Blinken says US arms will make a difference in Ukraine

Xi's visit to Hungary and Serbia brings new Chinese investment

 Fight for 6th Schedule key poll plank for Cong's Ladakh candidate Namgyal

Govt extends ban imposed on LTTE for 5 years



Issue No. 75

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and fulfilling regional aspirations.

We will work together for the

progress of India in the years to

In a separate post in Hindi, the

prime minister said, "Heartfelt

gratitude to my family members in

Kashi... The love and blessings I

have received from all of you in

the last 10 years have inspired me

to work with full determination.

With your support and participa-

tion, I will continue to work with

new energy for the all-round devel-

opment of this place and the wel-

come," he added

GUWAHATI, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

Modi files nomination from Varanasi

Union ministers, CMs accompany PM in a show of strength

VARANASI (UP), May 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi filed his nomination here on Tuesday, an event attended by several NDA leaders, including Union ministers and chief ministers, in a show of strength as he seeks a third term from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency.

Sporting a white kurta-pajama and a blue sadri, Modi reached the district collectorate after a busy morning, which included an aarti on the banks of the Ganga at the Dashashwamedh ghat and prayers at the city's Kaal Bhairav temple.

Immediately after filing his papers, the prime minister headed for the Rudraksha Convention Centre to address local party leaders and workers

A local spokesperson of the BJP said Modi gave the party's office bearers the "mantra of victory" and asked them to make people aware of his government's schemes.

Modi also told them to ensure that every booth records at least 370 more votes than it did in the last general election, in celebration of the abrogation of Article 370.



After filing his nomination, Modi posted on 'X', "Filed my nomination papers as a candidate for the Varanasi Lok Sabha seat. It is an honour to serve the people of this historic seat. With the blessings of the people, there have been remarkable achievements over the last decade. This pace of work will get even faster in the times to

"I am honoured by the presence of our valued NDA allies in Kashi today. Our alliance represents a commitment to national progress

nath Singh, Hardeep Singh Puri, Anupriya Patel and Ramdas Athawale were among the leaders who flanked Modi as he emerged from the collectorate after filing his

Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde, his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma, NCP leader Praful Patel, TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan, Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular founder Jitan Ram Manjhi and Rashtriya Lok Morcha chief Upendra Kushwaha were present at the

fare of the people in my third term as well. 'Jai Baba Vishwanath'!"

Union ministers Amit Shah, Raj-

BJP president J P Nadda and

collectorate. Uttar Pradesh minister and NISHAD party chief Sanjay Nishad, Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party chief Omprakash Rajbhar, RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary, LJP (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan, PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss, Tamil Maanila Congress chief G K Vasan, BJP leader Devanathan Yadav, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

HT Bureau
DIPHU, May 14: The United Christian Forum (UCF) has raised concerns over what they describe as the "unprecedented random collection of data" by police personnel regarding Churches and their adherents in the districts of Diphu and Dokmoka in Karbi Anglong.

In a memorandum submitted to the district commissioner, Madhumita Bhagwati, the UCF highlighted the distress caused by the sudden intrusion of police personnel into Church premises without prior notice or official instructions.

According to the memorandum submitted by UCF president Rev. Dr Solomon Rongpi and secretary Rev. Primingson Millick, police officers have been entering Churches, taking photographs, and posing inquiries without any formal notification.

'This intrusive behavior has not only caused panic among believers but has also raised concerns about the sanctity of places of worship," the memorandum read. Rev. Dr. Rongpi emphasised the necessity of prior (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Data collection by police rattles Diphu churches Moody's pegs India's FY25 GDP growth at 6.6 pc NEW DELHI. May 14: Moody's

NEW DELHI, May 14: Moody's Ratings on Tuesday said the Indian economy is projected to expand 6.6 per cent in the current fiscal year and said strong credit demand fuelled by robust economic growth will support the NBFC sector's

"We expect India's economy to expand 6.6 per cent in the year ended March 2025 (FY25) and 6.2 per cent the following year, and this will lead to robust loan growth at NBFCs, mitigating the impact of rising funding costs on their profitability," Moody's Ratings said.

The Indian economy is estimated to have expanded 8 per cent in the 2023-24 fiscal year.

In a commentary on the nonbanking finance companies, Moody's said robust economic conditions will help them preserve their asset quality even as rise in interest rates increase the debt burdens of their customers.

"Funding costs for non-bank finance companies (NBFCs) in India are rising, but strong credit demand fuelled by country's robust economic growth will support the sec-



"Also, robust economic conditions will help them preserve their asset quality even as rises in interest rates increase the debt burdens of their customers," Moody's said.

Aggregate year-on-year loan growth at NBFCs accelerated to 20.8 per cent in September 2023 from 10.8 per cent a year earlier, driven by demand for retail loans, including financing for housing and automobiles.

Moody's Ratings expects loans at NBFCs to grow about 15 per cent in the next 12-18 months, driven by various types of lending, including infrastructure financing large government-owned NBFCs and loans to small and medium-sized enterprises. "Growth in unsecured retail loans will slow after the Reserve Bank of

India (RBI) (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

HTBRIEFS

Protest held

JORHAT: Employees of 23 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) operating under Assam Agricultural University (AAU) across the state on Tuesday staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the vice-chancellor's office complex at AAU campus at Rowriah here in support of their demands. Holding placards and banners the protesters under the banner of Krishi Vigyan Kendra Employees' Welfare Association sought the resumption of benefits under the new pension scheme which they alleged have been stopped without their knowledge. They also stated that four KVK employees, who passed away did not get their postretirement benefits like gratuity, leave salary, etc., and even after four to five years. They said that several employees, who are scheduled to retire from service in the current year and the next year, were worried about their future. The protesters further said that giving promotion to them too was another longstanding demand of the employees that has not been fulfilled. The protesters also said that they have been working sincerely and contributing for the development of the agriculture sector by reaching out to farmers to guide and assist them, but the authorities were not paying due attention to their grievances and problem.

Cattle-head seized

GOSSAIGAON: Acting on a tip-off Grahampur police led by Reshmita Saikia, office-in-charge Grahampur Police out-post raided 127 (B) underconstruction National Highway and successfully seized 18 cattle-head from a truck bearing registration no. AS28-AC-0523 and apprehended the driver and his co-pilot on the spot. The police have successfully managed to seize the truck with 18 cattle heads loaded in the truck from outside the state of Assam. The driver and co-pilot arrested by the police have been identified as Abu Saman Sheikh of village Ambari Bhuyanpara in Fakirganj, Dhuburi and Shafiqul Islam hailing from village South Kharuapara in Barpeta district.

AASU protest

DIBRUGARH: The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on Tuesday protested against shifting of Oil offices to other state. After written assurance from OIL, AASU lifted the blockade programme. "The OIL has decided to shift some of its department viz. Finance, HR and other important department from Duliajan but we have opposed this move. On Monday, in protest against the OIL decission, we have organised a blockade programme but today Oil India authority have given a written assurance to us and after that the blockade was lifted," said Aboni Kumar Gogoi, president of AASU Dibrugarh. He said, "How can we give the main departments of OIL to shift to other state.'

BJP losing ground everywhere: Kejriwal

CHANDIGARH, May 14: BJP is losing ground across the country and will not win more than 230 seats all told, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal claimed on Tuesday, as he called on the people of Haryana to start the "revolution" to unseat the saffron party-led alliance from the Centre.

Kejriwal made the remarks in a roadshow for party candidate Sushil Gupta in Kurukshetra's Pehowa, where he attacked the BJP-led Centre for his jailing, claiming it is scared of him.

This was Kejriwal's first visit to Haryana after being released on bail. Gupta, the AAP's Kurukshetra Lok Sabha candidate, accompanied Kejriwal during the roadshow.

The Aam Aadmi Party national convenor was granted interim bail till June 1 by the Supreme Court on May 10 in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise



policy scam.

Addressing a gathering during his roadshow, Kejriwal said, "On March 16, elections were announced. On March 21, they sent me to jail. This means they wanted Kejriwal to not campaign. They are scared of Kejriwal.

He said the Narendra Modi government has lost ground and named several states where the BJP's seats,

according to him, were declining. "In the entire country, the situation is turning against them. BJP is losing badly ... In Haryana, Rajasthan they are losing; in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Bihar, UP, West Bengal, Delhi, Punjab, their seats are coming down. No where there is an increase in their seats. "They claim they will win 400 seats. Today I can tell you in writing that they are not winning more than 230 seats," Kejriwal said.

He exhorted the public to throw the BJP-led alliance from power, and with it, Modi's "dictatorship."

"History is witness, whenever there has been a revolution in the country, it has started from the brave land of Harvana. The campaign to end the dictatorship from this country should begin from Haryana," he said, adding, he was sure of a clean sweep in the state and ultimate victory of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NGT seeks response from authorities on 'substantial loss' of forest cover in Manipur

NEW DELHI, May 14: The National cause of deforestation and opium poppy Green Tribunal has sought a response from the regional office of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change regarding the "substantial decrease" in forest cover in Manipur.

The NGT was hearing a matter where it had taken cognisance of a media report in that had quoted state chief minister N Biren Singh's post on social media platform X.

The minister was quoted as saying that the forest cover in the state has been reduced from 17,475 square kilometres (sq km) in 1987 to 16,598 sq km in 2021, which showed a decrease of 877 sq km of forest cover.

A bench of NGT chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel took note of the report, according to which the decrease was primarily be-

cultivation.

'The news item raises a substantial issue relating to compliance with environmental norms," the bench said.

Underlining that the report pertained to "a substantial decrease" in the state's forest area, the green panel impleaded as parties or respondents the Shillong integrated regional office (IRO) of the MOEF&CC and the regional director, Kolkata of the Forest Survey of India.

"Let notice be issued to the above respondents for filing the response at least one week before the next date of hearing (on July 31)," the tribunal said in an order dated May 9.

It said the case had to be tagged with the pending larger matter of loss of forest land across the country. (PTI)

Why has Ganga river gotten dirtier despite spending ₹ 20,000 cr: Cong asks PM

NEW DELHI, May 14: The Congress on Tuesday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi why he has abandoned the Varanasi villages adopted by him and why the Ganga has gotten dirtier despite spending ₹ 20,000 crore. On a day PM Modi filed his nomination

from Varanasi, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the outgoing PM must answer for his "failures" in Varanasi.

"Today's questions: After spending ₹ 20,000 crore, why has the Ganga gotten dirtier? Why has the PM abandoned the Varanasi villages he had 'adopted"? Why is the PM determined to destroy Mahatma Gandhi's legacy in Varanasi," he asked in a post on X.

Ramesh said when he came to Varanasi in 2014, Modi had said "Maa Ganga ne mujhe bulaya hain" and promised to purify the waters of the Holy Ganga, but soon after coming to power, rebranded the existing Operation

Ganga as Namami Gange.

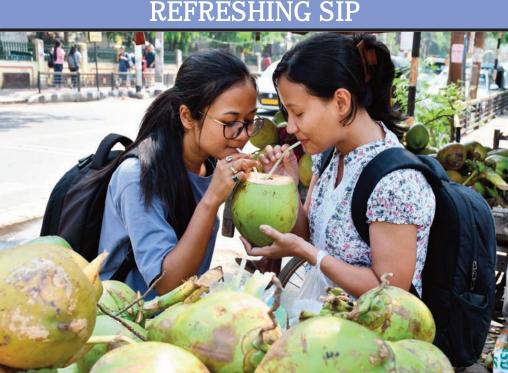
"Ten years later, the 'Namami Gange' project has cost the exchequer more than ₹ 20,000 crore. Here are the results: the number of Polluted River Stretches has increased from 51 to 66, 71% of monitoring stations have reported dangerous bacteria at up to 40

> antibiotic resistant bacteria have now been found in the waters. Where has the 20,000 crore in taxpayer money gone? How much has been siphoned off in corruption and mismanagement? How can the people of Varanasi trust a man who has given a jumla even to Ma Ganga,'

times more than safe levels, and

the Congress leader asked. He also said outside the city of Varanasi lie eight villages that the PM had "adopted", but a March 2024 ground report found that despite big promises of "smart schools", health facilities and housing, the villages have seen

absolutely no (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Two girls quenching their thirst with coconut water to beat the scorching heat in Guwahati on Tuesday. HT Photo

'Disasters triggered 26.4 million displacements in 2023'

Disasters triggered over half million internal displacements in India in 2023: Report

NEW DELHI, May 14: India experienced over half a million internal displacements due to floods, storms, earthquakes, and other disasters in 2023, a sharp dip from around 2.5 million displacements in 2022, according to a global report released on Tuesday.

Deadly floods left behind a trail of destruction in the Himalayan states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand last year. The glacial lake outburst flood in Sikkim in October 2023 led to the collapse of a hydroelectric dam, killed more than 100 people, and affected more

than 88,000. In Delhi, identified as a "flood displacement hotspot", the Yamuna River overflowed after heavy rains on July 9, 2023, prompting authorities to evacuate residents from their homes.

The report by the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) said around 27,000 displacements in the national cap-

On July 9, Delhi recorded 153 mm of rainfall in just 24 hours, the highest single-day rainfall since July 25, 1982

Overall, South Asia reported around 3.7 million internal displacements in 2023, with disasters causing 3.6 million, the lowest figure since 2018.

Researchers attributed the decline in displacements due to disasters partly to the El Nino event, which brought below-average rainfall during the monsoon and a weaker cyclone season.

However, floods and storms continued to displace people, often in the same areas.



At 3,52,000, India's flood displacement figure was the lowest since 2008, with the largest event triggering about 91,000 displacements in Assam in June, affecting

20 districts.

Cyclone Biparjoy, which formed in the Arabian Sea in early June, led to widespread flooding across Guiarat and Rajasthan, causing

105,000 displacements as it moved inland.

Cyclone Mocha, the largest disaster displacement event of 2023 in South Asia, triggered 1.3 million displacements in Bangladesh, mainly in Cox's Bazar district.

Forecasting and early warnings allowed authorities to initiate emergency procedures before Mocha's landfall, aiding pre-emptive evacuations from densely populated areas.

The IDMC said South Asia's cyclone season was less intense in 2023 than in previous years because of El Nino, but storms still triggered 1.8 million movements, about half of the region's disaster displacements. Government-led pre-emptive evacuations accounted for at least three-quarters of this figure. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'India's development journey to continue uninterrupted under Modi'

NEW DELHI, May 14: Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said India's journey of development and glory will continue uninterrupted under Prime Narendra Minister Modi's leadership

and people of Varanasi will bless him with a record margin victory again

The

minister filed his nomination from Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency on Tuesday, seeking re-election from the seat for the third consecutive term. Several NDA leaders and chief ministers attended the event. Shah too was present for the occa-

"Heartiest congratulations to

'Yashasvi' Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi on filing his nomination for the third consecutive time from Kashi, the city of Baba Vishwanath, the centre of Indian culture," Shah wrote on 'X' in

> The senior BJP leader said in the 10 years, Modi has not only brought worldclass development to Kashi (Varanasi) but also to the entire country. "He has also enhanced India's spiritual and cultural heritage. I

pray to Baba Vishwanath and Ganga 'Maiya' that India's journey of development and glory continues uninterrupted under Modi's leadership. I am confident that this time again the people of Kashi will bless Modi ji with a record margin of victory," Shah said. (PTI)

Inflation in food articles rose to 7.74 per cent in April as against 6.88 per cent in March

Wholesale inflation rises to 13-month high of 1.26 pc in April, food costlier

wholesale inflation rose to a 13month high of 1.26 per cent in April fuelled by rising prices of food articles, especially vegetables, amid expectations of RBI holding interest rates in the policy review next month.

THE HILLS TIMES

The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation has been rising for two months in a row. It was 0.20 per cent in February and 0.53 per cent in March. WPI inflation was 0.79 per cent in April last year.

The April WPI print is at a 13month high. The last high was seen in March 2023, when inflation was 1.41 per cent

"Positive rate of inflation in April 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, electricity, crude petroleum and natural gas, manufacture of food products, other manufacturing etc," Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement on Tuesday. As per the data, inflation in food articles rose to 7.74 per cent in April as against 6.88 per cent in March. In the fuel and power basket, inflation stood at 1.38 per cent in April, up from (-)0.77 per cent in the previous month.

ICRA chief economist Aditi

Stock markets rise for

3rd day on buying in

auto, metal shares

MUMBAI, May 14: Benchmark Sensex

climbed 328 points while Nifty closed

above the 22,200 level on Tuesday as

stock markets continued the winning

march for the third straight day on the

back of gains in index major Reliance In-

Rising for the third day, BSE Sensex

rose by 328.48 points, or 0.45 per cent, to

settle at 73,104.61. The 30-share index

rallied 510.13 points, or 0.70 per cent, to

touch a high of 73,286.26 in day trade. As

many as 20 Sensex stocks ended with

The broader Nifty of NSE rose by

113.80 points, or 0.51 per cent, to settle

at 22,217.85 with 36 of its constituents

Gains were led by metal and auto

shares while FMCG and pharma shares

declined due to profit taking, analysts

said. From the Sensex basket, Mahindra

& Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, JSW

Steel, NTPC, IndusInd Bank, Sun

Pharma, UltraTech Cement, State Bank of

India, Reliance Industries, and Maruti

Nestle, Tata Consultancy Services, Axis

Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, ITC, and

Asian Paints were among the laggards. Re-

tail inflation eased to an 11-month low of

4.83 per cent in April as prices of some

kitchen items declined, though overall

food basket firmed up marginally, accord-

recovery path from recent lows, aided by a moderation in India's CPI and

favourable signals from its Asian peers,"

said Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit

Volatility and range-bound trading are

likely to persist in the near term, given the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the low

In the broader market, the BSE small-

Among the indices, utilities soared 2.80

cap gauge climbed 1.79 per cent and mid-

per cent, power (2.51 per cent), industri-

als (2.40 per cent), telecommunication

(2.27 per cent), capital goods (2.11 per

cent), commodities (1.87 per cent), serv-

ices (1.78 per cent), energy (1.52 per cent) and realty (1.03 per cent).

consecutive session on Tuesday after ris-

ing through the day with minimal correc-

tions. Global equities were mixed in

muted trading Tuesday as investors

waited for producer prices data for cues

on inflation in the world's largest econ-

omy and ahead of Federal Reserve Chair

Jerome Powell speech later in the day,"

said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Re-

Meanwhile, official data released on

Tuesday showed wholesale inflation rose

to a 13-month high of 1.26 per cent in

April fuelled by rising prices of food ar-

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo set-

tled higher while Shanghai and Hong

search, HDFC Securities.

ticles, especially vegetables.

LOST

resident of vill. Mam Teron,

Lalung Gaon, P.O.- Pub-

silputa, P.S. Bokolia, Dist.-

Karbi Anglong have lost

Kong ended lower. (PTI)

"Nifty continued to gain for the third

cap index advanced 1.14 per cent.

"The domestic market has sustained its

ending in the green and 14 in the red.

gains while 10 declined.

were the major gainers

ing to government data.

Financial Services.

turnout. Nair added.

dustries and positive inflation data.



Nayar said WPI inflation is heavily sensitive to global commodity prices which is undergoing upturn

shown an uptrend in last few months, including the crude oil prices that we saw in April. As of now what we have seen in commodity prices, I would expect the WPI to move up further and cross 2 per cent in the next two months of May and June," Nayar said. ICRA forecasts average WPI for

current fiscal at 3.3 per cent. In the food articles basket, vegin April, up from 19.52 per cent in

71.97 per cent in April from 52.96 per cent in March. In onion, it was 59.75 per cent in April, versus 56.99 per cent in the previous month. PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Sanjeev Agrawal said "going ahead, inflation in food articles is expected to rationalize by September/October 2024 as many of the kharif crops will be entering the mandis and supplementing the ex-

0.42 per cent in April, as against deflation of 0.85 per cent in

The rise in April WPI is in contrast to the retail inflation data for the month. RBI mainly takes into account retail inflation while framing monetary policy.

Retail inflation eased to 11month low of 4.83 per cent in

RBI last month kept interest rate unchanged for seventh time in a row and said that it remains vigilant towards upside risks to food

The next meeting of the interest rate setting panel of RBI is scheduled for June 5-7.

Navar said based on the current growth-inflation dynamics, the chance of change in monetary policy stance in June looks extremely

"We are still waiting for the fourth (January-March) quarter GDP growth estimate which is scheduled to come this month end. Also, how the monsoon kicks off will be part of MPC's tone. Interest rate cut is likely only in second half of the fiscal, maybe in Octo-

isting supply' etables inflation was 23.60 per cent As per the data, manufactured ber-December," Nayar said. (PTI) Airtel and Google Cloud enter into a long-term strategic collaboration

GUWAHATI, May 14: Bharti Airtel ("Airtel") and Google Cloud entered into a long-term collaboration to deliver cloud solutions to Indian businesses. The strategic collaboration will offer a suite of cutting-edge cloud solutions from Google Cloud to fast-track cloud adoption and modernization for Airtel's customers. In addition, Airtel will provide a suite of cloud managed services to its customer base of more than 2,000 large enterprises and one million emerging businesses. Through this collaboration, the two companies are targeting the large and growing Indian public cloud services market, which is expected to reach \$17.8 billion

by 2027, according to IDC.* The two companies will bring together their unique strengths of connectivity and AI technology to develop industry-leading AI/ML solutions that Airtel will train on its large data set. These unique solutions will drive greater value to Airtel's customers and will include geospatial analytics solutions with advanced location intelligence for trend-spotting, predictive capabilities, market assessment, site selection, risk management, and asset tracking; voice analytics solutions for superior conversational applications trained across languages; and marketing technology solutions to forecast consumer behavior, perform tailored audience segmentations, and streamline content creation with high-precision contextual ads at reduced

In addition to these offerings, Airtel has developed an end-to-end IoT solution designed for the

utility sector that combines connectivity, Google Cloud services, and application software under one offering, enabling seamless, hassle-free, and faster

To power its cloud-based solutions business, Airtel has set-up a managed services center in Pune with 300+ experts who are being extensively trained to champion Google Cloud services and develop world-class tech solutions.

Gopal Vittal, MD & CEO, Bharti Airtel, said: "As India accelerates its digital transformation, cutting-edge cloud and AI solutions will be at the heart and center of this change. We are happy to partner with Google Cloud and jointly address this market opportunity with secure and scalable Cloud solutions for government, enterprises, and emerging businesses. Together, we will also accelerate the deployment of gen AI in the country and unlock its potential to solve problems."

Thomas Kurian, CEO, Google Cloud, added: "Our strategic collaboration with Airtel marks a significant milestone towards our commitment to accelerate cloud and AI adoption in India. Through this partnership, we aim to explore and build transformative solutions that can enhance Airtel's customer experiences."

Airtel will also leverage Google Cloud's gen AI capabilities to transform its customer experiences and interactions across its offerings of mobile, broadband, and digital TV, and to streamline its internal processes and operations. Airtel will also extend these capabilities to its B2B customers in India and globally.

Bengal lagging in harnessing renewable energy potential: Study

KOLKATA, May 14: West Bengal's progress in clean electricity generation has been slower than other states, as it harnessed just eight per cent of its renewable energy potential till February this year, according to a new study.

The eastern state's share of renewable energy consumption out of the total electricity consumption within West Bengal accounted for just 10 per cent, the joint study by US-based research organisation Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and clean energy think tank Ember said.

Karnataka and Gujarat, the top performers in 2023, maintained their robust performance in 2024, while eastern states and Chhattisgarh lagged, it said.

"West Bengal has utilised just per cent (approximately 636 MW) of its renewable energy potential (excluding large hydro), as of February 2024,' the study said.

"Despite the slow progress, the state has significant untapped potential for harnessing clean energy, which could be a golden opportunity for West Bengal. By investing in and promoting the development of renewable energy infrastructure. the state can reduce its carbon footprint, create employment opportunities and foster economic growth in the renewable energy sector," it said.

West Bengal, officials said. has taken steps to enhance its renewable energy generation.

In 2023, it invited bids for setting up a 900-MW pumped hydro storage project, in addition to the 900-MW Purulia Pumped Storage Project operated by the West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd. By 2030, the state aims to generate 20 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources, they said.

"While the state waits to add capacity, it can procure more clean electricity from short-term power markets. Our analysis found that only 18 per cent of its total power purchase and captive generation were traded in the short-term electricity market in the fiscal year 2023. Of this, a mere 0.3 per cent (around 38 million units) is traded in the green day ahead market,' IEEFA said.

Another area of opportunity is

distributed renewable energy, particularly rooftop solar.

