



- ENPO to continue 'public emergency' in eastern Nagaland
- Nagaland launches official websites for 5 new dists
- 'Development work for us is a mission to build nation, not to win elections'
- CAA becomes key poll issue in Kerala; LDF and UDF protest, BJP defends

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Inauguration • Foundation Stones • Bhoomi Pujan

Kamrup (M)

ATPO Complex
 Betkuchi, Guwahati
 1:30 pm

For All-round Development of Assam

Vikas Yatra

13 March 2024

Chief Guest

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
 Chief Minister, Assam

Guests of Honour

Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary
 Minister, Govt of Assam

Smt Queen Oja
 MP, Guwahati

Bhoomi Pujan

Unity Mall

Cost
₹298
 CR



Total project
₹635
 CR

Kamrup

Bihdia Raas Field
 3:00 pm

Guests of Honour

Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary
 Minister, Govt of Assam

Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita
 MP, Rajya Sabha

Smt Queen Oja
 MP, Guwahati

Shri Dilip Saikia
 MP, Mangaldai

Shri Bhabesh Kalita
 MLA, Rangia

Shri Diganta Kalita
 MLA, Kamalpur

Smt Nandita Das
 MLA, Boko

Rekibuddin Ahmed
 MLA, Chaygaon

Shri Hemanga Thakuria
 MLA, Palashbari

Smt Suman Haripriya
 MLA, Hajo

Foundation Stone

Upgrade of road from Chaygaon to Ukiam

- Highlights**
- ▶ Inter-state connectivity with Meghalaya through Jalukbari and Ukiam
 - ▶ Construction of drains, major bridges, retaining wall, etc.

Cost
₹103
 CR

Other projects: 82 Cost: ₹532 cr

Janasanyog /ID/19396/23/13-Mar-24

India's first automobile in-plant railway siding project of Maruti Suzuki in Gujarat

Project has been developed under the Centre's PM Gati Shakti mission in partnership with the Gujarat government

AHMEDABAD, March 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated India's first automobile in-plant railway siding project of Maruti Suzuki (MSIL) at its plant at Hansalpur in Gujarat's Mehsana district virtually from a function here.

PM Modi, who visited Gujarat on Tuesday, inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of ₹ 85,000 crore railway projects, including the launch of 10 new Vande Bharat trains, from Sabarmati area of Ahmedabad in Gujarat after visiting the Dedicated Freight Corridor's (DFC) Operation Control Centre here. The MSIL's in-plant railway siding project was also inaugurated during the event.

The project has been developed under the Centre's PM Gati Shakti mission in partnership with the Gujarat government, Indian Railways and MSIL at a cost of ₹ 976 crore, MSIL's Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs, Rahul Bharti said.

"It is for the first time in India that an in-plant railway siding for any automobile company has happened. This is the excellence of the Gati Shakti programme," Bharti told media persons here.

The project has been developed by a special purpose vehicle - Bahucharaji Rail Corporation Lim-



ited (BRCL) - set up with Gujarat Railway Infrastructure Development Corporation (GRIDE), Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) and MSIL as partners with 49 per cent, 29 per cent and 26 per cent equities each respectively.

GRIDE is a joint venture between the Gujarat government and the Ministry of railways.

The railway line within the Bahucharaji plant is developed entirely by Maruti Suzuki at a cost of ₹ 105 crore, Bharti said.

The project eliminates an annual 50,000 truck trips for MSIL, with the automobile major planning to increase dispatches of finished cars

by railway from 26 per cent currently to 40 per cent annually at its full capacity, he said.

"The project will save 50,000 truck trips, 35 million litres of fuel used in trucks per annum, and cut down on 1,650 tonnes per annum carbon emission. Logistics can be a good way of reducing our carbon emission, moving us towards carbon neutrality," Bharti said.

"Converting the dispatch from road to rail will benefit everyone as it reduces road congestion. A truck does an average trip of 1,600 km, and one train replaces 40 such trucks. One route of the train thereby helps us effectively elimin-

ate 64,000 km of a truck running

on the road," he said. The railway siding has a capacity to dispatch 3,00,000 cars per annum with a present parking capacity of 800 cars expandable up to 3,000 cars, he said.

Till February, Maruti Suzuki has dispatched around 18 lakh cars by railways. During the current fiscal till February, 4.09 lakh cars have been dispatched by the railways, he said.

"Our penetration of the railway as a mode of dispatch is the highest among all car manufacturers in the country. We have done more than 21 per cent of dispatches this year, and we want to keep increasing it further, the company's executive officer said.

"We want to keep increasing the share of railways in our finished goods dispatched from the factory to either the dealers in India or to ship for exports. Our exports are also growing, and the company now exports 42 per cent of cars from India. It will increase drastically in the future," he said.

Giving details of the timeline of the project, Bharti said that G-RIDE gave its formal approval in March 2017, after which the company's internal board approved it in January 2019, and construction began in May 2020. (PTI)

Sensex edges higher, Nifty ends almost flat amid volatile trade

MUMBAI, March 12: Equity market benchmark Sensex ended higher on Tuesday due to heavy buying in index heavyweights like HDFC Bank, TCS and Reliance Industries amid mixed cues from Asian markets.

Witnessing a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 165.32 points or 0.22 per cent higher at 73,667.96. During the day, the barometer surged 501.52 points to 74,004.16.

The broader Nifty, however, ended almost flat at 22,335.70, inching up 3.05 points or 0.01 per cent.

Among Sensex firms, HDFC Bank climbed more than 2 per cent. TCS, Maruti, Infosys, Reliance Industries and Bharti Airtel were among the major gainers.

State Bank of India, JSW Steel, ITC, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement and Nestle were among the laggards.

"The domestic market witnessed range-bound trading today after the previous day's sharp profit booking. However, mid and small-cap stocks remained pressured, primarily due to apprehensions regarding inflated valuations," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

"Global sentiment remained mixed as investors awaited key US inflation data, which could offer insights into the Fed's interest rate decisions. Additionally, market participants are anticipating India's inflation figures scheduled for release today, to remain consistent with the previous month, which will be at the middle of RBI's tolerance range," he added.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 2.11 per cent and midcap index dipped 1.31 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty plummeted by 3.53 per cent, industrials by 1.74 per cent, commodities by 1.73 per cent, services by 1.70 per cent, utilities by 1.59 per cent and metal by 1.34 per cent. IT and Teck were the only gainers. (PTI)

Sanmarg Business Awards to honour North Bengal's business leaders

HT Bureau

GUAHATI, March 12: Siliguri gears up to host the much-anticipated 3rd edition of the Sanmarg Business Awards, a prestigious event aimed at recognizing the exceptional contributions of businesses and leaders shaping the economic landscape of North Bengal. Scheduled for March 3 at Court-yard by Marriott, the event will serve as a platform to celebrate the achievements of individuals and organizations that have made a significant impact on the region's dynamic economy.

The ceremony is expected to draw a distinguished audience comprising CEOs, chairpersons, presidents of prominent Business Houses, Angel Investors, Venture Capitalists, First-generation Entrepreneurs, and Government Officials. This gathering reflects the collective commitment to acknowledging and celebrating the economic prowess of North Bengal.

Central to the awards' integrity is a meticulous se-

lection process for Promising Entrepreneurs, where businesses undergo rigorous evaluations and screenings. Input from stakeholders, employees, and competitors is integrated into the assessment, ensuring a fair and transparent selection process. A panel of esteemed jury members, including industry stalwarts like Ananya Mittal, director of Mittal Gardens, and Kamal Mittal, CMD of PCM Group of Industries, oversees the selection of deserving awardees.

Ruchika Gupta, president of Sanmarg Group Pvt Ltd and Founder-Guardian of the Aparajita, expressed her enthusiasm for the event, emphasizing its role in highlighting the transformative power of business in uplifting communities. She stated, "The Sanmarg Business Awards, North Bengal, serve as a platform to illuminate the remarkable endeavors of business leaders in Eastern India. It's a celebration of resilience, innovation, and the collective pursuit of excellence that define our region's economic landscape."

Airtel engages employees nationwide in Customer Day Initiative

HT Bureau

GUAHATI, March 12: In a bid to reinforce its commitment to customer-centricity, Bharti Airtel marked Tuesday as Customer Day across all its operational hubs throughout the nation. This initiative saw employees across various roles, typically not directly involved in customer-facing activities, immerse themselves in frontline duties, engaging directly with consumers to gain invaluable insights.

From the bustling markets to the homes of customers, Airtel's work-

force delved into diverse roles such as home delivery engineers, fiber executives, and retail staff, spanning from top-tier executives to junior managers. This widespread participation underscores the company's dedication to fostering a culture of customer obsession throughout its ranks.

Recognized as a pivotal component of Airtel's ongoing efforts to fortify its customer-centric ethos, the Customer Day initiative facilitates a deeper understanding of customer preferences and concerns. By providing employees with firsthand

exposure to customer interactions, Airtel aims to cultivate a culture of empathy and responsiveness within its organizational fabric.

The company anticipates that Customer Day will serve as a catalyst for transformative insights, equipping its workforce with a renewed perspective on customer needs and aspirations. This concerted effort underscores Airtel's unwavering commitment to elevating the customer experience and fostering lasting relationships in an increasingly competitive telecommunications landscape.

Google ties up with ECI to prevent spread of false information

Ads policies already prohibit the use of manipulated media to mislead people, like deepfakes or doctored content

NEW DELHI, March 12: Alpha-

bet Inc-owned Google has joined hands with Election Commission of India (ECI) to prevent spread of false information, promote authorised content and label AI-generated data during the upcoming general elections. Google India in a blog post on Tuesday said its product features are designed to elevate authoritative information on various election-related topics.

"We are collaborating with ECI to enable people to easily discover critical voting information on Google Search - such as how to register and how to vote - in both English and Hindi," Google said.

With more people using artificial intelligence to create content, Google said it is setting up processes to help audiences identify AI-generated content.

"As more advertisers leverage the power and opportunity of AI, we want to make sure we continue to provide people with greater transparency and the information they need to make informed decisions. Our ads policies already prohibit the use of manipulated media to mislead people, like deepfakes or doctored content," it said.

Google has already started displaying labels for content created with YouTube generative AI features, like Dream Screen.

"Soon, YouTube will begin to require creators to disclose when



they've created realistic altered or synthetic content, and will display a label that indicates for people when they're watching this content," it said. The blog post further said the company has begun to roll out restrictions on the types of election-related queries for which Gemini will return responses.

It said that for news and information related to the election, YouTube's recommendation system prominently surfaces content from authoritative sources on the YouTube homepage, in search results, and highlights high-quality content from authoritative news sources. The popular search engine said they have set policies around demonstrably false claims in areas like manipulated content, incitement to violence, hate speech, and harassment, that could undermine democratic processes.

"We rely on a combination of human reviewers and machine learning to identify and remove content that violates our policies. Our AI models are enhancing our abuse-fighting efforts, while a dedicated team of local experts across

all major Indian languages are working 24x7 to provide relevant context," the blog post said.

Google has set strict policies and restrictions around who can run election-related advertising on its platforms. These include identity verification, certification and authorisation by the ECI, and financier disclosures.

"We take our responsibility for providing high-quality information for these types of queries seriously, and are continuously working to improve our protections," the blog post said. Google said it has recently joined the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA), and pledged to help prevent deceptive AI-generated imagery, audio or video content from interfering with this year's global elections.

Earlier, Google had introduced the Google News Initiative Training Network and the Fact Check Explorer tool to enable newsrooms and journalists deliver reliable, fact-checked updates to debunk misinformation. Additionally, Google is supporting Shakti, India Election Fact-Checking Collective, which is a consortium of news publishers and fact-checkers in India working together to aid the early detection of online misinformation, including deepfakes, and to create a common repository that news publishers can use to tackle the challenges of misinformation at scale. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Anti-CAA protests erupt in state;

and democratically," he said. In Sonitpur, the district administration has imposed Section 144 of CrPC and prohibited holding of meetings, demonstrations, processions and sloganeering in public places to prevent any untoward incident.

Security has been tightened across the state with additional deployment of police personnel, including commandos, in sensitive areas, while all police stations in the state have been put on an alert.

Patrolling has been intensified and check-posts have been set up on arterial roads in almost all the cities and towns of the state, where protests were held over the issue in 2019.

All Assam Students' Union and 30 non-political indigenous organisations will also take out torchlight processions in the evening and launch a satyagraha from Wednesday.

An AASU delegation left for New Delhi on Tuesday to pursue the petition against the Act in the Supreme Court and the leaders will return for the procession in the evening, the student organisation's general secretary Sankar Jyoti Baruah said. (PTI)

Himanta allays CAA fear with

adding that "now the time has come for application on the portal.

"The data on the portal will speak now, and it will become clear whether the claims of those opposing the Act stand factually correct or not," Sharma said.

People of Assam will know in a month whether lakhs of people or a few thousand are applying for citizenship in the state, he said.

The chief minister said he respects both the protesters and the supporters of the Citizenship Amendment Act but 'enough has been said on CAA and now it is time to prove the claims'.

"It is time for those who are in politics to prove their claims just like Sita had to undergo 'agni pariksha' to prove her purity," Sharma said.

He said it would also be clear who were responsible for the death of five people during the violent protests in 2019.

"Protests should not be held now as the law has already been enacted, but if anybody has any grievance, they should go to courts," he said.

A sizable population of Bengali Hindus was left out due to lack of proper legacy data documents.

The NRC authorities had claimed that these people did not have documents to prove that they had entered the state before March 24, 1971. (PTI)

CAA not meant to snatch anyone's

take it away. "...I want to tell the minorities of this country that no citizen of the country will lose citizenship due to CAA. The CAA is a law that grants citizenship and does not take away anyone's citizenship. I assure you there is no provision in CAA to snatch anyone's citizenship," he said.

Speaking at a BJP social media volunteers meeting, Shah alleged that the Congress party opposed the new citizenship law due to appeasement and vote-bank politics.

"We had said we will bring CAA. The Congress party opposed CAA. Since independence it was a promise of the Congress and makers of our Constitution that citizenship will be granted to those persecuted on religious grounds in Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan, who come (to India). But, due to appeasement and vote-bank politics, the Congress party opposed the CAA."

He said in order to save their faith and honour, lakhs and crores of people from Pakistan and Bangladesh came to India, but were not granted citizenship.

"They (refugees) felt insulted in their own country when they were not granted citizenship," he said, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi honoured Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh refugees by granting them citizenship through the CAA. The home ministry statement sought to allay fears of a section of Muslims and students regarding the CAA, making it clear "no Indian citizen would be asked to produce any document to prove his citizenship after this Act."

"Indian Muslims need not worry as CAA has not made any provision to impact their citizenship and has nothing to do with the present 18 crore Indian Muslims, who have equal rights like their Hindu counterparts." The ministry also launched a portal for people eligible to apply for Indian citizenship under the CAA, an official spokesperson said in Delhi.

Alleging that the CAA is against the Constitution, Owaisi said he would challenge it in the Supreme Court. A law cannot be made on the basis of religion and there are many Supreme Court judgments on it, the AIMIM leader added.

"... (it is) against the right to equality. You are giving permission (citizenship) to every religion, you are not giving to those whose religion is Islam," he told reporters.

An application was also filed by the Indian Union Muslim League (IUM) in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Centre to stay the CAA's implementation till the pendency of petitions challenging its constitutional validity before the apex court.

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee claimed that the notified rules were "ambiguous, unconstitutional and discriminatory".

Addressing an official programme at Habra in North 24 Parganas district, Banerjee claimed the CAA was merely a precursor to implementing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) across the country and declared that her pledge to resist implementation of NRC in Bengal was the trigger to opposing the CAA.

"I urge the people to think several times before applying for citizenship under the law. That's because the rules provide no clarity on what happens to the status of existing citizens once they make a fresh application. I apprehend that existing citizens would automatically be first designated as illegal immigrants and then left at the mercy of the committee to grant them citizenship afresh."

The CPI(M) opposed the notification of CAA rules and claimed that it violates the secular principle of the Constitution by linking citizenship to religious identity.

In a statement, the Left party alleged that the implementation of the rules was linked to NRC and raised the apprehension that citizens of Muslim origin would be targeted.

Protests against the implementation of the CAA erupted across Assam with effigies of Modi, Shah and copies of the law being burnt.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said he will be the first to resign even if one person, who has not applied for the NRC in the state, gets citizenship.

"I am a son of Assam and if a single person who has not applied for NRC in the state gets citizenship, I will be the first to resign." Protesters in Assam are claiming that lakhs of people will enter the state after the implementation of the CAA.

Protests against the CAA also erupted in various parts of Kerala, as both the LDF and the UDF organised marches towards Central government institutions to condemn the decision.

But BJP state president K Surendran alleged that the CPI(M)-led LDF and Congress-led UDF are dividing the people under the cover of the CAA.

Senior BJP leader Prakash Javadekar criticised Vijayan, alleging the chief minister was misleading the public. BJP Tamil Nadu unit president K Annamalai said Stalin has "no powers" under the law of the land to take a stand against implementing the CAA in the state.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh when asked about state governments' powers was of the view that they can't directly say they will not implement CAA.

Students' groups at Jamia Millia Islamia in the national capital protested against the implementation of CAA and demanded that the Centre withdraw the law. (PTI)

Assam Police 'order' opposition parties to

notices were served by the police to ensure there is no damage to public property and risk to the lives of the people by any agitation in the state.

Meanwhile, no untoward incident has been reported in the state so far, police said.

Security has been tightened with additional deployment of police personnel. All police stations have been put on alert, patrolling has been intensified and check-posts have been set up on major thoroughfares in most towns of the state, including Guwahati which witnessed violent protests over the issue in December 2019, they said. (PTI)

CAA not to be implemented in tribal

councils were created under the 6th Schedule, were also exempted from the purview of the CAA, officials said quoting from the law that was passed in 2019.

Such autonomous councils are in existence in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.

These include Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Bodoland Territorial Council areas in Assam, Garo Hills in Meghalaya and tribal areas in Tripura.

The CAA seeks to grant citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis who came to India on or before December 31, 2014 from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after facing religious persecution. (PTI)

Cong declares candidates for Assam;

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has nine MPs in the current Lok Sabha from the state, while its allies AGP and UPPL have no representation. The Congress holds three seats and the AIUDF one, while another is an independent candidate. (PTI)

Meghalaya police busts sleeper

the SP said. With the arrest of Ripnar, three other persons were arrested in the district from Umsning and Nongpoh town. The four are active members of a sleeper cell of the proscribed HNLC.

The SP said this sleeper cell was taking directions from Bangladesh-based proscribed HNLC fugitives.

The arrested were identified as Damanbha Ripnar alias Shall Lapang, Robinis Ripnar, Jill Tariang and Shining Nongrum and from their possession 15 gelatin sticks, 167 splinters (shrapnel inside the IED), a safety fuse wire and three non-electric detonators, five mobile phones and the pick-up truck.

Police have registered a case in this regard at the Nongpoh Police Station. (PTI)

India's golden langur population

golden langurs, SACON's Principal Scientist Dr H N Kumara said. "This method is applied for the first time for golden langur, which is considered to be relatively simple, cost-effective, and robust, especially for arboreal, small group-living primates," Kumara said.

The demographic analysis, however, indicates an unstable situation in fragmented habitats.

Despite regular infant recruitment, the percentages of juveniles and immature individuals compared to adults were invariably low in all fragmented habitats, Biswas said.

"The low percentage of infants, compared to juveniles and adults, entails that these populations have a higher rate of mortality in the immature stage, which might be due to some human-induced factors such as road accidents, feral dog attacks, electrocution, or exposure to parasites, among others," he added. (PTI)

LOST

I, Klimso Timungpi daughter of Komol Sing Timung lost my Original Registration Certificate of Dhemaji Polytechnic (SCTE) bearing Registration No. 116035 in Diphu Market on 27/02/2024. If anybody finds the lost document kindly contact :
 Name : Klimso Timungpi
 F/N : Komol Sing Timung
 Address :
 Diphu, Taralango
 Ward -10
 PO + PS : Diphu
 District : Karbi Anglong
 Phone : 7635908078

7 NORTHEAST 8 NATION ENPO to continue 'public emergency' in eastern Nagaland Nagaland launches official websites for 5 new dists 'Development work for us is a mission to build nation, not to win elections' CAA becomes key poll issue in Kerala; LDF and UDF protest, BJP defends

Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee Means Guarantee of food at every household Free ration to 80 crore beneficiaries Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

12-hour 'Sarbatmak Hartal' called by 16-party United Opposition Forum Assam failed to invoke much response from public Anti-CAA protests erupt in state; security beefed up

Effigies of PM, Home Minister burnt •Oppn forum's 'Sarbatmak Hartal' fails evoke response •Police issues notice to UOFA

GUWAHATI, March 12: Protests against the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) erupted across the state on Tuesday with effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and copies of the law being burnt.



ported from Barpeta and Nalbari respectively. The 12-hour 'Sarbatmak Hartal', called by the 16-party United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA), did not evoke much response.

