US, Japan and South Korea hold drills in disputed sea

 Belgium will investigate suspected Russian interference

Ram temple wasn't and will never be election issue: PM Modi

When will Assembly polls be held in J&K, Congress asks PM Modi



Vol.No.

RNI-ASSENG/2023/86488

PRICE ₹8

**HOLIDAY NOTICE** 

Te would like to inform you that The Hills Times office will remain closed on Saturday and Sunday on the occasion of Rongali Bihu. Consequently, there will be no circulation of the newspaper on Sunday and Monday.

We appreciate your understanding and wish you a happy Rongali Bihu.

### Even oppn believes NDA will return to power: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, April 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the BJP used its majority in Lok Sabha for two consecutive terms to strengthen the country while the Congress used its decades-long majority to strengthen its "family", asserting that even the opposition believes that his government will retain power for a third term.

In an interview to Hindi daily Hindustan, Modi underlined his commitment to taking strict action against the corrupt amid criticism by opposition parties that probe agencies were used by his government to target their leaders.

Steps against corruption are being taken even in states where the BJP is in power, he said, adding that the narrative that only political corruption is being targeted is being circulated by people who are under the sword of investigative agencies.

He said, "Of the corruption cases probed by the Enforcement Directorate, only three per cent have people associated with politics. The remaining 97 per cent cases are linked to officials and criminals. Those who see benefits in a corrupt system are the ones who are (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Issue No. 46

GUWAHATI, SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

PAGES 8

# Nomination process for third phase of Assam polls begins

GUWAHATI, April 12: The nomination process for four Lok Sabha constituencies, including Guwahati, in the state going to polls in

third phase across the country. Voting in Guwahati, Barpeta, Dhubri and Kokrajhar (ST) con-

stituencies will take place in the third phase on May 7. As per the notification, the last date of filing nomination is April 19, while the scrutiny of the same

will be done the next day. The last day for withdrawal of candidature has been fixed on

April 22. The counting of votes will take place on June 4 along with the rest of the country.

In the high-profile Guwahati constituency, BJP's new face Bijuli dent of Assam BJP and the former president of the party's women wing in the state, is likely to have a direct contest with Congress first-timer Mira Barthakur Goswami, the president of Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress.

nominated senior leader, former minister and sitting Bongaigaon

The Deputy leader of the Congress Legislature Party in Assam and a former minister in Tarun Gogoi's cabinet, Rakibul Hussain will contest the Lok Sabha election for the first time from Dhubri, a bastion of the AIUDF.

Hussain is likely to face a triangular contest with AIUDF chief and incumbent MP Badruddin Ajmal and ruling alliance AGP's Zabed Islam, a former Assam

BJP-led alliance partner, United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) nominated its MLA Joyanta Basumatary for contesting the upcoming Lok Sabha polls from Kokrajhar (ST) constituency.

The opposition Congress named Garjan Mushahary as a candidate for the seat, while Kampa Borgoyary from Bodoland People's Front (BPF) (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### 'Paresh should return realising his goals'

ULFA (I) chief's bother pins accord signed by pro-talk faction

JERAIGAON, April 12: ULFA rades have done". (Independent) leader Paresh Baruah should return home with "due respect and not without realising his goals and aspirations for the people of Assam", his brother Bikul Baruah said.

"He has a goal, we do not agree with it but he has spent nearly 45 years pursuing it. We want him to come home but he should not return empty-handed

without achieving what he aspired for the people", Bikul Baruah told PTI in an interview at the family home here under Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency.

Asked about the pro-talk ULFA faction's accord with the government, the ULFA(I) chief's youngest sibling said, "We do not want him to come back with just a rehabilitation package like his earlier com-

"The accord signed is not in the interest of the people of the state and even the common people are aware that it has been for their personal interest. The leaders of the pro-talk faction are facing so much criticism and they have not been able to keep their stand before the people and the Assamese society", he claimed.

Thousands of people have lost their lives during the decadeslong ULFA issue but "these leaders ac-

cepted just a package. If they had to accept only this, it could have been done much earlier and many lives would have been saved. Was the

package the aim of their socalled movement", Baruah asked. Paresh Baruah is 'answerable to the people of the state as so many people (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# All eyes on Bijuli-Mira duel in Guwahati

the third phase began on Friday. The process started with issuance of the notification for the

Kalita Medhi, who is a vice presi-

From the ruling front, AGP has

MLA Phani Bhusan Choudhury to contest from Barpeta, Congress nominated its state Seva Dal chief Deep Bayan from Barpeta, while CPI(M) has named its lone MLA in the state Assembly Manoranjan Talukdar for the seat.

2021-22 Delhi excise policy. He is

in judicial custody till April 15 and is currently lodged in Tihar jail. The BJP has been telling "jhoot pe ihoot" (lie upon lie), but people have realised that this cannot go

In 2015, Union home minister Amit Shah had declared the then Congress minister Himanta Biswa Sarma "was the most corrupt person in Assam", he said.

ever, is now (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### **Tuliram gears up for 2024 Lok Sabha elections**

HT Correspondent **DONGKAMUKAM, April 12:** The Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and a star campaigner on Friday appealed people to support BJP candidate Amarsing Tisso from the 6 – Diphu (ST) Parliamentary Constituency ahead of the second phase of the Parliamentary elections scheduled for April 26.

The CEM attended two election rallies; one at Jengkha playground within the Kopili Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) constituency, and another at Panditghat playground within the Nomati MAC constituency. Both events drew large crowds.

At Jengkha playground, the CEM announced a se-

ries of impending welfare schemes set to roll out postelection. Tuliram Ronghang, addressing the audience, pledged to provide families without ration cards access to free rice under the government's initiative.

He also promised financial support to women through the Arunodoi scheme and health benefits via the Ayushman card.

Furthermore, Tuliram declared that each member of the Self Help Groups (SHGs) would receive ₹ 10,000 to boost income generation.

"In an effort to support education for girl students, the Government of Assam will provide financial assistance of ₹ 10,000 for those completing matriculation to aid in their college (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### BJP can put Kejriwal behind bars, cannot imprison his ideas: Bhagwant Mann

**DIGBOI, April 12:** Punjab chief of giving to the people what they minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday asserted that the BJP can put his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal behind bars, but cannot imprison the latter's ideas and the "change" he and his Aam Aadmi

Party has brought about. The idea with which the AAP works has been witnessed in Delhi and Punjab and "they (the BJP) can arrest one Kejriwal, but there are thousands across the country who are following the party principles

need the most", Mann said at an election rally here. "They thought that if Kejriwal is

sent to jail, AAP will be finished. But, how will they imprison his ideas?" the Punjab CM said, while campaigning for his party candidate Manoj Dhanowar for the Dibrugarh Parliamentary constituency

Kejriwal has been arrested by the ED in the money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped

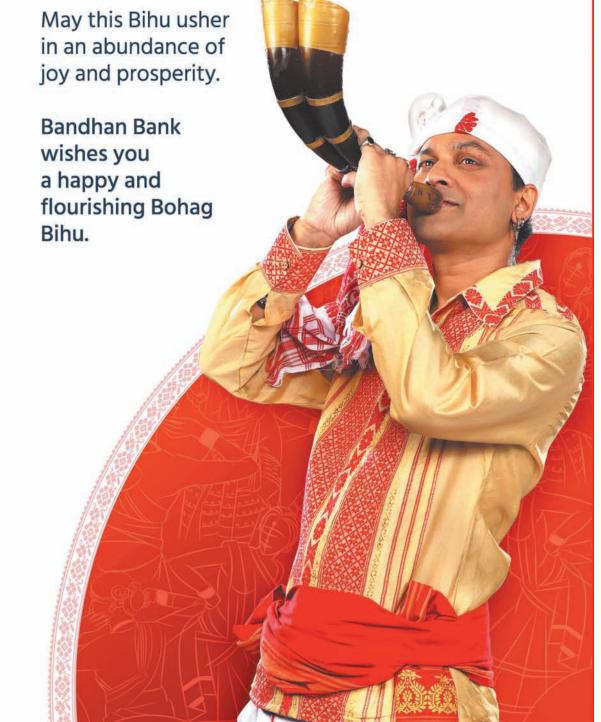
"Sarma (the Assam CM), how-

on, Mann claimed.

















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Call 104 for any health related queries Call 108

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THE HILLS TIMES

# Stock markets plunge as US inflation dashes rate cut hopes; Sensex, Nifty lose 1%

While 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1.06 % to settle at 74,244.90, NSE Nifty declined 1.03 % to close at 22,519.40

MUMBAI, April 12: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty plunged by 1 per cent on Friday due to across-the-board profit taking by investors after a recent record-breaking rally as US inflation data dashed hopes of a rate cut

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 793.25 points or 1.06 per cent to settle at 74,244.90 with 27 of its components ending in the red. During the day, it dropped 848.84 points or 1.13 per cent to 74.189.31

The NSE Nifty declined 234.40 points or 1.03 per cent to close at 22,519.40 with 45 of its constituents settling lower. All Nifty sectoral indices closed in the red.

From the Sensex basket, Sun Pharma, Maruti, Power Grid, Titan, JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of India were the major laggards.

Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy Services and Nestle were the gain-

"US inflation soared by 0.4% MoM, surpassing expectations and triggering a spike in US Treasury yields. Investors are questioning

**NEW DELHI, April 12:** Passenger vehicle wholesales

in India touched a record high of 42,18,746 units in the

financial year 2023-24, registering a year-on-year

growth of 8.4 per cent on the back of robust demand

for utility vehicles, industry body SIAM said on Friday.

Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), the overall passen-

ger vehicle dispatches stood at 38,90,114 units in fiscal

year 2022-23. Two-wheeler sales were up 13.3 per cent

last fiscal at 1,79,74,365 units, as compared to

to 2,38,53,463 units in the period under review, as

45,00,492 units last fiscal, as compared to 47,61,299

per cent based on conducive policies of the government

of India, the Indian automobile industry has posted a sat-

isfactory performance with domestic industry growing by

12.5 per cent during the last financial year," SIAM Presi-

He said the growth was led by the passenger vehicles

dent Vinod Aggarwal told reporters here.

Retail inflation eases to

ously, CPI-based inflation was the

lowest at 4.87 per cent in October

down from 8.66 per cent in Febru-

ary, according to the data released

by the National Statistical Office

in eggs, spices, and pulses, among others, eased on a month-on-month

basis. However, there was an

uptick in fruits and vegetables seg-

ments in March compared to Feb-

lower in the 'fuel and light' seg-

The retail inflation was also

The government has tasked the

Reserve Bank to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent, with a mar-

which factors in consumer infla-

tion while arriving at its bi-

monthly monetary policy, food

price uncertainties continue to weigh on the inflation trajectory

going forward. The central bank

has projected retail inflation at 4.5

per cent for the current fiscal as-

modity prices and supply chains.

4.9 per cent for the April-June

quarter and at 3.8 per cent for the

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist,

ICRA said an intensification of the

impending heatwave may worsen

the seasonal uptick in prices of per-

ishables, heightening the criticality

of a favourable monsoon in 2024

to keep food inflation in check and

inflationary expectations well-an-

Continuing geopolitical tensions also pose an upside risk to com-

The RBI projected inflation at

Commenting on the CPI data,

suming a normal monsoon.

September quarter.

chored. (PTI)

gin of 2 per cent on either side. According to the Reserve Bank,

According to the data, inflation

(NSO).

The inflation in the food basket was at 8.52 per cent in March,

Vehicle sales across categories rose by 12.5 per cent

Exports, however, saw a drop of 5.5 per cent at

"On the backdrop of a robust economic growth of 7.6

1,58,62,771 units in the financial year 2022-23.

against 2,12,04,846 units in fiscal year 2022-23.

As per the latest data issued by the Society of Indian



ticipated three rate cuts this year, leading to underperformance in EMs. Meanwhile, European markets excelled as the ECB maintained policy rates but hinted at a potential rate cut soon.

"Indian markets consolidated amidst worries over delayed US rate cuts, escalating Middle East tensions driving oil prices up, and subdued Q4 earnings projections," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

In Asian markets, Tokyo settled in the positive territory while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong

Domestic PV sales soar to record

high of 42 lakh units in FY24: SIAM

European markets were trading in the positive zone. Wall Street ended mostly with gains on Thurs-

"Nifty ended sharply lower on April 12 on profit booking across the board. Asian stocks fell on Friday as traders priced in less monetary policy easing by the US Fed this year," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.60 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.49 per cent.

All the indices ended lower, with oil & gas falling by 1.28 per cent,

(PV) segment which almost touched 50 lakh units in

sales and 7 lakh units of exports.

overall sales, which included 42 lakh units of domestic

SUVs grew by 25.8 per cent in FY24 at 25,20,691

units, as against 20,03,718 units in FY23, SIAM said.

the recovery path with a growth of over 13 per cent in

domestic sales to almost 1.8 crore units, even though it

was still lower than the earlier peak of 2.1 crore units

passenger cars and two-wheelers continued to face

challenges as the rural economy has not fully recov-

marginal growth to 97 lakh units and within that, some

drop was experienced in light commercial vehicles

(LCVs) and small commercial vehicles (SCVs) due to

The growth in commercial vehicles was also im-

pacted due to migration to higher tonnage trucks which

degrowth in the CNG segment," he said.

in the number of units. (PTI)

However, he said the entry-level categories of both

"The domestic commercial vehicle industry had a

Within the PV segment, utility vehicles including

Aggarwal said the two-wheeler segment continued

utilities (1.02 per cent), realty (0.96 per cent), bankex (0.91 per cent) commodities (0.84 per cent), IT (0.84 per cent) and financial services (0.81 per cent).
A total of 2,373 stocks declined

while 1,466 advanced and 104 remained unchanged.

Post-market hours, TCS announced its Q4 earnings. Industrial production for February and inflation data for March were scheduled for release later in the day.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.95 per cent to USD 90.56 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹ 2,778.17 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

The BSE benchmark climbed 354.45 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 75,038.15 on Wednesday. The Nifty advanced by 111.05 points or 0.49 per cent to reach a record closing peak of 22,753.80. During the day, it jumped 132.95 points or 0.58 per cent to hit a lifetime intraday peak of 22,775.70.

Stock markets were closed on Thursday on account of Eid-Ul-

### Rupee falls 13 paise to close at 83.44 against US dollar

MUMBAI, April 12: The rupee depreciated 13 paise to close at 83.44 against the US dollar on Friday, weighed down by a massive sell-off in domestic equities and a strong greenback against major

Forex traders said elevated crude oil prices also dented investor sentiments

of 13 paise from its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee closed flat at 83.31 against the US dollar. Forex markets were closed on Thursday on account of Eid-Ul-

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.51 per cent

created higher payload capacity, which is not reflected

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.36 and touched an intraday low of 83.44 against the greenback. The local unit finally settled at 83.44, registering a loss

### Gold gains ₹ 1,050 to breach ₹ 73k-mark; silver too hits fresh peak

5-month low of 4.85 % in NEW DELHI, April 12: Gold and silver prices ral- ${\it March, inches close to RBI's target}$ on Friday, with the yellow metal gaining sharply by ₹ 1,050 to breach ₹ 73,000 per 10 grams level amid bullish global trend. According to HDFC Securities, NEW DELHI, April 12: Retail ingold price surged ₹ 1,050 to hit its lifetime high of ₹ flation declined to a five-month 73,350 per 10 grams in Delhi. It had closed at ₹72,300 low of 4.85 per cent in March per 10 grams in the previous session. Similarly, silver mainly due to cooling food prices, prices zoomed ₹ 1,400 to hit a new record of ₹ 86,300 inching towards the Reserve

Bank's target of 4 per cent, accord-"Spot gold (24 carats) prices in the Delhi markets ing to official data released on Friare trading at a record high of ₹73,350 per 10 grams, up by ₹ 1,050, taking positive cues from overseas mar-The Consumer Price Index kets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities (CPI) based retail inflation was at HDFC Securities, said. 5.09 per cent in February and 5.66 per cent in March 2023. Previ-

Commodity markets were partially closed on Thursday on account of Eid-Ul-Fitr.

