IT development, and Mizoram \$32 million for health facilities, despite BJP's weakening influence. BJP leaders deny bias, emphasizing the aid's benefits, particularly green agriculture in tribal areas, aiming to empower 75,000 households. Infrastructure projects, like 400 km of new highways, prioritize connectivity and benefitting 142,000 tribal households. Some analysts question this approach, highlighting the rise of tribal party Tipra Motha in Tripura and demands for a separate state. In Tripura, the BJP focuses on economically empowering tribals to prevent unrest, addressing historical grievances. The delay in considering Tipra Motha's demands raises concerns. Concessions are made to ensure regional security, balanced economic growth, and the effective use of foreign loans for tribal development.

For Assam, the focus is on improving public health infrastructure, especially in interior areas, with an investment of over \$280 million. The long-term objective is to enhance nutrition, growth, and disease immunity among the population. Despite criticism from Assam opposition parties, the BJP-led government faces allegations of divisive policies, corruption, environmental degradation, and autocracy under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, worsening administrative tensions with neighbouring states. The BJP's political tactics extend beyond politics to secure international aid, focusing on tribal development in BJP-controlled regions. While critics argue bias, BJP leaders stress the positive impact on economically weaker sections. The challenges in Tripura highlight the complex interplay of political, tribal, and economic factors, shaping the region's future. The BJP's political ascendancy in Assam and Tripura, once marred by scepticism over its North Indian orientation, has solidified into a commitment to maintaining dominance. Despite accusations of favouritism in promoting certain states for investment, the BJP strategically secures international financial aid, exemplified by the recent World Bank approval of \$391 million for Assam and Tripura. This move fuels opposition claims of preferential treatment, highlighting a pattern where BJP-controlled regions receive substantial shares of aid compared to non-BJP states.

The distribution of aid becomes a focal point, with Meghalaya, Manipur, and Mizoram also benefiting. While these states receive financial support, the dominance of BJP in Assam and Tripura secures larger shares, raising concerns among analysts and opposition parties about the equitable distribution of resources. The rise of the tribal party Tipra Motha and its demand for a separate state adds complexity to the political landscape, prompting observers to question the delay in addressing these demands and potential consequences for regional stability. Assam, under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, faces opposition allegations of divisive policies, corruption, environmental degradation, and autocracy. The administrative tensions with neighbouring states add to the challenges, painting a complex picture of governance in the region. The BJP's political manoeuvres extend beyond conventional politics, shaping the distribution of international aid and influencing tribal development. The intricacies of regional politics, economic considerations, and historical grievances underscore the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing these states in Northeast India.

Why far-Right Hindus in India and overseas love demonizing Palestinians



Christians - should be either driven out or subjected to genocide.

Hindu nationalist rhetoric spares no vitriol in demonizing Muslims specifically, labelling them as invaders, land usurpers, sexual predators, and terrorists who should be subjected to

threats standing in the way of the creation of a homeland. Hindutva has also begun following the same playbook as Zionism to crush its opponents: flooding the media and education system with propaganda, using bulldozers to demolish Muslim-owned homes, and cracking down on anyone who protests supremacist or racist politics.

Bollywood actress and vocal Hindu far-right supporter Kangana Ranaut revealed this bond of shared Islamophobia when she met Israel's ambassador to India, Naor Gilon, in late October: "That they can't give us [each of Hindus and Jews] one land is inhumane and stingy of the Islamic world. . . . Today, the whole world, especially Israel and India, are fighting their war against terrorism." In a way, Hindutva supporters have claimed the Zionist cause as their own simply because the targets are predominantly Muslim.

Modi, too, has played up this narrative. When he declared that India "stands in solidarity with Israel" on October 7, and powerful politicians linked with the ruling party claimed India faced similar threats, it was seen as a green light by the Hindu right's powerful internet ecosystem to conflate Islam, Palestinians, and terrorism as a singular demonic entity that threatens India and Israel alike, using disinformation as "proof." Ignoring any kind of historical contextualization of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Hindu militant leaders have claimed that the Hamas attack was just the one more manifestation of a ubiquitous "Islamic terrorism." BJP leaders have amplified this narrative for domestic gains, increasing the

In the aftermath of the bombing of the al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, social media was ablaze with a surge of disinformation about who was to blame for the attack. This included a post from a Twitter/X account, which posed as an Al Jazeera journalist named "Farida Khan," falsely claiming to possess a video of a "Hamas missile landing in the hospital." The account was deleted once Al Jazeera issued a clarification stating that it did not employ anyone by that name. But the damage had already been done, with the false claims all over social media.

This account was part of a larger wave of far-right Hindu Indian accounts actively spreading Islamophobic, anti-Palestinian disinformation. Alarmingly, Indian accounts like that of "Farida" are at the forefront of fighting Israel's PR war, often using fake news to justify war crimes against Palestinians and stoke hatred against Muslim minorities living in India.

Since the start of the latest round of conflict on October 7, far-right Hindu Indians have been flooding feeds and chat groups on Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp with stories, videos, and photos falsely blaming Palestinians for gruesome atrocities, in order to bolster Israel's claims that its carpet-bombing of civilians is a matter of self-defense.

Posts circulated among millions of Indians on Twitter/X claim that Hamas kidnapped an Israeli baby, beheaded a boy, and abducted women as sex slaves - all claims that have been debunked, but continue to go viral because of the online Hindu far-right ecosystem. Other posts claim that images of Palestinians hospitalized from Israeli airstrikes are actors and images of bloodied children are the work of makeup artists. Old videos go viral after new labels are slapped on them: a ten-year-old protest in Egypt is spun as proof that Al Jazeera fakes footage of dead Palestinians; postelection celebrations in Turkey are recast as an attack on the Israeli embassy; a video of a Mexican man being disembowelled is labelled as

Hamas cutting a foetus out of a pregnant Israeli woman.

Prominent Indian news personalities have regurgitated this disinformation, including one TV editor who declared that he would not forget or forgive "Islamic terrorists . . . [who] tear open the stomachs of pregnant mothers and cut babies and keep them on the tip of spears." Under posts put out by Israeli government officials and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Twitter/X, Indian accounts are seen offering support, posting Islamophobic anti-Palestinian memes, and spreading further misinformation about how India's Muslim minorities pose a similar threat to India's national security.

The question arises: Why are so many far-right Hindu Indians fervently supporting Israel, particularly when India's founding leaders staunchly opposed the creation of the Israeli state and its basis in Zionism? Not only did India once have a reputation of routine support for Palestine within the United Nations - including by voting against the creation of Israel - but it was also the first non-Arab country to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as official representative of the Palestinian people. Moreover, India refused to establish diplomatic relations with Israel until 1992, and did so only after the PLO began dialogue with the Israeli government. How, then, did so many Indians get to the point of showering the Israeli embassy with support, to the point that many are enthusiastically volunteering to serve in the IDF?

The answer lies in the widespread influence of a similar ideology: Hindutva, or Hindu supremacism, which believes India should be a Hindu ethnostate. The ideology, which has been heavily pushed by the far-right government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since they came to power in 2014, believes that to create this Hindu state, religious minorities - particularly Muslims and

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Safa Ahmed

genocidal violence and ethnic cleansing. It's no surprise, therefore, that as support for Hindutva skyrocketed throughout the country, India became one of the top originators of anti-Muslim social media posts globally, producing a staggering 55 percent of anti-Muslim content on Twitter/X alone between 2019 and 2021.

Ironically, the founders of Hindutva, including ideologues Vinayak Savarkar and M. S. Golwalkar, praised the genocide of Jews during the Holocaust and openly admired Nazism; yet present-day Hindutva supporters see a reflection of themselves in Zionist demands for a Jewish state at the expense of Palestinians. Both ideologies rely on religious and racial supremacist narratives to declare the need for their own state; both claim that outsiders have defiled their ancient homelands; both engage in pinkwashing to paint their own group as morally superior to the "barbarians."

And while Zionists have not declared Islam itself as their enemy (despite their documented links with the global Islamophobia industry), this caveat hardly matters to Hindutva supporters when both ideologies also require stoking hatred for Muslims, dehumanizing them as

threat of violence toward an already battered population of two hundred million Indian Muslims, who already face regular mob violence, lynchings, threats of sexual violence, criminalization of religious expression, attacks on citizenship rights, and illegal home demolitions.

A senior BJP leader, Basangouda Patil Yatal, claimed that India "may face the situation that Israel is confronting today if we don't stand up against politically motivated radicalism." Another BJP leader posted a video of a pro-Israel rally showing Hindu supremacists chanting, "The battle lines are drawn clear, Israel is our friend," as a direct contrast to pro-Palestine rallies led by Indian Muslims. These rallies are the subject of a government crackdown, where largely Muslim protesters are assaulted, arrested under criminal charges, and labeled as anti-India terrorist sympathizers. Even beyond protests, Muslim support for Palestine is treated as criminal activity: four men were arrested simply for waving the Palestinian flag at a cricket match in Kolkata; an imam was arrested for making a prayer for Gaza in a mosque in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh; and major mosques in Kashmir have been shut down on Fridays (the days of congregational prayer) as a preventative measure to nip pro-Palestine rallies in the bud.

Online, the disinformation campaign against Palestine is used by Hindutva supporters to fan the flames of Islamophobia globally. Far-right Hindu Twitter/X users consistently inundate the platform with the hashtag #IslamIsTheProblem under posts related to both India and Israel, reinforcing the dangerous Islamophobic stereotype that Muslims pose an existential threat to all other groups.

The fact that Hindutva supporters are so enthusiastically spreading this hatred to justify the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in real-time should be a warning sign. It will not stop with Palestinians. It will not stop with Indian Muslims. It is just one part of a larger effort to demonize Muslims globally. (IPA Service)

Left-Right battle in Argentina presidential polls on November 19 can go either way

By: Satyaki Chakraborty

Only three days before the polling for the Argentina presidential elections on November 19, no opinion agency is predicting the victory of any candidate as both the Left wing Sergio Massa and his far right rival Javier Milei are running neck and neck in the electoral campaign. Some surveys have shown Milei getting a small lead but a few other surveys have shown Massa in a winning position with a lead of 3 to 4 per cent.

In such tight situation, both the candidates are wooing the 35 per cent of the voters who did not vote in the first round of polls on October 15. In that polls, Massa took the lead with 36 per cent of the votes polled as against 30 per cent by Milei. This was a bit surprising at that time as all opinion polls before the first round of polls gave Milei a lead of five to seven per cent.

In the first round, the third candidate Ms. Bullrich, a conservative got 23.8 per cent votes. She has declared her support to Milei in the final round and this should give a big boost to the chances of the far right candidate. But her decision has been contested by a large sections of her supporters. Finally, her vote bank got divided. Milei is not sure how much of Bullrich's votes will be cast in his favour on November 19.

Interestingly, the Peronist candidate Sergio Massa is focusing most on the absentee 35 per cent of the voters. His camp is claiming that they good response from these absentee voters. Massa's programmes to expand further the social security system for the poor and jobs for the unemployed has been welcomed by the electorate. On the other hand, Milei is depending a big way on the social media which is projecting him as an outsider, not involved in any political corruption and having innovative ideas about reviving the economy which is suffering from an inflation rate of 140 per cent now.

In fact, despite doing a good job for the poorer sections in the present term of the government, Massa has a lot to explain about the inflationary pressures on the economy in the last two years. Since he is the minister for economy, his personal responsibility is being questioned. Massa is however saying that there are some external factors, but the government I doing its best and the economic situation will improve in the next few months.

For Massa, the runoff fight has emerged as a big challenge as he will have to get the majority of the votes to be elected. If the 23.8 per cent of the votes received by the conservative third candidate Patricia Bullrich is



added, with the far right Milei, then Milei will have an easy victory. So Massa has to get votes from the conservatives also as also from the other sections of the Left represented by the Socialist Workers Party candidate Myriam Bregman.

While far right candidate Milei has proposed dollarizing the economy and closing down the central bank and opening up to the multinationals in key sectors of the economy, the ruling candidate Massa was sober in his approach underlining on the pro poor schemes and the subsidies for the low income group. He admitted the lapses of the Peronist government in curbing the high inflation but assured that the ruling coalition will be taking suitable steps to control price rise after coming to power.

Massa has been a leading figure in the center-left administration in power since 2019. He successfully focused messaging on the way in which Milei's proposal to slash the size of the state - from halving the number of government ministries to deep spending cuts - would affect everyday life for Argentines.

Milei, a self-described anarcho-capitalist who admires former US President Donald Trump, amassed a groundswell of support while calling for elimination of the Central Bank, replacement of the local currency with the US dollar, and a purge of the establishment that he called the "political caste."

Massa focused much of his firepower on the campaign's final days on warning voters against backing Milei, painting him as a dangerous upstart. He argued that Milei's plans could have devastating effects on social welfare programs, education and health care. The health, education and social development ministries are among those Milei wants to extinguish.

Milei also cast himself as a crusader against what he called the sinister forces of socialism at home and abroad. He opposes sex education, feminist policies and abortion,

which is legal in Argentina. He rejects the notion that humans have had a role in causing climate change.

Argentina is a vast country located in the southern part of South America. The eighth largest country in the world, it is the second largest country in South America after Brazil, and it's about one-third the size of the United States. Argentina is bordered by the Andes Mountains and Chile to the west.

To the east of the Andes, the interior of the country is flat, fertile grassland called the Pampas. The eastern border of the country is the Atlantic Ocean. Bolivia is to the north-west and Paraguay is to the north. The high mountain spine of the Andes, called the Andes Cordillera, creates a natural 3,195-mile (5,141.9-kilometer) border with Chile.

The country is divided into four regions: The Andes, the North, the Pampas, and Patagonia. The Pampas is the agricultural heartland. The country is a federal republic. There have been several democratically elected presidents after many years of political turmoil.

The National Congress is made of the Senate with 72 seats and the Chamber of Deputies with a total of 257 seats. There are seven judges in the Supreme Court, but that number will be reduced to five over the next few years. The president picks the judges and the senate must approve their appointments.

For the Latin American progressives, the victory of the ruling coalition candidate Sergio Massa in run off on November 19 is of crucial significance. Only on October 15, in the presidential elections, the left wing candidate Luisa Gonzalez was defeated by the right candidate. If the centre left can retain the presidency on November 19 elections, that will give a big boost to the Left wing forces of the region. Already Mexico and Brazil are headed by left wing presidents. Argentina is the second largest country in this trio. (IPA Service)

Will the 2024 general elections be PM Modi's last?

By: Dipak Kurmi

The dynamics of Narendra Modi's Prime Ministership have been characterized by a deliberate distance from journalists as a matter of policy. While enjoying considerable success within India, he has occasionally found himself confronting challenging inquiries from the press on foreign soil. A notable instance unfolded during his visit to the US in June when Wall Street Journal reporter Sabrina Siddiqui questioned him inside the White House on topics like human rights, freedom of speech, and minorities in India. Modi responded promptly, yet Siddiqui became the target of a vicious online harassment campaign, prompting a senior American official to intervene and denounce the trolling as "completely unacceptable" and "antithetical to the very principles of democracy."

The United Kingdom as PM, Modi experienced the true nature of independent media during his inaugural visit in 2015. In a joint press conference with then British Prime Minister David Cameron, he faced pointed questions about intolerance in India from the BBC's Justin Rowlett and the Guardian's Nicholas Watt. Watt went even further, publicly questioning Cameron about his comfort hosting Modi, creating an awkward moment for both leaders. Modi, who had carefully avoided the domestic press since becoming PM in 2014, appeared visibly taken aback by the directness and bluntness of the British journalists. Nevertheless, he managed to provide comprehensive responses. The full transcripts of the exchanges in November 2015, as well as in June 2023, are readily accessible to anyone genuinely interested in assessing Modi's performance in London and Washington. Personally, I think he handled the situations quite well.

The middle of Assembly elections in five states sets the stage for a potential press conference where, if miraculously undertaken by Modi today, he would inevitably face the question of whether the upcoming general elections in 2024 mark his final electoral contest. Such an inquiry would be both fair and legitimate. Having celebrated his 73rd birthday in September, Modi encounters the unspoken party rule within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that denies party tickets to individuals above the age of 75. The looming question is whether Modi will subject himself to the same rule that he has imposed on BJP leaders such as LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Sumitra Mahajan, and Kalraj Mishra. As BJP leaders surpassing the retirement age of 75 are traditionally expected to embrace electoral celibacy - eschewing Parliament and state legislatures - it remains to be seen whether Modi will follow suit or chart a different course.

The upcoming Lok Sabha polls hold the key to uncovering whether the 2024 general elections will indeed be Modi's last, as there is currently no indication that he will have a change of heart and convene a press conference for reporters to inquire about his career plans. Assuming, however, that the 2024 elections align with the BJP rulebook and mark Modi's final electoral endeavor,

the ongoing assembly elections in the five states take on paramount significance. These elections will determine whether the enduring "Modi magic" remains potent or has waned. If the magic proves resilient, the BJP can anticipate success in the 2024 general elections and, preceding that, in the Assembly elections currently underway, with results slated for announcement on December 3. However, if the BJP encounters setbacks on December 3, the question arises: can Modi still orchestrate victory in 2024, his presumed last election?

