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- 'Celebrating Hyderabad Liberation Day a befitting tribute to freedom fighters'

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For All-round Development of Assam

## Vikas Yatra



14 March 2024

Inauguration • Foundation Stones

### Kamrup

FRU, Sualkuchi  
1:00 pm

Jalukbari LAC

Total project cost  
**₹153 cr**

Chief Guest  
**Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma**  
Chief Minister, Assam

Guests of honour  
**Shri Keshab Mahanta**  
Minister, Govt of Assam

**Smt Queen Oja**  
MP, Guwahati

**Anchor project**

**Foundation stone** Upgrade of existing Sualkuchi FRU to 100-bed hospital

**Highlights**

- Hospital Building: G+3
- Doctors' quarter: G+2
- Nurses' quarter: G+2
- ETP, internal roads, etc.
- Quarter for Grade IV employees: G+2

**Cost ₹45 cr**



### Other Projects

**Cost ₹103 cr**

**Foundation stone**

**Education**

**Infrastructure development and upgrade**

- North Guwahati College
- Pandu College
- Pub Bongshor College
- Saraighat College
- Sualkuchi Budram Madhab Satradhikar College

**Untied Fund**

- Construction of Sualkuchi Sankar Dham
- Auditorium at Changsari

**PWD**

- Gaurav Path LPG GNB Road, North Guwahati
- Under Mukhya Mantri Unnata Pakipath Nirman Achoni**
- Kismat Bongshor to Pakarkona Road
- NH-15 Dumunichowki to Alta-Mandakata Road
- Changsari to Jalah Road

**Inauguration**

- Repair and renovation of Sualkuchi Swimming Pool
- Sualkuchi Extended Entrance Gate
- New Gaon Panchayat Office, Madhya Sualkuchi
- New Gaon Panchayat Office, Pachim Sualkuchi
- Model Anganwadi Center, Panipara, Amingaon
- Model Anganwadi Center, Athiabo, Dhopatari
- Model Anganwadi Center, Saraighat, Bezera
- Model Anganwadi Center, Bamunigaon, Agdala
- Model Anganwadi Center, Pandu Nath
- Model Anganwadi Center, Bongshor
- Repair and renovation of Sualkuchi Institute of Fashion Technology

**Cost ₹5 cr**

Janasanyog ID/19466/23/14-Mar-24

# Retail investors' F&O play for quick profits a worry; short-termism biggest risk to growth: CEA

*'Our actions make me worry that we may be interpreting mindfulness and living in the present as being myopic'*

**MUMBAI, March 13:** Chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said he is "worried" over retail investors' play in risky Futures and Options (F&O) segment in search of instant profits.

Speaking at a conference organised by capital markets regulator Sebi and NISM, Nageswaran said the biggest threat to sustainable capital formation and also sustainable economic growth is the "short-termism" in attitudes that the country is afflicted with.

Bemoaning the "furore" caused every time, there is a discussion on allowing corporate groups to promote banks despite the need for capital in a growing economy, Nageswaran said India Inc needs to reflect on the state of corporate governance practices and analyse its own conduct.

"The biggest risk for sustained capital formation and sustained economic growth is... in our short-termism," he said.

He added that it is "puzzling" to see that a country otherwise blessed with a "deep spiritual heritage and wisdom" is actually interpreting mindfulness and living in the present in the wrong ways.

Nageswaran rued that even now, people are mentioning handsome growth in F&O volumes, despite Sebi's own studies suggesting that 90 per cent of trades in the riskier segment leading to losses for investors.

"Our actions make me worry that we may be interpreting mindfulness and living in the present as being myopic," he said, making it clear that those two concepts stress on performing one's duty and obligations without thinking about the fruits of



the actions.

He said there is a need to change the outlook from a behavioural perspective to achieve goals like long-term capital formation and growth.

Nageswaran rued that there is an "adversarial" attitude among many stakeholders when it comes to regulators, wherein people overlook the fact a regulator's job is to have a long-term view of things and "providing counterbalance for instant gratification or myopia".

"The underline focus that the regulators have is to ensure that we stay stronger for longer rather than get caught up in the immediate euphoria of our growth rates, market valuations," he said.

Amid concerns that the activity in the F&O segment is fuelled by those seeking quick profits, he said the rising exposure of small investors in the segment "is a worry because we don't want to go through boom and bust cycles again and again".

Nageswaran said the economy is likely to grow 7 per cent in FY25

well, which will make it the third year in a row when the GDP has grown at over 7 per cent.

Stating that capital formation and economic growth are interdependent, wherein one feeds into another, he said the only mantra for policymakers in such times is not to be conventional and described India's prudent response to the Covid crisis as a case in point.

However, sustaining high growth performance has been "elusive" for India, which has had short periods of high growth that are typically followed by a long period of balance-sheet repair, dud loan cleaning for lenders, etc, he said, reminding that "we need to keep in mind that China grew around double digits for three decades".

"There is a need to ensure that we don't indulge in excess lending or excess borrowing in the current cycle as well", he said, adding that we need to make detailed plans with projections on growth, capital required, how it will come, how much as debt and how much as equity.

Banks also need to be adequately capitalised to fund the growth needs of the economy, and corporate ownership of banks will have to be allowed if the banks are to get the capital, he said.

"Why is it a taboo to even discuss corporate ownership of banks? The fact that a mere discussion of the idea of licensing of banks to corporate houses creates such a backlash or a furore is indeed a cause for reflection on the part of the corporates too," he said.

"It is also unfortunately a reflection on the overall state of corporate governance in the country," Nageswaran said. (PTI)

# DBF Launches Tailoring Entrepreneurship Programme

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, March 13:** Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF), the corporate social responsibility arm of Dalmia Bharat Ltd. (DBL), commemorated International Women's Day by introducing a sustainable livelihood programme focused on empowering rural women through entrepreneurship in tailoring. Aligned with the United Nations' global theme, "Invest in Women—Accelerate Growth," this initiative underscores DBF's dedication to advancing gender equality and economic empowerment in the regions where it operates.

Following a thorough assessment, DBF has identified 440 rural women entrepreneurs from 16 locations across India for participation in the programme. The aim is to equip these women with essential training in garment crafting skills and financial assistance, enabling them to establish and maintain their micro-enterprises independently. Each participant will receive support in the form of a high-quality tailoring machine, with costs divided equally between the beneficiary and DBF, ensuring financial barriers do not impede their progress. This initiative is expected to significantly boost the annual income of each woman, with potential earnings of up to ₹ 40,000.

Special events were held at Dalmia Cement manufacturing units across Assam in Lanka, Jagiroad, and Umrangso on March 8, where over 65 women beneficiaries were presented with sewing machines upon successful completion of their training by key company officials.

Ashok Kumar Gupta, CEO of Dalmia Bharat Foundation, remarked, "At Dalmia Bharat, our mission is deeply rooted in cat-



alyzing positive change within rural communities across India. Through this initiative, we aim to provide rural women with the tools and skills they need to thrive in the tailoring trade, offering more than just a source of income – we are providing a pathway to dignity and self-reliance. Empowered women become agents of change within their families and communities, driving progress and prosperity. By investing in women, we are investing in the future of our nation, building a more inclusive and equitable society for generations to come."

# Sensex tanks 900 points to slip below 73k amid broad-based selloff; smallcap, midcap tumble

**MUMBAI, March 13:** Equity benchmark index Sensex on Wednesday crashed over 900 points to sink below the 73,000 level due to widespread selling pressure amid a sharp fall in smallcap and midcap indices.

Besides, deep losses in utility, energy and metal stocks and recent selling by foreign investors added to the gloom, analysts said.

Benchmark indices started the session on a positive note, but the selling intensified during afternoon trade, with all sectoral indices ending in the red.

The 30-share index tanked 906.07 points or 1.23 per cent to settle at 72,761.89. During the day, it dropped 1,152.25 points or 1.56 per cent to 72,515.71.

The Nifty plummeted 338 points or 1.51 per cent to 21,997.70.

Power Grid was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, sliding over 7 per cent, followed by NTPC, Tata Steel, Tata Motors, JSW Steel, Bharti Airtel, Titan, Reliance Industries and Hindustan Unilever.

In contrast, ITC, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Nestle, Bajaj Finance and HDFC Bank were the gainers.

"In contrast to the global uptrend, the unfavourable risk-reward balance of mid and smallcap stocks, fuelled by prolonged premium valuations, has aggravated the downfall. Meanwhile, FMCG and contrarian plays like gold are offering some refuge. Other than the premium valuation no fundamental issue is noticed to drawback the long-term growth image of domestic midcaps," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research,

Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge tanked by 5.11 per cent, while the midcap index declined by 4.20 per cent.

All the indices ended in the red, with utilities tumbling 7.21 per cent, metal dropping by 5.75 per cent, services (5.71 per cent), telecommunication (5.45 per cent), oil & gas (5.16 per cent), commodities (4.28 per cent) and industrials (4.23 per cent).

A total of 3,516 stocks declined, while 400 advanced and 60 remained unchanged on BSE.

Meanwhile, industry veteran Uday Kotak on Wednesday said there may be some "early froth", and it may be a "little bubbly" but the markets are not out of control. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Unity Mall to promote

the auditorium and amphitheatre to be featured in the mall will also enable the entrepreneurs to engage in discussion with regard to their products and trades and enhance their business proposition. The yoga and meditation centres in the mall will also address wellness aspects of the entrepreneurs, the chief minister added.

The unity mall will have 35 commercial stalls for states/union territories (Except Assam) with adequate and uniform stalls. There will be 35 commercial stalls for 35 districts of Assam with adequate as well as uniform stall size. There will be provision for food courts, special for Assam and other state cuisine outlets.

Minister industries and commerce Bimal Borah, MP Queen Oja, additional chief secretary Ravi Kota, secretary chief minister's secretariat, industries and commerce Lakshmanan S, and host of others were present on the occasion.

## Big boost to state's

shall contribute greatly towards the process of economic growth of the state and the country.

Referring to the foundation stone laying for the semiconductor unit at Jagiroad an emotional moment for him, the Chief Minister said it has the potential to provide direct employment to as many as 15,000 youth of the State and provide indirect employment opportunities to equal number of job-seekers.

He appealed to the people of Assam to shed the "culture" of strikes/andolans/hartals and embrace positivity and optimism so that Assam can attain its rightful position among the States of the Indian Union.

Union Minister of Communications and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Chairman of Tata Sons N Chandrasekaran joined through the video-conference mode.

Deputy Chairman of Assam Legislative Assembly Dr. Numal Momin, Ministers of Assam Cabinet Pijush Hazarika, Bimal Bora, Jogen Mohan, Keshab Mahanta, along with a host of dignitaries were present at Jagiroad on the occasion.

Semiconductor assembly and testing is a critical part of the value chain where wafers manufactured by semiconductor fabs are assembled or packaged and then tested before they are finally used in the desired product.

The proposed facility will serve the growing global demands across key market segments like AI, industrial, and consumer electronics, the company said. (With inputs from PTI)

## Anti-CAA stir: Protests

the Assam Accord and the deadline to give Indian citizenship to all those coming to the state is March 24, 1971. Anyone coming after that will have to be deported," he added.

Borah claimed said that the BJP had promised to deport all illegal immigrants from the state before the Assembly elections in 2016, but has now made a U-turn for vote bank politics.

Anti-CAA protests by opposition parties, such as the Congress, and various organisations have been taking place in the state for the last three days.

Students of various colleges and universities also staged demonstrations against the central law in front of their respective campuses.

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) also held a 'satyagraha' in all the district headquarters during the day, a leader of the students' organisation said.

The students' organisation had taken out a torchlight procession in several parts of the state on Tuesday evening.

An AASU delegation had gone to New Delhi on Tuesday to pursue the petition against the Act in the Supreme Court, while leader of the opposition in the Assam assembly Debabrata Saikia filed an interlocutory application in the apex court, seeking a stay on the implementation of the Act.

Several student and non-political indigenous organisations along with opposition political parties in Assam have been opposing the CAA, claiming that it violates the provision of the 1985 Assam Accord.

The accord called for "detection and deportation" of all people who entered the state from Bangladesh post March 24, 1971.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) seeks to provide Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis entering India on or before December 31, 2014 from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after five years of residence here.

The Congress, Rajior Dal, Assam Jatiya Parishad, the Left parties and others have announced that they will continue with their protests in a peaceful and democratic manner.

Trinamool Congress' state president Ripun Bora said party workers will burn copies of the Act and rules in all the district headquarters of the state on Thursday.

A 12-hour 'Sarbhatmak Hartal', called by the 16-party United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA) on Tuesday, however, did not evoke much response.

The Assam Police had issued notices to opposition parties, asking them to withdraw the hartal over the implementation of the CAA, and warned that "legal action" would be taken against them if they fail to follow the diktat.

Meanwhile, security has been tightened across the state with additional deployment of police personnel, including commandos in sensitive areas, while all police stations are on an alert, a senior officer said.

Patrolling has been intensified and check-posts have been set up on the major thoroughfares in almost all cities and towns of the state, where widespread anti-CAA protests were held in 2019. (PTI)

## Akou ebar, Modi Sarkar:

developmental politics of Shri Narendra Modi ji. The vision of Modi ji to build 'Viksti Bharat' must be realised by electing BJP back to the government with thumping mandate so that the good work on building the new India continue. People of Assam has also received the fruits of welfare government, unlike the dark age of Congress government which was marred with corruption, violence, inefficiency and lack of commitment to nation building. These evils turned their heads as Narendra Modi ji worked tirelessly to revamp and revive the glory of Assam and the Northeast. Modi ji's inspiring leadership has helped recover 25 crore people out of poverty in last 10 years.

This is momentous and is evident how the quality of life has improved for the people across the country. Today, everyone from the Barak and Brahmaputra valleys has received a lot of support and importance from the double engine BJP governments to move forward with respect. We are confident that Assam will also be one of the top states in India in the coming days under the dynamic leadership of Modi ji. In order to make that journey a success, along with other constituencies, we, the people of Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, will also have to play a strong role in it. Modi government means social status, Modi government means social security, Modi government means economic development, Modi government means the right to live with dignity. With your support, we will continue this journey of progress and development under the leadership of world's most popular leader Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji."

In addition, Sarbananda Sonowal further said, "Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency has a glorious history. This constituency was able to identify itself as an economic focal point during the British rule. We all have to work together to repeat this history of a strong economy. We must unite and show the strength of the BJP allies in this election."

Sarbananda Sonowal also attended the meeting of Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in Tinsukia assembly constituency and interacted with the party workers. Sonowal also expected the AGP to play an active role in the NDA crossing the 400-seat mark in this Lok Sabha elections and said that the NDA's smooth and decisive victory.

The Union minister and senior BJP leader was accompanied by Tinsukia Assembly constituency MLA Sanjay Kishan, Margherita Assembly constituency MLA Bhaskar Sharma, Digboi Assembly constituency MLA Suren Phukan, BJP-AGP office-bearers, leaders and workers at various levels and local people.

## Joyanta Basumatary UPPL

Lok Sabha constituency in the ensuing parliamentary elections.

Notably, Basumatary is the sitting MLA of Sidli constituency and former vice-president of the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU). He was elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly in 2021, defeating former state cabinet minister Chandan Brahma. The UPPL party reigns in the Bodoland Territorial Region and is an alliance partner of the NDA alliance government in the state of Assam.

"It is a pleasure to announce Basumatary's name as the official candidate of the BJP-led NDA alliance for the upcoming Lok Sabha election in Kokrajhar HPC. His candidature is receiving majority support from the common masses across the region," said Narzary.

Narzary expressed optimism about the NDA alliance partner UPPL winning the parliamentary elections in Kokrajhar HPC, as well as all contesting constituencies in the state of Assam.

"The NDA alliance partner UPPL party is receiving majority support cutting across the communities in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections," he added.

Among others, UPPL vice president Afjal Haque Sarkar, party general secretary Madhab Chandra Chetry, MLAs Lawrence Islary, Jiron Basumatary, and senior party leaders were present at the press conference.

## BJP names candidates for all

northeastern state. Sitting BJP MLAs Laisam Simai (Nampong), Kento Rina (Nari-Koyu), Tsering Tashi (Tawang) and Lokam Tasar (Koloriang) were among those who failed to get tickets by the party.

The party also dropped women legislators Gum Tayeng (Dambuk) and Jumum Ete Deori (Lekang).

Of the four female candidates nominated by the BJP, Nyabi Jini Dirchi (Basar) is a fresh face, while the three others are Tsering Lhamu (Lumla), Dasanglu Pul (Hayuliang) and Chakat Aboh (Khonsa West).

Three Congress MLAs who joined the saffron camp recently were nominated. They are Ninong Ering (Pasighat West), Lombo Tayeng (Mebo) and Wangling Lowangdong (Borduria-Bogapani). (PTI)

## Total of 22,217 electoral bonds

the date of encashment and the denominations of the bonds encashed were recorded," the affidavit said.

It said in compliance with the apex court's directions, a record of this information was made available to the EC by hand delivering in digital form (password protected)

before the close of business hours on March 12.

"As per direction no. (b), the date of purchase of each electoral bond, the name of the purchaser and the denomination of the electoral bond purchased has been furnished. In terms of direction no.(c), the date of encashment of the electoral bonds, the name of political parties who have received the contributions and the denomination of the said bonds has also been furnished," the affidavit said.

It said the aforesaid data has been furnished in respect of bonds purchased and redeemed between April 12, 2019 to February 15, 2024.

"The electoral bonds were sold and redeemed in phases during this period and phase IX started from April 1, 2019. The number of bonds set out in the application included (by oversight) the bonds that were purchased during the period commencing April 1, 2019 and not from April 12, 2019," it said.

The affidavit also contains an annexure a copy of letter as proof of service of data sent by the SBI to EC.

"The amount of the electoral bonds which were not encashed by the political party within the validity period of 15 days during this period have been transferred to Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, as per the Gazette notification no.20 dated January 2, 2018," reads the letter sent by the SBI to the poll panel.

