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● Obama endorses Harris' WH bid, vows to do everything to make her win

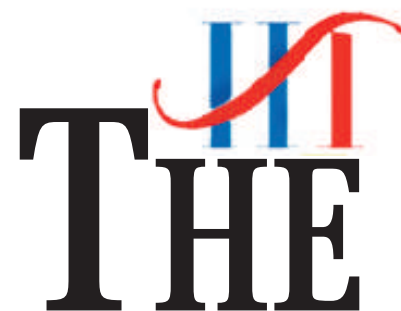
● US arrests 2 leaders of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel

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● PM Modi pays homage to Kargil War heroes

● Mamata to attend NITI Aayog meet to protest budget



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# THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU Voice of the hills people

Vol. No. 1

Issue No. 148

RNI-ASSEN/2023/86488

GUWAHATI, SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2024

PAGES 12

PRICE ₹ 8

## 'Moidams' of Ahom dynasty placed in UNESCO Heritage List

It was a matter of 'immense joy and pride' for India, says PM

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** The mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty in Assam -- 'Moidams' -- was on Friday included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, making it the first cultural property from the Northeast to get the coveted tag.

The decision was taken during the ongoing 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) being held in India.

'Moidams' was submitted as India's nomination for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List for the year 2023-24.

In a post on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was a matter of "immense joy and pride" for India that 'Moidams' had made it to the WHC list.

"The Moidams at Charaideo showcase the glorious Ahom culture, which places utmost reverence to ancestors. I hope more people learn about the great Ahom rule and culture. Glad that the Moidams join the #WorldHeritage



List," he said.

The unique burial mounds, represented by pyramid-like structures known as 'Moidams', were used by the Tai-Ahom dynasty that ruled Assam for around 600 years.

"Moidams' are vaulted chambers (chow-chali), often double-storied, that has an arched passage for entry. Atop the hemispherical mud mounds, layers of bricks and

earth are laid. The base of the mound is reinforced by a polygonal toe-wall and an arched gateway on the west," according to the UNESCO website.

"Eventually, the mound would be covered by a layer of vegetation, reminiscent of a group of hillocks, transforming the area into an undulating landscape," the description of 'Moidams' said.

Excavation shows each vaulted chamber has a centrally-raised platform where the body was laid. Several objects used by the deceased during his life, like royal insignia, objects made of wood, ivory or iron, gold pendants, ceramic ware, weapons, clothes to the extent of human beings (only from the Luk-kha-khun clan) were buried with their king, according to the website.

Reacting to 'Moidams' receiving the UNESCO tag, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said it is a day "etched in golden letters" and thanked UNESCO, the World Heritage Committee for understanding the outstanding universal value of 'Moidams'.

The session of the WHC being held at the Bharat Mandapam here from July 21 to July 31, will examine 27 nominations from across the world, including 19 cultural sites, four natural sites and two mixed sites. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Pak using terror, proxy wars to stay relevant: PM

25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kargil victory



**DRAS (LADAKH), July 26:** In a stern warning to Islamabad on the 25th anniversary of India's victory in the Kargil conflict, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said Pakistan has been trying to stay relevant by using terrorism and proxy wars and Indian soldiers will crush all terror attempts with full force.

Addressing a ceremony at the Kargil memorial in Dras, Modi said "falsehood and terror" were brought down to their knees by the truth in the 1999 war. He also noted that Pakistan has not learnt anything from its past.

"Today, I am speaking at a place from where the masters of terror can hear my voice directly. I want to tell these patrons of terrorism that their nefarious intentions will never succeed," Modi said in the presence of India's top military brass.

Condemning terrorism, Modi said Pakistan has always faced defeat in the past and asserted that the evil intentions of terrorists will

never be fulfilled. "Pakistan has not learnt anything from its past and has continued to wage war in the garb of terrorism and proxy wars to stay relevant," he said.

"Our bravehearts will trample all the terror attempts," Modi asserted.

The prime minister also paid glowing tributes to soldiers who had made supreme sacrifices in the Kargil war.

"In Kargil, we not only won the war, we presented an incredible example of truth, restraint and strength," he remarked.

Kargil Vijay Diwas, the prime minister said, reminds us that the sacrifices made for the nation are

immortal. "The nation is forever indebted and deeply grateful to the mighty superheroes of our armed forces," Modi said.

On July 26, 1999, the Indian Army announced the successful culmination of Operation Vijay, declaring victory after a nearly three-month battle on the icy heights of Kargil in Ladakh. The day is observed as Kargil Vijay Diwas to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan.

In his remarks at the Shradhdhanjali Samaroh, Modi said the victory in Kargil war was not of any government or any party. "This victory belongs (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Himanta pays tribute to armed forces on Kargil Vijay Diwas

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday paid tribute to the Indian armed forces for their supreme sacrifice, commemorating 25 years of Kargil War.

Sarma recalled how the armed forces ensured a crushing defeat to Pakistan in 1999.

"25 years ago, our brave soldiers culminated a long campaign to protect Maa Bharti from aggressors through Op Vijay and Op Safed Sagar. From Point 5140 to Batra Top & from Tiger Hill to Tololing Top, our brave men ensured a crushing defeat to Pakistan in the Kargil War," Sarma wrote in a post on X.

"Today, as we commemorate 25 yrs of #KargilVijayDiwas, the entire nation bows in gratitude to our forces for their unmatched bravery and supreme sacrifice," he added. On July 26, 1999, the Indian Army announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay", declaring victory after a nearly three-month-long battle on the icy heights of Kargil in Ladakh.

The day is observed as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in the war.

## Flood situation improves

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** The flood situation in Assam further improved on Friday as the number of affected people dipped to around 56,000 in seven districts, an official bulletin said.

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin said that the only major river that was flowing above the danger level was Disang at Nanglamuraghat.

It said the number of people affected by the deluge was 56,763 in 173 villages in seven districts. The affected districts were Sivasagar, Goalpara, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Dhemaji, Jorhat and Nagaon. Till Thursday, over 66,000 people in nine districts were affected by the deluge. The toll in this year's floods, storms, lightning strikes and landslides was 114.

Nagaon remained the worst-hit district with 49,311 people affected.

A total of 19 relief camps with 1,736 inmates were operational, while another six relief distribution centres were serving 13,529 people.

A total cropland of 4,279.4 hectares remained inundated and 10,370 animals were affected in the second wave of floods.

Infrastructure such as houses, cattle sheds and roads were damaged in the floods, the ASDMA bulletin said. (PTI)

## M'laya police arrest 10 HNYF activists

Tourists banned from visiting Sohra and Dawki at Umtngar

HT Bureau

**SHILLONG, July 26:** As many as 10 activists of the Hynniewtrep National Youth Front (HNYF) were arrested after they were checking and stopping vehicles ferrying tourists to Sohra and Dawki at Umtngar on Friday.

According to the East Khasi Hills Superintendent of police Sylvester Nongtger, the ten were arrested and a case has been registered against them. In the morning today, it was reported that HNYF took action against tourist taxis as well private cars with Assam registration, turning them back from the Umtngar area.

These vehicles were barred from proceeding towards popular tourist destinations such as Sohra and Dawki.

The HNYF's decision comes in response to allegations that local vehi-



cles are being prevented from ferrying passengers to these destinations. Many tourist vehicles with AS registration were turned back. HNYF president Sadon K Blah said the

checking was conducted to send a clear message to the state government for immediately setting up of entry-exit points as mandated by the Meghalaya (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Rajnath Singh's positive response to defence corridor in Assam: Himanta

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has responded positively to the proposal of setting up the country's third defence corridor in the state.

Sarma met Singh during his recent visit to New Delhi and discussed the issue of setting up of the defence corridor in the state after Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. 'After the setting up of a semiconductor unit in the state, we are keen that it becomes a defence production hub and Singh has responded positively to the proposal', Sarma said at a press conference here.

Sarma asserted that the proposal is under "advanced consideration" but it may take some time due to its sensitivity.

The Chief Minister pointed out that several factors need to be evaluated before a final decision is made, but establishing a defence corridor would significantly impact the state's economic landscape.

Sarma also noted that, for the first time, the Union Budget acknowledged that Assam's floods are exacerbated by water from outside the country. He highlighted that the Centre has expressed its readiness to provide comprehensive support to address this issue. Sarma also met Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman to discuss funding for a satellite township near Guwahati, expansion of the Brahmaputra Valley Fertiliser Corporation in Namrup, and the commissioning of its fourth unit.

The chief minister also met Union home minister Amit Shah who assured him that the issue of Aadhaar cards, which were blocked while taking the biometrics for updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC), will be resolved at the earliest. He said 9.23 lakh Aadhaar cards were blocked and this was causing immense inconvenience to people, particularly to students. The chief minister said during his (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Assam's detention centre comes under Supreme Court fire

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Flagging the "sorry state of affairs" at a detention centre for declared foreigners in Assam, the Supreme Court on Friday said it lacked adequate water supply, proper toilets and sanitation.

The apex court said it has perused a report submitted by the Assam State Legal Services Authority about the status of facilities made available at the detention centre in Assam's Matia.

"We find that the facilities are very poor in the sense that there is no adequate water supply, there is no proper sanitation, there are no proper toilets," a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said. The bench, which was hearing a plea concerning deportation of those who have been declared as foreigners and the facilities provided at the detention centres in Assam, said the report does not speak about the availability of food and medical help.

It directed the secretary of the Assam State Legal Services Authority to ensure one more visit to ascertain the quantity and quality of the food supplied at the centre, if cleanliness is maintained in the kitchen, and existence of medical and recreational facilities. The top court asked for a fresh report to be placed before it within three weeks and posted the matter for hearing in September. While hearing the matter on May 16, the apex court had observed that the Centre



must take immediate steps for deporting 17 declared foreigners at the detention centre in Matia. It had said priority should be given to deport four who have spent more than two years in the detention centre. During the hearing on Friday, the bench observed, "Please see the report submitted by the Assam State Legal Services Authority. Such a sorry state of affairs. There is no water supply, there are no proper toilets, no medical facilities. What kind of facilities you are managing?"

The counsel appearing for Centre said he has instructions with regard to deportation as per the apex court's May 16 order. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Congress slams Modi's claim on Agnipath as 'blatant lie'

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** The Congress on Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of playing "petty politics" while paying tribute to martyrs on Kargil Vijay Diwas and said his remarks that his government implemented the Agnipath scheme at the behest of the Army was a "blatant lie".

The Congress' attack came after Modi said the Agnipath military recruitment scheme was an example of necessary reforms undertaken by the Army and accused the opposition of playing politics over the recruitment process aimed at keeping the average age in the armed forces low. During his address on Kargil Vijay Diwas in Dras to mark the 25th anniversary of victory in the

Kargil War, Modi said some people were playing politics over a sensitive issue related to national security and rubbished claims that the Agnipath scheme was launched to save pension money.

Hitting back at Modi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "It is very unfortunate and deplorable that Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji is doing petty politics even on occasions like paying tribute to martyrs on Kargil Vijay Diwas. No Prime Minister has ever done this before."

"Modi ji is saying that his government implemented the Agnipath scheme at the behest of the Army, this is a blatant lie and an unforgivable insult (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** The National Health Mission (NHM), Assam signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Oil India Rural Development Society, Dulaijan and Numaligarh Refinery Limited in presence of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at Lok Sewa Bhawan here on Friday, an official statement said.

It may be noted that the under the MoUs, financial assistance of Rs 2.5 crore each will be provided as a part of CSR fund for the procurement of Hemo-Dialysis machines to treat advanced kidney failure patients.

"The new Hemo Dialysis ma-

chines will be installed in dialysis centres to cater to the needs of the patients. The aim of the MoU is to facilitate availability of dialysis machines and reduce out of pocket expenditure of the patients currently undergoing treatment with nephrological ailments," the official statement.

It further said that the department of Health and Family Welfare, through Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis programme is providing free Hemo-Dialysis services in 41 dialysis centres with 277 HD machines established in the Public Health Institutes such as medical colleges, district hospitals and community health centres.

"Moreover, considering the increasing demand, dialysis services to be expanded to 37 new hospitals with 150 hemo-dialysis machines across the state," it added.

Commissioner and Secretary Health and Family Welfare Dr P Ashok Babu, mission director NHM Assam Dr M S Lakshmi Priya, MD NRL Bhaskar Jyoti Phukan, CGM NRL Kajal Saikia, president Oil India Rural Development Society Bhairab Bhuyan, CGM administration Pipeline Headquarters Arunijoti Baruah and other senior officers of Government of Assam, NRL and OIL were present on the occasion.



## ASEAN cornerstone of India's Act East Policy and its Indo-Pacific vision: EAM Jaishankar

**VIENTIANE (LAOS), July 26:** The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is the cornerstone of India's Act East Policy and its Indo-Pacific vision, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday, as he sought to expand political, economic and security co-operation with the 10-member influential regional bloc.

Jaishankar is here in the Laotian capital to participate in the meetings of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In his remarks at the opening session of the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting, Jaishankar said the priority that India attaches to ASEAN and EAS (East Asia Summit) platforms is evident from Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting Jakarta last year on the very eve of the G20 Summit in New Delhi.

He noted that Prime Minister Modi had announced a 12-point plan that has been largely acted upon.

"For India, ASEAN is the cornerstone of its Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific vision that was thereafter built on it. For us, political, economic and security co-operation with ASEAN is of the utmost priority. So too are people-to-people linkages, that we are constantly seeking to expand," Jaishankar said.



It is encouraging to note that the India-ASEAN partnership acquires ever more dimensions with each passing day, he said.

He thanked his Singaporean counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan for co-chairing the meeting.

He also welcomed Minister Bendito Freitas of Timor-Leste as an observer in the meeting.

"Last year, Prime Minister Modi announced that we will open an Embassy in Dili. We are proceeding to do so very shortly and in fact, will be undertaking high-level visits there as well," Jaishankar said.

"I congratulate Lao PDR for the chairmanship of ASEAN and extend our fullest support for the successful Chairmanship. I also thank

our colleague and Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic) for the warm welcome and hospitality," Jaishankar added.

He extended his deep appreciation to all the members for strengthening ASEAN-India relations through substantive and tangible cooperation identified under the ASEAN-India Plan of Action and its Annex.

"Participated in a productive ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting this morning in Vientiane, Laos," Jaishankar posted on X.

"Welcome the Philippines as the incoming country coordinator. Digital, defence, maritime, connectivity, security, health and traditional medicine and cultural heritage preservation continue to

be priority areas for India-ASEAN cooperation," Jaishankar wrote on X. "Also spoke about the situation in Myanmar, keeping the Sea Lines of Communication open and free, Quad's outlook on ASEAN & AOIP (ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific) and the conflict in Gaza," he said.

Jaishankar's visit to Laos is of particular significance that this year marks a decade of India's Act East Policy, which was announced by Prime Minister Modi at the 9th East Asia Summit in 2014, the Ministry of External Affairs said in New Delhi ahead of his visit.

"As we celebrate a decade of the Act East Policy, India values the progress achieved in implementing our comprehensive strategic partnership and the increasing synergy in our outlook for the region," the minister added.

The 'Act East Policy' is a diplomatic initiative to promote economic, strategic and cultural relations with the vast Asia-Pacific region at different levels.

India envisages a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, one which is built on a rules-based international order.

The 10 member countries of ASEAN are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. (PTI)

## Capital gains tax rationalisation was industry's demand: Revenue Secy

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said the rationalisation of the capital gains taxes on various asset classes in the FY25 Budget is a tax simplification measure as sought by the industry and not to augment revenue.

Addressing members of the industry chambers CII and ASSOCHAM, he wanted to know if the industry was in favour of having different tax rates for different asset classes.

The FY25 Budget has rationalised the holding period for various asset classes for short- and long-term capital gains tax. The holding period for all listed assets has now been made one year for long-term capital gains tax (LTCG). For unlisted shares, debentures and real estate, the holding period for LTCG is two

years.

In terms of rates, LTCG tax has been rationalised at 12.5 per cent for all asset classes without the benefit of indexation. Earlier, the rate was 20 per cent for all asset classes except STT-paid equities. For real estate, it was 20 per cent with indexation.