PM Narendra Modi finds himself with a full plate these days. While skillfully sidestepping Mizoram, he is vigorously captaining the BJP ship towards victory in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Telangana. In all four states, we are witnessing a direct confrontation between Modi and the Opposition. State BJP leaders, once prominent, are now systematically downplayed, as Modi takes center stage, leading the charge directly into the heart of the enemy camp.

The BJP is venturing into state elections in four crucial states for the first time without a chief ministerial candidate. On every poster, banner, and hoarding, Modi's face takes center stage, relegating state BJP leaders to mere footnotes. Modi directly appeals to the electorate, urging them to cast their votes in his favor, while also positioning the lotus as the party's emblematic "face" in the battle against Congress Party's Ashok Gehlot, Bhupesh Baghel, Kamal Nath, and Bharat Rashtia Samithi's K. Chandrasekhar Rao. The unmistakable message is that Modi is sidelining seasoned veterans like Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Vasundhara Raje, and Raman Singh, projecting himself as the BJP's candidate across states. This strategic move, however, contradicts the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's advice to the BJP after the electoral setback in Karnataka earlier this year, emphasizing the need to not solely rely on the PM's popularity and charisma but to empower and mobilize regional leaders.

The BJP faces a daunting challenge in these critical states, and if it falters, its prospects for 2024 will become significantly tougher. In 2018, despite the BJP's absence in Mizoram and Telangana, it suffered defeats to the Congress in MP, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh. To Modi's credit, after the setback in the state Assembly elections, he orchestrated a turnaround in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The BJP secured victories in nine out of 11 seats in Chhattisgarh, 28 out of 29 in MP, and 24 out of 25 in Rajasthan. Additionally, the BJP won four Lok Sabha seats in Telangana. In Karnataka, which the Congress had claimed in early 2018, the BJP clinched 25 Lok Sabha seats out of 28. Consequently, Karnataka, MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Telangana collectively sent 90 BJP MPs in the last election. With Karnataka now in the Congress' pocket, if the BJP loses the ongoing Assembly polls in the remaining four states, but Modi somehow manages to secure 90 BJP MPs again from the five states, he is poised to secure a straight third term as PM. This would set the stage for him to retire in five years, perhaps announcing it at his first and last press conference in India. (The writer can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)

Careers related to controlling Diabetes

By: **Ranjan K Baruah**

One of the concerns for many of us at present is with the sugar level in our body. Whenever it comes to sugar we talk about diabetes. Globally, an estimated 422 million adults were living with diabetes in 2014, compared to 108 million in 1980. The global prevalence of diabetes has nearly doubled since 1980, rising from 4.7% to 8.5% in the adult population. This reflects an increase in associated risk factors such as being overweight or obese.

The International Diabetes Federation's (IDF) Diabetes Atlas (2021) reports that 10.5% of the adult population (20-79 years) has diabetes, with almost half unaware that they are living with the condition. By 2045, IDF projections show that 1 in 8 adults, approximately 783 mil-

lion, will be living with diabetes, an increase of 46%.

Over the past decade, diabetes prevalence has risen faster in low and middle-income countries than in high-income countries. Diabetes is a chronic disease, which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. This leads to an increased concentration of glucose in the blood (hyperglycaemia).

We should know that diabetes is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and lower limb amputation. Healthy diet, physical activity and avoiding tobacco use can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. In addition diabetes can be treated and its consequences avoided or delayed with medication, regular screening and treatment for complications.



In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 61/225 designating 14 November as World Diabetes Day. The document recognized "the urgent need to pursue multilateral efforts to promote and improve human health, and provide access to treatment and health-care education." The resolution also en-

couraged Member States to develop national policies for the prevention, treatment and care of diabetes in line with the sustainable development of their health-care systems.

The theme for World Diabetes Day 2021-23 is access to diabetes care. 100 years after the discovery of insulin, millions of people

with diabetes around the world cannot access the care they need. People with diabetes require ongoing care and support to manage their condition and avoid complications.

A healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a normal body weight and avoiding tobacco use are ways to prevent or

delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. Diabetes can be treated and its consequences avoided or delayed with diet, physical activity, medication and regular screening and treatment for complications.

One side is a challenge as our lifestyle has made diabetes common amongst many of us. It also brings career opportunities for young people who want to work against diabetes or in managing and controlling diabetes. Careers that work with diabetes include nutrition specialists, instructors, and doctors. In this field, one may teach people how to test their blood sugar, educate them on the warning signs of diabetes, or study and research potential treatments.

To become doctors we have to study medicine or complete our MBBS and followed by PG level courses and specialists in diabetes. A diabetologist is a Doctor

who specializes in the treatment of diabetes. Apart from becoming doctors one may choose to study nursing or similar caregiving courses. Like doctors and nurses there are opportunities for diabetes educators who can generate awareness related to diabetes.

One may choose to become nutrition specialists as diet is very important to control or manage diabetes. Nutrition and dietetics is a branch that is related to fitness, health, and healthy eating and this can be one of the best options for those who want to work against diabetes. Together we can manage diabetes and young people may choose a career in this field. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjan@gmail.com for any career related queries)*

NEEPCO Apprentice Recruitment 2023 – 75 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 30/11/2023

North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 75 Graduate Apprentice and Technician Apprentice Vacancy for FY 2023 - 2024 under the Apprenticeship Act 1961. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

1. Graduate Apprentice

No of posts: 28 posts

Place of training:

- Assam Gas Based Power Station (AGBPS), Dibrugarh, Assam: Elect/ Mech: 2 seats
- Agartala Gas Based Power Station (AgGBPS), Tripura: Elect/ Mech: 2 seats and Civil: 3 seats
- Kameng Hydro Power Station (KaHPS), Arunachal Pradesh: Elect/ Mech: 1 seat
- Kopili Hydro Power Station (KHPS), Umrongso, Assam: Elect/ Mech: 3 seats and IT: 1 seat
- Panyor Lower Hydro Power Station (PLHPS), Arunachal Pradesh: Elect/ Mech: 3 seats, Civil: 3 seats and IT: 1 seat
- Tripura Gas Based Power Station (TGBPS), Tripura: Elect/ Mech: 3 seats, Civil: 1 seat and IT: 1 seat
- Tural Hydro Power Station (THPS), Mizoram: Elect/ Mech: 3 seats and Civil: 1 seat

Duration: 1 year

Monthly stipend: ₹ 18,000 per month

Essential Qualification:

- A Degree in Engineering or Technology granted by a Statutory University.
- A Degree in Engineering or Technology granted by an Institution empowered to grant such degree by an Act of parliament.

2. Technician Apprentice (Diploma in Engineering or Technology)

No of posts: 8 posts

Place of training:

- Assam Gas Based Power Station (AGBPS), Dibrugarh, Assam: Elect/ Mech: 1 seat
- Kameng Hydro Power Station (KaHPS), Arunachal Pradesh: Elect/ Mech: 1 seat, Civil: 1 seat and IT: 1 seat
- Tripura Gas Based Power Station (TGBPS), Tripura: Elect/ Mech: 1 seat
- Tural Hydro Power Station (THPS), Mizoram: Elect/ Mech: 3 seats

Duration: 1 year

Monthly stipend: ₹ 15,000 per month

Essential Qualification:

- A Diploma in Engineering or Technology Granted by a State Council or Board of Technical Education established by a State Government.
- A Diploma in Engineering or Technology from a University.
- A Diploma in Engineering or Technology granted by an Institute recognized by the State Govt. or Central Govt. as equivalent to (a) and (b) above

3. Graduate or equivalent in general Streams such as B.A, B.Sc & B.Com.

No of posts: 14 posts

Place of training:

- NEEPCO Corporate Office, Meghalaya: B.Com: 2 seats and B.A.: 6 seats
- Assam Gas Based Power Station, Assam: B.A/B.Sc: 1 seat and B.Com: 1 seat
- Kopili Hydro Power Station (KHPS), Umrongso, Assam: B.A.: 1 seat
- Tripura Gas Based Power Station (TGBPS), Tripura: B.A /B.Sc/B.Com: 1 seat
- Tural Hydro Power Station (THPS), Mozoram: B.A.: 1 seat and B.Sc: 1 seat

Duration: 1 year

Monthly stipend: ₹ 15,000 per month

Essential Qualification:

- A degree in any subject (other than engineering/ technology) of a minimum three years duration granted by a Statutory University.
- A degree in any subject (other than engineering/ technology) of a minimum of three years duration granted by an Institution empowered to grant such degree by an Act of parliament.
- Graduate examination of professional bodies recognized by the Central Government as equivalent to a degree (other than engineering/ technology)

4. Trade Apprentice

No of posts: 25

Place of training:

- Assam Gas Based Power Station (AGBPS), Assam: Electrician: 2 seats, Boiler Attendant: 4 seats, Lineman: 1 seat
- Agartala Gas Based Power Station (AgGBPS), Tripura: Boiler Attendant: 4 seats
- Kameng Hydro Power Station (KaHPS), Arunachal Pradesh: Electrician: 1 seat, Lineman: 1 seat, Plumber: 1 seat
- Kopili Hydro Power Station (KHPS), Umrongso, Assam: Electrician: 2 seats
- Tripura Gas Based Power Station (TGBPS), Tripura: Electrician: 2, Lineman: 2 seats, Plumber: 1 seats, Fitter: 1 seats, Boiler Attendant: 1 seats
- Tural Hydro Power Station (THPS), Mozoram: Boiler Attendant: 1 seat, Lineman: 1 seat

Duration: 1 year

Monthly stipend: ₹ 14877 per month

Essential Qualification:

- # Boiler Attendant: 10th & ITI Pass
- # Electrician: 10th & ITI Pass
- # Lineman: 10th & ITI Pass
- # Plumber: 8 th Pass & ITI
- # Fitter: 10th & ITI Pass

Other Criteria of NEEPCO Apprentice Recruitment

Resident-ship: The candidate should be a resident of North East India.

Qualification Date:

For Graduate Engineering & Diploma Engineering, the candidate should have completed his / her Graduation / Diploma not before 1st June, 2022.

For Non-Engineering Graduate or equivalent in general streams such as B.A, B.Sc & B.Com, the candidate should have completed his / her Graduation / Diploma not before 1st June, 2022.

For ITI Trade Apprentices, the candidate should have completed ITI course.

Id Proof: The candidate must have Aadhaar Card (compulsory) / Pan Card/ Voter ID Card/ Passport which is required for online registration.

Age Limit: Maximum age 28 years as on 01-11-2023, but not less than 18 years.

Age Relaxation: Age relaxation is allowed for Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe/ Other Backward Classes/ Persons with Disability/ Ex-servicemen, as per applicable Govt. of India rules.

Reservation: Reservation for Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe/ Other Backward Classes (NCL)/ Persons with Disability/ Economically Weaker Section, will be as per existing Govt. of India rules.

How to Apply for NEEPCO Recruitment ?

Graduate Engineering & Diploma Engineering

Step I

> The Candidates must get himself / herself enrolled / registered with Board of Practical Training (BOPT), through online enrollment at National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS), in www.mhrdnats.gov.in and poses a valid enrollment ID generated after successful enrollment.

> For instance, there may be candidates who possess qualification of both B.Tech and Diploma. If he/ she apply against Technician (Diploma) training slots, he/she must register as Diploma only in the NATS portal (www.mhrdnats.gov.in)

Step II

The Candidates are advised to apply online & select any one NEEPCO Establishments.

Non-Engineering Graduate or equivalent in general streams such as B.A, B.Sc & B.Com

Step I

The Candidates must get himself / herself enrolled / registered with Board of Practical Training (BOPT), through online enrollment in <https://portalboptor.com/> and poses a valid enrollment ID generated after successful enrollment.

Step II

The Candidates are advised to apply online & select any one NEEPCO Establishments.

ITI Trade Apprentice

Step I

The Candidates must get himself / herself enrolled / registered with National Promotion Scheme (NAPS), through online enrollment at www.apprenticeshipindia.gov.in and poses a valid enrollment ID generated after successful enrollment.

Important Dates of NEEPCO Apprentice Recruitment 2023

Starting date of submission of online application: 15th November 2023

Last date of submission of online application: 30th November 2023

NID Assam Recruitment 2023 – Controller Of Finance & Accounts Post

Last Date: 15/12/2023

National Institute of Design (NID), Assam, Jorhat has released an employment notification for the recruitment of Controller of Finance & Accounts post. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

Name of post: Controller of Finance & Accounts

No of posts: 1 [UR]

Pay: Level 12 ₹ 78,800 - 2,09,200

Essential Qualification: Master's degree in Commerce/Financial Management from recognized University / Institution or C.A. / ICWAI / CS or equivalent.

Minimum Experience: Ten years of experience in Finance and Account matters in a Government / Educational / Research Institution / Organization of national standing

Age Limit: Not exceeding 50 years, as on the last date of application. (Direct recruitment)

Desirable:

- Of the total experience a minimum Five years should be as group A officer in Pay Level 10: ₹ 56,100- 1,77,500 or equivalent.
- Previous experience in Finance and Account matter at Central Government / Educational Institution / Autonomous Bodies funded by the Government of India in an analogous post.
- Passing the Departmental Accounts examination.
- Members of the Organized Accounts Cadre of Government of India / State Government.

Application Fee: The application fee is to be paid online / NEFT only & additional bank charges may apply.

General / OBC candidate(s): ₹ 1000
SC / ST / EWS candidate(s): ₹ 500

The candidate will be able to make the payment using his / her net-banking account, debit card and through the Bank in the following bank account:

National Institute of Design, Assam
Account number: 40153013234, Branch: Gar-Ali, Basant Bora Complex, Jorhat.
IFSC Code: SBIN0004460.

The UTR no. / journal no. after making the payment must be filled in, without which the form will not be accepted for further evaluation.

Important Dates of NID Assam Recruitment 2023

Starting date of submission of online application: 10.11.2023

Last date of submission of online application: 15.12.2023 (05.00 PM)

SBI Clerk Recruitment 2023 – 8283 Junior Associate Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 07/12/2023

State Bank of India (SBI) has released the official employment notification for the recruitment of 8283 Junior Associate (Customer Support and Sales) vacancy in clerical cadre in various branches of SBI across the country. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Candidates can apply for vacancies in one State/UT only. Candidates can appear for the test only once under this recruitment project. The candidates applying for vacancies of a particular State/ UT, should be proficient (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) in the specified opted local language of that State/UT.

Name of post: Junior Associate (Customer Support and Sales)

Name of organisation: State Bank of India (SBI)

No of posts: 8283 posts

No of posts @ North Eastern states: 685 posts

State	No of posts
Assam	430 posts
Arunachal Pradesh	69 posts
Manipur	26 posts
Meghalaya	77 posts
Mizoram	17 posts
Nagaland	40 posts
Tripura	26 posts

Mode of application: Online

Pay Scale: ₹ 17900-1000/3-20900-1230/3-24590-1490/4-30550-1730/7-42600-3270/1-45930-1990/1-47920.

Advertisement No.: CRPD/CR/2023-24/27

Eligibility Criteria of SBI Junior Associate Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates age should not below 20 years and not above 28 years as on 01.04.2023, i.e. candidates must have been born not earlier than 02.04.1995 and not later than 01.04.2003 (both days inclusive).

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below

- # SC/ST: 5 years
- # OBC: 3 years
- # PwD (Unreserved): 10 years
- # PwD (OBC): 13 years
- # PwD (SC/ST): 15 years

Educational Qualification: Graduation in any discipline from a recognised University or any equivalent qualification recognised as such by Central Government. Candidates having integrated dual degree (IDD) certificate should ensure that the date of passing the IDD is on or before 30.12.2023.

Final Year Candidates: Those who are in the final year/ semester of their graduation may also apply provisionally subject to the condition that, if provisionally selected, they will have to produce proof of having passed the graduation examination on or before 30.12.2023.

Local Language Proficiency: The candidates applying for vacancies of a particular State/UT, should be proficient (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) in the specified opted local language of that State/UT.

Application Fee of SBI Clerk 2023

The category wise fee structure for SBI Clerk online application is given below.

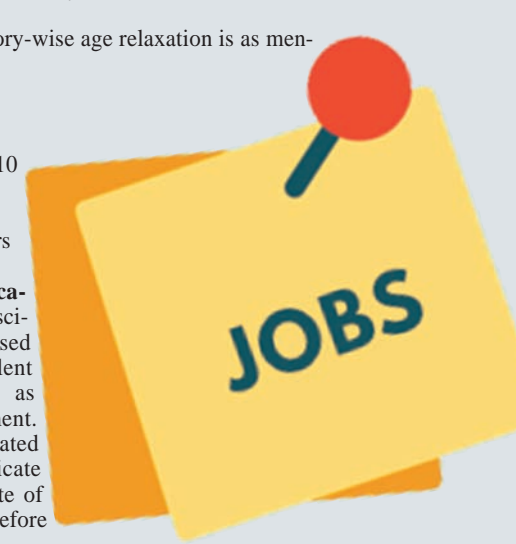
Category	Fee
UR	₹ 750
OBC/EWS	₹ 750
SC/ST	Nil
PWD	Nil

Payment Method: Debit Card, Credit Card, Net Banking or UPI.

Important Dates of SBI Junior Associate Recruitment 2023

Starting date of online application submission: 17th November 2023

Last date of online application submission: 7th December 2023



Aid to Gaza halted with communications down for a second day, as food and water supplies dwindle

RAFAH (GAZA STRIP), Nov 17 : Communications systems in the Gaza Strip were down for a second day on Friday with no fuel to power the internet and phone networks, causing aid agencies to halt cross-border deliveries of humanitarian supplies even as they warned people may soon face starvation.

