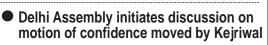
Zelenskyy warns of an 'artifical deficit' of weapons after withdrawal from Avdiivka

Western officials and Kremlin critics blame Putin and his govt for Navalny's death in prison



Farmer leader Pandher asks Centre to bring

ordinance to give legal guarantee for MSP



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MINISTRY OF

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DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG

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MINISTRY OF

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Janasanyog/D/17949/23/18-Feb-24

Recession has struck some of the world's top economies



NEW YORK, Feb 17: As some of the world's biggest economies stumble into recession, the United States keeps chugging along.

Both Japan and the United Kingdom said Thursday their economies likely weakened during the final three months of 2023. For each, it would be the second straight quarter that's happened, which fits one lay definition for a recession.

Yet in the United States, the economy motored ahead in last year's fourth quarter for a sixth straight quarter of growth. It's blown past many predictions coming into last year that a recession seemed inevitable because of high interest rates meant to slow the economy and inflation.

Give much of the credit to U.S. households, who have continued to spend at a solid rate despite many challenges. Their spending makes up the majority of the U.S. economy. Government stimulus helped households weather the initial stages of the pandemic and a jump in inflation, and now pay raises are helping them catch up to high prices for the goods and services they

On Thursday, a report showed that fewer U.S. workers filed for unemployment benefits last week. It's the latest signal of a remarkably solid job market, even though a litany of layoff announcements has grabbed attention recently. Continued strength there should help prop up the economy.

Of course, risks still loom, and economists say a recession can't be ruled out. Inflation could reaccelerate. Worries about heavy borrowing by the U.S. government could upset financial markets, ultimately making loans to buy cars and other things more expensive. Growing losses tied to commercial real estate could mean big pain for the finan-

cial system. But, for now, the outlook continues to appear better for the United States than many other big economies. The mood on Wall Street is so positive that the main measure of the U.S. stock market, the S&P 500 index, topped the 5,000 level last week for the first

"First and foremost, it's important to emphasize that the market's performance is more a reflection of a thriving economy rather than unwarranted 'animal spirits' from investors," according to Solita Marcelli, chief investment officer, Americas, at UBS Global Wealth Management.

When it upgraded its forecast for global growth in 2024 a couple weeks ago, the International Monetary Fund cited greater-than-expected resilience in the U.S.

Several unique characteristics of the U.S. economy have sheltered it from recessionary storms, analysts say. The U.S. government provided about \$5 trillion in pandemic aid in 2020-2021, far more than overseas counterparts, which left most

households in much better financial

shape and supported consumer

spending well into 2023. The Biden administration has also subsidized more construction of manufacturing plants and infrastructure through additional legislation passed in 2021 and 2022 that was still having an impact last year. About one quarter of the U.S. economy's solid 2.5% growth in 2023 was made up of government spending. Republican critics, however, charge that the extended spending contributed to higher inflation.

"We had some policies that I do think helped us a lot," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG. "But also the structure of our economy is so much different."

Americans have been better protected from rising rates than U.K. counterparts, for example, because most U.S. homeowners with mortgages have long, 30-year fixed rates. As a result, the Federal Reserve's rapid rate hikes of the past two years -- which have lifted mortgage rates from around 3% to about 6.7% -- have had little effect on many U.S. homeowners

Yet their British counterparts carry mortgages that have to be renewed every two to five years. They've struggled with rapidly rising mortgage rates as the Bank of England has lifted borrowing costs to combat inflation.

Catherine Mann, a member of the Bank of England's interest-rate setting committee, said Thursday that the U.K. economy's slowdown should be temporary. There are already signs in business surveys that the economy is picking back up, she

"The data we have today is rearview mirror," she said on the sidelines of an economic conference in Washington. Forward-looking reports "are all looking good." Like the Fed, the Bank of England is considering reducing its benchmark rate once it is confident inflation is under control

Another benefit for the Un States is that it experienced a surge in immigration in recent years, which has made it easier for businesses to fill jobs, potentially expand their operations, and has led to more people earning wages -- and then spending those earnings.

Japan, by contrast, is rapidly aging and has seen its population shrink for years, as it is less open to foreign labor. A declining population can act as a powerful drag on

FCI resorts to cash credit, short-term loan, ways and means

Govt raises authorised capital of FCI from ₹ 10,000 cr to ₹ 21,000 cr

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: The government has increased the authorised capital of state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) from ₹ 10,000 crore to ₹ 21,000 crore to enhance the operational capabilities and fulfill its mandate effectively, the Food Ministry said

FCI is the central government's nodal agency that undertakes procurement of foodgrains at a minimum support price (MSP) to protect the interest of farmers. It also maintains strategic stocks and distributes the grains under different welfare

"The increase in authorized capital is a significant step towards enhancing the operational capabilities of FCI in fulfilling its mandate effectively," the ministry said in a

FCI resorts to cash credit, short-term loan, ways and means etc. to match the gap in the fund requirement. The increase in the authorised capital will reduce the interest burden. decrease the economic cost and ultimately affecting the government subsidy positively,



With this infusion of capital, the FCI should also embark upon modernizing its storage facilities, improving transportation networks, and adopting advanced technolo-

These measures are essential not only for

reducing post-harvest losses but also for ensuring efficient distribution of food grains to consumers, it added.

The Centre provides equity to the FCI for working capital requirement and for creation of capital assets. The FCI is undertaking a grated IT system, leveraging existing internal and external systems. Through the e-office implementation FCI

is making efforts towards a paperless office

These initiatives of integrated IT solutions serving as the core operational software for FCI, should provide a single source of information and streamline functions with a common digital backbone.

According to the ministry, the FCI has taken several steps to enhance its efficiency including construction of cement roads, roof maintenance, illumination, and weighbridge

Besides, it has also purchased lab equipment and developed a software platform for quality checking.

The government's dual commitment to MSP-based procurement and investment in FCI's operational capabilities signifies a collaborative effort towards empowering farmers, fortifying the agricultural sector, and ensuring food security for the nation, it said. (PTI)

Himachal budget aimed at misguiding people: Jai Ram Thakur

SHIMLA, Feb 17: Senior BJP leader Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday said the budget presented by Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is an 'attempt to misguide" the people of the state by "telling lies" and claimed it has provided no relief to any section of society.

Notably absent is another popular AI image-generator, Midjourney. The San Franciscobased startup didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Friday.

The inclusion of X — not mentioned in an earlier announcement about the pending accord — was one of the surprises of Friday's agreement. Musk sharply curtailed content-moderation teams



after taking over the former Twitter and has described himself as a "free speech absolutist."

In a statement Friday, X CEO Linda Yaccarino said "every citizen and company has a responsi-

bility to safeguard free and fair

"X is dedicated to playing its part, collaborating with peers to combat AI threats while also protecting free speech and maximiz-

ing transparency," she said. Nothing has been done on 95 per cent of the schemes announced in the last budget and yet new schemes have been announced, Thakur said in a video as he was in New Delhi and not present in the Vidhan Sabha on

"The people of the state have lost faith in the Congress government which failed to fulfil its poll guarantees promised in the 2022 assembly polls," said Thakur, the Leader of Opposition in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly It is surprising that there is no mention of guarantees promised in the budget, he added.

The state government has taken a loan of ₹ 14,000 crore in the past 14 months, he said, adding that just announcing a relief package is not enough until it reaches the victim and is implemented. "The truth is that relief has been given to only selected people".

Unemployed youths, outsourced staff and employees of the Himachal Road Transport Corporation and Electricity Board are sitting on dharna for release of their salaries, while development has come to a standstill under the

Bandhan Bank authorised to collected revenues of West Bengal govt

KOLKATA, Feb 17: Private lender Bandhan Bank on Saturday said that it has been authorised by the West Bengal government to collect tax and non-tax receipts on its behalf.

The mandate will enable the bank to collect revenues through the Government Receipt Portal System (GRIPS).

By virtue of this mandate, people will be able to pay various taxes like property tax, motor vehicle tax and professional tax using this portal, the lender said.

The bank will soon be integrating itself with the West Bengal government to operationalise the payment collection process.

Debraj Saha, head-government business, Bandhan Bank said West Bengal is among the top three markets for Bandhan Bank. The bank has over 1,700 transaction outlets in the state, he said.

GRIPS is an online internetbased platform for making various tax and non-tax payments to the West Bengal government. (PTI)

Himachal Budget: Losses of public sector firms hit ₹ 5,143 cr in FY23

SHIMLA. Feb 17: Cumulative

losses of public sector enterprises in Himachal Pradesh stood at ₹ 5,143.46 crore as on March 31, 2023 and 14 out of 23 such units were in the red, according to a state government report. The report on public sector units was tabled in the state assembly on Saturday during the presentation of the annual budget for the next financial year. Himachal Road Transport Corporation topped the list with a loss of ₹ 1,966.13 crore, followed by Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board which lost ₹ 1,823.97 crore. While HP Power Corporation registered a loss of ₹ 6,89.24 crore, HP Power Transmission Corporation

Greek PM Mitsotakis to visit India next week

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis will pay a two-day state visit to India from February 21 with an aim to further deepen the strategic partnership between the two coun-

It would be the first visit to India by a head of state of Greece to India after a gap of 15 years. India-Greece relations were ele-

vated to 'strategic partnership' during Modi's visit to Greece in August last year.

Mitsotakis will be the chief guest and keynote speaker at the Raisina Dialogue in the national capital, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday, announcing his visit.

The Greek prime minister will be accompanied by senior officials and a high-powered business dele-

"Prime Minister Mitsotakis's visit is expected to further strengthen and deepen the strategic partnership between India and Greece," the MEA said. Mitsotakis will also visit Mumbai before re-

Patnaik lays foundation stone for ₹ 3,000 cr textile facility in Cuttack district

BHUBANESWAR, Feb 17: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday laid the foundation stone for the ₹ 3,000-crore Welspun Group's Integrated Textiles Manufacturing Facility and Warehousing Complex at Choudwar in Cuttack district.

The proposed complex is expected to create employment for over 10,000 people in and around Choudwar region.

Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik said once the complex comes up, Choudwar will get back its glory of being the textile hub of "Choudwar was devel

oped as an industrial hub by former chief minister Biju Patnaik in the 1950s. Today, once again, a new history has been created in Choudwar," Patnaik said. The CM also informed

that cotton farmers in the districts of Kalahandi Bolangir, Rayagada and Ga-

Women will be provided skill training," he said. The state industrial department and Industrial Pro-

japati will benefit from the complex, which will also provide employment opportunities for women.

Complex, we want to create a world-class textiles ecosystem in Odisha and take forward the legacy of Biju Babu." He said the Welspun Group is also committed to improve the quality of life in Choudwar by developing several amenities for the public.

has been instrumental in

bringing our project to

fruition. Through the Inte-

grated Textiles Manufactur-

ing Facility and Warehousing

The Orissa Textiles Mill (OTM) at Choudwar, once eastern India's largest com-

posite cotton mill, was co-founded by Biju Patnaik. The investment by Welspun Group is set to reignite industrial growth and development in the region as well as directly support the growth of cotton growers across the state, an official said. (PTI)

COL) had given a proposal for setting up a textile fa-

cility in Odisha to Welspun Group chairman B K

Goenka during the Make In Odisha programme in

commitment shown by the CM and the government

of Odisha. Their dedication to fostering an environ-

ment conducive to industrial growth and development

Goenka, said, "We are grateful for the support and

turning to Athens. (PTI) motion and Investment Corporation of Odisha (IPI-US wholesale inflation accelerated in January

Public frustration with inflation has become a central issue in President Joe Biden's re-election bid

WASHINGTON, Feb 17: Wholesale prices in the United States picked up in January, the latest sign that some inflation pressures in the economy remain elevated. The Labor Department reported

Friday that its producer price index — which tracks inflation before it reaches consumers — rose 0.3% from December to January after having fallen -0.1% from November to December. Measured year over year, producer prices rose by a mild 0.9% in January.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, "core" wholesale prices rose 0.5%, the most since last July. Compared with a year ago, core prices climbed 2%, up from 1.7% in the previous month. Public frustration with inflation

has become a central issue in President Joe Biden's re-election bid. Measures of inflation have plummeted from their heights and are nearing the Federal Reserve's target level. Yet many Americans remain exasperated that average prices are still about 19% higher than they were when Biden took

Some of the January rise in producer prices was driven by measurement quirks. They include an increase in the cost of financial management services, which jumped 5.5% just from December to January. In addition, many companies impose price increases early in the calendar year, which often boosts overall inflation measures in January. At the same time, though, the costs of hospital care. doctor visits and hotel stays also jumped last month, a sign that inflation in travel, health care and other service industries also remains elevated. Friday's figures will likely un-

derscore the Fed's caution about when to begin cutting its benchmark interest rate. Fed officials will likely want to monitor several more months of data to ensure that a downward trend in inflation will continue.

The wholesale figures follow a surprisingly hot report this week that showed that consumer prices eased less than expected last month, signaling that the pandemic-fueled inflation surge is only gradually and fitfully coming under control

Some of Friday's data is used to calculate the Fed's preferred price measure, which will be reported later this month. That gauge has been running well below the better-known consumer price index. In the second half of 2023, the Fed's favored measure, showed that prices rose at just a 2% annual

rate, matching its inflation target. But after Friday's release of

wholesale prices, economists fore-



cast that when core prices in the Fed's preferred gauge are reported later this month, they will have jumped by as much as 0.4% or 0.5%, a pace much faster than would be consistent with the Fed's inflation target.

Fed officials have expressed optimism that inflation is headed lower, and in December they forecast that they would cut their benchmark rate three times this year. Last year, the Fed hiked its rate to a 22-year high of about 5.4% to extend its concerted drive to conquer high inflation. Its rate hikes, which were intended to cool borrowing and spending, have made it far more expensive to obtain mortgages, take out auto and business loans or use credit cards.

Should inflation return to the Fed's 2% target, high borrowing rates would likely no longer be deemed necessary. Instead, the Fed would be expected to cut rates, which would make consumer and business loans more affordable.

Still, some officials remain cautious. Late Thursday, Raphael Bostic, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, said he was "not vet comfortable that inflation is inexorably declining to our 2% objective.'

But other Fed policymakers said they were still optimistic, even after the release of the hot consumer inflation report Tuesday. Austan Goolsbee, president of the Chicago Fed, said Wednesday that by assessing data over longer periods than just one month, "it's totally clear that inflation is coming

Some Wall Street traders and economists had expected the Fed to implement its first rate cut as soon as March. But two weeks ago, Powell made clear that a cut that month was unlikely and said the Fed needed "greater confidence" that inflation is sustainably returning to its 2% target before it would start reducing rates. Most economists now envision a rate cut in May or, perhaps more likely, in June.

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Power Grid unfazed by proposed O&M norms changes by CERC

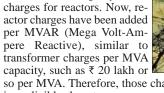
KOLKATA, Feb 17: Power Grid Corporation (POWERGRID) expects "no impact" from proposed changes in Operation & Maintenance (O&M) charges norms by Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), a top company official said. The official said the company was in discussion with the regulator.

Draft regulations suggest altering the prior 75:25 (sub-station vs transmission line) O&M cost distribution to 65:35 ratio, increasing transmission line charges while decreasing substation charges.

Chairman and Managing Director Ravindra Kumar Tyagi claimed "net impact is almost zero," with

"They have added one more element, 'reactor'. Earlier, we were not incurring any O&M charges for reactors. Now, reactor charges have been added per MVAR (Mega Volt-Ampere Reactive), similar to transformer charges per MVA

overall O&M charges main-



so per MVA. Therefore, those charges have been added. The net impact is negligible almost zero, we are going to receive the same O&M charges as before", he told investors in an analyst call

Speaking regarding Return on Equity (ROE), proposed norms suggest existing assets at 15.5 per cent and setting 15 per cent for new projects after April 1, 2024, he said discussions were on with the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and power grid was optimistic that final norms won't adversely affect the company's revenue or prof-

The company was aiming to cross capex of ₹ 10,000 crore in the current fiscal.

"Our capex in Q3, on a consolidated basis is ₹ 3,444 crore, and for nine months it is ₹ 7,690 crore. We are hopeful that this capex will be almost ₹ 10,000 crore plus," he said.

Power Grid's consolidated income during the December 2023 quarter was ₹ 11,820 crore. During the quarter, net profit rose 10 per cent YoY to ₹ 4,028 crore. (PTI)

Zelenskyy warns of an 'artifical deficit' of weapons after withdrawal from Avdiivka

 Western officials and Kremlin critics blame Putin and his govt for Navalny's death in prison

 Delhi Assembly initiates discussion on motion of confidence moved by Kejriwal

 Farmer leader Pandher asks Centre to bring ordinance to give legal guarantee for MSP



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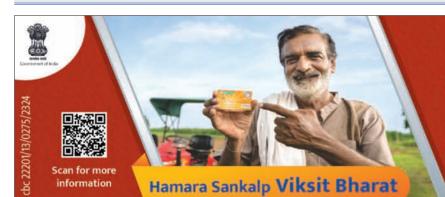
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DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

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7 crore 48 lakh Kisan Credit Cards distributed; Loan facility of ₹ 9 lakh crore given to farmers



Electronic devices found from NSA detenues in Dibrugarh jail

GUWAHATI, Feb 17: Several electronic gadgets were recovered from the cells of National Security Act (NSA) detenues at Dibrugarh Central Jail in Assam on Saturday. Among the detenues are 10 members of the radical group 'Waris Punjab De' (WPD), a pro-Khalistani outfit, including its chief Amritpal and one of his uncles.

They have been in jail since March 19 last year, following their arrests under the NSA from various parts of Punjab during a crackdown on the outfit.

Director General of Police (DGP) GP Singh revealed that a search of the premises was conducted by jail staff based on intelligence indicating unauthorised

The search yielded various electronic devices, such as a smartphone with a SIM card, a keypad phone, a TV remote with a keyboard. a spycam pen, pen drives, Bluetooth headphones, and speakers.

The jail staff confiscated these items, and investigations are underway to determine the source of these "unauthorised articles and

Need to 'pay attention

at trial courts' to reduce

growing cases: CJI

Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on

Saturday said that there is a need to

duce the burden of growing number

Addressing the inauguration cere-

mony of an arbitration centre inau-

gurated by him, the CJI said, "Trial

courts are where the solution to

problems begins, there is a need to

pay attention. Many such cases are

increasing in the Supreme Court

which should be settled in the trial

court itself. Due to non-availability

of bail in small cases, people are

coming to the Supreme Court and

Talking about Uttar Pradesh, CJI

Chandrachud said that investment is

increasing in the state. Industries will

be set up in the state and in this re-

gard, it is necessary to have expan-

sion and trust in the judicial sector,

he added. Appealing to advocates

and others in the legal profession to

engage with technology, the CJI

the pressure there is increasing."

DGP Singh posted on 'X' that additional CCTV cameras were installed in the public area of the NSA block following the receipt of information about unauthorised activities taking place there.

He further said additional lawful actions and preventive measures are being implemented to avoid such incidents in the future. It's noteworthy that the DGP did not specify that the electronic items were recovered from the WDP members housed in the jail.

A multi-tier security arrangement had been established in Dibrugarh Jail since the arrival of the radical outfit members from Punjab, including the installation of

Additional CCTV cameras installed as jail houses pro-Khalistani outfit members

additional CCTV cameras and the repair or replacement of faulty ones. Dibrugarh Jail, one of the oldest and high-security prisons in the Northeast, was constructed by the British in 1859-60.

Amritpal Singh was brought to Dibrugarh Central Jail on April 23, 2023 after Punjab Police arrested him from the state's Moga district after several weeks of manhunt.

His aides were also shifted to the jail during the massive operation against Waris Punjab De. Jail sources had earlier said Amritpal has been

Undeclared bandh continues in Karbi Anglong and West KA after attack on KSA members

speech, BJP general secretary a profound sentiment. Mookerjee

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Satur-day asked BJP members to build the party's Lok Sabha poll campaign around the government's de-

velopment and pro-poor welfare

initiatives besides the measures to

enhance the country's global stand-

ing, asserting that winning 370 seats

will be a true tribute to its key ideo-

BJP's national office-bearers be-

fore the start of its convention, he

said every party worker should

focus on polling booths in the next

100 days, the period by which the

upcoming Lok Sabha polls are

likely to be over, and ensure at

least 370 more votes for the party

at every polling station than in

Briefing reporters on Modi's

Vinod Tawde said the prime min-

Addressing a meeting of the

logue Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

DIPHU, Feb 17: The situation in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong regions remained tense as an undeclared bandh continued after a violent attack on Karbi Students Association (KSA) members in Kheroni Sariali of West Karbi Anglong on February 15.

The aftermath of the assault has tablishments and shops in West long district also remained shuttered, though government offices were operational. Additionally, public transport services were halted; however, train services remained unaffected.

In Diphu, a few private vehicles were seen on the roads amidst the subdued atmosphere.

