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Govt, oppn face-off on protem Speaker issue ahead of first LS session

NEW DELHI, June 22: Ahead of the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha, the NDA government and the INDIA bloc sparred on the issue of Pro-tem Speaker with Parliamentary Affairs minister Kiren Rijiju accusing the Congress of resorting to lies and the opposition threatening to refuse to join the panel of chairpersons in the House.

President Droupadi Murmu had appointed BJP leader and seven-term member Bhartruhari Mahtab as the Pro-tem Speaker of the Lok Sabha, who is tasked with administering the oath and affirmation to the newly-elected members of the lower house and preside over the election of the Speaker.

The President had also named five senior members -? K Suresh (Congress), T R Baalu (DMK), Radha Mohan Singh and Faggan Singh Kulaste (both BJP) and Sudip Bandyopadhyay (TMC) to assist Mahtab in the process that will take place over the first three days of the Lok Sabha Session commencing on June 24.

The Congress had alleged that the government has violated procedures and conventions and ignored the right of eight-term member Suresh to the post of the pro-tem Speaker, a claim dismissed as "misleading" by Rijiju.

On Saturday, opposition sources said Suresh, Baalu and Bandyopadhyay may not join the panel of chairpersons to assist pro-tem speaker Mahtab in adminis-



tering the oath to the newly elected members of the Lok Sabha. Rijiju had asserted that Mahtab was the senior-most in the House as he was elected for seven uninterrupted terms to the Lok Sabha, while Suresh, though an eight-term member, was not a member in 1998 and 2004.

Suresh had said his claim to the post of pro-tem speaker was overlooked as he belonged to the Dalit community, remarks that were scoffed at by Rijiju.

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala said the Congress had deliberately insulted a "tribal" Parliamentary Affairs Minister by lying on the issue of pro-tem speaker. "Congress has always insulted Tribals. They called Droupadi (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Ensure no spillover of Manipur unrest, CM tells Cachar admin

Tight vigil maintained in areas bordering Manipur after Jiribam incidents

GUWAHATI, June 22: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday asked the Cachar administration to ensure that peace is maintained in the district and there is no spillover of violence from neighbouring Manipur. Following incidents of ethnic violence in Manipur's Jiribam in the first week of June, many people from the state have taken refuge in adjoining Cachar district in southern Assam.

"Dr @himantabiswa held a video conference with @dcachar and SP @cacharpolice on the recent incidents in Jiribam, Manipur and instructed them to ensure peace and tranquillity are maintained in Cachar," the chief minister's office (CMO) posted on X. Sarma instructed the district



commissioner and superintendent of police to ensure that all humanitarian aid is provided to the people

from Manipur who have taken refuge in Assam. The state's chief secretary and

director general of police, along with other officials, were also present in the meeting, the CMO added. Tight vigil is being maintained in areas bordering Manipur to ensure there is no spillover of violence into Assam, a police officer said, adding patrolling and area domination is being conducted.

Jiribam, which has a diverse ethnic composition of Meiteis, Muslims, Nagas, Kukis and non-Manipuris, had so far remained unaffected by the ethnic strife that has been raging in Manipur since May last year. The ethnic conflict between Imphal valley-based Meiteis and hill-based Kukis has led to the deaths of over 200 people, and rendered thousands of people homeless. (PTI)

HT BRIEFS

Students' felicitation

BOKAJAN: The ceremony of felicitation and distribution of appreciation certificates to the students who passed the high school and higher secondary examinations 2024 was held in the premises of Radhakrishna Vivah Bhawan here in Karbi Anglong. The programme was organised by Bokajan Zonal Unit of Akhil Assam Bhojipuri Parishad in which two hundred and sixty-eight students were felicitated with flowers and appreciation letters. Deputy Speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly and local MLA, Dr. Numal Momin attended as the chief guest. Executive Member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Mukut Mahant; Chairman of the Education Board of KAAC, Sardilli Bey and others attended the programme.

Fish seeds

BOKAJAN: Karbi Students Association (KSA- Inglong Pho), Bokajan Regional Committee (BRC) released 15,000 fish seeds of various fishes into the Vomulango River in Karbi Anglong in Bokajan Sub-Division to create awareness on the environment. The fish seeds included Rohu, Mirga and Grass Carp. Secretary of KSA, George Timung while releasing the fish seeds said forest cover is being depleted over time. The government is also undertaking afforestation to increase the green cover.

Baan Theatre

GUWAHATI: Baan Theatre, one of Assam's earliest and premier theatre organisations, awarded the inaugural Baan Theatre Loka Shilpi Bota (Baan Theatre Folk Artist Award) to renowned folk artist Dhanada Pathak, popularly known as the 'Empress of Folk Song'. The ceremony took place on Saturday at Baan Theatre to commemorate the 56th death anniversary of Assamese cultural luminary Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha.

Flood situation improves marginally; toll rises to 39

GUWAHATI, June 22: The flood situation in Assam improved marginally as the number of affected people and districts decreased though two more deaths were reported, an official bulletin said on Saturday.

Two deaths were reported in the state in the last 24 hours, taking the toll in this year's flood, landslide and storm to 39, an Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin said.

Rivers Kopili and Kushiyara continued to flow above the danger level at Dharamtul and Karimganj respectively.

The number of affected population is currently at 2,63,452 in 12 districts - Barpeta, Kamrup, Bajali, Goalpara, Nagaon, Hojai, Udalguri, Karimganj, Darrang, Nalbari, Kam-

rup Metropolitan and Cachar.

More than 3.90 lakh people were reeling under the deluge in 19 districts on Friday.

Karimganj continued to be the worst-hit district with 1,39,989 people still remaining affected, followed by Darrang with 56,863 affected population.

The affected population in the state is spread across 33 revenue districts and 1,027 villages, the ASDMA bulletin said.

Cropland of 3,995.33 hectares was still under flood waters, while 2,20,546 animals, including 47,795 poultry, remain affected.

As many as 134 relief camps have been set up, sheltering 17,661 inmates, while another 94 relief distribution centres are also operational in the state. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Intention of Centre to levy GST on petrol, diesel; states will have to decide on rate'

NEW DELHI, June 22: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the intention of the central government has always been to bring petrol and diesel under GST, and it is now up to the states to come together and decide on the rate. She said a provision has already been made by former finance minister Arun Jaitley by including petrol and diesel into GST law. What is remaining is for the states to come together to discuss and decide on the rate of the levy.

"The intention of the GST, as was brought in by former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, was to have petrol and diesel in GST. It is up to the states now... to decide on the rate. The intent of my predecessor was very clear, we want petrol and diesel to come into GST," Sitharaman said. When GST was introduced on July 1, 2017, amalgamating over a

dozen central and state levies, five commodities - crude oil, natural gas, petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) - were included in GST law but it was decided that it would be taxed under GST at a later date. This meant that the central government continued to levy excise duty on them, while state governments charged VAT. These taxes, with excise duty, in particular, have been raised periodically.

Sitharaman said the intent of the Central government when GST was implemented was that eventually sometime (later) petrol and diesel can be brought into GST.

"Provision has already been made that it can be brought into GST. One and only decision which is expected is for the states to agree and come to the GST Council and then decide what rate they will agree on. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Fresh plea in SC seeks CBI, ED enquiry into NEET-UG exam

NEW DELHI, June 22: A fresh plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the CBI and the ED to investigate alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG held on May 5.

The petition, filed by 10 students who had appeared for the exam, has also sought a direction to Bihar Police to expedite the investigation in the case and file a report before the apex court.

"The petitioners are fully aware of the ramifications of the cancellation of the examination but there is absolutely no other alternative."

"The NEET UG Examination of 2024 had many other irregularities, in particular, the gross negligence on the part of the authorities to make the question papers available to the candidates on time. In some places, the wrong set of question papers was distributed and later recalled,"



the plea said.

The top court had earlier sought responses from the Centre, the National Testing Agency (NTA) and others on a slew of petitions, including those seeking scrapping of the NEET-UG 2024 exam and a court-monitored probe, amid mounting outrage over alleged irregularities in conducting the all-India medical entrance test.

The apex court had also stayed further proceedings on similar pleas

pending before different high courts.

The top court, however, had made it clear that it would not stay the counselling process.

The examination was held on May 5 across 4,750 centres and around 24 lakh candidates appeared. The results were expected to be declared on June 14 but were announced on June 4, apparently because the evaluation of the answer sheets was completed earlier.

The allegations of irregularities have led to protests in several cities and sparring between rival political parties.

As many as 67 students scored a perfect 720, unprecedented in the NTA's history, with six from a centre in Haryana's Faridabad figuring in the list, raising suspicions about irregularities. It has been alleged that grace (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

First cadaveric kidney transplant in NE takes place in Guwahati: Himanta

GUWAHATI, June 22: The first-ever successful cadaveric kidney transplant in the Northeast has been carried out at a state-run hospital in Guwahati, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed on Saturday.

He said two kidneys from a brain-dead accident victim were transplanted to two persons recently at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), with both the receivers making good recovery.

Addressing a press conference, Sarma said, "Kidney transplants have been taking place at the GMCH for the last six years. But it was for the first time that a kidney transplant was successfully carried out from a brain-dead donor, with permission from the family."

Such a procedure was attempted at the GMCH previously as well, but without success, Sarma, who has recently taken over the health portfolio, added.

He claimed that the successful procedure at the government-run hospital was the first such cadaveric kidney transplant in the entire northeastern region.

Cadaveric transplant involves removal of organs from a brain-dead donor with functional circulation, or from patients with sudden cardiac death.

The kidneys were retrieved from donor Parag Gogoi, a Guwahati resident who was an accident victim and admitted to the GMCH, with the consent of his family. One kidney each was transplanted to 38-year-old Amar Basfor of Guwahati, and 21-year-old Pallab Jyoti Das

of Nagaon. "We are extremely grateful to the family of Gogoi for showing such big-heartedness. Their act has ensured a healthy life for two persons," he said.

Stressing the need for encouraging families to donate organs, the CM said, "We must recognise publicly whenever a family comes forward. This will create awareness on organ donation and encourage more people to come forward."

He rued that in many instances when families are approached for organ donation, they demand "something in return" and lauded the move by Gogoi's next of kin for their noble step.

He mentioned how in other states, especially in southern India, liver and kidneys are routinely donated in such instances, with hospitals having a list of intended receivers ready.

Sarma said that if organ donation is encouraged, illegal organ trafficking can be stopped.

Another recent success at the GMCH has been IVF-induced pregnancies, the CM said, adding that 36 embryos have been successfully transferred to wombs, eight pregnancies have been reported and one child born through caesarean section.

Another critical procedure of bone marrow transplant is being done at GMCH in recent times, with 28 cases already successfully dealt with and three more patients currently receiving treatment (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Probe ordered into Lawkhua-Burachapari forest encounter

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday directed the chief secretary of the state to immediately initiate an inquiry into the incident where two individuals were killed in an encounter in Nagaon's Lawkhua-Burachapari Reserve Forest.

The directive follows the deaths of Samaruddin (35) and Abdul Jalil (40) during an encounter with patrolling forest guards.

"Last night, individuals from Sutirpari village trespassed into Lawkhua-Burachapari Reserve Forest. During an encounter with patrolling forest guards, a guard opened fire in self-defense, resulting in their deaths. I have instructed the Chief Secretary of Assam to promptly form an inquiry to thoroughly investigate the incident," Sarma wrote on micro-blogging site X.

As per the police, the deceased, identified as brothers, were reportedly fishing illegally inside the forest reserve at Roumari Beel. When confronted by forest guards, they allegedly attempted to flee, prompting the guards to open fire. Upon (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Two held with suspected heroin in Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: Special Task Force (STF) of Assam police on Saturday apprehended two alleged drug peddlers with suspected heroin weighing 54 grams, said an official statement.

The duo, identified as 34-year-old Raju Deka alias petla and 55-year-old Chandan Chettri alias Kancha were apprehended during a raid near Koinadhara traffic point under Basisitha police station jurisdiction. "Based on reliable input, raid was conducted at the near Koinadhara traffic point under Basisitha PS jurisdiction by STF, Assam (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Lakhs of devotees attend the mela and wait for the resumption of worship

Kamakhya temple's doors closed as annual Ambubachi Mela begins



GUWAHATI, June 22: The annual Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya temple, atop Nilachal hills in Assam's Guwahati, commenced on Saturday

with worship stopped for the next four days, coinciding with the ritualistic annual menstrual cycle of the goddess.

Lakhs of devotees attend the mela and wait for the resumption of worship and pay obeisance to the goddess.

Temple authorities said the doors were closed at 8.43 am with the start of 'prabriti' and worship will resume at 9.07 pm on June 25 after 'niribriti'. On June 26, the temple door will open for darshan after a ritualistic bath and daily puja, they said. Worship is stopped and doors are closed in the temple for four days annually, when the goddess is believed to undergo her menstrual cycle.

Devotees from different parts of the country and abroad converge at the annual mela, which is held in the temple premises during the period.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, in a post on X in Hindi, welcomed the devotees to the mela. "On the occasion of Ambubachi Mela, I welcome the sandhus and devotees," he wrote.

Arrangements have been made by the Kamrup Metropolitan district administration and other agencies for the smooth conduct of the Mela, an official statement said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Defer implementation of new criminal laws: Jairam Ramesh

NEW DELHI, June 22: Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday demanded that the enforcement of the three criminal laws, which are to come into force from July 1, be deferred, saying the Bills were "bulldozed" through Parliament.

In a post on X, Ramesh said the implementation of the Bills be deferred to enable a thorough review and re-examination by a reconstituted Standing Committee on Home Affairs as they were passed at a time when 146 MPs had been suspended.

"On Dec 25 2023, the President of India had given her assent to the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. The three far-reaching Bills had been bulldozed through Parliament without proper debate and discussion, and at a time when 146 MPs had been suspended from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha," Ramesh said.



"Earlier the Bills had been bulldozed through the Standing Committee on Home Affairs without detailed interactions with stakeholders across the country and completely ignoring the written and very detailed dissent notes of a number of MPs belonging to different political parties, including the Indian National Congress, who were members of the Standing Commit-

tee," he said.

Ramesh said the three new laws are to come into effect from July 1, 2024, and the Congress is of the firm opinion that the date should be deferred to enable a thorough review and re-examination of the laws by the reconstituted Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

He said the panel should have more extensive and meaningful consultations with various legal experts and organisations "who have serious concerns on the three laws as they stand", after which it should be scrutinised by the 18th Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha as well.

On Friday, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee had written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding deferment of the implementation of the three criminal laws, saying they were "hurriedly passed". Similar demands have been made by the DMK as well. (PTI)

Govt buys 71,000 tons of onion for buffer stock

Expects retail prices to ease with normal monsoon

NEW DELHI, June 22: The government has bought nearly 71,000 tonnes of onion so far this year for buffer stock, out of the total target of procuring 5 lakh tonnes for price stabilisation and it expects retail prices to ease with the progress of monsoon over most parts of the country.

According to data compiled by the department of consumer affairs, the all-India average onion retail prices stood at ₹ 38.67 per kg on Friday, while the modal price was ₹ 40 per kg.

Till June 20th, the Centre has procured 70,987 tonnes of onion, as against 74,071 tonnes procured in the same period last year, a senior official in the department of consumer affairs said.

"The pace of onion procurement for price stabilisation buffer this year is largely comparable with last year, despite about 20 per cent decline in estimated rabi production," the official said, adding that the government is on course to achieve targeted procurement of 5 lakh tonnes for price stabilisation.

The government will exercise the option of holding or releasing



onions from the buffer in order to maintain stability in prices of onion, the official said.

The procurement price is a dynamic one, linked to prevailing market prices.

The increase in prices of onion is on account of a shortfall in production in 2023-24 by about 20 per cent each in Kharif, late Kharif and Rabi, over the previous year due to less rains in major producing areas, the official explained.

To control prices, the govern-

ment has been taking measures in a graded manner, from August last year starting with export duty of 40 per cent, followed by Minimum Export Price (MEP) of USD 800 per tonne in October, 2024 and imposition of export prohibition from December 8, 2023. These measures have helped in maintaining domestic availability of onion at reasonably stable prices.

Export prohibition had been lifted from May 4, 2024 with MEP of USD 550 per tonne and 40 per

cent export duty in view of substantial stability observed in major mandis like Lasalgaon, in Maharashtra and the prospect of good Kharif production on the back of above-normal monsoon prediction this year.

"The prolonged and extreme heatwave condition currently prevailing over large parts of the country has impacted the production of green vegetables and led to increase in prices of vegetables including tomato, potato and onion," the official said, adding that the situation is expected to ease with the onset of monsoon over most parts of the country.

In March, the Union Agriculture Ministry released the data for onion production. As per the data, onion production in 2023-24 (First Advance Estimates) is expected to be around 254.73 lakh tonnes, compared to around 302.08 lakh tonnes last year.

This is due to a decrease of 34.31 lakh tonnes output in Maharashtra, 9.95 lakh tonnes in Karnataka, 3.54 lakh tonnes in Andhra Pradesh and 3.12 lakh tonnes in Rajasthan, the data showed. (PTI)

Sitharaman underlines Centre's support to states via timely tax devolution, GST compensation arrears

NEW DELHI, June 22: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday underlined Centre's support to states through timely tax devolution and GST compensation arrears to stimulate growth.

At the pre-budget meeting with state finance ministers, Sitharaman also nudged states to take advantage of the scheme under which the Centre gives 50-year interest free loan to states for undertaking specified reforms.

In her remarks, the Union Finance Minister underlined the union government's support to states through timely tax devolution, Finance Commission grants, and arrears of GST Compensation being provided for providing stimulus to growth, an official statement said.

Regarding the 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment', Sitharaman mentioned that while most of the loans are untied, a part of it is conditional-linked to citizen-centric reforms by states and sector-specific capital projects and requested the states to avail these loans by fulfilling requisite criteria.

Most states appreciated the centre's 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' and gave some suggestions for further improvement.

The participants also gave several valuable suggestions to the Union Finance Minister for inclusion in the Union Budget for FY 2024-25, along with some State-specific requests, the statement added.

Rajasthan FM and Deputy CM Diya Kumari told



reporters that the state has asked for a hike in allocation towards Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP), Jal Jeevan Mission (JIM), certain national highways projects and railway lines.

Karnataka Finance Minister Krishna Byre Gowda sought releasing ₹ 5,300 crore of already announced assistance for Upper Bhadra Water Project and declare it a national project.

He also sought inclusion of cesses and surcharges into a divisible pool so that states get their rightful share in central taxes.

Gowda also sought an increase in the central share to beneficiaries in housing schemes from ₹ 1.5 lakh to ₹ 5 lakh in urban areas and from ₹ 1.2 lakh to ₹ 3 lakh in rural areas. (PTI)

India's PSUs engine of growth, development: Union Minister Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI, June 22: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said the country's public sector undertakings have lived up to the global benchmarks and they are the engine of its growth and development.

Addressing an event here, he said "India, today excels in most of the global benchmarks, in some areas it is at par with other big nations, whereas in other areas it is much ahead of them."

Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, praised the public sector undertakings (PSUs) for their consistent contribution to the Indian economy and being the en-

gines of growth and development.

The rise of the Indian economy has been possible due to the contribution of the PSUs, he said.

The PSUs have lived up to the global benchmarks and standards, the minister said. "It is due to their unparalleled efforts that India has risen in the global innovation index. Today, it is ranked 40 worldwide, ahead of many economies of comparable size, whereas it was at rank 81 in 2014," Singh was quoted as having said in a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry. The reason why Indian PSUs have excelled in present times is because they have given

up the hesitation to incorporate private players, he said, while attending the 1st "ET Government PSU awards" organised by the 'Economic Times'.

Recognising their efforts, the minister also awarded various PSUs in different categories.

"In the category of skill development, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) received the gold award while Bhashini was awarded gold in the adoption of AI and predictive technology category. "Other categories were employee self-service where HPCL was the recipient of the gold award." (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Govt, oppn face-off on

Murmu ji Rashtrapati and they even abused her," Poonawala said. Rijju said he may be the first tribal to occupy the post of Parliamentary Affairs Minister but he won't be intimidated by the threats and lies of Congress party.

"I will be bound by rules and will strictly follow Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's mantra of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas," he said.

Earlier, Congress leader K C Venugopal had described the overlooking of Suresh's claim to the Pro-tem Speaker post as an attempt at "destroying parliamentary norms". "I have said this before and say this now, the battle for saving our democracy and constitution isn't over yet," Shiv Sena leader Aditya Thackeray said in a post on X.

CPI general secretary D Raja said even after a serious reprimand by the people by cutting the BJP in size, they have not understood the seminal importance of democracy, consultation, parliamentary norms and opposition for the country.

"However, the totalitarian BJP cannot see an opposition member even as Speaker pro tem and thus appointed a turncoat BJP MP to the post," Raja said. Mahtab, a BJP member from Cuttack, Odisha was appointed as pro tem Speaker by President Murmu under Article 95(1) of the Constitution to perform the duties of the Lok Sabha presiding officer till the election of the Speaker on June 26. (PTI)

Flood situation improves

A total of 54 persons were evacuated in Kamrup district by local administration and NDRF personnel, while 16 boats have been deployed in rescue operations in different parts.