Himanta allays CAA fear with NRC reference

GUWAHATI, March 12: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said that he will be the first to resign even if one person, who has not applied for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state, gets citizenship.

CAA not meant to snatch anyone's citizenship, assures Amit Shah

HYDERABAD/GUWAHATI, March 12: Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday assured minorities that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is not meant to snatch anyone's citizenship, as he accused the Congress and other opposition parties of spreading misconception about the new law which has sparked protests in Kerala and Assam.



Assam Police 'order' opposition parties to withdraw stir against CAA

GUWAHATI, March 12: The Assam Police have issued notices to opposition parties "ordering" them to "withdraw" the hartal over the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA and warned that "legal action" will be taken against them if they fail to follow the diktat, officials said on Tuesday.



and security leading to disruption of normal life of peace loving citizens in the state," said the identical legal notices, dated March 11, sent to the office-bearers of different parties.

CAA not to be implemented in tribal areas of Northeast

NEW DELHI, March 12: Most tribal areas in northeastern states, including those granted special status under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution, have been kept out of the purview of The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, which came into effect on Monday.

SCRUMPTIOUS ENDEAVOUR



Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurating the Pork Processing Plant at Nazira in Sivasagar district. Animal husbandry minister Atul Bora and education minister Ranaj Pegu were also present on Tuesday. UB Photos

Cong declares candidates for Assam; Gaurav Gogoi to contest from Jorhat



GUWAHATI, March 12: Deputy leader of Congress in Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi has moved out from his constituency and will contest from Jorhat in Assam during the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the party said on Tuesday.

Survey conducted in various habitats covering Manas Biosphere Reserve, fragmented forests of north-western Assam

India's golden langur population increases to 7,396, says survey



GUWAHATI, March 12: The population of endangered golden langur in India has increased to 7,396 from a previous estimation of 6,000, according to a recent survey.

Meghalaya police busts sleeper cell of HNLC, arrest 4

SHILLONG, March 12: Meghalaya police on Tuesday claimed to have busted a sleeper cell of the outlawed Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) by arresting four persons in Ri-Bhoi district.

clusive of bisexual and male bands, along with 31 lone males," he said. The 2008-09 estimation showed that there were 6,000 golden langurs in India, while the current head-count exercise suggested an increase in the population size but the satellite imagery shows shrinkage of forest cover which negatively impacts their habitats, Biswas pointed out.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Courage is the ladder on which all the other virtues mount.
-Clare Boothe Luce

CAA impact on Bengal politics

The recent notification regarding the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) has sparked a fresh wave of political discourse in West Bengal, particularly as the state braces for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The CAA, which aims to expedite Indian citizenship for religious minorities from neighbouring countries, has been a contentious issue since its inception. However, its recent notification has added a new dimension to the political landscape, particularly in constituencies with significant Matua and Rajbanshi populations. The Matuas, a community with deep roots in Bengal's history, have long awaited the implementation of the CAA. Originating from East Bengal, many Matuas fled to India during the Partition and the Bangladesh Liberation War. Their quest for Indian citizenship has been a longstanding demand, and the CAA represents a significant milestone for them. The notification of this act has been met with jubilation among the Matua community, marking a pivotal moment in their journey towards citizenship. In recent years, the Matua community's political allegiance has shifted, impacting electoral dynamics in the region. While they once solidly supported the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the 2019 Lok Sabha elections saw a significant portion of Matua votes going to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). However, dissatisfaction grew as the implementation of the CAA was delayed, leading to a sense of disillusionment among Matua voters.

The timing of the CAA notification, just ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, is not without significance. It has reignited discussions around citizenship and religious identity, with political parties vying for the support of key communities like the Matuas and Rajbanshis. The BJP, in particular, stands to benefit from the notification, as it reinforces its commitment to the promises made during previous electoral campaigns. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the concerns raised by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and others regarding the timing and implications of the CAA notification. Questions about religious discrimination and the potential fallout of the act on minority communities continue to loom large. Mamata Banerjee's vocal opposition to the CAA reflects broader apprehensions within the state, particularly among minority groups. Furthermore, the intertwining of the CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) adds another layer of complexity to the debate. Mamata Banerjee's reference to 'detention camps' underscores fears surrounding the implementation of these policies and their impact on vulnerable communities.

The Matua and Rajbanshi communities, with their significant electoral sway, hold the key to several Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal. Their support can tilt the balance in favour of any political party, making them crucial stakeholders in the upcoming elections. The BJP's efforts to court these communities through the implementation of the CAA underscore the significance of their votes in shaping the state's political future. The CAA notification may have implications far beyond electoral calculations, impacting the social fabric of West Bengal. As voters prepare to cast their ballots, it is essential to uphold democratic values and ensure that the voices of all communities are heard and respected. The CAA notification has injected fresh momentum into Bengal's political landscape, with implications that extend beyond electoral arithmetic. The coming days will witness intense campaigning and debates as parties vie for the support of key communities. As citizens, it is our collective responsibility to uphold the principles of democracy and ensure that the voices of all communities are heard and valued.

PM Modi's Transition to 'Yug Purusha' in provincial India

Welcome to the era of "image-time," where our existence is immersed in a visual narrative. Images inundate our lives through diverse channels of orality, cultivated perceptions, electronic and print media, and the expansive realm of social media platforms. We not only consume these images but also engage in their recreation and distribution among our peers. The younger generation in India, devoting a significant amount of time to the vast media landscape, becomes avid consumers of these visual narratives, distinguishing them from their older counterparts.

In the realm of images, a dichotomy exists between those with fleeting moments and those with enduring legacies. Images endowed with longevity often undergo a metamorphosis, evolving into symbols through a continuous process of additions, deletions, and modifications. These symbols, born from the amalgamation and remixing of diverse images portraying leaders, social icons, and political figures, possess the remarkable ability to persist even beyond an individual's lifetime. Consider the indelible impressions left by leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Ram Manohar Lohia, and Indira Gandhi, etched in the collective memories of the populace, particularly the youth, who, despite not directly experiencing these leaders and their eras, carry their images forward. However, the images or symbols of leaders no longer among us are less susceptible to drastic shifts, whether positive or negative. The political actions of leaders actively shape the resources of their image, paving the way for significant transformations. In contrast, a living leader seizes the opportunity to wield considerable influence over their own image through ongoing political endeavors, allowing for sweeping changes in perception.

Exploring the visual inclinations of the youth in the district towns of Uttar Pradesh involved engaging in interviews with middle-class individuals. These young minds, predominantly enrolled in colleges or engaged in preparations for diverse competitive exams, offered us valuable insights. Our interviewees, representing various castes in these district towns, collectively showcased a profound reliance on images and political symbols as beacons of hope during their arduous journey towards employment. The future emerged as a paramount theme in our discussions, resonating as the focal point in the minds of these youths. Beyond personal aspirations and concerns, their contemplations extended to encompass the future trajectory of both society and the nation.



Research indicates that the advent of the neo-liberal economy has induced inertia and uncertainties among the youth. During this phase of stagnation, they lose their bearings for personal growth. Notably, such trends were discernible in the initial stages of the neo-liberal era, primarily evidenced in studies conducted before 2010 in India. However, in the current epoch—what I refer to as the 'second (matured) phase of the neo-liberal era in India—a noteworthy transformation has unfolded in the mindset of the youth, marking a shift from inertia to aspirations. The fervent desire for success is rapidly taking root in provincial India, spurred by two key factors. Firstly, there is an explosion of information regarding diverse livelihood opportunities, success stories, and entrepreneurial narratives conveyed through various media forms. Secondly, the youth are driven to explore, comprehend, and share inspiring symbols of socio-political icons, delivered either through traditional narratives or the evolving narratives crafted by diverse media channels.

The concept of "kam-dhandha" is emerging as a beacon of hope among them. Many express the sentiment that if traditional employment opportunities

('Naukri') elude them, they are determined to embark on entrepreneurial pursuits like starting their own business or exploring online platforms such as YouTube channels. In this phase, often labeled as a 'time-pass period' by Craig Jeffrey in his book "Time pass: Youth, class, and the politics of waiting in India," I've observed that images play a pivotal role. They not only assist in garnering inspiration but also fortify the 'aspirations bhava,' fostering determination to achieve their goals.

Amidst the diverse imagery shaping the minds of the youth in provincial India, political images stand out as potent cultivators of inspiration and hope.

The manner in which these young individuals engage with images is intriguing. Our observations in the small district towns of provincial India revealed a distinctive pattern in how they consume political icons' images. Drawing from their knowledge, perceptions, and available information, these youths craft specific typologies or condensed narrative capsules for easy recollection and reference. For instance, figures like Gandhi are encapsulated as 'Mahatma' and 'Rashtra pita,' Nehru assumes the roles of the first Prime Minister of India and a nation builder, while Indira Gandhi is envisioned as the

daughter of Nehru and a formidable woman Prime Minister.

During interviews in various district towns of Uttar Pradesh, particularly in the eastern region, a multitude of images pertaining to Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, emerged. Descriptions portrayed him as a robust and decisive leader, committed to eradicating corruption and dedicated to fostering development—a narrative that has persisted over the years.

During recent field explorations in several district towns, a noteworthy trend came to light as diverse positive images of Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, coalesced into a symbolic amalgamation referred to as 'Yug Purusha' in the minds of certain youths. Intrigued by this classification, I delved deeper into the reasoning behind this symbolic encapsulation. While some youths found it challenging to articulate the reasons, others, particularly from upper castes and other backward castes, offered insights. According to them, Modi is perceived as diligently working towards a developed India, shaping the future trajectory of the nation with a visionary outlook. They highlighted his role in the construction of the Ram Janam Bhoomi temple as a testament to his commitment and contributions.

The emergence of the 'Yug Purusha' image intertwined with Narendra Modi's persona among a segment of provincial youth poses a challenge in pinpointing its exact origin. However, our observations indicate a significant shift in Modi's image, particularly among youths in district towns, following the Ram Janam Bhoomi Pran Pratishtha Samaroh. The event marked a pivotal moment, triggering a substantial transformation in the perception and portrayal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi within the provincial youth demographic.

Indeed, these images serve as potent symbols of trust and hope, resonating within the imaginations of those who embrace them. The 'Yug Purusha' emblem, forged through the political and administrative initiatives spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the past decade, transcends mere political connotations. These images carry with them a representation of a leader actively engaged in reshaping the socio-cultural and economic fabric of public life. As the 2024 parliamentary elections approach, it is conceivable that these symbols will wield political influence, leaving an indelible mark on the electoral landscape of Indian democracy and prompting nuanced political analyses. (The writer can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)

Being baptised in political delinquency and insensitivity Saffrons will project Sandeshkhali nationally to discredit INDIA bloc

By: M.R.Lalu

When political rivalries convert college campuses into hotspots of crime and criminal behavior, education takes a back seat. There has always been an epidemic of crime spreading exponentially in college campuses across the state of Kerala and I personally could witness many. It was on 17 September 1996, the state witnessed one of the most heart-wrenching campus brutalities carried out by a mainstream political party. In an attempt to silence political rivalry, three young boys from the BJP's students wing ABVP were brutally chased and killed by students from the same college and goons from outside the campus that belonged to the left parties. This heinous incident of abrupt brutality had taken place in the Devaswom Board College in Parumala. When being chased and tortured by a violent mob from the Students Federation of India (SFI), the students' wing of the CPI (M), the three jumped into River Pampa. The idea was to swim across the river and escape. But the barbarous goons began to pelt stones from the riverbed critically injuring the boys in water and they had drowned. The local women who were busy washing clothes tried to rope out the hapless boys with their clothes. But they were chased away by the wanton brutes and all the three died in the river.

Campus politics has always been a parallel track played in tune with the dictums of parties that ruled the state. Most of the students gain merit for representing the ruling party and they are given a free hand by the police when chaotic skirmishes take place. There have been plenty of instances in which lives have been lost and many students have become victims of political insanity. The Kannur district of the state deserves a special reference here as it remained the most acrimonious landscape for the state politics where rivalries between the BJP and CPI (M) destroyed a number of families. Both parties have had consistent efforts to steer their presence in this district which is in the Malabar region. Situation became turbulent when the traditional stronghold of the CPI (M) had shattering faced a systematic ideological invasion from the BJP and the Sangh Parivar. This had absolutely been leading the entire region to break into a huge political turmoil that gained notoriety for decades. Hundreds of party workers got butchered by the violence unleashed by the parties. Many people died and many families perished.

This narration was necessary here to

elaborate the quantum of political acrimony prevailed among parties in the state. But the present scenario turned this traditional enmity and acrimony more inhuman. Campuses are no more centers of learning. Across the state they have now been turning into breeding grounds of goons. With the uninterrupted supply of drugs and being baptized in ruthless political indoctrination, a huge number of students have gone directionless. Kerala's universities have long been witness to violence and spine chilling horror of student politics. With the latest brutality of political indoctrination, the foot soldiers of Students Federation of India (SFI) have managed to kill J S Sidharthan, a 20 year old second-year student of veterinary college, Pookot, Wayanad, under the Kerala University. The punishment executed on the young boy by the brutal gang was beyond comparison and narration. It is reported that he was stripped naked and beaten up with belts and cable wires by his classmates and seniors in front of other students. His close friends were threatened and forced to beat him up when the show of cruelty was performed in broad daylight. The probe found the involvement of almost 31 students. This heart-breaking trial-cum-torture continued for almost three days leading the boy to commit suicide. His body was later found hanging lifeless in the hostel.

Governor Arif Mohammed Khan has suspended the Vice-Chancellor of the university ordering a judicial enquiry. Now, there is a crucial question that began to distressingly prick the conscience of the people of the state. That why was the entire population of students and staff in the hostel silent on the inhuman torture of the boy? Why was the management of the college tight-lipped on violence inside its premises? This insensitivity indicates the depth of fear on this horribly rampant criminality that has been controlling the campus; it also finger-points at the failure of the education system. Evidently, the ruling class has been applying its political power to cripple the system with its notorious interference and the administration in universities and colleges have silently been forced to remain servile to their political masters. There has been a huge wave of violence infiltrating into the campuses with political groups and radicalized religious groups depicting consistently active among students.

Should this incident be seen as a usual occurrence of ragging breaking all extremes of brutality or was there a terrible mindset emanating from the vacuum of organizations that the Gov-

ernment of India has recently banned? Could they successfully stretch their ugly claws into colleges and universities by systematically intruding into political parties? What was the real intent of the crime that the goons perpetrated on a hapless boy? Was this criminal justice system executed by the students motivated by the brutal depiction of cruelty being carried out by the Taliban or other outfits working in countries where the atmosphere is warm and fertile for barbarity? Violent means of murders in the state, especially among the youth, should have shaken the society long before, but there seems a lack of urgency and lethargy again and again dominating its value system. Trimming the aspirations of a state that once remained an excellent hub for quality education, its political system has certainly pushed it through the tunnel of hatred and inhuman retribution.

Schools and colleges have lost their lessons of empathy and the value system that we cherished once got deeply dispelled. The state of Kerala has lost its sheen of being one of the most empathetic societies. Often being applauded for its socio-political awareness and excellent performance in various socio-economic indices, Kerala has maintained its status of being a good example for the rest of the country. But its terrible failure and inability to understand the need of maintaining values that would nurture its existence as a society is a reality. Irrespective of it being a society with good living standards, the state has grown into an insensitive terrain for moral values. With bigoted cries for free speech and scientific thinking being heard louder; the campuses in the state have lost the essence of a learning atmosphere well knit with compassion, tolerance and mutual acceptance.

Overwhelmingly misguided by different political ideologies, religious radicalization and social media, young minds in the state have lost their purpose. Political parties being purposefully partial and supportive of regimentation in the society have further deepened the malaise. Mostly, the crisis was the artificial creation of the ruling class that kept dismantling the minds of young generations by viciously squandering their imaginations of progress. The crisis is deep as the malice is emerging thicker threatening the existence of the state. At this juncture, how sincere and action oriented is the government? Let us grieve for Sidharthan, with this question reverberating in our minds repeatedly. (The author is a freelance journalist who can be reached at mrlalu30@gmail.com)

By: Arun Srivastava

Narendra Modi was absolutely right in saying that the Sandeshkhali "storm" would sweep across Bengal and ensure an end to the Trinamool Congress's "rule of terror". His confidence emanates from the apparition of the RSS polarising the Bengali society attaining a tangible shape.

Ever since Modi came to power, RSS has been using the state machinery and even his office and services to expand its support base in the eastern state, but it did not succeed so far. Probably the people, especially the women of Bengal, must not have forgotten the manner in which Modi jeered at Bengali women's dignity when he jibed 'Didi, O Didi' at Mamata Banerjee. Unfortunately for Modi, in spite of resorting to all kind of gimmicks, RSS and Modi could not expand.

But their tenacity must be appreciated. Finally, they appear to have succeeded in their mission. For Modi and his saffron ecosystem, Sandeshkhali has come as gift of the gab. Their gamble to project a turncoat Suvendu Adhikari, as the public face of the BJP has paid off. Probably, a diehard saffron face might not have succeeded in reaching out to the Bengali population, which has never been generous and affable towards the forces representing the political philosophy of Hindutva.

Since Suvendu has a Congress lineage, he has been acceptable to the Congress sympathizer, notwithstanding their comprehensive averseness to the Hindu outfit. At the same time, he could make inroad in the TMC support base and succeed in enticing other TMC leaders to cross over. Actually, this has been happening.

Strategically, the RSS and BJP have presented these turncoats as the vanguard of the Hindutva politics. It is worth recalling that initially the BJP had managed to entice a strong non-Bengali TMC leader, Arjun Singh, into its fold. But soon he realised the wicked game of the RSS and BJP and he returned to his old party.

Mamata Banerjee's arrogance and her opting for wrong priorities have been primarily responsible for erosion of her image as well as the adverse situation she is faced with today. She once symbolised the aspiration of the secular forces. They came to believe her. But as was witnessed in the past, instead of strengthening the secular forces, she relied more on muscle power and manipulative politics.

She preferred not to take lessons from the past mistakes of the political system and institution of the state. She had fought against the Left but did not try to realize why the Left cadres deserted their party. The RSS and BJP which have been busy discovering new tangible pastures finally got one in Sandeshkhali, closer to Su-

vendu's operational base.

The modern politics has completely lost its relevance and sanctity. It is acknowledged as politics but in reality it is not more than spiteful action. It is a malicious device to grab power and make money. In the seventies, the culture of "Aya Ram and Gaya Ram" dictated the politics. But at that time too, the leaders maintained the façade of some decency. But in present times the political decency, morality and ideology have completely lost any modicum of significance.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the saffron politics has given birth to this nature of politics and politicians. It is in public domain how they engineered defections and splits and made these leaders join them. A party which was supposed to be a party with difference was not at all concerned of the fact that the new entrant was from which political and ideological background.

For RSS and Modi, quantity was more important and imperative than the quality. Choosing Sandeshkhali is part of this strategy. ED team was attacked in the village on January 6. At that time the women of the village and region had taken the lead to protest against the ED raid on Shahjahan's house.

Suddenly on February 8, the same women revolted against Shahjahan and his aides and accused them of committing rapes and torture of the women of the area. The allegations simply underline that they have been resorting to such criminal activities for long and certainly have not resorted to such only during the last one month. The women even alleged land grabbing by them. What is noteworthy that only two complains of sexual harassment were registered with the legal authorities which visited the area.

Had it been a regular affair, why the women threw their support behind Shahjahan when ED raided his house? Does it imply that the lean period of a month bolstered the women of region to muster courage and speak the truth. If it is the case, it obviously puts Mamata in dock. It implies that she has left the state to be ruled by her partymen. This has precisely been the allegation of the RSS and Modi.

One thing is absolutely clear that RSS used this one month period to mobilise its women force and inspire them to speak out against Mamata. She had used Nandigram against CPI(M) and BJP, working on the same political line, is contemplating the use of Sandeshkhali against her.

That the saffron ecosystem will make it a state issue is evident from Modi's recent speech: "The women of Bengal and also the entire country are angry with what happened to the mothers and sisters of Sandeshkhali. The anger of Nari Shakti (power of women) will not be confined to

Sandeshkhali." Modi who was unmoved at the mass-scale rape and tortures on women in Manipur is quite shaken at what happened in Sandeshkhali. No heads rolled in the wake of Manipur atrocities of women's there, but according to him, "Anyone will hang his or her head in shame after knowing what happened to the mothers and sisters of Sandeshkhali. Sampurna Bangla te Sandeshkhali-r-jhawar utthe (The storm blowing over Sandeshkhali will sweep across Bengal)".