An indefinite sit-in demonstration demanding eviction from Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR) and Village Grazing Reserve (VGR) land is underway at the KSA premises in Diphu.

Meanwhile, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has called for a meeting of elected representatives and leaders on February 20 to address the issue of PGR and VGR land.

Another meeting has been convened by the KAAC on February 19, inviting all presidents and sec-

retaries of Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), Karbi Nimso Chingthur Asong, and KSA to discuss the matter further.

Modi sounds poll bugle at BJP meet

'Winning 370 seats will be true tribute to Mookerjee'

position will engage in "tu tu-main

main" (petty squabbling), unwar-

ranted and divisive issues but they

must not be distracted and remain

focussed on its development

number for the BJP. It symbolises

made the ultimate sacrifice for the

Modi said, "370 is not merely a

In a press conference held at the ASDC office, located, the ASDC-Youth Front and KSA-Jemson Timung thanked the CEM of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang, for initiating talks to resolve the PGR led to a shutdown of business es- and VGR land issue. They also clarified that they had not called down to the people's enforcement.

On the other hand, the Garo Students Union (GSU) has strongly condemned the attack on KSA members and demanded the immediate arrest of the perpetrators.

In a press conference held at the ASDC office, the ASDC-Youth Front and KSA-Jemson Timung thanked the chief executive member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, for initiating talks to resolve the PGR and VGR land issue. They also clarified that they had not called for any bandh, attributing the shutdown to the

people's enforcement. On the other hand, the Garo Students Union (GSU) has strongly condemned the attack on KSA members and demanded the immediate arrest of the perpetrators. It

is worth (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

abrogation of Article 370 to pre serve our nation's unity and integrity. As a true tribute to him, the BJP should secure victory in 370 seats." The Modi government had scrapped Article 370 of the Constitution, which accorded special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, in August 2019 soon after returning to power for a second time. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Manipur's Churachandpur limps back to normal

IMPHAL, Feb 17: The situation in Manipur's Churachandpur town, where two persons were killed in a clash with security forces two days ago after a mob barged into the mini-secretariat to protest the suspension of a constable, returned to normal on Saturday after the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF) lifted the "total shutdown" in the southern district, officials said.

Schools reopened and markets and business establishments have resumed activities, they said. However, the indefinite "public curfew" mposed by the Kuki Student Or ganisation (KSO) and other student organisations across the district from 6pm to 6am will continue.

Meanwhile, isolated incidents of gunfire continue to pour in from the peripheral villages of the hill district adjoining the valley, officials said.

On Thursday night, a mob had barged into the mini-secretariat in Churachandpur town to protest the suspension of the constable.

Constable Siamlalpaul was suspended after he was seen in a purported video with armed men, which had gone viral.

There were reports of destruction and burning of properties in and around Churachandpur district mini-secretariat area.

The official residence of the deputy commissioner was also torched by the irate mob around 1am on Friday. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Increasing number of countries viewing two-state solution as 'urgent': Jaishankar

SITUATION IN GAZA

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: India maintained for many decades that there should be a two-state solution to the Palestine issue and an increasing number of nations are now not only endorsing it but considering it as "more urgent" than before, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday amid concerns over the prevailing situation in Gaza.

Jaishankar made the remarks at an interactive session at a security conference in Munich in presence of US secretary of State Antony Blinken and German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock. The external affairs minister described the Octo-

ber 7 attacks on Israeli cities by Hamas as "terrorism" but at the same time, referring to Tel Aviv's response, said Israel has an international obligation to observe the humanitarian law.

Jaishankar said it is important that Israel should have been very mindful of civilian casualties.

Explaining New Delhi's position on the conflict, he said there are different dimensions to it, and broadly classified them into four points. "Number one -- we must be clear that what happened on October 7 was terrorism; no caveats, no justification, no explanation. It was terrorism," he said.

"Number two, as Israel responds, it is important



that Israel should have been very mindful of civilian casualties. It has an international obligation to observe humanitarian law," Jaishankar said.

The external affairs minister, mentioning point number three said the return of hostages today is imperative. "Number four -- There is a need for a humanitarian corridor, a sustainable humanitarian corridor to provide relief. And eventually, there has to be a permanent fix, a long-term fix. Otherwise we are going to see a recurrence," he said.

The external affairs minister also highlighted India's long-held position on the Palestine issue. "Certainly India has long believed in a two-state solution. We have maintained (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

said, "I ask all (CONTD. ON PAGE-9) Manipur CM condemns violence 10 killed in mishap in in state, vows legal action



IMPHAL, Feb 17: Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Saturday denounced the recent incidents of violence in Churachandpur and Imphal East district, labeling them as unfortunate.

Addressing media persons at the chief minister's secretariat in Imphal, Singh expressed strong condemnation and assured that magisterial inquiries would be conducted into the incidents. Singh also emphasised the government's commitment to uphold law and order, protect public property, and

ensure the safety of citizens. He further asserted that stringent legal action would be taken against those found guilty, including individuals making threats on social media platforms.

Regarding the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum's (ITLF) ultimatum to the SP of Churachandpur, Singh firmly stated that such threats against law enforcement agencies and government officials would not be tol-He reiterated the government's support for the SP and the DC of Churachandpur.

Singh also addressed misleading narratives, stating that divisive politics and misinformation aimed at inciting youth (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

TN fireworks factory

VIRUDHUNAGAR (TN), Feb 17: Ten people including four women were killed in an explosion at a fireworks factory in this district on Saturday. Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin directed two state ministers to coordinate the rescue and relief activities.

The chief minister said a sudden explosion in a firecracker manufacturing unit in Kundayiruppu village in Vembakottai resulted in the death of ten people - six men and four women.

He has directed state revenue minister K K S S R Ramachandran and labour minister C V Ganesan to immediately rush to the spot and ensure rescue and relief activities, an official release here said.

Expressing anguish over the accident, the Chief Minister conveyed his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families. He has ordered a solatium of Rs

ceased and Rs one lakh to the grievously injured. The mishap occurred around 12.30 pm on Saturday in the chemical mixing room of the firecracker making (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

3 lakh each to the kin of the de-

Gulzar, Sanskrit scholar Rambhadracharya

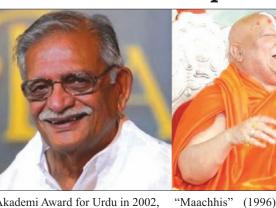
selected for Jnanpith Award

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: Renowned Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit Jagadguru hadracharya have been named the recipients of the 58th Jnanpith Award, the Jnanpith selection committee announced on Saturday.

Sampooran Singh Kalra, popularly known as Gulzar, 89, is celebrated for his works in Hindi cinema and is considered one of the finest Urdu poets of this era. Rambhadracharya, 74, the

founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot, is a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, educator and writer of more than 240 books and texts, including four epics.

In a statement, the Jnanpith selection committee said, "It has been decided to give the award (for 2023) to eminent writers from two languages: Sanskrit litterateur Jagadguru Rambhadracharya and well known Urdu litterateur Shri Gulzar." Gulzar received Sahitya



'Along with his long film journey, Gulzar has been setting new milestones in the field of literature'

Akademi Award for Urdu in 2002, Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2013, Padma Bhushan in 2004, and at least five National Film awards for his works.

Some of his finest works include the song "Jai Ho" for film "Slumdog Millionaire", which received an Oscar award in 2009 and Grammy Award in 2010, and songs for critically acclaimed films as

"Maachhis" (1996), "Omkara" (2006), "Dil Se..." (1998), and 'Guru" (2007), among others.

Gulzar also directed some timeless award-winning classics, including "Koshish" (1972), "Parichay" (1972), "Mausam" (1975), "Ijaazat" (1977), and television serial "Mirza Ghalib" (1988).

"Along with his long film journey, Gulzar has been setting new

milestones in the field of literature. In poetry, he invented a new genre 'Triveni' which is a non-mukaffa poem of three lines. Gulzar has alwavs created something new through his poetry. For some time now he has also been paying serious attention to children's poetry,' Bharatiya Jnanpith said in a statement. Rambhadracharya is one of the present four Jagadguru Ramanandacharyas of the Ramananda sect and has been holding this position since 1982.

A polyglot, who speaks 22 languages, Rambhadracharya is a poet and writer in several Indian languages including Sanskrit, Hindi, Awadhi, and Maithili.

In 2015, he received the Padma Vibhushan award. He was named Giridhara Misra. He lost his eyesight at the age of two months due to trachoma and was home tutored during initial years by his grandfather. By (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

2 THE HILLS TIMES

Editor's pick

Modi's tour signals a geopolitical shift

By: Kumardeep Banerjee

rime Minister Narendra Modi was in UAE and Qatar earlier this week, underscoring the importance of the region in India's growing interests in the geo-political strategic outcomes from Arabia. This land masses west of the India ocean, and, especially UAE hadn't seen a visit by an Indian Prime Minister in more than three decades, till Narendra Modi decided to refocus. For nearly three decades before 2015, these nations on the other end of the Arabian Sea had been a distant place for Indian political leadership, occasionally grabbing domestic headlines for the wrong reasons, even though a sizeable chunk of the Indian diaspora was toiling away mostly in labour intensive jobs, sending precious hard foreign currency back to their villages in India.

However, the importance of the region especially strategically important countries such as UAE as a key balancing power in West Asia was lost to the foreign policy makers of the time. The Indian prime minister's seven official visits to the UAE in a decade and reciprocal visits by UAE president Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in a similar timeline, underscore the seriousness both sides have attributed to nurturing, this relationship.

It was in August 2015 when PM Modi visited UAE on the invitation of then crown prince Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahvan, which was the foundation of this ever-greening relationship. The joint statement released, stated "The visit of an Indian Prime Minister to UAE after 34 years marks the beginning of a new and comprehensive strategic partnership between India and UAE in a world of multiple transitions and changing opportunities and challenges."

In recent decades, UAE's economic progress has been one of the global success stories, transforming the nation into a regional leader and a thriving international centre.

India's rapid growth, modernization, and skilled workforce position it as a key player in the global economy. The robust economic partnership between India and the UAE, upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2015, culminated in the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). This was one of the first CEPAs or bilateral trade agreements India entered with any country with significant economic clout, in decades and a statement released last year on the first anniversary of the CEPA implementation highlighted the positive impact it had on exports in labour-intensive sectors such as 'Mineral Fuels; Electrical Machinery (particularly telephone equipment); Gems & Jewellery; Automobiles; Essential Oils; Other Machinery; Cereals; Other Agri Products; and Chemical Products. The CEPA with UAE proved to be a template for a similar trade agreement India managed to sign with Australia in the same year. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

Bharat Ratna awards: The political calculations behind the recognitions

The swift announcement of four posthumous Bharat Ratna awards for Karpoori Thakur, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Charan Singh, and M.S. Swaminathan has raised evebrows, suggesting a strategic move in anticipation of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, known for his departure from political norms, seems indifferent to criticism regarding the timing and potential political motives of these awards

Rather than adhering to conventional political etiquette, Modi takes pride in his unapologetic approach to breaking liberal protocols. Even media observers sympathetic to Modi couldn't ignore the political undercurrents surrounding this decision, prompting a closer examination of the move.

The crucial query at hand revolves around the anticipated electoral advantages sought by the BJP and the Prime Minister through this move. However, the potential impact of awarding Karpoori Thakur may be limited, as contemporary Bihar voters are predominantly familiar with figures like Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar.

The BJP's stronghold alongside Nitish Kumar over the past two decades might overshadow the relevance of the Nitish Kumar/Janata Dal (United) constituency. Despite this, the formidable presence of the Lalu Prasad Yadav/Tejashwsi Yadavled Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) remains a potent Opposition force in the state. Bestowing the Bharat Ratna on Karpoori Thakur is unlikely to alter this political landscape. On another note, the award for Charan Singh appears akin to expressing gratitude towards Jayant Choudhury and the Rashtriya Lok Dal, considering their imminent return to the BJP-led National Democratic

Alliance (NDA). The conferment of the Bharat Ratna on P.V. Narasimha Rao appears to be a deliberate move to slight the Congress Party and its leaders, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. This seemingly unexplained resentment harbored by BJP/RSS leaders against the Nehru-Gandhi legacy comes at a time when the latter is marginalized in the country's political landscape, with no apparent indication of a family comeback to power. Prime Minister Modi, known for his

DEGREE OF THOUGHT assertive proach, subscribes to the By: Dipak Kurmi idea of thoroughly dimin-

ishing political rivals and ideological adversaries, a strategy characteristic of BJP's political tactics. Despite the lack of political resonance Narasimha Rao in Telangana during his lifetime and posthumously, the Bharat Ratna bestowed by Modi is unlikely to significantly boost BJP's electoral prospects in the state.

The Bharat Ratna conferred upon M.S. Swaminathan highlights a perceived lack of understanding by the BJP regarding the intricate politics of Tamil Nadu. Despite symbolic gestures like the inclusion of the fictional "Sengol" symbol in the new Parliament building, aiming to evoke the Tamil connection with Varanasi, the award to Swaminathan is expected to yield minimal political impact in the state.

The BJP's aspirations to gain influence in the state through seemingly vague gestures of goodwill, invoking the umbrella of India/Hindu cultural glory, are

likely to face significant challenges. Tamil cultural identity, deeply rooted in

> regional consciousness, resists attempts to homogenize Indian/Hindu cul-

ture, contrary to the essence of the Tamil spirit. The BJP's Hindi-heartland Hindutva approach may encounter difficulties in permeating the rich heritage of the land of Pallavas and Cholas, marked by the profound traditions of Tirukkural and the devotional expressions of Shaivita and Vaishnavite Tamil saint-poets. The religious fervor in the Tamil region stands distinct from the BJP and RSS's approach to political religion.

Prime Minister Modi displays persistence and determination in his ambition to propagate the Hindutva ideology throughout the nation, masquerading it under the banner of nationalism. However, the success of this endeavor is uncertain, as it appears to infringe upon a fundamental constitutional principle of the modern Indian polity - federalism, which upholds the autonomy of regional powers and

Noteworthy in Modi's political

approach is the incessant emphasis on India's civilizational grandeur and the imposition of political authority stemming from the BJP's stronghold in Hindi-speaking states. The imperious demeanor reminiscent of the Congress in the 1950s and 1960s persists within the BJP under PM Modi's leadership, albeit with a shift towards a subtler form of cultural dominance. Despite gestures of goodwill towards Tamil culture, the absence of shared political power renders these efforts seemingly ineffec-

Despite securing a comfortable majority in the parliamenwithout arena overwhelming dominance in the southern and eastern regions, Prime Minister Modi harbors ambitions beyond mere central governance. His vision extends to placing the BJP in power throughout the entire country, prompting a strategic approach of forging alliances. This outreach involves various parties, including the Janata Dal (Secular) led by former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in Karnataka, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh, the RLD in Uttar Pradesh, breakaway fac-

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in Maharashtra, the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab, and the JD(U) in Bihar. Drawing parallels with historical coalitionbuilding, such as the CPI(M) under Jyoti Basu forming the Left Front, the BJP's approach differs notably. While the CPI(M) maintained unity without undermining smaller allies, the BJP faces criticism for weakening its partners, except for the Akali Dal.

Renowned political scientist Rajni Kothari characterized the Congress as an inclusive umbrella party, where diverse factions coexisted. In contrast, the BJP, constrained by its rigid ideological foundations, cannot adopt a similar umbrella approach. Nonetheless, the party is compelled to seek partnerships and allies both within the political arena and beyond. Prime Minister Modi has been ardently engaged in forging connections with diverse factions across the nation. The downfall of Congress was attributed to a belief that India had no alternative to the party's dominance.

Similarly, the BJP, driven by a desire to propagate Hindutva as a unifying force, is nearing levels of hubris. Modi's recent strategy of using the Bharat Ratna award to appeal to diverse groups and regions appears weak, primarily due to the apparent inability to conceal the party's inclination to rule the nation akin to the Congress during the initial decades post-Independence. While a political party's aspiration for dominance is natural, there are inherent limits to such aspirations, and the BJP under PM Modi seems to be approaching this threshold. (The writer can be reached at di-

Easy to reach Mars but difficult to dispose of 'open defecation'

By: Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

ehaviour change plays an important role in the success of sanitation programs in India. While the construction of toilets is essential infrastructure, ensuring their sustained use requires addressing socio-economic and cultural factors that influence people's attitudes and practices towards sanitation. The mere construction of toilets does not guarantee their use. Deep-rooted habits, convenience, and socio-cultural norms associated with open defecation act as barriers. Even access to toilets, proper hand washing, and menstrual hygiene management require behavioural changes for optimal health benefits. Sustainable sanitation requires community ownership and active participation in program design and implementation.

India became the fourth country in the world (after Russia, the United States, and the European Union) and the only emerging country to launch a Mars probe into space. But it remains part of a group of 45 developing countries with less than 50% sanitation coverage, where many citizens practice open defecation either due to lack of access to toilets or by personal choice.

For India, providing access to toilets in some form or the other is the easy part. The most difficult thing is to get people to use them. In rural areas, toilet rejection varies by gender. An ongoing study based on 300 focus groups with men across the country has revealed that they prefer open defecation instead of toilets because it: saves water; Provides access to fresh water and an airy environment; Reduces toilet wear and tear; Saves women from being embarrassed in the eyes of men: And offers a convenient excuse to avoid stubborn wives and mothers.

Public agencies try to persuade families to invest in toilets for the safety of their young girls. But in villages, focus group-based studies with female teachers and girls revealed that a central benefit of open defecation is that it provides opportunities for same-gender social interaction for women. In many areas girls and women are not allowed to gather in public places to debate issues, exchange ideas, or simply relax together. Adolescents face even greater restrictions as older women often allow freer discussion among the youth. In this regard, open defecation provides an excuse to talk and spend time together, free from other constraints. Thus, eliminating open defecation in such villages first requires alternative safe gender-based spaces for social

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a very important and major program of the Government of India. But it is not just about building toilets. Rather, under, such toilets should be developed that people can use. Most importantly, it is also related to the system of disposal and treatment of dirt. This is very clear but how to carry it out is still a milliondollar question. Governments should ensure that toilets are accessible to all, especially marginalized groups, and consider affordability through subsidies or micro-financing schemes for better success of their sanitation programs. Design toilets that ensure privacy and dignity, especially for women and girls, while taking into account cultural sensitivity.

Provide training and support for proper toilet operation and maintenance, while being concerned about water availability and waste disposal.

Addressing the specific hygiene needs of women and girls, including menstrual hygiene management facilities and safe hygiene options during pregnancy. Connect with religious leaders and community elders to address culturally sensitive issues and integrate sanitation practices with existing belief systems. Empower local leaders, women, and sanitation workers to support sanitation practices and break sanitation-related taboos. Train to ad-Introduce

performance-based incentives for toilet use and recognize champions of change within communities.

Achieving success in sanitation

programs in India depends on promoting behaviour change. This indealing socio-economic and cultural factors, raising awareness, involving communities, increasing access, and using behavioural insights. Through these efforts, the government can encourage sustainable toilet use and improved sanitation practices across the country. For an emerging country like India, it is easier to participate in exploratory missions to Mars than to tackle the sanitation challenge. The former can be addressed through a linear process led by an advanced, wellresourced Indian Space Research Organisation, while the latter requires systemic change involving

thousands of towns and villages. For India to meet its goal of eliminating open defecation, collaboration and coordination among different types of systemic actors, generation of knowledge products in the form of accessible curriculum for masons and building and using only safe toilets is required. Community participation will be required.

Uniting for a Brighter Future: The Frontier Naga Territory Movement

By: Dr. Aniruddha Babar

One voice can change a room, and if one voice can change a room, then it can change a city, and if it can change a city, it can change a state, and if it change a state, it can change a nation, and if it can change a nation, it can change the world. Your voice can change the world." ~ Barack Obama

In the picturesque and mysterious mountains of the Eastern Naga region in the state of Nagaland, a movement is underway-a movement that not only captures the essence of the factual reality of the land but also encapsulates the dreams and aspirations of all the people in the region. The Frontier Naga Territory (FNT) Movement/ Frontier Nagaland Territory (FNT) Movement has surged forward with unwavering determination, driven by the collective efforts of various stakeholders under the visionary leadership of ENPO (Eastern Nagaland People's Organization). As the demand for FNT reaches its final stage, the call for unity echoes louder than ever, resonating through the rugged terrains of the Eastern Naga territories. Now, more than ever, it is imperative for all parties involved to set aside differences and stand united in their pursuit of a brighter, more prosperous future for the Eastern Naga people.

At this critical juncture, the unity and determination of all stakeholders are paramount, serving as the cornerstone upon which the realization of the Frontier Naga Territory hinges. It transcends mere political or economic significance: it is a profound embodiment of the collective aspirations and dreams of the Eastern Naga people, evident to their resilience and unwavering spirit. The ripple effects of this people's movement resonate far beyond territorial confines, reaching even our Naga brothers and sisters dwelling in the "Naga Self-Administered Zone" in Myanmar, who stand poised to reap the rewards of a unified and empowered Eastern Naga community of India.

