

6
WORLD



- Before his summit with North Korea's Kim, Putin vows they'll beat sanctions together
- South Korean soldiers fire warning shots after North Korean troops cross border

8
NATION



- People gave vote of no-confidence in him: Cong before Modi's Varanasi visit
- Cong accuses govt of 'destroying' railways, demands Ashwini Vaishnaw's resignation

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# Himanta takes over health department

State Cabinet: Portfolios shuffled, Keshab gets Suklabaidya's portfolios

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 18: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday took charge of the Health and Family Welfare Department as he made a minor reshuffle in his cabinet on Tuesday.

The Health portfolio was earlier held by Keshab Mahanta, who has been reallocated departments held by former minister Parimal Suklabaidya following his election to the Lok Sabha.

Mahanta, a member of BJP's alliance partner Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), had held the position since 2021, according to an official notification.

Mahanta has been reallocated the departments of Transport, Excise, and Fisheries, which were held by Suklabaidya, in addition to his earlier portfolios of Science, Technology and Climate Change, and Information Technology.

Suklabaidya, after his election to the Lok Sabha from Silchar (SC) Parliamentary constituency, resigned from his ministerial position, which has been accepted by the Governor.

In addition to the Health and Family Welfare Department, the chief minister will continue to hold the portfolios of Home, Personnel, Public Works, Medical Education and Research, Indigenous and Tribal Faith and Culture (except Directorate of Library and Museum and Directorate of Archaeology), and any other



department not allotted to any other minister.

As Health minister under chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Sarma led the state's efforts in tackling the COVID-19 crisis by ramping up health infrastructure, including testing facilities, and taking several measures to ease the difficulties faced by patients, their families, and stranded migrant workers outside the state during the lockdown. (With inputs from (PTI)

*'There's alignment on a number of big issues that we need to work on'*  
I see an 'opportunity' to engage with new Indian govt: Trudeau

OTTAWA, June 18: Days after his first interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Italy amidst the chill in bilateral ties, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said that there is an "alignment" on several "big issues" with India and he sees an "opportunity" to engage with the new Indian government including on economic ties and "around national security".

Prime Minister Modi posted an image on social media of the two leaders shaking hands on Friday, with a one-liner saying "met Canadian PM Justin Trudeau at the G7 Summit".

The meeting which took place on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Apulia, southern Italy, was the first amid strained diplomatic relations over pro-Khalistani extremism after Trudeau alleged in September last year of "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a designated Sikh terrorist.

Back in Ottawa, Trudeau told



CBC News that one of the really good things about the Summit is that "you get an opportunity to engage directly with a huge range of different leaders with whom there are various issues and certainly with India, there are massive people to people ties, they're really important economic ties."

"There's alignment on a number of big issues that we need to work on as democracies as a global community. But now that he (Modi) is through his election, I think there is an opportunity for us to engage, including on some very serious issues around national security and

keeping Canadians safe and the rule of law that we will be engaging."

When asked if he has seen improvement in cooperation from India on the Canadian probe into the murder of Nijjar in Surrey in British Columbia, Trudeau said, "There is work ongoing very much." Trudeau's allegations from last year were strongly rejected by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as "absurd and motivated".

India has been maintaining that the main issue between the two countries is that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil with impunity.

India has repeatedly conveyed its "deep concerns" to Canada and New Delhi expects Ottawa to take strong action against those elements.

Nijjar's murder is being probed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Four Indian nationals have been arrested in this connection by the RCMP. (PTI)

Rajnath meets senior ministers, discusses Parl strategy

NEW DELHI, June 18: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday chaired a meeting of senior ministers to plan the floor strategy for the upcoming Parliament Session during which President Droupadi Murmu is scheduled to spell out the NDA government's vision for the next five years.

The meeting at Singh's official residence was attended by ministers S Jaishankar, Manohar Lal Khattar, Bhupender Yadav, Piyush Goyal, Dharmendra Pradhan, Kiren Rijiju, Annapurna Devi, Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' and Chirag Paswan.

The defence minister is learnt to have sought inputs from the senior ministers, including NDA partners Lalan Singh and Paswan of the JD(U) and LJP(RV) respectively, for the president's address to the joint sitting of Parliament scheduled for June 27.

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha begins on June 24 when members will take oath and then choose the Speaker on June 26.

Both Houses will take up the debate on (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## HT BRIEFS

### Golden Jubilee

BOKAJAN: Bokajan Karbi Club at Rongkhangthir which was founded on 23rd June 1974 is preparing to celebrate its Golden Jubilee in completion of 50 years of its existence. For the purpose of the Golden Jubilee celebration the Club has constituted a Reception Committee with the executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Surjya Rongphar as its president and Chesong Bey as its Secretary. The Reception Committee is sprucing up its building and campus. It is drawing up various programmes and is preparing a list of invitations. Along with many dignitaries, the Reception Committee will invite the people of nearby localities and neighbourhoods. Bokajan Karbi Club was founded on 23rd June 1974 with Bapuram Bey as its president and Ram Chandra Engti was the secretary. Its founding members were Amarsing Engti, Moniram Engti and Janasing Phangcho.

### Body found

DIPHU: The body of a college student Roshan Basumatary (17) who drowned in the Siloni River at the Siloni picnic spot has been retrieved from the river by a team of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) on Tuesday. The deceased was the son of Kanak Basumatary, a resident of Panbari, Diphu. Yesterday Basumatary along with his friends went to take a bath at Siloni Picnic Spot where he drowned and went missing. Earlier, the friends and police officials conducted a search operation but could not find his body. Today the SDRF team from Hojai conducted a search operation and fished out the body from the water at around 10 am.

### Ropeway concession

GUWAHATI: College Students who are residents of North Guwahati who commute to South Guwahati now can avail 50 per cent concession on Ropeway charges. The GMDA has issued the notification due to the prevailing flood situation disrupting means of communication for students studying in colleges on the south bank. Upon rise in water level of Brahmaputra river ferry services from North Guwahati to South are halted until favourable conditions prevail.

## Senior BJP leader Ranjit Dutta resigns as MLA after LS victory

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 18: Ranjit Dutta, a senior BJP politician who emerged victorious in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections from the state's Sonitpur parliamentary seat, tendered his resignation as an MLA on Tuesday.

Dutta served as an MLA for the Biswanath district's Behali assembly seat.

Dutta, who submitted his resignation to the speaker of the legislature, reminisced about his time as a BJP MLA in Assam when the party was in opposition.

"I won from Behali in the 2001 state assembly polls. We were sitting in opposition when Congress



took power in the state and defeated the Asom Gana Parishad. At the time, the BJP had just eight MLAs, and I had been appointed deputy leader of the party in the assembly," he told reporters.

Dutta claimed that there were

frequently heated discussions on a variety of topics pertaining to human development between the opposition and treasure benches. That dignity, though, was always preserved on the floor of the assembly.

The BJP performed somewhat better in the 2006 assembly elections, and the party was represented by ten MLAs.

Ranjit Dutta was appointed as a minister in the Sarbananda Sonowal-led Assam government in 2016, the year the BJP took power in the state for the first time. But when the party retained in 2021, he was not appointed to the council of ministers. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 1,225 tourists evacuated from landslide-hit Sikkim

GANGTOK, June 18: In its second day of rescue operation, the Sikkim administration on Tuesday evacuated 1,225 tourists from Lachung and nearby areas of Mangang district which was hit by a series of landslides and rain last week leaving at least six people dead, an official said.

The evacuation of the remaining tourists, said to be a few hundreds, will be carried out on Wednesday if the weather permits as six helicopters are on standby at Bagdogra airport in neighbouring West Bengal, additional district magistrate (ADM) Vishnu Lama said.

The administration had rescued 64 tourists on Monday and brought

them safely to the district headquarters Mangan.

"We have evacuated a total of 1225 tourists from Lachung and surrounding regions and brought them to Mangan town by road today," Lama said.

Mangan district is known for popular tourist spots like Gurudongmar Lake and Yunthang Valley.

With vehicles provided by the Motor Vehicle Division of the Transport department, the rescued people reached the state capital Gangtok from Mangan town and began their onward journey to their respective destinations, the ADM said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Several initiatives are taken to make Assam safe: Himanta

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 18: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday asserted that in the last three years of his government, several initiatives were undertaken to make the state safe for the citizens.

He said that since May 2021, when the second BJP government was sworn-in, Assam Police arrested 14,593 traffickers and registered 8,855 cases, seizing significant drug quantities.

The chief minister claimed that the government has achieved success in combating corruption also.

According to him, the government's zero-tolerance policy led to 182 trap (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Rahul Gandhi slams PM Modi for 'silence' on NEET exam issue

NEW DELHI, June 18: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for maintaining "silence" on the NEET exam issue and asserted that his party is committed to strongly raising the voice of the youth from the streets to the Parliament for ensuring strong policies against paper leaks.

The former Congress president said the arrests made in Bihar, Gujarat and Haryana clearly show that there has been organised corruption in the examination in a planned manner and added these BJP-ruled states have become the "epicentre" of paper leaks.

"Narendra Modi, as usual, is maintaining silence on the tampering with the future of more than 24 lakh students in the NEET examination," Gandhi said in a post on X in Hindi.

"The arrests made in Bihar, Gujarat and Haryana clearly show that there has been organised corruption in the examination in a planned manner and these BJP ruled states have become the epicentre of paper leak," he claimed.

In the manifesto, the Congress had guaranteed to secure the future of the youth by making strict laws against paper leaks.

"While fulfilling the responsibility

of the opposition, we are committed to formulate such tough policies by strongly raising the voice of the youth from the streets to the Parliament and putting pressure on the government," he said.

Gandhi's remarks came after the Supreme Court on Tuesday said even if there was "0.001 per cent negligence" on the part of anyone in the conduct of the NEET-UG 2024 examination, it should be thoroughly dealt with.

Observing that students have to labour hard while preparing for these examinations, the apex court said the litigation pertaining to the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate)-2024 examination ought not to be treated as adversarial.

"Even if there is 0.001 per cent negligence on the part of anyone, it should be thoroughly dealt with," a vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and SVN Bhatti told the advocates appearing for the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA).

The NTA conducts the all India pre-medical entrance test.

The bench was hearing two separate petitions raising grievances, including on grace marks given to the students in the examination held on May 5. (PTI)

## Himanta asks Bengal CM to hand over IIT Kharagpur case to CBI

Assam CM reminds Mamata of seeking intervention into 2-year-old case

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 18: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma recently wrote to his counterpart in West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, requesting the transfer of the untimely death case of an IIT Kharagpur student from Tinsukia to the CBI. Faizan Ahmed was found dead in his hostel room on October 14, 2022. Earlier, on October 20, 2022 CM Sarma sought Banerjee's intervention to conduct a thorough investigation into the case.

Sarma reminded Mamata that the deceased's parents discovered injury marks on his body, suggesting possible homicide, which contradicted the college authority's initial claim of suicide.



"Late Faizan Ahmed was found dead in his hostel room on October 14th, 2022. Although the college authorities initially declared it a suicide, his grieving parents observed injury marks on his body, indicating a potential homicide.

Therefore, I had requested your intervention for a thorough investigation into the unnatural death of this promising young student," Sarma wrote in the letter.

Detailing the findings of a forensic report in a letter dated June 17 from the CMO office, Sarma stated that a second autopsy, as directed by the Calcutta High Court, revealed a gunshot wound on the upper left side of Ahmed's neck and a stab wound on the right side.

"In view of the shocking findings of the latest forensic report, it is imperative that the perpetrators of the horrific crime as well as any other person involved in concealing the crime, are brought to book, thereby (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

*'So far, Kavach has already been implemented on 1,465 route km and 121 locomotives'*

## Kavach implementation progressing rapidly on 3,000 km routes: Railways

NEW DELHI, June 18: A day after the collision of two trains in West Bengal, the Railway Ministry Tuesday said the implementation of Automatic Train Protection System, also known as Kavach, is going on in a rapid manner on 3,000 route kilometer, and once completed it will help prevent such accidents.

A goods train rammed into the stationary Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express near Rangapani, 30 km from the New Jalpaiguri station in Siliguri, on Monday morning killing 10 people and injuring around 40.

The accident triggered a wave of criticism of the railways over the delay in the implementation of the Kavach.



In response, the ministry said Kavach is a very complex system involving six major sub-systems: laying optical fibre cable along the

track, installing telecom towers along tracks, installing telecom equipment on these towers and on trains, setting up data centres at

stations and integrating them with the signal system, installing equipment on tracks; and finally installing equipment on locomotives and trains.

"The system was finally certified in 2019. Despite Covid challenges, work progressed and now the railway as well as equipment manufacturers are geared up to take up large projects. At this point of time, work is progressing rapidly on 3,000 km routes. Design work for other routes is also progressing very fast," a senior official from the railway ministry said, requesting anonymity.

According to the railways, the Kavach system, developed by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## US, India must remain at forefront of technology: NSA Doval

NEW DELHI, June 18: India and the US must remain at the forefront of developing critical technologies as part of a larger strategic interest, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval said on Tuesday in presence of his American counterpart Jake Sullivan.

Doval's comments came a day after he and Sullivan unveiled a raft of transformative initiatives to deepen India-US cooperation in areas of artificial intelligence, semiconductor, critical minerals, advanced telecommunication and defence space.

"The US and India have got to remain at the forefront of technology in case we need to protect and defend our value systems and it is part of a larger

strategic interest," Doval said.

The National Security Advisor (NSA) was addressing the iCET (India-US initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology) industry roundtable hosted by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The iCET was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden in May 2022 with an aim to forge greater collaboration between India and the US in areas of critical technologies.

In his remarks, Doval highlighted the role of industry in technology and the progress of iCET since its inception, according to a CII statement. "iCET has achieved more than we (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



# Power Min asks utilities to be on high alert due to rising demand amid heatwave

Ministry estimates peak demand can touch level of 260 GW during this season

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** The power ministry on Tuesday said it has asked all utilities "to maintain a high state of alert and minimise forced outages of equipment" amid heatwave pushing electricity demand, especially in the northern region where Monsoon is yet to arrive.

The country's northern region has been experiencing high electricity demand due to a prevailing heatwave since May 17, 2024, the ministry said in a statement.

Despite these challenging conditions, the ministry said, the highest ever peak demand of 89 GW in the northern region was successfully met on June 17, 2024.

It was made possible by importing 25-30 per cent of the region's power requirement from neighbouring regions, it said.

"All utilities have been advised to maintain a high state of alert and minimise forced outages of equipment," the statement said.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast, heatwave conditions in North-West India are expected to abate from June 20.

In response to the increased electricity demand and to ensure adequate power availability across



the country, the Ministry of Power has implemented a series of measures to meet the highest ever peak demand of 250 GW during the ongoing summer season.

The ministry has estimated that peak demand can touch a level of 260 GW during this season.

These measures include directions issued under Section 11 of the Electricity Act, 2003, for ICB (imported coal based) plants to continue the generation support during the high demand period.

The ministry has instructed power generating units to have minimum planned maintenance during this period.

Efforts are being made to minimise partial and forced outages to maximise the availability of generation capacity, it stated, adding that plants under long-term outage have been sensitised to revive their units to ensure maximum power generation.

All generating companies (GENCOs) have been advised to keep their plants in healthy condition to ensure full capacity availability for optimal operation of various generation sources, it stated. About the coal stock maintenance, it stated that adequate coal stocks are being maintained at coal-based thermal stations.

The hydro stations have been advised to conserve water during solar hours and dispatch maximum generation during non-solar hours to ensure power adequacy at all times, it stated.

Gas-based power plants have been directed to provide grid support under Section 11 of the Electricity Act, 2003. Additionally, around 860 MW of additional gas-based capacity (non-NTPC) has been tied up through competitive bidding specifically for this summer, it stated.

Furthermore, it stated that approximately 5,000 MW of NTPC gas-based capacity has been instructed to be ready for immediate operation as per system requirements. About the market utilisation of surplus power, it stated that any un-requisitioned or surplus power available with generating stations is to be offered in the market as per provisions of the Electricity (Late Payment Surcharge and Related Matters) Rules, 2022, and its amendments.

This power can be utilised by any other buyer from the power market. States can also tie up power with other states having surplus capacity via the PUSHp portal, it stated. (PTI)

# Rupee jumps 13 paise to settle at 83.42 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, June 18:** The rupee appreciated 13 paise to settle at 83.42 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, buoyed by fresh inflow of foreign capital and a firm trend in domestic equity markets, wherein benchmark indices scaled new peaks.

Forex traders said reports of dollar selling by public sector banks supported the Indian currency. However, higher crude oil prices capped the gains in the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.52 and hit the intra-day high of 83.39 against the greenback during the session.

It finally settled at 83.42 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 13 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had settled 1 paisa lower at 83.55 against the US dollar.

Forex markets were closed on Monday on account of Bakri Id.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the rupee gained as domestic markets hit new all-time highs and amid fresh foreign fund inflows.



"Reports of selling of dollars by state-run banks also supported the rupee. However, a positive tone in the US dollar and surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains," he said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹ 83.10 to ₹ 83.70."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 105.06, higher by 0.12 per cent.

According to analysts, the US dollar gained after hawkish comments by officials of the US Federal Reserve, while market participants were awaiting further cues from retail sales and industrial production data from the US.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.33 per cent to USD 83.97 per barrel.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 308.37 points, or 0.40 per cent, to close at a new peak of 77,301.14 points. The broader NSE Nifty settled 92.30 points, or 0.39 per cent, higher to close at an all-time high of 23,557.90 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Friday, as they purchased shares worth ₹ 2,175.86 crore, according to exchange data.

Analysts attributed the strong investor sentiment to the firm domestic macroeconomic outlook.

Fitch Ratings on Tuesday raised India's growth forecast for current fiscal to 7.2 per cent, from 7 per cent projected in March, citing a recovery in consumer spending and increased investment.

Meanwhile, India's forex reserves jumped USD 4.307 billion to a new all-time high of USD 655.817 billion for the week ended June 7, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday.

The kitty had jumped USD 4.837 billion to USD 651.51 billion in the previous reporting week. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Rajnath meets senior ministers

the Motion of Thanks on the President's address on June 28. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to reply to the debate on July 2-3.

The meeting at the defence minister's residence is also learnt to have deliberated upon the possible candidates for the post of Lok Sabha Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

The JD(U) has said it would support the BJP nominee for the Speaker's post, while another key ally TDP has sought a consensus candidate for the coveted post.

The opposition INDIA bloc has sought the Deputy Speaker's post for its nominee, while the BJP is mulling giving the post to one of its alliance partners.

The names of BJP leaders Radha Mohan Singh, D Purandeshwari and Bhadrurahi Mahtab as possible successor to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla are doing the rounds.

Senior Congress leader K Suresh, an eight-term Lok Sabha member, is the senior-most in terms of parliamentary experience and in contention for the role of Protem Speaker. (PTI)

## 1,225 tourists evacuated from

The district administration is ready to remain vigilant and prepared to cater to the needs of the remaining tourists and deal with any challenges, the official said.

District Magistrate Hem Kumar Chettri is himself supervising the evacuation of the stranded tourists.

Besides the district magistrate, the superintendent of police (SP) Sonam Detchu Bhutia, other senior civil and police officials, besides BRO, NDRF, SDRF, local panchayats and volunteers are coordinating the rescue of the stranded tourists.

The rescued tourists expressed gratitude towards the state government, Mangan administration, other agencies and the local people for taking care while they were holed up at various places and bringing them to safety.

Nearly 50 people were killed in the flash flood that hit the same district in October last year. (PTI)

## Several initiatives are taken to

cases and 224 arrests, including 206 public servants recovering Rs 6 crore.

Sarma also mentioned about the crackdown on illegal activities in the state, adding, "Special Task Force operations tackled illegal infiltration, fake currency, gold smuggling, and wildlife crimes, with numerous arrests."

Taking to his X handle, the chief minister wrote, "In the last 3 years, every effort has been made to make Assam a safe State for all the citizens. From crackdown on drugs and child marriage, to reduction in crimes against women and corruption, we are moving ahead in the right direction."

## Himanta asks Bengal CM to

ensuring justice to the deceased and closure to the grief stricken parents. I, therefore, request you to kindly hand over the case to the CBI for a transparent and fair investigation of the crime," Sarma added.

## Senior BJP leader Ranjit Dutta

Pallab Lochan Das, the sitting BJP MP from Sonitpur, did not run in the recently held Lok Sabha elections; instead, the party fielded Dutta in that seat.

"I have served as an MLA for a number of years in my political career. I spent some time today in the assembly for the final time before turning in my resignation," Dutta stated. He also specifically mentioned late BJP leader Bimalangshu Roy's role as a leader of the party in the assembly.

Dutta said, "I have learned so many things from Roy. He was our leader in 2001."

## Sri Lanka Navy arrests four

water separating Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka's northern tip, which is a rich fishing ground for fishermen from both countries.

Sri Lanka's Ministry of Fisheries said the issue of alleged illegal fishing by Indians would be discussed with External Affairs minister Dr S Jaishankar when he arrives here on June 20.

The fishermen issue is a contentious one in the ties between India and Sri Lanka, with the Sri Lanka Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats for illegally entering Sri Lanka's territorial waters. (PTI)

## US, India must remain at forefront

could imagine," Doval said, highlighting the progress made across the defence innovation roadmap and start-ups, and emphasised the importance of the semiconductor industry.

In his address, Sullivan noted three important buckets for technology partnerships, the first being innovation, the second as production, and the third being deployment.