In the global markets, spot gold at Comex traded at lied for the fourth straight session and hit fresh peaks USD 2,388 per ounce, up USD 48 from the previous closing level.

Gold reached a new all-time high in the early hours of the European trading day on Friday. Safe haven demand supported the spike in precious metals following heightened Middle East tensions and the possibility of Iran retaliating against an Israeli strike on its embassy in Syria, Gandhi said.

In addition, silver was also quoting higher at USD 28.95 per ounce. In the previous session, it had settled at USD 28.05 per ounce.

Meanwhile, in the futures trade on the MCX, gold climbed to an all-time high of ₹72,828 per 10 grams in the intra-day trade. The most-traded June contract of the yellow metal was trading at ₹ 72,681 per 10 grams, up by ₹ 1,037 or 1.45 per cent. (PTI)

### Price surge dampens demand for jewellery: Senco Gold

Gold price jumped about 10 % in last 30 days, became costlier by 23-25 %

KOLKATA, April 12: Jewellery retail major Senco Gold Ltd on Friday said the recent sharp spurt in gold prices due to geopolitical reasons has dampened demand, and the industry's first-quarter performance hinges upon ongoing buying propensity during festive and auspicious New Year celebra-

The Kolkata-based retail chain said it has taken a slew of measures to combat the demand situation, with a push toward diamond-studded gold jewellery and consumer-centric schemes.

However, these may not compensate for the 15-20 per cent degrowth in volume terms witnessed in March and April, a top company official said. "In the last 30 days, the gold

price has jumped about 10 per cent, and in the last six months, it has become costlier by 23-25 per cent. This sharp volatility has hit retail buying sentiment. Volumes have plummeted by 15-20 per cent for the industry," Senco Gold managing director and CEO Suvenkar

Eid, Bengali New Year, Akshay Tritiya, and regional New Year festivities are expected to help bring demand into stores, but cash movement restrictions because of the election model code of conduct might be a hurdle for certain retail-



ers. Senco had reported a 23 per cent growth in its consolidated net profit at ₹27.6 crore for the quarter ended June 2023, from revenue expansion of 30 per cent to ₹ 1,305

He, however, acknowledged that in "value terms," the market is expected to be flat as gold is hovering around ₹ 70,000 per 10 grams.

Sen expects a flattish performance in the year-on-year fourthquarter sales that ended in March The company is in a silent pe-

riod for results, and thus Sen declined to divulge more specific details.

Senco said that it has introduced a price guarantee scheme for six months under the Marigold scheme, which the industry offers only up to one month until Akshay

Tritiya, where a customer books gold and gets immunity from price rise. The company is also offering discounts in making charges to push sales during this period. The company also has DigiGold, which allows customers to invest in gold for as low as  $\ge 300$ .

Sen mentioned that the company is focusing more on diamond-studded gold jewellery, which has either narrowed the gap or even made ornaments less costly as they are made up of 14-carat gold.

He expects diamonds, including lab diamonds, which account for 11 per cent of total revenue, to increase to at least 15 per cent in the next 2-3 years.

The company's revenue for nine months ended December 24 was ₹ 4104 crore and net profit was ₹ 148.8 crore. (PTI)

## TCS Q4 profit rises 9 % to ₹ 12,434 crore on better margin

MUMBAI, April 12: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Friday reported a 9 per cent growth in net profit at ₹ 12,434 crore in January-March quarter of FY24, helped by improved margin and strong performance of its India business.

The largest software services exporter had reported a post tax profit of ₹ 11,392 crore in the same period of the preceding fiscal.

In the entire FY24, the company's net profit surged 9 per cent to ₹45,908 crore, while the revenue rose to ₹ 2,40,893 crore from ₹ 2,25,458 crore registered in

In the reporting quarter, the company was able to expand its operating margin by 1.50 per cent to 26 per

cent, which boosted the profit. Revenue also increased by 3.5 per cent to ₹ 61,237 crore during the reporting quarter from ₹ 60,583 crore

in the corresponding quarter a year ago. In the fourth quarter of FY24, the company bagged new orders worth USD 13.2 billion, highest-ever in a

Profit margin and order book validates the robustness of the business model and execution excellence, chief executive and managing director K Krithivasan

said in a statement. "In an environment of global macro uncertainty, we are staying close to our customers and helping them execute on their core priorities with TCS' portfolio of offerings, innovation capabilities and thought leader-

ship," he said.

contribution of this market in the company's topline fell to 50 per cent from 52.4 per cent in the year-ago period. The company also reported a dip in its staff strength by close to 2,000 people during the reporting quarter. Its overall workforce stood at 6,01,546 as of

Amid expectations of a ramp-up in the over ₹

15,000-crore deal with BSNL, the company's revenue

from India business grew 38 per cent, taking the home

country's contribution to the topline to 6.7 per cent in

per cent decline in revenue during the quarter. The

Its largest market of North America witnessed a 2.3

March 2024 from 5 per cent in the year-ago period.

The attrition in IT services dropped to 12.5 per cent from 13.3 per cent in the quarter-ago period. TCS scrip closed 0.45 per cent higher at ₹ 4,000.30 apiece on the BSE on Friday as against a 1.06 per cent

correction in the benchmark index. (PTI)

#### Contd. from Page 1...

### All eyes on Bijuli-Mira

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

### 'Paresh should return realising

have died and there must be some return for their blood", Bikul Baruah said. A tripartite agreement was signed between the pro-talk ULFA, central and state government in December last year and subsequently, this faction was disbanded in January.

Paresh Baruah's aspirations for the people of Assam is "different from ours but the ULFA leaders had given the government certain demands. It is the people's right to make a demand and the government's to consider it", he said, sitting below a framed picture of his elder brother.

"A give and take policy should be followed by both sides to arrive at a solution which is in the interest of the people of Assam and just not a package for personal interest", he added.

We want dialogue, negotiations must take place and a solution must be arrived at which will be long-standing and in the best interest of the people and the state", the teacher at the primary school, where the senior Baruah had studied, said. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has taken the initiative for dialogue since assuming office and has said several times in the media that the channel for communication with Paresh Barua is open, he said. "Our brother has also responded positively, there is peace in the state now and we are also hopeful of a solution", he added.

"The peace process, however, should not be hurried and all aspects must be taken into account in the interest of the state and its people", Baruah said

The ULFA(I) chief's primary demand is Assam's 'sovereignty' which Sarma had said he cannot discuss as a chief minister, having taken the oath of office on the country's constitution

Baruah had left home in 1979 when the younger sibling was a student of Class 8 and the latter has fond memories of his football-playing elder brother taking him to several matches played at different parts of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts as a railway employee.

"It has been a long time since he left home and since then my parents have died and my elder brother Dinesh Baruah was killed in 1994. We have no contact with him and this is painful", he said. Baruah's mother Miliki Baruah during her lifetime had issued media statements calling for peace and dialogue

but "she died with the unfulfilled wish of seeing her son (Paresh Baruah) again". "We have suffered a lot of pain and harassment over the years but we have accepted it as a part of our lives", he added. The school teacher of Jerai Chokoli Bhoria Primary School, established in 1940, also gave a tour of

the school where the ULFA(I) chief had initially studied and his name is still there in the admission register with his date of birth as April 15, 1957, and the date of admission as February 2, 1962. (PTI)

Even oppn believes NDA will return to

crying foul and presenting the wrong picture." Since his government came to power in 2014, eliminating corruption has been its priority, he said, citing steps like ending interviews for Group C and Group D jobs, launch of National Single Window System, efforts for making government services as faceless as possible and starting the DBT (direct benefit transfer) system to prevent the money of the poor from going into the pockets of middlemen.

"As a result, we have removed the names of more than 10 crore (100 million) fake beneficiaries who were not even born. By doing this, the government saved 22.75 lakh crore from going into the wrong hands. I am committed to taking strict action against the corrupt," he said.

Before 2014, the ED attached assets worth only 25,000 crore, whereas in the last 10 years the corresponding seizure surged to over one lakh crore, he said. "I assure your readers that action against such people, who steal the money meant for the welfare of the

people of this country, will not end," the prime minister told the newspaper. To a question that it is being said that there is not much enthusiasm among voters and no wave for the Lok Sabha polls starting from April 19, Modi said it is not the elections but the opposition camp that is dull because

"Even the opposition believes that the NDA government will return to power, which is why several opposition leaders are shying away from poll campaign. Many people have started blaming EVMs (electronic voting machines) even before the polls have begun," he said.

He added that people have got the opportunity to compare the "BJP Model" and the "Congress Model" for

"The Congress ruled the country with full majority for five-six decades. In comparison, the BJP has served with absolute majority for only one decade. When they had full majority governments, all they did was strengthen their family. Today, when we have a majority government, our priority is to strengthen the country; villages, the poor, our farmers, and the middle-class society," he said.

If one wishes to see the wave, one will have to go to the ground and be among the masses to see their enthusiasm for the third term of the BJP government at the Centre. "Our workers are already in the field. Now, even citizens have taken to the streets with 'Phir Ek Baar, Modi

Sarkar' slogans. When was the last time you saw something like this in the entire world, that even after 10 years of a government, the masses are engaged to reelect it to power with the same enthusiasm and absolute People are taking note of the fact that India is the fifth-largest and the fastest-growing economy in the world

and host the third-largest startup ecosystem of the world, he said. (PTI)

### BJP can put Kejriwal behind bars,

clean as he has entered the BJP washing machine, but how long will they fool people?" Mann, who is on a two-day visit to the state, said. Sarma was the education and health minister of Assam during the Congress rule but "what stopped him from coming up with quality schools and hospitals", the AAP leader said. "I have been told 8,000 government schools have been closed down in Assam as there were no students.

Why are the children not going to government schools - because the parents have lost their trust due to its poor conditions," he alleged. Mann claimed that the AAP government in Delhi and Punjab have built quality school infrastructure and

"now parents are withdrawing their children from private schools and admitting them to government schools. The same will happen in Assam if the AAP candidates are elected". The Punjab CM also alleged that the BJP did not keep its promise of raising the daily wage of tea garden

workers in Assam to ₹ 350 from the existing ₹ 250. "AAP will ensure that tea garden workers are paid ₹ 450 as wages, and we will not promise more than that, as Kejriwal is very clear that we should only announce what we can fulfill," Mann said.

The workers do not have land rights, too, but "we will ensure that they get the 'pattas' as it is their right", he said. Mann said the BJP government had also promised Scheduled Tribe status to six Assam communities -Adivasis, Tai Ahoms, Moran, Muttock, Chutias and Koch Rajbongshis - "but they again failed to keep their

## "We will, however, fulfill this genuine demand of the indigenous people of the state," he said. (PTI) Tuliram gears up for 2024 Lok

admissions, ₹ 12,000 for degree admissions, and Rs 25,000 for university admissions," he added. Tuliram lauded the contributions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma towards launching various welfare schemes targeting different sections of the populace for their overall upliftment. He encouraged the electorate to vote for BJP candidate Amarsing Tisso, reinforcing support for Narendra Modi's bid for a third consecutive term as India's Prime Minister to ensure continued development.

The rally at Panditghat playground saw a significant political shift with 50 workers from opposition parties crossing over to join the BJP.

The event was also attended by MP Horensing Bey, MLA Rupsing Teron, BJP candidate Amarsing Tisso, and other notable leaders from the party.

Small tea

growers

protest

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, April 12:
Amidst the ongoing Rongali Bihu

festival in the state, small tea

growers are facing significant

challenges as many brought leaf

factories are not purchasing the

green leaf. On Thursday, the Satra

Mukti Sangram Samity Tirap

Jagun Regional Committee and

the small tea growers of Tirap and

Jagun region jointly protested at

NH 315 against the DGP Group-

In the Tinsukia district of the

83rd Margherita constituency,

brought leaf factories in the Tirap

and Jagun regions are refusing to

buy green leaves from small tea

Rahul Chetry, the general secre-

tary of the Satra Mukti Sangram

Samity Central Committee, ex-

pressed deep concern, stating that

Rongali Bihu celebrations, small

tea growers in the Tirap and Jagun regions are facing distress due to

the refusal of DGP-owned Lekhapani Tea Factory to purchase their

green leaves, leading to a signifi-

minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

immediately take action against

tea leaves from small tea growers

of Tirap and Jagun region," said

LOST

"We demand that Assam chief

is unfortunate that during the

growers, prompting the protest.

owned Lekhapani Tea Factory.

Communities embrace spirit of Bihu with fervour and inclusivity

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, April 12: The people of Demow and its surrounding areas have geared up to celebrate Rongali Bihu. The air of Demow is reverberating with the sound of the dhol, pepa, and gagana, accompanied by the sonorous sound of the

With a few hours left for Rongali Bihu festivities to commence, people were seen thronging the markets in Demow to buy new clothes on Friday.

Bihu dance and dhol badan workshops were organised in various places in Demow and its surrounding areas, where children took part enthusiastically. Women are busy making til pitha, tel pitha, coconut ladoo, and other traditional Bihu delicacies for Rongali Bihu.

On the eve of Garu Bihu, people bought essential commodities required for Garu (Cow) Bihu. The clothes shops, grocery shops, and sweet shops in Demow were crowded with customers, and cars were parked along NH-37 Road in Demow on

Our Bureau adds: A mesmerising dis-

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, April 12: Stating

that the protection of wildlife is a

crucial component of the broader

subject of environmental protec-

tion, Justice Ujjal Bhuyan of the

Supreme Court of India high-

lighted that the Prevention of

Money Laundering Act (PMLA)

becomes relevant in dealing with

wildlife crimes for money laun-

dering, as wildlife crimes are 'in-

terring Wildlife Crimes: Chal-

organised in the Mizoram Bench

of Gauhati High Court here on

Thursday, as the chief guest, Jus-

tice Bhuyan said since proceeds

from wildlife crimes could be

dealt with under the provisions of

the PMLA Act, the offenses under

the provisions of the Wildlife

(Protection) Act are also included

under the aegis of the Mizoram

State Legal Services Authority

and the biodiversity conservation

organisation Aaranyak with objec-

tives to facilitate synergy among

various stakeholders, including

the judiciary, in the prevention of

Stating that organised wildlife

crimes, which have transcended

geographical barriers across the

world, are among the four major

crimes across the world along

with illegal trade in narcotic

drugs, arms smuggling, and

human trafficking, Justice Bhuyan

warned that to escape severe

crackdown and capital punish-

ment in various countries, crimi-

nals involved in the drug trade

have now shifted focus to wildlife

crimes, which are found to be

wildlife forensic institution is re-

quired in North East India, which

boasts a very rich diversity of

wildlife species and hence is

prone to wildlife crimes, to boost

the investigation of wildlife

crimes and enhance the conviction

He also underscored that a

equally remunerative.

burgeoning wildlife crimes.

The workshop was organised

in the PMLA Act.

Addressing a workshop on 'De-

and Opportunities'

trinsically connected'.



The CEO and secretary-general

of Aaranyak, Dr Bibhab Kumar

Talukdar, addressing the work-

shop, highlighted the utmost re-

quirement of synergy among

various stakeholders, including

the legal fraternity, in combating

and preventing organised wildlife

crimes. He pointed out that India's

frontier north-east region, which

has high wildlife diversity and is

surrounded by largely porous bor-

ders, is in the focus of global

wildlife criminals and has become

a transit route of illegal wildlife

Police, Lalbiakthanga Khiangte,

and senior customs official Mal-

sawmtluanga made elaborate pre-

sentations on the sustained efforts

by Mizoram Police and Customs

Department in the prevention of

wildlife crimes in the bordering

Making a presentation in the

technical session, the field direc-

tor of Dampa Tiger Reserve in

Mizoram, Agni Mitra, explained

how the bordering North East re-

gion stands vulnerable to wildlife

crimes because of porous borders

and proximity to the infamous

Senior law consultant of

Aaranyak and a lawyer in Gauhati

High Court, Ajoy Kumar Das, in

his presentation, highlighted the

enhanced efficacy of the Wildlife

(Protection) Act, 1972, in the

wake of Amendments 2022 and

explained how the investigating

agencies and the judiciary can ex-

ploit the amended act for increas-

ing conviction rates in wildlife

an august gathering, including the

chief secretary and DGP of

Meghalaya, principal chief con-

servator of forest and chief

wildlife warden of Mizoram, sen-

ior officials of Mizoram Police,

customs officials, senior officials

of the state judiciary, president of

Mizoram Bar Association and Bar

members, faculties, and students

of Aizawl Law College.