Eleven medical teams have also been deployed in the affected areas, the ASDMA bulletin said. Damage to various infrastructures like houses, cattle sheds, roads, bridges and embankments, have been reported from across the state, it added. (PTI)

Fresh plea in SC seeks

marks contributed to 67 students sharing the top rank. The NEET-UG examination is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country. (PTI)

'Intention of Centre to levy

"Once the states agree in the council, they will have to decide what will be the rate of taxation. Once that decision is taken it will be put in the Act," Sitharaman told reporters after the 53rd GST Council meeting. Including oil products in GST will not just help companies set off tax that they paid on input but will also bring about uniformity in taxation on fuels in the country. (PTI)

First cadaveric kidney transplant

at the hospital, he added. "The GMCH is becoming a super-speciality hospital in the true sense now. And once work at Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital (MMCH) (also in Guwahati) is completed, the city will have even more facilities," the CM said.

He said the government is working to make the state-run hospitals self-reliant financially by proper use of health insurance schemes such as Ayushman Bharat in these establishments. "If the government hospitals provide treatment to the card holders, they will get reimbursement from the relevant authorities. This will save a lot of government money," he added.

Sarma said the use of Ayushman Bharat and such government health insurance schemes in private hospitals will be controlled and made limited to hospitals providing super-speciality services.

"We have seen that many private hospitals with very limited facilities are surviving by claiming reimbursement from the government after providing very simple procedures to their patients. This needs to stop and we are working on it," he added. (PTI)

Kamakhya temple's doors closed

Camping facilities for 5,000 persons have been set up at the Kamakhya railway station and for 12,000-15,000 people at the main holding area in Pandu port. Provision for VIP passes has been stopped for the time being, while the road leading to the main temple has been closed for all vehicles except emergency and utility vehicles.

Strict regulations for food and water distribution to visitors by institutions have been issued, with no arbitrary distribution to be allowed, the statement said. Provisions for toilets, street lights, health camps and barricades on roads at certain locations have been made, it added. (PTI)

Probe ordered into Lawkhua-

hearing about the incident, local MLA Hurul Huda, visiting the residence of the deceased, emphasised the need for an inquiry and demanded compensation for the victims' families. "If they were trying to escape, they should have been shot in the leg. The forest department must explain why these two poor fishermen were killed and provide compensation to their families," stated the Congress legislator.

Villagers described the deceased as fishermen who had previously fished at Roumari Beel. (With inputs from PTI)

Two held with suspected

this afternoon (22.06.2024) and below mentioned drugs peddlers have been apprehended," the statement added.

Apart from drugs, the STF also cash ₹ 2500 and two mobile phones. Additionally, the police also recovered one .32 pistol like metallic gas lighter, and three keypad mobile phone etc from Deka. Both the alleged drug peddlers are from Barpeta and Golaghat. "Necessary formalities are being done into the matter," the statement concluded.

GRSE to construct four multi-purpose cargo ships for German shipping firm

KOLKATA, June 22: Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd on Saturday signed an agreement with a Germany-based shipping company for the construction and delivery of four multi-purpose cargo vessels, an official said.

The contract is worth approximately USD 54 million and the order is to be executed in 33 months. GRSE informed the National Stock Exchange and BSE. GRSE signed the agreement with shipping company Carsten Rehder Schiffsmakler und Reederei GmbH and Co. KG, Germany, for the construction and delivery of four multi-purpose vessels with an option of building another four ships in near future, the GRSE official said in a statement.

The vessels will be 120 metres long and 17 metres wide and can carry 7,500 metric tonnes of cargo each, the GRSE official said. The vessels will have a single cargo hold each to accommodate bulk, general and project cargoes, with provision for carrying containers on hatch covers, he said, adding that the ships have been specifically designed to carry multiple large windmill blades on deck. The agreement was signed here by Commodore Shantanu Bose, (retd), director (shipbuilding) for GRSE and Carsten Thomas Rehder, managing director for the German shipping company in the presence of Chairman and Managing Director of GRSE, Commodore P R Hari, (retd). The Kolkata-based PSU warship maker has been actively pursuing exports in both maritime and commercial vessels and has built and delivered an offshore patrol vessel to Mauritius, a fast patrol vessel to Seychelles and a passenger-cum-cargo ocean-going ferry to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the official said. (PTI)

NEGTA 45th Garments fair in Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: The North Eastern Garments Traders Association (NEGTA) organised a Garments Fair named 45th Buyers and Sellers meet with the aim to uplift small traders of Assam and NE. Keeping this in mind, a three-day Buyer's and Sellers meet was organized by NEGTA from Saturday. Under the aegis of NEGTA, the 45th Buyers and Sellers Meet was inaugurated on Saturday by president Shekhar Agrawal among others.

During inauguration president of the organization Shekhar Agarwal said The North Eastern Garments Traders Association (NEGTA) is an umbrella platform for those involved in the apparel and accessory industry. This Buyers and Sellers meet provides small business owners with an opportunity to network with Indian manufacturers and suppliers to purchase and sell their latest Indian designs and collections.

He further said since its inception, North Eastern Garment Traders Association (NEGTA) Buyers and Sellers meet, organised twice a Year, is India's most respected Garment Fair connecting the National and regional brands, manufacturers, designers of apparel and fashion accessories to the North East Retailers and their distribution channels including high street retailers, agents & distributors.

Speaking on the occasion general secretary of NEGTA Varun Rungta said this time the 45th Garment meet has been organized keeping in mind the upcoming festivals and Autumn-Winter collection. On behalf of NEGTA, this meet was organized at Hotel Daaysco.

ICICI Prudential Life offers 15% lifetime discount for women

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance on Saturday announced a lifetime discount of 15% exclusively for women on all the premiums to be paid, for its best-selling term insurance product, iProtect Smart.

Additionally, salaried women will be eligible for an extra 15% discount on the first year's premium, empowering them to provide financial security to themselves and their loved ones.

iProtect Smart combined with the critical illness benefit, provides cover against 34 critical illnesses including ailments such as breast, ovarian, uterine and cervical cancers. This combination offers benefits of both health and life insurance.

Importantly, the critical illness cover amount is paid out on diagnosis, providing the requisite financial resources for seeking immediate medical treatment, without disrupting the family's savings.

As per The Lancet estimates, the incidence of cancer diagnosed in the under 50 years adult age group had a higher ratio of women. A single hospitalisation can cost upwards of ₹ 1 lakh in an urban private hospital, hence, it is essential for women to plan availability of financial resources to treat such critical ailments.

Commenting on this announcement, Amit Palta, chief distribution officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance said, "We recognise the sacrifices women make as caregivers and guardians to ensure the well-being of their families. To celebrate the indomitable spirit of women we are proud to offer a lifetime discount of 15% on all premiums to be paid for our most popular term insurance product, iProtect Smart. Working women are equal contributors to household finances, they play crucial roles of

being 'protectors' and 'providers.' As part of our commitment to empower them to be financially secure we are offering an additional discount of 15% to salaried women on the first year's premium."

He further stated, "We have seen a rising interest amongst women for both protection as well as long-term savings plans as seen through our consistent business growth in the women segment over the last few years. As the share of working women in the country's workforce continues to rise, they will need life insurance to provide financial security to themselves and their loved ones. With our approach of 'right product to the right customer' we believe, the women segment holds significant growth potential going forward. We believe, iProtect Smart will enable them to ring-fence their long-term financial savings plan, as it can act as an income replacement tool for the family in case of any eventuality."

He went on to state, "This affordable and attractive offering exclusively for women is backed by our commitment to deliver on the promise we make. This is reflected in our industry leading claim settlement ratio of 99.17% for FY2024 with an average claim settlement turnaround time of just 1.27 days."

iProtect Smart provides financial protection against life's uncertainties, including death, terminal illness and disability at affordable premiums. Also, it offers life cover upto 99 years of age. For instance, a 30-year-old salaried woman can purchase the product with a life cover of ₹ 1 crore with policy tenure of 30 years by paying a monthly premium of just ₹ 546 after the discount. By availing this offer, women stand to save ₹ 34,920 over a 30-year premium paying tenure.

HDFC Bank wins award at Cannes Lions 2024

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank, announced that it has won Silver at the Cannes Lions 2024 for the Vigil Aunty -End of Scam Sale (EOSS) Campaign. The social media campaign, featuring actress Nora Fatehi and Vigil Aunty, has so far acquired a reach of over 28 million and 22 million views. Vigil Aunty is a fictional social media character created by HDFC Bank to spread awareness on digital frauds.

As part of the EOSS Campaign, HDFC Bank used actress Nora Fatehi's star power to replicate the modus operandi of fraudsters and make the public aware of how one can easily be susceptible to deepfakes and frauds. The Bank created a fake brand and had audiences believe in its legitimacy by creating an Instagram page for 'Lulumelon', making it sound like a genuine brand with exciting offers and deals. The campaign was recognised at the prestigious Cannes Lions for the best use of 'Events & Stunts'.

Ravi Santhanam, group head, chief marketing officer and head – Direct to Consumer Business, HDFC Bank said, "Winning a Cannes Lions for our fraud awareness campaign only adds to our commitment to spreading awareness about the issue, to help customers avoid becoming victims of digital frauds. This recognition is a testament to the exceptional creative talent of our agency partners, FCBKinnect.

Bangladesh PM Hasina invites Indian businesses to invest in the nation

NEW DELHI, June 22: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has invited Indian businesses to invest in the country's special economic zones, highlighting the huge potential for bilateral economic cooperation.

Addressing Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) members on Friday evening, Hasina said both India and Bangladesh should work together to do business.

"All over India, there is a huge market so both the countries can work jointly and share our experiences. There is a good opportunity to do business," Hasina said, stressing that doing business is a key part of the bilateral relationship. She added that high importance is being given to working with India to fulfil the needs of the people.

The prime minister mentioned that she wanted to make the economy of Bangladesh stronger and more sustainable. She also stated



that Bangladesh will work on bigger ports, waterways, rail and road connectivity.

Sanjiv Puri, President, CII said Bangladesh is India's land bridge to the vibrant regions of Southeast Asia, and Bangladesh and India can address the market together at a time when supply chains are shifting. He also mentioned that in agriculture, the two nations can set

up joint ventures between private sectors.

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said that to drive economic engagement, CII plans to take a CEOs delegation to Bangladesh later this year.

During the industry interaction, business members from India and Bangladesh highlighted several sectors of joint collaborations, in-

cluding increasing the supply of energy to Bangladesh with a special emphasis on hydropower and creating more energy transmission lines to Bangladesh.

They also spoke about education and skill development in Bangladesh through telecommunication solutions. Other areas of collaboration such as agriculture, trade, and IT were also discussed.

Hasina on Friday began a two-day State visit to India with an aim to further expand the already close ties between the two countries.

It is the first State visit by a foreign leader after the formation of the new government in India following the Lok Sabha elections.

Hasina was among the seven top leaders from India's neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region who attended the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union council of ministers at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on June 9. (PTI)

AASU stages protest in Jorhat



HT Correspondent

JORHAT, June 22: Responding to the call given by the central committee of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) the Jorhat district unit of the students' body on Saturday staged a demonstration near JB College (Autonomous) at Borpatra Ali here to protest against alleged irregularities in NEET-UG 2024, UGC-NET 2024 and bottlenecks in the Samarth portal of the state government for students to get admission into undergraduate programmes.

They also burnt the effigies of Union education minister, Dharmendra Pradhan and state education minister Ranaj Pegu.

The protesters holding AASU flags and placards shouted slogans against the BJP-led governments at the Centre and the state for jeopardising the future of students across the country and losing the credibility of holding the examinations in a fair and transparent manner.

Alleging that lakhs of students were deeply disturbed due to the anomalies, the protesters sought a high-level Supreme Court-monitored probe into the irregularities into both the cases.

The protesters alleged that the Samarth portal set up by the state education department for admission purpose of UG students into colleges, was not providing reasonable or minimum time to take admission.

They alleged that after the lists of eligible candidates were announced, the next day the students were asked to take admission, which created hurdles for those who were from distant areas.

Meanwhile, the Jorhat district

unit of the AJYCP also staged a protest at Mithapukhuri Road in Jorhat against the irregularities in the NET and NEET examinations. The protesters also tried to burn the effigies of Pradhan and Pegu but were prevented by the police.

The protesters holding placards and banners shouted slogans against the two ministers and the central and state governments and demanded that both the tests be held again.

Our Biswanath correspondent adds: As per the call of the central committee of All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the Biswanath district unit of AASU staged a demonstration against the anomalies seen in the recently conducted NEET and NET examinations at Biswanath Chariali on Saturday.

The AASU activists also burnt the effigies of union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the state education minister Ranaj Pegu at Swahid Bhawan here. They shouted slogans against the anomalies seen in the recently conducted NEET and NET examinations and the anomalies seen in the SAMARTH portal of the state government regarding the merit lists.

The AASU activists also demanded a high level inquiry into these serious anomalies in conducting these examinations. Bikram Bikash Bora, central executive member, Md Ajmat Sheikh, president of Biswanath unit of AASU, Suraj Bhuyan, president of Biswanath unit of AASU, Sushil Tanti, general secretary besides AASU workers from various regional and branch committees participated in the stir.

Effigies of Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, state education minister Ranaj Pegu burnt during protest

AJYCP stages protest against irregularities in NET, NEET in Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, June 22: The Nagaon district unit of Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) staged a protest against irregularities in NET, NEET and inconveniences in Samarth portal of the state government at Natun Bazar Chariali in Bagaob in the district on Saturday.

The protesters also burnt effigies of Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and state education minister Ranaj Pegu on the occasion.

During the agitation, the participants also demanded immediate resignation of both ministers from their respective posts with immediate effect. Over hundreds of students as well as other members of the youth organisation participated in the stir. The surroundings reverberated with various slogans during the protest.

Illicit liquor seized in Margherita

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, June 22: The police seized illicit liquor from various locations in Margherita and Digboi in Tinsukia district.

An excise team led by district superintendent of excise Prasanta Dutta conducted a raid in the Namdang Tea Estate, Lalga, Bargolai, Magargaon, and Thana Road all falling in Tinsukia district on Friday night.

During the raid the excise team seized a huge quantity of illicit liquor and damaged it. It confiscated and destroyed 800 liters of fermented wash (FW), 40 liters of illicit distilled liquor (ID), one distillation apparatus (DA), and 4.95 bulk liters (BL) of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) meant for sale exclusively in the state.

A case has been registered under Section 53(1) A of the Assam Excise Act, 2000 and under Section 61(B)(a) of the same Act as amended.



Addressing the media, Pragjyotish Bonia, president of Nagaon district unit of AJYCP and Devashish Das, secretary of the organisation claimed that during the seven-year long tenure of the

current BJP state government, question papers of various examinations were leaked over 70 times, with the issue becoming a serious concern for the students. Therefore, the district body of

the organization sought re-examination of NET as well as NEET in the country. Deep Moni Bora, the central organising secretary of AJYCP also participated in the stir.

Amtisuwa Pwrbw celebrated in Kokrajhar



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, June 22: Amtisuwa Pwrbw (Ambubashi Festival) has been celebrated with a day-long programme held at the village playground in Kanthalguri in Kokrajhar district.

The celebration was organised by Kanthalguri village society in association with local youths on Friday to mark the seasonal festival of Amtisuwa.

A friendly football match between the elderly and eleven youths was held, where the former defeated the latter by 4-1 goals, which led to much amusement amongst the public.

Competitions like tug of war and musical chair for women were also conducted during the celebrations.

The Kanthalguri village society celebrates the Amtisuwa Pwrbw every year during the first week of

Ashar month. Villagers join in the celebrations with joy and enthusiasm.

Dancers also enthralled the public with their folk dance during the celebrations.

The winners of the football, tug of war, music chair competition were conferred with cash prizes in the event.

Retired headmaster of SK Jewary ME School, Sukhanjhora, Karuna Kanta Basumatary, UPPL media secretary Hantigiri Narzary, village headman Kumananda Basumatary and several other dignitaries partook in the celebrations.

President of Kanthalguri village society, Motilal Mushahary presided over the programme.

Mushahary said, "The village society organised the Amtisuwa Pwrbw for creating an environment for celebration of the festival. The Amtisuwa festival is held in the village every year with much festivity and fervour."

Food festival held in Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: Foodies in the city can satisfy their palate with Nizami delicacies straight from Hyderabad with the Vivanta Guwahati organising a food festival at its Seven Restaurant from June 21 to July 7.

The exclusive gastronomic treat originates from the splendid kitchens of the Royal Falaknuma Palace of the Nizam of Hyderabad. At the Taj Falaknuma Palace, guests experience the magical delights of the bygone days of the royal lives of the Nizams of Hyderabad.

The public can enjoy these mouth-watering Hyderabad cuisines at lunch from 12:30 pm to 3 pm and at dinner from 7: 30 pm to 11:30 pm.

A special tasteful menu spreading delicious Nizami cuisine of Hyderabad, curated by a master chef from the magnificent Taj Falaknuma Palace Hyderabad is being laid out in Vivanta Guwahati, for the discerning taste buds. A blend of spices, ingredients and secret recipes, the non-vegetarian aficionados are sure to enjoy rare delicacies such as Pathar Ka Gosht, Haleem, Ameer Khwani Biryani and Dum Kamurg.

Nonetheless, the vegetarian menu also has a mouth-watering selection such as Kathal Haleem, Bharwani Paneer Tikka to be rounded off by splendid desserts such as Double Ka Meetha for the food connoisseurs of the city. Speaking on the occasion, Jayanta DAS, area director and GM said, "It a constant endeavour to bring the rare cuisines of India to the growing discerning citizens of Guwahati, come and enjoy this treat which is in store."

Periodicity of three special trains extended

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: To clear extra rush of passengers, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has decided to continue the services of three pairs of special trains from the first week of July.

The Guwahati - Shri Ganganagar - Guwahati will run for 13 trips each in both directions the Dibrugarh - Kolkata - Dibrugarh and the Silchar - Kolkata - Silchar together will run for 26 trips each in both directions. These trains will run with the existing days of service, timings and stoppages. Moreover, the NFR has decided to increase the frequency of two pairs of express trains which include the Dibrugarh - Kanniyakumari - Dibrugarh Vivek Express from the present five days to daily basis and the Silchar - Rangiya - Silchar Express from present three days in a week to six days in a week.

The Guwahati - Shri Ganganagar Special has been extended to run from July 3 till September 25 on every Wednesday. In return direction, the Shri Ganganagar - Guwahati Special has been extended to run from July 7 to September 29 on every Sunday. The Dibrugarh - Kolkata Special has been extended to run from July 6 till December 28 every Saturday. In return direction, the Kolkata - Dibrugarh Special has been extended to run from July 7 till December 29 every Sunday.

The Silchar - Kolkata Special has been extended to run from July 4 till December 26 every Thursday. In return direction, the Kolkata - Silchar Special has been extended to run from July 5 till December 27 every Friday.

Two Sibsagar colleges shine in graduation examination

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, June 22: Sivasagar Commerce College achieved 90.34 per cent in the sixth semester Bachelor of Commerce final results declared by the Dibrugarh University.

Of 176 students, 159 were successful, while 72 passed in the first class with CGPT grading A+, A, and B+. The university's average pass percentage was 62.8 per cent. The college achieved 92 per cent in the fourth semester examinations and 100 per cent in the HSSLC examinations.

In the Bachelor of Science sixth semester examinations, Sibsagar College (upgraded to University now) achieved excellent results with Tabassum Rahman securing the first class first position in Mathematics and Ayan Anjel Baruah securing first class first position in electronics. First class second position was bagged by Bitupon Baruah (chemistry) and Gaurav Gogoi (geology).

'World Music Day' celebrated in Diphu

HT Bureau

DIPHU, June 22: Music enthusiasts of Diphu town have come together to celebrate the 'World Music Day' at the Aqua Centric Park in Diphu in Karbi Anglong.

A live concert was organised at the Aqua Centric Park in the evening on Friday, which featured four local bands and two bands from Sikkim and Nagaland.

One of the organisers Risim Rongpi, who is also a vocalist of the band, 'Ambush' said it was for the first time that all like minded musicians and music lovers came together to celebrate the 'World Music Day'.

"I wish every music lovers a happy World Music Day. All likeminded musicians have come together to organise the programme. The programme has been organised by the World Music Day Celebration Community," said Rongpi.

He also said, "We are creating a platform for young musicians. Diphu has been one of the most happening places in music. Every month there used to be live concerts, but for the last 10 to 15 years it has lost its glory. We are working to revive live music."

The events were inaugurated by executive member (EM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) in charge of

fisheries etc., Madhuram Lekthe, while the evening concert was inaugurated by EM, KAAC in charge of education, Richard Tokbi and attended by Dharamsing Teron, director of the Centre for Karbi Studies.

The evening breeze and the beautiful landscape of the Aqua Centric Park rendered a magical touch of the live concert, where local bands like Sol, Redeemer, Optic Inertia and Ragamuffin performed on stage. As the bands performed, the teenagers could be heard jumping and screaming with joy. 'Guns from Country Side' from Sikkim and 'Fifth Note' from Kohima captivated the audience with their mesmerizing numbers.

"The music is good. We are also enjoying the soft drinks and snacks being served on the occasion," said Meena Rongpi, a music lover who had come to enjoy the live concert.

Risim Rongpi thanked all the music lovers who came to be part of the 'World Music Day' event and said that the community would be striving to revive live music in the region.