Modi's repeated stress on the plight of "the mothers and sisters" of Sandeshkhali during a rally in Barasat made it clear that the BJP was banking heavily on the allegations of atrocities to defeat Trinamool in the Lok Sabha polls in Bengal. The saffron design to malign Mamata and her government, just ahead of Lok Sabha election, is perceptible in the fact that his address was broadcast live at 19,000 places across the country. The programme in Barasat marked the conclusion of the BJP Mahila Morcha's three-day-long Shakti Vandan Karyakram to promote women's empowerment.

Modi's concern and sympathy for Sandeshkhali women was oozing like honey: "The women here (in Bengal) have shaped the country's direction, figures like Maa Sarada, Rani Rashmoni, Matangini Hazra... However, on this land, Trinamool has committed a grave sin against women. They have committed heinous crimes against mothers and sisters. I can see that the women of Bengal will put an end to the TMC's mafia raj." He felt ebullence at Supreme Court refusal to accede to TMC request to have the trial of Shahjahan in state. He said, "While the oppressed mothers and sisters are fighting for justice, the Trinamool government is using its power to protect the perpetrators who committed crimes against women. But it received a rap, first from the high court and then from the Supreme Court."

The BJP will use Sandeshkhali for electoral gain was revealed by a senior BJP leader by saying: "Modiji has made it clear that the party would take on Trinamool over its anti-women face in Sandeshkhali. We have already chalked out programmes in Sandeshkhali to keep the issue alive and spread the protest across Bengal."

The Left parties nevertheless ought to not forget that maintaining silence on the devious designs of the saffron ecosystem they were handing over the state on the platter to the rightist and fascist forces. Undeniably, the latest creations straightway fingers at the failures of Mamata and her criminalising the politics, but once RSS comes to control the fulcrum of the state politics and governance, the saffron mercenaries will dictate and ruin the lives of the common people. (IPA Service)

A 19th-century Indian queen's photographic work has been obscured by history

By: Kamayani Sharma

In the May 1890 edition of the Photographic Society of India's journal, a letter by Radharaman Ghosh, secretary to the Maharaja of Tripura, made a remarkable claim. Titled "The Camera Club of the Palace of Agartala" and likely dictated by the maharaja himself, the letter contained commentary on the photographs that had been dispatched to the journal. It stated that some pictures were taken by Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya and others by his wife, Maharani Manmohini. Calling attention to this information in his significant 1988 book *Chobi Tola: Bangalir Photography Chorchha*, writer Siddhartha Ghosh says that Manmohini "had printed most of those; the Maharaja had developed others. Each image was marked in a particular way to indicate the photographer". This would make the maharani among the first women from India known to create photographic images.

Who was she? What do we know about her images? And what can we make of them today?

Before delving into these questions, it is helpful to briefly survey the broader landscape within which to locate and read the little known about her. By the end of the 19th century, women had been making lens-based pictures for about 50 years. In India too, by the mid-1800s, several European women had begun to either work at established studios or set up their own urban practice focussing on only women, as professional zenana photographers who could access and photograph their subjects behind purdahs. Ghosh's book furnishes many of these names, such as Mrs E Mayer, Mrs Kenny-Levick and Bibi Wince. But while the work of European and North American women has been identified, both in their homelands as well as in colonies, it has been harder to trace the practices of women belonging to the occupied territories. Manmohini seems to be the first Indian woman credited with taking photographs, but it is her bhadramahila contemporary Sarojini Ghosh who is recognised as the first Indian woman professional photographer. One 1899 article extolled Sarojini Ghosh's Mahila Art Studio and Photographic Store in Calcutta thus: "Bromide enlargements, platinotypes, photographs on silk, etc. are executed in effective style and at moderate rates."

Clearly, by the last decade of the 19th century, the practice of photography was within the reach of elite women who were unencumbered by the veil, as the maharani consort of Tripura seems to have been. Along another axis of social location, Manmohini is among a small group of Indian aristocrats who operated the camera – her husband and probable teacher Maharaja Bir Chandra Bikram Manikya, of course, but also their compeer Sawai Ram Singh II of Jaipur and, many decades later, Rajmata Rajendra Kunverba of Kutch. Among these, Ram Singh's oeuvre of thousands of glass plate negatives is the best preserved. Rajendra Kunverba's archive has been entirely lost. The Manikya couple's work seems to be sparsely available in the public domain, though what has surfaced is arguably glamorous and relatable to contemporary publics – a few years ago, a photograph that the pair took of themselves in an almost anachronistically intimate pose emerged online, widely reported on and dubbed the first Indian selfie.

Taken using what Bir Chandra's great-great-grandson Vivek Dev Burman terms "a long wire shutter control" activated via a pneumatic bulb in the king's hand as the couple sat facing their camera, the Manikyas' self-portrait suggests a close and affectionate partnership. While it is impossible to comment on their marital dynamics, it does appear from the scant accounts available that they collaborated in the studio and dark room, with the young maharani learning the craft and chemistry from her husband. In her essay titled "Matrimonial Alliances between the Royal Houses of Tripura and Manipur in the Days of the Monarchy", historian Memchaton Singha tells us more about the queen and her conjugal family. A Manipuri Meitei princess, Khuman Chanu Manmohini was the third wife of Bir Chandra, marrying him at 13, when he was 50. Notwithstanding his acceptance of premodern norms governing marriage, Bir Chandra is regarded as a modernising ruler, to whom is attributed the founding of the Agartala Municipality in 1871 and the promotion of Western-style education and culture. His pioneering interest in photography – evinced by his ownership of one of the first two cameras in India (the other being Lala Deen Dayal's) – might be considered an example of his bent towards new ideas and technology.

Gendered codes

A member of the Royal Photographic Society till his death and founder of the Camera Club of the Palace of Agartala, Bir Chandra composed portraits of his family

members, courtiers and friends such as the Tagores. Some of his platinum palladium prints were part of a 2019 exhibition titled *The Tripura Project* curated at the Mangalbag Gallery, Ahmedabad – by Tilla, a design studio founded by Aratrik Dev Varman, one of the king's descendants – including another "selfie" with his first wife Bhanumati Devi. While Bhanumati does not seem to have progressed from posing to composing, Bir Chandra's passion for photography did influence his third wife. Ghosh writes, "The Maharaja himself was an expert photographer and a keen enthusiast for the dissemination of photography. It was under his tutelage that Manmohini learned photography and soon excelled in it. She not only took photos but also developed them herself."

Since Manmohini was trained by and probably worked somewhat subordinate to Bir Chandra, the issue of identifying which images might have been hers becomes complicated. It is unclear whether any of the labelled photographs referenced by Radharaman Ghosh seem to have survived. Another of Bir Chandra's direct descendants, MK Pragna Deb Burman, who is the state convenor of INTACH Tripura, is able to unearth from her family archive a single photograph that she thinks was almost certainly taken by the queen – a somewhat candid snapshot of a group of children in what looks like a garden's arbour inside the palace compound. Analysing compositional choices in terms of the gendered visual codes of the time, Deb Burman said, "This photo of the children is quite domestic in contrast to the more formal portraits of them by the king. It seems to me there was an attempt to take a series of photos." She is of the view that the informal intimacy between the royal women and children would have lent itself to more spontaneous photoshoots.

Since no details survive of the queen's practice, it might be best to look at the infrastructure installed by the king to get a sense of the context in which she might have produced this photograph. Drawing on contemporaneous descriptions, Ghosh tells us that the maharaja came to photography through oil painting, developed a laboratory in which he appointed assistants from his court staff, sourced "printing machines of colotype and photogravure for his state press in Agartala" and arranged for full-tone reproductions of photographs – at the time a cutting-edge technology – for a genealogy of the Tripura royal dynasty. In an essay titled "Our Native Princes as Amateur Photographers: Independent Tipperah" in the journal of the Photographic Society of India, the author shares: "Through all the stages of wet and dry collodion plates, he had attained great success considering the challenges with which he had to work. With the introduction of gelatin dry plates, many of these difficulties disappeared, and this enabled His Highness to carry on his photographic work on a most extensive scale."

Elaborating on these advancements at Bir Chandra's court, Pragna Deb Burman said, "Photographic material imported from England was unsuitable for their local climate, so the maharaja and maharani had to develop their own material that would last in that weather." Given the dominance of the king's knowledge, practice and images, substantiated by numerous reports, as well as the absence of pictures that can be definitively attributed to the queen, the exact nature of Manmohini's work is cast into doubt. She may have been the first recorded Indian woman to operate a camera, but does that quite make her a practitioner? Speaking to the photograph of children which Pragna Deb Burman considers a likely candidate for being a Manmohini original, her relative Vivek Dev Burman disagrees, basing his reasoning on the fact that she would have been unlikely to shoot outdoors or take up the cumbersome, physically demanding and technically unpredictable process of producing glass plate stereo negatives such as these. Besides, he argued, "no mother would take a picture of her children dressed so badly." He offers up another photograph with a stronger claim to being Manmohini's – a formal one of her daughters – pointing out that they are old enough for the queen to have become practised at such compositions, with the clothes and jewellery further possible proof of her directing the shoot.

However, in our email exchange, Vivek Dev Burman expresses scepticism about using the term photographer at all to describe her: "I am unsure if she was actually a photographer as we know it. More an assistant and part of the many that collaborated to make pictures. I am sure she did the styling and arranged or chose props for the shoots of her children, initially influenced by British photo magazines and later, as she gained confidence, using indigenous materials and styles. She is likely to have helped with the printing more easily... we must remember

she got married as a teenager and came from a village background." It is on the distinction between mechanical activation of a device and conscious creative decision-making that the matter of Manmohini's claim to a specific vision rests. Vivek Dev Burman conceded, "She probably picked up some knowledge about the practical side of photography. As almost all the pictures are portraits and taken in a studio set up in the palace, there was only some variation in the backgrounds used and props, making it easier to follow instructions on how to shoot. But using those old wooden cameras was anything but easy. She may have even opened and closed the shutter following instructions, depending on the lighting conditions. If that makes her a photographer then I guess she was."

While this may not be the case in this instance, it is hard not to keep in mind the historical erasure of the contributions of women to work produced by the men in their lives. Even accepting that she was an assistant, one might argue that her involvement in the production of these pictures – the art direction and printing process – is of interest as artistic and operational labour that forms an integral part of the image-making process. Manmohini's very presence in the studio and the dark room, assisting her husband alongside his male court staff, affords a chance to rethink historiographies of labour in lens-based practices. (Think of Saraswati Bai Phalke's involvement in her husband DG Phalke's film productions, holding bed linen as light reflectors, mixing film chemicals and punching holes in raw film reels.)

Contextualising this debate within the "non-standardised" systems of practice at the time, photographic historian Ranu Roychoudhuri said, "First, the larger question is, who could assert their singular creative ownership of the image in the 19th century – be called a photographer – when a complex and multipart process like photography is in question?... The darkroom work was not merely 'operational labour' but a crucial part of the 'creative labour' in the 19th century." Reflecting specifically on Manmohini's work, Roychoudhuri is of the opinion that while no evidence remains of the nature of her darkroom experimentations, "she was certainly Bir Chandra's active 'partner in the process'."

Visual representations

At least as an image of companionate matrimony, this partnership has been documented. Apart from her asterisked work behind the camera, Manmohini's appearance in relative dishabille in the photographs themselves – which she may have actively participated in framing – troubles the paradigm of purdah portraiture prevailing in late colonial India. Compared to, for example, Ram Singh II's series of zenana portraits 20 years prior (entirely mediated – as scholar Laura Wevstein demonstrates – through his sovereign masculinity legitimising the purdah as compatible with colonial modernity), or even the commanding studio picture of Sultan Shah Jahan, Begum of Bhopal, Manmohini's act of self-representation is a break from the patriarchal scope of depicting aristocratic women's bodies on camera. She is a lover as much as a wife, her left hand draped over her husband's shoulder, her right one resting on his belly in a proprietary hold, the arm's suggestive curve drawing the eye to the bulb in the maharaja's left hand, as though part of the same line of activation. This power pose becomes more pronounced when contrasted with Bir Chandra's selfie with his first wife, Bhanumati Devi, whom he envelops in his kingly embrace, his hand encompassing hers in a gesture of possessive control. The casual ease with which Manmohini (already unencumbered by the purdah system as a northeastern Indian woman) makes herself available to her own gaze, via a dispositif that is no mystery to her, and allows her to refute the zenana portrait's tension between invisibility and visibility.

Placing the self-portrait within the wider frame of photographic representations of women during this era, Roychoudhuri considers the circumstances of their availability: "The images of elite women were never meant for public display and were only to be circulated within a niche group in the family. The fact that we now have access to these restricted photographs owes itself to how studies of early photography have developed over the years, especially with the scholarly interest in photographs of women and families."

The labelled photographs of Maharani Manmohini dispatched to the journal of the Photographic Society of India may never be recovered. Whether or not she qualified as what we would call a photographer today might remain contentious also. However, paying attention to what can be known about and seen in her images – as both maker and model – inaugurates new possibilities of thinking about feminist histories of photographic labour and the gaze in South Asia. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Home remedies for longer, thicker eyelashes naturally

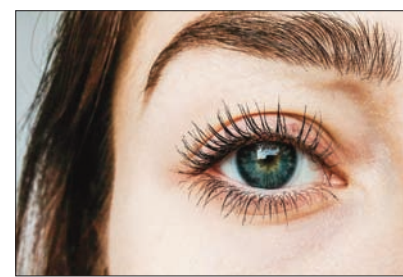
By: Shahnaz Husain

Eyelashes protect the eyes from light debris. They also act like sensors that warn the eyes of potential danger when objects come close. In fact, more attention is being paid to eye make-up, especially during this Covid crisis. Masks are mandatory, while eyes are visible. This has increased the importance of protecting the beauty of our eyes and eyelashes. Leaving mascara, eyeliner and eye shadow on right through the night can affect the beauty of the lashes. In fact, it can lead to infection of the lashes and eyes.

At night, use a cleansing gel and cotton wool to remove eye make-up gently. For upper lashes, put a cleanser on cotton wool and wrap it around your index finger. Brush through the lashes from underneath. To remove mascara from the lower lashes, use a cotton bud with a little cleanser on it. To remove kajal from the lower lashes use a cotton bud that has a little cleanser on it. Also, clean the corners of the eyes with a cotton bud. Use very gentle movements on the lashes.

Brush your lashes with an eyelash brush, so that they are not entangled. Heavy eye make-up, too much mascara and even eyelash extensions can damage and lead to loss of lashes.

If you have very thin or sparse eyelashes, it may become a problem and you may wonder how to encourage their growth. You can apply very little oil on the eyelashes, using a cotton bud. You may apply almond oil, coconut oil, or



olive oil. Leave it on for 15 to 20 minutes and wipe off very gently with moist cotton wool. Do not go to sleep with oil on the eyelashes, as this can lead to puffy eyes.

Curry leaves are also said to help. Keep curry leaves in hot water and leave it to cool. Then make a paste of the curry leaves and apply to the lashes, again using a cotton bud. Apply very little and wash off with water after 15 minutes.

You can also apply aloe vera gel. You can take the gel from the aloe vera growing in your house. The gel obtained from the plant itself is the leaf pulp and is found in the inner portion of the leaves. First, wash the leaf well and observe total hygiene while extracting the gel. Apply a small amount of aloe vera gel on the eyelashes before bed and wash it off in the morning.

Castor oil: Apply a small amount of castor oil on the eyelashes each night before bed and wash it off in the morning.

Eyelid massage: Gently massage eyelids along the lash line.

Nowadays new eyelash serum is available, to help enhance the growth of

natural eyelashes. It also improves the health and texture of sparse and brittle lashes. In serum form, it is easy to apply and includes a brush applicator. Follow the directions on the label.

Mascara adds glamour and thickness to the eyelashes. But, mascara must be removed at night, along with the rest of your eye make-up. Roll-on mascara is easy to apply. You can apply the mascara both above and below the upper lashes. This gives a thicker look. Apply on the lower lashes too. Wait for a while and apply a second coat. Then brush out the lashes, with a small eyelash brush, otherwise, the lashes will stick together. The idea is to achieve a natural effect. You can apply a little powder on the eyelashes between two coats of mascara, to make them look thicker.

The latest in eye glamour is eyelash extensions. They are attached to natural eyelashes, one by one to make the lashes look thicker. A trained beautician has to attach them. It's up to you to decide how thick you want your lashes to be. The eyelash extensions may last for about 3 weeks to a month and then you will have to get them done again. Basically, the eyelash extensions are synthetic strands that are specially curved to look like natural eyelashes. If you apply mascara on eyelash extensions, use the water-based kind.

You can also ask your doctor to prescribe supplements of Vitamin A, Vitamin B, which encourages hair growth. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called Herbal Queen of India)

Medical myths: Endometriosis facts vs. fiction

By: Kimberly Drake

Endometriosis is a chronic condition in which tissue similar to that usually lining the inside of the uterus grows outside the womb. This condition can cause pain during periods, sexual intercourse, and urination or bowel movements. It can also be responsible for other symptoms, including nausea, fatigue, and mental health concerns.

Sometimes, depending on the tissue's location, it can cause problems with fertility. Moreover, endometriosis can occur in or around other organs, including the lungs.

Worldwide, approximately 10% of females of reproductive age have endometriosis. Although extremely rare, endometriosis in males can occur. Furthermore, because endometriosis symptoms are so varied, people with the condition often experience a delay in diagnosis.

Risk factors for endometriosis include having a mother, sibling, or daughter with the condition, having periods that began before age 11, or having periods that are heavy or last longer than 7 days. Having a history of short monthly cycles of fewer than 27 days can also increase the risk of endometriosis in some individuals.

Confirming an endometriosis diagnosis often involves laparoscopic surgery, a common surgical procedure done under anesthesia. Once a doctor confirms a diagnosis, treatments include managing the symptoms with hormone therapy or pain relief medication. If the pain associated with endometriosis is severe or if fertility has become affected, surgery is an option. However, there is currently no known cure for the condition. Despite these known facts, many myths surround endometriosis, leaving many people confused about what to believe.

To help separate fact from fiction, we talked with Dr. Barbara Stegmann, clinical lead, Woman's Health at Organon and OB-GYN, and Carly King, N.D., licensed naturopathic doctor at Entrepreneur and The Health Centre Integrative Therapies. We also looked at recent peer-reviewed research to reveal the science-backed truths about endometriosis.

1. Periods are normally very heavy, very painful, or both

Although estimates suggest that more than half of all menstruating females experience some pain during periods, severe pain can sometimes indicate the presence of endometriosis.

Dr. King told Medical News Today: "Periods can be heavy and painful with endometriosis, but it's not always the case. Pain can show up in other areas, such as with bowel pain, urinary pain, ovulation pain, as well as pain in other areas of the body. Pe-

riod bleeds can vary in volume — cycle lengths can also vary, with midcycle bleeding a potential symptom as well."

Dr. Stegmann added:

"Periods are normally very heavy/very painful — this is only a partial myth. Some people do have very heavy, very painful periods, but that is only one end of the spectrum. Some have mild cramps and light periods, and some have pain between periods. So, it is best to speak to [a healthcare professional] if you have concerns."

2. Pregnancy can cure endometriosis

"Pregnancy does not cure endometriosis," Dr. King told MNT. "Some women see improvements in symptoms during pregnancy, although others do not, and still others may see a worsening of symptoms," she added.

Dr. Stegmann also emphasized that "[t]here are no cures for endometriosis." Still, she explained that pregnancy does cause hormone levels to change. This variation in hormones may result in people experiencing different pain levels after having a baby. Research also suggests that pregnancy does not seem to offer benefits for women with endometriosis. In addition, scientists note that although some endometriosis lesions show regression, others remain stable or increase.

3. A hysterectomy can cure endometriosis

According to one study involving 137 female participants with endometriosis who underwent a hysterectomy, 84% of the participants were satisfied with the results after surgery. However, while "[a] hysterectomy can relieve symptoms of endometriosis for many people, [...] the condition can recur after the surgery," Dr. King noted.

"Symptoms can also continue if there are endometrial lesions still present outside of the uterus," she added.

"Endometriosis responds to estrogen, which is made by the ovaries. A hysterectomy typically removes the uterus versus the ovaries and therefore wouldn't cure endometriosis," Dr. Stegmann further explained.

"There are different types of endometriosis, from lesions that are just on the surface to those that invade into the bowel and other organs. That type is called deep infiltrating endometriosis, or DIE. Those lesions will likely not improve even if you have your ovaries removed or your hormones suppressed," she continued.

4. Endometriosis only affects the female reproductive organs

"Endometriosis lesions are most commonly found in the pelvis and lower abdomen," Dr. King told MNT. "However, they can develop anywhere in the body," she noted. Dr. Stegmann explained further:

"Actually, most endometriosis does not affect

the reproductive organs but implants on the inside of your abdomen on a surface called the peritoneum. That is what causes pain. But endometriosis can be found just about anywhere and has been seen in the lining of the lung and even in the brain, where it causes seizures when the woman has a period."