Malhotra said the changes in "capital gains tax is a simplification measure and not a revenue augmentation measure. Yes, there is a revenue increase, but that is very, very marginal. It is a simplification exercise which all of you (industry) asked for". The revised LTCG tax structure has removed tax arbitrage for various asset classes.

Stating that the virtues of simplification lie in lowering compliance burden, the Secretary said simplification does not mean that tax in-

cidence will go down in every case, and a taxpayer will benefit in every aspect, be it holding period or the lowest rates.

"Well, that will not happen because ultimately the Government needs revenues. So, while you are asking for simplification.... then let's also be prepared that some things will go up and some things will go down. But simplification has its own virtues...." Malhotra said.

He asked the industry whether the incidence of tax should be different on gains made from selling shares and gains made from selling debentures or real estate properties held for the same duration.

"This question, I put to you and think yourself. Should the tax on these two asset classes or any other asset class be different?" Malhotra said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## 'Moidams' of Ahom dynasty

India is hosting the key event of UNESCO for the first time. Ahead of the start of the session, Janhvi Sharma, additional director general of the Archaeological Survey of India, told reporters that ICOMOS, an advisory body to UNESCO, had recommended favourably for the inscription of the 'Moidams' which meant that it "fulfils all those parameters".

The Paris-based International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is one of the key advisory bodies to UNESCO and its experts visit the nominated sites. Vishal V Sharma, chairperson of the WHC and ambassador and permanent representative of India to UNESCO, had said in a press conference that if the nomination gets accepted, it would be the first cultural property from the Northeast to get a UNESCO tag.

The Kaziranga National Park and the Manas National Park fall in the natural and mixed heritage categories respectively, he added. In an interview with PTI on Monday, Sharma said he was hopeful that 'Moidams' would make it to the list. (PTI)

## Pak using terror, proxy

to the country." Recalling the days of the Kargil war, Modi said he was fortunate to be amidst soldiers back then and added that he still remembers how the soldiers carried out a difficult operation at such a height. "I salute the brave sons of the country who made the supreme sacrifice to protect the motherland," he said. "India will overcome all challenges that come in the way of development, be it Ladakh or Jammu and Kashmir," he said. The abrogation of Article 370, Modi reminded, will complete five years on August 5 and today's Jammu and Kashmir is talking about a new future full of dreams.

Modi gave examples of progress in Jammu and Kashmir and mentioned G20 meetings being held in the union territory. "This heaven on earth is swiftly moving in the direction of peace and prosperity," the prime minister added. Before his address, Modi remotely carried out the "first blast" of the strategic Shinkun La Tunnel project that will be constructed at an altitude of around 15,800 feet on the Nimu-Padum-Darcha road to provide all-weather connectivity to Leh. "This tunnel will open doors of new possibilities for the development and better future of Ladakh," he said. The prime minister said the tunnel will make the lives of people of Ladakh easier given the numerous hardships they face due to the region's extreme weather.

Underlining the government's efforts to boost ease of living and provide more services for the people of Ladakh, Modi mentioned an approximate six-time increase in the budget from ₹ 1,100 crore to ₹ 6,000 crore in the last five years. "Be it roads, electricity, water, education, power supply, employment, every direction of Ladakh is transforming," he said. Referring to the ambitious targets for the border areas, the prime minister informed that the Border Road Organisation (BRO) has completed more than 330 projects, including the Sela Tunnel, showcasing "New India's" capabilities and direction. (PTI)

## M'laya police arrest 10

Residents Safety and Security Act (MRSSA), 2016, which clearly stated that "even tourists have to produce verification that they are visiting the state as tourists."

Meanwhile, terming the incident as unfortunate, Meghalaya deputy chief minister incharge home (police) Pre-stone Tynsong said, "It is very unfortunate that incident happened today and we were not aware and we never expected that few group of people will just do like that (checking tourists visiting Sohra and Dawki)."

He also assured, "Let me tell you very bluntly that the law has taken its own course. We will not allow such things to happen again."

## Himanta distributes appointment

to their families," he added. The latest appointment distribution follows a similar ceremony on July 14, where Sarma handed appointment letters to 41 youths for positions ranging from Grade IV to college teachers in the Education Department.

## Rajnath Singh's positive

meeting with railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, he requested a special train service from Guwahati to Lucknow to facilitate pilgrimages to the Ram Temple. He noted that over one lakh pilgrims from the state are eager to visit the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya but are currently inconvenienced by the lack of a direct train service.

Additionally, the chief minister announced that the state government will soon introduce a domicile policy to ensure that local residents who are proficient in the state's language are given preference in recruitment. Initially, this policy will apply to third and fourth-grade posts, with plans to extend it to other positions over time.

Sarma said he has also discussed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi the state's request to recognise Assamese as a classical language.

He highlighted that, for the first time, the question paper for civil services examinations is being set in Assamese. Furthermore, the state government is considering implementing a mutual transfer system for Grade 3 and 4 employees, similar to the one existing for teachers. The CM said according to economic survey data, Assam has emerged as one of the five fastest-growing states in the country. He expressed optimism that if this growth trend continues over the next six to seven years, Assam will become a leading developed state. (PTI)

## Assam's detention centre

The bench asked the Centre's counsel to also take instructions regarding facilities provided at the detention centres. The counsel appearing for the petitioner said they have heard from lawyers in Assam that some of those who are proposed to be deported have cases pending in the high court. "They must check since they are deporting people whose cases are pending somewhere down the line," he said.

The petitioner's counsel said deportation should not happen before the legal process has got completed. "They must tell us if it is voluntary, involuntary and whether the Bangladesh government has agreed," the lawyer said.

The bench granted the Centre three weeks to file its response on the issue of deportation. The plea has also sought a direction to the Assam government not to detain any person declared a foreigner by a foreigners tribunal until it can show proof of possible deportation in the foreseeable future. (PTI)

## Congress slams Modi's claim

to our valiant Armed Forces. Modi ji, it is you who are spreading lies!" he said in a post on X. Former Army Chief General (Retd) MM Naravane has said on record that 75 per cent of recruits were to be taken for permanency in the Agnipath scheme and the rest were to be let go after four years, he said.

But the Modi government did the opposite and forcibly implemented this scheme for all three armed forces, Kharge said.

"According to news reports, former Army Chief General (Retd) MM Naravane in his book, which the Modi government has stalled from being published, has also said that the 'Agnipath Scheme' was shocking for the Army, and for the Navy and the Air Force, it came like a 'bolt out of the blue'!" he said.

"Are we creating professional soldiers, only by six months of training?" Kharge asked. Soldiers join the Army out of patriotism, not to earn a living, he asserted.

The Congress chief pointed out that many retired officers had strongly criticised the scheme, saying it was endangering national security and the aspirations of the rural youth and demanded that it be completely scrapped. All this is on record, he added.

"Agniveers do not get any pension, no gratuity, no family pension, no liberalised family pension and no education allowance for their children," he said. "Modi ji, 15 Agniveers have been martyred so far. At least respect their martyrdom. There is a lot of anger and strong opposition among the youth of the country regarding Agniveer! The Congress party's demand is consistent -- the Agnipath Scheme should be scrapped!" Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh accused the prime minister of "lying even on Kargil Vijay Diwas".

"He (Modi) says that the Agnipath/Agniveer scheme was introduced by the Army. General MM Naravane, who was Army chief at that time, has written that the scheme came as a complete surprise to the Army and as 'a bolt from the blue' to the Navy and Air Force. Mr Modi is now trying to evade his responsibility for this disastrous scheme," Ramesh said in a post on X.

"He (Modi) says that managing the pension bill has nothing to do with the introduction of Agnipath. This is contrary to all that government spokespersons, military experts, and defence commentators have been pointing out for the last two years," he said.

"There has been unanimity that managing the pension bill of the Government of India was the primary motivation for Agnipath/Agniveer. Now Mr Modi says that this is not true," he said. It is absolutely amazing what the "self-proclaimed divinity" tries to get away with, Ramesh said.

"But the people of India found him out on June 4th, 2024 and it is clear that he's getting even more self-delusional," the Congress leader said. (PTI)

## MSP legal guarantee issue rocks Rajya Sabha; Opposition stages protest



**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Opposition parties led by the Congress on Friday created a ruckus and obstructed proceedings in the Rajya Sabha, as they were not satisfied with Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's reply on providing a legal guarantee on minimum support price (MSP) to farmers.

The trouble began during Question Hour when Chouhan listed steps taken by the government for the welfare of farmers and spoke about the committee looking into strengthening the MSP system but stopped short of talking about a legal guarantee for crop support prices.

Following the minister's remark, Congress MPs, including Randeep Surjewala and Jairam Ramesh, protested, saying that Chouhan's reply was incomplete.

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhanakhar tried to diffuse the situation, saying the minister had given a detailed reply and if the members were not satisfied, they should use available avenues to seek answers.

Dhanakhar repeatedly asked the members to allow the proceedings to continue and also threatened to name members for disrupting the House.

As per the rule, an MP named by the Chair has to withdraw from the House for the remainder of the day.

Opposition members, however, refused to relent and continued to shout slogans, disrupting proceedings for a few more minutes.

Earlier, in his replying during supplementaries, Chouhan said the government has set up a panel on MSP and would consider the recommendations once the report is submitted. "I would like to state that serving farmers for us is like worshipping God," he said, and asserted that "pradhan mantri Modi ji se bada koi Kisan hitashi nahi hai (There is no bigger well-wisher of farmers than Prime Minister

Modi)".

Chouhan said the panel has been formed to give suggestions on making the MSP system more effective and transparent.

Additionally, he said, the committee has been asked to examine the feasibility of giving greater autonomy to the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and ways to make it more scientific.

To ensure higher prices of crops for farmers, a mandate has also been given to the committee to suggest steps for strengthening the agricultural marketing system in line with the changing needs of the country. This committee is also working on issues like natural farming and crop diversification, the minister said.

The meetings of this committee are being organised regularly. Since July 22, 2022, the committee has met 6 times. Additionally, 35 meetings of various sub-committees have also been held.

"Whenever the panel submits its report, the government will examine it," Chouhan said.

On the question of whether the government wants to give a legal guarantee of MSP to farmers or not, the minister said it is continuously working towards farmers' welfare.

The MSP rates have been increased regularly to give proper prices to farmers, he added.

The agriculture minister informed that the government has a six-pronged strategy to give appropriate MSP to farmers.

It includes increasing farm production, reducing the cost of production, giving appropriate prices of the produce, compensating for loss due to natural calamities, diversification of agriculture, and organic farming.

"We are being called anti-farmer. I would like to state that we are working on solutions."

"This government is committed to farmers. We are continuously taking decisions for the benefit of farmers... The government is serious, and we will take appropriate steps once the committee's report comes," Chouhan said.

Amid sloganeering by Opposition party members, he said, "We have given twice the MSP rates as compared to when (Randeep) Surjewala's government was in power", in an apparent reference to the Congress-led government.

The minister said the Modi government gives MSP after adding 50 per cent profit to the cost of production. (PTI)

## Sensex rebounds 1,293 pts, Nifty races to record high on value buying in bluechips

**MUMBAI, July 26:** Benchmark Sensex rebounded by 1,293 points while Nifty shot up to a record high on Friday, cutting short the five-day losing streak on heavy value buying at lower levels and a rally in blue-chips like Infosys, Airtel and Reliance Industries. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,292.92 points or 1.62 per cent to settle at 81,332.72. During the day, it soared 1,387.38 points or 1.73 per cent to 81,427.18.

The NSE Nifty surged 428.75 points or 1.76 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,834.85. As many as 47 of Nifty constituents closed in green while three ended lower.

Sensex and Nifty had been on a decline since Friday last. Sensex tumbled 1,303.66 points or 1.60 per cent, while the Nifty declined 394.75 points or 1.59 per cent in five straight days of losses to Thursday.

All the Sensex shares except for Nestle closed in green on Friday.

Bharti Airtel was the biggest gainer, rising by over 4.51 per cent. Adani Ports, Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, HCL Technologies, Infosys, JSW Steel and Mahindra & Mahindra were the other big gainers. Nestle was the only loser, closing lower by 0.07 per cent.

"The domestic market experienced a substantial rebound on the start of the next month expiry, recovering from the recent losses incurred following the Union Budget. This upturn was driven by positive reactions to the better-than-expected US GDP, which augurs well for global demand."

"Investors are adopting buy-on-dip strategy, refocusing on quarterly earnings and stock-specific trends. Notably, gains were observed across sectors, with Metals and IT leading, and midcaps outperforming," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge soared 2.12 per cent and smallcap index rallied 1 per cent. All the indices ended higher, with telecommunication jumping 3.36 per cent, metal (3.19 per cent), teck (2.76 per cent), auto (2.35 per cent), commodities (2.26 per cent) and healthcare (2.10 per cent). As many as 2,652 stocks advanced while 1,286 declined and 102 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"This surge was fueled by improved sentiment following robust performances in IT and Metal stocks, as well as significant rollovers to the August series. Broader indices also reflected this strength, showing substantial gains," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark rose by 728.07 points or 0.90 per cent and the Nifty climbed 303.95 points or 1.23 per cent. (PTI)

## PM to chair NITI Aayog Governing Council meet today; focus on 'Viksit Bharat @2047'

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair NITI Aayog's 9th Governing Council meeting on July 27, which will focus on making India a developed nation by 2047, an official statement said on Friday. The council, the apex body of NITI Aayog, includes all state chief ministers, lieutenant governors of Union Territories, and several Union ministers. Modi is the chairman of NITI Aayog.

According to the statement, the meeting aims to foster participative governance and collaboration between the Centre and state governments, enhancing the quality of life for both rural and urban populations by strengthening the delivery mechanisms of government interventions.

"The Governing Council Meeting on July 27, 2024 will discuss the Approach Paper for the Vision Document on Viksit Bharat @2047... The meeting will also see detailed deliberations on the role of states in achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat @2047," the statement said.

The meeting will also focus on recommendations of the 3rd National Conference of Chief Secre-



taries held in December last year.

During the conference, recommendations were made on five key themes--drinking water: access, quantity, and quality; electricity: quality, efficiency, and reliability; health: accessibility, affordability, and quality of care; schooling: access and quality and land and property: accessibility, digitization, registration, and mutation.

Special sessions were also held to deliberate on cyber security, aspirational districts and blocks programme, role of states, and AI in

governance which were also discussed during the National Conference of Chief Secretaries. A vision document is being prepared to help India become a developed economy of USD 30 trillion by 2047, the 100th year of its independence.

In 2023, NITI Aayog was entrusted with the task of consolidating the 10 sectoral thematic visions into a combined vision for Viksit Bharat @2047. The vision encompasses various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sus-

tainability, and good governance, among others.

Meanwhile, chief ministers of three Congress-ruled states -- Karnataka's Siddaramaiah, Himachal Pradesh's Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Telangana's Revanth Reddy -- have announced they will not attend the NITI Aayog meeting over alleged bias against their states in the Union Budget. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK leader M K Stalin, Kerala's CM and CPI(M) leader Pinarayi Vijayan as well as Aam Aadmi Party-led Punjab and Delhi governments have also boycotted the meeting.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who was scheduled to arrive in Delhi on Thursday to attend the meeting, cancelled her plan. It was not clear if she would attend the meeting on Saturday.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Sasmit Patra has supported the decision taken by opposition parties, and accused the Centre of denying states their share in the Budget.

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) MP Mahua Majhi has said her party will take a decision based on the interests of the state. JMM is a INDIA bloc constituent. (PTI)



# Significant upgrade under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme to enhance facilities & accessibility

## Tangla railway station to get ₹ 14.14 crore revamp

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** In a bid to further enhance rail facilities in the north-east and Assam, ₹ 10,369 crores have been allocated in the interim Budget 2024-25 for railway infrastructure projects. Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), 60 stations in the north-east are being redeveloped with world-class amenities. Among these, Tangla railway station will receive a significant facelift at a cost of ₹ 14.14 crores. This revamping will provide modern state-of-the-art amenities to railway users in the nearby areas.