Israel has been pushing deeper into Gaza City, and its troops have been searching Gaza's biggest hospital, Shifa, for traces of a Hamas command center the military alleges was located under the building. They have displayed images of what they said were a tunnel entrance and weapons found in a truck inside the compound but not yet any evidence of the command center, which Hamas and Shifa staff deny existed.

The war, now in its sixth week, was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel, in which the militants

killed more than 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and captured some 240 men, women and children.

Gaza is now receiving only 10% of its needed food supplies daily, and dehydration and malnutrition are growing with nearly all of the 2.3 million people in the territory needing food, said Abber Etefa, a Mideast regional spokeswoman for the United Nations' World Food Program.

"People are facing the immediate possibility of starvation," she said from Cairo. With few trucks entering Gaza and no fuel to distribute the food "there is no way to meet the current hunger needs," she said Thursday.

"The existing food systems in Gaza are basically collapsing."

The breakdown of the communications network, which is crucial for coordinating aid deliveries, meant a further worsening of the situation. The U.N. agency

for Palestinian refugees, or UNRWA, said no aid deliveries would be able to enter southern Gaza from Egypt on Friday.

"We have seen fuel and food and water and humanitarian assistance being used as a weapon of war," said agency spokeswoman Juliette Touma.

Fuel is needed for generators that run emergency communication systems, hospitals, desalination plants and other critical infrastructure in Gaza.

Israel has barred fuel shipments into Gaza since the beginning of the war, but permitted a limited shipment to UNRWA earlier this week for trucks delivering food after the agency's fuel reservoir ran dry. Touma said that is "outrageous that humanitarian agencies are reduced to begging for fuel."

Following the surprise attack by Hamas, Israel responded with a weeks-



long air campaign and a ground invasion of northern Gaza, vowing to remove Hamas from power and crush its military capabilities.

On Friday, the military said it had found the body of another hostage taken by Hamas, identifying her as a soldier, Cpl. Noa Marciano. Like the body of another hostage found Thursday, 65-year-

old Yehudit Weiss, Marciano's corpse was recovered in a building adjacent to Shifa, the military said. Four hostages taken in the initial Hamas attack have now been confirmed dead, while four others have been freed and one rescued.

More than 11,470 Palestinians have been killed, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, believed buried under rubble. The official count does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths, and Israel says it has killed thousands of militants.

Israel's troops stormed into Shifa on Wednesday, and have been searching the complex. The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the troops searched underground levels of the hospital Thursday and detained technicians who run its equipment. Israel faces pressure to prove

its claim that Hamas set up its main command center in and under the hospital, which has multiple buildings over an area of several city blocks. So far, it has mainly shown photos of weapons caches which it says its soldiers found in the hospital.

On Thursday, the military released video of a hole in the hospital courtyard it said was a tunnel entrance. It also showed several assault rifles and RPGs, grenades, ammunition clips and utility vests laid out on a blanket that it said were found in a pickup truck in the courtyard. The Associated Press could not independently verify the Israeli claims.

For years, Israel has depicted the hospital as the site of a major Hamas headquarters, and in recent weeks it released satellite maps that specified particular buildings as a command center or as housing underground complexes. (AP)

Biden signed the bill in San Francisco, where he is hosting the summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies

Biden signs temporary spending bill averting govt shutdown, pushing budget fight into new year

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 17: President Joe Biden has signed a temporary spending bill a day before a potential government shutdown, pushing a fight with congressional Republicans over the federal budget into the new year, as wartime aid for Ukraine and Israel remains stalled.

The measure passed the House and Senate by wide bipartisan margins this week, ensuring the government remains open until after the holiday season, and potentially giving lawmakers more time to sort out their considerable differences over government spending levels for the current fiscal year.

Biden signed the bill in San Francisco, where he is hosting the summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies.

News of the signing came late at night. The president signed the



bill at the Legion of Honor Museum, where he held a dinner for APEC members.

The spending package keeps government funding at current levels for roughly two more months while a long-term package is negotiated. It splits the deadlines for passing full-year appropriations bills into two dates:

January 19 for some federal agencies and February 2 for others, creating two dates when there will be a risk of a partial government shutdown.

The two-step approach was championed by new House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, and was not favored by many in the Senate, though all but

one Democrat and 10 Republicans supported it because it ensured the government would not shut down for now.

Johnson has vowed that he will not support any further stopgap funding measures, known as continuing resolutions. He portrayed the temporary funding bill as setting the ground for a spending "fight" with the Senate next year.

The spending bill does not include the White House's nearly USD 106 billion request for wartime aid for Israel and Ukraine. Nor does it provide humanitarian funding for Palestinians and other supplemental requests, including money for border security.

Lawmakers are likely to turn their attention more fully to that request after the Thanksgiving holiday in hopes of negotiating a deal. (AP)

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 17: Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said the US will continue to say things that China doesn't like, as he defended President Joe Biden's remarks in which he called his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping a "dictator".

Biden called Xi, 70, a "dictator", just hours after they met for the first time in more than a year and held candid and productive discussions to revive bilateral ties on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco on Wednesday.

When pressed on whether Biden's comments were the position of the US government, Blinken responded that the president "speaks for all of us", CBS News reported.

"Well, it's not exactly a secret that we have two very different systems," the channel quoted Blinken as saying.

"And the president always speaks candidly, and he speaks for all of us." "We will continue to say things and continue to do things



that China doesn't like, just as I assume that they will continue to do and say things that we don't like," Blinken said on Thursday.

China has raised objections to such a remark by Biden, 80, in the past.

In an interview with NBC News, Blinken said: "It's no surprise that — and I don't think it will be news to anyone — that we have very different systems. And the President always speaks candidly and he speaks for us. But what's important is what we were able to achieve with yesterday's meeting."

The top American diplomat

made a similar comment when asked about it in an interview with ABC News.

"President Biden always speaks candidly and he speaks for all of us. But the point you made a moment ago is this summit yesterday, this meeting yesterday, produced real, concrete results for the American people. We have a couple of obligations in this relationship with China, the most consequential of any relationship that we have. We've got a real competition. We want to make sure it doesn't veer into conflict," Blinken said. (PTI)

Pedro Sánchez reelected Spain's PM despite controversy over amnesty for separatists

MADRID, Nov 17: Spain's Pedro Sánchez was reelected as prime minister by the nation's parliament on Thursday, when he leveraged a controversial amnesty deal to get the critical support from Catalan separatists to stay in power.

Sánchez, Spain's Socialist leader since 2018, was backed by 179 lawmakers in the 350-seat lower house of parliament to form a new minority leftist coalition government. Only right-wing opposition deputies voted against him.

The vote came after nearly two days of debate among party leaders that centered almost entirely on an amnesty deal for Catalonia's separatists that Sánchez agreed to in return for vital support to unlock another four-year term.

Sánchez won the vote after clinching the support of six smaller parties — including two Catalan separatist parties that command 14 seats — in recent weeks, allowing his Socialists to once again team up with the left-wing Sumar (Joining



Forces) party in government.

It remains to be seen if Sánchez can maintain enough support to exhaust his mandate that can run until 2027 given that some of his backers are parties that want to break Catalonia, or the Basque Country, away from Spain.

Spain's inconclusive national elections on July 23 left a highly fractured parliament. The center-right Popular Party received the most votes in the elections but failed to get enough support to form a government because of its alliances with the far-right Vox party, which finished third.

The amnesty deal would clean the slate for hundreds of Catalan sep-

aratists in legal trouble following the northeast region's illegal 2017 secession bid that sparked Spain's biggest crisis in decades. That includes benefiting former Catalan regional president Carles Puigdemont, who is a fugitive from Spanish law and considered public enemy No. 1 by many Spaniards.

Despite lingering disagreements, the two Catalan parties as well as two Basque ones said they would back Sánchez on Thursday but let him know that he must fulfill the economic and political deals reached with each of them.

The two Basque parties pointed out that their support was also key to keeping a progressive

government in power and making sure the right wing remained out of office.

The agreements with the Catalan parties include opening talks on the possibility of holding an authorized referendum for independence for the wealthy northeast region, but within the legal framework of Spain's Constitution. Sánchez has repeatedly said that he would not permit a vote that could break up Spain.

Analyst Oriol Bartomeus, professor of political science of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, said that since Sánchez has made it over the hurdle of forming a government he has a chance, albeit small, to keep it afloat for the full term.

"There is a possibility that it can last because it is very difficult, almost impossible, to win a no-confidence vote against this government," Bartomeus said, pointing to the only successful no-confidence vote in 2018 when Sánchez replaced his conservative predecessor. (AP)

Gang attack on Haitian hospital leads to a call for help and an unlikely triumph for police

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, Nov 17: The bullets began piercing the windows of the hospital as women cradling young children ran from room to room searching for a safe place to hide while the heavily armed gang drew closer.

The louder the gunfire grew, the more the women screamed until a hospital employee begged them to stay quiet and ordered them to lie on the ground. Mothers with babies and shaky hands forced one breast into their tiny mouths to keep them quiet, wondering if they would live through Wednesday's attack on the Fontaine Hospital Center and the surrounding community in the Haitian slum of Cite Soleil.

A couple of hours went by. The gunfire never ceased. Suddenly, an employee appeared, told them to get up and go to the front yard without making noise. Police were waiting with armored cars.

"Get in! Get in! Get in! Get in quickly!" the employees shouted as women carrying children and babies stepped into buses and private ambulances that officers would escort out of Cite Soleil, a rare triumph for a police department that is understaffed, under resourced and outmatched by gangs. Employees also joined the dozens of evacuees, carrying plastic containers that cradled newborns on oxygen.

It was the latest gang attack on a vulnerable and impoverished community in the capital of Port-au-Prince, a show of defiant force and violence that continues to overwhelm a crumbling government that requested the immediate deployment of an international armed force more than a year ago and has yet to arrive.

"A big disappointment is that the state has disappeared," Jose Ulysse, hospital director



and founder, said of the government's inability to fight gangs as he thanked police for saving people's lives on Wednesday.

He said he hopes he can reopen the hospital soon as many are left wondering why it was attacked amid speculation it could have been gangs flexing their muscles during an ongoing turf war, signaling that no one is safe.

The assault that forced the evacuation of the hospital and left dozens of homes ablaze was blamed on the Brooklyn gang. It is led by Gabriel Jean-Pierre, nicknamed "Ti Gabriel," leader of a powerful gang alliance known as G-Pep, one of two rival coalitions in Haiti.

Previous attacks in Cite Soleil and other areas have left hundreds of civilians dead as gangs pillage communities, raping and killing people inside their homes. More than 1,230 killings and 701 kidnappings were reported across Haiti from July 1 to Sept. 30, more than double the figure reported during the same period last year, according to the U.N. Ulysse said gang clashes in Cite Soleil increased after the recent death of Iskar Andrice, a former math

and physics teacher who became a feared gang leader. During the recent clashes in the sprawling seaside slum that led up to Wednesday's attack, gangs could be seen traveling by boat to surprise and kill rival gang members, Ulysse said.

"The minute a chief is dead, others will try to control the area," he said. "It's a matter of controlling more territory and collecting money."

Residents worry the violence in Cite Soleil and elsewhere will only escalate as gangs fight to fill the vacuum that Andrice's death left. The shooting on Wednesday began around dawn, recalled Edline Pierre, a 26-year-old mother of three. She was at the Fontaine Hospital Center with her two youngest, who were being treated for diarrhea and malnutrition.

By late morning, the gunfire grew closer, and she scampered under a bed with her two children. As bullets began to hit the hospital's roof and break the windows, she heard people in the yard yelling, "God, come get me!"

Many were in shock and scared, she recalled. Then, after everyone inside the hospital grew quiet, she heard gangs outside arguing whether or not to burn the facility.

"If it wasn't for God, (Wednesday) could have been the last day for me on earth," she said, recalling that police were still shooting at gang members hiding in bushes as they left in ambulances and buses. Pierre, along with many who were at the hospital that day, is staying at a private home in a safer community for now. She doesn't know if her eldest child or her mother, who was taking care of her, are alive. Their home was burned during the attack. (AP)

Turkey's Erdogan to visit Germany as differences over the Israel-Hamas war widen

BERLIN, Nov 17: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is expected in Berlin on Friday on a short visit to Germany as the two countries' stances on the war between Israel and Hamas are poles apart. Erdogan is due to meet Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Germany's largely ceremonial president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Scholz invited Erdogan to visit in May following his re-election.

Turkey is viewed as an awkward but essential partner in Germany, which is home to more than 3 million people with Turkish roots. It's a NATO ally that also is important in efforts to control the flow of refugees and migrants to Europe, but there have been tensions in recent years over a variety of issues.

This visit is overshadowed by a growing chasm between the two countries' stance on events following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel. Germany is a staunch ally of Israel and has opposed calls for a cease-fire, while pushing for aid to civilians in Gaza, advocating "humanitarian pauses" and seeking to keep open channels of communication with other countries in the

region to prevent the conflict from spreading. Erdogan has taken an increasingly strident stance against Israel. On Wednesday, he called it a "terrorist state" intent on destroying Gaza along with all of its residents. He described Hamas militants as "resistance fighters" trying to protect their lands and people. Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and European Union.

Those and similar comments have appalled politicians across the spectrum in Germany. Asked earlier this week about Erdogan's comments, Scholz didn't mention the Turkish leader by name but said "the accusations that are being made there against Israel are absurd."

On Wednesday, Scholz told parliament that his talks with Erdogan will include a discussion of "differing views — in this question, it is very important that there is clarity and that we make our own position very clear." Israel recalled its diplomats from Turkey last month after Erdogan accused Israel of committing war crimes. Turkey later also recalled its ambassador from Israel. (AP)

Pakistan's economy still fragile; support from IMF to continue: Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD, Nov 17: Pakistan's caretaker Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar has said Pakistan's economy continues to remain fragile despite improvements and the cash-strapped nation would have to go for more IMF loans for some time, a media report said on Friday.

Akhtar also emphasised that Pakistan needs strong financial reforms to strengthen its economy, the Dawn newspaper quoted her as saying. "The next International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme is very necessary for some time as the economy has returned to stability that was still very fragile. Until we are able to increase exports and domestic resources, we will need another programme," Akhtar said.

Her remarks came a day after the Pakistan government and the IMF concluded a review of the ongoing USD 3 billion standby agreement with a staff-level agreement, opening the way for Pakistan to get USD 700 million in the second tranche. She said there was no more refuge from undertaking long-standing reforms.

"The country will not survive without this. Probably, we will have to go into another EFF [Extended Fund Facility]. We will remain engaged with the IMF," she said



but hastened to add that this may be premature to talk about.

Akhtar said her priority was to immediately start working on the last USD 1.1 billion tranche under the current facility so that the new government should not face any difficulty, but "if we get time, we will also discuss this [new programme] as well". She also outlined key aspects of the IMF agreement, affirming the government's commitment to regular tariff adjustments, including a planned gas price hike in January to prevent the accumulation of circular debt in both the gas and power sectors.

The electricity and gas rates would be "continuously revised" and their costs controlled besides transferring their manage-

ment to the private sector as soon as possible and institutionalising ongoing campaigns against power and gas theft, she said. She said Pakistan would also need to adhere to the market-determined exchange rate completely, remain responsive through adequate monetary policy adjustment, particularly to core inflation, and bring four more state-owned enterprises in line with the financing and governance template of the newly approved SOE law.

Akhtar also tried to allay concerns regarding the external financing gap and expressed confidence over the achievement of the tax collection target. She said the government would remain committed to fiscal consolidation for macroeconomic stability and balanced growth.

She said that unlike in the past, no prior action was required by the IMF management this time before approving the staff-level agreement, taking total releases under the USD 3 billion programme to USD 1.9 billion and leaving USD 1.1 billion for the next and final review. Addressing the postponement of the new USD 1.5 billion international bond, Akhtar cited high interest rates and costly market conditions as key factors. (PTI)

Union Min Rijji inspects India-funded key connectivity project in Maldives

MALE, Nov 17: Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijji on Friday inspected the progress of work of an India-funded major connectivity project in the Maldives that is expected to usher economic development and prosperity in the country.

Rijji is here at the invitation of Maldives President-elect Mohamed Muizzu to represent India at the inaugural ceremony of the presidency.

Under the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMP) project, a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link will be built to connect the capital city Male with the adjoining islands of Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

It is funded under a grant of USD 100 million and a Line of Credit of USD 400 million from India.

"Glad to witness the progress of works of Greater Male Connectivity Project in Maldives. Project is being undertaken under the Govt of India's concessional Line of Credit and Grant and is expected to usher economic development and prosperity in the Greater Male Region," Rijji, posted on X. (PTI)

Opp'n leaders submit memorandum to Gov, urging PM to address Manipur crisis

IMPHAL, Nov 17: The "bloc of 10 like-minded opposition political parties" on Friday submitted a memorandum to Manipur Governor, Anusuiya Uiquey, urging her to arrange a meeting of all political parties in Manipur with the Prime Minister to find a solution to the present situation in the state.

Leaders of the 10 political parties—MPCC, JDU, CPI(M), AAP, RSP, NCP, SS(UBT), AIFB, and AITC—submitted the memorandum after meeting with the Governor at Raj Bhavan, said senior Congress leader and former Manipur chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh at a press conference held at Imphal Congress Bhavan after the meeting with the Governor.