This movement transcends the temporal confines of immediate political or economic benefits; it is a commitment to the enduring legacy of the Eastern Naga people. The realization of FNT signifies a pledge to build a future that goes beyond the transient ambitions of the present moment. It is a promise to secure a prosperous and sustainable environment that will echo through the ages, ensuring that the dreams of the youngest children and the wisdom of the elders are intertwined in the fabric of our collective history. Regardless of one's socioeconomic status, every individual plays a pivotal role in shaping the destiny of the Eastern Naga community, emphasizing the inclusive and egalitarian nature of this transformative endeavor.

As the Frontier Naga Territory Move-recognizing the inherent worth and digment gains momentum, it becomes increasingly evident that its significance extends far beyond the influence of leadership alone. It has evolved into a powerful people's movement where the collective strength of the community propels it forward. Standing on the brink of this monumental transformation, it is paramount that we internalize the profound truth that our true strength lies in our unity. Only through a harmonious collaboration of diverse perspectives and unwavering solidarity can we chart a course towards a future where the aspirations of every Naga find expression and fulfillment.

The journey towards FNT has not been without challenges. We have faced formidable obstacles, encountered setbacks, and weathered storms along the way, yet our resolve remains steadfast and unvielding. Despite the odds stacked against us, our collective spirit has only grown stronger, fortified by our unwavering commitment to the cause. Together, we have demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity, drawing strength from our shared purpose and unwavering determination. With every hurdle we overcome, our resolve deepens, propelling us forward on this arduous yet noble path towards the realization of our aspirations.

In our quest for Frontier Naga Territory, let us not lose sight of our values and principles. Integrity, honesty, and inclusivity must guide our actions as we navigate this transformative journey. It is through these virtues that we shall forge a future that is just and equitable for all. Upholding integrity ensures that our actions are grounded in truth and righteousness, fostering trust and respect among our fellow stakeholders. Embracing honesty allows us to maintain transparency and accountability, laying the foundation for meaningful dialogue and collaboration. And practicing inclusivity ensures that every voice is heard, every perspective is valued, and every individual is empowered to contribute to the collective vision of a prosperous and harmonious society. With these principles as our compass, we can navigate the complexities of the Frontier Naga Territory Movement with integrity, honesty, and inclusivity, paving the way for a future that is built on justice, equity, and unity.

As we march towards the realization of FNT, let us extend a hand of friendship and cooperation to all stakeholders, transcending barriers of politics, personal ambition and selfish gains. Let us set aside our differences, individualistic approaches and work towards a common goal-the prosperity and well-being of our Eastern Naga people-the overlooked and marginalized-the Socially & Politically Invisible, Constitutionally Injured, Economically Broken, Emotionally Hurt People of Eastern Nagaland. Our strength lies in our unity, in nity of every individual and it is through collaboration, compassion, solidarity and our grand eternal commitment to the Constitutional values and democratic process- that we shall achieve greatness and pave the way for a future where no one is left behind or

The Frontier Naga Territory Movement goes beyond the realm of economic or infrastructural progress; it is a profound journey of rediscovery, empowerment and claiming of our lost constitutional rights through the democratic process. This movement is a poignant assertion of our identity, a reclaiming of the essence that makes us what we are - The Proud inhabitants of the Eastern Nagaland-The Proud Citizens of this Nation-The Proud stakeholders of Constitutional Values of Justice, Equality, Liberty and Fraternity that this country of ours holds near and dear.. It is a call to uphold our rights as Eastern Nagas, ensuring that every Eastern Naga, irrespective of their background or circumstances, finds a space to thrive and flourish. In this collective pursuit, we wield the power to sculpt our destiny, moulding a future rich with promise and opportunity. As we traverse this transformative path, let our shared vision resonate - of a Frontier Naga Territory that not only flourishes economically but also safeguards our cultural heritage, individual liberties and constitutional rights, ensuring a harmonious and inclusive haven for all Eastern Nagas.

In this pivotal moment, as we approach the culmination of the Frontier Naga Territory Movement, it becomes paramount for us to uphold an unwavering commitment to our cause. The sacendured rifices ENPO-torchbearers of our movement remind us of the importance of resilience in the face of adversity. Simultaneously, we must look forward, drawing inspiration from the dreams woven by future generations.

Our journey, though challenging, is a testament to the strength derived from unity, the unwavering determination pulsating within our hearts, and the unyielding perseverance that propels us forward. As we navigate this difficult path, let us stand firm, fortified by the collective spirit of the Eastern Naga people, ready to surmount any obstacle in our relentless pursuit of a brighter and more prosperous future.

In the vast and intricate fabric of history, the Frontier Naga Territory Movement will be etched into the collective memory as a profound testament to the unyielding spirit of the Eastern Naga people. This movement stands as a lasting legacy, showcasing their remarkable resilience and unwavering determination-a narrative that surpasses geographical boundaries and resonates across generations.

tier Naga Territory Movement becomes not just a chapter but a cornerstone, symbolizing the strength and endurance of a community bound together by a common purpose. It is a story that unfolds beyond the constraints of any single era, weaving its significance into the very fabric of the Naga identity and leaving an indelible mark on the historical narrative of the Eastern Naga peo-

Each individual who plays a role in this movement will leave an indelible mark on history. Their contributions, whether big or small, their words of encouragement, and their actions will all be carefully documented for future generations to learn from and remember. Their struggles and sacrifices, their unwavering dedication, will be etched into the annals of our nation's history, serving as a testament to their resilience and commitment to the cause. Yet, even the betrayals of those who may falter in their loyalty to the Frontier Naga Territory Movement, those who act as the proverbial "Judas," will not escape the scrutiny of history. Every action, every betrayal, will be remembered and accounted for, shaping the narrative of our collective journey towards a brighter

The magnificent ascent of the Frontier Naga Territory is on the horizon, promising a future filled with promise and opportunity. The Frontier Naga Territory Movement shines brightly as a guiding light, showing us the way forward in a world filled with doubt and conflict. Despite the daunting hurdles we face, it stands tall as a symbol of hope, reminding us that when we come together in unity and solidarity, we can conquer even the most formidable challenges. In doing so, we lay the groundwork for a tomorrow where dreams are no longer distant fantasies but tangible realities waiting to be embraced and fulfilled.

So let us stand together, hand in hand, as we embark on this historic journey through a democratic, constitutional process to reclaim the lost Constitutional Rights through the rise of Frontier Naga Territory, our hearts ablaze with determination and our spirits unyielding in the face of adversity.

Let us forge ahead with unwavering

courage and steadfast conviction, knowing that our destination is not merely a distant dream but a tangible reality awaiting our grasp. The Frontier Naga Territory beckons us with promise and potential, and together, united in purpose and resolve, we shall overcome every obstacle, surmount every challenge, and carve our destiny with the strength of our collective will, until the vision of a thriving Frontier Naga Territory- a symbol of hope and justice- is realized in all its glory. (The author is an academician in the Dept of Political Science, Tetso College, Nagaland)



The Nigerian encounter

By: Kamal Baruah

ome phenomenal teachers, who helped students grow and learn through their powerful lessons. As memory decays over time, students don't recollect most of what their précis all about that they learned at classroom, but remember all those lifelong connections and memories with friends at hostel. This is another memoir of their amusing encounter with a Nigerian over the national capital during late 90s.

The DTC buses runs through the heart of Delhi in Red, Green, Blue and Orange colours, where No. 507 goes inside to JNU Campus. Now 507-A connects to Hauz Khas Metro Station. Inside the campus, most of the students had depended on DTC those days. The beautiful campus was in full bloom and one can see the names of buildings, hostels, roads, and facilities on the campus are drawn from Indian her-

What makes students happy at India's prestigious campus about its multi-disciplinary approach to education that allows a student from any background to choose another course of his/her choice, which made JNU unique in the country? The towering above all academic complexes, the JNU Central Library strive for excellence by opening up to 12 midnight and added a further boost



by its Library Canteen. Students don't go away without tasting a delicious tea and its tasty chicken curry, masala dosa and vada as most of the students used library as their study instead of their hos-

Hostel food is nothing more than raw vegetables and dhabas come to their rescue.

Anything academic tends to holds its value. Piled up novels of Sunday Book Market at Daryaganj are a steal and nominal price of secondhand textbook and its photocopies at JNU campus helps afford education for many. All works and no play aren't ideal.

Despite all serious learning, students await for new academic session, where a thousand of students join every year with a few hundreds of international stu-

It's a huge complex of more than 6000 residents from 25+ hostels that makes it another mini township - a new area being deThe entire ambience is soothing and relaxing. The hillock at PSR makes a cool hangout option among students.

It was their rag day in the weekend with a fellow international student that brought some boisterous jokes. As his door knocked at odd hours for a ragging, the Nigerian looked perplexed, so he politely asked them to wait for a while and slammed the door shut straightway.

A couple of minutes passed, but he didn't turn up for their call. Raggers stood in the verandah looking dejected. But they remember the most hilarious account of seven feet tall African, it was like facing Gulliver in the land of Lilliput, who arrived with his traditional attire of loosely fitted shirt and long sleeves in distinctive bright colours and patterns; saying "Well I'm ready for ragging"

With that entire dramatic outcome, the raggers finally forget

jokes with him, preferring instead to remain friendly talks about his country and its people. The ceremonial outfit turned the rag-talk a cozy lived-in air but his English accent was pronounced flat and tendency for the stress in Nigerian English with it a hard "H" as in "HO-tel", so police came out as "FO-lice" and hamburger as "HAM-boga"

Nigerians don't apply intonation when they speak English in their accent, there is a gap, and there is a vacuum. What do people of the world know about Nigerian people and culture, which made it so special for them? English was brought to Nigeria by British, traders and missionaries. Soon it blended with the local languages and turned into the Nigerian pidgin. Like other fellow citizen, football was his most loved sport.

Probably, the tall Nigerian didn't realize their intention for another Intro-Play at JNU but he felt CAM-for-table (comfortable) with a few north east students at JNU Campus. He believed in his cultural pride and represented for his ethnic group Igbo tribes and thereby ragging thought to be as campus community gathering at India's soil. He offered them some SAL-ad over the MATtress. It didn't lead the ragging menace, butrealized later, perhaps all raggers escaped from a

Comparative analysis of puppet dance in the North-Eastern region

By: Simanta Sarma

The puppet dance artists Tripura's Prabhitangshu Das and Assam's Binita Devi have attracted the younger generation of the North-Eastern region towards puppetry and are engaging them in the path of earning. Puppet dances of the North-Eastern region have gained recognition worldwide.

The North-Eastern region of India comprises the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Tripura, forming the northeastern part of India. Although these seven states share historical and geographical aspects, their cultural diversity is notable. In prehistoric and historic times, this region was known as Pragjyotisha, and after India's independence, due to political, economic, and

other reasons, Assam was divided into seven states. Despite the political division, the traditional society and culture of these seven states are deeply interconnected. Puppetry, especially puppet dance, is a significant aspect of the cultural presentation in the North-Eastern region. Traditional puppetry or puppet theater combines elements of song, dance, and drama. Dialogues in traditional puppet theater are minimal, and emphasis is placed on poetic verses. Songs hold greater importance in traditional puppet theater as they often conclude the performance or act as the climax. Oral tradition is prevalent in Puppet Theater, and stories are usually based on epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata, or Puranas. Puppet theater often incorporates humorous elements to depict various situations from real life with a touch of satire.

The art of making clay Puppets in Assam, Tripura, and Manipur is visibly similar. Puppets are crafted from the clay obtained from local riverside soil. Artists of puppet nachs (dance) use their expressions as a means of communication in their mother tongue Before the performance of puppet dances, the tradition of worshiping Bhagavata (a form of god) is a common characteristic of the traditional Suta Putala dance of the northeastern region. Puppets are revered with great respect, and the leader or patron of the group is often worshiped in their homes with devotion. Puja (ritual worship) is performed with burning incense sticks and oil lamps during the night on auspicious occasions. Puppets are crafted to represent various forms of gods during these rituals.

The attire and decorations of the clay puppets in Manipur are influenced by the traditional Ras Leela dance dramas. In Assam, during the narration of myths and epics, the puppets are adorned to depict various characters and scenes, and in Tripura, the puppets are adorned with attire and decorations through the journey of puppetry. Since all aspects of puppetry in the North-Eastern region are interconnected with the artisans' social life, lifestyle, puppet-making process, selection of themes, and presentation style, similarities are observed. Therefore, the current generation is analysing various social issues through this common perspective. The majority of puppeteers in the Northeastern region is uneducated villagers.

Consequently, there is a lack of capacity stemming from a dearth of exposure to the present environment. However, it must be acknowledged that despite this, puppeteers excel in the craft of puppet making and have considerable expertise in presentation. It is true that the promotion of folk art contributes significantly to the preservation of cultural heritage, and it offers ample opportunities for innovation and advancement. In this regard, I can provide an example of the contemporary puppetry group from the Northeastern region. Contemporary puppetry groups in this region have achieved notable success in various challenging

Puppeteer artists from Tripura, Prabhitangshu Das (Eminent Puppeteer and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee), and Assam's Binita Devi (Eminent Puppeteer, Actress and National Tagore Research Scholarship From Ministry of Culture, Govt of India) are attracting young generations in the Northeastern region towards puppetry and engaging them in the path of earning. Puppetry in the Northeastern region has gained recognition worldwide. Tripura Puppet Theatre and Assam's Surojit Academy are making efforts to give puppetry a commercial form.

Artists associated with contemporary puppetry have received formal training in various fields like fine arts, drama, etc., and they are educated urban youths. Every day, all these artists spend 3-4 hours creating puppetry artworks.

Despite reduced attendance at puppet shows, puppeteers can earn around 60-70 thousand rupees per



year. Puppetry artist Prabhitangshu Das has organized events even in Germany in 2012. Binita Devi from Guwahati has significantly contributed to the promotion and dissemination of puppetry art in Northeastern India. She has received a national scholarship from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and is conducting research at Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya. She is providing puppetry training to individuals and organizations like National Council of Educational Research and Training, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Assam Science Technology and environment Council, Vigyan Prasar, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and various universities and colleges. This field of artistic education is considered important by the Government of India. Presenting puppetry in the context of contemporary surroundings has added a special dimension to educational aspects.

Contemporary puppetry is now being sought after in society's contemporary sphere. In this regard, Prabhitangshu Das and Binita Devi have attracted nonartistic youth from the Northeastern region. Many educated young people are showing interest in this art form. Many have received national scholarships from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and have received fellowships and scholarships at the na-

The traditional puppet dance of Tripura is known as 'Putul Nach." In Assam, it is also called "Putala Nach." The process of making clay puppets is similar in Assam and Tripura, where small wooden frames are used. Assamese puppets are also made using small local wood. They are currently made with the help of thermocol. In Tripura's puppet dance tradition, the Bengali language is used. Mythological stories are popular in Tripura.

Usually, the puppets themselves tell mythological stories. The stories are generally depicted through names or folk songs. Importance is given to the art of acting. Performances of puppets in Assam and Tripura are organized by various parties. Puppets from Tripura and Assam exhibit unique characteristics. The colours of puppets made in Assam and Tripura are based on Assamese 'Hengul' high pitch sounds. Typically, colours are made from tree gum, resin, and various

Currently, natural colours are not readily available, so dyed fabrics are used instead. Manipuri puppets are known as 'Laitibi Jagai Namare Janajat' in Manipur. Manipuri string puppets are dressed in costumes reminiscent of Ras Leela by human surroundings. In Assam, puppets are displayed with the presentation of Puranas and epics, depicting lively characters during presentations. The skill of puppet play differs in Assam from Manipur.

Manipuri dolls are mainly used to tell the story of Krishna because most people in Manipur worship Krishna. In Assam, puppets depicting the stories of various deities are displayed. Folk music accompanies the narrative. The puppet dance art in Assam, Tripura, and Manipur is similar in some ways. Local social customs and traditions influence the various art forms practiced by local artists' groups. The groups of folk artists prioritize attention to their own art forms. Despite the respect and honour given to their art, every group strives to preserve and promote their art form. Many foreigners are interested in researching this art form in India, especially in the northeastern region. Many people are learning this art form and presenting their own local art forms.

Therefore, this art form is a source of pride for the northeastern region, as skilled artists revive it. (The author is an Assistant Professor in Sualkuchi Budaram Madhab Satradhikar College, Sualkuchi)

'Broken dreams: Honesty in Kashmir's story'



By: Aubaid Ahmad Akhoon

n the complex and nuanced tapestry of Kashmir's historical narrative, a stark rev-Lelation surfaces - the relentless pursuit of personal gain has too frequently eclipsed the collective well-being of the community. The ascension of an elite class, propelled by conscienceless motives, adeptly orchestrated the narrative through diverse channels, including mass media broadcast platforms and various tools within the state machinery.

This historical deception, orchestrated by those who would later form the elite, celebrated plunderers and blunderers, perpetuating a distorted legacy. The underlying issue lies in the acknowledgment that glorifying such figures betrays society and deviates its trajectory. What unfolded was not merely a breach of trust but a deliberate manipulation of narratives to serve vested interests.

Central to this narrative is the imperative for conscientious reflection before action. In a society where personal gains frequently overshadow collective welfare, the Kashmiri elite's fixation on personal reputation misled the populace, perpetuating self-serving motives and hindering genuine societal progress.

The downward filtration theory becomes apparent - the elite's actions influencing the broader population. As the elite prioritized reputation over authentic conscience, the common people were led astray, perpetuating a cycle of self-serving motives at the expense of societal advancement.

Navigating this historical landscape requires individuals, particularly Kashmiris, to liberate themselves from the shackles of per-

sonal gain. Both past and present elites must be held accountable for choices that have shaped Kashmir's narrative.

In the broader context, the Kashmiri tale serves as a cautionary reminder of the dangers when personal gain overshadows collective well-being. The call to question one's conscience isn't merely philosophical; it's a prac-

t i c a 1 imperative for a society prioritizing huindividual interests. Only through conscientious introspection can a commubreak nity free from the chains of historical fraud,

way for an authentic and just future.

paving the

This reflection extends beyond Kashmir, resonating with the timeless wisdom of Mark Twain, the American writer, humorist, and lecturer: "Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect." In a world fixated on external judgments, this insight urges individuals to prioritize the inner compass over fleeting perceptions.

that conscience is an unwavering guide to our

ciples. Unlike reputation, influenced by external factors, our conscience serves as a steadfast compass, pointing toward authenticity and moral integrity.

Reputation, often shaped by public opinion, is a fickle entity. Subject to change and influenced by external circumstances, it may not always align with our true character. While it can open doors, the cost of compromising principles for external validation should be carefully considered.

A delicate balance exists between maintaining a positive reputation and staying true to our authentic selves. Mark Twain's counsel encourages us to evaluate the cost of compromising principles for external validation, recognizing the inherent paradox in societal expectations.

A robust conscience is built on self-awareness and a commitment to moral principles. Reflecting on our values allows us to align our actions with convictions, cultivating a reputation grounded in authenticity.

Prioritizing conscience over reputation provides resilience against external judgment. Recognizing

Mark Twain's wisdom centers on the not control idea that conscience is an unwavering others' perceptions liberates us from self-imposed shifting focus from seeking approval to staying true to our principles. Tailpiece: the Kashmiri

Mark Twain's wisdom centers on the idea actions, reflecting our moral and ethical prin-

guide to our actions, reflecting our moral and ethical principles. Unlike reputation, influenced by external factors, our conscience serves as a steadfast compass, pointing toward authenticity and moral integrity. Reputation, often shaped by public opinion, is a fickle entity

Mark Twain's wisdom converge, offering a profound lesson for navigating societal narratives. The essence lies in conscientious reflection, prioritizing authenticity over fleeting reputations. Whether in the historical context of Kashmir or the broader spectrum of human experience, embracing the call to question one's conscience becomes paramount for a society aspiring to forge an authentic and just future. (The author is a renowned Educational Columnist & Motivational Speaker and an Associate Editor of the Weekly Publication 'Education Quill')

parable and

Flower Of Music

By: Khemu Parashar

The flower of music is very fragrant, infusion of enthusiasm in the body through, destruction of negativity, cultural heritage is linked to music, bud of prosperity blooms in it,

branch of joy is also laden with fruits, the sounds of music are really amazing, sweet fruits add magic to the ears, one quickly gets into the habit of tasting, them again and

Music makes the body and mind happy, reverses sad times, brings new life to the body, makes one feel fresh, life pure, there are hundreds of such qualities within it.

Humming Bird

By: Maharshi Dubey

Sweet bird Humming bird, Cute bird Humming bird,

Rapidly flaps wings, Humming-humming sings,

Flys backwards easily, Takes nectar usually,

How so small, Not big and tall, Wonderful bird Humming bird, Beautiful bird Humming bird.