"The state has only approximately 4 per cent (around 80 MW) of its renewable energy installed capacity in the distributed solar energy category. However, officials have identified it as an area of potential growth and have started to invite tenders to solarise the rooftops of government buildings," the report said.

India has recently come up with a scheme to promote rooftop solar that subsidises 60 per cent of the cost.

The report noted that West Bengal has also adopted progressive policies like the Green Open Access Rules, which ease the process for commercial and industrial consumers to source renewable energy directly. In addition, the state is taking measures towards the electrification of its transport infrastructure.

"With 318 public charging stations as of February 2024 and 67,756 total electric vehicle sales as of January 2024, the West Bengal government is actively seeking investments in electric vehicle infrastructure," it said. (PTI)

Mahindra unveils XUV 3X0

I, Kumari Rumi Chauhan, D/o Ramdarash Chauhan,

GUWAHATI, May 14: Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd pioneers of the SUV segment in India, on Tuesday launched its much-awaited SUV – the New Disruptor 'XUV 3XO' - starting at Rs 7.49 lakh at Poddar Autocorp Private Limited, Paschim Boragaon, Guwahati. The vehicle was unveiled by Deeplina Deka, famous Assamese Actress & Singer, Bharat Saini, RSM, NER, M&M Ltd, Akshay Poddar, CEO, Poddar Autocorp Private Limited.

The All New XUV 3XO is setting new benchmarks in the compact SUV segment, combines standout design, premium interiors, comfortable ride, cuttingedge technology, thrilling performance, and

The XUV 3XO represents Mahindra's commitment to innovation and excellence, culminating in an SUV that truly represents #EverythingYouWantAndMore.

The XUV 3XO is designed to cater to a broad spectrum of customers. From those upgrading from a hatchback to their first SUV to luxury seekers looking for high-end features at a competitive price, the XUV 3XO offers a unique blend of innovation, safety, comfort, and performance.

The XUV 3XO excels in providing a spacious and comfortable environment for all its occupants. It boasts best-in-class occupant space, which is remarkably generous, comparable even to SUVs a class

The All New XUV 3XO is available for test drives and the bookings will open online and simultaneously at Poddar Autocorp Private Limited, Paschim Boragaon, Guwahati, from May 15. The deliveries of the XUV 3XO will commence starting from May 26, ensuring that customers can enjoy their new Mahindra SUV as soon as possible.

Rupee settles on flat note at 83.51 against US dollar

at 83.51 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as the support from positive domestic markets and favourable inflation data was negated by strong

US Dollar and foreign fund outflows. Forex traders said the rupee remains under pressure due to ongoing elections as well as foreign fund outflows and the same shall subside once the results are out. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit traded in a narrow range. It opened at 83.51, and touched an intraday low of 83.52 during the day.

The domestic unit finally settled for the day at 83.51 (provisional), unchanged from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled flat at 83.51 against the US dollar.

'We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on the strong US dollar and a rise in crude oil prices. Sustained FII outflows may further pressure the rupee," Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

Choudhary further noted that a positive tone in the domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from PPI data from the US on Tuesday and CPI data later this week. "USDINR

spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹83.30 to 83.80," he said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was at 105.26, higher by 0.04 per cent.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.04 per cent to USD 83.33 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 328.48 points, or 0.45 per cent, to close at 73,104.61 points. The broader NSE Nifty settled 113.80 points, or 0.51 per cent, higher at

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday, as they offloaded shares worth ₹ 4,498.92 crore, according to exchange data.

On the macroeconomic front, India's retail inflation eased to an 11-month low of 4.83 per cent in April, as prices of some kitchen items declined, even though the overall food basket firmed up marginally, according to government data released on Monday. The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation was 4.85 per cent in March. It was 4.7 per cent in April

Contd. from Page I...

Modi files nomination

BDJS president Thushar Vellappally and Asom Gana Parishad president Atul Bora were also there. Bihar chief minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar did not attend the event due to health reasons. Before he filed his nomination, Modi posted in Hindi on 'X', "My relationship with Kashi is amazing, inseparable and incomparable... all I can say is that it cannot be expressed in words!

According to the spokesperson, there were four proposers for Modi's nomination -- Pandit Ganeshwar Shastri, long-time RSS functionary Baijnath Patel, Lalchand Kushwaha and Sanjay Sonkar. All four, along with Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, were present at the collector's office when Modi submitted his papers. The prime minister held a dazzling roadshow in Varanasi a day back and vowed to do a lot more to serve the holy city in his third term. He spent the night in the city.

Modi posted a clip from the roadshow on 'X' and said, "The love and blessings that my family members of Kashi showered on me during the road show has become an unforgettable moment in my life.

In another post in Hindi, he said, "My day started with paying respects to Maa Ganga in Kashi... I prayed to Maa Ganga for happiness, prosperity and health for Kashi residents as well as my family members across the country. 'Jai Maa Ganga'

In a post on 'X' in Hindi, Adityanath said, "The 'charioteer of Amrit Kaal' of India, respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is striving for prosperity of 140 crore Indians, filed his nomination for the Lok Sabha election from Varanasi today. Every resident of Kashi is committed to making their beloved MP, the respected prime minister, victorious with a record number of votes."

Voting in Varanasi will take place in the seventh phase of the Lok Sabha election on June 1. The Congress has fielded its state unit president Ajay Rai from the seat and the BSP has nominated Athar Jamal Lari. (PTI)

Data collection by police

intimation and official orders before any data collection process within Church premises.

"If any information or data is required, there should be a written intimation, and only then can the Church authority provide what is sought for," he stated.

The UCF has urged the district commissioner to intervene and halt such actions by the concerned authorities to maintain public peace and respect the sanctity of places of worship.

Moody's pegs India's

raised the risk weight of such credit assets for both banks and NBFCs by 25 percentage points in December 2023," Moody's Ratings said. NBFCs will continue to play an important role in meeting credit needs among individuals and businesses in India's vast economy.

The largest 20 NBFCs have strong market positions and long histories of providing specific types of loans, such as financing for housing or commercial vehicles. Also, most of them are owned by the government or by large corporate groups, which would lend stability to their funding in times of stress, the agency said. Moody's Ratings' FY25 GDP growth estimates are, however, lower than the projections made by the RBI and other agencies, but is at par with Deloitte's forecast.

The RBI has projected Indian economy to grow at 7 per cent in current fiscal. While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Fitch Ratings have estimated growth at 7 per cent, S&P Global Ratings and Morgan Stanley projects growth rate of 6.8 per cent. Deloitte India estimates India's GDP to grow at 6.6 per cent in the current fiscal year helped by consumption expenditure, exports rebound and capital flows, but flagged concerns around inflation and geopolitical uncertainties. (PTI)

BJP losing ground everywhere

the INDIA bloc. Kejriwal said he felt "sad" when the farmers, three years ago, were stopped at Delhi's borders and prevented from entering the national capital for their agitation. "I felt very bad, but I could not have my way because the Delhi Police is not under us. They dug iron nails on roads ... 'China jab hamari zameen hadapta hai unke liye keelen nahi thokte," he said, referring to the allegations of land grab by China in Ladakh.

"But they placed large nails, cement boulders for farmers. They did not let farmers enter Delhi as if farmers were their enemies ... Inke Pitaji ki Delhi hai?" he said. Delhi belongs to the 140 crore people of the country and not to any specific group, he added. "This time oust them from Delhi by voting them out."

The Delhi CM also championed the women wrestlers who sat on protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar last year against several alleged instances of sexual assault against former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

The protesters were met with stiff resistance from the Delhi Police during their weeks-long sit-in, at least once leading to a skirmish. "What they did with our wrestler daughters, did you see that or not?" Kejriwal asked the "The person against whom fingers were pointed, his son was rewarded with a ticket," he said without naming

anyone. The BJP has fielded Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh's son Karan Bhushan Singh from UP's Kaiserganj Lok Sabha seat. The decision has reignited allegations of callousness towards women by the BJP. Referring to the BJP manifesto, Kejriwal said all of Modi's "guarantees" are fake. "Earlier, a guarantee was

given by them that Rs 15 lakh will be deposited in every person's account, also of giving two crore jobs every year ... but they never came good on those guarantees," he said and asked the public to repose their faith in "Keriwal ki Guarantee." Kejriwal, who will be out till June 1, said it's up to the people to decide whether he goes back to jail or not. "Now, it is up to you ... when you go to vote, think in your hearts if Kejriwal has to be sent to jail or not." He said he had to go to prison because he created good schools, Mohalla Clinics, free electricity and free water. "This is my fault." A diabetic, Kejriwal alleged that when he was in jail, the prison authorities stopped his insulin for 15 days even

when he was supposed to take it every day. "My blood sugar levels rose to 300-350 and I told them it would cause damage to my liver and kidney. This

was the treatment they meted out to me," he said.

Kejriwal held another roadshow in Shahabad, also in Kurukshatra. Voting for all 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana will be held in the sixth of the seven phase general election on May 25. AAP, a constituent of the INDIA bloc is fighting Kurukshetra seat while the remaining nine seats in Haryana are being contested by Congress. (PTI)

Why has Ganga river gotten

progress in 10 years. Domri village has almost no pucca housing, he said, adding Nagepur village has extremely shoddy roads. Dalit communities in Jogapur and Jayapur have no toilets and no water, and the flagship Nal Se Jal Scheme seems to have missed Parampur village entirely, he claimed. "The condition of Mr. Modi's adopted villages tells us a lot about his sense of duty, or lack thereof, towards serving his constituents. Why has the PM abandoned his "adopted" villages? Is this the true face of "Modi ki guarantee"," he asked. Ramesh also alleged that "It is well known that the outgoing PM's ideology is that of Godse, not Gandhi".

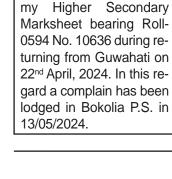
"He has taken his malicious hatred of the Father of our Nation to the extent of destroying the Sarwa Sewa Sangh, started by Acharya Vinobha Bhave, and associated with personalities like Dr Rajendra Prasad, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Jayaprakash Narayan," he said, adding it has been rendering extraordinary public service to the nation since 1955. "It had been operating on 13 acres of land, close to the Varanasi Railway Station, for which it had full possession papers. It was evicted from its iconic campus in August 2023, and the land was taken over by the Indian Railways. Only one corner of the campus, occupied by the Gandhi Vidya Sansthan, remains untouched because it had already been captured by the RSS. "Why does the PM persist in his hypocrisy of praising Gandhiji abroad, while destroying Gandhian institutions at home? Can he openly admit his admiration for Godse over Gandhi,' Ramesh asked. (PTI)

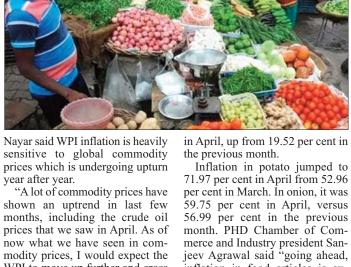
Disasters triggered over half

According to the report, disasters triggered 26.4 million displacements in 2023, the third highest annual total in the last 10 years. No country is immune to disaster displacement, said Alexandra Bilak, the director of IDMC. "But we can see a difference in how displacement affects people in countries that prepare and plan for its impacts and those that don't. Those that look at the data and make prevention, response and long-term devel-

opment plans that consider displacement fare far better," she said. Extreme weather events such as floods and heatwaves are becoming more frequent and are projected to increase manifold in India in the future due to climate change, according to a 2022 report by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar.

The increase in the concentration of heat-trapping greenhouse gases has heightened instability in the atmosphere, leading to increased convective activity thunderstorms, lightning, and heavy rain events. According to meteorologists, cyclonic storms are intensifying rapidly and retaining their intensity for longer durations due to global warming. (PTI)





Cooperative society

signs MoU for skill

development

HT Bureau
DIPHU, May 14: The first multi-

state cooperative society for agri-

culture for the states of Manipur

and Assam under the Union min-

istry of cooperation, 'Bharathi-

manass Agriculture Cooperative

Limited (Bharathimanassagri-

coop) has signed a memorandum

of understanding (MoU) with ICAR - ATARI (Agricultural

Technology Application Research

The MoU was signed on Mon-

day between AK Mohanty, di-

rector, ICAR - ATARI and Raghumani Khundrakpam,

chairman, of Bharathimanas-

As per the MoU, ICAR -

ATARI will provide skill-based

training programme and technical

guidance for enhancing agricul-

tural production, establishing food

processing units for fruits, spices,

vegetables and tea produced by

members and stakeholders of so-

ciety, technology inputs and other

materials for the welfare of

farmer's community and use of

Institute) in Shillong.

sagricoop.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, CEM of BTR Promod Boro, cabinet minister Atul Bora accompany PM Modi in Varanasi as he files nomination for Lok Sabha polls

CEM of BTR Pramod Boro attends PM Modi's nomination filing in Varanasi

HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, May 14: With the blessings of Baba Vishwanath Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi filed his nomination for the Lok Sabha elections from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency on Tuesday amidst presence of huge leaders of BJP and NDA alliance partners.

Chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, the chief executive member (CEM) of Bodoland Territorial Region and UPPL president, Pramod Boro, cabinet minister and AGP president, Atul Bora accompanied PM Narendra Modi and NDA alliance leaders during the filing of nomination in Varanasi.

People in large numbers thronged the streets in Varanasi when PM Modi went to file his nomination papers.

CEM of Bodoland Territorial Region, Pramod Boro expressed said that the nomination filing by PM Modi was a moment, which



signified the trust and confidence a historic third consecutive term of the people, paving the way for

ciplinary perspectives into our cur-

Farheena Danta, dean of humani-

ties and social sciences of Tezpur

University said that such work-

shops offer a platform to refine

teaching techniques, adapt to

evolving educational trends and ul-

timately enhance instruction qual-

ity. For students pursuing their

LL.M and aspiring to become ed-

ucators themselves, this workshop

is of utmost importance, the Dean

The other notable speakers at the workshop included Debasis Pod-

dar of National Law University

and Judicial Academy, who deliv-

ered a talk on interdisciplinary per-

spectives in legal pedagogy and

Anu Mehra, faculty of law of the

Delhi University, who discussed

on understanding student assess-

ment and feedback. Earlier, Mad-

humita Acharjee, head of the

department of law and Akhilesh

Kumar, director of MMTTC shared

their expertise and experiences in

leveraging pedagogy to create en-

gaging and impactful learning expe-

Speaking on the occasion

riculum," Singh said.

Adarniva PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji as he filed his nomination for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 from Varanasi, the sacred city of Baba Vishwanath. The entire National Democratic Alliance stands strong under the leadership of our PM, and there is simply no doubt that the people of Varanasi will bless Modi Ji with an overwhelming mandate for his historic third term as Prime Minister of Bharat", Boro said adding that the team NDA is headed for a stupendous victory in the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 under the leadership of the PM. He said that PM Modi has initi-

"It was an honour to accompany

REGION

ated several initiatives for bringabout transformative developments across the country in the last 10 years, including those in the Bodoland Territorial

He said that the people of BTR region could avail permanent peace after signing of the BTR Peace Accord on January 27, 2020.

One held under **POCSO** in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent SIVASAGAR, May 14: The police arrested a person for sexually two minor girls in Sivasagar.

The accused has been identified as Suraj Rajak of Samastipur in Bihar. He has been booked under section 4 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2019 (Amendment) Cr PC, Article 376 on Monday following an FIR filed by parents of two minor girls aged four and five years respectively.

According to reports, the ac-

Ghar Chariali near the victim's family. He had reportedly been sexually abusing the two little girls for a long period by enticing them with sweets and chocolates till they complained of acute pain to their parents. He was produced before the judicial magistrate from where he was sent to jail.

Monica Saikia, a leading women activist of the state condemned the incident and demanded exemplary punishment while Indrani Rajkumari, general secretary of the Sadaou Asom Mohila Samity, de-

Workshop on start-ups of Northeast held

JORHAT, May 14: In a bid to boost entrepreneurship and innovation in

as a potential space for women to build their free economy.

cused worked in a laundry and manded capital punishment for the lived in a rented house in Rang

HT Correspondent

the Northeast, the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Assam Women's University recently organised a workshop titled 'Role of Incubator in the Start-Ups of North-East India'.

The workshop was conducted in collaboration with the North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub (NEATEHUB), a notable initiative from Assam Agricultural University dedicated to supporting agricultural and rural development through innovation. In the inaugural lecture, Ajanta Borgohain Rajkonwar, Vice-chancellor of the Assam Women's University highlighted the significance of start-up initiatives

Drug peddler held at Itakhola

HT Correspondent BISWANATH CHARIALI, May 14: The police have arrested a drug peddler and recovered 8 gram of heroin from Saikia Chuburi in

Itakhola in Sonitpur district. The accused has been identified as Rohit Basumatary (31), son of one Atul Basumatary who originally hailed from Pukhuripara village under Uriamghat Police

Station of Golaghat district. A team of police headed by Shyamal Jyoti Saikia, officer incharge of the Sootea Police Station apprehended Basumatary and recovered a soap case containing 8 gram heroin late in the evening on May 12. According to sources, the police team had been following the drug peddler for a long time. The police team also seized a scooty



Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of the ICAR – ATARI. The MoU signing was attended by the directors of the society from Manipur, P. Ranapratap and Y. Ramdiyu and Enali Hasnu and Miss Ringbli, two directors from Assam. This agreement will boost the agricultural activities for enhancing production and food processing sector by producing hygienic and nutritious products to the common men and also help in socio-economic up liftment of

director Bharathimanassagricoop.

CORRIGENDUM

the farmer's community, said Ra-

manando Khundrakpam, manag-

In the news item under the headline 'Padmashree Jatin Goswami Gurudev honoured with Kushilaba Kala Nidhi title published on May 3, should have been "a song theme 'Tejare Kamalapati' sung by Janardan Kalita and not as published. The mistake is deeply regretted.

TU lays stress on exploring innovative methods in legal teaching rooms and incorporating interdis-



CSIR-NEIST holds discussion

on engineering sciences

HT Correspondent TEZPUR, May 14: The depart-

ment of law in collaboration with the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre (MMTTC) of the Tezpur University has organised a day-long national workshop on 'Pedagogy in Law'

The workshop held on Monday brought together esteemed legal scholars and educators from across the country to deliberate on contemporary pedagogical practices in the field of law.

Srikrishna Deva Rao, vice chancellor of the Hyderabad NALSAR University of Law delivered the first lecture of the workshop. He explained the importance of exploring innovative methods of

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, May 14: Padma Shri PS

Goel, FNA, FNAE, former secre-

tary of the Union ministry of earth

sciences, has delivered a lecture on

the topic 'Future of engineering sci-

ences' at the Council of Scientific

and Industrial Research (CSIR)-

North East Institute of Science and

mark the 'National Technology

that Goel in his lecture delivered at

the Dr JN Baruah Auditorium of the

institute, presented a whole gamut

of opportunities for future engi-

neers, scientists and innovators in

various disciplines of science and

technology. He explained that while

science understands the nature of a

concept, engineering applys scien-

tific knowledge for the benefit of

way back from the discovery of

decimal system, zero and trigonom-

etry by mathematicians and as-

tronomers such as Aryabhatta,

Bhaskara-I and Bhaskara-II to the

discovery of gravity, laws of mo-

tion, molecular structure and quan-

tum mechanics by scientists like

Isaac Newton, Bohr and Richard

Talking about the future of engi-

neering sciences, he encouraged the

scientists, engineers and innovators

to adopt the power of visualization

and said that most scientific and

technological evolutions are based

on visualization and having the au-

He spoke in detail about futur-

istic technologies for human habi-

tat on Mars, air taxies based on

battery/fuel cell, green hydrogen,

quantum computers and quantum

communication, gene therapy,

large adaptation of artificial intel-

ligence and machine learning, etc.

He observed that everybody can-

not be a scientist or an engineer,

but everybody can be an innova-

dacity to dream big

Goel delved deeper on discussing the evolution of modern science

The lecture was organised to

A CSIR-NEIST official informed

Technology (NEIST).

Day' on Monday.

the society.

Feynman.

legal teaching that involve venturing beyond traditional pedagogical approaches to engage students in dynamic and interactive learning experiences. He further said that by embracing innovation in legal teaching, educators can inspire a new generation of legal profes-

sionals in the coveted domain of

Addressing as the chief guest, Shambhu Nath Singh, vice chancellor of Tezpur University said that the theme of the workshop highlights the crucial role of effective teaching methodologies in legal education.

'Innovative approaches to teaching law are possible through integrating technology into class-

director of the Numaligarh Refinery

Limited, who was the guest of hon-

our at the programme, discussed the

various challenges of oil and gas

sector with the intention to ignite

young minds to come up with solu-

bution of indigenous science and

technology in the country's progress. Tiwari appealed to all to

take this day as an inspiration to

contribute to the country's develop-

ment by inculcating the spirit of in-

In the programme four entrepre-

neurs of the state shared their indi-

vidual experiences in terms of the

challenges faced in setting up of

their enterprises, and their associa-

tion with CSIR-NEIST for acquir-

ing the technology licenses for its

They were Alokananda Sen-

gupta, proprietor of Sewali Home

Enterprise in Jorhat, Raghubir

Singh Nagi from Nagi Trade and

Industries in Tinsukia, Pankaj

Sharma from an NGO in Jorhat and

Sanjeev Baruah from a self-help

tended by guests, entrepreneurs,

school students and teachers be-

sides the CSIR-NEIST fraternity.

The programme was largely at-

The National Technology Day

is celebrated on May 11 every

year to commemorate the coun-

try's successful nuclear tests con-

ducted in Pokhran, Rajasthan on

novation and

product marketing.

group in Titabar.

May 11, 1998.

need-based technologies.

developing

Phukan stated.

riences for law students. Assam Rifles screens 'Sam Bahadur' at Sotai Children Home

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, May 14: The Assam Rifles initiated a special movie screening event for the children residing at the Sotai Orphanage Home recently, fostering a sense of commitment and care towards the

"Sustainable aviation fuel is one global challenge where many countries are currently working on", He also informed that oil demand in the country will continue to grow till 2040 and further highlighted that some of the major challenges faced by NRL are sustainability and achieving Net Zero emission by Earlier, Virendra M Tiwari, director of CSIR-NEIST welcomed the gathering and mentioned that the day symbolises the immense contri-

children of Sotai Orphanage.

A total of 11 girls and 9 boys were treated to an inspiring cinematic film 'Sam Bahadur', which is a tale of valour and perseverance, aligning perfectly with the spirit of the armed personnel and the resilience of these young hearts. Sotai Children Home extended its gratitude to the Assam Rifles for their support in making this event possible. This is a testament to the Assam Rifles' dedication to the welfare of the community and its commitment to nurturing the future of our nation.

NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati hosts Bwisagu celebration

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, May 14: The NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati under the aegis of the Employee Welfare Association of the power station joyously celebrated the Bohagi Utsav (Rongjali Bwisagu Pwrbw) marking the culmination of the Assamese New Year festivities.

The colourful and vibrant event organised on Monday as a part of the employees' welfare initiatives, witnessed enthusiastic participation from employees and their families, along with distinguished guests.

The Rongjali Bwisagu (Bohagi Utsav) was inaugurated by K C Muraleedharan, business unit head, NTPC Bongaigaon, who highlighted the significance of the festive season of Bihu and the advent of the Bohag season in the Assamese New Year, symbolizing new beginnings and prosperity for all. Speaking on the occasion, he emphasised the cultural richness and diversity of NTPC Bongaigaon, describing it as a microcosm of different cultures and highlighted the spirit of inclusivity and unity as the township celebrates various festivals under one roof.

The Bihu dance and Husori celebrations at NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati showcased the talent and creativity of local performers, who entertained the audience with mesmerizing renditions of traditional songs and dances depicting the vibrancy of various tribes of the state. The rhythmic beats of the Dhol and Pepa, accompanied by melodious tunes, filled the air with an aura of joy and festivity, creating an unforgettable experience for all present. Additionally, the celebration also included the festivities of the Bwisagu Festival, marking the new year of the Bodo community, thereby exemplifying the spirit of communal harmony and cultural ex-

Induri S Reddy, GM (O&M), Asutosh Biswas, GM (Operation), Bindu Namboothiri, President, Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club, NTPC Bongaigaon, G M Thangzom, Commandant, CISF, M.S Kandari, Asst, Commandant, CISF, along with heads of various departments and family members of the station graced the occasion with their presence.

Former Tezpur MP Ishwar Prasanna Hazarika passes away

TEZPUR, May 14: Ishwar Prasanna Hazarika, former member of Parliament from the Tezpur Lok Sabha constituency has passed away at the Fortis Escorts Heart Institute in New Delhi

He breathed his last on Monday at the age of 88 years due to prolonged heart ailment and associated complications. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Tezpur constituency in 1996 as a member of the Indian National Congress.