Leaders of the other political parties also attended the press conference.

Ibobi Singh said that the 10 like-minded political parties, after a thorough deliberation on the ongoing crisis, decided to urge the Governor to arrange a meeting of all political parties.

He lamented that even after more than six months since the violent clashes erupted on May 3, there is no sign of ending the violence. The state government or the Centre so far has not come up with a concrete step to resolve the crisis, he also said.

"The state government is not seen chalking out a plan on how to bring the communities in conflict to the negotiating table, which is a must for the restoration of peace and normalcy in the state", he further said.

In such a situation, the opposition political parties considered it necessary on the part of the Centre to intervene and take the necessary steps to resolve the crisis, he said.

The former three-time chief minister then said that the 10 like-minded political parties have been urging the Centre to find a way to resolve the crisis that has caused a huge loss of lives and properties and the displacement of more than 60,000 people belonging to

both communities.

Representatives of the opposition parties had even camped in New Delhi to meet the Prime Minister and other Central leaders to press them to find a solution to the present conflict in the state. However, they had to come back to Imphal without meeting with the Prime Minister, as no positive response was received from the Prime Minister's office.

Even though there was no positive response to the appointment with the Prime Minister, the opposition parties were hopeful that the Centre would find a way to resolve the crisis. But no step has been taken so far, Ibobi further said.

"The situation is a complex one. The Prime Minister is the only hope for bringing peace to the state", the former chief minister said while expressing confidence that the state Governor will raise the matter with the PMO at the earliest.

In the memorandum, too, the "like-minded political parties" stated, "We consider that the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is the only hope for bringing peace to the state."

It urged the Governor to facilitate a meeting of all political parties in Manipur with the Prime Minister to find a solution to the conflict under his leadership and guidance.

In the memorandum, the 10 political parties also stated that the living conditions of the internally displaced people in relief camps are "inhumane".

"At the same time, there are instances of sporadic killing, firing, and kidnapping of people, including students, thereby leaving the people in great tension, uncertainty, and untold hardships, especially for those living on the periphery or on the borders between hills and valleys".

"The social and economic lives of all sections of society have been uprooted. There is still a lot of mistrust among the people," the memorandum added. (NNN)

EC stands firm for Mizoram vote count despite appeals and clash concerns



HT Bureau

AIZAWL, Nov 17: In the face of repeated appeals from various quarters, the Election Commission (EC) has affirmed its decision to proceed with the scheduled date for counting of votes for the Mizoram assembly polls on December 3, a top official confirmed on Thursday.

Given that December 3 falls on a Sunday, major political parties in the Christian-majority state, along with civil society organisations, had urged the EC to reconsider the date, citing clashes with church programs.

"I have discussed the matter with the Election Commission.

Counting will be held as per the schedule announced by the commission," stated Mizoram Chief Electoral Officer Madhup Vyas to a national news agency.

He visited Delhi and engaged with EC officials on the matter earlier this week.

Vyas also highlighted that count-

ing, unlike polling, does not involve the general public. Only designated staff working directly under the EC will be involved in the counting of votes, allowing others the freedom to pursue their activities on December 3.

"Counting has to take place for all five states at the pre-designated date," Vyas added. The vote count will encompass Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, and Telangana.

Mizoram witnessed polling for its 40-member assembly on November 7, with over 80% of the 8.57 lakh voters participating to determine the fate of 174 candidates.

Despite appeals from political parties, including the ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) and the BJP, as well as church and student bodies, urging the EC to reschedule the counting date, the decision remains unchanged.

The NGO Coordination Committee, a conglomerate of major civil society organisations, also advocated for a shift to December 4 or 5 to avoid the clash with Sunday, a day significant for the Christian population, constituting 87% of Mizoram's residents according to the 2011 census.

Nagaland BJP holds 21-day district tour programme

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 17: The Nagaland BJP in an effort to connect with the grassroots people and strengthen the booth-level committees in the state conducted a 21-day district tour programme.

The tour, led by the new BJP state president Benjamin Yephthomi, kicked off on October 28 and concluded here on Friday.

In his address at the culmination programme, organised by the Dimapur district unit of the party, Yephthomi said the extensive district tour was initiated in order to know and understand the grievances of all the 16 district units of the party while also reaching out to the grassroots people.

"A time has come for us to work with all sincerity and commitment to uphold the BJP from the grassroots level to the state level as our top priority," he said.

Yephthomi urged all the members of the party to extend full cooperation to the respective district presidents for the positive growth and progress of the party in the state. He also informed that the morcha head and mandal committee tour programme would follow suit at the earliest so as to complete all the 2,398 booth-level committees of the party by December end.

While expressing his gratitude to all the members of the Nagaland BJP for the cooperation extended to the state BJP team during the tour, Yephthomi made mention of the deputy chief minister and BJP Legislature Party leader Y Patton for his constant support extended during the entire tour programme.

For the first time in the history of Nagaland BJP, a state president extensively toured all 16 districts of the state to reach out to the people. During the tour, the state president and his team held a series of meetings with the district office bearers, mandals, morchas and booth-level officials.

MDA govt announces adaptation of NCERT textbooks for class I to X

SHILLONG, Nov 17: In a major decision, the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) government announced the adaptation of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbooks by the Meghalaya Board of School Education (MBOSE) for classes I to X from the next academic year.

Addressing media persons after a cabinet meeting, chief minister Conrad K Sangma said, "We have approved the proposal for adaptation of NCERT textbooks based on certain modifications in certain subjects will be done by the MBOSE from now on."

He said that the adaptation of NCERT textbooks with necessary modifications will be from class I to X and will take place from the next academic year.

Sangma said there are certain schools that are in the local or vernacular language the classes are taught, for them from class I to V, the adaptation or the necessary changes in the language will be done.

"Once the translation of the language is done, then the adaptation will take place," he also said.

The chief minister then said the exercise is important because the government is concerned about the overall education system.

The decision was also taken after conducting thorough research and consultation with different stakeholders at different levels in the edu-

cation system.

"After consultation, we have come to the conclusion that most of the textbooks that are being used in the MBOSE especially when it comes to these standardised subjects which are Science, English and Mathematics - the books are not at the standard of the national level and hence to improve the overall quality of the textbooks, we are adopting this," he said.

"Also in terms of the learning outcomes at the elementary stage, the textbooks that we are using currently are not in conformity with that particular aspect and hence to bring us in line with the learning outcomes at the national level, we are changing this textbook and this changing of the textbooks will also lead to a reduction of the number of textbooks being used at the different class levels," Sangma said.

He said that under the MBOSE right now for classes I, II and III, there are eleven textbooks that are recommended but under NCERT, there are only four textbooks.

"Therefore, there will be a large reduction in the number of textbooks that will be used. There will be increased and improvement in the quality of the content that will be imparted to the students. It will be in conformity to a large number of requirements at the national level including the learning outcomes and hence, this process is being done," he added.

Further, the chief minister said this is also

being done on a larger scale keeping in mind the state curriculum.

"The amendment to those or rather the drafting of those aspects will also be taken up and we will ensure that the curriculum also is adapted to the national curriculum and with of course necessary adaptation to local contents because we are very clear as a cabinet that the subjects in which we require local knowledge, local content based on our culture, based on our history and uniqueness, all these aspects should not be diluted," he said while adding, "Hence, the subjects where these matter of the subjects are there, we will take

necessary steps to adapt the NCERT contents and come out with our own textbooks but the content will be based on the NCERT norms and standards."

Sangma further said, the first phase of the decision will be implemented by the next academic year.

"And in the next to next academic year, we will see almost all the reforms are being implemented and hence, this is a massive exercise and a very big decision and hence all the stakeholders including DERT and MBOSE and teachers and different schools have all been taken on board and we are going ahead with these particular decisions," he further added. (NNN)

2 killed in accident LNKR issues statement

IMPHAL, Nov 17: In a road mishap at Laikot under Sapermeina police station (Ksngpokpi district), two of four family members were killed when a truck reportedly hit a Bolero on November 15. The Liangmai Naga Katimai Ruangdi, Manipur (LNKR-M), or Liangmai Naga Students' Union, Manipur, has urged the concerned authorities to look into the matter seriously and deliver justice to the victim family at the earliest.

In a press statement issued on Friday, the LNKR "learnt that a Bolero bearing registration number MN 06 LB-5312 with a family of four members on board was hit by an empty truck bearing registration number AS 01 PC 9144, a goods carrier, on NH-2 at Laikot under Sapermeina police station on November 15, around 2:30 pm."

The Liangmai student body alleged that it was a head-on collision that happened due to rash driving and over-speeding by the truck. The LNKR further alleged that the driver of the truck was found drunk.

According to the LNKR, one of the four passengers on the Bolero, identified as Amangliu, wife of Z Asuangbou, was dead on the spot. Later, Z Asuangbou, 43, succumbed to the injuries at Raj Medicity Hospital in Imphal at 11 p.m. on November 16.

The student body further said that their two children, Joshi Zuinamai, 22, and Pousanwibou Zuinamai, 21, are undergoing medical treatment. (NNN)

Militants abduct construction company workers

ITANAGAR, Nov 17: A junior engineer and a supervisor of a construction company were abducted by armed militants at gun point in longding district of Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday night, police said. A group of four armed militants reached a makeshift camp near an under-construction bridge close to Tisa river and abducted junior engineer Sashan Yadav and company supervisor Liangmai Pansa, longding SP Tumme Amo said. The rebels also snatched away more than 20 mobile handsets from the construction workers, he said. Self-styled sergeant Botai Wangsu of NSCN (K-YA) faction is suspected to be behind the crime, the SP said. The abduction was reportedly carried out by the banned outfit after the company refused to pay the extortion money demanded by the group. (PTI)

Cyclone Midhili: Alert sounded as heavy rain lashes Mizoram

AIZAWL, Nov 17: The Mizoram government on Friday sounded an alert following heavy rain in the northeastern state as a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal intensified into a cyclonic storm.

Cyclone 'Midhili' will cross the Bangladesh coast on Friday night or in the

early hours of November 18. Mizoram shares a 318-km-long border with Bangladesh.

Heavy rain battered Mizoram's capital Aizawl and other parts of the state on Friday affecting normal life. The streets of Aizawl wore a deserted look as people stayed indoors and only a

few vehicles were seen on roads.

District administrations and district disaster management authorities in notices asked people to be alert and take precautionary measures against any eventuality that can be caused due to the rain.

The state is likely to expe-

rience heavy rainfall till Saturday. The IMD forecast 51 mm of rain between the mornings of November 17 and 18 in Aizawl district. There are forecasts of heavy rain also in districts such as Champhai (52 mm), Kolasib (58 mm), Lawngtlai (52 mm) and Mamit (56 mm). (PTI)

AR organises Anti-drugs awareness campaign

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 17: Assam Rifles seized drugs worth over ₹ 4.26 in Nagaland since January 2023.

Disclosing this at an anti-drug awareness campaign, organised by Assam Rifles, at Tetso College Chumoukedima on Friday, brigadier SK Shukla, commander, 6 Sector Assam Rifles, said to increase awareness, in collaboration with Kripa Foundation and Miss Nagaland Hikali Achumi, has already conducted an anti-drug campaign in Kohima. He added that similar programmes in Tuen-

sang, Mon and Mokochung are also planned this month.

He assured that Assam Rifles would always stand by the people of Nagaland in their efforts to eradicate the drug menace from society.

The anti-drug awareness campaign at Tetso College was aimed at eradicating drug addiction and abuse among the youth. The special guest for the campaign was Miss Nagaland 2022 Hikali Achumi.

Shukla said the menace of drug abuse is a global challenge that transcends borders, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds.

NAME CHANGE

I have Change my name from Atia Begum to Asiya Begum by swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai. From today onwards I will be known as Asiya Begum for all Purpose.

Asiya Begum
Vill-Pub Kandulimari
P.O-Jugijan

PRESS NOTIFICATION FOR EXTENSION OF HIRING ATTENDANTS IN LIEU OF TADK AT TINSUKIA DIVISION

Tender No.: E/112/Attendant/2023 Date: 16-11-2023
North East Frontier Railway (NFR) Tinsukia Division under Ministry of Railway invited EOI (Expression of Interest) for engagement of Attendants in lieu of TADKs for which the last date of submission of proposal of EOI was fixed on 08-09-2023 at 15:00 hrs. at DRM/Tinsukia's office i.e. Sr. DPO/Tinsukia's office and also tender opening date was fixed on 08-09-2023 at 16:30 hrs. through press notification released on various leading newspaper of Assam on 01-09-2023. The office has not received any EOI from any agency within the stipulated time period, in regards with engagement of attendants. So, DRM/Tinsukia has extended the time period for calling of EOI till the date 01-12-2023. The detailed EOI document indicating the scope of work, qualifying requirements, from and procedure for submission of proposal for EOI can be downloaded from website of NFR, Tinsukia division at https://nfr.indianrailways.gov.in/view_section.jsp?lang=0&id=0.6.65.5.660 and the same should be submitted on or before 01-12-2023 upto 15:00 hrs. at DRM(P)/Tinsukia office i.e. Sr. DPO office, Tinsukia, 786125. Tender opening will be done on the same day at 16:30 hrs. and tender opening may be attended by your representative NFR reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the offers at any stage of the process without assigning any reason thereof and no claim/dispute in this regard shall be entertained.

Divl. Rly. Manager (P), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

Indian School of Business conducts 3rd Meghalaya Public Policy Workshop

SHILLONG, Nov 17: The Indian School of Business (ISB), in association with the Government of Meghalaya, successfully conducted the third fully residential Public Policy Workshop for Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from Meghalaya. The workshop was organised by the Bharti Institute of Public Policy at ISB along with the Meghalaya Institute of Governance. The Speaker of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, Thomas A. Sangma; the leader of the opposition, Ronnie V Lyngdoh; the Government Chief Whip, Nujorki Sungoh; and the opposition chief whip, Saleng A Sangma, along with 35 members of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly and 20 officials of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly and Meghalaya Institute of Governance, attended the workshop, held at the ISB campus from November 16-18.

These workshops at ISB would help Meghalaya's MLAs develop innovative entrepreneurship and investment ecosystems in the state. This will help Meghalaya's youth find new employment opportunities. The MLAs were also trained in ways in which they could improve livelihoods in tribal belts and rural areas across the state. The workshop com-

menced with an introductory session by Aarushi Jain, Policy Director of the Bharti Institute of Public Policy, focusing on understanding the Meghalaya Legislative Research Fellowship and activities to advance the constituency development plans.

During the workshop, the participants engaged in a series of insightful sessions led by eminent speakers, including Amarjeet Sinha, an IAS (Retd.) former advisor to the Prime Minister, and Venu Rajamony, a former ambassador of India to the Netherlands. Prof. Ashwini Chhatre, Executive director of the Bharti Institute of Public Policy, held a session on "Forest Economy and Improving Livelihoods", emphasising initiatives to improve livelihoods through the forest economy. Sampath Kumar, Principal Secretary and Development Commissioner, Government of Meghalaya, also conducted a workshop with the legislators. He said, "We look forward to strengthening the existing collaboration between the Government of Meghalaya and the Indian School of Business. These workshops go a long way towards collaborative governance, thereby facilitating discussions between academia, the executive, and the legislature." (NNN)

No.IPR-83/FLS/2022/38 **PRESS NOTICE** **Dated : 06-11-2023**
Tender No.IPR/04/2023
The Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar invites online bids from eligible Suppliers / Dealers / Firms / of BTR for Procurement and installations of LED Display Screen of Size 10 x 6 feet with Kiosk 55 inch under Information and Public Relations Office, BTC for an estimated amount of Rs. 32.00 (Rupees thirty two lakhs) only under SOPD fund for financial year 2023-24.
Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours.
Sd/- Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar.
IPR(BTC)-2023-24/768

No.IPR-20/FLS/2022/59 **PRESS NOTICE** **Dated : 06-11-2023**
Tender No.IPR/01/2023
The Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar invites online bids from eligible Suppliers / Dealers / Firms / of BTR for Procurement and installations of PA System & FLS Materials under Information and Public Relations Office, BTC for an estimated amount of Rs.24.82 (Rupees twenty four lakhs eighty two thousands) only under SOPD fund for financial year 2023-24.
Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours.
Sd/- Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar.
IPR(BTC)-2023-24/767

No. IPR-88/IPR/2023/06 **PRESS NOTICE** **Dated: 06-11-2023**
Tender No. IPR/03/2023
The Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar invites online bids from eligible Suppliers / Dealers / Firms / of BTR for Procurement of Advertising Single Pole GI Pole with medium size erection for an estimated amount of Rs. 70.00 (Rupees seventy lakhs) only under SOPD fund for financial year 2023-24.
Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours.
Sd/- Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar.
IPR(BTC)-2023-24/766

No. IPR-34/NewsPaper/Pt.I/2016/314 **PRESS NOTICE** **Dated: 06-11-2023**
Tender No. IPR/02/2023
The Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar invites online bids from eligible Suppliers/Dealers/ Firms / of BTR for Publication of "Bodoland Laithun" a monthly bi-lingual newspaper, for an estimated amount of Rs.22.05 (Rupees twenty two lakhs and five thousand) only under SOPD fund for financial year 2023-24.
Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours.
Sd/- Regional Officer cum CHD, Information and Public Relations, BTC, Kokrajhar.
IPR(BTC)-2023-24/765

MP records 71% voter turn-out till 5 pm

BHOPAL, Nov 17: Madhya Pradesh recorded a voter turn-out of 71.16 per cent till 5 pm on Friday as polling was underway for the 230-member legislative assembly, an election official said.