On March 11, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud had dismissed the SBI's plea seeking an extension of time and ordered it to disclose the details of electoral bonds to the EC by close of business hours on March 12.

The apex court had also directed the EC to publish the details shared by the bank on its official website by 5 pm on March 15.

In a landmark verdict delivered on February 15, a five-judge Constitution bench had scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme that allowed anonymous political funding, calling it "unconstitutional" and ordered disclosure by the EC of donors, the amount donated by them and the recipients by March 13.

Ordering the closure of the scheme, the top court had directed the SBI, the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit by March 6 the details of the electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019, till date to the EC.

On March 11, while hearing SBI's application seeking an extension of time till June 30 to furnish the details to the EC, the apex court had observed that the bank's submissions in the application sufficiently indicated that the information which was directed to be disclosed was readily available.

In its application, the SBI had contended that the retrieval of information from "each silo" and the procedure of matching the information of one silo to that of the other would be a time-consuming exercise.

The application had said due to stringent measures undertaken to ensure that the identity of the donors was kept anonymous, "decoding" the electoral bonds and matching the donors to the donations would be a complex process.

"It submitted that the data related to the issuance of the bond and the data related to the redemption of the bond was kept recorded in two different silos. No central database was maintained," it had said.

"It is submitted that donor details were kept in a sealed cover at the designated branches and all such sealed covers were deposited in the main branch of the applicant bank, which is located in Mumbai," it had said. (PTI)

## IED blast: Shillong's Punjabi

attempt to derail the fragile peace process and this incident is not isolated but is indicative of the larger issue of communal harmony and the safety of minority communities within Meghalaya," he said.

Violence erupted shortly after the MDA's ascension to power when there was a clash between the Sikhs and the locals following an assault on a bus driver.

The MDA government proposed relocating the residents and offered additional land, but disagreements persisted, particularly regarding the government's responsibility for housing construction costs.

While some local NGOs oppose government funding for Sikh housing, arguing it neglects indigenous communities, the Sikh residents' demands persist, rooted in their historical ties to the region dating back to British colonial times when they were brought to Shillong as workers. (PTI)

## No Smoking Day: Govt urged

We are happy that the government is strengthening the COTPA provisions to make hospitality sector completely smoke free.

"We support the government in its initiative for safeguarding people's health," said G P Sharma, president, Hospitality Association of Uttar Pradesh.

The government of India has started the COTPA Amendment process and introduced the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

A recent survey conducted in India revealed that 72 per cent believe that second-hand smoke is a serious health hazard and 88 per cent people strongly support strengthening of the current tobacco control law to address this menace.

India has the second largest number of tobacco users (268 million or 28.6 per cent of all adults in India) in the world. Of these, at least 1.2 million die every year from tobacco related diseases, Dr Chaturvedi said.

One million deaths are due to smoking, with over 200,000 due to second-hand smoke exposure, and over 35,000 due to smokeless tobacco use. Nearly 27 per cent of all cancers in India are due to tobacco usage. (PTI)

6 WORLD: China says boundary issue with India does not represent entirety of bilateral ties. 8 NATION: Nepal PM Prachanda wins vote of confidence in Parliament for 3rd time. 'Days not far when India becomes global power in semiconductor sector'. 'Celebrating Hyderabad Liberation Day a befitting tribute to freedom fighters'

Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee Vanchiton ko Variyata Assistance of ₹ 11,700 crore to over 25 lakh beneficiaries to promote entrepreneurship among Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and Sanitation workers. Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

Unity Mall to promote indigenous handicrafts and GI products

GUWAHATI, March 13: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma performed Bhumi Pujan of 'Unity Mall', at ATPO complex in Betkuchi on Wednesday. The mall will be built involving an outlay of ₹ 298 crore. It may be noted that the Unity Mall is a brain child of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who seeks to promote the concept of 'Ek Bharat Shresht Bharat' through promoting 'Made-in-India' products. In July last year, the government decided to implement this project and the bhumi puja by chief minister Sarma will tantamount to turning the project in to reality in Assam. It may also be mentioned that Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the budget of 2023-24 that all the states will be encouraged to set up a 'Unity Mall' in their state capitals, or most prominent tourism cen-

PM lays base of semiconductor assembly facility at Jagiroad's HPCL site An emotional day for people of Assam: CM

Big boost to state's industrialisation bid

GUWAHATI, March 13: Adding another glorious chapter to the ongoing process of industrialization in the state, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday virtually laid the foundation stone for the Tata Group's ₹ 27,000-crore indigenous "semiconductor assembly & test facility" at Jagiroad in Morigaon district. This apart, the Prime Minister also laid the foundation stones for the Tata-Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing's "Semiconductor Fabrication Unit" at Dholera and that for the CG Power-Renasas outsourced assembly and test (OSAT) facility at Sanand, both in Gujarat.



Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who was present at the event organised at the site of the facility in Jagiroad, said today is a landmark day for Assam and the North East. "This is the first time that an investment of this huge amount (₹ 27,000 crore) is being made in the state, which will put Assam and the North East on the industrial map of the country. This has been possible only due to the initiative taken by the prime minister," Sarma said on the occasion. This is an "emotional day" for the people of Assam as the facility is coming up on the site of the Hindustan Paper Corporation Limited (HPCL) which had to be

graphical barrier" is no more a hindrance in the process of industrialisation of Assam and the rest of the Northeastern states. The people of Assam shall remain forever indebted to the Prime Minister for his role in the ushering of a new wave of development and progress in the state, the Chief Minister added. The Chief Minister praised the Tata Group for coming forward with investments to the tune of ₹ 27,000 crore and assured the multi-billion dollar conglomerate of doing everything within the capacity of the government of Assam to provide a conducive industrial environment. He said the investment by Tata Group in Jagiroad (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

HT BRIEFS Sec 144 lifted

DIPHU: The district administration of West Karbi Anglong has withdrawn Section 144 CrP from the area of Kheroni police station in West Karbi Anglong. The decision was taken after no reports of anti-social elements had been found that could jeopardise peace.

Heroin seized

BOKAJAN: The police in Karbi Anglong seized heroin from Lahorjan last evening. Acting on secret information about the presence of drug peddlers the police carried out a raid at Lahorjan Sunday Bazar under Khakhathi police station in Karbi Anglong. During the raid at 9 pm a man identified as Lathara (43), resident of Gadailong Tamenlong, ward no 4 of Manipur was apprehended. The police recovered from his room 25 identical soap cases filled with brown coloured powder suspected to be heroin packed in transparent polythene bags weighing 294.92 grams have been recovered. The contraband was seized in the presence of the independent witnesses and further investigation is going on.

Panchayat sec busted

GUWAHATI: Directorate of vigilance and anti-corruption, (DVAC), Assam on Wednesday apprehended a secretary of Dhubri Gram Panchayat for allegedly demanding bribe. As per an official statement from DVAC, the person, identified as Nurul Islam Mollah, the Secretary in the Office of Alamganj Gram Panchayat was caught red-handed by the DVAC authorities after he allegedly accepted ₹ 10,000 in his office for sanctioning funds under the MGNREGA scheme.

Anti-CAA stir: Protests continue in NE region

GUWAHATI, March 13: The North East Students' Organisation (NESO), the apex body of major student unions of the eight states of the region, on Wednesday burnt copies of the rules of Citizenship (Amendment) Act across the region and demanded immediate repeal of the law. Activists of Rajior Dal, Bir Lachit Sena and Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) organised a march in Sivasagar, but were stopped by the police, leading to a minor scuffle. The police detained its leaders from the protest site, officials said. NESO chief adviser Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharjya said the

member organisations burnt copies of the law on Tuesday as well in protest of implementation of the contentious act. "The NESO held demonstrations across the Northeast and demanded immediate repeal of the CAA. Our agitation against the law will continue in a non-violent and peaceful manner," he added. Assam Congress president Bheupen Kumar Borah said protests will continue on "streets, court and ballots" against the CAA as the state is a sufferer of a long-standing immigration problem. "We cannot take any more burden from foreigners. We all have accepted (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Akou ebar, Modi Sarkar: Sonowal Sarba energises crowds in Tinsukia, Margherita and Digboi

DIBRUGARH, March 13: The Union minister of ports, shipping & waterways and ayush, Sarbananda Sonowal addressed four public meetings at Tinsukia, Margherita & Digboi during the day. The meetings witnessed energetic participation by party workers of BJP and AGP when the senior party leader, Sarbananda Sonowal, sought active support to continue the good governance of Modi government. Speaking on the occasion, the Lok Sabha candidate of BJP for Dibrugarh, Sonowal, said, "Akou Ebar, Modi Sarkar is our promise. In order to achieve this, we have a



duty to elect and send maximum MPs from Assam. Today, thanks to the efforts undertaken by the Modi Government, the people of the country has an opportunity to live with dignity because of the 'Modi Ki Guarantee.' Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the country has been experiencing the fruits of welfare with good governance.

Today, under Modi ji's visionary leadership, the stature of our country has elevated at the global stage, as India is revered by all countries of the world. This change has been instrumental in improving the quality of life and clocking impressive rates of growth and development of Assam and India." Sonowal further added, "I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the party workers & functionaries of Tinsukia, Margherita and Digboi as I seek your support and blessings in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. With your enthralling support and energetic enthusiasm, I am confident that the people will vote for the good, positive and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Joyanta Basumatary UPPL candidate for Kokrajhar LS seat

KOKRAJHAR, March 13: The ruling partner of the BJP-led NDA alliance, the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), has announced Joyanta Basumatary's name as the candidate for No 1 Kokrajhar Lok Sabha ST (HPC) in the upcoming parliamentary elections. UPPL working president and Rajya Sabha MP, Rungwra Narzary, while addressing the reporters at a press conference held at the central party office in Kokrajhar on Wednesday, stated that under the leadership of the BJP-led NDA alliance, UPPL has nominated Basumatary as the candidate for the Kokrajhar (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP names candidates for all 60 assembly seats in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, March 13: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday announced candidates for all 60 assembly constituencies in Arunachal Pradesh, dropping three ministers and fielding 16 fresh faces. Three Congress MLAs who recently shifted allegiance to the BJP figured in the candidates list. The party also nominated four women candidates and one of them is a greenhorn. Home minister Bamang Felix (Nyapin seat), industries minister Tumke Bagra (Aalo West) and agriculture minister Tage Taki (Ziro-Hapoli) were denied tickets by the party. The BJP last week announced that union minister Kiren Rijiju and Tapir Gao will contest the Lok Sabha elections from Arunachal West and Arunachal East constituencies respectively. The Lok Sabha and assembly elections will be held simultaneously in the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Total of 22,217 electoral bonds purchased from Apr 1, 2019 to Feb 15, 2024: SBI to SC

NEW DELHI, March 13: The State Bank of India (SBI) on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were purchased by donors between April 1, 2019 and February 15 this year, out of which 22,030 were redeemed by political parties. In a compliance affidavit filed in the apex court, the SBI said as per the court's direction, it has made available the details of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India before the close of business hours on March 12. It said details, including date of purchase of each electoral bond, names of the purchaser



and the denomination of the bonds purchased have been furnished. The affidavit, filed by SBI's chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara, said the bank has also furnished to the EC details like date of encashment of the electoral bonds, the names of political parties which received the contributions and the denominations of the bonds. "A total number of 22,217 bonds were purchased during

the period April 1, 2019 till February 15, 2024. At the time of collating the information for the EC, the details were segregated as below..." it said. The affidavit said between April 1, 2019 to April 11, 2019, a total of 3,346 electoral bonds were purchased and 1,609 redeemed. It further said from April 12, 2019 to February 15 this year, a total of 18,871 electoral bonds were purchased and 20,421 were redeemed. "The State Bank of India has ready records in which the date of purchase, denomination and name of buyer were recorded, and (in relation to the political parties) (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

IED blast: Shillong's Punjabi lane settlers seek Amit Shah's help

SHILLONG, March 13: Residents of the disputed Punjabi Lane here have sought the intervention of Union home minister Amit Shah into the IED explosion in their locality on March 9, resulting in one injury. In a letter to Shah, Harijan Panchayat Committee (HPC) secretary Gurjit Singh said the blast has instilled a sense of fear among the residents. The Sikh community residing in the contested area believes the blast was orchestrated to disrupt negotiations aimed at relocating them to municipal land. Initiated months after the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA), backed by the BJP, came to power in 2018, the relocation process is currently under the su-

perision of the high court. Singh emphasised to Shah that the blast undermines the peace efforts. He urged the home minister to take immediate action against those issuing threats, asserting that restoring peace requires holding troublemakers accountable. He called upon the Centre to uphold the rule of law and safeguard the rights of all citizens irrespective of ethnicity or religion. "The Sikhs of Punjabi colony have been subjected to threats from various tribal groups. These groups have been openly inimical to the presence of non-tribals in Meghalaya, creating a sustained atmosphere of intimidation and fear," Singh said. "The recent blast is a deliberate (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Exposure to second-hand smoke causes many diseases including, lung cancer and heart diseases

No Smoking Day: Govt urged to remove designated rooms in hotels, airports

NEW DELHI, March 13: On the occasion of No Smoking Day, doctors, cancer victims and hotel associations urged the government to remove designated smoking rooms in hotels, restaurants and airports to protect people from second-hand smoke. While appreciating the government for initiating the process to amend COTPA 2003 and setting a target of making India 100 per cent smoke free, they appealed for immediate removal of the current provision that permits smoking areas. "Smoking worsens lung function and reduces immunity. All designated smoking areas in hotels and restaurants and even airports should be abolished to ensure a 100 per cent smoke free environment. "Most of these designated smoking



areas are rarely compliant as per COTPA requirements and are actually putting our public at great health risk from exposure to secondhand smoke," said Dr Harit Chaturvedi, chairman of Max Institute of Cancer Care. In India, smoking is banned in all public places, according to the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products

(Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce Production, Supply and Distribution) Act (COTPA), 2003. Section 4 of this Act prohibits smoking in any place to which the public has access. However, COTPA 2003 presently allows smoking in designated smoking areas of certain public places like restaurants, hotels and airports. "Exposure to passive smoking happens in eateries, specifically hotels, restaurants, bar and restaurant, pubs and clubs, risking lives of thousands of non-smokers by exposing them to the smoke of cigarettes. "As cigarette smoke seeps from smoking areas to common areas, COTPA needs to be amended to not permit smoking in any premises. All places should be completely smoke

free in the best interest of the public health," said Nalini Satyanarayan, a passive smoking victim and health activist. Second-hand smoking is as harmful as smoking. Exposure to second-hand smoke causes many diseases including, lung cancer and heart disease in adults and the impairment of the lung function and respiratory infections in children, experts said. People with compromised respiratory and cardiovascular systems are at higher risk of death. Designated smoking areas facilitate the spread of infection as smokers cannot socially distance or wear masks and are trapped in close proximity in a smoke-filled environment, they said. "We are finding that families prefer to stay in hotels which do not allow smoking. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing  
- Walt Disney

## Electoral Bonds and SBI's Obligation

The recent tussle between the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Supreme Court over the disclosure of electoral bond details has once again brought into focus the intricacies of political financing in India. Amidst accusations of dilatory tactics and attempts to shield certain political entities from scrutiny, the SBI found itself compelled to comply with the apex court's directives, albeit under pressure. The heart of the matter lies in the transparency of electoral funding. While the breakup of electoral bond contributions has been made public, the absence of donor identities raises pertinent questions about the origins of these funds. The disproportionate share received by certain political parties, notably the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), raises concerns about undue influence and potential quid pro quo arrangements. The revelation of donor identities is paramount in understanding the dynamics of political financing. If corporate entities dominate the donor list, it could signal vested interests, whereas a majority of individual citizens contributing might indicate genuine grassroots support. Such a proportionality analysis is critical, especially amidst perceptions of cozy relationships between the government and favored corporations. The complexity surrounding the disclosure of electoral bond details seems more manufactured than inherent. The SBI's initial resistance, citing technical challenges in matching datasets, was swiftly debunked when the bank eventually provided the information in digital format. The claim of a Herculean task in processing 22,217 bonds appears unfounded in an era where advanced technologies can streamline even the most intricate tasks.

Furthermore, the SBI's reliance on provisions of the electoral bond scheme, despite its constitutional invalidation, raises questions about its sincerity in upholding transparency. Such maneuvers only serve to obfuscate rather than elucidate the process. While the onus lies on the Indian populace to draw their conclusions from the disclosed details, the Election Commission's role in ensuring transparency remains questionable. The lack of support from the commission further underscores the importance of robust oversight mechanisms in upholding democratic principles. In light of these developments, it becomes imperative to revisit the observations made by former Chief Justice S A Bobde regarding the transparency of the electoral bond scheme. The assertion that the scheme is not as opaque as perceived underscores the need for greater accountability in political financing. Moving forward, there is a pressing need for comprehensive reforms to enhance transparency and accountability in electoral funding. Strengthening oversight mechanisms, ensuring timely disclosure of donor details, and fostering public trust in the electoral process are essential steps towards upholding the integrity of democracy.

The recent episode involving electoral bonds and the SBI highlights the inherent challenges in ensuring transparency in political financing. While significant strides have been made in disclosing contribution details, further reforms are necessary to address existing loopholes and uphold the principles of democracy. Only through concerted efforts can we safeguard the integrity of our electoral process and strengthen democratic institutions. It is imperative for regulatory bodies, such as the Election Commission, to assert their independence and actively pursue transparency in electoral funding. The Commission must take proactive measures to enforce compliance with disclosure requirements and hold accountable those who seek to circumvent them. Additionally, civil society plays a crucial role in advocating for greater transparency and accountability in political financing. Through sustained pressure and engagement, citizens can contribute to strengthening democratic norms and ensuring the integrity of electoral processes.