NFR holds steady growth in freight

unloading during March, 2024

1306 freight carrying rakes unloaded during March this year,

which is an increase of about 5.49 percent

The workshop was attended by

Golden Triangle.

crime cases.

Inspector general of Mizoram

play of culture was seen on Friday at the Guwahati City Center through a captivating performance by 100 young artists animating the vibrant spirit of Bihu dance.

The perfectly synchronised performance was set to the melodic rhythm of the Bihu special song 'Sunrise Xoite Bihu Adorugoi

Justice Bhuyan emphasised on ance of the ecosystem.

PMLA crucial in dealing with wildlife

crimes: SC Judge Ujjal Bhuyan

boosting intelligence gathering

apparatus, capacity building, cre-

ation of data banks on wildlife

crimes and criminals, and the use

of forensic sciences besides bol-

stering protection mechanisms in

the country's national parks and

wildlife sanctuaries by adding

more teeth to existing law provi-

Addressing the workshop as the

guest of honour, Justice Prasanna

B Varale of the Supreme Court

said, "India is a goldmine of bio-

diversity and boasts a rainbow of

wildlife species. Wildlife crimes

pose danger to the ecological bal-

ance of the globe and India is no

Flagging the need for sustained

collaboration among various

stakeholders for the prevention of

wildlife crimes, Justice Varale pre-

scribed for fast-track courts, re-

duction of delays in investigation

to increase conviction rates in

wildlife crime cases, public partic-

ipation in prevention, regular re-

view of WLPA to improve

enforcement, investigation and

conviction, use of DNA analysis,

drones, and satellite imagery for

the protection of wildlife in the

Calling for coordination among

forest officials, state machinery,

and the public in the prevention of

wildlife crimes, Justice Varale

asked members of the Bar to come

forward to participate in wildlife

crime cases under legal services

He also said that tribal commu-

nities' age-old commitment to

protect wildlife should be upheld

and respected and mooted strong

In his welcome address, Justice

Machael Zothankhuma of Gauhati

High Court said the workshop,

which was also graced by another

two Judges of the High Court, Jus-

tice Nelson Sailo and Justice

Marli Vankung, was of great im-

portance at this crucial juncture

when wildlife crimes have posed

a grave threat to the delicate bal-

enforcement of wildlife legisla-

authority.

exception to it."

Bola', by ITC Sunrise Spices.

Composed by renowned Assamese musician Bijay Shankar Das, the music video was created exclusively to celebrate the spirit of Bihu. Sung by Ritisha Sharma and Nitul Dadhora, it also features famous Asthe talented Neel Tamuly.

Simultaneously, AmritCem, a leading cement brand in the North East, took a momentous step towards inclusivity and diversity by orchestrating a Bihu celebration that showcased the incredible talents of children with disabilities from the local community. The event, held on Friday at Pub Guwahati Bihu Sanmilan, Chandmari, was a testament to AmritCem's commitment to providing opportunities for all individuals to express themselves and pursue

Five children with disabilities, specially groomed by experienced choreographers sponsored by AmritCem, mesmerised the audience with their captivating dance per-

Under the spotlight of a packed ground, the young dancers exuded confidence and grace as they took to the stage, delivering a performance that left the audience spellbound and deeply moved.

Their stunning choreography, expressive movements, and infectious energy resonated with everyone present, transcending physical limitations and commu-

**CEM Tuliram** 

Ronghang

receives show

cause notice

HT Bureau
DIPHU, April 12: The Office of the Chief

Electoral Officer (CEO), Assam, has issued a

show cause notice to chief executive member

(CEM) Tuliram Ronghang of Karbi Anglong

Autonomous Council (KAAC) on Thursday for

alleged violation of the Model Code of Conduct

(MCC) during the electioneering process for the

upcoming second phase of parliamentary elec-

tions in Assam on April 26. The notice was is-

sued to the CEM following a complaint filed by

Longkiri Timung, a resident of Rongmongve,

Ward No 4, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.
The CEO's letter addressed to CEM Tuliram

Ronghang stated that the chief electoral officer

of Assam, had received complaints from

Longkiri Timung regarding the alleged violation

of the MCC by using a beacon-fitted car bearing

registration number AS09J 0007 for electioneer-

members (EMs) and chairman of Karbi Ang-

long Autonomous Council (KAAC) are using

official vehicles, which is a violation of MCC

The show cause notice stated, "On prima

facie scrutiny of the complaint and statements

made therein, it appears that the complaint has

merit and the misuse of official machinery is a

violation of the MCC guidelines. Now, there-

fore, you are hereby called upon to show cause

in writing as to why appropriate action for vio-

lation of MCC should not be taken against you.'

It further stated that in the event of no re-

sponse from the CEM within 48 hours, i.e., be-

fore 5 pm on April 13, 2024, it will be presumed

that the CEM has nothing to say in the matter,

and necessary action will be initiated by the

CEO without making any further reference.

guidelines

The complainant alleges that the executive

nicating universal emotions.

Commenting on the initiative, Pradeep Bagla, managing director of Amrit Cement Ltd, expressed immense pride in the young performers, emphasising their talent, hard work, and resilience.

"Their performance tonight was not only a testament to their talent and hard work but also a reminder of the importance of embracing diversity and celebrating the unique gifts that each individual brings to the world," he said.

Umang Bagla, director at Amrit Cement, echoed these sentiments, stating, "At Amrit Cement, we believe that diversity is strength and that everyone deserves the opportunity to express themselves and pursue their passions.'

In addition to providing a platform for these talented children to shine, AmritCem aims to promote inclusivity, equality, and accessibility in the arts.

By showcasing the power of dance to transcend physical limitations and foster positive change, the event seeks to inspire a more inclusive society where everyone is valued and celebrated.

### Sikkim CM will convert seats reserved for Bhutia-Lepcha community to SC if re-elected: Chamling

GANGTOK, April 12: Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF)

bly seats in the Himalayan state is scheduled on April 19. "The delimitation of assembly constituencies is scheduled

to take place in 2026 and my apprehension is that Tamang, if he returns as the chief minister after the elections this year, will manipulate the process to get 12 seats reserved for the tribal Bhutia and Lepcha communities as reserved seats for

Mangan district has three assembly seats, Kabi-Lungchok,

Chamling, who is seeking to return to power after being

president Pawan Kumar Chamling on Friday claimed that chief minister Prem Singh Tamang will convert all 12 assembly seats reserved for the Bhutia and Lepcha (BL) tribal communities into scheduled castes (SC) constituencies if he comes back to power.

Polling for the lone Lok Sabha constituency and 32 assem-

SCs," he said while campaigning in Mangan district.

Dzongu and Lachen-Mangan, all reserved for the Bhutia and Lepcha people and known by the acronym BL.

ousted by Tamang-led Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) in 2019 assembly polls, warned the indigenous tribal communities to guard against their share in the state legislature from being taken away by the ruling party in delimitation process The SDF supremo assured the gathering that he would

steadfastly protect the rights of Bhutia and Lepcha people if they elected his party to power again.

The SKM and SDF have pitted their candidates for all 12 BL assembly seats in Sikkim. (PTI)

### Bongaigaon DC encourages utilisation of ECI ICT app HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 12: Nabadeep Pathak, district commissioner cum district election officer, Bongaigaon, urges the public to utilise various ECI Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Applications for different purposes in view of the ensuing general election to Lok Sabha, 2024, pertaining to the 18-Bongaigaon LAC. These applications include c-VIGIL for raising complaints on violations of the Model Code of Conduct, Suvidha for all permission-related matters through an online system, Saksham-ECI for all voter-related services for persons with disabilities (PwD) delivered to their doorsteps, and NGSP to register complaints related to elections, non-elections, and other issues. The district election officer, Bongaigaon, further urges the public to use the toll-free number 03664-1950 installed at the District Contact Centre for obtaining various election-related information and lodging complaints. The toll-free number 1950 is operational 24x7. Additionally, the district election officer, Bongaigaon, also encourages the public to utilise the phone number 70867-93507 at the call

centre for obtaining various election-related information and lodg-

#### those brought leaf factory owners who are not purchasing the green

cant problem.

Rahul Chetry.

I, Rajiv Kumar, son of Shivchand Chauhan, hereby declare that I have lost the original Admit Card and Mark Sheets for the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Semesters of my B.A. program. These documents are from Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University and bear the Registration No. 15017764. Personal Details: Name: Rajiv Kumar

Father's Name: Shivchand Chauhan Village: No 2 Nowaibill Police Station: Kheroni

District: West Karbi Anglong If you find these documents, please contact me at your earliest

convenience.



### অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ

ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.

No.216PSC/DR-21/5/2022-23

### **NOTIFICATION**

It is for information to all concerned that the Assam Public Service Commission will hold the Interview/Viva-Voce for the post of Junior Manager (IT) in Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL) (Advt. No.08/2023, dated 30th March/2023) as per programme given below at its office at Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22. The detailed programme for the Interview/Viva-Voce is given below:

Sl. No	Name of the Post & Department	Date of Interview/ Viva - Voce	Reporting Time
1	Junior Manager (IT) in Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL)	23-04-2024 & 24-04-2024	9:00 AM

Kindly note that the candidates appearing the interview/viva-voce must bring the following testimonials in original alongwith self attested photocopies in chronological order, thereof for verification/scrutiny on the day of the interview:

- H.S.L.C Admit/Pass Certificate as a proof of age.
- H.S.L.C Marksheet and Pass Certificate.
- H.S.S.L.C Marksheet and Pass Certificate(if applicable) Diploma Marksheet (All Semester) and Pass Certificate.
- Degree Marksheet (All Semester) and Pass Certificate (if applicable). CGPA Conversion Formula of the respective universities
- Permanent Residential Certificate/Employment Exchange Registration/Voter ID.
- State Government Employees of Assam must submit No Objection Certificate from their respective employer or Permanent Residential Certificate/Employment Exchange Registration/Voter ID as domicile proof. Caste/PwBD certificate/BPL Card (if applicable).
- Declaration Form A ("May be downloaded from APSC's website").
- Ex-Servicemen Identity Card issued by Zila Sainik Welfare Office of the state of Assam and Discharge Book (for Ex-Servicemen category candidates).
- Any other documents that may be relevant for their candidature.

No intimation letter to the eligible candidates shall be sent separately by post. The intimation letters shall be uploaded on 17-04-2024 in the APSC's website (www.apsc.nic.in). The candidates shall have to download their own intimation letter from the aforesaid website

> sd/-Secretary Assam Public Service Commission Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

Janasanyog /D/224/24/13-Apr-24

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, April 12: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is continuously registering a steady growth in freight unloading.

1306 freight carrying rakes have been unloaded by NFR during March this year, which is an increase of about 5.49 per cent in comparison to February in which NFR had unloaded 1238 freight carrying rakes. In fact, NFR has unloaded 14056 freight carrying rakes as a whole during the FY2023-

NFR has transported goods like FCI

rice, sugar, salt, edible oil, food grains, fertilizer, cement, coal, vegetables, auto, tank, container and other items during the month and unloaded them in different goods sheds within its jurisdiction.

of freight carrying trains were unloaded in Assam, of which 367 were loaded with essential commodities. 106 rakes in Tripura, 24 rakes in Nagaland, nine rakes in Arunachal Pradesh, two rakes in Manipur and seven rakes in Mizoram were un-

Moreover, 230 freight rakes in West Bengal and 182 freight rakes in Bihar were also unloaded during March within the jurisdiction of NFR.

Essential and other commodities are being transported regularly not only to meet the essential requirements of common people, but also to keep the local economic activity of the region

During March a total of 746 rakes

loaded during the month.

moving andgrowing.

Advanced terminal handling facilities and introduction of more goods sheds have made the task of unloading more convenient for customers and other stakeholders to unload and clear inward rakes within a limited time frame. Continuous monitoring at all levels has also resulted in reduction of turnaround time and has increased unloading efficiency.





### THE HILLS TIMES

VOL. I, ISSUE 46, GUWAHATI, SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

#### QUOTE OF THE DAY

To destroy is still the strongest instinct in nature. -Max Beerbohm

### **NE** electoral scenario

he forthcoming Lok Sabha elections in the North Eastern states are poised to be a battleground where political dynamics are shifting, with the Congress party making significant strides against the ruling BJP. In the initial phase of polling covering 14 constituencies across eight states on April 19, the stage is set for a keenly contested electoral spectacle. In Arunachal Pradesh, the BJP faces formidable competition from the Congress in both the Arunachal West and Arunachal East constituencies. While BJP's Kiren Rijiju holds a slight advantage in Arunachal West, Arunachal East presents a closer contest with Bosiram Siram of the INC. Similarly, in Assam's constituencies like Kaziranga, Sonitpur, and Lakhimpur, the INDIA bloc, comprising the Congress and Assam Jatiya Parishad, is putting up a strong challenge against the BJP and its allies. Multi-cornered contests are emerging in several constituencies, complicating the electoral landscape. In Assam's Sonitpur, the presence of AAP and BPF candidates adds layers to the electoral calculus. Meanwhile, Manipur, marred by ethnic tensions, witnesses a direct face-off between the BJP and the Congress, with both parties vying for supremacy amidst the delicate socio-political fabric of the state.

Meghalaya presents a complex scenario with multi-cornered contests in both Shillong and Tura constituencies, where the Congress holds an edge in Shillong but faces challenges from regional and national parties alike. Mizoram's lone seat sees a tough competition between various parties, with the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) emerging as a strong contender. In Nagaland and Sikkim, the electoral landscape is characterized by one-on-one contests, highlighting the fierce competition between the BJP's allies and the Congress. The BJP's decision to not contest certain seats underscores the strategic alliances shaping the electoral dynamics in the region. Tripura, with its unique political landscape, witnesses a tight race between the BJP and Congress-CPI(M) alliance in Tripura West, indicative of the shifting political alliances and voter preferences in the state. The Congress's resurgence in the North East, attributed partly to Rahul Gandhi's Nyay Yatra, signifies a renewed vigor in the party's approach to regional politics. The alliance between the Congress and regional parties under the INDIA bloc banner has galvanized opposition forces, posing a formidable challenge to the BJP's dominance

As the electoral battle intensifies, issues of ethnic identity, socioeconomic development, and governance will shape voter sentiments. The outcome of the Lok Sabha elections in the North East will not only determine the political landscape of the region but also have broader implications for national politics. The North East emerges as a crucial battleground where the Congress, buoyed by strategic alliances and renewed momentum, seeks to upset the BJP's applecart. The electoral outcomes in these diverse states will reverberate beyond regional boundaries, underscoring the nuanced dynamics of Indian democracy. The North East, long considered a bastion of regional parties and tribal politics, is witnessing a shift towards mainstream national parties like the Congress and BJP. This transition reflects evolving voter preferences and aspirations for greater representation and development. The Congress's emphasis on issues like social justice and economic empowerment resonates with many voters, while the BJP's focus on national security and infrastructure development appeals to others. Against this backdrop, the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the North East are poised to redefine the region's political landscape and shape its trajectory in the years to

### Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh retires from politics after 33 years

By: Harihar Swarup

The Congress Parliamentary Party was meeting in Central Hall after 2004 Lok Sabha poll results, to elect a leader who will be Prime Minister. The Congress had secured majority under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and all expectations were that she will be PM. Newly elected Congress MPs were raising slogans that she should accept the top post. There were pressure from the BJP that a foreigner should not become PM. Sushma Swaraj, BJP leader, had even threatened that would shave her head if Sonia Gandhi becomes PM.