The top Biden administration official highlighted the importance of innovation and emphasised the need for government support for the private sector.

There exists bipartisan support for Indian industry in the US, he said adding that building the ecosystem and supply chain is the key to production.

Sullivan said that the core of iCET is about the idea of India and US being able to support each other and to encourage greater collaboration in the technology ecosystem, jointly innovate and find solutions to challenges.

Both the NSAs assured the industry that they welcome industry highlighting specific issues and due diligence will be done to resolve any barriers which hold back deeper and closer India US ties.

The Initiative for iCET represents a landmark agreement between the two countries on emerging technologies such as AI, semiconductors, biotech, and defense innovation.

Chandrajit Banerjee, the director general of CII, stated that under iCET India and US are working on sectors such as AI, biotech, critical materials and minerals, semiconductors among others to help enable deeper engagement between the two nations.

Representatives from industries spoke about their experiences of collaboration and the ways and means by which they planned to take India-US collaboration further through government facilitation.

Sullivan visited Delhi from June 17 to 18, in the first trip to India by a senior Biden Administration official after the Modi government came to power for the third term.

The US National Security Adviser was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising senior US government officials and industry leaders.

Sullivan's visit to India came three days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden had a brief conversation on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Italy's Apulia region. (PTI)

## Kavach implementation progressing

(RDSO) can trigger automatic application of brakes in case of an emergency when the train driver fails to act in time, ensuring safe train operations even in bad weather.

"So far, Kavach has already been implemented on 1,465 route km and 121 locomotives. Besides, the Agra division has developed a complete Kavach network on the 80-km stretch between Mathura (excluding the station) and Palwal to conduct trials on various types of engines and trains," the official said.

Recently, the Railway Board chairperson and CEO Jaya Verma Sinha and railway officials of North Central and Northern Railways inspected a Kavach trial in Vande Bharat train between Palwal and Vrindavan.

Sinha, while travelling in the eight-car set Vande Bharat, which ran at 160 kmph speed, had a first hand experience of Kavach working system at red signals, loop lines and other speed restriction points.

The Railway Ministry also said there is a steep decline in the number of consequential train accidents, from 473 in 2000-01 to 40 in 2022-23.

"From 2004 to 2014, the average number of consequential train accidents was 171 per annum, which significantly declined to 68 per annum during the period from 2014 to 2024," the official said. (PTI)

## Wynk Studio artists' surpass 1.7 billion streams on Wynk Music



HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, June 18:** Wynk Music, India's leading music streaming app by downloads and daily active users, has achieved a significant milestone with over 1.7 billion streams for songs by independent artists from Wynk Studio. This achievement underscores Wynk's commitment to promoting independent music and supporting emerging artists, marking this milestone within just two years of Wynk Studio's launch.

Amit Tripathi, Chief Marketing Officer at Bharti Airtel, highlighted the success, stating, "We launched Wynk Studio to provide a platform for upcoming artists to monetize their music while offering our customers a diverse music library. The 1.7 billion streams for these songs reflect how much our customers enjoy the content while we help the artists. In less than two years, Wynk Studio has gained immense popularity, signing artists from across the country and promoting language diversity on Wynk. We promise to continue diversifying and enabling more artists to build thriving music careers."

In addition to emerging artists, established musicians like Nikhita Gandhi, Vishal Dadlani, and Rahat Fateh Ali Khan have also collaborated with Wynk Studio to release their music. The platform has played a crucial role in advancing the careers of artists such as Prateek Gandhi, Raj Burman, Harsha Praveen, and Reena Gilbert, making them top performers on Wynk Studio.

### TEACHER REQUIRED

Applications are hereby invited from eligible candidates for the vacant post of one B.Sc.(Bio) teacher at Satgaon English High School, Satgaon, West Karbi Anglong.

#### Eligibility Criteria:

- Age: The candidate should not be less than 18 years and more than 38 years as on 01-01-2024. The upper age limit is relaxable as per Govt. norms
- Educational qualification: The candidate should be a B. Sc. (Bio) with at least 50% marks obtained from a UGC recognized University as a regular in academic career with English medium background.
- Salary: As per Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Adhoc Secondary School pay norms.

The last date of receipt of application is on 25th June, 2024.

N.B: For details please contact with HM/Secretary of the school

Sd/-  
HM/Secretary  
Prem Terang, BSc, BEd  
Contact No-7086973984

## Sensex, Nifty climb to lifetime highs

Markets continue record run

**MUMBAI, June 18:** Benchmark Sensex closed above the 77,000 level for the first time, and broader Nifty scaled a fresh peak on Tuesday as key equity indices stayed on the record-breaking run powered by a rally in index majors ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Infosys. Besides, renewed foreign fund inflows amid a firm trend in global equities boosted investor confidence, traders said.

In a range-bound session, Sensex and Nifty settled at their new closing all-time high levels amid intense demand for realty, consumer durable and utility stocks.

Rising for the third straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 308.37 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 77,301.14. During the day, it jumped 374 points or 0.48 per cent to hit the fresh lifetime peak of 77,366.77.

As many as 2,167 stocks advanced while 1,836 declined and 147 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The NSE Nifty went up by 92.30 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a record closing high of 23,557.90 for the fourth straight session. It rallied 113.45 points or 0.48 per cent to hit the new all-time high of 23,579.05 during the day trade.

"The Indian market touched record highs again and is gradually expanding the gains achieved following the national election. It is responding positively to the upcoming budget, which is anticipated to strike a balance between growth and populism."

"Similarly, it is also taking cues from positive global market trends, with the US moving steadily towards the presidential election in November. Market volatility has decreased over the month, which is contributing to a short-term trend," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Fitch Ratings on Tuesday raised India's growth forecast for

the current fiscal to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent projected in March, citing a recovery in consumer spending and increased investment. Among the 30 Sensex companies, Power Grid, Wipro, ICICI Bank, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Infosys, JSW Steel and State Bank of India were the biggest gainers.

In contrast, Maruti, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel, Tata Motors, ITC and Tata Consultancy Services were among the laggards.

"Indian equities are trading at an all-time high zone led by positive macros and US markets scaling to new highs. Further, 27 per cent growth in advance direct tax receipts for the Q1 FY25 supported the sentiments," Sid-dhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 0.96 per cent, and midcap index climbed 0.43 per cent.

Among the indices, realty jumped 2.11 per cent, utilities (1.05 per cent), telecommunication (1 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.90 per cent), bankex (0.83 per cent), services (0.74 per cent) and capital goods (0.73 per cent).

On the other hand, auto, metal and oil & gas were the laggards.

"Global equities ticked higher on Tuesday, following a tech-led rally in the US the previous night and as an uneasy calm held in Europe post the recent sell-off and traders awaited remarks from a horde of US Federal Reserve officials," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities, said.

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

European markets were quoting with gains in mid-session deals. US markets ended higher on Monday. (PTI)

## Gunnebo showcases advanced security solutions at Jorhat Jewellers' Association Meet



HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, June 18:** Gunnebo, a global leader in physical security solutions, recently presented its cutting-edge safe storage products to members of the Nikhil Assam Swarna Shilpi Samiti in Jorhat District, Assam.

This engagement aimed to introduce the jeweller community to Gunnebo's latest BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) certified physical safe storage solutions.

The event featured a detailed showcase of Gunnebo's advanced safes, highlighting their robust security features and compliance with industry standards.

The emphasis was on the benefits these certified safes offer in protecting precious jewellery and other valuables.

Attendees included key representatives from Gunnebo's safe storage division, such as Subir Das (Deputy General Manager &

Regional Head, East Region), Akash Ujawane (Deputy General Manager, Marketing), Pankaj Baruah (Sales Manager, East Region), and Jayanta Pathak from Dishant PSS INC, an authorized dealer for Gunnebo's Steelage and Chubb safes brands.

Anirban Mukhuti, Head of Marketing & Product Management, Asia, commented, "We are delighted to participate in the Nikhil Assam Swarna Shilpi Samiti Association meeting in Jorhat District. This is our first event in Upper Assam, marking a significant milestone in our outreach efforts to new regions. Our commitment to providing innovative security solutions ensures that our customers' valuables are protected, offering them peace of mind. Our extensive experience and expertise in this industry enable us to design products that meet the rising needs of our customers. Gunnebo Safe Storage has established several brand experience zones across India to enhance the customer touch and feel experience."



# CEM Pramod Boro tables ₹ 2200 crore budget for BTC

Focus on accountability, grassroots empowerment & landmark initiatives marks FY 2024-25 budget session

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, June 18:** CEM Pramod Boro presented a budget outlay of ₹ 2200 crores for the financial year 2024-25 for the Bodoland Territorial Council in the budget session of the Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly (BTCLA) held at the BTCLA House, Bodofa Nwgrw in Kokrajhar on Tuesday. The two-day budget session of the BTC Legislative Assembly was chaired by Katiram Boro, the Speaker of the BTC Legislative Assembly.

The budget session commenced with the question hour, followed by extensive discussions focusing on welfare, development, peace, tranquility, and sustainable development. During his budget speech, Boro stated, "The budget, themed under 'Vibrant BTR Mission 2024-25', encapsulates the BTR government's efforts to ensure accountability, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, and timely delivery of services for the people of BTR." He emphasised that the budget ensures continuity in implementing existing flagship programs of the council government while envisioning landmark efforts for social justice in the future. Notably, this is the first instance in the history of the Bodoland Territorial Council that its budget has been prepared following the List of Major & Minor Heads of Account (LMMH) as prescribed by the CAG of India [Rule 19(7)(a) of BTC Fund Rules, 2012].

"This achievement is the result of a series of diligent activities aimed at achieving transparency and accountability in the council's financial management system," Boro added.

From the budget speech, it is evident that the Boro-led BTR government's unique focus has been on empowering grassroots institutions, processes, and voices of BTR, a departure from past practices. The core principle of the budget is a people-centric approach that envisions "governance from the roots to the top", as articulated by Boro.

Several major initiatives planned for FY 2024-25 include the Vibrant BTR-100 Days



of Action, a program designed to expedite the reach of services across BTR. This initiative aims to fast-track flagship schemes from all sectors and departments crucial to realising the vision of a peaceful, smart, and green Bodoland. The respective Directorates of the Council are tasked with executing the 100 Days Action Plan.

Boro highlighted other significant initiatives such as massive tree plantations, Miyawaki Forest at the BTC Secretariat campus, action-based research on groundwater management, pilot projects on wetland conservation, and a rigorous campaign on the Green Mission and reducing disposable plastic usage. Additionally, efforts are underway to develop clean villages, incentivise top-performing communities, and conduct workshops on carbon sequestration, carbon offsetting, groundwater management, and plastic pollution reduction.

Furthermore, updates on the implementa-

tion of the Bodo Peace Accord 2020 were also emphasised during Boro's budget speech. The foundation stones for six projects under the historic Bodo Peace Accord 2020 were laid during the 'Celebration of 3 Glorious Years of BTR Government' at Bijni on December 20, 2023, by HCM Himanta Biswa Sarma. These projects include: Institute of Paramedical and Nursing Sciences at Tamulpur estimated at ₹ 19.45 crores; Institute of Paramedical and Nursing Sciences at Udalguri estimated at ₹ 28.88 crores; Polytechnic and Vocational Training Institute at Gobardhana Baksa district estimated at Rs 24.07 crores; Polytechnic and Vocational Training Institute at Parbatjhora Kokrajhar district estimated at ₹ 24.07 crores; Birsamunda Cultural Complex at Amguri Kokrajhar estimated at ₹ 9.62 crores; Gorkha Bhawan and Cultural Centre at Chirang estimated at ₹ 9.63 crores.

The budget speech also highlighted

achievements related to the Bodo Peace Accord 2020, including the completion of the rehabilitation package for 4,203 cadres and ex-gratia payments to 632 martyrs' next-of-kin. Additionally, the inclusion of 41 villages from Sonitpur district into BTR, provincialisation of teaching and non-teaching staff services, and the submission of detailed project reports for 19 projects under the Special Development Package were mentioned.

Sectoral achievements such as certification of 13 traditional and cultural articles under the Geographical Indication Registry, democratic empowerment of institutions, and various developmental initiatives across sectors were also noted.

Moreover, initiatives like the empowerment of places of worship, distribution of land pattas to landless families, digitisation of land records, introduction of e-offices, completion of PMAY-G houses, financial support for poor families, recruitment in education sector, and success in civil service examinations through the Bodofa Super 50 Mission were highlighted in the speech.

Further, new initiatives for supporting PhD students, promoting science education through Bodoland Science Mission, operationalisation of medical and nursing colleges, support for women through Mainao Swrang Bithangki, and advancements in sports infrastructure were discussed.

Efforts in environmental conservation, including the distribution of Agaru saplings and wetland conservation projects, as well as initiatives in industry development, tourism, rights of STs and traditional forest dwellers, and collaborations for overall development were also underscored.

Boro concluded by reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development and peace-building in BTR, emphasising that the administration has strived to increase social trust among all communities and groups, contrary to divisive practices employed by the Opposition in the past.

## Second wave of flooding hits Nagaon



**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, June 18:** Due to the release of additional water from Karbi Langpi hydro-electric power project after incessant rain for over a couple of days, the Kapili river is flowing around one meter above its danger level. The overflowing water of the Kapili river, as well as the leaking water through the breached portion of the embankment near Changsuki at Kampur, inundated the large areas under Kampur revenue circle for the second time within a fortnight in the district since Monday.

It is reported that over 500 families of Changsuki and Potiapam areas under Kampur revenue circle have been severely affected by the floodwater till the time of filing this report. The flood victims, along with their domestic animals,

have already shifted from their respective houses and have taken shelter at the railway track as well as at the nearby namghar. Besides, the flood water submerged the Kampur-Yamunamukh connecting PWD road, for which the district administration closed down all kinds of transportation on the road, sources added.

Although the water level of Kapili river slightly receded on Tuesday morning, the Kapili river is still flowing above its danger level till filing this report. It is feared that if it rains more, the water level of the Kapili as well as the Nishari river will increase and the overflowing water from both rivers will submerge more new areas under Kampur as well as Raha revenue circles till midnight, sources added further.

## NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati unveils film celebrating biodiversity

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, June 18:** NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati has released 'A Symphony of Sustainability', an environment film celebrating environmental stewardship and industrial harmony. Sudip Nag, RED (ER-I and ER-II), ceremonially released the captivating five-minute film during his recent visit to NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati in Kokrajhar.

The film showcases NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati's dedication to preserving the natural environment and promoting ecological balance. It was launched in the presence of Akhilesh Singh, head of Project, NTPC Bongaigaon, and senior officials of the station. 'A Symphony of Sustainability' beautifully illustrates NTPC Bongaigaon's belief in the harmonious co-existence of industrial progress and environmental stewardship. This commitment is evident in NTPC's operations, with a particular emphasis on maintaining ecological balance. Nowhere is this more evident than in the serene habitats around NTPC Bongaigaon, which have nurtured over 65 varieties of migratory birds in and around its ash dyke and township, highlighting the company's adherence to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) parameters.

The concept and script inputs for the film have been developed by Onkar Nath, AGM (HR), NTPC Bongaigaon, and Madhuriya S Lahkar, senior manager (HR-Corporate Communication). The film has been directed by noted wildlife filmmaker Udayan Borthakur from Guwahati, Assam, with voiceover by Padmini Brahma, specialist - Gender, Women and Child Development, BTC. During the event, Sudip Nag remarked, "Today, we celebrate not only our efforts but also the wondrous beauty of migratory birds that grace our surroundings at the ash dyke and township. NTPC Bongaigaon exemplifies how industrial development can go hand-in-hand with ecological preservation." Akhilesh Singh, head of Project, NTPC Bongaigaon, expressed pride in the project's achievements, stating, "Our continuous efforts in environmental conservation reflect NTPC's dedication to sustainable development. This film serves as an example of our ongoing commitment to fostering ecological balance." 'A Symphony of Sustainability' is a visual journey through the vibrant biodiversity fostered by NTPC Bongaigaon and depicts the company's role in supporting ecological integrity.

## Karbi Anglong Police make third arrest in Tissopi murder case

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, June 18:** Karbi Anglong Police have arrested one more person in connection with the killing of a young woman, Hukuri Tissopi. Late Tissopi was shot dead by unidentified miscreants in the wee hours of June 11 at her residence in Arlong Langso village, 3 km from Diphu-Lumding Road under Diphu police station in Karbi Anglong. The arrested person has been identified as Probin Rongpi.

It may be mentioned here that Karbi Anglong Police had earlier arrested two persons in connection with Tissopi's murder. The names of the previously arrested individuals were disclosed on Tuesday by superintendent of police Karbi Anglong, Sanjib Kumar Saikia, in a press briefing at his official chamber here. The names are Mukrang Terang and Rangina Rongpi. The SP said that the interrogation of the two arrested individuals led to the arrest of a third person involved in the murder, identified as Probin Rongpi.

The SP further informed that, according to the statements of the arrested persons, it was found that Mukrang Terang's father and late Tissopi had an illicit relationship, which led to disputes in the family. Unable to bear the family disputes arising from the intimate relationship between his father and Tissopi, Mukrang developed a plan to eliminate Tissopi by hiring a killer.

To execute the plan, Mukrang purchased a pistol from Dimapur to murder Tissopi. According to the plan, the two accomplices entered Tissopi's house in the early hours of June 11 and shot her to death at point-blank range. The SP also informed that the pistol used to kill Tissopi was hidden in a garden, which has been recovered by the police. The SP also mentioned that many names are yet to be revealed as the investigation is ongoing.

## KVK Nagaon hosts PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Webcast

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, June 18:** Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nagaon, hosted a webcasting program to commemorate the 17th installment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi (KSN) scheme on Tuesday at the office campus of KVK, Nagaon.

Dr Niranjana Deka, principal scientist and head of KVK, Nagaon, along with Kanchan Pator Bordoloi, former ZPC member, and over a hundred local farmers attended the event, which featured a virtual address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

PM Modi ceremoniously released the 17th installment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme for small and marginal farmers across the nation, reaffirming the government's commitment to support the agricultural community. Farmers, scientists, and officials from Nagaon Krishi Vigyan Kendra expressed their gratitude for the government's continuous support, highlighting the positive impact of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme on their lives and agricultural activities, as stated in a press note.

## NTPC Bongaigaon initiates dormitory project for Bodoland Silk Park

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, June 18:** In a significant step towards community development, Sudip Nag, regional executive director (ER-I and ER-II), NTPC, laid the foundation stone for a new residential dormitory for reelers and weavers at Bodoland Silk Park, Department of Sericulture, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in Kokrajhar. This project, estimated to cost approximately ₹ 50 lakhs, is part of NTPC Bongaigaon's CSR initiative, demonstrating the company's dedication to sustainable development and social responsibility.

During his maiden visit to NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati recently, Sudip Nag, along with Akhilesh Singh, business unit head, NTPC Bongaigaon, Onkar Nath, head of HR, NTPC Bongaigaon, and NTPC Bongaigaon officials, toured the Bodoland Silk Park in the presence of AK Chakrabarty, director of Sericulture, and representatives from BTC. The NTPC team was given an in-depth explanation of the silk-making process, from worm rearing to the weaving of finished products. Live demonstrations showcased the skills and dedication of the Silk Park workers. At the foundation stone laying ceremony, Sudip Nag expressed his pride and gratitude for being part of this mission in partnership with the Department of Sericulture. He emphasised NTPC's commitment to societal well-being beyond its core business. "This dormitory project is part of our goal to support approximately 10,000 reelers and weavers in the BTC region," said Nag, thanking the Department of Sericulture for this collaborative effort.

Akhilesh Singh reiterated NTPC Bongaigaon's focus on creating local employment, empowering women, and boosting income generation for the region's residents. "Our initiatives aim to uplift the socio-economic status of the local community, and this dormitory is a crucial step in that direction," he stated.

## AITUC urges safety for migrant workers following Kuwait fire tragedy

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, June 18:** The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) Assam State Committee has expressed shock and deep grief over the tragic Kuwait fire incident on June 12, which claimed the lives of 49 workers, including 42 Indians.

The incident occurred inside a six-storey building used by the NBCT Group to house their employees. AITUC Assam State Committee secretary Ranjan Chowdhury, in a statement on Tuesday, called for justice and adequate measures to ensure the safety and well-being of migrant workers. Chowdhury also stressed the urgent need for compensation for the families of the deceased workers, seeking ₹ 1 crore for each family and ₹ 50 lakh for those severely incapacitated. He also urged the government to establish

lish a policy specifically addressing the rights and protection of migrant workers, advocating for a review of the Migrant Act in the country.

Highlighting the challenges faced by migrant workers, Chowdhury stressed the importance of prioritising their safety, both in foreign countries and within India. He warned that with rising unemployment in India, migration is likely to increase as individuals seek employment opportunities. He called on the government to take proactive measures to ensure workplace safety and not view migrant workers solely as a means of generating foreign exchange.

"AITUC has repeatedly flagged the abolition of labour inspection by the present government 'for ease of doing business'. Given the mounting unemployment in India, migration is bound to increase,

with people desperate to get into some employment. In this situation, the government should proactively ensure safety at the workplaces and not take them only as a stable source of foreign exchange," Chowdhury said.

Referencing official data, Chowdhury revealed alarming statistics related to Indian workers in Kuwait.