Tangla railway station is an important station in Udalguri district, located between the Rangiya – Rangapara section under the Rangiya division of NFR. The existing station building will be extended with an improved facade, offering facilities such as retiring rooms and a waiting room with the latest amenities for passenger convenience. The station will also



Existing



Proposed

be equipped with divyangjan-friendly ramps and toilet facilities, two lifts, and a 5-metre-wide foot overbridge. A new toilet block will be constructed separately for male and female passengers. Additionally, improved parking facilities and beautification of the circulating area are planned. All platforms will be provided with shelters and resur-

faced with marble stone and tiles for ease of movement. The entry and exit paths will be developed to offer improved accessibility for passengers.

Tenders have been awarded for all the above works. The foundation work for the new station building has already started. Other passenger amenities, such as the installation of coach guid-

ance boards, train information display systems, platform extensions, and easy access water booths for divyangjan, are also in progress.

The upgrade of Tangla station is expected to create new employment and business opportunities, ease travel, and significantly boost tourism for passengers from the city and nearby areas.

## Amit Shah meets Sixth Schedule Council CEMs to discuss constitutional amendments

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, July 26:** A joint meeting of the chief executive members (CEMs) of Sixth Schedule Councils with Union Home minister Amit Shah was held in New Delhi on Thursday to discuss amendments to the Indian Constitution. Representatives from ten Sixth Schedule Councils, including the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), participated and emphasised the implementation of all clauses of the BTR Peace Accord, 2020.

Union Home minister Amit Shah assured the proper implementation of all clauses of the BTR Peace Accord and announced the formation of a committee under the Ministry of State, Ministry of Home Affairs, headed by Nityanand Rai, to resolve the development issues of the Sixth Schedule Councils in the north-eastern region.

Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of the Bodoland Territorial Region, described the meeting as fruitful, highlighting the developmental aspects of the Sixth Schedule Councils. He praised the government of India and the Home Ministry for initiating steps to promote the welfare



and upliftment of the councils.

"It's a pleasure to have joined the meeting of chief executive members of Sixth Schedule Councils with Union Home minister Amit Shah in New Delhi. HM assured that issues relating to all ten Sixth Schedule Councils, including the implementation of all clauses of the Bodo Peace Accord, 2020, will be addressed amicably. HM has also decided to constitute a committee under the chairman-

ship of MoS, Ministry of Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai to resolve the development issues of our people," Boro said.

"HM has always had a special place in his heart for our north-east, and I, on behalf of the people of BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region) and all ten Sixth Schedule Councils, extend my gratitude to minister Amit Shah for his continued guidance and leadership," CEM Boro added.

## IIE Guwahati hosts national seminar on agripreneurship innovation



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** The Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) Guwahati hosted a national seminar on Friday, titled 'Sustainable Growth and Innovation: Empowering Agripreneurship in the Seed Sector', supported by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, government of India. The seminar, inaugurated by Dr Lalit Sharma,

director of IIE Guwahati, brought together academicians, scholars, and practitioners from across the country to address critical issues and opportunities in the agriculture sector of India.

The seminar highlighted innovative approaches such as precision agriculture and data analytics, which optimise crop yields and resource efficiency. Additionally, diversification and value addition

strategies are crucial for improving product quality and profitability. Effective market orientation ensures that agripreneurs meet consumer demands, while robust risk management strategies address uncertainties in the sector.

A key focus of the seminar was the importance of environmental sustainability and the need for practices that conserve natural resources. Collaborative efforts with stakeholders and supportive government policies are essential for the success of agripreneurial ventures.

The seminar featured ten insightful papers presented by experts from various institutions, discussing the role of these institutions in fostering agripreneurship and developing a comprehensive policy framework for the sector. The discussions underscored the entrepreneurial mindset required to identify opportunities, take risks, and continuously improve operations in agripreneurship.

## JE outbreak in Nagaon claims six lives

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, July 26:** The post-flood ravages in various areas of Nagaon district have resulted in a serious health hazard, with Japanese Encephalitis (JE) claiming the lives of six persons, including two women, so far. Additionally, 20 individuals are currently undergoing treatment at various hospitals in Guwahati after being infected with JE, sources revealed.

Among those who succumbed to JE, two were from Kamrup, two from Kaliabor, and one each from Barhampur and Raha. Sources further reported that 49 other individuals have been infected with JE-like diseases in the district.

Madhabi Bezbaruah, a 76-year-old woman from Barhampur Bejorgaon village, was diagnosed with Japanese Encephalitis a couple of weeks ago. After a week-long treatment at a hospital in Guwahati, she was brought back to her residence, where she passed away from JE on Thursday.

## World Drowning Prevention Day observed with awareness prog

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, July 26:** According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) report, nearly 236,000 lives are lost due to drowning worldwide every year, which equates to approximately 350 per day or 26 every hour. Studies indicate that this tragedy predominantly affects people living in riverine areas due to a lack of awareness. Recognising the seriousness of this issue, the UN General Assembly declared July 25 as World Drowning Prevention Day, which has been observed annually across the globe since 2021.

In light of this significant issue, the 12 Battalion of NDRF, Doimukh, Itanagar-12 J Team organised an awareness cum demonstration programme on Thursday at Tol-Gereki near Bishnu Rabha Samadisthal in Tezpur. This event targeted the people residing on the banks of

the Brahmaputra River.

A nine-member NDRF team, comprising Chikunda Bharali, Swapan Kumar Roy, Amit Kairi, Sonu Maharu, Iswar Chouhan, Hardayal Singh, Fauzal Ahmed Laskar, Bikash Adhikari, and Uttam Kumar Deka, led by ASI Hironmohan Pathori, aimed to educate attendees on how to save themselves from drowning. Hardayal Singh gave a practical presentation on creating life support kits using easily available materials like used plastic bottles, footballs, and thermocol to float during critical situations, including floods. Other team members demonstrated techniques for self-rescue and rescuing drowning individuals.

The event, organised under this year's theme 'Anyone can drown, no one should', was attended by local residents and students from various schools in Tezpur town.

## Assam Rifles hosts 'A Day with Assam Rifles'

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARALI, July 26:** Assam Rifles conducted an enlightening lecture on Kargil Vijay Diwas at Charduar Hall, Lokra on Friday, commemorating the valour and sacrifice of Indian soldiers during the Kargil War. The event saw a robust turnout, with a total of 111 students and four teachers in attendance, along with members of the armed forces, students, and local citizens. The program delved into the strategic intricacies of the Kargil conflict, highlighting the challenges faced by the soldiers and the tactical manoeuvres that led to India's victory. Personal anecdotes and stories of extraordinary bravery were shared, providing a poignant and immersive experience for the audience.

The event began with a moment of silence, followed by a cultural program and a screening of a patriotic movie. The program concluded with a group photograph and refreshments, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among the attendees. Attendees were deeply moved by the accounts of heroism and resilience, which fostered a profound sense of patriotism and respect for the armed forces. The program served as both an educational and inspirational platform, ensuring that the legacy of the Kargil heroes continues to resonate and inspire future generations. Through this lecture, Assam Rifles reinforced the importance of remembering and honouring the sacrifices made by the soldiers, strengthening collective national pride and unity.

## Hygiene promotion prog launched in Cachar

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** A robust hygiene promotion program is currently being executed in Cachar, through a collaborative effort between the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Cachar, and the Inter Agency Group (IAG), Cachar, with valuable support from UNICEF-Assam. This initiative is designed to foster good hygiene practices, improve sanitation, and bolster community resilience.

The hygiene promotion program aims to address the critical need for better sanitation and hygiene awareness in the region.

## India Meteorological Department signs MoU with Assam University

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, July 26:** On Thursday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and Assam University, Silchar, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the installation of an X-Band Doppler Weather Radar on the university campus. The MoU was signed by Dr RM Pant, vice-chancellor of Assam University, and KN Mohan, scientist-G & head of the Regional Meteorological Centre, Guwahati. From the IMD side, Dr Sanjay O'Neill Shaw, scientist-F, and Dr SI Laskar, scientist-E, were present. Representatives from Assam University included Dr PK Nath, registrar; Prof Piyush Kumar Pandey, director of IQAC; Shubhadeep Dhar, finance officer; Dr Suprabir Roy, controller of Examinations; Jayant Bhatta, director of the College Development Council; Prof Parthankar Choudhury, dean of the School of Ecology and Environmental Science; and Dr Atri Deshmukhya from the department of Physics.

## Public meeting related to flash flood held

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** The Jokaichuk/Simoluguri circle development committee held a meeting related to flash flood at Outal Harimandir at Sintamonigrah recently. The meeting was presided over by committee's president Jitu Neog. Those present at the meeting rued the fact that paddy fields of 30 villages are submerged under water even after 75 years of independence.

Locals who attended the meeting demanded the government to take necessary measures to prevent artificial flood water from about 30 villages under Chintamonigrah, Bhagamukh and East Tiyaik Gaon Panchayats. They also urged minister Bimal Bora for immediate action to implement the announcement made on July 5 regarding construction of new sluice gate and pump set on Janji river.

They further urged urgent repair of dilapidated sluice gate at Rangagara on Brahmaputra main embankment under Sivasagar constituency.

The meeting demanded that the work of strengthening and paving the embankment of Miting river from Bhadiaghat to Khanamukh via Dimaiguri and the embankment of Janji river from Banai Ghat to Sosabat be strengthened this year as promised by minister Bora.

The meeting was chaired by the General Secretary of the Committee, Robin Chandra Bora. The meeting was attended by former Headmaster of Jelemtup Tribal Middle English School Narayan Shaikia, retired teacher Pradeep Shaikia, Organizing Secretary of Sadao Assam Keot Sammelan Ajit Hazarika, Aural Harimandir Narmachaya Ponai Hazarika, Bhagamukh correspondent of Amar Assam newspaper Gukul Bora and social worker Rongai Saikia, Hiren Lahan, Assistant Teacher, Chintamonigrah Middle English School, Diganta Changmai, Principal, Kumar Bheti Primary School, Anil Changmai, Bhola Shaikia, Anjan Shaikia, Bharat Gogoi, Robin Shaikia, retired Assam Police Officer Thanuram Gayan and Chintamonigrah Zonal Congress committee secretary Tilleswar Gogoi, transport corporation employee and Ritu Gogoi, retired medical employee.

## Workshop on child-friendly spaces during emergencies held in Morigaon

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAON, July 26:** The District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Morigaon, in collaboration with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) and UNICEF, Assam, organised a one-day district level capacity building workshop for block/circle level teams on child-friendly spaces during emergencies on Friday at Kalabithika, near DC's Office, Morigaon. A total of 40 participants from the Social Welfare, Education, field officer (Disaster Management), and Health Departments of Morigaon district participated in the workshop.

The training program was inaugurated by Devashish Sharma, IAS, district commissioner cum chairman, District Disaster Management Authority, Morigaon, who delivered an inaugural speech. Biman Das, ACS, additional district commissioner cum chief executive officer, DDMA, Morigaon, was also present at the program. The resource persons for the workshop included Binita Bez, supervisor, Department of Woman and Child Development; Joya Bora, supervisor of ICDS Project, Bhurbandha, Morigaon; Sanjay Kalita, junior engineer, SSA, Morigaon; and Gautam Sankar Brahma, district MIS manager, PM POSHAN, Morigaon.

The day-long workshop discussed the need for child-friendly spaces (CFS) in Assam. It began with a pre-

training test, followed by various sessions led by the resource persons on topics such as: Understanding humanitarian crises and their impact on children, and the needs of children during such crises; introduction to child-friendly spaces in relation to child protection, health, nutrition, and WASH; introduction to psychosocial responses and therapy-based techniques; program approaches for designing CFS and using the CFS kit and manual; introduction to age-appropriate learning continuity planning and child development and learning needs during and after disasters.

Child-friendly spaces (CFS) are safe spaces set up in emergency settings to support and protect children, aiming to restore a sense of normality and continuity to children whose lives have been disrupted by war, natural disasters, or other emergencies.

A temporary structure of a child-friendly space was demonstrated near the training hall, showcasing all facilities available in a CFS. The district commissioner and participants visited the CFS to experience its setup.

After the training program, feedback was received from participants, and certificates were distributed by Biman Das, ACS, additional district commissioner cum chief executive officer, DDMA, Morigaon. The training program concluded with a speech by Ranju Sarma, district project officer, District Disaster Management Authority, Morigaon.

## Festive atmosphere in Assam's Charaideo as 'Moidams' make it to UNESCO list

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** A jubilant atmosphere enveloped Assam's Charaideo district on Friday as UNESCO officially added 'Moidams' of the Ahom dynasty, the 600-year-old mound-burial system, to its World Heritage List.

The announcement was made during the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi, sparking widespread festivities in the region. Cabinet minister Jogen Mohan, dressed in traditional Ahom attire, joined the celebrations, singing and dancing with the crowd.

"This is a proud moment for Assam and the entire country. We are thrilled with this decision and extend our thanks to everyone who worked tirelessly over the past two years to make this dream come true," the minister said. The unique pyramidal-like burial mounds were used by the Tai-Ahom dynasty that ruled Assam for around 600 years between 1228 and 1826.

The state government had submitted a dossier to the Prime Minister in 2023 and he selected it among a list of monuments for submission as India's nomination for



inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List for the year 2023-24.

Members of local organisations as well as general public made a beeline to the 'Moidams', and participated in the celebration, with many bursting firecrackers outside the main entrance.

Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly Debabrata Saikia, who represents neighbouring Nazira constituency, extended his gratitude to the present as well as previous governments for ensuring the inclusion of 'Moidams' among the World Heritage Sites.

"Exciting news! #Charaideo, the sacred tombs of the Ahom People, is now a #UN-

ESCO World Heritage Site, celebrating Assam's rich cultural heritage," he wrote on X.

"Heartfelt thanks to the 'Gol' & 'GoA' for their efforts. Also, recognising the contributions of previous Govt's toward this achievement," the Congress leader added.

Assam Jaitiya Parishad (AJP) president Lurinjyoti Gogoi also welcomed the announcement and wrote on the micro-blogging site, "We are delighted at the recognition of the historic Charaideo Moidam as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The entire Assamese community is proud at this moment."

All Assam Students' Union (AASU) advisor Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharjya also expressed satisfaction at the recognition, especially with the 'Moidams' becoming the first in the cultural category to be included from the entire North Eastern region.

"Such recognition has once again established Assam on the world map. I extend my gratitude to each and everyone associated with ensuring this recognition," he wrote on X. (PTI)

No. BCDIM/NT/IT/3/2021-22/22

Date 25-07-2024

### SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders in the prescribed form affixing non-refundable Court fee stamps of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only and eventually to be drawn in the A.P.W.D F-2 Form of contract are hereby invited from the intending registered Contractors of appropriate category having up to date registration under Irrigation Department, Assam for the year 2024-25 for the following works and will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 1.00 P.M. on 14/08/2024 and will be opened on the same day at 2.00 P.M in the same place & date by the undersigned or officers authorised to open in presence of the intending tenders or their authorised agents who wish to be present. In cash of the date of receiving and opening of tender is non-working day, the tender will be reached and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

| Sl. No. | Name of Work  | Approx. Amount  | Time of Completion                                       |
|---------|---|-----------------|--|
| 1       | Protection work and Desilting of Ahopa F.I.S under Contingencies Amount of Ahopa, Dekadong, Jalagaon F.I.S. under AIBP(BTC) for the year 2012-13  | Rs. 4,53,500.00 | 6 (Six) months time from the date of issue of work order |
| 2       | Protection work and Desilting of Dekadong F.I.S (Ahopa, Dekadong, Jalagaon F.I.S. under AIBP(BTC) for the year 2012-13  | Rs. 4,30,000.00 | 6 (Six) months time from the date of issue of work order |
| 3       | Construction of Home Pipe Culvert and Construction of Approach Road of Dighaldong F.I.S under Contingencies Amount of Bonchola Deojara, Dighaldong, Uziarai, Tihunadi, F.I.S. under AIBP (BTC) for the year 2012-13 | Rs. 5,77,000.00 | 6 (Six) months time from the date of issue of work order |

Rates should be quoted on percentage i.e. Below/As per/Above the estimated rate.