As a civil servant, Hazarika had served in different key positions during his career. He served as the chairman and managing director of MMTC, director on the Board of NTPC, chairman of ASEB, income tax commissioner and in key positions in GAIL SAIL before joining politics. Born on January 22, 1937 to relatives.

freedom fighter Tirtheswar Hazarika and Mokshada Devi in Lakhimpur district, the meritorious late Hazarika pursued his college education at the Cotton College, Banaras Hindu University and the Delhi

School of Economics. He also held a barrister degree from the United Kingdom

Different organizations and individuals including Dadul Borkakati, president of Sonitpur District Congress Committee, senior congress leader of Sonitpur, Madhurjya Goswami,

Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rabha, Tezpur MLA Brindaban former Goswami, vice-chairman of AMTRON, Ritubaran Sarma and several others have deeply mourned the death of Hazarika. He is survived by his wife Chaya Hazarika, two sons, a daughter and several grieving

DRDO celebrated NTD 2024

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, May 14: Defence Research Laboratory (DRL) DRDO, Tezpur has celebrated NTD 2024 to commemorate the successful nuclear tests conducted in Pokhran in 1998. The nuclear tests in Pokhran showcased India's scientific and technological capabilities to the world, establishing the country as a nuclear power by highlighting the prowess of Indian scientists and engineers. Dr K Santhanam, former director of DRL, Tezpur graced the occasion as the chief guest. The programme held on Monday commenced with the welcome address by Dev Vrat Kamboj, director of DRL. He highlighted the essence of National Technology Day and emphasized the importance of this day as a catalyst to inspire the next generation of innovators and technologists. He encouraged the students to be motivated and inspired in the field of science and technology for newer innovation that could establish India as a technological superpower.

Forest department takes initiative for man-elephant co-existence

Herd of wild elephants stray into villages surrounding reserve forests areas in West Kamrup division



HT Correspondent BOKO, May 14: The state forest depart-

ment has taken special measures to ensure co-existence between wild elephants and A herd of elephants including calves has

been grazing in Dakuapara, Pakharapara, Chandmari, Sakhati, Mouman Tangabari and Jongakhuli villages, which are especially connected with the reserve forest areas under the Singra forest range office of West Kamrup division for the last few

When the herd of elephants entered the villages, villagers alleged that they were unable to go for work. They were unable even go to their paddy fields because of the herd of wild elephants.

A state forest team led by Ranger Bhargabh Hazarika launched a mobile awareness unit to calm the situation. The unit has started a campaign with a microphone among the villages.

Bhagabh Hazarika, the ranger of the Singra Range said, "We visited shops, daily bazaar areas, naamghars, temples, schools, churches etc. in the villages and sensitised the villagers about the consequences of human- elephant conflicts."

"We also urged the villagers to maintain distance from the herd of wild elephant so that any form of man-animal conflict can be prevented," added Hazarika.

Hazarika also said that even if wild elephants try to launch an attack, people should maintain distance and inform the forest department.

However, people in many of these villages are now worried as the wild elephants have been damaging their banana gardens, rubber gardens, paddy fields and betel nut gardens. Many villagers depend

on agriculture for their livelihood. Villagers of the area suspected that the cific places from the last few days because their corridors have blocked due to the exducted on National Highway - 17. They

herd of elephants was stuck in these spetension works that are currently being conhave urged the state government to find a solution for the wild elephants, so that the elephants can return to their habitat.











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QUOTE OF THE DAY

He who angers you conquers you. -Elizabeth Kenny

India, Iran sign landmark pact

ndia and Iran have embarked on a transformative journey, sealing a decade-long pact to fortify cooperation in developing and op-Lerating the strategic Chabahar Port. This landmark agreement, announced on Monday by the Indian government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, underscores a pivotal moment in regional geopolitics. Situated on Iran's southeastern coast along the Gulf of Oman, Chabahar Port emerges as a linchpin in the broader landscape of trade and connectivity. By deepening ties with Iran through Chabahar, India not only bypasses its regional rival Pakistan's ports but also unlocks a vital gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The port's significance transcends mere logistics; it stands as a beacon of resilience in supply chains and a conduit for diplomatic outreach. Since its inception in 2003, the partnership between India and Iran on Chabahar has weathered numerous challenges, including international sanctions. However, the recent agreement signifies a renewed commitment, culminating in a substantial investment of \$370 million. Indian Ports Global Limited (IPGL), in collaboration with the Port & Maritime Organization of Iran, will spearhead the port's expansion, particularly focusing on the Shahid Beheshti terminal.

This strategic alliance underscores the broader vision of enhancing regional connectivity, exemplified by initiatives like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The INSTC, spanning over 7,200 kilometers and involving thirteen member countries, aims to revolutionize trade routes between Mumbai and Saint Petersburg. Chabahar Port emerges as a pivotal node in this ambitious project, promising to slash transit times by 40% and reduce freight costs by 30%, compared to traditional routes via the Suez Canal. Beyond economics, Chabahar assumes a humanitarian role, facilitating the seamless flow of aid, particularly during crises like the Covid-19 pandemic. Notably, the port has enabled the swift transport of essential commodities, including wheat and pesticides, underscoring its versatility in addressing regional challenges. From a strategic standpoint, Chabahar holds multifaceted significance. For Iran, it offers a lifeline amidst Western sanctions, while for India, it represents a strategic pivot, circumventing geographic constraints imposed by Pakistan. Moreover, the port's location at the entrance of the Gulf of Oman positions Iran at the crossroads of international maritime trade, amplifying its geopolitical relevance. Looking ahead, the Chabahar agreement lays the groundwork for a robust Indo-Iranian partnership, fostering economic growth and geopolitical stability. As India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar aptly puts it, this venture not only strengthens connectivity but also reinforces trade relationships with Central Asia, heralding a new era of cooperation and

The India-Iran collaboration on Chabahar Port heralds a paradigm shift in regional dynamics, epitomizing the fusion of economic pragmatism and strategic foresight. As the wheels of progress set in motion, Chabahar emerged not merely as a port but as a symbol of solidarity, resilience, and shared prosperity in an ever-evolving geopolitical landscape. Moreover, the Chabahar agreement symbolizes a triumph of diplomacy, as it bridges cultural and historical ties between India and Iran. Beyond its economic and strategic implications, this partnership reaffirms the enduring bond between two ancient civilizations, fostering mutual respect and understanding. In an era marked by geopolitical tensions. Chabahar stands as a beacon of cooperation, offering a blueprint for peaceful coexistence and shared prosperity. As India and Iran embark on this transformative journey, the significance of Chabahar transcends mere infrastructure; it embodies the spirit of collaboration and the promise of a brighter future

What problem does Congress have with Modi's dream of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'?

The atmosphere of the country is completely heated during the Lok Sabha elections. The entire opposition is trying to corner Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His every attack is directed at Modi, in response to which Modi is leaving no stone unturned. Recently, while addressing the pubmeeting in Latur, Maharashtra, Modi fiercely targeted the opposition. On this occasion, Modi said, "When I talk about 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', the Shahjade of Congress gets fever. They say why does Modi talk about 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat'?

After this speech of Modi, 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' campaign has become a topic of much discussion. There is an ongoing debate on social media and this campaign is being discussed in village chaupals. People from all the opposition parties including Congress are also criticizing this campaign while Modi supporters are asking what problem does Congress have with Modi's dream of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. After all, why doesn't he want India to remain united and reach the pinnacle of excellence?

Before discussing these questions, let us know what is implicit in the concept of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'? Actually, the talk of taking India to the pinnacle of excellence starts with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Patel had called upon the countrymen to unite and live together to create a leading India i.e. a better India. He wanted India to once again achieve the glory of an alert, sensitive, inclusive and strong na-

In ancient times, India had economic, cultural, social and educational glory in the entire world. Then the evil eye of many invaders fell on India. They would come and loot our wealth and go away. After this the country remained stuck in the chains of slavery for a long time. After countless sacrifices, the country became independent in 1947, but after independence, the unity and superiority of India was not even considered

After independence, due to lack of positive thinking towards the nation, evils like nepotism, corruption and opportunism started becoming dominant. Only



DEGREE OF THOUGHT

a few families started taking economic and political decisions. The adverse effect of this has been that our country has not been able to move on the path of development at the expected

pace. A large

section of the

society was de-**Prof. Mahesh Chand Gupta** prived of equal opportunities and resources for social and economic upliftment. It is impossible to even estimate the amount of loss that the people of our

country, especially the young generation, women and the deprived sections of society have suffered due to these circum-The political parties enjoying power in the country kept calling the land of India as Mother but it was never given the real respect,

honor and glory which should have been given to a mother. After assuming the post of Prime Minister in the year 2014, Narendra Modi resolved to realize the dream seen for the nation by leaders like Patel and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. In the latter half of the year

2015, when there was a debate going on in our country on the so-called intolerance, then on the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel, Modi described national unity as supreme and internal vigilance as the capital of freedom and expressed his intention that 'One India, Best India' 'Want to give the form of a plan'. PM Modi called upon the countrymen to move the country forward by joining the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' campaign.

A few days later, in his familiar style, he invited suggestions from the general public in All India Radio's Mann Ki Baat programme. After this, the common people got connected with the

concept of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat. There was a competition among the general public to give suggestions. The idea moved forward as per the suggestions and expectations of the public. The impact of this

idea started

being seen on

all the schemes of Modi government. The spirit of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas was already there, when Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat was added to it, the situation changed rapidly. We all are able to see the winds of change

that have blown in the country

between 2014 and 2024. Modi has changed the status quo thinking that had persisted for nearly seventy years. Now our youth have got rid of the discriminatory system. Women no longer need to wait long for facilities and needs to be fulfilled. There has been a drastic change in the circumstances hindering development. Those favorable conditions are being created in the country, which are indispensable for development.

Our country has become strategically self-reliant. Earlier, every defense equipment and weapons was imported, but now the army has completely stopped importing hundreds of such equipment and weapons. It is a matter of pride to have a vibrant defense industry in the country. The country's capabilities in water, sky, land and space have proven unprecedented and the nation's progress on the path of new mission of self-reliance is making everyone proud. The morale of the countrymen has been boosted by the abolition of Article 370 from Kashmir. A lot has changed in the country in the last decade; the people of the country are witness to it

ernment has increased the comforts and facilities for the common people in the last ten vears; on the other hand, it has also taken the country to new heights due to all-round development. Our country has reached a position completely capable of dealing with all types of challenges, external and internal. Full credit for this goes to Modi but still Modi politely refuses to take credit for it.

Modi says that all this has been possible because of the great Mahayagya of social, economic and constitutional integration, which is going on strengthening the spirit of 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat'. Modi also says that just as 'Ek Bharat' for Sardar Patel meant equal opportunity for all, our government is also following the same path. The concept of Ek Bharat includes an India which provides equal opportunities to women, Dalits, underprivileged, tribals and forest dwellers. Where housing, electricity and water facilities are accessible to all without any discrimination. The country is able to do this through 'Sabka Prayas'.

The Prime Minister has always emphasized that nothing is impossible if the power of the people is harnessed along with the government. Modi has always connected 140 crore people of the country with his programs and schemes. The result of this is that a large section of people have started doing their every work keeping in mind the broader national goals. It is because of Modi's appeal that students now consider sector specific innovations while choosing their subjects of study and common people keep in mind their personal preferences as well as the goal of self-reliant India

while making purchases. Similarly, the industry, farmers and cooperative organizations have also started showing a tendency to keep the country's goals in mind while taking their decisions. Obviously the Modi government has been successful in making public participation the strength of the country.

We can currently see Modi's concept of a better India taking shape in the initiative of self-reliant India. Now the people are

success by becoming 'One India' and are also contributing in making 'Great India'. This is a miracle of the continuous flow of the sacrament of unity of the country. No matter how the Congress is looking at the revolutionary changes that have taken place in the country during the Modi era, Modi's statement is absolutely correct that earlier the overall development of the country was seen in pieces, through a political lens. In such a situation, many states of the country felt neglected; untouched by development, but today the development of the country is seen in the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat'. Development is now considered synonymous with the unity and integrity of the country.

Every single person of the country is connected with the concept of 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' and is also hopeful that the dream of a developed India in 2047 will come true on this path. On the contrary, the disruptive forces want to disintegrate the country. Issues like reservation, caste, religion and inheritance tax are being raised. On one side there is Modi and on the other side those forces who do not even like the concept of 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat'. Modi expects the feeling of national unity to be fostered through deeper engagement among all the states and union territories of the

Our diverse country should always celebrate 'unity in diversity' and the emotional bonds between the countrymen should become stronger, this is Modi's aim. To enable the countrymen to understand this diversity and to promote a sense of common identity, the rich culture, heritage, traditions and customs of the states are being displayed in a unique form on the initiative of Modi. The general public wants a better India and for this they want to bring Modi for the third time. People believe that only Modi can realize the dream of a better India and a developed India. Modi will have to come again; otherwise this dream will remain only a dream. (The author is a well-known educationist. He has been a professor in Delhi University for 44 years who can be reached at profmcguptadelhi@gmail.com)

A brief genesis of statehood movement in North East India vis-a-vis autonomous state movement in Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao

By: Daniel Teron

Nough the Sixth Schedule was implemented in 1952 for administration of the hill tribals in North-East India, a feeling of discontentment over the quantum of autonomy surfaced to the fore as early as in 1954 when a meeting of all Autonomous Councils under the sixth schedule was convened by B.M. Roy the C.E.M. of Khasi and Jaintia Autonomous Council to demand separate state and amendment of the sixth schedule. The imposition of Assamese language by the Assam Government in 1960 as the official language on 22nd April hastened the demand for statehood by the tribals when all leaders of the hill tribals met at Tura in Garo hills on 28th April, 1960 to oppose the imposition of the Assamese language initially snowballed itself into statehood movement and decided to form All Assam Hill Leaders conference (AAHLC) which was later renamed as All Party Hill Leader Conference (APHLC).

Unlike the present APHLC where no political party is represented the APHLC that was formed in 1960 was represented by the Congress, Eastern India Tribal Union (Meghalaya), Garo Union (Garo Hills), Mizo Union (Mizoram), Tribal Union (Dima Hasao) and hence the name All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC). It is pertinent to mention that the Nagas under the Naga National Council (NNC) did not join the APHLC led statehood movement smelling a rat in the politics since the beginning and went their own way and they finally achieved statehood in 1963 on December. After sometime the Mizos left the APHLC movement in 1963 following their assessment that they would be betrayed, went their own way, and got union territory in 1972 and finally separate state in 1987.

Meanwhile, Karbis and Dimasa continue to remain goodboys of APHLC and Congress till the end and that is why they had to pay heavy price for that. The Karbi and Dimasa were never taken into con-

fidence by the APHLC leadership since the beginning of the movement and as such their representative had represented as a member of the delegation to the talks with Central government only once, that was in the 1st talks with Central government in 1960 and after that no representative from Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao were represented in all the talks be it with Central or State government. Therefore nobody from Karbi Anglong and Dimahasao knew nothing what actually transpired in the talks among APHLC and government. With great expectations a huge contingent of Karbi APHLC leaders attended APHLC conference in 1969 at Tura in Garo Hills thinking that they would also be getting statehood.

But, when the General Secretary gave his secretarial reports it was known that Khasi, Jaintia and Garo would be given Autonomous State and Karbi and Dimasa were left in the lurch. The Karbi leaders led by Barelong Terang and Bapuram Singnar the president and secretary of the then Karbi Anglong District APHLC unit protested against this move of the APHLC leaders and came back to Karbi Anglong feeling dejected and demoralized.

Meanwhile, the bill for Autonomous State was introduced in parliament on 10th December 1968 and passed on 24th December 1969 and Autonomous State of Meghalaya was inaugurated on 2nd April, 1970 but we missed the bus during the time because of the treacherous attitude of APHLC and Congress leaders. The mistake that was done in 1969 could have been corrected in 1972 during the re-organisation of North-East India but that was also not done. In the meantime, a joint meeting of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao Congress was also held at Halflong opposing Autonomous State to Dima Hasao & Karbi Anglong with a promise to give more power to the Autonomous Councils which were

never fullfilled. However, democratic rights of the people were trampled upon as election was not held to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council for a period of 11 years from 1962 onwards. It is also important to mention that by then the APHLC of Karbi Anglong District Unit was not only dissolved but its leaders had also dispersed, While some of the elsewhile APHLC leaders went to form Karbi Nationlist organisation KNO and Mikir Hills Progressive Party (MHPP) demanding merger with Nagaland which did not get mass support.

The movement met its natural dead. It is in this backdrop that the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) was born on 17th May 1986 to spearhead another spell of mass democratic movement together with the KSA and KNCA. Had not the APHLC and Congress betraved us in 1969 there would have been no necessity for the ASDC to be formed or for that matter even KASDCOM or JACAS for us in the initial period of the movement we were able to compell the AGP State Government to declare the movement led by ASDC, KSA, KNCA and other fraternal organisations as a mass democratic, peaceful and genuine movement and in 1995 we were successful in compelling both Central and State Government to sign an MOU with 30 additional subject/department, including law and order upto the level of DC and SP and also including land alienation which went a long way strengthening the functioning of 6th schedule. Since it was only a stop gap arrangement and not a final solution the movement continue till today and it will continue till the Autonomous State is achieved come what may. On this historic occasion, we the

central committee of the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) gave a clarion call to the people of the 3 hill districts of Assam to join the Autonomous State movement with new vigour and not to be swayed away by the tantalizing appeal of national parties or reactionary elements like the APHLC. (The author is an Ex. Chairman of KAAC and publicity incharge, ASDC)

Special on International Family Day The role of families in combating climate change

By: Lalit Garg

nternational Day of Families is celebrated as an annual celebration on 15th May to celebrate the importance of families and their role in society. The United Nations adopted it as a resolution in 1994 to raise awareness of the importance of families, highlight the challenges they face, promote the ideals of solidarity, and demonstrate efforts that strengthen family units around the world.

This year we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Families, the theme of which is Families and Climate Change. Its goal is to raise awareness of the effects of climate change on families and encourage them to take action to reduce these impacts. Family and community initiatives aim to raise awareness about the threats to the environment and life from climate change and to clean up the environment by providing education, information access, training and community participation.

Family is the smallest unit in the animal world and social organization. It is difficult to even imagine running a human society in the absence of a family; we have understood this very well during the Corona crisis.

Every person is able to make his life journey pleasant, prosperous and development oriented only by being a member of some family. Its existence cannot be thought of apart from it. Our culture and civilization has been refining itself by going through many changes, but there has been no impact on the existence of the family institution. They may have been created or broken, but their existence cannot be denied. Its form changed and its values changed but its existence cannot be questioned.

No matter how much modern ideology we are growing up in, but in the end we experience satisfaction and fullness and meaning of life only in converting our relations into a family by linking them with the institution of marriage. The importance of family is

not only in India but everywhere in the world that is why International Family Day is celebrated with the aim of strengthening the family institution. The main objective of this day is to make the youth aware of the family so that the youth do not get away from their families in the flow of so-called modernity. The family institution continues to exist despite facing many struggles and changes. If we talk about old eras or even on the basis of religious beliefs, then like today, there used to be disintegration of families earlier too But in modern society disintegration of the family has become a common thing. In such a situation. International Family Day is celebrated with the mission and vision that families should not break. By living among the family, you remain stress-free and happy, and you also do not become a victim of loneliness or depression. The concept of society is incomplete without family and to create a family it is very important for people to live together and con-

There are two types of families - one is nuclear family and the other is joint family. Father, mother and children live in a nuclear family. In a joint family, father-mother, children, grandparents, uncle, aunt, elder father, elder mother, aunt etc. The first celebration of this day was announced by the United States of America on 15 May 1994. This day holds great importance for the people who are suffering the tragedy of breakdown and disintegration of joint families. In fact, the unique identity of human civilization is the joint family and wherever it is, there is heaven.

Old age shudders due to the actions of family members who destroy the importance of relationships and love and the socalled modernist thinking. While the disintegration of joint families and the emergence of

the nuclear family have caused pain to the elderly, it has also deprived the children of many events. The power to bear sorrow and endure hardships which is seen in joint families is not found in those who live alone. In todav's modern era, in view of rising inflation and increasing needs, joint families can be called the need of the hour.

India is a country of villages, a country of families, perhaps this is the reason that despite not wanting to, we have emerged as the world's largest population nation and perhaps this is the reason that despite the challenges arising from population pressure ;as a 'family', did not feel the need to formulate population policy. A part of the land surrounded by walls made of brick, stone and lime is called a household, with which 'I' and 'me' are associated. The organizational unit of relationships committed by values is each member of that household. The happiness and sorrow of every member touches each other's heart. The mind is affected by feelings of love.

Where the sun rises every morning in the struggle for food, clothing, shelter, education and proper medical care, and every evening the family comes and stays at home carrying the burden of half-fulfilled worries. Sometimes profit, sometimes loss, sometimes happiness, sometimes sadness, sometimes coincidence, sometimes separation, the cycle of life moves between these dualistic situations. There is a struggle between luck and effort. Every effort of a man is to create a 'home and family'. In the true sense, home and family are the place where life values like affection, harmony, cooperation, organization, sharing of joys and sorrows, acceptance of lessons in everything are lived. Where there is complete freedom to tolerate and understand everyone.

There is creative freedom with discipline, the right to make decisions with integrity & where childhood is nurtured in good values. Youth is lived by a relative lifestyle. Old age remains tolerant and balanced while sharing the experiences lived among everyone. Such a family definitely becomes a temple of worship.

Family is like a resource. Then what is the reason that if we look into the atmosphere of any family today, we will see the shadows of sorrow, worry. discord, jealousy, hatred, partiality, dispute, opposition and rebellion moving around. There would be a feeling of alienation even among our own people. Difference of opinion will lead to discord. Faith will descend into doubt. In such a crowd of untold tensions, man yearns for a moment of happiness. No one tries to tolerate/understand anyone. Because in that family. within the scope of its own existence, the changing peripheries of objectives, ideals, expectations, faith and belief go astray, obliterating the centre. To control this fragmentation and disintegration, we launched the "Sukhi Pariwar Abhiyan" under the leadership of Gani Rajendra Vijayji, through which extensive initiatives are being taken to strengthen the family institution.

The concept of Nuclear Family is not yet widespread in India. Even today, there are many families in India whose generations live together and support each other at every step. But the situation is gradually worsening in metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai. It is expected that soon the importance of joint family will start increasing again in the society and awareness will spread among people that they should live together in a family which has many benefits. This step and resolution of life taken in the name of human relationships and family tradition will be a unique gift to the family in welcoming tomorrow. (The author is a journalist, columnist who can be reached at lalit-

garg11@gmail.com)

Body-shaming, trolling, and the one big marketing ploy

ecently, the results of the Uttar Prauesii Ciaca Board exams were released, bringing on forefront the list of top scorers in the State. Leading the pack, among a total of 29,47,311 who appeared for the exams, was 15year-old Prachi Nigam, with an outstanding overall percentage of 98.5%.

However, what caught the attention of social media users was not her academic achievement, but rather the intricate details of her appearance, more particularly, her facial hair. Upon the revelation of her pictures, what followed was a brutal trail of trolls and shaming remarks, with many users sharing their personal, 100% guaranteed grooming tips. Well, to be honest, this reaction, although disheartening, was neither unexpected nor shocking.

The deep-rooted issue of body-shaming

Body-shaming and bullying is neither new, nor nearing to an end, anywhere in the future. We inhabit a society driven by media that historically scrutinizes and dissects every female figure in the public eye. This is the same media that told the Titanic star, Kate Winslet that Jack (Leonardo Di'Caprio) couldn't fit through the door because Rose was too fat.

This is the same media that told Sonakshi Sinha did not have any star quality because her figure didn't appeal to the male gaze. This is the same society that told Prerna Tandon (me) that she couldn't participate in the school assembly because, well, no one would say it to my face, but who would like to look at a fat, shabby women on stage? Tell me honestly, did you really expect something better from us? From this soci-

You might think that things have gotten better with time, that there's better awareness now. But as I sit down to write



embracing all your curves.

edges, flabs, or blemishes. It's

about systematically decon-

structing years of social condi-

tioning that have taught us to

believe we must look a certain

way. It involves flushing out all

the small beliefs we have inter-

nalized through various forms

of media, societal opinions, and

Remember the laughter that

erupted when Joey exclaimed,

beloved show Friends? That

scene, though crafted for

humor, left some viewers re-

treating into themselves, feel-

ing unseen and attacked by a

throwaway line meant as a

joke. It's been over 25 years

since that episode aired, and re-

grettably, not much has

changed. Both Indian and inter-

national media are rife with

similar instances, reinforcing

that the more things change, the

trolling isn't just about chang-

ing how we talk; it's about

transforming how we think. It

requires an overhaul of the cul-

tural norms we perpetuate and

confront the marketing strate-

gies that fuel our insecurities.