"Fortunately, this does not occur very often, and your [healthcare professional] should be able to help watch for signs or symptoms of implants [located in] other places," she continued.

Still, a 2017 study in mice that investigated the potential for endometrial-derived cells to migrate to other organs of the body suggests that endometriosis in locations distant from the pelvis may be more common than previously recognized.

5. Endometriosis always causes pain

Study data suggest that more than 60% Trusted Source of females with an endometriosis diagnosis report chronic pelvic pain. Moreover, people with endometriosis are 13 times more likely to have abdominal pain than those without the condition. Still, Dr. King notes that despite pain being a common symptom, it is possible to receive a diagnosis of endometriosis even if a person is not experiencing any pain.

Dr. Stegmann added: "Some people with mild forms of endometriosis have excruciating pain, and some people with DIE have little or no pain at all. We think this may be related to whether the implant releases certain pain-causing chemicals, as well as where the implant occurs. In fact, some people never know they have really advanced endometriosis until they have [...] abdominal surgery."

6. Menopause stops endometriosis

Although research is limited, scientists estimate that 2–5% Trusted Source of females have postmenopausal endometriosis.

Dr. King told MNT: "Endometriosis doesn't necessarily end when you're in menopause. In fact, the condition can develop years after your periods stop."

Dr. Stegmann explained, "For the same reason that a hysterectomy doesn't always cure endometriosis, menopause may not cure it either." She suggested that if endometriosis-related pain does not stop after menopause, it is best to consult a healthcare professional about pain management options.

7. Endometriosis equals infertility

Studies suggest that 30–50% of females with endometriosis also experience difficulty becoming pregnant. Still, Dr. King noted that despite statistics linking the condition to fertility challenges, "endometriosis does not automatically mean a diagnosis of infertility," Dr.

Stegmann agreed:

"I have had patients with [severe] endometriosis that become pregnant and those with mild endometriosis that do have issues. The only way to know if you will have problems with getting pregnant is to try. Just make sure you work with your [healthcare professional], since many of the medications used to treat endometriosis prevent pregnancy and will need to be stopped for you to be successful."

8. Abortion causes endometriosis

The myth that abortion causes endometriosis may have surfaced due to abortion-related political debate. However, this is not a fact-based claim. Dr. King told MNT: "While the exact cause of endometriosis is still unknown, there does appear to be a genetic link. There is no evidence that abortion causes endometriosis."

When asked whether having an abortion could cause endometriosis, Dr. Stegmann was clear: "Absolutely not. There is no association between abortion and endometriosis."

9. Birth control pills can cure endometriosis

Although Dr. King noted that birth control pills do not cure endometriosis, "they may help reduce symptoms due to suppression of ovulation and menses," she explained. "Nothing cures endometriosis." Dr. Stegmann reiterated. "But birth control pills do treat endometriosis by leveling out your hormones and preventing you from bleeding. So, they are a good treatment, but not a cure," she explained.

Other medications used to treat endometriosis include pain relievers, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Additionally, in 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a gonadotropin-releasing hormone antagonist, a medication to help treat the pain associated with endometriosis.

10. High estrogen levels cause endometriosis

Debunking this myth, Dr. King said: "High estrogen levels have not been shown to cause endometriosis. However, estrogen-blocking medications can help relieve symptoms." Additionally, research suggests that although high estrogen levels may not cause endometriosis, estrogen and its receptors may play a role in the processes that scientists associate with the condition. Still, a 2022 study notes that preventing or treating endometriosis may also involve therapies that target immune system activity.

The scientists who conducted the study found evidence suggesting that the activation of specific white blood cells may result in chronic inflammation and may contribute to the development of the condition. (Courtesy: MNT)

Union Defence minister Rajnath Singh to attend joint meeting of NDA partners on March 14 NDA alliance partners establish election steering committee for Kokrajhar HPC

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, March 12: A joint meeting regarding the formation of a central election steering committee for No 1 Kokrajhar Lok Sabha ST (HPC) of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) was held at the Bodofa Cultural Complex, Chandamari in Kokrajhar on Monday. The election steering committee was formed with Hemendra Nath Brahma, UPPL senior leader, and ex-MLA as chairman, and Gautam Das, BJP leader, and Executive Member (EM) of BTR as chief convenor along with seven other members amidst the presence of senior BJP leader and state cabinet minister, Ranjeet Kumar Dass, UPPL president and CEM of BTR, Pramod Boro, senior AGP leader, Karna Mohan Roy.

The meeting thoroughly discussed the preparation of NDA partners for the ensuing parliamentary elections across the state, including Kokrajhar Lok Sabha



constituency. The NDA alliance partners have decided to form LAC level election management committees in all areas under the Kokrajhar constituency to ensure healthy communication as well as strengthen the party affairs. The meeting also delved deeply into the upliftment and developmental welfare activities across the region through the spirit of NDA alliance partners.

Minister Dass stated that the NDA alliance partners are fully prepared to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and are hopeful of winning 12 plus seats across the state. He expressed confidence that the NDA alliance candidate would win the Kokrajhar constituency with the majority support of the common masses. CEM Pramod Boro mentioned

that the UPPL party candidate under the NDA alliance is receiving majority support in the Kokrajhar constituency, and victory seems clear. He emphasised that BJP-led NDA alliance partners are winning the hearts of the common masses across the state, as people from all communities are coming forward to extend their support to them. Boro predicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would secure a third consecutive term as PM of the country as BJP-led NDA alliance partners would win more than 400 seats across the country. He assured that the BTR government is committed to working for the all-round development of society.

Boro also informed that Union Defence minister Rajnath Singh is arriving in Kokrajhar on March 14 to attend a joint meeting of NDA partners, organised to be held at the Green Field, Bodofa Nwgr in Kokrajhar. He mentioned that party leaders, members, and workers representing the UPPL, BJP, and AGP parties would participate in a grand manner.

SOS Children's Village observes International Women's Day



HT Correspondent

HOJAI, March 12: SOS Children's Village, Family Strengthening Hojai, observed International Women's Day on March 8, 2024, centrally at the Dhanuhar Basti cluster, where caregivers from all clusters like Milk Basti, Hawaipur, Hira Basti, and Dhanuhar Basti attended the program, a press release stated on Tuesday. The program started with addressing the distinguished guests of the day followed by a welcome song by Bal Panchayat members.

In the first session, an awareness program on different women's rights and laws pertaining to safeguarding was shared by senior advocate DLSA Hojai, Sahana Begum Choudhry.

In the second session, an awareness program on mental health & how to manage stress and emotions was discussed by Dr Nibedita Pati, psychiatrist, District Hospital,

Hojai, Government of Assam. Sangita Gour & Sunaki Saikia, block coordinators, ASRLM (Assam State Livelihood Mission), Jugijan Development Block, Hojai branch, attended the program. They both shared the different schemes available under ASRLM and how a person can become self-reliant by starting with a very small investment for livelihood, and the process to strengthen a group was discussed. A discussion on the linkage of SHG formed by SOS CV-FS was held, but considering the same members in SHG through ASRLM and already registered is not possible for new registration.

Pinki Saha, Panchayat president, joined as guest of honour and praised the work of SOS and also shared the noble work done by SOS during Covid-19 too. She praised the initiative taken by SOS CV for enhancing the capacity

building of village women in all core aspects and strengthening the livelihood of her people. She informed that she is ready to support SOS work anytime and any time of need for the people of her Panchayat.

Chaturthi Biswas, chairman of Hojai Municipality Board, joined the program as chief guest and shared how the government is thinking of women empowerment and extending programs for the upliftment of rural women through SHG in all respects. Again, she also shared the good works done by SOS for the needy children and people of the locality. In the end, all the winners of different competitions organised for SHG like music chair, 3 leg race, quiz & SHG documentation competition were awarded with small tokens of gifts through the guests. Like every year, the best SHG, best animator, best caregivers for the year from all clusters were awarded with tokens of gifts by guests.

In the end, a dance competition was organised SHG wise and winners awarded on the spot. The Bal Panchayat members also performed different dances in the program. The program was supported by Vishal Mega Mart CSR Fund and concluded with a vote of thanks to the guests and all the participants to make the program a success. Chitta Ranjan Mohanty, AVD FS & Niranjan Das coordinated the program with the support of all animators & caregivers.

Assam Forest Employees' Association to hold executive meeting

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, March 12: The Assam Forest Employees' Association has scheduled an executive meeting at Herberian Hall in Assam State Zoo, Guwahati, starting at 11.00 am on March 15.

In a press note signed by Homen Pegu and Rahul Bora, the president and secretary of the organisation respectively, all executive members of the organisation, as well as presidents and secretaries of all district committees and anchal units, are requested to attend the meeting.

The press note states that during the meeting, the organisation will discuss its long-standing demands, including promotions, salaries based on qualifications, and other challenges faced by frontline staff and forest guards in their service. Additionally, the organisation will decide on its next activities or democratic movements to fulfill their demands during the meeting, as mentioned in the press note.

IWTD launches nighttime navigation service

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, March 12: In a bid to enhance transportation accessibility, the Inland Water Transport Department has initiated a nighttime navigation service to Aphalamukh Ghat in Majuli from Nimatighat here. The vessel named Jahnavi was inaugurated by IWTD on Sunday. It will commence its journey from Nimatighat at 5.00 pm and make its return trip from Aphalamukh at 7.00 pm every day.

Man receives life imprisonment

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, March 12: The Court of District and Sessions Judge, Jorhat, has sentenced a person to life imprisonment after convicting him of the murder of his own sister in a village under Teok Police Station of Jorhat district.

In the judgment pronounced by Sessions Judge P Das on Tuesday, Amar Bordoloi of Teok Parbatia Gaon was sentenced to life imprisonment after being convicted under Section 302 of the IPC for murdering his sister, Ritamoni Bordoloi.

The judge also imposed a fine of ₹ 100 on Amar. Failure to pay the fine would result in

him undergoing simple imprisonment for one day. Nine witnesses were examined during the trial.

The post-mortem report of the victim determined strangulation as the cause of death. Police, upon receiving information on November 4, 2019, about Ritumoni being found dead in her house, initially registered a case of unnatural death.

However, during the probe, the investigating officer discovered the incident to be a case of murder. On August 1, 2020, a case was registered suo moto against Amar under Section 302 of the IPC. Police investigations revealed that the accused regularly abused his sister.

Protests sweep state against CAA implementation

HT Bureau

DIPHU, March 12: The All Assam Students Union (AASU), Karbi Anglong, carried out agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Karbi Anglong.

AASU, Diphu, staged a demonstration near Diphu Bus Stand on Tuesday evening against the implementation of CAA. They burnt a symbolic copy of KAAC and shouted slogans.

They raised various slogans. The protest was attended by AASU assistant general secretary (AGS), Shorjun Hanse; AGS of Diphu Regional Committee, Deepjyoti Chetia; AGS of AASU Karbi Anglong District Committee, Lovelywell Ingti Kathar, and others.

In Bokajan, the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP), All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC), and others staged a protest against the implementation of CAA. The protest was attended by the president of APHLC, JI Kathar, AJYCP member Jitu Phukon, and others.

Our Sivasagar correspondent adds: As part of the protest called by the 16-party United Opposition Forum in Assam, several organisations and individuals in Sivasagar organised a demonstration against the implementation of CAA in the state. Sivasagar Police have arrested 16 people so far for their participation in anti-CAA demonstrations. Among the arrested individuals are Bidyut Saikia, secretary, and Ritumoni Hazarika, organising secretary, of Krishak Mukti Sangram Samity; Abhijit Chetia, Sundeep Gogoi, Bhaskar Boiragi, and Rahul Gogoi of Chitra Mukti Sangram Samity; Munindra Lahan, Biswa Das, Mamu Begum, Dilwar Hussain, and Rimpji Gogoi of Rajior Dal; and Manjit Bhuyan. SP Subhrajyoti Bora IPS informed this correspondent that they have been arrested for violating a High Court verdict against any call for 'Sarbatmak Hartal'.

Rajior Dal chief Akhil Gogoi,



addressing the media, described CAA as an attack on Assamese culture by the BJP. He emphasised that the Assamese people must vehemently oppose it. Responding to the chief minister's remark that he would be the first to resign if even one person who entered the state after 2014 is granted citizenship, Gogoi questioned why anyone should accept all who entered the state before 2014. He expressed concern that the BJP plans to grant citizenship to over 15 to 20 lakh Hindu Bangladeshis who entered Assam till 2014 and also to invite the remaining 1.7 crore Hindu people currently in Bangladesh from 2014 to 2026. He urged those who love the state and its people not to vote for BJP.

Shrinkhal Chaliha, a popular social activist, pledged to continue the protest and criticised the notion that only BJP activists are considered patriots while others are labeled traitors in India. He called upon people to participate in mass protests against the BJP and CAA from the historic Ranghar premises. Jintu Mech declared their unwavering commitment to opposing CAA. AASU Sivasagar also organised a procession in the evening to protest against the implementation of CAA.

Our Nagaon correspondent adds: Following the notification of the implementation of CAA across the country by the Union government last Monday, the district unit of All Assam Students' Union (AASU), along with 30 other ethnic organisations, intensified its protest against

the implementation of CAA in the district since late Monday evening. Office bearers as well as other members of the students' organisation went out on Monday evening and burnt photocopies of the act and its notification.

Continuing its ongoing agitation against the act, the district unit of the organisation also held a torchlight rally on Tuesday evening from its district office at Nagaon Nehrubai. However, the district police administration and other security personnel blocked all the agitators inside the AASU office with iron barricades, leading the participants to stage the protest at its doorstep.

Hundreds of agitators participated in the stir and shouted various slogans against the central government as well as the state government led by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. During the agitation, the participants strongly criticised the BJP-led NDA government at the centre and the state government in the state.

The organisation reiterated that the ongoing agitation will continue until the act is repealed. The participants emphasised that the people of Assam will never accept the act as it will destroy the identity of the Assamese nation as well as the Assamese language in the days to come.

It is pertinent to mention that the agitation was finally abandoned by the students' organisation after half an hour due to the strict security arrangements of the district police administration.

State Bank of India donates medical equipment

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, March 12: State Bank of India, Guwahati circle, donated medical equipment worth over ₹ 7 lakhs at Meruagaon State Dispensary in Morigaon district recently. The materials were distributed at a function organised by Meruagaon State Dispensary at Ratnakanta Bordoloi Hall, Meruagaon. The equipment was handed over to Dr Angarag Sandilya, medical & health officer, by Sujit Dey, regional manager, SBI, Nagaon, in the public meeting presided over by prominent social worker and retired teacher Dibakar Bordoloi. Participating in the meeting, Promode Sarma, assistant commissioner, Morigaon, appreciated the initiative of SBI and hoped that this arrangement would help the people of the backward tribal area of Morigaon district. The event was hosted by Dr Angarag Sandilya, medical officer, and Udipta Bhuyan, bank staff. The event was attended by Dr Phani Pathak, joint director of health, Morigaon, and Mrinal Hazarika, chief manager, SBI, Morigaon, EM of TAC, and journalists. In his welcome speech, Sujit Dey, regional manager, SBI, Nagaon, spoke about CSR activities undertaken by State Bank of India for the betterment and upliftment of society—stated a press release by Mrinal Hazarika, chief manager, SBI, Morigaon.

Assam Rifles organises field trip

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARALI, March 12: Assam Rifles organised a field study trip to Nameri National Park located in Sonitpur district for children of Gyan Vikas Academy, Charduar recently, stated a press release. The students were exposed to an enriching experience of biodiversity and conservation. Assam Rifles, with their expertise, facilitated insightful guided tours, shedding light on the park's flora and fauna. The students witnessed the park's rich wildlife, including diverse bird species and endangered animals, which contributed to their ecological awareness.

CEM Pramod Boro distributes Mainao Swrang Bithangkhi funds



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, March 12: Empowering women entrepreneurs towards self-reliance and financial independence has been a top priority of the government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Accordingly, financial assistance cheques of ₹ 25,000 each (first installment of ₹ 75,000) under Mainao Swrang Bithangkhi were distributed to 2049 women-led self-help groups (SHGs) on Tuesday at a program held at Dimakuchi in Udalguri district.

Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), graced the occasion as the chief guest and distributed the cheques among the SHG beneficiaries in the presence of Dilip Saikia, Lok Sabha MP, and several dignitaries. The financial assistance was given to the SHGs under the flagship program of Mainao Swrang Bithangkhi initiated by the Government of BTR.

CEM Boro stated that the BTR Government is dedicatedly working towards the welfare and upliftment of society. "The Government of BTR has achieved a milestone by providing financial support under our flagship initiative to 6000 SHGs in this financial year alone, thus promoting grassroots entrepreneurship and incubating a culture of self-reliance among the women of BTR," Boro said.

Meanwhile, continuing Assam's #VikasYatra under the guidance of CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, on Tuesday, CEM Pramod Boro laid the foundation stone for the new higher secondary school building in Kalaigaon, Udalguri district. Furthermore, CEM also laid the foundation stone for the school building of Bholabari High School in Udalguri. This transformative initiative aims to provide improved educational infrastructure, fostering a conducive environment for enhanced learning experiences, nurturing the potential of students, and promoting educational growth.

Margherita MLA initiates construction of Mini Sports Stadium at Bargolai

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, March 12: In a historic event, Margherita MLA Bhaskar Sharma laid the foundation stone and performed the Bhumi Puja for a Mini Sports Stadium at Bargolai, falling under 83 no Margherita constituency of Tinsukia district.

The stadium will be constructed at a cost of approximately ₹ 12 crore 80 lakh 23 thousand. The completion of the stadium, set up for the convenience of players from the larger Margherita area, will address a longstanding shortage in the region.

The Bargolai Mini Sports Stadium will be built by the Department of Public Works (Housing and National Highways), Government of Assam. Margherita MLA Bhaskar Sharma, in his speech, expressed confidence that the stadium would receive a positive response from all the sports persons in the Margherita region.

During the function, Margherita Achalik Panchayat president Sukhdev Sharma, Margherita District Sports Association general secretary Satya Ranjan Borkakoty, Margherita Municipal Board chairman Anand Kumar Sharma, Margherita Region veteran journalist and social worker Jagat Chngmai, Tinsukia District Journalists Association general secretary Rana Jyoti Neog, Margherita sportsperson Bhanu Chakraborty, Margherita sports organiser Indu Ranjan Baruah, engineer Arup Chakraborty, and many other distinguished and resourceful individuals from the Margherita region were present.

Dr Sujoy Lal Thoasen takes oath as chief commissioner of ASCRTPS

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 12: Governor Gulab Chand Kataria administered the oath of office to Dr Sujoy Lal Thoasen, IPS (retd), as the chief commissioner of the Assam State Commission for Rights to Public Services at a solemn function held at Raj Bhavan on Tuesday. Earlier, chief secretary to the Government of Assam, Paban Kumar Borthakur, sought the permission of the Governor to commence the proceedings of the ceremony. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by minister for Power Nandita Gorlosa, DGP GP Singh, commissioner and secretary to the Governor of Assam SS Meenakshi Sundaram, commissioner and secretary GAD MS Manivannan, former DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, add DGP Hireen Nath, along with senior officers of the state government and the family members of Dr Sujoy Lal Thoasen.

National Conference on Language and Linguistics addresses endangered languages of NE

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, March 12: "When a language faces the threat of extinction, it leads to the loss of cultural diversity and human heritage," said Prof C Yashwant Singh, a noted academician of linguistics and formerly dean of Arts, Manipur University, while delivering his keynote address at the National Conference on Language and Linguistics organised by the department of Linguistics and Language Technology (LLT), Tezpur University on Tuesday, marking its second anniversary. Prof Singh further added that languages are not just tools for communication; they are intricate expressions of culture, history, and identity.

Attending as the chief guest at the conference focused on the linguistics of the languages of north-east, many of which are from Tibeto-Burman languages, vice-chancellor of Tezpur University Prof Shambhu Nath Singh said that India's north-east region is the most linguistically diverse and culturally vibrant area in the country, with a



confluence of languages from at least four language families, several of which are lesser-known or understudied. "It is our duty not only to study these languages for academic purposes but also to help the speakers in multiple ways by encouraging them to preserve their linguistic, cultural, and ecological heritage," he added. Prof Singh also released a book titled 'Select Papers from National Conference on Linguistics and

Language Technology 2023' launched as part of the event.

Delivering the welcome address, Prof Gautam K Borah, head of the department of LLT, said that north-east is known for its linguistic diversity, but many of the 220 languages spoken in the region are currently endangered. In this context, the department has been conducting research on several endangered and previously unresearched lan-

guages of North East India.