The Rose

By: Mowsam Hazarika

So soft. It's like you'll be hurt if I touch you! So sweet, It's like you'll be unclean if I touch you!

So beautiful, It's like you'll be ashamed to look at you! Because you are The rose of my heart!

Yet I love you I can't hug! You who are among the thorns I can't make you my own!

When Winds Blow Wintry Whistles

By Bipul Chandra Kalita

When winds blow wintry whistles I become a tree Full of leafless branches With a status Of silent emotions Or, gradually roaring loneliness...

Many a suffering weighs my patience Pinching my conscience Punching my firmness To distract me From being ready to be green again...

When pains become my bosom friends Wintry winds blow trombones To make me prepare for a new suffering And I make myself ready to be tolerant...

Foes fail to defeat me rhetorically Kindness protects my isms; Friends win my simplest heart Love keeps it open like a widely read book...

The president said that the troop withdrawal was 'a correct decision' and emphasized the priority of saving Ukrainian soldiers' lives

Zelenskyy warns of an 'artifical deficit' of weapons after withdrawal from Avdiivka

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned allies on Saturday that an "artificial deficit" of weapons for his country risks giving Russia breathing space, hours after his military chief said he was withdrawing troops from the eastern city of Avdiivka.

Zelenskyy spoke to the Munich Security Conference, an annual gathering of security and foreign policy officials.

pabilities, Ukraine is back on the defensive against Russia in the nearly Putin to 2-year-old war, hindered by low adapt to ammunition supplies and a shortthe curage of personnel. rent intensity of the

"Ukrainians have proven that we can force Russia to retreat," he said. "We can get our land back, and (Russian President Vladimir) Putin can lose, and this has already happened more than once on the battlefield."

"Our actions are limited only by the sufficiency and length of range of our strength," he added, pointing to the situation in Avdiivka. Ukrainian commander Col Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi said early Saturday that he was withdrawing troops from the city,

where outnumbered defenders the power that they had" since battled a Russian assault for four months, to avoid encirclement and save soldiers' lives.

"Dear friends, unfortunately keeping Ukraine in the artificial deficit of weapons, particularly

tillery and

long-

range ca-

war," Ze-

lenskyy

said. "The



selfweakening of democracy over time undermines our joint results." The president said that the troop withdrawal was "a correct decision" and emphasized the priority of saving Ûkrainian soldiers' lives.

He suggested that Russia has achieved little, adding that it has

October and lost thousands of soldiers — "that's what Russia has achieved. It's a depletion of their army.

"We're just waiting for weapons that we're short of," he

pointing to a lack of longrange weapons. "That's why our weapon today our soldiers, our people." Zelenskyy on

Friday went to Berlin and Paris, where he signed long-term bilateral security agreements with Germany and France, following a similar agreement with Britain last

Ukraine's European allies are appealing to the U.S. Congress to approve a package that includes aid for Ukraine, \$60 billion that

would go largely to U.S. defense entities to manufacture missiles, munitions and other military hardware for the battlefields in Ukraine. The package faces resistance from House Republi-

Zelenskyy said on Saturday that the U.S. "did a lot for us" and thanked Washington for bipartisan support. He said he planned to meet U.S. senators in Munich on Saturday. They "have to understand (that) only in unity we can win (against) Russia," he

Asked whether it would be a good idea to invite former U.S. president and 2024 presidential hopeful Donald Trump to Kyiv, Zelenskyy replied: "I invited publicly, but it depends on his

"If ... he will come, I'm ready even to go with him to the front line," he added. Zelenskyy argued that "among us, there is no one for whom the ongoing war in Europe does not pose a threat."

"Please do not ask Ukraine when the war will end," he said. "Ask yourself why is Putin still able to continue it." (AP)

Western officials and Kremlin critics blame Putin and his government for Navalny's death in prison

TALLINN, Feb 17: World leaders and Russian opposition activists wasted no time Friday in blaming the reported death of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny on President Vladimir Putin and his government.

"It is obvious that he was killed by Putin," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was visiting Germany for the Munich Security Conference as he sought aid for his country's efforts to fight off an invasion by Russia.

'Putin doesn't care who dies — only for him to hold his position. This is why he must hold onto nothing. Putin must lose everything and be held responsible for his deeds," Zelenskyy added.

U.S. President Joe Biden said Washington does not know exactly what happened, "but there is no doubt that the death of Navalny was a consequence of something Putin and his thugs did.'

Navalny "could have lived safely in exile," but instead returned to Russia to "continue his work," despite knowing he could be imprisoned or killed because he believed so deeply in his country, in Russia." German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose country temporarily took in Navalny in 2020 after he was poisoned with a nerve agent, praised the Kremlin critic's bravery and said his death makes clear "what kind of

'He has probably now paid for this courage with his life," Scholz said, standing next to Zelenskyy. The German leader said he met Navalny in Berlin during his convalescence.

Navalny, 47, was serving a 19-year prison sentence on extremism charges in a remote penal colony above the Arctic Circle at the time of his death. He had been behind bars since he returned from Germany in January 2021, serving time on various charges that he rejected as a politically motivated effort to keep him



imprisoned for life.

Navalny was "brutally murdered by the Kremlin," said Latvian President Edgars Rinkēvičs in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "That's a fact, and that is something one should know about the true nature of Russia's current regime." Navalny's associates stressed they did not have independent confirmation of his death in the reports that came from Russia's penitentiary officials. His close ally Ivan Zhdanov said authorities "must notify the relatives" within 24 hours, but there have been no such notifications.

Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, appearing at the Munich conference, said she did not know whether to believe the official Russian announcement because "we cannot trust Putin and the Putin government. They always lie." "But if this is true, I want Putin and everyone around Putin, Putin's friends, his government, to know that they will bear responsibility for what they did to our country, to my family and to my husband. And this day will come very soon," she said. Navalny's death also led to an outpouring of grief

among Russians living abroad.

In the Serbian capital of Belgrade, hundreds of Russians and others lit candles and laid flowers outside the Russian embassy. Tens of thousands of Russians have moved to Serbia, a fellow Slavic country, since Russia invaded Ukraine two years ago. (AP)

A man in Iran guns down 12 relatives in a shooting rampage with a Kalashnikov rifle

TEHRAN, Feb 17: A 30-year-old man gunned down 12 of his relatives on Saturday in a remote rural area in southeast Iran, the deadliest shooting reported in decades.

Head of the justice department of the province of Kerman, Ebrahim Hamidi, told the semiofficial ISNA news agency the gunman opened fire on his father, brother and other relatives early morning in a village because of family disputes.

The report, which did not identify the assailant, stated he used a Kalashnikov assault rifle. Local media report on occasional shootings, but this attack has had the highest death toll in Iran, where citizens are only legally allowed hunting rifles, common in rural In 2022, an employee, who was dismissed

from a state-owned financial conglomerate, opened fire at his former workplace, killing three people and injuring another five before killing himself in the country's west. In 2016, a 26-year-old man shot 10 relatives in a rural area in the south of Iran.

In recent years, violence has spiked in the country suffering from deteriorating economic conditions coupled with crushing American sanctions that helped spark soaring inflation and increasing unemployment. (AP)

Israel defense chief: Military 'thoroughly planning' offensive in crowded Gaza border town TEL AVIV, Feb 17: Israel's denext Hamas center of gravity"

fense minister on Friday said Israel plans to target. Israel is "thoroughly planning" "We are thoroughly plana military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, signaling determination to move ahead despite growing international concerns about the safety of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians seeking refuge

U.S. President Joe Biden has urged Israel not to carry out the operation without a "credible" plan to protect civilians and to instead focus on a cease-fire, while Egypt has said an operation could threaten diplomatic relations between the countries. Many other world leaders have issued similar messages of concern. An estimated 1.4 million Palestinians, more than half of population, have crammed into Rafah, most of them displaced by fighting elsewhere in the territory. Hundreds of thousands are living in sprawling tent camps.

Speaking to reporters Friday, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that Israel has inflicted heavy losses on Hamas during a war that is now in its fifth month and that Rafah is "the

ning future operations in Rafah, which is a significant Hamas stronghold," he said. He declined to say say when the operation might begin, though Israel has previously said it will first develop a plan to evacuate civilians. Palestinians and international

aid agencies say there is no safe place to go, with Israel also carrying out strikes in areas where it had told civilians to seek shelter, including Rafah. The Israeli military launched its war in response to a cross-border Hamas attack on Oct. 7 that killed some 1,200 people in Israel and took 250 others hostage. The air and ground offensive has killed over 28.000 Palestinians, according to health authorities in the Hamasrun enclave, caused widespread destruction, displaced some 80% of the population and sparked a humanitarian crisis.

Egypt has repeatedly warned Israel not to push Palestinian civilians in Rafah across the border, saying a mass influx could lead to the end of the 1



Israel and Egypt. While some Israeli hard-liners have called for the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza, Gallant said there were no plans to do so.

"The state of Israel has no intention of evacuating Palestinian civilians to Egypt," he said. "We respect and value our peace agreement with Egypt, which is a cornerstone of stability in the region as well as an important partner."

New satellite photos, however, indicate that Egypt is preparing for that very scenario. The images show Egypt building a wall and leveling land near its border with Gaza. Egyptian officials did not respond to requests for comment. The Israeli offensive has in-

cluded months of airstrikes as

well as a ground invasion that has steadily moved southward through most of Gaza. In recent weeks, it has focused on Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest city and a Hamas stronghold.

On Friday, Palestinian health officials in Khan Younis said that five patients in intensive care died after their oxygen ran out following a raid by Israeli troops in southern Gaza's largest hospital. The Israeli army has been

searching the Nasser Hospital complex, arresting suspected Hamas militants and searching for evidence that the remains of Israeli hostages abducted by Hamas might be there. Israel says it does not target patients or doctors, but staff say the facility is struggling under heavy fire and dwindling supplies, in-

airstrikes on Rafah overnight killed at least 13 people, including nine members of the same family, according to hospital officials. Also on Friday, a Palestinian assailant opened fire at a bus stop on a busy intersection in southern Israel, killing two people and wounding four before being shot dead by a bystander. There was no

cluding food and water.

Gallant said 70 suspected

militants have been arrested at

the hospital, including 20 who

allegedly participated in the

Oct. 7 attack. Two Israeli

immediate claim of responsibil-

ity. Negotiations over a ceasefire in Gaza, meanwhile, appear

to have stalled, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday pushed back hard against the U.S. vision for after the war — particularly its calls for the creation of a Palestinian state. After speaking overnight with Biden and reportedly meeting with visiting CIA chief William Burns, Netanyahu wrote on X that Israel will not accept "international dictates regarding a permanent settlement with the Palestinians." (AP)

Pak elections: Nawaz Sharif's PML-N slams Imran Khan's party for seeking US intervention

LAHORE, Feb 17: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has criticised jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his party for seeking US intervention in the alleged "rigging" of the February 8 polls, saying "it goes against Pakistan's sovereignty.

PML-N leader Marriyum Aurangzeb also called out Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for inviting the US despite accusing it in 2022 of bringing down his government. Khan on Thursday sought the help of the US with a special message to Washington that it should play a role and voice concern about his country's "rigged" general elections

On Friday, Aurangzeb, while addressing a press conference along with party leader Ataullah Tarar, took exception to Khan inviting the US to interfere in the country's elections: "Absolutely not, we are not slaves! It goes against Pakistan's sovereignty," The Express Tribune website said.

According to The News International, the senior PML-N leader slammed PTI for seeking US help against alleged rigging in February 8 polls as she sought to remind it by saying, "According to you, the United States had conspired and overthrown your government. The PTI used to blame the US for conspiring against its government via a no-confidence motion. However, it now wants Washington to speak on Pakistan's

It was a purported diplomatic cable – the cipher – that Khan, 71, had waived at a public rally in March 2022 claiming that the US wanted to oust his government, soon after which his political stars took a downhill journey leading to incarceration, a conviction in multiple cases and even being disbarred from fighting the polls.

Aurangzeb also alleged that the PTI wants to spread anarchy in the country. Aurangzeb also told Khan's party to approach legal forums for the redressal of their rigging complaints, "If you have an objection to the election, take it to the Election Commission. After that, go to the high court and Supreme Court, we also went (there)," she said.

More than a week after voting took place for the general elections in Pakistan, there is still no clarity which party would form the government at the Centre. Independent candidates - a majority of them backed by Khan's PTI - won 93 of the 265 National Assembly

Indian-origin man jailed for life over 30-year-old UK murder

LONDON, Feb 17: An Indian-origin man has been sentenced to life imprisonment by a court here for murdering a woman 30 years ago after he was connected to the brutal killing through his strand of hair found at the crime scene.

Sandip Patel, 51, was found guilty of the murder of Marina Koppel by stabbing her at least 140 times at her flat in the Westminster area of London in 1994 and sentenced at the Old Bailey court in the city on Friday. The Metropolitan Police said innova-

tive work by its forensics team on his hair found on a ring worn by Koppel finally brought Patel to justice all these years later.

"This was a great team effort with the forensic scientists, fingerprint experts, the forensic manager and the investigating team all playing their part in solving

Marina's murder," said Dan Chester, Operational Forensic Manager and the Met Police's Forensic Lead for Cold Case Homicide Investigations.

"Forensic techniques and technologies constantly evolving, and the po-

lice will continue to review serious unsolved cases and, where possible, pursue new opportunities to enable both the prosecution of those responsible and to exonerate the innocent. This includes cases specifically related to violence against women," he said.

Marina, who was 39 at the time of her death, lived and worked in her flat during the week and spent time with her husband in Northampton during the weekend. It was an unconventional relationship as Marina worked as a masseuse and occasional sex worker, but the two were happily married, the court heard. She was described as a loving mother and worked hard to send money home to her family in Columbia, including her two children who were being

cared for by her family there. On August 8, 1994, Marina's husband became worried when he could not get hold of her for some time and so travelled to her flat to check she was ok. When he arrived at the flat, he found his wife's body unresponsive and covered in blood. He alerted the police who conducted an analysis of the crime scene gathering crucial evidence, including the ring she was wearing. During their search, they also found a plastic shopping bag which had Patel's finger-

However, Patel, who was 21 at the time, worked in the shop where the bag had come from so the presence of his fingerprints was not considered significant evidence, and for many years the case went unsolved, the Met Police said.

In 2008 further items were examined. among them a ring which had a hair attached. How-

ever, it wasn't until 2022 when sensitive techniques available allowed for a DNA profile to be obtained from the hair on the ring. It was at this stage that the hair was linked to Patel, whose DNA was now

on the database after he was charged with Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) in 2012. The Met Police said the case was

who continued to gather evidence. Patel was arrested on January 19 last year on suspicion of Marina's murder. Fingerprint experts then also matched his footprints to some bloodstained bare

taken on by Specialist Crime detectives

footprints that were found at the crime This, alongside the DNA on the hair, the fingerprints on the plastic bag and the fact that a bank card belonging to Marina stolen at the time from her flat, was used at an ATM just half a mile from his home shortly after the murder, was enough to convince the jury of his guilt.

Afghan women fear going out alone due to Taliban decrees on clothing and male guardians, UN says

ISLAMABAD, Feb 17: Afghan women feel scared or unsafe leaving their home alone because of Taliban decrees and enforcement campaigns on clothing and male guardians, according to a report from the N mission in Afghanistan.

The report was issued days before a UNconvened meeting in the Qatari capital Doha, where member states and special envoys to Afghanistan are expected to discuss engagement with the Taliban. The Taliban have barred women from

most areas of public life and stopped girls from going to school beyond the sixth grade as part of harsh measures they imposed after taking power in 2021.

They are also restricting women's access work, travel and health care if they are unmarried or don't have a male guardian, and arresting those who don't comply with the Taliban's interpretation of hijab, or Islamic headscarf.

The UN mission's report, published Friday, said the decrees are being enforced through arrest, harassment and intimidation. Women said they increasingly fear going to public spaces owing to the threat arrest and the "long-lasting stigma and shame" associated with being taken into police custody

Over half of the women interviewed for the report felt unsafe leaving the house without a male guardian, or mahram. Risks to their security and their anxiety levels worsened whenever a new decree was announced specifically targeting them, the report said. Women who went out with a mahram felt safer, but noted the stress from depending on another person to accompany them. Some said their male guardians

wanted to visit certain shops or stray from a route limited to performing basic necessarv tasks. This undercut chances to "enjoy even

micro-moments of stimulation or leisure' outside the home, said the report. Some women said that male relatives

were also afraid and reluctant to leave the home with female relatives, as this would expose them to Taliban harassment.

Nobody from the Vice and Virtue Ministry, which is the Taliban's morality police and enforces decrees, was immediately available for comment about the UN report. Heather Barr, from Human Rights Watch, told the Associated Press that Afghan women's fear of leaving home unaccompanied was "damning and devastating" but not surprising. (AP)

The H3 rocket blasted off from a launch pad at the Tanegashima Space Center on time Saturday morning

Japan's new flagship H3 rocket achieves planned trajectory in key test after failed debut last year

TOKYO, Feb 17: A Japanese flagship H3 rocket lifted off from a space station in southwestern Japan on Saturday, successfully achieving its planned trajectory and releasing two small observation satellites in a key second test, overcoming its failed debut launch a year ago and buoying hope for the country to be competitive in the global

The H3 rocket blasted off from a launch pad at the Tanegashima Space Centre on time Saturday morning, two days after its originally scheduled liftoff was delayed due to bad weather.

The rocket successfully achieved the planned trajectory and released the two satellites, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, said.

nounce the good results," JAXA President Hiroshi Yamakawa told a news conference. H3's main missions are to secure independent access to space and to acquire global competitiveness amid growing international demand for satellite launches. "We made a big first step today toward achieving

that goal," Yamakawa said.

"We feel so relieved to be able to an-



Saturday's success is a boost for Japan's space programme following a recent streak of successes, including a historic precision touchdown on the Moon of an unmanned spacecraft last month.

Saturday's launch was closely watched as a test for Japan's space development after H3 failed in its debut flight last March. JAXA and its main contractor Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have been developing H3 as a successor to its current mainstay, H-2A, which is set to retire after two more flights.

As the rocket soared and released its first payload successfully, project members at the JAXA command centre cheered and

hugged each other in a livestreaming footage. NHK television said some staff at a press centre were seen crying with relief and joy.

JAXA H3 project manager Masashi Okada called the result "perfect," saying H3 cleared all missions set for Saturday's flight. "I now feel a heavy load taken off my shoulders. But now is the real start for H3,

and we will work to steadily improve it." The H3 No. 2 rocket was decorated with thousands of stickers carrying cheering messages sent from well-wishers around the

In its debut flight last March, the rocket had to be destroyed along with its payload, the advanced land observation satellite, or ALOS-3, triggering disappointment and uncertainty about Japan's space exploration

JAXA and MHI have since identified and mitigated the possible electrical issues that led to the failure to ignite H3 rocket's second-stage engine, and carefully rehearsed for the upcoming second test flight. Just to be safe, the rocket this time carried a mockup of the ALOS satellite, called VEP-

4, which was not designed to be released. Two real microsatellites - observation satellite CE-SAT-IE developed by Canon Electronics, and TIRSAT which was co-developed by a number of companies and universities - were piggybacked on H3 Saturday. Their makers said they were willing to take the chance as they see a growing market in the satellite business.

H3 is designed to carry larger payloads than H-2A at much lower costs of about 50 billion yen (\$330 million), to be globally competitive.

Masayuki Eguchi, head of defense and space segment at Mitsubishi Heavy, said his company hopes to achieve more price competitiveness after about a dozen more

Japan's space programme has made a streak of successes recently. JAXA last month made the world's first "pinpoint" moon landing and capturing of lunar data by the unmanned spacecraft SLIM that had been launched from the H-2A rocket, days after the 48th H-2A rocket successfully placed a spy satellite into its planned orbit.

REGION THE HILLS TIMES 7 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024 AAU can contribute to growth of crop, fishery, dairy sectors: Economist

AAU can contribute to increasing growth rate of fishery sector from current 6.6 % to 10 %

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Feb 17: Eminent economist and member of NITI Aayog, Ramesh Chand on Saturday suggested that the Assam Agricultural University (AAU) can contribute in increasing the growth rate in the crop, fishery and dairy sectors of the state.

Delivering the 23rd convocation address of AAU at the Dr MC Das Memorial Auditorium of the university in Jorhat on Saturday, Chand said that AAU could contribute to increasing the growth rate in the fishery sector from the current level of 6.6 per cent to 10 per cent, which is the national av-

Chand said that the state has a potential in developing fisheries in view of abundant riverine and water bodies. He also said that among the four components of agriculture and allied sectors, fisheries was at the top in terms of growth rate in output which has reached close to 10 per cent in the last

The NITI Aayog member appealed to the researchers of AAU to identify best options from various agro- climatic regions of the state and develop varieties that give higher yield in crops and also improve productivity of milch cattle. He said that though rice was

a dominant crop in the state,



Kataria, who is also the Chan-

presided over the function.

cellor of the University, also

Kataria said that the AAU

has been making significant

contributions to agriculture ed-

ucation, research and exten-

sion. The growth in its

infrastructure and human re-

source development is also

helping its cause of agriculture

Addressing the graduates,

the Governor said, "Your deci-

sion to pursue a career in agri-

culture opens up immense

possibilities for you to help our

farmers. To make the most of

these opportunities, you need

to stay abreast of the latest in-

novations to expand your

knowledge and capabilities.