Only when we recognize the

profound impact of our words

and images can we begin to cre-

ate an environment where every

individual feels respected and

valued, irrespective of appear-

Ending body shaming and

more they stay the same.

'Some girl ate Monica!" in our

this article, my hand reaches the bottom of my chin in thought, and my fingers stroke against my thick hairs, I can't help but feel disgust. I can't help or resist my urge to rush to the nearest salon to get waxed, or grab the nearest razor to shave off the 'unwanted' hair.

How else could I even consider myself fit to join this race for beauty? How else can I expect people to accept me or take me seriously? This pushes me to confront my own ingrained disgust and the societal pressure to conform to established beauty norms. But I realize that this pressure is not just about aesthetics but about acceptability and respect in society.

Transforming the narrative

We live in a society where something becomes relevant for discussion and awareness among the members only when it serves the marketing interests of big commercial companies. It is particularly ironic and frustrating to see entities that have long capitalized on our insecurities now positioning themselves as champions of mental health and body positivity. The very social media platforms have been breeding grounds for insecurities, setting standards for flawless beauty every single day, are now discussing the harmful effects of trolling.

Body image and self-acceptance are not solely about being comfortable in your own skin,

People have come in support of the young girl today, taking baby steps to challenge the stringent societal constructs. But what now? Do we allow this conversa-

tion to fade away, as soon as all big businesses, commercial entities, radio shows, news channels, etc. have already cashed in on this opportunity? Are we ready to judge people solely based on their expertise and achievements, and not based on their looks? Are we ready to understand the hormonal challenges that young girls struggling with PCOS have to

endure on a daily basis. The road ahead

I personally feel that a balance must be achieved. I do not condone the bullying and trolling, but at the same time, I do not expect you and me to not judge people based off our first impressions. Every individual need personal grooming, its nothing to be ashamed of. Some people need to make more efforts, others do not.

Taking steps to take care of your own body or your appearance, doesn't mean that your academics or other professional commitments need to be put on the backburner. It is easy to say that the choice must lie with the person who is struggling with these challenges but in reality, This cannot be left up to the personal choice of the person because ultimately society and its institutions do not accept such differences.

Let's challenge ourselves and those around us to think before we speak, to understand before we judge, and to love before we shame. Only when we recognize the profound impact of our words and images can we begin to create an environment where every individual feels respected and valued, irrespective of appearance. It's a long road ahead, but it's one worth traveling if we hope to see genuine change in our lifetimes. (Cour-The trollers have trolled, and tesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)

Femicide: Many countries around the world are making the killing of women a specific crime - here's why it's needed

By: Madhumita Pandey

'n 1782, a judge in England gave husbands the right to Luse violence on their wives as long as any implement used was not thicker than their thumb. This standard of measurement led to the coining of the term "rule of thumb".

Society has thankfully made enough progress to find such archaic ideas abhorrent. However, tens of thousands of women continue to be killed every year around the world just for being women.

United Nations data shows that, on average, five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family. Some countries are now passing laws to specifically criminalise femicide — an extreme manifestation of gender-based vio-

The first documented use of the term "femicide" was in an 1801 book by Irish writer John Corry called A Satirical View of London at the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century where it was used to refer to the killing of a woman. The term was brought back in the 1970s by Diana E.H. Russell, a specialist in violence against women, who worked to highlight the magnitude of male violence and discrimination against women.

While no agreed definition of the phenomenon exists, femicide is broadly defined as the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender. This might be as a result of intimate partner violence or killing in the name of "honour", for example

Making a specific law Since the UN adopted resolution 68/191 in 2013, calling for nations to take action against gender-related killing of women and girls, many high-income countries have introduced femi-

In 2022, Cyprus integrated

gender-related killings an aggravating factor when imposing sentences. That same year, femicide was introduced in Malta's criminal code. It can now be considered a motivation of the crime of homicide, and in such cases, the judge can consider the highest form of punishment — life imprisonment.

Croatia is the most recent country to adopt a dedicated femicide law, making it a standalone offence punishable with a prison sentence of ten years or

Latin America and the Caribbean have some of the highest rates of hate killings of girls and women. In response, 18 of the 33 countries in the region have created new legislation classifying femicide as a distinct hate crime.

Costa Rica became the first country to pass a law making femicide a legally defined crime in 2007. A man who murders his wife or partner can be punished with between 20 and 35 years in prison. There are also specific punishments against physical abuse and restriction of movement, in which a partner manipulates a woman to prevent them from leaving.

Laws are not enough A report from Queen Mary University of London used the case study of Mexico to argue that the law alone has not led to the reduction of femicide there. The key findings from this report should certainly act as a crucial resource to not only understand the complexity of femicide as an extreme form of gender-based violence but to increase efforts to better respond

One of the main problems is the misclasification of numbers. In many cases, only gender-related killings perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member are counted as femicides.

This leads to under-reporting and invisibility of femicide that

as a distinct crime and rendered happens as part of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, hate crimes linked to sexual orientation, killing of indigenous women or connections with gangs and other forms of organised crime.

Costa Rica has sought to address this problem by signing into law an extended definition of femicide, which includes femicides perpetuated by those based on a relationship of trust, friendship, authority or power. This is to make it possible to punish crimes against women even if there is no "romantic" relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

Today, Costa Rica has a lower rate of femicide compared with its neighbours, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico.

While the social and political circumstances of countries around the world may differ, there are several lessons in combating femicide that are universal.

The term "feminicide" also carries political connotations. In Latin America it is used to refer to a lack of responsiveness from governments in relation to the killings of women and girls.

The idea of femicide emphasises state culpability and inadequate responses to this gender-based violence. This is particularly noteworthy as the rape and murder of women and girls are commonly used as abominable tools of conflict this has recently been in evidence in Ukraine, for example.

Given that most femicides are perpetrated by current or former husbands or intimate partners, it is of utmost priority to tackle toxic masculinity and to promote gender equality. Clearly, we need to go beyond the legal framework to combat violence against women and girls. It will take advocacy and active participation of community members to create long-term solutions to curtail femicides. (Courtesy:

Empowering women at the grassroots

By: Rajesh Ranjan

The low workforce participation of women and its consistent decline in India is a matter of critical concern. A recent report by the World Bank reveals that the Female labour workforce participation in India has declined since 2005.

force participation in India is limited to just the formal sector. The informal sector in India, such as domestic, care and household work, the work in the unorganised sectors remains an understudied topic. This paper by KREA University shows how the invisibility of scholars has further exacerbated the documentation of the plight of women in the informal sector and this report by the International Labour Organisation further reinforces this claim that the investment in care work is largely male-dominated.

Claudia Goldin, a noted economist, has argued the need to revisit the economic theory to overcome the limitations and challenges of the masculine nature of the discipline of economics. Julie Nelson.

an economist and Professor at the forefront, there is an urgent need University of, Massachusetts, has documented how social meaning associated with gender influences the meaning and theories of economics in the pragmatic sense.

Despite the limitations and challenges, there is an urgent need to invest in women, especially at the micro level.

Article 16 (4) mandates equality of opportunity. Article 39 of the Constitution casts an obligation on the State to secure the right to an adequate means of livelihood. Besides the constitutional mandate, the reasons to invest in women at the grassroots level are manifold. One prominent reason is that when women are skilled at the panchayat level, they not only contribute to the village economy and raise living standards but also act as a trickle-down messenger for the holistic development of other women. For instance, reservation at the Panchayat level through the constitutional amendment brought women to the forefront of the decision-making process. However, at the same time, on the social and economic to invest in the empowerment of women. Very few women at the grassroots level work in the organised sector. A report by the Ministry of Women and Child Development reveals that 95 per cent of women work in the informal sector. Investing in their skills would not only be beneficial for the overall economy but also wil ensure a diverse workplace.

The Gram Panchayat Surpura in Jodhpur, Rajasthan recently established a 'Shilpjeevika Centre'— a Skill Development Centre in Panchayat Bhawan Supura. The skill development centre was conceptualised by the Sarpanch and the Legal Aid and Awareness Committee of National Law University, Jodhpur, a year back to act as a nodal centre for skill and training of the women at the Panchayat level. The Panchayat, in the last two years, have opened a community library and the computer lab in the Panchavat Bhawan with the help of the Legal aid and awareness Committee of National Law University, Jodhpur, which was spearheaded by this author as a convenor of the Committee.

These different centres cater to different needs of the villagers. While the computer lab provides a platform for women and children to learn online skills and fill out online forms, the library is a resource centre for books

The newly initiated skill development centre where women learn vocational skills like soap making. with skills to earn. The Village Panchayat Surpura offers a great example by the Panchayat authorities to empower women at the grassroots level. The government through the National Policy for Empowering Women has also focused on imparting vocational and

technical skills. Empowerment of women at the grassroots level requires multidimensional intervention, not just from the government, but also from the civil society. As we move towards the 100th year of the journey of our nation and the constitution, what B R Ambedkar said should always be our guiding light, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved". (Courtesy: The Quint)

Milk for hair and skin



By: Shahnaz Husain

ilk, a common household item, has been used for many centuries as a natural beauty product. Its benefits for skin have endured the test of time.

Milk consists of nourishing and moisturizing properties. It helps in maintaining the health of your skin. It also helps in treating most of your skin concerns.

It's packed with vitamins A and D, as well as lactic acid. Some of these components are popular skin care additives. Drinking milk can also contribute to healthy, radiant skin.

Milk is considered a miracle drink to control melanin production and to achieve a fair, glowing and flawless complexion. It is one of the most nutrient-rich foods which is packed with proteins, enzymes, vitamins, minerals and lactic acid that works effectively for lighter, blemish and acne-free skin. Milk helps to nourish and soften the skin. It contains many Vitamins and minerals which are very necessary for healthy skin. Milk also contains alpha hydroxy acid, which actually helps to reduce blemishes and has an anti-tan effect on the skin.

Cotton wool soaked in cold milk can be used to wipe the skin to remove tan and soothe the skin. Cold milk applied daily, using cotton wool, not only helps to soothe the skin but also keeps it soft. It also makes the skin colour lighter over a period of time, if used daily. It would suit normal to dry

If you have a sunburn, applying milk to your skin can provide relief. The proteins in milk form a protective layer on the skin, reducing pain and redness associated

Turmeric and Raw Milk Face Pack Take 2 tablespoons of raw

with sunburn

milk and 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder. Apply the mixture on the face and wash it after 15 minutes. Use it twice a week. It will lighten your skin and give radiant look.

Turmeric is known for its anti-inflammatory brightening properties. When combined with the moisturizing effect of raw milk, this face pack becomes a potent solution for reducing blemishes and dark

Take two to three tablespoons of cold raw milk, add half a tablespoon of glycerine into it and mix it up. Apply on the face and lips with a cotton ball, and let it dry for 30 minutes. Wash your face with fresh water. It will result in smooth and glowing skin and your skin will remain moisturised throughout the day.

Milk also contains lactic acid, which nourishes and moisturises the skin and helps to delay the visible signs of ageing. Milk can be added to face packs very easily. However, it suits normal to dry skin more. Soak Lotus flowers in 3 to 4 tablespoons of warm milk for an hour. Crush the flowers with your fingers. Add three teaspoons of gram flour (besan) and mix it with the milk and crushed flowers into a paste.

Apply on the face, avoiding the lips and area around the eyes. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes. Raw milk should be used on the face for beauty care. Boiling the milk destroys several nutrients. For a face pack, add 2/3rd tsp of gram flour to raw milk and mix well. Add very little honey and rose to the mixture. Apply on the face and wash off with water after 10 minutes

It contains different kinds of proteins.

How to apply milk on the Face?

Start with cleansing your skin using a face wash. Dip a cotton ball o into milk and apply it gently to your face. Gently massage the milk into your skin in circular motions. Allow it to sit for 10-15 minutes. Rinse your face with lukewarm water and pat dry.

Milk for hair

Hair is also made up of a protein matter called keratin. Therefore, protein in milk is beneficial for the hair, in terms of adding strength and body. Milk also contains fats, which help to soften and smoothen the hair. It is of particular benefit to dry hair, as well as hair that has been subjected to chemical treatments. Milk also contains vitamins and minerals which are nourishing for the hair. Many of them are powerful antioxidants and nourish the hair follicles.

Milk can be applied on the hair to nourish and soften it and also to give it a healthy lustre. If the hair has been subjected to sun-damage, applying milk would help to nourish, soften and restore health to it. After your shampoo, rinse the hair with milk and leave on for 5 minutes. Then rinse off with plain water. It would help to add body and shine to the hair.

For extremely dry hair, add a little milk to egg yolk and apply on the hair half an hour before shampoo. This is a wonderful nourishing treatment for dry hair. The hair looks soft, smooth and A pre-shampoo treatment

can also be done with a hair pack containing powdered milk. Add a little water to make a thick paste. Apply it on the hair. Then dip a towel in hot water, squeeze out the water and wrap the hot towel around the head, like a turban. Keep it on for 5 minutes. Repeat the hot towel wrap 3 or 4 times. This helps the hair and scalp absorb the pack bet. (The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India)

WHO asks for data on abuse against older women and women with disabilities

By: Naureen Hossain

lder women and women with disabilities experience abuse that is unique to their demographics, yet they are underrepresented in national and global databases, according to findings shared by the World Health Organization (WHO).

On Wednesday, WHO and UN-Women released two new briefs, the first in a series that will discuss neglected forms of violence, including gender-based violence. The two briefs, titled measuring violence against older women and measuring violence against women with disability, investigate the types of violence that these groups face through the data available. Through reviewing existing studies into violence against women, the research team was able to synthesize the information available on this topic and its scope across different coun-

As was noted by Dr. Lynnmarie Sardinha, Technical Officer at WHO and the UN Special Programme on Human Reproduction (HRP) for Violence against Women Data and Measurement, and author of the briefs. The limited data on older women and women with disabilities undermines the ability of programmes to meet their needs.

'Understanding how diverse women and girls are differently affected, and if and how they are accessing services, is critical to ending violence in all its forms.'

One in three women is affected by genderbased violence in these forms. For older women—aged 60 years and over—and women

with disabilities, they are also subjected to other forms of abuse and neglect, usually at the hands of caregivers, family members, or healthcare institutions such as nursing homes. Examples of this include controlling behaviors such as withholding medicine and assistive devices, and financial abuse. Though these forms of neglect and abuse have been observed, the studies that the briefs reviewed seemed to focus more on intimate partner violence through physical and sexual abuse. The briefs acknowledge, however, that violence against women should not only be exemplified by intimate partner violence. The prevalence of this example hints at further nuances that are not sufficiently captured in the studies due to their limitations.

Violence against older women can manifest in other ways as they and their partners/perpetrators age. Although women aged 15-49 are at higher risk of intimate partner and sexual violence, older women are still likely to experience it, and this can shift towards other forms of abuse, such as neglect, economic abuse, and psychological abuse.

The brief on older women reveals, however, that there is limited data to definitively state its prevalence. This is particularly the case for low- and middle-income countries; the data that was compiled for this brief comes largely from high-income countries, a gap that the reports are aware of. Older women are represented in only ten percent of the data on violence against women.

Only 6 percent of the studies reviewed for women with disabilities included measures of

violence specific to this group. The lack of questions specific to this demographic indicates that they are, perhaps unconsciously, unaccounted for when measuring the scale of violence against women. Data collection procedures may not be designed to accommodate women with disabilities or prevent them from self-reporting, such as deaf or hard-of-hearing women who are unable to participate in surveys conducted through the telephone. The briefs also suggest that women who live

with lifelong disrespect and neglect may not recognize the specific forms of violence, which could account for fewer instances being reported. This could also apply to older women, where surveying and reporting mechanisms are geared towards women of reproductive age, especially in low- and middle-income countries. This may also speak of socio-cultural atti-

tudes towards violence against older women that are steeped in ageism, harmful stereotypes, and discriminatory cultural norms that prevent them from sharing their experiences.

The WHO briefs make several recommendations to address the evidence gaps. Among them are extending the age limit for survey participation and incorporating questions that relate to different types of violence. Data collection should also account for cultural-specific contexts of violence and abuse across different countries. Women with disabilities should be consulted in research at every stage when designing surveys targeted at them, which will allow for a broader spectrum of disabilities to be accounted for. (Courtesy: The

Palestinians mark 76 years of dispossession as a potentially even larger catastrophe unfolds in Gaza

JERUSALEM, May 14: Palestinians on Wednesday will mark the 76th year of their mass expulsion from what is now Israel, an event that is at the core of their national struggle. But in many ways, that experience pales in comparison to the calamity now unfolding in Gaza.

Palestinians refer to it as the "Nakba," Arabic for "catastrophe." Some 700,000 Palestinians — a majority of the prewar population — fled or were driven from their homes before and during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war that followed Israel's establishment. After the war, Israel refused to allow them to return because it would have resulted in a Palestinian majority within its borders. Instead, they became a seemingly permanent refugee community that now numbers some 6 million, with most living in slum-like urban refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

In Gaza, the refugees and their descendants make up around three-quarters of the population. Israel's rejection of what Palestinians say is their right of return has been a core grievance in the conflict and was one of the thorniest issues in peace talks that last collapsed 15 years ago. The refugee camps have always been the main bastions of Palestinian militancy.

Now, many Palestinians fear a repeat of their painful history on an even more cataclysmic scale.

All across Gaza, Palestinians in recent days have been loading up cars and donkey carts or setting out on foot to already overcrowded tent camps as Israel expands its offensive. The images from several rounds of mass evacuations throughout the seven-month war are strikingly similar to black-and-white photographs from 1948. Mustafa al-Gazzar, now 81, still recalls his family's months-long flight from their village in what is now central Israel to the southern city of Rafah, when he was 5. At one point they were bombed from the air, at another, they dug holes under a tree to sleep in for warmth.

Al-Gazzar, now a great-grandfather, was forced to flee again over the weekend, this time to a tent in Muwasi, a barren coastal area where some 450,000 Palestinians live in a squalid camp. He says the conditions are worse than in 1948, when the UN agency for Palestinian refugees was able to regularly provide food and other essentials.

"My hope in 1948 was to return, but my hope today is to survive," he said. "I

State Antony Blinken said on Tues-

day that American military aid on

its way to Ukraine will make a

"real difference" on the battlefield, as the top diplomat made an unan-

nounced visit to reassure an ally

facing a fierce new Russian offen-

In increasingly intense attacks

Analysts have called this mo-

ment one of the most dangerous for

Ukraine since Russia's full-scale

invasion in February 2022 - and

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

asked Tuesday for more air defence

systems to protect civilians under

time." Blinken said in the Ukrain-

ian capital where he met with Ze-

"We know this is a challenging

Russian fire in the northeast.

live in such fear," he added, breaking into tears. "I cannot provide for my children and grandchildren.'

The war in Gaza, which was triggered by Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel. has killed over 35,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, making it by far the deadliest round of fighting in the history of the conflict. The initial Hamas attack killed some 1,200 Israelis.

The war has forced some 1.7 million Palestinians — around three quarters of the territory's population — to flee their homes, often multiple times. That is well over twice the number that fled before and during the 1948 war.

Israel has sealed its border. Egypt has only allowed a small number of Palestinians to leave, in part because it fears a The international community

strongly opposed to any mass expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza — an idea embraced by far-right members of the Israeli government, who refer to it as "voluntary emigration.

Israel has long called for the refugees of 1948 to be absorbed into host countries, saying that calls for their return are unrealistic and would endanger its existence as a Jewish-majority state. It points to the hundreds of thousands of Jews who came to Israel from Arab countries during the turmoil following its establishment, though few of them want to return.

Even if Palestinians are not expelled from Gaza en masse, many fear that they will never be able to return to their homes

ritory will make it impossible to live there. A recent UN estimate said it would take until 2040 to rebuild destroyed homes. The Jewish militias in the 1948 war with the armies of neighbouring Arab nations were mainly armed with lighter weapons like rifles, machine guns and mortars. Hundreds of depopulated Palestinian villages were demolished after the war, while Israelis moved into Palestinian homes in Jerusalem, Jaffa and other cities.

In Gaza, Israel has unleashed one of the deadliest and most destructive military campaigns in recent history, at times dropping 2,000-pound (900-kilogram) bombs on dense, residential areas. Entire neighbourhoods have been reduced to wastelands of rubble and plowed-up roads, many littered with unexploded

Xi's visit to Hungary and Serbia brings new Chinese investment and deeper ties to Europe's doorstep



BUDAPEST (HUNGARY), May 14: When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Hungary last week, he arrived to one of the few places in the European Union where his country is considered an indispensable ally rather than a

By the time he left on Friday, he'd secured deals that provide fertile ground for China's plans of economic expansion in Europe.

After meeting with nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Thursday, the leaders addressed a small group of select media in Hungary's capital, Budapest, announcing the formation of an "allweather partnership" that would usher in a new era of economic cooperation.

As most EU countries make efforts to "de-risk" their economies from perceived threats posed by China, Hungary has gone in the other direction, courting major Chinese investments in the belief that the world's second-largest economy is essential for Europe's

While Xi and Orban didn't unveil concrete agreements following their meeting, Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto later said in a video that a deal had been reached on a oint Hungarian-Chinese railway bypass around Budapest, as well as a high-speed train link between the capital and its international airport.

The two countries also agreed to expand their cooperation to the "whole spectrum" of the nuclear industry, Orbán said, and deals were reached on China helping Hungary build out its network of electric vehicle charging stations and on construction of an oil pipeline between Hungary and

Zsuzsanna Vegh, a program assistant at the German Marshall Fund and visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said those deals were "a clear signal that China sees Hungary as a key and reliable ally" in the EU as it seeks to reverse Europe's toughening de-risking pol-

ment, shows that Hungary's government "remains indifferent to its allies' concerns and will continue to strengthen its bilateral ties with China in order to position itself favourably in what it perceives as

Pursuing a similar strategy is Serbia, Hungary's neighbour to the south, which has also provided wide opportunities for Chinese companies to exploit its natural resources and carry out large infrastructure projects.

of autocratic governance that eschews the pluralism valued in more traditional Western democracies — making both countries attractive to China as opaque direct deals help to eliminate red tape.

week, he and Vucic signed an agreement to build a "shared future", making the Balkan country the first in Europe to agree on such a document with Beijing.

searcher at the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, said that Xi's interest in Serbia reflects his strategy of appealing to countries that are less committed to a US-led economic and political community

along the northeastern border in re-

cent days, Moscow's troops have captured around 100 to 125 square kilometres (about 40 to 50 square miles) of territory that includes at least seven villages, according to open source monitoring analysts. Though most of those villages were Xi's visit, Vegh wrote in a statealready depopulated, thousands of civilians in the area have fled the

a developing multipolar world".

Like Orban, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has built a form

During Xi's visit to Serbia last

Vuk Vuksanovic, a senior re-

Xi's "shared future" agreement with Belgrade, Vuksanovic said, promotes "China's vision of the international order, the one where China is much more powerful, the one where the Western powers, primarily the US, no longer have the ability to dictate the agenda to others". China has poured billions of dollars into Serbia in investment and loans, particularly in mining and infrastructure. The two countries signed an agreement on a strategic partnership in 2016 and a free trade agreement last year. (AP) KYIV, May 14: US Secretary of lenskyy. But he added that American military aid is "going to make a real difference against the ongoing Russian aggression on the bat-

> The visit comes less than a month after Congress approved a long-delayed foreign assistance package that sets aside USD 60 billion in aid for Ukraine, much of which will go toward replenishing badly depleted artillery and air defence systems. Some of that "is now on the way," Blinken said, and some has already arrived in Ukraine.

> Moscow's renewed offensive in the northeastern region of Kharkiv is the most significant border incursion since the early days of the war. More than 7,500 civilians have been evacuated from the area, according to authorities. The Kremlin's forces are now expanding their push to the northern border regions of Sumy and Chernihiv, Ukrainian officials say, and repeated shelling and sabotage raids there are further stretching Kyiv's resources.

Zelenskyy thanked Blinken for the aid — but added that more is necessary, including two Patriot air



defence systems that are urgently needed to protect Kharkiv.

Zelenskyy lauded the 'crucial' US aid, and thanked Washington for bipartisan support

Blinken says US arms will make a difference in

Ukraine as Zelenskyy asks for more air defences

"The people are under attack: civilians, warriors, everybody. They're under Russian missiles," he said

Artillery, air defence interceptors and long-range ballistic missiles have already been delivered, some of them already to the front lines, said a senior US official travelling with the secretary on an overnight train from Poland who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity ahead of Blinken's meetings.