Prof. Borah further stated that given the importance of the department in this region, it shall offer a four-year undergraduate programme in Linguistics and Language Technology from the next academic year. Currently, it is offering a two-year Master's in Linguistics and Language Technology and guides PhD research in the discipline.

Senior Prof Madhumita Barbara, who has been closely associated with the erstwhile department of English & Foreign Languages for nearly three decades, expressed her views on the future activities of the department. Prof Farheena Danta, dean of Humanities & Social Sciences, said that research on endangered languages in the department will play an important role in the discussions on the introduction of mother tongue medium under the National Education Policy.

In conjunction with the programme, the students displayed wall posters on various topics in about 11 languages of the north-east.

ENPO, tribal bodies to collaborate in ensuring successful implementation of restrictions imposed under 'public emergency'

ENPO to continue 'public emergency' in eastern Nagaland



HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, March 12: In the backdrop of the 'public emergency' declared by it in eastern Nagaland on March 5 and subsequent bandhs in the region, the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) at an emergency consultative meeting with

tribal bodies and frontal organisations in Tuensang on Tuesday decided to further continue with the ongoing 'public emergency'. The bandhs called under the 'public emergency' crippled normal life in eastern Nagaland. The ENPO had called the 'public emergency' in eastern

Nagaland against the delay by the government of India to settle the offer for the creation of 'Frontier Nagaland Territory', comprising of six eastern districts of Nagaland. The meeting emphasised the need to stand in unison in achieving the desired goal of the people

of eastern Nagaland. Addressing the meeting, ENPO president Tsapikyu Sangtam urged all the tribal leaders and members present to ensure that all the people irrespective of their political and social affiliations are on board, saying "this is of primary importance and pre-requisite at this hour".

During the meeting, the members present reviewed the current status of the ongoing bandh in the entire eastern Nagaland jurisdiction.

The members agreed to further collaborate closely and coordinate efforts in ensuring successful implementations of the restrictions imposed under the 'public emergency' to show resentment against the central government for not honouring its commitment.

However, considering the concerns of the people, the meeting decided to relax/exempt public movement with private vehicles, all government and private educational institutions, power department, medical emergencies, fire and emergency services, PHED (domestic lines), banking, postal services and telecommunications, business establishments and private constructions.

Nagaland launches official websites for 5 new dists

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, March 12: The Nagaland government launched the official websites of five new districts of the state at the chief secretary's office chamber in Kohima on Tuesday.

The websites will provide informational service on various aspects of the newly created districts of Noklak, Shamator, Tseminyu, Chumoukedima and Niuland including history, administrative setup, geography, demographics, economy, tourism, statistical data, and schemes offered by the government. The websites comprise of 'citizen services' and 'public utilities' sections, which contain information on applying for government services. The websites are responsive and easily accessible through smart phones, tablets and desktop PC.

Chief secretary J Alam launched the official websites in the presence of the deputy director general of the National Informatics Centre, New Delhi and state coordinator for NIC Nagaland state centre, Naveen Kumar.

After the creation of the five new districts in Nagaland, the NIC initiated the development of the websites with the initiative of the district administration concerned. Using S3WaaS, a cloud service secure, scalable and suganya (accessible) framework, the websites were developed, security audited, and deployed on the production server which are accessible in the public domain.

The S3WaaS framework is compliant with mandatory guidelines from the compliance matrix of GIGW (Guidelines for Indian Government Websites), which is built upon a cutting-edge open source technology stack.

The websites are now available in the public domain and one can easily access information on the districts using the links Noklak.nic.in, Tseminyu.nic.in, Chumoukedima.nic.in, Niuland.nic.in and Shamator.nic.in.

Arunachal govt announces additional 4% DA for employees

ITANAGAR, March 12: The Arunachal Pradesh government has announced an additional 4 per cent dearness allowance (DA) for its employees, officials said on Tuesday.

The hike, effective from January 1, will benefit 68,818 state government employees and 33,200 pensioners, they said.

With this hike, the DA for employees and dearness relief (DR) for pensioners has reached 50 per cent. The state has to spend an additional ₹ 124.20 crore per year for this, they added.

"Under the guidance of Hon PM Shri @narendramodi Ji, our double-engine sarkar is committed to the welfare of all citizens, including those dedicated to delivering government services," chief minister Pema Khandu posted on X.

"Let us continue to work diligently for the all-round, inclusive growth of Arunachal Pradesh," he added. (PTI)

PSO of HNLC sent to 14 days judicial custody



SHILLONG, March 12: Arrested personal security officer (PSO) of the proscribed Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) Storgy Lyngdoh has been sent to 14 days judicial custody.

Lyngdoh, who was arrested from Mawlynrei on March 2, was again produced before the court on Monday.

This was after completion of his 10 days of police custody. Police have said that Lyngdoh had served demand notes to extort money for the HNLC leading to widespread scare and fear psychosis among a number of businessmen of Shillong.

"As per inputs he might have succeeded in scaring and threatening individuals to yield to the ille-

gal demands," police had said. During his arrest, one Bangladeshi SIM card was also recovered from him.

Lyngdoh is an active member of the HNLC with a close link to the deputy commander-in-chief of the HNLC. He was also the PSO of A. Hazarika @ Manbhalang Jyrwa, the previous vice-chairman of HNLC, who resigned during the process of peace talks.

In this connection, an FIR has been registered at Rynjang PS for further investigation into the matter, the SP said, even as he added that as per the records of Meghalaya Police, Lyngdoh is involved in many criminal cases and has been evading the due process of law. (NNN)

Arunachal NCP declares names of 8 candidates for Assembly elections

ITANAGAR, March 12: The Arunachal Pradesh unit of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has declared the names of eight candidates for the upcoming assembly elections.

The first list of candidates was declared by the party during a mass joining programme here on Monday include former MLA Likha Saaya, former minister Tapang Taloh, Loma Gollo, Nyasam Jongsam, Ngolin Boi, Aju Chije, Mongol Yomso and Salman Mongrey.

Saaya, who is also the state unit NCP president will contest from Yachuli assembly constituency while Tapang Taloh will fight from Pangin-Boleng.

Aju Chije will contest from Mechukha assembly seat, Loma Gollo from Pakke Kessang, Nyasam Jongsam from Changlang North, Ngolin Boi from Namsang, Mongol Yomso from Mariyang-Geku and Salman Mongrey from Changlang South. (PTI)

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna launched in East Garo Hills

HT Correspondent
WILLIAMNAGAR, March 12: Meghalaya soil and water conservation minister, Marcuse N Marak, launched the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) scheme for Doktilgre and Dinamingre villages in East Garo Hills district on Tuesday.

Launching the scheme, Marcuse informed the gathering that chief minister, Conrad K Sangma had been working tirelessly to transform the state into a 10 billion economy' by bringing in various developmental projects through different government departments. Williamnagar has witnessed a significant change in terms of development under the leadership of the chief minister.

"The RKVY scheme will immensely benefit local farmers of Dinamingre and Doktilgre villages by helping them in increasing their agricultural produce. It will help the farmers to opt for multiple cropping, thereby uplifting the standard of living of the villagers. Our government is



initiating steps to uplift the farmers and the farmers in turn should extend their cooperation," Marcuse said.

The others who spoke on the occasion included the Rongjing SDO (C), Reuben Ch Momin and the

representatives from Dinamingre and Doktilgre villages.

Earlier during the day, the minister inaugurated the newly constructed Muga Grainage Hall at Pilot Extension Centre (PEC) at Samanda Megapgre.

Sikkim CS directs departments to follow model code of conduct

GANGTOK, March 12: Sikkim chief secretary V B Pathak on Tuesday directed all government officials, including the heads of departments to strictly follow the model code of conduct (MCC) rules once it comes into effect with the announcement of poll schedule.

Sikkim is one of the states in which assembly polls will be held along with Lok Sabha elections.

At a meeting held in the Tashiling Secretariat, Pathak told the department heads about the dos and don'ts during MCC and pressed for cooperation of the departments to ensure that rules are followed by all, an official said.

The officials sought the chief secretary's guidance

on the issues concerning their respective departments to which the latter explained everything in fine detail.

The MCC will come into effect in Sikkim immediately with the announcement of the schedule for election to the 32-member state Assembly and one Lok Sabha seat.

Director general of police A K Singh, chief electoral officer D Anandamay and the heads of all departments attended the meeting.

Jigmi Wangchuk Bhutia, additional secretary-cum-nodal officer for MCC, State Election Commission made a detailed power point presentation on rules and regulations to be followed by all departments till the conclusion of elections in the state. (PTI)

Nagaland CM to inaugurate Integrated Business Hub

DIMAPUR, March 12: Nagaland chief minister, Neiphiu Rio along with the vice chairman of NITI Aayog, is poised to inaugurate the Integrated Business Hub and Innovation Center (IBH & IC) on March 13 at Dimapur.

This momentous occasion marks a significant milestone in Nagaland's journey towards becoming a hub of innovation and enterprise, fostering economic growth and development in the region. The inauguration of IBH&IC represents a milestone in Dimapur leading the way in the state's journey towards becoming a hub of innovation and enterprise. With state-of-the-art facilities and a conducive ecosystem for collaboration, the centre is poised to support startups, entrepreneurs and businesses in realizing their potential and contributing to Nagaland's economic prosperity, an official statement said on Monday.

"The NITI Aayog's vice chairman's presence underscores the central government's unwavering support for initiatives that promote innovation and economic development across the nation. Their participation in the ceremony adds a touch of grandeur, reaffirming the significance of this momentous occasion," the official statement also added.

In addition to the inauguration, the vice chairman's itinerary includes a visit to Kohima to pay homage at the War Cemetery, honouring the sacrifices of the brave soldiers. Furthermore, he will engage with local stakeholders in one of the districts, emphasizing NITI Aayog's commitment to driving inclusive growth across the country.

"The inauguration of the IBH & IC heralds a new era in Nagaland's economic landscape, promising to unlock opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development," the statement added. As the curtains rise on this new chapter in Nagaland's narrative, the centre emerges as a harbinger of transformation, promising to unlock the gates of opportunity and prosperity for all who dare to dream, it further added. With the steadfast support of NITI Aayog and its esteemed partners, Dimapur stands poised to metamorphose into a bustling epicentre of innovation and enterprise, a testament to the resilience and dynamism of the Nagaland spirit, the statement stated. (NNN)

HNYF denies Lyмба's involvement in IED blast at Them Iew Mawlong

SHILLONG, March 12: The Hynniewtrep National Youth Front (HNYF) has denied that its disciplinary secretary was involved in the March 9-IED bomb blast at Them Iew Mawlong.

58-year-old Tarson Lyмба was picked up from Dawki in West Jaintia Hills district on the night of March 10, after he was alleged to have been involved in the IED bomb blast incident.

Tarson has helped in the picking up and bringing of the HNLC leaders from certain locations along the international border to Shillong for peace talks with the government. A delegation of the HNYF led by its president Sadon K Blah along with the family members of Tarson met the superintendent of police (SP) of East Khasi Hills district, Rituraj Ravi to seek clarification on his arrest.

"The SP has clearly indicated that the arrest of Tarson was in connection with the recent bomb blast which took place at Mawlonghat," Blah told reporters after the meeting.

"However, as HNYF, we are not convinced that Tarson would be involved in the bomb blast incident. In fact we believe that he is not involved at all," he said. Blah said that Tarson has been with the HNYF for the past 26-27 years and was never involved in any anti-social activities. (NNN)

265.49 kilometres of National Highway 913 to be constructed under project Centre sanctions over ₹ 6,621cr for frontier highway in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, March 12: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday said the Centre has sanctioned an allocation of ₹ 6,621.62 crore for construction of the ambitious frontier highway in Arunachal Pradesh.

The allocation has been made for the construction of eight packages on National Highway 913 (Frontier Highway), transitioning to an intermediate lane configuration using the EPC mode, the minister said.

The project spans a total length of 265.49 kilometres.

"Encompassed within this initiative are packages 1, 3 and 5 covering the Huri-Taliha section, two packages addressing the Bile-Migging section, packages 2 and 4 managing the Kharsang-Miao-Gandhigram-Vijaynagar section, and package 1 focusing on the Bomdila-Nafra-Lada section," the transport minister said.

The development of these highway stretches holds promise for enhanced connectivity to border areas, fostering socio-economic growth in the state, he said.

The construction of the frontier highway



is anticipated to curb migration and facilitate reverse migration towards the border areas

of the state, the minister said. "Additionally, these stretches play a vital

role in establishing essential road infrastructure connecting significant river basins, thereby enabling the development of numerous hydropower projects within the state," Gadkari pointed out.

The greenfield road is designed to link uninhabited and sparsely populated areas of Upper Arunachal, making it conducive to tourism.

Chief minister Pema Khandu welcomed the development project, saying that the state is witnessing a new era of connectivity in border areas.

"Gratitude to Hon Union Minister Shri @nitin_gadkari Ji for fresh allocation of ₹ 6,621.62 crore for construction of eight packages of NH-913, designated as Frontier Highway, spanning length of 265.49 km. This marks a monumental step towards enhanced connectivity," Khandu said in a social media post.

The greenfield road will usher in socio-economic development, fulfill aspirations of people by creating job opportunities, check migration and increase tourists' footfall, he added. (PTI)

NAME CORRECTION

I, Abdur Rafique do here by affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the below mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my name appeared in the passport bearing No. F0240070 as Mahammad Abdur Rafique and my father's name as Afazuddin Mahammad Ahmed in place of Abdur Rafique and Afajuddin respectively. That Abdur Rafique and Mohammad Abdur Rafique are the same and one person who is myself and Afazuddin Mahammad Ahmed and Afazuddin are the same and one person who is my father. That this affidavit is required to be produced before the authority concerned as a piece of documents.

Sd/-
Abdur Rafique
SO- Afajuddin
RO - Ward No. 2
Kharupetia,
PO & PS- Kharupetia
Dist- Darrang Assam

NAME CORRECTION

I, OBEDUR RAHMAN do here by affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the below mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my name appeared in the passport bearing No. K0613312 as Mahammad Obedur Rahman and my father's name as Mohammed Afazuddin in place of Obedur Rahman and Afajuddin respectively. That Obedur Rahman and Mohamad Obedur Rahman are the same and one person who is myself and Afajuddin and Mohammed Afazuddin are the same and one person who is my father. That this affidavit is required to be produced before the authority concerned as a piece of documents.

Sd/-
OBEDUR RAHMAN
SO- Afajuddin
RO - Ward No. 2
Kharupetia,
PO & PS- Kharupetia
Dist- Darrang Assam

CAA becomes key poll issue in Kerala; LDF and UDF protest, BJP defends

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, March 12: The notification of CAA rules by the Central government has turned into a key issue in Kerala in the Lok Sabha polls, sparking separate protests by the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF, while the BJP vehemently defended it, asserting it does not target Muslims.

Protests have erupted in various parts of Kerala against the Centre's notification regarding the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), as both the LDF and the UDF organised marches towards Central government institutions to condemn the decision.

A day after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan denounced the CAA as divisive and assured it would not be implemented in the state, senior BJP leader Prakash Javadekar criticised him, alleging that Vijayan was misleading the public.

"Shri Pinarayi, don't make the people fools. The CAA is not designed to revoke anyone's citizenship but to grant it to refugees persecuted on religious grounds who came to India. This is not discriminatory against Muslims," Javadekar said in a post on "X".

Javadekar, who is also the BJP in-charge of Kerala, said Muslims are not persecuted for their religion in Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Afghanistan.

Shortly after the Centre announced the implementation of the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, Vijayan had said the government has repeatedly stated that the Act, which treats Muslim minorities as second-class citizens, will not be implemented in Kerala.

"That remains the position. All of Kerala will stand united in opposing this communally divisive law," the chief minister said in a statement here.

Meanwhile, hitting out at the BJP on the issue, the CPI(M)-led LDF on Tuesday alleged that "the RSS agenda to build a Hindu Rashtra is behind the CAA."

"The notification was issued ahead of the elections with the aim of religious polarisation," LDF convenor E P Jayarajan alleged.

Seeking to garner support in favour of the Left from the Muslim community in polls in Kerala, Jayarajan claimed that the Congress did not oppose the Citizenship Act in Parliament.

"Congress MPs in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha didn't do anything. It was like tacitly supporting communalism," the senior CPI(M) leader told reporters.

He alleged that the intention of the Centre is to break the peaceful atmosphere prevailing in the coun-

try and seize power.

Hitting back at the LDF, the UDF alleged that the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government, which says that the CAA will not be implemented in the state, has no sincerity on the issue.

"In 2019, police in the state registered 835 cases related to protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Despite the chief minister's announcement to withdraw non-aggressive cases, this action has not been carried out. It raises questions about the government's stance."

"The chief minister should clarify why these cases have not been withdrawn," the Leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, V D Saheeshaan, said.

Criticising the Centre on the issue, the Congress leader said the same government that filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that it did not intend to implement the CAA amendment brought the rules into effect just before the elections.

"Determining citizenship on the basis of religion is unacceptable. This action is against Article 5 of the Constitution on how to grant citizenship. The Congress and the UDF will fight as hard as they can to preserve the Constitution," he said.

BJP state president K Surendran alleged that the LDF and UDF are dividing the people under the cover of the CAA.

Speaking to the mediapersons in Kochi, he said that both fronts are trying to deceive the Muslim community in Kerala.

"CAA has become law in our country. No one can do anything. I do not know if you are aware or not, but Pinarayi Vijayan, after CAA came up for discussion in Parliament, has set up a concentration camp in Kollam to detain illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and other infiltrators."

"If there is any lie in what I said, you should go and investigate. Vijayan has established a jail in Kollam. The first concentration camp on Centre's instructions to implement the CAA has been set up in Kerala's Kollam district. The first state to implement the CAA would be Kerala," Surendran alleged.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), the youth wing of the CPI(M), on Tuesday announced its intention to challenge the union government's decision to implement the CAA, by filing a petition in the Supreme Court.

DYFI's All India President, A A Rahim, expressed that the amendment poses a threat to the fundamental principles of the country's Constitution. (PTI)

Development work for us is a mission to build nation, not to win elections: PM Modi

'Railway sector in the country suffered heavily after the country's independence because the past governments prioritised 'political motives' rather than development'

AHMEDABAD, March 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said his government undertakes developmental works as a part of its mission to build the nation and not to win elections as perceived by some people.

The PM launched ₹ 1,06,000 crore development projects for the country at an event in Sabarmati area of Gujarat's Ahmedabad city after visiting the Dedicated Freight Corridor's (DFC) Operation Control Centre near the venue, ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

These comprise ₹ 85,000 crore railway projects, including the launch of 10 new Vande Bharat trains, and a petrochemicals complex coming up at Dahej in Gujarat's Bharuch district with an investment of ₹ 20,600 crore.

"Some people try to look at our efforts through the electoral lens. Let me tell you that we undertake developmental works as part of a mission to build the nation, not to form a government (by winning elections). We want to ensure that our youth do not suffer what their past generations had suffered. This is Modi's guarantee," the PM said.

Modi said that in the last 10 years, his government spent around six times more amount for the development of Railways than was done earlier. In just two months of 2024, his government inaugurated and laid the foundation of ₹ 11 lakh

crore projects, he added.

The PM said the railway sector in the country suffered heavily after the country's independence because the past governments prioritised "political motives" rather than development.

"Earlier, lawmakers used to clap in Parliament over the railway minister's announcement of giving stoppage to a train or increasing the number of coaches. This was the thinking back then. What would have happened if such an attitude persisted in the 21st century too? That is why the first thing I did was to merge the railway budget with the main Union budget so that the Centre's fund is made available for the development of Railways," he said. Earlier, it was very common for trains to get late. Everything was left on the fate of the passengers, he said.

"Earlier, lawmakers used to clap in Parliament over the railway minister's announcement of giving stoppage to a train or increasing the number of coaches. This was the thinking back then. What would have happened if such an attitude persisted in the 21st century too? That is why the first thing I did was to merge the railway budget with the main Union budget so that the Centre's fund is made available for the development of Railways," he said. Earlier, it was very common for trains to get late. Everything was left on the fate of the passengers, he said.

Till 2014, only 35 per cent of the railway lines were electrified. The common people were suffering due to long queues, agents demanding commission and hours of waiting to get train reservation, the PM said.

"I know this very well because I started my life on railway tracks," he said.

Modi said his government has shown a strong willpower to pull the Railways out of a "hell-like situation" and this sector's development is among their topmost priorities.



The previous governments did not give priority to the doubling of railway tracks, he said.

Referring to the DFC, Modi said that for decades, there was a demand of separate tracks for goods trains. It would have increased the speed of both passenger and goods trains and was also necessary to boost agriculture, trade and export activities, he said.

"But under the Congress regime, this project was either delayed or hit roadblocks. Today, we are inaugurating the freight corridor having a length of 650 km."