"The Parliament was recently informed that the Indian Embassy in Kuwait received 16,000 complaints between 2021 and 2023, ranging from late payment of wages to issues with living arrangements and mistreatment by employers. Additionally, between 2022 and 2023, 1,400 Indian workers lost their lives in Kuwait. As such, there is an urgent need for improved protections and support for migrant workers," he added.

## Ancient Krishna idol discovered

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, June 18:** Nijora Das, a middle-aged woman, was returning home near the historic Athai Sagar from her brother's residences in Rudrasagar on Monday evening. As she was about to enter her campus, she noticed a polythene bag hanging on a pole near her gate. She brought it home and, to her surprise, found a beautiful flute-playing Krishna idol, believed to be very old. Along with it, she also found a letter from an unknown person, neatly typed in Assamese.

The letter stated that the person's family had inherited the idol from their great grandfather's days and had been devoutly worshipping it.

## Margherita mourns loss of veteran Congress leader

**HT Correspondent**

**MARGHERITA, June 18:** Veteran Congress leader of the Margherita sub-division and renowned Tangsa leader, Lukam Tulum, passed away at the age of 93 on June 12 at his residence in Kharankong village under Khumchai Gaon Panchayat of 83 number Margherita constituency of Tinsukia. On Tuesday, Lukam Tulum's 'Adya Shradha' was held at his residence.

Many senior and veteran Congress leaders of Tinsukia district, All Assam Mech Kachari Students, Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee, Tangsa Script Development Committee, Tirap Changlang Longding People's Front, All Man (Tai Speaking) Student Union, All Assam Tangsa Student Union, Ledo Malu Gaon village pradhan Tehan Hakun, and many others attended the 'Adya Shradha' and paid rich tribute to the departed soul.

Pallab Shyam Wailung, general secretary and

spokesperson of the Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee, said that veteran Congress leader and renowned Tangsa leader Lukam Tulum was part of the Burmese Army and fought during the Second World War.

Wailung noted that Lukam Tulum was a dedicated Congress leader who was closely associated with former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Assam chief minister Hiteswar Saikia, and Tarun Gogoi. Hiteswar Saikia had offered Tulum a ticket to contest from the Margherita constituency, but he declined, and Kul Bahadur Chetry was given the ticket instead, becoming an MLA for three consecutive terms.

Sengkhom Mossang, general secretary of the Tangsa Script Development Committee, stated that Lukam Tulum was a pioneer of the Tangsa language, enabling the celebration of World Mother Language Day on February 21.

## Toren Chandra Boro to receive Ahmed Ali Baskandi Award 2024



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, June 18:** Noted writer, former president of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS), and presently convener of Bodo Advisory Board of Sahitya Akademi, Toren Chandra Boro has been named for the prestigious 'Ahmed Ali Baskandi Award 2024'. The award is conferred by the Department of Cultural Affairs, government of Assam, to individuals who have made significant contributions to the upliftment of language, literature, culture, communal harmony, and tranquility among communities in the state.

The award will be presented on June 20, 2024, during the Bishnu Rabha Divas celebration at Darang College, Tezpur. Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will grace the occasion as the chief guest.

The award includes a citation, robes (anga bastra), xori, and Rs 1 lakh. Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region, has extended his warm greetings and congratulations to Toren Chandra Boro for this achievement.

Dr Surath Narzary, president of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, and Dipen Boro, president of ABSU, have also extended their warm congratulations to Boro on being honoured with this award.

## Tezpur University hosts seminar on promoting state's GIs

Experts gather to enhance market potential and quality of GI products

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, June 18:** Tezpur University's Intellectual Property Rights Cell (TUIPR), in collaboration with the Assam Science Technology & Environment Council (ASTEC) and the Science Technology and Climate Change Department, government of Assam, organised a day-long program titled 'Brainstorming Session on Prospects of Promoting Geographical Indications (GIs) of Assam' on Tuesday at Tezpur University.

Dr Jaideep Baruah, director of ASTEC, graced the occasion as chief guest, and Er Biman Chandra Barua, head i/c of the Science & Technology Division at ASTEC, participated as a resource person. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Baruah, an expert in Intellectual Property Rights and GI promotion, delivered an insightful presentation on the economic benefits of GIs. He highlighted successful case studies from Assam and outlined the potential growth trajectory for Assam's GI products. Examples such as muga silk of Assam, Assam orthodox tea, Tezpur litchi, judima, and Bodo eri silk were cited by Baruah to illustrate how GI status ensures quality and adds brand value. He emphasised that while GI registration is crucial, effective packaging and branding are equally essential for market success.

Addressing the gathering, Prof Shambhu



Nath Singh stated that the objective of the brainstorming session was to develop a comprehensive roadmap for enhancing business prospects for various stakeholders involved in registered GIs in the region. He urged the TUIPR cell and ASTEC to collaborate closely to facilitate the promotion of ethnic products through GIs.

In his inaugural address, Prof Pritam Deb, IPR chair professor at TUIPR, briefed the attendees that the session would benefit from the expertise of around 100 authorised users and registered proprietors of GIs, along with experts

from diverse core and practical areas. Discussions included legal aspects of GIs, criteria for becoming an authorised user, obligations, innovative industrial designs to enhance GI-tagged products in domestic and international markets, and sustainable packaging strategies.

The event featured three technical sessions covering various facets of GIs in Assam. Additionally, craftsmen and Farmer Producer Groups (FPOs) working on 33 granted GIs of Assam, including muga silk, Assam orthodox tea, Tezpur litchi, judima, and Bodo eri silk, showcased their products in an exhibition.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Before anything else, preparation is the key to success*  
— Alexander Graham Bell

## Indians in Russian Army?

The recent uproar surrounding jobless Indians joining the Russian Army has sparked a significant debate. The Indian government's strong reaction to the deaths of two Indian nationals recruited by the Russian Army in the Ukraine war has led to demands for their early release and return. However, this reaction seems somewhat disproportionate, considering the longstanding defense relations between India and Russia, which have benefited India greatly during challenging times. It is no secret that young Indians have been traveling to Russia to take up positions as helpers in the Russian Army. The government was well aware of this trend but only acted after two recruits were killed in the ongoing conflict with Ukraine. This delayed response raises questions about the government's approach to this issue. The government has yet to disclose the exact number of Indian nationals currently serving in the Russian Army, but reports suggest that around 200 Indians are involved, though the actual number could be higher. Russia has been recruiting men from friendly countries in Asia and Africa since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began. These recruits are not professional soldiers but wage earners attracted by the lucrative pay packages offered by the Russian Army. Indian recruits reportedly receive a monthly salary of ₹ 1.95 lakh and additional benefits of ₹ 50,000. The contracts are typically for a minimum of one year, with no leave or exit allowed before six months of service.

India is not alone in facing this issue. Nepal, for instance, has also seen its citizens recruited by the Russian Army, with at least ten Nepalese soldiers killed in the conflict. Since January, Nepal has stopped issuing permits for its citizens to work in both Russia and Ukraine. This highlights a broader trend of foreign nationals from countries like Nepal, India, and Somalia being recruited by the Russian Army. The Indian government recently acknowledged that "a few Indian nationals" had signed up for support roles with the Russian Army. The Indian embassy in Moscow has been in regular contact with Russian authorities to secure their early discharge. However, the question remains: if the government knew about these recruitments, why did it not act sooner to prevent them? The delayed reaction sends a mixed message to Russia and the international community. It is important to note that many countries recruit foreign nationals for their armed forces. France, Denmark, Ireland, and Israel are among those that allow foreigners to serve in their military. The French Foreign Legion, for example, comprises soldiers from 140 countries. Similarly, the Indian Army recruits foreigners, including Nepalese, Bhutanese nationals, and Tibetan refugees.

Given this context, there is little reason for India to be overly concerned about jobless Indians joining the Russian Army. These individuals seek employment to support their families and improve their livelihoods. India has a history of contributing troops to UN peacekeeping forces, with more than 200,000 Indian soldiers serving in conflict zones, particularly in Africa. Over 160 Indian soldiers have been killed in these missions as of September 2022. Since the 1970s, Russia has been India's most trusted defense partner, and this relationship should not be undermined by the recruitment of a few Indian nationals seeking better opportunities. The focus should be on ensuring their safety and well-being while maintaining strong diplomatic ties with Russia.

## Students from disadvantage background shined in Indian Aviation Industry empowering futures



By: Munmun Singha Chowdhury

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds encounter numerous challenges in the demanding world of modern employment. This is especially true for pupils in lower Assam, where their chances are severely hampered by a lack of resources and restricted access to high-quality education. In Gossagaon, Assam, an institution specializing in aviation and hospitality management was founded in 2023 to address these issues. With positions in India's hotel and aviation industries, the academy's first batch of 120 students has already accomplished a noteworthy feat in line with its aim of providing meaningful career prospects for students from underprivileged regions.

A group of students who came from low-income backgrounds and had no English competence began a journey that would change their lives. They showed steadfast dedication and tenacity across a demanding six-month diploma course, overcoming many obstacles in their academic and personal lives. Their perseverance paid off, as they were able to make the shift from uncertain prospects to lucrative employment in hospitality and aviation.

Prior to enrolling in them in Job Oriented course these pupils faced dismal odds. Due to their financial struggles and family responsibilities, they were trapped in a cycle of poverty with no end in sight. Their dreams were long-shadowed by the terror of an unfulfilled life, which loomed huge and stifled their desires. On the other hand, in such rural area the founding of such institution who offered a ray of hope and a way forward for a better future.

The curriculum of the school is carefully crafted to meet the demands of the business, giving students real-world experience and information relevant to the workplace. This customized approach made sure that students were ready to take on the demands of the hospi-

tal and aviation industries after completing the course.

The first batch of graduates' successful placements is evidence of both the students' resiliency and the academy's quality of instruction. The achievement raised their families' standards of living and gave them renewed stability and hope in addition to improving their own standards of living.

For some students, finding work was a transformative experience that changed their lives. Their condition of uncertainty was transformed into one of empowerment and opportunity by it. They were able to assume professional jobs and make a substantial contribution to their respective industries because of the skills and confidence they acquired at here. Their triumphant tales provide as potent references to what is possible with the correct encouragement and instruction.

Now that their careers are flourishing, the graduates exemplify a spirit of unwavering drive. They keep setting greater goals and show resilience and perseverance in the face of a constantly changing labor market. Their rise from obscurity to greatness is an inspiration to all of us, not just for themselves. They serve as examples of the great influence that opportunity and education can have on a person's life.

The program has not only improved the lives of its pupils but also established a standard for other educational projects that target underprivileged groups. For the pupils of Lower Assam, a better, more just future has been made possible by the academy's dedication to offering career-oriented education.

As these young professionals continue to succeed, their tales will surely encourage a great number of others to pursue similar careers by demonstrating that even the most difficult challenges can be solved with perseverance and the correct opportunity. (The Author is the Director of Connection Point Academy)

# Italy's G7 Summit spotlights political turmoil across global economies



The G-7 summit of the world's leading economies, excluding China, will convene from June 13-15 at a scenic Italian resort by the Adriatic Sea. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, previously considered a fringe figure on the right, now commands significant domestic support compared to her counterparts and some invited leaders.

In the lead-up to the November presidential election, US President Joe Biden finds himself behind his Republican rival Donald Trump in recent polls. This comes despite Trump facing legal challenges, including a conviction in one case and ongoing trials in others. A video showing Biden appearing disoriented in public surfaced, necessitating intervention from Meloni to guide him back on track. It was an image that Biden's team had hoped to avoid projecting.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has called for an unexpected early election set for July 4, where he faces predictions of a defeat to the rising Labour Party. Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron, reacting to the strong showing of Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) in the European parliamentary elections, has surprisingly dissolved parliament, scheduling new elections for June 30 and July 7.

Despite having three years left in his final term, Macron is contemplating two potential outcomes. First, French voters, having expressed discontent by flirting with the RN, may opt for a different direction. There is a

convergence of socialist and left-of-center parties preparing for a unified challenge. Second, even if the RN gains control of parliament and the prime minister's position, it could face scrutiny over the next three years due to governance issues and fiscal mismanagement.

Germany, Europe's largest economy, dealt a blow to Chancellor Olaf Scholz as his party fell behind both the Christian Democrats and the far-right AfD in the recent European elections. The Greens, known for their focus on climate change issues, also saw disappointing results.

After eight years in office, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is grappling with increasing discontent among voters. A recent poll indicates his approval rating stands at 30%, trailing behind Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre, who commands 40% support. Despite the next election not scheduled until September 2025, Trudeau faces a challenging

road ahead to regain political momentum.

Among the special invitees, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan recently encountered a setback in local elections, highlighting domestic political challenges. Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi secured a third term, albeit with his party losing its parliamentary majority, necessitating reliance on coalition partners. Managing a coalition government demands diplomatic finesse, an area where PM Modi's leadership in Delhi and Ahmedabad remains a topic of scrutiny.

The leaders facing challenges today are confronted with pressing global issues. The conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza demand immediate attention, overshadowing other concerns. Additionally, China's growing economic influence poses a significant challenge to the established global order.

In response, the United States is urging the European Union to increase tariffs on Chinese elec-

tric vehicle imports. The presence of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the summit has shifted focus directly onto Ukraine's security situation. The US has announced a decade-long security pact with Ukraine, aimed at bolstering its defense capabilities in the face of long-term threats. However, the durability of this commitment remains uncertain, with potential future shifts in US policy depending on electoral outcomes. Furthermore, the G-7 has pledged substantial financial aid totaling \$50 billion to Ukraine, leveraging blocked Russian foreign exchange reserves. President Biden's message to Russian President Vladimir Putin underscores a firm stance against strategic waiting tactics.

Climate change mitigation remains widely endorsed across Europe, despite challenges. Global average temperatures reached record highs for 12 consecutive months up to last May, highlighting the urgency of action. European initiatives, such as dedicating 4% of arable land to biodiversity conservation, have sparked some public opposition. Nevertheless, there is growing recognition that extreme weather events are increasingly impacting global food security.

The G-7 countries' portion of the global GDP has been declining as China and India's shares have expanded in recent years. The latest European parliamentary elections witnessed gains for far-right parties, including Italy's ruling Brothers of Italy party, which doubled its representation. Despite these gains,

centrists maintain dominance in the European political landscape. Meanwhile, Germany and France are experiencing a rise in far-right influence, while in Britain, the left-leaning Labour Party is driving political momentum. Adding to the complexity, Donald Trump's lead in the US presidential race further complicates the global political landscape.

Domestic political dynamics can have significant international policy ramifications. Far-right parties, which are gaining traction, often oppose free trade, advocate for softer stances on Russia, show less aggression towards China, and maintain strong anti-immigration sentiments. The presence of the Indian Prime Minister at the summit, beginning his third term, presents a timely opportunity to evaluate these shifting dynamics on the global stage.

The G-7 seeks greater alignment from India on efforts to isolate Russia, curb Chinese trade and technological advancements, and advance climate control initiatives. However, India is unlikely to forfeit its access to Russian oil and coal due to both economic necessities and strategic considerations.

Moreover, the G-7's focus on environmental issues has been tempered by ongoing geopolitical conflicts such as Ukraine and Israel-Hamas, which have diverted attention and resources. This summit faces challenges due to the political turbulence in key democratic economies worldwide. (The writer can be reached at [dipakurmiglttd@gmail.com](mailto:dipakurmiglttd@gmail.com))

## Suresh Gopi- Kerala's own saffron superstar

By: M.R.Lalu

The South Indian movie industry except the Malayalam industry in Kerala is known for its big stars taking plunge in politics. Many had managed to become Chief Ministers. From the most popular MG Ramachandran, widely known as MGR to Jayalalitha to Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, popularly known as NTR, all of them managed to etch their names in the list of great Chief Ministers. Superstar Rajanikant missed it, even though he began his stint in politics with his own party Makkal Mandram. Disgruntlement among the populace and being skeptical about the prospects in politics, the people's star disbanded his party. He cited ill-health as the reason. Kamal Haasan was the next superstar who tried his debut in politics floating his party Makkal Needhi Maiam.

Though he is still active in Tamil Nadu Politics his party decided to opt out of the 2024 Lok Sabha Election. He campaigned for the DMK led alliance putting his fans and party members in a serious dilemma. Chiranjeevi was another popular star obviously from the Telugu industry, whose Praja Rajyam Party made its maiden election victory from Tirupati Assembly seat in 2009. Year 2012 saw him as the Minister of State for Tourism in the Manmohan Singh led UPA government.

When many of the superstars had their successful stint in politics in South India, the Malayalam film industry maintained its distinction. No big names with superstardom from the industry did dare to give it a try until recently. The political ambience in the state was totally disrespectful to actors planning to make their political plunge. The perceived belief in the state

was that actors from the film industry can't seriously contribute to the spectrum of politics like any seasoned politician. This remained a prominent view for decades in the state except for a few mediocre actors trying their space in politics and winning in the state elections. But for the parliament, nobody from the superstar reputed tried.

Popular comedian Innocent was an exception. But he did not enjoy the stardom of Mohanlal, Mammooty and Suresh Gopi. Superstar Suresh Gopi made the

most unlikely political pitch in Kerala by joining the BJP. Nobody from the film world in Kerala would have appreciated his move. But the action star, well known for his police roles, had chosen the saffron umbrella and his critics put him through unethical prosecution in mainstream media and social media ever since he made his view public. His victory in Thrissur, the constituency Gopi emotionally nurtured since his debacle in 2019, has overturned the perennial assumptions of holding the BJP a political pariah.

Suresh Gopi's entry into politics had evoked mixed emotions among his supporters who adored him as the best action hero. The Malayalam action thriller Commissioner had given his movie fans breathtaking moments of heroism. Suresh Gopi, who played the City Police Commissioner, an angry young officer commit-

ted to book the brutes and the corrupt, is seen taking on the Union Minister in public.

The dialogues from the movie scenes still give hair-raising moments. Gopi's acceptance as a Good Samaritan among the general public has also been a contributing factor in his victory. He could, this time, cut across caste and religious barriers and mostly it is viewed that along with his popular support base in Thrissur, a tectonic shift in voting among the Christian community in the area got him elected.

Voters in the constituency adore him to be one among the best human beings, who stand with the poor.

More than three decades of his acting career had got him a tremendous fan base across the state. Beyond that, he could successfully connect his persona with the social sensibilities of the common men. Outside his party that he represents, what he gained was from the common voter, especially women. This victory in Thrissur, the cultural capital of Kerala, where he was put to dust in the 2019 Lok Sabha Election, gives him a historic moment for two reasons.

First, he represents the BJP, the party that the state of Kerala kept at a distance as an untouchable for decades and second, he was destined to give his party its first, credible and resounding victory with a margin of 74686 votes. The Saffron Star, as you may call him, is the first popular

actor who dared to declare his allegiance with the BJP in the state of Kerala. As the minister for tourism he is expected to do well for the state that enjoys tremendous tourism potential. The BJP made him a Rajya Sabha MP in 2016. Its decision did pay off today.

His messiah of the poor image had given him significant backing. Not only as an actor and politician but he is known for his sizable humanitarian initiatives as well. There are numerous beneficiaries of his acts of kindness. These initiatives include his personal help to the needy irrespective of their caste and religion and political affiliation. Prayers for the actor's victory had been resonating from all over the state. But pundits hold an ideal reservation on the new minister's personal character.

Being straightforward and new to the tactics of playing power politics to its tricky, quirky and sometimes murky realms, they feel, he needs to be careful as he has to ride through the slushy moors of it. Suresh Gopi's box-office superstardom is not enough to get him ride through the terrains of politics; it needs a different rhythm and composure.

Moreover, what they say, he needs to develop a strategy to pull the party mechanism out of its present primitive mindset in the state. The growth of BJP in the state has gained its momentum. BJP's jump in vote share from 11 to 16% in Kerala demands a new leadership that the next state election would identify in the debutant union minister, who the electorate began to sense, holds credible substance to lead the saffron party as its Chief Ministerial candidate. (The author is a freelance journalist who can be reached at [mlalu30@gmail.com](mailto:mlalu30@gmail.com))

## Prime Minister Modi's clay feet has a name: Rural distress

By: Dr. Soma Marla

Rural India limited the Bharatiya Janata Party to 240 seats in the Lok Sabha. And but for the "NDA allies", Narendra Modi wouldn't have become Prime Minister for a third time. The BJP now depends on its partners for the simple majority in Parliament. The BJP lost a third of its rural parliamentary constituencies in 2024, reflecting acute rural distress. MSP, Agri-veer and high unemployment, all of these contributed to the BJP's post-poll distress.

The BJP retained only 126 of the 251 rural seats it held in the 17th Lok Sabha. But the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 221 rural and semi-rural Lok Sabha constituencies. Most of these seats came from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. Compare this with 251 rural and semi-rural constituencies in 2019. The INDIA bloc, on the other hand, won 157 rural and semi-rural constituencies in the 2024 election.

The newly-installed NDA government should immediately address issues related to rural distress. The farming community is in such dire straits that it cannot wait for relief. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made a big show of his government's commitment to farmers by releasing the payment for the next quarter PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. But there is nothing special about this direct to bank transfer. The 17th instalment should have been paid in late April, but wasn't because of the Model Code of Conduct in place.

And throughout the course of the election campaign, there was simmering rural discontent. Farmers weren't getting remunerative agricultural prices, there was high rural unemployment, there was a decade-long wage stagnation and rising food prices. The common masses including lakhs of farmers suffered. Naturally, the Modi government was blamed and it paid dearly in the recent

elections.

