

6 WORLD

● Communications blackout and spiralling hunger compound misery in Gaza

● Kuwait's ruling emir, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah, dies at age 86

8 NATION

● Unemployment, rising prices behind Parl security breach, says Rahul

● Sometimes even judges make mistakes: Justice Bharat P Deshpande

Govt focusing on upliftment of farmers, agriculturists: Himanta

'State's farmers should also practice commercial tree plantation to increase their incomes'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 16: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that the state government is working for the upliftment of farmers and agriculturists in the state.

Sarma said this while addressing a gathering at the 8th Assam Agri-Horti Show-2023 here at College of Veterinary Sciences Playground here in Guwahati.

"The current government in the state has been working tirelessly for the past two and half years for the uplift of the agriculture sector," he said.

Sarma said that the initiative by the state government to procure paddy at a minimum support price led to procurement of a total of 6-lakh metric tonne of the crop from



as many as 62,000 farmers from across the state.

"This led to transfer of an aggregate amount of ₹ 12,000 crore into the accounts of the farmers and agriculturists," he added.

The chief minister further said

that the state government's attempt at purchase of mustard from farmers too have met with unprecedented enthusiasm.

"All steps are being taken to see that farmers are not deprived of the schemes and policies that have

been launched or undertaken for their benefits. Millet Mission, Fodder Mission, among others, are also being utilized as medium to support the farmers," he added.

Drawing a comparison between farmers in many other states to those from Assam, Sarma said that the state's farmers should also practice commercial tree plantation and horticulture more extensively so as to increase their incomes like their counterparts from some of the other states.

Referring to products from the state such as lemon, lichi, ginger, bhootjolokia, among others, managing to attract attention in many markets abroad, Sarma exuded confidence scientific cultivation of such species would go a long way in ensuring **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

Modi hails Assam entrepreneur for mobilising 3,000 women to form SHGs



GUWAHATI, Dec 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hailed a woman entrepreneur from Assam, who mobilised 3,000 people to form self help groups (SHGs), as an inspiration for enabling economic uplift of the society.

He said Kalyani Rajbongshi, who hails from Guwahati, is an example of how women can contribute to the growth of the nation when they become financially independent. Interacting with Rajbongshi dur-

ing a 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' event through video conferencing, Modi hailed her for helping others through her knowledge in striving towards financial self-reliance.

"I am happy to hear that others have benefitted from your knowledge... you are an example of how women of our country who are self-dependent can contribute to the society," the PM said.

Rajbongshi is an entrepreneur and self help group (SHG) worker,

who has helped women of her area form SHGs and financially contribute to their households.

Recounting before the PM her journey from being a homemaker to an entrepreneur, Rajbongshi said she started off in 2016 by setting up a mushroom processing unit with ₹ 2,000 that she got under a central government scheme.

She later went on to set up a food processing unit and a weaving centre when more government assistance came her way.

She also helped 3,000 women of nearby areas to form 300 SHGs and provided bank linkages to over 200 of these groups, for which the state government had feted her with 'Assam Gaurav' award earlier this year. "An entrepreneur and SHG worker, she mobilised about 3,000 women around her locality and helped them form 300 SHGs for augmenting family income. She has facilitated loans for more than 230 **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

HT BRIEFS

Motorcycle rally

BOKAJAN: Minister of Transport, Excise & Fisheries, Government of Assam, Parimal Suklabaidya visited Bokajan, Karbi Anglong in a motorcycle rally from Jorhat to promote road safety on Friday. The motorcycle rally arrived in the evening at around 4 pm and visited Bokajan Jinbaba Higher Secondary School and Bokajan Higher Secondary School where a brief awareness meeting on road safety was held. The minister said those driving two-wheelers should always wear helmets while driving, those driving cars should wear seatbelts, one should not be on the phone while driving and one should not indulge in drunk driving. "One should think of one's safety and that of others and maintain the speed limit," he added. The motorcycle rally covering 300 km went to Kaziranga from Karbi Anglong.

Road mishap

BOKAJAN: A youth died in an accident last night at around 8 pm when an LP truck, AS 03 BC 4410 and motorcycle, DL 09 SL 2015, collided head-on at NH 39 near Amrajan patrol pump under Bokajan police station. The rider of the motorcycle was seriously injured and died on the spot. Passersby took the injured motorcycle rider called 108 Ambulance and took him to Bokajan Community Health Centre where he was declared dead by the doctor.

Engineer held

GUWAHATI: A complaint was received at this Directorate of Vigilance & Anti-Corruption, Assam, alleging that Sanjib Kumar Das, executive engineer, Sorbhog-Jania Division (Irrigation), Sorbhog, Barpeta had demanded ₹ 5,000 as bribe from the complainant who is a contractor for releasing his security deposit. Unwilling to pay the bribe, the complainant approached this Directorate for taking necessary legal action against the above-mentioned public servant.

Times have changed, lies do not get votes, work does: Nadda

SHIMLA, Dec 16: Times have changed and the report card speaks. Lies do not get votes but work does, BJP president J P Nadda said on Saturday.

He said this while addressing a gathering at Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh, where a felicitation function was organised by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not only delivered what he had promised, but also what was not promised and people have faith in his guarantees, the BJP chief said, adding that the Congress resorts to lies in order to get votes while the BJP works for the welfare of the country's people and thus, gets elected.

Nadda said the BJP-led Centre has given ₹ 3,378 crore to Himachal Pradesh and added that the prime minister considers the hill state as his second home and would leave no stone unturned to help the people here.

"You spend the money and the Centre would give you more," he told the Congress government in

the state. Taking a dig at the state government led by chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Nadda said there is only one guarantee of the Congress -- that the guarantee would not be fulfilled.

The women of Himachal Pradesh are still waiting for Rs 1,500 per month, people are still looking for English-medium government schools, youngsters are waiting for jobs while farmers are waiting for the time when cow dung and milk would be purchased from them for ₹ 2 per kg and ₹ 80-100 per litre respectively, he said. This was Nadda's first visit to his home state after the BJP's poll victories in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The BJP president was given a rousing reception at Bilaspur.

Union minister Anurag Thakur asserted that the BJP would register a "hat-trick" in Himachal Pradesh by winning all the four Lok Sabha seats in the state in the 2024 general election, adding that people would vote to make Modi the Prime **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

Election process for urban local bodies to be completed by April 30: Nagaland to SC

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: The Nagaland government has told the Supreme Court that the election process for urban local bodies in the state will be completed by April 30.

In November, the Nagaland Assembly passed a bill reserving 33 per cent seats in urban local bodies for women. Urban local body elections in the state were last held in 2004. A bench of Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia took note of an affidavit filed by the Nagaland chief secretary earlier this month that said the rules will be framed within a month -- before January 8.

"An affidavit has been filed on behalf of the chief secretary of the state of Nagaland affirming that the Nagaland Municipal Act, 2023, was passed on November 9, 2023, by the Nagaland Legislative Assembly and was notified on the same day after receiving the assent of the governor," it noted. "It is further stated that the rules will be framed within a month from the date of the affidavit, i.e. on or before January 8, 2024, and the election process will be completed by April 30, 2024," the bench noted in its order passed on December 11. It posted the matter for hearing on May 3.

The apex court is hearing a petition filed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties and others seeking 33 per cent reservation for women in urban local bodies in the northeastern state. The petitioners moved an application before the top court against the cancellation of elections and urged it to take contempt action against those concerned for "disobeying" its March 14 order regarding the poll process.



"Notice of contempt can be discharged on the next date as by that time elections will be over," the bench noted in its December 11 order. While hearing the matter in July, the top court had slammed both the Centre and the Nagaland government over non-implementation of the constitutional scheme of one-third reservation for women in urban local bodies.

The top court had asked the Centre to clarify whether the constitutional scheme of quotas for women in municipality and town council elections could be violated by Nagaland, where the assembly had earlier passed a resolution to repeal the municipal act and resolved not to hold elections to the urban local bodies.

The state assembly had passed the resolution following pressure from tribal organisations and civil society groups. **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

NIA confirms grenade explosion at Na Ali Lichubari military station

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Dec 16: A team of NIA personnel, along with forensic experts, inspected the site of the blast at Military Station (41 Sub Area) at Na Ali Lichubari on Saturday, confirming that the explosion on Thursday was caused by a grenade.

Jorhat SP Mohan Lal Meena stated that a joint team of Army and NIA personnel had inspected the site near the entrance gate of the Army camp and affirmed that the blast heard by the people of Lichubari locality was due to the explosion of a grenade.

It may be mentioned here that a sensation prevailed after local residents and shopkeepers near the entrance gate of the Military Station heard a loud sound at around 7:30 PM on Thursday and suspected it to be a blast near the gate.

The grenade attack, which Ulfa has admitted to causing, is the third in upper Assam, with the other two incidents occurring in Sivasagar and Tinsukia districts in the past few days. Police on Friday had stated that **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

Financial irregularities over ₹ 1,500 crore transpired under previous regime: BTR chief

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 16: Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) chief Pramod Boro made startling allegations on Saturday, asserting that financial irregularities exceeding ₹ 1,500 crore transpired under the previous regime within the sixth schedule area.

Boro informed that a formal probe has been requested from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and the Assam government approached to pursue the matter. "Upon assuming control of BTR, we inherited a substantial financial burden of ₹ 3,000 crore. After conducting a thorough audit, we have successfully reduced the liability to approximately ₹ 1,200 crore," he stated while addressing the media during a press conference com-



memorating three years in office.

Boro further highlighted a concerning issue wherein a work order exceeding ₹ 1,500 crore was sanctioned by the preceding BTR administration without appropriate financial categorisation.

Emphasising the severity of the matter, he mentioned that the Bodoland council had passed a resolution last year, urging a CBI investigation into these alleged financial irregularities. The chief executive member underscored the importance of transparency and accountability in governance while seeking justice in the face of fiscal discrepancies.

Boro further asserted that their BTR government aim is to serve the people through the development of the region, adding, "We don't have the mentality required for corruption. Our only goal is serving the people through the development of BTR". He further informed that the BTR government has prioritised providing quality education to the students. **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

'The eighth cooperative is an all-women one, which will produce sanitary pads'

Ex-militants to make sanitary pads, run rice mills in Assam

GUWAHATI, Dec 16: The hands that once trained to fire guns are now learning to make sanitary pads in Assam's Udalguri district.

Former women militants are being trained in making sanitary napkins by the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) administration, with commercial production of a unit expected to commence soon.

"Rehabilitation of former militants is very important. We have tried to find out their areas of interest and expertise, and then train and engage them accordingly," Pramod Boro, chief executive member of BTR, said here on Saturday.

He said that besides the financial assistance provided to surrendered militants by the central and state governments, the BTR is also helping them in finding employment.

"We have launched several flagship programmes. Among them is forming



cooperatives of former militants and helping them etch out livelihoods," the BTR chief said.

The programme has been named 'Fin Rwdwmkhang' (Mission Blossom Again).

"From rice mills to sanitary pad-making units, different cooperatives are coming up under it," Boro added.

Sharing details of the Mission, Binual Wary, general secretary of its governing body, told PTI that a target has been

set to establish 30 cooperatives, involving mostly former militants. Of these, 21 cooperatives have already been formed and eight of these have also got schemes sanctioned, he said.

Five of the sanctioned schemes are for setting up rice mills, one for a dairy processing unit and another for a stevia processing unit.

"The eighth cooperative is an all-women one, which will produce sanitary pads. It is coming up in Udalguri. The machine, provided by Niti Ayog, has already been installed and customised training provided to them.

"We hope to start production within a couple of months," Wary, a former top militant of a now-disbanded faction of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), said.

All products under this Mission will be sold under the brand 'Rwdwm' (bud), he added. **(CONTD. ON PAGE-9)**

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Yamaha launches much-awaited R3 and MT-03 in India

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 16: India Yamaha Motor (IYM) Pvt Ltd is thrilled to announce the launch of the much-awaited models – the track-oriented R3 and the street fighter MT-03 in India, as part of its heart-revving brand campaign – The Call of the Blue. These two iconic motorcycles truly represent Yamaha's Racing DNA and underscore the brand's unwavering commitment to advancing the premium motorcycle segment in the Indian market. The brand aims to meet the elevated expectations of legions of riding enthusiasts seeking pure motorcycling experience, maximum performance, and racing pedigree from their motorcycles.

The latest additions to Yamaha's portfolio, both the models aim to fulfill the growing aspirations of young R15 and MT-15 customers in India. The all new R3 and MT03 boasts a powerful 321cc liquid cooled, 4-stroke, in-line two-cylinder, DOHC and 4-valve per cylinder fuel injected engine that produces 30.9 kW (42 PS) at 10,750rpm of maximum power and 29.5 Nm (3 kg-m) at 9,000rpm of maximum torque. Additionally, both the bikes feature, such as light-weight diamond frame, Upside Down Front Forks, long swingarm and mono-cross rear suspension, multi-function LCD instrument cluster, and LED headlight, taillight & turn signal light. The R3, with strong genetic links from YZR-M1, is built to thrill even hardcore motorcyclists, while the MT-03, with its daring and audacious artwork, attracts those looking for torque and agility in their ride.

Commenting on this remarkable day, Eishin Chihana, chairman of Yamaha Motor India Group of Companies said, "As an integral aspect of the 'The Call of the Blue' brand campaign, Yamaha is committed to strengthen its premium segment range by introducing models that appeal to the need of young Indian consumers. The R-series and MT-series models enjoy a huge fan base in India because of their superior performance and iconic design. These Yamaha fans have been waiting for a long time to elevate their riding experience with the larger displacement models in this series. In alignment with this dedication, we are excited to announce today the launch of our latest – supersport bike, R3 and hyper-naked, MT-03 in India. We are confident that both these

models, showcasing Yamaha's cutting-edge technology and innovation, will undoubtedly captivate the interest of our young customers in the country and offer them a thrilling ride experience. With the addition of these step-up models in the R-series & MT-series, we look forward to further nurture the growing premium motorcycle segment in India."

The R3 has been developed in line with the product concept of "Ride the R Anytime". The track-oriented characters of the latest Yamaha R3 offer excellent riding confidence, quick-revving performance, and high-rpm efficiency. A near 50/50 weight distribution – ideal setup for supersport bikes – exacted in the latest Yamaha R3 smoothly takes care of the handling performance. The handlebar crown is made of cast aluminum and presents a natural steering feel, while the fuel tank cover ensures unity between the rider and machine. Moreover, the design provides better aerodynamic efficiency with the combo of fairings (cowlings), windscreen, cross layered wing and air duct work that directs airflow to the radiator; everything is an aesthetic pleasure.

The MT-03 comes from the legendary hyper-naked family and is a true master of torque. It has been developed under the concept of "MTs that stimulate your Pride - The Evolution to a True MT Sibling". This version of the MT-series carries an aggressive design bringing the bold front face with twin-eye positioned lights and yet another distinct "MT" look. Fuel tank area bodywork is well thought-out, offering a sense of size and volume for a big-bike appearance that accentuates the masculinity of the bike. Additionally, offers a snug fit and comfortable sitting position to the rider. The tightly packed look for the front assembly further emphasizes the "mass-forward" body design image highlighting the best of MT family.

Both the motorcycles, which is going to elevate the supersports experience of Yamaha customers, feature a compact and lightweight diamond frame chassis offering optimum balance of strength and rigidity, neutral handling, and easy maneuverability in traffic. Equipped with the all-aluminum DiAsil cylinder with offset design and highly heat resistant pistons, they ensure stable engine performance with excellent heat dissipation and reduced horsepower loss.

Govt issues revised order to allow use of sugarcane juice to make ethanol

OMCs have been asked to inform the food ministry after placement of revised contracts

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: The food ministry has issued a fresh order reversing ban on the use of sugarcane juice for making ethanol and allowed utilisation of the juice as well as B-heavy molasses to produce the green fuel in the 2023-24 supply year.

The revised order comes days after the Centre on December 7 banned use of sugarcane juice and sugar syrup for the 2023-24 supply year (November-October) in an order to ensure adequate sugar supply in the domestic market and check prices.

In a directive issued to all sugar mills and distilleries, the ministry said the oil marketing companies

(OMCs) will issue a "revised allocation" of "sugarcane juice and B heavy molasses-based ethanol" for the 2023-24 supply year to "each distillery".

OMCs have been asked to inform the food ministry after placement of revised contracts.

After receiving the revised allocation, sugar mills and distilleries have been asked to supply ethanol strictly as per the revised quantity of cane juice and B-heavy molasses.

"No diversion of sugarcane juice and B heavy molasses is allowed for production of rectified spirit and extra neutral alcohol," the directive said.



All molasses-based distilleries will endeavour to make ethanol from C-heavy molasses, it added.

A decision in this regard, food secretary Sanjeev Chopra said, was taken in the meeting of a

committee of ministers held on Friday.

He said the government has decided to give flexibility to use both cane juice and B heavy molasses within an overall cap on diversion of sugar of up to 17 lakh tonnes in the current 2023-24 supply year.

Already 6 lakh tonnes of sugar has been diverted for making ethanol from cane juice before the ban, another food ministry official had said.

The government has estimated sugar production to decline to 32.3-33 million tonnes in the 2023-24 season (October-September) as against 37.3 million tonnes in the previous season. (PTI)

Realme launches first 5G smartphone in 'Champion' series



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 16: Realme, on Saturday announced the launch of its first 5G smartphone in its "Champion" Series - the realme C67 5G. The realme C67 5G, the 5G Charging Champion comes with 5G connectivity and combines a powerful camera, fast charging, a massive battery, an appealing design, a powerful 5G chipset, adequate RAM for multitasking, and generous storage capacity.

The realme C67 5G, aims to deliver young users with a superlative product experience at a great price. The C67 5G comes equipped with a powerful 50MP AI camera that allows users to showcase their creativity and photography. To ensure that users are able to view these pictures in top-notch quality, the C67 5G houses a 120Hz Ultra Smooth Display with FHD+ display and a 91.4% screen-to-body ratio designed for an immersive experience. It also features the Mini Capsule 2.0 in a revamped vision design.

The smartphone also gets a 33W SUPERVOOC Charging solution for fast charging, with a massive

5000 mAh battery that goes from 1 to 50% in just 29 minutes. The realme C67 5G comes powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6100+ 5G Chipset that ensures powerful performance and an overall smooth operating experience.

The smartphone comes with Dynamic RAM options of up to 6GB, paired with up to 6GB of RAM and 128GB Storage that provides users with smooth and efficient multitasking, allowing you to run multiple apps and switch between tasks seamlessly. The realme C67 5G boasts a 7.89mm ultra-slim body that ensures a comfortable grip.