At the venue, PM Modi laid the foundation stone of railway workshops, loco sheds, electric traction system upgradation work and dedi-

cated to the nation two new sections of the Dedicated Freight Corridor and Western DFC's Operation Control Centre in Ahmedabad.

He flagged off 10 new Vande Bharat trains between Ahmedabad-Mumbai Central, Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam, Mysuru-Dr MGR Central (Chennai), Patna-Lucknow, New Jalpaiguri-Patna, Puri-Visakhapatnam, Lucknow-Dehradun, Kalaburagi-Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal Bengaluru, Ranchi-Varanasi and Khajuraho-Delhi (Nizamuddin).

The PM also flagged off the extension of four Vande Bharat trains.

The Ahmedabad-Jamnagar Vande Bharat is being extended till Dwarka, Ajmer-Delhi Sarai Rohilla

Vande Bharat till Chandigarh, Gorakhpur-Lucknow Vande Bharat till Prayagraj and Thiruvananthapuram-Kasargod Vande Bharat till Mangaluru.

He also flagged off and two new passenger trains between Asansol and Hatia & Tirupati and Kollam stations.

The PM dedicated 51 Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminals to the nation. These terminals will promote seamless movement of goods between different modes of transportation, said a PIB release.

Other projects which were launched by the PM included digital controlling of railway stations at 2,646 stations, 35 rail coach restaurants, 1,500 "One Station One Product" stalls to promote local products and generate income for local artisans and businesses and solar-powered stations and buildings at 975 locations.

Modi also laid the foundation stone of the petrochemicals complex of Petronet LNG, including ethane and propane handling facilities of more than ₹ 20,600 crore, at Dahej in Gujarat.

The setting up of the petrochemicals complex in proximity to the existing LNG regasification terminal would result in significant savings in the capex (capital expenditure) and opex (operating expenses) cost of the project, said the release. (PTI)

Haryana CM Khattar, all cabinet minister submit resignation to Guv

CHANDIGARH, March 12: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and his cabinet ministers on Tuesday submitted their resignations to Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, sources said.

The development came amid speculation of cracks emerging in the state's ruling BJP and Jananayak Janata Party (JJP) coalition over seat sharing ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

The cabinet comprised 14 ministers, including Khattar and three members of the Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala-led JJP. All have resigned.

A new cabinet is likely to be sworn in at the oath taking ceremony to be held at the governor's residence later in the day, the sources said.

The BJP has called a meeting of its MLAs at Haryana Niwas. However, there was no official word from the party.



Five MLAs of the JJP are learnt to have skipped the meeting called by the party in New Delhi.

Several BJP leaders had earlier maintained that party would fight all 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Union minister Arjun Munda, BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh, who have been appointed as observers by the party, as well as BJP's Rajya Sabha MP Subhash Barala are in Haryana Niwas.

Amid uncertainty over what exactly would happen next, there

Panel formed to draft legal framework for adventure sports, amusement parks: Guj govt to HC

AHMEDABAD, March 12: The Gujarat government on Tuesday informed the high court that a high-level committee has been constituted to draft a legal framework, certification and enforcement proceedings for adventure sports and amusement parks in the state.

A 13-member committee has been given three months to come out with the legal framework, certification and enforcement proceedings for such activities, Advocate General Kamal Trivedi told the division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Aniruddha Mayee.

The court was hearing a suo motu PIL on the Harni boat tragedy, in which 12 students and two teachers of New Sunrise School at Waghodia near Vadodara drowned after a boat capsized in Harni Lake on the outskirts of Vadodara city on January 18.

"Tourism activity in the state is

increasing, and people have started utilising boating activities, amusement parks, adventure sports, and ropeways at religious and tourist places," Trivedi told the division bench.

The advocate general informed that the state urban development and urban housing department has decided to constitute a high-level committee to lay a specific policy for legal framework, certification and enforcement of various activities of adventure sports and amusement parks, roadways for religious and tourist places and boating in rivers, lakes, and other boating activities in rivers.

The committee has been given three months to draft a legal framework, certification and enforcement proceedings, he said.

The state government has also framed rules under the Gujarat Inland Vessels Act, mandating registration and certification of boats, he said. (PTI)

FLY91 to start flights to Lakshadweep from April NDA finalises seat-sharing in Andhra Pradesh

MOPA (GOA), March 12: Regional airline FLY91 will start commercial services on March 18 and flights to Lakshadweep in April.

The Goa-based carrier, which will have a fleet of 70-seater ATR 72-600 aircraft, has raised USD 25 million, and plans to connect 50 cities in 5 years, its MD and CEO Manoj Chacko said on Tuesday.

At a briefing at the Mopa airport, Chacko said it will start commercial services from March 18 with flights from Goa to Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

There will also be flights to Sindhudurg from Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

The carrier will start flights to Agatti in Lakshadweep from April.

FLY91 will have a total of six ATR 72-600 planes in six months.

Currently, there are two aircraft in its fleet.

"We aim to connect Bharat," Chacko said and added that initially, it will con-



nect 13 city pairs. In the next five years, FLY91 plans to have around 35 planes, connect 50 cities and 6 bases, Chacko said.

Civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday virtually inaugurated the symbolic flight of FLY91.

The carrier, operated by Just Udo Aviation Pvt Ltd, seeks to enhance air con-

nectivity across Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

Chacko said the airline is well-capitalised and currently has around 200 staff.

For every new aircraft, FLY91 will be adding 25 people and for each new station, the addition will be around 20 staff.

"We have a conservative, restricted growth path," he said.

The airline received its air operator permit from aviation regulator DGCA on March 6.

Chacko said the airline's first base Goa is a huge attraction for pilots.

The airline is promoted by Chacko, a former Kingfisher Airline's senior executive, former Fairfax India head Harsha Raghavan, and others.

It is also the first Indian airline to use Goa's Manohar International Airport as its home base.

In April 2023, the carrier received the non-objection certificate for flying from the civil aviation ministry. (PTI)

AMARAVATI (ANDHRA PRADESH), March 12: Andhra Pradesh NDA partners finalised their seat-sharing formula for the Lok Sabha and state polls following a marathon discussion on Monday, under which the BJP will contest six Lok Sabha and 10 assembly seats while the TDP will fight 17 parliamentary and 144 state seats.

Under the deal, Pawan Kalyan's JanaSena will contest two Lok Sabha and 21 assembly seats, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu announced after the meeting.

Senior BJP leader and Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat went into a huddle with TDP supremo Naidu and JanaSena chief Kalyan in Amaravati to finalise seat-sharing for the upcoming Parliamentary and Assembly elections.

"In Amaravati today, the BJP, TDP and JSP (Janasena) forged a formidable seat-sharing formula. With this significant step, the people of Andhra Pradesh now stand on

the threshold of reclaiming our state and paving the way for a brighter future. I humbly call upon my people of Andhra Pradesh to shower their blessings upon this alliance, and grant us a historic mandate to serve them," said Naidu in a post on X.

The state has 25 Lok Sabha and 175 assembly seats.

JanaSena was initially supposed to contest 24 assembly and three Lok Sabha seats, but in the seat-sharing formula it got 21 assembly and two Lok Sabha seats, after the TDP joined the NDA alliance recently.

The 2024 polls will be the first time the three parties are contesting the polls together. Back in 2014, when TDP and BJP fought the polls together, JanaSena was their outside ally.

The TDP and JanaSena have announced the names of 100 candidates already, and Naidu said the respective parties will name other candidates soon.

According to the TDP supremo, the

Monday brainstorming exercise sought to forge a formidable combination of seats for every alliance partner that truly represents the people of Andhra Pradesh and their aspirations.

Meanwhile, TDP sources said that the state's opposition party have invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend an election meeting which could take place between March 17 and 20.

"We have invited Modi for the meeting, mostly he will come for the meeting, date is not yet finalised. We proposed March 17 but a day here and there, mostly Modi will be there. Between March 17 and 20 it will happen. That will be a good way to kick off the campaign. Modi, Naidu, Pawan, all together," the sources added.

Another TDP source emphasised that if Modi participates in this meeting, it could be the first time in a decade that Modi, Naidu and Kalyan would be sharing stage. (PTI)

Life expectancy dropped by 1.6 years during pandemic, reversing past progress: Lancet study

NEW DELHI, March 12: Global life expectancy dropped by 1.6 years between 2019 and 2021, a sharp reversal from past improvements, according to a research published in The Lancet journal.

One of the first to fully evaluate demographic trends in the context of the first two years of the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the study has published findings, which researchers said, could have implications for health systems, economies and societies around the world.

The findings also included those of an ageing worldwide population.

The study found that life expectancy declined in 84 per cent of countries and territories during this time. This demonstrated the "devastating potential impacts of novel pathogens", the researchers said.

Places such as Mexico City, Peru and Bolivia experienced some of the largest drops, the study found.

The researchers also found a marked increase in adult mortality rates globally during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, reversing past decreasing trends.

However, child mortality continued to drop amid the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit more slowly than in earlier years, with half a million fewer deaths among children under five years in 2021 compared to 2019, they found.

The researchers said stark differences in child mortality persisted regionally, with one in every four children who died globally living in South Asia and two in every four children who died living in sub-Saharan Africa.

The estimates reported here will enable key stakeholders to better understand and address the

profound changes that have occurred in the global health landscape following the first two years of the Covid-19 pandemic and longer-term trends in the future, they said.

The research, coordinated by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington (UW), US, presented updated estimates from the Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) 2021.

GBD 2021, the newly published most recent round of GBD results, is one of the first studies to fully evaluate demographic trends in the context of the first two years of the pandemic.

Measuring mortality, excess mortality from the Covid-19 pandemic, life expectancy and population, the researchers estimated that global death rate jumped among people aged over 15 years -- by 22 per cent in men and 17



per cent in women -- from 2019 to 2021. Roughly 131 million people died globally from all causes in 2020 and 2021 combined, of which the pandemic caused about

16 million, either directly by infecting or indirectly by bringing about social, economic or behavioural changes, they estimated.

The team identified high mortality during the pandemic in places previously less recognised or reported such as Jordan and Nicaragua. The high pandemic-related excess deaths in these countries were not apparent in previous all-age excess mortality estimates, they said.

Conversely, they found Barbados, New Zealand and Antigua and Barbuda to be among those places experiencing some of the lowest excess mortality from the pandemic.

The pandemic did not, however, completely erase historic progress made in enhancing life expectancy at birth, which rose by nearly 23 years between 1950 and 2021, they said.

Assessing population trends,

the researchers found that in 2021, the global population almost touched 7.9 billion, with 56 of 204 countries and territories peaking and subsequently shrinking.

The decline in global population was observed to begin in 2017 following years of stagnation, which accelerated during the pandemic.

Many lower-income countries, however, continued to see rapid population growth, with the largest share coming from Sub-Saharan Africa (39.5 per cent) and South Asia (26.3 per cent), they said.

The researchers said that further, the global population is ageing with the number of people aged 65 years and older now increasing faster than the number of people younger than 15 years in 188 of 204 countries and territories. (PTI)

Thought 'not practicable' when mooted, it took three decades for voter ID cards to become reality

NEW DELHI, March 12: First mooted in 1957, the Electors Photo Identity Card made its nationwide debut over three decades later in 1993 to prevent voter impersonation in elections.

What the Election Commission once thought was "not practicable to operate satisfactorily on a large scale", has become a mainstay in India's election system. The identity cards are now acceptable also as proof of identity and address.

A pilot project to issue photo identity cards for voters was undertaken in the Calcutta (South West) Parliamentary constituency for a by-election in May 1960, but it did not succeed and the project was shelved for almost two decades.

It was during the 1979 assembly elections in Sikkim that photo identity cards were issued and it was subsequently implemented in other northeastern states such as Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

This was a precursor to the nationwide launch of Electors Photo Identity Cards in 1993.

According to the book "Leap of Faith" published by the Election Commission to document the journey of polls in India, the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 1958, had an interesting provision of introducing photo identity cards.

India's first Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sukumar Sen, before his retirement, had the satisfaction of seeing the bill intro-

duced in the Lower House of Parliament by his younger brother and then Union law minister Ashoke Kumar Sen on November 27, 1958.

The Bill was enacted into law on December 30, 1958, within days of K V K Sundaram becoming India's second CEC. Sundaram was also the longest-serving CEC, from December 20, 1958, to September 30, 1967.

In its report on the 1962 Lok Sabha polls, the poll panel said that soon after the general elections of 1957, it was suggested that issuance of identity cards with photographs attached to all electors in congested urban areas would greatly facilitate identification at the time of poll and avoid impersonation.

"The Election Commission tried it as an experimental measure in the Calcutta South-West Parliamentary constituency in which a by-election was then due. In spite of strenuous efforts spread over a period of 10 months, only 2.13 lakh electors out of a total of 3.42 lakh could be effectively photographed, and identity cards with photographs attached could thereafter be issued only to 2.10 lakh.

"Thus, three out of eight electors could not be provided with identity cards. The main reason for this was that an appreciable section of women electors refused to be photographed either by men or women photographers. A section of the voters could not be found," the report noted.

In the report on the 1962 General Elections, Sundaram recalled that the exercise had to be aborted after finding out that it would "not be practicable to operate the system satisfactorily" on a large scale, either in Kolkata or elsewhere in the country.

"The expenditure on the project for the Calcutta area alone would be of the order of Rs 25 lakh which would be an appreciable addition to the national expenditure on the conduct of elections.

"After a careful consideration of the machinery available to the commission for the purpose and after consulting the government, the EC came to the conclusion that it would not be practicable to operate the system satisfactorily on a large scale either in Calcutta or elsewhere in the country," he said.

It was in 1993 that the Electors Photo Identity Cards were finally introduced. The Election Commission in 2021 launched the Electronic Electoral Photo Identity Card (E-EPIC).

Electronic Electoral Photo Identity Card is a non-editable secure PDF version of the voter identity card and has a secure QR code with an image and demographics like serial number, part number and others. E-EPIC can be downloaded on a mobile or a computer and can be digitally stored.

India is gearing up for the next general elections to elect its 18th Lok Sabha, the schedule for which is likely to be announced soon. (PTI)

Mamata ups ante on CAA, links Act to NRC

BARASAT (WB), March 12: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday stepped up her attack on the BJP-led government at the Centre over the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA, claiming that the notified rules were "ambiguous, unconstitutional and discriminatory".

Addressing an official programme at Habra in North 24 Parganas district, Banerjee claimed that the CAA was merely a precursor to implementing the National Register of Citizens across the country and declared that her pledge to resist NRC implementation in Bengal was the trigger to opposing the Act which was implemented on Monday.

"I urge the people to think several times before applying for citizenship under the law. That's because the rules provide no clarity on what happens to the status of existing citizens once they make a fresh application. I apprehend that existing citizens would automatically be first designated as illegal immigrants and then left at the mercy of the committee to grant them citizenship afresh," she said.

"Those not found qualified would be sent to detention camps. It's a ploy to snatch away citizenship rights, not granting them one," she claimed, maintaining that she took legal opinions on the matter before reaching this conclusion. The chief minister was perceptively referring to Muslim



immigrants who already enjoyed citizenship status in the country.

"A conspiracy is being hatched to evict Christians, Muslims, Namasudras and Bengalis from this country which I won't allow. It's a ploy to divide Bengal," she alleged.

Banerjee, incidentally, was speaking on a day the Union home ministry announced the launch of a new portal for people applying for citizenship under CAA-2019, less than 24 hours after it notified the implementation of the Act by framing its rules.

The rules paved the way for granting citizenship to undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014.

On Monday, even before the

will not allow anyone to be "thrown out".

The rules provided no clarity on the status of existing assets and properties of such disqualified applicants and whether those will be confiscated, Banerjee said while asserting that the Act remained silent about the status of SCs, STs and OBCs.

"What about those who came to India in 2015 or later?" she asked. Referring to the NRC experience in Assam, the Trinamool chief said, "The exercise was carried out in 2019 and over 13.5 lakh Bengali Hindus were stripped off their citizenship status." Accusing the BJP of making false promises before polls, Banerjee asked, "Would you submit your fate in the hands of this party?"

"Throw this law away and live peacefully in Bengal. No one can touch you as long as I am around," she declared.

Rubbishing Banerjee's claims, BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar accused her of "misleading" people.

"The chief minister is not speaking the truth. There's not even a one per cent possibility of deserving people not getting citizenship."

"Every person with legitimate claims for citizenship will get citizenship within two years," he said, and added, "If that doesn't happen, then I will do sit-ups before the CM." (PTI)

Odisha govt's women employees to get 25 days casual leave a year

BHUBANESWAR, March 12: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday announced casual leave of 25 days in a year for women employees working in different departments of the state government.

The women employees would now get an additional 10 days of CL taking their total CL in a year to 25 days, an official said.

An official release issued by the Chief Minister's Office said Patnaik took this decision keeping in mind the family responsibilities and various problems of women.

The state government also said that Odisha was the first in the country to take radical steps like reserving 33 per cent of government jobs for women in the 90s.

Recently, the Odisha government had also announced 15 days of casual leave in a year for employees in various non-government-aided educational institutions. The women block grant employees of different educational institutions have also been granted paid maternity leave of 180 days for two births. (PTI)

Tri-service firepower, manoeuvre exercise 'Bharat Shakti' begins in Pokhran

JAISALMER, March 12: The mega 'Bharat Shakti' exercise to demonstrate the prowess of indigenously manufactured defence equipment of the three services began in Rajasthan's Pokhran firing range on Tuesday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Army Chief General Manoj Pande in attendance.

The exercise will be held for about 50 minutes.

LCA Tejas, ALH Mk-IV, LCH Prachand, mobile anti-drone system, BMP-II and its variants, NAMICA (Nag Missile Carrier), T90 tanks, Dhanush, K9 Vajra and Pinaka rockets are among the platforms that are being demonstrated at Pokhran, about 100 km from Jaisalmer city.

"Synergised joint operations will be decisive in the Indian



context. Through live firepower and manoeuvre demonstration, it is endeavoured to showcase the tri-services operational capabilities to counter any threat leveraging indigenous capability and the ability to undertake conflicts in the face of global upheavals," Additional Director General, Army Design Bureau, Major General C S Mann had earlier said.

The first-of-its-kind exercise

on such a scale is "not tailored towards any direction (northern or western border) or any adversaries", sources in the defence establishment said.

"In a clear indication of India's readiness to confront and overcome contemporary and future challenges with home-grown solutions, 'Bharat Shakti' highlights resilience, innovation and strength of India's domestic defence capabilities on the global stage," the Prime Minister's Office said on Sunday.

"The programme exemplifies the nation's strong strides towards 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence, by showcasing the might and operational prowess of the Indian armed forces and the ingenuity and commitment of the indigenous defence industry," it said. (PTI)

India, Russia in discussions on thermonuclear research, transit potential of North sea: Rosatom CEO

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, March 12: India and Russia are in discussions to collaborate on a range of activities including research on controlled thermonuclear fusion and joint development of the transit potential of the Northern Sea route, a top official of the state-run atomic energy corporation in Moscow, Rosatom, has said. A E Likhacheva, CEO of Rosatom said the main topic of discussion with India was on the prospects of further cooperation in the field of nuclear technologies and in non-energy and non-nuclear areas.

Likhacheva, who visited the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP) in Tamil Nadu last month, said both sides have gained enormous experience in cooperation during the construction of KNPP's first units.

"Already, our cooperation extends beyond the borders of India. Indian companies are participating in Rosatom's project to build the first nuclear power plant in Bangladesh - Rooppur NPP," he told PTI in an email interview.

Additionally, Rosatom was developing a considerable number of new areas of activity --about 80 of them-- and in many of them it was ready to share its developments with friendly countries.

"Thus, we can offer the Indian side our competencies in the construction of low-power nuclear power plants," he said.

He was of the view that both countries have great potential for cooperation in scientific research, including on the topic of controlled thermonuclear fusion.

Likhacheva said Rosatom was also ready to provide Indian scientists, the opportunity to conduct research at the MBIR multi-purpose fast neutron research reactor currently under construction in Russia.

"This will be the most powerful research reactor in the world, it will open up unique opportunities for conducting a wide range of work on medical topics, research in the field of fundamental and applied physics, as well as in the interests of creating new materials," he said.

Besides that, Russia is also in discussions with India on the joint development of the transit potential of the Northern Sea Route, which is operated by Rosatom.

This will help ensure supplies of Russian oil, coal and liquefied natural gas to India via the said route, with transshipment in Russian Far Eastern ports.

"We are also exploring options for cooperation within the framework of the Euro-Asian Container Transit project. This project involves the organization of a pilot line for international container transit through the Northern Sea Route. As you can see, the range of areas for mutually beneficial cooperation is very wide, and I am confident we will still make a significant contribution to the development of the strategic partnership of our countries," he said.

Regarding India's long-term energy strategy and goals, the Rosatom CEO said that the company plans to have a cumulative installed capacity share of non-fossil fuel energy sources of around 50 per cent by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Nuclear energy would play a significant role in attaining those goals.