Earnest Money:- 2% against work value for General Category and 1% for SC, ST, OBC & MOBC etc. in the form of Bank Draft/F.D/Call Deposit, fully pledged to the Executive Engineer, Barama-Chapaguri Division (Irrigation) Mushalpur, Baksa along with Tender Papers for each Group Separately.

The details particulars of works, term and condition, specification etc. may be seen in the office of the undersigned during office hours on all working days upto 12.00 Noon of 14-08-2024.

The details tender papers will be issued on written request and on payment (Non-Refundable) of Rs.300.00 (Rupees Three Hundred) only in the form of Cash only pledge in favour of the Executive Engineer, Barama-Chapaguri Division (Irrigation) Mushalpur, Baksa during office hours up to 12.00 noon 14/08/2024.

This N.I.T. will form Part of the Contract Agreement in addition to A.P.W.D. F-2 form.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,  
Barama-Chapaguri Division (Irrigation),  
Mushalpur, Baksa

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/188



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Diplomacy is the art of saying 'Nice doggie' until you can find a rock.*  
-Will Rogers

## Budget bonanza or political ploy?

The Narendra Modi government's 2024-25 budget proposals have come under scrutiny, with critics arguing they serve electoral rather than economic needs. While finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been lauded for presenting a middle-class-friendly budget, a closer examination reveals it disproportionately benefits the BJP's support base and the corporate sector, offering little to the impoverished and marginalised communities. Take Bihar, for instance. Widely touted as one of the major beneficiaries alongside Andhra Pradesh, Bihar's allocation includes ₹ 11,500 crores for flood control and irrigation projects. This encompasses the long-awaited interlinking of rivers, a project the state government has advocated for over a decade. However, this windfall is unlikely to trickle down to the poor and Dalits. Instead, it is poised to enrich bureaucrats, contractors, and political elites, who view these allocations as annual festivities akin to Chhath Puja or Diwali. The economic disparities in Bihar are stark. While new multiplexes and skyrocketing real estate prices in Patna indicate rising affluence among the rich, the poor remain mired in hardship. The state is perennially afflicted by floods, with 28 of its 38 districts classified as flood-prone. Despite the significant funds allocated for flood management over the years, there has been no permanent solution. Flood expert Dinesh Mishra criticises the viability of the river interlinking project, likening it to a misguided attempt to solve systemic issues with superficial fixes.

The budget's failure to address recurring floods comprehensively is glaring. Although the state's annual flood management expenditure is substantial, the benefits seldom reach those most affected. Funds are often misappropriated by vested interests, leaving the poor and Dalits to fend for themselves. Even the state's emergency fund, amounting to ₹ 87.3 billion, offers little respite due to systemic corruption and inefficiency. Sitharaman acknowledged Bihar's flood woes, yet did not outline any new measures to mitigate them. This omission highlights a broader strategy: using budget allocations to bolster political support rather than addressing critical needs. By releasing significant funds, Modi aims to project concern for Bihar's plight, yet the real beneficiaries are likely to be the affluent and influential, not the marginalised.

This budget continues a pattern where Modi's administration overlooks fundamental needs such as food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare for the poor. Despite the rhetoric of economic upliftment, basic education and health services remain inaccessible to many. Affordable housing, which could alleviate some economic pressures, is still a distant dream for low-income families. As state elections in Haryana, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra loom, Modi's budgetary maneuvers appear more tactical than altruistic. Cash distributions to the poor and substantial state funds aim to create a favorable impression, but these actions do little to reduce the prevailing inequality. The opposition rightly accuses the Modi government of partisan budget allocations, prioritising states based on political allegiance rather than need. Ultimately, Modi's budget serves dual purposes: reinforcing the BJP's ideological agenda and securing political longevity. This strategy, while shoring up support among certain demographics, neglects the broader mission of equitable development. Without addressing the systemic issues plaguing Bihar and other states, these budget proposals will likely perpetuate the status quo, benefiting the few at the expense of the many. The budget, rather than being a tool for equitable development, seems to prioritise political gains, undermining the crucial need for sustainable and inclusive growth, leaving Bihar's vulnerable populations behind.

# Indian railways budget 2024-25 shifts focus from poor to aspirational class

Indian Railways Budget 2024-25 has clearly shifted its priority from addressing the needs of the poor and common people as a means of mass transport system at affordable travel cost to fulfilling the demands of the aspirational class of the country who can afford the high-cost of railway travel as it is reflected in the focus on Vande Bharat flagship trains apart from developing Amrit Bharat trains and Vande Metro.

This reality of the shift is underplayed by the Minister of Indian Railways Ashwini Vaishnav by making a statement that the priority of the railways will be safety first, perhaps for pacifying the people's anger on railway accidents in the recent times that have totally exposed the weaknesses in the Railways safety. "Current Budget estimates are a record allocation for capital expenditure for railways. And majority of this fund will be spent on ensuring safety works," he claimed.

However, the implementation of the safety measures will remain challenging. Let us take example of the Kavach 4.0, the Automatic Train Protection System, which have already been approved. Vaishnav himself says, "Kavach consists of multiple components like hardware, software, optical fibre. And India has

a diverse network of railway systems, so the challenge is to combine all networks for deployment of Kavach."

Indian Railways has lost the priority it traditionally been accorded as mass transport system in the public sector before 2016, when PM Narendra Modi led government decided in 2016 to discontinue the practice of a separate budget and to merge with the general Union Budget. Union Minister of Finance Arun Jaitley had presented the first combined budget for FY 2017-18.

Thereafter, independent functioning of the Indian Railways has been compromised. It has been systematically restructured and developed at the cost of the government seemingly with the soul purpose of ultimately handing it over to private sector. It is even without a full time Union Cabinet Minister for quite some time.

No wonder, the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned the word "Railways" only once in her 83-minute-long budget speech. He speech was largely silent on big-ticket announcement for Indian Railways.

Even though as Railway Minister, Vaishnav has lauded the Budget 2024-25, which according to him has made a record al-

location of over ₹ 2.55 lakh crore. Of course, it is a jump of 5.85 percent from the previous year's ₹ 2.41 lakh crore, but in absolute term it is only an increase of about only ₹ 14000 crore. When adjusted to cost escalation in one year, it is pittance in reality, which is not enough to address both the requirement of the "aspirational class" and the common people.

The total outlay for capital expenditure is ₹ 2.65 lakh crore as against ₹ 2.62 lakh crore in 2023-24. It was not a big increase, which also includes ₹ 2.52 lakh

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dr. Gyan Pathak

crore from general revenues, ₹ 200 crore from Nirbhaya Fund, ₹ 3,000 crore from internal resources and ₹ 10,000 crore from extra budgetary resources. This amount will be spent on assets, acquisitions, construction and replacement. However, the Minister of Railways have said that majority of this fund will be spent on ensuring safety works.

The railway budget shows that Indian Railways is still not in good condition. It is going worse in FY 2024-25 as the budget has estimated operating ratio of 98.22 per cent. It was only 98.10 per cent in FY 2023-24. That is Indian railways will have to spend ₹ 98.22 to earn ₹ 100 in FY 2024-

25, while it was spending ₹ 98.10 in 2023-24.

Out of allocation of 2.55 lakh crore, railways working expenses are to rise from 1.08 lakh crore in the revised estimate of 2023-24 to 1.17 lakh crore in 2024-25, while other ordinary working expenses are to rise from 1.45 lakh crore to 1.55 lakh crore.

It means the increase in total outlay from 2.43 lakh crore (RE 2023-24) would be consumed in working and other ordinary working expenses. In this sense there is no real increase in allocation for other important expenses. It means the big things that have been claimed by the Minister of Railways can't be fulfilled, especially in respect of railways passenger safety, amenities, and comfort. Moreover, the funds will be disproportionately provided for the 'aspirational class passengers' rather than for common passengers.

Total Railway Revenue Receipts are projected in the negative (-2.73 lakh crore). The negative trend is projected for all six heads — passenger, other coaching, goods, sundry, suspense, and other miscellaneous receipts. Total budgetary support from the General Revenues is projected at ₹ 3393 crore against the ₹ 3271 crore in the revised estimate for the last year. It is only an increase of ₹ 122 crore, which

shows how much the Central government is concerned about the Indian Railways. The Central support is given as reimbursement of losses on operation of strategic lines and debt servicing (interest component) against market borrowings for National projects.

Allocation for new lines is ₹ 34602 crore, Gauge Conversion ₹ 4719 crore, Doubling ₹ 29,312 crore, Computerisation ₹ 375 crore, and Traffic Facilities — Yard Remodelling and others ₹ 8982 crore, and Rolling stock ₹ 24270 crore. There are not very big increases in allocations compared to last year in these or other schemes. Budget for the Indian Railways lack proper direction given it to be a mass public transport system that needed greater push for rapid economic development, employment generation, and catering to the transportation needs of the common people.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has said the railway budget very weak adding that the Railways has become "neither here nor there". He has also said, "Railway accidents are happening every day, trains have been stopped, the number of coaches has been reduced, ordinary passengers are troubled, but nothing has been said about the railways in the budget, there is no accountability." (IPA Service)

## A comprehensive budget: Prioritizing growth and employment

By: Dipak Kurmi

The Union Budget 2024-25 showcases the finance minister's steadfast commitment to crafting a forward-looking, comprehensive plan for a thriving, environmentally sustainable, and technologically advanced India. Aiming to propel the nation enthusiastically into the "Amrit Kaal" era and secure its place among developed countries by 2047, the budget strongly focuses on fostering growth, promoting inclusiveness, and generating employment opportunities.

The full Budget, building on the Interim Budget's framework, outlines a long-term vision for Viksit Bharat. By presenting nine key priorities, it provides a clear roadmap to achieve the nation's extended development goals while addressing immediate concerns.

The Union Budget ensures that every Indian has a role in realizing the Viksit Bharat vision. It addresses a broad range of economic challenges and impacts all sectors of society. The Budget encompasses provisions for farmers, the middle class, youth, women, MSMEs, and vulnerable groups, reflecting a comprehensive approach to national development.

This meticulously crafted Budget features a robust focus on agriculture and rural development. It includes a substantial increase in agricultural expenditure, essential for boosting farm productivity. Key initiatives such as funding for rural infrastructure, support for farmer-producer organizations and cooperatives, missions for oilseeds and pulses, development of clusters near consumption centers, promotion of natural farming, advancement in technology and agri-research, and the use of digital public infrastructure are all aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and setting a new benchmark for socio-economic progress in the nation's core regions.

Agriculture alone is insufficient to drive demand and create jobs. For truly inclusive growth, a focus on industry, especially labour-intensive manufacturing, is essential. Consequently, the Budget's emphasis on boosting labour-intensive sectors and MSMEs stands out as a central theme. Measures such as credit guarantees for

MSMEs, increasing the MUDRA loan limit to ₹ 20 lakhs for borrowers who have repaid their loans, providing credit support for stressed MSMEs, establishing e-commerce export hubs through public-private partnerships to aid domestic artisans, and expanding mandatory onboarding in TReDS are designed to tackle persistent issues faced by MSMEs.

Additionally, the government's pledge to develop investment-ready industrial parks on a plug-and-play basis, in collaboration with states and the private sector, is a significant step forward. The approval of 12 new industrial parks under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme will offer ready-to-use infrastructure for industrial operations. Furthermore, enhancing the tech platform to improve outcomes under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and advancing the Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 will streamline and simplify the business environment.

The Budget's emphasis on skills development is marked by several key initiatives, including internship opportunities at 500 leading companies, a monthly internship allowance of ₹ 5,000, and a three percent interest subvention on education loans. These measures are designed to bridge skill gaps within the industry and position India as a prominent manufacturing hub.

In addition to focusing on skills development, the finance minister has introduced three new employment-linked schemes, targeting both first-time job seekers and employers, and connected to the EPFO. To boost female workforce participation, the Budget includes initiatives such as establishing women's hostels, offering women-specific skill programs, providing office creches, and supporting self-help groups. Furthermore, an allocation of ₹ 3 lakhs has been set aside to benefit women.

Aligned with global trends, the Budget clearly prioritizes environmental sustainability and the green economy. Initiatives include advancing energy transition through policies like pump storage, developing a roadmap for hard-to-abate sectors such as steel, power, chemicals, cement, and refining, and promoting rooftop solar installations. These measures are designed to foster sustainability and drive green growth.

The Budget adopts a pragmatic stance by aiming to stimulate and revitalize urban consumption demand, which is beginning to recover.

Measures such as reducing income tax rates for salaried employees, especially those in lower income brackets, increasing the standard deduction for the salaried class under the new tax scheme, and providing deductions on family pensions are designed to offer relief to the middle class. These provisions are expected to enhance their purchasing power and encourage more individuals to embrace the new income tax regime.

The Budget's foundation is built on maintaining macroeconomic stability and ensuring policy continuity, which are crucial for fostering sustained economic growth. In this regard, the finance minister deserves praise for successfully reducing the fiscal deficit to 4.9 percent for the current year, a notable improvement from the 5.1 percent projected in the Interim Budget for 2024-25.

The continued emphasis on capital expenditure, maintained at the same level as in the Interim Budget, underscores the government's commitment to infrastructure development as a primary objective. The allocation of ₹ 1.5 lakh crores for long-term, interest-free loans to states will supply essential resources for capital projects, enabling them to enhance infrastructure effectively.

The Budget seeks to foster collaboration with states and stakeholders to advance next-generation reforms, particularly in areas like land and labor, which fall under state jurisdiction. It also aims to incentivize the effective execution of the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) to drive progress in these crucial factors of production.

Key announcements in the Budget also highlight a focus on urban development and city modernization, ensuring tax stability, and supporting start-ups through the abolition of angel tax. Additionally, the Budget aims to enhance housing in both rural and urban areas with expanded support for the PM Awas Yojana.

Overall, the Budget presents a thorough, practical, and forward-thinking approach, emphasizing both growth and inclusion. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

## Pro-corporate fraudulent employment schemes mark 2024-25 budget

By: P. Sudhir

The Indian economy is at a critical crossroad, where the GDP growth is in no way boosting the employment generation capacity. Even within the jobs created, 57.3 per cent are self-employed, 18.3 per cent are unpaid household workers and more than 45 per cent are employed in agriculture. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme launched in March 2020 has utterly failed to generate employment in manufacturing and strikingly India's year-on-year manufacturing productivity has fallen by 2.38 per cent in 2022-23.

But due to the incentives and many other expropriatory bonanzas from the Modi government, India's listed companies reaped enormous net profit at the rate of 10.1 per cent in 2023-24, which is the highest since 2007-08. Now the Economic Survey has stated that the Indian economy is in dire need to generate an average of nearly 78.5 lakh jobs annually in the non-farm sector to meet the needs of the rising workforce.

Given this acute employment crisis and the issue becoming a hot topic in the Lok Sabha election campaign, one would have thought that the first union budget of the third Modi government would pay special attention to employment generation and creating new job opportunities. However, the budget presented by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is notable for the hollow and deceptive measures to create jobs in the formal sector while liberally doling out public funds to the corporates.

The finance minister has announced a set of Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Schemes creating much hype among the corporate pundits. Scheme A is applicable to all employers whereas B and C are for specific categories. As per the scheme A, if an employer recruits a new worker or enlists any unlisted worker in EPFO, then the government will pay one

month's salary of the worker up to a cap of ₹ 15,000 in three instalments. It means that, government is going to directly subsidise the employer one twelfth part of his payable annual wage share. Employers in manufacturing, who hires at least 50 new non-EPFO workers, will be eligible for scheme B. In this scheme, government will pay the employees' and employers' share of EPFO, calculated as 24 per cent of the salary component directly from the people's money.

As per scheme C, any company that recruits 2-5 new employees will receive EPFO employer contributions of up to ₹ 3,000 per month. Clearly, government will subsidise up to 32.33 per cent of the wage component from the public exchequer. Another blow is the internship policy, where the government has delinquently allowed the top 500 most profiteering companies to run their entire production and services with interns/apprentices. Government will take the burden of monthly stipend of ₹ 5000 and one-time assistance of ₹ 6000 and the rest of the training cost can be taken from the company's CSR funds.