On his fourth trip to Kyiv since Russian troops rolled over the border, Blinken's goal is to underscore the Biden administration's commitlong-term security, US officials said. They noted that since President Joe Biden signed the aid package late last month, the administration has already announced USD 1.4 billion in shortterm military assistance and USD 6 billion in longer-term support.

In a statement released after Blinken's arrival, the State Department said he would hold talks with Zelenskyy and other top Ukrainian officials "to discuss battlefield updates, the impact of new US security and economic assistance, long-term security and other commitments, and ongoing work to bolster Ukraine's economic recov-

Delays in US assistance, partic-

ularly since the Israel-Hamas war began and has preoccupied top administration officials, triggered deep concerns in Kyiv and Europe. Blinken, for example, has visited the Middle East seven times since the Gaza conflict began in October. His last trip to Kyiv was in Septem-

The US official added that Blinken also would give a speech later Tuesday extolling Ukraine's "strategic successes" in the war. It is intended to complement a Blinken address last year in Helsinki, Finland, deriding Russian President Vladimir Putin for Moscow's strategic failures in launching the war.

Since the Helsinki speech, however, Russia has intensified its attacks, most noticeably as the U.S. House of Representatives sat on the aid package for months without action, forcing a suspension in the provision of most US assistance. Those attacks have increased in recent weeks as Russia has sought to take advantage of Ukrainian shortages in manpower and weapons while the new assistance is in tran-

EU agrees on a new migration pact; Mainstream parties hope it will deprive the far right of votes

BRUSSELS, May 14: European Union nations endorsed on Tuesday sweeping reforms to the bloc's moribund asylum system as campaigning heats up for Europe-wide elections next month, with migration expected to be an important

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum was officially approved by the 27-nation EU's economy ministers, ending more than eight years of work to rewrite the rulebook for handling people who enter Europe without authorisation.

EU government ministers approved 10 legislative sections that are part of the pact, running to more than 1,500 pages of legal text. Hungary and Poland, which have long opposed any obligation for countries to host migrants or pay for their upkeep, voted against the package.

The new rules lay out the guidelines for screening

people to establish whether they qualify for some kind of protection, like asylum, or deporting them if they're not allowed to stay.

Mainstream political parties believe the pact provides answers to questions that have divided nations since well over 1 million migrants swept into Europe in 2015, most fleeing war in Syria and Iraq. They hope the reforms will starve the far right of vote-winning oxygen in the June 6-9 elections.

However, the vast legislative package will only enter no immediate fix to an issue that has fuelled one of the EU's biggest political crises as nations bicker over who should take responsibility for migrants when they arrive and whether other coun-

tries are obligated to help. Critics say the pact will let nations detain migrants at borders and fingerprint children. They say it's aimed at keeping people out and infringes on their right to claim asylum. Many fear it will result in more dubious political deals with poorer countries that people leave or cross to get to Europe.

force in 2026, so it provides

Indonesian rescuers search through rivers and rubble after flash floods that killed 50

TANAH DATAR, May 14: Rescuers on Tuesday searched in rivers and the rubble of devastated villages for bodies, and whenever possible, survivors of flash floods that hit Indonesia's Sumatra Island over the weekend. Monsoon rains and a landslide of mud and

cold lava from Mount Marapi caused rivers to breach their banks. The deluge tore through mountainside villages in four districts in West Sumatra province just before midnight Satur-

The floods swept away people and 79 homes and submerged hundreds of houses and buildings, forcing more than 3,300 residents to flee to temporary government shelters, National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said. Muhari said 50 bodies had been pulled from

mud and rivers by Tuesday, mostly in worst-hit Agam and Tanah Datar districts, while rescuers are searching for 27 people who are reportedly Television reports showed rescue personnel

using jackhammers, circular saws, farm tools and sometimes their bare hands, digging desperately in Agam district where roads were transformed into murky brown rivers and villages covered by thick mud, rocks, and up-

Scores of rescue personnel were searching through a river around the Anai Valley Waterfall area in Tanah Datar district where tons of mud, rocks and trees were left from flash

state visit to China this week BEIJING, May 14: Russian President Russia in opposition to the West. The sides

Russian president Putin to make a

Vladimir Putin will make a two-day state visit to China this week, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday, in the latest show of unity between the two authoritarian allies against the US-led Western liberal

Putin will meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping during his visit starting on Thursday, the ministry said, saying the two leaders would discuss "cooperation in various fields of bilateral relations ... as well as international and regional issues of common concern". No details were mentioned.

The Kremlin in a statement confirmed the trip and said Putin was going on Xi's invitation. It said that this will be Putin's first foreign trip since he was sworn in as president and began his fifth term in office.

China has backed Russia politically in the conflict in Ukraine and has continued to export machine tools, electronics and other items seen as contributing to the Russian war effort, without actually exporting weaponry.

China is also a major export market for energy supplies that keep the Kremlin's coffers full. China has sought to project itself as a neutral party in the conflict, but has declared a "no limits" relationship with

have also held a series of joint military drills and China has consistently opposed economic sanctions against Russia in response to its now two-year-old campaign of conquest against Ukraine.

The two continent-sized authoritarian states are increasingly in dispute with democracies and NATO while seeking to gain influence in Africa, the Middle East and South America. Putin's visit comes just days ahead of

Monday's inauguration of William Lai Ching-te as the next president of Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy that China claims as its own territory and threatens to annex by force if necessary.

Xi returned last week from a five-day visit to Europe, including stops in Hungary and Serbia, countries viewed as close to Russia. The trip, Xi's first to the continent in five years, was seen as an attempt to increase China's influence and drive a wedge between the EU and NATO on one side, and a yet-to-be-defined bloc of authoritarian nations on the other underpinned by Chinese economic influence that has been wavering amid a housing crisis and dramatically slower domestic economic growth.

Army whistleblower who exposed alleged Australian war crimes in Afghanistan is sentenced to prison

MELBOURNE, May 14: An Australian judge sentenced a former army lawyer to almost six years in prison on Tuesday for leaking to the media classified information that exposed allegations of Australian war crimes in Afghanistan.

David McBride, 60, was sentenced in a court in the capital, Canberra, to five years and eight months in prison after pleading guilty to three charges including theft and sharing with members

of the press documents classified as secret. He had faced a potential life sentence. Justice David Mossop

ordered McBride to serve 27 months in prison before he can be considered for release on parole.

Rights advocates argue that McBride's conviction and sentencing before any al-

leged war criminal he helped expose reflected a lack of whistleblower protections in Australia.

McBride's lawyer Mark Davis said he planned to file an appeal against the severity of the sentence.

McBride addressed his supporters as he walked his dog to the front door of the Australian Capital Territory Supreme Court to be sentenced.

"I've never been so proud to be an Australian as today. I may have broken the law, but I did not break my oath to the people of Australia and the soldiers that keep us safe," McBride told the cheering crowd. McBride's documents formed the basis of an Australian Broadcasting Corp. seven-part television series in 2017 that contained war crime allegations, including

Australian Special Air Service Regiment soldiers killing unarmed Afghan men and children in 2013.

Police raided the ABC's Sydney headquarters in 2019 in search of evidence of a leak. but decided against charging the two reporters responsible for

the investigation. In sentencing, Mossop said he did not accept McBride's explanation that he thought a court would vindicate him for acting in the public interest.

McBride's argument that his suspicions that the higher echelons of the Australian Defence Force were engaged in criminal activity obliged him to disclose classified papers "didn't reflect reality," Mossop said. (AP)

Ex-Indian Army officer with UN killed in Gaza, first international casualty since Israel-Hamas conflict

UNITED NATIONS, May 14: A former Indian Army officer working with the United Nations was killed in Gaza when the vehicle he was travelling in came under attack in strife-torn Rafah, becoming the "first international casualty" for the world body since the Israel-Hamas conflict started last year.

The United Nations has called for a full investigation while Israel has ordered a separate investigation into the

Col Waibhav Anil Kale, 46, who took premature retirement from the Indian Army in 2022, joined the UN as a Security Coordination Officer in the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS) two months ago, officials in New Delhi said on Tuesday.

Kale, who had served with the 11 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles, was travelling along with another DSS staffer to the European Hospital in Rafah when their UN vehicle was struck on Monday morning. The other person, not identified, was seriously injured.

According to Kale's LinkedIn profile, he had joined the Indian Army in April 2004 and had also served as Contingent Chief Security Officer with the United Nations between 2009 and 2010. He did his B.A. from the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and had degrees in Behavioral



Science and International Humanitarian Law and had studied at, among other institutions, the Indian Institute of Management at Lucknow and Indore. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "deeply saddened to learn of the death of a United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS) staff member and injury to another DSS staffer."

A statement by Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said that Guterres condemned all attacks on UN personnel and called for a full investigation. Guterres sent his condolences to the family of the fallen staff member.

"With the conflict in Gaza continuing to take a heavy toll – not only on civilians but also on humanitarian workers - the Secretary-General reiterates his urgent appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and for the release of all hostages," the state-

In a post on X, Guterres said the UN vehicle was struck in Gaza, "killing one of our colleagues & injuring another" and said, more than 190 UN staff have been killed in Gaza.

Responding to questions on the incident during a press briefing, Haq said at this point, "We are in the process of informing the relevant governments and the relevant family members.

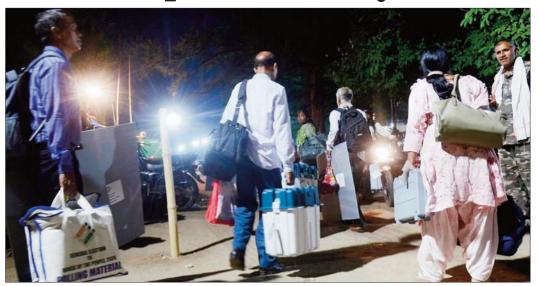
He added that they were "international staff" and confirmed that "this is, in fact, the first international UN casualty." While there have been international casualties involving workers for the World Central Kitchen in Gaza, Haq said that "of UN staff, I believe I've not been previously aware of an international casualty.'

Hag added that the vehicle was headed to the hospital "as part of their regular work. They go to different locations to assess security conditions. And this was the European hospital in Rafah." When asked for details about how their vehicle was struck, Hag said "We're still accumulating details. We expect to get reports, including from the relevant authorities."

He added that close to 190 UN personnel have been killed in Gaza since October 7, "most of them national staff of the UN Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA." (PTI)

Poll panel has set the target of publishing the final electoral roll for panchayat elections by mid-June

Panchayat polls likely to be held in Tripura in July end: Official



AGARTALA, May 14: The Tripura State Election Commission (TSEC) has initiated the process to conduct three-tier panchayat elections which are likely to be held in the northeastern state in

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July end, an official said TSEC has already completed the delimitation of wards and pan-

chayats as per the rules.

the electoral rolls for the three-tier panchayat elections to gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads. We are trying to "The TSEC has initiated steps to complete the process at the earli-

The northeastern state has 591 gram panchayats (6,111 seats), 116 panchayat samitis (419 seats) and eight zilla parishads (116 seats).

Chowdhury said the poll panel has set the target of publishing the final electoral roll for panchayat elections by mid-June.

"Once the final electoral roll with booths are finalised, we will recommend the state government to conduct elections. It is up to the government to make a decision on when the election will be held. We are expecting the three-tier elections to be held in July end," he said.

In the last panchayat elections held on July 27, 2019, the ruling BJP had won more than 95 per cent of the seats in gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads, of which 86 per cent were unopposed.

Chowdhury said if the elections take place in the last part of July, the model code of conduct will come into effect by June end. (PTI)

Preparation commences for Naga Plebiscite Day

DIMAPUR, May 14: Preparations are in full swing at various venues by various organisations to commemorate Naga Plebiscite Day on May 16.

Naga National Council (NNC), Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), NSCN-IM are among the prominent organisations preparing to commemorate

FNR organised Naga Plebiscite Day will be held at NBCC Convention Centre in Kohima. FNR has invited several Naga organisations and prominent leaders to participate in the programme.

Meanwhile, NSCN-IM said it will organise the mega event at 'General Headquarters Church of Naga Army, Hebron Camp off Dimapur. According to the NSCN-IM programme, the event has been christened as "Commemoration of Naga Plebiscite 1951".

Naga Army chief, Gen. Ningkhan Shimray will give the welcome address on the occasion, while presidential speech will be delivered by NSCN-IM vice chairman Tongmeth Wangnao.

Deputy ato kilonser (deputy prime minister) Gen. VS Atem, secretary general of Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR) Neingulo Krome, general secretary of Naga Hoho (NH) Atoho Kiho, president of Naga Students' Federation (NSF) Medovi Rhi, vice president of Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) Apeuna Iheilung, convenor of Gobal Naga Forum (GNF) Chuba Ozukum, president of United Naga Council (UNC) Ng Lorho, president of Tirap Changlang Longding People's Front (Arunachal Pradesh) Ngungtim Changmi, president of ENPO Tsapiliu Sangtam and representative of Naga People's Organisation (Myanmar) Michael Kyarlynn will also deliver speeches on the occasion



at Camp Hebron.

NSCN-IM has reiterated that 'Naga Plebiscite Day' will be commemorated on May 16, and that "the political significance of Naga Plebiscite Day of May 16, 1951, had been bolstered by the Amsterdam Joint Communiqué of July 11, 2002, regarding recognition of the unique history and situation of the Naga people and Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015 demonstrating that Nagalim was never a part of the Indian Union or Myanmar either by consent or con-

Secondly, the NSCN-IM said the Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015, was signed based on the principle of sovereignty. "Since sovereignty constitutes the identity of a nation, the sovereign Nagalim national flag and the sovereign Nagalim national constitution are duly recognized and acknowledged in the

letter and spirit of Framework Agreement," it added. NSCN-IM also said that it is "our bounden duty' towards our Naga nation to be steadfast in "our commitment" and uphold the sanctity of the Naga na-

KHADC to come with a tribal clans list

SHILLONG, May 14: The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) has decided to soon come up with a list of tribal clans within the council's jurisdiction.

Speaking to reporters recently, KHADC deputy chief executive member, PN Syiem said that the decision was taken at a meeting convened by the KHADC with the members of the different clans and traditional heads following a lot of debate on the Scheduled Tribe issue and the role of the tribal clans.

"We have decided to come up with a list of all tribal clans within the council's jurisdiction and accordingly we have requested the different clans to send their details to the council so that their respective clans can be included in the said list," Syiem said.

He said the meeting had also discussed the need to find out if there are clans which are forgotten or not existing any more before publishing the final list of tribal clans within the council's jurisdiction.

Sviem said that the objective is to streamline the clan administration in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills region.

"After taking the views and suggestions, we feel that there is a need to have a list of tribal clans under the council's jurisdiction so that the issuance of certificate will be done

in a proper manner," he added. He said that the council will again convene a meeting on the matter to get all tribal clans on board. In regards to the definition of who is a Khasi, the deputy CEM said, "We have discussed that the matter has to be as per KHAD (Khasi Social Custom of Lineage) Act, 1997. However, we still have to discuss the issue as has been expressed by the majority of the stakeholders before taking decision

on the matter. Leader of Opposition, Titosstarwell Chyne said that the council is happy to note that members of different clans and traditional heads are supporting the Lineage Act as well as the recent notification issued by the social welfare department in regards to the ST certificate issue. He also urged that all clans should submit their full details in order for the council to come up with the said list of tribal clans in the Khasi Hills region of the state. (NNN)

Mizoram class 10 results announced, pass percentage 73.37

AIZAWL, May 14: Boys outshone girls in Mizoram's class 10 board examination, the results of which were announced on Tuesday. Of the 18,561 students who appeared in the class 10 or High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination, 73.37 per cent have cleared the test, the Mizoram Board of School Education announced on Tuesday.

The pass percentage of boys was 74.38 per cent while that of girls was 72.48 per cent. The class-10 board examination was held between February and March this year. Lalmoipuialawmzual of St Paul Higher Secondary School in Aizawl topped the merit list securing 485 marks out of 500. Vanlalmuanpuii and H Lalsangpuia, both also from St Paul Higher Secondary School stood second and third respectively. While Vanlalmuanpuii secured 480 marks, Lalsangpuia got

478 marks out of 500. Of the total 18,561 candidates, who appeared in the examination, 1,332 students passed with distinction, 3,801 in the first division, 5.564 in the second division and 2,921 in the third division. (PTI)

200 refugees from Myanmar's Chin and Bangladesh's Chittagong enter Mizoram

GUWAHATI, May 14: More than 200 refugees from Myanmar's Chin state and Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts entered south Mizoram Lawngtlai district bordering Bangladesh and Myanmar, an official said.

At least 127 people belonging to the Bawm tribe, one of the ethnic Mizo tribes, from Bangladesh, entered Chamdur 'P' village in Lawngtlai district last week raising the total number of Bangladeshi refugees taking shelter in Mizoram to 1,368, the official said.

About 1,241 Kuki-chin people from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts have already taken refuge in Lawngtlai

They began entering Mizoram in November 2022 due to a military offensive by the Bangladeshi army against the Kuki-Chin National Army (KNA), an ethnic insurgent group fighting for a separate state

The official also said that about 95 refugees from Myanmar's Chin state also fled to Lawngtlai and Khawzawl districts between April 30 and the first week of May.

The Myanmar nationals reportedly fled their homes fearing forced conscription by the Arakan Army militant group, the largest ethnic armed organisation in the neighbouring country, he

District administrations have been making arrangements for immediate relief and humanitarian assistance for the newly arrived refugees, he said.



ment, a total of 34,346 Myanmar nationals, including 13,302 children, have taken shelter in Mizoram spreading across all the 11 districts as of May 4. Of the 21,044 adults, 10,097 are males and 10,947 are females, it said.

7,901 Myanmar refugees are staying outside relief camps by joining relatives or friends as well as staying in rented houses, while 16,445 people live in 149 relief camps across seven districts, it

East Mizoram's Champhai district hosted the highest number of Myanmar refugees at 14,499 followed by south Mizoram's Siaha district (6,044) and Lawngtlai district (5,922), it said. The Chin people from Myanmar have

nities from Manipur have also been taking shelter in different parts of Mizoram following ethnic violence in the neighbouring state since May last year, offi-

February 2021 after the military junta

seized power in the neighbouring coun-

Bangladesh, over 8,000 Kuki commu-

Besides refugees from Myanmar and

The Chins, Kukis and Kuki-Chin people share ethnic ties with the Mizos. Earlier, chief minister Lalduhoma had said that his government would

continue to provide relief to the Myanmar and Bangladeshi refugees and internally displaced people from Manipur

'Bulletproof Business Accelerator' concludes in Kohima

KOHIMA, May 14: Nikhil V Kumar, a business growth expert, mentor and founder of Bulletproof Teams, recently conducted a workshop titled "Bulletproof Business Accelerator" at Kohima on May 10, 2024, an official statement said recently organised by StartUp Nagaland under Department of Industries & Commerce, the workshop aimed to equip entrepreneurs with essential skills and strategies for business growth and sustainabil-

The event was graced by director, department of industries & commerce, Tokugha Achumi during the inaugural session. In his welcome address, he commended the entrepreneurial spirit of the younger generation in Nagaland and emphasized the importance of mentorship in fostering entrepreneurship. He highlighted the significance of initiatives like the "Bulletproof Business Accelerator" workshop in providing guidance and support to as-

The statement also said the full-day master class covered a range of topics essential for entrepreneurs, including the journey of Entrepreneurship and Leadership, Mastering Time Management, creating Support Structures for Entrepreneurs, and Scaling Business to the

Nikhil's engaging sessions provided participants with practical insights, strategies, and networking opportunities to propel their entrepreneurial journey forward. Attendees also had the chance to engage in a Q & A session, gaining further clarity and guidance from Coach. Marking a significant milestone in empowering entrepreneurs in Nagaland, fostering economic prosperity and innovation in the region. StartUp Nagaland remains committed to nurturing a supportive ecosystem for startups, facilitating initiatives that enable entrepreneurial success.

Nikhil also had a Business & Networking Brunch on May 9, where he engaged with State Empanelled Incubators at The Heritage, Old DC Bungalow. This pre-session provided a valuable platform for incubators to interact with Nikhil, exchange ideas, and gain insights into the startup ecosystem in Nagaland, the official statement added. (NNN)

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POST	VACANCIES	QUALIFICATION
Clerk/ PRT (Computer)	01	 (i) Graduate or 1 year experience in a clerical work /minimum 1 year in Computer Diploma. (ii) Typing with minimum speed of 40 WPM. (iii) Knowledge of Computer MS Office (speed 8000 key depression per hour).
PT Teacher	01	 (i) Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed) Four Years Degree Course
		One Year B.P.Ed Diploma

Candidates who are willing to work in Assam Rifles Public School (High), Diphu only to apply. Application with mobile number of the candidates and copy of Aadhar card must be submitted by hand on or before 21th May 2024 at the following address:-

Assam Rifles Public School (High), Diphu ARTC&S Karbi Anglong Assam PIN: 782460

2. For any queries, please contact 9394601209/ 7974155228/ 9954833515 (School NCO) or email at principalarhighschooldiphu@gmail.com.

All expenses will be borne by the candidates themselves. Pay and perks will be as per prevailing scales in comparable

Note: All candidates are required to carry PAN Card / UID or any other valid Identity Card & original certificate for educational qualification.

Militant serving life imprisonment escapes from Tripura's central jail

AGARTALA, May 14: A member of the banned NLFT, who was serving life imprisonment in a murder case, escaped from the central jail in Tripura's Sepahijala district, an official said on Tuesday. The disappearance of Swarna Kumar Tripura of the outlawed outfit from the central jail came to light this morning during the roll call of inmates by the authorities concerned, Sepahijala District Magistrate Nagesh Kumar said.

"The militant was sentenced to life imprisonment after he was found guilty in a murder case in South Tripura's Santirbazar area and was lodged in the central jail. All the police stations were alerted after the incident. A massive search operation is underway to arrest the convict," he said. The militant had escaped twice from the central jail in 2016 and Kanchanpur sub-jail in 2022.

Sepahijala Superintendent of Police Bogati J. Reddy visited the central jail to take stock of the situation after the incident. An inquiry has been initiated to find out how the prisoner escaped from the high-security jail premises, he said, adding

the CCTV footage is also being checked. A senior police officer said it appears that the convict escaped from the jail premises during the wee hours of

E-challan will also be generated automatically as per Central Motor Vehicle Act 1980 Sikkim transport dept to use AI Algorithms for traffic management

Sikkim Transport Department has decided to introduce 'Artificial intelligence driven traffic management system' in the Himalayan state from May 25, an official said on Tuesday.

The new system powered by advanced artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms is designed to automatically detect the validity of documents such as insurance, tax, fitness, pollution under control (PUC) and permit along with traffic violations such as speeding, jumping signals, improper lane, usage etc, Transport Commissioner-cum Secretary Raj Yadav said.

The e-challan will also be generated automatically as per Central Motor Vehicle Act 1980 by the new trans-



All vehicle owners (in-

cluding government vehi-

cles) are required to keep all their vehicle documents upto date as any discrepancies will lead to the issuance of

an e-challan which will be resolved at the level of the concerned SP/ RTO of the district, Yadav said. (PTI)

8 THE HILLS TIMES

Govt extends ban imposed on LTTE for 5 years



NEW DELHI, May 14: The Centre on Tuesday extended the ban imposed on the LTTE by five more years for fostering a separatist tendency amongst the masses and enhancing the support base for it in the country, particularly in Tamil Nadu, besides threatening the territorial integrity of India.

The Union Home Ministry imposed the ban invoking the sub-sections (1) and (3) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

In a notification, the home ministry noted that the LTTE is an association based in Sri Lanka but has supporters, sympathisers and agents in the territory of India. The central government is of the opinion that the LTTE is still indulging in activities which are prejudicial to the integrity and security of the country.

It said that even after its military defeat in May, 2009 in Sri Lanka, the LTTE has not abandoned the concept of 'Eelam' (an independent country for Tamils) and has been clandestinely working towards the 'Eelam' cause by undertaking fund raising and propaganda activities and the remnant LTTE leaders or cadres have also initiated efforts to regroup the scattered activists and resurrect the outfit locally and internationally.

"The pro-LTTE groups/elements continue to foster a separatist tendency amongst the masses and enhance the support base for LTTE in India and particularly in Tamil Nadu, which will ultimately have a strong disintegrating influence over the territorial integrity of India," the notification said.