# India has done well at WTO meeting at Abu Dhabi to protect trade interests

There are reasons for India to be satisfied with the outcome of the just concluded World Trade Organisation ministerial, the 13th ministerial conference that ended in Abu Dhabi last week. India was represented by its Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. Though there was no major achievement at the ministerial where decisions are taken by consensus by the member countries, India should be satisfied as there were no adverse decisions for India in the election year.

Goyal affirmed India's successful navigation through critical issues, safeguarding the interests of the nation's farmers and fishermen, at the Ministerial Conference. He said reinstating the appellate body was considered important so that disputes could be elevated to the WTO for resolution. There was progress on several contentious issues that had not been resolved over many years during discussions generally through MC13. Policy space for the benefit of India's farmers and fishermen continued to be retained, and in every respect, India's interests had been protected to the highest possible level. The fact that no permanent solution on public stockholding for food security purposes could be reached and that the status quo continued was a positive development for India.

In fact, according to trade experts, the developing countries including India had made the biggest blunder in the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) negotiated during the Uruguay Round of GATT formally ratified in 1994 at Marrakesh of allowing developed countries to reduce their subsidies from a high base, while they themselves had a low base of subsidies. Indian delegation was led by the then Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee. The GATT ministerial led to setting up of WTO from January one, 1995.

As the GATT ministerial happened at a time when India was recovering from one of the worst balance of payment crisis in 1990-1991, that led to opening up of the economy, very little economic leverage was available to India then. India's quantitative restrictions on exports was dismantled at that time and phased reduction of import tariffs began around that time as part of the economic reforms to liberalise international trade regime. This has had a positive impact on India's trade over time with India's goods and services exports surging towards \$ 1 trillion mark.

As Mukherjee used to say then India cannot trade in Sahara, it has to trade with developed countries, which had the



wherewithal and economic muscle to trade. India has come a long way since then and it is no longer a pushover and its strength has grown leaps and bounds to be among the top economic powerhouses of the world. Hence the bargaining capacity of India has improved considerably.

With the subsidies classified under different boxes following the GATT ministerial, no real reduction of subsidies by developed countries happened except some shifting of subsidies from one box to another. In Abu Dhabi, India stood firm on its ground to protect the interests of the Indian farmers. Similarly, India did not yield ground on the issue of Fisheries subsidies. Thus there was no headway in these two major MC13 Agenda areas.

On the issue of E-Commerce, the WTO members including India agreed to extend the moratorium on import duties on E-Commerce by another two years, thus maintaining the status quo.

India along with South Africa, successfully blocked the Chinese led Investment Facilitation Agreement as it is a non-trade issue, just like Environment and Labour, which are outside the purview of the WTO and can be discussed in other relevant forums. While Industrial tariff was not a part of the MC13 agenda, efforts by some countries to discuss Industrial Policy Issues were also not agreed to as they were not a part of the Original Marrakesh Framework.

The only major decision to which India

agreed was the new disciplines on services domestic regulations supported by 72 WTO members. Though India is not a part of the plurilateral agreement and need not give any new additional commitments, it can benefit from any additional commitments given by other countries, according to international trade expert H C Prasad.

While this agreement is expected to lower trade costs and facilitate services trade by streamlining and simplifying procedures, Prasad feels that the OECD's Services Trade Restrictiveness Index could make a back entry through these regulations and pressurize countries including India to liberalize many services, based on the priorities of developed countries supported by a highly subjective STRI index.

This however is not something "we should be afraid of, but be prepared with our strategies. Since we are not a part of the plurilateral agreement, but benefit from any liberalization by other countries, we are in a better position to use the opportunity," Prasad said.

However, discussing services at WTO as a part of the complete negotiations with give and take between different sectors and areas is still the First Best if agreed to by WTO members, Prasad opined.

In the last few years, India has been spearheading the cause of the poor in the global stage and at the G20 summit held in September 2023 was perhaps a feather on India's cap as it became the voice of

the voiceless south, particularly from African countries. India was instrumental in ensuring African union became a member of the G20 high table.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi focussing on welfare of the poor on the global stage, India stood strong for its MSMEs, farmers & fishermen even at the 12 WTO ministerial conference. The voice of the poor and the vulnerable got strengthened globally by India's stand at the WTO, as Goyal himself had emphasised at that point of time.

India's efforts to bring Members on the table to discuss issues irrespective of the existing geopolitical order has ensured benefit for the developing nations. India has been raising at the WTO meetings not only its own issues but raised the issues of other developing countries, LDCs, poor & vulnerable with great interest.

Goyal after the conclusion of the WTO 12th Ministerial Conference in Geneva in July 2022 had said. India has been 100 percent successful in portraying before the world the priority issues of the developing world including itself. Few countries do attempt to create false campaign, but India obstinate stand thwarted such attempts at the WTO. The WTO ministerials are held once in two year, though there has been some exceptions.

Admitting that India and the Developing countries accepted certain compromising decisions when the WTO was established 30 years ago and during the Uruguay Round of negotiations, Goyal said India today bats on the front foot rather than being fearful on various issues be it Environment, Start-ups, MSMEs or gender equality. This is a result of the confidence of New India. India is able to build consensus & get a Win-Win outcome.

Whether it is related to Agriculture such as MSP reinforcing the relevance of the Public Stockholding Programme towards fulfilling the National Food Safety Programme or PM Garib Kalyan Scheme, TRIPS Waiver, e-Commerce moratorium, response to covid and fisheries, India no longer succumbs to the pressure of the developed world.

On the WTO Reforms agenda, India has maintained that the basic structure and core principles of WTO including Consensus, S&DT provisions, SDG goals, will have to be retained while making it more contemporary. This will not only be good for the WTO but also for the developing and under-developed countries in the future, besides fostering global trade through transparent means. (IPA Service)

## India-China border dispute: A complex quandary

The recent escalation of tensions between India and China along their disputed border underscores the precarious nature of their relationship, as both nations bolster their military presence in the region. India's decision to deploy thousands of soldiers to reinforce its frontier with China signals a significant shift in its strategic posture, with potential ramifications for regional stability and global security.

The deployment of a 10,000-strong unit of soldiers, previously stationed along the western border, to guard the frontier with China highlights the growing sensitivity of this contested region in the eyes of Indian leadership. Additionally, an existing contingent of 9,000 soldiers designated to the disputed border will now operate under a newly created fighting command, further emphasizing the strategic importance of this area.

Nestled in the Himalayas, the disputed border region holds religious significance for Hindus, with some of their holiest shrines located there. Furthermore, it has witnessed significant infrastructure development, reflecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government's push to promote tourism in the area. However, this development has also heightened tensions with China, exacerbating the long-standing border dispute.

The escalation of tensions between India and China is not isolated but reflects broader geopolitical dynamics characterized by nationalist fervor and territorial assertiveness. Both countries' nationalist governments are hardening their stances on the border dispute, with the lack of clarity regarding the border line fueling the potential for hostile encounters and interstate conflict.

The border dispute between India and China dates back to the 1962 war, which resulted in significant casualties for India and a victory for China. Since then, the

two countries have made efforts to manage their differences through diplomacy and bilateral agreements. However, the 2020 border clash, which left casualties on both sides, strained relations and highlighted the unresolved nature of the dispute.

Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, both countries have pursued assertive foreign policies, driven by nationalist narratives and concerns about territorial integrity. The deepening rivalry between the two powers, exacerbated by security cooperation between India and the United States, has further fueled tensions along the disputed border. Despite periodic attempts at de-escalation and dialogue, the underlying issues driving the border dispute remain unresolved. The lack of clarity regarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the absence of mechanisms to prevent skirmishes from escalating into full-blown conflicts pose significant challenges to peace and stability in the region.

In light of these developments, it is imperative for India and China to explore avenues for mutual security assurance along the heavily militarized border. This could involve establishing additional buffer zones in contested areas and strengthening existing border protocols to reduce the risk of escalation. Moreover, a return to regular dialogue at the highest levels is essential to manage distrust and prevent further deterioration of relations between the two countries.

Ultimately, the India-China border dispute is a complex and multifaceted issue with far-reaching implications for regional and global security. Resolving this dispute will require sustained diplomatic efforts and a willingness to compromise on both sides. Failure to address these issues risks further escalation and instability in one of the world's most volatile regions.

## China's National People's Congress ends with confidence but less exuberance

By Satvaki Chakraborty

The seven day session of the China's National People's Congress ended on Monday in Beijing with a call for mobilizing the resources of the country for the building of a robust economy based on high tech and AI. There was the customary declaration about the more closer unity of the people under the Communist Party's leadership with President Xi Jinping at the core.

The NPC is like Indian parliament and its importance in China is far less compared to the Congress of the Communist Party (CPC) which was last held in October 2022. So that way, the NPC delegates numbering around 2,000 could review the performance of the Chinese economy and polity in the last seventeen months since the Party Congress and take some course corrections.

In fact, this process of course correction has been a continuous process of the functioning of the CPC since Xi Jinping took over the leadership in 2012. In the last twelve years, there had been excesses in dealing with the chiefs of the state owned bodies as also CEOs of high tech companies. Harsh treatment was meted to the owners of leading real estate companies as also finance bodies. But in the last one year, President Xi has taken measures to dilute the earlier harsh decisions to ensure that the high tech sector does not slow down by any means. The deliberations at the just concluded NPC vindicated that stand of the Party supreme Xi.

The NPC deliberations signal two important trends. First, the main focus will be on achieving 5 per cent growth in the economy during 2024 and this will have to be achieved with the increased participation of high tech sectors which have to reach a much higher level with the help of AI to take on the United States in terms of the size of the economy in coming years. As a follow up of this, some of the high tech CEOs who had to face wrath from President Xi in earlier years, have been rehabilitated. The mainland friendly Chinese-American techies have been encouraged to come back to the country and participate in the massive developmental programme.

The NPC confirmed the priorities of innovation and self-reliance in technology, particularly as the United States and its allies continue to place arbitrary economic, trade and financial sanctions on Chinese companies and individuals. The Chinese leadership does not foresee any major geopolitical tensions in 2024. Though the defence spending has been hiked by 7.2 per cent for 2024, the amount is much less than the US spending. Analysts say that finally, the hike may be less at the end of the year.

The big focus on economy during 2024 has been given



on the basis of the CPC leadership's understanding that China has time till the end of the year to concentrate solely on economic development as the geopolitical situation is not expected to deteriorate significantly during the year to adversely affect China's interests. Rather, the situation may help China in the coming months in terms of geopolitics. Xi Jinping's trusted friend President Putin is getting elected for the fifth term in the presidential elections held in Russia on March 17 next. Russia is a strategic ally and China is the dominating power among the two. Putin's election is positive for China's geopolitical aims. Then the elections to European Union in June this year. There will be a far right shift but this will be more nationalistic and anti-US in tone. China can gain from EU shift in terms of trade from the European nations in the coming period.

Most important is the Presidential elections in USA in November this year. If Donald Trump wins, there will be an impact on trade relations and tariff war may intensify. But at the same time, Trump is a deal master, he is interested in getting something to show the Americans. China has enough weapons in its kitty to arrive at a win win situation for both through such deals... US high tech is very important for China for its speedy growth. China will work for that irrespective of President Biden or Donald Trump in White House in 2025.

China under Xi Jinping is genuinely concerned at the prospect of the US circumscribing it, politically, economically and even militarily. This could take many forms. Xi has a keen eye for the latest developments in science and technology, information and cyber warfare, and he knows the problems which the US could create for aspiring China to take its rightful place in 2049. While keeping its option open for collaboration with the US on hi-tech space and

infra projects where does India stand within Xi's vision of New China? India, according to the new vision of Xi, is not a big player in global scenario, but Chinese leaders take into account seriously that India is giving some competition to China in the area of economy.

India is the largest functioning democracy in the world in terms of population. China does not like a vibrant democracy like India to fare better in terms of economy. China is angry that Indian government is taking restrictive measures against the Chinese companies operating in the country. Simultaneously, China is also worried that some of the top US hi-tech companies are considering shifting some scheduled investments from China to India. China has taken note that just as China is aspiring to emerge as the largest economy in the world overtaking USA by 2049, India also is set to become the third largest economy shortly surpassing Japan and Germany. Right now, India is the fourth largest economy.

Indian commentators term the 21st century as the "Asian century led by China and India". Our government leaders also say so. But the Chinese commentators always say that the 21st century is the Chinese century. They never mention that India, Vietnam and Indonesia will also be the other partners in that century. Like Mohan Bhagwat of RSS, who talks of Akhand Bharat as his dream, China also talks of a Greater China. In fact, China is more comfortable with the right wing government in India, rather than the prospect of a liberal centre-left government led by the Congress and other non-BJP parties.

While keeping options open for dialogue with China under Xi Jinping, the Indian government has to be reconciled to the fact that China views India as a part of the US global strategy of containing China. This was not the position five years ago. The membership of QUAD and participation of India alongwith US and Australia in the Indian Ocean exercises have angered China and blinkered its view on India. India has to closely monitor the developments in the global politics and use its flexibility more in its diplomacy with the big nations.

India has to be prepared for a long haul in respect of its relationship with China. The purported "Amrit Kaal" of Narendra Modi is spread over the next 23 years to reach 2047; while China's Amrit Kaal covers the next 25 years till 2049. The march will be on parallel lines for the two biggest populated countries of the world. China, a monolithic political system and India, a thriving chaos of democracy. The last congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2022 and the latest National People's Congress maintain the Chinese position of seeing India as emerging rival economic power. (IPA Service)

### POST BAG

## CAA: A political gimmick

Sir/Ma'am

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has been perceived as a 'political gimmick' strategically timed before the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Critics question the timing, suggesting that if the Union government was genuinely committed to the CAA, it could have been notified earlier. The sudden notification just before the elections raises suspicions regarding its true intent. Moreover, there is skepticism about the CAA being used as a tool to deceive the public, especially considering the complexities of granting citizenship. The assertion is clear: discrimination based on religion or caste is unacceptable, and the CAA's potential for such discrimination

is troubling. The issue extends further as questions arise about the inclusivity and effectiveness of the CAA. People wonder whether the CAA portal will genuinely accommodate individuals from all religions, or if it will perpetuate biases. Additionally, there is irony in the ruling party questioning the citizenship of individuals who supported them in elections. This contradiction highlights the political dynamics at play and underscores the need for transparent and equitable citizenship policies.

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## Interconnected issues, voices from the margins: The Indo-Pacific needs an inclusive climate policy

By: **Ambika Vishwanath & Aditi Mukund**

Amidst geopolitical flux and increasing tensions, the Indo-Pacific remains one of the world's most important economic and geopolitical regions. This shared space comprises 40 economies, 65% of the world's population (around 4.3 billion people) and \$47.19 trillion in economic activity. The threat from climate change looms large in the region, endangering millions of lives and potentially having a significant impact on global economic growth.

Recognising its strategic importance and these potential vulnerabilities, many of the world's major geopolitical players – whether situated in the region or beyond – have drawn out security blueprints and policy programs focused on the Indo-Pacific over the past decade.

A number of these actors, including Germany, the United States, Canada, France, South Korea, and Bangladesh, have incorporated climate security and its various dimensions into their strategies. But efforts to engage with the climate challenge within a geopolitical framework will remain lacking if the diverse needs of the Indo-Pacific's people are not included.

Our research at Kubernein Initiative has focused on the human impact of the interconnectedness of climate change (in terms of weather patterns and more frequent and intense natural hazards), with urban development as well as more "traditional" security concerns, faced by the people in the Indo-Pacific.

The Indian Ocean region is referred to as the "World Hazard Belt", where earthquakes and tsunamis occur frequently. Challenges include, but are not limited to, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and the intensified occurrences of typhoons, cyclones, floods, droughts, heatwaves, and other natural disasters. By 2050, over 80% of the population in the Indo-Pacific could be directly impacted by climate change, a 15% increase since 2000. Climate change as a "threat multiplier" is a term now widely used to describe the cascading effects onto several overlapping areas: migration of people, resource scarcity, growing urban population, human health and well-being, livelihoods and economic security, agricultural productivity and related livelihoods.

For example, the Indo-Pacific produces over 50% of the total global captured fish – more than any other region. However, ocean warming, changing levels of salinity, and sea level rise affect the presence and availability of fish and aquatic life, thereby impacting the livelihoods of fishing-dependent communities and increasing the incidence of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing.

A decline in fishing activity in the region could have major downstream impacts on women and marginalised groups that are typically economically dependent on fishing. For instance, in Asia women comprise around 72% of the aquaculture industry, whose livelihoods are threatened, thereby hampering their economic security and ability to contribute to the growth of the aquaculture industry. In recognising the transnational nature of climate change, it becomes evident that the imperative for climate action extends beyond any single state, necessitating, instead, a concerted and collaborative approach that encompasses not only individual states but also regional organisations and governments.

Regional "multilateral" groupings are proving to be effective, including incorporating ideas of inclusivity – referring to the inclusion of a wider gamut of stakeholders to foster more equitable outcomes – into traditional strategic efforts. For example, attempts to ensure considerations of gender and equality form a part of all policies including security and external affairs are gaining traction through provisions like ASEAN's Gender Mainstreaming Framework.

As it becomes clear that climate change holds a central position in the Indo-Pacific strategies of various states and regional organisations, there is a substantial gap in understanding where the risks lie and whom they affect, leading to setbacks in advancing cooperation on climate security. Differences exist among industrialised, developing, and least-developed nations in the region regarding matters like climate finance, loss and damage, and emissions reduction targets, leading to a lack of consensus on priority areas.

While human security issues are given precedence, these disparities persist. For example, despite the growing use of military capabilities for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations in the region, concerns related to military security and competing geopolitical interests take precedence over those associated with climate security.

Tensions between China and the West to gain influence in the Pacific have provided an opening to discuss climate action, but this so far is motivated more by securing geopolitical interests. The ramifications of climate change remain inadequately defined, and when strategies are evaluated on the criterion of inclusivity, have a long way to go.