In the last decade and a half, rural distress has increased. The cost of production in agriculture had gone up nearly three times fuelled by high prices of fertilizers, seeds, diesel and pesticides. All of these are essentials for the agrarian economy. Though the government has been periodically announcing MSP for various crops, farmers continue to be in distress, unable to sell their harvested produce in markets.

In economic terms, there are two types of incomes. One nominal and the other real. While nominal incomes (in currency terms) saw a small rise with MSPs, "real" incomes were falling. Real income is tied to purchasing power (Consumer Price Index) of consumed food and household industrial goods. As per estimates, real income has decreased by 60 percent in the last 15 years, chiefly due to the price disparity between agricultural and industrial commodities in the markets.

This price imbalance has resulted in the transfer of nearly Rs 28 lakh crore of the total estimated Rs 42 lakh crore worth of total farm produce in the country. For every rupee purchase of agricultural goods by a consumer in the super markets, a farmer receives only 26 to 30 paise. The surplus is pocketed by grain merchants, millers and corporate houses. The "real income" that the farmers get is unable to sustain families leading to rural distress. The dismal performance of the farm sector is reflected in the slowdown in average agriculture growth. The Modi government's promise to double farmer incomes was only talk. Rural distress has not been receiving adequate attention from policymakers. Instead of providing employment and succor to rural families, the Union government had cut budget allocations to pay for subsidies for various government schemes. Example, subsidy allocation for MGNREGA has been coming down consistently in the last 2-3 years. Demand for work under the MGNREGA rose 48.8

percent in April.

There is a continued rise in unemployment, going up to 30.2 million people seeking jobs, according to data from the Ministry of Rural Development. The demand for work under MGNREGA increased sharply by 48.8 percent in April, says NCAER data. The government might have not spent on the subsidies for MGNREGA while tax flows, especially GST, have been highly robust.

While India's provisional GDP grew 8.2 percent in FY24, thanks to the manufacturing and mining sectors. However, the share in GDP and the Gross value added (GVA) has come down to 1.4 percent in FY24. Average agriculture growth is usually at 3 percent. In 2023-24 it was only 1.4 percent. This was coupled with high food inflation. In February-April, average food inflation was at 8.6 percent. The decline in consumption and in rural demand was visible not only in the fall of household items but also in the fall in sales of tractors and motorcycles in rural markets.

Instead of resorting to superficial measures, Modi's NDA government should take immediate measures to curtail rural distress: Issue a one-time farm loan waiver; calculate crop MSPs as per the recommendations of M S Swaminathan Commission, bring a law to ensure legal guarantee of MSP for all crops. Nearly 130 million rural poor are deprived of cheap ration under PDS and sections of the poor, including migrant workers, are invisible. Remove GST on the purchase of farm inputs including fertilizers, and farm equipment. Construct grain and cold storage godowns in all taluk headquarters. Pay crop insurance compensation straight into farmers' bank accounts within 30 days of crop damage. Entrust crop insurance exclusively to public sector insurance firms. Scrap Agri-veer and double the funds for MGNREGA. Repair local irrigation and drainage channels; build rural hospitals, schools and roads. (IPA Service)



# When will the number of women in the voter list increase in Parliament?

By: Priyanka Saurabh

The status of women in India has not always been equal. There have always been changes in this from time to time. If we assess the status of women, we will come to know that from the Vedic era till the present time, there have been many ups and downs in the social status of women and their rights have been changing accordingly. The result of these changes is that the contribution of women is increasing day by day in the Indian political, economic, social, and cultural systems, which is a successful effort for an inclusive democratic system. The election can prove helpful in removing many political prejudices associated with women candidates. Besides, it will also prove effective in the political empowerment of women.

There is a huge difference between the words and actions of all the major political parties. Unless political parties give tickets to more and more women, it cannot be imagined to increase their participation.

But during the distribution of tickets, all the parties have been trying to keep women away from contesting elections on one pretext or the other. Unless this male-dominated mentality changes, the picture will not change much despite the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill. Women voters have never been as important as they are now. Women voters are increasingly being recognized as a constituency that can influence outcomes, there is no better symbol of this than the hasty passage of the Women's Reservation Bill.

Despite all the tall claims made by the BJP on "women power", only 10 to 15 percent of its candidates in five state elections in November were women. The same applies to other parties which have a pan-India presence. India's women voters are a force to be reckoned with. Political parties are racing to win women's votes with promises of welfare schemes and concessions, but true empowerment remains elusive.

Unless political parties give



Members of both houses of Parliament during a session.

tickets to more and more women, it cannot be imagined to increase their participation. The number of women voters in the voter list of the country is continuously increasing. But due to not getting tickets from political parties, they are not able to reach Parliament in this proportion.

Half of the voters are women. The increase in their numbers in the Hindi belt states in the last 15 years is having a profound impact on election results. Amidst all this, a question also arises why is the representation of women in the Parliament of India still less? Why do almost all parties still shy away

from giving tickets to women?

In the last Lok Sabha elections, out of 542 MPs, 78 were women. Among these, a maximum number of 11-11 women won the elections in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. BJP, which got the Women's Reservation Bill passed in Parliament, has announced candidates for 417 parliamentary seats. Of these, 68 are women. That means the party has expressed confidence in only 16 percent of women. BJP had fielded 45 women candidates in 2009, 38 in 2014, and 55 in 2019. Congress has announced 247 candidates so far. In this, 35 candidates i.e. a little

more than 14 percent are women.

Narendra Modi's efforts to woo women voters with measures like the Women's Reservation Bill, LPG subsidy, cheap loans, and distribution of cash have helped the BJP increase its votes.

The number of women voters has increased because their population and education have also increased. Political parties have also contributed to spreading awareness. It was also in their interest to make women aware and encourage them to vote so that their voting percentage could increase. The focus towards women also increased because men often go out in search of work and hence they do not come to their constituencies to vote.

The Election Commission also worked in this direction and made it easier for women to reach the booth and cast their vote. Separate arrangements are also made for pregnant women at the booths. But this progress is so slow that India is still lagging behind many big countries in this matter. The number of women voters has increased but their number as candidates and

MPs is still very low. All political parties try to woo women with many special schemes. Like free bus rides, direct money transfers, etc., most of the parties are stingy in giving tickets to them. Except for Chhattisgarh and Tripura, the number of women MPs is very low in most of the states.

Swami Vivekananda believes that the best thermometer of the progress of any nation is the condition of its women. We should try to put women in such a situation where they can solve their problems in their way. Our role in the lives of women should not be to savor them but to become their companion and ally. Because Indian women are capable enough to solve their problems themselves. If anything is lacking then it is only that we as a society learn to trust their abilities. Only by doing this, we will be able to take India on the path of progress. *(The author is a poetess, an independent journalist and a columnist. She can be reached at priyankasaurabh9416@yahoo.com)*

yet to be duly formulated. The discourse is about formulating a paid menstrual leave policy for women, apart from the paid sick leaves.

Even when the discourse has not even reached its peak, critics, albeit fairly, have pointed out that women have the potential to misuse the paid menstrual sick leaves given to them. While the aforementioned concern largely stems from a male gaze of policy making, the broader discourse delves into the possibility of increased discrimination that women might face, owing to the reluctance of employers to employ women.

While the policy for the corporate world is still being debated, a few progressive universities in India, mostly law schools, have taken a step forward and introduced menstrual leave policies for their students. For instance, the Maharashtra National Law University has granted one day per month of menstrual leave for its female students. This is a fresh, welcome change and is actively being implemented by several other universities.

On this note, I'll conclude with a sigh, although hopeful for the future holds for women everywhere. *(Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)*

There has been a recent discourse about the menstruation leave policy for women in universities and corporate offices — a welcome discussion

rights, men have a say in women's employment opportunities and pay scales, and men allegedly have a say in how women choose to express themselves.

In such a society, god forbid if a woman, in the exercise of her right, incriminates a man for a crime that he committed, the very first response is never about shaming the man. It is almost always about interrogating the woman about her whereabouts, morality, and lack of preparedness.

Moreover, women who do not earn a livelihood are financially bonded to their husbands and are often suppressed-emotionally and physically. With nowhere else to go, they often become mute spectators and victims of marital rapes.

When such is the circumstance in most households in India, it takes real courage for women to speak up against their husbands who have been perpetrators of marital rape. Women who choose to speak up often risk being divorced, abandoned, ridiculed, or subjected to domestic violence.

When this is the case, it is reasonable to assume that women would not be willing to risk an awful lot just to incriminate a man for an ulterior motive.

Are we getting on board with the menstruation policy discussion? Make room for empathy!

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## It's about time we started trusting women

By: Neha Srikanth

I say this with an open mind, well aware of the echoes of backlash I might receive from ever-critical naysayers of their very own misconstrued version of 'feminism.' Feminism has always been about equal rights and equal opportunities for both sexes - male and female. However, the fourth wave of feminism has been broadened to include within its ambit the rights of transgender people and other members of the LGBTQIA+ diaspora.

**Marital rape: Criminalize it, criminalize it not**

I say this in light of the recent judgments of the courts of law, societal notions, and inhibitions that have come to the surface. In India, the ongoing debate of criminalizing marital rape is not unheard of, although surprisingly, it is hardly ever acknowledged.

Almost as if it were a default setting, the first pronounced flaw that critics of criminalizing marital rape point out is the incapacity to acquire the requisite proof of the crime.

Valid, extremely valid. The very scale on which the culpability of a criminal is decided, especially in the criminal jurisprudence in India, is even higher than the conventional

'preponderance of probability' scale, to extend to that of 'proof beyond reasonable doubt.'

How will the victim of marital rape, a crime of such nature that, if committed, happens within the four walls of the only place that women are supposed to feel safe in, ever prove to the court 'beyond reasonable doubt' that her husband has raped her? Notice I say women because, in the majority of marital rape cases around the world, it has been husbands who have been the perpetrators of marital rape.

I see the lacuna in criminalizing marital rape—after all, you cannot possibly base the entire standard of proof on trusting women. However, this inherent lacuna is no reason for shunning the discourse on marital rape altogether.

The least we can do is give women the benefit of the doubt when she says that she has been a victim of a crime, especially marital rape. Allow me to explain something to those who are unsatisfied with this contention.

We live in a patriarchal society which is predominantly run by men—and by 'run,' I do not mean run unanimously. It is funny how, in our society, men have a say in women's reproductive and sexual



rights, men have a say in women's employment opportunities and pay scales, and men allegedly have a say in how women choose to express themselves.

In such a society, god forbid if a woman, in the exercise of her right, incriminates a man for a crime that he committed, the very first response is never about shaming the man. It is almost always about interrogating the woman about her whereabouts, morality, and lack of preparedness.

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While the policy for the corporate world is still being debated, a few progressive universities in India, mostly law schools, have taken a step forward and introduced menstrual leave policies for their students. For instance, the Maharashtra National Law University has granted one day per month of menstrual leave for its female students. This is a fresh, welcome change and is actively being implemented by several other universities.

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## Natural ways to lighten dark underarms



By: Shahnaz Husain

The underarm area rarely gives us any trouble but is major cause of embarrassing and frustrating during summer season. Dark underarms sometimes forces us to stop wearing favourite sleeveless top or going out for a swim?

The skin in this area is very sensitive and is susceptible to a variety of problems like rashes, pigmentation, infection, ingrown hair, and even pimples due to use of skin products which contains chemicals. The excessive use of deodorants causes discoloration and dead cells accumulate in the underarm area and cause darkness.

Darkening of the skin under the arms is common. This may be caused by reaction to antiperspirants, deodorants or some hair removal creams. There can be a reaction to alcohol or certain perfumes in deodorants. Shaving can also cause darkening of the skin. The other reasons may be perspiration, sun-exposure or hereditary factors. Dark skin under the arms poses a problem where clothes and grooming are concerned, making it impossible to wear sleeveless or strappy dresses.

The good news is that regular use of herbal remedies can lighten and brighten dark underarms in few months time.

**Home remedies for lightening underarm skin colour:**

Waxing is the best option, as it removes hair by the roots. As such, it is said to weaken the follicles over a period of time and thus discourage hair growth. The lemon and sugar mixture used for waxing would itself help to lighten the skin, as lemon juice helps to make skin colour lighter. Combined with sugar it is more effective.

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hair by the roots. As such, it is said to weaken the follicles over a period of time and thus discourage hair growth. The lemon and sugar mixture used by most beauty parlours also helps to lighten skin colour. Ready-to-use wax and waxing strips are also available, but getting your waxing done at a beauty parlour may give better results. For dark skin under the arms, mix gram flour (besan) with yogurt and a pinch of turmeric into a paste. Apply three times a week on the area and wash it off after half an hour. Yogurt contains lactic acid and helps to lighten skin colour. Turmeric is also a mild natural bleach.

Both cucumber and lemon juice help to lighten skin colour. Mix them in equal quantities and apply under the arms 3 or 4 times a week. Wash off with plain water after 15 minutes.

Rice flour can be mixed with yogurt and used as a scrub under the arms. Apply the paste and leave on for 15 minutes. Then moisten the area and rub it gently on the skin, washing off with plain water. Rice flour helps to remove the dead cells along with their contained pigment.

Potato juice may be applied under the arms daily to make the skin colour lighter. Apply and leave on for 20 minutes. Wash off with plain water. Mix baking soda with water into a paste and apply under the arms daily. Leave on for 5 minutes and wash off with water.

Sesame seed (til) oil mixed with coconut oil can be applied and massaged daily. Sesame seed oil has SPF and helps in cases of sun-damaged skin. Coconut oil contains vitamin E, which benefits the skin and helps to lighten the skin colour. *(The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India)*

## UN report finds 80% Gazan women relying on food aid

By: Nandita Banerji

A new report by UN Women is urging for Palestinian women-led organisations to be placed at the forefront of the ongoing humanitarian response in Gaza and the West Bank. The United Nations' agency released a new Gender Alert on June 10, 2024, focusing on the work of women-led organisations.

The latest Gender Alert highlighted the dire situation facing Palestinian women, particularly in Gaza, where 80 per cent reportedly rely on food assistance. The report argued that Palestinian women's organisations have a unique understanding of the challenges faced by women and girls in the region, making them best suited to deliver vital aid.

These 25 organisations collectively employ 1,575 people throughout Gaza and the West Bank. According to the assessment, 89 per cent of the surveyed organisations' offices have been damaged, with 35 per cent completely destroyed.

UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous in statement said: "The work of women-led organisations in Gaza and the West Bank is as much about the survival of women and girls as it is about maintaining hope, dignity, and the possibility of a better future for those they serve. Investing in their resilience is not just important — it is the key to an inclusive response that leaves no one behind."

The report comes amid a long-

running conflict that has had a significant impact on Palestinians' lives. Since May 2024, Israel's incursion into Rafah has displaced nearly 800,000 people, many of whom have already been displaced several times since October 2023.

Furthermore, the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has deteriorated, with more than 500 people killed and 5,000 injured since October 7. As the death toll increases, severe humanitarian needs continue to grow at an unprecedented rate, in a context where needs were already dire before the current escalation, stated the latest Gender Alert.

The Gender Alert is a call to action for international actors to prioritise Palestinian women's roles

in humanitarian aid distribution. This includes providing them with the resources and assistance they require to effectively address the ongoing crisis.

Women-led organisations urge the international community and stakeholders to take decisive action: to actively fund women-led organisations, vital for reaching the women and girls most in need; to advocate for increased humanitarian access, enabling these organisations to expand their life-saving responses; and to include women-led organisations in all humanitarian coordination structures to ensure a truly effective and inclusive humanitarian response," the UN Women statement said. *(Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)*

Now add extreme heat, linked to climate change, to the list.

Shabbir is a member of the Star Women's Sports Academy in Jacobabad, the only women's sports club in the city of nearly 300,000 people. The girls have started training later in the day in a bid to beat the heat but parents are unhappy with their daughters returning home late on their own.

And there is little rest at night either. Shabbir says the one air conditioner her family has invested in provides "little comfort" because of frequent power cuts. The long days and nights are affecting her performance.

"I am not playing my best," she said.

Hasaneen Soomro, who plays hockey at the same club, is equally frustrated.

"Of course the heat impacts our game," the 19-year-old said. "The heat makes you sluggish, and this game is defined by speed."

**Long and unbearable summer**

Sport has long been an often unaffordable luxury for girls from low-income households in Pakistan. It costs money to get to the few sports clubs available and even eating well is costly.

Some sports clubs try to help out with expenses but Erum Baloch, who founded the club in Jacobabad where Shabbir and Soomro play, says that can also be difficult.

And now she is also grappling with the challenge of training her team on outdoor pitches during what she calls the "long and unbearable" summers.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the women wear long clothing when training. Even though Baloch's club is in

## In Pakistan, extreme heat has become one more fetter on women's sports

By: Zofeen T Ebrahim

Pakistani student Aqsa Shabbir is hot, tired and frustrated. A keen field hockey player, she can no longer train during the day because of a brutal heatwave, she can't sleep at night and she fears she will not play well in a tournament at the end of June.

The 17-year-old, who lives in Jacobabad in the southern Sindh province, already had to overcome many obstacles — like many girls who live in Pakistan's smaller cities where exercising in public is frowned upon — and the heatwave is making things harder.

Two years ago, Jacobabad was named the hottest city on earth after temperatures reached 51 degrees Celsius. This year, as a heatwave seared southeast Asia, temperatures shot up to 52 degrees Celsius in May.

"We cannot keep waiting for the weather to get better — it won't," Shabbir told Context by phone from Jacobabad.

Rising temperatures are one more barrier for women and girls who want to stay active in a country where there are few training spaces available to them, apart from private sports clubs reserved for the wealthy.

A 2022 study found that the main obstacles to participating in sport in the Muslim-majority country are "religious and cultural limitations, a lack of permission from parents, and a lack of sports facilities and equipment".

Now add extreme heat, linked to climate change, to the list.

Shabbir is a member of the Star Women's Sports Academy in Jacobabad, the only women's sports club in the city of nearly 300,000 people. The girls have started training later in the day in a bid to beat the heat but parents are unhappy with their daughters returning home late on their own.

And there is little rest at night either. Shabbir says the one air conditioner her family has invested in provides "little comfort" because of frequent power cuts. The long days and nights are affecting her performance.

"I am not playing my best," she said.

Hasaneen Soomro, who plays hockey at the same club, is equally frustrated.

"Of course the heat impacts our game," the 19-year-old said. "The heat makes you sluggish, and this game is defined by speed."

**Long and unbearable summer**

Sport has long been an often unaffordable luxury for girls from low-income households in Pakistan. It costs money to get to the few sports clubs available and even eating well is costly.

Some sports clubs try to help out with expenses but Erum Baloch, who founded the club in Jacobabad where Shabbir and Soomro play, says that can also be difficult.

And now she is also grappling with the challenge of training her team on outdoor pitches during what she calls the "long and unbearable" summers.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the women wear long clothing when training. Even though Baloch's club is in

a women's government college, the girls she coaches are uncomfortable swapping shalwar kameez for jogging pants, never mind cooler shorts.

"Families don't like them wearing pants ... shorts is too far-fetched a concept," said Baloch. "Until society is ready, we need to concentrate on (making) sports for women acceptable instead of letting a dress come in our way."

Farwa Batool, from Khairpur city in Sindh, wears long sleeves beneath her T-shirt to cover her arms and also wears a hijab when she plays field hockey.

"You cannot imagine the heat we bear," she said, adding that she envies the men who can wear just shorts and T-shirts. She gets up at 5.45 am to train at the mixed gender club, hoping no men will be around.

"If we could have women-only grounds, or women timings are introduced with men strictly not allowed, we too can be free of yards of cumbersome clothing."

In Jacobabad, Baloch is hoping to get financing from the government or a sponsor to pay for an indoor facility with air conditioning.

**Unsustainable expenses**

Zamzam Allahbukh said she pays out of pocket to top up water and ice supplies at the women's sports club she runs in Mirpurkhas, 230 km east of Pakistan's largest city Karachi.

"I don't want them catching a heatstroke," she said.

To manage costs, she has introduced games like football and volleyball because she does not have enough equipment for everyone to play cricket or field hockey.

"At least with one football or one volleyball, quite a few girls can play a sport," she said.

Baloch, too, arranges for drinking water every day for her 43 field hockey players along with oral rehydration solutions but this is not sustainable.

"I don't know how long I can carry on doing this," she said. "We cannot train girls on an ad hoc basis — there needs to be a continuous and full government support for them, if they want to play their best."

As heat threatens the viability of the few facilities available to women and girls, Baloch said she hopes they don't lose out on the opportunities sports can provide.

Some of the athletes Baloch has coached went on to attend university on sports scholarships.

Bushra Arif, a former field hockey player, is keenly aware of what sport offers girls in her country.

"Sports teach lifelong values like endurance, teamwork, confidence, overcoming challenges," said Arif, now the director of physical education at Khurshid Begum Girls Degree College in Hyderabad in Sindh.

Despite all the challenges, Shabbir is trying to look on the bright side ahead of her important tournament in the neighbouring Sukkur district.