Amidst pressure that she

should accept the highest execu-

tive post of the land, Sonia Gandhi sprang a surprise; She proposed the name of Dr. Manmohan Singh, an economist, who was Finance Minister in P V Narasimha's government. Dr Singh thus became PM, whose government lasted for ten years. Dr Manmohan Singh, 91, retired from politics early this month, after the expiry of his Rajya Sabha term; he remained a member of the upper house for 33 years. He contested for the Lok Sabha only once from South Delhi but got defeated. Thereafter, he never contested for Lok Sabha polls. It was suspected at that time that some senior Congress leaders had worked behind the scenes to ensure his defeat in a bid to prevent him acquiring the image of a popularly elected leader. After once bitten, twice shy Singh never attempted to run for the Lok Sabha—not taking risk even when he was PM from 2004 to 2014.

Interestingly, as he retired from the Rajya Sabha, Sonia Gandhi enters the Upper House for the first time as a Congress MP from Rajasthan—the state Singh represented for last six years, having been elected to the House earlier from Assam.

I have known Dr. Singh very well, having travelled with him to many countries. I last met him a vear back in his new abode which was allotted to him as ex Prime Minister. We talked many things including resignation of Khare (the first was Sanjay Baru, who later wrote the book "the Accidental Prime Minister".) Khare had good equation with PM and quit the post of Media advisor in a huff after the then Principal Secretary, a 10, Janpath nominee, brought an unknown journalist as media advisor. Dr Singh told me he never wanted Khare to leave and prepared to issue an official order that only Khare will report to him. During Khare's term in PMO, the Prime Minister released my book "Power Profiles"

In 2014, towards the end of his second term, Dr. Singh had said, "History will be kinder to me than media". This was at a time when he was getting attacked for being "a weak Prime Minister" with Sonia Gandhi acknowledged as the power behind the throne during the two terms of premiership.

In September 2013, Rahul Gandhi gatecrashed at a press conference being held at the press club. He tore into pieces an ordinance cleared by PM (Dr. Singh). He dubbed the ordinance as "complete nonsense". The ordinance had overturned the Supreme Court's ruling that MPs would immediately lose their membership if they were sentenced to a prison term of at least two years. It was seen as Dr Singh's weakest moment as the PM. Many felt he should have resigned. He did not. What is not known so widely is that Rahul had apologized to Dr. Singh af-

Singh's rise from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of power is the story of a self-made man; that such a rise can take place in India is due to the power of incredible democracy, however faltering it may be. Born in Gah, a backward village in west Punjab (now in Pakistan), which did not have any school, health facilities or electricity, he used to walk miles to an Urdu medium school -and would study under kerosene lamp at night. He attributed his rise to the "system of scholarship" for poor students that existed at the time. (IPA Service)

# Rongali Bihu - A call for unity and revival

envelops the vertain landscapes of Assam, the air is filled with the joyous melodies and vibrant colors of Rongali Bihu, the festival that celebrates the arrival of the Assamese New Year. More than just a mere celebration, Bihu is an emotion deeply woven into the fabric of Assamese culture, a mirror reflecting the rich tapestry of traditions, customs, and values that have stood the test of

For generations, Rongali Bihu has been a unifying force, bringing together people from all walks of life,

transcending boundaries of religion, caste, or creed. It is a time

when the entire state becomes a canvas of revelry, where the rhythmic beats of the dhol (drum), the melodious tunes of the pepa (buffalo horn), and the enchanting melodies of the gogona (bamboo instrument) reverberate through every village, town, and city.

In the days of yore, Rongali Bihu was a true community affair, with people assembling in homes to sing the captivating Huchori songs, invoking blessings for a prosperous and peaceful year ahead. The village

s the warmth of spring envelops the verdant Huchori groups were welcomed with open arms, their presence considered a matter of great fortune, and the funds raised through their performances were channeled back into the development of the village itself.

Even the children embraced the spirit of Bihu, forming their own Huchori groups and singing from door to door, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie among themselves and their families. The aroma of traditional delicacies like chira (flattened rice), pitha (rice cakes), sandoh (parboiled rice), muri (puffed rice), and til'r laru

(sesame candy) wafted through the air, filling every heart with joy and nostal-

Sadly, the passage of time has brought about a gradual erosion of these age-old traditions. The thrilling sounds of dhul, pepa, and gogona are increasingly confined to Bihu workshops, as fewer and fewer villages retain the authentic celebrations of yesteryear. The younger generation, immersed in the allure of technology and materialism, often finds itself disconnected from the rich cultural heritage that once defined the Assamese



It is a sobering reality that the very fabric of Assamese unity is fraying, as divisions along religious, caste, and political lines threaten to tear apart the sense of oneness that Bihu has always fostered. Even within the same village, the once-cherished traditions of Huchori and the Uruka feast during Magh Bihu are slowly fading into obscurity, replaced by individualism and indifference.

This erosion of unity and cultural identity is a matter of grave concern, for it strikes at the very heart of what it means to be Assamese. The clarion call of the hour is for every Assamese to rise above the narrow confines of divisive ideologies and embrace the spirit of togetherness

Bihu is not merely a festival; it is the lifeline of Assamese culture, the embodiment of our identity as a people. It transcends the boundaries of politics, religion, and customs, reminding us of the shared heritage that binds us together as one. As the thrilling beats of the dhul reverberate across the land, they carry with them the magic of unity, the power to bring every Assamese heart closer, and the strength to fortify the unbreakable bonds that have withstood the test of time.

It is time for every Assamese to feel the emotion, to embrace the thrill, and to celebrate Rongali Bihu with an open heart, free from the shackles of narrow-mindedness. Let the joyous

fill the air, let the aroma of traditional delicacies waft through every home, and let the spirit of

togetherness reign supreme. As we revel in the mirth and merriment of Rongali Bihu, let us also renew our commitment to reviving the unity that has always been the bedrock of Assamese culture. Let us pledge to pass on these treasured traditions to the generations that follow, ensuring that the beating heart of Assamese identity never

For it is only through this unity, this unwavering commitment to our shared heritage, that we can truly embark on the greater journey of Assamese nation-building. Let us embrace our roots, celebrate our diversity, and stand tall as a cultured nation, united in the spirit of Bihu, for it is in this unity that our true strength lies.

Rongali Bihu is not just a festival; it is a testament to the resilience, the vibrancy, and the enduring spirit of the Assamese people. Let us celebrate it with pride, let us honor its traditions, and let us ensure that its essence remains forever etched in the hearts and minds of every Assamese, today and for generations to come. (The writer can be reached at dipakkur-

### Lessons from history: The pitfalls of Rahul Gandhi's wealth redistribution scheme

Recently Rahul Gandhi, the illustrious beacon of hope for the Indian National Congress and the I.N.D.I. Alliance, unveiled his grand plan for India's economic salvation – wealth redistribution. Clutch your wallets tightly, for the Messiah of the masses has come forth with a plan so bold, so audacious, that it would make even Robin Hood blush with envy.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

Gandhi, in his infinite wisdom, proclaimed that under the tutelage of Congress, wealth would no longer be hoarded by the bourgeois elite. It shall be taken from the greedy grasp of the wealthy and generously showered upon the downtrodden, based on their caste and creed, as determined by some mystical census data.

But wait, before you applaud this noble crusade against economic inequality, let us take a moment to peer into the annals of history, where similar tales of wealth redistribution led not to utopia, but to dystopia.

The Soviet Union debacle: Ah, the grand experiment of Communism! The Soviet Union, under the spell of wealth redistribution, descended into a maelstrom of inefficiency and scarcity.

The state seized control of industries, stifling innovation and plunging the populace into poverty. Eventually, the Iron Curtain came crashing down, leaving behind a legacy of economic ruin and dashed dreams.

The Maoist nightmare:

In the land of the dragon, Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution turned fertile fields into barren wastelands. Collectivization and central planning led to famine and despair, leaving millions dead in its wake. Only when Deng Xiaoping ushered in reforms did China emerge from the abyss of economic

The tragic tale of Venezuela: Hugo Chavez and his successor, Nicolas Maduro, em-



barked on a journey of wealth redistribution in Venezuela. Nationalization of industries and rampant corruption transformed a once pros-

EPIC

perous nation into a haven of hyperinflation and poverty.

The exodus of millions seeking refuge elsewhere stands as a grim testament to the folly of such poli-

The Zimbabwean fiasco:

Robert Mugabe's land redistribution scheme in Zimbabwe resulted in chaos and economic collapse. The seizure of farms from white farmers led to food shortages and plummeting agricultural output. The breadbasket of Africa became a cautionary tale of mismanagement and despair.

But why dwell on the past when we have the sage counsel of Rahul Gandhi to guide us? For who needs in-

novation and productivity when we can simply redistribute wealth like candy on Diwali?

Not everyone can manage wealth:

The age-old fallacy that anyone can be a successful entrepreneur! Why bother with skills and acumen when you can simply receive handouts from the government? Let us ignore the countless examples of failed businesses and bankruptcies, for surely, the road to economic prosperity is paved with good intentions, not competence.

Take, for instance, the saga of the Ambani brothers. While Mukesh soared to dizzying heights of success, Anil faltered and stumbled, proving once and for all that leadership skills are overrated. Who needs business acumen when you can rely on the benevolence of the state?

History teaches us to repel wealth distribution: Let us heed the lessons of history, dear comrades, and reject the siren song of wealth redistribution. Karl Marx's utopian vision may have dazzled the masses, but

in reality, it led to untold suffering and misery. If we truly wish to uplift the downtrodden, let us embrace policies that foster innovation and entrepreneurship, not ones that stifle growth and prosperity.

Rahul Gandhi's proposal for

wealth redistribution is nothing short of a perilous journey into the abyss of economic ruin. Let us not be swayed by promises of equality, for the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Instead, let us chart a course towards prosperity through sustainable and inclusive policies. After all, the only thing worse than learning from history is repeating it. (The author be reached

shashankadas0007@gmail.com)

Independent candidate Robert Kennedy may act as a spoiler to Biden's victory

By: John Bachtell

n the highly polarized Presidential elections in America scheduled in November this year, the announcement by Robert Kennedy Jr. has caused a slight jolt to the prospects of the Democratic Party nominee President Joe Biden. If the anti-MAGA majority is united and votes strategically in the 2024 elections, Biden can defeat Trump in a head-to-head matchup, and Democrats could gain Congressional majorities. The GOP/MAGA leaders know this well. One essential strategy to defeat Biden is propping up third-party campaigns to split the anti-MAGA coalition.. With Kennedy Jr. contesting against the Democratic nominee, that

possibility is there. Republican candidate Donald Trump has a numbers problem. He couldn't crack 47% of the vote in either 2016 or 2020 and shows no signs of significantly expanding his voter base in 2024. Trump is a weaker candidate now, having amassed 91 felony indictments, and non-MAGA voters widely see him as a serial rapist, fraudster, narcissist, and liar. He is more dangerous and erratic, and his rhetoric is more hateful and violent. Trump has repulsed a section of GOP voters

who will never vote for him. So, Trump's most likely path to victory is by winning a plurality. Republicans have lost the popular vote in seven of the last eight presidential elections. They prevailed twice with pluralities due to third parties lowering the winning threshold, prevailing in the Electoral College.

Indeed, Trump and MAGA aim to win by suppressing Biden voters, mobilizing the MAGA base with appeals to white Christian nationalism, and promoting third parties to draw voters who

qualms about voting for Biden. Biden's problem is that even without the third party threats to his re-election, there are significant blocks of voters in key swing states who are angry about his support for the war on the

people of Gaza. Analysts have said that absent a reversal of that policy his reelection effort could be in serious trouble.MAGA strategists hope to win the Electoral College outright or attain narrow outcomes in enough battleground states to dispute the election results and carry out one of several "coup" schemes by throwing the election to a MAGA-dominated US House of Representatives to decide.

Promoting Cornel West, Jill Stein, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and the failed "No Labels" campaigns are all part of the MAGA fraud to steal the 2024 election. "Trump needs to split the anti-Trump coalition. If we're united he can't win, if we're split he can," said Pat Dennis of American Bridge, a Democratic Partyaligned opposition research group. "We see (Kennedy and No Labels) essentially as an arm of the Trump campaign, and we intend to treat it as such.'

The tell is that all these candidates are directing their fire at Biden, not Trump. For example, Kennedy preposterously told CNN's Erin Burnett, "Biden is absolutely a bigger threat (to democracy)," brushing aside the January 6 insurrection, calls for political violence, and plans for mass deportations and concentration camps to imprison political opponents and other fascist plans contained in the Project 2025 Agenda.

But this is a lie. Biden pushed social media companies to monitor online activity for medical disinformation. Instagram, a pri-

will not vote for him but have vate company, temporarily banned Kennedy for spreading dangerous anti-vaccine disinformation during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on money alone, it appears MAGA strategists and their extreme right-wing billionaire backers see Kennedy's campaign as the best chance to be, in the words of Steve Bannon, a "useful chaos agent" to throw the election to Trump and a vector to spread disinformation and GOP talking points. Bannon reportedly worked for months to convince Kennedy to oppose Biden in the Democratic Party primaries to sow discord and spread anti-vaccine disinformation.

Kennedy also received support from the Heal the Divide PAC with ties to Marjorie Taylor Greene and was promoted by right-wing cable host Tucker Carlson before Fox fired him. After Kennedy decided to run as an independent, some right-wing media cooled on him, fearful he would draw votes from Trump.

However, the January campaign filings prove Kennedy's campaign is a "stalking horse" for Trump. The single largest donor for Trump, Tim Mellon of the extreme right Mellon-Scaife billionaire family, is also the single largest donor for Kennedy.

The Kennedy campaign has raised \$40 million, \$20 million from Mellon.Previously, Harlan Crowe, the right-wing billionaire, a force behind the Federalist Society's corruption of the Supreme Court and principal patron of Justice Clarence Thomas, made a maximum donation to West's campaign. An uproar forced West to return the dona-

Shanahan, a multi-millionaire and tech industry CEO, has poured \$4.5 million of her money into the campaign and may be the first vice presidential

a ticket. None of Kennedy's other choices panned out, and Kennedy desperately needed a running mate to qualify for the ballot legally. So far, Kennedy is on the ballot in Utah and North Carolina, a battleground state. However, the campaign aims to achieve ballot status in all 50

**AFFAIRS** 

SHASHANKA DAS

Besides his family name, RFK Jr. the son of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and nephew of President John F. Kennedy, rose to prominence as an environmental lawyer and grifter in the anti-vaccine movement, spreading disinformation, particularly in African American and Latino communities and zany conspiracy theories, including that vaccines cause autism and people to become gay. The Center to Counter Digital Hate lists Kennedy and his Children's Health Defense as #2 among its Disinformation Dozen. Kennedy has also spread anti-

LGBTQI, anti-immigrant, and anti-Semitic hate and disinformation and supports a 15-week abortion and În Vitro Fertilization (IVF) bans. He also supports repealing President Biden's signature Inflation Reduction Act, which drives a green energy transition, while he tries to appeal to voters concerned about the climate crisis.

Polling shows Kennedy will draw votes from both Trump and Biden, but more from Biden. According to Lis Smith, who heads up a Democratic Party team focused on these third-party schemes, Kennedy could draw significant support from voters familiar with his family name but not his politics and those who refuse to vote for Trump but have qualms about voting for Biden.

Kennedy casts himself as a opulist and claims Trump and Biden are both creatures of the corrupt merger of corporations

candidate to buy herself a spot on and the state that threatens to undermine democracy. He can tap into the anti-vax and conspiracybelieving constituencies, hatred of Big Pharma, and voters disenchanted with the two-party sys-Multiple tem. parties representing various interests contesting for power makes

sense under a parliamentary system. However, the U.S. reality is a two-party system that offers a binary, winner-take-all choice. with each party reflecting coalitions of different classes and social forces.

The most reactionary forces dominate the GOP, including right-wing billionaires, white Christian nationalists, and fascists. Grouped around the Democratic party, in addition, of course, to numerous business interests, are broad constituencies in the African American, Latino, and other people of colour communities, organized labour, and other mass democratic movements. Some capitalist concerns still committed to constitutional democracy are also in the mix around the Democratic Party.

With so much at stake, there's no getting around the binary choice voters face - the winner will either be Trump or Biden or the danger third parties pose in tipping a close outcome.