Meanwhile, the 'Guitar Hero' contest will be held in Diphu in July. Popular guitarist of Northeast, Toshimoo Jamir will be the judge in the competition.

Consultative meeting on biotechnology held in Jorhat

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, June 22: A two-day consultative meeting of the department of biotechnology entitled 'Developing a roadmap for supporting and nurturing Biotechnology in the North East Region by DBT during the next five years' was organised at CSIR-NEIST in Jorhat on Friday and Saturday.

The meet discussed the current state of progress and identified the major challenges of the northeastern region in medical, veterinary, agriculture, aquaculture, environment and bio-energy sectors of biotechnology for developing a roadmap of DBT to strengthen effective and inclusive support to the region.

The meeting was attended by all heads and representatives of S and T Councils, health departments, veterinary departments of all the eight states of the Northeast and many leading scientists of research institutes of the region like IBSD-Imphal, Pasteur Centre-Shillong, Guwahati Medical College, Jorhat Medical College, Tezpur University, Mizoram University, Veterinary Colleges of Assam, ADMac-Guwahati, NRC-Mithun-Dirang, NRC-Yak-Medziphema, NRC-Pig-Guwahati

and several eminent scientists and technical experts from across the country. Dinakar Salunke, ICGEB, New Delhi shared the genesis of the meeting, necessities and possibilities for future course of action for biotechnology research.

Suraksha S. Diwan of North East Region Programme of DBT highlighted the success stories of DBT support towards promoting biotechnology R&D in the northeastern states. Rajesh S. Gokhale, secretary of DBT, New Delhi in his keynote address encouraged the scientists and academicians to come together to develop S&T mission for uplifting and encouraging biotechnological research in all sectors to reach greater heights in the Northeast.

Virendra M Tiwari, director of CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat welcomed the delegation of eminent scientists and leaders, the DBT organising team and all participants of the meeting.

He shared that CSIR-NEIST has been continuously working for the welfare of the northeastern region through quality knowledge and skilled human resource generation, S&T intervention and entrepreneurship development relevant to the northeastern states.

Woman running tea stall with remuneration from Bihu performance has CM as customer

Hemaprabha Biswas performed at record winning Bihu recital at Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati last year for being largest Bihu dance with 11,298 participants

GUWAHATI, June 22: A young woman from Assam running a tea stall with money earned in a record-setting Bihu performance has Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma among her customers now.

Hemaprabha Biswas was among the performers at the Bihu recital in April 2023 at Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati, which has entered the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest Bihu dance with 11,298 participants.

The state government had awarded all participants with cash reward, which Biswas used for opening a tea stall at Jakhlabanda in Nagaon district to help supplement the family income.

Her decision drew praise from the locals as well as the CM.

"Remember I told you about Hemaprabha Biswas? She par-



ticipated in Assam Government's 2023 World Record setting Bihu performance and invested her financial reward to become a job creator. Well, I visited her stall today to sip some Kadak Chai and wish her good luck," Sarma posted on X after visiting her stall on Friday.

He also shared a short video clip of his visit, during which

the CM was seen interacting with Biswas and enquiring about her business.

Sarma also met Prabhin Saikia, who was also part of the Bihu performance and used his remuneration to invest in dairy business, the chief minister's office said.

"The CM appreciated their hard work and wished them

good luck for their future endeavours," it added.

The CM had praised Biswas on the micro-blogging site earlier this month as well, saying, "Making full use of the amount, Hemaprabha Biswas from Kaliabor opened a shop to support her education and being Atmanirbhar in its true sense."

"We will continue to assist our people and through our policies empower them to be self-sufficient and be torchbearers of a new Assam," he added.

Pursuing her graduation from a local college, Biswas had earlier said that though she wanted to initially buy a scooter with the money earned in the Bihu performance, she later decided to invest in the tea stall to help her family financially. She runs the stall with the help of her mother. (PTI)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (PHE) KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL::DIPHU

NOTIFICATION

The Assam Citizen Centric Service Delivery (ACCS) Project, Right to Public Service (RTPS) Web portal has been launched. So the Contractor of **Class III** who is registered with Public Health Engineering Department is immediately requested to apply for online registration of Contractors License through "Sewa Setu" Portal. **The Contractors under PHE Divisions under KAAC Zone are hereby requested to apply online and upload the relevant documents at the Sewa Setu Portal (sewasetu.assam.gov.in) for re-registration of earlier offline paper based contractors registration issued to them. The process is to be completed within 30th June, 2024 positively or else registration will be treated as invalid after 30th June, 2024.**

Sd/-

**Additional Chief Engineer, PHE
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu**

Memo. No. Addl.CPHE/DIP/Estt-50/2023-24/503-09 Dtd. 19/06/2024

The significance of Nalanda University revival

By: Prof. Mahesh Chand Gupta

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the new campus of Nalanda University in Rajgir, Bihar. With this, after centuries, Nalanda University has stood up to spread knowledge in the whole world. The new campus of Nalanda, built at a cost of 1749 crores in 455 acres, is not just a concrete building, but the construction of this building has revived the glorious history of our country. This is an important step towards the goal of making India a world leader, through which a new history is sure to be created along with awakening the spirit of knowledge in the whole world.

Just ten days after taking oath as Prime Minister for the 3rd time, Modi has gone to the program of Nalanda University. Modi's visit to Nalanda is not spontaneous but it is a decision taken by him after a lot of thought, discussion and contemplation. Now it is not hidden from anyone that whatever decision Modi takes, there is some big purpose behind it. Modi is giving the message of moving forward to the country on the pretext of Nalanda.

The revival of Nalanda, which became the ocean of knowledge for the whole world centuries ago and was burnt to ashes and destroyed by the invaders, is a very big and revolutionary step. After the construction of Shri Ram temple, Nalanda has become another example of the revival of our nation. There is something that our existence does not fade away.

The construction of a new building near the ruins of the ancient university in Nalanda is

making us proud. Although buildings are built every day, but this new construction in Nalanda is unique, it is a matter of pride for the country.

In Nalanda, Modi has also said that "I see Nalanda as an auspicious sign for India's development journey. Nalanda is not just a name. Nalanda is a value, Nalanda is a mantra, a pride, a saga. Nalanda is the proclamation of the truth that books may burn in the flames but the flames cannot erase knowledge. The destruction of Nalanda had filled India with darkness. Now it's restoration is going to start the golden age of India."

Modi has spoken the truth because the invaders destroyed the splendour of Nalanda thrice. It was rebuilt twice. In the 12th century, Bakhtiar Khilji, the commander of Qutubuddin Aibak, set fire to the library of Nalanda University which had millions of books. According to historians, this destructive fire raged for three months, due to which everything was destroyed there.

The fire set in Nalanda was not an attempt to destroy any building or library, but an attempt to hurt the pride of India because the Nalanda University, established in the 5th century AD in the ancient Magadh Empire (modern Bihar), was famous all over the world. Ten thousand students from all over the world studied here.

As the world's first residential university, the grandeur of Nalanda University attracted scholars from all over the world, including China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and South East Asia. Subjects like medicine, Ayurveda, Buddhism,



mathematics, grammar, astronomy and Indian philosophy were taught at Nalanda.

Aryabhatta, the pioneer of Indian mathematics and inventor of zero, was one of the eminent teachers of Nalanda during the sixth century AD. According to historians, admission in Nalanda was not easy centuries ago. Students seeking admission here had to go through a tough interview process.

All this was so grand that demonic forces and those with destructive thinking could not see it. Demonic forces tried from time to time to destroy our grandeur and make us disappointed, frustrated and hurt. In the past, the time cycle moved in such a way that demonic forces became dominant. Due to foreign invaders, adverse conditions prevailed in the country for a long period.

The invaders destroyed huge buildings like our Nalanda. Attempts were made to destroy our existence but how could they erase knowledge? How could they erase the knowledge which

is in our natural instincts? The invaders who temporarily demolished the buildings went away happily but just as the seven rays of the sun illuminate the environment once the darkness of the clouds clears, the light of education has once again started emanating from Nalanda University, designated as an institute of national importance and excellence.

Prime Minister Modi has expressed confidence that Nalanda will become an important centre of global interest. Modi's mission is to make India a centre of education and knowledge for the world and to be recognised as the foremost knowledge centre in the world once again, but how this mission will be accomplished needs to be thought about. Nalanda University is a symbol of India's educational

heritage and vibrant cultural exchange. Nalanda's rise again is certainly a moment of joy. This will become an inspiration for our educational upliftment, but Nalanda's inspiration will be

The revival of Nalanda, which became the ocean of knowledge for the whole world centuries ago and was destroyed by invaders, is a very big and revolutionary step

Only educational upliftment can make the concept of a developed India a reality. I have been a professor at Delhi University for more than four decades. Due to my long experience as a teacher, I believe that education and development complement each other.

Every stage of development can be reached only by climbing the ladder of education. If we want to see India as a developed country by the year 2047 on the occasion of completion of 100 years of independence, then this is possible only due to education

but it is not so simple and easy.

For this, a lot of work will have to be done for the universities of the country. Government universities will have to be energized. All the states will have to compete to strengthen the structure of their respective universities. The condition of education and government universities in the country from primary education to post-graduation is very worrying.

Education has been ignored in the seventy years after independence. Adequate provisions for education were not made in the budget. This is the reason why our government universities and other higher institutions lagged behind. In our country, private universities are continuously expanding, earning money but on the contrary, universities funded by UGC are lagging behind. The infrastructure of most of our universities is not strong. They lack world-class smart class rooms. There is a lack of good auditoriums, libraries, academic blocks and excellent labs. In India, which was the main centre of education in the entire world in ancient times, in India where the most important and famous Nalanda University, one of the first universities of higher education in the world, was established, the current condition of universities in that India is worth thinking about. Because of this, higher education in the country is lagging behind in terms of quality.

Children of rich people go abroad for higher education and settle down there after making a career. Children of common people are facing exploitation in private universities. If the condition of universities with UGC funding is improved, the situa-

tion can be changed. This is possible only when we bring our universities into the world rankings. We will work towards making them big brands.

However, the Modi government has started efforts for educational upliftment. The new education policy is proof of this. Modi believes that "when education develops, the roots of economy and culture also become strong." If we look at the developed countries, we will find that they became economic and cultural leaders only when they became educational leaders. Today, students from all over the world want to go to those countries and study. Once such a situation used to exist in our institutions like Nalanda and Vikramshila."

Modi has a vision; he is doing extensive work and is restoring the country's glory. The period in which we are living now is a period of revolutionary, glorious and big positive changes for India. The whole world is accepting our culture. People are inclined towards India's glorious and ancient culture. Even the youth who were attracted towards western culture are adopting our culture again.

Modi's dream is to make India a world leader. This dream can come true with the help of education. Today, Nalanda has risen again. On the same lines, universities of the entire country should be taken forward on the path of progress. This work cannot be done by leaving it to the government or the concerned university administration. For this, everyone will have to work together. *(The author is a renowned educationist, thinker and speaker. He has been a professor at Delhi University for 44 years)*

Sati: The burning of the widow



By: Sanjib Kumar Sarma & Bhaktarika Sarma

The practice of sati has been prevalent in India since ancient times. This was such an inhuman practice. Under which after the death of a man, his widow wife had to enter his burning pyre at the time of his funeral and commit suicide. This system was highly prevalent in the kshatriya society. After the death of her husband the woman used to demonstrate her inner devotion and complete dedication to her husband by immolation herself on his funeral pyre.

Sati is described as a Hindu custom in India in which the widow was burnt to ashes on her dead husband's pyre. Basically the custom of Sati was believed to be a voluntary Hindu act in which the woman voluntarily decides to end her life with her husband after his death. But there were many incidences in which the women were forced to commit Sati, sometimes even dragged against her wish to the lighted pyre.

Though Sati is considered a Hindu custom, the women, known as Sati in Hindu religious literature, did not commit suicide on their dead husband's pyre. The first woman known as Sati was the consort of Lord Shiva. She burnt herself in fire as protest against her father who did not give her consort Shiva the respect she thought he deserved, while burning herself she prayed to be reborn again as the new consort of Shiva, which she became and her name in the new incarnation was Parvati.

Other famous woman in Hindu literature titled Sati was Savitri. When Savitri's husband Satyavan died, the Lord of death, Yama arrived to take his soul. Savitri begged Yama to restore Satyavan and take her life instead, which he could not do. So Savitri followed Lord Yama a long way.

After a long way in which Yama noticed that Savitri was losing strength but was still following him and her dead husband, Yama offered Savitri a boon, anything other than her husband's life. Savitri asked to have children from Satyavan. In order to give Savitri her boon, Lord Yama had no choice but to restore Satyavan to life and so Savitri gained her

husband back.

These two women along with other women in Hindu mythology who were exceptionally devoted to their husbands symbolized the truthful Indian wife who would do everything for their husband and they were named Sati. The meaning of the word sati is righteous. But as written earlier the women named Sati, in Hindu religious literature, did not commit suicide on their dead husband's pyre. Therefore the custom of burning the widow on her dead husband's pyre probably did not evolve from religious background but from social background.

There are different theories about the origins of Sati. One theory says that Sati was introduced to prevent wives from poisoning their wealthy husbands and marry their real lovers. Other theory says that Sati began with a jealous queen who heard that dead kings were welcomed in heaven by hundreds of beautiful women, called Apsaras.

And therefore when her husband died, she demanded to be burnt on her dead husband's pyre and so to arrive with him to heaven and this way to prevent the Apsaras from consorting with her husband. There are also other theories about the origins of Sati. Even though Sati is considered an Indian custom or a Hindu custom it was not practiced all over India by all Hindus but only among certain communities of India. On the other hand, sacrificing the widow in her dead husband's funeral or pyre was not unique only to India.

In many ancient communities it was an acceptable feature. This custom was prevalent among Egyptians, Greek, Goths, Scythians and others. Among these communities it was a custom to bury the dead king with his mis-

treesses or wives, servants and other things so that they could continue to serve him in the next world.

Another theory claims that Sati was probably brought to India by the Scythians invaders of India. When these Scythians arrived in India, they adopted the Indian system of funeral, which was cremating the dead. And so instead of burying their kings and his servers they started cremating their dead with his surviving lovers.

The Scythians were warrior tribes and they were given a status of warrior castes in Hindu religious hierarchy. Many of the Rajput clans are believed to originate from the Scythians. Later on other castes who claimed warrior status or higher also adopted this custom.

This custom was more dominant among the warrior communities in north India, especially in Rajasthan and also among the

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higher castes in Bengal in India. Among the Rajputs of Rajasthan, who gave lot of importance to valor and self sacrifice, wives and concubines of the nobles even committed suicide, when they came to know that their beloved died in battlefield?

In other parts of India it was comparatively low. And among the majority of Indian communities it did not exist at all. A few rulers of India tried to ban this custom. The Mughals tried to ban it. The British, due to the efforts of Hindu reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy outlawed this custom in 1829. There aren't exact figures about the number of Sati incidences. In general, before this custom was outlawed in 1829, there were a few hundred officially recorded incidences each year.

Even after the custom was outlawed, this custom did not vanish completely. It took few decades before this custom almost vanished. But still there are rare incidences in which the widow demands to voluntary commit Sati.

In 1987 an eighteen years old widow committed Sati in a village of Rajasthan with the blessing of her family members. In this incidence the villagers took part in the ceremony, praising and supporting the widow for her act. In October 1999 a woman hysterically jumped on her husband's

pyre surprising everyone. But this incidence was declared suicide and not Sati, because this woman was not compelled, forced or praised to commit this act.

In different communities of India, Sati was performed for different reasons and different manners. In communities where the man was married to one wife, the wife put an end to her life on the pyre. But even in these communities not all widows committed Sati.

Those women who committed Sati were highly honored and their families were given lot of respect. It was believed that the woman who committed Sati blessed her family for seven generations after her. Temples or other religious shrines were built to honor the Sati.

In communities where the ruler was married to more than one wife; in some cases only one wife was allowed to commit Sati. This wife was normally the preferred wife of the husband. This was some kind of honor for the chosen wife and some kind of disgrace for the other wives. In other communities some or all of the wives and mistresses were immolated with the husband.

And in some cases even male servants were immolated with the kings. This kind of Sati in which the wives and servants were treated as the ruler's property intensifies the theory that Sati was introduced to India by the Scythian invaders of India.

If historical facts are to be believed, the practice of sati was prohibited many times between 15th and 18th centuries. In 1582, Mughal Emperor Akbar outlawed sati, and in 1663, Aurangzeb tried to end it again. Even the Portuguese, French and British, who came to India during the European colonial period, tried to stop sati. In 1850, the British hardened their rules against the practice.

Sir Charles Napier ordered to hang to death any Hindu priest who presided over a widow burning. The princely states of India during that time were also pressurized to rule out sati completely. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the key reformers who opposed the practice. In 1887, in the village of Deorala in Rajasthan, an 18-year-old married woman named Roop Kanwar was forced to become sati when her husband died after eight months of marriage. She refused. Consequently, a group of men from the village forcefully dragged and immolated her.

Police investigated the case and those men were arrested. In light of this incident, the government created the Prevention of Sati Act, making it illegal to force or encourage a woman to commit sati, and anyone doing so would be punished by death. And yet, some widows still choose to become sati – at least four such cases were recorded between 2000 and 2015.

Understanding Child psychology and its importance

By: Bhagaban Baishya

Child psychology is one of the branches of psychology. This particular branch focuses on the mind and behavior of children from prenatal development through adolescence. Child psychology deals not only with how children grow physically, but also seeks to better understand their mental, emotional, and social development as well.

Child psychology is the study of subconscious and conscious childhood development. Child psychologists observe how a child interacts with their parents, themselves, and the world, to understand their mental development.

Everyone wants their child to have healthy development, but it's not always clear if a child's behavior is a symptom of a normal stage in development or a sign of an abnormality. Child psychologists can help one understand the difference. Understanding the normal and abnormal psychological patterns of a child can help parents understand how to best communicate and connect with their child, teach their child coping mechanisms for managing emotions, and help their child progress and thrive in each new developmental stage.

Child psychologists can also identify abnormal behaviors early help detect the root of common behavioral issues such as learning issues, hyperactivity or anxiety, and help children work through early childhood trauma. They can also help to prevent, evaluate, and diagnose mental health and learning problems, developmental delays or conditions such as autism. Physical development in children is typically a predictable sequence of events. Each child holds their head up, rolls over, crawls, walks, and runs, in that order. Child Psychologist can aid their pediatricians in observing their child's physical development, and if there are any abnormalities that could indicate developmental irregularities. Child psychologists observe child's progression toward the milestones of development to ensure that child is physically developing normally.

Major delays in physical development may reveal other underlying developmental issues that can then be addressed early on.

The medical understanding of childhood cognitive development has greatly changed over the recent years. We now know that even newborn babies are aware of their environment and are interested in it, even before they have the language to express that.

Emotional and social develop-



ments are deeply intertwined. Emotional development refers to how the child feels, understands, and expresses their emotions. Emotional development is expressed in very young children through the expression of basic emotions like fear, joy, anger, and sadness. As the child develops, more complex emotions such as confidence, hope, guilt, and pride emerge.

Emotional development also includes a child's ability to feel and understand the emotions of other people through empathy. Learning to regulate and express emotions appropriately is difficult for many children.

Helping children understand their emotions early can have a powerful impact on current and future emotional development. A Child Psychologist can help your child understand and express their emotions in a healthy, positive way.

Emotional development highly informs social development. This is true because the way a child feels, understands, and expresses their feelings has a direct impact on how they interact with other people.

Social development is about how the child develops the values, awareness, and social skills necessary to relate to the people around them; their parents, peers, authority figures, and animals. A child's early relationships can have a huge impact on their development of age-appropriate social skills. Trust, friendship, conflict management, and respect for authority are examples of social development.

There are several child development theories, each with their own set of beliefs and presumptions. Some theories are backed by scientific evidence, while others are not. Child developmental theories are associated with the study of development of children and properly understanding how they change throughout their childhood.

Many such theories have been suggested by psychologists and researchers to describe and explain the steps and processes that children go through as they grow.

Child development theories focus on the physical, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and social

growth of a child over time. These theories aid in our understanding of how children develop and learn, as well as the more complex aspects of child development. Each theory has its own unique perspective on child development. Some of the theories about child development concentrate on the developmental milestones that children reach by a certain age. Others place emphasis on specific aspects of childhood development, like personal character, sensory perception, and moral development. The theories provide a framework through which it is possible to understand various aspects of the child development process.

To conclude it can be said that Child psychology is important because it helps you understand how children develop and grow. It also emphasizes the importance of early intervention, which can have a significant impact on a child's overall well-being. As our children develop physically and mentally; knowing them is one of the most important responsibilities of being a parent.

Children observe household members; how they talk, how they act, and how they walk; they follow this. Good things have to be taught; children learn by observing even without saying bad things. Learning how your children view the world, teaching children new skills; and guiding them in processing their feelings and changes.