Your efforts will definitely

prove fruitful in making the

country a prosperous nation".

Highlighting the position of

development in the state.

the productivity was 45 per cent less than West Bengal. It was 2236 kg compared to 2996 kg of West Bengal and 2806 kg of the national aver-

He observed that AAU efforts in pushing the growth rate of various sub-sectors of agriculture would be of much use in fulfilling aspirations of about half of the population of the state, which is engaged in agri and allied sectors, besides contributing to Viksit India and Viksit Assam.

Speaking about self employment avenues, Chand told the students that there were opportunities open to them today for getting into entrepreneurship and mentioned about the government initiatives like SETU (Self Employment Talent Utilisation).

Governor Gulab Chand

the nation in terms of food production, the Governor said that India has come out of the category of 'food crisis country' to become a 'food grain exporting country.

"Our policy makers, agricultural scientists and farmer brothers and sisters have made an important contribution in this regard," the Governor

State agriculture, animal husbandry and veterinary minister, Atul Bora, who was the guest of honour on the occasion, in his address spoke about the state government's efforts for sustainable development of agriculture and its allied sectors as part of the government's goal to make the state among the country's top five states of the country.

Bora stated that the Centre's 'Act East' policy was benefitting the agri exports.

AAU vice-chancellor, Bidyut Chandan Deka in his address gave an overview of the activities undertaken by the university through its colleges, research stations and Krishi Vigyan Kendras across the state in contributing to the growth of the agri

Altogether 550 students were awarded degrees in graduation, post graduation and doctorate during the conAdvertisement for Selection of different posts for Project Management Units at state and district levels for implementation of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission under Samagra Shiksha, Assam

No. SSA/TT/Consultants etc./FLN/308/2023/10423

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has launched the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) as part of the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Mission on 5th July 2021. For effective implementation of the scheme in the state of Assam, a Project Management Unit (PMU) both at state level and district level has been set up. For smooth functioning of Project Management Unit (PMU) both at state level and district levels, Samagra Shiksha, Assam invites online application from intending eligible candidates in prescribed form for recruitment in the following posts (purely on contract basis). Intending candidate must submit online application (in prescribed format). Online Application will be received from 19/02/2024 to 28/02/2024.

Qualification and Eligibility criteria:

SI	Name of the Post, job location etc.	Qualification, Experience etc.	Age	Salary
	Name of post: Data	Academic Qualification and others:	Candidate must not be	Remuneration:
	Analyst of FLN at State PMU Number of post: 02	 MCA/BE/M.Sc(I.T/Computer Science) with 50% from AICTE recognized institution or equivalent (OR) 	less than 30 years and more than 45 years of age as on 01.01.2024.	Rs.40, 000.00 per month (consolidated)
	Job Location: State	Master's degree in Statistics/ Econometrics with 50% from UGC recognized university.		
	Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha, Assam, Kahilipara, Ghy-19	 Proficiency in Assamese and English, written and verbal. Proficiency in computer application (SPSS software, 		
)1		MS Office word, excel, PPT, internet, Google sheet, Google form, etc.)		
		Experience:		
		 Minimum 3 years working experience in Programming/ Data Handling/ Software Development/Data Analysis work under Government Offices/Education 		
		Department/Government Undertakings/ NGOs working		
	V - School and - Colors - Colo	under Government Projects.		
	Name of post : Consultant of FLN at	Academic Qualification and others: • Master's degree with 50% in Language / Education	Candidate must not be less than 27 years and	Remuneration: Rs.35, 000.00 per
	District PMU (Language)	from UGC recognized university or equivalent. Proficiency in Assamese and English, written and	more than 45 years of age as on 01.01.2024.	month (consolidated)
)2	Number of post: 10	verbal. Proficiency in computer application (MS Office word,	<u>.</u>	
	Job Location: District Mission Office/State	excel, PPT, internet etc.)		
	Mission Office, Samagra	Experience:		
	Shiksha	 Minimum 2 years working experience in academics/ language related works/ academic content 		
		development/ Textbook; syllabus; curriculum related		
		work/educational administration under Government		
		Offices/Education Department/Government Undertakings/School/ NGOs working under		
		Government Projects. Desirable:		
		Ph.D./M.Phil from recognized University.		
	Name of post :	Academic Qualification and others:	Candidate must not be	Remuneration:
3	Consultant of FLN at District PMU (Numeracy)	 Master's degree with 50% in Mathematics/Statistics from UGC recognized university or equivalent. 	less than 27 years and more than 45 years of	Rs.35, 000.00 per month (consolidated)
		Proficiency in Assamese and English, written and	age as on 01.01.2024.	month (consolidated)
	Number of post: 29	verbal.		
	Job Location: District	Proficiency in computer application (MS Office word,		
	Mission Office/State Mission Office, Samagra	excel, PPT, internet etc.) Experience:		
	Shiksha	Minimum 2 years working experience in academics/		
		numeracy related works/ academic content		
		development/ Textbook; syllabus; curriculum related		
		work/educational administration under Government Offices/Education Department/Government		
		Undertakings/ School/ NGOs working under		
		Government Projects.		
		Desirable: Ph.D./M.Phil. from recognized University.		
	Name of post: Data	Academic Qualification and others:	Candidate must not be	Remuneration:
	Analyst of FLN at District	 MCA/BE/M.Sc(I.T/Computer Science) with 50% from 	less than 27 years and	Rs.35, 000.00 per
04	PMU Number of post: 27	AICTE recognized institution or equivalent. (OR)	more than 45 years of age as on 01.01.2024.	month (consolidated)
15	Job Location: District	Master's degree with 50% in Statistics/Econometrics from UGC recognized university.		
	Mission Office/State Mission Office, Samagra	 Proficiency in Assamese and English, written and verbal. 		
	Shiksha	Proficiency in computer application (SPSS software,		
		MS Office word, excel, PPT, internet, Google sheet,		
		Google form, etc.)		
		Experience:		
		Experience: Minimum 2 years working experience in Programming/		
		Minimum 2 years working experience in Programming/ Data Handling/ Software Development/Data Analysis		
		 Minimum 2 years working experience in Programming/ 		

DHSK College's NSS unit secures 2nd place in Yuva Samvad- India

DIBRUGARH, Feb 17: The National Service Scheme (NSS) unit of DHSK College has achieved a remarkable feat by securing the second position in the esteemed Yuva Samvad-India@2047 competition.

Held at the Dibrugarh University on February 13 and sponsored by the Union ministry of youth affairs and sports, this event serves as a platform to foster youth dialogue and innovathinking, drawing participation from colleges nationwide.

Recognized for its active engagement in community service and social initiatives, the NSS unit of DHSK College showcased exceptional creativity and commitment to social change during the competition.

Their innovative ideas set them apart from competitors, earning them well-deserved officer of the NSS unit said that recognition. Yuva Samvad-India@2047 provides young in- college participated in the comdividuals with an opportunity to petition.

exchange ideas, tackle pressing issues, and envision the future of

The success of the college's NSS unit underscores the institution's dedication to nurturing academic excellence, social responsibility and civic engagement among its students.

S.K. Saikia, principal of the college expressed immense pride in the NSS unit's achievement, praising the students for their dedication and hard work. This victory reflects the college's commitment to fostering innovation and activism within its community.

As the college celebrates this significant milestone, the NSS unit remains steadfast in its mission of service and social empowerment, serving as an inspiration for others to contribute to positive change.

Sivanath Chutia, programme a group of 10 students from the

OBITUARY



aren Sarma, a senior petition writer of the Morigaon circle office passed away on February 15. He was 87.On the eve of the' Saturtha' the family members of Naren Sarma expressed their grief over his death. Naren Sarma was associated with various religious organizations till his death. He worked as a petition writer for almost 50 years in the Morigaon circle office. He was born in Morigaon town and was actively involved in various social and cultural activities since his student days. He was an active member of the Morigaon District Branmin Samai and Morigaon Sri Sri Sarbajanin Durga Puja Udjapan Committee.

Sarma is survived by his wife, three sons, two daughters-in-law, three grandchildren and sev-

NFR upgrades track signalling system for safe train journeys

GUWAHATI, Feb 17: The Northeast Frontier Railways (NFR) continues to adopt technically advanced measures to upgrade and maintain track signalling system to make train journeys safer for passengers.

Railway signalling systems ensures the safe operations of trains and their reliability and maintainability directly affects the capacity and availability of railway connectivity. Signalling refers to the communication system using signals to control train movements and provide information to drivers and operators. In contrast, interlocking is a mechanism that coordinates systematic function of signals, switches and other equipment to prevent

conflicting movements and ensure safe movement of trains The process is being carried out in all five divisions of the

NFR, i.e Tinsukia, Lumding, Rangiya, Alipurduar and Katihar to avoid unprecedented incidents like accidents etc. NFR conducts several automated tests at signaling systems regularly by which human errors are checked and eliminated. Further, replacement and new installation along with up- gradations are being implemented in signaling systems, when and wherever the

As part of the initiative by the Indian Railways, NFR carried out various signalling up-gradation system at several divisional stations and sections. 'System Integrity Test' of electronic interlocking/panel interlocking were carried out at the Lanka station and out of 4759 planned drawings, 4628 drawings related to logic interface, cable route plan, cable termination chart, track bonding plan etc. were completed on January this year.

National seminar on chemicals & pharmaceutical sciences held

Seminar explored latest advancements, research taking place in fields of chemicals and pharmaceutical sciences

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, Feb 17: With an aim to explore cutting-edge research and advancements, the Girijananda Chowdhury University (GCU) has organized a national conference on 'Frontiers in Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences for the Development of Novel Therapeutics-2024' at its campus in Tezpur in Sonitpur

The national seminar was organised by GCU in collaboration with the Association of Chemistry Teachers (ACT), Mumbai and Rangapara College at the university campus on Friday.

The programme began with a warm welcome address by Jasoda Ranjan Das, president of the Shrimanta Shankar Academy, Guwahati. The inaugural session featured a thought-provoking speech by Dipankar Saha, registrar of the Girijananda Chowdhury University, Abdul Baquee Ahmed, principal of the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences at GCU, Tezpur and Ranjan Kalita, principal of the Rangapara College.

Rama Dubey, scientist F from the Defence Research Laboratory (DRDO), Union ministry of defence, graced the



event as the keynote speaker. He delivered an enlightening speech on "Harnessing the Power of Microencapsulation Technology in Pharmaceutical Science," shedding light on the potential of this innovative approach in therapeutic devel-

The scientific session commenced with notable figures leading the technical sessions. The sessions covered a diverse array of topics including plant pathology, mycology, virology, entomology, food science, biotechnology, cell and molecular biology, bioinformatics, structural biology, botany, zoology, human physiology, microbiology, microbial technology, computational biology, genomics and proteomics, nanobiotechnology, and system

A total of 56 poster presentations and 12 oral presentations were delivered, showcasing the depth and breadth of research being conducted across the nation. With over 200 delegates from various renowned institutes including Dibrugarh University, Tezpur University, Defence Research Laboratory, Tezpur, University of Calcutta, Mata Gujri College of Pharmacy, Bihar, Gautam Institute of Pharmacy, Bihar, Royal Global University, Chaitanya (Deemed to be) University, Telangana, NETES Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, Guwahati Down Town University, NEF College of Pharmaceutical Education & Research, participated

in the conference. The event served as a testament to the dedication and commitment of the scientific community towards advancing knowledge and innovation in chemical and pharmaceutical sciences. As the conference concluded, participants left inspired and motivated to continue pushing the boundaries of science for the betterment of society.

Process of selection:

- Submission of online application.
- Shortlisted candidates will be called for Interview.
- Interview (along with verification of documents) will be held at State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19. The list of shortlisted candidates will be uploaded in the official website of Samagra Shiksha, Assam. No T.A' D.A will be paid for attending the verification process and Interview.
- Marking pattern will be on General Awareness, Personality & Aptitude, Subject matter in relevant field, Relevant Experience, etc. for the post. The applicant has to obtain minimum 50% of the total marks on the above in the interview and only then the candidates will
- The candidates will have to apply online along with the recent colored passport size photograph (maximum 50 KB) and signature (maximum 20 KB). Incomplete and incorrect online application will be summarily rejected. Claims for correction etc. will not be
- Online Application through https://ssa.assam.gov.in from 19/02/2024 to 28/02/2024
- Candidate can apply against maximum two posts.
- In case of District level PMU, Samagra Shiksha will be the final authority to decide the allotment of work place after selection (excluding Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong).
- At the time of interview/verification of documents, intending candidates will have to produce specific working/experiences certificate duly countersigned by concerned authority along with all relevant documents in original. Candidates will have to submit a set of photocopy of all relevant documents at the time of verification of documents along with a recent passport size colored photograph.

Important Points:

- The above posts are purely on contract basis. Appointment will be made initially for a period of 11 months. The services may be extended for another term(s) on the basis of the performance of the incumbents.
- The candidate selected against these posts cannot claim for permanent absorption or continuation of the their services under Samagra Shiksha or under Government as these posts are purely temporary in nature under the intervention of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Scheme and will be based on performance of the incumbents.
- The continuation of the services of the selected candidates will be based on performance appraisal of the incumbents and subject to availability of the fund/continuity of the scheme/intervention.
- The selected candidates will have to sign an agreement with the authority for the appointment period.
- In case of any irregularities observed regarding their eligibility/efficiency/punctuality/commitment in serving Samagra Shiksha, Assam in "Mission Mode", or any ineligibility detected as per terms of the advertisement even after engagement against the said posts, the authority reserves the right to terminate/discontinue their services at any time without assigning any reason thereof.

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

Janasanyog /DF/2756/ 23/18-Feb-24

'AAP cannot be bought by any party'

Delhi Assembly initiates discussion on motion of confidence moved by CM Kej

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: The Delhi Assembly on Saturday initiated a discussion on the motion of confidence brought by chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who alleged that the BJP tried to poach AAP MLAs to topple his government. Starting the discussion, the AAP's Kasturba Nagar MLA Madan Lal alleged that the BJP was persistently trying to "fail" and "paralyse" the Kejriwal government -- either by poaching party MLAs or interfering in its workings. Leader of opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, the lone opposition representative in the House following the suspension of BJP members for the session, was not present when the discussion began. He arrived in the House shortly after. Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was also present in the House and is scheduled to speak later in the day.

This is the third motion of confidence of the Kejriwal government in the last three years. It with 21 MLAs. They have made multiple at-

comes amid the AAP's claims that the BJP wanted to break the party by offering money to its MLAs and toppling its government in Delhi. The previous confidence motions came in August 2022 and March 2023, amid AAP allegations that the BJP was carrying out "Operation Lotus" to poach its MLA.

The AAP has an overwhelming majority in the Delhi Assembly, with 62 MLAs in the 70member House. The opposition BJP has eight MLAs, of whom seven are currently suspended. Tabling the motion of confidence on Friday, Kejriwal said, "Two MLAs had come to me saying they were contacted by BJP members offering them Rs 25 crore each. They were told that chief minister Arvind Kejriwal will be arrested and the government will be

toppled."
"They were also told that the BJP is in touch

tempts to approach our MLAs under 'Operation Lotus'. Even this time, our MLAs refused to budge," he had added.

Kejriwal said the AAP checked with all its MLAs after these claims and found that seven of its legislators were approached but none of them accepted the offer.

He said the BJP knows it can never win elections in Delhi and that is why it is using different tactics to topple the AAP government.

"To show that none of our MLAs have de-

fected, I present this resolution, 'The House expresses its trust in the Cabinet'," he had said. During the discussion, the AAP's Kondli (East) MLA Kuldeep Kumar lashed out at the BJP and alleged that the saffron party has been "luring and threatening" opposition leaders across the country and claimed that attempts

were made to poach him as well. "This House has failed all the attempts by

been luring and threatening all opposition leaders across all states and tried to make the same attempt in Delhi as well. They try contacting us through our relatives. They blatantly accept that they control all central agencies and institutions," Kumar alleged.

He further said the AAP cannot be "bought by any other party" and that it is not scared of 'threats and central agencies.'

"They (BJP) think that they can purchase MLAs and topple the Delhi government. They don't know that we are loyal soldiers of Arvind Kejriwal and we will not bow before the BJP. The AAP cannot be bought by any party and our party is not scared of their threats and central agencies," he added. The AAP's Dwarka (South-West) MLA Vinay Mishra alleged that the BJP "tried poaching our MLAs multiple times by offering powerful political positions

"Multiple attempts have been made by the BJP to poach our MLAs. They not only offered powerful political positions but also bribes. They even threatened our MLAs. These are blatant attempts only to topple our government," Mishra alleged.

Akhilesh Pati Tripathi, the AAP MLA from Model Town, claimed that there have been attempts to break the city government as the AAP has done the work that "the BJP and the Congress couldn't do in 70 years".

"People trust the AAP in Delhi and it is not easy to break this government. There are attempts to topple our administration because we have done the work that the BJP and the Congress couldn't do in the last 70 years. We have fulfilled the promises we made to the citizens, other parties didn't," Tripathi claimed.

Congress-backed news channel in Kerala says its bank accounts frozen by tax authorities

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Feb 17: The management of Congress-backed Jaihind TV in Kerala on Saturday alleged that its bank accounts were frozen by the Centre, a day after the national party's main bank accounts were frozen by the I-T department over an outstanding tax demand

According to sources in the TV channel, the office of the Assistant Commissioner, Central GST and Central Excise in Thiruvananthapuram issued notices to two leading private banks, directing them to recover the amount due to the central government from the news channel's parent company, Bharat Broadcasting Company, leading to the freeze of its accounts.

Jaihind TV was recently in the news after the CBI issued a notice seeking details of the investments made in the channel by Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar in connection with a disproportionate assets case against the Congress leader.

The channel's Managing Director B S Shiju said the action of the tax authorities was completely 'unexpected', and that too while the case related to it was pending in the High Court.

"This abrupt action is indeed unfortunate and has plunged the channel into a state of crisis," he said. Shiju said the channel, on December 22 last year, received a notice seeking details of an investment made by Shivakumar and his family members in it.

"We are fully cooperating with the investigating agency in that regard. But unfortunately, after this, we received half a dozen notices from various central government departments and agencies. It is evident that this is a clear case of political vendetta against the Indian National Congress and D K Shivakumar," Shiju, who is also a Congress leader, told PTI.

Sources in Jaihind TV said the freezing of the accounts was in connection with a 7-year-old case concerning service tax arrears, which is currently being heard by the Kerala High Court.

They also claimed that the action was taken without any warning, disrupting the channel's

day-to-day operations. The CBI registered a case against D K Shivakumar in 2020, alleging that between 2013 and 2018, he had amassed assets worth over Rs 74 crore, which are allegedly disproportionate to

In its notice issued under Section 91 of the CrPC, the CBI had asked the channel to furnish details of investments made by Shivakumar and is wife Usha Shivakumar, dividends paid to them, share transactions, financial transactions along with bank details through which they were made, statement of holdings, their ledger accounts, contract notes and transactions for all share transactions among other details. (PTI)

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF WORKS BRANCH SECRETARIAT

No. KAAC/HRN/W-12/2023-24/25

Dated: 17/02/2024

TENDER NOTICE

HAMREN: 782486

Sealed tender affixing Nonrefundable KAAC court fee stamp (Receipt) Rs 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of Works Department and will be receive by the undersigned up to 4 P.M on 04/03/2024 and will opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be any holidays/Non-working day, the tender will be opened in the next working day. The undersigned has the night to accept, reject any tender without any reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate.

SL No	Name of Works	Tender Amount	A/A Amount	Earnest Money	Time allowed for completion	
1	Construction of Range Office at Mukroh	Rs 29,43,000.00	Rs 29,43,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	45 Days	
2	Construction of Ranger Quarter at Mukroh	Rs 25,25,000.00	Rs 25,25,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	45 Days	
3	Construction of 2 Nos. of Forest Staff Quarter as Mukroh	Rs 27,38,000.00	Rs 27,38,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	45 Days	
4	Construction of DG Set house & Installation of DC Set at Mukroh	Rs 18,11,000.00	Rs 18,11,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	30 Days	
5	Installation of Deep Tube at Mukroh	Rs 15,44,000.00	Rs 15,44,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	30 Days	
6	Construction of Toilet for Police Stal Tat Mukroh	Rs 6,62,000.00	Rs 6,62,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	30 Days	
7	Construction of Approach Road (Paver Block) at Mukroh	Rs 46,95,000.00	Rs 46,95,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	45 Days	
8	Construction of Water Staging at Mukroh	Rs 8,55,000.00	Rs 8,55,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	30 Days	
9	Construction of Sonny Fist at Mukrnh	Rs 16,55,000.00	Rs 16,55,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	45 Days	
10	Construction of Boulder Retaining will at Mukroh	Rs 23,82,000.00	Rs 23,82,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL= 2%	45 Days	

Detail NIT/ document and name of works amounts may be obtained from Office of the E.E (Work) KAAC, Branch Secretariat, Hamren during working hours.