### Lack of inclusivity

The current lack of inclusivity in climate action is visible in two major ways. The first involves overlooking the disproportionate and differentiated impact of climate change on women and vulnerable groups. Vulnerabilities span socio-economic status and geographic location, creating a mosaic of challenges across the region. Small island developing states in the Pacific face existential threats from rising sea levels, while communities in Southeast Asia contend with the increasing frequency of severe storms.

The Pacific Islands or Bangladesh are responsible for a mere 0.03% and 0.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions respectively, but face repercussions disproportionately with numerous cascading effects. Fiji, for example,

has planned a relocation for 42 villages due to a rise in sea levels and soil that is unfit for agriculture because of high salt content. Bangladesh is facing a future of at least one super cyclone every year in the coming decades.

The second involves marginalised voices not being represented in climate multilateralism. Gender-blind or non-inclusive climate action is a risk multiplier. Within certain geographies, impact is particularly evident in societies where women often play central roles in agriculture and resource management. This is well documented but not often used to prompt change in policies. As climate change disrupts these activities, it not only jeopardises the livelihoods of women and exacerbates existing gender inequalities, but it also further risks long-term economic security of a state.

A 2014 study found that in societies where the socioeconomic status of women is low, natural disasters kill more women than men – both directly and indirectly through related post-disaster events. For example, around 70% of the fatalities from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami were women. Any policy that does not consider inclusivity is likely to fail in the long term.

Ideally, regional and global processes should be informed by hyperlocal socioeconomic realities. Climate action cannot be blanket and must be tailored to specific needs, while also learning from indigenous and local practices that have a history in resilience. Promoting inclusivity in multilateralism across the Indo-Pacific thus becomes a crucial baseline, with context-specific approaches that are collaborative in nature and consider local and regional perspectives.

As an example, in the case of Australia, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Development Policy commits to 80% gender equality in investments in partner countries around the world, with a commitment to ensure at least half of all projects will have a climate change objective.

Efforts like this could move the needle on closing the climate financing gap alongside the needs of women – an important objective, since only about 0.01% of all worldwide funding supports projects that address both climate change and women's rights. A key example of a collaborative approach is Australia's support for the Gender Response Alternative for Climate Change, with ActionAid Australia, Monash University, and the Huairou Commission, a women-led grassroots social movement that supports rural and Indigenous communities.

### Partnerships

In navigating the intricate geopolitical terrain of the Indo-Pacific, a paradigm centered on a "partnership" rather than a "prescriptive" stance becomes imperative when applying a gender and inclusivity lens. Indo-Pacific climate multilateralism can glean valuable insights by building cooperative partnerships with local stakeholders well-versed in local risks and security.

The inclusion of a gender lens, or the inclusion of perspectives from marginalised communities, does not necessitate major changes, but is a matter of breaking down silos and enhancing existing initiatives together. This ensures alignment that will ultimately be economically beneficial, and consequently provides robust security resilience.

An often cited example of this is the Barefoot College's "Solar Mama's" project – set up in partnership with governments, civil society, and the private sector – which trains largely rural and non-literate women in solar panel installation, enabling and empowering them to meet the needs of their community.

From 2019-'20, Barefoot College trained 291 women, who would go on to bring clean energy solutions to 45,591 households in 626 communities around the world. This is also an income-generating opportunity for these women, contributing to their economic security and building community resilience; through another program under Barefoot College, 1,500 children were brought into the educational system who would have otherwise not had the opportunity to study.

Similarly, India has sought to incorporate collaboration and inclusivity in global climate efforts through the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, which serve as platforms for Indo-Pacific and global south countries to voice their concerns, coordinate energy access, provide and receive disaster relief, and bolster resilience.

These could be fortified by including a gender action plan, formed in collaboration with other International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure members, that would take gender as a consideration during policy planning, recognise the differentiated impact of policies on women, and involve women as stakeholders in decision-making.

As part of its recent stint as host of the G20 in 2023, India led the formation of a disaster reduction working group, which could learn from the principles of the already existing Sendai Framework that recognises the vulnerabilities women face and the extensive role they play in disaster risk reduction. The challenges from climate change remain common, but its manifestations are varied. Integrating climate action into Indo-Pacific policies in a manner that is inclusive and equitable requires a holistic approach that considers the interconnectedness of environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

Our research on the growing feminist foreign policy discourse as well as on the gender policies of Indo-Pacific players indicate that this is possible. It becomes a matter of connecting these strategies to their climate goals. Climate policies should not exist in isolation, but must be interwoven into broader policy frameworks, reflecting the complexity of the region. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

## The race to understand polar ice sheets

By: **Leslie Carol Roberts**

Residents of flood-prone cities such as Miami, London and New York live with the fear of rising waters inundating their homes, transit systems and businesses during storms. As the waters creep higher each year, people wonder: How far – and how fast – will sea level rise in the years to come? The answer, in large part, lies in the stability of the vast ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica, including the Thwaites Glacier in Western Antarctica, the so-called Doomsday Glacier.

As an ever-growing mountain of research confirms that climate change is leading to more rapid melting of polar ice, the race is on to determine when, where and how polar ice sheets will collapse. This collapse could raise sea level by 6 feet or more by the end of the century – or even sooner.

Glaciologist Richard Alley of Penn State University has studied polar ice for more than 35 years. In the 1990s, his ice-core research shocked the world with the startling finding that the last Ice Age did not come to a gradual end, as long believed, but ended abruptly and violently, with temperatures rising sharply in three short years.

These days, Alley focuses his attention on ice shelves, the extensions of polar glaciers into the sea. Here, massive ice cliffs break off into the ocean in a process called calving. Researchers are still working to understand why some ice shelves calve faster than others and what triggers this instability. Alley and his colleagues explore current research on calving in the 2023 Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

Knowable Magazine spoke with Alley about his work on the calving of ice sheets, and about coping with the ice's uncertain future. This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

### Why study ice shelves?

Greenland and Antarctica are covered in gungunous piles of ice. All piles tend to spread under their own weight, like a ladleful of pancake batter spreads in the pan. If your ice pile spreads into a cold ocean under cold air, it forms floating extensions called ice shelves. These shelves are almost all the way around Antarctica, and there are still a few left in Greenland.

Ice shelves generally have slower-moving ice or rocks along the edges, or they can run aground in shallow areas of the sea floor, generating friction to slow their movement like a spatula can hold back pancake batter. This buttressing of the ice shelves slows the spread of the ice behind them that sits wholly on land, keeping the ice sheet bigger and the ocean smaller. It is this land-based ice that raises alarms about sea level: If it reaches the sea faster, it is a new addition to the world's oceans, so waters rise.

### How does climate change affect this picture?

Ice shelves melt on their underside, due to warmer water temperatures. During summer, warmer air temperatures can melt the ice from above. This causes thinning. As ice shelves thin, they can generate less friction along their sides or against shallow areas of the sea floor. And, beyond some threshold, ice shelves can completely break up, reducing buttressing to zero.

Oversimplifying a little, whether or not this calving becomes rapid will control whether or not the Antarctic ice sheet becomes an important contributor to sea-level rise by 2100 or before, and whether it grows to dominate sea-level rise within the following century or so.

What we want to know is: What controls when ice shelves break off? When do things break and when do they break slow? When does an ice shelf get lost, versus merely getting shorter? The Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica is in more or less the same position as when it was discovered in 1841 and for many millennia preceding. The Larsen B ice shelf sat there for 10,000 years and didn't change a lot, then it went away in five weeks.

### How are you trying to understand this?

Members of our broader research group are

working extensively in the field. This especially involves the International Thwaites Glacier Collaboration, the major project to learn what is going on in the most vulnerable part of the most vulnerable ice sheet in the Antarctic, the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, which includes the Thwaites Glacier. After seasons lost to Covid, a major expedition will be traversing down Thwaites, using radars, seismic sensors and more to characterise the ice and its bed.

Other groups are working farther downstream, extending work that has been done on the ice shelf and in the ocean beyond. Thwaites is vast, larger than the state of Florida. It is some 80 miles across, making it arguably the widest glacier on Earth. Since the 1990s, scientists have reported on the increased velocity of its movement and the doubling of its contribution to sea-level rise. Its collapse would trigger meters of sea-level rise in the decades and centuries to come, hence its popular nickname in the media, Doomsday Glacier.

Our group, led by my colleague Sridhar Anandakrishnan, has also been working to understand the mechanisms of iceberg calving as part of a collaboration examining the great ice cliff of Helheim Glacier in southeastern Greenland. This work is supported by remote sensing, modelling, theory and even laboratory experiments.

Really seeing the great ice in the field is a transformative experience for many people. I had the remarkable experience of going to Greenland with 10 US senators as a guide to the ice, and they were truly impressed by the power, and the potential for loss of ice. We flew along the front of Jakobshavn Glacier, which drains the ice sheet into the ocean, watching a cliff taller than a 30-story building and knowing that about nine times that much extended below the water. It did not break while we were there, but when it does, seismologists around the Earth will see the earthquake waves and know what happened.

### Do you and your team have any indication about what determines whether an ice shelf will break?

Much recent work, including papers led by Karen Alley (my daughter, and a professor at the University of Manitoba) and by Shujie Wang at Penn State, offer an increasingly clear picture of how ice shelves break. How and where and when ice shelves break is determined by multiple factors.

One fascinating process goes something like this: Melting beneath ice shelves usually involves relatively warm, salty ocean waters flowing in and reaching the deep part of the ice shelf where it first starts to float. When the ice melts there, this freshens the ocean water a little, so it rises along the base of the ice shelf, generating turbulence that mixes in more warm water and drives more melting.

What we are learning is that meltwaters on the underside of an ice shelf don't stay spread out across the whole base of the shelf. Instead, they localise into plumes that carve channels in the ice. These channels often form at the edges of the ice shelf. The channels at the edges cut upward, weakening the edges until they may break, removing the friction from the sides and transferring stress to where the ice starts to float. If that stress becomes enough, the whole ice shelf breaks off.

### There's a lot of fascinating information coming out of the Thwaites Glacier Collaboration. Is the news good or bad?

There surely is some bad news, but the work is also revealing some good news if you're hoping that sea level does not rise rapidly. There are ways that the glacier tends to stabilise where it is, rather than retreating. For example, the rocks beneath are very warm and soft so that as the ice thins and removes weight, the rocks "bob up," partially offsetting the ice loss and keeping the glacier grounded, aided by accumulation of sediment. The bad news discoveries include rapid thinning of the ice shelf from warm waters circulating beneath.

### What are the challenges in predicting how much warming will ultimately cause the Thwaites Glacier to break apart?

Some of this is really difficult, especially where fractures are involved. Think about ce-

ramic coffee cups dropped on hard floors. Sometimes the coffee cup just bounces, or the rim chips, or the handle breaks off, but sometimes the whole thing shatters. Scientists can accurately predict the average behaviour of a lot of coffee cups dropped on a lot of floors, if you tell us the height of the drop, the type of floor, the type of cup and a few other things. But predicting the exact behaviour of the next cup dropped is really difficult, in part because the behaviour depends on whether there are small cracks buried deep in the material of the cup, among others. Predicting exactly how much warming is needed to break parts of Thwaites will be harder than predicting coffee cups.

### Sounds like there's still a lot of uncertainty here. How should policymakers cope with that?

First of all, the uncertainties are not our friend. There is basically no way that sea-level rise can be notably smaller than expected. When we make the climate warmer, the ocean warms up. That makes the water expand, which raises sea level. That's relatively easy.

The glaciers in the mountains are doing what we projected decades ago: They really are melting. That takes water that was ice out of the mountains and puts it into the ocean, and that raises sea level. Those are fairly easy predictions. There are not large uncertainties in those.

The uncertainties are: Will the ice shelves break off, will the flow of the big ice sheets change a lot, with the potential to drive these very large, rapid sea-level rises. So the uncertainties are on the bad side.

In other areas of our lives, we tend to invest a lot to avoid the possibility of a catastrophe, even if we are not sure it is going to happen. The example I like to use is highway safety. We have highway engineers, we have crumple zones in the car, we have airbags and antilock brakes and seatbelts and we have police out there trying to stop drunken drivers. We are not very likely to get killed by a drunken driver, but the catastrophe would be so bad if it happened that we invest a lot in heading that off.

What would make sense may be to think about sea-level rise and our response to it with the same sort of lens: There are things we can do to better understand why it happens and what the causes are. Next steps might be communities taking steps that reflect scientific findings, which of course have economic as well as social benefits.

### You are also trained as an engineer and have thoughts about seawalls and their shortfalls. Do you see other paths forward that communities and cities working to defend themselves against rising seas might follow?

If calving really accelerates, it would be really, really expensive to design coastal defences to protect against the larger possible sea-level rise. How many billion dollars are you going to spend on defending against a meter of sea-level rise, and then you get 2 meters and get flooded? That's partly why this uncertainty is so concerning.

Instead, we can get serious about research on the risk of sea-level rise. The cost of the research to reduce the uncertainties is small in comparison. This can seem self-serving because, while I'm an old guy and won't do much of the research, it will be done by our students, by colleagues, by friends. But I think you will find across the board in our field that we believe more research is cost-effective. Because of the chance of something worse happening – what's that going to cost on the coasts?

### And yet, you say you're optimistic?

The optimistic part is that we can solve climate change now in ways that help the economy. When I was in school the only thing solar was good for was satellites and calculators. It was nowhere close to being competitive. But now, it is cheaper to add renewables than anything else. Putting more investment into renewable energy is economically favourable, as well as environmentally favourable. When I was young, we did not know we could do it, but now we know we can. (Courtesy: The Wire)

## Arctic could go without ice for first time by 2030 under all emission scenarios: Study

By: **Rohini Krishnamurthy**

The Arctic is projected to go ice-free for the first time by August or September of 2030 under all emission scenarios, according to a new study.

Further, the Arctic Ocean could see frequent occurrences of ice-free conditions by mid-century (by 2035-2067), the paper published in journal Nature Reviews Earth & Environment stated.

"Our study also focuses on the frequency of ice-free conditions, rather than just when the first-time ice-free conditions are reached," Alexandra Jahn, from the University of Colorado Boulder, told Down To Earth.

This, she added, is important as Arctic sea ice will not cease to exist after going ice-free for the first time. "So it is important to also know how frequently ice-free conditions will reoccur in the future," she noted.

Arctic sea ice cover – which includes the sea ice area, extent, and thickness – has declined since the beginning of satellite observations in 1978. They

could see ice-free conditions occur in the next few decades, probably the first for at least 80,000 years.

"The transition to an ice-free Arctic signifies a regime shift from a perennial sea ice cover to a seasonal sea ice cover, or from a white summer Arctic to a blue Arctic," the researchers wrote in their review.

Jahn and her colleagues outlined predictions of the ice-free Arctic, including for September and other months. To quantify ice-free projections, the team analysed monthly sea ice using climate models.

After reviewing papers for the definition of ice-free conditions, they found that they have varied over time. Previously, it was re-

ferred to as the nearly complete disappearance of all sea ice. But now, scientists have agreed to designate the Arctic ice-free when the ocean has less than 1 million square kilometres of ice. In recent years, the Arctic

Ocean had around 3.3 million square kilometres of sea ice at its minimum in September. Arctic sea ice reaches its minimum extent in September every year.

The paper highlighted that under all future emission scenarios, the first ice-free day in the Arctic could occur over 10 years earlier than previous projections.

The frequency at which ice-free conditions occur could vary depending on future warming levels. For instance, if ice-free conditions occur for warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, they are un-

likely to reoccur for several decades. But if warming exceeds 2°C or 3°C, September ice-free conditions would likely re-occur every two or three years or almost every year, respectively.

And if temperatures stay within the 1.5°C mark or only exceed this limit for a short time, there is a less than 10 per cent chance that the Arctic will not become ice-free.

The paper also said the Arctic is resilient and can bounce back to normalcy if the atmosphere cools down.

Model projections show a decline in the probability of the Arctic facing ice-free conditions when temperatures go down by 2050 by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. "This recovery follows the same relationship as the melt, so we get the same amount of sea ice back for a given cooling as we lose for a given warming," Jahn explained.

The team next plans to look at predictions of daily ice-free conditions, which has not been done so far. (Courtesy: Down To Earth)



# House passes bill that would lead to a TikTok ban if Chinese owner doesn't sell

WASHINGTON, March 13: The House on Wednesday passed a bill that would lead to a nationwide ban of the popular video app TikTok if its China-based owner doesn't sell, as lawmakers acted on concerns that the company's current ownership structure is a national security threat.

The bill, passed by a vote of 352-65, now goes to the Senate, where its prospects are unclear.

TikTok, which has more than 150 million American users, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Chinese technology firm ByteDance Ltd.

The lawmakers contend that ByteDance is beholden to the Chinese government, which could demand access to the data of TikTok's consumers in the US any time it wants. The worry stems from a set of Chinese national security laws that compel organisations to assist with intelligence gathering.

"We have given TikTok a clear choice," said Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash. "Separate from your parent company ByteDance, which is beholden to the CCP (the Chinese Communist Party), and remain operational in the United

States, or side with the CCP and face the consequences. The choice is TikTok's."

House passage of the bill is only the first step. The Senate would also need to pass the measure for it to become law, and lawmakers in that chamber indicated it would undergo a thorough review. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said he'll have to consult with relevant committee chairs to determine the bill's path.

President Joe Biden has said if Congress passes the measure, he will sign it.

The House vote is poised to open a new front in the long-running feud between lawmakers and the tech industry. Members of Congress have long been critical of tech platforms and their expansive influence, often clashing with executives over industry practices. But by targeting TikTok, lawmakers are singling out a platform popular with millions of people, many of whom skew younger, just months before an election.

Opposition to the bill was also bipartisan. Some Republicans said the US should warn consumers

if there are data privacy and propaganda concerns, while some Democrats voiced concerns about the impact a ban would have on its millions of users in the US, many of which are entrepreneurs and business owners.

"The answer to authoritarianism is not more authoritarianism," said Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Calif. "The answer to CCP-style propaganda is not CCP-style oppression. Let us slow down before we blunder down this very steep and slippery slope."