As the child grows up, developmental stages, as such it goes through progressive development stages. From birth to adulthood; environmental, genetic and cultural factors; all of these can affect a child's development; and how quickly they progress from one stage of development to another; It studies child psychology. What stage children are going through; is difficult to explain. Analyzing their feelings; is very difficult. That's where child psychology matters to you; and can help provide valuable information. Child Psychology Subconscious and Conscious; is the study of childhood development. *(The writer is the Head Master of Bhiringeshwar High School, Suakuchi. He can be reached at bhagaban-baishya95@gmail.com)*

Guardians of life: Dogs' extraordinary devotion in saving humans

By: Dipak Kurmi

In the state of Oregon, a remarkable story has emerged of a dog saving his owner's life with a mix of devotion, determination, and intelligence. According to several newspapers, Brendan Garrett was driving a truck when he failed to navigate a curve, causing the vehicle to plummet into a deep ravine. Garrett sustained injuries, as did two of the four dogs accompanying him. However, one of the dogs, a whippet named Blue, remained unscathed. Displaying extraordinary loyalty and resourcefulness, Blue traversed the dense forest surrounding the ravine, covering nearly four miles, and reached a campsite where Garrett's friend was waiting.

The moment Blue arrived, Garrett's friend, already concerned about the delay, feared something terrible had occurred and immediately contacted Garrett's brother, Tyree. The family quickly organized a search of the area. Tyree Brandon eventually spotted the truck deep in the ravine. Brendan Garrett and the injured dogs were rescued and received medical treatment.

This incident is a testament to the countless stories of canine loyalty and devotion towards their human companions. Dogs often go to great lengths, even risking their lives, for those who love and care for them. In this particular case, Blue survived his perilous journey to the campsite, despite the dangers of wild animal attacks and speeding vehicles.

The bond of deep love and attachment that dogs form with caring humans is one aspect of the story.



Another aspect is how humans treat these loyal companions. Many people deeply care for their dogs and other pets, considering them family members and even willing to die for them.

Some believe that all animals should be treated with dignity and respect. However, there are also those who are indifferent or cruel to animals, inflicting harm, killing, enslaving, and exploiting them without a second thought.

To understand the belief that animals are inferior to humans and exist for human benefit, one must look at its roots in the Judeo-Christian theological tradition and the anthropocentric worldview of Humanist philosophy from classical Greece. Aristotle, in his work *Politics*, asserted that nature made all animals for the sake of man and that it was permissible to enslave both irrational people and animals. Similarly, Saint Augustine, in *The City of God*, explained, "When we read 'Thou shalt not kill,' we do not understand this phrase to apply to bushes, because they have no sensation, nor to unreasoning animals that fly, walk or crawl, because they

are not associated in a community with us by reason... Hence it is by a very just ordinance of the Creator that their life and death is subordinated to us."

The persistence of this attitude is evident throughout history. In "Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust," Charles Patterson highlights that Saint Thomas Aquinas, like Aristotle before him, believed that only the rational part of the soul endured after death. As a leading figure of medieval Scholasticism, Aquinas asserted that since animals lacked the capacity for reason, their souls did not survive death, unlike human souls.

The European Renaissance, spanning from the late 14th century to the first half of the 16th century, along with the Enlightenment of the 18th century, rejuvenated the full scope of Greek humanism. Portions of this tradition had been marginalized by Scholasticism due to perceived incompatibility with Christian faith. This revival led to a renewed focus on rationality as a defining human trait and reinforced humanity's dominant position in the

universe, encapsulated by the Greek sophist Protagoras's aphorism, "Man is the measure of all things." Consequently, the status of animals was further diminished, leading to unprecedented cruelty in the animal food processing industry, unnecessary medical research, cosmetic testing, brutal bullfighting, Jallikattu, and other senseless acts of sadism.

The same process can be observed in India, despite its predominant spiritual heritage, as expressed in the Vedas, Upanishads, the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the Puranas, which all accord an exalted position to non-human living beings and grant them the same rights as humans. Swami Vivekananda encapsulated the essence of this heritage in his seminal speech on Vedantism in Jaffna in January 1897.

"In every man and in every animal, regardless of their strength, morality, size, or greatness, dwells the same omnipresent, omniscient soul. The difference lies not in the soul itself but in its manifestation. The distinction between myself and the smallest creature is only in this manifestation; fundamentally, he is the same as I am, he is my brother, sharing the same soul as I do.

This is the paramount principle that India has always taught. The concept of the brotherhood of man extends in India to the brotherhood of all life, encompassing animals and even the tiniest of ants. All life forms are our kin, as our scriptures declare: "Thus the sage, knowing that the same Lord inhabits all bodies, will worship every being as such." (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

'My Beloved Life' by Amitava Kumar: Truth, memories, and what we leave behind

By: Savari Debnath

An elderly lady, who used to be a doctor in the villages of Jharkhand, tells Jugnu that her husband once said to her there was no point in being "fanatical" about the truth. Memories become distorted and disappear with time, people come into our lives and vanish mysteriously, leaders who once appeared capable become hateful monsters. There's little surety in life besides its transient nature and facts morphing into fiction.

Amitava Kumar's new novel *My Beloved Life* is like looking at a family – and nation's – photo album. It makes the phrase "larger than life" seem redundant, for our life, even in its limitations and sorrows is stranger and grander than any we could've imagined. Each photo in this album may appear unidimensional at first, but once we're made aware of the backstory, we realise how infinite the experiences of each individual can be.

Time's endless loop
Jadunath Kunwar's (Jadu) first memory is from a time before he was born. His mother was bitten by a snake and the valiant efforts of his father and neighbours not only ensured she lived but also that he was born healthy and happy. The incident, now a part of his personal history, becomes a source of Jadu's strength. If he could survive a snake bite as a foetus, then his time in jail during the Emergency and having his life's savings stolen from him on the bus ride home cannot keep him from living reasonably happily and long till his death in his mid-80s.

Born in 1935, Jadu is an older sibling of the newly independent India. He remembers the final years of the freedom movement, the pride of having a homegrown government, the awe of meeting Tenzing Norgay. Back then, the meritorious students made their way to the city closest to their villages to get an education and become able citizens of the new country. In Patna, Jadu sits among women and hears his well-off, convent-educated classmates prattle away in English.

Soon enough he marries a beautiful, demure Maya and when his daughter is still young, goes to America for a few months as a Fulbright scholar. Born to illiterate parents, this is no ordinary achievement and yet Jadu is "utterly defined" by his childhood poverty. The diaries he keeps barely register his most private thoughts, instead it is there that he logs in the family's daily expenses and keeps a tab of their financial well-being.

The first section of the novel, titled "Jadu", is a third-person narrative of a man from his birth to old age. When one lives through so many defining moments of history, it's easy to become detached from their self and personal history. The same happens with Jadu – instead of delving into his difficult feelings about his mother's accidental death or affection for Ananya, his former classmate, as a historian, it is that nation that he prefers to put under a microscope.

He is especially empathetic towards the student uprising in Bihar and JP Narayan's contribution to the movement. He starts to write about his mother but cannot see the essay to its end. A memoir he writes later in life is confined to his eyes only. As one reads about Jadu's brush with activism or being imprisoned during the Emergency, one is forced to wonder whether relishing the past can only be afforded by those who have had relatively easy lives.

A historian by profession, Jadu also takes a special interest in literature. In fact, one could even say it brings him joy. He attempts to translate Aggyey, meets icons like Mahadevi Verma and Firaq Gorakhpuri, and discusses a Maugham novel with the woman he's meeting behind his wife's back. At one point, he suspects his life is becoming "novelistic". And who can deny that? Perhaps, from a vantage point, each of our lives is.

Time and again, it is stressed that Jadunath Kunwar is a man of principle. His steadfast belief in academic practice and living an honest life is challenged when he agrees to pay the dowry for his daughter Jugnu's wedding. His professional and personal integrity are also compromised when he falls prey to dubious online and TV news and appears uncharacteristically "victorious" when Modi comes to power again in 2019.

Time after time
Jugnu tells her story in the first-person voice. Her father's restrained ways and methodical approach to life do not ward off her anxieties about how he'd react if he were to find out about her Black boyfriend. It was Jadu who sup-

ported her decision to leave her husband but her father's smug happiness at the retainment of the right-wing government makes her anxious. The chasm between them – admittedly not a very wide one – is created by political differences.

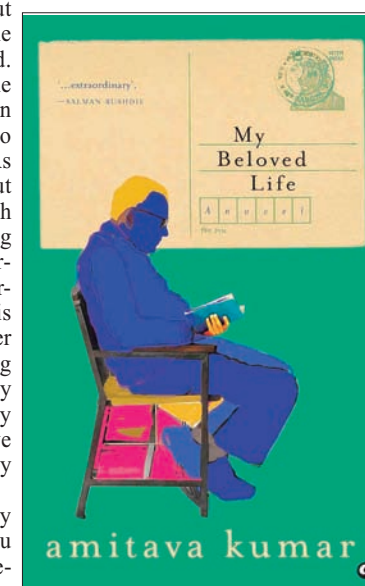
Jugnu remembers her parents' fights about Ananya, the time when she mistook her grandmother for her mother, or when her father spoke about the evils of caste when he was invited to talk about his time in America. Though not very different from how Jadu remembers his own life, Jugnu's memories prove that we often exist in an altered

state in someone else's reality. It is futile, therefore, to be "fanatical" about the truth – one might get the absolute details about someone (or something) right but who documents the feelings, perceptions, and memories about them?

Jadu's only child, Jugnu bears witness to his life even when he's no longer around. A father is resurrected in his daughter's memories as she remembers him as a young man and later as an old man at the mercy of the COVID-19 pandemic that had upended every sense of normalcy.

At every turn, Kumar makes us conscious of our precarious relationship with the truth – our own as well as those whose lives are entwined with ours. With time, fact becomes fiction and fiction becomes an exaggeration of fact – one has to make peace with their contradictory natures. Jadu and Jugnu's stories snake their way through India's political history from the 1930s to the present and I believe Kumar must be happy about the novel having a mind of its own. It wanders, takes detours, loses itself in thought till the author's gentle hands nudge it back on track. *My Beloved Life* is a wholly sincere offering of a novelist at the peak of his craft and a person who has unearthed beauty in the ordinary.

The takeaways are life-affirming: no life, however seemingly unexceptional, is in vain; every life, however seemingly unexceptional, is worthy of an artist's loving gaze. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)



SHORT STORY

THE CALL

By: Dr. Suman Bharali

(...continued from the last edition)

“Ok, we all are together. Tomorrow this can happen to any one of us. Let's search for Seema together.” Said a lady.

A neighbor lady held Jumi and said.

“You go and search for Seema. We will keep Jumi with us safely. You need not have to worry about her.”

Seema's mother showed her gratitude to the crowd of neighbors with tears in her eyes. Soon they divided into groups and started the search as planned. Seema's mother with a man and two ladies went to the police station.

The police took the matter seriously and assured them of full commitment in searching Seema. As she was an adolescent girl. The in-charge of police station informed the petrol party to search the streets and possible areas like hospitals, friend's place, relatives etc., where Seema might be. He also advised the patrol party to ask the shopkeepers along the route, whether they saw Seema. He informed all the check gates and nearby police stations as well. He then asked Seema's mother to have faith in them and go to home. He took the neighbors phone number and said.

“You go to your home and relax. I have informed everyone I need to. Soon we will get some information. As soon as I get any information I will call on this number and inform you. You need not have to come. We will come to your home if needed.”

Seema's mother joined her hands in Namaste posture and pleaded.

“I cannot live without my daughter. She is a very good and innocent girl. Please find her I beg you.”

“I understand your worry. I too have a daughter. Don't worry. We will do everything we can. Have faith on us

and go home.” The police officer replied.

Seema's mother along with the neighbors returned to their house. The other neighbors also returned after searching the nearby streets and bye lanes. The party which went to the tuition center brought the names of the students and their phone numbers. They called the numbers one by one but nobody knew where Seema was. At last the neighbors decided to have patience and faith in police. They hoped that till morning they will get some news from the police. All the neighbors went to their respective houses after consoling Seema's mother. They asked her to be strong and have faith in God. A few ladies stayed with Seema's mother in her house for the night. As they did not want to leave her alone during this hard time. They prepared some food and gave her to eat. Then they relaxed till the morning. That night nobody could sleep well.

In the morning some people went to the police station to ask if there is any information. The police in-charge said that they have searched every nook and corner and every possible place whole night, but could not find any clue about Seema. The people asked the police to keep searching till they find her. The Police officer assured them that there will be no negligence from their side. They will give their best to find Seema.

At home when Seema's mother got the information that the police could not find Seema, she fainted. The neighbors took her to the hospital. People from the factory she worked came to see her when they got the information. They gave the neighbors phone number of her brother i.e., Seema's maternal uncle. In the evening the Uncle and few relatives arrived. They stayed there for the night. In the morning they visited the police station and told that they want to take Seema's mother and Jumi with them to their village which was at two hours



distance. And asked the police to inform them immediately if they get any information about Seema. The police officer agreed and told their search will not stop till they find Seema. Seema's uncle and the relatives took her mother and sister with them to their village that afternoon. Seema's mother could not stop weeping. Her sister was also frightened and mum seeing all these happen suddenly. At a moment their whole family and home was destroyed. May such tragedy don't come to anybody's home.

On the other side the four boys kept themselves house arrested and silent. They were constantly communicating among themselves. They were keeping an eye over the events that were occurring since last two days. They did not let anyone else know about the incident. They were afraid that if police get any clue about their contact with Seema prior to her disappearance they will be in great trouble. They were waiting for the tide to suppress. They thought gradually people will accept that they have lost Seema and normalcy will return to the area. When they heard that Seema's mother and sister were taken to their home village by her uncle, they were happy. They thought now the people will give up and forget everything soon.

At night Rajneesh was lying on bed scrolling down post in social media. Then a call came from an unknown number in his phone. The number seemed to be familiar. But he did not pick up the call as they were avoiding any call since the incident. They feared that someone might get clue that they

know Seema and what happened to her, if they talk with others. So they were hiding in their homes away from the reach of all other persons. The call came again. He did not pick it up. Then the call was coming repeatedly. He got frightened and kept his phone silent. He then called Pramod. Pramod said that call from that number is coming to his phone as well. They called Bijju and Usman. They said they were also getting calls from that number. All of them were frightened now. They thought someone might have seen them or know that they are connected with the incident. All of them decided to meet at Bijju's house and switch off their respective mobile phones.

After an hour the four boys were at Bijju's house. They decided to stay there for the night. They sat together and switched on their mobile phones. Now as they were together they got confidence to face the call. They thought they will receive the call if it comes to anyone's phone this time. All of them were looking at their mobile screen and waiting for the call.

Suddenly, all the four mobile phones rang together. All of them shouted.

“Here it is.”

“The call from that number is coming in my phone.” Said Pramod

“In my phone as well.” Said Bijju

“In my phone also.” Said Rajneesh and Usman together. They looked at each other and then to one another's mobile phones to match the number. It was the same number. But how is it possible to call at our different phone numbers at the same time. They were

shocked. No one picked the call. Their mind were confused and they could not understand what was happening. They kept their mobile phones in silent mode for some time to think and decide what to do.

“Let all of us receive the call at once if it comes again. It's better to face the fear. Otherwise we will remain anxious.” Said Rajneesh.

The other three agreed. They took their mobiles in their hands again. Then the call came in all the four mobile phones at the same time again. All of them looked at each other's eyes and nodded. Then they received the call at once together in all the four mobiles.

“Hello!” All of them spoke together in their mobiles.

“Helloo!” How are you all?” voice of a girl replied from the other side. There was same voice and same reply in all the four numbers. The boys were terrified and put their phones on loud speaker. So that one can listen what reply is coming from the others mobile.

“Hey! Who are you? How are you doing this?” Asked Usman

“I thought you could recognize my voice. You forgot me so soon. Guess who am I? You know me.” Replied the voice.

The boys were confused. They felt that the voice was familiar.

Bijju whispered in Pramod's ears. It's Seema. They all heard what Bijju said and looked at each other with wonder.

“We recognize you. You are Seema right?” asked Rajneesh

“Oh my dear, you have not forgotten me.” Replied Seema's voice.

“But we saw you drowning. Where are you now? Everyone is searching for you?” asked Rajneesh again.

“Only you know where I am. I am still there, where you left me.” Replied the voice

“How is it possible? How are you speaking? Are you not dead?” Asked Bijju, with a trembling voice. (..to be continued)

POETRY

My Village

By: Arti Rai

The rural evening,
The younger sister
Of a peaceful night,
Appears quite before
Its time.

And the village night
Is seen standing
At the door of twilight,
Briskly walking to
Shape into
Its own being.

The sky looks darker in the night.
Brighter, with even brighter stars
Twinkling, blinking their eyes,
To me seem closer,
Above my rooftop gazing
With sprightly brilliant eyes
Smiling, narrating their stories.

An ubiquitous serenity walks
Hand in hand
Silence speaks
At a shrill.
During such dark
And lonesome nights.

Eventually, the night softly
Embraces the villagers
In its gentle arms,
And quietness begins
To sing a lullaby.
And sleep becomes a bliss.

The occasional whisper
Of new wedlock, their laughter
Followed by a shhhhh... sound,
And also the cries of little babies
Invite a mystic notice.

And sometimes, midnight
Barking dogs, irritating sounds
Of wild crickets, hooting of
Round-eyed owls offer
A huge hindrance
To the deep sleep.

Next to it comes
The early dawn,
Fresh and fragrant
Like a day-old bride
Stepping out
Of the palanquin ...

My River !!

Original in Assamese by: Mowsam Hazarika
Translated by: Tasdika Ghaznavi

Sometimes I cry !
For many a reasons !
Sometimes I laugh !
For many a reasons !

Whether I cry ..
Or laugh..

My river flows..
Day and night !

Yet..
I come to her banks..

To talk to myself..

Offloading some burden
To flow away..

To retrieve some aspirations
From her flow !

And she flows on..
Sunrise to sunset..
Sunset to sunrise .

A Mystic Game...

By: Bipul Chandra Kalita

Its light enlightens
dark mysteries

Time is a mystic car
that takes you ahead
Sometimes silently
Sometimes violently

Its darkness, if any,
darkens anybody's
enlightened spirit...

But spares none from
moving or finally
stopping.
Pain and gain get
mixed mystically in it
like good and bad
winks...

Light and darkness
get puzzled to evalu-
ate my existence
Sometimes rightly

That I am getting old
can not be termed as
an accidental bliss:

Sometimes wrongly
But fail not to high-
light this creature's
ceaseless activities,
Pain and gain sink in
an ocean called 'de-
sire'...

USS Theodore Roosevelt to participate in joint military exercises between the US, SKorea & Japan

US aircraft carrier arrives in S Korea as a show of force against nuclear-armed N Korea

SEOUL, June 22: A nuclear-powered United States aircraft carrier arrived on Saturday in South Korea for a three-way exercise stepping up their military training to cope with North Korean threats that escalated with its alignment with Russia.

The arrival of the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike group in Busan came a day after South Korea summoned the Russian ambassador to protest a pact reached between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un this week that pledges mutual defense assistance in the event of war.

South Korea says the deal poses a threat to its security and warned



that it could consider sending arms to Ukraine to help fight off the Russian invasion as a response - a move that would surely ruin its relations with Moscow.

Following a meeting between their defense chiefs in Singapore earlier in June, the United States, South Korea and Japan announced Freedom Edge.

The new multidomain exercise is aimed

at sharpening the countries' combined response in various areas of operation, including air, sea and cyberspace. The Theodore Roosevelt strike group will participate in the exercise that is expected to start within June.

South Korea's military didn't immediately confirm specific details of the training. South Korea's navy said in a statement that the arrival of Theodore Roo-

sevelt demonstrates the strong defense posture of the allies and "stern willingness to respond to advancing North Korean threats."

The carrier's visit comes seven months after another U.S. aircraft carrier, the USS Carl Vinson, came to South Korea in a show of strength against the North. The Theodore Roosevelt strike group also participated in a three-way exercise with

South Korean and Japanese naval forces in April in the disputed East China Sea, where worries about China's territorial claims are rising. In the face of growing North Korean threats, the United States, South Korea and Japan have expanded their combined training and boosted the visibility of strategic U.S. military assets in the region, seeking to intimidate the North.

The United States and South Korea have also been updating their nuclear deterrence strategies, with Seoul seeking stronger assurances that Washington would swiftly and decisively use its nuclear capabilities to defend its ally from a North Korean nuclear attack. (AP)

Israeli national found dead after being shot in West Bank Palestinian town

RAMALLAH, June 22: An Israeli was shot dead in a Palestinian town in the northern West Bank on Saturday morning, Israel's army said, while deadly strikes rocked northern Gaza.

The army said a man was pronounced dead after being shot in the town of Qalqilya, and that Israeli troops were currently operating in the area. The day before, Israeli forces shot dead two militants in the same West Bank town.

No further details were made public. Violence has flared in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war erupted last October. Since then, at least 549 Palestinians in the territory have been killed by Israeli fire say the Palestinian Health Ministry, which tracks the killings. Over that same time, Palestinians in the West Bank have killed at least nine Israelis, including five soldiers, according to UN data.

In a separate event, the Palestinian Civil Defence, an emergency group active in Gaza, said they pulled 19 dead bodies from a building hit by an Israeli strike in an eastern neighbourhood of Gaza City on Saturday. The group said its emergency workers were also digging for survivors at the site of another strike in Shati Refugee camp, west of Gaza City. The Associated Press has been unable to verify the figures provided by the emergency group.