Terms & Conditions

N.B._

- 1. The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/works for all division under CPWD-21.
- 2. Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender, without which no tender will be accepted.
- 3. The contractor shall Repair/Re-construct if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works. The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuses to Repair/Re-construction the work.
- 4. The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W). KAAC/KAAC Authority
- 5. The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender. a. Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - b. Sale in Clearance Certificate/ GST registration.

 - c. KAAC Registration (Contractual).
 - d. Call Deposit.
 - e. Caste Certificate.
- f. Bank Account number & Pan Card. 6. Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund.
- 7. The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Department Of Works Branch Secretariat

> Hamren Dated: 17/02/2024

CANCELLATION NOTICE

No. SSA/Esstt/Engagement/Consultant (P&M)/741/2023/10418

It is for information to all concerned that the Public Notice issued vide No. SSA Esstt/Engagement/Consultant (P&M)/741/2023/10358 dated 14.02.2024 regarding the interview for the post of Expert (Consultant, Planning) under Samagra Shiksha Axom to be held on 21.02.2024 is hereby Cancelled due to administrative reason.



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

Janasanyog/DF/2764/23/18-Feb-24

ENGAGEMENT UNDER SAMAGRA SHIKSHA, ASSAM

No. SSA/Esstt/Engagement/SMO/151/2023/10422

The Samagra Shiksha, Axom invites online applications from Indian Citizens (as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India) for the under mentioned position under Samagra Shiksha, Axom on contractual basis. The online applications will be received from 19.02.2024 to 28.02.2024. The posts are temporary in nature and the selected candidates will be initially engaged for a period of 11 (eleven) months only. The contractual engagement will neither be regularized under Samagra Shiksha, Axom nor will be absorbed under any job/programme of Government of Assam in future and no person (s) so engaged shall have any right (s) to claim for permanent abortion in any post (s) in the government or in the Samagra Shiksha, Assam.

Age for categories of post: The candidate should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 62 years of age as on 01-01-2024. The age limit of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the Matriculation/HSLC Admit Card or Pass Certificate issued by a recognized Board/ Council and no other document shall be accepted in lieu of the mentioned documents.

SI No	Name of the Post	Essential Qualification and Experience	Pay in Pay Band in Rs.	Grade Pay in Rs.	No. of Post	Place
1	Project Engineer	BE (Civil) Engineering from Institutions recognized by AICTE and recognized university with minimum 03 years of working experience in Govt. Deptt / Organization /Pvt. Reputed Agencies/Firm etc. Having experience in building design preparation, drawing and estimate Candidate having experience in AutoCAD will be an added qualification. Must be Computer Literate with proficiency in MS Office.	3000/- 110000/-	12700/-	01	State Mission Office

- 1. The link of the recruitment portal will be available in the Samagra Shiksha website https://ssa.assam.gov.in
- 2. Read the User Guidelines carefully which is available on the recruitment portal on how to submit the online application form. 3. Claims for any correction will not be entertained after submitting the online registration and online application.
- 4. Before filling the on-line application, applicant has to go through the User Guidelines for online registration and online application. 5. Candidate must upload the supporting document of educational qualification, experience and others through portal.
- 6. Only eligible candidates will have to appear in test/interview, the exact date of which will be communicated separately. 7.A candidate must be in good mental and bodily health and free from any physical defect likely to interfere with the efficient discharge
- of his/her duties as an Officer of the service.
- 8. The exact date & time of the Test/ Interview will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates separately. 9. Marking pattern will be on General Awareness, Personality & Aptitude, Subject matter in relevant field, Relevant Experience, etc. for the post. The applicant has to obtain minimum 50% of the total marks on the above in the interview and only then the candidates
- 10. The office will not be responsible for any non submission of online application due to any error or other problem.
- 11. The decision of the Selection Committee in all aspects and all respects pertaining to the application and its acceptance or rejection as the case may be, conduct of test and at all consequent stages concluding in the selection or otherwise of any candidate shall be final in all respects and binding on all concerned. The Mission also reserves its right to alter and modify time and conditions laid down in the notification for conducting the various stages up to selection or withdraw the Notification at any time, duly intimating details thereof to all concerned, as warranted by any unforeseen circumstances arising during the course of this process, or as deemed necessary by the Mission at any stage.

Janasanyog/DF/2748/23/18-Feb-24



Sd/-Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom

Kahilipara, Guwahati-19 Memo No. KAAC/HRN/W- 12/2023-24/ 25(A)

CDSCO issues sampling guidelines to ensuring quality and efficacy of drugs, cosmetics

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has issued new guidelines for effective surveillance for quality and efficacy of drugs and cosmetics available in the market by adopting uniform drug sampling methodology.

The apex drug regulator, functioning under the Union Health Ministry, said that currently most sampled drugs are from big brands and collected from urban or suburban locations only.

In the new guidelines for sampling of drugs, cosmetics and medical devices, notified last week, it said that interior locations or rural distributions are not covered and thereby quality of drugs at distant user or last user was not being assessed.

"From the past trends it is observed that there is no defined methodology for sample selection and location of sampling etc and was done randomly with the individual knowledge of drug inspectors," the document stated.

Cosmetics samples were not collected in some regions. There is no centralised database of sale outlets where "not-of-standard" quality (NSQ) or spurious products were reported, the new guidelines stated, adding that such identified outlets are to be kept for regular vigilance.

"This guideline is mainly focused to utilize available information and identified risks for selection of sample and location to

'Bookchor' stealing

attention at World

Book Fair in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: For some

it is JRR Tolkien's fantasy classic

'The Lord of the Rings' while for

others it is holy scripture 'Bha-

gavad Gita' – a wall of quirky

notes bearing titles of a range of

books is grabbing eyeballs and the

occasional chuckle at the ongoing

book fair here. On a temporary

wall of its stall at the 52nd New

Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF),

a proprietor has put up a question for visitors – 'Which book has

changed your life?' The handwrit-

ten answers, posted on bright yel-

portant personalities as well as

some amusing responses. Some

said their '10th NCERT Maths'

impact on their lives, while some

iust wrote 'Jai Shri Ram' on the

wall of notes. A woman chose the

spot to make a self-motivating note

to herself and wrote: "I am not giv-

ing up." The idea of the wall was

conceived by a Bengaluru-based

bookseller, 'Bookchor'. Just out-

side its stall at Hall No. 1 at the re-

vamped Pragati Maidan complex,

curious visitors gathered near the

wall to get a dekko of the re-

sponses to the question – 'Which

book has changed your life?' The

yellow grid created by dozens of

post-it notes put up since the open-

ing of the fair on February 10,

draws in visitors as soon as they

enter through the hall gate nearest

to the stall. (PTI)

Note :-

in the market from manufacturing facility, wholesale outlet, retail outlet, government distribution channel etc. in urban, sub-urban, and rural locations," it stated. This will also ensure maintaina centralised monthly NSQ/spurious drug list and pub-

cover vast variety of drugs, cos-

metic and medical devices moving

lishing on CDSCO website to avoid their further use. Currently, the list of "not-ofstandard quality" and spurious drugs shared by the CDSCO is not updated every month. Also, the in-

formation on distributors from

where samples are drawn is not

shared. This guidelines will be useful for effective surveillance for quality and efficacy of drugs and cosmetics available in the market by methodology for drug inspectors under drug regulatory authorities of state and central governments,

the document said. According to the new norms, each drugs inspector with consultation of his controlling authority shall prepare a sampling plan on monthly basis and annual basis for finalising the sampling locations to cover the entire jurisdiction/ area under their office.

This will avoid communication gap between the officers and optimum utilization of resource to cover the maximum territory and all kinds of product category with identified risk and approached under this guidance document.

Sampling plan shall include

The annual sampling plan shall be shared with their headquarters of their offices for review and to avoid any repetitive sampling of one brand and to cover maximum variety of brand/category in the proposed sampling schedule.

It is important that sufficient quantity of samples are collected and forwarded to laboratory so that all the parameters are tested and retested, if any required by laboratory before issuing of NSO test report, the guidelines.

It is important to avoid any procedure delay in testing and obtaining of test report from the laboratory, so that further use of identified NSQ products are stopped by issuing drug alert and product recall notice at the earliest for public awareness, irrespective of proceeding of drugs inspector as per provision under the Drugs and Cosmetic Act and Rules thereun-

Each drug controlling office shall prepare a list on monthly basis for wholesale/retail outlet with name of registered pharmacist and owner where spurious products are reported/distribution chain is broken for the provided invoice.

The above list shall be shared to their head office for preparation of a centralised list of wholesale and retail outlets revealed in sale and distribution of spurious products medicine from these outlets, the

ground targets with rockets.

outs of inimical elements.

Joint operations included the IAF

and the Army's weaponised version of

the advanced light helicopters Mk-IV

devastating simulated enemy targets

As another first, IAF Chinook heli-

As the sun set on the horizon,

The indigenous air defence systems,

Akash and SAMAR, were also show-

cased, destroying multiple aerial tar-

using their rockets and swivel guns.

Wild animal attacks: Hartal turns violent in Pulpally, locals tie cow atop Forest dept jeep

WAYANAD, Feb 17: The district-wide hartal called by the ruling LDF, opposition UDF and BJP to seek permanent solutions to the man-animal conflicts in the region turned violent in Pulpally on Saturday with protesters damaging a Forest department vehicle and tying atop it a cow that was killed in a suspected tiger attack earlier in the day.

Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan issued a direction to convene a high-level meeting under the aegis of ministers to discuss issues related to frequent man-animal conflicts in Wayanad district.

Besides blocking the road to other parts of the state, the locals at Pulpally stopped a forest department vehicle and an angry mob damaged the vehicle.

They tore away the soft top of the jeep and punctured the tyre. People had gathered at Pulpally in large numbers with the body of Paul, an eco tourism guide of the forest department who died after being attacked by a wild tusker near Kuruva island on Friday.

The protesters also placed a wreath on the forest department's vehicle alleging that the officials were unable to protect the life and property of the people.

Later, a section of protesters brought the carcass of a cow killed in a tiger attack earlier in the day, on a tracor and tied it to the bonnet of the Forest Department ve-



hicle. The CM intervened in the matter in the wake of intense protests staged by local people seeking solutions to address frequent attacks by stray wild animals in human settlements in the high range district.

Meanwhile, shops and business establishments remained closed while vehicles kept off the roads today across Wayanad districts in view of the hartal call. Last week, Aji (42) was trampled to death by the elephant in the Mananthavady area of the district trig-

gering massive protests in Wayanad. (PTI)

Bihar: Nitish Kumar downplays Lalu's 'doors are always open' remark

remark by Prasad, with whom he

the assembly premises on Thursday. "I maintain good relations with allies and leaders of opposition parties. I shake hands with them, whenever I meet them. That's all", Kumar said. The CM said, "I don't think of who says what... Things were not going

well, so I left them (RJD)". On Friday, Lalu Prasad said. Kumar, days after the latter parted ways with the grand alliance.

Asked whether he will give another chance to Nitish in the future, Lalu said, "Ab aayenge toh dekhenge. Doors are always open". When asked about cabinet expansion, Kumar said, "Ho Jayega (It will be done). Sab Theek Chal Raha Hai (things are going smoothly". Sources in the NDA on

PATNA, Feb 17: A day after Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) presiwas seen warmly shaking hands "doors are always open" for Nitish and exchanging pleasantries inside

dent Lalu Prasad caused a flutter by saying "doors were always open for Nitish Kumar", the Bihar Chief Minister on Saturday downplayed the issue, but said he maintained good relations with allies as well as opponents".

The JD(U) chief was replying to questions from journalists on the

Contd. from Page 1...

Modi sounds poll bugle

The Lok Sabha has 543 seats, and the BJP had won 282 and 303 of them in 2014 and 2019 respectively. Modi has set a target for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance to win over 400 seats. In a post on X later, Modi said, "Addressed the @BJP4India National Office Bearers. Complimented every Party Karyakarta for their exceptional efforts to serve people. Discussed ways to deepen our Party's grassroots level connect across all sections of society. Over the last decade, BJP has made a mark as a party of development and good governance. Our schemes, initiatives and reforms have transformed several lives.'

Tawde said Modi has been the head of a government, including more than 12 years as Gujarat chief minister, for nearly 23 years and there has been no allegation of corruption. "It's been an 'aarop mukt' and a 'vikas yukt' period," he said quoting the prime minister, adding that there has been no instance of such a long tenure of anyone holding constitutional positions not drawing any

With the BJP likely to name its candidates for the polls, expected in April-May, in the coming weeks, Modi asked party members to keep in mind that 'lotus' (its poll symbol) will be its candidate at every seat it will contest and work to ensure its win. Tawde said the party will launch a campaign to reach out to beneficiaries of various central government schemes from February 25 and March 5. Modi's leadership is marked by dedication, emotional investment and a steadfast commitment to development, he said, adding that the entire nation today takes pride in the "transformative" policies and initiatives spearheaded by him. (PTI)

Need to 'pay attention

senior advocates to engage with technology, work on tablets and laptops and a lot of people are doing this now." Talking about young people joining the profession of law, he said, "This generation thinks differently and a large number of women are coming in it. They consider their future secure here." Discussing his tenure as the chief justice of Allahabad High Court, Chandrachud said, "I grew up in an urban environment, but after coming to Uttar Pradesh, the heart of India, I got to learn and know a lot." (PTI)

Increasing number of

that position for many decades and, I think, today many more countries in the world feel not just that the two state solution is necessary, but it is more urgent than it was before," he said. Israel has been continuing its military offensive in Gaza as part of its retaliation to the unprecedented attack on Israeli cities by Hamas on October 7. Hamas killed around 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped more than 220 others some of whom were released during a brief ceasefire.

Over 25,000 people have been killed in Gaza in the Israeli offensive, according to the Hamasrun authorities in Gaza. India has been calling for de-escalation of the situation and creating conditions for an early resumption of direct peace negotiations towards a two-state solution to the Palestine issue. India strongly condemned the terror attack by Hamas. (PTI)

Undeclared bandh continues

 $mentioning \ that \ on \ February \ 15, \ the \ KSA-Jemson \ Timung \ and \ the \ ASDC \ Youth \ Front \ organised$ a protest opposing the Rachnatmak Nonia Sangyukta Sangh's (RNSS) demand to legalise settlement in Village Grazing Reserve or Professional Grazing Reserve (VGR/PGR) land in West Karbi Anglong. Upon returning to Diphu after their protest dharna, KSA members fell victim to a violent mob at Kheroni Chariali where a total of 15 members were attacked. Out of 15, five sustained severe injuries and were taken to the Diphu Medical College and Hospital.

Manipur's Churachandpur limps

The ITLF has demanded that district SP Shivanand Surve and DC S Dharun Kumar should leave the district and be replaced by "officers preferably from Kuki Zo community".

The ITLF also warned that if the suspension of policeman Siamlalpaul was not withdrawn, "all government offices shall be closed" and both the DC and SP shall bear "responsibilities for any untoward incidents that may fall on them". A total shutdown called by the ITLF in Churachandpur on Friday hit normal life with streets and markets wearing a deserted look. (PTI)

Manipur CM condemns

were unacceptable. The chief minister clarified that the government had taken appropriate disciplinary action in response to incidents involving the snatching of weapons. In light of reported gunfights in Sugunu area and Lailoiphai, additional forces have been deployed for combing operations, with instructions given to the ADG (Law and Order) to oversee activities in the area. Later, Singh assured citizens that no area in the state would be overlooked in maintaining law and order, emphasising the government's unwavering commitment to state and national security. (NNN)

10 killed in mishap in

unit in the village. "Initially 9 persons died due to the explosion and 3 who were injured were rushed to Sivakasi Government Hospital for treatment," Virudhunagar district Collector V P Jayasee-

Preliminary enquiry revealed that there was overcrowding in the chemical mixing room, and that the explosion could have been triggered when the chemical was being handled, he said. The factory owner had a licence. Asked how the explosion happened, the Collector replied "it could have been due to a human error. We have ordered a thorough enquiry by an inter-departmental team." (PTI)

Gulzar, Sanskrit scholar

woman poured fuel on her age five, he had memorized the entire Bhagwad Gita and by eight, the entire Ramcharitmanas, according to his website. Established in 1944, the Jnanpith Award is given annually for outstanding contributions to Indian literature and is considered the highest literary honour in the country. This is the second time the award is being given for Sanskrit language and for the fifth time for Urdu which the victim, being

The award carries a prize money of ₹ 21 lakh, a statue of Vagdevi and a citation. The recipients for the award were decided by a selection committee chaired by Jnanpith awardee Pratibha Rai. Other members of the selection committee included Madhav Kaushik, Damodar Mauzo, Prof Suranjan Das, Prof Purushottam Bilmale, Praful Shiledar, Prof Harish Trivedi, Prabha Verma, Dr Janaki Prasad Sharma, A Krishna Rao and Jnanpith director Madhusudan Anand. Goan writer Damodar Mauzo had received the prestigious award for 2022. (PTI)

rural and tribal areas and drugs and to give wide publicity for the used in areas of endemic for cerpublic to avoid use of purchased tain diseases, drugs for seasonal **Indian Air Force displays**

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Saturday displayed its firepower capability at a mega exercise featuring over 120 aircraft, including frontline fighter jets and attack helicopters in Rajasthan's Pokhran desert.

In the Vayu Shakti exercise, the IAF also demonstrated the capabilities of its long-range drones and air-to-air missiles as well as its increasing strength in the rapid deployment of combat assets by airlifting weapons like M-777 ultra-light howitzers and other military plat-

low post-it notes included both In keeping with the exercise's fiction and autobiographies of imtheme 'Lightning Strike from the Sky', over 120 aircraft displayed the IAF's offensive capabilities by day as well as by night. school textbook had the maximum

Fighter aircraft, including the Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Tejas and Hawk, attacked and destroyed simulated enemy targets on the ground and in the air with deadly precision, the IAF said.

These attacks were delivered in multiple modes and directions, employing a variety of precision-guided munitions as well as conventional bombs and

Upholding the IAF's firm commitment to 'AtmaNirbhar Bharat', the indigenously built Tejas aircraft showcased its swing-role capability and destroyed an aerial target with a missile, followed by the engagement of a ground target with bombs.

Keeping up with the technological advancements in the combat domain and the lessons learnt from recent conflicts, the IAF also displayed a longrange unmanned drone, which destroyed a simulated enemy radar site, with pinpoint accuracy.

firepower capabilities at Pokhran

An IAF Rafale also successfully engaged an aerial target with a beyond-

visual-range air-to-air missile. The event began with three Chetak



helicopters trooping the national flag and the Air Force ensign, flying past the grandstand with the national anthem playing in the background.