Ahead of the House vote, a top national security official in the Biden administration held a closed-door briefing Tuesday with lawmakers to discuss TikTok and the national security implications. Lawmakers are balancing those security concerns against a desire not to limit free speech online.

"What we've tried to do here is be very thoughtful and deliberate about the need to force a divestiture of TikTok without granting any authority to the executive branch to regulate content or go after any American company," said Rep. Mike Gal-

agher, the bill's author, as he emerged from the briefing.

TikTok has long denied that it could be used as a tool of the Chinese government. The company has said it has never shared U.S. user data with Chinese authorities and won't do so if it is asked. To date, the US government also has not provided any evidence that shows TikTok shared such information with Chinese authorities. The platform has about 170 million users in the US.

The security briefing seemed to change few minds, instead solidifying the views of both sides.

"We have a national security obligation to prevent America's most strategic adversary from being so involved in our lives," said Rep. Nick LaLota, R-N.Y.

But Rep. Robert Garcia, D-Calif., said no information has been shared with him that convinces him TikTok is a national security threat. "My opinion, leaving that briefing, has not changed at all," he said.

"This idea that we're going to ban, essentially,

entrepreneurs, small business owners, the main way how young people actually communicate with each other is to me insane," Garcia said.

"Not a single thing that we heard in today's classified briefing was unique to TikTok. It was things that happen on every single social media platform," said Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Calif.

Republican leaders have moved quickly to bring up the bill after its introduction last week. A House committee approved the legislation unanimously, on a 50-vote, even after their offices were inundated with calls from TikTok users demanding they drop the effort. Some offices even shut off their phones because of the onslaught.

Lawmakers in both parties are anxious to confront China on a range of issues. The House formed a special committee to focus on China-related issues. And Schumer directed committee chairs to begin working with Republicans on a bipartisan China competition bill.

Senators are expressing an openness to the bill but suggested they don't want to rush ahead. (AP)

## Nepal PM Prachanda wins vote of confidence in Parliament for 3rd time amidst political uncertainty

KATHMANDU, March 13: Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" on Wednesday secured a vote of confidence in Parliament, as the Himalayan country struggled to maintain political stability due to the frequent shifting of alliances.

Prachanda, 69, a former guerrilla leader belonging to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) -- the third largest party in the House of Representatives (HoR) -- received 157 votes in the 275-member lower house.

Altogether 268 MPs were present during the voting. A total of 110 votes were cast against him while one lawmaker abstained from voting. Prachanda needed 138 votes to win the trust vote, his third since assuming charge in December 2022.

"The Prime Minister has won the vote of confidence," announced Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire, amidst cheers from the ruling coalition members.

The vote comes days after the Maoist leader dumped the Nepali Congress and forged a new alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist).

According to constitutional provisions, a prime minister has to take a vote of confidence after an

ally withdraws support to the ruling coalition. The Nepali Congress is the largest party in the HoR.

Prachanda's new political alliance is with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML) led by former prime minister K P Sharma Oli, who was regarded as a top critic of the Maoist leader.

CPN (UML) Chair Oli has said they formed the new alliance as there were problems in the previous ruling alliance.

He said the government has been reconstituted as per the wish of the Prime Minister and with their backing since the alliance with the Nepali Congress became inconvenient.

Prachanda became the prime minister for the third term on December 25, 2022.

Last year, Prachanda faced a floor test after the Oli-led CPN-UML withdrew its support to the Prachanda-led government following a rift over backing the main opposition party's candidate for the presidential poll.

In the first floor test on January 10, 2023, Prachanda received 268 votes. The Prime Minister had to take the floor test for the second time only three months later after he again broke ties with the CPN-UML and forged an alliance with

the Nepali Congress in March. He had received 172 votes at the time.

In the 2017 election, Prachanda and Oli merged their parties and secured a comfortable majority. Oli became the prime minister, but their partnership ended halfway following differences between them.

Meanwhile, in an editorial, The Kathmandu Post said, "Overnight political change isn't something new in Nepal. So when Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal broke ties with the Nepali Congress and switched over to the CPN-UML last week, people were hardly surprised."

In the past few decades, three big parties -- the Nepali Congress, the CPN-UML and the Maoist Centre -- have ruled the country turn by turn, forever changing coalitions and partners at their convenience.

"Friends turning foes and vice-versa in the course of accumulating power and perks has become accepted practice across parties," the newspaper noted.

"Given the quick pace of Nepali politics, it will not be long before the UML's new commitment to helping the country achieve a semblance of political stability and economic growth is put to test," the editorial said. (PTI)

## 'We should enhance mutual trust and avoid misunderstanding and misjudgement' China says boundary issue with India does not represent entirety of bilateral ties

BEIJING, March 13: China on Wednesday said the Sino-India boundary issue does not represent the entirety of the bilateral ties and called for enhancing mutual trust between the two countries to "avoid misunderstanding and misjudgement".

India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

Bilateral ties nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in more than four decades.

Responding to questions on External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's remarks this week that the amassing of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has "not served either of us well", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said, the boundary issue should be placed appropriately in the bilateral ties.

"China has stressed multiple times that the boundary question does not represent the entirety of China-India relations, and it should be placed appropriately in the bilateral relations and managed properly", Wang said.

While responding to a query from a Chinese diplomat at the 'Express Adda' on Monday, Jaishankar said, "I think it is in our common interest that we should not have that many forces on the Line of Actual Control (LAC)."

"It is in our common interest that we should observe the agreements that we have signed. And I believe that it is not just in our common interest and it is in China's interest as well."

This tension that we have seen for the last four years has not served either of us well, Jaishankar said.



Wang, in his reply, said "Both China and India believe that an early settlement of the situation on the China-India border serves the common interests of both countries".

"We hope that the two sides will follow the common understandings between the leaders of the two countries and the spirit of relevant agreements, maintain communication through diplomatic and military channels, and find a solution to relevant border issues that can be accepted by both sides at an early date", he said.

China hopes that India will work in the same direction as China and approach the bilateral relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective, he said.

"We should enhance mutual trust and avoid misunderstanding and misjudgement. We should step up dialogue and cooperation and avoid setting up obstacles. We should handle differences properly and avoid creating disputes. In this way, we will bring the bilateral relations to a sound and steady track of development", he said.

When pointed out that Jaishankar's comments referred to the resolution of the present standoff in eastern Ladakh where the two countries deployed thousands of troops, while China referred to the overall boundary issue, Wang said, "The two things in nature are the same."

He reiterated China's hope that India can work with China in the same direction, follow the common understandings reached by leaders of the two countries as well as the spirit of relevant agreements, maintain communication via diplomatic and military channels and find a mutually acceptable solution for relevant border issues as soon as possible.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a standoff in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong Tso (lake) area. The eastern Ladakh standoff has resulted in a freeze of bilateral ties on all fronts except trade.

The two sides have so far held 21 rounds of corps commanders-level talks to resolve the standoff.

According to the Chinese military, the two sides so far agreed to disengage from four points, namely the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban (Gogra).

India is pressing the PLA to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok, maintaining that there cannot be restoration of normalcy in its relations with China as long as the state of the borders remains abnormal. (PTI)

## Putin says Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if its sovereignty or independence is threatened

MOSCOW, March 13: President Vladimir Putin said that Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if there is a threat to its statehood, sovereignty or independence, voicing hope that the US would refrain from actions that could trigger a nuclear conflict.

Putin's statement was another blunt warning to the West ahead of a presidential vote this week in which he's all but certain to win another six-year term.

In an interview with Russian state television released early Wednesday, Putin described U.S. President Joe Biden as a veteran politician who fully understands possible dangers of escalation, and said that he doesn't think that the world is heading to a nuclear war.

At the same time, he emphasized that Russia's nuclear forces are in full readiness and "from the military-technical viewpoint, we're prepared."

Putin said that in line with the country's security doctrine, Moscow is ready to use nuclear weapons in case of a threat to "the existence of the Russian state, our sovereignty and independence."

The Russian leader has repeatedly talked about his readiness to use nuclear weapons since launching the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The most recent such threat came in his state-of-the-nation address last month, when he



warned the West that deepening its involvement in the fighting in Ukraine would risk a nuclear war.

Asked in the interview if he has ever considered using battlefield nuclear weapons in Ukraine, Putin responded that there has been no need for that.

He also voiced confidence that Moscow will achieve its goals in Ukraine and held the door open for talks, emphasizing that Russia will hold onto its gains and would seek firm guarantees from the West.

"It shouldn't be a break for the enemy to rearm but a serious talk involving the

regions. One of the drones hit an oil refinery in the Ryazan region, injuring at least two people and sparking a fire. Another drone was downed as it was approaching a refinery near St. Petersburg.

Ukraine, meanwhile, reported more Russian attacks early Wednesday.

A Russian strike killed two people and injured another five in the town of Myrnohrad in the eastern region of Donetsk, about 30 kilometers (about 20 miles) from the front line, according to Gov. Vadym Filashkin. Local rescuers managed to pull a 13-year-old girl out of the rubble of an apartment building that was hit by a Russian missile.

A five-story building in the northern city of Sumy was struck by a drone launched from Russia overnight and 10 people were rescued from the rubble, including eight who sustained injuries, according to the regional administration.

In President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hometown in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, the death toll from a Russian missile attack the previous night rose to four, said Gov. Serhii Lysak. He said that 43 people were wounded in of Kryvyi Rih, including 12 children, the youngest of them two and eleven-month-old.

"Every day our cities and villages suffer similar attacks. Every day Ukraine loses people because of Russian evil," Zelenskyy said. (AP)

## Important to have tools to tackle rise in extremism: UK PM Rishi Sunak

LONDON, March 13: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday said his government is committed to having tools in place to tackle a rise in extremist activity that is seeking to hijack the country's democratic institutions.

Addressing Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons, the British Indian leader alluded to reports of a new definition of extremism set to be tabled in Parliament on Thursday and stressed that the new strategy would not impact free speech. The new measures are expected to ban groups or individuals who promote an ideology based on intolerance, hatred or violence and clearly set out which groups and individuals the UK government can support or fund.

"There has actually been a rise in extremist activity that is seeking to hijack our democratic institutions...it is important that we have the tools to tackle this threat," said Sunak.

"This is absolutely not about silencing those with private and peaceful beliefs, nor will it impact free speech, which we on this side of the House will always strive to protect," he said.

The comments follow a joint statement from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell, warning the new expanded definition of extremism poses a risk to the country's Muslim communities.

Their statement reads: "The new definition being proposed not only inadvertently threatens freedom of speech, but also the right to worship and peaceful protest -- things that have been hard won and form the fabric of a civilised society."

"Crucially, it risks disproportionately targeting Muslim communities, who are already experiencing rising levels of hate and abuse."

The senior clerics of the church of England said they were concerned about the proposed strategy's implications for public life in the UK.

"The UK has a proud history of welcoming people from all walks of life and celebrating diversity. We are a community of communities. Our leaders should cherish and promote that -- and pursue policies that bring us together, not risk driving us apart," they added.

The strategy, expected to be elaborated on Thursday, follows Sunak's impassioned speech from the podium at 10 Downing Street in London earlier this month to warn that the country's democratic and multi-faith values were under threat by extremists.

"The time has now come for us all to stand together to combat the forces of division and beat this poison. We must face down the extremists who would tear us apart," he said, warning that "Islamist extremists and the far right feed off and embolden each other". (PTI)

## 'Boeing will also add weekly compliance checks for all work teams in the Renton factory, where Max jets are assembled' Boeing promises changes after getting poor grades in a government audit of manufacturing quality

ARLINGTON, March 13: Responding to a US government audit, Boeing said Tuesday that it would work with employees found to have violated company manufacturing procedures to make sure they understand instructions for their jobs.

The aircraft maker detailed its latest steps to correct lapses in quality in a memo to employees from Stan Deal, president of Boeing's commercial plane division.

The memo went out after the Federal Aviation Administration finished a six-week review of the company's manufacturing processes for the 737 Max jetliner after a panel blew off one of the planes during an Alaska Airlines flight on January 5.

The FAA reviewed 89 aspects of production at Boeing's plant in Renton, Washington, and found the company failed 33 of them, according to a person familiar with the report. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss de-

tails that have not been publicly released -- although they were reported earlier by The New York Times, which saw a slide presentation on the government's audit.

"The vast majority" of violations found by the FAA involved workers not following Boeing's approved procedures, Deal said in his memo.

Deal said the company will take remedial steps that include "working with each employee noted with a non-compliance during the audit to ensure they fully understand the work instructions and procedures."

Boeing will also add weekly compliance checks for all work teams in the Renton factory, where Max jets are assembled, he said.

Deal acknowledged a recent conclusion by a panel of government and industry experts that found Boeing's procedures for ensuring safety were too complicated and changed too often.

"Our teams are working to simplify and



streamline our processes and address the panel's recommendations," he told staff.

The day before the blowout on Alaska Airlines flight 1282, engineers and technicians at the airline wanted to remove the plane from service to examine a warning light tied to the plane's pressurization system, but the airline kept flying the plane and scheduled a maintenance check for late the following night, The New York

Times reported Tuesday. Before that could happen, however, a door-plug panel blew off the jet 16,000 feet (4,800 metres) over Oregon.

Alaska told The Associated Press that the maintenance plan "was in line with all processes and procedures. Nothing required or suggested that the aircraft needed to be pulled from service."

Bret Oestreich, president of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association, the union for technicians at Alaska, said there was nothing unusual in Alaska's handling of the matter. He said the warning light does not indicate the location of a possible pressurization issue, and mechanics had been unable to pinpoint a problem after the light tripped on three earlier flights.

The earlier cabin-pressurisation warnings caused Alaska to stop using the plane on flights to Hawaii. A few days after the blowout, National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy said the

warnings were unrelated to the accident. A preliminary report pointed to four bolts that were missing after a repair job at the Boeing factory.

Besides the ongoing FAA and NTSB probes, Boeing faces a Justice Department investigation into whether its recent problems -- including the Jan. 5 blowout of an emergency door panel from an Alaska Airlines jet that had taken off from Portland, Oregon -- violate terms of a settlement the company reached in 2021 to avoid criminal prosecution after two crashes of Max jets in 2018 in Indonesia and 2019 in Ethiopia killed 346 people.

Separately on Tuesday, Boeing reported that it received orders for 15 jetliners in February and delivered 27 planes, including two Max jets each to Southwest Airlines and United Airlines. TD Cowen analyst Cai von Rumohr called the deliveries "anemic" but not surprising because of increased FAA scrutiny of the company. (AP)

# Arrests of UNLF(P) leaders in Manipur prompt controversy and heightened tensions

**HT Bureau**  
**IMPHAL, March 13:** The recent arrests of two prominent figures from the United National Liberation Front (P) in a joint operation conducted by Manipur Police, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), and the CRPF have stirred controversy and sparked protests across Imphal, intensifying existing tensions in the region.

Thokchom Thoiba, self-proclaimed army chief of the banned outfit, and Lieutenant Colonel Laimayum Ingba, head of its intelligence department, were apprehended swiftly in a coordinated operation. Following their arrest, the two individuals were promptly transported to Delhi for interrogation by NIA officials.

The UNLF(P), under the leadership of Kh Pamei, had made



headlines when it signed a ceasefire agreement with the central government on November 29, 2023. Despite this purported commitment to peace, concerns persisted among security agen-

cies regarding the outfit's alleged involvement in various violent activities, including recent incidents of arms looting and clashes with security forces.

Sources within security agencies have indicated suspicions that UNLF(P) members have been clandestinely establishing camps in areas predominantly inhabited by the Kuki community. Such activities have exacerbated tensions between different ethnic groups in Manipur, fueling fears of potential escalations in violence and instability.

In response to the arrests, protests have erupted in various parts of Imphal, with demonstrators demanding the immediate release of the detained leaders.

The situation on the ground remains tense, with heavy security deployments observed across sensitive areas of the city.

Amidst the growing unrest, authorities have maintained a conspicuous silence, refraining from issuing an official statement regarding the arrests.

This lack of transparency has only served to deepen the uncertainty surrounding the controversial operation, prompting widespread speculation and raising questions about the motives behind the arrests.

As the community awaits further developments, concerns persist regarding the implications of these arrests on the fragile peace process in Manipur and the broader implications for regional stability.

With tensions running high and uncertainties looming large, the aftermath of these arrests threatens to further exacerbate an already volatile situation in the region.

# Mizoram to review prohibition law: Excise minister



**AIZAWL, March 13:** The Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) government in Mizoram will review the state's prohibition law that banned the sale and consumption of liquor in the state except for certain areas, the assembly was informed on Wednesday.

The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019 was introduced by the previous Mizo National Front (MNF) government.

"The existing prohibition law is under assessment and scrutiny. The law will be reviewed if need arises," Excise and Narcotics Minister Lalghinglova Hmar said in the assembly.

on to upgrade the excise department office building and staff quarters.

There has been debate on various platforms that the existing prohibition law needs to be reviewed as Mizoram has limited sources of revenue and many people died of alcohol consumption despite it being a dry state.

Health Minister Lalrinpui recently informed the assembly that the state registered 438 alcohol-related deaths, including 77 women, during the past 10 months since April last year.

Prohibition was reimposed in 2019 in Mizoram after a gap of four years when the MNF government notified an act on May 28 that year.

With the powerful churches and community-based organisations favouring a stringent prohibition law, Mizoram was virtually dry all the time since India's independence.

Though partial prohibition was in place, the state government allowed opening of wine shops in 1984 under the provisions of the Mizoram Excise Act, 1973 but those shops and bars were closed from 1987 and partial prohibition continued.

The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act of 1995 was enforced on February 20, 1997, imposing a complete ban on liquor.