"Who knows, we may outdo other teams from other cities with relatively lower temperatures, being more acclimatised to this extreme heat." *(Courtesy: Scroll.in)*



Putin last visited NKorea in 2000, when Kim's father, Kim Jong Il, was still its leader

## Before his summit with North Korea's Kim, Putin vows they'll beat sanctions together

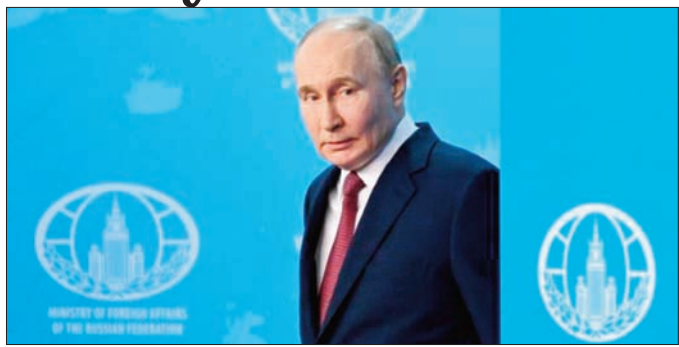
**SEOUL, June 18:** Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked North Korea for supporting his actions in Ukraine and said their countries will cooperate closely to overcome U.S.-led sanctions as he headed to Pyongyang on Tuesday for a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Putin's comments appeared in an op-ed piece in North Korean state media hours before his expected arrival for a two-day visit as the countries deepen their alignment in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with Washington.

In the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, the streets were decorated with Putin's portraits and Russian flags. A banner hung on a building said: "We warmly welcome the President of the Russian Federation."

Putin, who will be making his first trip to North Korea in 24 years, said he highly appreciates its firm support of his military action in Ukraine. He said the countries would continue to "resolutely oppose" what he described as Western ambitions "to hinder the establishment of a multipolar world order based on justice, mutual respect for sovereignty, considering each other's interests." Putin also said Russia and North Korea will develop trade and payment systems "that are not controlled by the West" and jointly oppose sanctions against the countries, which he described as "illegal, unilateral restrictions."

North Korea is under heavy U.N. Security Council economic sanctions over its nuclear



weapons and missile programs, while Russia is also grappling with sanctions by the United States and its Western partners over its aggression in Ukraine.

Putin said the countries will also expand cooperation in tourism, culture and education.

Before heading to North Korea, Putin traveled to Yakutsk, a city in eastern Russia, where he reportedly planned to meet regional Gov. Aisen Nikolayev, and receive briefings on the area's technology and defense-related projects.

Putin's visit comes amid growing concerns about an arms arrangement in which Pyongyang provides Moscow with badly needed munitions to fuel Russia's war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program.

U.S. and South Korean officials say military, economic and other exchanges between North Korea and Russia have sharply increased since Kim met Putin in September in the Russian Far East, their first

since 2019.

U.S. and South Korean officials accuse the North of providing Russia with artillery, missiles and other military equipment for use in Ukraine, possibly in return for key military technologies and aid. Both Pyongyang and Moscow deny accusations about North Korean weapons transfers, which would violate multiple U.N. Security Council sanctions that Russia previously endorsed.

Along with China, Russia has provided political cover for Kim's continuing efforts to advance his nuclear arsenal, repeatedly blocking U.S.-led efforts to impose fresh U.N. sanctions on the North over its weapons tests.

In March, a Russian veto at the United Nations ended monitoring of U.N. sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear program, prompting Western accusations that Moscow is seeking to avoid scrutiny as it buys weapons from Pyongyang for use in Ukraine. U.S. and South Korean officials have said they are discussing options for a new mechanism for monitoring the North.

Earlier this year, Putin sent Kim a high-end Aurus Senat limousine, which he had shown to the North Korean leader when they met in September. Observers said the shipment violated a U.N. resolution banning the supply of luxury items to North Korea.

John Kirby, spokesperson of the U.S. National Security Council, said the deepening relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang is concerning, "not just because of the impacts it's going to have on the Ukrainian people, but because we know North Korean ballistic missiles are still being used to hit Ukrainian targets, but because there could be some reciprocity here that could affect security on the Korean Peninsula."

"We haven't seen the parameters of all of that right now, certainly haven't seen it come to fruition. But we're certainly going to be watching that very, very closely," he said.

Lim Soosuk, spokesperson of South Korea's Foreign Ministry, said Seoul has been stressing to Moscow that any cooperation between Russia and North Korea must not "proceed in a direction that violates U.N. Security Council resolutions or undermines peace and stability in the region."

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, with the pace of both Kim's weapons tests and combined military exercises involving the United States, South Korea and Japan intensifying in a tit-for-tat cycle.

The Koreans also have engaged in Cold War-style psychological

warfare that involved North Korea dropping tons of trash on the South with balloons, and the South broadcasting anti-North Korean propaganda with its loud-speakers.

South Korea's military said soldiers fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers who temporarily crossed the land border Tuesday for the second time this month. The South's military said North Korea has been increasing construction activity in front-line border areas, such as installing suspected anti-tank barriers, reinforcing roads and planting land mines.

Putin has continuously sought to rebuild ties with Pyongyang as part of efforts to restore his country's clout and its Soviet-era alliances. Moscow's ties with North Korea weakened after the 1991 Soviet collapse. Kim Jong Un first met with Putin in 2019 in Russia's eastern port of Vladivostok.

After North Korea, the Kremlin said Putin will also visit Vietnam on Wednesday and Thursday for talks that are expected to be focused on trade. The United States, which has spent years strengthening ties and accelerating trade with Vietnam, criticized Putin's planned visit.

"As Russia continues to seek international support to sustain its illegal and brutal war against Ukraine, we reiterate that no country should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression and otherwise allow him to normalize his atrocities," a U.S. Embassy spokesperson in Vietnam said in a statement. (AP)

## South Korean soldiers fire warning shots after North Korean troops cross border, apparently in error

**SEOUL, June 18:** South Korean troops fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the rivals' heavily fortified land border on Tuesday for the second time this month, the South's military said. Both incursions were believed to be unintentional.

Around 20 to 30 North Korean soldiers who were doing construction work crossed the military demarcation line that serves as the border between the two countries in the Demilitarized Zone, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff. The soldiers retreated after the South broadcasted warnings and fired warning shots, and the

curried in a different area along the central front-line region.

The Koreans' heavily fortified border area, referred to as the Demilitarized Zone, has occasionally been a site of bloodshed and violent confrontations between the rivals. The military demarcation line marks the border between the two Koreas within the DMZ, which is 248 kilometers (154 miles) long and 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) wide.

The zone is strewn with an estimated 2 million mines and also guarded by barbed wire fences, tank traps and combat troops on both sides. It's a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.



South's military didn't spot any suspicious activity after that, the joint chiefs said.

The border area is dense with overgrown trees and plants, and the North Korean soldiers may have not known exactly where the border was, according to the South's military, which said it doesn't believe the soldiers deliberately crossed into the South. The North did not return fire.

The intrusion comes as tensions rise between the rivals, who in recent weeks have engaged in Cold War-style psychological warfare and made it clear they are no longer bound by their landmark military agreement in 2018 to reduce tensions.

Troops from the South also fired warning shots on June 11 after another group of North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the border. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said that Tuesday's incursion oc-

The South's military has observed increased North Korean activity along the border to install what appear to be anti-tank barriers, reinforce roads and plant land mines. The work has gone

on uninterrupted despite several explosions caused by mines that killed or wounded an unspecified number of North Korean soldiers, said the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The construction started around April and is possibly aimed at making it harder for North Korean civilians or soldiers to defect to the South as Pyongyang's leadership attempts to strengthen its control over its people, according to the joint chiefs.

"Our military is closely monitoring North Korean military activities in the front-line area while guarding against accidental situations," the joint chiefs said in a statement. (AP)

## Former Thai PM Thaksin was indicted on a charge of royal defamation

**BANGKOK, June 18:** Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was granted release on bail hours after he was formally indicted on Tuesday on a charge of defaming the country's monarchy in one of several court cases that have rattled Thai politics.

Thaksin, an influential political figure despite being ousted from power in a coup 18 years ago, reported himself to prosecutors on Tuesday morning and was indicted, Prayuth Bejraguna, a spokesperson for the Office of the Attorney General, said at a news conference.

Thaksin, 74, voluntarily returned to Thailand last year from self-imposed exile and served virtually all of his sentence on corruption-related charges in a hospital rather than prison on medical grounds. He was granted release on parole in February.

Since then, Thaksin has maintained a high profile and is seen as the unofficial power behind the party leading the government, Pheu Thai. He has travelled the country making public appearances and political observations that could upset the powerful conservative establishment that was behind his 2006 ouster.

His removal from power had started a deep political polarisation in Thailand. Thaksin's opponents, who were generally staunch royalists, accused him of corruption, abuse of power and disrespecting then-King Bhumibol



Adulyadej, who died in 2016.

Prosecution of the long-ago lese majeste case is seen by some analysts as a warning from Thaksin's enemies that he should tone down his political activities.

Thaksin's lawyer, Winay Chatmontree, told reporters that Thaksin was ready to enter the judicial process. The Criminal Court said Thaksin's bail release was approved with a bond of 500,000 baht (USD 13,000) under the condition that he cannot travel out of Thailand unless approved by court. His passport was confiscated.

The law on defaming the monarchy, an offense known as lese majeste, is punishable by three to 15 years in prison. It is among the harshest such laws globally and increasingly has been used in Thailand to punish government critics. Winay said his client is "not worried, and he's always maintained that he hasn't done anything wrong. He's come here with full confidence in fighting his case". (AP)

## US renews warning it's obligated to defend the Philippines

**MANILA, June 18:** The United States renewed a warning on Tuesday that it's obligated to defend its close treaty ally a day after Filipino navy personnel were injured and their supply boats damaged in one of the most serious confrontations between the Philippines and China in a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, officials said.



China and the Philippines blamed each other for instigating Monday's hostilities in the Second Thomas Shoal, which has been occupied by a small Filipino navy contingent aboard a grounded warship that's been closely watched by Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships in a yearslong territorial standoff. There is fear the disputes, long regarded as an Asian flashpoint, could escalate and pit the United States and China in a larger conflict.

US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell discussed China's actions with Philippine

counterpart, Maria Theresa Lazaro, in a telephone call. Both agreed that China's "dangerous actions threatened regional peace and stability," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

Campbell reaffirmed that the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, which obligates Washington and Manila to help defend the other in major conflicts, "extends to armed attacks on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft - including those of its coast guard - anywhere in the South China Sea," according to Miller.

A Philippine government task force overseeing the territorial disputes condemned what it said were "dangerous maneuvers, including ramming and towing," which disrupted a routine effort to transport food, water and other supplies to the Filipinos manning the territorial outpost aboard the BRP Sierra Madre at the shoal. (AP)

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PHE), HOWRAGHAT DIVISION, HOWRAGHAT KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL, DIPHU

No. PHEE/HOW/TND-1/2024-25/

Dated:

NIT NO-1 for 2024-25

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Separate sealed tenders for separate works in plain paper affixing non-refundable KAAC cash receipt worth Rs 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn in PWD F-2 form are hereby invited from registered contractors/Firms of PHE Department under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council for the works mentioned in Annexure A as per approved A/A of SOPD 2024-25 accorded by the authority of KAAC vide No. KAAC/PHE-3/AA/2019-20/2021-22/13-A dt. 13/06/2024. Detailed tender papers, terms and conditions etc. may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on all working days from 10.00 AM to 3.00 PM from 25/06/2024 till 3.00 PM of 02/07/2024 and will be opened in the same date i.e. 02/07/2024 at 3.30 PM in presence of the intending tenderer or their authorized agents who like to remain present. In case the last date and time for receipt and opening of tender happens to be holiday, the tenders so invited will be received and opened on the same time of the next working day.

The tender paper will be available in the office of the undersigned on payment of Rs. 100.00 either in cash or demand draft pledged in favour of "Executive Engineer, PHE, Howraghat Division, Howraghat.

Name of the works: -As per Annexure- "A"

#### TERMS AND CONDITION

1. Tenderer should quote their rate distinctly both in figure and in words on percentage basis at per/ below/above on the estimated rates.
2. The Tenderer should furnish their full name and address distinctly in the tender papers.
3. Class I, II, III contractors are only invited as intending tenderer.
4. Earnest money in the form of NSC/KVP DULY pledged in favour of the "Executive Engineer (PHE), Howraghat Division, Karbi Anglong" should invariably be enclosed with the tender papers.
5. GST, Professional Tax, Income Tax Clearance Certificate should be enclosed with the tender papers.
6. The work must be completed within stipulated time as stated in Annexure A.
7. The work should be started after signing necessary agreement and in consultation with A.E.E. in charge.
8. Payment will be made subject to availability of fund.
9. No advance payment will be made for the work.
10. Non-tribal tenderer must produce up to date KAAC trading license along with tender documents.
11. All other terms and condition will be following as per APWD, F-2 form of tender.
12. The undersigned reserved the right to accept/reject any or all tender in part or in full without assigning any reason thereof and does not bind himself to accept the lowest quoted tender rate.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (PHE)  
Howraghat Division, Howraghat

Dated: 17/06/2024

Memo No. PHEE/HOW/TND-1/2024-25/416-427

#### ANNEXURE 'A'

Sl No	Name of Works	Estimated Amount (Rs. in Lakh)	Earnest Money		Period of Completion
			SC/ST	Gen.	
1	Refurbishing of staff qtr. (3 Nos)	₹ 12.60	1%	2%	60 Days
2	Construction of approach road to Howraghat Sub-Division office along with campus improvement	₹ 10.00	1%	2%	60 Days
3	Water supply arrangement at Longchekjan Shiv Mandir, Longchekjan under Langpher MAC	₹ 26.90	1%	2%	45 Days
4	Construction of plinth protection and drain at backside of Division office	₹ 4.50	1%	2%	45 Days
5	Rewiring of Howraghat Sub Division Office building	₹ 5.00	1%	2%	15 Days
6	Construction of toilets at Dokmoka Sub Divisional Office	₹ 3.00	1%	2%	30 Days
7	Construction of internal path at Dokmoka Sub Divisional Office campus	₹ 2.00	1%	2%	45 Days
8	Supply of Chemical	₹ 7.00	1%	2%	7 Days
9	Supply of Fittings and Specials	₹ 3.00	1%	2%	7 Days
10	Annual maintenance of office buildings (Division and Sub-Divisions)	₹ 10.00	1%	2%	45 Days
11	Improvements of RCC Ring well (10 nos.)	₹ 5.00	1%	2%	10 Days

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (PHE)  
Howraghat Division, Howraghat



## Students likely to be exposed to danger in view of damage to property, road blockages in different areas of Mangan district Schools in Sikkim's Mangan to be closed due to safety concerns of students

**GANGTOK, June 18:** The Mangan district administration on Tuesday ordered the closure of all government schools in the district with immediate effect due to safety concerns of students in view of damage to property and road blockages.

An order issued by district magistrate Hem Kumar Chettri said government schools in Manul, Singhik, Mangan and Mangshilla clusters of Mangan block and Lingdong, Hee Gyathang, Passingdong, Lingzya, Tingyong and Gor clusters of Dzongu block will remain



closed till further orders. The order stated that the district magistrate deemed it

unsafe for the students to attend schools in view of the damage to property and road

blockages in different areas of Mangan district due to continuous and heavy rainfall that occurred on the intervening night of June 12-13.

The heads and staff of schools shall remain in the station, the order said, adding the decision shall come into force with immediate effect and shall remain valid till further orders.

Incessant rains since June 12 wreaked havoc in Mangan, causing multiple landslides, and severing connectivity to most parts of the district. (PTI)

## Meghalaya rains claim 2 lives, leave over 3,000 people affected

**SHILLONG, June 18:** Incessant rainfall in the state over the last few days has claimed two lives and affected over 3,000 people, Meghalaya State Disaster Management Authority (MSDMA) said on Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Probino Warbah (48) of Tynring Village, East Khasi Hills, and Kantly Maram (49) of Nongkroh Rambrai village, West Khasi Hills. While Warbah died because of drowning on June 10, lightning claimed Maram's life on June 12, MSDMA officials said.

The officials said over 3,037 people across 42 villages in six districts have been affected following continuous rainfall since June 10.

All districts have been directed to take steps to activate district Incident Response Teams (IRT), keep District Emergency Operation Centres (DEOC) operational 24x7, issue advisories to the public, and initiate immediate relief measures. (PTI)

## FKJGP demands training institutes for rural self employment

**SHILLONG, June 18:** The Federation of Khasi Jaintia and Garo People (FKJGP) has demanded establishment of Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) in East Jaintia Hills district in Meghalaya.

In a letter to the convener of the State Level Bankers Committees (SLBC) on Tuesday, FKJGP president Deihok Sumer said, "In order to curb the problem of unemployment of youths in our district, we request your office to establish the RSETIs in our district."

"The establishment of the training institute in our district will enhance the placement of unemployed youths in various

## Nagaland govt making all efforts to resolve ENPO issue, says NDPP

**DIMAPUR, June 18:** The ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) in Nagaland asserted that the state government under the leadership of chief minister Neiphiu Rio is making all possible efforts to ensure that the Frontier Nagaland Territory demand raised by the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) is resolved as early as possible in a manner that is beneficial and acceptable to the entire Naga family.

"We are all aware that the state government has made it categorically clear that it supports the aspirations of the people of eastern Nagaland and has even recommended the institution of an autonomous body so long as the unity and integrity of the state is protected," the NDPP media and communication committee said in a statement on Monday.

On the same lines, the party said that it also supported and endorsed this recommendation of the state government.

The NDPP appealed to the democratically elected representatives of the eastern region and the mass-based civil society organisations to carry out consultations and deliberations so that the best way forward can be formulated, wherein there I would be teamwork and shared responsibility.

It stressed that the elected representatives and the civil society organisations needed to sit across the table, discuss the hurdles collectively and formulate methods that would ensure that the aspirations of the people are collectively addressed.

Also, welcoming the statement of the Eastern Nagaland Legislators Union (ENLU) in the matter, the NDPP said the statement issued by the former was well appreciated as it was factually correct.

The ENLU is a legislators' body comprising all the 20 MLAs of eastern Nagaland and cuts across political affiliations as its members comprise of MLAs, who belong to different political parties, including independents.

The NDPP said that it endorsed the stand and appeal of the ENLU, which had clearly stated that the ENPO issue should not be politicised nor used for exploitation for political mileage.

The party also appealed to all sections to work collectively in the greater interest of the Naga society so that "we can work towards unity and oneness".

It added that all sections should refrain from issuing immature statements and avoid attempts to exploit the sensitive issue for short-term political gains.

## Three insurgents arrested, arms seized in Manipur

**IMPHAL, June 18:** Security forces arrested three insurgents from Tengnoupal and seized sophisticated arms in Kangpokpi district, a Manipur police statement said.

Security forces arrested three valley-based insurgents from Shantong near Lamlong village in Tengnoupal district on June 14, it said.

The statement issued on Monday night also said that the "situation in the state was under control" and security forces continued to conduct search operations to maintain law and order situation.

In a separate search operation conducted at Gangpijang hill ranges in Kangpokpi district, security forces seized one 7.62mm AK 56 assault rifle, one pt. 22 rifle, one 12-inch single-bore barrel gun, two improvised projectile launchers, one Chinese hand grenade, one country-made hand grenade, one 51mm mortar and live ammunition on Sunday.

The statement also said that police officers of Assam and Manipur on Saturday had a joint meeting at Jiribam along the Assam-Manipur border in connection with the prevailing scenario in the region.

Regular patrolling and area domination have been intensified in the entire riverine stretch of the Barak and Jiri rivers. (PTI)

## NPCC slams state BJP for 'coercing' its candidate

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, June 18:** The Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee (NPCC) on Tuesday slammed the Nagaland unit of BJP and advisor H Tovihoto Ayemi for allegedly coercing Congress candidate of municipal ward number 7, Kanili kinilimi to withdraw her candidature from the upcoming Dimapur Municipal Council polls in exchange for a nomi-

nated member's berth in the civic body. Nagaland is going for the urban local body elections on June 26.

Condemning what it called blatant abuse of power by Ayemi and the state BJP, the NPCC, in a release issued by its communication department, on Tuesday said such undemocratic practices aimed at subverting the will of the people should not be tolerated and should be de-

nounced in the strongest possible terms by all right-thinking citizens.

The Pradesh Congress urged the State Election Commission and the Nagaland government to take up the matter in all seriousness and initiate necessary action for prompt delivery of justice and win back the confidence of the electorate of the affected ward and the state in general.

## Arunachal Govt appoints 19 advisors to assist various ministers

**ITANAGAR, June 18:** The Arunachal Pradesh government on Tuesday appointed 19 advisors to assist various ministers. Cabinet secretary Kaling Tayeng said the advisors would not be entitled to any emoluments, remuneration, perks and facilities. While minister in the outgoing cabinet Honchun Ngandam has been appointed as advisor to the minister for PWD (Eastern and Central Zone-B), Nakap Nalo, who was a minister in the previous government, has been appointed as advisor to the minister for disaster management. MLA Wangling Lowangdong and Ninong Ering have been entrusted with the roles of advisors to environment and forests and hydro-power development departments, respectively.

Itanagar MLA Tech Kaso is the advisor to the minister for urban affairs, land management and food and civil supplies, while Phurpa Tsering got charge of PWD (North West, Western and Central-A zones), highways and science and technology.