He said India already ranks second after China in terms of the number of nuclear power units under construction simultaneously.

The construction of KNPP is a flagship project of Indo-Russian cooperation and it is being built according to a modern generation 3+ design

with VVER-1000 reactors, he said. "This is the largest nuclear power plant in India. Operating just one 1,000 MW unit prevents on average more than 3 million tons of CO2 emissions annually."

"... the operation of the first two units has already prevented emissions of more than 47 million tons of CO2 equivalent. This means that in addition to providing the south of India with the necessary electricity, the nuclear power plant is already helping to improve the environmental situation in the region," Likhacheva said.

He said Unit 1 and 2 of the NPP were operating stably and in compliance with all safety conditions.

"The construction of the second stage (blocks 3 and 4) and the third stage (blocks 5 and 6) is actively underway. The construction process of the nuclear power plant is in full swing. Let me remind you, the Russian side's area of responsibility includes design, supply of main and auxiliary equipment, installation supervision and personnel training. We fulfill all our obligations in full," he said.

Likhacheva also said Rosatom has already delivered the first batches of the new type of fuel assemblies, TVS-2M, with an increased nuclear fuel load, to the power plant in June 2022. "Operating on longer fuel cycles increases the economic efficiency of a nuclear plant, since the unit is shut down less frequently for scheduled maintenance. This increases the utilization factor of the installed capacity of the nuclear power plant, that is, it allows the nuclear plant to produce more electricity during the calendar year," he said.

The second unit of KNPP will get the first batch of the new fuel assemblies in the summer of 2024, he added. (PTI)

Tejas crashes in Jaisalmer in first incident involving indigenous LCA, no casualties

JAISALMER/NEW DELHI, March 12: A Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) of the Indian Air Force crashed near a residential colony in Jaisalmer on Tuesday during an operational training sortie, the first such incident involving the indigenously-built jet. There were no casualties.

The pilot ejected safely and a court of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident, the IAF said in a brief statement.

The crash took place around 100 km from the Pokhran desert in Rajasthan where a mega war game 'Bharat Shakti' witnessed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top military brass was underway. Military sources indicated that the Tejas jet was to be part of the exercise.

Jaisalmer Additional Superintendent of Police Mahendra Singh said there was no loss of human life in the crash near Kalla and Jawahar residential colonies. A portion of a hostel building was dam-

aged but there was no one inside at the time, added another police official.

Thick black smoke was seen billowing from the single-storey brick structure. Scores of people stood at a distance as the mangled remains of the plane smouldered.

"The pilot is safe and no other person was injured in the incident. There were people all around the site of the incident and fortunately all are safe," Jaisalmer MLA Chhotu Singh Bhati, who reached the spot after the incident, told reporters.

An eyewitness said the pilot ejected shortly before the plane crashed. "As soon as the plane hit the ground, there was a loud sound," he told reporters. Fire brigades were rushed to the site and flames were doused. The pilot was taken to a hospital. Officials said it was the first Tejas jet involved in an accident.

"A Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas of the

Indian Air Force crashed near Jaisalmer today during an operational training sortie. The pilot ejected safely... A court of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident," the IAF said in a statement.

Manufactured by state-run aerospace behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), the Tejas aircraft is a potent platform for air combat and offensive air support missions while reconnaissance and anti-spoiler operations are its secondary roles.

Tejas aircraft are set to be the mainstay of the IAF. It has already inducted nearly 40 Tejas of initial variants. In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a ₹ 48,000 crore deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd for the procurement of 83 Tejas MK-1A jets for the IAF.

In November last, the ministry accorded an initial approval to procure an additional batch of 97 Tejas jets for the IAF. (PTI)

JettWings Airways to begin operations to 3 destinations in Bengal soon

KOLKATA, March 12: JettWings Airways will very soon begin flight operations to three destinations in West Bengal, an official of the airline said.

The airline will begin flight operations to Cooch Behar in the northern part of West Bengal from Guwahati under the Centre's UDAN scheme.

It will also operate commercial flights to Kolkata and Bagdogra, the official said.

A few days ago, the Guwahati-based airline said that it has received permission to operate across 12 sectors in the Northeast, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, under the UDAN scheme.

If everything goes well, the airline will begin commercial flights between Assam and West Bengal by the first week of June, while the flights under the Centre's UDAN scheme are expected to begin by the end of June, the official said.

The flights from Guwahati to Kolkata will be operated daily via Rupsi airport. The airline will use 88 plus-seater aircraft for com-

mercial flights, the airline's Chief Executive Officer and MD Sanjay Aditya Singh told PTI over phone.

He also said that for the short haul flights -- Bagdogra and Cooch Behar -- the airline might look at smaller aircraft.

JettWings Airways is the brainchild of two individuals, Dr Sanjive Narain and Sanjay Aditya Singh. Dr Narain serves as the Chairman of the airline, while Singh holds the positions of CEO and MD.

The newest entrant in the Indian aviation sector will connect the airports at Guwahati, Pakyong in Sikkim, Cooch Behar, Kushinagar, Gaya, Bareilly, Kanpur and Agra, the company said in a statement.

"JettWings Airways will be the first airline from the Northeast region scheduled to operate its fixed-wing aircraft on commercial routes from this year with modern deck turbofan regional jets and turboprops, supported by a robust business plan to acquire and operate 42 aircraft in the first five years," it added. (PTI)

Community-based mental health care shows better outcomes: WHO

NEW DELHI, March 12: Community-based mental health care shows better outcomes and countries in the South-East Asia region should prioritise transition from long-stay institutional mental health services to community-based care to ensure these services are accessible and stigma-free, the World Health Organisation said on Tuesday.

Transitioning from long-stay tertiary psychiatric institutions to community-based care is beneficial for both individuals and the society at large, Saima Wazed, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia, said in a virtual address to the regional meeting on "Transitioning from long-stay services to community mental health networks: towards deinstitutionalisation in WHO South-East Asia Region".

When these services are integrated into the fabric of communities, it becomes easier for individuals to seek help without the fear of judgment or discrimination. This shift also allows for greater personal autonomy, improved quality of life, and personalised care options, she said.

"Community-based settings provide individuals opportunities



to regain a sense of independence and engage in social and vocational activities, which can significantly improve their overall well-being," Wazed said.

An estimated 13.7 per cent of the population in the region suffers from mental health conditions.

The treatment gap for mental health conditions remains as high as 95 per cent. More than 2,00,000 people die of suicide every year. People with severe mental disorders die 10 to 20 years earlier than others. However, investment in mental health remains very low across the region, Wazed

said.

The regional director also released a report on "Deinstitutionalisation of people with mental health conditions in WHO South-East Asia Region", which while acknowledging the complexities and unique contexts of each country, offers recommendations that can be adapted to local realities.

"This report can serve as a catalyst for change, igniting a process that results in every person leading a life of dignity, purpose, and fulfilment," Wazed, who champions the cause of mental health and has set it as one of her top priorities as

regional director, said.

Long-stay mental health institutions, including psychiatric hospitals and asylums, are often characterised by the absence of effective treatment, segregation, poor living conditions, lack of resources, and overcrowding.

The transition from institutional care to community-based care is driven by a growing understanding of the negative impact of long-term institutionalisation, advances in treatments, and recognition of human rights and dignity of individuals with mental disorders.

"Historically mental health care has been synonymous with institutionalisation. Large asylums were built with the intention of providing a place of refuge for those grappling with mental illnesses. However, as our understanding of mental health has evolved, so too must our methods of care," Wazed said.

Earlier, the Paro Declaration on universal access to people-centred mental health care and services, adopted by member countries of the Region in 2022, and the Regional Action Plan for Mental Health for the WHO South-East Asia Region 2023-2030, emphasised on the shift to community-

based services.

Besides being more efficient, community-based services are also better equipped to identify mental health concerns at an early stage, reducing the need for crisis intervention. This approach benefits individuals, alleviates the burden on emergency services and reduces the overall cost of mental health care, she said.

Community-based mental health care shows better outcomes, reduces treatment gap, and increases coverage, Wazed stated.

Community-based care models emphasise on the creation of safe and supportive living environments within the broader society, which not only benefits individuals with mental disorders but also promotes empathy and understanding among the public, dispelling misconceptions, and reducing stigma.

Successful deinstitutionalisation, moving from tertiary care to community care, requires careful planning, collaboration, additional financial resources, and continuous monitoring. It needs parallel expansion of community care services and networks. (PTI)

'Tora's Husband' by Rima Das wins five trophies at Filmfare Awards Assamese

GUWAHATI, March 12: Filmmaker Rima Das' Assamese feature 'Tora's Husband' emerged as the big winner at the first edition of the Filmfare Awards Assamese by bagging five trophies in key categories.

The film won awards for best film, director, screenplay, dialogues and best actor for Abhijit Das, the director's brother who played the lead role in the movie.

The 2022 film follows Abhijit, his wife Tarali Kalita Das and their two children during the pandemic-induced lockdown as he tries to keep afloat his small busi-

ness while balancing his life at home.

"'Tora's Husband' was a profoundly challenging film crafted during the Covid period, etching a place in our hearts. We navigated through ups and downs, enduring great pains and losses.

This is dedicated to my father and all those who lost their lives during Covid. I express gratitude to my family and the entire team for standing together, making this film a reality. Thank you, Filmfare," Das said in a

statement.

The National award-winning filmmaker, known for movies such as 'Village Rockstars' and 'Bulbul Can Sing', said there are artists in every village in Assam.

"With the advent of digitalization, the filmmaking community is rapidly expanding. Events like these contribute to raising the visibility of the Assamese industry on both national and international stages. Let's create a better creative world together, uplifting each other, fostering empathy, and caring for nature and all its species," the filmmaker added.

Filmfare Awards were held here on Sunday in association with Jeevan Ram Mungi Devi Goenka Memorial Public Charitable Trust. (PTI)

Dhruv Vikram, Anupama Parameswaran to star in Mari Selvaraj's sports drama film

MUMBAI, March 12: Actors Dhruv Vikram and Anupama Parameswaran will feature in Tamil director Mari Selvaraj's upcoming sports drama movie.

The untitled film is the first project to come out of the multi-film partnership between production banners Applause Entertainment and Neelam Studios, headed by filmmaker Pa Ranjith.

The movie is a tale of guts, grit and glory in the life of a young man where the whole world was a Goliath to his David, as per the official synopsis.

"A story of a man who defied the lines on his hand to achieve what no one thought possible, to choose sport over a gun, peace over violence and life over death," as per the official plotline.

Dhruv Vikram, son of Tamil superstar Vikram, will play the lead role with Parameswaran of "Prenam" fame taking on the female lead part.

Selvaraj, the director of critically-acclaimed titles "Karnan" and "Maamannan", said he is excited to collaborate with Ranjith for the project. "Pariyerum Perumal", my first film, was with Pa Ranjith Anna. That was one major factor why the film reached such strong heights. It was a stepping stone for my next films as well. I'm pumped up and exhilarated to be joining hands with him once again now for my 5th film along with another strong partner - Applause Entertainment," he said in a statement. (PTI)

Salman Khan teaming up with A R Murugadoss for new film

MUMBAI, March 12: Superstar Salman Khan on Tuesday announced his new feature film, to be directed by filmmaker A R Murugadoss.

The untitled project will be produced by Sajid Nadiadwala's banner Grandson Entertainment. It has been scheduled for release in theatres on Eid 2025.

"Glad to join forces with the exceptionally talented, @a.r.murugadoss and my friend, #SajidNadiadwala for a very exciting film !! This collaboration is special, and I look forward to this journey with your love and blessings. Releasing EID 2025," Salman posted on his official Instagram page.

Murugadoss is best known for directing Tamil and Hindi films such as "Ghajini", "Thuppakki", "Holiday: A Soldier Is Never Off Duty" and "Sarkar".

He had earlier penned the script of Salman's 2014 movie "Jai Ho", which was a remake of Murugadoss' Telugu hit "Stalin".

Salman was most recently seen in "Tiger 3", the third part of his "Tiger" series. (PTI)

Vipul Amrutlal Shah on 'Bastar: The Naxal Story': We wanted to explore human tragedy

MUMBAI, March 12: Producer Vipul Amrutlal Shah says his upcoming film "Bastar: The Naxal Story", based around the naxal insurgency in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district, explores the sufferings of the common people in the region without getting into the political side of the issue.

The upcoming movie is directed by Sudipto Sen, who earlier collaborated with Shah for the controversial 2023 movie "The Kerala Story". Shah, along with the film's cast and the families of the martyr police officers, unveiled the movie's track "Vande Veeram" on Monday.

"We didn't want to get into politics. We want to explore human tragedy. All politics is on one side and real sufferers are the common people. When will their pain come out in front of people? We usually swear at politicians and leave the issue but this real human tragedy needs to come forward," he said. Sen called "Bastar: The Naxal Story" a "human document".

"We are focusing on the people who are facing violence on an everyday basis... It is more about gun violence which we have concentrated on in the film," the director said. The film is led by actor Adah Sharma. It is her second collaboration with Shah and Sen after the success of "The Kerala Story". She plays the role of an IPS officer in the movie. (PTI)



Dev Patel becomes emotional as 'Monkey Man' gets standing ovation at SXSW festival

"Monkey Man" received a standing ovation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) film festival.

The much-anticipated India-set movie, also written by the "Slumdog Millionaire" and "Lion" star, had its world premiere at the film gala, held annually in Austin, Texas. The movie was introduced to the audience by filmmaker Jordan Peele, who serves as a producer of the project. Inspired by the legend of Lord Hanuman, "Monkey Man" is set in Mumbai and features Patel as Kid, a man on a quest for vengeance against the corrupt leaders who murdered his mother and continue to systematically victimise the poor and powerless.

Post the screening, Patel made his way to the stage and was met with loud cheers and applause from the audiences. Seeing the overwhelming reaction, the actor became emotional.

The actor said he has been a longtime fan of the action genre and revealed that he was introduced to the story of Lord Hanuman from Hindu epic Ramayan by his grandfather. "He (the character) really captivated me. He has been sort of an emblem for my father and many in my family... If you go to any gym in India, there's like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Ronnie Coleman and Hanuman. What baffled me growing up was this iconography of this superstrong being who could hold mountains in one hand and split his chest open. It reminded me of the iconography of Superman. I was like this is amazing, I wish the world knew about it," Patel said.

The actor said he wanted to take a grounded route to the story.

"When you go deep into it, he is sort of a guy who has lost faith in himself and had to be reminded of who he was," he said, adding that he was also inspired by his love for Bruce Lee movies. (PTI)

Mimicry of celebs all in good fun, stand-up puts my different skills to use: Jamie Lever

NEW DELHI, March 12: What do you do when you get an 8 am call from Usha Uthup with the legend screaming 'I love you!' in your ears and asking you to mimic her? That's what happened to stand-up comic and actor Jamie Lever, and Uthup's wish became her command.

Jamie, a social media sensation with her excellent impersonations of Asha Bhosle, Farah Khan, and Kareena Kapoor Khan, says she has been lucky that celebrities have always taken her mimicry in good spirits.

The comedian, who is currently promoting her comedy gig 'The Jamie Lever Show', recounted how Uthup approached her out of the blue.

"Usha Uthup called me at 8 am and I was fast asleep. She said, 'Darling! I love you!' I was like who is screaming in my ears and I said 'Hello?' She said, 'Main hoon! Usha! Usha Uthup! I watch all your videos, please mimic me. Why aren't you mimicking me? And that's how I started mimicking her. What more could I ask?' Jamie, who is the daughter of screen legend Johny Lever, told PTI in an interview.

"Honestly, I have been so lucky. People have always come forward and complimented me... This is all in good fun. People are enjoying it, so it's worth it," she added.

Besides doing stand-up and acting, Jamie is a trained Indian classical vocalist and a Bharatanatyam dancer who has also learnt jazz and hip-hop at the Terence Lewis Dance Academy.

During the reading of the 2021 film "Bhoot Police", the actor, 36, said her co-star Saif Ali Khan came up to her and said "my wife is a big fan of yours".

It took her a few seconds to register that Saif was talking about Kareena.

"Then, I was like 'Wait, did he just say Kareena Kapoor is a big fan of mine?' I couldn't even fathom that this has happened. He said, 'She watches your videos, she really likes you'. I was shocked. I know she knows my dad and Johny Lever is Johny bhai for her. But I'm nowhere close to her circle. The fact that she took my name is big for me," she added.

Choreographer-filmmaker Farah, is equally supportive, she said.

"She is always complimenting and commenting on my videos. She called me one morning and said, 'Jamie, what have you done? My husband is sending your videos to my kids, saying 'Mumma talks like this.' I love her spirit, she's such a sport."

Industry stalwarts Rekha and Javed Akhtar have also praised her, added Jamie. "Rekha ji has called me and asked me to break down my process of making a video. She said, 'Break it down for me darling, how do you do it? You wear a sari, you even do make-up?' She asks me those details.

"Javed Akhtar saab has called me and complimented me especially on my Kareena Ranaut mimicry. He said 'The way you have caught the nuance of how she says 'hai' that's just too good.' Every day,

I'm amazed," she said.

While she has never restricted herself to only one skill, the Mumbai-born actor said there was a phase when she was only doing television. Her small screen credits include: "The Kapil Sharma Show" and "Comedy Circus Ke Mahabali".

"Then, I got bored of it and felt like I'm being repetitive. Sometimes people like to go with the tried and tested. That this works with her so let's do more of it. It was really becoming monotonous for me. I wanted to break from that cycle. I hosted a lot of red carpets at award shows. Then I switched to social media."

Stand-up helps her put all her acquired skills to use on one stage, Jamie said.

"I can use all the different skills I have and bring them all together, stitch it up together in a nice stand-up act. All the skills I have acquired from all the various jobs I've done whether it's playing a different character in a different accent in 'Bhoot Police', impersonating people in my social media videos or playing Farah Khan on 'The Kapil Sharma Show'..."

The actor is not new to the stand-up circuit but the two-hour 'The Jamie Lever Show' is her first solo stint. She has done almost 300 onstage shows worldwide with small clubs and also toured with her father.

"Four years ago, my father predicted that one day I will have my own Jamie Lever show. So he asked me to start preparing for it. It has taken me a lot of time to gather the courage and confi-

dence. Over the years, I have built

the content... It's from my experiences in mimicry or just being his daughter. I realised I have so much to say, so many of my own observations of people around me," she added.

"Also, it's a unique life to have been a funny person's child. You are not treated normally. People will just look at you and laugh at you like you are a joke. They are like 'Ae! Johny Lever ki beti!' I don't get a normal reaction... That's been my life. In school, I was made to do plays or jokes because I was Johny Lever's daughter. I was forced to do all these things..." she quipped. Jamie, whose last film appearance was sports actioner "Crakk", is set to make her cinema debut in her mother tongue Telugu with "Aa Okatti Adakku". (PTI)



Tendulkar, Rohit's presence at Ranji Trophy final underlines growing emphasis on domestic cricket

MUMBAI, March 12: Red-ball cricket needed it, Sachin Tendulkar and Rohit Sharma wanted it. The growing emphasis on the importance of domestic cricket and red-ball games got another shot in the arm with Tendulkar and Rohit attending the third day's play during the Ranji Trophy final between Mumbai and Vidarbha here on Tuesday.

Coming off an excellent 4-1 series win over England with a depleted Indian side and heading into IPL 2024 season, Rohit appeared relaxed and was spotted in the Mumbai dressing room during the afternoon, with the dominant hosts running away with the contest on the

field. Rohit was seen scrolling through his phone while also chatting with Mumbai teammates including Shardul Thakur, but how did the India skipper made his way to the domestic giants' dressing room with a phone while not being a part of the squad remained an intriguing question.

With the backdrop of Shreyas Iyer missing out on a BCCI contract and also losing his spot in the Indian Test side, Rohit witnessed the right-handed batter getting back into his groove but also throwing away his wicket when he was just one hit away from triple-figure mark.

In the morning session on Tuesday, the TV camera kept

panning towards the MCA President Box wherein sat the legendary Tendulkar to witness the action.

Tendulkar was spotted sitting alongside former players Dilip Vengsarkar, Subroto Banerjee, a few officials as well as Chandrakant Pandit, the incumbent coach of Madhya Pradesh and Kolkata Knight Riders.

The Little Master, who had termed Mumbai's batting as 'ordinary' on the opening day when the 41-time champions were shot out for a mere 224, appeared satisfied with the improvement shown in the second innings wherein Musheer Khan (135), Ajinkya Rahane (73) and Iyer flayed the opposition. Ten-



dulkar took to his social media platforms to share his observations. "Mumbai displayed a lot more discipline, patience and commitment in the second innings," he wrote.