The Israeli army said its fighter jets struck two Hamas military sites in the Gaza City area, but did not elaborate further.

The Israel-Hamas war erupted on October 7 when Hamas militants stormed southern Israel and killed around 1,200 people and took hostage some 250 others. Israel has responded by bombarding and invading the enclave, killing over 37,400 Palestinians there according to the Israeli Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count.

Israeli nationals are prohibited from entering Qalqilya and other areas of the West Bank that fall under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

In April, the death of a 14-year-old Israeli settler sparked a series of settler attacks on Palestinian towns in the territory. The army said the boy was murdered, and later arrested a Palestinian in connection with the killing.

In 2014, the abduction and killing of

three Israeli teens in the West Bank escalated tensions and eventually ignited a 50-day Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, at the time the deadliest round of fighting between the two sides.

Over recent years, the PA's influence in the northern West Bank has waned as militant groups have grown increasingly powerful.

Also Saturday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said a 12-year-old Palestinian



boy died from his wounds after being shot by Israeli forces in Ramallah last week. Commenting on the shooting, the Israeli army said its

forces raided al-Amari refugee camp near Ramallah to arrest a suspect last Friday and then opened fire on a group of Palestinians who were pelting them with stones.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories as part of their hoped-for independent state. (AP)

Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK, criticized for saying West provoked Putin to invade Ukraine

LONDON, June 22: Nigel Farage, leader of the far-right Reform U.K. party, is facing wide-ranging criticism across the political spectrum over his claim that the West provoked Russian President Vladimir Putin to invade Ukraine, including of being an appeaser. In a BBC television interview broadcast Friday evening, Farage, who is seeking to woo voters away from Britain's governing Conservatives at the July 4 general election, drew a link between the expansion of NATO and the European Union eastwards over the past few decades and the invasion.

Claiming that he warned of a potential war in Ukraine in 2014, when he was a member of the European Parliament, Farage said "we provoked this war." It's unclear whether his warning came before or after Russia had annexed the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine in February 2014.

"It was obvious to me that the ever-eastward expansion of NATO and the European Union was giving this man a reason to his Russian people to say, 'They're coming for us again' and to go to war," Farage said. "It's, you know, of course it's his fault — he's used what we've done as an excuse."

Farage's critics from across the political spectrum slammed his statement, with many describing him as a Putin apologist.

In perhaps his sharpest criticism of Farage, Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said it was "completely wrong" to say the West provoked Putin into launching a full invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. "This is a man who deployed nerve agents on the streets of Britain, who's doing deals with countries like North Korea," Sunak said. "And this kind of appeasement is dangerous for Britain's security, the security of our allies that rely on us and only emboldens Putin further."

Many Conservatives, including Sunak, have largely held back from overly criticizing Farage, who though not a lawmaker in the U.K. Parliament, was hugely influential in Britain's vote to leave the EU in 2016.

The worry among many Conservatives is that attacking him too much will further alienate many Conservative voters, who sympathize with his tough rhetoric on issues like immigration and Brexit. In many constituencies around the country, Conservatives have argued that a vote for Reform would see the main opposition Labour Party come through the middle and win.

"I think Nigel Farage is a bit like that pub bore we have all met at the end of the bar who often says if 'I was running the country' and presents very simplistic answers to actually, I am afraid in the 21st century, complex problems," Ben Wallace, the former Conservative defense secretary who has stood down as a lawmaker, told BBC radio.

This is the first general election that Reform U.K. is contesting and it has enjoyed a lift in the polls after Farage said in early June he would lead the party and contest the seat in Clacton in southeast England. Though the party is not expected to secure many seats, Farage is currently favorite to win his contest and finally enter Parliament after seven attempts.

Keir Starmer, leader of the left-of-center Labour Party who is widely expected to become prime minister after the election, labelled Farage's comments as "disgraceful." (AP)

Sri Lanka survived two tough years of economic crisis; possibly because of India's support: Prez Wickremesinghe

COLOMBO, June 22: Sri Lanka has survived two difficult years of its economic crisis and it was possible because of the financial support of USD 3.5 billion from India, President Ranil Wickremesinghe said on Saturday and emphasised his commitment to maintain a strong partnership with New Delhi.

Addressing the 31st All India Partners Meet in Colombo from June 20-22, Wickremesinghe said that he during his last visit to India to attend the new government's swearing-in discussed with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi the core areas of partnership.

"Having now survived two difficult years, I must acknowledge that this was possible because India gave us a loan of USD 3.5 billion. All that will be repaid," he said.

Wickremesinghe said that sustainable energy is one of the grave areas that the two nations would be jointly working on.

"When I was in Delhi last week, I discussed with Prime Minister Modi the need to accelerate the joint programme that we have decided, agreed on. So the major ones are identified. Now this will show the new path we are taking, and a number of



projects, all will be in one parcel," he said.

He added that Sri Lanka had discussed a fair number of proposals.

"First is the grid interconnection between Sri Lanka and India, so that sustainable energy can be transmitted to India, where you all need that very badly. We have the Sampur solar power project, which is a Government to Government (G2G) project, and a three-island project, and which is where we hope the groundbreaking can take place in July," he said.

Wickremesinghe added that additionally there is a focus on a project to establish land connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

"Extensive discussions have also taken place regarding expediting the Trincomalee Development Project, which

encompasses industrial investment zones and tourist areas. Furthermore, plans are underway to construct a multi-product oil pipeline from Nagapattinam to Trincomalee, pending the final observation report," he said.

Wickremesinghe also mentioned the directors meeting of the International Monetary Fund, the global lender which is helping the island nation come out of the economic crisis.

"We have just concluded the board of directors meeting of the IMF, which was quite successful and are preparing thereafter to meet with our creditor nations, the Paris Club, India and others, who meet at the official creditors committee next week, and also carrying on discussions with China with the Exim Bank of China," he said.

"I hope by next week, or

thereafter, that we will have come out of this phase of bankruptcy and into the next phase as we go ahead," he said.

The island nation, in April 2022, declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948. The unprecedented financial crisis led President Wickremesinghe's predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to quit office in 2022.

Earlier in May, Foreign Minister Ali Sabry had said Sri Lanka is looking at a reduction of approximately USD 17 billion from its overall debt burden in the ongoing debt restructuring process.

In March, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it has reached a staff-level agreement with Sri Lanka for the next phase that would enable it access to USD 337 million from the nearly USD 3 billion bailout approved in 2023 for the cash-strapped country.

Two tranches of USD 330 million each were released in March and December 2023 even as the Washington-based global lender has praised Colombo for its macroeconomic policy reforms, which it said, "are starting to bear fruit." (PTI)

Pakistan minister condemns Swat lynching, says religion being weaponised to justify 'street justice'



ISLAMABAD, June 22: The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader, while speaking during the budget debate in the National Assembly, said that Parliament had to take stern notice of "mob justice", as it had brought Pakistan "to the brink of destruction", the Dawn newspaper reported.

The minister also recalled an attempt on his life in 2018 when he was shot by a supporter of the religio-political party Tehreek-i-Labbaki Pakistan.

Iqbal said he was grateful that he got a new lease

of life after an extremist shot him. "Another mob lynching has happened in Swat and Pakistan is under scrutiny for it." The 65-year-old secretary general of the PML-N further said that if this was an isolated incident "we could move past it."

However, Iqbal referred to similar incidents that happened earlier in Sialkot, Jaranwala and Sargodha where those accused of desecration were lynched by vigilante mobs.

The minister also recalled an attempt on his life in 2018 when he was shot by a supporter of the religio-political party Tehreek-i-Labbaki Pakistan.

On Thursday night, an enraged mob in the picturesque Pakistani town of Swat gunned down a tourist, dragged him through the town and later hanged him in full public view for allegedly committing desecration of the Quran.

Muhammad Ismail, a 40-year-old resident of Sialkot in Punjab province, was visiting the northwestern Pakistan hill resort town of Swat and was accused of having burnt the pages of Islam's holy book in Madyan tehsil of Swat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Amid interruptions by Deputy Speaker Ghulam Mustafa Shah of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Iqbal

said, "Another mob lynching has happened in Swat and Pakistan is under scrutiny for it." The 65-year-old secretary general of the PML-N further said that if this was an isolated incident "we could move past it."

However, Iqbal referred to similar incidents that happened earlier in Sialkot, Jaranwala and Sargodha where those accused of desecration were lynched by vigilante mobs.

The minister also recalled an attempt on his life in 2018 when he was shot by a supporter of the religio-political party Tehreek-i-Labbaki Pakistan.

Iqbal said he was grateful that he got a new lease

UN envoy defends failure to include Afghan women in upcoming meeting with the Taliban in Qatar

UNITED NATIONS, June 22: The United Nations' top official in Afghanistan defended the failure to include Afghan women in the upcoming first meeting between the Taliban and envoys from 22 countries, insisting that demands for women's rights are certain to be raised.

UN special envoy Roza Otunbayeva was pummeled with questions on Friday from journalists about criticism from human rights organisations at the omission of Afghan women from the meeting in Qatar's capital, Doha, on June 30 and July 1.

The Taliban seized power in 2021 as United States and NATO forces withdrew following two decades of war. No country officially recognises them as Afghanistan's government, and

the UN has said that recognition is almost impossible while bans on female education and employment remain in place. Human Rights Watch Executive Director Tirana Hassan said that, in the face of the Taliban's tightening repression of women and girls, the UN plans to hold a meeting "without women's rights on the agenda or Afghan women in the room are shocking."

Amnesty International Secretary General Agnes Callamard said, "The credibility of this meeting will be in tatters if it doesn't adequately address the human rights crisis in Afghanistan and fails to involve women human rights defenders and other relevant stakeholders from Afghan civil society."

Otunbayeva, a former president and foreign minister of Kyrgyzstan, insisted after briefing the UN Security Council that "nobody dictated" conditions to the United Nations about the Doha meeting, but she confirmed that no Afghan women will be present.

UN political chief Rosemary DiCarlo will chair the meeting, Otunbayeva said. She will attend, and a few of the 22 special en-

voys on Afghanistan who are women will also be there.

The meeting is the third UN-sponsored gathering on the Afghan crisis in Doha. The Taliban weren't invited to the first, and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said they set unacceptable conditions for attending the second in February, including demands that Afghan civil society members be excluded from the talks and that they be treated as the country's legitimate rulers.

Undersecretary-General DiCarlo visited Afghanistan in May and invited the Taliban Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, to attend the upcoming meeting.

The Taliban accepted and said they are sending a delegation.

"We do hope that delegation will be led by de facto Foreign

Minister Muttaqi," Otunbayeva said, but the Taliban may send another minister. Just before the Doha gathering, there will be a hybrid meeting with Afghan civil society

representatives from inside and outside the country, Otunbayeva said. And on July 2, immediately after Doha, "we'll be meeting all the civil society people."

The Taliban have used their interpretation of Islamic law to bar girls from education beyond age 11, ban women from public spaces, exclude them from many jobs, and enforce dress codes and male guardianship requirements.

Otunbayeva said the upcoming gathering will be the first face-to-face meeting between the Taliban and the envoys and will focus on what she said were "the most important acute issues of today" — private business and banking, and counter-narcotics policy.

Both are about women, she said, and the envoys will tell the Taliban, "Look, it doesn't work like this. We should have women around the table. We should provide them also access to businesses." She added that "if there are, let's say, 5 million addicted people in Afghanistan, more than 30 per cent are women." (AP)



Nepal nominates 8 new ambassadors, including for India

KATHMANDU, June 22: Nepal has nominated ambassadors for eight countries, including India, a little over two weeks after recalling the incumbents.

According to the Cabinet sources, former chief secretary and Nepal's ambassador to the United Kingdom, Lokdarshan Regmi, has been nominated as the new Nepalese ambassador to India.

Regmi has earlier held positions of Home Secretary, Finance Secretary and Secretary at the Ministry of Land Reform and Management.

The decision was taken by Nepal's Cabinet on Friday.

Earlier on June 6, the Nepal government had recalled ambassadors from 11 countries, including those serving in India and the US and appointed under the Nepali Congress'

quota, three months after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' terminated his alliance with the party and joined hands with former prime minister KP Sharma Oli.

The development had come three months after the coalition was formed with the support of CPN-UML.

The government has named former Commerce and Industry Secretary Chandra Ghimire as Nepal's new ambassador to the United States replacing the incumbent ambassador, Sridhar Khatri while Bijan Pant has been named Nepal's new ambassador to the United Kingdom.

All the ambassador nominees need to undergo parliamentary hearings before the president appoints them to their respective positions. (PTI)

Probe into 1985 Kanishka bombing remains 'active & ongoing'

OTTAWA, June 22: Investigations into the bombing of the Air India Flight 182 remain "active and ongoing", the Canadian police have said, terming it the "longest" and one of the "most complex domestic terrorism" probe, ahead of the deadly bombing's 39th-anniversary memorial.

The Montreal-New Delhi Air India 'Kanishka' Flight 182 exploded 45 minutes before it was to have landed at London's Heathrow Airport on June 23, 1985, killing all 329 people on board, most of them Canadians of Indian descent.

The bombing was blamed on Sikh militants in retaliation to 'Operation Blue Star' to flush out militants from the Golden Temple in 1984.

In a statement on Friday, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

(RCMP) Assistant Commissioner David Teboul called the bombing the "greatest terror-related loss of life involving and affecting Canadians" in the country's history as he offered "deepest sympathies, understanding and support to the families of the victims".

"The Air India investigation is the longest and certainly one of the most complex domestic terrorism investigations that the RCMP has undertaken in our history," Teboul said. "Our investigative efforts remain active and ongoing," he said.

Asserting that the impacts of the bombing "have not diminished with time" he said that the trauma it caused has impacted generations.

"We must never forget those innocent lives lost to this tragedy and other acts of terrorism," he said.

Nothing that this year marks the 39th anniversary memorial of the bombing, he said that the 40th memorial, a significant milestone, is approaching in 2025.

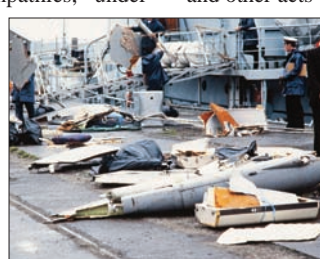
"At the memorials, previous and current employees from the investigation and our greater organisation, past and present, will ensure we remember those

lost and those left to deal with the unthinkable," he said.

"Over the years, attending the memorials has been an opportunity to pay our respects to the victims and their families and show our appreciation for all those that did so much to respond to and investigate the tragedy," he said, encouraging people to do the same in private or at the memorials in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

India's consulates in Vancouver and Toronto have planned a memorial service to mark the anniversary of the bombing.

A memorial is scheduled on June 23 at the Air India Memorial at Stanley Park's Ceperley Playground area in Vancouver. Another memorial service is scheduled at South Lawn, Queen's Park, Toronto. (PTI)



El Salvador death toll rises to 19 as heavy rains continue

SAN SALVADOR, June 22: The torrential rains hitting El Salvador caused the deaths of another six people on Friday when two girls and four adults were killed after being buried in their homes. Wall collapses and landslides on the outskirts of the capital brought a total of 19 dead.

Two weather systems - one along Guatemala's Pacific coast and the other in the Gulf of Mexico that developed Tropical Storm Alberto - have brought saturating rains to southern Mexico and Central America. The Civil Protection authorities of El Salvador issued a red alert and the country's Congress declared a state of national emergency for 15 days because of the severity of the rains.

The death of the two girls, ages 5 and 7, was confirmed by the country's Rescue Commands and the Civil Protection, which alerted residents to the danger of landslides because of the accumulation of water that can cause walls to collapse.

According to the official report, a wall collapsed on the girls' house and after several hours of work, they recovered their lifeless bodies. The parents of the minors were rescued alive and taken to a local hospital. (AP)

PPA MLA to prioritise resolving Assam-Arunachal border issue

Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share an 804.1-km-long border

ITANAGAR, June 22: Newly elected People's Party of Arunachal legislator Nabam Vivek on Saturday asserted that he would prioritise resolving the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border dispute in his Doimukh constituency.

Despite the 2022 agreement between the two governments to resolve the longstanding issues, people of some villages under the Doimukh assembly segment strongly objected to the boundary demarcation.

"I have requested chief minister Pema Khandu to reconstitute the regional committee immediately so that a consensus can be reached between the villagers of both the states and to draw the boundary line," Vivek told PTL.

On July 15, 2022, the historic Namsai Declaration was signed between the two governments, and Arunachal Pradesh got 86 villages as compared to its claim of 123.

There is no problem be-



tween the governments of the two states, he said, adding that the issues lie at the ground level.

"The boundary issue is a major concern for me. In the disputed border region, I am the only representative from the Arunachal side, while Assam, which shares a long boundary with my con-

stituency from Bedeti in Biswanath district to Boginadi in Lakhimpur district, has 6-7 MLAs," he said.

Both governments are determined to resolve the issues amicably, he said.

"I will go to the ground level, discuss with the people and try to convince them. Resolving the border dispute was

a poll promise," the 51-year-old lawmaker said.

Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share an 804.1-km-long border.

Arunachal Pradesh, which was made a union territory in 1972, has been maintaining that several forest tracts in the plains traditionally belonged to hill tribal chiefs and communities and these were "unilaterally" transferred to Assam earlier. After Arunachal Pradesh achieved statehood in 1987, a tripartite committee was appointed, which recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh.

Assam contested this and the matter was in the Supreme Court for a long time.

Vivek also said that he would work to construct an RCC bridge to connect Doimukh with Yupia, the Papum Pare district headquarters, besides concentrating on health and education. (PTI)

MSU support to NSF's non-cooperation

IMPHAL, June 22: The Maring Students' Union (MSU) reaffirmed its "unwavering support" for the non-cooperation movement declared by the Naga Students' Federation (NSF), denouncing any form of cooperation with the "Indian armed forces".

As the principal students' organization representing the Maring Naga tribe, the MSU expressed profound concern over the recent actions of the Assam Rifles in the Rilram Maring area of Tengnoupal and Moreh sub-division. "The Assam Rifles' rigorous and intrusive checks on local roads, coupled with their negligence in securing the borders, undermine the purpose of their presence. Despite knowing that commuters—whether public or business people—are local residents, they unnecessarily ask for ID proof and sometimes detain them, which amounts to harassment. The student union demands an end to their intimidation to village leaders and dissemination of misleading reports, particularly those unjustly targeting the Rilram Area Maring Organisation (RAMO)," the MSU stated.

While expressing heartfelt sympathy towards the plight of Myanmar nationals, the massive inflow of these individuals following the political upheaval in Myanmar after the military coup in 2021 has created unbearable hardships and insecurity for the native residents, the MSU expressed. The Myanmar nationals being sheltered in the six Maring Naga villages (Saibol, Moirengthel, Chanringphai, Lamlong Khunou, Choktong, Satang), numbering about 1,428 (only those whose biometrics were captured), have outnumbered the local residents, which is of great concern, kit also said. Monitoring their activities has become a significant challenge, as the concerned authorities cannot regularly conduct verification exercises amidst the fluctuating number of inmates. The Union acknowledges the violent conflict in neighboring Myanmar, the Maring

student body added.

The MSU then said that, in addition to the "harsh reality" faced by local residents along the Indo-Myanmar border, the Maring Students' Union said it was appalled by the massive militarization in the Maring area and the belligerent attitude of the Indian armed forces operating there. The halting of business commuters by Assam Rifles stationed at Sita presents a significant challenge to their right to live with dignity and economic well-being, the MSU also said. This interruption not only hampers their ability to earn a livelihood but also imposes undue stress and uncertainty on their daily lives, the student body also said. Ensuring the smooth passage of commuters is essential to uphold their fundamental rights and foster a stable economic environment. The attitude of the Indian military personnel is highly questionable, it further added.

While paying "deepest" homage to the victims, the student body recalled the "historical incidents of brutality, including the infamous Operation Bluebird of 1987 at Oinam and surrounding villages, the brutal assault and murder of Late Eli Rose of Ngapum village, and the tragic Oting incident in December 2021".

The implementation and recent extension of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA-1958) on April 1, 2024, for another six months have exacerbated these issues, fostering a culture of impunity and leading to numerous human rights violations, the Maring student body said.

The MSU then "vehemently" condemned "these violent acts" and demanded accountability. The MSU also called on the government of India to repeal AFSPA and conduct transparent investigations into all reported abuses in the "Naga homeland". The MSU urged the international community to support "our quest for peace, justice, and human dignity". (NNN)

Women vendors urge govt to discuss Manipur crisis in Parl

IMPHAL, June 22: Women vendors of Khwairamband Keithel on Saturday urged the BJP-led NDA government to table the ongoing crisis in Manipur during the upcoming session of the Parliament for thorough discussion, aiming toward ending the crisis.

Addressing a press conference at Manipur Press Club, Imphal, today, leaders of Khwairamband Keithel Joint Coordinating Committee also strongly protested against authorities' actions against village volunteers "who are defending villages in the fringe of the valley districts".

The leaders then congratulated the BJP-led NDA coming to power again at the Centre while expressing hope that the new government will surely prioritize resolving the protracted ethnic crisis in Manipur.

Quoting the Manipur chief minister who asserted that the Centre would come up with a solution to end the crisis within the next two or three months, one of the leaders expressed hope that the Centre will translate it into action.