In January 2015, a new law was notified, that allowed wine shops to open in the state. After coming to power, the MNF changed the policy following its poll promise and moved towards the imposition of dry law again. (PTI)

# Rio opens integrated business hub in Dimapur

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, March 13:** Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio on Wednesday inaugurated the Integrated Business Hub and Innovation Center at Forest colony in Dimapur in the presence of NITI Aayog vice chairman Suman Kumar Bery, representatives of CII, investors, and the business community and entrepreneurs from the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Rio said the Integrated Business Hub has been conceptualised and brought to life to provide a dynamic platform designed to facilitate and support investors, startups, and entrepreneurs alike.

"At the heart of this initiative lies a commitment to streamlining administrative procedures, promoting transparency, and providing quick support to investors. Through a single-point coordination strategy, we aim to simplify processes, and

create an environment that fosters growth and opportunity for all," he said.

Rio assured that proper due diligence, observance of best practices and utmost transparency and meritocracy would be maintained in the establishment and operation of this new facility.

He said priority will be given to Startups, entrepreneurs, and investors who are eager to invest in Nagaland and called for collaborations between local talent and investors to promote innovation and seize untapped opportunities.

He also assured to create opportunities for retail, food courts, corporate offices, marketing fronts for PSUs and innovative enterprises amongst other verticals.

Rio said the integrated business hub will not only serve as office space for investors but also provide modern amenities and a welcoming working environment. He added that it will undergo necessary

renovations to become a contemporary workplace that meets the needs of the modern investor.

He said Nagaland's dedicated support team, comprising representatives from Investment Development Authority of Nagaland and other relevant government departments, will ensure seamless transition to permanent locations for investors. They will also provide essential support services, including legal assistance, information on local business practices, and access to vital resources, he said.

"Our aim is to ensure ease of doing business and single window clearance for our investor partners and corporate friends," he added.

Rio appreciated NITI Aayog for partnering with Nagaland in the field of providing skill development to the youth of the state as part of Skill India with special emphasis in the NE region.

# TMC fields Zenith Sangma from Meghalaya's Tura

**SHILLONG, March 13:** The Opposition Trinamool Congress has selected former minister Zenith M Sangma as its candidate for the Tura parliamentary seat in south Meghalaya, which is currently held by the ruling National People's Party's Agatha K Sangma.

This move is seen as an indirect snub against INDIA bloc member Congress, which had previously announced Saleng A Sangma as its candidate.

The decision effectively terminates any potential Congress-TMC alliance in Meghalaya, a state with only two parliamentary seats. Zenith Sangma is the younger brother of former chief minister Mukul Sangma, who defected from the Congress and joined the TMC prior to the 2023 elections. However, Zenith lost his seat in the assembly elections. (PTI)

**KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WORKS**  
**BRANCH SECRETARIAT**  
**D I P H U - 782486**

No. KAAC/HRN/W-16/2023-24/41 Dtd. 11/03/2024

### SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby Invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. on 16/03/2024 and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

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

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount	A/A Amount	Earnest Money	Time allowed for completion
1.	Construction of road 2500m from Amsoi Tiniali to Bhoksong via Dalimbari road to Ahom Baroi Rongpi Village via Ahom Baroi LP School	Rs. 14,45,000.00	Rs. 14,45,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL=2%	40 Days

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

**Terms & Conditions**  
**N.B.**

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/works for all division under CPWD-21.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender, without which no tender will be accepted.
- The contractor shall Repair/Re-construct if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works. The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuses to Repair/Re-construct the work.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W). KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
  - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
  - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate GST registration.
  - KAAC Registration (Contractual).
  - Call Deposit.
  - Caste Certificate.
  - Bank Account number & Pan Card.
- Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund.  
The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (Works)  
Kerbi Anglong Automomous Council  
Branch Secretariat  
**HAMREN**

**KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WORKS**  
**BRANCH SECRETARIAT**  
**HAMREN 782486**

No. KAAC/HRN/W-17/2023-24/42 Dated 11/03/2024

### SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Short tender affixing Nonrefundable KAAC court lee stamp (Receipt) 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of Works Department and will be receive by the undersigned up 4 P.M. on 16/03/2024 and will opened on the tame date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent if any.

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

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount	A/A Amount	Earnest Money	Time allowed for completion
1	Repairing of Langsomepi LP School at Langsomcpi	Rs. 7,00,000.00	Rs. 7,00,000.00	ST/SC/OBC-1% GENERAL=2%	20 Days
2	Construction of Addl.Class room (3 room)	Rs. 26,95,000.00	Rs. 26,95,000.00	ST/SC/OBC-1% GENERAL=2%	45 Days
3	Construction of Kitchen Set at Langsomcpi LP School	Rs. 11,25,000.00	Rs. 11,25,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL=2%	45 Days
4	Construction of Boys Toilet at Langsomcpi	Rs. 4,00,000.00	Rs. 4,00,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL=2%	30 Days
5	Construction of Girls Toilet at Langsomepi	Rs. 4,00,000.00	Rs. 4,00,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL=2%	30 Days
6	Construction of R.C.C Ring well at Langsomepi LP School	Rs. 2,52,000.00	Rs. 2,52,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL=2%	30 Days

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

**Terms & Conditions**  
**N.B.**

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/works for all division under CPWD-21.
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- The contractor shall Repair/Re-construct if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works. The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuses to Repair/Re-construct the work.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W). KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
  - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (Work)  
Kerbi Anglong Automomous Council  
Branch Secretariat  
**HAMREN**

# Days not far when India becomes global power in semiconductor sector, says PM; attacks past govts

## India's semiconductor dreams were first envisioned during the 1960s

**DHOLERA (GUJARAT), March 13:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday laid the foundation stone of three semiconductor facilities in India at ₹ 1.25 lakh crore, and said the country is eager to play a big role in the semiconductor sector and days are not far when it becomes a global power in this field.

Addressing people after virtually laying the foundation stone of the three semiconductor facilities - two in Gujarat and one in Assam, PM Modi targeted the Congress, accusing the previous governments led by it of failing to convert India's semiconductor dreams into reality due to the "inability" to understand the country's potential, priorities and futuristic needs and its "lack of will and efforts".

Referring to his government's commitment to make the country a semiconductor manufacturing hub, he said when India commits, it delivers, and added that chip manufacturing opens the door of development with infinite possibilities.

"Two years ago, we declared a Semiconductor Mission and announced that we would take initiatives. Within a few months, we signed MoUs and today we are laying the foundation stones for three projects. India commits, India delivers and democracy delivers," he said.

India is already decades behind in semiconductor manufacturing, but will not lose a single moment any longer, he said.

India's semiconductor dreams were first envisioned during the 1960s, but the then governments failed to act upon them due to their lack of will and efforts to convert the resolutions into accomplishments, he said.

"For the first time, India dreamt of semiconductor manufacturing in the 1960s. But even after this, the then governments did not take advantage of those opportunities. The biggest



reasons behind this were lack of will power, lack of effort to convert our pledge into achievement, and lack of capacity to take far-sighted decisions for the country," he added.

Because of this, India's dream of manufacturing semiconductors remained a dream, he alleged.

"People who were in those governments said there was no need to hurry as this is a future need. Hiding behind India's poverty, they kept ignoring all such investments of modern needs. They would commit corruption worth thousands of crores of rupees, but would not invest in semiconductor manufacturing," he said.

No country can develop with such a thinking, he said.

"Therefore, our government is working with forward-looking thinking and a futuristic approach. Today, we are moving ahead with the ambitions of competing with developed countries in the semiconductor sector," he said.

"Only a few countries in the world are manufacturing semiconductors, and Covid-19 has given us a lesson to have a reliable and resilient supply chain. India is eager to play a very big role in this direction," the prime minister said.

He said the country has always been a space, nuclear and digital power.

"In the coming time, we will begin commercial production of semiconductor products. Days are not far when India becomes a global power in this field as well," he said.

"The 21st century is a technology-driven century, and we cannot imagine it at all without an electronic chip. Made in India and Design in India chip will create a big capability to take India towards self reliance," he said.

Modi said India will get the strategic advantage of decisions taken and policies framed by his government to

encourage the ease of doing business by removing over 40,000 compliances, making FDI policies liberal in defence, insurance and telecom sectors, etc.

India has further strengthened its position in electronic and hardware manufacturing in recent times through PLI, he said.

"Today, India has emerged as the world's second largest mobile phone manufacturer. It is also working to encourage innovation and the artificial intelligence mission. India is not just working towards technology adoption but also towards technology advancement," he added.

The country's youth will be the biggest beneficiary of the semiconductor industry, the PM said.

Chip manufacturing is not just an industry, but opens the door of development that is full of infinite possibilities. The sector will not just create jobs for India, but will also develop technology advancement, Modi said.

"We are completing the cycle of the talent ecosystem," he said.

He said that India has already become the world's third largest start-up ecosystem in such a short time. After this programme, the semiconductor sector will create new opportunities for our start-up systems.

PM Modi laid the foundation stone of three facilities - semiconductor fabrication facility at the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR) in Gujarat, outsourced semiconductor assembly and test (OSAT) facility at Morigaon in Assam and the OSAT facility at Sanand in Gujarat.

The foundation stone-laying ceremony in Dholera was attended by Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, and Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrabosekaran. (PTI)

## Celebrating Hyderabad Liberation Day a befitting tribute to freedom fighters: Amit Shah

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** The decision to celebrate September 17 every year as 'Hyderabad Liberation Day' is a befitting tribute to freedom fighters and will ignite the "flame of patriotism" among youth, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Wednesday.

The central government had issued a notification on Tuesday on the commemoration.

In a post on 'X', Shah said it is a historic day as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has decided to celebrate September 17 every year as Hyderabad Liberation Day in honour of the martyrs of the Hyderabad liberation movement.

He said the decision is a befitting tribute to the freedom fighters and the martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice to remain a part of Bharat by liberating the Hyderabad region from the brutal Nizam rule.

"I welcome Modi Ji's landmark decision, which will ignite the flame of patriotism among the youth and immortalise our icons of the freedom movement," he said.

In the notification, the Union Home Ministry said Hyderabad did not get independence for 13 months

after the Independence of India on August 15, 1947, and was under Nizam's rule.

The region was liberated from Nizam's rule on September 17, 1948, after a police action namely 'Operation Polo'.

The 'Razakars', a private militia, had committed atrocities and defended the erstwhile Nizam rule in Hyderabad

When India gained independence, the Razakars called for Hyderabad state to either join Pakistan or to become a Muslim dominion while resisting its merger with the Union of India.

The people of the region fought valiantly against the atrocities of the 'Razakars' to merge the region into the Union of India.

On September 17, 1948, the then Hyderabad state was annexed into the Union of India following military action, initiated by the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Modi government has been holding an event on September 17 for the last few years to commemorate 'Hyderabad Liberation Day'. Union Home Minister Amit Shah had also attended the event in the past. (PTI)

## Unemployment, inflation and 'bhagidari' are crucial issues country is facing: Rahul

**DHULE, March 13:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said unemployment, inflation and "bhagidari" were crucial issues that the country was facing, and accused the Centre of diverting the attention of people from the real problems.

Interacting with people at Dondaicha village in Dhule district of Maharashtra during his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Gandhi said conducting a caste census will be a historic and revolutionary step.

Gandhi and the Congress have been repeatedly assuring that if his party forms a government at the Centre, it would carry out a caste census.

"Economic and financial survey will be the next step and I will do it. Dalits, poor people from the general category, minorities and tribals will know where they stand. Unemployment, inflation and 'bhagidari' (share) are crucial issues that the country is facing," he said.

Gandhi claimed that media, the Election Commission, bureaucracy, private hospitals, educational institutions have no representation from the poor from general category, Dalits, tribals or minorities. He also said that Rs 16 lakh crore of rich people have been waived by the Modi government.

"So why can't the government waive the dues of farmers?" he asked. The former Congress president claimed that 22 people in the country have the same amount of wealth as possessed by 70 crore people. (PTI)

## Mamata disowns brother after he expressed displeasure



**KOLKATA, March 13:** TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday disowned her younger brother Babun Banerjee after he expressed displeasure over the party re-nominating Prasun Banerjee from Howrah Lok Sabha seat in West Bengal.

She made the remark while speaking to reporters in Jalpaiguri.

Hitting out at her younger brother for speaking out against the party's selection of candidates, Banerjee said, "Before every election, he creates a problem. I don't like greedy people. I don't believe in dynasty politics that I will give him ticket in elections. I have decided to disown him and cut off all relationship with him."

Asked about media reports that he might join the BJP, the West Bengal CM said, "He can do whatever he wants to. The party stands by its official candidate Prasun Banerjee."

Babun Banerjee, who is presently in New Delhi, however, denied speculations that he might switch over to the BJP, but said he is pondering over contesting "Lok Sabha polls from the Howrah seat as an independent."

"I am not happy with the selection of the candidate from Howrah Lok Sabha seat. Prasun Banerjee is not the right choice. There were many capable candidates who were overlooked," he said.

"I can never forget the insult that Prasun hurled at me," he said.

A former footballer, Prasun Banerjee, is two-time Lok Sabha MP of the TMC from the Howrah seat.

Banerjee, one of the younger siblings of Mamata Banerjee, said he is a registered voter of Howrah.

"I know Didi (Mamata Banerjee) would not agree with me. But if needed, I will contest as independent from Howrah Lok Sabha seat," he said.

Asked about speculations that he might join the BJP, he replied in the negative.

"As long Mamata is there, I would never quit the party and neither would I join any other political party. Yes as I am connected to sports, I know many BJP leaders, who too are connected with sports," he said. (PTI)

### KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF WORKS BRANCH SECRETARIAT DIPHU - 782486

No. KAAC/HRN/W-11/2023-24/40

Dtd. 11/03/2024

#### SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby Invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. on 16/03/2024 and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

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

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount	A/A Amount	Earnest Money	Time allowed for completion
1.	Repairing of Range Officer Quarter at Kheroni	Rs. 13,52,000.00	Rs. 13,52,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL=2%	20 Days
2.	Construction of boundary wall at Kheroni Forest Office, Kheroni	Rs. 33,00,000.00	Rs. 33,00,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% GENERAL=2%	30 Days

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

#### Terms & Conditions

##### N.B.

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/works for all division under CPWD-21.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender, without which no tender will be accepted.
- The contractor shall Repair/Re-construct if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works. The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuses to Repair/Re-construction the work.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W). KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
  - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
  - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate GST registration.
  - KAAC Registration (Contractual).
  - Call Deposit.
  - Caste Certificate.
  - Bank Account number & Pan Card.
- Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund. The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (Works)  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council  
Branch Secretariat  
**HAMREN**

### KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF S.E. WORKS KAAC::SECRETARIAT DIPHU - 782460

No. KAAC/S.E.W-14(Pt)/2023-24/

Dtd. 12/03/2024

#### TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby Invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. on 18/03/2024 and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate. To accept. The lowest tender wuoted.

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1.	Construction of 30 Nos RCC Ring well at Mukroh	Rs. 75,77,700.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General = 2%	120 days

#### Terms & Conditions

##### N.B.

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/ works for all division under CPWD for the year 2021.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bunk draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The Contractor shall Repair/Re-Construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuse to repair/Re- construction the woks.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W), KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
  - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
  - Sale Tax Clearance Certificatc/GST.
  - Council Registration.
  - Call Deposit.
  - Council receipt
  - Caste Certificate.
  - Aadhaar Card
  - Pan Card
  - Account number
  - Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund Super-intending Engineer (Works)
  - The undersigned Is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer (Works)  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council  
**DIPHU**

# CM Saini-led BJP govt wins confidence motion by voice vote

**CHANDIGARH, March 13:** Nayab Singh Saini-led BJP government in Haryana on Wednesday won the confidence motion by voice vote in the state assembly here, a day after he took oath as the new chief minister.

Five of the Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) MLAs left the House when the trust vote was taken up during the assembly's special session.

The JJP, which was part of the previous Khattar government, had issued a whip, asking its 10 legislators to remain absent from the Assembly during voting on the confidence motion.

Speaker Gian Chand Gupta put the trust motion for voting by voice vote which the Saini government won.

Former state home minister and senior BJP leader Anil Vij, who had left in a huff the party meeting where Saini was picked up chief minister on Tuesday, was present in the House.

During the voice vote, besides JJP's 10 MLAs, lone legislator of the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) was also not present in the House.

JJP MLAs Devender Singh Babli, Ram Kumar Gautam, Ishwar Singh, Ram Nihar and Jogi Ram Sihag left the House when the trust vote was taken up.

Congress members asked Speaker Gupta to conduct voting through secret ballot but he refused saying there was no provision in the rules for the same.

Earlier, Saini had moved a motion to seek a vote of confidence in the assembly. A two-hour discussion took place on the motion.

Speaking in the House, Saini said, "Our government not only has the trust of the MLAs, but we also have trust of the people of Haryana."

The BJP having 41 MLAs on its own was comfortably placed even



without support of the JJP.

Besides JJP's 10 MLAs, INLD member and one Congress member were also not present which reduced the strength of the House to 78.

In the 90-member state assembly, the BJP also enjoys the support of six of the seven independents as well as of lone Haryana Lokhit Party MLA Gopal Kanda. The main opposition Congress has 30 MLAs.

The BJP named Saini as Haryana's new chief minister on Tuesday, hours after the surprise resignation of Manohar Lal Khattar from the post along with his cabinet ministers.

During the discussion on the trust vote, Chief Minister Saini praised Khattar for the works undertaken during his nine-year-long tenure.

He said it is his first day in the House as Chief Minister and Leader of the House.

Saini also recalled his days when he was a member of the House during 2014-2019.

"During that time I was told that I had to contest Lok Sabha polls. At that time, I was a minister in the

Haryana government. When the party desired that I contest LS polls, I abided by that.

"When the party entrusted me with the new responsibility, I am here to take up the latest assignment," he said.

The new chief minister said he comes from an ordinary background and no other member from his family is in politics.

"The BJP gave me a great honour. The party made an ordinary member its state unit president and then entrusted with the responsibility of chief minister. This is possible only in the BJP," he said.