"First, a crucial partnership between @ajinkyarahane88 and Musheer Khan put Mumbai in a solid position. Then, Musheer's stand with @ShreyasIyer15 has taken the game further away

from Vidarbha. Had a good time watching the game today with my friends and colleagues," Tendulkar added.

The presence of Rohit and Tendulkar came a day after another Mumbai and India legend, Sunil Gavaskar, showed up. Gavaskar sat with cricket administrator Ratnakar Shetty and former women's cricket team skipper Diana Edulji as well as former captain and chairman of the Mumbai selection committee, Milind Rege.

The opening day marked the presence of enthusiastic crowd turning up in decent numbers to fill up the Vijay Merchant Pavilion, but they also had to deal with the disappointment of

Mumbai batters not making it big in the first essay.

But the disappointment did not last long as Mumbai fought their way back into the final to get into the driver's seat. However, there were some off-field issues that did concern a few. With the IPL 2024 about 10 days away, the Wankhede Stadium is undergoing renovation work which is expected to be completed before the venue hosts its first game on April 1 between Mumbai Indians and Rajasthan Royals. A few fans, though, complained about the lack of a scorecard for fans despite a manually-operated scorecard operational across the field. (PTI)

Ronaldo scores but Al-Nassr ousted in Asian Champions League quarterfinals

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, March 12: Cristiano Ronaldo scored and Al-Nassr was still ousted from the Asian Champions League quarterfinals on Monday.

Al-Nassr responded to a 1-0 first-leg defeat against Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates by winning the return match 4-3 in Riyadh. But it lost the penalty shootout 3-1. Ronaldo was the only home player to score in the shootout.

The 39-year-old Ronaldo did miss several chances in regulation, and shook his head in disbelief in the second half when he missed the target from just two meters out with Al-Ain goalkeeper Khalid Eisa on the ground.

Soufiane Rahimi, the only goal-scorer from the first leg, was much more clinical on Monday. The Moroccan scored twice in the first half to give one-time champion Al-Ain a 3-0 advantage overall.

Just before the break, however, Abdulrahman Ghareeb pulled one back for Al-Nassr, and just after, an own goal from Eisa made it 2-2 on the night.

With 18 minutes of normal time remaining, former Manchester United defender Alex Telles scored for Al-Nassr to



force the game into extra time.

Al-Ain restored its lead through Sultan Al Shamsi, but with 118 minutes on the clock, Ronaldo scored from the spot to level the tie 4-4 on aggregate. In

the shootout, Ronaldo found the net while Marcelo Brozovic, Telles and Otavio all failed.

Al-Ain will face more Saudi Arabian opposition in the last four. Four-time champion Al-

Hilal carries a 2-0 lead against two-time champ Al-Itihad into their quarterfinal second leg on Tuesday.

In the eastern zone, Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors and Ulsan HD

meet on Tuesday. The South Koreans teams are 1-1 after the first leg. Yokohama F.Marinios of Japan has a 2-1 advantage over China's Shandong Taishan in the other quarter. (AP)

Nishant Dev loses in quarterfinal; Indian boxers draw a blank at Olympic qualifiers

BUSTO ARSIZIO (ITALY), March 12: Nishant Dev missed out on a Paris Olympic quota by a whisker, suffering a heartbreaking loss in the 71kg quarterfinals as all Indian boxers returned empty-handed from the first World Olympic Boxing Qualifier here.

Dev went down 1-4 to USA's Omari Jones, the 2021 World Championship silver medalist, in a closely-contested light middleweight quarterfinal late on Monday. A win in the last eight stage would have fetched the 2023 World Championships bronze medalist an Olympic quota. None of the nine boxers competing here were able to add to India's tally of four quotas in boxing.

After two qualification events -- the

Asian Games and the first World Olympic Boxing Qualifier -- not one Indian male pugilist has been able to book a place for the Olympics.

All four quotas in boxing have come in the women's section with two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg), Parveen Hooda (57kg), and Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) securing their passage to Paris.

Indian boxers will get a final chance to book their ticket to Paris during the second World Olympic Boxing Qualifier, scheduled to be held in Bangkok from May 23 to June 3. Between 45 and 51 boxers will qualify from the Bangkok meet.

India had nine boxers competing in the Tokyo Olympics with Borgohain winning the only medal -- a bronze.

On Monday night, Dev was slow off the blocks, as Jones relied on his speed to land several blows in the opening minutes to take command at the start.

Trailing on all five cards after the opening three minutes, the 23-year-old was aggressive from the beginning of the second round.

Both boxers threw punches but Jones' speed gave him a slight edge. With Dev coming at him heavily, the US pugilist relied on his counterattack.

The round was a messy one with lots of clinching, and warnings were handed to both boxers. As the bout progressed,

Dev grew in confidence. He ended the second round with a strong left cross to take the round 4-1.

The Haryana boxer made a positive start to the third round as he connected a powerful right hook. He looked more comfortable as Jones, who sustained a cut under his left eye, lacked urgency.

However, Jones soon changed gears and the two boxers traded several punches, including body blows as both looked tired. But the US pugilist was able to land a flurry of punches in the final minute which probably led to three of the five judges ruling the round in his favour, much to the disappointment of Dev, who looked shell-shocked by the verdict. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, March 12: India on Tuesday slipped a spot to the fourth position in the latest FIH men's world rankings with Germany taking the third place following their impressive run at the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers.

India (2761) had directly qualified for the Paris Olympics through an Asian Games gold last year and didn't need to play in the recently-concluded Olympic Qualifiers.

Germany (2786), on the other hand, went unbeaten at the Olympic Qualifiers in Oman and followed that up with two wins and two draws against Argentina and a young Belgian side during the Santiago del Estero mini-tournament in the FIH Pro League to surpass India.

Netherlands (3060) are followed by Belgium (2499) who are followed by England (2304) who dropped a place on the back of four straight losses in the FIH Pro League.

Spain (2244) followed by Australia (2678) in fourth place. Australia (2678) in fourth place followed by Belgium (2499) who dropped a place on the back of four straight losses in the FIH Pro League.

England (2304) remained sixth, followed by Spain (2244) on seventh, who have closed the gap to England thanks to a strong showing at the Olympic Qualifiers in Valencia, where they finished second to qualify for Paris.

China (2226)'s performances during the Indian mini-tournament of the FIH Pro League in February, saw them sit second in the Pro League table, catapulting them ahead of India (2215) in the world rankings, into the eighth position.

Less than 100 points separate England on sixth and India on ninth, showing the closely-contested nature of international women's hockey. (PTI)

ing a spirited showing at the Olympic Qualifiers in Oman, where they pipped Pakistan in the bronze medal match to qualify for the upcoming Olympic Games.

In the Women's Rankings, India (2215), who failed to make the cut for the Paris Games, are ranked ninth in the list headed by Netherlands (3422), who remained clear of the chasing pack, having won all 12 of their Pro League season 5 matches thus far.

Argentina (2827) and Germany (2732) moved ahead of Australia into second and third places following strong performances during the Santiago del Estero mini-tournament.

Australia (2678) in fourth place followed by Belgium (2499) who dropped a place on the back of four straight losses in the FIH Pro League.

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Less than 100 points separate England on sixth and India on ninth, showing the closely-contested nature of international women's hockey. (PTI)



In the range: How Tughlakabad's 'butt party' helps shooters stay on target

NEW DELHI, March 12: It takes a village to raise a kid or move a mountain or in this case, keep an international shooting range up and running through the year in the heart of Delhi.

When the pistol and rifle shooters make a beeline for the well-lit room inside the Karni Singh Ranges, Manu and Mohit are hard at work to ensure equipment is ready.

They are part of the "butt party", a bunch of youngsters from the Tughlakabad, one of the oldest villages in Delhi located in the shadows of the seven centuries old Tughlakabad fort.

With most of its members in their late teens or early 20s, the 15-strong "butt party" is the "lifeline" of the premier shooting arena in the country.

They all come from the same village and the skill has been passed on to them by their seniors, who also hail from Tughlakabad.

Be it fixing the targets, print-

ing rolls and score-sheets in the 10m, 25m and 50m ranges or loading clay pigeons at the shotgun ranges or operating them, they are the unsung heroes of the highly technical sport.

"About 14-15 boys from our village work here on a contractual basis to keep the ranges up and running during national and international competitions and trials," says Manu, 24, who left school after ninth standard and was brought to the range by a senior to become part of the 'butt party'.

The term 'butt party' comes from the old times when servicemen manually placed and removed targets and patched up bullet holes with square pieces of paper and starch.

Electronic targets may have replaced manual targets but 'butt party' has stuck.

"I don't really know why we are all called 'butt party' but we know our job very well. With all of us coming from the same village, there is camaraderie

among us and also makes us understand each other better," says Mohit, 19, a college student.

"Our team does everything to make all the ranges operational, including filling pistol and rifle cylinder with compressed air, fixing targets, templates, print rolls, collecting score-sheets, loading clay pigeons at the shotgun ranges and operating them," he adds.

The ongoing Para Shooting World Cup is keeping them busy all day long, with an unending stream of shooters waiting for their turn to get the cylinders refilled in their pistols and rifles.

Air pistol and air rifles operate on a mechanism where pressurised air cylinders attached to the barrels eject the lead pellets at the press of the trigger.

The process to fill these cylinders from the reservoir cylinder is in itself a specialised job where a small mistake can have disastrous consequences as was evident recently when a na-

tional-level shooter lost his thumb after his pistol cylinder exploded during refilling.

"In a competition like the Para World Cup where more than 250 shooters are competing, we have to be on our toes to ensure no accident occurs."

"We know exactly how much compressed air needs to be filled in air pistols and air rifles and how to attach the cylinder below the barrel without damaging the delicate lining of the guns," says Manu, who wanted to play professional cricket but could not go beyond the district level.

"This is the only job I know. The increase in the number of national and international competitions and trials has guaranteed us work 365 days a year.

I am doing this job for 6-7 years. We ensure that no shooter fills the cylinders himself. We don't allow them to do it, it can lead to accidents, adds Manu, who is a veteran of 100-plus competitions and trials.

JPNautiyal, chairperson, para shooting, Paralympic Committee of India says, the 'butt party' is an "integral part" of shooting sport.

"They know exactly how much compressed air needs to be filled, how much the cylinder rims have to be tightened in order to ensure no accidents take place. They are also sensitised to the needs of the para shooters, who have come here for the ongoing World Cup," says Nautiyal.

"Their task is huge as shooters, once they arrive in droves at the range from airports, need to get the pistol and rifle cylinders refilled as they have to empty them before they board the flight. "A compressed cylinder cannot fire more than 80 shots, so a shooter needs at least four refills a day. Multiply it with the 250-odd shooters who are here and one can gauge the quantum of work these people do. Their hands are full all the time free," says Nautiyal. (PTI)

Palmer stars for Chelsea as Newcastle beaten 3-2 in English league thriller

LONDON, March 12: Cole Palmer capped an impressive display with a goal and an assist as Chelsea beat Newcastle 3-2 in a pulsating English Premier League match on Monday.

In front of watching England manager Gareth Southgate, the 21-year-old Palmer pulled the strings in midfield for the London club.

His 11th goal this season made him the sixth Chelsea player to score in five consecutive league matches. Chelsea has not lost a league game at home in the month of March since 2001.

The result cut the four-point gap between Newcastle in 10th and Chelsea in 11th to one point.

Palmer's goal came 12 minutes into the second half. He found space just outside the Newcastle penalty area and fired home a low shot.

Nicolas Jackson gave the home side the lead after six minutes when he diverted a shot

from Palmer past Newcastle goalkeeper Martin Dubravka.

Although it lost in-form winger Anthony Gordon to injury 10 minutes before halftime, Newcastle fought back and eight minutes later got an equalizer when Alexander Isak found the net with a perfectly placed shot from 18 yards out.

Substitute Mykhailo Mudryk made it 3-1 to Chelsea in the 76th just five minutes after replacing Raheem Sterling.

Jacob Murphy got a goal back for the visitor in the 90th but his rasping strike was not enough to stop Chelsea taking all three points and prevent Newcastle from recording its first home-and-away double over the Blues since the 1986-87 season.

Howe told the BBC Gordon's injury "looks like a knee problem and it doesn't look too good at the moment -- it is unclear."

The injury to defender Dan Burn looked less serious, he added. (AP)

Kohli's aggression gives his team required intensity: Anil Kumble



BENGALURU, March 12: Former Indian captain Anil Kumble is marvelled at Virat Kohli's manic consistency and believes that his on-field aggression always adds to required intensity in any T20 team that he plays for.

Kumble marked it as the biggest legacy of Kohli, who is the only player in history of IPL to play 16 seasons for one franchise -- Royal Challengers Bangalore.

"I would say consistency. I saw him in RCB when I was a part of RCB, that's where he started his T20 career, after being a U-19 World Cup winner. From there, the transformation in his fitness, the way he wanted to play his cricket, and the performances he put in white-ball cricket," Kumble told Star Sports.

"In Test cricket, we know his greatness.

In T20s for India, his consistency over a period of time has been immense. The kind of aggression and attitude he brings on to the field help the team gain intensity," said Kumble.

The World Cup winning England captain Eoin Morgan rated Kohli as one of the finest cricketers of the modern era.

"I highly regard him as one of the greatest of the modern era, across all three formats. When you have a player of that calibre in your side, it's crucial that you're constantly asking him to get the best out of himself.

"It brings a huge ceiling, as we've seen in the past. The level of inspiration and intensity that he brings lifts everybody within the group."

Mike Hesson, who has shared dressing

room space with Kohli during his tenure as RCB coach, offered a slightly different view of a calmer Kohli outside the playing field.

"You talked about the side on the field, but he's very calm off the field. When youngsters come into the team or overseas players, he'd spend time getting to know them.

"This was after he was a captain (of RCB) as well. It's not a captain thing. It's a genuine want to share and communicate about things other than cricket," said Hesson. For Robin Uthappa, the combative instincts of Kohli makes playing against him a tough and an even more "annoying" experience.

Uthappa has played alongside Kohli at Royal Challengers Bangalore, and he has

also been in opposition while playing for various other IPL teams such as Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders.

"Playing against Virat isn't daunting as much as it is annoying. As an opposition, he could be grating, in your face. You'd always feel like there's a battle happening with a bowler," Uthappa said. But Uthappa said the ambit of that battle is not just restricted to Kohli the batsman.

"There's an extra battle happening with an extra-cover fielder because he's coming at you all the time. He's throwing the ball and it's whizzing past your head. You feel that pressure all the time," he added.

Royal Challengers Bangalore will start their IPL 2024 campaign on March 25 with an away match against title holders Chennai Super Kings. (PTI)

Pant declared fit as keeper-batter for IPL; set to return as DC captain

NEW DELHI, March 12: The BCCI on Tuesday declared Rishabh Pant fit to play as a wicketkeeper-batter in the upcoming IPL, brightening his prospects of a national comeback in the T20 World Cup after suffering multiple injuries in a harrowing car crash 14 months ago.

Pant, who will once again be back as Delhi Capitals skipper, has undergone extensive rehabilitation and is ready to shoulder the dual responsibility in the event starting March 22, ending weeks of speculation surrounding his exact role in the league.

"After undergoing an extensive 14-month rehab and recovery process, following a life-threatening road mishap on December 30th, 2022, near Roorkee, Uttarakhand, Rishabh Pant has now been declared fit as a wicket-keeper batter for the upcoming IPL 2024," said the BCCI in a statement.

The T20 World Cup is scheduled to be held in the West Indies and the USA in June.

A few weeks back, Pant, in an interaction with Star Sports, had recalled telling his doctor that he would shave off at least six months from his recovery timeline.

"I asked the doctor how long will it take for me to recover. I told him that everybody is speaking different things, but you will give me the most clarity about it. He (Doctor) said it would take 16 to 18 months. I told the doctor from whatever timeline you give me, I will reduce six months from it,"

Pant had told the official TV broadcasters of IPL.

The National Cricket Academy had declared him fit a week back after he passed all the fitness tests related to his 'Return To Play' (RTP).

It has been learnt that he batted for long hours and more importantly, kept wickets for extensive periods in match simulations organised by the NCA.

There was speculation that he might play only as an 'Impact Player' or batter but one of India's biggest match-winners in the past six years has managed to get back in shape to go full throttle.

Pant keeping wickets also means that he would have a fair chance of playing the T20 World Cup if he can come up with some impactful innings during the IPL season.

"If he can make the T20 World Cup for us, that will be a big thing for us. He is a big asset for us. If he can keep, he can play the World Cup. Let's see how he does in the IPL," BCCI secretary Jay Shah had recently told PTI in an exclusive interaction.

Pant was present at the Capitals table during the IPL auction last year, and has been working on his fitness at the NCA after recovering from the injuries sustained in the unfortunate incident. The accident had left Pant with a severe right knee injury that required a ligament reconstruction surgery besides a fractured wrist and ankle. But he has done well to bounce back.



"If there was any nerve damage, there was a possibility of amputation. That is when I felt scared," Pant had said in Star Sports series 'Believe: To Death & Back' which documented his recovery.

"I had taken an SUV, but what I was seeing was a sedan," he quipped as he remembered his mangled vehicle.

"There was someone around so I asked if he could help getting the leg back in the position. He helped the knee get back in place.

"It was the first time I had such a feeling in life. At the time of the accident, I was aware of the wounds, but I was lucky as it could have been even more serious," he recollected.

Two-day conference for sports psychologists to be held in Mumbai

MUMBAI, March 12: The Indian Sports Psychologists' Association (INSPA) will organise a two-day conference here to bring together sports psychologists from around the country.

The conference, named 'Mind the Gap', will be held at the International Institute of Sports Management (IISM) on March 15 and 16, and can be attended online, the INSPA informed in a release.

"Mind the Gap will spark conversations among diverse sports psychologists ranging from established practitioners to aspiring professionals," the INSPA said.

INSPA president Keerthana Swaminathan hoped this initiative would foster collaboration between like-minded professionals.

"The theme for our inaugural conference is 'Landscapes in Sports Psychology', and reflects the evolving nature of the discipline. We will explore these diverse landscapes, fostering dialogue and collaboration," Swaminathan said.

3rd lead

Prolific Yashasvi Jaiswal wins ICC Player of Month Award Dubai, March 12 (PTI) India's newest batting sensation Yashasvi Jaiswal was on Tuesday named the ICC 'Player of the Month' for Feb-

ruary, following his prolific run in the Test series against England, which saw him amass over 700 runs. The 22-year-old southpaw totalled a staggering 712 runs over five matches, the highest aggregate by an Indian batter in a Test series against England.

The Indian opener created several records in February, and equalled the long-standing Test record for most sixes in a Test innings (12) during his Rajkot double ton. He struck two double hundreds and three half-centuries in the just-concluded series against England, which the hosts won 4-1 with Jaiswal playing a handsome role in the triumph.

"I'm really happy to achieve ICC award and I hope I will be getting more in future," Jaiswal said after he was informed about the win.

"It's one of the best and this is my first five-match series. I really enjoyed it, the way I have played and the way it's been and we won the series by 4-1. It's been an incredible experience with all my mates And I really enjoyed it."

Few have made as strong a start to their international career as Jaiswal and the numbers prove that he could already be one of the best Test openers in the world. (PTI)



অসম চৰকাৰ
উদ্যোগ, বাণিজ্য আৰু বাজহৰা প্ৰতিষ্ঠান বিভাগ



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বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ

- অসমৰ থলুৱা, হস্তশিল্প, জি আই টেগ সমৃদ্ধ সামগ্ৰী উপলব্ধ হ'ব
- ৰাজ্য/কেন্দ্ৰীয়শাসিত অঞ্চলৰ বাবে ৩৫খন সম আকাৰৰ বিপণি
- অসমৰ ৩৫খন জিলাৰ বাবে সম আকাৰৰ ৩৫খন বিপণি
- অসম তথা আন ৰাজ্যৰ পৰম্পৰাগত খাদ্যৰ বিপণি
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- আলোচনা, সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান আদিৰ বাবে প্ৰেক্ষাগৃহ আৰু প্ৰেক্ষাকক্ষ
- যোগাভাস আৰু ধ্যান কেন্দ্ৰ

লক্ষ্য

- অসম তথা উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ বাবে এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ বাণিজ্যিক কেন্দ্ৰ হিচাপে প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰা
- বিভিন্ন কাৰিকৰ, শিল্পী, উদ্যমী, স্থানীয় আৰু পৰম্পৰাগত, অ' ডি অ' পি সামগ্ৰীসমূহৰ বাবে এখন উপযুক্ত বজাৰৰ সৃষ্টি কৰা
- বছৰি ৫.৫ লাখতকৈ অধিক লোকৰ সমাগমৰ লক্ষ্য নিৰ্ধাৰণ

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৩ এ টি পি অ' চৌহদ, বেতকুছি, গুৱাহাটী

১৩ মাৰ্চ ২০২৪

দিনৰ ১:৩০ বজা

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