Other advisors include Chow Zingnu Namchom (rural works, sports and youth affairs), Mutchu Mithi (home and education), Mohesh Chai (health and family welfare, commerce and industries), Pani Taram (public health engineering), Hayeng Mangfi (water resources), Jikke Tako (power) and Dongru Siongju (tax and excise). (PTI)

## SITUATION VACANT

Date 18/06/2024

In Pursuence Of Smc Resolution No. 1 interested Candidates are here by Invited for the post of Samaguri Ancholik High School (Adhoc). The post is purely Adohoc basis. Applications are invited in standard form for filling up the post. Candied must not be less then 18 years and not more then 38 years as on 01-01-2024. Up to date employment Registration in local employment Exchange of Karbi Anglong. An application will be received from 20-06-2024 to 26-06-2024 during School hours (1.00 pm).

Sl No.	Name of post	No of post	Qualification
1	LDA Cum Typist	1 (One)	H S. Passed

N.B: 1. The Interview (viva) test will be conducted as on dt 30-06-2024 at 11.00 am in said School office.  
2. Computer Certificate must be produce with the application.

Sd/-  
Secy/Headmaster  
Samaguri Anchalik High School  
Samaguri - 782482  
Karbi Anglong

## GOVT. OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS:: KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT CIRCLE, D I P H U

No. E-1/Grade-III/Apptt./Sec./2 024/

Dated Diphu the /2024.

## ADVERTISEMENT

In pursuance of the Principal Secretary, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu's letter no. KAAC/Esstt-296/P(E)/Sec. Edn./Prior Approval of Post/2020-21/30 dated Diphu the 08th March, 2024, applications are invited from the eligible candidates who are citizens of India as defined under Article 5-8 of the Constitution of India and permanent residents of the administrative jurisdiction of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council in the prescribed Standard Form of application published in Part-IX of Assam Gazette along with copies of Educational Qualification Certificates, Mark Sheets and all other testimonials and 02 (two) copies of recent passport size photographs duly self attested for filling up the following sanctioned vacant posts of Grade-III and Grade-IV in Secondary Schools of Department of the School Education under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu.

Sl. No	Name of Post	Scale of Pay	Grade pay	No. of Post	Minimum Educational Qualification
1	L.D.A.	Rs. 14,000-60500/-	Rs. 6,200/-	07	Any Graduate from any recognised University with one year Degree/Diploma of minimum 06 (six) months in Computer Application from Government recognised Institution, but degree obtained from off-campus and distance education institution shall not be considered as valid
2	Grade-IV	Rs.12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3,900/-	05	HSLC passed or as per Circular/Guidelines issued by Personnel Department, but Degree obtained from off-campus and distance Education Institution shall not be considered as valid.

## Terms and Conditions:

- Age- candidates should not be less than 18 years and not more than 40 years for General, 43 years for OBC/MOBC and 45 years for ST/SC candidates, 42 years for Ex-Serviceman and 50 years for Person with disabilities as on 01/01/2024.
- The ST/SC/OBC and MOBC candidates should submit Caste Certificate alongwith the application.
- Incomplete application shall be summarily rejected on the spot.
- The last date of application is 28th June' 2024 upto 4.00 P.M. If the last date of submission of application is holiday, then the next working day will be considered as the last date.
- Application received either by post or by hand after the last date of submission the application will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- The candidate of General/OBC/MOBC/ST/SC must submit Voter ID for residential proof.
- Upto date Employment Exchange Registration Certificate should be enclosed alongwith the application.

Sd/-  
Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong  
District Circle Diphu.

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, June 18:** Train running through the down line of the accident affected site between Rangapani and Chatterhat stations under the Katihar division of the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) resumed from the morning on Tuesday. The first passenger train passed on the down line at around 10:42 am. It may be mentioned here that running of trains through that section was suspended in the morning at about 08:55 am on Monday as a consequence of the rear end collision of the Kanchanjunga Express by a container carrying goods train. The up line was restored for train opera-



tion in the evening at 05:40 pm on Monday.

10 people lost their lives in the accident and another 10 were grievously injured. The injured are being treated at different hospitals. Ex-gratia pay-

ments have already been paid by observing the norms.

Janak Kr Garg, chief commissioner of Railway Safety has already begun the statutory inquiry into the incident as per Section 114 of the Railway Act

1989. Meanwhile, a few trains passing through that section had to be diverted, cancelled and rescheduled as a result of the accident.

## Cancellations:

The New Jalpaiguri - Malda Town Express of June 19, the Alipurduar - Mariani Intercity Express of June 19 and the Mariani - Alipurduar Intercity Express of June 20.

## Rescheduled:

TheDibrugarh - Deoghar Express has been rescheduled to leave at 04:00 hrs on June 19 instead of 23:30 hours on June 18. The Kamakhya - Gomti Nagar Express has been rescheduled to leave at 00:00 hrs on June 19 instead of 20:00 hours on June 18.



Ministry of Jal Shakti claims that there has been a marked improvement in the state of the river

## People gave vote of no-confidence in him: Cong before Modi's Varanasi visit

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** On a day Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses his first event in Varanasi after the Lok Sabha polls, the Congress Tuesday said the people of his constituency gave a vote of no-confidence in him as he barely managed to edge past his Congress rival after trailing in multiple rounds of counting. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also posed a set of nine questions to the prime minister on issues concerning his constituency and asked why they have not been addressed.

Ramesh asked the PM why river Ganga is "dirtier than before" even after spending ₹ 20,000 crore on the Namami Gange project. He also asked why the nomination papers of 33 candidates were rejected in the Varanasi constituency during Lok Sabha polls.

"The 'one-third' Pradhan Mantri is visiting Varanasi again, a few weeks after he barely eked out a victory after trailing @kashikirai for multiple rounds of counting. It was a vote of no confidence in him by the people of Varanasi. Here are 9 Varanasi-centric Questions that we had asked him during the campaign, and which we want to remind him of today," Ramesh said in a post on X, tagging Ajay Rai, who was the Congress candidate from Varanasi.

"Why has the 'one-third' Pradhan Mantri's flagship Namami Gange project failed so miserably? After spending ₹ 20,000 crore, why has the Ganga gotten dirtier," he asked noting that in 2014, Modi promised a cleaner Ganga through his government's flagship Namami



Gange programme.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti claims that there has been a marked improvement in the state of the river but, as is often the case with this government, that claim turned out to be "a bold-faced lie", Ramesh alleged.

The "Sankat Mochan Foundation" found that rather than improving, water quality in the Ganga has actually been consistently degrading -- faecal coliform bacteria levels are a staggering one million times "higher than the permissible limit of 500 per 100 millilitres", he noted.

The Central Pollution Control Board also found that water quality does not comply with their standards, he claimed.

"The rot runs so deep in the BJP that their failure to clean our holy river is hardly a surprise. Last year, the Central Pollution Control Board declared the Ganga the most polluted river in India. The 'One third' Pradhan Mantri should clarify: how has he delivered on one of the signature promises he made to the people of the country at the beginning of his tenure as PM," Ramesh asked.

The Congress leader said only seven candidates' nomination papers were accepted for the Varanasi Lok Sabha seat in 2024, compared to 26 in 2019 and 42 in 2014, claiming that 33 nominations were rejected on the day PM filed his nomination. Candidates also faced longer than usual wait times, had their affidavits arbitrarily rejected, and by the end of the process as many as eight of them alleged that the process was "rigged", Ramesh claimed. "Did Mr. Modi attempt to rig the election, knowing that it was going to be tough for him?"

He also asked: why 41 of 47 beds are lying idle in Banaras Hindu University's cardiology department and why did Varanasi Port, inaugurated in 2019 after spending thousands of crore, failed.

"First, Varanasi residents had to suffer the indignity of being 'gifted' this project - even though it was funded through their own tax money. Now, they have to suffer the indignity of a non-functional port. As of 2021, the Double Anyay Sarkar has decided to privatise this failure, and to nobody's surprise, Adani Ports was the only bidder.

"Why is the 'one-third' Pradhan Mantri so keen to hand over every single national resource to Adani? Why is there no investigation into the complete failure of this port, and the diversion of funds to it," he asked. Ramesh also asked why has the prime minister abandoned the Varanasi villages he had "adopted".

"The condition of Mr. Modi's adopted villages tells us a lot about his sense of duty, or lack thereof, towards serving his

constituents. Why has the Pradhan Mantri abandoned his "adopted" villages? Is this the true face of "Modi ki guarantee?" he asked. Ramesh also questioned why is the PM "destroying" Mahatma Gandhi's legacy in Varanasi by taking over the land of Sarwa Sewa Sangh, started by Acharya

Vinobha Bhawe.

"It was evicted from its iconic campus in August 2023, and the land was taken over by the Indian Railways. Only one corner of the campus, occupied by the Gandhi Vidya Sansthan, remains untouched because it had already been

captured by the RSS. Why does the one-third Pradhan Mantri persist in his hypocrisy of praising Gandhiji abroad, while destroying Gandhian institutions at home? Can he openly admit his admiration for Godse over Gandhi," the leader asked. (PTI)

### GOVT. OF ASSAM

#### OFFICE OF THE JT. DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES, KARBI ANGLONG DIST.

**D I P H U**

E-mail: [jdhs.as.karbianglong@gmail.com](mailto:jdhs.as.karbianglong@gmail.com)

No. Jt. DHS/Works/2024-25/ \_\_\_\_\_ /Dated Diphu, the \_\_\_\_\_ June' 2024

#### SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tender/Quotation in format affixing with KAAC stamp worth Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only are invited from reputed Govt. registered and resourceful Contractors for Construction/ Repairing/ Renovation of the following works and will be received by the undersigned up to 3:00 pm of 28/06/2024 and opened on the same day at 3:00 pm. In case there is a Govt. holiday/ bandh etc. the Tender/ Quotation will be opened in the next working day at the same time for the F.Y. 2024-25.

Intending Contractors/ Suppliers of their authorized agent may be present at the time of opening of the Tender/ Quotations etc.

Contractors will have to deposit 2% (two) for General and 1% (One) in case of ST/SC/OBC of the Tender/ Quotations amount as Earnest Money in the form of Call Deposit/ Demand Draft from any Govt. recognized bank in the name of the Jt. Director of Health Services, Karbi Anglong, Diphu.

#### Civil Works for F.Y. 2024-25:-

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Estimated Amount (In Rupees)	Tender Amount (In Rupees)	Time of Completion	Remarks
1	Earth Filling work at Dokmoka MPHC (Phase-II)	10,00,000.00	10,00,000.00	60 days	
2	Renovation and extension of RCC Ring Well at Hidipi MPHC	4,00,000.00	4,00,000.00	30 days	
3	Construction of Garbage Bin at Hidipi MPHC	4,00,000.00	4,00,000.00	30 days	
4	Rep./Renovation of Doctor's Quarter at Santipur Health & Wellness Centre	9,00,000.00	9,00,000.00	45 days	
5	Rep./ Renovation of Govt. Quarter now occupied by Sri Pankaj Moni Phukan, Service Engineer.	9,00,000.00	9,00,000.00	60 days	
6	Rep./ Renovation of Govt. Quarter now 6 occupied by Sri Longbison Rongpi, LDA	9,00,000.00	9,00,000.00	60 days	
7	Construction of Boundary Wall at Dillai State Dispensary	10,00,000.00	10,00,000.00	60 days	
8	Construction of Car Parking Shed at Hidipi PHC	6,00,000.00	6,00,000.00	45 days	
9	Construction of Boundary Wall (2 ft) with fencing at Rajapathar MPHC	10,00,000.00	10,00,000.00	60 days	
10	Earth Filling Work at Dhansiri PHC	10,00,000.00	10,00,000.00	60 days	

#### Terms & Conditions:-

- The Tender should be accompanied with the following documents:-
  - Govt. Contract Registration.
  - P. Tax Clearance.
  - Income Tax Clearance Certificate.
  - Certificate of Financial Ability from Gazetted Officer/ Local MAC/ BDO.
  - Caste Certificate.
  - Earnest Money deposit in the form of Call Deposit/ Demand Draft etc.
  - GST Registration and GST Clearance Certificate.
- The rate shall be quoted in flat percentage i.e. above or below as per estimated.
- The unsuccessful Tenderer will get back their earnest money after allotment of work.
- The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Tender without assigning any reason thereof.
- Schedule of Rate will not be changed or revised in any circumstances.
- For details information please contact the undersigned during office hours.

**N.B.-** 1. No Tender will be accepted failing to furnish the above documents.

2. Payment will be made subject to the availability of fund.

Sd/-

i/c-1t. Director of Health Services,  
Karbi Anglong District, Diphu

Memo No. it. DHS/Works/2024-25/752-A

/Dated Diphu, the 18<sup>th</sup> June' 2024

## Congress needs to decide who is their 'biggest enemy': Annie

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Congress leaders need to decide whether the communal-fascist forces are their biggest enemy or the Left parties, CPI leader Annie Raja said Tuesday on Priyanka Gandhi being named as the party candidate for the Wayanad seat after her brother Rahul Gandhi vacated it.

Annie Raja, who had contested against Rahul Gandhi in the recently held Lok Sabha polls, said a decision on her candidature will be taken by the party leadership. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday said Rahul will keep the Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha seat in Uttar Pradesh and vacate the Wayanad seat from where his sister Priyanka will contest. Asked about the move, the CPI leader told PTI, "It is the decision of the Congress party. We respect their decision. It is a good thing that the UDF has announced a woman candidate. Number of women has been going down in Parliament. All political parties need to worry about this".

"UDF announced a woman candidate, I welcome that. But I had raised this question when Rahul Gandhi contested. I am asking this question to Priyanka Gandhi today with all due respect... for you and your party, who is your biggest enemy? Is it communal-fascist forces or the Left parties?" she said. She said while the numbers of the NDA have gone down in the Lok Sabha, it does not mean the communal-fascist forces have weakened. "Every party of the LDF is a part of the INDIA alliance, I can very well say she (Priyanka Gandhi) is also a leader of the INDIA alliance. The leader herself is fighting against a party of the alliance," she said. The Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the

Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) are rivals in Kerala. At the same time, the Congress and the Left parties are part of the INDIA bloc.

"As far as Congress party is concerned, leader of Congress party Priyanka is concerned, which force do you see as the biggest enemy of your party and the people of this country... is it the fascist forces or the Left parties?" Annie Raja said.

She, however, said the move will not affect the unity of the INDIA bloc, and the CPI is committed to defeating the communal forces. "When Narendra Modi became prime minister in 2014, the CPI had analysed that election and said it was not a simple regime change. It was a situation where attacks on democracy and the Constitution were going to happen," she said. "Within our party congress we had passed a unanimous resolution that the biggest enemy of this country are the communal-fascist forces. No party can defeat them alone. That is why leftist, democratic and secular parties need to come together," she said.

"The CPI has always worked to strengthen the INDIA alliance. We have not done anything to weaken the INDIA bloc. The aim is to defeat the fascist forces, so the Left, democratic, secular forces should come together strongly," she said.

She also said the INDIA bloc needs to analyse if they were successful in the elections, and why they could not come to power. "INDIA alliance should also analyse if we were successful, where we fell short, were we able to have understanding in all states... We could not come to power because everything is not alright," she said. (PTI)

## Cong accuses govt of 'destroying' railways, demands Ashwini Vaishnaw's resignation

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Accusing the government of "destroying" Indian Railways, the Congress on Tuesday demanded Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's resignation in the wake of the Kanchanjunga Express accident and said that he has no moral right to remain in the position.

The opposition party also took a swipe at Vaishnaw for reaching the accident site riding pillion on a motorcycle, asking whether he is a rail minister or a "reel minister".

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said whenever there is a train accident, Modi government's railway minister reaches the spot under the glare of cameras and behaves as if everything is fine.

"Narendra Modi ji, tell us who should be held accountable, the Railway Minister or you?" the Congress chief asked.

Kharge posed seven questions to the government and demanded answers.

After a major accident like Balasore, why was not even a single kilometer of the much-hyped "Kavach" anti-train collision system added, he asked.

"Why are nearly 3 lakh posts vacant in the Railways, why were they not filled in the last 10 years? According to the NCRB (2022) report, 1,00,000 people have died in rail accidents between 2017 and 2021 alone! Who will take responsibility for this?" the Congress chief asked.

The Railway Board itself has admitted that the long working hours of loco pilots due to acute shortage of manpower are the main reason for the increasing number of accidents, he said and asked why were the posts not filled.

"In its 323rd report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee had criticised the Railways for the 'neglect' shown by the Railway Board towards the recommendations of the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS). It was underlined that the CRS investigates only 8%-10% of accidents, why was the CRS not strengthened?" Kharge asked.

According to the CAG, why was 75% funding reduced in the 'Rashtriya Rail Suraksha Kosh' (RRSK), while Rs 20,000 crore was to be made available every year, he asked.

Why is this money being used by railway officials on unnecessary expenses and comfort facilities, Kharge further asked. (PTI)

## Modi to lead Yoga day celebrations from Srinagar

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** The main International Day of Yoga celebrations this year will be held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar on June 21 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the event there, AYUSH Minister Prataprao Jadhav said on Tuesday.

Jadhav, the Minister of State for Ayush (independent charge), said this year's theme 'Yoga for Self and Society' highlights yoga's dual role in fostering individual and societal wellbeing. It underlines promoting connection between the inner-self and the outer world going beyond one's own wellbeing, Jadhav said.

"Yoga nurtures physical, mental, and spiritual growth while promoting societal harmony. The enthusiastic participation of millions in recent years reflects the profound impact of yoga on communities," the minister said.

He also announced that PM has written to each gram pradhan, encouraging grassroots participation and the spread of yoga in rural areas. Jadhav launched a 'Common Yoga Protocol Book in Braille' script to support visually impaired people to learn and practice yoga with convenience. The minister also launched Profes-



sor Ayushman comic on yoga. This book will help children to learn and practice yoga with interest and entertainment.

The United Nations General Assembly, heeding to a call by Prime Minister Modi, had made a declaration in December 2014 to observe June 21 every year as IDY.

The IDY resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2014 came at the initiative of the PM Modi and was passed unanimously.

Since 2015, the IDY has evolved into a mass movement around the world, Jadhav said.

Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha said that IDY is not only a celebration but also a concerted effort to bring about a behavioural change so that people adopt yoga in their lives so that they can get the benefits

of yoga. He further highlighted the 'Whole of Government' approach to the IDY celebrations, emphasising the coordinated efforts across various government departments and the active participation of state governments to ensure an inclusive and widespread observance each year. Along with state governments, union territories are actively participating in the IDY 2024. The National Ayush Mission team across the nation is also actively engaged in organising IDY events, he said.

This year, the IDY will witness several events including the 'Yoga for Space'. With support of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a unique initiative called 'Yoga for Space' is being organised wherein all ISRO scientists/officers will perform Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) on IDY.

The Gaganyaan project team will also be participating in IDY 2024.

The Ayush ministry has already launched a video contest through MyGov Portal and MyBharat portal to raise awareness about yoga and to inspire people to prepare for and become active participants in the observation of IDY 2024.

Families have to record up to one-minute harmonious yoga demonstration short video as a part of the contest. To promote technology and start-ups in the field of yoga, the ministry has organised Yoga Tech Challenge on MyGov portal and MyBharat portal which aims to identify and promote those start-ups or individuals who have developed yoga related tools.

Last year, the global celebration of IDY was led by Modi at the United Nations headquarters in New York, USA, while the national celebration was led by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh.

The IDY celebration is done by a harmonious 45 minutes yoga demonstration called Common Yoga Protocol (CYP). Videos of CYP demonstrations are available on YouTube in 22 Indian languages, six UN languages and nine other foreign languages. (PTI)



# Parents' fascination with English-medium schools no less than suicide: NCERT chief

NEW DELHI, June 18: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said even if there was "0.001 per cent negligence" on the part of anyone in the conduct of the NEET-UG 2024 examination, it should be thoroughly dealt with.

Observing that students have to labour hard while preparing for these examinations, the apex court said the litigation pertaining to the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate)-2024 examination ought not be treated as adversarial.

"Even if there is 0.001 per cent negligence on the part of anyone, it should be thoroughly dealt with," a vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and SVN Bhatti told the advocates appearing for the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA).

The NTA conducts the all India pre-medical entrance test.

The bench was hearing two separate petitions raising grievances, including on grace marks given to students in the examination held on May 5.

"We all know the labour which the children undergo, especially in preparing for these exams," the bench said, adding, "Imagine a person who has played fraud on the system becomes a doctor, he is more deleterious to the society".

"Representing an agency



which is responsible for conducting the examination, you must stand firm. If there is a mistake, yes this is a mistake and this is the action we are going to take. At least that inspires confidence in your performance," the bench told the NTA's counsel.

Stressing on timely action by the authority, the top court said the pleas would come up for hearing on July 8 along with other pending petitions, including those which have sought a direction to conduct the exam afresh.

It said the NTA and the Centre would file their responses on these fresh petitions within two weeks.

When one of the advocates appearing for some petitioners raised the issue pertaining to a question asked in the exam, the

bench said, "They (NTA and Centre) will respond to it".

"Let us understand the purpose of your submissions. In these matters, we are prepared to sit up to evening," it observed.

While hearing separate petitions raising grievances over the NEET-UG 2024, the apex court had last week sought responses from the Centre and the NTA on a plea for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into allegations of question paper leak and other irregularities in the exam.

The Centre and the NTA had on June 13 told the top court that they had cancelled the grace marks given to 1,563 candidates who took the examination for admission to MBBS and other such courses.

They will have the option to

either take a retest or forgo the compensatory marks awarded to them for the loss of time, the Centre had said.

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

There have been allegations of question paper leaks in states like Bihar and other irregularities in the prestigious exam.

The allegations have led to protests in several cities and filing of petitions in several high courts as also the Supreme Court. Scores of students protested in Delhi on June 10 seeking a probe into alleged irregularities.