The Realme C67 5G is available in two stunning colors: Sunny Oasis and Dark Purple which comes in two storage variants priced at ₹ 13,999 (4GB+128GB) and ₹ 14,999 (6GB+128GB).

Commenting on the launch, realme spokesperson said, "At realme, we are truly committed to making 5G accessible to all & the new realme C67 5G, the first 5G smartphone of our 'Champion' C Series is a testament to that unwavering commitment. With the Realme C67 5G, we are redefining possibilities and setting a new standard for innovation, offering our community of young consumers a great 5G device that seamlessly integrates the latest technology while maintaining our commitment to delivering exceptional value. As we push the boundaries of innovation, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide powerful cutting-edge technology and democratise 5G in India."

Realme has always been committed to provide users with cutting edge technology at an accessible price point. The Realme C Series is a testament for it with a massive customer base of over 30 million in India. From fast charging, camera technology to design aesthetics, the C Series has made its mark and for each new generation of the C Series smartphones stands out to lead the segment with its unparalleled and exciting upgrades across four key areas: charging, camera, storage, and design.

ESIC to set up nine hospitals in Maharashtra, MP, Uttarakhand

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has decided to set up nine hospitals in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and 17 new dispensaries in Gujarat. The decision was taken in the 192nd Meeting of Employees' State Insurance Corporation held on Friday at ESIC Headquarters under the Chairmanship of Union Minister for labour and employment Bhupender Yadav.

Minister of state for labour and employment, petroleum and natural gas Rameswar Teli also attended the meeting as vice-chairman.

According to a labour ministry statement issued late in the evening on Friday, nine new ESI hospitals in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and 17 new dispensaries in Gujarat will be set up under the ESI Scheme to improve the healthcare infrastructure.

To neutralise the impact of inflation, the proposal to increase the basic rate of Permanent Disablement Benefit (PDB) and Dependent's Benefit (DB) was also approved by ESI Corporation, the statement said.

The PDB is paid at the rate of 90 per cent of wages in the form of monthly payments, depending upon the extent of loss of earning capacity as certified by a Medical Board.

The DB is paid at the rate of 90 per cent of the wage in the form of monthly payment to the depen-



dents of a deceased insured person in cases where death occurs due to employment injury or occupational hazards.

However, the statement did not mention the earlier rate of PDB and DB.

The ESIC also decided to increase the number of beds in its hospitals in Bibewadi, Maharashtra, and Rourkela, Odisha.

The sanctioned bed strength is set to increase from 100 to 120 and from 75 to 150 in ESIC hospital in Bibewadi and Rourkela, respectively, as ESI Corporation accorded the approval for the same during the meeting, the statement noted.

To provide all the super speciality treatment facilities hassle-free and under one roof, the proposal for the development of ESIC Hospital Andheri, Mumbai, as a multi-speciality hospital with a capacity of 500 beds was approved, it stated.

The step is taken to modernise the facilities in the hospital to provide IPs (insured persons) and their dependents with modern treatment facilities. (PTI)

Ola electric announces 'December to Remember'



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 16: Ola Electric, India's largest EV company, on Saturday announced its 'December

to Remember' campaign to further accelerate #EndICEAge mission.

Under the campaign, the all new S1 X+ is now available with a flat ₹ 20,000 discount, bringing down the cost of S1 X+ to ₹ 89,999 only. This makes the S1 X+ one of the most affordable 2W EV scooters to buy, overcoming the biggest barrier to adoption. The deliveries of the S1 X+ have already kick-started across the country and the scooter has seen unprecedented demand.

S1 X+ offers top-notch performance, advanced tech features and superior ride quality at an affordable price. It comes with a 3kWh battery and offers a certified range of 151 km. Powered by a 6kW motor, S1 X+ touches 0-40 kmph in 3.3 seconds and has a top speed of 90 kmph.

To further boost the EV penetration in the country, the company has announced its 'December to Remember' campaign starting 3rd December, with lucrative offers and discount schemes, ending the season on a high note.

Anshul Khandelwal, chief marketing officer, Ola, said, "Ola Electric has set a new industry benchmark with record-breaking sales of 30,000 units in the month of November. To further accelerate the adoption and make EV's mainstream, today we are overcoming the biggest barrier to adoption with our new S1 X+. With a price equivalent to the leading ICE scooter, we are confident that the S1 X+ is poised to #EndICEAge. With our wide range of scooters along with their attractive price, I firmly believe that customers will now have no reason to buy an ICE product."

13 states, UTs among 'achievers' in logistics performance index: DPIIT report

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, and Gujarat are among the 13 states and Union Territories that have again been categorised as "achievers" in the logistics index chart 2023, according to a report released by the commerce and industry Ministry on Saturday.

The index is an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports and economic growth.

As against 15 states and UTs, this year, the number has reduced to 13 as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have slipped into "aspirers" and "fast movers" categories, respectively, this year.

Steps taken by Sikkim and Tripura have helped them move up the ladder to the "achievers" category from "fast movers" in 2022.

The other states and UTs in the "achievers" category are Delhi, Assam, Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh.

Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry have been categorised as "fast movers" in the report.

Those in the "aspirers" category include Goa, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The report ranks states on the basis of their logistics ecosystem, highlights the key logistics-related challenges faced by the stakeholders and includes suggestive recommendations, according to the fifth LEADS

(Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2023 report unveiled by commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal.

The index aims at enhancing focus on improving logistics performance across states, which is essential for improving the country's trade and reducing transaction costs.

Goyal said the logistics sector will play a key role in taking the country's economy to about USD 35 trillion by 2047.

Citing a report of economic think tank NCAER, he said the country's logistics cost is estimated in the range of 7.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent.

"Going forward, the aim to bring it down to the 5-6 per cent level is certainly doable," he said, adding that the government has taken a series of measures, such as investing huge amounts in infrastructure development to help promote cut logistics costs.

He suggested the industry to focus on skilled manpower, enhanced participation of states, use of new technologies like AI, blockchain and data analytics, and steps to reduce carbon footprint will further help in the growth of the country's logistics sector.

The minister said the LEADS report will play a pivotal role in instilling healthy competition among states/UTs to enhance logistics performance.

LEADS was conceived on the lines of the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) of the World Bank in 2018. While the LPI relies entirely on perception-based surveys, LEADS incorporates perception and objectivity, thereby enhancing the robustness and comprehensiveness of this exercise. (PTI)

FCI sells 4.29 lakh MT of wheat, 14,760 MT of rice in Bengal through e-auction

KOLKATA, Dec 16: The Food Corporation India (FCI) has sold 4.29 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and 14,760 metric tonnes of non-fortified rice through 25 open market e-auctions in West Bengal from June to December this year, an official of the agency said on Saturday.

FCI Deputy General Manager (West Bengal region) Pradeep Singh said the Open Market Sales Scheme (domestic) had been done through the e-auction portal of M-junction.

"In a bid to stabilise the prices of the cereals and also to increase affordability for the general public, the FCI has sold 4.29 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and 14,760 metric tonnes of non-fortified rice in West Bengal through 25 open-market e-auctions from June to December this year," Singh said.

The FCI will also continue to supply the staples through the public distribution system (PDS) free of cost, he said.

While the reserve price of wheat for e-auction sales is ₹ 2,150 per quintal, it is ₹ 2,900 per quintal for non-fortified rice.

Singh said fortified rice is supplied through the PDS only, and not via the e-auction route.

"West Bengal is a wheat-deficit state but self-sufficient in rice production. For the state, wheat is procured from Haryana, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh at the prevailing minimum support price (MSP) of ₹ 2,275 per quintal for marketing season 2024-25," he said.

While wheat is procured from the farmers during the Rabi season, rice is purchased during the Kharif season, he said.

According to the official, differentiation in the quantum of purchase of wheat and rice through the e-auction route has also been made for big and small processing units.

Singh said the FCI has also asked the processors not to hold stocks over and above the monthly processing capacity while bidding for tenders. (PTI)

Adani acquires majority stake in news agency IANS

IANS had a revenue of ₹11.86 crore in the fiscal year 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023)

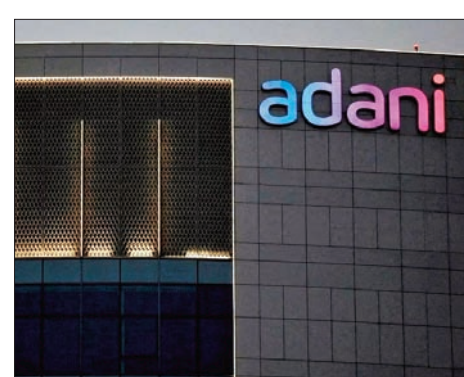
NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Billionaire Gautam Adani's group has acquired a majority stake in news agency IANS India Pvt Ltd for an undisclosed sum as the group expands its presence in the media space.

In a regulatory filing, Adani Enterprises -- the firm that holds the group's media interest -- said its subsidiary "AMG Media Networks Ltd has acquired a 50.50 per cent stake constituting equity shares of IANS India Pvt Ltd."

The company did not disclose the acquisition price.

Adani had forayed into media business in March last year when it acquired Quintillion Business Media, which operates business and financial news digital media platform BQ Prime. It thereafter in December took nearly 65 per cent stake in broadcaster NDTV.

AMNL was the vehicle for these acquisitions



as well.

In the filing, it said, "AMNL has also signed a shareholders' agreement with IANS and Sandeep Bamzai, a shareholder of IANS, to record their

inter-se rights with respect to IANS."

IANS had a revenue of ₹ 11.86 crore in the fiscal year 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023).

"All operational and management control of IANS will be with AMNL and AMNL will have the right to appoint all directors of IANS," the filing said.

"Pursuant to the acquisition as set out above, IANS is now a subsidiary of AMNL."

A first-generation entrepreneur, Adani started off as a commodities trader in 1988 and expanded his business interests to become India's largest private player in infrastructure, with 13 ports and eight airports. Over the years it diversified into producing coal, energy distribution, data centres and more recently into cement and copper. It even bid and acquired 5G telecom spectrum to set up a private network. (PTI)

State Level Recruitment Commission for Class-IV Posts
Assam Administrative Staff College, Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

No. SLRC-G-IV/Assam/Advertisement for Analogous Posts-IV/2023-24/01/19
ADDENDUM

In continuation to the Commission's earlier advertisement No. SLRC-G-IV/Assam/Advertisement for Analogous Posts-IV/2023-24/01/14 published on 31-10-2023 by State Level Recruitment Commission for Class-IV Posts, this is for information of all concerned candidates for Class IV Posts under Government of Assam that a window is provided in the online applications portal accessible through official website of SEBA www.sebaonline.org and www.assam.gov.in to enable any applicant who wishes to be considered under the Assam Public Service (Preferential Appointment) Rules, 1999 to indicate their eligibility in the said online application portal.

Sd/-
Secretary, SLRC for Class-IV Posts

Janasanyog ID/14886/ 23/17-Dec-23

AASU stages protest over molestation of college student

AASU demands stringent punishment against the accused principal of school of which victim is student

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Dec 16: The situation turned tense in Moran in Dibrugarh district after a group of protesters clashed with the police on Saturday following the release of the principal of the Moran Higher Secondary School from police custody.

The students and activists of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) staged protest against the alleged molestation of a student of the seventh standard by the principal of the school.

The massive protest led to road blockades as the agitators staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the school.

The police along with CRPF personnel rushed to the spot to in-



tervene and bring the situation under control.

The agitators took to the streets shouting slogans demanding that stern action be taken against the principal.

"We demand the arrest of the principal who has done such a shameful act. Such a shameful incident has never happened in the history of the Moran Higher Secondary school," said an activist of AASU.

He said, "Due to loopholes in our law, the principal managed to get bail. He should be sent to jail for his actions."

Meanwhile, family members of the victim filed a written complaint at the police station in Moran regarding the incident.

The matter is being investigated, said sources.

ICSI Guwahati Chapter organises 10th ICSI NCLT Conclave



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Dec 16: The Guwahati (Northeastern) chapter of Eastern India Regional Council of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) organised the 10th ICSI NCLT Conclave on Saturday.

The Institute initiated the ICSI NCLT Conclave this year to sensitise company secretaries on NCLT and NCLAT practices and build their capacities, by organising seminars across fifteen different locations in India. The topics for these seminars were suggested by the

president, NCLT.

The 10th Conclave held in Guwahati was graced by Justice Kalyan Surana, Gauhati High Court & Justice Soumitra Saikia, Gauhati High Court as the Chief Guest(s) Vinod Sharma, regional director, Ministry of corporate affairs, Northeastern region graced the occasion as the guest of honour.

While addressing the gathering, CS Manish Gupta, president, The ICSI said about the importance of ICSI NCLT Conclave and the objective behind the same is to uplift

the capacity of the Professional in NCLT area.

CS Sandip Kumar Kejriwal, council member and chairman, practising secretaries committee, the ICSI and CS Nikhil Jain Gangwal, chairman, Guwahati (North Eastern) Chapter of EIRC of the ICSI were also present at the Conclave along with other renowned guests.

The Guwahati (Northeastern) chapter also released its 8th Half Yearly e-Newsletter on the occasion.

Suklavidya directs Sivasagar administration to take action against traffic rules violations

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, Dec 16: State transport, excise and fishery minister Parimal Suklavidya has directed the Sivasagar district administration to initiate action against traffic rule violations so as to prevent the increasing number of road accidents in the district.

The excise minister visited Sivasagar, Nazira, and Demow recently to review the development works of different departments concerned. He held a review meeting with officials of various departments at the Sukapha Bhawan in Sivasagar town.

Suklavidya discussed in detail the alarming rise in road accidents with Sivasagar district commissioner, Aditya Vikram Yadav, SP Sivasagar Subhrajyoti Bora, and district transport officials. They deliberated on ways to minimize road accident and the minister directed them to adopt strict measures against all violations of traffic rules.

He also directed the Lok Nirman department to mark the speed limits and other road signs to help the public and students while using public roads. Suklavidya, in reply to queries from the media, clarified that the government has no role in the increase of road accidents by increasing licensed wine shops in the state. He said that those who take alcohol should avoid coming out in the streets in an inebriated state.

The Minister also took part in a motorcycle procession to Gaurisagar, Nazira, and Demow and reviewed the measures undertaken by the transport, police, and Lok Nirman departments in maintaining traffic rules as part of the awareness campaigns being organized as part of the Road Safety Week.

Villager defence parties provided with torchlights for man-animal conflict mitigation

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Dec 16: Village defence parties (VDPs) of 11 villages affected by human-elephant conflict near the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve have been provided with torch lights for facilitating mitigation of the conflict and promoting co-existence.

Aaranyak, a biodiversity conservation organisation of the state distributed these rechargeable torch lights with support from US Fish and Wildlife Service and cooperation from the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve authority.

HEC-affected villagers like Jogi gaon, Difaloo Bagisa, Kolakhowa, Koilakha, Dhekiapota, Borbheta-Amloki, Borjuri Bosti, Methoni Bagisa, Lakhoujan, Geleka Balija and Lakshmi-juri situated near the national park will be directly benefitted from these torch lights provided to VDPs of these villages.

"A key function of a VDP is to coordinate with officials of the forest department to protect wildlife and other resources in the national park, especially by ensuring round-the-clock vig-

ilance", said Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, an International Union for Conservation of Nature heritage hero and a senior scientist in Aaranyak.

Aaranyak's senior official, Manas Kumar Bhattacharjya, who coordinated the distribution of the torch lights underscored the necessity of these torchlights.

He said, "When VDP members are on night surveillance, the spotlights will enable them to spot elephants and other wildlife, such as rhinoceroses and keep a close watch to ensure that these animals do not stray into the human settlement areas. This will ensure the safety of both villagers and wildlife, ensuring coexistence among them."

The lights were distributed among VDPs in two separate programmes held on December 14 and 15. Honorary wildlife warden of the Kaziranga National Park and a veteran in the conservation sector, Uttam Saikia moderated both the torchlights distribution programmes, indicating his involvement and support for the initiative.

Deputy ranger, Achyut Krishna Gogoi and senior forest official Sashanka Saikia were present at the

event signifying the support of local authorities to the initiative.

The distribution of spotlights paved the way for involvement local communities in the mitigation of conflict, promoting a sense of shared responsibility. This initiative demonstrated a proactive and community-focused approach to address the increasing incidents of human-elephant conflict, emphasising collaboration between conservation organisations, local communities and authorities.

Rechargeable spotlights are among the mitigation tools distributed by Aaranyak among various stakeholders in HEC-affected areas in the state and other parts of the Northeast for facilitating coexistence.

"Empowering communities in Bokakhat Range! Thanks to Aaranyak, we've distributed solar charge lights to 8 more Village Defence Parties. Due to our ongoing efforts, a total of 19 villages now shine bright, enhancing safety and community well-being. Together, we illuminate progress!" Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve tweeted on the multi-blogging platform 'X' on December 15.

Kokrajhar district police officer visits Majuli school

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Dec 16: The newly appointed district police officer of Kokrajhar district, Tarun Goel on Saturday visited the Auniati Higher Secondary School in Majuli.

He was impressed by the school environment and the students and expressed his desire to interact with them. He also admired the Satriya culture of the river island.

During the visit he conducted a teaching programme for the students before the start of the afternoon examinations. He explained

how to pass competitive exams based on his preparation.

Goel quoted Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi in a very interesting way to offer various tips to the students to win the competition.

Assistant headmaster-in-charge of the Auniati Higher Secondary School, Kamal Dutta thanked Goel for inspiring the students. The Haryana resident is a 2022 Assam cadre IPS officer. He was accompanied by Inspector Prashant Charen-gia of Dergaon Police Training College.

Deer rescued in Biswanath

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Dec 16: Officials of the Biswanath wildlife division on Saturday rescued a deer that had strayed from the Kaziranga National Park and entered the Bhojmari village in the south-western part of Biswanath.

According to sources, the deer had strayed into the Bhojmari village from the adjoining national park early during the day. The villagers on seeing the animal, immediately contacted the local forest officials.

Soon a team of officials from the Biswanath wildlife division arrived in the village and rescued the deer. The animal was freed into the Kaziranga National Park after being administered with primary treatment.

'Cultural identity' a unifying factor for Assamese people

Tribes of Assam are bound together by shared legacy



GUWAHATI, Dec 16: The 'cultural identity' of the Assamese community, which is divided into many tribes and sects, but bind together by shared legacy ranging from history to food, can be the unifying factor for the people of the state, eminent personalities of diverse fields opined.

They maintained that perspectives on the community by non-resident Assamese with connections with the state will help in a better understanding of the issues facing the state and its people.

"We need more writings by people who have roots in Assam and are connected with the happenings here, but have been staying outside for various reasons. When things are viewed from a distance, new perspectives emerge,"

litterateur and former director general of Assam police Kuladhar Saikia said.