Voting in Naxalite-affected Balaghat, Mandla and Dindori districts ended at 3 PM while it will continue till 6 PM in other parts of the state.

Polling began at 7 am across all 230 constituencies, including 47 reserved seats for Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 35 for Scheduled Caste (SC), in the state. The exercise will continue till 6 pm in all the polling stations except those in Naxalite-affected areas of Balaghat, Mandla and Dindori districts where it ended at 3 pm, an official said.

"Till 3 pm, 60.52 per cent of voters cast their votes in Madhya Pradesh," state Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan told reporters.

The highest voter turnout of 70.27 per cent was recorded in Shajapur district, while the lowest turnout of 45.34 per cent was registered in state capital Bhopal, he said.

Balaghat district's Naxalite-af-

fectured Baihar seat recorded a turnout of 61.87 per cent, Lanjhi 74.40 per cent and Paraswada 72.32 per cent, he said.

However, details of the voter turnout at the polling stations in other Naxalite-affected districts are awaited.

There are 2,533 candidates in the fray, including political heavyweights like Chief Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan (of the BJP) and his predecessor and rival Kamal Nath (belonging to the Congress).

Prominent among those who voted early include Chouhan and his family, Union ministers Narendra Singh Tomar, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Prahlad Patel, state BJP president V D Sharma and BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya.

State home minister Narottam Mishra, sports and youth welfare minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia, industries minister Rajvardhan Singh Dattigaon and state CEO Anupam Rajan were also among those who cast their votes in the morning.

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh and his son and former



minister Jaivardhan Singh, who is contesting from Raghogarh, also cast their ballots along with family members. Former minister Ajay Singh exercised his franchise in Churhat constituency.

Women were seen standing in queues for voting at various polling booths in the state including Hoshangabad, an eyewitness said.

A total of 64,626 polling stations have been set up in the state. Among these, 64,523 are main booths and 103 auxiliary polling

stations, where the number of voters is more than 1,500, he said.

As many as 5,60,58,521 voters, including 2,87,82,261 males, 2,71,99,586 females and 1,292 third gender persons are eligible to exercise their franchise.

The total number of voters also includes service and overseas electors, the official informed.

A total of 2,533 candidates of political parties and independents 2,280 males, 252 females and a third-gender person are vying to enter the state assembly. (PTI)

J&K encounter: Five Lashkar terrorists killed

SRINAGAR, Nov 17: Five Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terrorists were killed on Friday following an overnight encounter with security forces in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. "The bodies of the slain terrorists have been retrieved and the area is being sanitised," Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V K Birdi told PTI after the 18-hour gunfight in Kulgam district ended. Birdi said the bodies of the slain terrorists were located through drone footage. Security forces had launched a cordon-and-search operation in Nehama village of Kulgam following information about the presence of terrorists in the area on Thursday, the officials said. (PTI)

Delhi HC stays proceedings in money laundering case against Hero Motocorp's Pawan Munjal

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: The Delhi High Court on Friday stayed the proceedings against Hero Motocorp chairman Pawan Kant Munjal in a money laundering case being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Justice Saurabh Banerjee issued notice to the investigating agency on Munjal's petition against the ED case and granted it time to file its reply.

While granting the interim relief, the judge observed that a similar stay order was recently passed on the predicate offence under the Customs Act and the petitioner has been exonerated by the Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT) in that matter. "Accordingly, there shall be a stay of proceedings under the ECIR," the court ordered.

The court clarified that the stay was in relation to the petitioner only and the ED was free to proceed further according to law.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) had filed a prosecution complaint last year on charges of allegedly "carrying, attempting to export and illicit export of prohibited items, that is, foreign currency" against Munjal, a third party service provider company called SEMPL and individuals identified as Amit Bali, Hemant

India strongly condemned civilian deaths: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: New challenges are emerging from the incidents in West Asia and it is time for the countries of the Global South to talk in one voice for greater global good, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday while condemning civilian deaths in the Hamas-Israel conflict.

In his address at the second edition of the India-hosted virtual Voice of Global South Summit, he said New Delhi has emphasised on dialogue and diplomacy along with restraint to deal with the situation in West Asia.

The prime minister apprised the leaders attending the summit about the achievements of India's G20 presidency that largely focused on addressing challenges facing the Global South or the developing nations. "For global prosperity, Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas (together with all, development for all) is needed. But we all are seeing that new challenges are emerging from the incidents in West Asia," Modi said.

"India has condemned the horrific terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7. Along with restraint, we have also emphasised on dialogue and diplomacy. We strongly condemn the deaths of civilians in the conflict between Israel and Hamas," he said.

Prime Minister Modi also referred to his recent phone conversation with President of Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas last month.

"After speaking to President Mahmoud Abbas, we have sent humanitarian assistance for the people of Palestine. This is the time when the countries of the Global South need to speak in one voice for the greater global good," he said.

In his remarks, the prime minister also called for co-operation under the framework of 'five Cs' which he explained as consultation, cooperation, communication, creativity and capacity building.

"For 'one earth, one family, one future', let us all move forward together with five Cs," he said.

"One earth, one family, one future" has been India's theme for its G20 presidency.

Israel has been carrying out a massive military operation in Gaza following the unprecedented and multi-pronged attacks on Israeli cities by Hamas militants on October 7.

Hamas killed around 1,400 people in Israel and kidnapped more than 220 others. Around 11,500 people have been killed in Gaza in the Israeli offensive, according to the Hamas-run authorities in Gaza.

There has been mounting criticism of Israel for the death of a large number of civilians, including women and children, in Gaza in its military operations.

The prime minister also mentioned forward movement at the G20 on several initiatives which would benefit the Global South.

Modi also described the Voice of Global South as



the most unique platform for the changing world of the 21st century.

"Our priority was to make the G-20 inclusive and human-centric on a global scale. Our effort was that the focus of G-20 should be development of the people, by the people and for the people," he said.

"It is with this objective that we organised the Voice of Global South Summit for the first time in January this year. In more than 200 G-20-related meetings held in different states of India, we gave prominence to the priorities of the Global South," he said.

"The result was that we were successful in getting everyone's consent on the issues of the Global South in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration," Modi said. Modi also talked about the African Union's entry into the G20 as a permanent member at the New Delhi summit of the grouping.

"I cannot forget that historic moment, when the African Union was inducted into G20 as a permanent member with India's efforts," he said.

In a significant milestone under India's G20 presidency, the African Union in September became the new permanent member of the grouping of the largest economies of the world in the first expansion of the influential bloc since its inception in 1999.

Listing achievements for the Global South under India's G20 presidency, Modi said unprecedented seriousness was shown this time on climate finance.

There was consensus at G20 on providing finance and technology in easy terms to countries of the Global South for climate transition, he said.

"India believes that new technology should not become a new source of widening the distance between North and South. Today, in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), there is a great need to use technology in a responsible manner. "To take this forward, an AI Global Partnership Summit is being organised in India next month," he said. (PTI)

BJP scattered in Rajasthan, doesn't have CM face: Priyanka

JAIPUR, Nov 17: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Friday that the BJP is scattered in Rajasthan and it does not have a chief ministerial face in the upcoming state Assembly polls.

The Congress general secretary also took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's frequent visits to the poll-bound state, saying it seems that he is out to find a chief ministerial face for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "The BJP is a scattered party in Rajasthan and it does not have a face for the chief minister's post. The prime minister is roaming every corner of the state. Sometimes, it seems that he is out to find his chief ministerial face," Gandhi said while addressing a poll rally at Sagwada in Durgapur district. She also asked the voters to be careful if emotions and religion are used in order to get their votes. "If emotions and religion are used in politics, one has to be careful," she said. Hitting out at the BJP-led Centre, Gandhi said people across the country, including farmers, are suffering due to inflation. The 200-member Rajasthan Assembly will go to polls on November 25 and the counting of votes will be taken up on December 3. (PTI)

Art historian BN Goswamy dies at 90

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: Renowned art historian and writer Brijender Nath Goswamy died at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) Chandigarh on Friday. He was 90.

Goswamy had lung infection, family friend and theatre artist Neelam Man Singh told PTI.

"It wasn't a prolonged lingering illness. He was having problem breathing for the last one month, but that was about it," she added.

Born on August 15, 1933, the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awardee was best-known for his works on the Pahari style of paintings.

Goswamy quit the prestigious civil services in 1958 to follow a career in academics and research.

Fondly known as BNG in art circles, Goswamy authored more than 26 books on the subjects of Pahari paintings, miniature paintings, court painters, and masters of Indian paintings among others.

Goswamy's latest book, "The Indian Cat: Stories, Paintings, Poetry and Proverbs", explores all the varied ways in which cats have made themselves a home in art, literature, and speech. He had delivered a lecture on the subject on October 26 in Chandigarh.

Singh remembered the professor of Art History at Panjab University as someone who was "articulate" and a "great listener".

"He was my teacher of art history. His wife was like an elder sister to me. I was very impressed by his gentle manners and that he was a great listener. I was really fascinated by the idea of art history. He was very articulate and gave us a window to look at how miniature paintings were made, how modernism worked," she said.

Goswamy's wife, Karuna, was also an art historian. She died in 2020. He is survived by daughter Malavika. Message of condolence poured in on social media with people remembering Goswamy as a "rigorous scholar" and a "warm, elegant, empathetic presence".

"Devastated to hear of the death of my beloved friend and mentor, BN Goswamy, India's greatest art historian and one of the most wisest and most brilliant men I ever met. He was a kind friend, a generous mentor, a rigorous scholar, a fabulous writer and an entrancing speaker who every year hypnotised the audiences @JaipurLitFest with his wit, subtlety and erudition. He was irreplaceable and will be hugely missed. Om shanti!" writer-historian William Dalrymple posted on X. (PTI)

Silkyara tunnel collapse: Rubble cleared over 24-metre stretch to rescue trapped labourers



UTTARKASHI (U'KHAND), Nov 17: Working round-the-clock with a powerful machine, rescue workers have drilled through up to 24 metres of rubble in the Silkyara tunnel till Friday afternoon, inching closer to the 40 labourers trapped inside for five days.

In its latest update on the rescue operation, the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) said the fifth pipe -- being used to prepare an escape passage for the trapped workers -- is being positioned.

The rescue workers have to drill up to 60 metres to insert 800- and 900- millimetre diameter pipes -- one after the other -- with the help of a giant drill till an escape passage can be created for the labourers stuck behind the collapsed portion of the under-construction tunnel, NHIDCL Director Anshu Manish Khalkho said.

Asked why the machine was not able to achieve the expected drilling speed of four to five metres per hour, he said aligning the pipes on the machine and welding those properly before pushing those through takes time.

Khalkho also claimed that the drilling machine being diesel operated is behind the slow progress.

"It is a diesel-operated machine working in an enclosed space. So ventilation at certain time intervals with compressors is also needed.

The vibration created by these processes may disturb the equilibrium," he said.

"We are working with a strategy but it has to be reinforced to ensure nothing goes wrong midway through," he said.

The machine has been working satisfactorily and the speed will go up as more progress is made through the rubble and the rescue workers get accustomed to the method, Khalkho added.

Another 'auger machine' is being airlifted from Indore as a back-up so that the rescue operation continues uninterrupted, he said.

Meanwhile, people whose relatives are among the 40 trapped workers are being allowed to speak to them through a pipe inside the tunnel.

Two people from Uttar Pradesh were allowed to speak to their kin, who are among the trapped workers.

"My nephew is among those trapped. I spoke to him. He said that he was fine," Shatrughan Lal said.

A man from Lahimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh, whose son Manjit is among those trapped, said he was happy to hear his voice.

"He asked me not to be tensed as he was doing well. The authorities have asked us to wait patiently. All I wish is that he comes out safely," he said.

Navayuga Engineering Com-

pany Ltd PRO GL Nath told PTI. "The trapped workers have been provided food. They are fine. The auger machine is also working well. We pray to god that they are evacuated as soon as possible."

When asked about the progress of the work, he said the fifth pipe is being pushed in.

Each of the 900-millimetre diameter pipes being used to prepare an escape passage for the trapped workers is six metres in length.

An American auger drilling machine was flown in from Delhi on Wednesday to speed up rescue efforts as the earlier one deployed for the purpose had a capacity to penetrate only up to 45 metres of rubble, Adesh Jain, an expert overseeing the operation from the spot, said.

It had to be replaced by a heavier and more efficient drilling machine as the debris had spread over an area of about 70 metres due to rubble constantly falling from above, Jain said.

Consultations are also being held with international experts who have experience of being involved in similar rescue operations.

The round-the-clock rescue work is being helmed by 165 personnel from multiple agencies, including the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Border Roads Organisation and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the State Emergency Operation Centre said.

The labourers have been trapped since Sunday morning when a part of the tunnel collapsed following a landslide.

The stretch where debris is accumulated begins 270 metres from the mouth of the tunnel on the Silkyara side.

Uttarkashi District Magistrate Abhishek Ruhela said the trapped workers are safe and being supplied with oxygen, medicines, and food and water through air compressed pipes.

Constant communication is being maintained with them to keep up their morale, he said. (PTI)

Indigenous industries have huge role in making self-reliant, competitive, robust economy: Prez Murmu

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: Asserting that India has embarked on the journey to achieve the goal of an inclusive and developed country, President Droupadi Murmu said on Friday that the indigenous industries have a huge role in building a self-reliant, competitive and robust economy.

She said the government has taken several policy initiatives in the last few years and brought in reforms to encourage indigenous design, development and manufacturing of defence equipment.

The president was addressing the officers of the Indian Ordnance Factories Service and probationers of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS), who had called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

"India has embarked on the journey to achieve the goal of an inclusive and developed nation. You all know that the indigenous industries have a huge role in making a self-reliant, competitive and robust economy," she said.

Campaigns and initiatives, such as "Atmanirbhar Bharat", "Make in India", "Startup India" and "National Skill Development Mission", are some of the major

programmes intended to serve this purpose, Murmu said.

Initiatives, such as appointing priority to procurement of capital items from domestic sources under the Defence Acquisition Procedure-2020, simplification of the industrial licensing process, liberalisation of the foreign direct investment (FDI) policy, launch of Mission DefSpace, launching the SRIJAN portal to facilitate indigenous and establishment of two defence industrial corridors, are aimed at achieving self-reliance in the defence sector, she said.

Murmu said the officers will be the movers and facilitators of indigenousisation in defence systems and would be expected to work towards enhancing the country's defence-production capabilities.

"We know that India's defence exports have risen from Rs 686 crore in FY 2013-14 to nearly Rs 16,000 crore in FY 2022-23. India's defence exports have reached more than 85 countries and India's defence industry has shown the world its capability in design and development," she said.

Nearly 100 firms export defence



products, the president pointed out, adding that India now exports a wide range of defence products, including aircraft like the Dornier-228, Brahmos missiles, PINAKA rockets and launchers, radars, simulators etc.

The global demand for India's indigenous products, such as the LCA-Tejas, aircraft carriers, and MRO activities, is also increasing, she said.

"Dear young officers, it is im-

perative that while discharging your duties, you actively participate in the development programmes and facilitate the process of making India a defence-manufacturing hub," Murmu said.

Addressing the IDAS officers, she said they will be playing a vital role in managing the financial aspects of the country's armed forces.

"You will be responsible for ensuring efficient financial manage-

ment and accountability within the defence sector. I am confident that with your professional integrity and based on your robust training modules, you will be able to promote financial prudence in defence forces and contribute significantly in nation building," the president said.

Murmu urged them to adopt latest techniques and methods for auditing and accounting to bring in greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of defence systems.

She said the officers have joined their services at a time when the country is undergoing extensive transformation at local as well as global level.

"With the emergence of new technologies and with latest techniques and information spreading at a fast pace in every part of the world, your role in the making of a developed nation and making India globally competitive will become even more important. Your thoughts, decisions and actions will contribute in a big way in shaping the future of defence systems and the country," the president said. (PTI)

CHHATTISGARH POLLS

67.34 pc voter turnout recorded till 5 pm

RAIPUR, Nov 17: A voter turnout of 67.34 per cent was recorded till 5 pm in 70 assembly constituencies for the second phase of the Chhattisgarh elections that began on Friday morning under a thick security blanket of police and paramilitary personnel, a poll official said.

Polling in 70 constituencies began at 8 am and concluded at 5 pm, except in nine polling booths in the Naxal-affected Bindranawagarh seat in Gariband district, where voting began at 7 for security reasons, a poll official said.

Voting in the nine booths of Bindranawagarh --Kamarbhaudi, Amamora, Odh, Bade Gobra, Ganwargaon, Gariba, Nagesh, Sahbinkachhar and Kodomali, where process began at 7 am, concluded at 5 pm, he added.

Till 5 pm, 67.34 per cent turnout was recorded in 70 constituencies, he said.

While a woman died of an unknown reason while she was standing in a queue to cast her vote at a polling booth in Kasdol assembly constituency in Balodabazar-Bhatapara district, a man was killed in an elephant attack when he was heading towards a polling booth in Korea district.