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 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)

## Cops involved in drug trade will be dismissed, says Punjab CM

CHANDIGARH, June 18: Any police official found involved in drug trade would be dismissed from service and the property of traffickers attached, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said on Tuesday while announcing tough steps to break the "nexus" between low-rank police officials and smugglers. Mann also announced the transfer of police officials at lower levels on a mass scale across the state and added that 10,000 police personnel would be recruited to strengthen the department. Interacting with reporters after a meeting with the senior superintendents of police (SSPs)

here, Mann said the police department would see reforms soon. During the just-concluded Lok Sabha elections, a huge quantity of drugs and cash were seized in Punjab, the chief minister said. "We got clues from where those came and what their destinations were. We have the details," he said. Mann said the day the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha polls ended, he called the director general of police and told him to take further action against the drug menace. The chief minister said police officers have been asked to transform the war against drugs into a mass movement. (PTI)

**CORRIGENDUM - 01, 02 & 03 AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO.: CON/2024/MAY/05, Dated : 15-05-2024**

Corrigendum-01, 02 & 03 has been issued against Tender No. CE/CON/DMV/PMS/2024/04 for details please visit [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

**Chief Engineer/CON/1**  
Northeast Frontier Railway  
(Construction Organisation)  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

### GOVT. OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS:: KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT CIRCLE, D I P H U

No. E-1/Grade-IV/Apptt./Ele./2024/

Dated Diphu the /2024.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

In pursuance of the Principal Secretary, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu's order no. KAAC/Esstt-679/p(B)/Ele,Edn./Prior Approval of Post/2023-24/4 Dated Dipliti the 08th March '2024, applications are invited from the eligible Candidates who are Citizens of India as defined under Article 5-8 of the Constitution of India and permanent residents of the administrative jurisdiction of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council in the prescribed standard form of application published in part-IX of Assam Gazette alongwith copies of Education Qualification certificates, mark-sheets and all other testimonials and 02 (Two) copies of recent passport size photographs duly attested for filling up of the following vacant posts of Grade-IV in Elementary (M.E) Schools Department of Schools Education under the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council , Diphu.

Sl. No.	Name of Post	Scale of Pay	Grade Pay	No. of Posts	Minimum Educational qualification
01	Grade-IV	Rs.12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3,900/-	06	HSLC Passed or as per Circular/guidelines issued by personnel Department, but degree obtained from off-campus and distance education institution shall not be considered as valid.

#### Terms & Conditions:

- Age- Candidate should not be less than 18 years and not more than 40 years for General, 43 years for OBC/MOBC and 45 years for ST/SC candidates, 42 years for Ex-Servicemen and 50 years for person with Disabilities as on 01/01/2024.
- The ST/SC/OBC and MOBC candidates should submit caste certificates alongwith the application.
- Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected on the spot.
- The last date of receipt of application is 28th June'2024 upto 04.00 PM.If the last date of submission of application is holiday, then the next working day will be considered as the last date.
- Application received either by post or by hand after the last date of submission of application will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- The candidate of General/OBC/MOBC/ST/SC must submit Voter ID for residential proof
- Employment exchange Registration Certificate should be enclosed alongwith the application.

Sd/-

Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong  
District Circle, Diphu.

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PHE) URBAN WATER SUPPLY DIVISION, DIPHU

NO. PHEE/UWSD/DIP /TB -40 (C)/ 2024-25 /34

Date:-17-06-2024

#### ADDENDUM

In partial modification to this office Notification for NIT -1 FOR THE YEAR 2024-25 vide NO. PHEE / UWSD /DIP /TB -40 (C) / 2024-25 /24-33 Date:-15-06-2024 the following works will also be included in Annexure-A. The works are included in SOPD AAP-2024-25 under ACE (PHE), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu. Sl no of works are the continuation of the previous Annexure-A.

Other features of the said Office Notification will remain unchanged.

#### ANNEXURE-A

NIT Memo. PHEE / UWSD /DIP /TB -40 (C) / 2024-25 /24-33

Date :- 15-06-2024

Sl No	Name of Work	Gr. No	Amount (In Lakhs)	Earnest Money		Time of Completion.
				Gen	ST/SC	
27	Detailed Estimate for Repairing, renovation including jungle clearance and Colour washing painting including sanitary fittings at ACE (PRE) & Divisional Office building.	27	₹ 14.00	2%	1%	25 Days
28	Refurbishing and renovation of Staff Qtr. at Addl Chief Engineer (PHE) office complex.	28	₹ 4.00	2%	1%	15 Days

Sd/-

Executive Engineer (PHE)  
Urban W/S Division, Diphu.

Memo NO. PHEE / UWSD /DIP /TB -40 (C) / 2024-25 /35-45

Date:-17-06-2024

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR, HANDLOOM & TEXTILES, (HILLS) ASSAM. DIPHU

No. HTHC.37/NIT/2024-25/01

Date Diphu the 18th June, 2024

#### TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tender in Prescribed format affixing non refundable KAAC money receipt of Rs. 10/. (Rupees ten) only are hereby invited from the intending Govt. Registered Contractors and local eligible contractors for the following works (schemes under SOPD) for the year 2024-25. The tender will be received up to 2:00 pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2024 and will be opened thereafter on the same day in presence of the contractors or their authorized person.

In the case, if the opening day of tender falls on holiday then tender will be opened on the next working day in the same time. The undersigned reserved the right to accept or reject one or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof after and will not be bound himself to accept the lowest rate of tender.

#### LIST OF WORKS

Group	Name of work	Tender amount	Earnest money	Time of completion
1	Construction of Boundary Brick wall at WESU, H&T Bakalia	10.00 L	1% ST/SC/OBC 2% for General	60 days
2	Construction of Traditional Weavers Training Hall at Bakalia Playground	50.00 L	1% ST/SC/OBC 2% for General	120 days
3	Construction of RCC ring Well, water staging with submersible pump set, Internal Electrification and earth filling at WESU, H&T, Bakalia	05.00 L	1% ST/SC/OBC 2% for General	30 days

#### Term & Condition

- The rate should be quoted as above/below/ Reserved rate of % (percentage) basis as per APWD Building & Sanitary schedule works for 2020-21.
- The tender should submit Earnest Money 1% for ST/SC/OBC and 2 % for general to be deposited as call deposit/ Bank draft in favour of The Joint Director, H&T (Hills) Diphu.
- The tenderer should furnish the following document along with the tender paper as —
  - Upto date any Govt. Registration Certificate
  - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate
  - GST Registration & Clearance Certificate
  - Caste/Tribe Certificate for ST/SC/OBC
  - Valid Trading License for General category
  - Photo copy of PAN Card
- The tender will be received at the O/O the Joint Director, Handloom & Textiles (Hills), Diphu.

Sd/-

Joint Director  
Handloom & Textiles (Hills), Diphu  
Date Diphu the 18th June, 2024

Memo No. HTHC.37/NIT/2024-25/01- A



# PAYAL KAPADIA'S 'ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT' SELECTED FOR MUNICH FILM FESTIVAL

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Filmmaker Payal Kapadia's Cannes-winning title "All We Imagine as Light" is set to be screened at the 2024 Munich International Film Festival.

The film is a part of the 14-film lineup for the CineMasters Competition, the main section of the film gala, which is considered the second largest film festival in Germany after the Berlin Film Festival. Other titles that will be showcased at the festival include "Kinds of Kindness", "100 Yards", "Caught By The Tides", "Woman Of...", "Memory" and "Substance".

"All We Imagine As Light", Kapadia's feature directorial debut, was the first Indian film in 30 years and first ever by an Indian female director to be showcased in main competition of the Cannes Film Festival, last being Shaji N Karun's "Swaham" (1994).

At the 77th edition of the recently-concluded film gala, the film had won the Grand Prix award, the second-most prestigious prize of the festival.

"Kinds of Kindness", directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, had won the best actor trophy for Jesse Plemons at the Cannes.

"All We Imagine as Light", a Malayalam-Hindi feature, is about Prabha, a nurse, who receives an unexpected gift from her long estranged husband that throws her life into disarray. Her younger roommate, Anu, tries in vain to find a private spot in the big city to be alone with her boyfriend.

One day the two nurses go on a road trip to a beach town where the mystical forest becomes a space for their dreams to manifest, according to the plotline.

"All We Imagine As Light" is an Indo-French co-production between petit chaos from France and Chalk and Cheese Films from India. (PTI)



## KATY PERRY ANNOUNCES NEW SONG 'WOMAN'S WORLD'

**LOS ANGELES, June 18:** Singer-songwriter Katy Perry has announced that she will release "Woman's World", the first single from her upcoming sixth album on July 11.

In an Instagram post, the 39-year-old said the music video of the track will drop a day later, on July 12.

"WOMAN'S WORLD SONG JULY 11 VIDEO JULY 12 PRE-SAVE + PRE-ORDER GET READY TO POP OF KATYPERRY.COM," Perry captioned the clip featuring her in a mesh top and metallic armour-like pants.

The Roar performer appeared for the last time at the season finale of American Idol on May 19. During the finale, she hugged her fellow judges, Luke Bryan and Lionel Richie.

Perry officially announced her departure from the American reality show on Jimmy Kimmel Live.

"I love Idol so much," Perry told Kimmel. "It's connected me with the heart of America, but I feel like I need to go out and feel that pulse to my own beat."

The Bon Appetit creator joined American Idol as a judge in 2018 when the show again started taking its baby steps with ABC. She, along with Bryan and Richie, has been a part of the judging panel for seven seasons.

Perry confirmed, "They [her fellow judges] know that I have some things planned for this year." (AGENCIES)



## Allu Arjun's 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' to now release on December 6

**MUMBAI, June 18:** (PTI) Allu Arjun's much-awaited movie "Pushpa 2: The Rule" has a new release date and will now hit the theatres worldwide on December 6, the makers have announced.

Directed by Sukumar, "Pushpa 2: The Rule" is a sequel to Arjun's "Pushpa 1: The Rise", which had turned out to be a huge blockbuster in the country after its release in December 2021. In a post on X on Monday evening, production banner Mythri Movie Makers shared the new release date of the movie, which was earlier slated for come in cinemas on August 15. "We intend to give you the best. The wait increases for a memorable experience on the big screens. #Pushpa2TheRule Grand release worldwide on 6th DECEMBER 2024. His rule will be phenomenal. His rule will be unprecedented," the studio posted along with a brand new poster. Mythri Movie Makers also released a statement, explaining the reason behind postponing the release of the film.

"Pushpa 2: The Rule" is one of the most anticipated Indian films. Following the immense success of Pushpa: The Rise, our responsibility to deliver excellence has increased significantly. We have been tirelessly working to complete the movie and release it on time. "However, due to the remaining shoot and subsequent post-production work, we will not be releasing the film on August 15th, 2024," the studio.

The company said the decision was made in the best interests of the "film, the audience, and all stakeholders".

"Our goal is to provide a memorable experience on the big screen without compromising quality," the statement added.

The studio has so far released a teaser of the film as well as two songs -- "Pushpa Pushpa" and "Sooseeki" -- and it said the "overwhelming response" across all languages has been "heartening". (PTI)



# Hrithik on 'Lakshya' being 'a turning point' in his career: I don't know why Farhan cast me

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Marking the 20th anniversary of "Lakshya", actor Hrithik Roshan on Tuesday said filmmaker Farhan Akhtar cast him in the movie at a time when he was in search of his own identity, something he channelled through its protagonist Karan Shergill.

"Lakshya", which won critical acclaim for both Hrithik and Farhan, was released in theatres on June 18, 2004. It also emerged as a hit at the box office.

Set against the backdrop of the 1999 Kargil War, the Hindi film revolved around an aimless young man Karan Shergill (Hrithik), who joins the Indian Army and matures into a battlefield hero.

In a video shared on Instagram, Hrithik walked down memory lane where he reminisced about the making of the movie, finding himself and looking forward to the re-release of "Lakshya" in theatres on Friday.

The actor said he was in awe of Farhan, his childhood friend, who was fresh from the success of his 2001 directorial debut "Dil Chahta Hai".

"I was very young, hardly an actor, and Farhan was a friend who had suddenly become this incredible mind," said Hrithik, who had by then starred in 10 films, in-

cluding "Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai", "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham" and "Koi... Mil Gaya".

"When I saw his first film, I was like, 'How has this person made this film?'

How? Where did he get the courage, knowledge, or information?' He had written this beautiful script, and more than the story or the big cause, it was the character of Karan Shergill that was me.

"I don't know what made Farhan cast me, but perhaps that director's mind could see through and understand a person's countenance, knowing that this human had been through certain things that would make him the perfect cast for this film," he further said.

At that time, Hrithik — now 50 — said he was the perfect human, not the actor, to be cast in "Lakshya".

"I had been through all those experiences in very similar ways. Karan Shergill was me. I did not need to do much. The naivety, spontaneity, anger, being on the cusp of maturity, learning the ways, being completely confused and dumbfounded as to what I was going to do in my life, not having any hopeful avenues — I went through that crossroad so greatly and intensely in my life that it just came natu-

rally to me." The actor credited Farhan for guiding him throughout the making of the film, which was a difficult shoot with a major portion shot in the mountainous terrain of Ladakh in extremely low temperatures.

"... 'Lakshya' has been a turning point in my career as an actor because here I was working with a director for the first time in my life who told me to ignore the camera," he added.

Hrithik described Farhan as a "hard taskmaster" on set who would be his usual jovial, fun self when not on set.

"I truly think it's a film that was destined to be. It has gone a long way in changing people's lives, livelihoods as well. I'm just full of gratitude that this film happened in my life and that I got a chance to grow via this film and via these people that I worked with," he said.

Produced by Farhan and Ritesh Sidhwani's Excel Entertainment, "Lakshya" also starred Amitabh Bachchan and Preity Zinta. The film's soundtrack, composed by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy and penned by Javed Akhtar, continues to be popular among listeners. Boman Irani, Anjula Bedi, Lillete Dubey, M. K. Raina, Kushal Punjabi, and Om Puri also rounded out the cast. (PTI)





# Shreyas likely to come back for Sri Lanka ODIs; Riyan, Abhishek, Mayank in line for Zimbabwe T20Is



**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Gautam Gambhir's expected appointment as India's head coach could provide a new lease of life to IPL champion skipper Shreyas Iyer's international career during the three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka in July-August.

Having led Kolkata Knight Riders successfully in the IPL, Iyer could also go for the five-

match T20I series against Zimbabwe starting July 5, but the more realistic chance of a comeback is the ODI series against Sri Lanka.

Gambhir, who is the front-runner for India coach position, and Iyer forged a successful partnership during KKR's victorious IPL campaign this year and the talented Mumbai right-hander, who has been a prolific

50-over batter, might finally have fortune favouring him after a few tumultuous months. Gambhir was the mentor of the franchise.

Iyer was dropped from BCCI's central contracts, along with Ishan Kishan, after he fell out with the establishment for his apparent reluctance to play Ranji Trophy.

However, Iyer always main-

tained that his recurring lower back issue kept him out of the game even though he did play the Ranji Trophy final scoring 90-odd runs.

Currently, a lot of young hopefuls, who have performed in the IPL, are training at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for five T20Is against Zimbabwe set to be announced some time next week.

"Shreyas is currently not at NCA. Here mostly those players are there, who have performed in the IPL and will be in contention for Zimbabwe selection. "Abhishek Sharma, Riyan Parag, Mayank Yadav, Harshit Rana, Nitish Reddy, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Yash Dayal are all at the camp. Some will go to Zimbabwe T20Is," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"However, there is every possibility that Shreyas will travel for the three-match ODI series in Sri Lanka. The last ODI that India played was in South Africa and he scored a half-century (52). He had 500 plus runs (530) in World Cup and averages just around 50. Can you drop him?" he added.

It is understood that seniors like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, along with pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, will now focus on ODIs and Tests for the remainder of the season with nine WTC Tests between September 2024 to January 2025.

The schedule includes two home games each against Bangladesh and New Zealand, five away against Australia and the marquee ODI Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

While there will be a lot of new players in T20Is including IPL stars, the likes of Rinku Singh, Shubman Gill, Avesh Khan, and Khaleel Ahmed are also expected to travel to Zimbabwe. (PTI)

# India eye runs from top-order batters, 2-0 series-winning lead against SA in 2<sup>nd</sup> ODI

**BENGALURU, June 18:** India will expect their top-order batters to produce a tidier effort against South Africa in the second women's ODI here on Wednesday in their quest for an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. India have a 1-0 lead in their hand, courtesy a 143-run win in the first game but the win, as comprehensive as it was, also left some questions unanswered.

The home side rode on Smriti Mandhana's hundred and a fine spell by spinners to outclass South Africa, but it was not enough to paper over some wide cracks in the batting department.

The most glaring of them is the continued underwhelming ODI outings of opener Shafali Verma. Her last one-day fifty came in 2022, an unbeaten 71, against Sri Lanka at Pallekele.

In the last six matches, the opener's individual scoresheet reads: 1, 8, 0, 4, 1, 7. The 20-year-old will require a substantial score sooner than later to cling on to her spot. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur will also like to have a big score under her belt after notching up 14, 9, 5, 3 and 10 in her last five outings. Top-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues, who returned from a back injury that forced her to sit out of the T20I series against Bangladesh, too failed to impress.

Rodrigues would like to recapture her 2023 form where she made a couple of 80s and came close to scoring her maiden ODI hundred. All of them, in fact, can take a cue from vice-captain Mandhana, whose sixth ODI hundred stood out for its studiousness.

Of course, the graceful left-hander has been in good touch in ODIs, as her last 20 innings dating back to February 2022 have fetched seven fifties and two centuries and was dismissed below 10 only thrice. But returning to the one-day format after playing a string of T20s in the last four months might have been tough for her, and it became all the more difficult because she also had to bail out the team from a precarious 99

for five against the Proteas.

However, Mandhana braved those tests, showing wonderful adaptation of skills and mindset.

Hopefully, her colleagues in the top-order will contribute more runs as she will not have to repeat that firefighting act.

While the bowlers fired in unison under debutante leg-spinner Asha Shobhana (4/21), India will keep an eye on the fitness of Pooja Vastrakar. The pacer had to walk off the field in the 18th over of South Africa innings with what then seemed to be a knee niggle. However, later Mandhana attributed Vastrakar's absence to cramps. In the case of an eventuality, India can always fall back on Arundhati Reddy, a like-for-like replacement.

On the other hand, South Africa will also look for a better outing from their batters, who came a cropper against Indian bowlers on a rather sluggish Chinnaswamy pitch. The Indian spinners - Asha, Deepti Sharma and Radha Yadav - shared seven wickets among themselves, and visitors will have to find a way to nullify them to avoid another collapse.

It's imperative then for SA that skipper Laura Wolvaardt, who was dismissed in the first over in the opening match, finds her range.

Teams:

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (WK), Uma Chetri (WK), Dayalan Hemlatha, Radha Yadav, Asha Shobhana, 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 Jercksen, Mieke de Ridder, Sinalo Jaffer, Marizanne Kapp, Ayabonga Khaka, Masabata Klaas, Suné Luus, Eliz-Marli Marz, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Tumi Sekhukhune, Nondumiso Shangase, Delmi Tucker. Match starts at 1.30 pm. (PTI)

# East Bengal rope in David on three-year contract

**KOLKATA, June 18:** Super Cup champions East Bengal FC on Tuesday announced the signing of rising Indian forward David Lahliansanga on a three-year contract.

One of the most prolific young strikers in India, David was the top scorer in last year's Calcutta Football League and Durand Cup, and also played a pivotal role in Mohammedan Sporting Club's maiden I-League triumph.

"East Bengal is a big club with millions of fans spread across India. I love playing in front of passionate fans," said David in a statement.

David was named by head coach Igor

Stimac in India's last two World Cup Qualifiers squads against Kuwait at home and Qatar away but did not get any minutes.

"I've already spent some time with Mahesh, Nandha and Lalchungnunga in the India camp. They are very helpful and always motivate me to get better. I want to give my best for this club."

East Bengal head coach Carlos Cuadrat said, "David is one of our Indian recruits whom we had been trying hard to sign for a long time. He was the leading scorer in the Durand Cup and the CFL, which grabbed my attention. From that moment he became a target for our future plans. I am extremely happy to welcome a gem

like him."

Hailing from Mizoram, David rose through Aizawl FC's youth ranks before being promoted to Aizawl's first team in the 2019-20 season.

After spending three seasons, David moved to Mohammedan Sporting Club in 2023. The 22-year-old made an immediate impact in the Durand Cup, winning the Golden Boot award with six goals and one assist in just three matches, including four goals in a group stage match against Jamshedpur FC.

He continued his rich vein of form through the remainder of the season as he scored an astonishing 21 goals to propel

Mohammedan to the CFL title and later played a crucial part in the Black & White brigade's I-League triumph with five goals and two assists.

The top scorer in last year's Calcutta Football League and Durand Cup, David also played a pivotal role in Mohammedan Sporting Club's maiden I-League triumph with five goals and two assists.

Hailing from Mizoram, Lalhlansanga rose through Aizawl FC's youth ranks before being promoted to Aizawl's first team in the 2019-20 season. After spending three seasons with the Mizoram capital side, David moved to Mohammedan Sporting Club in 2023. (PTI)

# Pooran's explosive 98 take WI to 104-run win over Afghanistan in T20 WC

**GROS ISLET (ST LUCIA), June 18:** Nicholas Pooran displayed his incredible six-hitting prowess as West Indies geared up for the Super 8 with a dominating 104-run win over Afghanistan in their final Group C match of the T20 World Cup here.