An ex-president of Assam Sahitya Sabha, he mentioned of initiatives taken by the literary body to connect second-generation non-resident Assamese with their language when he was at the helm of the sabha.

Saikia was speaking at the launch of a book, 'The Assamese 'A Portrait of a Community'', by journalist Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty here on Friday.

Underlining the importance of language for a community to thrive, Saikia said 'economics of language' is a vital concept in this regard.

"Dominance of a handful of languages in the internet could sound the death knell for other languages," the

retired top cop added.

Writer Ratna Bharali Talukdar maintained that culture can play the most crucial role in bringing the Assamese community together, which is divided into many tribes and non-tribes.

"We have to downplay the linguistic differences and explore the power of cultural identity as a unifying factor," she said, adding that there was also a growing discussion on 'ecological identity' having the power to bring the entire North Eastern region together.

Pisharoty, sharing an outline of her book, said she has endeavoured to present an 'insider's' view from an outsider's perspective.

"We, the Assamese people, have a rich legacy which binds us together.

From our food habits to the jewellery we wear to our history, it all contributes to the forming of our community.

"I have tried to delve into the history and origins of several of such aspects, and find the common thread that binds us together," the Delhi-based journalist added.

Emphasising on the 'cosmopolitan outlook' of the Assamese society, another panelist and author Kaushik Barua maintained it was an inherent aspect of the state.

"Assamese people have been used to living and experiencing different religions, languages, etc and have been accepting and assimilating. It has given us a cosmopolitan outlook," a recipient of Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar said.

Noted novelist Arupa Kalita Patangia, sharing her perspectives on the emergence of Assamese literature and its journey to the global forum, exuded hope that books written in Assamese language will reach the world readers in greater numbers.

While noting that not many Assamese language books have been translated into world languages, the Sahitya Akademi awardee also emphasised on the need for literature to be able to transcend geographical boundaries through its own merit.

Celebrity chef Atul Lahkar, who has been promoting Assamese cuisine, dwelt on how food habits of a community have a common origin, which also plays a unifying role.

He urged writers to delve more into the origin of Assamese cuisine and document it as it would also serve as a reservoir of the growth and changes of the society as a whole. (PTI)

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

No.BW.04/2023/11

It is notified for general information that the outstanding balance of **8.04% ASSAM SDL, 2024** issued in terms of the Government of Assam, **Finance Department's Notification No.BW.01/2018/PT/149 dated January 11, 2019** will be repaid at par on January 16, 2024 with interest due up to and including **January 15, 2024**. In the event of a holiday being declared on the aforesaid date by the Government of Assam under the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, the loan will be repaid by the paying offices in this State on the previous working day. **No interest will accrue on the loan from and after January 16, 2024.**

2. As per Sub-regulation 24 (2) and 24 (3) of Government Securities Regulations, 2007, payment of maturity proceeds to the registered holder of Government Security held in the form of Subsidiary General Ledger or Constituent Subsidiary General Ledger account or Stock Certificate shall be made by a pay order incorporating the relevant particulars of his bank account or by credit to the account of the holder in any bank having facility of receipt of funds through electronic means. For the purpose of making payment in respect of the securities, the original subscriber or the subsequent holders of such a Government Securities, as the case may be, shall submit to the Bank or Treasury and Sub-Treasury or branch of State Bank of India where they are encased/registered for payment of interest, as the case may be, the relevant particulars of their bank account.

3. However, in the absence of relevant particulars of bank account/mandate for receipt of funds through electronic means, to facilitate repayment on the due date, holders of **8.04% ASSAM SDL, 2024**, should tender their securities at the Public Debt Office, 20 days in advance. The securities should be tendered for repayment, duly discharged on the reverse thereof as under:-

"Received the Principal due on the Certificate".

4. It should be particularly noted that at places where the treasury work is done by a branch of the State Bank of India, the securities, if they are in the form of Stock Certificates, should be tendered at the branch of the bank concerned and not at the Treasury or Sub-treasury.

5. Holders who wish to receive payment at places other than those where the securities have been encased for payment should send them duly discharged to the Public Debt Office concerned by Registered and Insured Post. The Public Debt Office will make payment by issuing a draft payable at any Treasury/Sub-Treasury or branch of State Bank of India conducting Government Treasury work in the State of Assam.

Sd/-

Commissioner & Secretary to the Government of Assam
Finance Department

Janasanyog /D/14830/23/17-Dec-23

PUBLIC NOTICE

No. SSA/Esst/Engagement/ QE (TT)/682/2003/8606
In pursuant to the advertisement published vide No. SSA/Esst/Engagement/SMO/1/2007/5421 Date : 06/06/2023 and No. SSA/Esst/Engagement/SMO/Q&P (TT)/617/2023/7698 dated 10.10.2023, it is for general information of all concerned that the interview for the following posts under Samagra Shiksha Axom will be held as mentioned below :

Sl.No	Name of the Post	Date of schedule of Interview
1	Officer- In-charge[Pre-Primary & Early Child Care Education]	28.12.2023
2	Equity Officer In-charge	29.12.2023 and 30.12.2023
3	Consultant (MIS)	02.01.2024
4	Quality Expert-Mathematics [Teachers Training]	02.01.2024
5	Quality Expert, Quality and Pedagogy	02.01.2024
6	Accounts Officer	18.01.2024, 19.01.2024 and 20.01.2024

The date-wise list of short-listed candidate is uploaded in the official website of Samagra Shiksha Axom at <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>

The short-listed candidates are requested to attend in the interview as per the scheduled date in the State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19 with the original testimonial relating to Educational Qualification, Experience and other documents, etc.



Sd/-Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog /DF/2171/ 23/17-Dec-23

Weekly drive for fresh veggies

By: Kamal Baruah

Every time I go into a rural habitat, I chase after something. It's a favourite haunt of my time in the weekend, where my grocery bag is always a part and parcel of my travel. So it was another Sunday, the moment before I got into the steering wheel, my wife reminded me once for that essential item besides a light snacks and a flask of coffee. A small bowl of cornflakes with milk at breakfast makes a perfect way to start a day as we are preoccupied with a long drive to catch the early hours of the day.

I was staring straight ahead, not looking at the dashboard and got no idea how fast I was driving over the empty road lane of the national highway until the

speed warning was audible. After an hour, the road goes by the low hills and valleys. There was a line of cars parked beneath the tall trees near Jagiroad where a roadside dhaba welcomed us for fresh roti-sabzi and hot cream chai.

The splendid view of Kolia Bhomora goes across the mighty Brahmaputra. We are miles and miles away from Arunachal, yet the snow-capped Himalayas are visible above the bridge. Yes, we will soon be there and in the meantime, Tezpur greeted us. The newly laid road at Koliabor over the NH-715 surely gives a passionate traveler a joy of riding. Then the poor condition of roads in the passing lane of the town forced us to slow down. Eventually, after three hours of non-stop drive, we finally arrived at TMCH tired and hungry.

We waited outside the Girls' hostel with impatience as our daughter's first holiday break after her first year of medicine.

While returning, we saw something magical about local haat (bazaar) that I love passing through the old traditional village market and the 'Khelmati' weekly bazaar gives us an opportunity to explore a real picture of farmers in a rural setup. There's nothing better than a chilled glass of sugarcane juice on a scorching hot noon that also gave us a shot of instant energy.

We were drinking one glass after another. There were hordes of village dwellers crowded into the market for organic produce and traditional handicrafts. They buy only the bare necessity and at the same time they sell xaak-

sabji (vegetables) from their backyard. The needs of the people are fulfilled locally, and sellers earn their livelihood by catering to these demands.

I always wish I had my grocery bag inside boot while on move. So I arrived at the bazaar buying a bag full of organic vegetables like brinjal, cabbage and cauliflower but my preference always goes for wild indigenous vegetables. Besides beans, pulses and spices, the market has plenty of leafy vegetables such as paleng, maani-muni, pudina, kolmou, brahmi, masendori, curry leaf, bhedai-lota, laai, moricha/datha, khutura, pui, chukka, lofa, jilmil, doron and methi etc. In addition, there are unique non leafy vegetables like kosu, koldil/kolphul, kaskol, posola, bhut jolokia, outenga and

sojina from tribal women that make my fresh veggie at Saptahik (weekly) Bazaar.

These indigenous veggies are typically cooked in curry, soups, or salads. Ironically, the consumption of these plants is not socially acceptable because they are considered to be food for the poor. But I don't seem at all bothered what people think of us. As I passed through the end of the market, a bunch of hanging bananas attracted our attention. It seems naturally ripened while commercial producers use ethylene gas to control ripening. An ageing Koka (old man) was selling fresh fruits on the street.

People generally looking for things at a low price, whereas rural markets at Sonitpur don't expect bargain hunters. As I wanted to know the selling price,



he said at fifty in anxiety. His voice was full of pity and I instantly placed order packing for two dozen. It was a surprise moment to get to see him weighing my order. I paused in crowds waiting for next to happen. After all, bananas are sold in Kgs. We were enlightened. As the saying goes, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away". However for common people, a banana could be a part of their daily lives.

With changing landscape across the state and varying seasons, the Saptahik Bazaar has its entire enigma to attract urban dwellers. As the weekend approaches, my grocery bag goes empty and my quest for local vegetables has intensified. I would long for another Sunday drive for some fresh indigenous veggies around my dwelling. I'll always be there, no matter how far.

'Reshaping tomorrow: Addressing the underlying social evils'

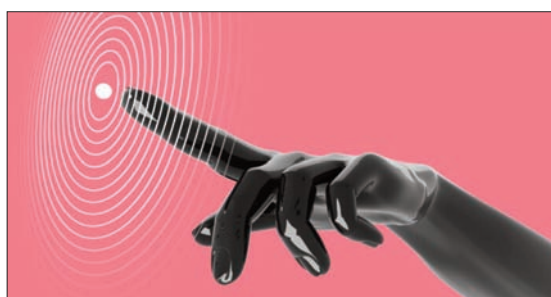
By: Umais Mudasir

Inequality, famously identified as the root of social evil by Pope Francis, permeates our society, causing significant harm and eroding discipline. Discipline, fundamental for constructing societal infrastructure, manifests in the behavior of a community. Much like discipline epitomizes self-love, it evolves into a potent force for social love when upheld with dignity, honour, and respect.

Amidst our contemporary era of modernization, where technological progress burgeons, one cannot ignore the lingering presence of social evils, including:

Corruption System:

The term corruption, inherently negative, pervades our society to such an extent that one can hardly navigate life without encountering its influence. It manifests as a form of bribery, often involving powerful individuals opting for illegal or dishonest behavior, pre-



dominantly from an economic perspective. Introduced by the upper echelons of society, corruption has ensnared other sections, subjecting them to the dominion of the affluent.

From a political standpoint, corruption reveals itself when parties or officials misuse their power, prioritizing popularity and monetary gain. The pervasive influence of those with wealth and muscle power leads to a society in flux, transitioning abruptly from better to worse. The detrimental impact of corruption extends beyond societal conditions, reaching into the educational foundations of our nation, particularly

affecting the precious carriers of our nation-building pillars – the students. Corruption, fueled by power, greed, and money, has catalyzed social, political, and economic ruin.

To rectify this, urgent administrative measures are imperative to quell corruption, ensuring every individual can fulfill their basic necessities without facing adverse circumstances.

Inequality:

Another formidable social evil is inequality, a term encompassing discriminatory behavior based on caste, creed, gender, social status, background, and religion. Prosperity falters in the face of such weak-

nesses, with instances of gender-based and inter-caste conflicts resulting in large-scale fatalities.

Abolishing discriminatory activities requires a concerted effort to recognize our shared humanity, promoting empathy and understanding. The rarity of gender and inter-caste conflicts should be the norm, prompting a collective realization that if the creator of this universe is the same, why create divisions? A concerted focus on self-consciousness is essential for realizing our true purpose within society.

Money and Muscle Power:

The dominating class in our society, primarily the affluent, subjects the less privileged to negative elements, creating a vital source of destruction for basic social principles.

Money and muscle power actively operate on the social platform, capturing widespread attention. The evident suffering of the poor under the criminal ide-

ologies of the upper class relegates them to perpetual victimhood, compelling acceptance of societal actions without recourse.

Such prejudices breed undisciplined behavior, necessitating a collective effort to minimize these actions in our society. The fatalistic impact of these actions requires proactive measures to eradicate chaos, making society equitable and just for every section.

While these factors significantly contribute to societal degradation, they are not the sole culprits. Numerous other factors play a role in the ruin of our society. Let's examine them individually.

The fatalistic impact of these actions on our society necessitates proactive measures to eliminate chaos. Striving to create an egalitarian and just society for every section is the path forward. (The author is a student who can be reached at umaismudasir18@gmail.com)

A Ritual Before the Dusk

By: Rakesh Chandra

We bow our head in obeisance, as
One More day is going into oblivion;
The dusk is slowly coming
To announce the footfall
Of the night pitch dark;

We could survive the day just
Because Of your benign help;
We were lost
In the wilderness
Till the gleaming rays of hope
And joy illuminated our life's journey;

Kindly accept our emotional offering,
In your language
Emanating from
Our hearts-pure and stainless.

Tomorrow once again,
we will repeat the ritual, coming
To you like the rugged fighters,
And most humble human beings too.

Galloping Injustice

By: Khemu Parashar

Injustice is increasing rapidly on earth,
best discipline is falling into pieces,
there is darkness everywhere,
the flame of the lamp is not far away,
it is the fault of this human being on earth,
humanity has been destroyed,
have created a good mess of lies,
truth has been beaten by running,
honesty is being made a shoe for feet

A big protest is needed to stop this,
we have to awaken the power of unity,
and you have to give a befitting reply,
injustice has to be crushed at any cost,
unity has to be maintained,
to answer a brick with a stone

BOOK REVIEW :

By: Suresh Chandra

Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, born in Haryana in 1989, is a well-known signature of children's literature. Writer, journalist, and translator Dr. Saurabh has created abundant literature for children as well as adults. Along with books of children's poetry, he has made a significant contribution to Hindi literature by creating many works of couplets, stories, poems, translations, adaptations, and edits in adult literature. He has been enriching literature by writing independently for twenty years.

Pragyan is a beautiful collection of fifty-one children's poems by children's litterateur Dr. Satyavan Saurabh. Various colours of life can be seen in these poems. There is beauty in nature and there is also the ugliness of society. While there is a vivid depiction of the joys of childhood, there is a touching description of children burdened with work due to financial constraints. Childhood is the golden period of life but not all children have the same childhood. The childhood of some children is crushed by the cruel hands of time. A glimpse of this struggle can be seen in this collection-

Get education on paper, only love in promises.

Sharing speeches, love, and affection on Children's Day.

In search of two breads, he robs the world.

Crawling on the sidewalks, carrying bags.

Childhood is getting affection like this, Saurabh every day.

Got lullabies of abuse, gifts of kicks.

The first poem of the collection is 'Bane Santan Adarsh Hamari', in which a parent cherishes dreams for his upcoming child. How do parents want their children? The poet thinks about his upcoming child. Giving the example of our heroes, the poet says that his child should also incorporate their good qualities in life and follow the path shown by them. In this poem, our heroes and heroines have been depicted naturally. The poet believes that it is important for every common child to have our ideals -

If you have a son, he should be like Prahlad, he should follow the path of religion.

May he become as steadfast as the North Star and show the true path to everyone.

By giving birth to a daughter, I will light the flame of friendship, Gargi, and knowledge.

Let my children become ideal, I will teach them those things.

Children's literature is children's literature. In this, the tender feelings of children are taken care of. Children like entertainment, but the poet wants children to get information about life too. The poet also considers it his duty to make children aware of the inconsistencies prevalent around him. He wants to extend the sensitivity of children to the entire society. This emotional sentiment of the poet in the poem 'Google Ki Aosh Mein' is touching -

The phone has taken away all the joys from childhood.

Grandmother sat and watched the change in generation.

The mind yearns for things, wondering who is at home.

Everyone is sitting silent, holding the phone.

What kind of change is coming in the new century?

Today I am more interested in phones than in relationships.

Children feel connected to nature. Natural scenes attract them a lot. The little child inside the poet also looks at these beautiful scenes of nature with fascination. 'Bachpan ke woh Geet' is one such poem in which the poet has humanized childhood and depicts its changing form every moment in a very beautiful manner. The use of symbolic and figurative style is immediately visible -

Whenever I sit, I remember my childhood.

My mind started to wander, I started talking to fairies.

I still like those songs of childhood.

The mother sings a lullaby, a strange love.

The phone has taken away all the



joys from childhood.

Grandmother sat and watched the change in generation.

The poet's compassion extends from every destitute person to animals. Today, the poet urges to behave with equality, cooperation, and sympathy towards the condition of cows and animals across the country and says in the poem 'Plight of Cows' -

Hey, please pay attention to Mother Cow today.

The one who kept feeding milk, ate dry mouthfuls.

What milk came from the udder, Saurabh got squeezed.

To a cow like a mother, let it wander.

There are cows in our country, helpless and orphaned.

That's why he doesn't get company in his own home.

The child's world revolves around the mother and the mother's world consists of children. The mother herself wants to give every happiness to the child by enduring sorrow. 'Maa Hariyali Doob' is a small poem but in this poem, the poet has deeply expressed all the love for the mother -

What kind of feeling is hidden in your lap?

Mother, I sleep peacefully when you are near.

Mother is the mine of love, God on earth.

Praise the mother, the greatest of all.

Mother is like the words of a poem, the language of a story.

It got mixed in the juice of couplets, it gave life to the verses.

Mother is the pivot of the family. The

house runs smoothly only because of the mother's sacrifice and dedication. While taking care of the comforts of the family members, the mother never pays attention to her happiness. In the poem 'Aanchal Ki Chhaya', a child shows his sincere sympathy towards this sacrificial form of his mother and says -

Temple - Oh holy, auspicious, and pure.

Mother always gives us the support of life.

Mother is the embodiment of renunciation and sacrifice.

Shadow of Aanchal, the sunshine of every crisis.

In this world, like a mother, Sujan is not Saurabh.

All the knowledge of Geeta is contained in her mother's words.

The poet believes that we should accept changes easily. Elderly people have always been strong pillars of the family. The poet does not like his departure. After the departure of his grandparents, the poet's life has become desolate, the poet imagines in various ways so that he remembers them all the time. The freshness of the poet's imagination is visible in the poem 'Grandfather and Grandfather' -

Without grandparents, the door is deserted.

Which story should I tell now, give me the love of the lullaby.

Became grandparents, only now they complain.

Make the courtyard happy, and remember them constantly.

Cry, sing, and laugh, with grandparents.