'sonic boom' created by a Rafale aircraft. Two Jaguar aircraft flying at low levels followed the Rafale, taking highfidelity reconnaissance images of the

Combat support operations by transport aircraft included a containerised delivery system drop by a C-17 heavylift aircraft and an assault landing by a C-130J carrying IAF special forces, the Garuds, the IAF said in a statement.

targets with air-to-ground guided mis-

It was followed by a perfectly timed

The Apache attack helicopter demonstrated its firepower in this event for the first time, by engaging siles, while Mi-17 helicopters engaged

Dated Kokrajhar the 9th February 2024

Night events displayed for the first time the capabilities of the indigenous Light Combat Helicopter 'Prachand' wherein it neutralised designated targets with rockets. It was followed by a Jaguar and Su-

> area weapons at night showcasing the strategic bombing capability of the Remotely piloted aircraft carried out

30 MKI dropping heavy calibre and

the bomb damage assessment of all targets that was live-streamed to the operations centre and the audience. Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Anil

Chauhan witnessed the exercise. (PTI)

Pregnant woman

gang-raped, set

ablaze

MORENA (MP), Feb 17:

A 34-year-old pregnant

woman was allegedly

raped by three men and set

on fire in Madhya

Pradesh's Morena district,

and is battling for her life in a hospital, police said on Saturday. The victim, who

sustained 80 per cent burns, is undergoing treat-

ment in Gwalior, an offi-

cial said. The incident occurred in Chand Ka Pura

village, around 3 km from

Ambah town, on Friday, he

said. The victim went to

the village to work out a

compromise with a woman

who had accused her hus-

band of rape, inspector

Alok Parihar of Ambah po-

lice station told PTI. The

victim was, however, al-

legedly raped by three men

who were present in the

woman's house. Later, the trio and the accused

and set her ablaze, the offi-

cial said. A video has been

shared with the police in

rushed to a hospital in a ve-

hicle, is heard saying that

she was first gang raped, and then the accused woman and

the men had set her ablaze,

he said. (PTI)

No.DPRD/BTC/6thASFC-II/Baksa-1/2024//

NOTICER INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders with a validity period of 90 (ninety) days from the date of receipt in prescribed from affixing nonrefundable court fee stamps of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and paisa twenty five) only subsequently to be drawn up in printed F-2 form are hereby invited from the Govt. registered PWD (Roads/Building), P&RD, others Govt. Contractor's under Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II and Class-III category from approved firm according to tender limit of eligibility for the following works under 6th ASFC for the year 2022-23 during 2023-24 and will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 2.00 pm on 2/03/2024 and will be opened on the same date and place at 2.15 pm in the presence of willing contractors or their authorized

Sl. No.	Name of Dev. Block	Name of Scheme	A/A amount (Rs.)	Tender Amount (Rs.)	Earnest Money (ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%)	Cost of Tender in Rs.	Time for completion in days	Pre-Bid meeting date & time
1	Tamulpur Dev, Bl∝k	Imp. of road from Milan Boro house to Sapkata LP School and adjacent are under 5 No. Tamulpur VCDC	9,94,000.00	9,85,280.00	ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%	300.00	60 days	26/02/24
2	Tamulpur Dev. Block	Imp. of road from RD road (Puran Chowk) to Dhamdhama road	19,51,000.00	19,33,736.00	ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%	600.00	60 days	26/02/24
3	Tamulpur Dev, Block	Earthfilling at Dongpar field under 1 No. VCDC, Tamulpur Dev. Block in Tamulpur District	19,94,000.00	19,74,261.00	ST, SC, OBC- 1% & Gen-2%	600,00	60 days	26/02/24

Details NIT may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the Contractors or their authorized agent up to 12.00 Noon on all working days from 9/02/2024 to 2/03/2024 in the office of the undersigned on payment of in the form of Banker cheque/ Demand draft of any nationalized Bank (Preferable SBI) duly pledged to the Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar. The Cost of tender (Non-Refundable) must be in the form of Demand Draft/ Banker Cheque of a Nationalized Bank drawn in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar and payable at SBI, Kokrajhar to be deposited 0.03%. The Contractor should submit valid Registration certificate, GSTIN, PAN Card, Voter Card, Aadhar Card, Caste Certificate and Labour License along with the tender. In case the office remain closed in tender receiving/opening day the same will be received/opened on the next working day.

- The Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar does not bind himself to accept the lowest tender and also reserves the right to reject all tenders without assigning any reason.
- Payment will be made subject to availability of fund under appropriate Head of Account No claim what so ever in this regard will be entertained.
- Taxes will be deducted as per relevant provision of Act.
- Contractors will have to submit their tender with upto date registration certificate and item of annexure should be
- enclosed with the tender otherwise tender will be treated as cancelled. The tenderer should submit their tender with up to date GSTIN certificate and PAN Card failing which the tender
- may be treated as cancelled.

IPR(BTC)-2023-24/1408

Panchayat & Rural Development, BTC, Kokrajhar



CHRISTOPHER NOLAN OPEN TO MAKING A HORROR FILM IF IT'S AN 'EXCEPTIONAL IDEA'

LONDON, Feb 17: Christopher Nolan likes moving between genres and if he stumbles upon an exceptional idea, he would love to make a horror film

There is a lot of buzz around the next film of the director, whose 12th feature film "Oppenheimer" is a front-runner at the Oscars this year, including in the best picture and best director categories.

Asked at a British Film Institute panel discussion in London if he would ever consider

making a horror movie, Nolan seemed open to the idea of directing a horror film, according to Variety.

"'Oppenheimer' has elements of horror in it definitely, as I think is appropriate to the subject matter," Nolan said.

"I think horror films are very interesting because they depend on very cinematic devices. It really is about a visceral response to things, and so, at some point, I'd love to make a horror film. But I think a really good horror film

requires a really exceptional idea. And those are few and far between. So I haven't found a story that lends itself to that," the filmmaker said.

Nolan's 'Oppenheimer', starring Cillian Murphy in the central role, is a biopic of the theoretical physicist J Robert Oppenheimer.

The film has earned over USD 950 million at the world-wide box office, making it one of the most successful movies in the British director's career, which is dotted by big budget blockbusters whether it is the 'Batman' trilogy, 'Prestige', 'Inception', 'Interstellar' or 'Dunkirk'. (PTI)

'DANGAL' CHILD STAR SUHANI BHATNAGAR DIES AT 19



NEW DELHI, Feb 17: Suhani Bhatnagar, who played young Babita Phogat in Aamir Khanstarrer wresting drama "Dangal", has died at the age of 19.

"She died at AIIMS yesterday. She was 19," a close relative of the actor told PTI, confirming her death.

He did not elaborate on what led to the young actor's death but media reports suggested she suffered medical complications after a leg fracture and was later admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

"She was admitted on February 7 and passed away on February 16," a source at the hospital

The Faridabad-born actor became a prominent face after appearing in the 2016 biographical drama about a wrestler who mentors his two daughters to success.

Zaira Wasim played young Geeta while Bhatnagar portrayed the role of Babita. The grown-up versions of the characters were played by Fatima Sana Shaikh and Sanya Malhotra. Aamir Khan played the role of their fa-

ther, Mahavir Phogat.
In a social media post, Khan's production house mourned Bhatnagar's death.

"We are deeply saddened to hear about our Suhani passing away. Our heartfelt condolences to her mother Poojaji and the entire family. Such a talented young girl, such a team player, 'Dangal' would have been incomplete without Suhani.

"Suhani, you will always remain a star in our hearts. May you rest in peace," Aamir Khan Productions said in the post on X. The film's director Nitesh Tiwari also mourned the death.

"Suhani's passing away is absolutely shocking and heartbreaking. She was such a happy soul, so full of life. My deepest condolences to her family," he said in a statement.

Suhani had taken a break from acting to complete her studies.

THANKS FOR EVERYONE'S INPUT ON MY FACE: AMY SCHUMER



LOS ANGELES, Feb 17: Writeractor Amy Schumer has hit back at negative comments about her face, saying it's "puffer than normal" because she is going through "medical and hormonal" changes due to her endometriosis.

Schumer appeared on The Tonight Show and Good Morning America to promote her new show "Life and Beth" on Hulu but her facial appearance sparked a discussion on social media. In an Instagram post, the 42-year-old opened up about the health issue she is facing while also criticising the the undue focus on a woman's appearance.

"Thank you so much for everyone's input about my face! I've enjoyed feedback and deliberation
about my appearance, as all women
do for almost 20 years. And you're
right, it is puffier than normal right
now." "I have endometriosis,
an auto immune disease
that every woman should
read about," Schumer
wrote in an Instagram
post alongside the
poster for the second

season of her show.

ical and hormonal

"There are some med-

things going on in my

Endometriosis, according to the World Health Organisation, is a disease in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus. It can cause severe pain in the pelvis and make it harder to get pregnant. Schumer said while she believes that a woman "doesn't need any excuse for her physical appearance and owes no explanation", she took it as an opportunity to advocate for self-love and acceptance of "the skin you are in". "Like every other woman/person some days I feel confident and good as hell and others I want to put a bag over my head," she explained."

world right now, but I'm okay."

"But I feel strong and beautiful and so proud of this TV show I created. Wrote. Starred in and directed. Maybe just maybe we can focus on that for a little," she

added. In 2021,
Schumer had her
uterus and appendix removed due
to endometriosis. (PTI)

Jiya wins 'Best Film' award at Prag Cine Awards 2024

'Jiya' wins 4 awards including Best Film, Best Screenplay and Dialogue, Best Singer Male, and Best Background Score

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Feb 17: Filmmaker Kenny Basumatary's latest directorial 'Jiya', produced by Sarmistha Chakravorty, has won 4 awards, including Best Film at the latest edition of Prag Cine Awards held at Jorhat on February 16.

'Jiya' has won the Best Film award, Best Screenplay and Dialogue (Kenny Basumatary & Sarmistha Chakravorty), Best Singer Male (Angarag Papon Mahanta) and Best Background Score (Ambar Das). The film had secured a whooping 16 nominations in the prestigious awards. Written and produced by Sarmistha Chakravorty, 'Jiya' is about a young woman (Jiya) who, having escaped an abusive marriage, navigates the challenges of single mother-hood with her daughter Nupur. Struggling against societal judgment, Jiya conceals her vulnerability behind a resilient façade. Pallavi, her steadfast friend, becomes a crucial pillar of support. Jiya leaves a toxic job only to find solace in Pallavi's workplace, where she encounters the courteous Abhi. What happens next?

Expressing her excitement at winning multiple awards, Sarmistha Chakravorty said: "This is a dream coming true moment for me. My debut film as writer-producer and we won 4

awards including the Best Film. This is really overwhelming for us that our first venture has won 4 awards, and had received total 16 nominations. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire team, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making this happen." Speaking about the big win, director Kenny Basumatary said: "This is a huge recognition for the film. Winning four awards, including the esteemed Best Film category, is a testament to the collective dedication and hard work put in by our entire team." "I am deeply honoured and grateful to receive the award for Best Background Score for our film 'Jiya'. This recognition is a testament to the collaborative efforts and creativity that went into crafting the musical backdrop of our story. I am truly appreciative of this acknowledgment, and it motivates me to continue pushing the boundaries of artistic expression," said Ambar Das.

The film premiered in front of a packed audience at the 8th Brahmaputra Valley Film Festival at Jyoti Chitraban on December 15, 2023. 'Jiya' will be released across theatres on May 17, 2024.

Speaking about her debut as a film producer, Sarmistha Chakravorty had said: "At first, it was just a small dream of acting in a serious role. Since I have so many single mother friends around me, I thought of writing a script based on that. Then I somehow managed the expenditure needed for the shoot. With the help of selfless support from Kenny and our team, we managed to shoot the film. Actually, I got support from everyone. From Angarag Papon Mahanta, Shankuraj Konwar, Maitrayee Patar, Chandana Pathak, Raj Dweep, Swapna Jyoti Thengal, Eepsita Hazarika to each and everyone involved. Music production was done free of cost at home since my husband Ambar Das has composed, produced the songs and did the background score. This is how I could manage. Making of this film was possible only because of the unconditional love and support I received from everyone."

Feels great that talent is recognised on national level, says Priyamani

MUMBAI, Feb 17: South star Priyamani says "Jawan" and "The Family Man" have made her popular in Hindi cinema with better opportunities coming her way.

The actor, who is fluent in different languages, is already an established star in the south and won the National Film Award for her role in "Paruthiveeran".

"I feel honoured that makers not only from your industry but from other industries are willing to have you on board because they believe in your talent. It feels great that talent is being recognised everywhere and people (actors) are getting more opportunities. It's good that we are being recognised on a national level," the Bengaluru-based actor told PTI in an interview. Priyamani's stint in Hindi cinema began with a cameo in Mani Ratnam's

bilingual movie, "Raavan", followed by a dance number in Shah Rukh Khan's "Chennai Express", but it was her OTT debut show, "The Family Man", fronted by Manoj Bajpayee, that led to her becoming famous with Hindi audiences.

"I'm happy that people are liking my work. I'm a little more known because of 'Jawan' here in Mumbai. Earlier, they (people) had to take a second look at me to think if I was the same girl from 'The Family Man'. But now the popularity is growing more, so every time wherever I walk, people are like, 'Oh it's you'," she said. The "Chaarulatha" star said she is "conscious and cautious" about her choices in Hindi cinema. Next on her slate is "Article 370" and "Maidaan" besides the third season of Prime Video series "The Family

Man". "I'm very conscious and cautious of what I do. When it comes to Hindi, and in other languages also, I take my time in deciding what I want to do," she said.

"Article 370", fronted by Yami Gautam, is a political drama, which deals with the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir. The film is directed by Aditya Suhas Jambhale. Priyamani plays the role of an officer in PMO named Rajeshjwari Swaminathan. She described her character as a strong-willed woman. The Central government on August 5, 2019, had revoked Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated it into union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Priyamani said she learnt many things about how Article 370 came into force while

working on the movie.

"Through the process of story narration, and when we started shooting for the film, I realized that there is much more to this... It is not meant for a certain age group, anybody and everybody can watch it." "Article 370", backed by Gautam's filmmaker husband Aditya Dhar and Jio Studios, will be released in theatres on February 23. Priyamani is also looking forward to the release of "Maidaan" on April 10. The sports drama is directed by Amit Ravindernath Sharma of "Badhaai Ho" fame and is headlined by Ajay Devgn. The actor said producer Boney Kapoor approached her for the movie through her husband Mustafa Raj, an entrepreneur. (PTI)



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Tamil Nadu

pack off Punjab

INDIAN WOMEN ENTER MAIDEN FINAL AFTER BEATING JAPA

(MALAYSIA), Feb 17: India kept alive hopes of winning a

first-ever gold in Badminton Asia Team Championships after the women shuttlers progressed to their maiden final with a 3-2 win over two-time former champions Japan in a thrilling semifi-

nal here on Saturday.

The world No. 23 pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, world No. 53 Ashmita Chaliha and 17-year-old Anmol Kharb registered stunning wins in the first doubles and second and deciding singles to take India through to the summit clash. India will face Thailand in the final on Sunday.

India had won two bronze medals in men's team event in the 2016 and 2020 editions.

Though Japan were without their world No. 4 Akane Yamaguchi, the world No. 7 pair of Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota and world No. 8 combination of Mayu Matsumoto and

Wakana Nagahara, they were still a formidable side, making it tough for India.

Returning from a long injury layoff, Sindhu had enjoyed wins against China's Han Yue and Hong Kong's Lo Sin Yan Happy but she couldn't produce her best against the left-handed Aya Ohori, going down 13-21, 20-22 in the first singles to peg India

Treesa and Gayatri, playing the first doubles, dished out a superlative performance to outwit world No. 6 Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida 21-17, 16-21, 22-20 in a 73-minute contest as India drew level at 1-1. Up against former world champion Nozomi Okuhara, who is currently ranked 20, the left-handed Ashmita produced an aggressive game, using her overhead cross drops and jump smashes to good use, to record a shocking 21-17, 21-14 win to hand India a 2-1

With Tanisha Crasto suffering



a niggle, Sindhu then paired up with Ashwini Ponnappa but they couldn't get across the world No. 11 pair of Rena Miyaura and Ayako Sakuramoto, losing 14-21, 11-21 in 43 minutes.

With the five-match rubber evenly poised at 2-2, Anmol was handed the responsibility of taming world No. 29 Natsuki Nidaira, and the Indian once again lived up to the expectation, claiming a 21-14, 21-18 win in

"Our girls are doing magic, they were excellent today," former India coach Vimal Kumar, who is with the Indian team in Malaysia, told PTI.

"I will give a lot of credit to Gayatri and Treesa and also Ashmita for pulling out of the matches. It was an outstanding performance from Ashmita, she outclassed Okuhara, she raised her game to another level.

'Young girl Anmol also her going forward. When you do cushion. (PTI)

shows they can handle pressure and I am really impressed with her. This is special moment for Indian badminton.

Ashmita managed to draw out errors from Nozomi and also played some delectable backhand drives and forehand cross hits to open up a 11-9 lead after an initial battle in the opening

Nozomi clawed back at 12-12 but the Indian broke the run of play with a nice over-the-head drop and a backhand return and then a couple of straight smashes helped her to stay ahead. The Indian pushed one to the back and then Nozomi hit wide as Ashmita grabbed four game points with a jump cross smash and sealed it when the Japanese's back hand

went to net. After the change of sides, Ashmita fell 2-7 behind but she soon stepped up the pace and showed that we can depend on entered the break with a 11-9

They had injuries and they

brought young players in. I

know how difficult it was going

to be (for them). But we fully

We had to show a different side

to us. So it was important to get

the clean sheet. Because we

know we can create chances and

the deadlock in the second half,

they continued created plenty

more gilt-edged opportunities

after the break. However, Ker-

ala Blasters FC goalkeeper Ka-

maljit Singh, who replaced the

injured Sachin Suresh in the

first half, pulled a bunch of fine

saves to keep his side's deficit

down to one goal. Coyle be-

lieved his side could have added

to their tally but was happy for

While Chennaiyin FC broke

top-order after posting 435 well in team championships, it SALEM (TAMIL NADU), Feb

> Baba Indrajith and Vijay Shankar powered the hosts to 435 in their first innings here on Saturday. Punjab were 141/4 at stumps on the second day, trailing by 294

Batting on 88 overnight, Shankar duly reached his century with the help of 12 fours and a six, while Indrajith went on to make

17: Tamil Nadu took firm control

of their Ranji Trophy Group C

match by packing off the Punjab

top-order after big hundreds by

ing the day on 122. Indrajith, who added 281 runs for the fourth wicket, found the fence 10 times and cleared it once.

187 in 295 deliveries after resum-

During their marathon association, both Indrajith and Shankar did a lot of running, relying a lot on the singles and twos to keep the scoreboard ticking.

However, Tamil Nadu's lowerorder batters failed to contribute significantly to their total after the dismissal of Shankar to off-spinner Jassinder Singh with the score reading 388 for five.

TN skipper Sai Kishore chipped in 20 before the home team's first innings came to an end in 131.4

Off-spinner Sukhwinder Singh was the most successful bowler for Punjab, finishing with figures of 4/99 in 31 overs.

There were two wickets apiece deserved the three points. From for Jassinder Singh and allthe first whistle to the last, we rounder Abhishek Sharma, who were the best team. And then we bowls left-arm spin. find ourselves down to 10 men. In reply, at least three Punjab

batters looked to have settled down nicely before losing their Prabhsimran Singh was dis-

missed for 24, while Anmolpreet Singh and Nehal Wadhera got out after doing all the hard work, for 41 and 43 respectively.

At stumps, Mandeep Singh and wicketkeeper Anmol Malhotra were batting on 18 and 3 respec-

Left-arm spinner Ajith Ram, who averages an exceptional 16.6 for his 46 wickets in nine matches, had Prabhsimran trapped in front of the wickets and bowled Wadhera to leave Punjab precariously placed at 131/4. (PTI)

We fully deserved the theree points: Chennayin's FC's Owen Coyle

Mumbai thrash Assam by innings and 80 runs to warm up for quarter-finals

MUMBAI, Feb 17: All-rounder Shardul Thakur's match haul of 10 wickets was complemented by Shivam Dube's counter-attacking century as Mumbai finished their group B Ranji Trophy league engagements with a resounding innings and 80 run win against Assam inside two days.

The 41-times champions Mumbai have been at their ruthless best this season, capping five wins, four of them with bonus points to top the Group B standings with massive 37 points. They had already qualified before the last match and the final game was more of a warm-up before the semi-finals.

Thakur claimed 8-1-31-4 to add to his 6/21 in the first innings as Assam were folded for 108 in 33 overs with Mumbai wrapping the

issue inside two days. Mumbai encountered a solitary loss — against Uttar Pradesh from seven matches this season, while against Chhattisgarh they bagged three points with a first innings lead. Mumbai's nearest rival Andhra have 25 points with their last league round fixture against Kerala in progress.

Dube, who had completed his second century in four innings on day one, ended his innings for 121 off 140 balls that included 11 fours and five sixes.

Dube now has two fifties and two centuries in six innings since his return to his state side from na-

Shams Mulani also chipped in with a quickfire 47-ball 31 that took Mumbai's first innings to 272. giving them a 188-run first innings

Assam in their second essay were rocked early by new ball bowler Mohit Avasthi (2/10) who removed both their openers on single digit scores.

Tushar Deshpande (2/37) and Tanush Kotian (1/5) then kept chipping away wickets before Thakur wrapped the tail in his fourwicket burst.

At Vizianagaram, visitors Kerala put up a strong fightback to post 258/3 in reply to Andhra's 272 allout. But despite being in the backfoot, Andhra are set to finish second to join Mumbai in the last-

Skipper Sachin Baby was unbeaten on 87, in company of Akshay Chandran (57) at stumps on

Earlier opener Rohan Kunnummal scored 61, while Krishna Prasad got out for 43.

India A regular Abhimanyu Easwaran struck 200 not out to put Bengal's in driver's seat in their match against Bihar at Eden Gardens. Easwaran hit 23 boundaries in his unbeaten knock of 200 (291 balls) as Bengal declared on 411/5 with a big first innings lead of 316. Bihar were 32/1, trailing Bengal by 284 at close on day two. But this peformance is little too late for Bengal who are already out of the quarters reckoning having endured two losses.

For Easwaran, who has been found wanting in big matches, this was his third first-class double hundred, first since his career-best 233 for India A against Sri Lanka A in May 2019.