Despite broad opposition among Democratic-aligned voters to Biden's foreign policy toward Israel and Palestine, his re-election offers the best opportunities to consolidate political and economic gains won in the last four years. A resounding victory could shift the political balance of forces and create new space for mass democratic movements to advance expanded democratic rights and electoral reform, environmental and social justice, and a peaceful foreign policy. Trump only offers fascism. (IPA Service)





# English certificate courses for BA English students

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

nglish certificate courses are concentrated, short-term training courses cre-ated to provide students a thorough knowledge of the English language. The subjects covered in English course certificates span from grammar and vocabulary to speaking and writing to reading, exam preparation, cultural and social facets,

Students who want to begin or advance their professions in English or people who want to learn more about the fundamentals of the English language are the target audience for English courses.

#### Why are certificate courses important?

In many universities, the curriculum tends to focus more on theoretical aspects rather than practical applications. Even if you engage in projects or practicals, the emphasis is often on securing good grades rather than

Certificate courses, available in the market, bridge this gap by enhancing your skills across various dimensions. They expand your knowledge in areas aligned with market needs, equip you with the ability to handle real-life situations, and develop your personality to thrive in the industry.

For BA English programs students, there exists a plethora of certificate courses that perfectly complement their studies. These courses enhance knowledge and skills in specific domains, allowing students to gain a competitive edge in their chosen

Here are some certificate courses that are relevant to BA English students

#### 1. English for written communication

The course emphasises the value of written communication in language learning and offers fundamental abilities in English reading and writing. It goes over



fundamental grammar rules and exposes pupils to a range of texts and literary works to extend their horizons. The application of writing abilities will be taught to students through assignments and other activities. To increase exposure to written English, the course also offers a range of written samples in each session.

2. Advanced certificate of proficiency (English)

The programme seeks to im-

velop in their careers by becoming fluent in multiple languages. 3. English language for competitive exams

The training seeks to improve participants' English language skills, particularly those who intend to take competitive tests that assess their language ability. The teachers will provide students with lessons that will help them comprehend grammar, writing, and vocabulary better.

4. English for beginners Intensive Spoken English Course The programme is intended for total beginners who want to quickly advance to an intermediate level of spoken English. Each lesson lasts roughly 1.5 hours and includes over 77 hours of intensive spoken English language practice. The course is entirely animated and interactive. The emphasis of the course is fluency, and English terminology and grammar are explained in an easy-to-un-

derstand manner. 5. Workplace English cer-

The goal of the Workplace English course is to help students become more effective communicators in the workplace. The course emphasises developing fluency and accuracy while covering grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students will get practice using English in informal workplace settings by completing simulated activities on business-related subjects. The goal of the course is to provide students the skills they need to stand out and be noticed in the workplace.

Scope for the above certificate courses

The learners of the Certificate Course in Spoken English have a wide range of future opportunities available to them, some of which include the following: The course will be beneficial to the students academically since it will provide them the option of choosing graduate school or applying for research jobs in the

in obtaining employment as English language trainers or spoken English instructors in a variety of Institutes. In newspapers or other agencies, one can work as an editor, a sub-editor, or in other positions. The students may work as BPO executives, tour guides, translators, and other similar positions. Candidates can get employed in varindustries Government to Private sectors. The job role includes Content Writer, PR Manager, Editor,

**Expected salary** 

The average salary of these jobs can range anywhere between 2-5 LPA. With experience and expertise, it can go up to 7-8 lakh per year. (The author is the Founder & Director, Pragatee HR & Career Consultancy based in Jorhat. He can be reached pragatigroup08@gmail.com/99 57663224)

Professor, Personnel Manager,

### **SSC Junior Engineer Recruitment** 2024 – 966 Posts, Online Apply

Staff Selection Commission (SSC) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 966 posts of Junior Engineer (Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical) for various Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations in the Government of India. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of examination: SSC Junior Engineer (Civil, Mechanical & Electrical) Ex-

No of posts: 966 posts

#### Name of post/s:

# Border Roads Organization (BRO): Civil, Electrical & Mechanical

# Central Public Works Department (CPWD): Civil & Electrical

# Central Water Commission: Civil & Mechanical # Brahmaputra Board: Civil

# Farakka Barrage Project (FBP): Civil, Electrical # Military Engineer Services (MES): Civil, Electrical & Mechanical

# National Technical Research Organization (NTRO): Civil

# Central Water and Power Research Station: Civil & Electrical # DGQA-NAVAL, Ministry of Defence: Electrical & Mechanical

Pay: Level-6 (Rs 35400-112400) of pay matrix of 7th Central Pay Commission.

Eligibility Criteria of SSC Junior Engineer Recruitment Age Limit as on 01.08.2024:

Central Public Works Department (CPWD): Up to 32 years

**Others:** Up to 30 years Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below

# SC/ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years

# PwD (Unreserved): 10 years

# **PwD** (**OBC**): 13 years # **PwD** (**SC/ST**): 15 years

#### **Educational Qualification:**

Central Water Commission: Degree or Diploma in respective branch of Engineering from a recognized University or Institution.

MES/ Border Roads Organization (BRO)/ DGQA-NAVAL: Degree in respective branch of Engineering from a recognized University;

(a) Three years Diploma in respective branch of Engineering from a recognized Institute or University or Board; and

Others: Diploma in respective branch of Engineering from a recognized University

(b) Two years experience in Planning, Execution and Maintenance of concerned

**Application Fee:** # General/ OBC: Rs. 100/-

# SC/ ST/ Women/Ex-Servicemen: Nil

# Payment Mode: Through Debit/ Credit Card/SBI Challan/SBI Net Banking

**Important Dates of SSC Recruitment 2024** # Starting date of submission of online application: 28th March 2024

# Last date of submission of online application: 18th April 2024



### **KBM English School Golaghat Recruitment – 3 Posts**

Last Date: 20/04/2024

KBM English School, Merapani, Golaghat has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 3 posts of Computer Teacher. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Computer Teacher

No of posts: 03 posts

**Pay:** Rs 8000 to Rs 30000

Educational Qualification & Experience: MCA/ BCA/ Diploma having knowledge of C Programing, SQL

**Application fee if any:** N/A

#### How to Apply for KBM English School Golaghat Recruitment?

Interested and eligible candidates may Contact- 9954360181 /8011844438 and Mail their CV at – kbmenglishschoolmerapani@gmail.com

Last date of submission of application: 15 days from the date of advertisement i.e., 20th April 2024.

About KBM English School Golaghat

KBM ENGLISH SCHOOL is a premier education institute in Merapani, Golaghat from Kindergarten to XII having Science and Arts stream.

### **Gauhati High Court Recruitment** 2024 – 8 Law Clerk Posts

Last Date: 25/04/2024

ers' language and communica-

tion abilities. To assist students

use the language in social, pro-

fessional, and academic situa-

tions, the course emphasises

spoken English, advanced gram-

matical comprehension, and

phonetics. The curriculum also

seeks to develop students' per-

sonalities and capacities for life-

long learning. It is a great choice

for people who want to over-

come language hurdles and de-

Gauhati High Court has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 8 Law Clerk Posts in the Principal Seat of the Gauhati High Court. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Law Clerk

No of posts: 8 posts Pay: Rs.30,000 per month

Educational Qualification: Candidate must be a Graduate/ Post Graduate in Law or Doctorate in Law from any recognized University in India. Candidate must possess the educational qualification as on the last date of application.

Other Criteria of Gauhati High Court Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidate's age should not be more than 40 years as on 25th April 2024. Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# OBC/ MOBC: 3 years

**# SC:** 5 years # STP/ STH: 5 years

Preference: Candidates practicing at the Bar or having professional experience or literary works in Law to their credit would get preference.

Employment Exchange Certificate: The candidate must have a valid Employment Exchange Registration Number for the State of Assam.

**Application Fee of Gauhati High Court Recruitment** Candidates have to pay the application as mentioned below according to their caste:

SC/ST **PWD** 

Rs.500 Others **Important Dates of Gauhati High Court Recruitment 2024** 

# Starting date for submission of online application: 5th April 2024 # Last date for submission of online application: 25th April 2024 till 5 PM **# Last date for payment of fees:** 30th April 2024, Till bank transaction hours

### DC Sonitpur Recruitment 2024 – 26 **Junior Assistant & MTS Posts**

Office of the District Commissioner, Sonitpur has released advertisement for recruitment of 26 Grade-III and Grade-IV posts in the cadre of Junior Assistant and Multi Tasking Staff in the newly constructed Tea Garden Model Schools of Sonitpur District. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

1. Junior Assistant (Grade-III) No of posts: 13 (Thirteen)

**Scale of Pay:** Pay Band-2 Rs. 14,000 – 70,000, Grade Pay - Rs. 5,600. Educational Qualification: Candidates must have passed Bachelors Degree from any stream (Arts/Science/Commerce) from any recognized university.

Computer Skills: Candidates must have minimum 6 (Six) months Diploma in Computer Application.

2. Multi Tasking Staff (Grade-IV) **No of posts:** 13 (Thirteen)

Scale of Pay: Pay Band-1 Rs. 12,000 – 52,000, Grade Pay- Rs. 3,900. Educational Qualification: Candidates must have passed Class VIII from any rec-

Other Criteria of DC Sonitpur Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates age must be minimum 18 Years and not more than 40 years as on 01st January 2024.

Age Relaxation: Permissible relaxations in upper age limit for different categories

# SC/ ST: 5 years

# **OBC/MOBC:** 3 years # **PwBD:** 10 years

# Ex-Servicemen: 2 years

Nationality: The candidate should be a citizen of India and a permanent resident of

Employment Exchange Registration: Applicant must be registered in Employment

Application Fee: Candidates need not pay any application fee.

**How to Apply for DC Sonitpur Recruitment?** Interested and eligible candidates may apply in Standard Form of Application as pub-

lished in Assam Gazette in Part-IX. Duly filled application along with other documents may be sent by post or by hand to the following address. Office of the District Commissioner, Sonitpur.

Sealed envelope should be superscribed with post applied for.

**Documents to be enclosed:** 

a) Age proof (Birth Certificate/ HSLC Admit etc.)

b) Proof of Educational Qualification - Highest Examination Passed Certificate. c) All marksheets from HSLC onward (only for Grade-III)

d) Caste Certificate if Applicable.

e) Employment Exchange Registration proof.

f) 2 passport Size recent Photographs without any wearable. g) Proof of Residence (PRC/ Voter ID etc.)

h) Computer Diploma / Degree Certificate (Only for Grade-III)

**Important Dates of Sonitpur Recruitment 2024** # Starting date to apply: 15th March 2024 # Last date to apply: 25th April 2024, up to 5 PM

### **UPSC CMS Examination 2024 –** 827 Vacancy, Apply Online

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 827 Assistant Divisional Medical Officer, General Duty Medical Officer & Other posts through Combined Medical Services (CMS) Examination 2024. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of exam: Combined Medical Services Examination 2024

**No of posts:** 827 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

# General Duty Medical Officers Sub-cadre of Central Health Service: 163

# Assistant Divisional Medical Officer in the Railways: 450 # GDMO (New Delhi Municipal Council): 14

# General Duty Medical Gr.-II (Municipal Corporation of Delhi): 200

**Eligibility Criteria of UPSC CMS Examination Age Limit:** A candidate for this examination must not have attained the age of 32 years as on 1st August, 2024 i.e. the candidate must have been born not earlier than 2nd August,

However, for Medical Officers Grade in General Duty Medical Officers Sub-cadre of Central Health Services, the upper age limit must not exceed 35 (thirty-five years) as on 1st August, 2024.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# SC/ST: 5 years

# **OBC**: 3 years # **PWD:** 10 years

Educational Qualification: Candidate should have passed both the written and prac-

tical parts of the final M.B.B.S. Examination. Physical and Medical Standards: Candidates must be physically and medically fit according to the physical/ medical standards for the Combined Medical Services Examination, 2024 as per regulations.

Application Fee: Candidates (Excepting Female/SC/ST/PwBD candidates who are exempted from payment of fee) are required to pay of fee of Rs. 200 (Rupees Two Hundred only) either by depositing the money in any Branch of SBI by cash or by using net banking facility of State Bank of India or by using Visa/ Master/ RuPay Credit/ Debit Card/ UPI Payment or by using Internet Banking of SBI.

**Important Dates of UPSC CMS Recruitment 2024** # Starting date of submission of online application: 10th April 2024 # Last date of submission of online application: 30th April 2024

### **UPSC IES/ ISS Recruitment 2024 – Economic** Service/ Statistical Service Examination

Last Date: 30/04/2024

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has released a notification for the recruitment of 48 vacancy against Indian Economic Service (IES)/ Indian Statistical Service (ISS) Examination 2024. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of Exam: Indian Economic Service/ Indian Statistical Service Examination

No of posts: 48 posts

Examination wise vacancy: # Indian Economic Service: 18 # Indian Statistical Service: 30

Eligibility Criteria of UPSC IES/ ISS Recruitment

Age Limit: A candidate must have attained the age of 21 years and must not have attained the age of 30 years on 1st August, 2024 i.e he/she must have been born not ear-

lier than 2nd August, 1994 and not later than 1st August, 2003. **Age Relaxation:** The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# SC/ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years # **PWD:** 10 years

**Educational Qualification: Indian Economic Service:** A candidate for the Indian Economic Service must have obtained a Post-Graduate Degree in Economics/Applied Economics/Business Economics/Econometrics from a University incorporated by of an Act of the Central or State Legislature in India or other Educational Institutes established by an Act Parliament or declared to be deemed as University under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 or a Foreign University approved by the Central Government from time

**Indian Statistical Service:** A candidate for the Indian Statistical Service must have obtained a Bachelor's Degree with Statistics/Mathematical Statistics/Applied Statistics as one of the subject or a Master's degree in Statistics/Mathematical Statistics/Applied Statistics from a University incorporated by an Act of the Central or State Legislature in India or other Educational Institutes established by an Act of Parliament or declared to be deemed as University under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 or a Foreign University approved by the Central Government from time to time.

Physical Standards: Candidates must be physically fit according to physical standard for admission to Indian Economic Service/ Indian Statistical Service Examination, 2024 as per Regulations given in Appendix III of the rules for the Indian Economic Service/Indian Statistical Service Examination, 2024 published in Gazette of India dated 10th April, 2024.

**Application Fee:** Candidates (excepting Female/ SC/ ST/ Persons with Benchmark Disability Candidates who are exempted from payment of fee) are required to pay fee of Rs. 200 (Rupees Two Hundred only) either by remitting the money in any Branch of State Bank of India or by using Visa/ Master/ RuPay Credit/ Debit Card/ UPI or by using Internet Banking of any Bank.

Important Dates of UPSC IES/ ISS Recruitment 2024 # Starting Date to Apply Online: 10th April 2024 # Closing Date to Apply Online: 30th April 2024



The dueling military and diplomatic maneuvers are meant to strengthen the partners' solidarity in the face of China's aggressive military actions in the region

# US, Japan and South Korea hold drills in disputed sea as Biden hosts leaders of Japan, Philippines

SEVELT, April 12: A US carrier strike group led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt has held a three-day joint exercise with its allies Japan and South Korea as US President Joe Biden met for talks with leaders from Japan and the Philippines at the White House.

The duelling military and diplomatic maneuvers are meant to strengthen the partners' solidarity in the face of what they see as China's aggressive military actions in the re-

A number of US and South Korean guided missile destroyers and a Japanese warship joined the April 10-12 drill in the disputed East China Sea, where worries about China's territorial claims are rising. The Associated Press was one of several news organisations allowed a front-row look at the drills.

Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander, commander of Carrier Strike Group Nine, said the three nations conducted undersea warfare exercises, maritime interdiction operations, search and rescue drills and work focused on communication and data sharing.

He told journalists on Thursday on the Roosevelt that these drills would help improve communication among the United States and its allies and "better prepare us for a crisis in

F/A-18E Super Hornet combat jets took off from the carrier's flight deck, which also had anti-submarine MH-60R Seahawk helicopters. Journalists were flown more than an hour from Kadena Air Base, the hub of US Pacific



air power. Kadena is on Japan's southern island of Okinawa, which is home to about half of the 50,000 American troops stationed in

"It is a busy time; there is a lot going on in the world," Alexander said. "The significance of this exercise is we have three like-minded countries, three like-minded navies that believe in peace, security and stability in the western Pacific.'

In Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said its director-general of Asian affairs had met with a top Japanese Embassy official on Friday and expressed "serious concern and strong dissatisfaction" about Japan's "negative moves" during Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's meetings in Washington with Biden and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

That followed earlier Chinese statements that accused the US and Japan of smearing

gional peace and stability, while saying China will "resolutely defend" its security and development interests.

The participation of Japan and South Korea in the joint exercise was another sign of improving ties between the sometimes wary neighbours

The two US allies' relationship has often been strained by the memory of Japan's 35year colonization of the Korean Peninsula. Washington has been pressing them to cooperate so the three partners can better deal with threats from China and North Korea.

This week's huge parliamentary election defeat of the governing party of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, who has sought better relations with Japan, could constrain his Japan-friendly efforts, but experts believe ties will remain stable.

The drills focused on improving the three nations' joint response capability against North Korea's increasing nuclear and missile threats, South Korea's navy said in a statement.

It said the navies conducted anti-submarine exercises to enhance their readiness against North Korean submarine threats and maritime interdiction training to practice blocking potential illegal transfers of banned weapons by

The latest naval exercise is part of Biden's work to deepen security and diplomatic engagement with Indo-Pacific nations. Biden invited Kishida and Marcos to the White House for their first trilateral talks Thursday, and has the Pacific allies is "ironclad."

Tensions between China and the Philippines have risen over repeated clashes by the two nations' coast guard vessels in the disputed South China Sea. Chinese coast guard ships also regularly approach disputed Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands near Taiwan.

Beijing has defended its operations in the South China Sea and blamed the United States for creating tensions. Chinese President Xi Jinping had a series of talks this week with senior officials from Vietnam, Russia and Taiwan.

The US-Japan-South Korea naval exercises follow four-way drills held in the South China Sea, where Japan joined the United States, Australia and the Philippines

Participants carefully avoided mentioning China and said they were holding the exercises to safeguard a peaceful and stable Indo-Pa-

A Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson said Friday that China's activities in the South China Sea are "justified, lawful and beyond reproach" and accused the US of flexing its muscles in the region and building up anti-China

"These acts are irresponsible and extremely dangerous," Senior Col. Wu Qian said in a statement posted online.

An area of long-simmering disputes, the South China Sea serves a key sea lane for global trade. Concerned governments include Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Tai-

### Belgium will investigate suspected Russian interference in upcoming EU elections

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

BRUSSELS, April 12: Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo announced on Friday an investigation into suspected Russian interference in Europe-wide elections in June, saving that his country's intelligence service has confirmed the existence of a network trying to undermine support for Ukraine.

"Belgian intelligence services have confirmed the existence of pro-Russian interference networks with activities in several European countries and also here in Belgium," said De Croo, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union

De Croo said that Belgian agencies are working closely with the Czech authorities after a pro-Russian influence operation was uncovered there. He said that probe showed that members of the European Parliament were approached and offered money to promote Russian propaganda.

"According to our intelligence service, the objectives of Moscow are very clear. The objective is to help elect more pro-Russian candidates to the European Parliament and to reinforce a certain pro-Russian narrative in that institution," he told reporters. De Croo said the "the goal is very clear: a weakened European support for Ukraine serves Russia on the battlefield and that is the real aim of what has been uncovered in the last

Europe-wide polls are being held on June 6-9 to elect a new EU parliament. De Croo said that Belgian prosecutors are taking action. He noted that "the cash payments did not take place in Belgium, but the interference does.

"These are serious concerns and that is why I have taken action," he said. "We cannot allow this type of Russian menace in our midst. We need to act, and we need to act both on the national level and we also need to act on the EU level.'

He provided no details about who might be under suspicion. Belgian authorities uncovered an influence-peddling operation at the European Parliament in December 2022 involving officials from Qatar. The government of Qatar has denied the alle-

### US airlines ask the Biden administration not to approve additional flights between the US and China

WASHINGTON, April 12: Large U.S. airlines and some of their unions are asking the Biden administration to stop approving any more flights between the United States and China because of what they call "anti-competitive" policies that China imposes on U.S. carriers.

The airlines and unions said on Thursday that China closed its market to U.S. carriers at the outbreak of the pandemic and imposed rules that still affect American operations and airline crews. "These actions demonstrated the clear need for the U.S. government to establish a policy that protects U.S. aviation workers, industry and air travelers," they said in a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Transportation Secretary

The letter was signed by the CEO of the Airlines for America trade group and the presidents of the Air Line Pilots Association. the Allied Pilots Association, which represents crews at

American Airlines, and the Association of Flight Attendants. The number of flights between China and the U.S. has been rising, although it remains far below pre-pandemic levels. The Biden administration increased the number of round trips that Chinese airlines can make from 35 to 50 per week, starting March 31, after China's aviation authority promised to seek an increase in flights by U.S. carriers.

The U.S. airlines said Chinese airlines get an advantage by flying shorter routes through Russian airspace, which has been off-limits to U.S. carriers since Russia invaded Ukraine more than two years ago. (AP)

### Pope will travel to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Singapore in longest trip of papacy

VATICAN CITY, April 12: Pope Francis will visit Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Singapore in September, the Vatican announced on Friday, confirming the longest trip of Francis' papacy that is sure to test his health, stamina and mobility.

The Vatican confirmed the Sept. 2-13 visit, saving the 87-year-old pope would visit Jakarta, Indonesia; Port Moresby and Vanimo, Papua New Guinea; Dili, East Timor; and Singapore. Further

details will be announced later. Francis' health has become a source of increasing concern and speculation, even though the pontiff is able to carry on with a rigorous schedule of meetings at the Vatican and even excursions to local parishes.

Francis, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, had to cancel a planned visit to Dubai late last year after he came down with a bad case of bronchitis. He suffered from respiratory problems all winter and had to curtail his participation in Holy Week events to save his energy for Easter.

Francis has also been using a wheelchair for nearly two years because of bad knee ligaments, and has said that traveling has become increasingly more difficult.

And yet at 11 days, the trip would be the longest of Francis' papacy, outpacing by a few days some of his long trips to the Americas early on



in his 11-year papacy. It will bring the Argentine Jesuit to the world's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, as well as the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, where the Catholic Church wields enormous influence.

In a statement announcing the visit, the Indonesian foreign ministry welcomed the visit and recalled that it had originally been scheduled for 2020 but was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

'The visit of Pope Francis to Indonesia holds significant importance to the Indonesian people, not only for Catholics but also for all religious communities. The visit is also expected to strengthen the message of tolerance, unity and world peace," the statement said.

Indonesia is home to roughly 242 million Muslims and 29 million Christians — 8.5 million of whom are Catholics — according to a 2022 report by the Religious Affairs Ministry.

East Timor, which today has a population of about 1.2 million people, is Southeast Asia's only predominantly Christian nation with the exception of the Philippines. According to the 2015 census, 97.6% of East Timor's population is Catholic

The visit to East Timor will likely reignite attention over a clergy sex abuse scandal involving its revered independence hero and Nobel Peace Prize winner. The Vatican confirmed in 2022 that it had sanctioned Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo following allegations that he sexually abused boys there during the 1990s. Belo is believed to now be living in Portugal.

Francis will be the first pope to visit Papua New Guinea since St. John Paul II went there in 1984. The country, in a strategically important part of the South Pacific, has struggled with tribal violence and civil unrest.

John Paul also visited Singapore, in 1986. The country today is home to some 395,000 Catholics.

The Vatican has planned only one other papal trip this year — to Belgium to celebrate the anniversary of the country's Catholic university. Francis has also said he wants to return to his native Argentina, but no plans or dates have been announced. (AP)

### Massive attack destroys one of Ukraine's largest power plants

KYIV, April 12: A massive missile and drone attack destroyed one of Ukraine's largest power plants and damaged others, officials said on Thursday, part of a renewed Russian campaign targeting energy infrastructure. The Trypilska plant, which was the biggest energy supplier for the Kyiv, Cherkasy and Zhytomyr regions, was struck numerous times, destroying the transformer, turbines and generators and leaving the plant ablaze. As the first drone approached, workers hid in a shelter, saving their lives, said Andrii Gota, chairman of the supervisory board of the state company that runs the plant, Centrenergo.

They watched the plant burn, surrounded by dense smoke and engulfed in flames. "It's terrifying," said Gota. Hours later, rescuers were still dismantling the rubble.

Speaking in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin cast the attacks on Ukrainian energy facilities as a response to Ukrainian strikes that targeted Russian oil refineries.

The Trypilska plant supplied electricity to 3 million customers — but none lost power because the grid was able to compensate since demands are low at this time of year. Still, the consequences of the strikes could be felt in the coming months, as air conditioning use ramps up with summer.

At least 10 other strikes overnight damaged energy infrastructure in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city. Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said more than 200,000 people in the region, which has been struck repeatedly, were without power.

Ukraine's largest private energy operator, DTEK, described the slew of strikes as one of the most powerful attacks this year, while Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko told reporters it was a "large scale, enormous, missile attack that affected our energy sector very badly."

Russia has recently renewed strikes on Ukrainian energy facilities, and attacks last month blacked out large parts of the country a level of darkness not seen since the first days of the full-scale invasion in 2022.

The volume and accuracy of the attacks have alarmed the country's defenders and left officials scrambling for better ways to protect energy assets. The strikes have also tested Ukraine's ability to make quick repairs.Ukraine's leaders have pleaded for more air defence systems to ward off such attacks, but those supplies have been slow in coming. "Today's situation demonstrates that there's nothing left to shoot down" the missiles, Gota said. (AP)

# is a turning point in Vietnam's anti-corruption campaign

HANOI, April 12: The unusually harsh death sentence given to a real estate tycoon in Vietnam was a pivotal moment in the decadelong "Blazing Furnace" anti-corruption campaign as the Vietnamese business community wrestled with an uncertain future on Friday.

Real estate tycoon Truong My Lan, who was sentenced to death Thursday by a court in Ho Chi Minh city for orchestrating the country's largest ever financial fraud case, was one of Vietnam's most important businesspeople for years. She has been convicted for fraud amounting to \$12.5 billion — nearly 3% of the country's 2022 GDP — and for illegally controlling a major bank and allowing loans that resulted in losses of

\$27 billion, state media outlets reported. Vietnam typically gives death penalties crimes like terrorism or murder and, according to Amnesty International, has

among the highest rates of capital punishment worldwide. But a death sentence for a financial crime is rare in the country. Thursday's sen-

tencing marked a "big turning point" in the ongoing anti-corruption drive in Vietnam, said Nguven Khac

Giang, an analyst at Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. "It signals that the party's commitment to a crackdown on corruption has ... expanded," he said.

The Communist Party's so-called Blazing Furnace campaign began in 2013, but it wasn't until 2018 that authorities began scanning the private sector. Since then, several owners of Vietnam's fast-growing businesses have been arrested. The trial for Trinh Van Quyet — the former chair of the real estate company FLC, which also owns Vietnam's third-largest airline, Bamboo Airways — will likely be heard next. He was arrested in 2022. Giang said Lan's trial was "an example" for upcoming cases. The anti-corruption campaign is a hallmark of Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, Vietnam's top politician. The 79-year-old ideologue views corruption as a grave threat facing the party and has vowed that the campaign will be a "blazing furnace" where no one is untouchable.

It's making foreign investors jittery while dampening Vietnam's economic outlook at a time when the country has been positioning itself as the ideal home for businesses looking to shift their supply chains away from China. Vietnam already lost two presidents in a little over a year and the country's bureaucracy has ground to a halt with terrified officials choosing to do nothing lest they be in the crosshairs. Lan's death sentence sent "shockwaves" across the Vietnamese business community, creating a "sense of uncertainty" about the future,

said Giang.

The real estate sector in particular is floundering. An estimated 1,300 property firms withdrew from the market in 2023 and high-rises lie empty in major cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh. Add to this poor global demand and reduced public investment slowing

Vietnam's economic growth down to 5.05% last year, compared to 8.02% in 2022,

according to government data. Meanwhile, despite the long campaign against graft, public opinion about corruption in Vietnam remains mixed, according to an annual survey built on interviews with nearly 20,000 people known as the Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index. It found that, while fewer people were asked for bribes, the number of people who felt the government was serious about fighting corruption had actually dipped in 2023 from the previous year. Giang said that these were now "uncharted waters" for Vietnam, making it impossible to predict what lay next. "We haven't really seen anything like this before," he said. (AP)

### Real estate tycoon's death sentence Norway's health minister resigns after plagiarism accusation in latest scandal to rock the Cabinet

COPENHAGEN, April 12: Norway's health minister resigned on Friday, the second Norwegian government member to step down this year amid allegations they plagiarized academic works

Ingvild Kjerkol resigned a day after a probe by Nord University in Bodoe in northern Norway, where Kjerkol, handed in her master thesis in 2021, concluded that "there is a not insignificant amount of plagiarism in her master's thesis."

'We have come to the conclusion that Ingvild should resign as minister," Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre told a press conference. He said the probe had concluded the plagiarism was "intentional."

Kjerkoll said she and a co-author "did not intend to plagiarize other people's assign-

"Although it hurts not to be believed, we have to deal with the fact that (the university) is of a different opinion," she said at a joint press conference with Gahr Støre.



The 48-year-old Kierkol has been in office since October 2021 when Gahr Støre presented a coalition government of his own Labor party and the junior Center Party.

Kjerkol is the second government member to be entangled in academic plagiarism

allegations this year.

In January, Sandra Borch stepped down

as minister for research and higher education after a student discovered that parts of Borch's master's thesis, including spelling mistakes, were copied without attribution from a different author Gahr Støre's coalition has seen the departure of several ministers in recent months

over other wrongdoings. In September, it was revealed that the husband of then Foreign Minister Anniken

Huitfeldt had been trading in stocks for years behind her back and that could potentially enrich her. In September, the ruling social demo-

cratic Labor party was defeated in local elections by the conservative Hoeyre, the main opposition party, for the first time The party, which for decades was Nor-

way's largest party in local elections, came in second in the Sept. 11 elections for local councils in Norway's 356 municipalities

### Ex-Pak Prez Alvi advises Pakistanis to 'reset, alt-del & restart' to change their destiny

**ISLAMABAD, April 12:** The people of Pakistan must "reset, alt-del and restart" to change their destiny, former president Arif Alvi has said, asserting that the "poor but hardworking" nation, polarised by political differences, deserves better. Alvi, Pakistan's president from 2018 to March 2024, took to social media platform X on Thursday to criticise the cash-strapped country's current state of affairs.

"The argument by some that it has happened before and others have also done the same is no justification to continue on this path, as it is retrogressive thinking with no way forward," the 74-year-old leader said.

"To change our destiny is to Re-Think, Reset, Alt-Del, Clean the slate, Re-Start,"

"Who will do it? Who can do it? Is it even possible? I think it is, as we have the potential, and this poor but hardworking nation certainly deserves better," the dentist-turned-politician said.

Bashing the deterioration of Pakistan's

economy, politics and judiciary, he said that there is severe stress on the country's institutions, which are being forced to take partisan positions.

Asserting that the country's economy needs political stability, which the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other global institutions have pointed out, he said, "FDI (foreign direct investment) without local investment will also be an elusive dream.'

Alvi, who is a close aide of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and a senior leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party before becoming the president in 2018, said that a "total political farce is being perpetrated in the Parliament with a stolen mandate.'

Khan and his party have repeatedly said that the outcome of the February 8 general elections was rigged and that the powerful Army favoured the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to assume power. The 71-year-old cricketer-turnedpolitician has claimed that his party's mandate had been stolen and "efforts were being made to take over the party".

Though PTI-backed independent candidates won more seats in the National Assembly, a post-poll alliance between PML-N and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) allowed them to form a government under the leadership of PML-N party president Shehbaz Sharif.

Alvi also took a dig at the judiciary. He said that the "judiciary hopefully is going through some forced introspection" but claimed that the response in the delivery of justice is "too slow and partial".