Before the chief minister moved the confidence motion, Congress MLAs sought to know from Speaker Gupta about the urgency of convening the Assembly session.

"There was no emergency," senior Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda said and claimed that proper time was not given to the MLAs.

Party MLA B B Batra asked, "What was the urgency of convening the session?"

On this, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kanwar Pal said the opposition should appreciate "our sincerity that we are seeking trust vote within 24 hours after the new CM took oath".

Pointing towards opposition benches, he said there was a time when several days used to be given to prove majority which was a clear cut indication of then government indulging in horse trading.

On the leadership change, he said, "tyag ki rajneeti" is possible only in the BJP, not in the Congress.

Participating in the discussion, Hooda said it is for the first time that a party (JJP) is issuing whip to its members to remain absent from the House. "What does this mean? This shows that both BJP and JJP are hand-in-glove," he said.

The JJP members should have been present and voted against this government, but people know what they are doing, said Hooda.

This is a stop-gap arrangement, he said, while claiming Saini is playing the role of "night watchman".

Don't deceive the public, dissolve the House and seek fresh mandate, demanded Hooda.

Independent MLA Ranjit Singh Chautala, a minister in the Saini Cabinet, said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become 'Jannayak' (mass leader). The situation in the Congress is such that their leaders are disillusioned and are leaving the party." Independent MLA Nayan Pal Rawat said "yashvasi and tapsvi" former chief minister Khattar worked for welfare of various sections including the poor and downtrodden.

"I hope Saini will also follow the same path to take the state ahead," he said. (PTI)

## Khattar resigns as MLA of Karnal; CM Saini to take care of constituency

**CHANDIGARH, March 13:** Amid speculation that he may contest the Lok Sabha polls from Karnal, former Haryana chief minister M L Khattar on Wednesday announced he was resigning as a member of the state Assembly.

Khattar, who represented the Karnal seat, said newly appointed Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini will take care of the constituency now. The former chief minister made the announcement soon after the Nayab Saini government won the trust vote in the Assembly. Saini replaced Khattar as Haryana's chief minister on Tuesday.

"During the past nine-and-a-half years, I have served as the Leader of the House. I will serve the people of Haryana till my last breath," Khattar said.

## BJP names 72 more candidates for LS polls

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** The BJP on Wednesday named 72 more candidates for the Lok Sabha elections, including Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal and Anurag Singh Thakur, and former chief ministers Manohar Lal Khattar, Trivendra Singh Rawat and Basavaraj Bommai.

BJP chief spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Anil Baluni has been fielded from Garhwal in Uttarakhand.

In Delhi, it has fielded two new candidates -- Harsh Malhotra from East Delhi and Yogendra Chandolia from North West Delhi.

In Karnataka, Union minister Pralhad Joshi will fight from Dharwad while former chief minister B S Yediyurappa's son B Y Raghavendra will contest from Shimoga.

Tejasvi Surya, the BJP's youth wing chief, will seek re-election from Bengaluru South.

Yaduveer Krishnadatta Wadiyar of the erstwhile Mysore royal family replaced Pratap Simha as the BJP candidate in the Mysore seat.

Earlier this month, the BJP had announced its first list of more than 190 candidates for the Lok Sabha polls, due in April-May. (PTI)

## CAA implementation ahead of LS polls dirty vote bank politics of BJP: Kejriwal

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act ahead of the Lok Sabha polls was "dirty vote bank politics" of the BJP, Kejriwal said.

The country demands scrapping of CAA, he said and asked people to vote against the BJP if the law is not repealed. Kejriwal said that had the BJP government at the Centre done its work in its 10-year rule, there would have been no need for it to implement CAA ahead of the polls.

"People in India are facing back-breaking inflation... and the youths are forced to run from pillar to post for jobs, the AAP leader said. "On one hand there is a huge army of unemployed in the country and the BJP government in Haryana is sending youths to die in Israel where a war is going on. On the other hand, the BJP wants to settle Pakistanis in India and provide employment to their children."

"What kind of nonsense is this to bring people from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan to India and give the rightful employment of our children to them," Kejriwal charged, adding, "In the last 10 years, 11 lakh industrialists and businessmen left India. If the BJP must bring people to the country, it should bring them back to provide jobs."

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva hit back at Kejriwal and claimed that the Delhi chief minister "doesn't even understand that CAA is a legislation to provide shelter to all the persecuted minorities (from neighbouring countries) and not to strip anyone of their citizenship".

Kejriwal needs to understand that "refugees from Pakistan and Afghanistan are our own and will remain so", he added. (PTI)

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## Herb kabab chini, Ayurvedic drug Neeri KFT may aid kidney recovery: Study

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** Herb 'kabab chini' and herbal formulation Neeri KFT can be effective in improving kidney function in those suffering from renal diseases, claims a new study by the National Institute of Unani Medicine.

The study published in the Avicenna Journal of Medical Biochemistry spoke about the potential of traditional medicine in treating various diseases, despite low awareness levels, and sought greater accessibility to affordable treatment options for all.

As part of the study, researchers from the institute in Bengaluru categorised 30 patients randomly into two groups.

While one group was given Neeri-KFT, the other was provided with kabab chini (piper cubeba), it said, adding that after 42 days, a decrease in serum creatinine levels was observed in both groups.

There was an enhancement in the glomerular filtration rate (GFR), the study said, adding that these parameters are indicators of improved kidney function.

Patients also experienced an improvement in appetite and fatigue, the



researchers said.

Asked about it, Dr Jayant Kumar Hota, senior consultant nephrologist at the Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, said while there is no denying that many ingredients in Indian medicines may be helpful in curing or preventing kidney diseases, the sample size in the survey is too low to come to a definitive conclusion.

"I think we need systematic multicentre studies involving many patients of different types of chronic kidney diseases to really find out the efficacy

of these medications," he added.

However, Dr Sanchit Sharma, executive director of AIMIL Pharmaceuticals, emphasised on the growing international recognition of traditional medicine and noted Ayurveda's mention of several remedies such as including Neeri KFT to strengthen kidneys.

Dr R P Parasher, National President of the Integrated Medical Association (Ayush) said there are a number of medicines in Ayurveda for the treatment of urinary disorders and kidney

diseases that also act as anti-oxidants and immuno-modulators.

"These medicines increase the secretion of digestive juices, enzymes and chemicals, detoxify the body, bring down hypertension and decrease inflammation," he said.

These medicines also reduce oxidative stress by reducing the activity of free radicals in the body, Parasher said, adding kabab chini is Piper cubeba and is included in the ingredients of Neeri KFT.

The study mentions that chronic kidney disease (CKD) ranks 19th as a cause of death and a considerable social and economic burden worldwide that affects more than 10 per cent of the world's population. The prevalence of CKD is higher in developing countries. According to the WHO's Global Burden of Disease 2015 report, 1.2 million and 19 million people died of renal failure and disability-adjusted life-years respectively.

With nine out of 10 patients unable to afford expensive treatment, this study was conducted to explore the scientific facts behind traditional medicine and find an affordable option. (PTI)

## People from disadvantaged sections biggest beneficiaries of govt schemes: Modi

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that people from disadvantaged sections like SCs, STs and OBCs are the biggest beneficiaries of his government's welfare schemes as he accused the previous Congress dispensations of neglecting them and never appreciating their role in the country's progress.

Speaking at the launch of the PM-SURAJ national portal, he cited the election of Ram Nath Kovind and Droupadi Murumu, who come from Dalit and tribal communities respectively, as president to assert that the BJP's efforts to ensure that those from deprived sections reach top positions will continue.

The opposition made every effort to ensure their defeat, he said.

Taking a swipe at the Opposition, Prime Minister Modi told the gathering that consisted of people from disadvantaged groups, "How can anyone say I have no family when I have brothers and sisters like you."

Modi said that the biggest beneficiaries of schemes like free ration, free medical treatment, pucca houses, toilets and Ujjwala gas connection are the people on the periphery, the deprived segments.

"SCs, STs, OBCs are the biggest beneficiaries of government welfare schemes for the poor. Now we are working with the goal of saturation in these schemes," the prime minister said.

The Pradhan Mantri Samajik Uthhan and Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan (PM-SURAJ) national portal aims to provide credit support to eligible individuals across the country including those from Scheduled Castes and backward classes and sanitation workers.

This initiative is set to facilitate financial empowerment and enable entrepreneurship opportunities for the most disadvantaged sections of society, PM Modi said one lakh beneficiaries from deprived sections have been given Rs 720 crore assistance till now.

He said the SURAJ portal will facilitate financial assistance to the disadvantaged sections of society, similar to direct benefit transfers from other government schemes, and the process will be free from middlemen, commissions and recommendations.

"Such a system of DBT was unimaginable

during the previous governments," he said.

The prime minister also spoke about the distribution of Ayushman Bharat Cards and PPE kits to Safai Mitras engaged in sewer and septic tank cleaning.

Talking about the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, the prime minister said that it cannot be achieved without the development of the deprived segments.

He said that he has broken away from the mindset of the past and it is being ensured that facilities available to others like gas connection, bank accounts, toilets, etc. are also provided to Dalits, backwards, deprived and tribals.

The prime minister pointed out that many generations of deprived segments were wasted in just arranging for the basic amenities.

"After 2014, the government reached the segments devoid of any hope and made them partners in the nation's development," he said.

The prime minister also mentioned schemes for nomadic and semi-nomadic communities and NAMASTE (National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem) scheme for Safai Karamcharis. Talking about the elimination of the inhuman practice of manual scavenging, he pointed out that 60,000 sufferers have been given financial assistance so that they can rebuild a life of dignity.

"The government is making all possible efforts to empower the SC, ST and OBC communities", PM Modi said and informed that the assistance provided to them by various institutions has been doubled in the last 10 years.

Lakhs and crores of rupees were "only associated with scams" during the previous governments, he said and affirmed spending the money for the welfare of Dalits and the deprived and for the development of the country.

He mentioned increasing scholarships for SC, ST and OBC youth, reservation of 27 percent seats for OBC in the all-India quota of medical seats, making inroads for OBC students in the NEET examination, and assistance from National Overseas Scholarship for students from underprivileged communities to pursue Master and PhD degrees abroad.

He added that the amount of national fellowship has also been increased to help students pursue PhD in science-related subjects. (PTI)

### KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF S.E. WORKS KAAC::SECRETARIAT DIPHU - 782460

No. KAAC/S.E.W/HRN-17(Pt)/2023-24/ Dtd. 12/03/2024

#### SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventual to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. on 18/03/2024 and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate. To accept. The lowest tender wuoted.

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1.	Construction of Boundary Wall at Langsomepi L.P. School	Rs. 64,09,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General = 2%	120 days

Detail NIT documents and name of works amounts may be obtained from office of the S.E. (Works), KAAC, Diphu during working hours on payment of Rs. 500/-

#### Terms & Conditions

##### N.B.

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/ works for all division under CPWD for the year 2021.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bunk draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The Contractor shall Repair/Re-Construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuse to repair/Re- construction the woks.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W), KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
  - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
  - Sale Tax Clearance Certificatc/GST.
  - Council Registration.
  - Call Deposit.
  - Council receipt
  - Caste Certificate.
  - Aadhaar Card
  - Pan Card
  - Account number
  - Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund Superintending Engineer (Works)
  - The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer (Works)  
Kerbi Anglong Automomous Council  
DIPHU

Activists arrested in Sivasagar demonstration

# Protests intensify against CAA implementation

HT Correspondent

**TEZPUR, March 13:** As part of the continuous protest by different organisations throughout the district of Sonitpur against the recent enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act by the central government, the Sonitpur district committee of Bir Lachit Sena Assam and the Dhekiajuli Regional Committee of the organisation registered a strong protest on Wednesday at Dhekiajuli. In protest against the enforcement of CAA by the government, the organisation burnt effigies of the Prime Minister of India and the chief minister of Assam on NH 15. The Dhekiajuli regional committee of AASU, led by Sankar Das, and AJYCP, led by Rana Pratap Barua, chief adviser of AJYCP central committee, registered their joint protest against the enforcement of the act on Tuesday. In a symbolic gesture of defiance, members of the AJYCP in Bihaguri also burnt copies of the CAA notification.

Meanwhile, the All Assam Students Union along with several other organisations also organised a torchlight rally on Tuesday evening at the district headquarters. Citing concerns over its perceived threats to the language, culture, and existence of the Assamese people, the organisations urged the people to raise their voice against it and shouted slogans against the BJP-led central and state government. The rally, led by Abhijit Nath and Arup



Talukdar, president and general secretary of the district AASU, and Nitul Bora, assistant general secretary, AASU central committee, moved throughout Tezpur town.

Addressing the media during the protest, the leaders of the organisations voiced strong opposition against the Centre's decision to implement the CAA and emphasised that the Act poses a grave threat to the identity and heritage of the As-

same populace and cannot be accepted under any circumstances.

**Our Sivasagar correspondent adds:** Activists of Bir Lachit Sena Asom and Asom Yuva Mancha carried out a massive protest demonstration against the government for implementing CAA in the state, despite blanket security arrangements in every nook and corner of the town on Wednesday. A large number of activists were arrested by police, including secretary-general of the Bir Lachit Sena Rantu Paniphukan and organising secretary Shringkhal Chaliha. Others include Hara Kumar Gogoi, Hemanta Bora, Nabadip Bora, Prakash Bariah, Abhisek Bora, Bitupon Saikia, Nilutpal Kotoky, Ankit Raj Kalita, Utpal Asom, Akash Dutta, Abhilash Bora, Dharmy Konwar, and Bidyut Saikia of Rajjor Dal. Sivasagar Police forcefully took the protesters in a bus and transported them to the police station. Asom Yuva Mancha activists burnt symbolic copies of the Citizenship Act.



Minister IPRP&S Pijush Hazarika, in the presence of Director of Information and Public Relations and other senior officials of Kamrup District Administration inaugurates an LED billboard in front of the DC Office, Amingaon, on Wednesday. HT Photo

## Nausad Ali sentenced to life imprisonment

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, March 13:** In connection with Case No-387/2017 at Mikirbitha Police Station, one Nausad Ali has been convicted of a serious offense under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The court, presided over by the Additional Sessions Judge cum Special Judge (POCSO) in Morigaon, found Nausad Ali guilty of the charges brought against him. The sentence handed down to Nausad Ali is rigorous imprisonment for life, reflecting the gravity of the offense and the significant impact it has had on the victim and society at large.

## Street hawker apprehended

HT Correspondent

**TEZPUR, March 13:** In Itakhola, a significant development unfolded as Itakhola Police apprehended Ahidur Rahman (49) of Bakula, Jamuguri-hat, on Tuesday in connection with a rape incident that occurred in Hatinga Garden. According to sources, Ahidur Rahman, a street hawker by trade, was taken into custody by the authorities. He stands accused of exploiting a 21-year-old woman with disabilities from the locality. Following his arrest, Rahman was remanded to judicial custody.

## NFR to operate four pairs of special trains to manage festive rush

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, March 13:** In an effort to accommodate the extra rush of passengers during the festive season of Holi, it has been decided to run four pairs of passenger special trains. These special trains will operate between Dibrugarh - Gorakhpur, New Jalpaiguri - Gorakhpur, New Jalpaiguri - Asansol & Katihar - Ranchi. All these trains will run for 2 trips.

Train no 05764 (New Jalpaiguri - Asansol) will depart on March 22 & 29, 2024, Friday at 21:45 hours from New Jalpaiguri Station to reach its destination Asansol at 10:25 hours the next day. Similarly, Train no 05763 (Asansol - New Jalpaiguri) will depart from Asansol Station on March 23 & 30, 2024, Saturday at 13:00 hours to reach New Jalpaiguri at 02:30 hours the next day.

Train no 05762 (Katihar - Ranchi) will depart on March 21 & 28, 2024, Thursday at 22:30 hours from Katihar Station to reach Ranchi at 14:25 hours the next day. Similarly, Train no 05761 (Ranchi - Katihar) will depart from Ranchi Station on March 22 & 29, 2024, Friday at 20:30 hours to reach Kati-

har at 11:00 hours the next day.

Train no 05978 (Dibrugarh - Gorakhpur) will depart on March 21 & 28, 2024, Thursday at 19:25 hours from Dibrugarh Station to reach Gorakhpur at 06:25 hours on Saturday. Similarly, Train no 05977 (Gorakhpur - Dibrugarh) will depart from Gorakhpur Station on March 26 & April 2, 2024, Tuesday at 10:45 hours to reach Dibrugarh at 01:10 hours on Thursday.

Train no 05778 (New Jalpaiguri - Gorakhpur) will depart on March 25 & April 1, 2024, Monday at 15:00 hours from New Jalpaiguri Station to reach Gorakhpur at 06:25 hours on Tuesday. Similarly, Train no 05777 (Gorakhpur - New Jalpaiguri) will depart from Gorakhpur Station on March 23 & 30, 2024, Saturday at 10:45 hours to reach New Jalpaiguri at 05:00 hours on Sunday.

The details of stoppages and timings of these trains are available on the IRCTC website and are also being notified in various newspapers and social media platforms of NF Railway. Passengers are requested to verify the details before undertaking their journey.

## Assam's ginger makes international debut in Dubai markets

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, March 13:** Making waves from Assam's agricultural heartland to the cosmopolitan hub of Dubai, a significant milestone has been reached in the agriculture-horticulture sector. Ten metric tons of organic ginger, cultivated by farmers from Golaghat district's Padum Pothar FPC, have been successfully exported.

Atul Bora, the minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, took to social media to celebrate this achievement. "Due to special emphasis and dedicated efforts of Hon'ble CM Dr. @himantabiswa, Assam's agriculture-horticulture sector has witnessed rapid transformations. I congratulate the hardworking farmers of our state for this milestone achievement.

I would also like to thank all the officials of Agriculture, Horticulture



Department, APEDA and other stakeholders for facilitating exports of Assam's farm products."