Why did they leave the courtyard, life

became an orphan.

In the poem 'Anupam Tyohar' of this work, the poet expresses the importance of festivals and says that festivals are a storehouse of love and harmony. Festivals not only entertain us, but they also expand our experience by providing various types of information. Festivals, which provide healthy entertainment and education, are children's true companions -

May there be an aura of life, "Teej" and "Festivals".

Fill your mind with colors and infuse new life.

Through renunciation, penance, and chanting, the seeds of love grew.

May your wishes be fulfilled, and worship Bhado Teej.

Raksha Bandhan is the festival of love and heart.

Draupadi resides in it, it is Kanha's love.

The condition of the poet's sensitivity is such that he sees the image of old people even in the old broom. The poet's heart is pained by the neglect of the elderly. The tendency to throw away work is based on selfishness and narrow-mindedness. The poem 'Vridhhi Ki Har Baat Ka' which teaches us to respect elders is wonderful -

Who takes care of everything about the elderly?

Under the guise of modernity, every house is in distress.

This is the proven step towards fame, glory, happiness, and peace.

A home is an empty house without an elderly person.

He is a very old man, and Saraswati respects him.

Pragyan: Sensitive compositions for children

Name of the book: *Pragyan*

Author: Dr. Satyavan 'Saurabh'

Genre: Children's poetry

Publisher: Notion Publishing Group, Chennai

Version: 2023

Price: ₹160

Page Number: 100

It is only from them that we get the knowledge of experience.

Everyone's windows are closed, what kind of time has come?

Gave it to elders, and threw it out of the house today.

It is clear from the above examples that the main tone of the works of Pragyan Bal Sangrah is human sensitivity and compassion. Flowing like a calm river, these poems drench the reader's mind with waves of cool emotions. There is seriousness and decency in these poems and the discipline of the embankments. Environment, weather, sunshine, morning, bird, butterfly, squirrel, leaves, grass, elephant, cloud, lake, moon, sun, childhood, mom, dad, lamp, letters, daughters, new year, country, festival, morality beautiful compositions by child psychology have been created with full seriousness on the topics of forgiveness, our martyrs, tuition, Google, tricolour, book, school, police, grandparents and other relationships, etc. These works proceed with a light story; hence they also include the element of narrative which keeps the child's mind engaged with curiosity till the end. These poems depict not only the children but also the working class of society struggling with deprivation. The purpose of all this is that the poet wants to protect the tender feelings of children and instill in them a feeling of sympathy toward their suffering.

These compositions written in verse are a mixed form of song and poetry. There is rhythm and flow in them which makes these poems impressive. The language is simple, interesting, and easily understandable according to the child's mind. The printing is beautiful and error-free. The cover decorated with the charming picture of Pragyan with the expanding sky is very attractive. Hearty congratulations to Dr. Satyavan Saurabh for creating a readable work 'Pragyan' adorned with entertaining and sensitive poems that appeal to children.

Manipur government refutes schools affiliating to CBSE claim



IMPHAL, Dec 16: Manipur Education (School) department has said that the state government had not issued any NOC (No Objection Certificate) for affiliation of any of the schools in the state since May 2023.

The education department was reacting to a post on X by one Dr Lamthinang Haokip claiming that 20 educational institutions in Churachandpur and 16 from Kangpokpi have affiliated with CBSE recently.

A clarification note of the Manipur education department signed by joint secretary Anjali Chongtham stated that the state

government had not issued any 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) for affiliation with CBSE to any educational institution in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi since May 2023.

Dr Lamthinang Haokip's post on the X on December 14 came at a time when Manipur is reeling under crisis after the clash broke out on May 3 last. As per the norm of the government, an educational institute within the state of Manipur needs to obtain a prior NOC from the state government if it wants to affiliate to a board or council outside the state including the CBSE. (NNN)

He further expressed the need to open similar and proper camps with biometric and civil police teams in different border areas

Refrain from setting up villages in State: Manipur CM to Myanmar refugees

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Dec 16: Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Saturday asked refugees from Myanmar not to set up villages in the state.

He stated, "It is very important to maintain a good diplomatic relationship with the neighbouring countries. We are only asking the Myanmar refugees not to construct villages in the state."

At present around 4,100 Myanmar refugees are taking shelter at different relief camps in the Manipur border districts of Kamjong, Ukhrul, and Tengnoupal due to the war-like situation in Myanmar.

Speaking as the chief guest at the observance of Vijay Diwas (Indo-Pak War 1971) at Imphal on Saturday, the CM said that efforts are underway in the areas of Kamjong and Ukhrul using bio-



metrics under the concerned District Commissioners.

He stated security forces should also not neglect areas like Behiang

Two NLFT militants arrested in Tripura



AGARTALA, Dec 16: Two insurgents belonging to the banned National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) outfit have been nabbed in Tripura on Saturday, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team raided Khasnam village in North Tripura district and arrested the two militants, who had taken shelter in a house after sneaking in from neighbouring Bangladesh, assistant inspector general (AIG), Jyothisman Das Chowdhury said.

The militants were identified as Ganaram Reang (38) and Bahadur Reang (45), he said, adding a Chinese-made pistol, extortion letters of the outfit and Bangladeshi currency notes were seized from their possession.

The arrests came a couple of days after two top-ranking NLFT militants were nabbed in Sinma area of West Tripura district. (PTI)

Simsang Festival in Williamnagar concludes

HT Correspondent
WILLIAMNAGAR, Dec 16: Meghalaya minister for PHE, Soil and Water Conservation Marcuse N Marak, graced the grand finale of the two-day Simsang Festival, 2023, as the chief guest at Rongrenggre Govt Higher Secondary School playground, Williamnagar, on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, Marcuse informed the gathering that the aim of the festival is to showcase the talent and skills of the local people and artisans in various fields like sports, handicrafts, singing, etc. and also to encourage the youngsters to come forward and grab the opportunities being provided by such kind of festivals. He also informed that the govt is transparent and trying to bring more opportunities and platforms where the talented youth will be able to showcase their skills and talents.

East Garo Hills deputy commissioner, Vibhor Aggarwal, while delivering the welcome address informed that the popularity of the festival and the number of participants respectively are increasing every year.

On the occasion, the chief guest also distributed cheque to the NRLMs and Self Help Groups under the Lakapati Didi scheme.

The highlights of the festival included, competition in games and sports, singing, dancing, cooking and performances by various music bands like Riprap, Nokpante, Do pos among others.

KSU seeks ministerial intervention into exam centres issue

SHILLONG, Dec 16: The Khasi Students Union (KSU) recently sought intervention of Meghalaya Health Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh into the complaint against allotment of centres outside Meghalaya for indigenous candidates appearing for the direct recruitment for Group B & C posts in the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS) here.

"We seek your immediate intervention with the direct recruitment for Group B & C in NEIGRIHMS where it was reported that local candidates from the state were allotted examination centres in far-flung areas outside the state of Meghalaya," KSU general secretary Donald V Thabab said in a letter to Lyngdoh.

He informed that the KSU also made an attempt to meet the health minister but she was out of station adding that, they were able to talk to her on the phone.

Thabab said Lyngdoh has assured the KSU that she along with chief minister Conrad K Sangma will take up this matter tomorrow in New Delhi.

"(She also assured that they) will try to meet officials of the Union Health Ministry to sort out this problem and to request that all local candidates should be allotted centres within the state," he said while quoting the minister.

Thabab said the KSU will also take up the issue with the chief minister for his immediate intervention.

Meanwhile, the KSU has also written to the Director of NEIGRIHMS Dr Nalin Mehta for immediate resolving the problem faced by indigenous candidates.

"The Union thinks that all the anomalies with regards to preference of centres should be sorted out immediately and that local candidates should be allotted centres within the state of Meghalaya," it said in the letter to Mehta.

The letter reminded that Mehta had ver-

bally informed the Union during their last meeting that a certain agency with the nomenclature HLL was tasked with conducting the examinations for the aforementioned recruitment. Furthermore, the Union leaders were informed that four locations were selected as examination centres viz, Shillong, Guwahati, Jorhat & Delhi.

The HLL agency was selected based on its competency and fulfilment of the required criteria to conduct the examinations.

"However, to our dismay, we were informed by aggrieved candidates that another centre, Dibrugarh was allotted to numerous local candidates for the examinations to be held on the 17 & 18 of December. It also came into our notice that the candidates were allowed to select a centre of their choice from three options, Shillong, Guwahati & New Delhi," the KSU wrote.

"Most of the local candidates opted for Shillong as first preference and Guwahati as the second one, but to their disappointment, they were allotted either Jorhat or

Dibrugarh as centres. This inaccuracy on the part of the agency exhibits its inefficiency and negligence in conducting such specialized examinations," the letter said while adding that the errors by the HLL agency have put the prospects of many local candidates in shambles.

The KSU also reminded that most citizens of the state come from economically weaker sections of the society, and this will be a hurdle in their aspirations as it involves huge expenditures in terms of transport and lodgings.

"The KSU, thus, strongly urged that this issue should be resolved at the earliest taking into account the urgency of the matter," it said.

Meanwhile, the KSU also reminded the Director of his commitment to survey the different computer centres located in Shillong for conducting CBT system examinations. (NNN)



Khasi Mandarin tickles taste buds in Bengaluru ZestFest 2023 is being held across different malls located in the city

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Dec 16: ZestFest, a celebration dedicated to the flavors and cultural significance of the Khasi Mandarin Orange of Meghalaya is all set to captivate attendees with a burst of citrusy excitement spanning over four days starting from the December 14 to 17. This unique event aims to showcase the rich heritage and zestful traditions associated with the Khasi Mandarin orange from Meghalaya.

The event which is scheduled to be held in Bengaluru across different malls located in the city – Lulu Mall, Bangalore, Forum Mall, Kanakpura and Lal Bagh Botanical Garden, will celebrate and showcase the flavors and cultural richness of Meghalaya's Khasi Mandarin oranges, bringing together local farmers, businesses, and communities in a vibrant celebration. The event witnessed the presence of the minister of department of agriculture and farmers' welfare, government of Meghalaya, Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh who graced the event as special guest.

The agriculture minister expressed, "The festival serves as a platform for farmers, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and farmer companies to showcase their orange harvest in Bangalore. The market conditions are favorable for farmers to dedicate their efforts, given the government's unwavering commitment to investing in, introducing, and empowering technology-based practices for improved agricultural growth. This initiative aims to prepare agricultural produce for both national and international markets. I encourage the young sellers present to step forward; numerous opportunities await you, and the government is dedicated to providing continuous support. Various schemes, including FOCUS, CM-ELEVATE, and PRIME, have been implemented to facilitate this. Today, we also



witnessed a cultural exposure. Even Karnataka has the presence of different tribal groups. Despite differences, there is a cultural unity reflected in their attire and vibrant dances, echoing our own cultural richness. This integration is crucial for our collective progress and understanding."

Highlighting Meghalaya's rich agricultural heritage, ZestFest showcases the succulent Khasi Mandarin oranges, renowned for their unparalleled flavor and vibrant zest. The festival aims to showcase the exceptional quality and distinctive taste of these locally grown oranges, emphasizing the region's commitment to sustainable agriculture and culinary excellence. It may be mentioned that on the December 11 2023, the directorate of horticulture, government of Meghalaya, and the Meghalaya State Agricultural Marketing board in a momentous ceremony, flagged off 20 metric tons of GI-tagged Khasi Mandarin to Dubai marking a significant milestone for Meghalaya's rich agricultural diversity.

In addition to the culinary extravaganza, ZestFest will offer a cultural immersion into the world of Khasi Mandarin

oranges, including a display of a wide variety of fresh produce, with a focus on Khasi Mandarin oranges and related products. Visitors can enjoy traditional music and dance performances, witness live demonstrations of orange harvesting techniques, and explore the unique cultural showcase inspired by the vibrant citrus fruit.

ZestFest is not just a celebration of Khasi Mandarin oranges but a tribute to the hardworking farmers and the rich agricultural landscape of Meghalaya. It beautifully encapsulates the essence of community, agriculture, and celebration. It recognizes and applauds the dedication of our local farmers who play a pivotal role in cultivating the exquisite Khasi Mandarin oranges that grace the state of Meghalaya. The festival serves as a platform to shine a spotlight on their tireless efforts, resilience, and the vital contribution they make to the community and appreciate the hard work that goes into every orange we enjoy. It not only promotes Meghalaya's agricultural heritage but also boosts tourism, and economy, providing a platform for local businesses to thrive.

Auto rickshaw display card system launched

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Dec 16: Dimapur commissioner of police Kevithuto Sophie launched auto rickshaw display card system at the commissioner of police office premises here on Saturday to streamline auto rickshaw operations in the town.

Highlighting the increasing traffic congestion due to a surge in auto rickshaws in Dimapur, Sophie, in the launch programme, said the new system would include effective management and regulation of auto rickshaws, enhanced passenger safety — particularly for women and the elderly — and detection of crimes, including stolen auto rickshaws. The system will also monitor compliance with proper licenses, uniforms and permits to prevent unauthorised hire by private auto rickshaws, he said.

Sophie added that the display card would be valid for two years, after which renewal will be required. He said all records would be digitally maintained and regularly updated at the office of the deputy commissioner of police (traffic), Dimapur.

During the launch, Sophie shared ad-



ditional initiatives undertaken by Dimapur traffic police in 2023 such as the installation of solar traffic blinkers, road safety awareness programmes in schools and colleges, installation of traffic islands and traffic assistance booths at various locations.

The newly introduced display card system, conceptualised by the Dimapur traffic police, involves thorough verification of documents and permits for all auto rickshaw drivers/owners.

Under this system, a photo identity

card, containing essential details of the auto rickshaw and contact numbers for traffic controls/police control room will be issued. These cards are to be prominently displayed on the windshields and rear of the auto rickshaws for the convenience of passengers.

Sophie said the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) Dimapur has approved this initiative, adding numerous auto rickshaws in Dimapur and Chumoukedima have already been issued photo identity display cards.

eCF No. TP/RTP/01/2023/347325/764

NOTICE

In connection with the notice inviting applications for Registered Technical Personnel (RTP) vide Notice No. TP/RTP/01/2022/193, dated the 22nd November, 2022 and based on the applications received between 1st October 2023 to 30th November 2023, the following list of applicants are hereby published for verification of original documents for issue of RTP registration. The incumbents will be assigned RTP registration Numbers from the Office of the Director, Town and Country Planning Assam, Dispur, Guwahati-06 only after producing their valid original documents and subsequent verification of the same during working hours **on or before 22nd December, 2023.**

1. LIST OF APPLICANTS (ARCHITECT) FOR ORIGINAL DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

SL. NO.	NAME
1	ABHIMANYU BARUA
2	KAUSTAB DAS
3	IFFAT JERIFA
4	PAPARI SARMA
5	RAJBALLAV DUTTA
6	BISHAL KASHYAP
7	JINKU NAHAR DEKA
8	BEAUTY NARZARY
9	ABHINOVA SAIKIA

2. LIST OF APPLICANTS (ENGINEER) FOR ORIGINAL DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

SL. NO.	NAME
1	RAVI PRAKASH PANDEY
2	SAGAR BASUMATARY
3	SAHIDE MD AZAD
4	NURUL AMIN
5	DULEN HAZARIKA
6	LUCKY DOLEY
7	PRIYANKA BARMAN
8	SIDHARTH BARBHUIYA
9	RATUL TALUKDAR

3. LIST OF APPLICANTS (GROUP OR AGENCY) FOR ORIGINAL DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

SL. NO.	NAME
1	M.S. ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION
2	Y.D. OUTLINES
3	M/S FRIENDS & GROUP CONSULTANT

4. LIST OF APPLICANTS (SUPERVISOR) FOR ORIGINAL DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

SL. NO.	NAME
1	DAISY SHARMA
2	SANJAY KUMAR THAKUR
3	ANJANA SINHA

Important Conditions to the Candidates:

- The RTP Registration will be made based on the provisions made in the Appendix-II of the Assam Unified Building Construction (Regulation) Byelaws, 2022 against the applications received in the prescribed format (Form-4 or 5; as the case may be) from the individuals and groups of agencies of Architect(s)/Engineer(s)/Structural Engineer(s)/Supervisor(s)/ Town Planner(s)/Landscape Architect(s)/Urban Designer(s)/Engineer for Utility Services/Geo-Technical Engineer(s) whose qualifications and competence satisfy criteria stated in the Appendix-II of the Assam Unified Building Construction (Regulation) Byelaws, 2022 and registered the incumbents will be responsible for carrying out the services as per the provision of the said Bye Laws as Competent Registered Technical Personnel (RTP) in Assam.
- The incumbents whose names are reflected in the above lists shall produce their valid original documents at the Office of the Director, Town and Country Planning, Dispur, Guwahati-06 **on or before 22nd December, 2023** during working hours and after verification of the same by the concerned officials, the RTP Numbers will be assigned to the eligible candidates.
- The Authority reserves the exclusive right to declare black listed, cancel registration or take any other action that the Authority may decide to take against the defaulting RTPs as per the clause A-7 of Appendix-II of the Assam Unified Building Construction (Regulation) Byelaws, 2022.
- The RTPs shall carry out the professional practice as per the provisions made under Assam Unified Building Construction (Regulation) Byelaws, 2022.
- The RTPs shall submit the applications for renewal of their registration numbers before 45 (forty five) days from the date of expiry of the validity period at the Office of the Director, Town and Country Planning Assam.

Sd/-

Director

Town and Country Planning Assam

Dispur, Guwahati-06

Janasanyog /D/14844/23/17-Dec-23

Development of small cities key to developed India resolve: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that his guarantee begins from where hope from everyone else ends and asserted that development of smaller cities is at the centre of his resolve to make India a developed country.

Addressing the beneficiaries of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra through video conferencing, the prime minister said, "With resolve of a developed India, 'Modi's guarantee vehicle' is reaching every corner of country."

In one month, the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra has reached thousands of villages and cities and most of them are small towns, he added. Modi said his government is trying to ease troubles of everyone like a family member.

"This is our government that has helped the poor, farmers, small businessmen and various other sections of society. Modi's guarantee begins after hope from everyone else ends," he said.

The prime minister said that for a long time after independence, benefits of development were limited to a few big cities, but his government is focussing on development of smaller cities and that would strengthen the foundation for a developed India.

He also urged everyone to avail the benefits of various government schemes.

"Even though Modi has flagged off the Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra, the truth is that today the countrymen have taken command of that yatra. At a place where the journey halts, people from other villages or cities start leading the journey," he said. Modi also flagged off the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram, the five states where assembly elections were held recently. The yatra was launched for other states earlier, but the launch for the five states got delayed due to the model code of conduct in place due to the elections.