"Politicians, workers, including women, are languishing in jail, in case after 'crooked' case," he said, adding that brutal actions against innocents are "extremely and disgustingly common," Alvi said, apparently referring to supporters of Khan who are in jail following the unprecedented protests on May 9, 2023, following the arrest of Khan in a corruption

### The bodies of 4 women have been found in Mediterranean coast

MADRID, April 12: The bodies of four women have been found in a rubber-dinghy boat off the coast of southeast Spain, authorities said on Fridav.

The government office in the southeast city of Murcia said the boat was towed by marine rescue services to the port of Cartagena early on Friday after being spotted by coast guards.

It said the women appeared to be of North African

origin and may have been migrants trying to reach Spain. Migrants regularly use such boats to reach Spain from northwest Africa. Autopsies are to be held to establish the cause of death, the office said. No other occupants were found in the boat and it was

not immediately known if there had been any beforehand. Tens of thousands of migrants from sub-Saharan countries fleeing poverty, conflict and instability in West Africa try to reach Spain each year by boat. Most go in large open vessels to the Canary Islands

in the Atlantic, while others from Morocco, Algeria and Middle Eastern countries try to cross the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean to mainland Spain. Several thousand die making the hazardous journey.

The Interior Ministry says 15, 351 migrants arrived in Spain by boat between January 1 and March 31, up by more than 4,000 in the same period last year. The vast majority arrived on the Canary Island route. (AP)

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### When will Assembly polls be held in J&K, Congress asks PM Modi

NEW DELHI, April 12: With Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a rally in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur, the Congress accused the BJP-led Centre on Friday of suspending democracy in the Union Territory and asked it when would the Assembly polls be held

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said while the prime minister was in Udhampur, in its attempt to retain power in the erstwhile state, the BJP-led government has suspended almost all tiers of democracy and refuses to hold fresh elections.

"PM Modi must answer for his suspension of democracy," Ramesh said while posing several questions to the prime minister.

He said the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir has been under the Centre's direct rule ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) withdrew support to the Mehbooba Mufti-led government in 2018, citing a "deteriorating security situation"

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been left without an elected government since then. Four seats in the Rajya Sabha also remain vacant because of the delay in holding assembly polls. The Centre has often blamed the Election Commission of India for the delay in holding elections but now the

Chief Election Commissioner has turned around and blamed the Centre for the delay after 2022's delimitation exercise," the former Union minister said on the microblogging

He added that eventually, the Supreme Court had to step in and give the Centre a deadline of September 2024 to conduct the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Why has the BJP waited so long to conduct polls in the state? Are they afraid of the verdict of the people? How long will the PM cling to power in a state where the people never chose him as their leader?" Ramesh asked.

He said the terms of 4,892 panchayats and 316 block development councils (the second and third tiers of Panchayati Raj) in Jammu and Kashmir came to an end on January 9 and with the tenures of the urban local bodies having ended in November last year, the people of the Union Territory no longer have elected representatives at most levels of governance.

"Once again, the ruling BJP has been unwilling to hold fresh elections in the state. Why has PM Modi so ruthlessly suppressed the will of the people?" the Congress leader asked.

Ramesh said in his speech in Parliament on December 11 last year, Home Minister Amit Shah said full statehood would be restored in Jammu and Kashmir at an "appropriate time"

"Like the assembly and panchayat polls, will this commitment also be delayed till the time is 'appropriate' for the BJP?" he asked.

The Congress general secretary

said the new industrial policy announced in January 2021, along with the abrogation of the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution, was supposed to usher in "development and progress. However, till date, only 414 units have been registered and actual investment on the ground is just Rs 2,518 crores". Although there was much optimism about the hospitality sector, investment proposals worth only Rs 87 crore have been received till date, he noted.

"Where is all of the 'development and progress' that PM Modi had promised?" Ramesh asked, using the hashtag piTodoPradhanMantriji"

Addressing a poll rally in Udhampur, Modi said after decades, the Lok Sabha election is taking place in Jammu and Kashmir without the fear of terrorism and threat of cross-border firing.

He urged people to repose their trust in him, saying he will get rid of all the problems plaguing Jammu and Kashmir for the last

# Ram temple wasn't and will never be election issue: PM

'They (Indians) faced the worst situations for protecting their faith'

matter of devotion and faith for the country's

The prime minister said the temple was a vic-

"It was a victory after a long wait of 500

years. When foreign invaders vandalised tem-

ples, the people of India fought to protect their

Taking a dig at the leaders of the Congress

and its allies, who he said were living in huge

bungalows when Ram Lalla was living in a tent.

Modi said people used to run from pillar to post

to get the tent changed during rains, only to be

people who considered Ram as the prime deity

for worship. We had told these people that one

day, Ram will return to his temple. Do not for-

get three things -- one, this is a reality now after

500 years of fighting. Do you agree? Secondly,

it has been done through a full process of the ju-

diciary. It has been vetted by a court judgment

'This was an assault on the faith of crores of

religious places. They faced the worst situations

for protecting their faith," he said.

threatened with court cases.

people," he added.

tory of tolerance.

UDHAMPUR (J&K), April 12: In a scathing attack on the INDIA opposition bloc for claiming that the Ram temple in Ayodhya is a "poll plank" for the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said it is a matter of faith for the people of the country.

He compared the mindset of the Congress and its allies with that of the Mughals, who he said used to derive pleasure from vandalising temples, and accused them of teasing the majority community by displaying videos of consuming meat during the month of Sawan to consolidate their vote banks.

"You must have seen how the Congress hates the Ram temple. The Congress and its entire ecosystem start screaming if there is even a reference to the temple. They say the Ram temple is an election issue for the BJP. It was never an election issue and will never be an election issue," the prime minister said at a mega public rally here in Jammu and Kashmir.

Amid tight security arrangements, Modi hit the campaign trail in Udhampur for Union minister Jitendra Singh, who is seeking re-election for a third consecutive time from the Udhampur seat in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Modi pointed out that the Ram temple movement started when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was not even born. "It was an issue at a time when the British were yet to come. It is a 500-year-old matter when there was no thought of elections," he said.

Taking a dig at the Congress for declining the invitation to the consecration ceremony of the temple, Modi said, "What kind of an election game was it that you declined the invite to this holy function? It is an election issue for the Congress and the INDIA bloc, whereas it is a and its justice delivery system. Thirdly, the peo-

ple of India have contributed every penny for the construction of the temple, not the government," he said.

Modi said the trustees of the temple, after forgiving the opposition leaders for the sins committed by them against those batting for the shrine, invited them by going to their houses, but "they declined the invitation".

"I want to ask the Congress that when you were speaking against it day in and day out, as part of which election issue were you doing so? Every devotee of Lord Ram has seen your arrogance when you ignored the biggest event to which crores of people were attached," the

He claimed that declining the invitation was the election game plan of these parties. "What type of compulsion was this that you said Ram was imaginary? Which vote bank were you catering to? The Congress and the INDIA bloc do not care about the majority of the country's people. They feel happy to insult their feelings,'

Referring to some leaders consuming meat in the month of Sawan and making its video viral, Modi said, "In the month of Sawan, they went to the house of a person who was handed a punishment by a court and is on bail and cherished the taste of mutton. They made a video of it to tease the people of the country."

"During the month of Sawan, a person who was convicted, who is on bail, someone went to this kind of a criminal.... During Sawan, they enjoyed eating mutton. Not just this, they made a video and worked to tease the people of India," he said, referring to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's visit to RJD supremo Lalu Prasad's house. (PTI)

### Gross violation of law: CIC pulls up EC for not replying to RTI query on EVMs



NEW DELHI, April 12: The Central Information Commission (CIC) has expressed "severe displeasure" over the Election Commission (EC) not furnishing a reply to an RTI plea that had asked the poll panel about the action taken on a "representation" given to it by eminent citizens, raising questions on the credibility of EVMs and VVPAT machines during elections.

Terming it a "gross violation" of the law, the CIC has also directed the EC to submit a written

Service (IAS) officer M G Devasahayam, who was one of the signatories to the representation on the credibility of electronic voting machines (EVMs), voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) and the vote-counting process, had filed an application with the poll panel under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, seeking details of the action taken on it. The representation was sent to the EC on May 2, 2022. Through the RTI application filed on November 22, 2022, Devasahayam wanted to know about the persons and public authorities to whom the representaany meetings held on the issue and all relevant file notings.

The EC did not give any response to him within the manda-30-day period and Devasahayam's first appeal to senior officials was also not heard. He approached the CIC in the second appeal, citing the lack of response from the poll panel.

When quizzed by Chief Information Commissioner Heeralal Samariya, the central public information officer of the EC failed to give a satisfactory reply on why no response was furnished Former Indian Administrative to Devasahayam.

Commission, after perusal of case records and submissions made during hearing, expresses severe displeasure over the conduct of the then PIO in not having provided any reply to the RTI application within the time-frame stipulated under the RTI Act. Therefore, commission directs the then PIO through the present PIO to furnish a written explanation for the gross violation of the provisions of the RTI," Samariya

### Conspiracy being hatched to impose President's rule in Delhi: Atishi

NEW DELHI, April 12: Delhi Cabinet minister Atishi on Friday alleged that a big political conspiracy is being hatched by the BJP-led central government to impose President's rule in the na-

"Arvind Kejriwal's arrest is a political conspiracy to topple his government. We have learnt from reliable sources that in the coming days, President's rule will be imposed in Delhi. But imposing President's rule in Delhi will be illegal and against the mandate of people," she said at a press conference here.

Reacting to the AAP leader's charge, the BJP said it was surprising that the fear of President's rule is haunting the AAP, which has 62 MLAs in the 70-member Delhi Assembly.

At the press conference, Atishi claimed that in recent times, many events have taken place that indicate the possibility of the imposition of President's rule in the national capital

In the last few months, no senior IAS officer has been posted in Delhi, she said.

"Posts are lying vacant in departments but no postings have taken place. Bureaucrats have stopped attending meetings called by ministers, citing the Model Code of Conduct. The lieutenant governor has been writing letters to the MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) over the functioning of the Delhi government," she said.

Atishi further said the BJP already knows that it cannot come to power in Delhi.



"The AAP defeated the BJP in the Delhi assembly elections in 2015 and 2020. That is why they want to topple the Delhi government. However, the imposition of President's rule would be illegal since the Delhi government enjoys a majority. We proved our majority through a floor test on February 17 this year," she said.

Later in the day, Atishi's cabinet colleague Saurabh Bharadwaj spoke in the same vein.

"The BJP and the lieutenant governor are talking about a constitutional crisis in Delhi. This shows that there is a conspiracy to impose President's rule in Delhi. The BJP has been defeated twice in Delhi in 2015 and 2020 and it knows it cannot form the government in Delhi. Even if elections are held today, Arvind Kejriwal will

"President's rule was imposed in Delhi throughout 2014. We had approached the Supreme Court at that time. Subsequently, elections were held and the AAP came to power in

"People gave them a reply for imposing President's rule. If President's rule is imposed in Delhi, the people of Delhi will again give them a reply," he said.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva hit out at the AAP, saying it was surprising that the fear of President's rule is haunting the AAP, even though it has a majority in the assembly.

"Atishi's usual false narrative of her victimisation and the 'Operation Lotus' story were replaced by a new story early this morning. Today, she has said that President's rule is likely to be imposed in Delhi," he said. Sachdeva also demanded the resignation of

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case. "It would be better if Arvind Kejriwal resigns. Hand over the government to a new chief minis-

ter and let Delhi's administration run properly,"

Kejriwal has been arrested by the ED in the money laundering case linked to the nowscrapped 2021-22 Delhi excise policy. He is in judicial custody till April 15 and is currently lodged in Tihar jail. (PTI)

### Smriti accuses Rahul of neglecting devpt of Amethi for 15 years

AMETHI (UP), April 12: Union Minister and BJP's candidate from Amethi, Smriti Irani, on Friday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and the Congress of neglecting the development of Amethi

"The government at the Centre was of his 'mataji' (mother, Sonia Gandhi) and that in UP had their support. But Rahul Gandhi never thought about the development of Amethi," said Irani, while speaking with the people from the Yadav community at her residence here.

Continuing her attack against Rahul Gandhi, the BJP leader said when a minister from Karnataka asked him why he was contesting elections from Wayanad, he replied that the people of Wayanad are more

"I want to ask, are the people of the area from where he was MP for 15 years not loyal? Are they traitors?" rani asked.

Irani defeated Rahul Gandhi in Amethi in the 2019 polls. The Congress party is yet to announce its candidate for the 2024 Lok Sabha election from the seat. (PTI)

### Cong to become extinct like dinosaur in few years: Rajnath

GAUCHAR (U'KHAND), April 12: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh claimed on Friday that the Congress will become extinct like the dinosaur in a few years and likened the infighting in that party to the reality show "Bigg Boss". "The exodus of leaders from the Congress continues."

the BJP," he said at a rally in Uttarakhand's Gauchar. "I am afraid that in a few years from now, the Congress will become extinct like the dinosaur. In a few years after 2024, if we take the name of the Congress, children will

They are quitting the party one after another and joining

The senior BJP leader was here to campaign for the party's candidate for the Pauri Lok Sabha seat Anil Baluni. The defence minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has emerged as a strong country. Its voice is heard distinctly on international

forums and taken seriously. Singh added. He claimed that the Russia-Ukraine war was suspended for over four hours following Modi's talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and US President Joe Biden for the safe evacuation of 22,500 Indian students stranded in Ukraine.

made by India over the last few years.

He also quoted US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti as saying that if the world has to see the future, it should come

### **Shah slams Congress for doing** nothing on Article 370 for decades

MORADABAD (UP), April 12: homes, he said. "Pakistan ke ghar Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday attacked the Congress over its handling of the Kashmir issue, saying the party "pampered" Article 370 like an "illegitimate child" for decades.

At an election meeting in Moradabad, Shah also slammed Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for suggesting recently that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should not be speaking about Kashmir while addressing rallies in other states.

"Tell me, isn't Kashmir ours? Kharge ii of the Congress asks what do people of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have to do with Kashmir," he said, adding that every child of Moradabad is ready to give his life

for Kashmir. "For 70 years, the Congress pampered Article 370 like an illegitimate (anauras) child in its lap," Shah said, referring to the special status enjoyed by Jammu and

Kashmir under the Article. "You made Modi ji the prime minister for the second time and he abolished Article 370 on August 5, 2019. Today, our tricolour is flying there with pride. Under the leadership of Modi ji, Kashmir has been united with India forever," Shah

Sharpening his attack on the Congress, Shah said, "In 10 years, Modi ji eliminated terrorism and Naxalism from the country. When the Congress was in power, aliamalia-jamalia (anyone) could come here every day from Pakistan and explode bombs.

"Kisi ke maathe per joon nahi rengtee thee (nobody was bothered by this)," he said.

When Modi came to power, they committed the same mistakes in Uri and Pulwama but they had forgotten that the Manmohan Singh government was not here anymore, Shah said

He recalled that the armed forces carried out retaliatory strikes inside Pakistan within days of these terror

attacks.

The Modi government eliminated the terrorists by entering their mein ghusskar aatankwaadiyo ka safaayaa karne ka kaam Narendra Modi je ne kiyaa.

In 10 years, Modi has transformed the country's economy from eleventh position to fifth position, he said.

He said, "Modi ji has divided the entire country into four 'castes' -women, poor, youth and farmers. On this basis, work has been done for the development of everyone in the entire country

"If you form the Modi government for the third time, he guarantees that this time we will make India the third largest economy,' Shah said.

Focussing on Uttar Pradesh, Shah said, "Modi ji has done a lot for the state also. I came to western UP in 2013. At that time, fear, riots, cow smuggling and goons reigned here. You removed Samajwadi Party and development moved ahead.

Referring to the alleged migration of Hindus from Kairana in western UP, he said, "Earlier, Hindus were migrating but now it is the goons who are migrating."

"Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has worked to strengthen the law and order situation here within seven years. Migration, mafia rule and cow smuggling have ended here. Modi ji gave four airports and six expressways to UP," Shah said.

The Union minister also informed that under the current government the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane increased from Rs 210 per quintal to Rs 340 per quintal and the payment increased from Rs 23,000 crores to Rs 2.5 lakh crores and more than 20 sugar mills were started and 5 new

sugar mills were built. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election. ST Hasan of Samajwadi Party, who was jointly fielded by the SP, BSP and RLD, emerged victorious from Moradabad.