The committee considered that it is the responsibility of both the Centre and the state government to resolve the crisis, the leader said, adding, "We would like to appeal again to restore peace and normalcy in the state at the earliest."

They urged the Centre to bring up the Manipur issue in the Parliament during the upcoming session due to begin from July 24 as a main agenda so that the members discuss and suggest a practicable solution to the crisis.

The committee further expressed concern over the fresh wave of violence that rocked the Jiribam district and rendered homeless to hundreds of people after their houses were torched. (NNN)

Will uphold framework agreement at all time: NSCN-IM

'GOI should not nourish the false hope of winning over the hearts of the Nagas with colonial mantra'

DIMAPUR, June 22: The NSCN-IM asserted recently in a statement that it "will uphold the Framework Agreement at all time." According to the NSCN-IM, it felt free and exhilarated when the representatives of the government of India repeatedly "assured us" saying that they will also abide by the Framework Agreement. "The irony of the Framework Agreement was that it was being threatened through deceit and double-dealing of the government of India on the Naga issue," it also said. According to the NSCN-IM, the Naga people have started questioning the sincerity of the government of India which has made many agreements with all Naga factions. "This kind of divides and rules policy stands on the way to an honorable solution. The government of India should not nourish the false hope of winning over the hearts of the Nagas with colonial mantra or hooking the Nagas with development bait. The colonial policy of the government of India will never bring the Nagas closer to India rather it will drive the Nagas further away to the other block", it also said. "The truth of the situation is that the Nagas are not alone. The international community has acknowledged that the Naga issue is a genuine case of national resistance movement. Parliamentarians from many countries, international human right organizations and the Churches are with the Nagas. Except for a few collaborators of the enemies, all sections of Naga people remain united on the Naga political issue that remains politically sacrosanct. They are



fully convinced that their future is in salvaging their national principle," the NSCN-IM added.

According to the NSCN-IM, the inherent sovereign right of peoples and nations are indestructible and it never dies. The Roman Empire, the British Empire and other colonial powers tried to murder the national sovereign rights of peoples and nations, but it ends up with damning failure, it stated. The Naga national issue cannot be robbed off or murdered by any power in so far as it is rooted on the solid ground of the recognized sovereign right of the Naga people, the NSCN-IM also said.

"Above all, the presence of God, the Creator of heaven and earth has been with the Nagas since the beginning of the movement. Small and weak we may be, but no human force can defeat us because God is at the centre of the movement. We started the movement with Him and it will be concluded with Him at His own Timing," the statement of the NSCN-IM further added.

Recalling the turns of past events, the NSCN-IM said, "We talk of unique history of our free country, we talk of our inherent sovereign right, we talk of our

unique identity and culture, but talking alone is not enough if they are not made recognized entities. We confronted our enemies in the east, in the west, in the north and south, but confrontation alone does not solve problem".

It also said confrontation without negotiation is an act of militarism. Confrontation must go along with negotiation. All disputes among peoples and nations over land and water and all international disputes are settled through negotiations. We believe in negotiated settlement through bilateral talks or multilateral talks, the NSCN-IM also said. From the

very beginning we Nagas chose political talk, not armed confrontation. We focus on peace not war; we focus on solution not problem. We are for peaceful co-existence of the two peoples, but we strongly opposed to forced union, it stated.

According to the NSCN-IM, the past Indian leaders viewed the Naga national resistance movement from military perspective and as such, "hundreds of thousand innocent Nagas were indiscriminately arrested and ruthlessly tortured; thousands were killed or slaughtered to frighten those uncommitted weak people, but the real revolutionary sons and daughters of the land stayed the course". They tried to impose military solution upon the Nagas, but it was proven to be a futile exercise.

"The Nagas survived from many horrible onslaughts of the enemies by His grace," the NSCN-IM added. (NNN)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HANDLOOM AND TEXTILES,
KARBI ANGLONG::: DIPHU

NO. ADHTD/SOPD/NIT/1/2024-25/05

Dated:- 17/06/2024.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

In pursuance of KAAC administrative approval letter No. KAAC/H&T/-15/AA&FS/Pt-I/2016-17/441, Dated 14th June/2024, sealed tender affixing non-refundable Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council cash receipt worth Rs.10.00 (Rupees ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from registered Contractors/Firms for implementation of schemes/works mentioned in Annexure-I under State Owned Priority Development (SOPD) fund for the financial year 2024-25 under Assistant Director, Handloom & Textiles, Karbi Anglong, Diphu. The tender will be received by the undersigned up to 2:00 P.M. on 01/07/2024, and will be opened on the same date, place and time in presence of the tenderer or their authorize representative if they so desire.

If the day of opening of tender will be holiday or non working day, the tender will be opened on the next working day. The undersigned reserve the right to accept/cancel any or all tenders if necessary without assigning any reason thereof and will not be bound himself/herself to accept the lowest rate.

Detailed tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Assistant Director, Handloom and Textiles, Karbi Anglong, Diphu from 17/06/2024 during working hours.

Terms & Conditions:-

- The rate to be quoted as % (percent) above/below/as per schedule rate.
- The tenderers must quote their rate distinctly both in figures and words.
- Earnest Money 1% for ST/SC and 2% for others should be deposited in favour of Assistant Director, Handloom & Textiles, Karbi Anglong, Diphu in the form of Call Deposit/Bank Draft/NSC of any recognized Bank should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The following valid documents should be enclosed with the tender:-
 - Photocopy of Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Photocopy of GST Registration & GST Clearance Certificate.
 - Photocopy of Govt./KAAC Contract Registration.
 - Original copy of Call Deposit/Bank Draft of any Govt./Recognized Bank.
 - Photocopy of Caste/Tribe Certificate for ST/SC and Trading License for non ST/SC.
 - Photocopy of PAN Card.
 - Photocopy of Bank Passbook front page.

ANNEXURE-I

Sl/No.	Name of Schemes/works	Tender Amount	Time of Completion
1	Construction of office building including internal electrification work & construction of Common Toilet at HTC, H&T, Phuloni. (Total Estimated amount phase-I + phase-2 = Rs.40.00 Lacs).	40,00,000.00	90 Days
2	Decoration and furniture of sale Emporium at Assistant Director office campus, Diphu.	7,00,000.00	
3	Construction of Weavers workshed at Rajpur, Langpher MAC.	5,00,000.00	
4	Construction of Weavers workshed at, Lumbajong MAC.	5,00,000.00	
5	Construction of Weavers workshed at Kangkijan, Langpher MAC.	5,00,000.00	
6	Construction of Weavers workshed at Eragon, Langpher MAC.	5,00,000.00	
7	Construction of Weavers workshed at Hawraghat MAC.	5,00,000.00	
8	Construction of Weavers workshed at Langhin MAC.	5,00,000.00	
9	Construction of floor tiles at WESU, Bakalia Office.	4,00,000.00	
10	Construction of workshed at Mekbi Athoi, Langpher MAC.	3,00,000.00	15 Days
11	Extension of Departmental Exhibition stall at KPH, Taralangso	10,00,000.00	
12	Renovation & Repairing of Departmental Exhibition Stall at KPH, Taralangso.	8,00,000.00	
13	Supply of 60 "complete frame looms & accessories to passed out trainees.	9,72,000.00	
14	Supply of 60" complete frame looms & accessories to individual workshed.	1,89,000.00	
15	Supply of looms & accessories to individual deserving handloom weavers.	12,00,000.00	
16	Supply of best quality cotton yarn to passed out Trainees.	1,12,500.00	
17	Supply of best quality cotton yarn to individual deserving handloom weavers.	12,50,000.00	
18	Supply of best quality cotton yarn to registered weaving coop. societies.	2,50,000.00	

Sd/-

Assistant Director
Handloom & Textiles,
Karbi Anglong, Diphu.

Shah launches special programme to fast-track immigration services



NEW DELHI, June 22: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday launched a special programme under which the immigration process of pre-verified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders will be fast-tracked, an official said. The Fast Track Immigration- Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP) is a “visionary initiative” by the government, thoughtfully designed for Indian nationals and OCI cardholders, the official said. Eligible individuals will need to apply online and submit their biometrics (fingerprint and facial image) along with other required

information as specified in the application form. The FTI registration will be valid for a maximum of five years or until the validity of the passport, whichever comes first, he said. Approved applications would receive a message to schedule an appointment to provide their biometrics details. Applicants may provide their biometrics at designated international airports in India or the nearest Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) according to the prior appointment schedule. Biometrics is compulsory for the completion of the application process, the official said.

The applicants may ensure a minimum passport validity of at least six months while applying for the FTI-TTP. The membership of programmer will be co-terminus with passport validity, he said.

The applicant needs to provide the current residential address to avoid the rejection of the application, another official said. Incorrect or false information, concealing any material facts in the application form shall make the application liable for rejection. Those applicants will not be registered for the FTI-TTP whose biometrics, for any technical reason cannot be captured, the official said.

The FTI-TTP aims to revolutionise people’s travel experience, making it faster, easier, and more secure, he said. This initiative showcases the government’s commitment to enhance travel convenience and efficiency for everyone, the official said. Registration under FTI will be completed after necessary verifications and confirmation of eligibility, he said.

Applicants will be registered after their identity has been successfully authenticated through mobile OTP and email verification. The Union home ministry also shared a support help desk email ID -- india.ftitp-boi@mha.gov.in. (PTI)

TDP's Ayyannapatrudu unanimously elected Speaker of Andhra Assembly

AMARAVATI, June 22: TDP’s Narsipatnam MLA C Ayyannapatrudu was elected unanimously as the Speaker of the 16th Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Saturday. Addressing the Assembly, Pro-tem Speaker and TDP’s Rajahmundry Rural MLA G Butchaiah Chowdary said that Janasena chief Pawan Kalyan, TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh and BJP’s Staya Kumar Yadava made three proposals on behalf of Ayyannapatrudu for the Speaker’s post.

“As Ayyannapatrudu was the only person who filed the nomination, I declare that he has been elected as the Speaker unanimously. I extend my wholehearted congratulations to Ayyannapatrudu and request him to ascend the Speaker’s chair,” said the Pro-tem Speaker. Ayyannapatrudu’s election was a mere formality as no other MLA filed a nomination to challenge him.

On Friday, only three nominations were received for the Speaker’s post, and they all were on behalf of Ayyannapatrudu, said PPK Ramacharyulu, secretary general, Legislative Assembly.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and others escorted Ayyannapatrudu to the Speaker’s chair. (PTI)

INDIA bloc spent too much time on seat sharing talks: Dipankar Bhattacharya

‘How we actually transcend our differences or navigate through differences to maintain this overarching national unity - that is a big challenge’



NEW DELHI, June 22: The INDIA bloc could have performed better in the recently-held Lok Sabha polls and perhaps, too much time was spent in reaching seat-sharing agreements, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya has said.

In an interview with top editors of PTI at the agency’s headquarters here, the CPI(ML) Liberation leader

also said mass movements, such as the farmers’ agitation, youth and civil-society movements, as well as a community of “digital warriors” supplemented the opposition bloc’s efforts in the election.

The Left leader, whose party is a part of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), said the victory margin was very close on 30-40 seats. Bhattacharya quipped that while

he cannot say there was nothing “unfair” about it, the opposition bloc could have performed better in the parliamentary polls.

“I cannot completely rule out that there has been nothing unfair to that (the poll results), but having said that, I think there were some states where we could have done better.”

“For example, Bihar is one state. If only we could have performed at par with Uttar Pradesh, things would have been different. Maybe, even in Karnataka, where the Congress is in power. They could have probably performed slightly better,” he said.

Referring to last year’s Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan Assembly polls, Bhattacharya said not contesting those elections together led to a loss of momentum for the opposition alliance. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the elections in all the three Hindi-heartland states.

“Those three Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan -- I wish that the INDIA alliance could have been factored in. There was no reflection of INDIA in those elections and the results did not go our way. (PTI)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PHE) DIPHU RURAL WATER SUPPLY DIVISION, DIPHU SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO - I of 2024-25 UNDER SOPD

Sealed tender affixing KAAC receipt worth ₹ 10.00 (Rupees ten) only are invited from registered contractors/ firms of PHE Department under Karbi Anglong Autonomous council area for the work as per (Annexure - A) of AAP 2024-25 (SOPD - G) duly approved and accorded A/A by the KAAC authority vide No. KAAC/PHE-3/ AA /2019-20/2021-22/13-A Dt. 13-06-2024 under Diphu Rural Water supply division, Diphu will receive up to 2.00 P.M. of 01-07-2024 and tender so received will be opened on the same date at 2:30 PM in presence of intending tenderer or their authorized representative who likes to be present.

Detail tender papers, specification, terms and condition etc. may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on all working days from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM of 24-06-2024 to 01-07-2024 and up to 12.00 noon of 01-07-2024 on payment of ₹ 100.00 (Rupees one hundred) only in demand draft which should be pledge in favour of “Executive Engineer (PHE), Diphu Rural Water Supply Division, Diphu”. The undersigned have reserved the right to accept or reject or cancel the same without any reason and claim thereof. In case of any unavoidable circumstances if tender could not be received or open on the predetermined time and date the same shall be received and opened in the next working day at the same time for which no separate communication will be made.

The A/A accorded under Head of Account 2225-02-190-2419-670-32-99 for the financial year 2024-25 of Grant No. 76

The estimates were prepared based on APHE SOR (2015-16) & CPWD DSR (2021-22) and rate analysis based on present market price.

Terms and Condition: -

- Bidder should quote their rates distinctly both in figures and in words on percentage basis as per below / above / and the estimated rates / departmental approved rates.
- The Bidder should furnish their full name and address distinctly in the tender papers.
- Earnest money should invariable be enclosed to the tender papers.
- Income tax. Professional tax and GST clearance certificate should be enclosed with the tender papers.
- The work must be completed within stipulated time.
- The work should be started after signing necessary agreement and in consultation with AEE (PHE) / SO (PHE) i/c.
- Payment will be made subject to availability of fund.
- No advance payment will be made for the work.
- Non-tribal tenderer must produce up to date KAAC trading license along with the tender documents.
- All other terms and condition will be followed as per APWD - 2 forms of tender.
- The undersigned reserved the right to accept / reject any or all tender in part of in full without assigning any reason thereof and he does not bind himself to accept the lowest tender rate.

ANNEXURE-A Memo NO. PHE/DIP/R/TB/TND/1 / 2024-25 /358-72 Date: 15/06/24

Sl No	Name of Work	Gr. No.	Amount (In Lakhs)	Earnest Money Gen	ST/SC	Time of completion
1	Construction of approach road (M&BT) from ITI-Mentila road to O/o Executive Engineer (PHE) Diphu rural W/S Division Chainage-200.00 m	1	20.00	2%	1%	45 Days
2	Construction of approach road (M&BT) from Store section to the Executive Engineer (PHE) Diphu rural W/S Division office chamber. Chainage-42.00 m 2	2	2.10	2%	1%	20 Days
3	Construction of Hand railing along the retaining wall near Executive Engineer office Chamber.	3	5.00	2%	1%	30 Days
4	Water supply arrangements at Diphu Rural W/S Division office complex.	4	5.10	2%	1%	25 Days
5	Construction of CC flooring near mechanical store for storage of Sintex water tank.	5	2.63	2%	1%	30 Days
6	Construction of RCC sentry room for Chowkidar at office campus of PHE, Diphu rural W/S Division.	6	1.17	2%	1%	45 Days
7	Construction of Double leaf Iron gate at O/o Executive Engineer (PHE) Diphu rural W/S Division.	7	0.96	2%	1%	45 Days
8	Construction of Chemical Store room at the O/o Executive Engineer (PHE) Diphu rural W/S Division.	8	4.22	2%	1%	60 Days
9	Construction of RCC protection wall at EE(PHE) Diphu Rural designated Quarter.	9	30.00	2%	1%	60 Days
10	Construction of Boundary wall around Bokajan Store near CCI.	10	8.12	2%	1%	45 Days
11	Construction of Longchor at Jilangso(Kohora).	11	9.80	2%	1%	60 Days
12	Construction of Rapid sand filter, Pump House,UGR and interconnection between TP and UGR at Dihingia PWSS	12	13.00	2%	1%	60 Days
13	Renovation of PHE, Inspection Bungalow at Bagori including supplying of furniture.	13	10.90	2%	1%	60 Days
14	Renovation of Type-IV staff quarter at Silonijan Zone-1 PWSS for accommodation of Head Assistant Chowkiholder sub-division.	15	3.55	2%	1%	45 Days
15	Installation of panel board at Matipul old PWSS	16	0.59	2%	1%	20 Days
16	Installation of DTW at Police reserved campus	17	12.00	2%	1%	20 Days
17	Supply of centrifugal pumpset at different schemes under Chowkiholder Sub-division-2 Nos	18	1.80	2%	1%	7 Days
18	Supply of HDPE pipe jointing machine (upto 200 mm dia.)- 4 Nos and PPP pipe jointing machine (upto 200 mm dia.)- 8 Nos	19	2.80	2%	1%	7 Days
19	Supply of HDPE pipe of different diameter under Chowkiholder and Diphu Sub-division	20	6.10	2%	1%	7 Days
20	Supply of PPR pipe of 20mm dia including fittings Chowkiholder and Diphu Sub-division	21	1.41	2%	1%	7 Days

Sd/-
Executive Engineer, (PHE)
Diphu Rural W/S Division

Memo NO. PHE/DIP/R/TB/TND/1/2024-25/358-72

Date: 15/06/24

Bihar Police obtain NEET exam papers to tally with seized documents; may do narco testing of accused

PATNA, June 22: The Economic Offences Unit of Bihar Police has obtained NEET reference question papers to compare these with documents recovered during a search operation last month from a flat here and is also exploring the "possibility of conducting narco analysis and brain mapping tests" of accused in the case, sources said on Saturday.

They also indicated that the Enforcement Directorate might investigate the money laundering aspect of the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance examination - the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) or NEET, conducted by the National Testing Agency in May.

"We had requested the NTA for the reference question papers after we began the probe last month. Finally, they did the needful. We will tally these papers with partially burnt papers seized from a Patna flat last month. This exercise is likely to be done before a forensic examination of such documents," an EOU source said.



Top officials of the EOU are likely to visit Delhi on Saturday to "discuss certain aspects of the ongoing probe with the senior officials of the Union Education Ministry and other concerned wings", he said.

"Based on EOU's FIR, the Enforcement Directorate may probe into the matter under several sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The central agency is expected to identify proceeds of crime and initiate proceedings to attach properties belonging to the accused or

suspects," said another source of the Economic Offences Unit.

Commenting on the development, Abhaynand, former director general of police (DGP), Bihar, told PTI: "There is no doubt that grave offences have been committed in the NEET-UG 2024 exam. Prima facie, it appears that the paper was leaked... Evidence collected so far is also suggestive of the paper leak. The case must be probed under the provisions of the PMLA as black money is involved in it."

The arrested accused in the case are providing conflicting statements or changing their statements during interrogation, an EOU source said.

"Officials are contemplating conducting brain mapping and narco-analysis tests. These scientific tests may provide certain fresh leads to investigators," the source said.

A narco-analysis test involves intravenous administration of a drug that causes the subject to enter into a stage of anaesthesia, during which the person becomes less inhibited and is more likely to divulge information, which would usually not be revealed in the conscious state.

Brain mapping uses neuroscience to determine whether a person has specific knowledge related to a crime. This is done by measuring EEG signals in the brain.

Brain mapping and narco-analysis tests are illegal without the subject's consent. The EOU has also started investigating the role of some more private professional col-

leges in Bihar who allegedly sent solvers on behalf of real candidates in the NEET exam.

"It is suspected that solvers of private colleges/institutes were allowed to appear on behalf of real candidates in connivance with officials of the examination centres, where the exam was held on May 5," a source said.

It is also suspected that officials were bribed so that an "undeserving candidate" could sit strategically next to a "brilliant dummy candidate" who was also paid money.

Search operations were conducted to nab a few suspects in Nalanda district, sources said.

The EOU, which is probing the alleged NEET-UG paper leak case, last month arrested 13 people as part of its investigation into the alleged paper leak in the NEET-UG 2024 exam.

The arrested accused included Sikandar Yadavendu, the prime suspect who is a junior engineer at the Danapur Municipal Council, aspirants and their parents. (PTI)

UAPA tribunal confirms ban on Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Muslim League J&K faction

NEW DELHI, June 22: A tribunal set up under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) on Saturday confirmed the Centre's decision to impose a five-year ban on the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) and Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Jammu and Kashmir. The one-member tribunal of Delhi High Court judge Sachin Datta was constituted under the stringent anti-terror law in January to assess whether there was "sufficient cause" behind the imposition of the ban.

Upholding the ban, the tribunal held the two organisations were carrying out secessionist activities in the valley with help from across the border to realise the merger of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan and establish Islamic rule in the Union Territory.

The tribunal also upheld the Centre's contention that the organisations were acting on behalf of Pakistan-based terrorist organisations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Hizbul Mujahideen, and were giving constant ground support for carrying out militant operations in the valley.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati and advocate Rajat Nair represented the government before the tribunal.

The Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) was declared outlawed for five years by the government under the UAPA on December 27, 2023 on account of being involved in anti-national and secessionist activities in the Union Territory.