The home ministry said the group's objective for a

separate homeland (Tamil Eelam) for all Tamils threatens the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, and amounts to cession and secession of a part of the territory of India from the Union and thus falls within the ambit of unlawful activities.

LTTE sympathisers living abroad continue to spread anti-India propaganda among Tamils holding India responsible for the defeat of the LTTE, which, if not checked, is likely to develop a sense of hate among Tamil populace towards the central government and the Indian Constitution, it said.

Despite the ban, the activities of pro-LTTE organisations and individuals have come to notice and, attempts have been made by these forces to extend their support to the LTTE, the ministry said.

LTTE leaders, operatives and supporters have been inimically opposed to India's policy on their organisation and action of the state machinery in curbing their activities, the notification said.

Cases have been registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967, against LTTE, pro-LTTE groups or elements since the last ban on the group five years ago and that indicate that LTTE and its remnant cadres, followers and supporters are involved in various criminal activities, including smuggling of illegal drugs, arms for furtherance of objective of the outfit. The activities of the LTTE continue to pose a threat to, and are detrimental to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India as also to the public order and, it should be declared as an unlawful association, the home ministry said.

As the LTTE continues with its disruptive, separatist and secessionist activities, which are prejudicial to the integrity and sovereignty of India and its strong anti-India posture posing a grave threat to the security of Indian nationals, it is necessary to declare LTTE as an unlawful association with immediate effect.

The LTTE was formed in 1976 and emerged as one of the most lethal terrorist group over the years.

India had banned the LTTE after the assassination of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. Since then, the ban imposed on the group has been extended every five years. The terror organisation had suffered a military defeat in 2009 in Sri Lanka following the killing of its chief Velupillai Prabhakaran. (*PTI*)

Fight for 6th Schedule key poll plank for Cong's Ladakh candidate Tsering Namgyal

'Four-point agenda also includes statehood demand, a public service commission for Ladakh and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts'

LEH, May 14: Congress candidate in the Ladakh Lok Sabha seat Tsering Namgyal is contesting the election on a four-point agenda for the Union territory, the key among which is the fight for implementation of the 6th Schedule of the Constitution that guarantees land and job for the locals.

The four-point agenda also includes statehood demand, a public service commission for Ladakh and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts.

Stressing the INDIA bloc was committed to safeguarding the rights of the people of Ladakh, he said there is discontent among the populace following the failure of talks involving Home Minister Amit Shah and representatives of Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance over the demand for the 6th Schedule of the Constitution.

"The dialogue stopped there and so did our hope... people are now worried and angry," Namgyal said in an interview with PTI.

The political landscape of Ladakh has been roiled by nearly two months of protests led by activist Sonam Wangchuk, culminating in a 21-day climate fast. Demonstrations, commencing on March 6 and concluding on May 10 to pave the way for parliamentary polls saw a turnout of around 50,000 people, representing a sub-



stantial portion of Ladakh's popu-

Ladakh's transition into a Union Territory following the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 has catalysed divergent reactions in the region. While celebrations marked the response in Leh, Kargil witnessed a contrasting sentiment marked by dissatisfaction with the territorial restructuring.

"At that time people danced and sang. Today, people are crying. People had hopes that our youth would get jobs and that ecology would be protected. But at the end of the day people are not happy with this government," said Nam-

gyal, the leader of the opposition in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

The unfulfilled promises of attaining the 6th schedule status pledged by the BJP during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and subsequent hill development council elections have fueled a shift from jubilation to discontent, prompting a wave of protests throughout the region.

"People hoped for a new beginning, but the dialogue did not go the way it should have. The government delayed it first, kept it hanging till the Model Code of Conduct came into place, and at Conduct came into place, and at

the last moment, our leaders were called for talks," said Namgyal, the leader of opposition in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council. Citing unmet expectations regarding job opportunities, land rights and environmental preservation he alleged that there was a lack of transparency in budgetary allocation and a failure to empower the hill councils effectively. The Congress candidate accused the BJP of fooling the people of Ladakh.

"People of Ladakh are aware... they will not believe the false promises. People will vote in favour of the four-point agenda," he said

Namgyal remains optimistic about the prospects of the INDIA bloc and hints at a potential shift in national leadership dynamics.

Poling in Ladakh will be held on May 20. The showdown between Namgyal, BJP's Tashi Gyalson, and Independent candidate Haji Hanifa Jan can shape the region's political trajectory significantly.

The BJP had won the Ladakh seat for the first time in 2014, with prominent Buddhist leader Thupstan Chhewang becoming an MP. Chhewang, however, resigned from the post and BJP in 2018, citing disagreements with the party's leadership. In 2019, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal of the BJP won the seat. (*PTI*)

There is no 'lehar', only 'zehar' in PM's language: Jairam Ramesh

BHUBANESWAR, May 14: Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Tuesday claimed that there is no 'lehar' (wave) in favour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but only 'zehar' (poison) in his language.

Addressing a press conference here, Jairam said that the language of the "outgoing" prime minister indicates he is "tensed and confused".

"He (PM) has realised that farmers, youth, labourers, women and backward classes are upset with him. That's why he talks about Hindu-Muslim, Muslim League, black money given to Congress in tempos and 'mangalsutra'.

"There is no 'lehar' (wave) on the ground in favour of the PM but only 'zehar' (poison) in his language. This indicates that time has arrived for a change," Ramesh claimed.

In the past four phases of elections held in 379 Lok Sabha seats, it was clear that BJP became 'saaf' (finish) in south India and 'half' in north, west and east, he said, adding that INDIA bloc

will get a majority in this election.

The Congress is fighting this election to save

the Constitution and democracy as 'dhantantra' (capitalism) is prevailing in the country, he said.

Stating that BJD and BJP are two sides of the same coin, the senior Congress leader alleged they are engaged in a "fake fight" in the ongoing Lok Sabha and assembly elections in Odisha. "The prime minister and the chief minister are indulged in a 'fake boxing' match. However, the reality is that the BJD had given full support to the BJP in Parliament during the last 10 years," he alleged. The BJD MPs supported "antifarmer, anti-tribal and anti-environment" Bills in both houses of Parliament and even the ruling party in Odisha elected BJP nominee Ashwini Vaishnaw in Rajya Sabha polls, he said.

Hitting out at Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, he said, "Did you not extend 100 per cent support to the BJP in Delhi? Is it not true that the BJD supported the weakening of the Forest Rights Act, amendment in the Forest Conservation Act, Land Acquisition Act, and the Labour Code?"

Land Acquisition Act, and the Labour Code?"
"There is no difference between the BJP and
BJD. Congress is the only alternative in Odisha

that is fighting against the BJP-BJD 'alliance'. Voting for BJP is like voting for BJD and viceversa," Ramesh alleged.

The Congress leader alleged that not a single penny has been spent on the development of Odia during the Modi rule, while Rs 650 crore has been allocated for Sanskrit, whereas the Manmohan Singh government had given classical language status to six languages including Odia. Advocating for a caste-based census, Ramesh said the exercise is necessary to give proper reservation to the SC, ST and backward communities. He asked Patnaik to clarify whether he was in support of it.

Asserting that the Congress is in favour of extending the 50 per cent cap on reservations, Ramesh asked the CM to clarify his stand on the issue

"Why have you (Patnaik) not fully implemented the Forest Rights Act and Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Rules in Odisha?" the former Union minister questioned. (PTI)

Mamata's offer to cook food for PM Modi stirs controversy



KOLKATA, May 14: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's offer to "cook food" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi elicited mixed responses from different political parties, with the BJP terming it a "political agenda" and the CPI(M) dubbing it as an "understanding" between the TMC and the saffron

Taking a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his recent allegation that RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav last month had fish during a period when some Hindus abstain from having nonvegetarian food, Banerjee on Monday said she was ready to "cook something for him (Modi)" if he wanted though she was not sure whether he would

eat what she cooked.

Banerjee, at an election rally here, had made the remarks while taking a dig at the BJP for allegedly interfering with the food habits of the people and had said she would be happy to cook food for Modi but is not sure "whether the PM will be ready to savour my cooked meal."

"I have been cooking since my childhood days. People have praised my cooking. But will Modi ji accept my food? Will he trust me? I will cook whatever he loves." she had said.

The TMC supremo had said, "I love both vegetarian foods like Dhokla and non-veg foods like macher jhol (fish curry). Different communities, and different sects among Hindus have their own unique rituals and eating habits. Who is BJP to impose a diktat on an individual's dietary habits? It shows the BJP leadership has little idea and concern about the diversity and inclusiv-

ity of India and its people."

Banerjee's offer to cook for the prime minister, who is a vegetarian, drew sharp reactions from the saffron camp.

"Mamata Banerjee wants to feed Modi ji with fish and rice cooked by her. Good proposal. But before that, why doesn't she first offer pork chop to her lieutenant Firhad Hakim? It will serve three purposes, secularism will be asserted, it will show charity begins at home and the fritters will also be praised," former BJP state president and exTripura Governor Tathagata Roy posted on X.

BJP leader Sankudeb Panda claimed Banerjee had deliber-

ately invited Modi knowing well that he is a strict vegetarian.

"This is nothing but her ploy to trap the PM. She knows on the one hand the PM will never eat fish or any non-veg item. If she believes everyone should be allowed to eat what he/she loves to eat, then why is she twisting Modiji's comments about one's dietary habits? She is insulting devout Sanatani Hindus" he added.

Reacting to Banerjee's comments, CPI(M) leader Bikash Bhattacharya said, "Being Dada-Bon (brother and sister), Mamata didi can certainly offer to cook meals for the prime minister, do not know if it is to placate him."

Bhattacharya was referring to the jibe - "Didibhai-Modibhai" that the Left and the Bengal Congress unit use to refer to the alleged tacit understanding between the BJP and the TMC.

He said such comments in the backdrop of her public posturing against "Modi's politics and divisive speeches show an apparent contradiction" in what she publicly says and preaches in private.

"Both Mamata Banerjee and Narendra Modi are responsible for bringing the country to such a state. Both are mixing politics with religion," he added.

The TMC, however, supported the party supremo's remark and said she spoke about the unique religious, and cultural diversity of India and the theme of "unity in diversity".

"She spoke rightly and her comment regarding Modi stems from the fact that as Modi has the right to eat what he likes, every other Indian too has the same right," TMC MP Dola Sen told PTI.

She also criticised the BJP for trying to impose the "Sangh Parivar's narrative" about their agenda to impose a diktat on diets and other customs on people of this country. (PTI)

Expect star campaigners to lead by example and not vitiate delicate fabric of society: EC

NEW DELHI, May 14: The Election Commission on Tuesday said it expects star campaigners, particularly of the national parties, to lead by example in the remaining three phases of the Lok Sabha polls and not vitiate the delicate fabric of society.

The commission also said that it is "primarily" the responsibility of the leaders to "correct the course" of their statements or utterances in the remaining phases of the ongoing election.

The statement comes against the backdrop

of the poll authority issuing show-cause notices to BJP president J P Nadda and Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on complaints of model code violations by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

"At the outset, Commission expects top

leaders of political parties, especially of the major national parties, most of whom are star campaigners, to set good examples of campaign discourse expected of them in the current elections," the EC statement said.

It is primarily the leaders' responsibility

It is primarily the leaders' responsibility to correct the course of their statements "to avoid any permanent dent on the delicately balanced social fabric of the country", the

EC said.

Coming out with its second report on the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct since the March 16 announcement of the Lok Sabha election, the poll panel said it has disposed of over 90 per cent of complaints and no major complaint from parties was pending, except some by the Congress and the BJP.

"With about two months completed since the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into effect, campaign by various political parties and candidates at constituency level has largely remained violence free, less noisy, less cluttered and intrusive, free of inducement...," the commission added.

It said nearly 425 major complaints -- excluding canvassing-related or clarificatory complaints -- have been filed by various political parties and candidates at the level of the EC and state chief electoral officers.

Of these, action has been taken (or matter disposed of) in 400 cases, it said.

"Approximately 170, 95 and 160 complaints were filed by Congress, BJP and others (other parties) respectively. Most of these complaints have been acted upon," the EC said. (PTI)

Matuas will get citizenship: Shah

BONGAON (WB), May 14: In a bid to address concerns of the Matuas over citizenship, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday assured the community that its members would get citizenship under the CAA and accused West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of spreading canards about it.

Addressing a rally at Matua community stronghold Bongaon, Shah said, "Mamata Banerjee can never stop the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act in Bengal as it is a law by the central government."

"No power in the world can stop my refugee brothers from becoming citizens of India. This is the promise of Modi Ji. Mamata Banerjee must remember that citizenship falls under the exclusive authority of the central government, not the state governments," he said.

Shah accused Banerjee of "lying" and spreading canards about the CAA.

"Mamata Banerjee is lying that anyone who applies for citizenship under the CAA will face problems. I have come to assure the people of the Matua community that no one will face any trouble. You will get citizenship and will be able to live with respect in the country," he added. (*PTI*)

Death toll rises to 14 in Mumbai hoarding tragedy; search and rescue ops still on

MUMBAI, May 14: The death toll in the hoarding collapse incident in Mumbai has risen to 14 while 75 others are injured, civic officials on Tuesday said as rescue and search operations continued a day after the tragedy.

Mumbai Police Commissioner Vivek Phansalkar assured strict action against those responsible for the incident, while the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said it will take down the remaining billboards on the GRP land where the hoarding collapsed.

The 120 x 120 square feet illegal hoarding fell at a petrol pump in Ghatkopar area during dust storms and unseasonal rains that lashed Mumbai on Monday.

Rescue teams were facing a challenge as they cannot use gasoline-powered cutter equipment and oxyfuel cutter which can result in a blast or fire as there is a petrol pump at the site, an official of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) said.

At least 12 fire engines and other vehicles were involved

in the search and rescue operation since the incident on Monday. Two NDRF teams, comprising 100 personnel, also joined the operation on Monday evening. Two heavy duty cranes and two hydra cranes were being

used in the operation along with two earth-excavating ma-

chines and 25 ambulances, the civic official said.

The NDRF teams used two cranes weighing 500 tonnes each to pull up the hoarding from both sides. After creating a gap of about 3.5 to 4 feet, the rescuers crouched into the



tiny space to look for people trapped underneath, NDRF assistant commandant Nikhil Mudholkar said.

During the search on Monday night, three girders of the hoarding were pulled using two hydraulic cranes. Efforts are underway to pull two more big girders using hydraulic cranes, and once this is done, the NDRF will be able to find out if more people are trapped inside, he said.

So far, 89 persons were pulled out from under the collapsed hoarding, of whom 14 were declared dead, officials said. The injured persons were admitted to six hospitals in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane and 32 of them were discharged so far, they said.

The condition of one of the injured persons admitted to the Rajawadi Hospital was critical, a BMC official said.

Police Commissioner Phansalkar visited the spot late Monday evening and assured of strict action against those responsible for the incident.

A case has been registered against Bhavesh Bhinde, the owner of M/s Ego Media Private Limited and others for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and other relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code at Pant Nagar police station, another official said.

lice station, another official said.

The billboard was illegal and no permission was taken to install it as per civic officials.

to install it, as per civic officials.

An Assistant Police Commissioner (Admin) had given permission for erecting four hoardings on behalf of the Commissioner of Railway Police, Mumbai, including the one which collapsed, but no official permission or NOC

was obtained from the BMC, as per a civic official.

BJP leader Kirit Somaiya asked how the permission for erecting the billboard was given by a police officer when the city civic body is the authority for it.

The former MP also claimed permissions for the hoarding and a petrol pump (where the billboard collapsed) were given when Uddhav Thackeray was the chief minister of Maharashtra.

Had the then director general of police been strict, such a hoarding would not have come up, he told reporters.

Somaiya said the permission on paper was given for a 40 feet hoarding whereas the billboard which collapsed was 120 feet tall. (*PTI*)

'BJP sent me to jail because it's scared of me,' says Kejriwal in Kurukshetra



CHANDIGARH, May 14: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday held a roadshow in Kurukshetra's Pehowa campaigning for party candidate Sushil Gupta and attacked the BJP-led Centre over his jailing claiming it is scared of him

jailing, claiming it is scared of him. Gupta, AAP's Kurukshetra Lok Sabha candidate, accompanied Ke-

jriwal during the roadshow.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor was granted interim bail till June 1 by the Supreme Court on Friday in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

Addressing a gathering, Kejriwal said, "On March 16, elections were

announced. On March 21, they sent me to jail. This means they wanted Kejriwal to not campaign. They are

scared of Kejriwal."

He told the crowds in Pehowa, "I have relations in Pehowa. You will ask how. In-laws of my younger brother and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann come from Pehone"."

"His (Mann's) father-in-law Inderjeet Singh is with us today ... From here, not even a single vote should go to BJP, which sent me to jail," he said.

Bhagwant Mann's wife Dr Gurpreet Kaur hails from a village in Pehowa.

This was Kejriwal's first visit to Haryana after being released on bail. Gupta during the roadshow highlighted several initiatives which AAP dispensations in Delhi and Punjab have taken for the welfare of various sections.

Various sections:

Voting for all 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana will be held in the sixth of the seven phase general election on May 25. (PTI)

Devotees to experience better tracks enroute Amarnath cave shrine: DG BRO

rector General of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan on Tuesday said the pilgrims planning to visit Amarnath cave shrine would experience "improved tracks" this year.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

The 52-day pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in south Kashmir will commence from the twin tracks -- traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and 14-km shorter but steep Baltal route in Ganderbal district -- on June 29.

"I am back from the Baltal (base camp). Last year, we were assigned with the task of widening the track which was important for the safety of the devotees. We have completed the widening work and also covered the surface with blocks and attended curves and slopes," the DG BRO told reporters on the sidelines of a tunnel breakthrough function in Ra-

He said the BRO has also completed the most important work of laying roadside railing and sidewalls at vulnerable locations especially in the areas prone to shooting stones from the hillocks to keep the pilgrims safe.

Drainage was also completed on



Padam-Darcha road (in the Union

Territory of Ladakh) which will con-

nect Manali to Leh through Darcha

and Nimmu on Srinagar-Kargil-Leh

national highway, providing a third

axis (apart from Manali-Leh and Sri-

nagar-Leh which connects Ladakh to

He said the BRO constructed

13,000 feet high Sela Tunnel in

Arunachal Pradesh was dedicated to

the people in March, while over

the hinterland)," he said.

water, Lt Gen Srinivasan said.

The DG said it is heartening to note that the BRO has become 'agency of choice' for construction of infrastructure, including roads in strategic, sensitive and inaccessible areas where the work is only possible for six months due to weather va-

"We are considering ourselves fortunate by getting such projects. We are presently working on Nimuheight of 15,800 along Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road will be a reality

The DG said the Char Dham and Amarnath yatra treks, restoration of connectivity in Sikkim, major part of Arunachal Pradesh frontier highway and Indo-Myanmar border fence are some of the major projects handed over to BRO.

Referring to Sikkim where a glacier outburst caused massive damage to infrastructure, he said the connectivity was restored for light motor vehicles in northern Sikkim beyond Chungthang, while efforts are on to restore the connectivity in rest of the affected areas shortly.

"A 600-km-long portion of Arunachal Pradesh frontier highway is with BRO and down below, the work on Indo-Myanmar border fence is underway. Not only on the mainland, our footprints are there in Andaman and Nicobar islands where our task force is working on a road to provide connectivity to the southernmost location, the Indira point," he said.

He said the BRO is working on the projects to ensure their completion within the time-frame despite various challenges like weather and

CBI probing MMTC coal import 'scam'

investigating alleged corruption in MMTC's coal import from an Australian company at inflated prices, which the PSU's former CMD kept under wraps for more than 11 years, officials said on Tuesday.

The probe started only after the MMTC suffered a jolt in the Supreme Court, which had ordered an arbitration case in favour of the Australian company. The MMTC had to deposit Rs 1,088 crore in the Delhi High Court. The MMTC ordered an internal vigilance enquiry into the allegations that certain officials of the PSU earned pecuniary benefits by allowing the Brisbane-based company to charge USD 300 per metric tonne (valued at about ₹615 crore) when the global commodity prices had nosedived as a cascading effect of Lehman Brothers' collapse in 2008.

The glaring irregularities flagged in the vigilance report were enough for the MMTC top brass to recommend a CBI investigation. On a reference from the Commerce Ministry, the CBI registered a preliminary enquiry last year in which the role of two former senior officials is under scanner.

The agency did not give any comments on the developments. In its complaint to the CBI, the

MMTC alleged that it had entered into a long-term agreement for coal supply with Brisbane-based Anglo American Metallurgical Coal Pty Ltd on March 7, 2007. The agreement was for three delivery periods of one year each for to March 2009, MMTC should try to the supply of free on board (FOB) basis where the buyer assumes all risk after the commodity is shipped.

The three one-year delivery periods spanned from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005, July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, and July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. These were extendable to two additional delivery periods. According to the terms of the

agreement, the MMTC could either agree to further extend or negotiate a fresh Long-Term Agreement with the company. The PSU availed itself of the first extended delivery period without any controversy, in which the coal price was kept at USD 96 per metric tonne. The officials said the second extended delivery period was decided in alleged "connivance of MMTC officials and Anglo American Metallurgical Coal Pty Ltd" when the PSU officials agreed to a price of USD 300 per metric tonne while the previous year it was USD 96 per metric tonne. Sources said the prices were to be negotiated through mutual discussion before the commencement of the relevant delivery period to extend the agreement for the delivery period. If the prices were not favourable to the MMTC, it could have entered into a fresh Long-Term Agreement, which would have enabled all coal suppliers to compete and thereby resulted in a competitive price.

A senior official of the MMTC had also recorded on the note sheet that up avoid and defer the USD 300 per metric tonne (FOB) price of coal to be finalized for 2008-09. The caution was given as customers of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL)-MMTC had enough stock to meet their requirements up to March 2009.

One of the officials who was the CGM during the discussions had later risen to become the CMD and continued till 2020. The MMTC has alleged he "kept the matter under wraps" and avoided "detection and enquiry into the motives for this transaction'

The Lehman Brothers crisis hit the global economy on September 15, 2008, when the American global financial services firm went bankrupt. The officials said that as a cascading effect of the collapse of the American financial major, commodity prices, including coal, had nosedived.

According to the MMTC complaint, "despite adverse market conditions prevailing" and "without adequate assessment of the viability of high-priced raw material" for RINL's production, the dealing officials proposed and the Sale Purchase Committee of Directors (SPCOD) approved the proposal to purchase coal at USD 300 per metric tonne which valued at about ₹615 crore (at the exchange rate of ₹ 44 per USD).

It is alleged that the delivery order was granted without considering material changes in market conditions and that there was no pressing requirement for coal until March 2009. (PTI)

project leaked in test phase



NEW DELHI, May 14: The 25-megawatt Lambadug hydroelectric project in Himachal Pradesh suffered leakage during the test phase as well, before its penstock leaked on May 10, causing significant damage to property in Multhan village in Kangra district, according to an independent fact-finding team of environmentalists.

The three-member team of Himdhara Environment Research and Action Collective reached the area last Saturday to document the testimonies of the affected people and ascertain

The team found that gushing muddy water from the leaking penstock of the hydro project affected around 80 families in the village and demanded a complete moratorium on new projects of 25 MW and above capacity.

The team also recommended a safety audit of all existing operational hydropower and mega projects in the state.

The project, constructed on the Lambadug river, is one among 40 projects in different stages of commissioning, construction, and planning on the Beas river and its tributaries.

Nineteen of these projects are of 25 MW and above capacity with significant underground and surface excavation.

The project, being executed by Megha Engineering Infrastructure Limited, had suffered leakage during the testing phase too. However, the volume of water was not large, and people were assured that the project would be operational only after all safety measures were taken.

The May 10 incident affected nearly a 300metre stretch of Multhan market and about 4 hectares of farmland. The foundations and lower stories of the structures in the affected area are covered in 6 feet of muck, the team found.

They said water leakage continues despite the claim of project authorities that the reservoir had been completely drained. Water is leaking from near the pressure shaft and the penstock below the forebay. (PTI)

Himachal's hydro Shift dairies away from landfills, ramp up milk testing: Delhi HC directs chief secy, FSSAI

NEW DELHI, May 14: Stating that the presence of dairies next to landfill sites can have serious consequences on people consuming milk from the cattle there, the Delhi High Court has asked the chief secretary to "seriously consider" relocating Bhalaswa and Ghazipur dairies to an alternative site in Ghogha.

It also directed the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) as well as city authorities to ramp up testing for presence of chemicals in milk and milk products from all the nine designated dairies in Kakrola, Goela, Nangli Shakrawati, Jharoda, Bhalaswa Dairy, Ghazipur, Shahbad Daulatpur, Madanpur Khadar and Masoodpur, and take appropriate action.