Returning Officer of Kasdol segment Bhupendra Agrawal said the woman, identified as Sahodara Bai Nishad (58), fainted when she was standing in the queue at polling station no.76 in Malda village panchayat.

She was shifted to the community health centre in Kasdol by her family members with the support of polling personnel, where doctors declared her dead, he added.

In another incident, one Umen-



dra Singh (25) was trampled to death by an elephant near Mangora village under Korea forest division, an official said.

As per preliminary information, Singh was heading to the polling station to cast his vote and stopped on seeing a group of people who were on the way to watch the pachyderm roaming the area, the forest official said.

The elephant suddenly charged towards the crowd and Singh, who could run away in time, was trampled to death, he said.

Chief minister Bhupesh Baghel cast his vote in Kurduddih village in his constituency Patan Durg district.

Chhattisgarh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan and his wife cast their votes in Civil Lines Raipur.

Talking to reporters ahead of voting, Baghel said his party will win 75-plus seats (in the 90-mem-

ber assembly) and there is a one-sided contest in Patan Segment.

In Baghel's turf Patan the BJP has fielded his distant nephew and party MP Vijay Baghel. The candidature of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) state president and son of former chief minister Ajit Jogi, Amit Jogi, in Patan has added a new dimension to the contest.

When asked about the possible triangular contests in Patan, Baghel denied and said it is people and farmers are contesting (elections on his behalf) not him and the contest is one sided.

Deputy chief minister TS Singh Deo (Ambikapur) and State ministers -- Ravindra Choubey (Saja seat), Anila Bhedia (Dondilohara), Amarjeet Bhagat (Sitapur) and Jaishankar Agrawal (Korba) and state assembly speaker Charandas Mahant (Sakti), who are Congress candidates from their respective segments, were among those who

cast their vote.

State BJP chief and MP Arun Sao, who is the party candidate from Lormi seat, cast his vote in Bilaspur segment. BJP MP and Union Minister Renuka Singh, who is party candidate from Bharatpur-Sonhat seat (spread over Korea and Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Baikunthpur (MCB) districts) cast her vote in Premnagar segment in Surajpur district.

The state's chief electoral officer Reena Baba Saheb Kangale cast her vote at a polling booth in Dharampura in the capital.

Meanwhile, residents of Thenthagaddi in Raigarh district decided to boycott the polls alleging a road had not been constructed in their village.

Speaking to reporters, village resident Sonu Pradhan said, "There are more than 330 voters in the village and everyone has decided not to exercise their franchise. We have already said we will not take part in the electoral process till our demand for construction of road in the village is fulfilled."

Similarly, residents of Manikpur Dhenka village panchayat in Masturi segment in Bilaspur district also refused to vote alleging lack of development, including absence of roads in the area.

Bilaspur Collector Anish Sharan said the local Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) was at the village to hold discussions and further details were awaited.

The second phase of polls will decide the electoral fate of political heavyweights like Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, his deputy TS Singh Deo, eight state ministers and four members of Parliament. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

PM flags misuse of AI to create

noting that a business of around ₹ 4.5 lakh crore has taken place in the Diwali week, including those related to Chhath.

India's achievements during the COVID-19 pandemic created confidence among people that the country is not going to stop now, he said, adding that about 130 countries attended a Global South summit hosted by India which he addressed before attending the 'Diwali Milan' programme.

A time comes in the life of a nation which can launch it to a higher trajectory and this is what is happening to India, he asserted, urging the media to give strength to the programme for making the country developed by highlighting the country's strengths without resorting to any untruth.

Ideas related to developed India and economy are going to be at the centre of discourse for the next 25 years, and people are accepting the way the country has been progressing, he said.

This era is leading to India becoming a grander country, he said.

With people, especially those from Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, celebrating 'Chhath' in different parts of the country, he said it is good that it is now being observed in different parts of the country. The rise of electronic media has seen festivals like Durga Puja and Navratri going global, he said.

With the BJP hosting the 'Diwali Milan' for the first time in the last several years, the prime minister said a "total disappearance of COVID-19" was visible in the festive joy of people this time.

In his remarks, Modi recalled his recent visit to a tribal region in Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh where he interacted with women self-help groups and youngsters and said he was left much impressed with their successes and rising confidence and aspirations.

It is there, the prime minister said, that he seized on the idea of "Lakhpati Didi" to help more than two crore women involved in self-help groups.

This confidence of the masses will lead to the country becoming developed by 2047, he said. He urged the media to take up 10 cities to hold programmes as to how they can grow and become a ₹ 1 trillion economy or how the size of their economy can be doubled and these cities grow to become the driving engine of the regional economy.

Rising aspirations is a reason behind the growing market during the festival season, he said, adding that more than 13.5 crore people lifted out of poverty have joined the aspirational class seeking better things in life. He also praised the media's support to the cleanliness programmes and said it has also led to growing expectations.

Noting that relatively young journalists have fallen to not only the coronavirus but other diseases as well, he emphasised on having regular health check-ups for them saying they also lead a tense and busy life like politicians. (PTI)

Manipur govt condemns ITLF

within a couple of weeks, we will set up our self-government irrespective of whether the Centre recognises it or not," ITLF general secretary Muan Tombing said.

The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) has also condemned ITLF's separate administration demand and said it will only escalate the prevailing tense situation.

It is a conspiracy to permanently rule out peaceful co-existence, COCOMI said in a statement, adding it is well known to both the central and state governments that illegal immigrants are primarily behind the violence in Manipur.

Manipur has remained gripped by recurring bouts of violence since ethnic clashes first erupted in May. More than 180 people have been killed since then.

The clashes have occurred over a number of grievances that both sides have against the other, however, the flashpoint of the crisis has been a move to give Meiteis Scheduled Tribe status, which has since been rolled back and an attempt to turf out tribals living in protected forest areas.

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

Karbi Anglong district marks 72nd

other developed districts of Assam. CEM in his speech said it is a red letter day for the people of Karbi Anglong. The celebration also coincided with the Unity, Victory and Prosperity rally to highlight the welfare schemes implemented in Sighason.

"As we celebrated the foundation of Karbi Anglong we need to remember the selfless contribution made by former leaders Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) president of Karbi Adorbar (KA) and general secretary, Semson Sing Intgi and leaders like Harsing Engti, Soi Soi Terang, Nihang Rongphar, Nihang Tokbi, Moniram Langneh, Raidang Engti and others under Karbi Adorbar who strive for creation of Mikir Hills district now Karbi Anglong. It is due to their effort that the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district now Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong was formed on this day of November 17, 1951. It is because of their sacrifice that we have our own district today," CEM added.

He also said that in 1970 the Mikir Hills district became a full-fledged district and was renamed as 'Karbi Anglong District' w.e.f. 14th October, 1976, and since then it has been enjoying autonomy under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The CEM also said that good leaders should come up to lead the district, adding, "Education should be more developed so that more doctors, engineers, academicians, ACS and IAS officers, bureaucrats come up".

He further announced that the 75th KAAC foundation day (diamond jubilee) will be celebrated in grandeur by inviting President, Prime Minister and chief minister of Assam. The celebration will be at Talarangso here.

The CEM stated that all tribes and communities are living peacefully, respecting each other's culture and religion and urged them to cooperate in making Karbi Anglong as one of the developing districts in India.

On the occasion the village council certificates were given to the Karbi traditional village headmen. Altogether 172 village headmen received the certificates. A book on Karbi Anglong history, KAAC constitution book and Karbi customary law book were also distributed to the Karbi traditional village headmen.

Agriculture seeds and tools were also distributed.

Earlier in the day the CEM inaugurated hongpharla courtyard of Sarkari Goanburas constructed under MAC development funds. Other development schemes were also inaugurated. Each hongpharla was constructed with an amount of Rs 10 lakhs under MAC Development funds.

The celebration was also graced by MLAs Rupsing Teron, Bidyasing Englung, Dorsing Ronghang and chairman, KAAC Raju Tisso and deputy chairman, Ajit Dey including EMs and MACs. The welcome address was delivered by principal secretary, KAAC Mukul Kumar Saikia.

The CEM also inaugurated the office of the Karbi Students Association (KSA) at Longnit, under Sighason Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) Constituency.

MLAs Darsing Ronghang and Bidya Sing Englung; EMs of KAAC, Amarsing Tisso; president of KSA, Mirjeng Kro; general secretary of KSA, George Timung and others were present on the occasion.

Heroin worth over ₹ 11 cr

Necessary legal action is being initiated at the STF police station," he said, adding that the total value of the seized contraband would be around ₹ 11 crore.

In the second case, STF conducted a raid at Khanapara in Guwahati and apprehended two "habitual women drug peddlers", Goswami said.

The police recovered 43 vials containing 54.5 grams of heroin, ₹ 5,680 in cash and one mobile handset, he said. A senior official said that the total value of the seized drug would be nearly ₹ 44 lakh as per Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) standards. (PTI)

56 cases of human rights

caused to assets during the construction of the tower/pillar of that project, erosion of two backward tribal buddhists villages under the Margherita sub-division in Tinsukia district from the Burl Dihing River," the statement added.

With the intervention of the Commission, compensation of ₹ 355.5 lakh, states have either paid or in the process of paying the same, it said.

Besides this, the commission also held meeting with the chief secretaries and DGPs of the north eastern states and asked the officers to submit action taken reports on various advisories issued by the commission on various issues such as mental health, police encounter, bonded labour, right to food & safety, CSAM, truck drivers, ocular trauma, prevention of suicide in judicial and police custody, manual scavenging and others etc.

"The officers were directed to ensure timely submission of reports in cases pending before the commission and in particular the compliance reports wherein the commission makes a recommendation in cases of alleged and proven cases of violation of human rights of individuals. The commission also stress upon the state governments to provide infrastructure to SHRCs and fill up the vacant posts on priority for smooth functioning of State Human Rights Commission," the statement added.

It further stated that after hearing the cases, the commission interacted with the NGOs/HRDs which were attended by their representatives and they raised a gamut issues related human rights violations.

"The Commission appreciated the work being done by the NGOs and Human Rights Defenders in the north-eastern states and encouraged them to continue to do so without fear or favour," it said.

The interaction concluded with the observation that the continued partnership of the NGOs, HRDs with the National Human Rights Commission will go a long way in strengthening the human rights regime in the country. They were informed that they can file complaints of human rights violations through hronet.nic.in.

HC quashes Haryana law

associations had moved court against the law. The state did not have legislative competence under Article 35 for enacting this law, Bhan contended.

The act was applicable on private sector companies, societies, trusts, limited liability partnership firms, partnership firm and any person who employed 10 or more persons on salary, wages, or other remuneration for manufacturing, carrying on business, or rendering any service in Haryana.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya had given his assent to the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill in March 2021.

Providing 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs for state domiciled candidate was a key poll promise of the Janhaya Janta Party at the time of 2019 assembly polls.

After the polls, the JJP extended support to BJP and formed a government as the saffron party fell short of attaining a simple majority on its own. (PTI)

India among few big economies

the developed nations, with the same percentage of the global population, contribute nearly 60 per cent of global carbon emissions.

Last August, India updated its nationally-determined contributions (NDC), committing to reducing the emission intensity of the GDP by 45 per cent by 2030 from the 2005 level and achieving 50 per cent cumulative electric power-installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. (PTI)

ISRO, NASA discuss potential opportunities in space exploration

BENGALURU, Nov 17: The US space agency NASA and its Indian counterpart ISRO have held discussions on potential opportunities for future cooperation in space exploration.

NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory Director Laurie Leshin visited the ISRO headquarters here and had a meeting with the Chairman of the Indian space agency and Secretary of the Department of Space, S Somanath.

"Dr. Laurie Leshin expressed happiness over the joint efforts of JPL and ISRO officials working together as a single team at ISRO's U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) in realising 'NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR)', Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO said.

NISAR's readiness for launch and potential opportunities for future cooperation including professional exchange in technical areas and space exploration were also discussed during her visit on November 15, ISRO said.

ISRO sources said the NISAR -- a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) observatory being jointly developed by NASA and ISRO -- is expected to be launched from Sriharikota spaceport in the first quarter of 2024.

"NISAR will map the entire globe in 12 days and provide spatially and temporally consistent data for understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems, ice mass, vegetation biomass, sea level rise, ground water and natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides," according to ISRO. (PTI)

Cong T'gana manifesto assures free internet for students, ₹ 4,000 social pension, LPG at ₹ 500

HYDERABAD, Nov 17: AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday released Congress party's manifesto which includes six guarantees and various declarations for Telangana, including ₹ 4,000 social pension and LPG at ₹ 500.

After releasing the 42-page manifesto, 'Abhaya Hastham', the Congress chief said the mood of the people of Telangana is such that the grand old party has to be brought to power, "come what may".

The six guarantees of the Congress include the promise of ₹ 2,500 per month and gas cylinders at Rs 500 for women, as well as 200 units of free electricity for all households, if the party comes to power in the state after the November 30 polls.

The party also promised to scrap Dharani, an integrated land administration portal and replace it with a new revenue system.

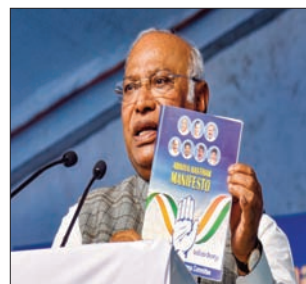
Under Rythu Bharosa, the party promises ₹ 15,000 investment assistance for farmers every year, while farm labourers will get ₹ 12,000.

Under 'Cheyutha', ₹ 4,000 social pension and ₹ 10 lakh

health insurance cover will be given to eligible beneficiaries.

Under Vidya Bharosa Card, financial assistance card of Rs 5 lakh will be provided to students, which can be used in the payment of college fees (in addition to fee reimbursement) and other education related expenditure.

"Free internet through Wi-Fi facilities will be provided to all students," it said.



The manifesto also promised that a judicial inquiry will be conducted by a sitting high court judge into all irregularities and corruption in the construction of the Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Project.

The Congress, if voted to power, will waive off crop loans of ₹ two lakh at once, the poll document added.

'123456' the most common password, can be cracked in under a second: Study

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: The most common password was "123456" and a hacker would probably take less than a second to crack it, according to a study conducted by NordPass, a software company that helps users organise their passwords.

The password "123456" was held by about 45 lakhs accounts, the study found in partnership with independent experts specialising in researching cybersecurity incidents, according to the Panama-based company's website.

The second and the third most popular passwords were "admin" and "12345678", used in about 40 lakhs and 13.7 lakhs accounts, respectively, the study findings on the website show.

In India, the most common password was "123456", kept in around 3.6 lakhs accounts, followed by "admin", used in around 1.2 lakhs accounts, according to the website. The research team analysed passwords from a 6.6 Terabyte-database, which were stolen by employing various stealer malware, such as Redline, Vidar, Taurus, Raccoon, Azorult, and Cryptbot, it said.

Malware logs included both passwords and the source website and the researchers' database in-

cluded data from up to 35 countries.

The researchers classified the data into various verticals, which allowed them to perform a statistical analysis based on countries, NordPass's website said.

NordPass exclusively received only statistical information from the researchers, which gives no reference to internet users' personal data, it said.

Further, no personal data was



acquired or purchased by NordPass to conduct this study, the website said.

"Streaming lovers seem to be strong password haters," NordPass said, referring to users who enjoyed streaming online content. The study found that compared to other popular websites, people choose the poorest credentials to

secure accounts on this platform category.

The website also acknowledged "123456" to be the "world's worst password" as it was ranked the most common password 4 out of 5 times, while "Password" held this title once throughout the lifetime of the study.

NordPass quoted the researchers while saying that "while passwords are getting harder to breach due to rapidly evolving technologies, malware attacks are still seen as a prominent threat for account security."

The password manager company advised account holders to use complex passwords that were at least 20 characters long and included a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special symbols.

NordPass also asked password users to desist from reusing the same password across multiple websites or services, as compromising one account could risk the safety of all the other accounts.

Further, it called for a "regular" assessment of the passwords for their health and improving them for a "safer online experience", in addition to advocating the use of password managers such as itself. (PTI)

Sabarimala pilgrimage begins

SABARIMALA (KER), Nov 17: Thousands of pilgrims, mostly from Kerala and the other southern states, converged at the famous Sabarimala temple to pay obeisance to Lord Ayyappa as its doors were opened on Friday, commencing a two-month-long pilgrimage to the hill shrine.

Devotees from the states, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, formed long queues at the Sanmadhanam as the temple doors were opened by priests at 3 am on Friday, the first day of the auspicious Malayalam month of Vrichikam, for the annual pilgrimage.

Present during the auspicious opening ceremony were prominent figures such as Kerala Devaswom Minister K Radhakrishnan, along with MLAs Pramod Narayan and K U Jineesh Kumar.

The newly-appointed president of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), P S Prasanth, also offered prayers at the temple in the early hours of Friday. Later, minister Radhakrishnan inaugurated the free food distribution at the Annadana Mandapam located at the Sanmadhanam.

Talking to reporters after chairing a review meeting, he assured devotees that basic facilities would be meticulously arranged in a time-bound manner, ensuring a seamless and comfortable Sabarimala pilgrimage experience for all. (PTI)

MUMBAI, Nov 17: Tamil horror series "The Village" will premiere on Prime Video on November 24, the streaming platform announced on Friday.

Inspired by Asvin Sridharsangam, Vivek Rangachari, and Shamik Dasgupta's graphic horror novel of the same name, the series is a fast-paced, action-packed story that takes the viewers deep into the desolate hinterlands of Tamil Nadu.