This siphoning of money from the public exchequer to private kitty will certainly not resolve even a bit of the unemployment problem. The way to enhance production linked profit is to enhance the unpaid labour component in it and the ELI and internship schemes are a deliberate attempt by the Modi government to put free labour at the disposal of the corporates. But, the persistent fall in aggregate demand owing to declining purchasing power of the people is bringing down the net sale and realisation of production linked profit and thus affects the mood of private investment towards production. Corporate income growth is consistently being channelised toward speculation. The government may subsidise the corporates but the state of the economy and the conditions of the people will be worsened further with these schemes. (IPA Service)

By: Vivek Shukla

In national capital, the distance between Mori Gate and Daryaganj should not be more than three to four kilometres. When India's hockey team was chosen for the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, it included Michael A. Gettle and Ifikhar Ali Khan Pataudi Senior. Pataudi was born at Pataudi House, Daryaganj. He later captained the Indian cricket team, and his son Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi also led the Indian team. Gettle and Pataudi Senior were arguably Delhi's first Olympic participants. Gettle was an Anglo-Indian and resided near the old St. Stephen's College in Kashmiri Gate. During that era, many Anglo-Indian families lived in Kashmiri Gate and Mori Gate. Brilliant forward, Gettle also played alongside Dhyan Chand in the 1932 Los Angeles Games. He learned the intricacies of hockey at St. Stephen's College, which was then located in Kashmiri Gate.

The Delhi Brotherhood Society (DBS), which established St. Stephen's College, has always been committed to community service and encouraging emerging athletes. This college has produced hordes of players who have represented India in Olympic Games. If it has been producing accomplished players, credit must be given to all those who work both as Christian priests and social workers. They are all associated with the DBS.

Dr. Karni Singh is undoubtedly St. Stephen's College's most renowned Olympian. He participated in shooting competitions at the 1960 (Rome), 1964 (Tokyo), 1968 (Mexico), 1972 (Munich), and 1980 (Moscow) Olympics. As you travel from Tughlakabad to Jamia Hamdard University in South Delhi, you'll encounter the Karni Singh Shooting Range. Hundreds of monkeys roam around it. The Karni Singh Shooting Range is the first stadium in the capital named after a player — a rare occurrence in our country where political leaders dominate stadium naming conventions.

The range was built for the shooting events of the 1982 Asian Games. Renowned sports administrator and a product of St. Stephen's college, Randhir Singh also participated in five Olympics from 1968 to 1984. Of course, it is a stunning feat. He also won the Arjuna Award in 1993. He has held several positions in both Indian and international sports governing bodies, and also had a successful shooting career before retiring from the sport in 1994. Singh began his sports administration career in 1984, while he was still competing as a shooter.

He has been the Acting President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) since 11 September 2021. His other roles in international sports administration include being a member of the IOC from 2001 to 2014; since 2014, he has been an honorary member of the IOC. He had also served as the Secretary General of the OCA from 1991 to 2015.

Mansher Singh, an exceptional shooter, competed in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. Both Randhir Singh and Mansher Singh studied at St. Stephen's College and honed their shooting skills there. Mansher "Joey" Singh specializes in double trap and trap. At the 2008 Olympic Games, he finished in first place in the trap qualification. He also came first at the 2004 Olympic Games. In addition, he has medals from the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games. In the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia, he won a gold medal in the trap event.

Meanwhile, during the Rome Games, Ranjit Bhatia, a mathematics professor at St. Stephen's College, competed in the marathon. In the same Rome Olympics, the "Flying Sikh" Milkha Singh's dream of winning a medal in the 400-meter race was shattered. While not a St. Stephen's alumnus, he moved to Delhi after the Partition and lived in Paharganj for a few years. At the 2000 Sydney Olympics, St. Stephen's College's Piyush Kumar competed in the 4x400-meter relay race, and Sandeep Sejwal participated in the 100 and 200-meter breaststroke swimming

events. Neha Aggarwal, a table tennis player and former student of St. Stephen's College, where Gandhiji's associate, Deenbandhu C.F. Andrews, taught, participated in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Well, all those who are associated with DBS are proud of the fact that Charles Freer Andrews (12 February 1871 – 5 April 1940) was an Anglican priest and member of Delhi Brotherhood society (DBS). He was an educator and an activist for Indian independence. He became a close friend to both Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi and identified with the Indian liberation struggle. He was instrumental in convincing Gandhi to return to India from South Africa, where Gandhi had been a leading light in the Indian civil rights struggle. He also taught in St. Stephen's college.

Brother Solomon George, a Christian priest at a Pitampura church in capital and working in many educational institutions, says, "We strive to ensure our students excel not only in academics but also in sports and other activities, becoming ideal citizens. We provide them with every possible facility." It is with this vision that St. Stephen's Cambridge School, recently established on the Delhi-Sonapat border, and is offering modern facilities for various sports, aiming to produce future Olympians for India.

And in this Paris Olympics that is starting from July 26, Jaspal Rana, another alumnus of St. Stephen's College, is taking part as a coach of young shooter, Manu Bhaskar. Rana, an accomplished former shooter himself with multiple Asian Games and Commonwealth Games medals in his kitty, Rana contested mainly in the 25 m Centre Fire Pistol category. He was a gold medalist at the 1994 Asian Games, 1998 Commonwealth Games - Men's Center Fire Pistol, Men's Center Fire Pistol Pairs,[1] 2002 Commonwealth Games - Men's 25m Center Fire Pistol, 2006 Commonwealth Games - Men's 25m Center Fire Pistol Pairs, and 2006 Asian Games. One only hopes that priests of DBS continue to work for the glory of Indian sports and society.



# 10 skills that matter at job interviews

By: Ankit Aggarwal

If 10 people are applying for the same job you have applied to, how do you stand apart? Your skill set is the only thing that will help you stay ahead in a competitive job market.

A majority of hiring managers would agree that college curricula or a professional degree alone will not help meet future roles; the largest HR challenge is the skill gap.

The need for professionally qualified employees is rapidly increasing, and it is essential to know which skills are greatly appreciated by employers. Let us look at 10 critical skills that can turn you into the candidate who stands out in any job interview. Mastering these skills will not only add value to your resume but will also help you excel in interviews by leveraging your confidence.

## 1. Communication leaves an impact

Clear communication plays an important part in the interview

process. In addition, learning how to communicate your messages clearly and briefly will help you stand out.

Candidates with good written and verbal communication are valued because they can use these skills to express their ideas, resolve conflicts and get work done effectively.

## 2. Problem-solving skills are a greater employability factor

Employers are looking for people who can solve problems. That is why, during the interview, I usually provide the candidate with certain scenarios to calculate his or her problem-solving skills by understanding how they would act in such a situation.

Speaking about different instances when you solved workplace problems is always effective when describing your problem-solving skills.

## 3. Mastering time management

The ability to manage time at work, regardless of your core specialisation, is a great skill to have; in the world of business,



time is money. Employers seek individuals who can prioritise tasks and work within deadlines.

How a candidate can organise his/her work and prepare to meet different deadlines demonstrates how efficient and goal-oriented the person is.

## 4. The ability to learn quickly

The flexibility to operate in changing environments is imperative in the ever-competitive, ever-evolving job market. Employers are more likely to hire employees who are flexible

when it comes to change.

The ability of an individual to continue learning new things while embracing change and effectively adapting to the demands of the workplace is a winning skill.

## 5. Out-of-the-box thinking

When you tell the interviewer your perspective about how you handled or executed a situation at work, it creates a positive image.

## 6. Digital marketing and social media skills

We live in the digital age,

hence knowledge of social media communication and marketing through digital platforms is a necessity.

Employers want candidates who would ideally know how to ride social media trends to promote their brands and reach out to potential customers.

Knowledge of SEO practices, content creation and social media management skills can prove essential during job interviews.

## 7. Teamwork makes the dream work

Teamwork is when two or more people work together towards the achievement of a common goal.

It is an essential component that any employer requires in her/his employee, regardless of the line of work the employee is being hired for. The ability to work in teams to achieve mutual objectives is an important interpersonal skill.

Effective teamwork involves effective communication, coordination and leadership to motivate people towards a common

goal.

## 8. A proactive mindset

The work environment is dynamic and constantly evolving. While it's important to update yourself and stay ahead of the curve, having a proactive mindset can be helpful.

When employees display an open-minded attitude, stepping up in times of crises without being told to do so, it proves that you are valuable and thus deserving of the position you aspire for.

Careful self-promotion, meaning sharing information that is not mentioned in your CV, can enhance your image in the eyes of a potential employer.

## 9. Multi-language skills

Employers believe that candidates who know more than two languages will be capable of comprehending and expressing their ideas and instructions to a larger section of the audience which can be advantageous for organisations with a diverse group of clients or employees.

In the job interview, you can emphasise your language profi-

ciency and share examples of how you have, as a result, incurred particular advantage for your previous employers.

## 10. Leading by example

Much like teamwork, demonstrating leadership is a key skill that employers are looking for, especially when it comes to meeting organisational objectives.

While individuals with discipline and organisation skills are preferred, employers are looking for persons who can navigate through complexity, make decisions, engage with people and guide them in the right direction to achieve the desired results.

The secret to cracking any job interview is to present your best version. The more useful and relevant skills you have, the higher your chances of being hired.

The above skills are most essential to help you become a preferred candidate because the job market is highly competitive. Remember to focus on your strengths and stay confident. (Courtesy: Rediff.com)

## SSC MTS Recruitment 2024 – 8326 MTS & Havaldar Vacancy, Online Apply

Last Date: 31/07/2024

Staff Selection Commission (SSC) has released the official notification for the recruitment of 8326 MTS & Havaldar Vacancy through Multi-Tasking (Non-Technical) Staff, and Havaldar (CBIC & CBN) Examination, 2024. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

**Name of exam:** Multi-Tasking (Non-Technical) Staff, and Havaldar (CBIC & CBN) Examination, 2024

**No of posts:** 8326 posts

**# MTS:** 4887 posts

**# Havaldar:** 3439 posts

**Pay Scale:** ₹ 18000- 56900 (Level 1 as per 7th CPC pay Matrix)

**Eligibility Criteria of SSC MTS Recruitment**

**Nationality:** The nationality of the candidate should be

# A citizen of India  
# Subject of Nepal  
# Subject of Bhutan  
# Tibetan Refugee

# Person of Indian Origin migrated from Pakistan, Burma, Afghanistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Ethiopia and Vietnam.

**Age Limit:** The age limits for the posts as per the Recruitment Rules of various User Departments are:

# 18-25 years (i.e. candidates born not before 02.08.1999 and not later than 01.08.2006) for MTS.

# 18-27 years (i.e. candidates born not before 02.08.1997 and not later than 01.08.2006) for Havaldar in CBIC and CBN, Department of Revenue and a few posts of MTS in various departments.

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

# SC/ ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years

# PwBD (Unreserved): 10 years

# PwBD (OBC): 13 years

# PwBD (SC/ ST): 15 years

# Ex-Servicemen (ESM): 03 years

**Educational Qualification:** The candidates must have passed Matriculation Examination or equivalent from a recognized Board.

**Application Fee of SSC MTS Exam**

# SC/ ST PWD/ ESM/ Women: Nil

# UR/ OBC: ₹ 100

# **Payment mode:** BHIM UPI, Net Banking or by using Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, RuPay Credit or Debit cards or in cash at SBI Branches by generating SBI Challan

**SSC Exam Centres in North East India**

A candidate must indicate the Centre(s) in the online Application Form in which he desires to take the examination. Here is the list of centres under North Eastern Region (NER):

Itanagar (5001), Dibrugarh (5102), Guwahati (Dispur) (5105), Jorhat (5107), Silchar (5111), Imphal (5501), Shillong (5401), Aizwal (5701), Dimapur (5301), Kohima (5302), Agartala (5601), Tezpur (7994)

**Important Dates of SSC MTS Vacancy 2024**

# **Starting date of submission of online application:** 27th June 2024

# **Last date of submission of online application:** 31st July 2024

# **Date of MTS Examination:** Oct-Nov 2024

## Indian Bank Apprentice Recruitment – 1500 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 31/07/2024

Indian Bank has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 1500 Apprentice Posts under the Apprentice Act 1961 in Indian Bank. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

**Name of post:** Apprentice

**No of posts:** 1500 posts

**Category-wise vacancy:**

# SC: 255

# ST: 77

# OBC: 351

# EWS: 137

# UR: 680

**No of posts in Assam:** 29 posts

**Stipend:**

# **Metro / Urban Branches:** ₹ 15,000 p.m.

# **Rural / Semi Urban Branches:** ₹ 12,000 p.m.

**Eligibility Criteria of Indian Bank Apprentice Recruitment**

**Age Limit:** Minimum 20 years and maximum 28 years as on cut-off date.

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

# SC/ ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years

# PwBD: 10 years

**Educational Qualification:** Graduate Degree from recognized University/Institutes.

**Application Fee:** Category-wise application fee is as under.

# **General/OBC/EWS:** ₹ 500

# SC/ST/PwBD: Nil

**Important Dates of Indian Bank Apprentice Vacancy 2024**

# **Starting date of submission of online application:** 10th July 2024

# **Last date of submission of online application:** 31st July 2024

## Indian Navy Civilian Recruitment 2024 – 741 Posts through INCET

Last Date: 02/08/2024

Indian Navy has released the official notification of Indian Navy Civilian Entrance Test (INCET-01/2024) for the recruitment of 741 Naval Civilian Staff vacancy under various Naval units / formations across the country. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

### 1. Chargeman (Ammunition Workshop)

**No of posts:** 1

**Age Limit:** Between 18-25 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) Bachelor of Science degree with Physics or Chemistry or Mathematics from a recognised University or Institution.

Or

(ii) A Diploma in Chemical Engineering from a recognised University or Board.

### 2. Chargeman (Factory)

**No of posts:** 10

**Age Limit:** Between 18-25 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) Bachelor of Science degree with Physics or Chemistry or Mathematics from a recognised University or Institution.

Or

(ii) A Diploma in Electrical/ Electronics/ Mechanical/ Computer Engineering from a recognised University or Board.

### 3. Chargeman (Mechanic)

**No of posts:** 18

**Age Limit:** Not exceeding 30 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) Diploma in Mechanical or Electrical or Electronics or Production Engineering from a recognized University or Institute; and

(ii) Two years' experience in quality control or quality assurance or testing or proof in the area of design or production or maintenance of engineering equipment or system from a recognized organisation.

### 4. Scientific Assistant

**No of posts:** 4

**Age Limit:** Not exceeding 30 years

**Educational Qualification:**

B.Sc degree in Physics or Chemistry or Electronics or Oceanography with two years experience in the following fields:-

(i) Material (metal, metal alloys, rubber) analysis and testing techniques Or

(ii) Machinery noise and vibration movements; analysis and reduction techniques Or

(iii) Chemical analysis of oils, lubricants, electrolyte and water, etc. Or

(iv) Study and analysis of corrosion process and mitigation techniques.

### 5. Draughtsman (Construction)

**No of posts:** 2

**Age Limit:** Between 18-25 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) Matriculation or equivalent from a recognized Institution or Board;

(ii) Two years' Certificate in Draughtsmanship from an Industrial Training Institute or equivalent recognized Institution OR three years apprenticeship under Apprenticeship Training Scheme in Draughtsmanship OR ITI certificate and two years

Trade Apprentice Training with certificate of All India Trade Test conducted by National Council of Vocational Training in the trades of Shipwright/ Welder/ Platter/ Sheet Metal/ Ship Fitter;

(d) Certificate in Automated Computer Aided Design (Auto CAD) from Department of Electronics Computer Accreditation courses (DOEACC) or equivalent.

### 6. Fireman

**No of posts:** 444

**Age Limit:** Between 18-27 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) 12th class pass from a recognised Board.

(ii) Elementary or basic or auxiliary Fire Fighting course from a recognised institute.

### 7. Fire Engine Driver

**No of posts:** 58

**Age Limit:** Between 18-27 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) 12th class pass from a recognised Board.