In an order passed on May 8 while hearing a petition regarding the state of dairies in Delhi, a bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan took notice of the diseases which can spread amongst animals and even jump to other species, including humans, and said milch animals have to be kept in the utmost hygienic conditions. The court said the authorities are "turning a blind eye" to the irreparable harm which dairies operating near landfills could cause to citizens' health, adding it was prima facie not persuaded by the Delhi chief secretary's submission that cattle in such dairies can be prevented from eating hazardous waste at the landfill sites until they are completely cleared.

"This court takes judicial notice that frequent global outbreaks of bovine diseases like foot and mouth disease, bovine herpes virus, parainfluenza, bovine respiratory virus, bovine diarrhoea and many other such diseases can spread like wildfire amongst animals. These viruses are known to jump to other species, including humans. So, milch animals have to be kept in utmost hygienic conditions," the bench, also comprising Justice Manmeet PS Arora, said.

"We, therefore, issue the following general directions: The Chief Secretary to seriously consider the suggestion made by the petitioners with respect to the relocation of Bhalaswa and Ghazipur dairies to Ghogha dairy," it ordered. The bench asked the authorities to consider the suggestions given by the petitioners for making Ghogha dairy an "attractive alternative site" for dairy owners and also remove all unauthorised constructions, commercial establishments, residential houses and industrial units there. The court observed that the milk from dairies is used for making a wide variety of products including powdered milk, sweets and formula foods for toddlers and consumption of milk of cattle feeding on hazardous waste from landfills would have serious consequences.

"FSSAI/ Department of Food Safety, GNCTD (is directed) to ramp up testing and to conduct random sample checking of milk for presence of chemicals in dairy units in all the nine designated dairies as also of the milk products such as sweets from the areas where milk is supplied and to take appropriate action as per law in case of any violation," the court stated.

In the order, the court also reiterated its concern about the use of oxytocin in cattle, stating that it leads to side effects such as uneven heart beat, cardiac seizure, eve problems like blurred vision, early onset of menstrual cycle in girl child and growth of abnormal breasts in male child. It, therefore, asked the police commissioner to file an affidavit indicating the efforts made to track the sources of spurious oxytocin or hormones and its production, packaging and distribution. The court further directed that the existing dairies should be made compliant in terms of their licensing requirements under different laws and that bio-gas plants should also be installed near all the nine authorised dairies in Delhi at the earliest, preferably prior to onset of monsoon.

It also said that veterinary hospitals should be made functional forthwith near all the designated dairies and asked the chief secretary to file a detailed affidavit indicating the roadmap on the future plan for the nine dairy colonies. The court initiated a pilot project in Madanpur Khadar Dairy Colony with respect to its mapping and identification, tagging of cattle, curbing use of oxytocin or hormones and cleanliness and sought an "action taken" report from the authorities concerned within eight weeks. It asked the Delhi Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to carry out regular inspections to check the condition of cattle in the colony and to immediately report any disease or injury to any animal to the Veterinary Officer of the Government Veterinary Hospital.

"The work of mapping and identification shall be carried out through Para Legal Volunteers of the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLSA)... Each of the Respondents responsible for carrying out the above measures shall depute a sufficient number of officials for the said purpose and also extend full cooperation to DSLSA. The Delhi Police is directed to render full cooperation so that there are no law and order issues," the court or-

BRO achieves milestone

RAJOURI/JAMMU, May 14: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Tuesday achieved a significant milestone by breaking through the 2.79-km Sungal tunnel along the Jammu-Poonch national highway.

BRO chief Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan expressed the hope of completing the strategically important project within the next couple

Sungal, connecting Akhnoor and Poonch, is the second of the four tunnels on the strategic national highway 144-A, also known as the golden arc road, having achieved the

Earlier, the 700-metre Naushera tunnel

achieved the breakthrough on January 28, while the tunnelling work inside 260 meter Kandi and 1.1 km Bhimber Gali is in "This is a great moment for all of us as the

Jammu-Poonch link, advancing rapidly, is on track for completion in the next couple of years," Lt Gen Srinivasan told reporters at the breakthrough ceremony of the Sungal tunnel.

Without naming Pakistan, he said this road is strategically very important in view of the "nefarious activities" of the neighbouring country which is backing terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The border areas of Poonch, Rajouri and Akhnoor are vital defence locations and when you are providing better connectivity, it automatically helps in enhancing defence preparedness," Lt Gen Srinivasan said. (PTI)

GANHRI defers reaccreditation of NHRC again

NEW DELHI, May 14: The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has deferred the reaccreditation of NHRC, India for the second year in a row

Geneva-based GANHRI, through its Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), is responsible for reviewing and accrediting NHRIs (National Human Rights Institutions) in compliance with the Paris

It is a "rigorous, peer-based process, undertaken by representatives of NHRIs from each of the four regions: Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe", according to the website of GANHRI. GANHRI has deferred the reaccreditation of NHRC (National

Human Rights Commission) during its review meeting recently, Last year, the review of the NHRC, India, which was due in March

2023 for its reaccreditation, had been deferred for a year, they said.

The deferral means no final decision has been taken as yet, a In accordance with the UN Paris Principles and the GANHRI

Statute, two classifications for accreditation are used by GANHRI: 'A' -- fully compliant with the Paris Principles; and 'B' -- partially compliant with the Paris Principles.

The NHRC, India established in 1993 had got 'A' status of accred-



views. It was under the process of review for 2016, which was deferred to second session in November, 2017 during which, the Sub Committee on Accreditation of GANHRI recommended that the NHRC, India be again given 'A' status, according to a statement issued by the NHRC in 2018.

GANHRI, too, was set up in 1993.

itation the first time in 1999, which it retained in 2006 and 2011 re-

At an international workshop held in Tunis, Tunisia on December

13, 1993, a group of NHRIs set the foundation for the global network of national human rights institutions, known today as the GANHRI. Accreditation takes into account compliance with Paris Principles

The Paris Principles, as they came to be known, set out the roles, responsibilities and minimum standards for NHRIs to be considered independent and effective.

The Paris Principles quickly received broad support within the UN human rights system. They were endorsed by the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and the UN General Assembly in

The NHRC was set up under the Protection of Human Rights Act, passed by Parliament in 1993.

Reacting to the development, Congress leader P Chidambaram said it is "sad and a shame" that the GANHRI has declined accreditation to the NHRC.

"The status of NHRC as an accredited Human Rights body was suspended in 2023 and now again in 2024. The GANHRI has concluded that India's NHRC has failed to satisfy the international body that the NHRC is 'able to operate independent of government interference'. That is a rebuke to the NHRC and the government of India," Chidambaram said in a post on X on Tuesday. (PTI)

NCGG starts training 41 civil servants from Sri Lanka

for Good Governance (NCGG) has started training 41 civil servants from Sri Lanka to help them gain insights into India's transformative policies such as right to service, housing for all and leveraging digital technology among others, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday.

The third capacity building programme for senior civil servants of Sri Lanka organised by the NCGG from May 13 to 24 at Mussoorie,

The programme is being attended by 41 senior civil servant officers from Sri Lanka from the PM Office, Presidential Secretariat, Department of National Police Commission, Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption, National Audit Office, Department of IT management and Ministry of Finance among others, the statement said.

The NCGG, an autonomous institution under the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), is mandated to work in areas of public policy, governance, reforms and capacity building.

NCGG's efforts align with the Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' i.e. "The world is one Family" and emphasises strengthening bilateral ties and fostering coop-



eration with other countries, said the statement

issued by the Personnel Ministry. V Srinivas, Director General of the NCGG and Secretary of the DARPG, inaugurated the session and highlighted the significant milestone achieved with the participation of fourteen senior civil servant officers from Sri Lanka in the first capacity building programme led by Secretary to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Anura Dissanayake.

In his address, Srinivas emphasised the commonalities between India and Sri Lanka in governance practices and the potential for mutual learning.

He emphasised on fostering closer ties between the government and its citizens. "Central to this vision is the concept of 'maximum governance, minimum government,' emphasising digitally-driven gover-

nance with a citizen-centric approach," the

The programme delves into specific policy areas such as Skill Development, Agriculture, Disaster Management, and healthcare initiatives like the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana.

Participants will gain insights into transformative policies such as righat to service, housing for all and the Digital India initiative, it

Moreover, the programme offered sessions on planning eco-friendly smart cities, Aadhaar as a tool for good governance, and gender and development, among others, the statement

"Emotional intelligence, land record management and national security were also explored in detail. Additionally, sessions on election management in India and Indo-Sri Lanka relations enriched participants' understanding of strategic governance areas," it added.

The programme also features immersive field visits to prestigious institutions including the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) and the Forest Research Institute (FRI) in Dehradun, providing practical exposure to governance mechanisms, the statement said. (PTI)

Civil Judge (Sr.Div.) IN THE COURT OF Shri Parvez Ahsan Choudhury Civil judge (Sr. Div.), Karbi Anglong.

SUMMONS TO APPEAR IN PERSON Title Suit/13/2023 Sri Pradip Singnar Vs Sri Long Kathar Engti NEXT DATE: 30-05-2024

Sri Arun Kumar Mishra S/o Gupteswar Mishra, R/o Khatkhati Bongrum Basti, PO. & PS Khatkhati, KARBI ANGLONG, ASSAM.

Whereas Sri Pradip Singnar has instituted a suit against you for you are hereby summoned to appear in this court in person on the 30-05-2024 at 11:00 o' clock in the forenoon, to answer the claim; and you are directed to produce on that day all the documents upon which you intend to rely in support of your defence.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance of the day before mentioned, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 04-05-2024

> SD/-Civil Judge (Sr. Div.)



Went to support my friend: Allu Arjun after being booked for alleged election code violation

HYDERABAD, May 14: Days after he was booked for allegedly violating the Model Code of Conduct in the run-up to Lok Sabha polls, popular Telugu actor Allu Arjun on Tuesday said he went to the Nandyal district to support his friend and YSRCP constituency candidate S Ravi Chandra Kishore Reddy but isn't affiliated to any political party.

On Saturday, the "Pushpa" star waved to a large crowd from a balcony with the YSRCP candidate and also posted a message on X in his favour.

The Andhra Pradesh Police booked a case against the "Pushpa: The Rise" star on Saturday under IPC Section 188 the same day.

Arjun said he remains neutral and supports "my people" including Janasena Party founder and actor-uncle Pawan Kalyan, regardless of their political affiliations. "Firstly, I want to clarify that I'm not affiliated with any political party. I remain neutral and support my people, regardless of their political affiliations. This includes my uncle Pawan Kalyan, whom

I'll always stand by, along with my friend Ravi and my father-in-law, Mr. Reddy," the actor said in a statement.

The National Award winner, who cast his vote in Hyderabad on Monday, said he went to Nandyal district to support his friend Pavi

"I made a promise to my friend, Mr. Ravi, to support him, but I couldn't fulfill it last time. To keep my word, this time I went to Nandyal to support him," he further said.

In a post on X on Saturday, Arjun thanked the people of Nandyal for a "warm reception".

"Thank you, Silpa Ravi Reddy (YSRCP candidate) garu, for the hospitality. Wishing you the very best in the elections and beyond. You have my unwavering love

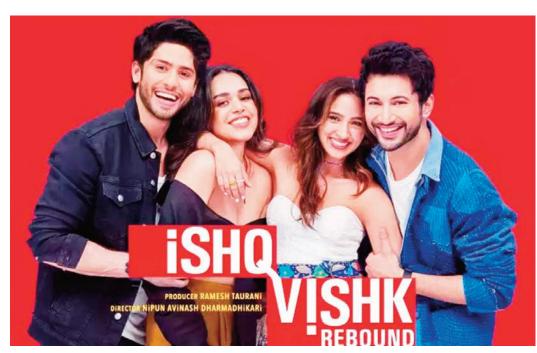
and support," he had posted.

Janasena, TDP and BJP are NDA alliance partners, who are taking on Y S
Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP in the

Andhra Pradesh went to the polls on Monday. (PTI)



'ISHQ VISHK REBOUND' TO NOW RELEASE IN CINEMAS ON JUNE 21



MUMBAI, May 14: "Ishq Vishk Rebound", starring Pashmina Roshan, Jibraan Khan, Rohit Suresh Saraf and Naila Grewal, will now release in theatres on June 21.

The film, which was earlier slated for release on June 28, is a sequel to the 2003 Shahid Kapoorstarrer romantic comedy "Ishq Vishk". Saraf, 27, shared a new poster of the film on his Instagram handle on Tuesday. The poster mentioned the film's release date as June 21, 2024.

"Re-directing you to the official season of #PyaarKaSecondRound #IshaVishkRebound " the

"Re-directing you to the official season of #PyaarKaSecondRound #IshqVishkRebound," the "Vikram Vedha" actor wrote in the caption. Directed by Nipun Avinash Dharmadhikari, "Ishq Vishk Rebound" went on floors earlier this year.

The film is produced by Ramesh Taurani and co-produced by Jaya Taurani under the banner Tips Films Limited. (PTI)

Chris Hemsworth on Scorsese & Coppola's criticism of superhero films: It felt harsh

LONDON, May 14: Hollywood star Chris Hemsworth says the criticism of Marvel superhero movies by cinema giants like Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola came across as "harsh" and an "eye-roll" to him.

Scorsese had made headlines in 2019 when he had branded the superhero films as "theme park experience" and "not cinema". Coppola later went a step further and called superhero movies "despicable".

Hemsworth, known for play-

ing the fan-favourite superhero
Thor in multiple Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), said he has been a fan of the two filmmakers due to the extensive nature of their filmography.

"It felt harsh, and it bothers me, especially from heroes. It was an eyeroll for me, people bashing the superhero space. Those guys had films that didn't work

too we all have. When they talked about what was wrong with superheroes, I thought, cool, tell that to the billions who watch them.
Were they all wrong?"

tralian actor told UK news outlet The Times of London.

On Scorsese's contention that superhero movies had an adverse impact on mid-budget and indie cinema, Hemsworth offered a counter

"Cinema-going did not change because of superheroes, but because of smartphones and social media. Superhero films actually kept people in the cinemas during that transition and now people are coming back. So they deserve a little more appreciation," he said. Hemsworth also addressed the criticism of superhero movies by actors who appeared in the Though names, ments

were

seem-

aimed at his Thor: Love and Thunder co-star Christian Bale, who had once complained that acting in front of a green screen was a monotony. Another co-star of Hemsworth, Idris Elba, had said it was torture filming a Marvel film.

"It's, like, They're films that are successful, put me in one. Oh, mine didn't work? I'll bash them.' Look, I grew up on a soap opera. And it used to bother me when actors would later talk about the show with guilt or shame. Humility goes a long way. One of the older actors on Home and Away' said, We don't get paid to make the good lines sound good, but to make the bad ones work.' That stuck with me," he said.

Hemsworth, who has appeared as Thor in eight MCU movies, said if he ever played the superhero on the screen again, he would try to do something different.

"If I ever went back to (Thor) I'd wonder how we could change it again. But there is a superhero curse in the sense you get pigeonholed, and I've felt a little hamstrung with what I could do, so (I) desperately wanted something to scare the shit out of me. And Furiosa' did," he said, referring to his upcoming movie Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga.

The film, directed by George Miller, will be released in theatres worldwide in July. (PTI)

Action thriller Assamese film 'Rudra' to have emotional quotient: Director Roopak Gogoi

GUWAHATI, May 14: Acclaimed Assamese film director Roopak Gogoi said his multicrore action thriller 'Rudra', which is set for pan-India release by the end of this year, will also have emotional quotient.

In an interaction with PTI, the award-winning filmmaker said Assamese superstar Ravi Sarma will play the lead role in the movie, which will have around 60 senior and junior actors from film and theatre backgrounds.

"The movie will be an action thriller but it will also have some emotional quotient, depicting certain situations in the rural society," Gogoi, known for his critically acclaimed children's film 'Tumi Malala' (You are my Malala), said.

Gogoi, who has also written the script of 'Rudra', said that shooting, which will take place in Assam, Meghalaya and Andhra Pradesh, is set to commence next week and is expected to be completed by July.

He said the production unit is presently working with a specialised team to ensure high-quality action in the film.

"We have brought experts from outside the state and they are training around 30 local youths, which will be useful for As-

samese cinema in the future. Usually stuntmen are brought from Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai for action in Assamese films, because of which production becomes very expensive," he said.

The filmmaker said he is aiming for release of the film by November end.

Asked about the budget, Gogoi said, "Initially we had decided on a budget, but later realised that if we stick to that figure, probably we would not be able to provide the entertainment we have planned for the audience. Hence, we have kept the budget open and

'Rudra' is produced by Rajesh Kumar More, O P Garodia, Arvind Garodia, Gautam Beria, Anup Beria and Manoj Kumar Kedia.

will invest as per requirement."

More said that 'Rudra' will be a big-budget film.

When asked how he would deal if he faced a situation similar to that of an Assamese superstar, whose big-budget film recently bombed in the box office following his change in stance on CAA, Gogoi said, "A film has to be worth watching... only then it will be successful despite attempts by some sections to sabotage it."

Gogoi also disapproved of the diktat of a militant organisation to

hall owners to run a particular Assamese film for three weeks, failing which no Hindi movie would be allowed to screen.

"This should not happen... If there is no audience for that particular Assamese film, what will the hall owner do for three weeks? If in this case, the producer requested the extremist group to issue such a diktat, such things should not be done at all,"

he asserted.
On 'Tumi Malala', Gogoi said the story revolved around the friendship between the daughter of a maid and that of her employer in the backdrop of the National Register of Citizens

"We had to face some difficulties in a few Indian festivals as the topic was slightly controversial due to the political scenario of the country. However, we faced no such issue in international events. We believe our effort was recognised by cine lovers," Gogoi

'Tumi Malala' was the only film from India to be screened at the Beijing International Children's Film Festival 2022 as an 'official selection' among the 10 foreign entrants and it received the Golden Flowers Award in the event, he added. (PTI)







Maradona heirs say his Golden Ball trophy was stolen; They want to stop its auction

PARIS, May 14: Diego Maradona's heirs will launch a lawsuit to try and stop the auction of a trophy he was awarded after the 1986 World Cup won by Argentina, their lawyer told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The Golden Ball trophy rewarding the best player of the tournament had been missing for decades after it disappeared in unclear circumstances and only recently resurfaced. It is set to be auctioned in Paris next month, the Aguttes auction house said last

at age 60, captained Argentina in its 3-2 win over West Germany in the 1986 final in Mexico City. Before that were the "Hand of God" goal and the "Goal of the Century" in a 2-1 win over England in the quarterfinals. Maradona's heirs say the trophy was stolen and claim the current owner cannot

be entitled to sell it. Gilles Moreu, a lawyer working with Paradox Lawyers firm, said he will throw an urgent request to the president of the Nanterre judithe Golden Ball withdrawn a poker game or sold to pay off stolen. According to the person who bought the trophy from the auction. He told the AP he will also request a judicial sequestration of the trophy and file a complaint for theft and concealed theft.

Aguttes said the trophy reappeared in 2016 among other lots that were acquired from a private collection at auction in Paris. Maradona received the

award in 1986 at a ceremony at the Lido cabaret on the Champs-Élysées. It subsequently disappeared, giving rise to rumors.

Some say it was lost during

debts, Aguttes said. Others say lawyer, Maradona's family Maradona stored it in a safe in a Naples bank that was robbed by local gangsters in 1989, when he played in the Italian league. Maradona' heirs believe it

was stolen from the bank. Moreu, who represents two daughters of Maradona, say the heirs found out only recently that the trophy had been

years ago was not aware it had wants the sale to be been stolen. "If the owner of banned because it bean object can claim ownership ieves the Golden Ball belongs to said he was

contacted by an Argentine colleague after the two daughters discussed the matter with the other heirs, who gave their approval to the legal action. The auc-

under French law, it is on the obvious condition that his or her good faith cannot be called into question," the Paradox Lawyers firm said in a statement to the AP. "This cannot be the case for the owner of a trophy that was famously stolen from Diego Maradona and whose heirs can legally claim ownership.'

Moreu said, "It doesn't appear that the seller contacted

The auction house said it expects the trophy "to fetch millions due to its uniqueness."

Bidders will be asked to make a deposit of 150,000 euros (\$161,000) to participate in the June 6 auction.

The Hand of God goal came when Maradona punched the ball into England's net. Four minutes later, he weaved through England's midfield and defense and past goalkeeper Peter Shilton for what FIFA later declared the greatest goal in World Cup history.

Duran Duran: Substitute bags two late goals in Villa thriller with Liverpool

Substitute Jhon Duran was a late savior for Aston Villa on Monday, scoring twice in the last five minutes against Liverpool to grab a remarkable 3-3 home draw and edge his team closer to next year's Champions

Watched by Villa fan Tom Hanks, who was in the ground in a claret tracksuit top, Villa played its part in a thrilling match in front of a packed house that Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp described as "rock-

A win would have confirmed a place in the English Premier League top four for Unai Emery's side and a place in the European Cup for the first time

But the home side went behind in the second minute with a bizarre own goal from goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, and although Youri Tielemans equalized soon after, goals from Cody Gakpo and Jarell Quansah put Liverpool in the driving

Until Duran's appearance after 79 minutes.

The Colombian scored in the 85th and 88th, the second an astonishing lob executed on the run that sent Villa and its supporters wild with joy.

"We created chances but we didn't score," Tielemans told broadcaster Sky Sports. "We got the draw and fought right until fourth place, five points ahead



the end and that's the most important thing. Unfortunately, we couldn't score more, we felt like we deserved more in the first half. It's unlucky but we'll take the draw." Villa remained in

of Tottenham.

Villa has one game left to play and Tottenham has two, starting with Tuesday night's visit by league leader Manches-

The top four qualify for the ball in the back of the net after

Champions League. Liverpool was third, 14 points clear of Villa. The atmosphere was electric at kickoff but the power was quickly sapped for the home side when Liverpool had the

cross from the right took a deflection and the wrong-footed Martinez fumbled the ball into his own net.

It took the home side just 15 minutes to recover. Ollie Watkins did well on the left flank and cut the ball back for the unmarked Youri Tielemans to slam home from around 16 meters.

Liverpool regained the lead but only after a lengthy VAR review. Luiz Diaz fed Joe Gomez on the overlap and his low ball across goal was turned in by Cody Gakpo.

Jarell Quansah made it three early in the second half when he headed home a cross from Elliott to bag his first league goal.

And then it was Duran Duran when the Colombian slotted home from just outside the box and then scored that astonishing

"Jhon Duran is a special player," Emery said on Sky Sports. "He was very clinical and today was important for

The Aston Villa players will tuned into Tuesday's Spurs-Man City game. Anything other than a Spurs win means Villa are into the Champions League.

"There's some of us that have never been close to the Champions League in our life." Villa captain John McGinn said. "We'll have our Man City tops

for Madrid-Rome double; facing Keys in the quarters

Swiatek on course



ROME, May 14: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek remained on course for an uncommon Madrid-Rome double after beating Angelique Kerber to reach the Italian Open quarterfinals on Monday.

It was a ninth straight win for Swiatek, and the two-time Rome champion will next face Madison Keys after the American player eased past Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 6-1 in a match that was interrupted by an environmental protest.

Swiatek needed eight set points to secure the opener but had no such problems at the end of the second, sealing a 7-5, 6-3 victory on the first match point when Kerber's return went wide.

The match against Keys will be a repeat of last week's Madrid Open semifinal, which Swiatek won. The Polish player is attempting to become the first woman to win the "dirt double" since Serena Williams in 2013.

"For sure, playing against Maddie is not easy," Swiatek said. "The score was pretty one way in Madrid. It's kind of easy for your mind to just drift off sometimes. The most important thing is to stay focused and really disciplined.

Keys' match in Rome was temporarily suspended at 3-1 in the second set after two protesters jumped onto the court and threw confetti, while others from the environmentalist group glued

themselves to the stands. "As soon as I saw them come over the barrier, my first thought was like, Should I go tackle one of them?' But I stopped myself," Keys said. "And then the chair (umpire) started yelling at me to go sit down

"Unfortunately, it's starting to become a little bit of a common thing that's happening.

The players returned to the locker room and the protestors did not resist when security intervened before police and firefighters also arrived to handle the situation.

Two more Americans were through to the quarterfinals after third-seeded Coco Gauff rallied to beat Paula Badosa 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 and Danielle Collins eased past Irina-Camelia Begu 6-0, 6-3.