A Studio Shakthi production, the series is produced by B. S. Radhakrishnan and written and created by Milind Rau, with co-writers Deeraj Vaidy, and Deepthi Govindarajan. It stars popular Tamil actor Arya in the lead, alongside a versatile ensemble cast featuring Divya Pillai, Aazhiya, Aadukalam Naren, George Mayan, PN Sunny, Muthukumar K, Kalairani S S, John Kokken, Pooja, V Jayaprakash, Arjun Chidambaram, and Thailaivasal Vijay.

The story is set in the village of Kattiyal, where Gautham (Arya) and his family encounter a living form of horror they never imagined in their worst nightmare, the official log-line reads.

Arya said he is excited to make his streaming debut with the horror genre.

"Horror is a genre that I personally believe to be quite challenging for any actor to showcase their acting skills and talent. What's really exciting about 'The Village', is that it's not your run-of-the-mill horror of ghosts and evil spirits but is more contemporary with strong elements of sci-fi and fantasy," the actor said in a statement.

"Director Milind Rau has brought his vision to life in the most spectacular manner, bringing elements of horror with nuance and a deep message on how our actions, led by desire

Prime Video sets Nov 24 premiere for Tamil horror series 'The Village'



for personal gain, can have devastating consequences that can impact not a few but an entire community or society," the statement fur-

ther read.

The series is set to stream exclusively on Prime Video in India and across more than 240 countries and terri-

tories worldwide in Tamil, dubbed in Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi, with subtitles in English. (PTI)



Sting, Jonas Brothers, Halsey and One Republic to perform at Lollapalooza India 2024

MUMBAI, Nov 17: Music aficionados are in for a treat as legendary singer Sting as well as popular bands Jonas Brothers and OneRepublic are set to perform at Lollapalooza India in 2024. The organisers on Friday unveiled the line-up of renowned artists from around the globe and India for the two-day festival in Mumbai's Mahalaxmi Race Course on January 27 and 28.

"Featuring four stages with piping energy and over 20 hours of live music performed by some of the biggest names globally and locally, the festival is truly an experience of a lifetime with innovative culinary selections, art, fashion and much more," the

organisers said.

The festival will also feature gigs by American popstar Halsey, English alternative rock band Keane, Ari Staprans Leff aka Lauv, British electronic music project Jungle, Rock duo Royal Blood and hip-hop rapper JPEGMAFIA.

Anoushka Shankar is also part of the international line-up artists that include Italian electronic dance music artist Meduza, French DJ Malaa, Caribou, K-pop band The Rose, Eric Nam, Fatoumata Diawara, DJ Kenny Beats, and Israeli alternative indie electronic pop sound masters Garden City Movement.

Lollapalooza India has also

scheduled performances by Indian bands The Raghu Dixit Project and When Chai Met Toast as well as The Karan Kanchar Experience, Parvaaz, Prabh Deep, Dualist Inquiry, Komorebi, Parekh & Singh, Skrat, Kamakshi Khanna, JBABE, Chrms, Dewdrops, Shashwat Bulusu, Jatayu, Monophonik, Sublime Sound, Stalwart John, Long Distances and Megan Murray.

BookMyShow Live, will spearhead Lollapalooza India as the promoter and co-producer for the festival's Indian edition along with global producers, Perry Farrell and C3 Presents. (PTI)

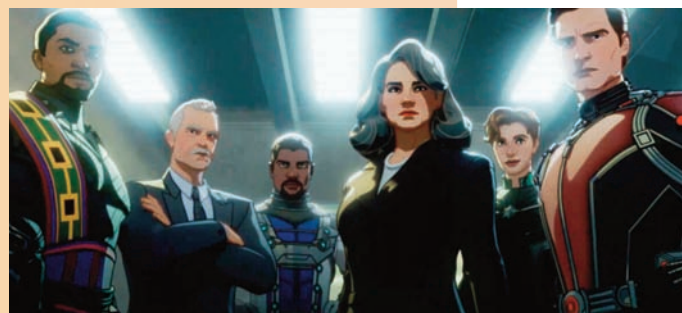
Kajol pays homage to grandmother Shobhna Samarth on 107th birth anniversary

MUMBAI, Nov 17: A true feminist and one of the "sharpest and most forward thinking" women of her time, is how Kajol remembered her grandmother, cinema legend Shobhna Samarth, on her 107th birth anniversary. Samarth was an actor and director, who worked extensively during the golden era of Indian cinema. She made her debut with 1935 film "Nigah-e-Nafarat" and went on to feature in several films such as "Bharat Milap" (1942) and "Ram Rajya" (1943), in which she played Sita. She also launched her daughters Tanuja and Nutan into the film industry. Kajol, daughter of Tanuja, shared a 1944 magazine cover featuring her grandmother as Sita on Instagram alongside a post on how she was way ahead of her time. "On her 107th birthday... here we have the OG Sita who was at one point and still is to my way of thinking one of the most beautiful women in the world. One of the sharpest and most forward thinking women of her time. Who bought her own filters from the United States when they were not available here for her close ups in films! 'Who knew and managed not only her own finances but her daughters as well and with great success I might add. And yes also had a huge hand in raising her seven grand daughters. This is true #feminism! For all those who ask me what it means and where I get my attitude from," the actor wrote. (PTI)



Marvel Studios' 'What If...?' season two to premiere on December 22

drop on December 22, followed by new episodes airing each day for nine days.



MUMBAI, Nov 17: "What If...?", the popular animated series from Marvel Studios, will return with its second season on December 22 on Disney+ Hotstar.

Created by A C Bradley, the animated series reimagines certain characters and events from the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). The first episode of season two will

Season two of "What If...?" continues the journey as The Watcher, voiced by Jeffrey Wright, guides viewers through the vast multiverse, introducing brand new and familiar faces throughout the MCU.

"The series questions, revisits and twists classic Marvel Cinematic moments with an incredible voice cast that includes a host of stars who reprise their iconic roles," a press release stated.

The show, directed and executive produced by Bryan Andrews, will feature fan-favorite characters like Nebula, Hela and Happy Hogan.

The first season, which came out in 2021, featured original MCU actors like Mark Ruffalo as the Hulk, Elizabeth Olsen as Scarlet Witch, Sebastian Stan as Bucky Barnes, Benedict Cumberbatch as Doctor Strange, Chris Hemsworth as Thor and others. (PTI)

Vidhu Vinod Chopra thanks audience for loving '12th Fail': Want to work harder for rest of my life



MUMBAI, Nov 17: Director Vidhu Vinod Chopra on Thursday expressed gratitude towards viewers for showering love on his latest film "12th Fail" and promised to treat them with more movies in future.

Starring Vikrant Massey and Medha Sharma, the Hindi film is based on Anurag Pathak's best-selling novel about the incredible journey of IPS officer Manoj Kumar Sharma and IRS officer Shraddha Joshi. "12th Fail" released in theatres on October 27. As of November 10, the film

had earned Rs 27.11 crore at the box office, according to production house Zee Studios.

In a video message posted on the banner's X page, Chopra, 71, said he is "overwhelmed" to see audiences flocking cinema halls to watch the movie.

"I want to thank you all. I went to see the movie in the theatres this morning and I was overwhelmed because it was a full house. The way people reacted I felt it was important for me to come on this platform and thank all of you for all your love, affection, and

encouragement.

"Thank you for all the love you have given to '12th Fail' and I hope that I can make more films like that for you to watch. This love is contagious, it's really making me feel I need to work harder and harder for the rest of my life," said the filmmaker, known for directing "Khamosh", "Parinda", "1942: A Love Story" and "Mission Kashmir".

"12th Fail" also stars Anant V Joshi, Anshuman Pushkar, Sanjay Bishnoi and Priyanshu Chatterjee. (PTI)



F1 off to rough Las Vegas start: Ferrari damaged, fans told to leave before practice ends at 4 am

LAS VEGAS, Nov 17: The Las Vegas Grand Prix had a bumpy opening when the first practice of the \$500 million Formula One race was halted nine minutes into the session Thursday night because Carlos Sainz Jr. ran over a water valve cover that badly damaged his Ferrari. It caused the first practice to be aborted, a delay of 2 1/2 hours before second practice for track repairs, and all spectators were removed from viewing areas ahead of the 90-minute session that ended at 4 a.m. local time — the deadline

for F1 to return the roads to Las Vegas commuters.

"I am very sorry for the fans that this happened, but I believe we will be able to put on a great race," said Red Bull driver Sergio Perez.

The FIA said Sainz hit the concrete frame around the cover moments after cars took to the track in the hyped return to Las Vegas. After Sainz came to a stop and was examining his damaged car, the governing body ordered all cars off track so it could inspect the entire circuit.

Multiple drainage covers needed to be sealed ahead of the second practice, which was originally scheduled for midnight but didn't begin until 2:30 a.m. on Friday. Track organizers an hour earlier had told all fans to leave "due to logistical considerations for our fans and our staff."

Ferrari boss Fred Vasseur raged after the abbreviated first practice that what happened to Sainz was "just unacceptable" and said Sainz would not be able to participate in second practice. Ferrari changed the



chassis during the lengthy break and Sainz was able to get on track for the extended 90-minute session. But, because of the repairs to the Ferrari, the FIA ruled Sainz will be given a 10-place grid penalty.

Ferrari salvaged the day as Charles Leclerc and Sainz went 1-2 in the second practice session. During a news conference after first practice, the moderator attempted to ask Vasseur about the "bigger picture" and Vasseur refused to change the topic. "This one is a good one, I don't need to have a bigger

picture than this one," Vasseur said. "We had a very tough FP1. This will cost us a fortune. We (expletive) the session for Carlos... we have to change the chassis out of the car, to set up the car, OK? The show is the show and everything is going well but I think it's just unacceptable for F1 today. You would be upset in my situation." The moderator made a second attempt and Vasseur said: "Can I leave now? Can you ask Toto a question?" as he motioned to Mercedes principal Toto Wolff. (AP)

INDIA HEADS INTO THE FINAL WITH A PERFECT 10 WINS

WE WANT TO TAKE ON THE BEST: MITCHELL STARC

KOLKATA, Nov 17: "We want to take on the best," Mitchell Starc asserted after five-time champions Australia set up a mouth-watering World Cup summit showdown with tournament hosts India.

Heading into the final with a perfect 10 wins, India have been the team to beat in the World Cup, and Australia are relishing the challenge of crossing swords with the formidable home side. Australia on Thursday prevailed over South Africa by three wickets in a see-saw contest at Eden Gardens.

"We want to take on the best," Starc said at the post-match media interaction.

"They've been the best in the tournament so far and we both find ourselves in the finals. So that's what World Cups are about. It's why we play the game. We certainly come up against a team that have obviously led from the front through the tournament and they're undefeated," Starc said.

Both teams had crossed swords in their opening fixture of the tournament in what turned out to be a one-sided affair with India winning by six wickets after bowling them out for a paltry 199 in Chennai.

"We played them in the first game of the tournament, now we get to take them on in the



last. So yeah, what a place to be at the end of a World Cup," he added. Chasing 213 against South Africa, their batters faltered against the South African spinners to make it a nervy win in the end.

Asked whether they would be wary of facing India's spinners at Ahmedabad, he said: "I guess we'll find out when we get to Ahmedabad tomorrow and see if it's a fresh wicket or an old wicket." The last time India played Australia in the World Cup final was back in 2003, when Starc was a sprightly 13-year-old boy. "Apart from Australia winning, I don't know what happened in that game," he said.

He further said both teams are aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses and he's looking forward to the "spectacle" of facing India in front of a packed 130,000 crowd at Narendra Modi Stadium.

"It's a big occasion, it's a World Cup final. Certainly, guys in both changing rooms have been there before at different formats.

"Both teams played each other in the (World Test Championship) Final earlier in the year. I don't think either changing room is new to big occasions. "It's going to be loud. There's going to be a lot of pas-

sion there and no doubt there's going to be different amounts of pressure at different times on both teams.

"It's just going to be a great spectacle of cricket. And certainly, everyone in our changing room is looking forward to the occasion," he said.

By his standards, the left-arm quick has had a quiet World Cup taking just 10 wickets from eight matches before the semi-final.

But under overcast conditions, Starc with his new ball partner Josh Hazlewood ripped apart the South African top-order, taking four wickets inside 12 overs.

"Yeah, that's probably not been the tournament I would have liked from the get go but nice to step up in a big game. And I think our power-play was probably what got us on our way.

"There were other key moments throughout the day with bat and ball, but to start the game like that with Joshie (Hazlewood) and I, was great.

"Looking at Josh's pitch map -- that's what he does so well in Test match bowling. The way we run off each other to have that power-play that we did, and carry some momentum through to the middle overs was how we want to start matches. (PTI)

It'll be fitting for India to win WC but I won't watch: SA coach Rob Walter



KOLKATA, Nov 17: A disappointed South Africa coach Rob Walter will not watch the World Cup final after his team once again failed to make the cut, but said it would be "fitting" for the tournament's "best" team, India to win the coveted trophy on Sunday.

India have been invincible in the ongoing showpiece, storming into the World Cup final on the back of 10 consecutive wins. The hosts will take on record five-time champions Australia in the summit clash in Ahmedabad.

"To be honest, there's one per cent chance I'll be watching (final). And to be even more brutally honest, I actually don't care," Walter said after South Africa's bitter three-wicket loss to Australia in the second semifinal here on Thursday.

Walter, however, was quick to add that it would be fitting for India to lift the trophy at home.

"But obviously, because of the World Cup being in India, it's always great for the home nation to win the World Cup," he said.

"I've got a lot of friends in the Australian change room, so I probably have a soft spot for a couple of them, especially the coach.

"But just seeing the support when we last played here against India and the way the fans rallied around the team, and the great

hope and inspiration of winning a World Cup at home, I think it would only be fitting for India to win," Walter said.

"And in the same breath, they have been the best side in the competition and they've played the best cricket."

Walter also backed the controversial selection of out-of-form skipper Temba Bavuma, who played the semifinal despite not being 100 per cent fit.

"He marshalled the troops this evening unbelievably well. To give and get the game close, strategically the way he operated along with the senior heads around him on the field was brilliant," he said.

"The different pressures created through the field positions, I thought it was an excellent effort to defend that score.

"Sometimes it's not easy to walk through a tournament when you aren't delivering yourself but the batters around you are. But the important thing is that we operate as a unit," Walter said.

"He was the lead man that got us into this tournament in the first place. I think people forget that so I just wanted to make sure that he was aware of how important he is in this team and how proud I am of his efforts and the way he led throughout the tournament. I just told him how proud I am of him," Walter signed off. (PTI)

Bopanna-Ebden pair seal semifinal spot in ATP Finals

TURIN (ITALY), Nov 17: Indian tennis star Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden advanced to the semi-finals of the ATP Finals men's doubles event after defeating the pair of Wesley Koolhof and Neal Skupski in straight sets here on Friday.

Bopanna-Ebden pair won 6-4, 7-6(5) over Koolhof (the Netherlands) and Skupski (Great Britain) in a Red Group

qualification decider that lasted 84 minutes. The third-seeded Indo-Australian duo produced a strong performance on serve, winning 88 per cent (35/40) of points behind their first delivery to improve to 2-1 in Red Group play. With their 40th tour-level win of the season, Bopanna and Ebden joined defending champions Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury in the knockout stages from Red Group.



Earlier this week, Bopanna, 43, became the oldest player to win a match in the tournament history. Bopanna and Ebden first teamed up at the start of this season and enjoyed an impressive year together, winning tour-level trophies in Doha and Indian Wells.

Bopanna is making his fourth appearance at the year-end event, while Ebden is debuting. Bopanna and Ebden can still

finish the season with year-end ATP Doubles No. 1. They must reach the final to pass already-eliminated Dodig and Krajicek, who are in top spot. Koolhof and Skupski can no longer finish the season at No. 1.

The pairs of Santiago Gonzalez-Edouard Roger Vasselin and Marcel Granollers-Horacio Zeballos -- who are in the fray in Green Group -- must lift the trophy to move to No. 1. (PTI)

Neha stays steady to win third title of season at 15th Leg of Hero WPGT

KOLKATA, Nov 17: Neha Tripathi turned in yet another steady round of 1-over 73 at the challenging RCGC to become the first player to win more than twice on the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, here on Friday. Neha won the 15th Leg of the WPGT by a whopping nine shots over Tvesa Malik (76) for her third win of the season.

Despite the win, achieved at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club, Neha was still Rs. 27,792 short of leader Sneha Singh (76), on the Order of Merit. Sneha finished seventh at 16-over 232.

Right behind Neha and Tvesa, who finished first and second, was amateur Anaahat Bindra (73), who was tied third alongside Ridhima Dilawari (79), who had a nightmarish final round.

Shweta Mansingh (78) was fifth, while Khushi Khanjau (78) was sixth and Sneha was seventh. Jasmine Shekar (77), Ananya Datar (77) and Yaalisai Verma (78) were tied for eighth to complete the top-10. Neha, who shot 72-73 in the first two rounds to take a four-shot lead into the final round, had one birdie on the

fourth and bogeys on the fifth and 15th to more than double her 36-hole lead.

Tvesa had two bogeys and a double bogey and no birdies in her 76 as she finished second but was disappointed with her scoring this week. She had rounds of 74-77-76 and, at 11-over 227, she was nine behind the winner.