Founded by deceased separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Tehreek-e-Hurriyat (TeH) was outlawed for five years on December 31,

2023. The organisation was banned for fomenting terrorism and spreading anti-India propaganda in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Union Home Ministry, while imposing the ban, had said the leaders and members of TeH have been involved in raising funds through various sources, including Pakistan and its proxy organisations, for perpetrating unlawful activities, including supporting terrorist activities and sustained stone-pelting on the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

The ministry had said TeH and its members by their activities show sheer disrespect towards the constitutional authority and constitutional set up of the country and have been indulging in unlawful activities, which are prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty, security and communal harmony of the country.

While banning Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction), the ministry had said it was in response to the outfit's involvement in anti-national and secessionist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, with the intent to create a reign of terror in the country.

Masarat Alam Bhat is known for his anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda.

Bhat became the chairman of the headline faction of the Hurriyat Conference following the death of Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Currently, he is in jail.

The ministry, in a notification, had stated that the objectives of the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) are to attain freedom for Jammu and Kashmir from India, merge it with Pakistan, and establish Islamic rule. (PTI)

Bystander effect to blame for public apathy during violent crimes: Experts

NEW DELHI, June 22: As 32-year-old Rohit Yadav clobbered his "ex-girlfriend" Arati Yadav with a spanner in Maharashtra's Vasai earlier this week, the inaction of several bystanders was equally shocking, if not more.

Even as the 22-year-old woman collapsed, the man kept hitting her lifeless body while shouting "Kyun kiya aisa mere sath? (why did you do this to me)". The broad daylight murder was another in the list of similar incidents where people chose to remain mute spectators instead of restraining or apprehending the assailant.

In May last year, a 16-year-old girl was killed by her alleged boyfriend who stabbed her more than 30 times and hit her with a concrete slab on a busy street in Delhi's Shahbad Dairy area.

Most of the people chose to walk past while some stood quietly, witnessing the gruesome act.

What's common at the sites of these incidents of crimes of passion? The presence of passive spectators either choosing not to get involved or worse, filming the crime on their smartphones to share on social media for a few likes and followers.

The general apathy among the public towards such incidents can be attributed to the bystander effect and the psychological phenomenon of diffusion of responsibility, experts said.

According to clinical psychologist Shweta Sharma, when there are several witnesses, an individual might feel "less personal responsibility to act".

"We call it a bystander effect. There are some psychological and social factors behind this bystander effect. The first thing is the diffusion of responsibility, when many people are present so individuals might assume that someone else will intervene," Sharma told PTI.

This thought of staying inactive



gains strength from fear for one's safety. In a similar incident in October 2022, a 19-year-old was chased down a busy street by three men and stabbed to death in Delhi's Sunder Nagri. It happened barely a month after a man was stabbed in a busy market of North-West Delhi's Begumpur. "They also fear for their personal safety. They feel if they are going to intervene, it might put their own safety at risk, especially if the situation involves violence," she added.

The CCTV footage of the Vasai incident showed a man trying to stop Rohit Yadav from hitting the girl only to be pushed back as the accused waved the spanner at him. Sharma added that the increasing presence of social media in daily life has also normalised such incidents whose videos go "viral" - resulting in a lack of confidence in people to determine the appropriate behaviour in such situations.

"If others are not reacting, a person may interpret the situation as less urgent or assume help is not needed... They don't feel confident to act on it."

"So this lack of confidence is also a part of the bystander effect," Sharma, a panel psychologist at the Juvenile Justice Board, Gurugram, said.

Another disturbing reality of such macabre incidents is that there are people who record the crimes and then circulate them on social media to satisfy their insatiable hunger for likes, comments and followers.

In September 2022, a young woman from a village in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, was allegedly gang-raped, stripped and walked for two kilometres naked, battered, bruised and bleeding, her trauma captured in a grainy video that went viral.

In the Vasai incident, police detained a man and a woman who shot videos of the attack and uploaded them on social media.

Forensic psychologist Deepti Puranik called it a new trend that has made people "less empathetic towards the victim".

"Currently, we are in a digital world where technology is easily accessible and people are hooked to their mobile. Everyone wants to upload something unique on their social media accounts and get maximum likes to become popular," Puranik told PTI.

"In the competition to get maximum likes, individuals have lost their sense of right or wrong and are less empathetic," she added.

A global programme for sensitisation about mental health issues, and violent crimes is the way forward, both Puranik and Sharma noted.

"Sensitisation about the violence, sensitisation about consensual relationship, sensitisation about the emotional regulation, this is much more important, only then certain kinds of acts of violence, especially in intimate partner relationships will decrease," Sharma said.

Puranik said it is important to create awareness programmes to sensitise the public towards their responsibility.

"When you are not helping a citizen when a crime is happening it means you are a passive participant of that crime. One most important way by which we can address the issue of bystander apathy is to create awareness programmes for the public," she said. (PTI)

Security measures tightened ahead of Amarnath Yatra

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, June 22: With the Amarnath Yatra set to begin in a week, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said security arrangements have been tightened and facilities improved for the successful conduct of the pilgrimage.

Jammu Additional Director General of Police Anand Jain has reviewed security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, emphasising the need for the highest level of alertness to scuttle any attempt by terrorists to disrupt the pilgrimage, officials said on Saturday.

Taking part in the virtual 'Pratham Puja' which marks the ceremonial commencement of the Amarnath Yatra - at the Raj Bhavan in Srinagar on Saturday morning, Sinha said "darshan" for the pilgrims across the country will start on June 29 when the yatra commences.

"The (Shri Amarnath) Shrine Board and the J-K administration have made special arrangements for the pilgrims. In the last two years, the facilities for the yatrins have improved a lot."

Sinha said the roads leading to the cave shrine have been upgraded and some stretches have been

widened by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) this year. "I think the yatrins will be able to undertake a smoother pilgrimage this time," he told reporters at Raj Bhavan after the puja.

The LG said people from all religions have always supported the yatra.

"I appeal to the people of J-K, especially those in the areas from where the yatra passes through, to keep alive the tradition of supporting the yatra and taking care of the pilgrims this year also. Peaceful and smooth pilgrimage helps create a good image of J-K across the world," he added.

The 52-day pilgrimage will begin from the two tracks - the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag and the 14-km shorter but steep Baltal route in Ganderbal - on June 29, a day after the first batch of pilgrims will leave Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu for the valley.

Over 4.5 lakh pilgrims performed the pilgrimage last year and offered their prayers at the naturally formed ice-shrivingam inside the cave shrine.

Later, at another function, Sinha launched various Swachh Bharat initiatives for the yatra.

"Happy to launch various Swachh Bharat initiatives of Directorate of Rural Sanitation for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2024. A new logo, Swachh Yatra Anthem, website and mobile application developed by the directorate will greatly benefit our objective of zero-waste pilgrimage," the LG said.

He said J-K is at the forefront of promoting sustainable tourism.

"For this holy Yatra, we've worked a solution through fusion of tech & human resource. Our integrated strategy aims at zero-waste, clean & efficient sanitation system & complete protection to natural resources & environment," the LG said on X.

Meanwhile, Jammu ADGP Jain on Friday conducted an extensive review of the security arrangements on the 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway for the upcoming yatra, a police spokesperson said.

He was accompanied by Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Doda-Kishtwar-Ramban Range, Shridhar Patil, Jammu DIG (Traffic) Dr Haseeb Mughal, Ramban Senior Superintendent of Police Anuj Kumar, SSP (Traffic National Highway) Rohit Baskotra.

Jain inspected the security meas-

ures implemented on the highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, especially at community kitchens, lodgement centres and checking spots at key locations.

Highlighting the potential threats from anti-national elements aiming to disrupt the yatra, Jain underscored the necessity of foolproof security and emphasised the need for the highest level of alertness.

He urged the officers to keep a close watch on any suspicious activity and maintain round-the-clock vigilance, the spokesman said.

Jain also stressed the importance of a coordinated and people-friendly approach to ensure the comfort and security of pilgrims.

The ADGP also gave instructions to the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel to remain extra vigilant and responsive to any emergencies, ensuring prompt rescue operations in case of any unexpected mishaps due to natural or man-made calamities.

During the inspection, Jain checked the functioning of CCTV cameras, the communication network, and transport arrangements of security forces, the spokesperson said. (PTI)

Kanchanjunga Exp accident: ECR suspends issuing of T/A 912, directs drivers to maintain caution

NEW DELHI, June 22: The East Central Railway has directed station masters in its area not to issue the note that authorises train drivers to cross signals in case of failure of the automatic signalling system, days after the Kanchanjunga Express-goods train collision in another zone killed 10 people.

The decision to suspend the issuing of the T/A 912 written authority letter was taken at a safety meeting of the East Central Railway (ECR), according to a circular issued by the zone on June 21.

On June 17, the goods train rammed into the passenger train in West Bengal's Darjeeling District that falls under the Northeast Frontier Railway zone. Drivers of both trains had been issued the T/A 912 as the automatic signalling on the Ranipatra station-Chattra Hat Junction was "defective", officials had said. While the Railway Board in its initial response had said the now-deceased goods train was over-speeding, driver unions have claimed there is no speed restrictions mentioned on the note and its member was not at fault.

The ECR's circular said, "It has been decided in safety meeting held by GM/ECR (General Manager/East Central Railways) with PHODs (Principal Head of Departments) and DRMs (Divisional Railway Managers) that during failure of automatic signal T/A 912 will not be issued till further advice."

"In the place of T/A 912, provision of G&SR 9.02 will be used for double line till further advice as mentioned below," it said.

According to the G&SR 9.02, during automatic signal failure, train drivers will stop at each red signal for one minute during the day time and two minutes at night, and then proceed at 15 kmph when the view ahead is clear and 10 kmph when view ahead is obstructed due to any reason up to the next signal. Earlier, Eastern Railway Zone also issued a similar order on June 19 banning the issuance of T/A 912. However, it withdrew the order the next day.

On the June 17 accident, the Railway Board had said the goods train driver should have maintained a 10 kmph speed after stopping for one minute at each defective signal, the loco unions contradicted it.

Working president of the Indian Railway Loco Runningmen Organisation (IRLRO), Sanjay Pandhi, had said, "T/A 912 is issued to suspend the provisions of G&SR 9.02 which mandates the driver to maintain 10 kmph speed. T/A 912 is issued when all lines between two stations are clear and it authorises the driver to move at the normal applicable speed limit in that section."

The applicable normal speed of any train, also known as the booked speed, is anything up to 130 kmph. (PTI)

Akshar Yoga Kendraa scripts 5 Guinness World Records on International Yoga Day

Thousands of Yoga practitioners and enthusiasts from different walks of life performed 7 different Yoga asanas

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 22: The Akshar Yoga Kendraa, under the visionary leadership of its founder and revered Yogi Himalayan Siddha Akshar, scripted history this International Yoga Day by creating 5 new Guinness World Records.

Thousands of Yoga practitioners and enthusiasts from different walks of life performed 7 different Yoga asanas, including Naukasana (Boat Posture), Kaundinyasana (Sage Kaundinya Asana), Chakrasana (Wheel Posture), Natarajasana (Lord Shiva Posture), and Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation), to set the world records at an event held at the Bengaluru-based Akshar Yoga Kendraa.

While they successfully created 5 Guinness World Records, a positive response on other two is awaited. The record-setting feat witnessed the participation of more than 3000 people, including members of the Indian Army, NCC, Air Force, Karnataka State Police, as well as specially-abled persons, children from orphanages, and members of the business and corporate community.

"In addition to asanas and techniques, Yoga is a holistic concept for the overall well-being of an individ-



ual's mental and physical health. It has been our consistent effort to elevate the ancient practice of Yoga to fresh zeniths and make it a household practice across the world. Creating 5 new Guinness World Records on the occasion of Yoga Day, with participation from fellow citizens as well as people from 20 different countries, is an ode to the unparalleled power of Yoga. All the asanas performed have immense health benefits for everyone, especially women, who tackle numerous challenges in everyday life," said Himalayan Siddha Akshar on

achieving the historic feat.

He further stated that the idea behind the event was to foster a sense of global unity and collective achievement while raising awareness about the multifaceted benefits of Yoga.

The accomplishment of the 5 Guinness World Records is slated to be commemorated with the issuance of a Special Cover and Postmark by the Department of Posts, under the Ministry of Communications, following the official announcement.

Following comprehensive training for weeks, the participants held

the 5 different asanas for durations ranging from 30 seconds to 5 minutes.

382 people performed Naukasana (Boat Posture) while 352 performed Kaundinya Asana (Sage Kaundinya Asana), Chakrasana (Wheel Posture) was performed by 390 and Natarajasana (Lord Shiva Pose) was done by 595. A total of 1372 Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) were done and thus 5 Guinness World Records were created.

The successful event has been a testament to Akshar Yoga Kendraa's commitment to Yoga, which includes effective coaching and enthusiastic participation from around the globe.

Besides scripting the historic record to commemorate the 10th International Yoga Day, the Akshar Yoga Kendraa organised a series of activities designed to highlight the transformative power of yoga.

Notably, Akshar Yoga Kendraa had last year entered the Guinness Book of World Records for performing three different Yoga asanas - Vashishtasana, Ushtrasana, and Halasana for the durations of 45 seconds, 60 seconds, and 90 seconds respectively

AFFIDAVIT

I, Jas Bahadur Rai, S/o: Late Agum Bahadur Rai, Vill.: Tila Basti (Santi Gaon), PO & PS: Khatkhat, Dist.: Karbi Anglong (Assam) states that my father Late Agum Bahadur Rai was a resident of the above mentioned place. The land patta was issued in the name of my wife Smt. Any Gowala, vide patta No. 230, Dag No- 316 by the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu. I am a permanent resident of the above mentioned address. Jas Bahadur Rai, S/o: Late Agum Bahadur Rai, Vill.: Tila Basti (Santi Gaon), PO & PS: Khatkhat, Dist.: Karbi Anglong (Assam)

AFFIDAVIT

My voting particulars are LAC: 108- Bokajan (S.T), Voter ID: KZG0289504, Part No.: 183, Village: Tila Basti (Santi Gaon), Post office: Khatkhati, Mouza: Borjan, Police Station: Khatkhati, Sub-Division: Bokajan, District: Karbi Anglong, State: Assam.

The above particulars stated above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing has been concealed herein. Jas Bahadur Rai, S/o: Late Agum Bahadur Rai, Vill.: Tila Basti (Santi Gaon), PO & PS: Khatkhat, Dist.: Karbi Anglong (Assam)

AFFIDAVIT

Vikash Kumar Jain, S/O Mangat Mal Jain of Nagaon Lawkhowa Road near Marwari Hindi School, opp to Satyanarayan Mandir, through an affidavit, have declared my name as Vikash Jain instead of Vikash Kumar Jain for all purposes in future. Vikash Jain and Vikash Kumar Jain is the name of same and one person i.e. myself. Vikash Jain, Lawkhowa Road, Nagaon (Assam)

10 years in the making, song from Kannada film ‘Ibbani Tabbida Ileyali’ launched on World Music Day

BENGALURU, June 22: Actor-director-producer Rakshit Shetty's production house Paramvah Studios on Thursday launched a song, which has been 10 years in the making, from one of the much-awaited Kannada films from its stable, 'Ibbani Tabbida Ileyali', on the occasion of World Music Day on June 21.

The song, 'Oh Anahita', featuring actors Vihan and Ankita Amar, is a nod to 1990s Bollywood, its director Chandrajith Belliappa said. He lists Shah Rukh Khan as one of his biggest influences in wanting to make films.

A software programmer who worked for SAP Labs for more than three years before quitting and embracing films full time,

Belliappa said the song was written and composed by him 10 years ago, just for fun.

"It fit the mood of the film, so we decided to use this song. But the other five songs for the film are by music director Gagan Baderiya. The film is a musical. 'Oh Anahita' lasts 6 minutes, 30 seconds. This is the first content we are putting out," said Belliappa.

The whimsical title of the film literally means, 'In the Dew Kissed Land', the director, who grew up in Madikeri, Coorg, said.

"The English title of the script when I wrote was, 'Dew drops, sunshine and a blade of grass'. And then I came across 'Ibbani Tabbida Ileyali', an

old Kannada song. It had the intended essence, so I used it," Belliappa added.

'Ibbani Tabbida Ileyali' is Belliappa's first full-length feature film. His first attempt at direction was for an anthology, 'Katha Sangama', a pet project of Rishab Shetty, who conceptualised the film as an ode to legendary Kannada film director Late Puttana Kanagal. Kanagal also made a

film of the same name in

1976. Belliappa is one of the seven directors who were part of this anthology. He was one of the writers for Rakshit Shetty's treasure hunt caper 'Avane Srimanarayana' and writer and assistant director of one of the biggest all-time Kannada hits 'Kirik Party'.

Belliappa said cinematographer of 'Ibbani Tabbida Ileyali', Srivathsan Selvarajan, who graduated from New York Film Academy, was part of the US Motion Picture Academy's Oscar Gold Rising Programme (2023 batch). "He was the only Indian among 25 people chosen from across the world. So, I am really happy that he makes his debut with my film," Belliappa said. (PTI)



Shriya Pilgaonkar to serve as jury member for IFFLA 2024

MUMBAI, June 22: Actor Shriya Pilgaonkar will be serving as a jury member for the shorts category for the 2024 edition of the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA).

The film gala, which will run from June 27 to 30, will screen 20 films, including seven narrative features, twelve shorts, and one docu-series with a diverse line-up of films from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and the United States, a press release said.

The shorts program of the festival includes films such as "Hema" featuring Rajshri Deshpande, "Last Days of Summer", "Wire & Cloth", "Ade (On A Sunday)", "Lori" and "Bobby Beauty Parlour".

"I am honoured and thrilled to be invited as a jury member for the short film category at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles 2024. I look forward to attending the festival in LA and watching these stellar shorts by emerging South Asian filmmakers."

"The atmosphere at film festivals is always creatively energizing and deeply inspiring. I'm excited to meet and interact with diverse storytellers and performers, and to witness the incredible line-up of films at IFFLA," Pilgaonkar said in a statement.

Filmmaker Tarsem Singh's "Dear Jassi" will serve as the opening film for the 2024 edition, while Tamil superstar Vijay Sethupathi's "Maharaja" will be bringing the curtains down on IFFLA.

The festival will also screen "Kill", an upcoming action thriller from filmmaker Nikhil Nagesh, and the Sundance winner "Girls Will Be Girls", which is the maiden production venture of actor-couple Ali Fazal and Richa Chadha. (PTI)



Jennifer Lawrence to star in and produce murder mystery movie 'The Wives'

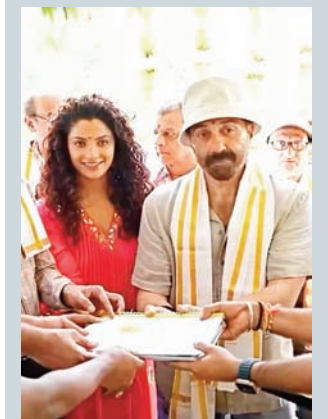
LOS ANGELES, June 22: Hollywood star Jennifer Lawrence is set to feature in and produce an upcoming murder mystery. ADVERTISEMENT The Oscar-winning actor has partnered with Apple Original Film and A24 for the film, titled The Wives, according to entertainment news outlet The Hollywood Reporter.

Though the plot details have been kept under wraps, the movie is partly inspired by the Real Housewives franchise, which focuses on the soap operatic and over-the-top theatrics of well-to-do women in areas ranging from Orange County to Miami to Atlanta.

Lawrence will produce the movie through her banner Excellent Cadaver along with Jeremy O Harris and Josh Godfrey of the production banner bb2.

Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley wrote the script for the project. No director is attached. (PTI)

Saiyami Kher, Regina Cassandra join Sunny Deol in Gopichand Malineni's action film



NEW DELHI, June 22: Actors Saiyami Kher and Regina Cassandra will feature alongside superstar Sunny Deol in filmmaker Gopichand Malineni's upcoming action film.

Touted as the "biggest action film of the country", the untitled film will be produced by Mythri Movie Makers and People Media Factory.

Kher, known for movies such as "8 A.M. Metro", "Ghoomer" and "Choked", shared the news in a post on Instagram.

"Lights camera action! Time for some serious action. Can't wait to fight it out along side, the one and only @iamsunnydeol. Really happy that @mythriofficial & @dongopichand sir have shown faith in me for an out and out mass action film. Let's do this! Please wish us luck," the actor wrote alongside photos from the film's launch ceremony on Thursday.

Cassandra also posted her photos from the event on Instagram and said she is excited to be a part of the project.

"To new beginnings and new adventures! Kickstarting a very exciting project on an auspicious note with more than legendary company. #SDGM - directed by @dongopichand," she wrote.

Malineni is best known for directing Telugu action films such as "Don Seenu", "Bodyguard", "Balupu", and "Veera Simha Reddy". The director also has another film with frequent collaborator, Telugu star Ravi Teja, in the pipeline.

The untitled movie will feature music by ace composer Thaman S. (PTI)

Grateful to judiciary for allowing release of 'Maharaj': YRF after Gujarat HC lifts stay order

MUMBAI, June 22: Yash Raj Films (YRF), the banner behind "Maharaj" that marks the debut of Bollywood star Aamir Khan's son Junaid, has expressed gratitude to the judiciary after the Gujarat High Court lifted an interim stay on the film's release.

The period drama, set in pre-independent India, is based on the Maharaj Libel Case of 1862.