Second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka fought back from a set down and had to fend off three match points — after getting treatment for a back problem before beating Elina Svitolina 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7) in a match that finished well after midnight local

Two-time champion Svitolina looked certain to secure the victory on her first match point as she had what should have been the simplest of volleys over the net with Sabalenka seemingly stranded right at the other side of the court. But Svitolina hit the ball into the net.

Victoria Azarenka, Jelena Ostapenko and Qinwen Zheng also advanced. (AP)

Masters, total 19 Indians in fray

SHARJAH, May 14: Grandmaster and world number seven Erigaisi Arjun starts as the top seed as he spearheads a strong Indian challenge in the USD 52,000 Sharjah Masters Chess tournament here.

One of the strongest open events in the world will see participation of as many as 19 Indian Grandmasters and S L Narayanan will be the second highest rated Indian ahead of Nihal Sarin.

The nine-round Swiss tournament, which carries a total prize pool of USD 52,000 with USD 12,000 reserved for the winner, begins later in the day.

Arjun flew straight from Warsaw where he just finished the Superbet Rapid and Blitz tournament ending fifth overall.

This is a rare case of a top-10 player participating in open events and Ariun has played exceptionally well in the past few

months. The reason top players avoid competing in open events is the huge risk to their rating but Arjun is setting new standards by actually gaining points from

open events. While there are nine players above Elo 2700 in the fray, Arjun is 29 points ahead of second seed Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran.

The tournament comes close on the heels of Dubai Police Global Chess challenge that was dominated by the Indians.

V Pranav was the worthy winner taking home USD 16,500. For the first time ever in an International open of this stature, the top three prizes were bagged by Indians with Aravindh Chithambaram finishing second and M Pranesh coming third. Chithambaram is a two-time national champion and has been

making steady progress. For the first time in his career, the Chennai-based player has cracked into the top-50 of world rankings and will be hoping to make further progress.

Nihal Sarin was in the eye of a storm when he was indirectly accused of online cheating by Russian great Vladimir Kramnik because of his stupendous results in the online blitz

The champion from Kerala is exceptional in the faster version of the game and has been one of the best players when it comes to online chess.

A bit stagnant for some time, Sarin will also hope to have a good tournament and break free from the present levels.

Abhijeet Gupta is a former world junior champion and has won tournaments across conti-

He is a feared opponent for many but inconsistency has been a problem for him in the last few Having recovered from a seri-

ous hand injury, Gupta is another Indian to look forward to in the event that has 88 participants in all. Arjun, S L Erigaisi

Narayanan, Nihal Sarin, Aravindh Chithambaram, Raunak Sadhwani, Leon Luke Mendonca, Abhimanyu Puranik, Aditya Mittal, Abhijeet Gupta, S P Sethuraman, V Pranav, Subramaniyam, Bharath Sankalp Gupta, Pranav Anand, Raja Rithvik, B Adhiban, D Harika, Aditya Samant, P Iniyan. (PTI)

Chess: Arjun top seed in Sharjah enhanced budget to conduct more Masters. total 19 tests at junior level, says expert

The Increase in doping violations by minors in India is a cause of concern and NADA needs an enhanced budget to at least keep the menace in check as complete eradication would be tough, feels noted sports medicine expert PSM Chandran.

Chandran, who is currently heading Sports and Exercise Science at the Khelo India State Centre of Excellence at Kalinga Stadium here, said roping in celebrities to propagate the harmful effects of doping could be a good way to reach out to young-"First of all, let's make it clear,

those who dope constitute 2.5 to three per cent of all the athletes, the other 96.5 to 97 per cent are clean. In sports, there always will be doping, it's a matter of how best you can keep it under control and not about eradicating it," Chandran told PTI in an interview. "Since the minors are also competing, some of them will do doping, whatever may be the reason. It (doping by minors) is a cause of concern but is not something unexpected. Just like adult sportspersons, they (minor athletes) also think they can get ad-(to educational institutions) or get jobs if they get

"Moreover, dope testing at junior levels is minimal because of lack of funds (for NADA) and they might be thinking that the chance of getting caught is less."

In a report published by World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in January, India was named as the second worst country in a 10year global study of positive doping cases by minors. Russia topped the list, followed by India and China.



Last month, in another WADA report, India registered the highest percentage of failed dope tests among countries which tested more than 2000 samples, based on the figures of 2022.

India tested 3865 samples (urine, and blood combined) during the recorded period, of which 125 returned adverse analytical findings. This amounted to 3.2 per cent of the samples.

Chandran, who has served as consultant at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and as lead Dope Control Officer for the Indian Premier League, said lack of funds is a major hurdle in conducting tests at junior level com-

"It costs around Rs 25,000 per test, this includes cost of the kits, transportation and laboratory charges as well as courier charges. But where is the money and how many tests you can do from the budget, these are the questions to be asked. "With the limited resources,

how many tests can NADA do?

Can they do testing for all sports?

So, NADA has to go for sports like weightlifting and athletics (where doping is more rampant) and leave others. "Even the labs have limitation

in testing, they cannot take so much of load.' In this year's interim budget, the government allocated Rs 22.30 crore to NADA, a slight in-

crease than the 2023-24 amount

of Rs 21.73 crore. Chandran also said that more than highlighting the moral aspect of doping, the focus should be on its harmful effects on health, especially on youngsters.

"How it effects health, that should be highlighted. You talked about the moral side and the violation of the spirit of playing sports. That does not help," he said. Talking about innovative ideas on how to control doping, he said, "I always tell NADA people that they should spend money on creating awareness of harmful effects of doping on health through mass media like during live telecast of big sporting events. (PTI)

Jimmy Dunne resigns from PGA Tour board; He feels his input is no longer needed

Dunne, one of the architects behind the PGA Tour's stunning reversal to strike a deal with the Saudi backers of LIV Golf, abruptly resigned Monday from the PGA Tour board with a letter that expressed frustration at the lack of progress that no longer included his input.

Dunne, a power broker on Wall Street and in golf circles, was not included on the PGA Tour Enterprise's new "transaction subcommittee" that will be handling the direct negotiations with the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia.

Dunne and Ed Herlihy, an attorney specializing in mergers and acquisition and chairman of PGA Tour Inc., were whom PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan leaned on when he first met with Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the PIF governor, that led to the June 6 agreement. The immediate result of the deal was an end to antitrust lawsuits neither side wanted and had already cost the PGA Tour in the neighborhood of \$50 million. The tour has since brought on Strategic Sports Group as a minority investor in a deal initially worth \$1.5 billion.

"As you are aware, I have not been asked to take part in negoti-

NEW YORK, May 14: Jimmy ations with the PIF since June 2023," Dunne said in his letter to the board first obtained by Sports Illustrated.

> "Since the players now outnumber the independent directors on the board, and no meaningful progress has been made towards a transaction with the PIF, I feel like my vote and my role is utterly superfluous," he wrote.

The tour, feeling pushback and resentment for the secrecy behind the June 6 deal, appointed Tiger Woods to the board with no term limit. The board now has six player directors — Woods, Patrick Cantlay, Jordan Spieth, Webb Simpson, Adam Scott and Peter Malnati — and five independent directors. Dunne is the second independent director to resign following the June 6 announcement. Randall Stephenson, former AT&T chairman, resigned in July over objections to the agreement with the Saudis.

Rory McIlroy resigned from the board in November, and player directors appointed Spieth to finish his term. The move signals the tour in a state of disarray as it tries to work out a deal with PIF and start the process of unifying a sport that has been divided since LIV launched in June 2022. (AP)

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Home Turf: Rajasthan aim to clinch play-off berth in Parag's 'Royal' homecoming

GUWAHATI, May 14: Riyan Parag, the hottest cricketing property to emerge from India's north-east, is expected to get a grand welcome from his home fans when Rajasthan Royals try to ensure a safe passage into the IPL play-offs against the ousted Punjab Kings in their penultimate league game on Wednesday.

Placed second in the 10-team table with 16 points, Royals need to ensure one win in their next two 'home' games in Guwahati. That will be enough to seal a last four berth.

For the past few years, Guwahati has been Royals' second home base and it was a strategic move by the franchise having invested a good six years in tapping Parag's potential.

Panned for being inconsistent on social media platforms, Parag's homecoming this year is special as his performance of 483 runs at a strike-rate of 153 despite not being an opener is simply outstanding.

A stable core and improvisation as per match situations have already made Parag an India contender for the next T20 series where he is expected to make his international debut.

As and when it happens, Parag will become the first cricketer hailing from the north-eastern part of the country to wear the senior team's iconic blue jersey.

Parag's emergence as the cricketing face from the region makes this and the RR's next match against KKR more significant.



The support for the 22-year-old will be organic and that will also help Sanju Samson and his men against Punjab Kings, which unearthed two T20 gems in Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma but once again failed to fire as a team.

Skipper Shikhar Dhawan's absence due to injury for the better part of the season made matters worse as his stand-in Sam Curran didn't exactly look the part.

Samson, on the other hand, has grown in stature as a leader in what is expected to be his best season as a batter.

He already is his team's top-scorer with 486 runs. The dynamic opening duo of Yashasvi Jaiswal (344 runs) and Jos Buttler (359 runs) have had an average season by their standards but Parag and Samson have ensured that batting remained solid and consistent with he low-scoring game against

RR's strongest aspect is their bowling unit that has never been taken to the task as such during the whole season.

Sandeep Sharma (Economy Rate 8.07) at the death and Trent Boult (ER 8.38) at the start have executed plans to the 'T'.

Ravichandran Ashwin has only become sharper as the tournament has progressed.

sharper as the tournament has progressed and Yuzvendra Chahal can always produce that magic ball against the run of play.

Squads:

Punjab Kings: Sam Curran (c), Matthew Short, Jonny Bairstow (wk), Prabhsimran Singh (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Sikandar Raza, Rishi Dhawan, Liam Livingstone, Atharva Taide, Arshdeep Singh, Nathan Ellis, Kagiso Rabada, Harpreet Brar, Rahul Chahar, Harpreet Bhatia, Vidwath Kaverappa, Shivam Singh, Harshal Patel, Chris Woakes, Ashutosh Sharma, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Shashank Singh, Tanay Thyagarajan, Prince Choudhary, Rilee Rossouw.

Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c), Abid Mushtaq, Avesh Khan, Dhruv Jurel, Donovan Ferreira, Jos Buttler (wk), Kuldeep Sen, Kunal Singh Rathore, Nandre Burger, Navdeep Saini, Ravichandran Ashwin, Riyan Parag, Sandeep Sharma, Shimron Hetmyer, Shubham Dubey, Rovman Powell, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, Trent Boult, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Yuzvendra Chahal, Tanush Kotian.

Match starts: 7:30pm IST. (PTI)

India doing really well, hopefully they can qualify for T20 WC semis: Harmanpreet



DHAKA, May 14: Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur is confident that Indian women's team will be one of the potential semi-finalists in this year's T20 World Cup and beating the 'Southern Stars' will go a long way in clinching its first maiden global title.

The T20 World Cup is scheduled in Bangladesh from October 3-20 with Harmanpreet banking on the Indian team's familiarity with the conditions to win the competition.

India have been drawn alongside six-time champions Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Group A for the ninth edition of the tournament, while Group B comprises South Africa, England, 2016 champions West Indies, Bangladesh and Scotland.

Asked to predict the semifinalists, Harmanpreet, who recently led India to a 5-0 whitewash of Bangladesh in the T20I series in Sylhet, said, "India, Australia, England and South Africa. Because all these teams have been doing really well and hopefully these four can qualify for the semis so we can have very good cricket over there.

"I think it will be Australia (who I look forward to facing) because they are very competitive," Harmanpreet told ICC during a fixture launch event here.

Though Harmanpreet's side has challenged Australian dominance of late, the rivals have come up trumps in global events, winning the Women's T20 World Cup final

in 2020 as well as the Commonwealth Games final in 2022. Australia also defeated India in the 2023 T20 World Cup semifinal.

"If we do well against them, it will give us a lot of confidence and I'm really looking forward to playing against them," she added.

Harmanpreet also felt India's success in the recently-concluded 5-match series against the hosts had made them more familiar with the conditions.

"Yeah, it's a bit similar to India and hopefully, in these conditions, we should do well."

India and Bangladesh have been involved in some intense rivalry of late and it was very much on show during the recently-concluded series. India have travelled to Bangladesh twice since the 2023 T20 World Cup -- in July last year for a three-match T20I series and an ODI series as well as the recent 5-match T20I series.

"Bangladesh will be the home team and they will know the conditions better than us. Obviously crowd will be supporting them. But playing against them is always an exciting event. And hopefully, we will do well against them," said Harmanpreet.

On India's so-near-yet-so far experience in World Cups, Harmanpreet said,

"I think in all the ICC events we have done well. The only thing is that we have lost a lot of close games. And this time hopefully all those close games if we can win and do well for the team." (PTI)

Paddler Manika Batra reaches career-high ranking of World No. 24

NEW DELHI, May 14: Ace women's table tennis player Manika Batra rose to a career-best singles ranking of 24 following her success in the Saudi Smash, becoming the first Indian woman paddler to break into the top-25 in world rankings.

The 28-year-old Khel Ratna awardee, who was in 39th spot before the tournament, jumped 15 spots following her run in Jeddah, where she reached the quarterfinals. Manika, the 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medallist in individual and team categories, had shocked multiple-time world champion and Olympic gold medallist China's Wang Manyu (seeded second) on her way to the last-eight in the Saudi Smash.

It was also the first time an Indian women player advanced that far in the tournament. Manika's rise through the draw finally earned her 350 points.

In an Instagram post, Manika, who had made history by becoming the first Indian paddler to reach the women's singles quarterfinals at the Hangzhou last year, wrote that the ranking boost had come at the right time as she aims to secure a Paris Olympics berth.

"An extreme confidence boost on the road to Paris 2024. Breaking into the Top-25 and achieving the best rank ever achieved by an Indian in women's singles of the ITTF Ranking," wrote Manika.

Manika also thanked her coach Aman Balgu and sparring partner Kirill Barabanov of Belarus for her success.

"Thank you, everyone, for your blessings and support. Especially my coach @amanbalgu, my sparring partner @kirill_barabanov and my family for the constant support. Onward and upward towards Paris 2024," she added. (PTI)

Will ending 'Impact Player' rule bring down IPL high scores? DC head coach Ponting says no

NEW DELHI, May 14: Delhi Capitals head coach and former Australia captain Ricky Ponting believes high-scoring games will continue to be a norm in the IPL even if the muchdebated 'Impact Player' rule is discontinued.

The Impact Player rule allows teams to replace one of the original XI announced at the toss at any point during the match.

It has divided opinions with some like India captain Rohit Sharma calling it detrimental for all-rounders as they don't get a chance to bowl while some others like Sourav Ganguly describing it as a good innovation.

"...there is a talk if the impact player remains in the IPL, if it doesn't, will the scores come down again? I am interested to see that. I am not sure they will," the three-time World Cup winner said during the release of Delhi Capitals' batting coach Pravin Amre's autobiography 'Zero FOR 5: The Thrilling Cricket Journey of Pravin Amre' here on Monday.

"Yes, the impact player does provide a bit of cushion for the guys at the top but I think the guys at the top are so used to going out and playing a certain way.

NEW DELHI, May 14: National

Cricket Academy head and former

India great VVS Laxman looks

best placed to replace Rahul Dravid

as the chief coach of the men's na-

tional team if the latter decides

against reapplying for the high-pro-

file job. With BCCI secretary Jay

Shah ruling out possibility of hav-

ing different coaches for red and

white ball formats, it will be a hunt

for one candidate, who will have to

live out of a suitcase for majority of

Dravid, whose contract ends

However with BCCI seeking ap-

plications from interested parties

after the T20 World Cup, will be

well within his rights to reapply for

the next three and half years.

the post.

"I mean imagine trying to tell Jake Fraser-McGurk to play a different way or tell Travis

Head to be a little bit defensive, that's just not going to happen," he explained.

This year, the 200-mark has been breached 36 times so far in the IPL, compared to the overall count of 37 the previous edition. BCCI secretary Jay Shah has stated that the rule can be reconsidered if that's what the stakeholders would like at the end of the IPL.

Ponting also spoke about the challenges that a coach faces while handling a franchise. He said the job is more difficult than coaching a national team.

"I think it is a lot more difficult being a

coach of a franchise team because the different nationalities involved, a few Australian coaches, couple of Australian players, couple of South African players, we have New Zealanders, we have Nepalese part of our squad over the journey," he said.

"And the hardest part of coaching with the franchise is only getting the players together for a few days before the first game of the season, when you are trying to create culture around the team, you haven't got much time with the players.

"It's really hard to do that, it is also hard to make big skill changes in such a short period

Coach Ki Khoj: Laxman looks best bet to replace

Dravid but will Langer, Gambhir be interested?

by May 27, a day after the IPL

final, it is understood that the par-

ent body is keen to hire a fresh

PTI looks at some of the big

If he applies for the top post,

Laxman will be a runaway

favourite. The 49-year-old has been

NCA's head for past three years

and is overseeing the development

of next batch of Indian cricketers

through board's pathways system

He has also had experience of

coaching the senior team when

Dravid was in leave. The Indian

team under his guidance played in

(India A and India U19).

names who could be interested in

applying for the post.

VVS Laxman:

of time," he listed the difficulties of the job.

Talking about the evolution of the game in the last decade, Ponting said the space for batters with "classical technique" is shrinking.

"Look at the way England are trying to play now, they haven't got it exactly right yet...players have come through playing a lot of one-day or T20 cricket," he said.

"...there still is room for purist batsmen in Test match cricket, but that's going to be less and less," he pointed out.

Ponting said Indian superstar Virat Kohli and Englishman Joe Root are among the few top batters with a classical technique.

"...in the last 10 years there is not a lot of classical technique in the modern day batters, you look at the absolute best now, Joe Root is probably the most classical one,"

"Stephen Smith, what he has done over the years has been a little bit different, Marnus Labuschagne has been a bit different with the way he plays, Virat is classically, technically very good as well, but I think there is a bit of a shift." he said.

Speaking at the same event, Amre said his book underlines the importance of having a good mentor. (PTI)

man management skills.

Under him, a rejuvenated KKR

are back in play-offs but a proud

man that he is, will Gambhir apply

on his own if he isn't sent feelers

by the BCCI top brass? Also, his

deep emotional attachment with

KKR and a personal bond with

principal owner Shah Rukh Khan

that he is -- a strong minded individ-

ual who would love a free hand. Virat

Kohli will also be around for the bet-

ter part of the next three years and

given the history between both of

them, it could be a rocky terrain. But

it must be mentioned that Gambhir

and current skipper Rohit Sharma

share a terrific relationship. (PTI)

The other aspect is the person

could stop him from applying.

Injured Taskin Ahmed receives surprise call-up to B'desh T20 WC squad

DHAKA, May 14: Despite nursing a side strain, pacer Taskin Ahmed was on Tuesday included in Bangladesh's squad for the T20 World Cup to be held in the Americas next month.

Ahmed, who has also been named the vice-captain, picked up the in-

jury ahead of the fifth T20I against Zimbabwe last week.

But before that the 29-year-old had a great outing in the series, bag-

ging eight wickets in four games at an impressive economy rate of 4.56. The Tigers will be led by Najmul Hossain Shanto, as all the familiar and experienced players have been included in the squad of 15. Opener Litton Das too has been named in the squad despite his poor recent form. Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is the senior-most player in the

squad, having featured in every event since its inception in 2007.

Bangladesh will start their campaign against Sri Lanka on June 7 in Dallas, Texas. They have been clubbed in Group D, which also has South

Dallas, Texas. They have been clubbed in Group D, which also has South Africa, Netherlands and Nepal.

It will be their ninth straight appearance in the tournament, qualifying this time based on the T20I Team Rankings criteria set by the Interna-

tional Cricket Council.

Bangladesh squad: Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Taskin Ahmed (vc),
Litton Das Soumya Sarkar Tanzid Hasan Shakib Al Hasan Towbid

Litton Das, Soumya Sarkar, Tanzid Hasan, Shakib Al Hasan, Towhid Hridoy, Mahmudullah, Jaker Ali, Tanvir Islam, Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan.

Travelling reserves: Hasan Mahmud, Afif Hossain. (PTI)

Teams where coaches work behind scenes and give players freedom do better: Rayudu

NEW DELHI, May 14: Former India cricketer Ambati Rayudu has no doubts that IPL teams that empower their players to take "ownership" are the ones likely to be more successful compared to those who leave decision-making in the hands of coaches.

In a discussion on what goes into keeping the team environment healthy, the former India and Chennai Super Kings player cited Kolkata Knight Riders mentor Gautam Gambhir's example. He loves the manner in which Gambhir gives his players the freedom to perform and according to him, it has been the key to the two-time IPL champions' run of success so far this season.

"If the coaches take a back-seat and work behind the scenes, and let the players take the ownership, and let the players have the freedom in order to perform on the ground, tose are the sort of teams that excel, and that is what KKR has been doing," Rayudu, a veteran of 55 ODIs and six T20Is told Star Sports on Tuesday.

Star Sports on Tuesday.

KKR, the IPL winners in 2012



and 2014 under Gambhir's captaincy, became the first team the enter the playoffs this season and are currently on 19 points after

Gambhir returned as KKR mentor this season and his presence is being attributed to the team's resurgence after nearly a decade

resurgence after nearly a decade.
"Gautam Gambhir is just facilitating them and guiding them in the right direction... If you keep it

simple, it is easy," added Rayudu, who has been part of six IPL-winning teams.

Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh applauded ex-KKR coach Brendon McCullum for bringing positivity into the dressing room irrespective of whether the team won or lost.

"When I was part of KKR, Brendon was there. Brilliant coach. One of the top guys I have ever worked with. He was so positive in that dressing room. Whether you win or lose, he remained the same.

the Asian Games, bilateral T20s

versus Australia at home and away

series in England, New Zealand and Ireland. With the likes of Rohit

Sharma, Virat Kohli, Ravindra

Jadeja, Mohammed Shami still

around for at least two more years.

Laxman with his cricketing acu-

men and genial demeanour could

be the bridge between old and new

Among those who have played

top flight cricket in the last 10 years

and saw formats evolve, Gambhir's

tactical nous cannot be ignored.

Two IPL titles as captain with

KKR, back-to-back play-offs with

LSG in their first two years, Gamb-

hir has always been praised for his

in Indian cricket.

Gautam Gambhir:

"We lost about 6-7 games at the start of that season, and we ended up qualifying for the final. I have not seen even a single change in Brendon McCullum when we were not winning and when we were winning," said Harbhajan about the former New Zealand cricketer, who left KKR in 2022 to become England Test coach.

He added that it was the duty of mentors and coaches to keep the players in a positive frame of mind. "He (McCullum) was just very humble, straightforward, and for him, everybody was equal. So that is what is very important to make sure the team is important. It is about those players going there and doing what they have to do to make sure they lift the cup.

"It is our duty as mentors or coaches to give them the best we can and keep them in good shape. Not just physically but also mentally because that plays a very big role." (PTI)

We will try out best combinations before final squad for Olympics is selected: Harmanpreet



BENGALURU, May 14: India will put to test its best strategies and combinations during the European leg of the FIH Pro League as it would be the last opportunity to shortlist the final squad for the Paris Olympics, said men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh on Tuesday.

The team left for Antwerp, Belgium on Tuesday for the challenging league, where the winner of this season will be determined. India, currently third in the points table, behind the Netherlands and Australia, will play Belgium and Argentina in Antwerp between May

22 and 26. It will be followed by matches against Germany and Great Britain from June 1-9 in London. "We are trying out the best combinations before the final squad is selected for the Olympics. Hence, the Pro League outing is crucial in our preparations for Paris as well as for players to make it to the 16-member squad for Paris," said drag-flicker Harmanpreet in a Hockey India release before the team left for Europe.

Last month, India, the Tokyo Olympics bronze medallists, lost all their five matches in Australia, raising doubts about their preparations for the Paris Games. Harmanpreet said the team will focus on eliminating any chinks in its armour ahead of Paris.

"The team is quite excited to get back on the road again for yet another challenging outing where we will take on world's best teams in the Pro League. We will be travelling on the back of a very intense training camp over the past few weeks where we focused on our conditioning and played intrasquad matches regularly. "The team is shaping well and

the Pro League is an important event for us to iron out the flaws in our execution ahead of the Olympics," said Harmanpreet.

The skipper said the Pro League will not just help him asses his team's preparations but also provide cues into the rivals' strategies. "We have Belgium and Argentina in our pool at the Olympics along with Australia, Ireland and New Zealand. We play Belgium and Argentina both in Antwerp. Harmanpreet hoped that after finishing third in the last few seasons of the Pro League, his team would stake claim to the title this time around. (PTI)

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