He attributed the rapid transformations in Assam's agriculture-horticulture sector to the special emphasis and dedicated efforts of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Minister Bora extended his

congratulations to the hardworking farmers of the state for this remarkable accomplishment.

Expressing gratitude, minister Bora thanked all officials from the Agriculture and Horticulture Department, APEDA, and other stakeholders for their support in facilitating the export of Assam's farm produce.

## Noted farmer Bapuram Saikia honoured on first death anniversary

HT Correspondent

**NAGAON, March 13:** The family of late Bapuram Saikia, in association with the district unit of Vigyan Manaska Yatra, organised a commemorative programme on the occasion of the first death anniversary of late Bapuram Saikia, a noted farmer from the greater Palasani area on the outskirts of the small town at Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha's Kamala Devi Bhavan on Wednesday. The programme was chaired by noted professor and columnist of the state, Dwijen Barman, while Prof Guna Saikia, noted physician and child specialist Dr Anjan Saikia, columnist Dr Devendranath Muktiar attended the programme as the keynote speakers. Dr Anjan Saikia, Dr Devendranath Muktiar, and professor Guna Saikia respectively spoke on the life and sacrifice of late Bapuram Saikia, highlighting how, as a farmer, he worked hard during his life to establish his five daughters in society.

ৰাজ্যৰ সৰ্বাংগীণ উন্নয়নৰ অবিৰত প্ৰয়াস

# বিকাশ যাত্ৰা

কামৰূপ জিলাৰ শূৰালকুছি এফ আৰ ইউক

## ১০০খন বিছনায়ুক্ত চিকিৎসালয়লৈ উন্নীতকৰণ

অসমৰ মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী  
ড° হিমন্ত বিশ্ব শৰ্মাৰ  
কৰকমলেৰে শিলান্যাস

গৌৰৱময় উপস্থিতি

শ্ৰীকেশৱ মহন্ত  
মন্ত্ৰী, স্বাস্থ্য আৰু পৰিয়াল কল্যাণ ইত্যাদি  
বিভাগ, অসম চৰকাৰ

শ্ৰীমতী কুইন ওজা  
সাংসদ, গুৱাহাটী লোকসভা সমষ্টি

সময় : দিনৰ ১২:৩০ বজা | তাৰিখ : ১৪ মাৰ্চ ২০২৪ | স্থান : শূৰালকুছি, কামৰূপ

চিকিৎসালয়খনৰ চমু বিৱৰণ :

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* আন্তঃচিকিৎসা কক্ষ	* এম আৰ আই কক্ষ	* শীতলীকৰণ কক্ষ	* কেণ্টিন	* মৰ্গ	* পৰীক্ষাগাৰ	* বোগীৰ পৰিচালিকাৰীৰ কক্ষ	* জৰুৰীকাৰণী বিভাগ	* চিকিৎসকৰ কক্ষ	* আত্মত্যাগকৰণ বাৰ্ড
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(NHM/D/2023-24/2027)

# Defiant Vidarbha prolong Mumbai's wait for 42<sup>nd</sup> Ranji Trophy triumph

**MUMBAI, March 13:** A dogged fightback from Vidarbha, led by Karun Nair (74) and skipper Akshay Wadkar (56 not out), prolonged Mumbai's wait for a 42nd Ranji Trophy title as the visiting side reached 248/5 in pursuit of a mammoth 538 on the fourth and penultimate day of the final here on Wednesday.

Set an improbable target to win the summit clash after being outplayed since the first day afternoon, Vidarbha put up a resolute show with the bat to frustrate their hosts by resorting to stonewalling for the majority of the day.

Nair, who joined the Vidarbha ranks only at the start

of this season, was at the forefront of their resistance as he faced as many as 220 balls while batting for 287 minutes to keep Mumbai at bay.

But the right-handed batter ultimately fell to the brilliance of Musheer Khan late in the day, with the 19-year-old producing a superb bowling show after setting up the game with 136 in the second innings.

Nair's skipper Wadkar was batting on 56 with Harsh Dubey (11 not out) for company. The team required another 290 runs with five wickets in hand.

Mumbai managed a couple of wickets each in the first two sessions and the vital scalp of

Nair in the last. They took the second new ball in the 82nd over of the innings.

Up until then, Mumbai had tried almost everything on what remained a placid pitch at the Wankhede Stadium. It had more on offer for the home team's spinners who remained persistent throughout.

Mumbai's troika of right-arm pacers took turns to come around the wickets to try and bounce out Vidarbha, while spinners operated from both ends to challenge the batters' techniques.

In the end, Vidarbha walked away with a moral win of sorts having not capitulated given the occasion and pressure of



the final and the fact that a target of 538 is perceived as out of reach for most batting line-

ups. The leader of the spin pack for Mumbai was Musheer,

who remained nearly unplayable for his figures of 17-3-24-2. He bowled a challenging line from both sides of the pitch to keep troubling the Vidarbha batters.

Musheer's dismissal of Nair, who was earlier dropped on four by Hardik Tamore off Kotian, was the one which stood out.

Giving a nice loop to the ball to land it in front of middle and leg, Musheer got it to turn away sharply.

It wasn't the first time in the day when Musheer had challenged Nair's defence this way, but on this instance, he found an outside edge which was grabbed sharply by Tamore.

Tanush Kotian also played his part taking 2/55 from his 19 overs, having accounted for Dhruv Shorey (28) and Yash Rathod (7) after Vidarbha made their intentions clear earlier in the day.

At no stage did the Vidarbha batters show intention to aim for the humongous target on Wednesday, but were discipline enough to ensure they had long hauls in the middle, barring Atharva Taide (32).

Taide walked across the wickets to attempt a sweep off Shams Mulani (1/56) in the 19th over and was trapped leg-before, post which Mumbai struck again soon to send Shorey back in the shed. (PTI)

## Ashwin replaces Bumrah at top of ICC Test rankings

**DUBAI, March 13:** A nine-wicket haul in his 100th Test match helped Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin re-claim the top spot in the bowlers' list, while his captain Rohit Sharma was back in the top-10 at sixth in the batting charts of the latest ICC rankings on Wednesday.

Ashwin was at his best throughout the Dharamsala contest against England as the experienced right-arm picked up four wickets in the first innings and then a 36th five-wicket haul in the second innings as India cruised to a dominant triumph in the fifth and final Test of their series. The big haul helped Ashwin move past teammate Jasprit Bumrah into the premier position that he previously held earlier this year, the ICC said in a statement.

Rohit, who smashed a hundred in Dharamsala, rose five places to sixth and within 108 rating points of No.1 ranked Test batter Kane Williamson.

Yashasvi Jaiswal (up two places to eighth) and Shubman Gill (up 11 spots to equal 20th) reached new career-best ratings following excellent individual series against Ben Stokes' side.

Bumrah fell into a share of the second position with Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood following his six scalps in the second Test against New Zealand in Christchurch. (PTI)

## PANT TO MAKE IPL COMEBACK

# 'IT FEELS LIKE I AM GOING TO MAKE MY DEBUT AGAIN'



**NEW DELHI, March 13:** Rishabh Pant will soon be back on the field 14 months after surviving a life-threatening car accident and ahead of that moment, the wicket-keeper-batter is "nervous" like a debutant all over again.

Pant was cleared to play the IPL by the BCCI on Tuesday. His team Delhi Capitals will open its IPL campaign against Punjab Kings in Mohali on March 23. He met with a horrific car crash in December, 2022, while driving to his home in Roorkee.

He suffered multiple injuries and a ligament reconstruction surgery had to be performed on his right knee. He was also

left to nurse a fractured wrist and ankle.

"I am excited and nervous at the same time. It feels like I am going to make my debut again," said Pant in a

Delhi

Capitals

release.

The 26-year-old underwent an extensive rehabilitation and recovery

process

at the National

Cricketer

Academy

following the

accident.

"To be able to play

cricket again after everything I've been through is nothing short of a miracle. I'm grateful to all my well-wishers and fans, and most importantly, the BCCI and staff at NCA. All their love and support continues to give me immense strength," said Pant. On joining the Delhi Capitals pre-season camp, Pant added, "I am excited to return to Delhi Capitals and the IPL - a tournament I enjoy so much. Our team owners and support staff have been by my side throughout with their full support, guidance and co-operation at every step, for which I am deeply grateful."

"I can't wait to re-unite with my DC family and play in front of the fans again." Pant will be expected to bat as well as keep wickets with the BCCI declaring him fit as a wicketkeeper-batter. The southpaw was present at the Capitals table during the IPL auction last year.

The big-hitting player has appeared in 33 Tests, 30 ODIs and 66 T20 Internationals for India. (PTI)

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has asked the AIFF's ousted legal head, Nilanjan Bhattacharjee, to submit evidence for the allegations of corruption he has levelled against national federation head Kalyan Chaubey, calling it a serious matter.

AIFF president Chaubey on March 6 served a legal notice to the organisation's former principal legal advisor Bhattacharjee for accusing him of corruption.

Bhattacharjee, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has alleged that Chaubey was part of non-transparent tender processes and made attempts to "siphon off money from the federation" for personal expenses.

Taking cognizance of the matter, the AFC has asked Bhattacharjee to submit a "full written report" by March 18.

"We refer to the attached media articles in which we note that allegations relating to corruption have been made by you against the All India Football Federation (AIFF) President, Mr Kalyan Chaubey. In light of the seriousness of this matter, we kindly request that you provide the AFC with a full written report setting out your position on the matter by 18 March 2024 at the latest," Deputy Secretary to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, Barry Lysaght, wrote in a letter addressed to Bhattacharjee, on Tuesday.

"Such report should include (without limitation) details of the allegations, any evidence to support such allegations, any steps taken by you to address the allegations at the AIFF (or any other body/person) and any other relevant information or documentation relating to this matter."

Chaubey has called allegations "baseless", accusing Bhattacharjee of trying to damage his reputation.

Bhattacharjee has remained steadfast on his position and has claimed that during his tenure, he once refused to sign a "lopsided" agreement with airlines company Indigo where "a minimum guarantee of Rs seven crore" was to be given for content creation rights against "no incentive to Indian football".

But Chaubey has given a point-by-point rebuttal to the allegations by Bhattacharjee, who said he will submit all his evidence to AFC by the due date.

"I am happy because at least the AFC chose to take note of my allegations while everybody within the AIFF, except very few people, decided to keep mum. This can be the beginning," Bhattacharjee told PTI.

"I will submit all the evidence I have within the stipulated time given by AFC."

"Any individual who thinks about Indian football can join me and share anything they have," he added.

Former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia also waded into the controversy and called for Chaubey's resignation.

"There has been a lot of negative stories going on regarding AIFF administration."

"But the AFC taking note of corruption allegations against Kalyan and may be AFC looking to open an investigation, it has the possibility to seriously damage reputation of Indian football," he reasoned. "For some time it has been a mess in Indian football administration. The controversial sacking of Secretary General and the legal head making serious corruption allegations against Kalyan and later his termination..."

"...nothing is going right in AIFF administration. Kalyan should resign taking responsibility of all this and new elections should be held to clean up Indian football," he said. (PTI)



## Ravindra becomes youngest recipient of Sir Richard Hadlee Medal

**CHRISTCHURCH, March 13:** The biggest find of New Zealand's World Cup campaign in India, Rachin Ravindra on Wednesday became the youngest recipient of the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal after becoming the country's best male cricketer of the year.

Among women, Melie Kerr grabbed the major prizes at the New Zealand Cricket Awards.

Kane Williamson was recognised for his outstanding form in the Test arena with the ANZ Test Player of the Year Award, and winning the Redpath Cup for men's first-class batting.

At 24, Ravindra is the youngest winner

in the award's history, after a season that's seen him become a mainstay of New Zealand's red and white ball sides.

After breaking into the 50-over side in March last year, Ravindra shone in the ODI World Cup in India, scoring 578 runs at an average of 64, including three centuries and two half-centuries, including an unbeaten 123 in the tournament opener against England in Ahmedabad.

As a result, Ravindra was named as the ICC's Emerging Player of the Year for 2023, and also secured a USD 350,000 Indian Premier League contract with Chennai Super Kings.

The Sir Richard Hadlee Medal capped

off a breakout season for Ravindra on the international stage, on which he contributed for the Kiwis across all three formats.

Ravindra continued his meteoric rise in the Test arena, registering New Zealand's highest ever maiden Test century with 240 during the first Test against South Africa at Bay Oval, and playing a key role in the BLACKCAPS first ever Test series victory over South Africa.

He also shone on the T20 international stage, featuring in 14 of the BLACKCAPS' 26 T20I matches over the season and scoring a blistering 68 from 35 balls in the first T20I against Australia at Sky

Stadium.

Kerr claimed a clean sweep of the major female awards, winning the Debbie Hockley Medal after being named ANZ ODI and T20I Player of the Year, and the Dream11 Super Smash Women's Player of the Year.

The leg-spinning allrounder was the WHITE FERNS' leading ODI run-scorer with 541 runs at an average of 67, notching her third and fourth ODI centuries along the way. She was also the team's joint leading T20 wicket-taker and second highest T20I run scorer with 252 runs at an average of 42 and a strike-rate of 118. (PTI)

## Mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton to help Indian men's hockey team in Paris Olympics

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** It's mind over matter for Hockey India as the sports body hired renowned South African mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton to assist the men's national team in the Paris Olympics.

Upton, who played a role in India winning the 2011 Cricket World Cup, will be a part of the support staff of the country's men's hockey team in Paris. He was also there when the team won gold medals at the recent Asian Champions Trophy and Asian Games.

Indian men's hockey team chief coach Craig Fulton confirmed to PTI that Upton will be with his wards at the Olympics.

"We have Paddy Upton, he will be with us in Australia (for Test series). We will be using him wisely. For sure he will be there for Olympics

with us," Fulton said when asked about the mental conditioning coach's services.

Fulton, who is also a South African, believes that world ranked fourth India are still to reach their peak and there are plenty of bases to cover in the coming months.

"We are not complete yet but, in 4-5 months from the Olympics, we will be there."

"Ideally any high-performing team wants to win any tournament. That's the ideal goal to be realistic. But realistically, we are ranked fourth in the world now, does that mean podium 'right now no' but that's the beauty of hockey," he said.

"Realistically, we are not there yet but we still have time."

The coach said the Indian team is currently in a development phase. "We are in a development phase

with the squad. We are trying to create some depths in different positions. That's important to do now because it really counts in crunch matches in Olympics," he said.

Talking about India's recent home campaign in the FIH Pro League, Fulton said he was neither satisfied nor disappointed.

"If you look at the four matches - 2 against Holland, 2 against Australia -- I think we are disappointed with the second game against Australia, 5 minutes to go we were 2-1 up and then we made a mistake which got punished and then we lost the shoot-out," he said.

"The first game was a strange one, we got to learn a lot of lessons there tactically, but to be 0-2 down after 90 seconds."

"But the Dutch games I feel we were really organised. But 2-2 I felt

was fair result for both games. They are the league leaders and they are the team to chase at the moment."

Fulton is in no mood to make any drastic changes in the style of play and said the upcoming Australia tour holds great significance for the side.

Now we are in Bhubaneswar for next three weeks for the training and then we go to Australia for five Test matches and that's really important, and then we come back to Bengaluru and after selection is done, we leave for the Pro League.

"We are just carrying on with our training, we are focussed on becoming very strong defensively, we need to improve our offence. We are not changing a lot, just focussing on getting better and consistent," he said.

India are scheduled to tour Australia from April 2 till 15 for a five-Test series in Perth. (PTI)

## Shafali smashes 71 as DC secure direct qualification into WPL final

**NEW DELHI, March 13:** The big-hitting Shafali Verma led the way with a blazing 37-ball 71 as a dominant Delhi Capitals secured direct qualification into the final of the Women's Premier League with a seven-wicket hammering of Gujarat Giants here on Wednesday.

Table-toppers Delhi Capitals entered the game looking to bag a direct spot in the final and once their bowlers restricted Giants to 126 for nine with a disciplined show at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, the hosts inched closer to realising their goal.

In the final on Sunday, the Capitals will play the winner of the eliminator between Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bangalore.

As she is wont to, Shafali launched into a flurry of boundaries, including hitting as many as five sixes and seven fours, to help her side complete the chase of 127 without much ado.

DC finished the game with as many as 41 balls remaining. Shafali reached her fifty in just 28 balls.

She got to the landmark with a four over extra cover off Mannat Kashyap.

The duo of Shafali and Jemimah Rodrigues (38 not out) then bludgeoned Meghna Singh for 20 runs, and Ashleigh Gardner was also carted for 28 runs in two overs.

Earlier, Delhi Capitals' bowlers produced a fine effort to restrict Gujarat Giants to a modest total.

If it was not for Bharati Fulmali's 36-ball 42 and Kathryn Bryce's unbeaten 28, the Giants would have finished with a much lower total.

South African veteran Marizanne Kapp led the way with fine figures of 2/17 in four overs, bowling beautifully in the powerplay, while there were also two wickets apiece for Shikha Pandey and Minnu Mani.

Gugatar Giants' decision to bat first on winning the toss backfired as they found themselves in a spot of bother at 12/2 in the fourth over, including losing the big wicket of skipper Beth Mooney for a duck to South African all-rounder Kapp in the match's very first over. (PTI)



# Assam's

game changing initiative to boost sporting excellence

**Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma**  
Chief Minister, Assam

## Appointments and cash incentives to **102 medal winners** of **37<sup>th</sup> National Games**

In a visionary effort to encourage sporting excellence in the state, Government of Assam is offering

**Fresh Appointments**  
to 55 medal winning athletes in various Government departments and

**Cash incentives to 40 employed athletes & 7 minor athletes**

**₹50,000** to Gold Medalist    **₹40,000** to Silver Medalist    **₹30,000** to Bronze Medalist

Summary of Appointment	
Till 13 March 2024	97,252
On 14 March 2024	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,307</b>



14 March 2024 | 10:00 AM | Srimanta Sankaradeva International Auditorium, Kalakshetra, Guwahati

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