The Gujarat High Court on Friday observed that "Maharaj" did not target the Vaishnav Pushtimarg sect as alleged by its members, who had filed a petition against the release of the film, claiming that it hurts religious sentiments.

The film has nothing objectionable or derogatory, the court said after watching it, and allowed its release on streaming platform Netflix.

In a statement posted on its official social media handles, YRF said the movie is a tribute to Karsandas Mulji, one of the greatest social reformers of India. "We are grateful to our judiciary for allowing the release of Maharaj, a film that celebrates one of the most important social reformers of our country, Karsandas Mulji," the production banner said.

"Karsandas, a hero and a devout Vaishnav, stood for righteousness, protected women and safeguarded his community and faith. Maharaj is a tribute to his indomitable fighting spirit and his courage to be on the right side of history," it added.

The studio, known for producing renowned films such as "Veer Zaara", "Fighter", "Pathaan", "Ek Tha Tiger", "Chak De! India", "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge", "Silila", and "Kabhi Kabhie", said it has never made a movie that would "tarnish" the country's reputation.

"Yash Raj Films has a 50-year-old legacy of championing India, its stories, its people, culture and heritage. We have never produced a film that has tarnished the reputation of our country or our countrymen. Hope you watch 'Maharaj' and join us in saluting Karsandas," the production banner said.

"Maharaj" is produced by Aditya Chopra under YRF Entertainment and is directed by Siddharth P Malhotra of "Hichki" fame.

Malhotra also shared an emotional note on social media, saying the film has a story that needs to be told against all odds.

"A film release is almost like the arrival of a child for a filmmaker. The labour of love would like to be celebrated and announced with elan. But when you choose to tell a story that must be told against all odds then the battle will be uphill but hopefully worth the pain and obstacles as we as a team are super proud of the film 'Maharaj' that we have made," he wrote.

"Maharaj" also stars Jaideep Ahlawat, Shalini Pandey, and Sharvari Wagh in a special appearance. (PTI)



India women eye ODI series clean sweep against South Africa



BENGALURU, June 22: India were able to tame varied challenges thrown at them by South Africa so far, and they will be eager to take the series to its fitting conclusion of a 3-0 margin during the third and final ODI here on Sunday.

Currently, the margin stands 2-0 in favour of India but that insuperable position has not come without its own trials by fire.

In the first match, the Indian batters had to come back from a perilous 99 for five before making a 260-plus total. The home side bowlers defended the target well too.

But in the second game, it was the turn of the Indian bowlers to ace the test that they were subjected to by centuries Laura Wolvaardt and Marizanne Kapp on a placid pitch.

Despite the heavy pounding, they kept their nerves till the last ball of the match to come out on the right side of the result.

However, the common thread across these two matches was the exceptional batting of Smriti Mandhana, who made 117 and 136 in them.

Mandhana thus became the first India woman batter to score two successive hundreds in

ODIs, and she also equalled Mithali Raj's record of seven one-day centuries.

So, the Indian vice-captain will be eager to sign off from the ODI series on a high before entering the one-off Test at Chennai from June 28.

The timely return to form of skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who made an 88-ball 103 in the second match, too might have

pleased the management no end.

However, the think tank will be eager to see a substantial outing from opener Shafali Verma, whose run of low scores has now been extended to eight matches. With the series already in kitty, India might also give an outing to fringe players such as bowlers Shreyanka Patil, Saika Ishaque and top-order batter Priya Punia.

On the other hand, South Africa will be keen to win the match and gain at least two ICC Women's ODI Championship points, critical in their qualification for next year's 50-over World Cup.

Of course, a win will go a long way in instilling a dose of confidence ahead of the Test and the ensuing T20 series.

But for that, the visitors will need a concerted effort from their batters and bowlers.

Teams (from): India: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (WK), Uma Chetty (WK), Dayalan Hemalatha, Radha Yadav, Asha Sobhana, Shreyanka Patil, Saika Ishaque, Pooja Vastrakar, Renuka Singh Thakur, Arundhati Reddy, Priya Punia.

South Africa: Laura Wolvaardt (c), Anneke Bosch, Tazmin Brits, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Mieke de Ridder, Sinalo Jafta, Marizanne Kapp, Ayabonga Khaka, Masabata Klaas, Sune Luus, Eliz-Mari Marz, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Tumi Sekhukune, Nondumiso Shangase, Delmi Tucker.

Match starts at 1.30 PM. (PTI)

Hope blasts 82 not out as WI crush USA by 9 wickets in T20 WC Super 8 clash



BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS), June 22: Opener Shai Hope blasted an unbeaten 82 as West Indies came back roaring to crush the United States of America by nine wickets in the T20 World Cup Group 2 Super Eight match here.

After bowling out the USA for a mere 128 in 19.5 overs, the West Indies batters went all guns blazing from the word go to knock off the target in 10.5 overs to make 130/1, recording a comfortable win.

The win improved West Indies' standing in the Group 2 points table. The Caribbean side, which had suffered an eight-wicket hammering from England on Wednesday, is now placed second with two points and a Net Run Rate of 1.814.

West Indies skipper Rovman Powell lauded Hope for showing his mettle after being dropped for the contest against England.

"He's been fantastic, he got a chance against Afghanistan but was dropped next game against England in St Lucia because of the combination. However, he was hungry for a good performance," Powell said.

"It's (the win is) very special, Kensington brings back special memories for us. We had a great opportunity to come out and play some good cricket. (Roston) Chase plays really well, plays a role very well. Keeps things tight. On a good surface, he bowled really well," Powell added.

Johnson Charles fell for a 14-ball 15 with a couple of fours early on but the pair of Hope (82 not out) and Nicholas Pooran did the job for their side, smacking the USA bowlers all around the park here at the Kensington Oval.

Hope made a mincemeat of the USA bowling as the right-handed wicketkeeper-batter clattered eight sixes and four fours to make 82 not out from just 39 balls, with Pooran reaching 27 not out from 13 balls with three sixes and a four.

Hope remained at the forefront of WI's chase as he forged a 67-run stand for the opening partnership with Charles and then added

another 63 runs unbeaten for the second wicket with Pooran, which came off only 23 balls as the Caribbean side ruled the roost. USA skipper Aaron Jones rued not putting up a better show with the bat on a wicket which had plenty of runs.

"(It was a) tough night for the boys. We had to score about 170-180 today. In the middle overs, we lost wickets in clusters, it goes like that sometimes. At the end of the day, we needed runs on the board," he said.

"We tried to go hard with the ball but we know West Indies are a good batting unit. England will be a good game, we are up for a challenge," he added.

Earlier after the West Indies put USA in to bat first, Andre Russell (3.5-0-31-3) and Roston Chase (4-0-19-3) made life tough for the opposition batters.

After an early blow in the form of Steven Taylor (2) who was caught at point by chase of Russell, the pair of Andreis Gous and Nitish Kumar (20) forged a strong partnership to revive USA and take them ahead but they both fell after making their respective starts.

Nitish was trapped leg-before by West Indies spinner Gudakesh Motie for 20 off 19 balls with two fours and Gous, who hit three fours and a six in his rapid 29 off 16 balls, was caught at deep midwicket by Hope off Alzarri Joseph in the eighth over and that was when USA's decline began. None of the following USA batters could trouble the West Indies as the tournament co-hosts kept chipping away with regular wickets, denying their opponents any momentum with the bat. USA skipper Aaron Jones (11) was cleaned up by Chase who looked unplayable. Chase grabbed another wicket when he had the veteran Corey Anderson trapped leg-before for seven.

Harmeet Singh, who had provided fireworks with the bat for the USA against South Africa in the last match, fell for a first-ball duck when Chase had him caught by Charles to ensure West Indies remained on top of the proceedings. (PTI)

Chennaiyin FC extend Connor Shields' contract till 2025

CHENNAI, June 22: Chennaiyin FC on Saturday extended the contract of its forward Connor Shields' by one year, which would keep him at the club till 2025. Having joined the Marina Machans from Motherwell FC in 2023, Shields has scored five goals and assisted in four while playing 27 matches.

The 26-year-old Scottish player has become an integral part of the CFC frontline and has played a crucial role in the club's success on many occasions, the club said in a release.

"Absolutely delighted to have Connor Shields back. After how well Connor did last year within the club. He has pace, power, (he is) adaptable, plays a number of positions and (is) an outstanding lad as well," said head coach Owen Coyle. "(He is) very highly regarded by his teammates and his qualities really shone through for us. (He has) outstanding ability (and is) a fantastic crosser of the ball," Coyle added. (PTI)

Mark Zothanpuia joins East Bengal FC on three-year deal

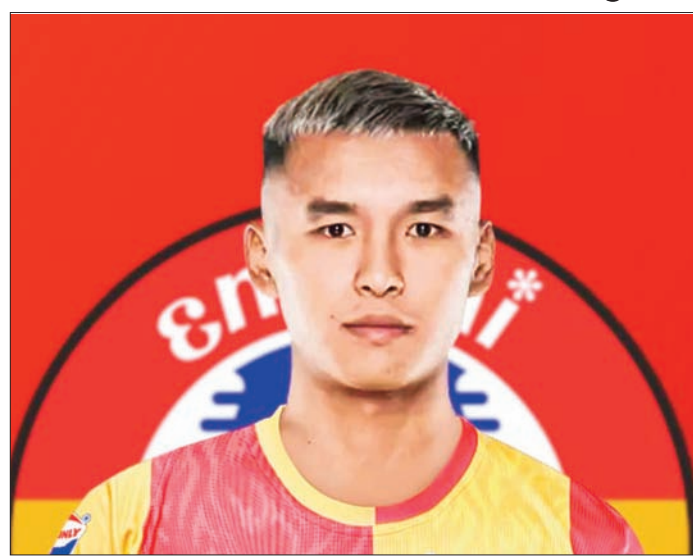
KOLKATA, June 22: East Bengal FC on Saturday announced the signing of promising India U-23 player Mark Zothanpuia on a three-year contract that will run until the end of the 2026-27 season.

Zothanpuia is a versatile footballer who can play in both midfield and defence.

Welcoming Zothanpuia to the East Bengal FC family, Vibhash Vardhan Agarwal of Emami Group said, "Mark is one of the most versatile young players in India and is a valuable addition to our squad. The future is bright for him and we'll nurture him to bring out his best abilities."

Emami Group is the majority stakeholder in East Bengal FC. Head coach Carles Cuadrat highlighted Zothanpuia's versatility, saying, "Mark is a young player with excellent qualities. His versatility will allow us to consider him for different roles to help the team."

"He has gained a decent amount of ISL experience and is joining Emami East Bengal at the right phase of his career,



to reach the next level as a player. We'll give him the right environment to ensure his growth and success."

Born in Mizoram, Zothanpuia was part of FC Pune City's youth team and Hyderabad FC's reserve team before being promoted to Hyderabad FC's first team in the 2020-21 season.

The 22-year-old rose to

prominence in the previous season, starting regularly for Hyderabad FC and emerging as one of their key players.

Zothanpuia was part of HFC's 2021-22 ISL Cup-winning squad. He has played a total of 1,971 minutes across 24 matches (18 in the ISL, 3 in the Kalinga Super Cup and 3 in the Durand Cup) last season.

Primarily a midfielder, Zothanpuia seamlessly adapted to the left-back position where his consistency earned him a spot in the India U-23 squad for the friendlies against Malaysia in March this year.

Having played as left-back, left wing-back, defensive midfielder and centre back in the 2023-24 ISL, Zothanpuia registered 1 assist, an 81% passing accuracy, 23 key passes, 73 successful duels, 95 recoveries, 20 interceptions and 26 clearances, besides creating 24 chances in 18 appearances.

Expressing his excitement, Zothanpuia said, "It's a dream for any young Indian player to play for a big club like East Bengal. Kolkata is the Mecca of Indian football and I can't wait to experience the amazing support from the East Bengal fans."

"I am grateful to Coach Carles and the Emami East Bengal management for showing faith in me."

The player registration is subject to completion of regulatory processes. (PTI)

Not a dead rubber, we're looking to learn further: Deepti Sharma

BENGALURU, June 22: Senior all-rounder Deepti Sharma on Saturday said India will not treat their third and final women's ODI against South Africa as a dead-rubber, but they will be looking to consolidate the gains from previous matches.

India have taken an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series after winning the first two matches by 143 runs and four runs.

"Yes, we have won the series but we will not approach this match as one of academic interest. We look to learn from whatever opportunities we get, as we will be going into the one-off Test (in Chennai) later this week," said Deepti in the pre-match press meet.

The off-spinner had showcased her all-round skills in the first match, making a crucial 37 that helped India recover from a shaky 99 for five.

The 26-year-old also bagged

two wickets. "I love to tackle pressure situations. My thought process is very clear. I always want to make the team win or place the team in a winning position whether it is with my batting or bowling," she added.

In both the matches, Indian top-order made a rather slow start before gaining acceleration in the middle and end phases.

Deepti said the India batters have showed good adaptive skills in the series.

"The openers played as per the conditions. The ball was moving around a little bit in the initial overs, and they played within themselves. They adapted well."

"After 10-12 overs, we built some good partnerships. They used every scoring opportunity in that area and that's a positive for us - the way we capitalised later on," she said.

Deepti said Indian players have been working on improving their fielding standards. (PTI)

Long way to go but Pant on course to reach lofty levels of Adam Gilchrist: Ian Smith

GROS ISLET (SAINT LUCIA), June 22: Rishabh Pant's comparison with Adam Gilchrist would be pre-mature at this stage but the India wicket-keeper batter can certainly get close to the Australian great's records if he can maintain his current form, reckons former New Zealand international Ian Smith.

Himself a wicket-keeper batter, Smith is impressed with what Pant has done since his comeback from a horrific car accident. He had a good IPL and has now carried that form into the T20 World Cup.

Pant is among the most exciting talents in the game, having already logged Test hundreds in Australia, England and South Africa, something even his mentor M S Dhoni could not achieve. However, Pant has a long way to go when compared with Gilchrist, who amassed more than 15,000 runs in international cricket besides taking more than 800 catches behind the stumps.

"Rishabh Pant since his accident has come back very strong

and he looks in terrific form. He is dynamic. He's aggressive, he's dangerous," said Smith, who has now become one of the most respected voices in the game and is currently commentating on T20 World Cup.

Like Gilchrist, Pant has shown he can bat up and down the order across formats.

"He can compliment who's with him, whether he comes in to support Kohli or whether he comes in to support... Rohit Sharma, so three is a good spot for him because I firmly believe that in white ball cricket your best players should have the opportunity to face the most deliveries. And so that's what makes him valuable."

"He can hit the first ball he faces out of the ground and he's got other bailout options as well if it doesn't work out that way. I mean, you know, he's replaced a very good player in K L Rahul. KL Rahul is a world class cricketer. That says it all for me," said Smith.

However, the 26-year-old's comparison with Gilchrist can



wait.

"Ah yeah, well, he's got a bit to go. But yes, similar type cricketer who can, in test cricket, bat down the order. And in white ball cricket can be back at the top of the order. So there's that similarity with Gilchrist there. But if he continues on the same vein for a few more years, then people will say Gilchrist and Pant, yeah, very close," said the 67-year-old from Nelson.

For him, Pant is surely one of the best in the modern-game alongside Quinton de Kock, Jos Buttler and Mohammad Rizwan.

The Blackcaps, who are among the most consistent team in world cricket, failed to qualify for the Super 8s of the ongoing ICC event, marking the end of a cycle for Smith.

"They've just come to the end of a really good cycle where their

results have always been competitive, and we've got through to finals in world competitions. Players getting on a wee bit, getting older, starting to work on what is important to them and how they can maximise what's left in their career dollar-wise."

"You can't blame a lot of them for that. You get one opportunity at it and it's a lot more lucrative to travel the world and play in the leagues than it is to stay in New Zealand and be based there. It's something New Zealand have to look at," he said referring to top players opting out of central contracts.

"The other thing is we need some fresh ideas in the coaching department. I don't think one coach can coach all three forms of the game anymore and so therefore New Zealand just needs a bit of a new broom to sweep through after a pretty successful cycle."

Following the World Cup exit, Kane Williamson declined a central contract to spend more time with family and be available for franchise cricket. (PTI)

T20WC: England eye massive win over USA to stay alive in semifinal race

BRIDGETOWN, June 22: Defending champions England will need their power hitters to do the job against a demoralised yet tricky USA in their final Super 8 match as they eye a huge win to keep themselves in contention for a semifinal spot at the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

England batters couldn't produce the big hits while chasing a target of 164 during their last Super 8 match against South Africa, suffering a narrow seven-run loss on Friday.

West Indies' massive nine-wicket win over the USA has opened up the group, leaving England with the task of notching up a big victory to push their net run-rate up as it might come down to it in the end.

While South Africa are currently sitting atop the Group 2 with two wins, both West Indies and England have a win and a loss each with the former having a better NRR than the latter.

However, no team is assured of a semifinal berth and England will need to defeat USA by either 10 runs or at least an over to spare to



stay in contention for the semifinals.

For SA, a loss -- even in a Super Over -- against WI in their final match will knock them out of the race if England can achieve their task.

If SA win and England lose to USA, it will again be a three-way tie between WI, ENG and USA for the second spot and the team with better run-rate will go through to the knockout stage.

England batters produced an authoritative performance against the West Indies but they failed to tame the SA bowlers and faltered in

their chase of 164 on Friday.

Phil Salt has been in great form, having blasted two centuries, a fifty, and three thirties in his last 10 T20Is but his early dismissal meant England couldn't get the explosive start as Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow couldn't quite bring out the big shots.

Harry Brook (53) and Liam Livingstone (33) played sensibly to take the chase deep but England eventually failed to score 25 runs in the last three overs.

However, despite the loss, England's batting remains a formidable force which the likes of Saurabh

Netravalkar and Harmeet Singh will find tough to tame.

In the bowling unit, Adil Rashid and Jofra Archer have been their standout bowlers with 13 and 12 wickets each but Mark Wood's form will be a cause of worry as apart from a three-wicket haul, he couldn't get any wicket in his last 5 T20Is.

For the co-hosts USA, it has been a reality check after a stunning show in the group stage. They suffered successive losses and their entry into the semifinal will be a miracle as they are alive in the tournament only mathematically.

USA will need to beat England by 80 runs in their final game and also hope that South Africa outwits WI by more than 67 runs to make the semifinal on the basis of NRR.

For US, Andries Gous and Aaron Jones have done the heavy lifting in the batting department and they will need support from the entire team as it will take more than a few individual performances to get it across the defending champions.

Jones has been leading the sides since USA have been without skipper Monank Patel following their game against Pakistan.

Teams:
England: Jos Buttler (c), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonathan Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Cur-

ran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley and Mark Wood.

USA: Monank Patel (c), Aaron Jones, Andries Gous, Corey Anderson, Ali Khan, Harmeet Singh,

Jessy Singh, Milind Kumar, Nisarg Patel, Nitish Kumar, Noshtush Kenjige, Saurabh Nethralvkar, Shadley Van Schalkwyk, Steven Taylor, Shayan Jahangir. Reserve Players: Gajanand Singh, Juanoy Drysdale, Yasir Mohammad.

Match starts: 8pm IST. (PTI)

Indian women's compound archery team wins hattrick of World Cup gold medals

ANTALYA (TURKEY), June 22: Indian compound women's archery team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Swami and Parneet Kaur continued their imperious form this season, securing a hattrick of World Cup gold medals with a win over Estonia in the third stage of the event here on Saturday.

The trio, who had qualified as the top-seed, beat Estonia's Lisell Jaatma, Meeri-Marita Paas and Maris Tetsmann, 232-229 in a one-sided final here.

The women's compound team thus has been unbeatable this season, having won the World Cup Stage 1 and Stage 2 gold medals in Shanghai and Yechen in April and May respectively.

Indian male compound archer Priyansh is also fighting for a bronze later in the day. (PTI)

Nagal confirms his Paris Olympics qualification

CHENNAI, June 22: Indian tennis star Sumit Nagal on Saturday confirmed that he has officially qualified for the men's singles event of the upcoming Paris Olympics.

The Paris Games will be his second stint in the Olympics, having also qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Games, where he made it to the second round.

"Extremely glad to share that I have officially qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics. This is a monumental moment for me as the Olympics holds a special place in my heart!" Nagal posted on X.

"One of my career highlights so far was participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Ever since then, Paris has been a big goal for me. Can't wait to put my best foot forward."

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) had said that Nagal as per ITF was alternate till June 10, when the rankings were considered for qualification.

Rohan Bopanna and N Sriram Balaji will compete in the men's doubles event at Paris Games. Bopanna, being a top-10 player, had the choice to pick his partner. AITA approved his choice and paired him with Balaji.

Nagal had enhanced qualification chances by winning the Heilbronn Challenger earlier this month as he broke into the top 80 of the ATP singles rankings.

The Heilbronn victory was Nagal's second Chal-



lenger title this season, having prevailed in the Chennai Challenger earlier this year.

The 26-year-old Nagal has been making the waves since the start of the 2024 season as he qualified for the main draw of the Australian Open, where he made it to the second round with an upset win over then world number 37 Alexander Bublik.

He had also qualified for the main draw of the Indian Wells Masters and Monte-Carlo Masters, the ATP 1000 events. (PTI)

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