He also interacted with beneficiaries from various states who have availed various government schemes. (PTI)

PM Modi to inaugurate second edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam today

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the second edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam at his parliamentary constituency Varanasi's 'Namo Ghat' on Sunday and flag off the Kanyakumari-Varanasi Tamil Sangamam train, according to officials here.

The cultural festival will be held from December 17 to 30. The first batch of the Tamil delegation departed from Chennai on December 15. Nearly 1,400 people (seven groups of 200 each) from varied walks of life are expected to be travelling from different parts of Tamil Nadu, they said. During their stay in Kashi, as per their tour itinerary, they will also visit Prayagraj and Ayodhya, the official said.

"The seven groups of students (Ganga), teachers (Yamuna), professionals (Godavari), spiritual (Saraswati), farmers and artisans (Narmada), writers (Sindhu) and traders and businessmen (Kaveri) have been named after seven sacred rivers of India will travel from Chennai, Coimbatore and Kanyakumari to Kashi," an official statement said on Saturday.

"More than 42,000 registrations were received during the time of registration. Out of them, 200 people for each group were selected by the selection committee," it said. The Union Ministry of Education will be the nodal agency for this event. The Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Railways, Textiles, Food Processing (ODOP), MSME, Information and Broadcasting, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, IRCTC and related departments of the government of Uttar Pradesh will be participating in the event. (PTI)

Unemployment, rising prices behind Parliament security breach, says Rahul Gandhi

Unemployment in India is at 3.2%, the lowest in six years: BJP IT in-charge

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said unemployment and rising prices were behind the December 13 Parliament security breach.

Speaking to reporters after an election strategy meeting with leaders of the party's Gujarat unit here, Gandhi said it's the youngsters who are not getting jobs due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies who breached Parliament security.

He said the breach was the eruption of an anger long simmering among the youth. "The biggest issue in the country is that of unemployment, which is boiling all over the country. The country's youth are not getting employment due to the policies of Modi ji," he said.

BJP derided Gandhi saying he "always talks trash" and claimed that unemployment was at its lowest in the last six years. "Rahul Gandhi never disappoints; always talks trash. For the record, unemployment in India is at 3.2%, the lowest in six years."

"Instead, Rahul Gandhi and I.N.D.I.A. alliance leaders must explain the close linkages of those involved in the Parliament breach with Congress, TMC, and CPI(M). Rahul Gandhi, in particular, must clarify his association with Asim Sarode, who was part of Bharat Jodo Yatra and has offered to provide legal aide to the intruders," BJP IT in-charge Amit Malviya said in a post on X.

In another post, he highlighted Congress MP Dhiraj Sahu's corruption with caption "Don't 'Donate for Dynasty'."

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said the breach was a serious issue yet the Union Home Minister is not ready to give a statement on it in Parliament.

"The security breach is a serious issue and the government should pay attention to it. We are asking for the Home Minister's statement in Parliament, but the Home Minister is not saying anything, neither is he giving a statement. He is speaking in TV shows, but not inside Parliament."

"This is not good for democracy. But there is no meaning of this to those people who do not believe in democracy," Kharge told reporters.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack on Wednesday, two men jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour, released yellow smoke from canisters and shouted slogans, before they were overpowered by the MPs.

"Where are the jobs? The youths are desperate. We have to focus on this issue



and give jobs to the youth," Gandhi also said in a Hindi post on X.

"There has definitely been a security lapse, but the reason behind it is the country's biggest issue - unemployment," Gandhi said.

Kharge when asked about Amit Shah accusing the Congress of politicising the issue, said, "Home Minister Shah talks about us to seek votes and abuses Nehru ji to seek votes. This is all they do."

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said it was not the Congress but the BJP which was trying to get political mileage from the incident.

The Delhi Police, which comes under

the Union Home Ministry, described it as a "terror attack" in a court and the Opposition has only been seeking a discussion on it in Parliament, he said.

Venugopal said that while the MP who facilitated the entry of the accused in Parliament was not even questioned, those seeking answers from the government had been suspended.

"The Opposition is not politicising the Parliament security issue, but the BJP and the Home Minister and Prime Minister are. The Home Minister is telling us that the issue comes under Parliament, under the Speaker."

"Delhi Police is under the Home Minister of India, isn't it? Delhi Police has given an affidavit in the court that it is a terror attack. We didn't politicise it. We didn't make it a terror attack. We said it is a serious security lapse from the government side," Venugopal said.

The leader also took a dig at the BJP-led Centre saying it had claimed the new Parliament building will be one of the "most secure places" and accused it of opening the government coffers for its construction even as the country reeled under an economic slowdown.

He also criticised the government over the MPs suspension.

"On one side, you are penalising all the members of Parliament, those who are raising the voice. You suspended 15 MPs. For what reason did you suspend 15 MPs? In this Parliament, suspension of the members has become the major role of the Presiding officer."

"People may think that those who are talking about national security ... they cannot even protect the Parliament House. People are worried about this," Venugopal said.

On December 13, two men -- Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D -- jumped into the Lok Sabha's chamber. Around the same time, two others -- Amol Shinde and Neelam Devi -- released coloured smoke from canisters while shouting "tanashahi nahi chalegi" outside the Parliament premises.

Lalit Jha, the fifth accused, allegedly circulated videos of the protest outside the complex on social media. All five have been arrested.

The Opposition has been seeking answers from the government on the security breach and have demanded a statement from union home minister Amit Shah on the issue in Parliament. They have also been disrupting proceedings over Shah's silence. (PTI)

Sometimes even judges make mistakes: Justice Bharat P Deshpande

PANAJI, Dec 16: Each legal case is distinct and one cannot compare it with other present or past matters, said Justice Bharat P Deshpande of High Court of Bombay at Goa on Saturday, underscoring that sometimes even judges make mistakes.

Addressing the lecture series 'GRK-Judiciary Talks' at G R Kare College of Law, Margao, Justice Deshpande said there are a lot of judgments on each topic.

"My experience as a sessions judge and also as a high court judge is that each and every case is having something different in it. You cannot compare each case or earlier cases with the present cases," he said.

While applying the "law laid down by the Supreme Court and high courts", one should not just go and find out what the ratio is but ascertain what the facts are, he told the students at

the event. "So we have to have that balancing act. Sometimes it is very difficult, sometimes you have to find out something which is not there in earlier cases and come to the conclusion," he said. Justice Deshpande further said, "We, as judges, won't claim that we are right always. We also commit mistakes (sometimes). But the fact is that there should be frankness in accepting that there is a mistake."

Nobody in this world is perfect in all aspects, he said.

"Everybody commits mistakes at one or other point of time. The best thing is that you have to accept your mistakes, try to correct them and go forward. That is the part of life which we try to inculcate in our society itself," he said.

Justice Deshpande urged the students to visit courts to gain practical experience besides get-

ting theoretical knowledge in classrooms.

He told the law students to use their degree as a tool to give service to society and people in need of legal aid.

Justice Deshpande said that theoretical knowledge was necessary but gaining experience was important. "Visit courts, especially the trial courts. That knowledge will give you first-hand experience for your career in future," he said.

The judge also asked students not to be a "slave" of technology.

"You have to take advantage of that (technology) but go to the root of the matter. Read books which will give you thorough knowledge of the procedural laws and rules," he added.

Advocate Parijat Madhusudan Pande, chairman of the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa, was also present on the occasion. (PTI)

SFI stages massive protest ahead of Gov's visit to Calicut university



MALAPPURAM (KERALA), Dec 16: The Students Federation of India, the students organisation of the ruling CPI(M), on Saturday staged a massive protest in front of the Calicut University where Governor Arif Mohammed Khan is scheduled to visit in the evening and stay for various events in coming days. The SFI has been staging widespread protests against the Governor alleging that he has been pushing the BJP-RSS nominees to the senate of various universities in the state using his authority as the Chancellor of the universities in the state.

The SFI protest at Calicut University was led by its state secretary, P M Arsho and president Anusree. Many students including the office-bearers have been arrested by the police.

Police have increased the security in and around the university campus ahead of the Governor's visit. Earlier in the day, Khan had challenged the students saying he will be staying at the university campus in an apparent bid to take on the pro-Left student union.

"I was planning to stay at the government guest house. Then I was told that they (SFI) had said that they wouldn't allow me to enter the university. Then I said change the programme and I will stay at the university campus itself," Khan told reporters in New Delhi.

Addressing the students as part of the protest blocking the way to the campus, Anusree said the Governor ignored the University list and

pushed the sangh parivar nominees in the senate.

"The Chancellor has been behaving like a fascist. If he behaves so, he needs to stay outside the campuses. We will stage the protest to safeguard the secular campuses from the communal forces," Anusree said.

The Governor is scheduled to reach the campus at 6.30 PM today.

Police have arranged all measures to ensure smooth passage of the Governor.

The Governor today said he would get out of the car in case the protesters reach the vehicle.

"If someone comes near my car, I will immediately stop it and get down. Why should they hit my car? They should hit me. If they have guts, they should hit me. They want to frighten me. I am not the one who can be frightened. They are bullying," Khan said.

Recently, while on his way to the International Airport at Thiruvananthapuram, the Students Federation of India activists allegedly attacked Khan's car following which he alighted from the vehicle.

The student union has been protesting against the actions of Khan as the Chancellor of the universities and nominating BJP-ABVP activists as the senate members in various universities.

The SFI, the youth wing of the ruling CPI(M), has been alleging that Khan's actions were part of the saffronisation agenda of the BJP. (PTI)

Improving quality of life of 60 crore poor people biggest achievement of Modi govt: Shah

AHMEDABAD, Dec 16: Improving the quality of life of 60 crore poor people in the country has been the biggest achievement of the Narendra Modi government, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

Addressing the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' organised at Sanand in Ahmedabad district, Shah also urged everyone to take a pledge to make India a developed country, and strive to realise the dream of those who sacrificed their lives for the country's freedom.

"PM Narendra Modi worked to secure India by carrying out surgical strikes on Pakistan, realised the incomplete dream of abrogation of Article 370, undertook the work of constructing Lord Ram temple in Ayodhya, took India to the Moon through Chandrayaan mission, improved economic parameters to their best since independence, and led to the highest industrial development since independence," Shah said. "Several times, journalists



ask me as to which of Narendra Modi's achievements will get my highest marks. I say this without any controversy, confusion or dilemma that if I have to give the highest marks, then it will be Modi's work to improve the quality of life of 60 crore poor," he said in his address.

These 60 crore poor get their own houses with tap water connection, gas cylinder, toilets, and also get medicines worth up to Rs 5 lakh, undergo operation and hospitalisation for free, and receive 5 kg food grains. There cannot be a bigger work than this, the

Union Cooperation Minister said.

Within nine years, the prime minister made sure that the gas cylinder reaches the household of crores of poor women, something that nobody would have imagined, he said.

PM Modi provided houses to more than four crore poor, and made arrangements to supply tap water to every household, Shah said.

"Every village was connected by road, every house was provided with electricity connection and bank account, and arrangements were made that every poor person gets 5

kg food grains per month," he said.

The country's Covid-19 vaccination campaign carried out here was also unprecedented in the world, he said.

"We progressed a lot in many fields in the last 75 years, but those who sacrificed their lives to free the country...dreamed to make India number one in the world. The time has come to realise their dream. When the country completes 100 years of independence...India should be number one and a developed country in the world," Shah said.

Everybody should take a pledge to make India developed where nobody is left without access to clean fuel for household use, toilet, medicines, and food, he said.

"PM Modi has requested us to ensure that every single person gets an Ayushman card, tap water connection, toilet, gas cylinder, 100 per cent coverage of government schemes and a completely satisfied public to make India a developed nation," he said. (PTI)

Kerala University study on Kutch crater could throw better light on Indus Valley civilisation

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Dec 16: A group of geologists from Kerala University is claimed to have made a significant scientific discovery that may offer a clearer understanding of the events leading to the end of the Indus Valley civilisation.

They have claimed that the crater in Luna, Kutch in Gujarat, was caused by a meteor impact, potentially marking the only major one since human beings appeared on Earth.

Melt rock analysis from the crater site has confirmed that the rocks were remnants of a meteor, and the impact occurred within the last 6,900 years, coinciding with the thriving period of the Indus Valley civilisation in the area.

"We can only confirm that the impact happened within the last 6,900 years. We need to conduct precise dating to determine the



exact time of the impact," K S Sajinkumar, lead geologist from the team that made this discovery, told PTI.

He said that they have submitted a proposal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to establish a Crater Research Centre at Luna. "This is the fourth crater discovered in India, and the first by an Indian team. The other three were found by foreign geologists.

We have very limited resources for such research compared to developed countries," said Kumar.

The nearest Indus Valley site from Luna is about 200 kilometers away. However, scientists are skeptical about whether this impact could have wiped out the Indus Valley civilisation.

The crater is approximately 2 km wide, suggesting that a meteor with a diameter of 100 to 200

meters would have caused it.

Its immediate impact could be effective within a 5 km radius. "But the dust cloud caused by it would have taken at least a month to settle down," Kumar added.

He mentioned that this is a fascinating discovery as it marks the first meteor impact after the evolution of human beings.

"Many international firms have already shown interest in pursuing further studies here. We have been contacted by many," he added. The research paper by these geologists was published in the scientific journal ScienceDirect. The scientists are now planning to seek foreign assistance to date the samples and determine the exact year of the impact.

"We need to protect this site, which is a marshland. It is getting destroyed as it has been flooded with water for 11 months of the year," he added. (PTI)

Chinese visa case: Karti Chidambaram calls ED probe 'fishing and roving' inquiry

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Congress MP Karti Chidambaram has sought exemption from appearing before the ED on Saturday, on fresh summons issued to him in a money laundering case linked to issuance of visa to some Chinese nationals in 2011, stating that the probe was a "fishing and roving" inquiry and that he required time to collect documents.

The federal agency had first asked the 52-year-old legislator from Sivaganga constituency in Tamil Nadu to depose before the investigating officer of the case on December 12 in Delhi. After the MP cited his engagement in the ongoing Parliament session, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) asked him to appear on December 16.

The 2022 ED case pertains to allegations of Rs 50 lakh being paid as kickbacks to Karti and his close associate S Bhaskararaman by a top executive of Vedanta group company Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd. (TSPL), which was setting up a power plant in Punjab, according to the Central Bu-

reau of Investigation (CBI) FIR.

The money laundering case stems from the CBI complaint.

Karti, through his lawyer, has sent an around 100-page reply to the investigating officer of the case appending his election affidavit, Income Tax return, details of bank accounts and immovable assets while he sought exemption from appearance on Saturday as well as time to furnish all the documents sought by the agency. It was not immediately known if the ED considered his plea. Asserting that he was willing to appear before the agency and co-operate in the investigation, Karti's lawyer said he had some contentions.

He told the ED that the latest summons do not disclose the allegations against the MP and whether he was called as an "accused or witness" in the case.

The MP said in the letter that the information and documents sought from him are nothing but "in the nature of a fishing and roving enquiry"

and there was no reason to call for his and his family members' personal financial matters in this probe.

Karti told the ED that in the "spirit of cooperating with the investigation", he has already submitted to the agency the documents and records sought in the past while information relating to his financial matters was available in the public domain through his election affidavit. The MP cited that he submitted these documents as many as 19 times to the ED in the INX Media and Aircel-Maxis case between 2018-2019.

He claimed that the latest summons against him were issued "mechanically" but despite that he will require time to submit the documents again as they are "extremely voluminous in nature" and are available at his Chennai office and residence but he was in Delhi "due to the ongoing winter session of Parliament".

Karti, early this week, told PTI that the case was "most bogus" and his legal team will take it forward. (PTI)

Cong discusses IS poll preparedness in Gujarat

Kharge says, 'will move ahead with positive agenda'

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: The top leadership of the Congress Saturday discussed the party's preparations in Gujarat for next year's Lok Sabha elections, with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge saying they will move forward with a positive agenda to strengthen the organisation.

Kharge chaired a meeting of Gujarat Congress leaders at the AICC headquarters here. Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi and other senior leaders of the party were also present.

Discussions were held on challenges the party faces in Gujarat and ways to highlight the BJP's "misgovernance" before the people.

This was part of a series of meetings organised by the party to strengthen the organisation in every state and prepare itself for the general elections next year.

"Due to the continuous misgovernance of the BJP government in



Gujarat, the issues remain the same — unemployment, inflation, economic inequality, atrocities against Dalits and tribals, fraud and immense corruption," Kharge said in Hindi on 'X' after the meeting.

"Today, we discussed the preparations of the Gujarat Congress in the context of the 2024

Lok Sabha elections.

"The Congress party, with a positive agenda, will strengthen the organisation for the fresh challenges ahead," the Congress chief added.

Among other leaders at the meeting were AICC general secretary K C Venugopal, Mukul Wasnik and Gujarat Congress

president Shaktisinh Gohil.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gohil said, "I thank the Congress high command for holding detailed discussions. We will move forward with a positive agenda as corruption is going on in Gujarat under the BJP rule and the state is being 'looted', and people are very upset."

Senior party leader Wasnik said it was a very constructive discussion. "We are hopeful that in Gujarat, we would succeed in implementing the programmes of the organisation in the state to strengthen the Congress," he said.

"We held a 2.5-hour-long discussion on our Lok Sabha elections and how we would take on the challenges before us together," Wasnik added.

Gujarat is the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP has been in power there for several years now. (PTI)

Delhi govt shirking responsibility by blaming me for failure of Farishtey scheme: LG Saxena

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Delhi LG VK Saxena has accused Arvind Kejriwal government of "shirking responsibilities" in 'Farishtey' scheme, expressing surprise that it filed a case in the Supreme Court alleging he was responsible for the stopping of the scheme.

In his letter dated December 14, Saxena wrote to the Delhi Chief Minister "at the outset, I would like to put on record the very fundamental and generic fact that the scheme under question and the operationalisation thereof is under the departments of Health and Finance, which are fully transferred subjects as per the constitution and totally under the control of you and your ministers." The LG referred in his letter to news reports, according to which, the Delhi government counsel attributed the stopping of the Farishtey scheme meant for road victims to him before the Supreme Court.

"Any attempt at attributing the failures of schemes, etc under such departments that are 'transferred', to anybody else, to say the least, the LG Governor, is nothing but a pre-meditated exercise of hubris, aimed at shirking responsibilities and blaming others for your own failure," Saxena said. The LG

wrote that the total number of beneficiaries under the Farishtey scheme during 2022-23 was 3,698 and it stood at 3,604 in the seven months of 2023-24. The government under the scheme in 2022-23 paid private hospitals Rs 4.85 crore and till October this fiscal, it had paid them Rs 3.54 crore, he said.