With both teams assured of a Super 8 berth, it was the two-time champions who displayed their batting might, amassing a formidable 218 for five, with Pooran going on a six-hitting spree during his 53-ball 98. It was the highest total for the West Indies in T20 World Cups.

In reply, Afghanistan succumbed to scoreboard pressure, managing just 114 in 16.2 overs.

"We knew here will be one of the better wickets of the competition. After Guyana and Trinidad, the batters wanted to come here and get runs. (Pooran) I think it is on the back of hard work. He has had a very good 12 months. Good to see him score runs not only in franchise cricket but also for WI," West Indies skipper Rohan Powell said at the post match presentation ceremony.

Afghanistan had bundled out their opponents for sub-100 totals in their first three games but skipper Rashid Khan's decision to bowl first here backfired as Pooran put on a ruthless display, hitting as many as 8 maximums and 6 fours during his stay.

Opener Johnson Charles (43), Shai Hope (25) and Powell (26) also contributed with the bat as WI posted the highest total of this edition of T20 World Cup.

Gulbadin Naib (2/14) was the top bowler for Afghanistan, claiming two wickets in his 2 overs.

With the bat, opener Ibrahim Zadran (38), Azmatullah Omarzai (23) and Karim Janat (14) tried their bit but it proved too huge a total in the end.

"Don't think so (this big loss will affect us). We've achieved what we wanted - to get Super Eight. The different pitches coming up... we'll adjust to them. Good learning this loss happened at this stage, not in a do-or-die game. We take the positives with us, like fielding and middle-overs bowling," Rashid said. Earlier, West Indies lost opener Brandon King in the second over but hosts scored heavily in the first five overs and the last five overs.

Pooran turned on the heat in the fourth over, collecting 36-runs off Azmatullah Omarzai's bowling - 6, 5NB, 5WD, 0, 4LB, 4, 6, 6. It was the joint most expensive over in T20Is. The wicketkeeper batter and Charles took the hosts to 92/1 at the six-over mark, the biggest Powerplay total in men's T20 World Cup history.

"You don't want to be on 97 and get run-out but it was all about reaching a respectable total. I assessed the conditions early on, we had a good start in the powerplay, I had to take the responsibility in the middle overs with the Afghanistan spinners bowling," 'Player of the Match' Pooran said.

Afghanistan really didn't recover from the onslaught as after pacer Naveen-Ul-Haq dismissed the Charles, Pooran continued his hitting spree with Hopes and Powell playing second fiddle.

In the 18th over, Pooran launched into Rashid, smacking him for three maximums and a four for a 24-run over. During his innings Pooran surpassed Chris Gayle (124 sixes) as West Indies' most decorated T20I six-hitter. The left-hander was eventually run-out in the last over.

Chasing the huge total, Afghanistan never looked comfortable as they lost in-form Rahmanullah Gurbaz (0) in the first over. (PTI)

# Kylian Mbappé's nose injury places doubt on his continued involvement in Euro 2024

**DUSSELDORF, June 18:** Kylian Mbappé's facial injury in France's 1-0 win against Austria has put in doubt whether he will continue at the European Championship.

An aerial head-on-shoulder collision with Austria's Kevin Danso left Mbappé curled on the field with his nose bloodied and swollen late in the Group D game at Dusseldorf Arena.

"I don't have the elements in my hands," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "He didn't get off lightly. It is still to be seen. I cannot at this stage give the answer (if he will be ruled out)."

Mbappé's obvious pain following the incident prompted Austria

goalkeeper Patrick Pentz to signal for urgent medical assistance.

"We're worried to see Kylian leave the field like that," France midfielder N'Golo Kante said. "We still don't know what the situation is. ... We hope that it's not too severe and that he's back with us for the rest of the competition." Mbappé is France's talisman and his injury likely struck fear in the hearts of fans.

Later he appeared to try to lighten the mood.

"Any ideas for masks?" he posted on X, likely acknowledging he will need some form of facial protection if he is to play on at the European Championship.

France's best player, Mbappé is

widely considered the heir to Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo as soccer's biggest global icon. Also, he will finally wear the famous white jersey of Real Madrid next season after joining as a free agent from Paris Saint-Germain.

He tried to play on against Austria, but quickly fell to the ground again, holding his face and prompting whistles and jeers from the opposition fans, who seemed to believe he was time-wasting as France held on for the win.

He was then booked by referee Jesus Gil Manzano and replaced by Olivier Giroud.

"He's not doing well. He's with

the medical staff. His nose got badly hit that's for sure," Deschamps said. "We need to check, but it seems quite complicated, which is really unfortunate for us tonight."

Mbappé produced a mixed performance before the injury but still showed his importance to France's hopes of winning a record-equalling third European Championship and its first since 2000.

It was his moment of inspiration that led to Maximilian Wober scoring an own goal in the 38th minute that handed Deschamps his 100th win as France coach.

With a flash of close-ball con-

trol, Mbappé beat Philipp Wober in the box and crossed in search of a teammate. In Wober's desperation to cut out the danger, he inadvertently diverted the ball into his own net.

Mbappé was then guilty of a remarkable miss 10 minutes into the second half when failing to hit the target from close range with only the keeper to beat.

Bursting through on goal, he was too fast for Wober and had time to steady himself in the box before picking his spot. With France fans behind the goal just waiting for the net to bulge, Mbappé's shot instead curled past the post to the relief of the Austrians. (AP)

# New coach will be appointed, void left by Sunil Chhetri biggest worry: IM Vijayan

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Filling the huge void left by the iconic Sunil Chhetri's retirement is the biggest challenge facing the Indian football team at the moment, the legendary I M Vijayan said on Tuesday while playing down the sacking of head coach Igor Stimac.

The high-profile Stimac was removed by the All India Football Federation on Monday due to lack of results in recent times but former stars Vijayan and Climax Lawrence are not worried about the decision that brought to an end the Croatian World Cupper's five-year reign as the head coach of the senior men's team.

The absence of a ready replacement for Chhetri is a bigger cause for concern for them, who are now part of the AIFF's technical committee with Vijayan heading it.

Both Vijayan and Lawrence's view is that a coach can be appointed at any time but a striker, of the calibre of Chhetri, cannot

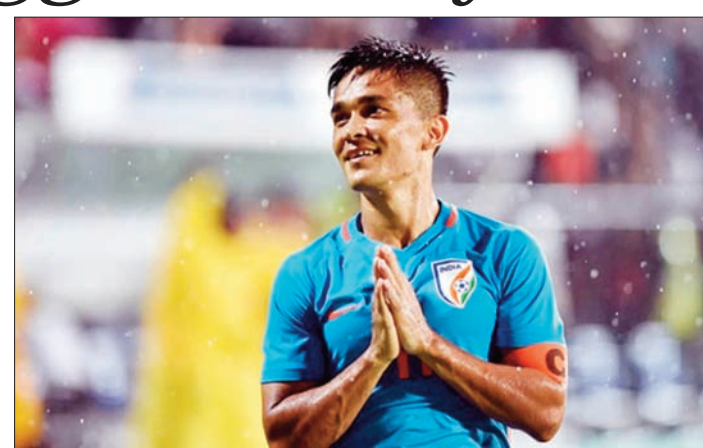
be unearthed overnight.

Men like Vijayan and Lawrence, who have served the Indian team with distinction, know that the sacking of Stimac was on expected lines following a forgettable AFC Asian Cup and the failure to go beyond the second round of FIFA World Cup Qualifiers despite getting a relatively easy draw.

The AIFF brass, including the members of the executive committee and those in the technical committee, was on the same page as far as Stimac was concerned after the disappointing campaign in the World Cup Qualifiers.

"It was a unanimous decision," said Vijayan.

"The coach will be appointed as early as possible so that the team doesn't lose out on anything before the next FIFA window in September. They will soon sit together and start the process of finding a coach," Vijayan, one of India's finest players, said.



"However, how do you find a replacement for Chhetri. That is going to be very difficult as a great player like Chhetri comes rarely. We have some good strikers, and we are trying to get them to play as much as possible."

"The biggest issue is that our strikers don't get a lot of playing time in domestic leagues, be it the ISL or the I-League."

In tournaments such as the ISL and I-League, the clubs look to recruit foreigners that serves their interest as they want to win trophies.

While that has been a stumbling block in the development of quality home-bred strikers, Lawrence feels that it's high time the game's stakeholders train their focus on scouting talent at the grassroots.

"Grassroots is where we have to focus. Yes, Indian strikers are not getting to play the amount of time they should, but there is no point cribbing over that. That's how professional football works. We have to look for talent at the grassroots and mould them into quality strikers," Lawrence said.

"True, you are not going to suddenly get another Sunil Chhetri, another Bhachu Bhutia and another IM Vijayan. So, we have to focus on building a good team and not just hope for one great striker to emerge and bail the team," Lawrence added.

The likes of Vikram Partap Singh, Manvir Singh, Lalanzuala Chhangte, Liston Colaco and Rahim Ali have emerged as options to lead India's charge upfront in the near future but Chhetri, with his record 94 international goals over a glorious 19-year career, have raised the bar too high for them to emulate. (PTI)



# Focus on South African batters in Super 8 clash against USA

**NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), June 18:** South Africa will have no room for error as their world-class batters will be keen to flex their muscles against a spirited USA in their opening Super Eight match of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

The Proteas have remained unbeaten in the tournament so far with their bowlers doing the heavy lifting in all four games.

Playing three games on the challenging New York tracks, and one in Kingstown, South Africa have not crossed the 120-run mark even once.

Although their batting performance is not a reflection of the team which possesses some big hitters like Quinton de Kock, Heinrich Klaassen, Tristan Stubbs and David Miller.

But still the top order of De Kock, Reeze Hendricks and captain Aiden Markram might feel the pressure to perform.

South Africa survived by a run against Nepal in their previous game and with the likes of defending champions England and hosts West Indies also in Group 2, the Proteas can ill afford to let up against USA. They would like to start the Super Eight on a winning note.

Ahead of the World Cup, South Africa's biggest concern was the woeful form of Anrich Nortje, but the star pacer has turned it around with some scintillating display in the group stage and is currently the joint second



leading wicket-taker with nine scalps.

Nortje and fellow pacer Ottneil Baartman, have formed a formidable pair, while Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada will also be eager to trouble the inexperienced USA batters.

Co-host USA, who are an eclectic mix of

eight Indians, two Pakistanis, a West Indian, one New Zealander, a South African and a Dutch, are in the midst of a dream run having qualified for the Super Eights in their debut appearance.

They have played an aggressive brand of

cricket.

They will be keeping an eye on the fitness of skipper Monank Patel, who missed the match against India and was also not going to play against Ireland due to a niggles.

They will be keen to cause another upset after defeating former champions Pakistan in the league stage. While it may be a daunting task, the spirited bunch are ready for the challenge.

"Definitely looking forward to the challenge (of Super Eight) for sure. Over the last couple of weeks, we've shown that obviously we could definitely compete and beat some of the full member nations," USA vice-captain Aaron Jones had said last week.

**Teams:**

**South Africa:** Aiden Markram (c), Ottniel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaassen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs.

**USA:** Monank Patel (c), Aaron Jones, Andries Gous, Corey Anderson, Ali Khan, Harmeet Singh, Jessy Singh, Milind Kumar, Nisarg Patel, Nitish Kumar, Noshush Kenjige, Saurabh Nathraivakar, Shadley Van Schalkwyk, Steven Taylor, Shayan Jahangir. Reserve Players: Gajanan Singh, Juanoy Drysdale, Yasir Mohammad.

Match starts at 8 PM IST. (PTI)

## Gautam Gambhir interviewed by CAC, set to be named India coach soon



**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Former India opener Gautam Gambhir was on Tuesday interviewed by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) for the national team's head coach position.

The interview took place over a zoom call with both Gambhir and Malhotra attending it virtually.

"Yes, Gambhir appeared for the interview with the CAC. One round of discussions happened today. There is another round expected tomorrow," a BCCI source told PTI.

Gambhir is believed to be the only candidate who is in contention and the announcement of his name is a mere formality which could happen in the next 48 hours.

The specifics of his interaction with CAC chairman Ashok Malhotra and his colleagues Jatin Paranjpe and Sulakshana Naik were not immediately known. Both Paranjpe and Naik are based in Mumbai.

The discussion, it is believed, was focussed on the roadmap he has in mind for the next three years, which will feature three ICC tournaments across formats.

There is an Apex Council meeting on Tuesday evening and it is understood that secretary Jay Shah will apprise the members about the coach selection process before the final announcement is made.

The CAC is also interviewing a few interested candidates for the North Zone selector's position. The 42-year-old Gambhir recently guided Kolkata Knight Riders to the IPL trophy as the team's mentor.

Current India coach Rahul Dravid will be stepping down at the end of the team's T20 World Cup campaign in the Americas.

The side is currently in Barbados for the Super 8 matches after remaining unbeaten in the group league stage. It will take on Afghanistan on June 20. (PTI)

## Tondaiman, Rajeshwari among five-member Indian shotgun team for Olympics

**NEW DELHI, June 18:** Senior trap shooter Prithviraj Tondaiman will spearhead the Indian shotgun team in the upcoming Paris Olympics as the national shooting federation Tuesday named a five-member squad for the mega event, with all of them appearing in their maiden games.

The Paris Games will be held from July 26 to August 11.

Tondaiman has made the cut in men's trap, while Rajeshwari Kumari will take aim in the women's trap event.

Anantjeet Singh Naruka will be India's sole men's skeet shooter while Raiza Dhillon and Maheshwari Chauhan in women's skeet complete the five quota places that the shotgun squad had earned in the qualification cycle.

Maheshwari and Anantjeet will also feature as the sole Indian pair in the skeet mixed team event, which is making a debut at the Paris Games. Incidentally, all five named will also be competing in their first Olympic Games. The National Rifle Association of India's (NRAI) secretary general Kr. Sultan Singh said "There was intense competition for places and things could have changed in case some shooters medalled at the recently concluded Lonato World Cup.

"But we believe that we have a great shotgun team, which has won the highest ever spots for India at any Games and certainly a second Olympic medal in the discipline looks a strong possibility." (PTI)

## Little hectic but we're ready; keenness in group to do something special: Rohit on Super 8

**BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS), June 18:** India captain Rohit Sharma conceded that the T20 World Cup's Super 8 stage is going to be a "little hectic" but his players are prepared for the grind as there is "real keenness" among them to do "something special".

India will open their Super 8 campaign against Afghanistan on June 20, followed by games against Bangladesh (June 22, Antigua) and Australia (June 24, St Lucia).

"Once we play our first game, we are going to play the next two in a span of 3 or 4 days," Rohit said in a video uploaded by the BCCI.

"It is going to be a little hectic but we are used to all of this. We travel and play a lot so that is never going to be an excuse," the 37-year-old added.

The Indian team had an extended practice session on Monday with senior players like Virat Kohli and Rohit spending more-than-usual time in the nets.

"There is real keenness in the group to go and do something special. That's a good way to start the second stage. It clearly shows that everyone wants to make a difference and we take our skill sessions quite seriously," he said.

"There is something to achieve in every skill session that you do," Rohit said on the mood inside the dressing room after an undefeated run in the group league stage.

The Indian team endured hostile batting conditions during the US leg due to the drop-in pitches used by the organisers.

Rohit said the ongoing Caribbean leg



brings with it a sense of familiarity and his team would look to make the most of it.

"We have seen a lot of games here, we have played a lot of games here. So everyone understands what one needs to do to get the result in our favour. Everyone is looking forward and are quite excited as well at the same time," Rohit said.

The Indian team defeated Ireland, Pakistan and the USA in the league stage before their final group clash against Canada was called off due to the wet outfield in floodlit Florida. (PTI)

## It's great to go out knowing I'm not going to cop it anymore: Warner



**NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), June 18:** Australian Opener David Warner is relieved that he will be retiring after the T20 World Cup here and is hopeful that the "real cricket tragics" would see him as the one who tried to change the game with his aggressive batting while being the "only one" to have copped flak.

Warner, who retired from the Test and ODI format earlier this year, will walk into international sunset at the end of the ongoing showpiece in the USA and West Indies.

The 37-year-old Warner served a one-year ban by Cricket Australia for

his involvement in the 2018 sandpaper gate scandal but enjoyed plenty of success since his return to the national side.

"Coming back since 2018 I've probably ... been the only one that's ever copped a lot of flak," Warner told News Corp.

"My back was always up against the wall when I came back, and I knew that. I copped my fair share over my career. I've probably been the only one that's ever copped a lot of flak, whether it's people who don't like the Australian cricket team or don't like me."

Warner, who has 49 centuries across formats and close to 19000 runs in international cricket, was speaking ahead of Australia's Super 8 clash against Bangladesh here.

"I've always been that person who has copped it. I always feel like I've taken a lot of pressure off a lot of guys as well and I think understandably, I've been that person to be able to absorb that," the combative opener added.

"But one can only absorb (so much). For me it's great to go out knowing I'm not going to cop it anymore."

He acknowledged the fact that his name will forever be linked to the scandal that took place at Newlands, Cape Town during a Test match against South Africa. At the same time, the batter is also hopeful that he will be remembered for the manner in which he played the game at the top of the order.

"I think it's going to be inevitable that when people talk about me in 20 or 30 years' time, there will always be that sandpaper scandal," he said.

"But for me, if they're real cricket tragics and they love cricket, (as well as) my closest supporters, they will always see me as that cricketer - someone who tried to change the game."

"Someone who tried to follow in the footsteps of the openers before me and try and score runs at a great tempo and change Test cricket in a way."

Both Warner and then captain Steve Smith were suspended for one year with Cameron Bancroft getting a nine-month suspension.

Warner was also banned for life from taking any leadership role in the Australian cricket setup. (PTI)





## WORLD SICKLE CELL DAY

19th June to 03rd July, 2024

### Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Awareness Drive

Location wise list of Sickle Cell Screening Health Camps

SL	District	Date & Location	SL	District	Date & Location
1	Baksa	19/06/2024 - Majrabari Additional SC, Hahchara Village, Jalab BPHC	18	Jorhat	19/06/2024 - Bahphola LP School, Kolbari SD, Solmora BPHC
2	Bajali	19/06/2024 - Garh Basic LP School, Bandhasidhani, Nityananda BPHC	19	Kamrup	19/06/2024 - Nazirakhat AWC/Rangamancho, Sonapur BPHC
3	Barpeta	19/06/2024 - Gamariguri LP School, Barpetaroad BPHC	20	Kamrup	19/06/2024 - Doledonga Community Hall, Jalukbari MPHC
4	Biswanath	19/06/2024 - Dubia Karbi BPHC, Gohpur	21	Karbi Anglong	19/06/2024 - Deopani, Bokajan BPHC
5	Bongaigaon	19/06/2024 - Nigomkhola, Bongaigaon BPHC	22	Karimganj	19/06/2024 - Dullavcherra TE, R. K. Nagar BPHC
6	Cachar	19/06/2024 - Shibasthan AAM, Harinagar BPHC	23	Kokrajhar	19/06/2024 - Kashiabari SC AAM, Kachugaon BPHC
7	Charaideo	19/06/2024 - Deepling TE Hospital, Patsaku BPHC	24	Lakhimpur	19/06/2024 - Borkhamukh, Ghilamora BPHC
8	Chirang	19/06/2024 - Khunkrajhara Community Hall, Ballanguri BPHC	25	Majuli	19/06/2024 - Nayabazar, Ratanpur Miri MPHC
9	Darrang	19/06/2024 - Kehotali, No.1 Abhoypukhuri, Jaljali BPHC	26	Morigaon	19/06/2024 - Silchang village, Nellie SD, Morigaon
10	Dhemaji	19/06/2024 - Gogamukh CHC	27	Nagaon	19/06/2024 - Bangthaigaon AAM, Buragohaitan BPHC
11	Dhubri	19/06/2024 - Krishnakali TE, Chapar BPHC	28	Nalbari	19/06/2024 - Pachim Borigog Ambapriya Choudhuri HS, Ghograpar BPHC
12	Dibrugarh	19/06/2024 - Chaharikota AAM, Lengeri Sector, Khowang BPHC	29	Sivasagar	19/06/2024 - Ligriribari LP School, Demow BPHC
13	Dima Hasao	19/06/2024 - Langting Market	30	Sonitpur	19/06/2024 - Sapoi TE, Dhekiajuli BPHC
14	Goalpara	19/06/2024 - Ghatiyapara AWC, Ambari MPHC, Rangjuli BPHC	31	South Salmara	19/06/2024 - Kuchnimara Gaon Panchayat Office
15	Golaghat	19/06/2024 - Naharjan Tea Garden, Bokakhat	32	Tinsukia	19/06/2024 - Tara Tea Estate, Kakopothar Block
16	Hailakandi	19/06/2024 - Sonasara Nachghar, Katlichera BPHC	33	Udalguri	19/06/2024 - Gopsachuba High School, Khoirabari BPHC
17	Hojai	19/06/2024 - Taralanshu Village, Lanka BPHC	34	West Karbi Anglong	19/06/2024 - Mokoiram LP School, Baithalansho BPHC

Testing facilities available in nearby health sub-centres, primary health centres and special campaign camps.  
"Transforming lives, Defeating Sickle Cell: Together We Heal"

(NHMD/2024-25/101)