(ii) Must possess Heavy Motor Vehicle license from recognised authority; and

**Physical Standards:** Must be physically fit and capable of performing strenuous duties and must have passed the test specified below:-

(i) **Height without shoes-** 165 centimeters provided that a concession 2.5 centimeters height shall be allowed for Scheduled Tribes.

(ii) **Chest (normal)-** 81.5 centimeters.

(iii) **Chest (on expansion)-** 85 centimeters.

(iv) **Weight-** 50 kilograms (minimum).

(v) **Eye sight** -6/6 without any correction (normal vision).

### Endurance Test:

(i) Carrying a person (fireman lift of 63.5 kilograms to a distance of 183 meters within 96 seconds);

(ii) Clearing 2.7 meters wide ditch landing on both feet (long jump); and

(iii) Climbing 3 meters vertical rope using hand and feet.

### 8. Tradesman Mate

**No of posts:** 161

**Age Limit:** Between 18-25 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) 10th Standard pass from a recognised Board/ Institution.

(ii) Certificate from a recognised Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in the relevant trade\*.

### 9. Pest Control Worker

**No of posts:** 18

**Age Limit:** Between 18-25 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) Matriculation or equivalent from a recognized Board.

(ii) Must have knowledge of Hindi or regional language.

### 10. Cook

**No of posts:** 9

**Age Limit:** Between 18-25 years

**Educational Qualification:** Matriculation with one year experience in the trade.

### 11. MTS (Ministerial)

**No of posts:** 16

**Age Limit:** Between 18-25 years

**Educational Qualification:** Matriculation or equivalent or Industrial Technical Institute (ITI) pass.

**Other Criteria of Indian Navy Civilian Recruitment**

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

# SC/ ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years

# PwBD (Unreserved): 10 years

# PwBD (OBC): 13 years

# PwBD (SC/ ST): 15 years

# Ex-Servicemen (ESM): 03 years

**Examination Fee:** Candidates (except SC/ST/PwBDs/Ex-Servicemen and Women candidates, who are exempted from payment of fee) are required to pay a fee of ₹ 295 (Rupees Two hundred Ninety Five only), excluding applicable taxes and charges, through online mode by using net banking or by using Visa/ Master/ RuPay Credit/ Debit Card/ UPI.

**Important Dates of Indian Navy Civilian Recruitment 2024**

# **Starting date for online application submission:** 20th July 2024

# **Last date for online application submission:** 2nd August 2024



Democrat now a threat to Trump in several major swing states, survey suggests

## Obama endorses Harris' White House bid, vows to do everything to make her win

WASHINGTON, July 26: Kamala Harris will be a "fantastic President of the United States," former president Barack Obama said on Friday, as he and his wife Michelle endorsed her and vowed to do "everything we can" to enable her to win the high-stakes elections against Donald Trump in November.

Harris, 59, launched her presidential campaign hours after President Joe Biden said he would be forgoing his bid for a second term.

The decision came after Biden faced weeks of mounting pressure to step aside following his startling debate performance against rival and former president Trump last month, which raised concerns about his fitness for a second term and ability to defeat his Republican opponent in November.

Obama, who didn't immediately endorse Harris following President Biden's announcement on Sunday, released a video to support the Vice President.

"Earlier this week, Michelle and I called our friend @KamalaHarris. We told her we think she'll make a fantastic President of the United States, and that she



has our full support. At this critical moment for our country, we're going to do everything we can to make sure she wins in November. We hope you'll join us," Obama said in a post on X.

"Michelle and I couldn't be prouder to endorse you and to do everything we can to get you through this election and into the Oval Office," the 62-year-old former president told Harris on a phone call joined by his wife.

Harris thanked the Obamas for their support and expressed gratitude for their decades-long friendship. "I'm looking forward to doing this with the two of you, Doug (Douglas Emhoff) and I both. And getting out there, being on the road," Harris, 59, said.

"But most of all, I just want to tell you the words you have spoken and the friendship that you have given over all these years mean more than I can express, so thank you both. It means so much. And we're gonna have some fun with this too, aren't we?" she added.

Michelle, the former first lady, said she is proud of Harris and expects the upcoming election to be historic.

"I can't have this phone call without saying to my girl, Kamala, I am proud of you. This is going to be historic," she told Harris in the approximately one-minute video.

In a joint statement announcing the endorsement,

the Obamas praised Harris.

"But Kamala has more than a resume. She has the vision, the character, and the strength that this critical moment demands. There is no doubt in my mind that Kamala Harris has exactly what it takes to win this election and deliver for the American people," the statement said.

"At a time when the stakes have never been higher, she gives us all reason to hope," it added.

With Obama's endorsement, Harris, who is of Indian and African origin, has secured support from all major Democrats and party leaders in Congress, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

Obama, the first Black president, and Harris, who could become the first female president, have been in regular contact since Biden announced his decision to drop out, the US media reports citing sources familiar with the matter said, noting they have known each other for 20 years.

No other Democrat has announced their candidacy for

the presidential nod.

Harris has secured endorsements from more than 40 state delegations, surpassing the number of delegates she will need to win the nomination.

If that support holds, Democrats will officially nominate her for president during a virtual roll call vote in August.

Under new rules adopted by the Democratic National Committee on Wednesday, the nominee will be selected as soon as August 1, and the candidate has until August 7 to select a running mate. The party will meet for its convention in Chicago starting August 19.

In an Oval Office address Wednesday, Biden acknowledged it was time to "pass the torch" to a new generation of leaders.

Harris, who was a senator from California before she was elected vice president, quickly hit the campaign trail with events in Wisconsin, Indiana and Texas.

Her campaign said it raked in more than USD million between Sunday afternoon, when she officially joined the White House race, and Monday evening. (PTI)

## Agreement with Russia is 'deal with the devil,' adviser to Ukrainian president says

KYIV, July 26: Signing an agreement with Russia to stop the war with Ukraine would amount to signing a deal with the devil, a top adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, as pressure mounts on the country to seek an end to more than two years of fighting.

A deal would only buy time for Russian President Vladimir Putin to strengthen his army and usher in another, potentially more violent chapter in the war, Mykhailo Podolyak told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday. "If you want to sign a deal with the devil, who will then drag you to hell, well, go for it. This is what Russia is," Podolyak said when asked about the prospects for a peace deal for Kyiv, whose forces are locked in a bloody war of attrition with Moscow's troops in eastern Ukraine.

"If you sign anything today with Russia, that will not lose the war and will not be legally responsible for mass crimes, this will mean that you have signed yourself a ticket to continue the war on a different scale, with other protagonists, with a different number of killed and tortured people," he said.

It is a view held across Zelenskyy's camp and reflected broadly among Ukrainians. But it also increasingly comes

up against the current of Western pressure, as Kyiv continues to face difficult front-line conditions against Moscow's larger, better equipped army, as well as uncertainty over the level of future political support from Ukraine's closest ally, the U.S.

War fatigue also appears to be eroding the morale of Ukrainians, who have struggled with constant bombardment, electricity outages and the loss of loved ones. A poll

by the Kyiv International Institute for Sociology found that a number of Ukrainians opposed to territorial concessions to Russia in exchange for peace has continued to fall. It was 55% in July, compared with 74% in December.

Even Zelenskyy hinted at a willingness to negotiate with Russia for the first time since the 2022 full-scale invasion, suggesting Moscow should send a delegation to the next global peace summit, which is expected in November.

But Podolyak insisted that support, effective economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure to isolate Russia. As he spoke, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba was in China, one of Russia's closest allies, on a mission to forge closer ties. Podolyak said the goal was to provide explanations for Ukraine's positions and for why China should play a more "active intensive function in ending the war on the terms of international law." (AP)



## US arrests 2 leaders of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel: 'El Mayo' Zambada and son of 'El Chapo'

WASHINGTON, July 26: Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, a longtime leader of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, and Joaquín Guzmán López, a son of another infamous cartel leader, were arrested by US authorities in Texas on Thursday, the US Justice Department said.

A leader of the powerful Sinaloa cartel for decades alongside Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, Zambada is one of the most notorious drug traffickers in the world and known for running the cartel's smuggling operations while keeping a lower profile.

A Mexican federal official told The Associated Press that Zambada and Guzmán López arrived in the United States on a private plane and turned themselves in to authorities. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to discuss the matter.

The US government had offered a reward of up to USD 15 million for information leading to the capture of Zambada, who eluded authorities for decades.

Zambada and Guzmán López oversaw the trafficking of "tens of thousands of pounds of drugs into the United States, along with related violence", FBI Director Christopher Wray said, adding that now they will "face justice in the United States".

"Fentanyl is the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced, and the Justice Department will not rest until every single cartel leader, member, and associate responsible for poisoning our communities is held accountable," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement. Mexican authorities didn't immediately comment on the arrests. US officials have been seeking Zambada's capture for years, and he has been charged in a number of US cases. He was charged in February in the Eastern District of New York with conspiring to manufacture and distribute the synthetic opioid. Prosecutors said he was continuing to lead the Sinaloa cartel, "one of the most violent and powerful drug trafficking organizations in the world".

Zambada, one of the longest-surviving capos in Mexico, was considered the cartel's strategist, more involved in day-to-day operations than his flashier and better-known boss, "El Chapo" Guzmán, who was sentenced to life in prison in the US in 2019 and is the father of Guzmán López.

Zambada is an old-fashioned capo in an era of younger kingpins known for their flamboyant lifestyles of club-hopping and brutal tactics of beheading, dismembering and even skinning their rivals. While Zambada has fought those who challenged him, he is known for concentrating on the business side of trafficking and avoiding gruesome cartel violence that would draw attention.

In an April 2010 interview with the Mexican magazine Proceso, he acknowledged that he lived in constant fear of going to prison and would contemplate suicide rather than be captured.

"I'm terrified of being incarcerated," Zambada said. "I'd like to think that, yes, I would kill myself." (AP)

## Ex-Pak PM Khan's party announces countrywide protest for release of all arrested leaders

ISLAMABAD, July 26: Pakistan authorities on Friday braced for a possible showdown with supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf after the party announced a countrywide protest for the release of all arrested party leaders.

Apart from the PTI, the rightwing Jamaat-e-Islami also announced a demonstration in Islamabad against the rising high cost of electricity and other commodities. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party will hold nationwide protests for the release of 71-year-old founder Khan and other arrested party leaders and workers.

Khan was arrested on August 5 last year after his conviction in the first Toshakhana corruption case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Since then, he has been kept in jail in various cases.

Though the former-cricket-turned-politician had secured bail or his conviction was set aside, he has not been released. According to the PTI, it will hold a protest in front of the National Press Club in the capital, while the Jamaat-e-Islami plans to stage a sit-in at the famous F-Chowk facing the parliament building. Meanwhile, police in Islamabad imposed section 144, banning all kinds of gatherings, including protests in the federal capital, and sealing the Red Zone for all entries. The zone houses key government offices and embassies.

Police also partially closed the Islamabad Highway at the Faizabad Inter-

change, which sits at the main entry point from Rawalpindi to Islamabad.

Separately, the Punjab Home Department imposed section 144 in the province to ban all protests and gatherings. The PTI has claimed its party leaders are being arrested ahead of nationwide protests, saying that the Punjab Police raided PTI leader Raja Basharat's house in Rawalpindi. It also noted that more than a dozen people, including lawmaker Javed Iqbal, have been arrested in the Rahim Yar Khan city.

The party says the police in Lahore raided the house and camp of PTI leader Mehr Naeemullah and arrested five of

his friends, but Naeemullah managed to escape from there. So far, the authorities have thwarted the efforts of the PTI to hold big rallies. The call for Friday's protest comes after the party was reinvigorated by the Supreme Court judgment of July 12, which not only endorsed its status as a political party but also awarded it reserved seats. Strengthened by the verdict, PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan asked his workers to prepare for elections. "New election will be held after November as the current government has failed," he said. The Supreme Court on July 12 declared that the PTI was a political party and eligible to receive reserved seats for women and non-Muslims in the national and provincial assemblies. The ruling meant that independent members of the parliament who won elections with the support of PTI could join it. (PTI)



## ASEAN cornerstone of India's Act East Policy and its Indo-Pacific vision: EAM Jaishankar

VIENTIANE (LAOS), July 26: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is the cornerstone of India's Act East Policy and its Indo-Pacific vision, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday, as he sought to expand political, economic and security cooperation with the 10-member influential regional bloc.

Jaishankar is here in the Laotian capital to participate in the meetings of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In his remarks at the opening session of the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting, Jaishankar said the priority that India attaches to ASEAN and EAS (East Asia Summit) platforms is evident from Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting Jakarta last year on the very eve of the G20 Summit in New Delhi.

He noted that Prime Minister Modi had announced a 12-point plan that has been largely acted upon. "For India, ASEAN is the cornerstone of its Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific vision that was thereafter built on it. For us, political, economic and security cooperation with ASEAN is of the utmost priority. So too are people-to-people linkages, that we are constantly seeking to expand," Jaishankar said. It is encouraging to note that the India-ASEAN partnership acquires ever more dimensions with each passing day, he said.

He thanked his Singaporean counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan for co-chairing the meeting. He also welcomed Minister Bendito Freitas of Timor-Leste as an observer in the meeting.

"Last year, Prime Minister Modi announced that we will open an Embassy in Dili. We are proceeding to do so very shortly and in fact, will be undertaking high-level visits there as well," Jaishankar said.

"I congratulate Lao PDR for the chairmanship of ASEAN and extend our fullest support for the successful Chairmanship. I also thank our colleague and Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic) for the warm welcome and hospitality," Jaishankar added.

He extended his deep appreciation to all the members for strengthening ASEAN-India relations through substantive and tangible cooperation identified under the ASEAN-India Plan of Action and its Annex. (PTI)

## Typhoon Gaemi wreaked the most havoc in the country it didn't hit directly — the Philippines

BEIJING, July 26: What was Typhoon Gaemi weakened to a severe tropical storm and headed toward inland China on Friday after making landfall the previous evening on the east coast.

The storm felled trees, flooded streets and damaged crops in China but there were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage. Five people died in Taiwan, which Gaemi crossed at typhoon strength on Thursday before heading over open waters to China.

The worst loss of life, however, was in a country that Gaemi earlier passed by but didn't strike directly: the Philippines. A steadily climbing death toll has reached 32, authorities there said on Friday.

The typhoon exacerbated seasonal monsoon rains in the Southeast Asian country, causing landslides and severe flooding

that stranded people on rooftops as waters rose around them.

China Gaemi waned into a severe tropical storm after coming ashore on Thursday evening in coastal Fujian province, but it is still expected to bring heavy rains in the coming days as it moves northwest to Jiangxi, Hubei and Henan provinces.

About 85 hectares (210 acres) of crops were damaged in Fujian province and economic losses were estimated at 11.5 million yuan (USD 1.6 million), according to Chinese media reports. More than 290,000 people were relocated because of the storm.

Elsewhere in China, several days of heavy rains this week in Gansu province left one dead and three missing in the country's northwest, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Taiwan Residents and business own-



ers swept out mud and mopped up water on Friday after serious flooding that sent cars and scooters floating down streets in parts of southern and central Taiwan.

Five people died, several of them struck by falling trees and one by a landslide hitting their house. More than 650 people were injured, the emergency operations centre said.

Visiting hard-hit Kaohsiung in the south, President Lai Ching-te commended the city's efforts

to improve flood control since a 2009 typhoon that brought a similar amount of rain and killed 681 people, Taiwan's Central News Agency reported.

Lai announced that cash payments of USD 20,000 New Taiwan Dollars (USD 610) would be given to households in severely flooded areas.

Philippines At least 32 people have died in the Philippines, mostly because of flooding and landslides

triggered by days of monsoon rains that intensified when the typhoon - called Carina in the Philippines - passed by the archipelago's east coast.

The victims included 11 people in the Manila metro area, where widespread flooding trapped people on the roofs and upper floors of their houses, police said. Some drowned or were electrocuted in their flooded communities.