"These figures, prima facie, neither indicate a 'halt' of the scheme, nor do they support allegations of 'non-payment,' made by the Health Minister and endorsed by the Chief Minister - in fact they belie the claims," Saxena said.

"It is surprising that instead of obtaining full facts and circumstances of the matter from the concerned administrative department and coordinating with Delhi Arogya Nidhi/Finance Department, the minister has preferred to file a writ before the Supreme Court," he said.

Saxena alleged that what was being played out was nothing but a "characteristic game of disowning one's own failures, ineptness and inefficiency and creating a public perception that one is not being allowed to work."

The LG also referred to a proposal of the health minister sub-

mitted to him by the chief minister, for suspension of health secretary SB Deepak Kumar and former director general of health services Dr Nutan Mundeja for allegedly stopping the Farishtey scheme.

He said that Kejriwal in his noting to him referred to the health minister's proposal also for suspension and disciplinary action against the officers to the National Capital Civil Services Authority.

Saxena also took exception to the health minister's proposal on payment to hospitals on behalf of the beneficiaries, calling it "grossly erroneous and misleading."

"... as mentioned earlier, any decision for payments to be made has to be taken at your end and at the end of the Health Minister, since the subjects are 'transferred', and any role attributed to me therein, is nothing but 'mischievous,'" he wrote. Saxena, however, said that he has referred the matter to the chief secretary to obtain a factual report before considering any action on the proposal.

He said that he was yet to receive a copy of the writ petition filed by the Delhi government for re-operationalisation of Farishtey scheme. (PTI)

'Responsibilities of BJP leaders change irrespective of stature'

NOIDA, Dec 16: The BJP is a cadre-based party and does not differentiate between small or big party workers, said Rajya Sabha MP and former Uttar Pradesh deputy chief minister Dinesh Sharma on the recent appointment of chief ministers in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

Sharma said the change in responsibilities is part and parcel of the BJP and party workers go through such changes irrespective of their stature.

The BJP leader said he was the deputy CM of Uttar Pradesh from 2017 to 2022 but when his role changed he went to the ground as a party worker "the very next day with no qualms".

"There is no bias towards small or big party workers in the BJP. They are treated the same and any worker may get a chance. Even veterans don't hesitate when their responsibilities are changed," Sharma told PTI.

After the recent victories in Vidhan Sabha polls, in a surprise move the BJP selected Mohan Yadav, Bhajan Lal Sharma and Vishnu Deo Sai as chief ministers of MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh respectively. (PTI)

Bengal LoP alleges Lalit Jha's association with TMC youth wing, ruling party dismisses charge

KOLKATA, Dec 16: Leader of opposition in West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday alleged that Lalit Jha, the alleged mastermind in the Parliament security breach case, was associated with the youth wing of the Trinamool Congress.

The TMC, however, dismissed the allegation.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack on Wednesday, two men jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour, released yellow-coloured smoke from canisters and raised slogans, before being overpowered by the MPs.

"Lalit Jha is rank and file of Trinamool Yuva," Adhikari, the BJP MLA from Nandigram, told reporters at Bagdogra airport.

Adhikari claimed that Jha's photos with various TMC leaders, including MLA and councillors and TMC Yuva leaders in the state, have come to the fore.

"He is a known face of Trinamool Congress youth wing," he alleged.

Jha and his family members, who hail from Bihar's Darbhanga, have been living in Kolkata for some decades now.



Dismissing Adhikari's allegation, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh told PTI that Jha was never associated with the ruling party in West Bengal.

"The biggest question is why were passes to the two persons who breached the Parliament security given by a BJP MP," Ghosh said. BJP MP Pratap Simha had issued visitor passes to the two persons.

The TMC spokesperson said that the BJP was adopting diversionary tactics to turn the glare from the saffron party MP.

"It is a failure of the Union Home Ministry," he said.

The discovery of Jha's Kolkata connection sparked a political debate with West Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar on Thursday alleging TMC MLA Tapas Roy's association with the accused.

Majumdar posted two photographs on his social media handle, in which Jha is purportedly seen with Roy and other persons, and called for an investigation.

PTI could not independently verify the authenticity of the photographs.

The TMC MLA denied knowing Jha and claimed that the BJP was trying to shift the blame. (PTI)

Indian Navy responds to hijacking incident in Arabian Sea

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: The Indian Navy has swiftly responded to a call for help following a hijacking incident involving a Malta-flagged cargo vessel with 18 crew on board in the Arabian Sea, officials said on Saturday. The Indian Navy swung into action after receiving a Mayday message (distress call) on the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operation (UKMTO) portal on December 14.

The vessel MV Ruen indicated that six 'pirates' persons had illegally boarded it, the officials said.

The Navy's maritime patrol aircraft undertook surveillance missions in the area and its warship on anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf Aden were deployed to locate and assist MV Ruen.

The Navy said its aircraft flew over the hijacked ves-

sel and movement of the vessel is being monitored. It said the vessel is now heading towards the coast of Somalia.

"Responding swiftly to the developing situation, the Indian Navy diverted its naval maritime patrol aircraft undertaking surveillance in the area and its warship on anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf Aden to locate and assist MV Ruen," an Indian Navy spokesperson said.

"The aircraft overflew the hijacked vessel on early morning of December 15 and the aircraft has been continuously monitoring movement of the vessel, which is now heading towards the coast of Somalia," he said.

The official said the Indian Navy's warship deployed in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy patrol has also intercepted MV Ruen on Saturday morning. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Modi hails Assam

SHGs through SHG-bank linkage," the chief minister's office had posted on X after she was conferred with the award in March.

The PM, who also enquired about her formal education to which she said he had cleared Higher Secondary exams, urged Rajbongshi to continue with her work for the society.

The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is being undertaken across the country with the aim of attaining saturation of flagship government schemes by ensuring their benefits reach all the targeted beneficiaries in a time-bound manner.

Besides addressing beneficiaries through video conferencing, Modi also flagged off the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram, the five states where assembly elections were held recently.

The yatra was launched for other states earlier, but the launch for the five states got delayed as the model code of conduct was in place due to the elections. (PTI)

Govt focusing on

a niche market for such products from Assam in the world market. He said that the though there is a Rs 100-crore flower market in the state, flowers cultivated in the state constitute only about 15 per cent of the total demand.

"The state is also dependent on procurement from outside the state for pig feed and fish feed, among others," he added.

Lastly, he made an appeal to the concerned authorities to take steps to transform Assam into a state that is self-sufficient in agriculture and poultry.

Cabinet minister Atul Bora, Keshab Mahanta, Sanjay Kishan, Jayanta Mallabaruah, members of Parliament Queen Ojha, were also present.

Times have changed

Minister for a third straight time. Former chief minister and Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Jai Ram Thakur described the BJP's poll victories in the three states as historic and exuded confidence that the party would once again form the government at the Centre.

State BJP chief Rajiv Bindal said the effective strategy of the Prime Minister, Nadda and the party's central leadership led to the electoral success in the three Hindi-heartland states.

Later, Nadda took out a road show in the Sundernagar market area in Mandi district and inaugurated a newly-constructed BJP office. He is scheduled to spend the night in Kullu, before leaving for Delhi on Sunday. (PTI)

Election process for

These organisations had said Naga customary laws do not allow women to participate equally in political and socio-economic decision-making bodies.

On March 30, the State Election Commission (SEC) of Nagaland issued a notification cancelling the election programme notified earlier "till further orders" in view of the repeal of the municipal act.

However, the apex court had on April 5 stayed the SEC notification. Besides seeking quashing of the March 30 notification issued by the SEC cancelling the election schedule, the application filed by the petitioners also sought setting aside of the Nagaland Municipal (Repeal) Act, 2023.

Several Naga tribal bodies and civil society organisations had opposed urban local body elections under the Nagaland Municipal Act, 2001, asserting that it infringed on the special rights for Nagaland guaranteed by Article 371-A of the Constitution.

The 2001 act, which was amended later, made 33 per cent reservation for women mandatory for holding urban local body elections, as directed by the Supreme Court. (PTI)

NIA confirms grenade

a minor blast had taken place but could not ascertain whether it had been triggered by an IED or by a grenade throw.

On Friday, the police had arrested a youth, Arindam Bora of Ejarguri under Teok PS, who was found to have given a post that resembled celebrating the incident (blast).

Meena said that Bora, who was earlier arrested by the police while reportedly on his way to join Ulfa (I) in 2021, will be arrested for posting material that supports anti-national activity.

It may be mentioned here that Bora had spent several months in jail after being arrested two years back.

Financial irregularities

Appreciating the BTR government's flagship initiatives such as the Bodofa UN Brahma Super 50 Mission and the Bodoland School Adoption Program, Boro said that these have been pathbreakers in that effort.

Ex-militants to make

Boro, speaking at a press conference here to mark the completion of three years in office, maintained that restoration of peace and harmony, and putting a stop to violence have been the priority of his administration. "We are glad to say there have been no major incidents of violence, bandhs or communal conflicts in BTR in the last three years. Peace has been restored and people no longer live in fear," he asserted.

The BTR chief also said the "misunderstanding" that was there among Bodos and non-Bodos in the region is being resolved and local people are being involved for it.

"We have launched a 'Happiness Mission' through which youths and community leaders are being trained to intervene in case of any problem between different communities," he said.

"I am also meeting representatives of different communities residing in BTR and working on resolving all differences," Boro added. (PTI)

J&K Congress passes resolutions demanding statehood, assembly election

JAMMU, Dec 16: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) on Saturday passed two resolutions at its executive committee meeting demanding the restoration of statehood for the Union Territory and the assembly election.

JKPCC also demanded an immediate filling of all vacant posts in all government and semi-government institutions in a fast-track mode and called for the constitution of a "high-level independent commission" for the investigation of recruitment scams.

The resolutions were passed under the command of AICC In-charge, J-K Affairs, Rajni Patil.

"Today we held the meeting of the political affairs committee in which we passed two resolutions - one political and another socio-economic. We are holding the meeting to debate the issues. We are discussing the J-K situation and hearing workers' viewpoint on it," Patil told reporters here. She said the party will accordingly formulate the policy according to them.

"They (Supreme Court) have kept the deadline of September 24... We want restoration of statehood.

We want guarantees for jobs. We want an early assembly election so that we have a council of ministers and MLAs here," she said.

An assembly election has not been held in the region for more than five years.

The Congress unit said the deferring also of urban local body and panchayat elections has left no trace of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir.

The party has already raised the issue with the government seeking elections to these bodies under the State Election Commission in accordance with amendments 73rd and 74th, with due reservation to OBCs like SCs, STs and women.

The party also demanded the implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in J&K since the delimitation has taken place in the Union Territory.

"We are in favour of 33 per cent reservation for women. It was our commitment," Patil said.

The party in one of the resolutions demanded the restoration of the old system of recruiting youths to the army with special focus on those from the border areas, including the LOC. (PTI)

AAP appoints Raghav Chadha as party leader in Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: The Aam Aadmi Party has appointed its MP Raghav Chadha as the leader of the party in Rajya Sabha in place of Sanjay Singh, sources said.

In a letter to the Rajya Sabha chairman, the AAP party leadership has said that in the absence of Sanjay Singh, who has "health issues", Raghav Chadha will henceforth be the party's leader in the upper house.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh is currently behind bars in the Delhi liquor policy case.

Sources in the Rajya Sabha secretariat confirmed that a letter has been received from the AAP regarding appointing Chadha as its floor leader. The letter is with the RS Secretary General for implementation.

Chadha is one of the youngest members of Rajya Sabha. The AAP has a total of 10 MPs in the Upper House currently.

The AAP has the fourth largest strength in Rajya Sabha after the BJP, the Congress and the TMC. (PTI)

Progress in ending child marriage stagnating in India; 1 in 5 girls, 1 in 6 boys are married: Study

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: One in five girls and about one in six boys in India are married, with the progress made towards eliminating the practice of child marriage entirely stagnating in recent years, according to a study published in 'The Lancet Global Health' journal.

Between 2016 and 2021, the practice of child marriage also became more common in some states and Union territories, researchers said in their study. Girl child marriages increased in six states, including Manipur, Punjab, Tripura, and

West Bengal, while eight states, including Chhattisgarh, Goa, Manipur, and Punjab, witnessed a rise in boy child marriages, the researchers found after analysing data from all five waves of India's National Family Health Survey from 1993 to 2021.

The research team, comprising researchers from Harvard University and those affiliated with the Indian government, however, said that child marriage had declined nationally. Prevalence of girl child marriage decreased from 49 per cent in 1993

to 22 per cent in 2021, while that of boy child marriage came down from 7 per cent in 2006 to 2 per cent in 2021, they found. Nevertheless, progress towards stopping the practice of child marriage altogether has stalled in recent years between 2016 and 2021, the researchers said. Child marriage numbers reduced the most between 2006 and 2016.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) sees child marriage as a "violation of human rights", as it "compromises the development of girls and boys".

Child marriage is often the result of entrenched gender inequality, making girls disproportionately affected by the practice, according to the UN agency.

Ending child marriage is therefore seen to be critical towards achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which is to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" by 2030. Specifically, SDG target 5.3 seeks to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation".

According to the UN, one in five young women worldwide (19 per cent) were married in childhood in 2022.

While globally, the practice of child marriage has come down, the "profound effects of COVID-19 are threatening this progress, with up to 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage over the course of a decade from the onset of the pandemic," the organisation says.

In the study, the researchers considered men and women aged 20-24 who were married before turning 18 in their analysis even though India legally considers marriage of boys before age 21 to be child marriage. The team included more than 13.4 million women and more than 1.4 million men in their analysis. The researchers noted that increased global attention to doing away with child marriage has led many countries to pass legislations to ban the practice.

In India, they said, policy response to prevent child marriage in India has involved legal prohibition intended to directly prevent child marriage, referring to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act passed in 2006. The Act set the legal age of marriage for men to 21 years and women to 18 years. (PTI)

No. SLRC-G-III/91/Advertisement/2023/5

ADDENDUM

In continuation to this Commission's earlier Advertisement No. SLRC-G-III/91/Advertisement/2023/2, dated the 30th October, 2023 this is for information of all the concerned candidates for Class-III Posts under Government of Assam that a window is provided in the online application portal accessible through official website of SEBA www.sebaonline.org and www.assam.gov.in to enable any applicant who wishes to be considered under the Assam Public Service (Preferential Appointment) Rules, 1999 to indicate their eligibility in the said online application portal.

Sd/-
Secretary,
State Level Recruitment Commission for Class-III Posts
Assam Administrative Staff College,
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

Janasanyog /D/14859/23/17-Dec-23



NEVER THOUGHT MY NAME WOULD BE ATTACHED TO DEEP PURPLE: SIMON MCBRIDE

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: After playing with Deep Purple and its members on and off for several years, singer-guitarist Simon McBride says it's incredible to officially be a part of the band that was such a big part of his growing up years.

The Irish singer-guitarist joined Deep Purple officially last year as a replacement for Steve Morse. He is set to perform in Bangalore on Saturday and Sunday with members Ian Gillan, Ian Paice, Don Airey and Roger Glover for Book-MyShow Live's newest IP, Bandland.

McBride, who has never been to India and hopes to soak in the culture briefly during his short trip to the country, said Deep Purple's music has always been a huge influence, not just on him, but on music lovers all over the world.

"They've influenced me over the years. I learned their songs when I was a kid so it's incredible for me to be a part of that. I never ever thought or believed that my name would be attached to Deep Purple but now

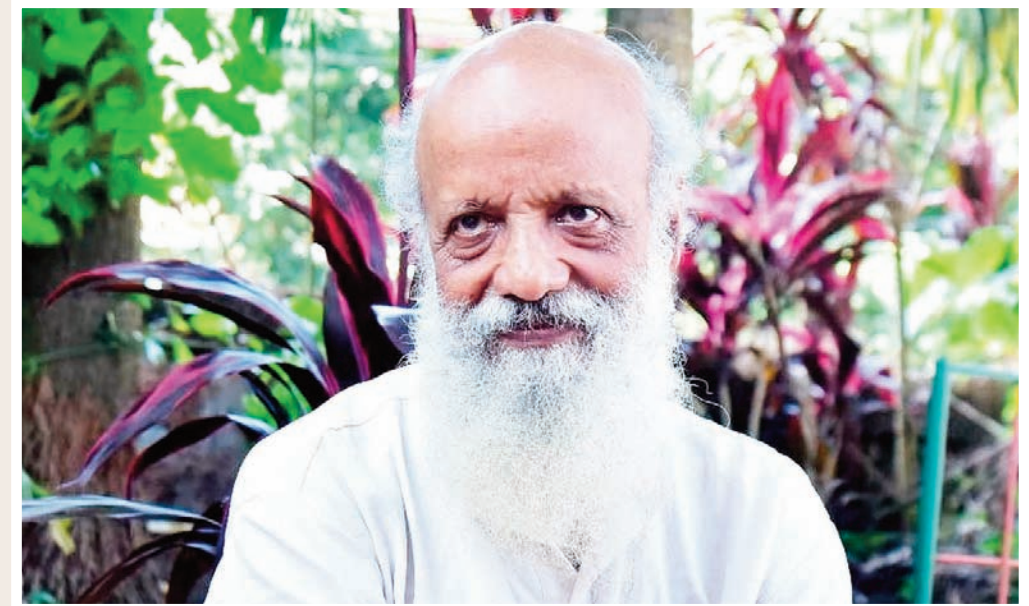
it is. I treat them like we're playing in a normal pub band or something," McBride told PTI in an interview.

The Belfast-born guitarist also counts Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath among his influences. A talented guitarist, McBride mastered a guitar when he was just nine and was named 'The Guitarist of the Year' by Guitarist magazine when he was just 15 years old.

The musician said all the band members get along well because of their shared love for music. "It is what keeps them going and I'm exactly the same. I've played with them all at several times or several points over the years. I get along with them and get free reign to do whatever I want, there are no barriers," he said.

Deep Purple was formed in 1968 and has withstood many changes over the years with new members replacing old artists. Paice is the last remaining original member from band's foundation days. (PTI)

Young people drawn to theatre, but have no audience: Kannada theatre veteran Prasanna



BENGALURU, Dec 16: Of late, young people from every nook and corner of the country are being drawn to theatre in droves, but have nowhere to go, said playwright Heggodu Prasanna, founder of Karnataka's celebrated amateur theatre group Samudaya and the national president of Indian People's Theatre Association currently.