Easwaran also got two reprieves en route to his double century, first he was dropped on 152 and then survived a catch off a no ball on 185. Bengal skipper Manoj Tiwary scored 30 in what was seemed to be his final innings of his twodecade long career.

The veteran of 147 first-class and 169 List A matches was trapped lbw by Bihar spinner Ashutosh Aman. (PTI)



NEW DELHI, Feb 17: vidual honours and the Indian

Blasters at home. The home team not only dominated ball possession, but created more chances and registered more attempts at goal compared to their opponents. Chennaiyin FC recorded their fourth win of the season which

propelled them to the eighth po-

sition in the standings. Coyle's

side also put an end to their

three-game losing streak in the

Teenage golfer Zara Anand will

replace defending champion

Avani Prashanth in the Indian

team for the 44th Queen Sirikit

Cup next month in New

Zealand. The Noida teenager

will join the experienced Vidha-

tri Urs and Heena Kang as the

Indian team competes at the

prestigious event, which will be

held at the famous Clearwater

Golf Course in Christchurch,

New Zealand. The event is

Heena, Vidhatri and Zara fin-

ished in that order on the Indian

Golf Union's Order of Merit for

2023. A year ago at the last edi-

tion of the event, Avani became

the first Indian to win the indi-

scheduled from March 20-23.

league with this result. The veteran head coach was pleased with what he saw from his team and stated that the three points were throughly deserved. "We were outstanding tonight, from the first whistle to the last," Coyle said in the postmatch press conference.

team finished second in Manila

for their best-ever performance.

Avani's teammates last year

were Vidhatri Urs and Nishna

Patel. This year Avani will miss

the event as she has been given

a special invitation to the Sage

Valley Junior International in

Sage Valley, Graniteville, South

held in the week March 17-23

and will then proceed to Au-

gusta for the prestigious Au-

Amateur (ANWA) from April 3-

6. "We have a great crop of

young women amateurs and it

was a splendid show last year,

when Avani won the individuals

National

Women's

The Sage Valley event will be

Carolina, US.

ficult because we had a very, very good opponent. Kerala Blasters FC is a wonderful team. They are not one of the big spenders in the league. Ivan (Vukomanovic) does a remarkable job. He's a proper football man, but also a really good man.

"Tonight was going to be dif-

Zara to join Vidhatri and Heena for Queen Sirikit Cup golf

their best event show," said Bri-

jinder Singh, President, Indian

Golf Union "However, Avani will be away playing in US. So, we now have Vidhatri, who has a lot experience and was in the Indian squad last year.

"Heena has been doing well on the domestic scene and the youngest member of the team, Zara, did well enough to reach the final of the All India Ladies. So, we have a lot of hopes from this trio." Vidhatri, the All India Ladies amateur champion, beat Zara Anand in the finals in December 2023, while Heena lost in the pre-quarters of the match

Anmol is brave and intelligent, says Gopichand

NEW DELHI, Feb 17: Anmol tinental championship. Kharab is a fearless and intelligent player and her emergence is refreshing for Indian badminton, gushed chief National coach Pullela Gopichand after the teenager's impressive show at the

Asia Team Championships The 17-year-old from Faridabad humbled world number 29 Natsuki Nidaira in the deciding fifth match against Japan, a win that carried India into first-ever final in the prestigious tournament.

Anmol, who won the senior national champion in December 2023, had also notched up a thrilling three-game win over China's Wu Luo Yu on Wednesday

This is her first major international assignment. "I think

the result of two matches is a testimony that she can players.

pressure on and show that kind of nerve, it is very refreshing. She is fearless.

ponents will read her game in time

"To beat China and Japan, I don't think many teams can say that, so really happy. There is great energy in the dug out and it showed literally during the match.

"Before this tie, if you would have told me that (Nozomi) Okuhara would be beaten and we will make a comeback after Sindhu's loss, I would have said little chance but it has been a great run so far. "The match against China was a fantastic win. The morale was high in general. Good to see Gayatri (Gopichand) and Treesa (Jolly) pulling out the match and the way Anmol played it was amazing. Ashmita's was

also a fantas-After PV

Sindhu suffered a shock defeat in the opening match, doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly produced a 21-17 16-21 22-20 win world no. 6

Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida to bring India back into the five-match rubber.

"Shida and Matsuyama are a top pair, and Treesa and Gayatri had to work hard, it was close and tough match. They have beaten China and Japan in two solid matches. After losing at India Open, to comeback and win, I mean this will do them a lot of good.'

India will face Thailand in the summit clash and Gopichand feels the singles matches will be key.

"They have top doubles teams, so doubles will be tough but we have edge in singles and we are again counting on Anmol. So. God willing, we will win tomorrow. It is another tough match." (PTI)

Bengaluru FC face Mumbai City FC challenge in their attempt to reach the playoffs FC, they recovered to beat Chen-

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Feb 17: Mumbai

City FC readies to play hosts to Bengaluru FC at the Mumbai Football Arena (MFA) in the City of Dreams as the Matchweek 15 of Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 season draws to an end on February 18, Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

After a brief series of setbacks, the Islanders bounced back into form with Spanish forward Iker Guarrotxena notching the winner for them away at East Bengal FC. The victory was a massive morale booster for the Petr Kratky-coached side, who had earlier squandered a 2-0 lead against the upbeat Jamshedpur FC at home.

Overcoming a transitional phase, the Islanders will be hoping that their latest acquisitions settle into the scheme of things as seamlessly as possible to avoid any further hiccups towards their title charge.

Up against them is a Bengaluru FC unit that has garnered a varied set of results since the resumption of

the ISL campaign After a rather shock 3-1 to Punjab naiyin FC by 1-0 before drawing 1-1 against the Red Miners. Head coach Gerard Zaragoza has had nearly two months with his team now and it is about time that his ideas, philosophies, and the changes that he has brought about in the setup begin reflecting consistently on field. What's at stake?

Mumbai City FC

The Islanders had rolled over the Blues by 4-0 when they last met at the Kanteerva in December, a result that led to the eventual dismissal of Simon Grayson from the helm of Bengaluru FC.

Now, the home team has a chance

to record only their second league double against the Blues, after first doing it back in 2019-20. The aforementioned defeat to Jamshedpur FC meant that their impressive sixmatch-long unbeaten streak at home rounded off, and Kratky will be cautious to avoid successive losses at the MFA - a pattern that they had fallen prey to at around the same time (February-March) last year.

Guarrotxena repeatedly teased and troubled the East Bengal FC defence in the last game, and Mumbai City FC will take significant confidence from that game after losing key players in the frontline due to suspensions and departures to other clubs. Regardless, there's plenty of quality in their ranks to ride over mid-season troubles. Placed fifth in the table currently, two matches (13) and six points (25) separate them with league leaders Odisha FC (31 points in 15 matches). For all it's worth, Mumbai City FC has a realistic shot at retaining the top spot and they can't let momentum for the same desert them in the coming

Bengaluru FC

The Blues are on a worrisome run of form on the road in this campaign, having been winless in their previous eight away games. Further, their attacking unit isn't really operating at its optimum potential yet, having netted merely once each in all of their last five games.

In the current campaign, they have developed a tendency of con-

stages of the match and arguably compromising their offensive potential for defensive solidity. For instance, they have conceded only 9% of their total goals in the last 15 minutes of their matches in ISL 2023-24, which is the lowest share amongst all teams. However, they have scored

merely twice in the final 15 minutes of their games - again, the least as compared to every other side that in the competition. In comparison, no team has scored more goals that Mumbai City FC (7) between minutes 75-90. Does that suggest that this fixture will go down the wire? Only time will tell.

Key Players to Watch Out Alberto Noguera (Mumbai City

The Spaniard brings sharpness to the Mumbai City FC midfield, adopting a more direct approach, whilst being constantly on the lookout for creating and converting goalscoring opportunities. He has already netted and assisted once in two appearances this season, aver-

curacy of 88%. Noguera has created two goal-scoring chances per 90 minutes and is playing the perfect foil to Lalengmawia Ralte at the centre of the park, connecting the midfield to the tip of the attack and setting the tempo for his team's forward foravs. Suresh Singh Wangjam (Ben-

galuru FC) Suresh Singh Wangjam was on

target in the game against Jamshedpur FC, bagging his first goal of the current ISL season and only his second overall. Suresh averages 38 passes per match at an accuracy of 84% and has created eight goalscoring opportunities.

He is a dynamite at the centre of the park, regularly pushing forward, getting into promising advanced positions and earning fouls to help the team capitalise upon set-piece opportunities. Suresh has earned 26 fouls in this campaign and his terrific goal in the previous match should instil greater belief in him to explore his potential to the fullest moving forward.



The kind of strokes that she plays, it all come naturally to her," Gopichand told PTI. "She is reading the game well, you can see her intelligence. She

played beautifully. Of course, opand that's where she needs to rework on her mistakes but she has been phenomenal. "She fought really well and she

is naturally brave and intelligent." Indian women team had a phenomenal run this week, defeating China, Hong Kong and Japan to enter their first-ever final and Gopichand was also gung ho about the performance in the Con-



Yashasvi rocks England with ton as India in cruise control

RAJKOT, Feb 17: Yashasvi Jaiswal's dream season just got better as he singlehandedly seized the initiative from England with a sizzling century, putting India in complete control at the end of third day's play in the third Test.

Jaiswal's (104 retired hurt off 133 balls) second ton of the series was beautifully complemented by Shubman Gill (65 batting, 120 balls), who curbed his natural aggression as India ended the day at 196 for 2 in 51 available overs.

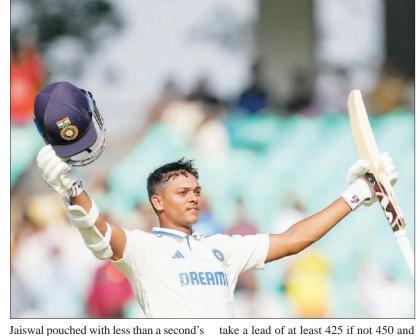
The left-handed opener, who will be torch-bearer of Indian batting for the next decade, scored his third Test hundred in only seventh Test appearance before the blazing blade was brought to a halt by back spasms that forced him to retire.

The Jaiswal-Gill pair added 155 runs in quick time with the former giving the English team a test of its own medicine with nine fours and five sixes, the best being the imperious pull off Jimmy An-

The overall lead swelled to 322 by stumps, after Indian bowlers made a splendid comeback, getting last five England wickets for only 29 runs with visitors being bowled out for 319.

Mohammed Siraj (4/84 in 21.1 overs) was brilliant with his yorkers to tail-enders while Kuldeep Yadav (2/77 in 18 overs) compensated brilliantly for Ravichandran Ashwin's unfortunate withdrawal with two quick wickets in the morning session.

However it was Joe Root's indiscreet reverse ramp off Jasprit Bumrah which



Jaiswal pouched with less than a second's reaction time that turned the tables.

"That shot was not on and it became a turning point," Siraj said at post-match press conference.

Rohit Sharma's captaincy was spot-on and the manner in which he tweaked Jasprit Bumrah's field position at long-on to get Ben Stokes dismissed off Ravindra Jadeja (2/51) spoke volumes about his

On Sunday, India would be looking to off Rehan Ahmed for fours.

dated India's grip on the contest, having lost Rohit Sharma (19) cheaply in the second session.

At the other end, Gill put behind the disappointment of the first-innings duck with a fifth half-century, countering England's ploy of a packed on-side field with up to six fielders placed and Wood bowling into his body.

However, his charge was halted only

after England brought back Mark Wood

for a short-ball ploy yet again in the game

Unfazed with England's deployments,

Jaiswal dealt in singles once into his 90s

and brought up his third century of fledg-

to retired hurt close to the end of the play

for being unable to deal with back

Jaiswal not only took the wind out of

England's aspirations but also consoli-

However, the left-handed opener had

ling career with a four off Wood.

with a packed leg side field.

India's task was to preserve wickets and build their lead, given the amount of time left in the game and surface here

being benign so far. Additionally, Rohit's early dismissal with their overall lead not being big enough would have provided some concerns but all that was banished by the pair of Jaiswal and Gill with their unbeaten 155-run stand for the second wicket.

Kuldeep, who was hit for plenty by Ben Duckett on second day, found his mojo, bowling splendidly through the first session of the day which kept a leash on England, while also accounting for out post lunch but the ploy backfired hor-

Indian team wears black armbands in memory of former captain Dattajirao Gaekwad

RAJKOT, Feb 17: Indian players wore black armbands in the memory of former captain Dattajirao Gaekwad on the third day of the ongoing third Test against England here on Saturday.

Dattajirao, who played 11 Tests for India between 1951 and 1962, died on February 13 after remaining hospitalised for 12 days.

At 95, he was India's oldest living Test cricketer.

Dattajirao was the father of former India batter and coach Aunshuman Gaek-

"Team India will be wearing black arm bands in memory of Dattajirao Gaekwad, former India captain and India's oldest Test cricketer who passed away recently," the BCCI said in a statement shortly before the third day's play got underway here at the Niranjan Shah Stadium.

A right-handed batter, who could bowl both medium pace and leg-break, Dattajirao was India's captain during the 1959 tour of England. (PTI)

Jonny Bairstow with an unplayable delivery. Bairstow moved deep into the crease but was pinned in front of the wickets with one that turned sharply into him from outside the off.

Bumrah then accounted for Root (18) for the ninth time in 21 innings, as former skipper's shocking dismissal — a reverse ramp to second slip — once again exposed the bizarreness of the ultra aggressive approach.

Having struggled to score freely in the first session, England resorted to go all-

Jadeja had Stokes (41) caught by Bumrah who was placed a bit straighter at long-on, forcing the batter to adjust his stroke. Jadeja also had Tom Hartley

stumped for his second wicket. For Ben Foakes, a delivery from Siraj slowed a little bit off the surface for an

easy grab for Rohit at mid-on. The India pacer wasted no time in cleaning up tail-enders Ahmed and Anderson to bring up a four-for, with England rolling over for 319 from 290/5 at

Tiger Woods withdraws from Riviera with flu Sachin visits bat-manufacturing unit in symptoms. His 2024 debut lasts only 24 holes Kashmir, pleased with quality of willow

LOS ANGELES, Feb 17: Tiger Woods returned to the PGA Tour and lasted only 24 holes, withdrawing Friday from the Genesis Invitational with flu-like symptoms and dehydration after hitting his tee shot on the seventh hole at Riviera.

Rob McNamara, his longtime associate and vice president of TGR Ventures, said Woods felt flu symptoms Thursday night that worsened when he woke up.

"He had a little bit of a fever and was better during the warm-up, but then when he got out there and was walking and playing, he started feeling dizzy," McNamara told a PGA Tour official. "Ultimately, the doctors are saying he's got potentially some type of flu and that he was dehydrated. He's been treated with an IV bag and he's doing much, much better, and he'll be released on his own here soon.

Woods left Riviera about two hours after he withdrew, sitting in the front seat of a red SUV as

He was 1-over par for the round — 2 over for the tournament — and projected just outside the cut when he asked for a cart and was driven off the course by a rules official. He has been walking slowly and looked drained of energy play-

managed to create quite a spec-

An ambulance and a ladder

truck from the Los Angeles Fire

Department were parked out-

side the clubhouse, presumably

phones when there was move-

headed for the exit. Woodland

leaving without Woods.

a few hundred fans.

tacle at Riviera.

to deliver them.

ing the front nine.

"He obviously wasn't himself, just didn't look right. Saw that before the round started," said Gary Woodland, who played in the same group with Woods along with Justin Thomas. "Obviously, everything's better with him there and for him for his first tournament back and he couldn't come out and finish the way he wanted to, that sucks for all of us."

Woodland said he noticed Woods being quieter than normal, though they all were trying to make sure they were among

the top 50 to make the cut. "I feel bad for him. He wasn't right," Woodland said. "He definitely was trying to fight through it and I hope he's

The 48-year-old Woods still

ficial event since the Masters last April, withdrawing in the middle of the rain-delayed third round. He played the unofficial Hero World Challenge in December against a 20-man field with no cut, and the 36-hole PNC Championship with his son, Charlie.

have at least 125 overs to bowl out Eng-

land. With no Ashwin available, India

would need a cushion of more overs on a

Jaiswal's onslaught continued despite

England frenetically changing their bowl-

ing and fielding plans but none worked

Jaiswal brought out two reverse sweeps

Having spotted a vacant off-side field,

deck that is still good for batting.

enough to stop the Indian opener.

Woods now has played six official tournaments since returning from a February 2021 car crash in Los Angeles that shattered bones in his right leg. He has pulled out of three of them — the 2022 PGA Championship after 54 holes, the 2023 Masters when he didn't return Sunday morning to complete the third

waiting for Woods. PGA Tour Woods had said he hoped to officials said IV fluid bags were play one tournament a month needed and there were none at through the major season. He had said Thursday he was expe-Riviera, so the paramedics had riencing back spasms, which Photographers and media led to his shank on the final hole when he started the tournacrowded near the ambulance next to a 6-foot high hedge ment with a 72. raised cameras and mobile

Along with playing, Woods is the tournament host of the ment, except the trucks were Genesis Invitational that is run by his TGR foundation.

On the golf course, there was His week in Los Angeles began with plenty of hype a steady stream of spectators the launch of his new apparel line with TaylorMade Golf and and Thomas approached the ninth green surrounded by only his first PGA Tour start of the

SRINAGAR, Feb 17: A cricket bat manufacturer in the Sangam area here was in for a pleasant surprise when Sachin Tendulkar and his family visited his manufacturing unit on Saturday.

Tendulkar, accompanied by wife Anjali and daughter Sara, stopped by at a unit in Charsoo on the Srinagar-Jammu highway and interacted with the work-

"We were busy making bats when a vehicle stopped at our gate. We were pleasantly surprised to find the Little Master and his family," Mohammad Shaheen Parray, owner of MJ Sports,

told PTI over phone. Parray said Tendulkar checked the quality of the bats made of Kashmir willow.

"He stroked a few bats and was quite pleased with the quality. Tendulkar said he had come to compare the Kashmir willow bats with those made of English

"We requested him to lend his voice in support of the local bats," Parray said, adding the batting maestro promised to support the Kashmir willow bats. Parray said Tendulkar spent an hour at the manufacturing unit and interacted with a small bunch of fans. (PTI)



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Farmers' agitation: Shotgun shooters sweat over Olympic selection trials in Patiala



NEW DELHI, Feb 17: More than 150 shotgun shooters are sweating over their participation in crucial national Olympic trials later this month in Patiala in the wake of the farmers' agitation and the restrictions imposed on inter-state travel.

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has convened two meetings but they have not yet altered the venue or the dates for the third selection trials because of several issues, including a "packed calendar" and the impending "announcement of the general elections".

The scores in the selection trials, to be held at the Moti Bagh Gun Club Ranges in Patiala from February 25 to March 2, "will be considered for selection of teams for Paris Olympic Games", an NRAI statement had said on January 22.

Several shotgun shooters PTI spoke to said carrying arms and ammunition by road will be a nightmare. Besides, airfares to Chandigarh have gone through

the roof because borders have been sealed due to the farmers' agitation.

NRAI secretary-general Sultan Singh when asked if the federation will be able to organise the trials in Patiala given the circumstances said, "That is a very difficult question. But do we have an option, considering the (shooting) calendar, elections... I'm running against the wall."

On whether the trials could be shifted to the Jagatpura range in Jaipur or the Karni Singh range in Delhi, he said the Tughlakabad range would be an issue because of the upcoming Para Shooting World Cup from March 6-15.

The Para Shooting World Cup at the Karni Singh Ranges has 24 Paris Paralympic quota places up for grabs and 500 para shooters from 52 countries are com-

"If I shift it (trials) anywhere else, then the northern people have a problem going to south (India) and south people have a

problem going to north (India). Shooters in Chandigarh will then ask, 'how do we reach Jaipur'," said Singh.

"We've already had two meetings, but what is the solution? I can't even postpone the trials because of a packed calender, and if the elections are announced, then the code of conduct will also come into play... then there can be no shipment of ammunition, no weapons can be carried," he added.

"We are totally seized of the matter, but we have no choice," he said. "I am more than welcome to any suggestions that might come up," he added.

However, a top shooter told PTI on condition of anonymity that both Jaipur and even the shooting range in Bhopal would be better options compared to Patiala given the scenario.

"The paramilitary forces at the borders will ask for a whole lot of documents... for what purpose we are carrying such large quantities of arms and ammunition. Then, the flights to Chandigarh have become very expensive as people are avoiding roads," he said.

Another shooter said, several shooters recently travelled by road to Bhopal for the second round of Olympic selection

"Besides, when the NRAI talks about shooters from the south, that is only a miniscule number and they also mostly reside and train in Delhi. Most of the shotgun shooters are from Delhi and adjoining areas. So where is the problem to shift the venue," he said.

Another shooter said, the code of conduct that might come into force once the general elections are announced does not apply to sports shooters. (PTI)

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