Earlier this week, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered authorities to speed up efforts in delivering food and other aid to isolated rural villages, saying people may not have eaten for days.

The bodies of a pregnant woman and three children were dug out on Wednesday after a landslide buried a shanty in the rural mountainside town of Agoncillo in Batangas province. (AP)



# Nagaland bans single-use plastics from August 1

**DIMAPUR, July 26:** The Governor of Nagaland has imposed a complete ban on all Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) carry bags irrespective of microns and also on all single use plastic bottles for water and soft drinks below one litre from the state of Nagaland with effect from August 1, 2024.

A penalty of ₹ 10,000 for the first offence, ₹ 20,000 for the second offence shall be realized from the defaulters and for subsequent offence a permit cancellation shall be imposed.

This move of the Nagaland Governor is in pursuance to the Special Task Force (STF) on single use plastics meeting held on June 20, 2024 and with a view to eradicate the serious



environmental and ecological challenges posed by rampant use of single-use plastics and single-use plastic bottles in Nagaland.

As Such, all individual institutions/commercial establishments (educational institutions, offices, hotels, shops, restaurants, religious institutions, in-

dustrial establishments, banquet halls etc.) shall abide the aforesaid ban and any breach shall be liable for punitive action, a government order said today.

A District Task Force already constituted in respective districts shall strictly monitor and function as vigilance squads and ensure imposing of

complete ban on stocking, distribution, selling and use of all single-use plastics carry bags and single use plastic bottles for water and soft drinks below one litre in their respective jurisdiction.

The District Administration/District Task Force (DTF)/local bodies shall levy penalties against the defaulting business establishments in their respective jurisdiction, the order also said.

District Task Forces (DTFs) shall regularly monitor and conduct a quarterly meeting for strengthening and compliance of the complete ban on the above mentioned items. Action Taken Report (ATR) shall be furnished to the Government on a regular basis, the order added. (NNN)

# Non teaching staffs strike in M'laya from July 29

**SHILLONG, July 26:** The All Meghalaya SSA Non-Teaching Staffs Association (AMSSANTS) recently announced its decision to hold an indefinite sit-in demonstration starting from July 29, till the state government is ready to fulfil its promise to enhance salary of SSA non-teaching employees in the state.

A statement issued by the association said that the decision was taken at a meeting held at Malki ground today.

"We have unanimously decided to stage an indefinite sit-in demonstration from Monday next (July 29) till the government is ready to fulfil its promise to enhance our salary, which has been pending since 2016," it said.

The non-teaching staff include those working right from the cluster level, block level, district level and state level under the office of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, State Education Mission Authority of Meghalaya.

The association also reminded that the education minister Rakkam A Sangma in his reply in the State Assembly in 2023 had



informed that the department had already sent the file relating to the proposal for enhancing the salary of SSA non-teaching staff to the finance department but unfortunately till date nothing has been done in this regard.

"This clearly shows that he (Rakkam) was only making a false promise/assurance just to fool the members of the state Assembly. However, the non-teaching staff are prepared to fight for their rights," it said while adding that the indefinite sit-in demonstration is not to protest against the state government but it is to "demands for our rights". (NNN)

## Tripura CM Manik Saha to attend NITI Aayog meeting in Delhi

**AGARTALA, July 26:** Tripura chief minister Manik Saha will attend the NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi on July 27, an official said on Friday.

The Niti Aayog's ninth governing council meeting will be held on Saturday in the national capital under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Chief Minister Manik Saha is set to leave the state on Friday to attend the NITI Aayog meeting scheduled to be held in New Delhi on Saturday. He will speak on the issues related to the state's overall development", said an official of the Chief Minister's Office.

Saha will also attend the two-day meeting of chief ministers of BJP-ruled states at the party headquarters beginning on Saturday, the official said. (PTI)

## Ex-BJP MP Rajdeep Roy named party in-charge of Tripura unit



**AGARTALA, July 26:** Former BJP MP from the Silchar Lok Sabha constituency, Rajdeep Roy, has been appointed as the in-charge of the party's Tripura unit, officials said.

The development comes ahead of the panchayat elections on August 8. Roy replaces Mahesh Sharma, a party release said.

"Grateful to the Hon'ble National President of Bharatiya Janata Party #JPNadda Ji for appointing me as the Prabhari of Tripura state," Roy said.

Chief Minister Manik Saha, BJP state president Rajib Bhattacharjee and former Union minister Pratima Bhoomik were among those who congratulated Roy.

"Congratulations and greetings to Rajdeep Roy for being appointed as the party's state in-charge," Saha said in a post on Facebook. Bhattacharjee, in his message, said: "BJP national president J P Nadda has appointed party in-charges for various states. Congratulations to former Silchar MP Rajdeep Roy for being appointed as the party prabhari for Tripura." (PTI)

# Sikkim man held for impregnating mentally challenged woman

**GANGTOK, July 26:** The police arrested a man on the charge of impregnating a mentally challenged woman in Sikkim's Gangtok district, an official said on Friday.

The accused, who is known to the woman, was arrested by Gangtok Sadar police after a complaint was lodged by her sister.

According to the FIR, the complainant discovered her sister's pregnancy after noticing the absence of menstrual periods for around three months. A subsequent test confirmed the pregnancy.

When questioned, the



adult woman revealed that the accused had taken her in his vehicle and forced himself on her during a road trip.

The Sikkim State Commission for Women helped

the victim's family make a complaint with the police.

The case is currently under investigation, the police official said, adding that the arrest was made on Wednesday. (PTI)

# Sikkim govt urges people to guard against fake FB account of CM

**GANGTOK, July 26:** The Sikkim government has urged people to guard against a fake Facebook account of Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang and not to engage with the fraudulent profile.

"It has come to the attention of the authorities concerned that a fraudulent Facebook profile impersonating Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang has been created. This fake profile is not affiliated with or authorised by the chief minister's office or any other official authority," Information and Public Relations Department Secretary Karma Doma Youtso said in a statement on Friday.

She urged people to exercise caution and not to engage with the fake profile.

Any communication or request made from this profile is not legitimate and should be reported immediately to Facebook for appropriate action, Youtso said.

While the authorities are working closely to address this issue and ensure the swift removal of the fraudulent profile, the residents of Sikkim are requested to remain vigilant and only rely on verified and official communication channels for updates and information from the chief minister, the official added. (PTI)

# Meghalaya govt to help unemployed youths secure overseas jobs

**TURA, July 26:** Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K. Sangma on Friday said the state government will provide up to ₹ 50,000 in training fees for unemployed youths to help them secure jobs overseas and connect them with reputable agencies.

Speaking at a job fair for overseas placements here, Sangma said the initia-

tive includes funding for training, visa assistance, and other necessary paperwork.

He said the move aims to address the labour shortages in developed countries due to aging populations.

"The population of most developed nations is aging and they do not have adequate young working population. With

India having the youngest population in the world, and even younger in the state of Meghalaya, there is an opportunity to bridge this gap by sending job-ready youth to work in these countries after proper training and support in terms of documentation from the government," he added. (PTI)

## Manipur CM to attend Niti Aayog meeting in Delhi

**IMPHAL, July 26:** Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh is scheduled to attend the NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi on Saturday.

Before his departure to the national capital on Thursday, Singh said, "My visit to Delhi is for the NITI Aayog meeting, which will be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Following this, there will be a chief ministers' conclave where the PM will be present."

"I will address the current situation in the state and seek solutions to the ongoing crisis. I am optimistic that positive outcomes will result," Singh said. (PTI)

## Mizoram CM Lalduhoma to participate in Niti Aayog meeting

**AIZAWL, July 26:** Mizoram chief minister Lalduhoma will participate in the Niti Aayog meeting to be held in Delhi on July 27, a CMO official said on Friday.

The Niti Aayog's ninth governing council meeting will be held on Saturday in the national capital under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The official said that Lalduhoma left for New Delhi on Friday afternoon.

The chief minister is expected to present issues related to the state's financial needs in the meeting, he said. (PTI)

## OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY :: NAGAON (ASSAM) ADVERTISEMENT

In partial modification to our earlier advertisement conveyed vide memo no. DLSA-N/2024/1641-49 dated 15.06.2024, fresh applications are invited in Standard Form, from intending candidates for filling up the following vacant post on contractual basis under the LADCs Modified Scheme 2022, in the establishment of District Legal Services Authority, Nagaon. The candidates who have already applied for the above mentioned posts need not make fresh applications.

| Sl No. | Name of the post  | No. of Vacant Post | Pay                              | Category   | Age Limit   | Educational Qualification   |
|--------|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---|---|
| 01     | Receptionist -cum- Data Entry Operator (on contractual basis) | 1 nos.             | Rs. 18,000/- (Fix pay per month) | Unreserved | 18 years to 40 years as on 01.01.2024 (Relaxation as per Govt. rules) | Graduation in any stream from a recognized University along with a 06 (six) months diploma/certificate course in computers with proficiency in MS Office, internet and email. Candidate should also possess good verbal and written communication skills, and ability to work in telecommunication systems. |
| 02     | Office Assistant (on contractual basis)                       | 3 nos.             | Rs. 18,000/- (Fix pay per month) | Unreserved | -Do-  | Graduation in any stream from a recognized University along with a 06 (six) months diploma/certificate course in computers with proficiency in MS Office, internet and email. Candidate should have the ability to take dictation and prepare files for presentation in the courts.                         |
| 03     | Peon (on contractual basis)                                   | 3 nos.             | Rs. 12,500/- (Fix pay per month) | Unreserved | -Do-  | Class VIII pass. Candidates who have passed HSSLC or above shall be ineligible to apply.  |

### General terms and conditions:

- The candidate must be an Indian citizen as defined in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India.
- The appointment shall be purely temporary and on contractual basis and does not entitle the person for being regularized in Govt. Service.
- After expiry of contract period of 01 (one) year, the contractual agreement will automatically stand terminated.
- The service may be extended after appropriate break in service, subject to the approval of the Hon'ble Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Nagaon.
- The candidates for Receptionist—cum- data Entry Operator and Office Assistant shall also possess good typing speed with proper drafting qualities, file maintenance and processing knowledge.
- If any candidate is found to have suppressed his educational qualification or given any wrong information at the time of applying for the post, his candidature shall be liable to be rejected, summarily without assigning any reason.
- The last date of receipt of application is 10 (ten) days from date of publication of the advertisement. The office shall not be liable for any postal delay.
- Duly filled applications on Standard Form of application (Assam Gazette Part IX) along with self attested photocopies of all the relevant testimonials and 02 (two) copies of recent passport size photographs should be addressed to **The Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Nagaon, Room No. 63, 4th Floor Judicial Court Building, Nagaon, Assam, Pin-782001.**
- Contact numbers and email id (if any) must be provided in the application. If mobile numbers are not provided the candidature will be rejected.
- The applicants have to deposit their application in a sealed envelope in the "DROP BOX" provided for the purpose in front of the premises of the office of the **Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Nagaon, Room No. 63, 4th Floor Judicial Court Building, Nagaon, Assam, Pin-782001.** Applicants may also send their applications through post at the same address. The office shall not be liable for any postal delay.
- The applicant must mention at the top of the envelope containing the application "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF OFFICE RECEPTIONIST—CUM- DATA ENTRY OPERATOR" for candidates intending to apply for the post of Receptionist—cum- Data Entry Operator, "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF OFFICE ASSISTANT" for candidates intending to apply for the post of Office Assistant and "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF PEON" for candidates intending to apply for the post of Peon.
- The eligible candidates for all the posts shall have to appear for viva-voca. The candidates short listed in the viva-voca for the post of Receptionist—cum- data Entry Operator and Office Assistant shall also appear for skill test (Computer).
- The list of eligible candidates will be uploaded in the official website of Nagaon Judiciary (nagaoadcourts.gov.in) with the date of interview and skill test and intimated on their respective mobile phones.
- No separate call letter will be issued from this office.
- All other information relating to recruitment process (including final results) will be published in the official website of Nagaon District Judiciary.
- All the applicants are advised to visit the official website frequently.
- Canvassing directly or indirectly shall disqualify a candidate.
- No TA/DA will be admissible to the candidates.

Sd/-  
District & Sessions Judge -cum-Chairman,  
District Legal Services Authority,  
Nagaon, Assam

Janasanyog /D/3035/24/27-Jul-24

## ECF No: 396599/259-60 APPLICATION FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ST STUDENTS OF ASSAM FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-25

It is for information of all concerned that Fresh / Renewal applications for Pre-Matric (Class IX & X) and Post-Matric scholarships for students of Assam belonging to Scheduled Tribes (ST) are invited for the academic year 2024-25 through **National Scholarship Portal (NSP)** at [www.scholarships.gov.in](http://www.scholarships.gov.in). Applications will be entertained through online portal only for students studying in Govt. / Govt. aided / Govt. recognized School / Higher Secondary / Colleges / University including Medical / Technical Institutions having valid U-DISE / AISHE / NCVT code only. The timelines for submission of applications are given below:

| Sl No | Name of Scheme   | Eligibility (Annual Family income) | Last date for submission of online applications by student |
|-------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 1     | Pre Matric Scholarship to ST students studying in Class IX - X | Rs. 2.50 lakh                      | 31/08/2024   |
| 2     | Post Matric Scholarship to ST students                         | Rs. 2.50 lakh                      | 31/10/2024   |

### Note:

- Students while applying for scholarships for the above two schemes are hereby requested to register themselves in NSP through the app "NSP OTR" available in Google play store and perform Face-authentication for generating **One Time Registration (OTR)** number which has been made mandatory for applying for scholarship from the Academic year 2024-25 onwards.
- Aadhaar and mobile number registered with Aadhaar are mandatory for generating OTR. (Details available at [scholarships.gov.in](http://scholarships.gov.in)).
- Students while filling up the online application form should upload income certificate of their parents/ guardians which has been issued by the concerned Circle/Revenue Officer.
- Students should also upload Caste certificate issued by office of the District Commissioner of their respective Districts. If the applicant name/surname in the application form differs in the Caste certificate, he should submit an affidavit duly notarized justifying the differences.
- Students should have a valid Bank account which should be seeded with their respective Aadhaar as scholarships will be credited into Aadhaar Seeded Rank Account of the students only.

Sd/-  
Tribal Affairs (Plain),  
Assam

Janasanyog/D/3088/ 24/27-Jul-24



# PM Modi pays homage to Kargil War heroes

*'Kargil Vijay Diwas reminds us that the sacrifices made for the nation are immortal'*

**GUWAHATI, July 26:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday, paid homage to the bravehearts, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty, on the occasion of 25th Kargil Vijay Diwas at the Kargil War Memorial in Dras, Ladakh. Addressing the Shirdhanjali Samaroh, he said that the glorious land of Ladakh is witness to the 25th year anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas.

"Kargil Vijay Diwas reminds us that the sacrifices made for the nation are immortal", he remarked. Even though months, years, decades and centuries pass by, the Prime Minister underlined that the lives laid down to protect the nation's borders cannot be erased. "The nation is forever indebted and deeply grateful to the mighty superheros of our armed forces", he further added.

Recalling the days of Kargil war, the Prime Minister said that he was fortunate to be amidst the soldiers back then, adding that he still remembers how our soldiers carried out a difficult operation at such a height.

"I salute the brave sons of the country who made the supreme sacrifice to protect the motherland," Modi said.

"In Kargil, we not only won the war, we presented an incredible example of 'truth, restraint and strength', the Prime Minister remarked. He threw light on Pakistan's deceit at the time when India was making all efforts to maintain peace.

"Falsehood and terror were brought down to their knees by truth", he added.

Condemning terrorism, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan has always faced defeat in the past.

"Pakistan was not learnt anything from its past and has continued to wage war in the garb of terrorism and proxy wars to stay relevant," Modi continued. He further asserted that the nefarious intentions of terrorists will never be fulfilled. "Our bravehearts will trample all the terror attempts," he added.

"India will overcome all challenges that come in the way of development, be it Ladakh or Jammu & Kashmir", the Prime Minister reiterated. He reminded that in a few days from now on 5th of August, the abrogation of Article 370 will complete 5 years and the Jammu & Kashmir of today is talking about a new future full of dreams.