Amateur Anaahat was one of the only four players to have two birdies in her round. She birdied the eighth and the 15th, while bogeying the 10th. At 1-under through 16 holes, she looked like becoming the only player to card a sub-par round this week before she bogeyed the 17th and the 18th. Ridhima had a rough day with six bogeys and a double and just one birdie on the 14th in her 79 despite which she was tied third alongside Anaahat.

It was yet another tough day for scoring with only Anaahat, Ananya Datar (77), Jyotsana Singh (79) and Rhea Jha (81) getting more than one birdie. However, barring Anaahat, all others also gave a lot of bogeys and double bogeys. (PTI)

KL the Keeper of India's fortunes: When 'Dhoni' Review System became Decision 'Rahul' System

AHMEDABAD, Nov 17: There was an Instagram reel by a social media influencer that went viral last year, when the interviewer was asked to decipher an incomplete footage of a DRS call.

Without having a look, he says "out hai sir" and then asks the interviewer to shift the focus of the photo and there stood Mahendra Singh Dhoni behind, taking another immaculate call in what has come to be known as the 'Dhoni' Review System (DRS).

But in this World Cup, it won't be a misnomer if KL Rahul gets the DRS moniker in his name and we call it the 'Decision 'Rahul' System'. At least on five occasions over the course of the World Cup, the Indian wicket-keeper prevented an excited bowler or his skipper from raising a "T" for the umpire. A lot of moving parts have come together in the tournament and one of the important cogs in the wheel is Rahul, whose 386 runs at near 99 strike-rate and 77 average has slipped under the radar because of Rohit Sharma,



Virat Kohli and Mohammed Shami's brilliance but he has been that calming influence which is a pre-requisite of every team.

Magnificent when in full flow and completely lousy other times, a picture of calm when in form but ready to play a dishevelled stroke now and then, Rahul has been an enigma in Indian cricket for close to a decade.

For someone with Test centuries in Sydney, Lord's and Centurion, a man of his calibre could be termed an "under-achiever" as he is no less compared to a Rohit or Kohli, when it comes to the talent quotient. But between spells of brilliance, there has been those lulls which, also by his own admission, let self doubts creep in but in this World Cup, if anyone has been a

symbol of assurance, it is Rahul, the keeper.

That catch to dismiss Devon Conway in the semi-final, would have certainly warmed the cockles of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's heart.

With 16 dismissals in 10 games (15 catches and 1 stumping), he is second only to Quinton de Kock, a specialist keeper.

For someone, who wasn't a regular keeper till a few years back, this effort has been phenomenal. What has also stood out is Rahul's judgement of DRS calls.

The reason for that is his perfect footwork behind the stumps as he has a perfect idea of where the ball finishes, says former India keeper Deep Dasgupta.

"DRS is not just a wicket-keeper's call only. The wicket-keeper can neither gauge the impact nor the height. The impact (whether pitched within stumps) is generally a bowler's call or the skipper standing at mid-on or mid-off. "The guy stationed adjacent to square leg umpire needs to check the height

while the keeper with his movement would get an idea where the ball finishes," Dasgupta explained the whole process. From the looks of it, Rohit might not come across like that but he is way more process oriented than a Kohli when it comes to DRS calls.

What has helped has been Rahul's presence behind the stumps as he could dissuade the bowler because of his perfect concept of where the ball could finally finish. While Dhoni was the master of getting his DRS calls right, Dasgupta gave an interesting insight how the legendary Indian skipper had such a high percentage of correct decisions.

"If you check the numbers, most of Dhoni's DRS calls has gone with Umpires' Call. So when India didn't get a decision, they at least kept the review. There would never be any outrageous calls. Same with Rahul. He is someone who could temper an enthusiastic bowler's expectations," Dasgupta. (PTI)

That was not remotely close to a choke: SA head coach after semifinal loss



KOLKATA, Nov 17: South Africa suffered yet another defeat in a knockout game of a global event but their performance against Australia in the second World Cup semifinal on Thursday was far from a choke, feels head coach Rob Walter.

From a precarious 24/4, South Africa rode on David Miller's counter-attacking century to post a respectable 212 before Australia survived some tense moments to chase down the target in 47.2 overs.

Walter provided his personal definition of a choke, stating, "for me, a choke is losing a game that you are in a position to win."

"In this instance, we were behind right from the word go, and we actually fought our way back into the competition and put up a score that gave us a chance," Walter said in the post-match media conference.

Walter said his team was 30-40 runs short.

"And then, again, they (Australia) got us

to a flier. We fought and we put ourselves back into the game," he said, adding 30 more runs would have made the difference.

"Of course, we were 30 runs or 40 runs short, but still having them seven down. "So, for me, there's nothing even remotely close to a choke that happened over these three days. It's a serious contest between two good teams of the tournament."

"It's gutting to lose semifinal. It was incredibly serious challenge in first 12 overs.

To come back from 12/4 the with the way Klaasen and Miller put together, it showed 270 was the total.

"Even 250 would have proved to be a serious total. First 10 overs on either side separated the game. But there were a lot of positives to take home," Walter added.

Asked if they erred in batting first after winning the toss, he said: "To be honest, even the commentators that I've spoken to, no one could predict the pitch to play like that for the first five overs."

"And had it played as we expected it to, then we would have backed ourselves to get 270. "And once we got 270, because it was turning so much in the evening, we knew that that was going to be our end into the game."

"And ultimately it was, really. We just didn't have enough runs to work with. It's easy to say in the back end of losing, but I think the contest would have been even a touch closer than it really was."

The coach further revealed that their pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada had a bruised heel which proved to be a setback. Rabada could bowl only six overs returning with 1/41.

"KG had a bruised heel, that's why we didn't see as much of him in the contest as we would have expected to."

"If you're watching him on the park, you're seeing him limping around. So he bowled, he just wasn't able to deliver 100%."

"And obviously with that, it also led to bringing Aiden on, and Aiden was outstanding the whole way through the game."

"Obviously, a fit and able KG has shown throughout this competition that he was one of our leading bowlers and has been for some time."

"It was a pity, and it was a defining moment in the game to be dead honest." (PTI)

No real weaknesses in Indian team: Hazlewood after fiery powerplay spell against SA

KOLKATA, Nov 17: Bracing up for the World Cup final against India, a team he describes as one without "any real weaknesses", Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood says he saw a "few cracks" while rattling their top-order in their tournament opener.

Australia, who lost that game in Chennai by six wickets after reducing India to 3/2 in the second over, set up a big-ticket title showdown against the formidable hosts with a nervy three-wicket win over South Africa here on Thursday.

In the tournament build-up, the two teams were engaged in a three-match ODI series with India winning 2-1.

"We got one in the series, lost that 2-1, but no, we've played them a lot of times. We know them inside out, same with them."

"They're a quality team, they've been on a march the whole tournament, no real weaknesses in their team, so, yeah, look forward to playing them on Sunday," Hazlewood said of India after the win over South Africa.

The pacer added, "I guess we saw a few cracks when we targeted them in Chennai chasing a small target, we were lucky enough to get a couple early."

India bowled out Australia for 199 in their first game in the showpiece.

It will be a repeat of the 2003 World Cup final which a batting-heavy Australia won in a lopsided contest.

Hazlewood, who rocked the South African batting along with fellow new ball bowler Mitchell Starc, hoped they would recreate

their magic against India in the final in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Hazlewood and Starc got plenty of early movement and bounce with the new ball to leave South Africa reeling for 24/4 after the first 13 overs, setting the tone for their win.

"I think there was enough there on the wicket. It looked like every time they went to play a shot, we got a wicket. They sort of had to knuckle back down and try and see it out," Hazlewood told reporters.

"Yeah, Starc and I have bowled together for a long time now, we know each other's games, and we both play well on the same night, which is pleasing."

"Hopefully, we can do that on Sunday as well, but... yeah, there's a little bit in the wicket which we probably haven't had, in the previous games, or in a couple here and there, but it was nice to get the ball on," he added.

Hazlewood credited Starc for keeping it simple against South Africa. The left-arm quick returned with brilliant figures of 10-1-34-3, while Hazlewood bagged 2/12 from his eight overs with three maidens.

"You don't try and chase it too much either. You know there's enough there, you've just got to put the ball in the right area, but easier said than done sometimes."

"Starc keeping it simple... don't go over-attacking. We know that they've sort of got six front-line batters, and Marco's (Jansen) had a great, great tournament at seven, so if we can make early in-roads, we know they're set up for the back-end as well." (PTI)

PCB names Wahab Riaz as new chief selector

LAHORE, Nov 17: The Pakistan Cricket Board on Friday named the country's former fast bowler Wahab Riaz as their new chief selector, a week after accepting the resignation of legendary batter and ex-captain Inzamam ul Haq.

Inzamam had on October 30 resigned as the chairman of the national selection committee after the PCB initiated an inquiry to probe if his association with a company that manages a number of national team players amounted to conflict of interest.

The 38-year-old Riaz's first assignment will be to select the squads for the Test tour of Australia and the T20I rubber in New Zealand.

Pakistan will play their Test series in Australia from 14 December to 7 January and a five-match T20I away series against New Zealand from January 12 to 21.

The PCB is expected to announce the other national selectors in a couple of days after consulting Riaz.

Riaz, who is also the sports advisor to the Punjab government, has not played for Pakistan since 2020 but is still active in the Pakistan Super League and appeared in domestic List A matches last year.

The left-arm pacer, who has represented Pakistan in 27 Tests, 91 ODIs and 36 T20Is, also played in three successive World Cups, finishing with 35 wickets.

The bowler said he was honoured to assume the role of chief selector and added the decision to involve former players in cricketing matters by the PCB is commendable and he is willing to work for the betterment of the sport in



the country.

"Heading a selection committee is a challenging task. We have a significant Australia tour coming up that is part of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle and a T20I series against New Zealand that will allow us to develop a formidable unit leading up to the ICC T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies in June next year," he said.

Riaz also spoke about his good rapport with the new director and head coach of the Pakistan team, former teammate Muhammad Hafeez.

"I have a good rapport with Hafeez and we will be working closely for the success of Pakistan cricket. My primary goal would be to give weightage to the top performers in domestic cricket and announce well-rounded squads

equipped with the necessary skill sets. I will always be available to the players for feedback and advice."

The PCB named a new chief selector after Inzamam resigned from the post last month following PCB setting up an inquiry committee to probe conflict of interest allegations.

The PCB has formed a five-member panel to probe Inzamam's role in the company -- Yazoo International -- where he shares the same agent who manages Babar Azam, pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi and wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan.

Though Inzamam resigned, he maintained that his association with agent-and-partner Talha Rehmani had never affected or compromised his decision-making as a selector. (PTI)

WORLD CUP FINAL ICC pitch consultant Atkinson back home as BCCI curators monitor preparations



AHMEDABAD, Nov 17: What will be ICC pitch consultant Andy Atkinson's future was a question floating around as the burly New Zealander was nowhere to be seen during pitch preparation 48 hours ahead of the World Cup final between India and Australia.

It is learnt that Atkinson had already left the country as his assignment is already over.

"Andy's assignment is over and he has gone back. Don't try to find controversy where there is none. Nowhere it is written that ICC's pitch consultant need to be present before final," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Atkinson exactly isn't a favourite with BCCI brass after accusing the host nation of changing track for the semifinal between India and New Zealand from a fresh to a used one.

However, the ICC later sent a clarification that there is no such rule of holding knock-out matches on a fresh track and Atkinson was apprised of the development in advance.

On Friday, the two senior BCCI's chief of ground staff Ashish Bhowmick and his second in command Taposh Chat-

terjee, along with former India seamer and BCCI's GM (Domestic Cricket) Abbey Kuruvilla, closely monitored the pitch preparations for the mega final on Sunday.

It couldn't be confirmed if the track used for the final is a used one or fresh surface but the two senior curators and BCCI GM monitored the use of heavy roller on the designated 22-yard strip.

"If heavy roller is being used on a black soil strip then the idea is to create a slow batting track where you can get a big score but you possibly can't consistently hit through the line. 315 could be a defendable score as batting second will be difficult," a state association curator explained.

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma along with first team regulars KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja had an extensive net session, with reserve players Ishan Kishan, Ravichandran Ashwin and Prasidh Krishna for company.

As it has been the custom, Rohit and Dravid spent a considerable amount of time looking at the track and also had extensive discussions with Bhowmick and Chatterjee. (PTI)

PCB starts clearing players' dues after central contracts issue resolved

KARACHI, Nov 17: The Pakistan Cricket Board has started clearing the dues of national team players, which were held up for the last few months because of issues relating to new central contracts.

A PCB official confirmed that majority of the players offered new contracts had signed the document and their dues had been cleared dating back to June.

"A few who have not signed as yet will do so in the next two days and their dues will also be cleared swiftly," he said.

While the old central contracts expired in June, the new contracts list was not announced until late September because of differences between the players and the cricket board.

The team then left for India to play in the World Cup.

Eventually, the board gave in and announced big hikes in the monthly retainership of players and also confirmed they would get a three per cent share annually from the ICC revenue the board gets on a yearly basis.

A reliable source stated that some of the players, including Iftikhar Ahmed and Shan Masood among others, had not signed the document as they were not happy with being placed in category D of the new contracts, but later relented after being assured they would be promoted soon.

A big issue was made out of the fact that Pakistan players had not been paid their monthly salaries while they were playing in the World Cup. Around the same time, relations between the team and the PCB also soured over some statements made by chairman, Zaka Ashraf, on the team performances.

The Pakistan team could not make it to the World Cup semifinals after losing five of the nine games.

Babar Azam, who resigned as captain across formats following the debacle, Muhammad Rizwan and Shaheen Shah Afridi (who has been made T20 captain), are the only three players given category A contracts, which means they will get much higher monthly retainers compared to the other three categories.

After the pay hikes, the three are being paid a monthly retainer of around Pak ₹ 6.2 million including taxes. They will also take home match fees, bonuses and share from the ICC revenue and other team kit sponsorship deals. (PTI)

Umpires for WC final listed

AHMEDABAD, Nov 17: Englishmen Richard Illingworth and Richard Kettleborough will stand as on-field umpires in the World Cup summit clash between India and Australia here on Sunday.

This will be the second outing for Kettleborough, who also stood in the final of the 2015 World Cup. His partner on that occasion was Kumar Dharmasena. More than 93,000 spectators watched the 2015 final at the MCG. However, that number will be trumped as a three-figure crowd is expected on Sunday as the host nation will look to replicate their 2011 triumph on home soil. For Illingworth, too, this will be a second World Cup final appearance, albeit his first as a match official. He featured in the 1992 Cricket World Cup final as a player.

Among other officials for the grand finale on Sunday is Joel Wilson of Trinidad and Tobago, who will be the third umpire, fourth umpire Chris Gaffaney (New Zealand), and match referee Andy Pycroft (Zimbabwe). (PTI)

Ticked a lot of boxes, will definitely win World Cup one day: Miller

KOLKATA, Nov 17: Experiencing a fifth World Cup semifinal loss is frustrating, but South Africa will definitely take pride in their performances in this edition of the event and veteran batter David Miller believes it's only a matter of time before they clinch the coveted trophy.

World Cup's perennial 'chokers' South Africa, having taken the group stage by storm with their power-packed batting, fell short in the semifinal, but Miller's century backed up by a disciplined bowling show kept Australia on the edge in their nervy three-wicket win over the Proteas here on Thursday.

"It's pretty frustrating to be honest. Quinny (Quinton De Kock) mentioned with his four hundreds, he is okay not to score any runs and win the trophy," Miller told reporters here.

"You want to get through to the final and have a crack at the trophy. We're happy to have hung in there and put up a total. That's the game of cricket."

The likes of pace bowling all-rounder Gerald Coetzee, who made his ODI debut only in March this year, along with left-arm quick Marco Jansen have been impressive for South Africa in this World Cup.

"Before the tournament started, we talked about just having great memories, and enjoy the journey. We ticked a lot of boxes, can definitely look back and say we had a great time. It doesn't help losing a semifinal but guys showed a lot of character," Miller said.



"We all played in different tournaments, different teams. It's one of these things. It wasn't to be this occasion. But the guys are definitely going to

win a World Cup. We showed what we can do," he said.

Their last World Cup choke was in the 2015 semi-

final against New Zealand in Auckland, where the co-hosts won with one ball remaining in a rain-affected match.

Asked about the mood this time, Miller said: "There were a lot more tears in Auckland. Not a great feeling to lose a World Cup semifinal. But we had a great campaign from the team, consistent performances (in this edition). Individuals have stood out, to lose this is pretty frustrating," he said.

Asked whether he is mulling retirement, the 34-year-old said: "I will see how it goes. I can't answer how my body feels right now. I'm going to take it year by year and assess. It's (the next World Cup) a long way away now."

Before the match, skipper Temba Bavuma admitted that he was not 100 per cent fit, but he still played only to return with a four-ball duck, capping off a miserable tournament with 35 being his highest score.

But Miller backed his skipper and said he has made the difference as a leader.

"He (Bavuma) didn't get runs as he would have liked to. But he has done his fitness and he was fine, obviously he was not 100 per cent but the leader that he's, I think he's really stood up in the last year-and-half. He has taken ODI cricket to another level."

"Unfortunately he didn't get runs. But to have a leader like him is always important. He did a great job," Miller said. (PTI)