According to Prasanna, whose method acting techniques have become a source of inspiration for many Bollywood greats like the late Irrfan Khan and Pankaj Tripathi, although this kind of interest from the youth had never happened before in the history of theatre, this is not really surprising as young people were always looking to align themselves with something worth-

while. "What had happened during the freedom movement or the Naxalite movement, where youth in cohorts would go on to become activists, is now happening with theatre. And this is a crazy situation. Because finally they all have to go to Mumbai, the ghetto of actors," said Prasanna, when PTI caught up with him in Mysuru. Realising that without an audience, actors have nowhere to go - with only a handful of lucky ones making it into films - Prasanna said he decided to create an atmosphere that is conducive to theatre by involving children.

Prasanna believes that if theatre is made a part of education, not only will children grow up to be appreciative of plays, but the process will also play a big part in nurturing the natural cu-

riosity of children. Plus, parents will start paying attention to theatre, he added.

Thus in Mysuru, the city that still hangs on to its traditional roots despite the onslaught of the modern, the theatre veteran, has floated his latest pet project, Indian Institute of Educational Theatre (IET).

"We, the theatre people, have done some idiotic things. We have done vague modernist productions, which have isolated the audiences. We have lost the 'adult' audience more or less. So if theatre in this country has to revive, one has to work with children. We spent the last two years, setting up this institute. Now, we really want to get into public schools and start a campaign," said the Sangeet Natak Akademi winner. (PTI)

ADVANCE BOOKING OPENS FOR SHAH RUKH KHAN'S 'DUNKI'



MUMBAI, Dec 16: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Saturday announced advance booking has been opened for his upcoming movie "Dunki".

Directed by Rajkumar Hirani, the movie is set to be released in theatres on December 21. It also features Taapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal, Boman Irani, Vikram Kochhar and Anil Grover.

"Aaj ki tazaa khabar sunn ke... Hardy toh nikal pada hai cinemas ki ore. Aap bhi kar lijiye taiyaari... Kyun ki khul chuki hai advance bookings humari. Book your tickets now," the 58-year-old actor posted on X.

Billed as a saga of friendships, borders, nostalgia for home and love, "Dunki" is a comedy-drama film based on an illegal immigration technique named 'donkey flight'.

It marks Shah Rukh's third and last release of 2023 following back-to-back action blockbusters in "Pathaan" and "Jawan". "Dunki" is directed by Hirani from a script he co-wrote with Abhijit Joshi and Kanika Dhillon. (PTI)

SUNNY SINGH WRAPS SHOOTING OF NEXT MOVIE 'RISKY ROMEO'



MUMBAI, Dec 16: Actor Sunny Singh on Saturday said he has concluded shooting for his upcoming movie "Risky Romeo".

Directed by Abir Sengupta, "Risky Romeo" is a neo-noir comic tragedy about "modern day existential crisis". It also stars actor Kriti Kharbanda.

Singh, known for movies such as "Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweeti" and "Adipurush", said working on the movie turned out to be an "extremely fulfilling experience for him."

"I usually do not get offered characters like this and only when I started shooting I realised what Abir had seen in me and offered me such a different character," the 35-year-old actor said in a statement.

"The genre of this film is completely unexplored in our industry and it's a bold step towards showcasing emotions in a very different way. And the city that Abir has chosen to film 'Risky Romeo' is adding to the magic of the story. I cannot wait for the audiences to experience what we experienced while shooting the film," he added.

"Risky Romeo" is produced by Sengupta, along with Anushree Mehta under their banner Jaadugar Films, in association with Priyanka Mehrotra and Rameshchandra Yadav of PR Motion Pictures. (PTI)

Sunny Deol says 'Gadar 2' helped him connect with newer audience: They are now seeing my older films

MUMBAI, Dec 16: Actor Sunny Deol believes his recent release "Gadar 2" has helped him establish a connection with the younger audiences, who have now started exploring his past filmography.

The Anil Sharma-directorial, which landed in August, turned out to be a surprise hit of the year with over Rs 500 crore in worldwide gross, much like its predecessor "Gadar: Ek Prem Katha", which was the highest grossing Hindi movie of 2001. "With 'Gadar 2', what happened is all my fans and all the people that wanted to see the kind of cinema which they had seen in 'Gadar', we kept the story that way and people came to see the character, which is deep rooted in their hearts."

"But the beauty of it was the new generation which has got connected

to me. I was not connected to them otherwise. They got to see what I'm doing (in 'Gadar 2') and are now seeing some of my older films," Deol told PTI in an interview. The 66-year-old actor reprised his role of Tara Singh in "Gadar 2", set years after the events of the first movie. It saw Tara Singh return to Pakistan in order to rescue his imprisoned son Charanjeet "Jeete" Singh (played by Utkarsh Sharma) during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.

When "Gadar 2" came out, Deol said, he visited some theatres and was bowled over by the response.

"I could see the love and appreciation. It all felt good. I'm thankful for the love and trust in me. From now on, I'll keep doing movies that people will love," he added.

Prior to the film's release, Deol

said the sentiment among the industry folks and critics was that the movie will not work at the ticket window. "We would not know about the sentiment of the audience, we would know about the sentiment of the industry. Yaha industry ka sentiment itna woh nahi tha (The sentiment in the industry was not positive), they were making predictions, the critics and even others bashed the film," he said.

But the audience is open to all kinds of movies, whether it is his movie, his younger brother Bobby Deol's "Animal" or "Rocky aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani", which featured his father Dharmendra in a pivotal role. "We make films for the audience. Our films are made for all kinds of audiences. Like there's 'Animal' and 'Rocky Rani'. Audience is

accepting all kinds of films. If the critics want to critique a film, then they should write thesis on art movies, this cinema is not for that."

"It is high time that we all be nice and happy that this year has been so good for us and the audience is going back to theatres. We are today offering films that they want to see. It is a good time for Hindi cinema and I believe this will continue."

As the eldest son of cinema icon Dharmendra, Deol started his cinema journey in 1983 with "Betaab" and enjoyed a great run in the initial years with hits such as "Arjun", "Ghayal", "Damini", "Ghatak", "Border", "Arjun Pandit" and "Gadar", among others.

Post "Gadar", he went through a dry patch which took him 20 years to overcome. What kept Deol going in

all these years is his sportsman spirit and a positive frame of mind.

"You have to walk a path. No matter how much you talk about it, argue or (do) self-pity, you still have to walk. Why waste your energy? 'I'm a sports guy. You win or you lose, you learn and you move ahead. Sports guys have a positive adrenaline and that's what I have in me. I'm one of those guys who gets up before the sun rises and goes to sleep (early). I love the days, I can't take the nights," he said.

Asked whether he learned anything during the rough patch in his career, the actor said there is growth in a person every day.

"That's how you keep moving, rather than sitting and thinking about it because what has to happen will happen. If it (success of 'Gadar 2')

hadn't happened, I would still be working like this only and would be trying to do something or the other. I would not be grumbling and criticising," he said. The actor revealed he is working on a number of projects currently, including the sequel to his 2007 movie "Apne". The follow-up will also feature his father Dharmendra, brother Bobby and son Karan Deol. Besides, he will also star in "Baap" with Sanjay Dutt, Jackie Shroff and Mithun Chakraborty, and "Lahore, 1947", which will be produced by superstar Aamir Khan.

"There were a lot of proposals coming and it is very difficult to work with all of them. But you can't do everything. There are a couple of films that I'm doing and they will be announced when they are ready to be announced." (PTI)

Aman Raj clinches Jaipur Open title in final-hole thriller; Saptak, Sunhit take joint 2nd place

JAIPUR, Dec 16: Aman Raj of Patna produced a superb chip-putt on the last hole to post an error-free final round of four-under 66 and secure his fourth career win by one shot at Rs one crore Jaipur Open here on Saturday.

The 28-year-old Aman (65-66-64-66) had a four-day total of 19-under 261 at the Rambagh Golf Club here. The win was also Aman's third of the year and his second at the Jaipur Open, an event he

won previously in 2018.

Greater Noida's Saptak Talwar (64-65-71-62) and Gurugram's Sunhit Bishnoi (65-67-68-62) claimed tied second place at 18-under 262 after they shot scores of eight-under 62, the best rounds of the tournament, on Saturday.

The winning cheque of Rs 15 lakh lifted Aman from fourth to second position in the TATA Steel PGTI Ranking thus keeping his hopes alive of finishing

as No. 1 this season.

Aman currently has season's earnings of Rs 84,81,745 and trails the Order of Merit leader Om Prakash Chouhan by nearly Rs 29 lakh with one event remaining in the season, the year-end TATA Steel Tour Championship next week.

Aman, the overnight leader by two shots, did not have the best of starts on day four as he missed some birdie opportunities from short-range on the greens

and managed just one birdie on the front-nine. However, Aman, known to be one of the calmest players on the tour, kept his round together with a couple of crucial par-saves from eight feet on the second and 13th and a chip-in to save par on the 11th.

Aman then began his surge towards the title with his second chip-in of the day on the 14th that resulted in a birdie. He then saw it home with birdies on the

17th and 18th, both par-5s. On the 18th, he emerged victorious after sinking a five-footer following a superb chip shot from over the green.

"With the birdies not coming my way early on, I was trying to make pars to keep the momentum going. I made some clutch putts and outstanding par-saves along with way, especially the chip-in on the 11th. "After further gains on the 14th and 17th, recovering well from the rough

on the latter, I was pumped on the last hole as I knew a birdie was required to win. I got it done with a great chip-putt," Aman said. "After the practice round I was confident of having a good week here. To win you need a few things to favour you and I felt that happened in round three. It's turning out to be a great season for me and I'm now looking forward to closing it on a high at the Tour Championship next week." (PTI)

JUNIOR MEN'S HOCKEY WC

INDIA LOSE 1-3 TO SPAIN IN BRONZE MEDAL PLAYOFF

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 16: India's hopes of redeeming some pride in the junior men's hockey World Cup remained only a dream as they lost 1-3 to Spain in the bronze medal play-off here on Saturday.

Goals from Nicolas Alvarez (25th and 51st minute) and Petchame Pau (40th) sealed the deal in Spain's favour as Sunil Jojo's 28th-minute penalty-corner strike was the only saving grace for the two-time junior world champion Indians, whose perennial frailty with penalty corner conversions came to the fore yet again on Saturday.

This was India's second defeat to Spain in this edition of the tournament, having lost to the European team 1-4 in the pool stages. India had also finished fourth in the last edition of the tournament in 2021 in Bhubaneswar.

Spain, following the win against the Uttam Singh-led side, equalled their best showing in the global tournament, adding to the bronze they had won in the 2005 edition in Rotterdam, beating India 6-5 on penalties.

Spain were clearly the dominant side and India would have lost by a bigger margin had it not been for some plucky saves by India goalkeeper Mohith Shashikumar after half-time.



Mohith effected two brilliant saves in the 33rd minute when the Spanish attackers had virtually run over the Indian defence. Mohith's fine anticipation saw him save two shots at the goal to keep the scoreline 1-1.

Alvarez opened the scoring

for Spain in the 25th minute, when he pulled away on the left flank all the way to the goal-mouth before sending in a diagonal shot, which got deflected off the goalkeeper's gloves into the goal.

Three minutes later, India

struck the equaliser with Sunil Jojo scoring from the follow-up of a penalty corner. Jojo's quick anticipation saw him score with a flick after the Spanish goalkeeper had saved the first attempt. On a day when India again failed miserably with PC

conversions, quite like the semi-final against Germany where they wasted a dozen of them in the 1-4 thrashing, they also seemed to lack the will to go all out. Barring Jojo's 28th minute conversion, rest of the eight PC attempts went abegging.

Spain's high-press game saw Petchame Pau again give his team the lead in the 40th minute, sending the ball past Mohith.

India's disjointed defence took another goal in the 51st minute when Cabre Verdiell's run on the left found Alvarez, who deflected the ball into the goal as Mohith drifted to the other corner.

As the timer clicked away, there was desperation in the Indian camp, which resulted in a couple of collisions, leading to Petchame limping off three minutes before the final hooter and Pere Amat also seeking the team physio's help.

India last stood on the podium in 2016 when they won the gold medal in the Lucknow edition of the tournament. Their first title triumph had come in Hobart in 2001, before finishing runners-up in Milton Keynes, England in 1997.

Meanwhile, Germany, who finished runners-up in 2021, will play France in the summit clash. (PTI)

Odisha Masters: It is Ayush vs Sathish in all-Indian men's singles final



CUTTACK, Dec 16: World Junior championships bronze medalist Ayush Shetty edged out Indonesia's Alwi Farhan in a thrilling three-game match to set up an all-Indian final against Sathish Kumar Karunakaran at the Odisha Masters Super 100 badminton tournament here on Saturday.

Ayush had lost to Farhan in the semifinals of the World Junior Championships to settle for a bronze in Spokane, US. On Saturday, the 18-year-old from Karnataka rallied his way to a 19-21, 21-14, 22-20 win to avenge the loss and enter his maiden Super 100 final here.

On Sunday, Ayush will be up against compatriot Sathish, who will also be playing his first Super 100 final of his international career. He entered the summit clash after beating fellow Indian and defending champion Kiran George 18-21, 14-21 in a 41-minute semifinal.

The final tournament of the 2023 BWF World tour season will have Indian representation in four out of five finals with Unnati Hooda being the only one to miss out in women's singles. She lost 16-21 5-21 to former world champion and Olympic medalist Nozomi Okuhara of Japan.

India's Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa also advanced to women's doubles final with a 21-17 21-13 win over Indonesians Arly Nabil Thesa Munggaran and Agnia Sri Rahayu in the semifinal. It was their third final in as many weeks.

The Indian pair had reached the finals of Syed Modi International Super 300 in Lucknow before winning the Guwahati Masters super 100 last week.

Second seeds and world No. 24 Indian pair will face another Indonesian combination Meilysa Trias Pus-

pitasi and Rachel Allesya Rose in the summit clash.

Tanisha will also compete in mixed doubles final after she and her partner Dhruv Kapila recorded a 21-14, 21-14 victory over Denmark's third seed Mads Vestergaard and Christine Busch in the semifinals. Tanisha and Kapila will meet top seeds Hee Yong Kai Terry and Tan Wei Han Jessica of Singapore in the summit clash.

Sixth seeded Indian doubles pair of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Sai Pratheek K also progressed to the final with a superb 21-17 17-21 21-18 win over Indonesian eighth seeds Teges Satriaji Cahyo Hutomo and Christopher David Wijaya.

They will square off against seventh seeded Lin Bing-Wei and Su Ching Heng of Chinese Taipei.

In a 73-minute battle, Ayush, who hails from Sanoor near Karkala in Karnataka, showed his grit as he recovered from a game down to outwit his Indonesian opponent.

The Indian made a good start and held leads of 2-0, 7-4 but Farhan kept himself in the hunt and turned the tables after the interval. He took a 14-12 advantage and then reeled off three more points to eke out a 17-14 lead. The Indonesian had four game points but Ayush managed to save three of them before Farhan prevailed. After the change of sides, Farhan marched ahead to a 8-5 lead but Ayush never stopped fighting. He recovered to 10-8 with five straight points and then held on to roar back into the contest.

Things were looking bleak for Ayush in the decider when Farhan grabbed a 13-9 advantage at one stage. But the Indian showed great composure to slowly make his way to 19-19 and 20-20 then nosed ahead. (PTI)

Shubha Satheesh has fracture, dislocation to finger; doubtful for Australia Test



NAVI MUMBAI, Dec 16: India Women batter Shubha Satheesh has suffered both fracture and dislocation to her finger, informed captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Saturday, which has made her a doubtful starter for the Test match against Australia to be played next week.

Shubha did not bat in India's second innings on Friday due to a broken finger nor take the field on Saturday in the one-off Test against England, which India won by 347 runs.

India will face Australia in another one-off Test at the Wankhede Stadium from December 21 to 24.

The BCCI informed before the start of the play on the third day that Shubha, who played her

maiden game for India across formats, will take no further part in the Test.

The Board did not provide any details as to when and how Shubha suffered the injury, though she had warmed up ahead of the second day's play on Friday. But the 24-year-old did not take the field on that day and was seen sitting in the dugout with her fingers strapped.

After India completed their world-record 347-run win over England on Saturday, skipper Kaur informed that Shubha had suffered both fracture and dislocation to her finger.

"Our medical team will give you an update on that. She was not able to bat in the second innings. She

had a fracture and suffered (a) dislocation — both together," Kaur told the media during the press conference.

Shubha suffered the injury before play began on the second day (Friday) of the Test.

"Yesterday (Day Two) when we were warming up she got injured," Kaur said.

Shubha, who top-scored for India in the first innings with 69 off 76 balls became the 12th player from the country to make a fifty on debut in women's Tests.

She added 115 runs for the third wicket with fellow debutant Jemimah Rodrigues, which is now the second highest ever partnership in Tests for India. (PTI)

Akash Deep: From Sasaram to Indian dressing room via Kolkata Maidans

NEW DELHI, Dec 16: Emotions welled up inside Saurashish Lahiri when Akash Deep, the latest Bengal speed merchant to enter Indian dressing room, rang him up.

It was quite natural too as Lahiri, his first state-level coach, has seen the growth of Akash as a cricketer from close quarters.

"Today, Akash called up and said, 'Sir, main toh train tha, par train ko bhi patri pe laana hota hai, woh aapne kiya. (I was a train but the train needed to be put on track, you did that),' Lahiri, the former Bengal off-spinner recollected the conversation with his 'ward' just after he received the best news of his career.

With his new ball colleague Mukesh Kumar already making the India cut, Akash would have been hoping to get a chance or two to prove his mettle like he has been doing it for Bengal over the past four years.

Hailing from a middle-class family in remote Sasaram village in Bihar, the 27-year-old

Akash had his share of struggles. He lost his father and elder brother and there was no prevailing sporting culture in the family.

Call it fate but just like Gopal-ganj's Mukesh, who was playing tennis ball cricket before 'Vision2020' changed his life, Akash, who was a 'big name' in Asansol's 'khep cricket' (tennis ball tourneys in Bengal), even went a step further and bowled in a tournament in Dubai.

"I remember I once asked him, did he have a passport and he replied, 'Not just a passport sir, thappa bhi laga hai' (immigration stamp). Seeing the look on my face, he said that he had played in a high prize-money tennis tournament in Dubai also," Lahiri remembered.

Joydeep Mukherjee, the erstwhile Director of Bengal senior team, also had a nice little anecdote about how he first found out about the muscular hulk.

"It was at the Rangpur Ground, where a second division CAB league match was being



held. I saw that the keeper was standing hardly 10 yards behind the stumps when a pacer was bowling from one end, but the keeper stood a good 35 yards back when a lanky boy was operating from the other end.

The guy was bowling so quickly which wasn't usual in

Maidan and more so in second division," Mukherjee recollected.