This time, the SP has given the ticket to Ruchi Veera from Moradabad, while the BJP has fielded Sarvesh Singh. (PTI)

ask, who?" Singh added. said. He said if others are also responsible for the omission, then He also commented on the infighting in the opposition Singh said the world is acknowledging the progress the CPIO shall serve a copy of "They are fighting with each other daily. The party has the order on them and ensure that become somewhat like the house of 'Big Boss' on TV. the written submissions of such people are sent to the CIC. (PTI) They are tearing each other's clothes daily," Singh said. AIIMS Delhi launches multi-centre study to develop low-cost cervical cancer tests quality assurance, she said. necessary cause of cervical cancer. Worldwide, cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in



NEW DELHI, April 12: To develop and validate low-cost, pointof-care indigenous HPV tests for detection of cervical cancer, AIIMS here on Friday launched a multicentre study with the support of DBT-BIRAC Grand Challenges India in collaboration with WHO's International Agency for Research

in Cancer (IARC).

Validation studies for three indigenous human papillomavirus (HPV) tests will be conducted at AIIMS, Delhi, National Institute of Cancer Prevention Research in Noida and National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health in Mumbai, Dr Neerja

Bhatla, former head of department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AIIMS, Delhi and chief coordinator of the programme said on Friday.

Presently, HPV tests are expensive and need elaborate laboratory setups. They should meet international standards to receive WHO prequalification and have necessary

women. In India, it is the second most common cancer among women after breast cancer. Every two minutes, a woman dies of cervical cancer around the world,

According to Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN) data, an estimated 6,63,301 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer worldwide in 2022 and about 3,48,874 women died from the disease. Low-middle income countries (LMIC) like India contribute nearly 80 per cent of the disease burden.

In India, there are approximately 1,27,526 new cases and 79,906 deaths per annum, Bhatla stated.

"Considering this, the WHO launched 'Call For Elimination of Cervical Cancer' with a vision of a cervical cancer-free world in which India is also one of the signatories. By 2030, we should meet the targets of screening 70 per cent of women and vaccinating 90 per cent of girls," she said.

Cervical cancer is preventable and can be treated if detected in precancerous or early stages, she

Persistent infection with highrisk HPV has been found to be the Hence, WHO recommends HPV testing at the age of 35 and 45 years in the elimination strategy. To achieve the 2030 targets and

incorporate HPV testing into the national programme, there is an urgent need to develop and validate low-cost, point-of-care indigenous HPV tests which can detect the major cancer-causing HPV genotypes in the Indian population and do not require too much technical expertise or elaborate infrastruc-

"With this vision, we are launch-

ing a multi-centre study with the support of DBT-BIRAC Grand Challenges India in collaboration with WHO's International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC)," Bhatla said. The evaluation of tests with fewer HPV types is a novel aspect of this study that will improve the accuracy of the test and make it more cost-effective for the programme, she said.

'This landmark project will allow validation of Make in India HPV tests for cervical cancer screening by international quality standards and will benefit millions of women in India and other LMICs to get rid of the scourge of cervical cancer," said Dr M Srinivas, Director, AIIMS, Delhi. (PTI)

### 'Haven't really thought about retirement, want to play 2027 ODI WC'

# Rohit Sharma sets his eyes on playing in upcoming 50-over WC, WTC final

India's defeats to Australia in the WTC and the World Cup finals still burning his mind, skipper Rohit Sharma nourishes the dream of playing in those tournaments' upcoming editions in 2025 and 2027.

The 36-year-old Rohit was part of India's 2007 T20 World Cup victory, but he counts the 50-over showpiece as the real stuff.

"I am playing well at the moment and I am thinking of continuing for a few more years. I really want to win that World Cup. The 50over World Cup is the actual World Cup. We have grown up watching the 50-over World

There is the World Test Championship final happening at Lord's in 2025. Hopefully, we will make it there," Rohit said in a YouTube chat show - Breakfast With Champions – that was also attended by British pop singer Ed Sheeran.

Six months have passed since India succumbed to Australia in the World Cup final at Ahmedabad, but Rohit found it tough to come to terms with that defeat.

"It was happening in India. We played well until that final. When we won the semis, I thought, we were just one step away from it (victory). I thought, what's that one thing that can make us lose that final, and honestly, nothing came to my mind," he said.

The Mumbaikar eventually found a shelter in that ready answer - one bad day on the

"We'd ticked all the boxes, we were playing good cricket, confidence was there. But



that was one bad day and the Aussies had a very good day. I don't think we played bad cricket in that final," he noted.

However, Rohit found some solace in India's resounding 4-1 Test series win over England recently at home. But the Indian captain said the series was not a cakewalk as the eventual scoreline suggested.

"You might enter the field with a plan, but when you see things moving differently, you have to change it.

"When we played recently against England, we came across a different team, they were playing cricket differently. Each batter came and challenged us. So, we had to

Rohit did not find it amusing that the visiting teams have a tough time on Indian shores, and in fact, he equated himself with their tra-

"It is difficult to win away from home. They make life difficult when you are away. It is the same for other countries as well because it is not easy when they come to India. You want to take advantage of that (home conditions)," he explained.

It brought the talk to his favourite moment in Test cricket, and the elegant right-hander picked his maiden hundred as the most cher-

Batting at No. 6, Rohit made a 301-ball 177 against the West Indies at Kolkata, which was

"India is all about scoring that hundred and then the crowd erupts. My first hundred was in a Test match at Kolkata. It was Sachin Tendulkar's 199th Test, so the stadium was packed, some 70000 people in the stadium. Probably it was (the best moment)," he

Rohit, who has not missed a season of the Indian Premier League since its inception in 2008, said now there was no weak team in the league, a remarkable shapeshifting from its

"IPL has grown so much in the last decade or so and every team is now competitive. I don't think there is any weak team in the IPL. It is something like EPL first division where any team can beat any team.

"But it was not like that when it started off. Now, there is so much technology involved, people are aware what gaps are to be filled, so they get the right players from the auction etc," he offered. Rohit also shared his memory of playing alongside the legendary Shane Warne in the IPL.

"I used to play against Shane when he was leading Rajasthan Royals and I was with (now-extinct) Deccan (Chargers). He got superb cricketing brains, and he thinks about cricket in a different angle.

"Adam Gilchrist was his teammate (in Australia), and he played for us (Chargers) and he used to tell us how good he was. Even while commentating he (Warne) used to predict what's going to happen in the next two or three balls." (PTI)

### Mary Kom steps down as Paris Olympics Chef-de-Mission, cites personal reasons



NEW DELHI, April 12: Six-time world champion boxer M C Mary Kom on Friday stepped down as India's chef-de-mission for the upcoming Paris Olympics, saying she is "left with no choice" due to some personal reasons. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha announced that Mary Kom had asked to be relieved from her position in a letter addressed to her.

"I consider it an honour to serve my country in every way possible, and I was mentally prepared for it. However, I regret that I will not be able to uphold the prestigious responsibility and would like to resign, owing to personal reasons,"

the 41-year-old stated in a letter to

"It is embarrassing to retreat from a commitment, which I seldom do, but I am left with no choice. I am there to cheer on my country and the athletes competing in this Olympic Games, with great expectations,' she added. The IOA had announced her appointment on March 21.

The celebrated boxer, who is also a bronze-medallist from the 2012 London Olympics, was to be the logistical in-charge of the country's contingent at the July 26-August 11

"We are sad that Olympic medal winning boxer and Chairperson of the IOA Athletes Commission Mary Kom has stepped down citing personal reasons. We respect her decision and her privacy," Usha said in a statement

"I shall make the appropriate consultations and soon make an announcement about the replacement for Mary Kom." Usha said she had a conversation with Mary Kom after receiving her letter. "I completely understand her request and respect her decision. I have also conveyed to her that she will always have my own support and that of IOA. I also request everyone to respect the legendary boxer's privacy," she said.

### Rajasthan Royals need better execution of plans against Punjab Kings

MULLANPUR, April 12: A disappointed Rajasthan Royals will have to focus on better execution of their strategies for a swift turnaround when they face a highly inconsistent yet capable Punjab Kings in their Indian Premier League match here on Saturday.

The Royals had an excellent chance to register their fifth win on the trot and consolidate their totem pole position, but Rashid Khan's daring assault helped Gujarat Titans snatch a last-ball victory on Wednesday.

It might have come as a rude shock for the Royals at Fort Jaipur, and as such, they would want to treat it as an aberration and dish out a more refined outing against the Punjab side.

But it also highlighted some muddled thinking. The Sanju Samson-led Rajasthan outfit lost to the Titans because of the below-par effort from Kuldip Sen (19th over) and Avesh Khan (20th over) at a vital passage, when they conceded 35 runs across 12 balls.

Here, the Royals made a slight tactical error by not letting Trent Boult complete his quota in that match as the veteran left-arm pacer ended the match at 2-0-8-0.

There is no gainsaying that Boult could have made a change in the script, but Samson leaving that option unused was a tad perplexing.

Of course, Boult has been largely used with the new ball in this iteration of the IPL, but in crunch situations nothing counts more than experience. So, the Royals will be looking for an improvement in the strategising and execution part against the Kings.

The Shikhar Dhawan-captained side has blown hot and cold so far in the tournament, winning two and losing three out of five matches. The primary reason for their middling run this year is the patchy form of their fancied batsmen as Punjab relied on cameos by uncapped Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma to boost their batting.

Opener Jonny Bairstow (5 matches, 81 runs) and middle-order batter Jitesh Sharma (5 matches, 77 runs) are the most underwhelming

MUMBAI, April 12: The

world's number one T20 batter,

Suryakumar Yadav attributed

the audacious array of shots he

played against Royal Chal-

lengers Bengaluru to "muscle

memory" and constant practice

Suryakumar dazzled with a

19-ball 52 studded with four

sixes and five fours to help

Mumbai Indians chase down

RCB's 197-run target in just

practice these shots. It is in my

muscle memory," Suryakumar

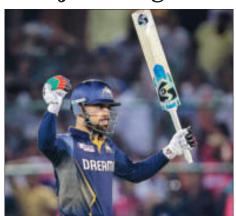
said after MI's seven-wicket

win in the IPL on Thursday

"I just try to play the field. I

at nets.

15.3 overs.



of the lot, and it has robbed them of momentum upfront and in the business end of their innings. Sam Curran has been above average with the ball, taking six wickets from five matches but the England all-rounder's needle has fallen behind from the halfway mark with the bat, despite scor-

The absence of injured Liam Livingstone from the middle-order too has reduced their firepower, and Kings will hope to have the Englishman back in their ranks at the earliest.

On the contrary, the Punjab bowlers have done marginally better, but their propensity to concede big runs while bowling first will be a concern. A group consisting of bowlers such as Kagiso

Rabada and Arshdeep Singh has given away 199, 199 and 182 runs in their last three matches and they will have to break the pattern against the

It's easier said than done as the Royals' batting unit has been in good shape as 185 is the lowest total it posted while batting first.

Outside the match calculations, the Royals will have another bigger worry to nullify. Over the last few editions of the IPL, the Royals had begun strongly, just as they did this year, before tapering off after the mid-season. (PTI)

would try to see how he could

change the course of the game.

beforehand, because I have practiced all of them during the

nets. I try to make sure that I bat

according to the situation of the

game. If the game is progress-

ing slowly, then I think of how

ways try to see how I can

change the game and how I can

control it with my abilities," he

On MI's performance so far,

he said, "I think the train was al-

ways on track, it just took a

while to get going. It's fine,

we're coming back and have

two games in a row at the

Wankhede. It gives us great

confidence and has improved

the team's atmosphere as well."

Shane Watson said sky is the

limit for Suryakumar when he's

just lets loose. The sky is the

limit for him when he's batting

like that. He can hit them and

does hit them all around the

ground," said Watson. (PTI)

"When his mind's free, he

Former Australia all-rounder

"It feels great to have won

found our rhythm.

batting at his best.

I could possibly speed it up. "Whenever I go into bat, I al-

"I think about the shots I play

It's in my muscle memory:

Asked about his favourite

shot in the match against RCB,

he said, "I think all the shots.

The slice over point was my

Suryakumar was playing in

his second match of this IPL

after recovering from a sports

was great. Mentally I was here,

just physically in Bangalore (for

"Coming at Wankhede, chas-

ing 200, if there is dew it is im-

portant to take a chance. We

wanted to finish early for the net

Asked about Jasprit Bum-

rah's five-wicket haul, Suryaku-

mar said, "It is always good to

have Jasprit by your side. It has

been 2 to 3 years, have never

batted Jasprit in the nets. Either

On Ishan Kishan who make

69 off just 34 balls, he said,

"That's what we have told him.

Just go out and enjoy. His intent

has been great. He is enjoying

Later in an interview with

'JioCinema', Suryakumar said

whenever he came out to bat he

he breaks my bat or my foot."

run rate," said the 33-year-old.

"It is always good to be back in Wankhede. Joining the squad

favourite.'

hernia surgery.

recovery at NCA).

### FIRE SERVICE WEEK 2024

14TH APRIL to 20TH APRIL, 2024 "ENSURE FIRE SAFETY, CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS NATION BUILDING"

- Routinely check cords, sockets, switches & appliances for signs of damage. Never use electrical cords under rugs or carpets.
- Avoid overloading of sockets. Get electrical work done by qualified electricians only.
- Install Miniature Circuit Breaker (MCB) to safeguard against short
- Do not put on/off electrical switches in case of LPG leakage. Open all doors/windows for ventilation.





- Check cooking gas (LPG) stove & accessories regularly for
- Switch Off all electrical appliances & cylinder regulator before leaving home or while going out.
- If LPG cylinder catches fire, don't panic. If possible, try to turn off the knob and cover the burning cylinder with wet cloth.
- If a pan catches fire, put a cover over it and turn off the burner.
- In case of fire, keep calm and run to safe place with inmates instead of collecting your belongings.
- Do not store flammable materials in the house.
- Handle open lamps/candles carefully and do not leave naked fires, diyas & lamps unattended.
- Do not smoke while in bed & do not throw burning cigarettes and matchsticks carelessly. Inform the fire services immediately on discovering a fire.
- Use any means of communication (Electronic or Physical) to inform the Fire and Emergency Services, giving correct address of place of occurrence and any prominent landmark.



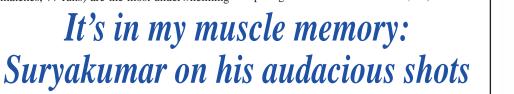






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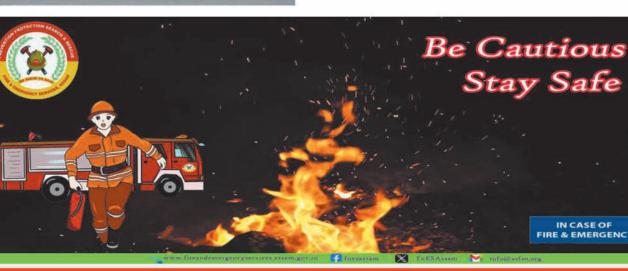
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- Ensure that fire extinguishers are readily accessible in key areas of your home, school & other establishments. Learn how to use them safely and effectively. Do not block/obstruct the fire exits/escape
- routes. Never use an Elevator and Lift to escape during fire. Always use the staircases. Clear the passage for approaching Fire Service vehicles. Avoid crowding while Fire Service is at
- Don't interfere with the work of Fire Service personnel. Help them only when it is sought.
- Always keep the EXIT PATH free from obstruction for quick & easy movement during emergency.





ISSUED BY THE DIRECTORATE OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES, ASSAM IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

Printed, published and owned by Rameswar Chauhan & Printed at Echo Printing unit of The Echo of India, AK Deb Road, Katabari, Gorchuk, Guwahati- 781035 and Published at Rabha Complex, 2nd Floor, Rukmini Gaon, Oppn.- Pantaloons, Guwahati-781022. Editor -Rameswar Chauhan, Guwahati Office Ph - 0361 2220018, Fax- 272106, e.mail: hillstimes@gmail.com and ads.hillstimes@gmail.com (only for advertisement)



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