"I immediately called up the then U-23 coach Saurashish and even he told me that he had heard about him. We kept Sourav (Ganguly), the then CAB president in loop and he was put

in Vision2020 and was also given accommodation at CAB's dormitory at Eden Gardens as he had no permanent place to stay back then," Mukherjee remembered.

At Vision 2020, former Bengal pacer Ranadeb Bose worked with him and the transformation from tennis to season-ball cricket happened pretty quickly.

There were some hurdles in the way too. Once selected for Bengal U-23, Akash developed a pain in the waist and being raw, he had little idea that he had developed a stress reaction.

While erstwhile U-23 head coach Lahiri told him to join the U-23 trials where physios would work on his rehabilitation, a junior state selector forced him to bowl which aggravated his back pain.

A furious Lahiri confronted the selector, who was a small-time former Bengal cricketer.

"He said how can we select someone without seeing. I was forced to tell him that I have seen him bowl and he needs

rehab now. Whether you guys select him or not, this boy will make his U-23 debut," Lahiri now laughs about how he lost his cool when an injured newcomer was pushed to bowl.

Having taken 90 wickets in 25 red-ball games, Akash's biggest strength is his pace and also the ability to bowl vicious in-dippers.

"At the domestic level, during the last Ranji Trophy semi-final between Bengal and MP, the delivery with which he dismissed Rajat Patidar -- one that pitched on the off-stump and cut back to flick the off-bail off -- could have got any batsmen out."

He can bowl at the same pace for a good 8-10 overs. His stock delivery is inswinger but because he has superb wrist position and gets deliveries to straighten as well," Lahiri said.

Mukherjee believes that his stint with the Indian team would be a long one.

"Sai (Sairaj Bahutule) knows about his potential when he was with Bengal. Kamlesh (Jain), the

current Team India physio has worked with him. There is Paras (India bowling coach). He will only get better in that environment. The best part is if you ask him to repeat a drill 10 times. He will do it 20 times. He is a coach and captain's delight," said Mukherjee.

Akash had a brief dip in form after a season with RCB when Jos Buttler launched into him during a game at Chinnaswamy. When he came back, Akash realised that while trying to master the outswing, he was losing his stock delivery.

But fortunately, Lahiri was there to hold his hand. Lahiri, who was then doing his NCA Level 2, in fact, had Akash as "one of his projects".

The Level-2 aspirants need to work with two players and help them in course correction and NCA's coaching module strictly says, 'don't tinker with player's basic strength.' His "project" was successful.

For Akash, sky will be the limit from here onwards. (PTI)

India Women record biggest Test victory in history

India Women pulverise England by 347 runs

NAVI MUMBAI, Dec 16: Deepti Sharma played the enforcer's role to perfection for the second time in as many days as the dominant India Women scripted a historic 347-run victory over England on the third day of the one-off Test here on Saturday.

India set in motion the hunt for triumph while declaring their second innings closed at the overnight score of 186 for 6, leaving England to climb a huge mountain of 479 runs in their second innings.

The Indian bowlers led by off-spinner Deepti (4/32) and pacer Pooja Vastrakar (3/23) then bundled out England for 131 to celebrate a victory which now stands as the biggest in terms of runs in the history of women's Test cricket, bettering Sri Lanka's 309-run victory over Pakistan in April 1998.

It was also India's first win over England at home in 15 Tests, having beaten them in away games twice in 2014, giving them a big boost ahead of the one-off Test against Australia starting here next week.

Over the course of the last three days the Indians did not show any rust of not having played Test cricket in two years, and a first at home after nine years, while being at their ruth-

less best.

But for all that slew of records, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side should thank Deepti (8-2-32-4) who was in her elements after that sensational 5 for seven in the first innings, as England lacked gumption to fight even on a pitch that appeared to be far more gentle.

India did not have to wait long for the first breakthrough this morning.

It came in the form of Tammy Beaumont (17) with pacer Renuka Singh moving the ball in from outside the off to knock down her off-stump. England sunk deeper after suffering twin blows in Vastrakar's first over. Sophie Dunkley (15) played one straight into the hands of substitute Harleen Deol at gully.

Vastrakar then dealt England a body blow when she cleaned up first-innings star Nat Sciver-Brunt for a first-ball duck, getting the ball to nip back in and passing it through between the bat and the pad.

India also wasted two DRS reviews in haste — one each against Heather Knight and Danni Wyatt — but did not have to work too hard for the third wicket.

An on-song Vastrakar had one nipping away after pitching to find an outside edge off

Knight's bat, as Yastika Bhatia did the rest behind the stumps. Knight made a 20-ball 21 with four boundaries.

England's misery continued when Wyatt edged a delivery to the first slip for Deepti's first wicket in the innings after making 12.

Deepti then had Amy Jones (5) pulling one straight to short midwicket, and in her seventh over of the innings, the 26-year-old hit the timber twice to dismiss Kate Cross (16) and Lauren Filer (0).

While Deepti narrowly missed taking 10 wickets in the game to become the first Indian Women's player to do so, Rajeshwari Gayakwad (2/20) enjoyed some success.

The left-arm spinner had her first success in the form of Sophie Ecclestone (10) when the batter went for a sweep and missed to connect, while Lauren Bell (8) was caught by Jemimah Rodrigues at silly point for the final wicket of the game.

It was a perfect outing for India also given that all their debutants in the game — Shubha Sathesh, Rodrigues and Renuka — tasted success, but there also was a dampener in the form of Shubha missing the action on the second and the third day owing to a fractured finger. (PTI)



Mohammed Shami to miss SA Tests; Chahar pulls out as Akash Deep replaces pacer in ODIs

MUMBAI, Dec 16: India will not have the services of Mohammed Shami in their quest to register a maiden Test series win in South Africa as the senior pacer was on Saturday ruled out of the two-match series after the medical team did not clear him, the BCCI announced. Shami, who has been recuperating from an ankle niggle post his wonder run in the recent ODI World Cup, was earlier included in India's Test squad but his availability was subject to him getting clearance from the board's medical team.

The BCCI did not name any replacement for Shami. The first Test between India and South Africa will start in Centurion on December 26. Before the opening Test, the Indian Test team members will play a three-day intra-squad match from December 20.

As of now, Shami is likely to continue his recovery at home and the he could make a return during the Test series at home against England starting from January 25 in Hyderabad.

The second Test against the Proteas will start at Cape Town from January 3, 2024.

Pace-bowling all-rounder Deepak Chahar was also withdrawn from the ODI squad after he expressed his unavailability to travel to South Africa because of a family emergency.

"Chahar has informed the BCCI that he will not be available for the upcoming ODI series due to a family medical emergency.

"The Men's Selection Committee has named (pacer) Akash Deep as his replacement," the BCCI statement read.

The BCCI also said in the statement that after the conclusion of the first ODI in Johannesburg on Sunday, Shreyas Iyer will join the Test squad to prepare for the two-match series.

"He (Iyer) will not be available for the second and third ODI and will take part in the inter-squad game," it read.

The BCCI also said head coach Rahul Dravid and other regular support staff will not oversee the three-match ODI series as they will be monitoring the inter-squad game in preparation ahead of the Test series, underlining the significance the management is giving to a Test series win in the Rainbow nation.

"Team India (Senior Men) Head Coach Rahul Dravid, Batting Coach Vikram Rathour, Bowling Coach Paras Mhambrey and Fielding Coach T. Dilip will link up with the Test squad and oversee their preparations for the inter-squad game and the Test series," the statement said.

In the absence of the regulars, the ODI team, which is to be led by wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul, will be handled by India 'A' coaching staff comprising batting coach Sitanshu Kotak, bowling coach Rajib Datta and fielding coach Ajay Ratna.

India's updated ODI squad: KL Rahul (captain, wk), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sai Sudharsan, Tilak Varma, Rajat Patidar, Rinku Singh, Shreyas Iyer, Sanju Samson (wk), Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Akash Deep. (PTI)

India eye ODI reboot from first ODI against South Africa



JOHANNESBURG, Dec 16: With a clutch of new-gen stars lining up to make their presence felt, India's journey into their ODI future will hit its first stop during the opening match against South Africa at the hulking Wanderers here on Sunday.

Scepticism may be in the air about the relevance of an ODI series with a T20 World Cup in sight, but for India, and to a good extent for the Proteas as well, this face-off signifies the arrival of a fresh line, building up ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have built lofty castles in white ball formats over the last decade and a half, but now they are in the evening of their careers, and the younger Indian names will perform need to carry forward their legacy.

None then will be in more focus than KL Rahul, who will lead India in this three-match series.

The wicketkeeper-batter has stood-in as India skipper in the past, but a successful outcome here could potentially land the Bengaluru man the ODI captaincy for a longer duration.

While the likes of Rahul, Ruturaj Gaikwad, if he has recovered from the illness that forced him to sit out of the T20Is, and Shreyas Iyer have showcased their prowess in the past, a few others will be eager to become part of the jostle for space in India's white ball scheme of things.

Rinku Singh has impressed everyone with his impact outings in the T20Is so far this year, and the team management will now be

eager to see him graduate to the 50-over version, and the left-hander could make his ODI debut on the morrow.

The international opportunity might also come in the way of Rajat Patidar, who has been churning out runs in domestic cricket for a few years now, and Bhardwaj Sai Sudarshan, who had a reasonable run in the Vijay Hazare Trophy for Tamil Nadu, for slots open the middle-order along with Tilak Varma.

The Indian think-tank will hope that these young names could tick a few boxes against a South African attack that has a depleted look to it in the absence of rested Kagiso Rabada and injured Anrich Nortje.

India too will not have the three pacers who shored up their bowling in the recent ODI World Cup — Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj.

While Bumrah and Siraj will feature in the Test series, Shami has been ruled out of the tour after the BCCI medical team did not give him fitness clearance.

In the absence of these senior pros, the onus is squarely on the shoulders of bowlers such as Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar and Arshdeep Singh to marshal India's pace department and they will have to show more consistency despite producing a fine effort in the final T20I against South Africa at this venue.

It is a non-negotiable task for them because Bumrah or other seniors' continued availability cannot be guaranteed going forward.

The Johannesburg surface showed a rather unexpected leaning towards spin in the third T20I on Thursday, and in that scenario, India

will be happy to have three experienced campaigners in their ranks in Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel and Yuzvendra Chahal.

The visitors can also look to give a run to off-spinner Washington Sundar, who can also double up as a top-order batter.

But among them, leg-spinner Chahal, who had some excellent matches in the Vijay Hazare Trophy for Haryana, will be eager to prove that he is still a relevant force in white ball cricket.

Chahal was neither a part of India squad in the World Cup nor was he there in the T20Is against Australia at home.

So, the 33-year-old will be hoping to get a chance here to roll his arm and impress the selectors.

Sanju Samson, though he is slotted in as a reserve wicketkeeper behind Rahul, will be hoping to land a match or two in the series after getting cold shoulder from the selectors for a good part of the season.

The Teams:

India: KL Rahul (Captain, wk), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sai Sudharsan, Tilak Varma, Rajat Patidar, Rinku Singh, Shreyas Iyer, Sanju Samson (wk), Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Akash Deep.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (Captain), Otniel Baartman, Nandre Burger, Tony de Zorzi, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Mhlangeni Mpongwana, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne, Lizaad Williams.

Match starts at 1.30 PM IST. (PTI)

With win against strong England, India have got a taste of what Test cricket is all about: Muzumdar

NAVI MUMBAI, Dec 16: Indian women's cricket team head coach Amol Muzumdar on Saturday said his side had got a taste of "what Test cricket is all about" after crushing England by a massive 347 runs in the one-off four-day match here.

Muzumdar was delighted with the effort of his players, and said he wants the team to continue in the same vein against Australia in the one-off Test starting December 21 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

"Absolutely brilliant stuff for the two-and-a-half days. No Test match is easy but the efforts that the girls put in, getting together 5-6 days before the Test at Wankhede and the preparation was nice to result into this win," Muzumdar, a domestic stalwart, said after the comprehensive win.

"We had thought that we'd play in a certain fashion and I'd want them to continue to do that (score like that on the first day). We didn't plan to score 400 on the first day. It's a good sign for Indian cricket, all of

them who made their debut. "It's the confidence they carry because England is a strong side. They (India) just got a taste of what Test cricket is all about."

He was effusive in his praise of Deepti Sharma, who earned the player-of-the-match award for her 67 in the first innings and a match haul of 9 for 39.

"I jokingly call Deepti (Sharma) 'Stokeys' (Ben Stokes' nickname). Nine wickets and a fifty, she's an important cog in the wheel and it's important for her confidence. "We have back-to-back Test matches for the first time and we're looking forward to the Australia series as well," Muzumdar said.

Deepti was proud of her effort and said the wicket at the DY Patil Stadium here offered a lot of assistance to the spinners. "Feels very good because we were waiting for the Test to start. It's a proud feeling and we bowled according to plan. We were quite calm batting on the first day, trying to build partnerships, that's it," she said. (PTI)

Real Kashmir FC sealed 3-1 victory over Shillong Lajong FC

SRINAGAR, Dec 16: Real Kashmir Football Club (RKFC) continued their winning streak, securing a 3-1 victory over Shillong Lajong FC in their last home game of round one in the I-League football tournament here on Saturday.

The Snow Leopards made a strong start with Kamal Issah scoring in the fifth minute at TRC Ground. But Karim Samb equalised for Shillong Lajong FC by scoring a goal in the 16th minute as the first half ended with both teams level at 1-1.

Fuelled by the fervent crowd, RKFC relentlessly pressured the visiting team and scored two more

goals in the second half.

RKFC regained the lead with Gnoghre Krizo's goal in the 55th minute before local boy Moham-mad Inam sealed the victory with a 69th-minute strike and was declared man of the match.

RKFC is on third place on the points table, tied on 20 points with Sreenidi Deccan FC, trailing only on goal difference. The Kashmir team has played 10 games so far with six wins, two draws and two losses. Shillong Lajong's second consecutive loss kept them in fifth place with 16 points. RKFC will now play their next away match against Delhi FC on December 24. (PTI)

India's Rohit meets Nepal's Tamang in final of All-India Amateurs golf

KOLKATA, Dec 16: India's Rohit and Nepal's Subhash Tamang beat their respective opponents on Saturday to set up a summit clash in the All-India Amateur Golf Championship here.

Rohit, who has played on numerous Indian Golf Union teams, beat Jordan Clay Burnand of South Africa 2 & 1 in the semi-final at the RCGC here. In the other semi-final, Tamang, who is trained by former Indian pro Tarun Sardesai, beat top seeded Altin Van Der Merwe of South Africa 3 & 1.

The final will be played over 36 holes in two sessions on Sunday. Rohit and Tamang were seeded third and fourth respectively after the strokeplay. Van Der Merwe topped the 36-hole strokeplay section while Shat Mishra was second.

While Shat lost in the pre-quarter-finals, Van der Merwe's run came to an end in the semi-finals. Rohit beat Rohan Singh Rana 3

& 1 in the first round and then added the scalp of Anshul Khabthiyal 3 & 2. Thereafter in the quarter-finals, he moved past Juhar Singh on the 18th hole. He beat South Africa's Burnand 2 & 1 in the semi-finals. The match play segment was arrived at following 36-hole stroke play segment. The top 32 players moved into the second stage with 16 pairings in Round 1.

The team event, which forms part of the stroke play, was won by South Africans Van der Merwe and Jordan Clay Burnand with a total of 286. India's Sandeep Yadav and Rohit were second at 294 and India 'B' comprising Vinamra Anand and Shaurya Bhat-tacharya were third at 295. The All India Amateur Championships is the country's oldest golf tournament having started in 1892. The Championships were not held during the two World War and was cancelled once in 2020 due to Covid-19.(PTI)



Head coach Muzumdar filled in for my lack of Test captaincy experience: Harmanpreet

NAVI MUMBAI, Dec 16: India women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Saturday credited head coach Amol Muzumdar for taking vital decisions for the team, conceding that she lacked the requisite experience of leading in Tests, after they completed a record 347-run win over England here.

India took precisely seven sessions to create the world record in terms of the largest Test win by runs, while also registering their first-ever victory over England at home and overall their sixth in 39 Tests, here at the DY Patil Stadium. Harmanpreet, who made her Test debut in 2014, led India for the first time in the format in this game.

"Our coach helped us a lot, I had zero experience in leading the team in Test," Harmanpreet told the media after the massive win.

"I was trusting his (Muzumdar's) decisions — be it sending Shubha (Sathesh) at one-down in the first innings or whatever ideas he gave in bowling, like the first 40 minutes were important today, the idea was to put them (England) in

early and utilise the morning conditions," she said.

"His experience really helped us and it also gave me time to decide what was the best for the team," Harmanpreet added.

She said India were able to execute all their plans and set the tone with their fielding, which proved decisive for the hosts as they now prepare to take on Australia in another one-off Test next week.

"Everything went according to the plan. We got the score that we wanted and the bowlers did a good job, both medium pacers and spinners knew their plans and performed accordingly," she said.

"The biggest positive was our fielding, especially in a long game when you have to field for 90 overs (in a day) it is very important to maintain the energy. We managed to set the tone with our fielding," Harmanpreet added. She said that India relied heavily on their batting experience in the first innings to formulate bowling and fielding plans, which saw England being shot out for 136 and 131 in the two innings.

"We do not have much experi-

ence playing Test cricket to determine what sort of field placements can help where. The more you bat, the more you would understand what fields to set for your bowlers," Harmanpreet said.

"The credit (also) goes to the bowlers, whatever fields they were given they bowled according to that. Your job becomes easier when your bowlers can bowl in the right spots," she added.

Harmanpreet praised India debutant Shubha for her 69-run knock in the first innings while again mentioning Muzumdar's role in it.

"Shubha gave us a very good start — that was also our coach's decision, during the practice game at the NCA, he saw her batting and taking the game ahead," she said.

"He said, 'if we can send her at one-down she can give us a solid start' and she did it the way we were expecting from her," Harmanpreet added.

The India skipper said there would be no change in India's approach in the one-off Test against Australia from December 21-24 at the Wankhede Stadium next week.



"The wicket (at Wankhede) is a little different to this one. We have two to three days to train and see how the pitch is and accordingly we can take the decisions. But we will go with the same approach — we will look to win," she said.

Harmanpreet heaped praise on bowling coach Troy Cooley, saying that Indian bowlers have a lot of trust on the former Australia and England men's team coach.

"Whenever we get an opportunity to work with him, he moti-

vates us always, especially the bowlers, which areas to bowl and their line and lengths," Harmanpreet said.

"The bowlers also trust him and his decisions. Whatever decisions he is taking for them, they are trusting him and they are able to execute the plans he is making for them," she added.

"You need a person you can trust — especially a coach — and they are trusting his ideas and plans," Harmanpreet said. (PTI)