The Prime Minister gave examples of progress and mentioned holding G20 meetings in the UT,



government's focus on infrastructure development and tourism, cinema halls opening up, and tazia procession being initiated after three and a half decades.

"This heaven on earth is swiftly moving in the direction of peace and prosperity", he added.

Underlining the developments taking place in Ladakh, the Prime Minister said through Shinkun La Tunnel, the union territory will remain connected with the whole country throughout the year, in every season.

"This tunnel will open doors of new possibilities for the development and better future of Ladakh."

Congratulating the people of Ladakh, the Prime Minister said that this tunnel will further make their lives easier as the numerous hardships faced by them due to the region's extreme weather will be eased. The Prime Minister highlighted the government's priorities towards the people of Ladakh and mentioned making efforts personally for the safe evacuation of citizens from the Kargil region from Iran during the Covid-19 pandemic.

He recalled a quarantine zone being established in Jaisalmer where they were tested before being sent to Ladakh.

Underlining the government's ef-

orts to boost ease of living and provide more services for the people of Ladakh, the Prime Minister mentioned an approximate six-time increase in the budget from ₹ 1100 crores to ₹ 6000 crores in the last 5 years.

"Be it roads, electricity, water, education, power supply, employment, every direction of Ladakh is transforming", PM Modi said, highlighting the application of holistic planning for the first time.

Referring to the ambitious targets for the border areas, he informed that the Border Road Organization (BRO) has completed more than 330 projects including Sela Tunnel, showcasing New India's capabilities and direction.

Emphasising the importance of upgrading military technologies, the Prime Minister said in the changing global scenarios, our defence force needs the latest weapons and equipment along with a modern working style and arrangements.

The Prime Minister said that the defence sector had felt the necessity to upgrade in the past as well, but unfortunately, this issue was not given much importance.

"However, in the last 10 years, defence reforms have been prioritised, making our forces more capable and self-reliant," he added.

Modi further said that a major stake in defence procurement is being given to the Indian defence industry, adding that 25 per cent has been reserved for the private sector in the defence and research development budget.

The Prime Minister pointed out that those misleading the youth of the nation today had no regard for the armed forces in the past.

Recalling the false promises made by past governments on One Rank One Pension, the Prime Minister underlined that it was the present government that implemented the scheme where ex-servicemen were given more than ₹ 1.25 lakh crores.

He further pointed out the neglect of past governments and said, "These are the same people who did not build a war memorial for the martyrs even after 7 decades of independence, did not provide enough bulletproof jackets to our soldiers deployed on the border and kept ignoring Kargil Vijay Diwas."

Concluding the address, the Prime Minister said, "The victory of Kargil was not the victory of any government or any party. This victory belongs to the country, this victory is the heritage of the country. This is a festival of pride and self-respect of the country", a release stated.

## Was Escobar Chandrababu Naidu's friend: Jagan hits back over being compared to drug lord

**AMARAVATI, July 26:** YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy whom Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu compared to Pablo Escobar, threw the ball back into the TDP chief's court on Friday when he asked mockingly if Naidu had been a friend of the late Colombian drug lord.

While presenting a white paper yesterday on the law-and-order situation and the alleged drug menace in the state under YSRCP rule between 2019 and 2024, Naidu had claimed that Reddy had aimed at emulating Escobar.

On Friday, Reddy addressed a press conference responding to Naidu's allegations and asked, "Is he Chandrababu's friend that he knows his name so well? He must be. Otherwise, I don't know his name (Escobar) itself. On the other hand, Chandrababu Naidu is repetitively speaking about a particular person (Escobar)."

Speaking over the alleged atrocities being committed against his party cadres since the TDP-led NDA took over the reins of power, Reddy reflected on the absence of the Congress party during YSRCP's recent protest held in New Delhi over the matter. He said the Congress party should be questioned about this.

The former CM asserted that the YSRCP had invited all the parties, including the Congress and the BJP, for the protest and a photo exhibition.

He also said the Congress party should be questioned over its alleged ties with Naidu and how Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy is being used as a point of contact to reach Congress elders.

However, he declared that the YSRCP would work with any party joins it in fighting against the "injustices" in the state.

According to Reddy, Naidu allegedly has a knack of engaging in "diversion politics" using the might of the media to discredit and defame any person he wants to target.

Referring to the seven white papers released by Naidu, he called them "erroneous papers" and alleged that the TDP-led government failed to convince the public that the state's debt is as high ₹ 14 lakh crore, and so it was revised down to ₹ 10 lakh crore.

Stressing that there is no protection for women in the state, Reddy alleged that up to 12 women were raped within 45 days of the NDA government coming to power in

Andhra Pradesh.

Likewise, Reddy highlighted that women, farmers, students and several other sections used to receive their welfare schemes and benefits on time during his government but observed that that was not the case anymore under the NDA government.

Reddy alleged that Naidu is backing off from presenting a regular budget as he would be compelled to incorporate poll promises in it.

The former chief minister alleged that Naidu does not have the boldness to table a regular budget, which generally is for 12 months, and noted that the TDP-led government is failing to present a budget for seven months.

"If he presents a regular budget then he has to show the fake promises he had made during polls in the regular budget. If those 'Super Six' promises do not reflect, he (Naidu) thought people will open their mouths," said Reddy.

The 'Super Six' schemes include ₹ 1,500 monthly pension for women in the age bracket of 19 to 59 years, 20 lakh jobs for youth or ₹ 3,000 monthly unemployment aid and free bus travel for women.

Other schemes under Super Six include three free cooking gas cylinders for every household per year, ₹ 15,000 to every school-going child per annum and ₹ 20,000 annual financial assistance for every farmer.

According to Reddy, people will wait to see if they will receive the money promised during the elections, which is allegedly making Naidu to create a fear psychosis in the state so that people will not come on to the roads to protest.

Recently, the chief minister announced in the assembly that the state budget will be presented after two months due to "financial constraints".

Questioning if the state is moving forward or going back 52 days after the declaration of the election results, Reddy alleged that atrocities such as murders, rapes and destruction of assets were rampant.

According to the opposition leader, victims were being booked while the police department was playing the role of a spectator under the allegedly oppressive rule of the TDP-led government, which also includes the BJP and the Janasena. (PTI)

## Netanyahu, his govt barbaric; their barbarism supported by most of western world: Priyanka

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday slammed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over what she said were the Israel government's "genocidal actions" in Gaza, as she accused him and his government of "barbarism".

The Congress general secretary's remarks came after Netanyahu defended Israel's ongoing war in Gaza in a speech to the US Congress on Wednesday.

Netanyahu received a warm welcome from House Speaker Mike Johnson and other Republican lawmakers who arranged his speech in the chamber.

Netanyahu received a bipartisan standing ovation.

Priyanka Gandhi said it was no longer enough to speak up for the civilians, mothers, fathers, doctors, nurses, aid workers, journalists, teachers, writers, poets, senior citizens and the thousands of innocent children who were being wiped out day after day by the "horrific genocide" taking place in Gaza.

"It is the moral responsibility of every right-thinking individual, including all those Israeli citizens who do not believe in hatred and violence, and every government in the world to condemn the Israeli government's genocidal actions and force them to stop," she said in a post on X.

Their actions are unacceptable in a world that professes civility and morality, Priyanka Gandhi said.

"Instead, we are subjected to the image of the Israeli prime minister being given a standing ovation in the US Congress," she said.

"He (Netanyahu) calls it 'a clash between barbarism and civilisation'. He is absolutely correct, except that it is him and his government that are barbaric and their barbarism is being given the unstinted support of most of the western world. It is truly a shame to watch," Priyanka Gandhi said.

The Congress leader has been raising her voice against Israel's actions in Gaza and expressing solidarity with Palestinians. (PTI)

## Took initiatives through 'whole of govt' approach during Covid for effective management: Govt

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** The Centre took several initiatives through the "whole of government" approach during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure effective management and availability of sufficient healthcare infrastructure to meet the increased demand, the Lok Sabha was told on Friday.

In a written reply, Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel provided details of the key schemes launched and implemented by the ministry to deal with pandemics such as Covid-19 and ensure sufficient resources in public health facilities around the country during such outbreaks.

To strengthen the public health infrastructure and effectively manage and respond to any future pandemics and outbreaks, the Pradhan Mantri - Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission was launched in October 2021 with an outlay of ₹ 64,180 crore, to be implemented over five years, to fill critical gaps in health infrastructure, surveillance and research.

The scheme is centrally sponsored with some central sector components, she said.

Measures under the scheme focus on developing capacities of health systems and institutions across the continuum of care at all levels in responding effectively to current and future pandemics/disasters.

Under the centrally-sponsored components, support is provided to states and Union Terri-



tories for construction of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in rural and urban areas, establishment and strengthening of block public health units, integrated district public health laboratories in all districts and critical care hospital blocks.

Central sector components majorly support interventions focusing on enhancing capacities for surveillance and health emergency response, research, pandemic preparedness and One Health approach to prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks in ani-

mals and humans, Patel said.

The India Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package (ECRP-I) for ₹ 15,000 crore was approved by the Union Cabinet in April 2020 to prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by the pandemic.

An additional ₹ 8,473.73 crore was released to states and Union Territories, Patel said. ECRP is a central sector scheme launched in 2020 for providing support to primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities.

It aims to build a resilient health system to support preparedness and prevention functions for the management of Covid-19 and future outbreaks, she added.

To provide support to central hospital agencies and to states and Union Territories to augment their existing response to the second wave and the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, the ECRP-II was approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2021 with a financial outlay of ₹ 23,123 crore. ECRP-II has central sector and centrally-sponsored schemes. ₹ 12,740.22 crore was released to states and Union Territories under the centrally-sponsored scheme component, Patel stated.

The scheme aimed to accelerate health system preparedness for immediate responsiveness for early prevention, detection and management of Covid-19, with the focus on health infrastructure development. (PTI)

## Mamata to attend NITI Aayog meet to protest budget 'bias, conspiracy to divide states'

**KOLKATA, July 26:** West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee confirmed on Friday that she would participate in the central think-tank NITI Aayog meeting scheduled on July 27 in Delhi.

Banerjee's statement came amid uncertainty on whether she, too, would skip the meet like most other CMs of the INDIA bloc.

Talking to reporters at the Kolkata airport before leaving for Delhi, Banerjee said she would join the meeting and use the opportunity to register her protest against a "discriminatory budget" and the "conspiracy to divide Bengal and other opposition-ruled states."

The chief minister said she was asked to send her written speech seven days ahead of the meeting which she has done and it was before the Union Budget was tabled.

"I will stay at the meeting for a while. If I get an opportunity to deliver my speech at the meeting and record my protest against the discrimination and political bias against the opposition-ruled states in the budget besides the conspiracy that is being hatched to divide Bengal and its neighbouring states, I will do so. Else, I will walk out of the meeting," the chief minister said.

Banerjee, accompanied by her nephew and TMC MP-cum-national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, left for Delhi on Friday afternoon after postponing her trip to the national capital by a day.

The postponement had stirred speculations on whether Banerjee, who had earlier expressed her intention to attend the NITI Aayog meeting, would join the bandwagon of opposition party chief ministers.

Several INDIA bloc CMs had announced their decision to skip the meet as a mark of protest against the Union budget which, they alleged, was "anti-federal" in spirit and "extremely discriminatory" towards their states.

The list includes Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin of the DMK, Kerala Chief Minister and CPI(M) leader Pinarayi Vijayan, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann of the Aam Aadmi Party and all three Congress chief ministers - Karnataka's Siddaramaiah, Himachal Pradesh's Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Telangana's Revanth Reddy.

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren of the JMM is, however, likely to join the meeting despite earlier reports that he, too, had chosen to give it a miss.

"All opposition-ruled states, including Bengal, have been totally deprived in this Budget. The Centre has taken a step-motherly attitude towards these states. I cannot accept such discrimination and political bias against us," Banerjee said. (PTI)



## In 22-coach train, 12 are non-AC for general passengers: Rly Min

*'Passenger traffic greatly varied from the year 2019 to 2024 due to Covid-19 pandemic'*

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has said that the existing policy on composition of mail and express trains provides for 12 non-AC general and sleeper class coaches and eight AC coaches in a train having 22 coaches. He said that of the total number of coaches presently in use, two-thirds are non-AC, and one-third are AC variants.

The railway minister made the statement in Rajya Sabha in a written response to questions raised by IUMI MP Haris Beeran who wanted to know the steps taken by the government to address the persistent problem of overcrowding in low-cost passenger trains and if their number or capacity has been reduced.

"The passenger traffic greatly varied from the year 2019 to 2024 due to Covid-19 pandemic. However, Indian Railways (IR) operates various types of regular time-tabled trains e.g. suburban, short distance passenger trains, long distance/Mail Express/ superfast trains with different composition catering to different segments of passengers," Vaishnaw said.

He added, "The extant policy regarding composition of Mail/Express trains, provide for 12 (Twelve) General class & Sleeper class non-AC coaches and 08 (eight) AC Coaches, in a train composition of 22 coaches, thereby providing greater accommodation for passengers using General and non-AC Sleeper Coaches."

The railway minister said that of the total number of coaches presently in use, two-thirds are non-AC, and one-third are AC variants.

Additionally, the Railways has also started Amrit Bharat services which are fully non-AC trains, providing high quality services to the passengers.

"Besides, IR constantly endeavours to provide additional accommodation to travelling passengers by operating Special train services during festivals, holidays, etc. and by augmenting the load of trains, both on permanent and temporary basis, to cater to additional demand," the railway minister said. He added, "These are on-going processes on Indian Railways. Keeping in view increased demand, IR has planned to manufacture 10,000 non-AC Coaches including General Class and Sleeper Class Coaches." (PTI)

## India, US sign first-ever cultural property agreement for retrieval of antique objects

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** India and the United States on Friday their first agreement to prevent illegal trafficking of cultural property and return of antiquarian objects to their place of origin, the Ministry of Culture said.

The US-India Cultural Property Agreement was signed by Union Cultural Secretary Govind Mohan and US envoy Eric Garcetti in the presence of Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at the sidelines of the ongoing 46th session of the World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam here.

Interacting with the press later, Shekhawat said it is a general agreement that will allow "smooth repatriation" of historic artefact from the US to India.

He added that there are "297 items" that are "lying in the US, ready to be repatriated."

India has repatriated 358 antiquities since 1976, out of these 345 have been retrieved since 2014, the minister said. "The agreement aims to prevent illegal trafficking of cultural property and retrieval of antiquarian objects to their place of origin," the Culture Ministry said in a statement.



The US Embassy in a statement said that with this agreement, India joins the ranks of 29 existing US bilateral cultural property agreement partners.

"This cultural property agreement is about two things. First and foremost, it's about justice - returning to India and to Indians, what is rightfully theirs. Secondly, it's about connecting India with the world."

"Every American and every global

citizen deserves to know, see, and experience the culture that we celebrate here today. To know Indian culture is to know human culture," the envoy said.

The US-India Cultural Property Agreement was negotiated by the State Department under the US law implementing the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of

Ownership of Cultural Property, the statement said.

Garcetti also congratulated the government of India for hosting UNESCO's 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, saying it demonstrates the country's commitment to not only protecting its own cultural property, but also help others doing it.

"This event marks the culmination of nearly two years of diligent work by experts from both countries and fulfills President Biden's and Prime Minister Modi's commitment to enhance cooperation to protect cultural heritage highlighted in the joint statement issued after their meeting in June 2023," the embassy said in the statement.

"Cultural property agreements prevent the illegal trade of cultural property and simplify the process by which looted and stolen antiquities may be returned to their country of origin."

"The United States has been unwavering in its commitment to protect and preserve cultural heritage worldwide and to restrict trafficking in cultural property," it said. (PTI)

## NTA declares final results of NEET-UG

*'Re-revised score cards are live now'*



**NEW DELHI, July 26:** The National Testing Agency on Friday announced the final results of the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam NEET-UG, officials said.

The results were declared following directive from the Supreme Court after taking into account marks of a physics question, which the NTA had said has two correct answers.

"The re-revised score cards are live now," a senior NTA official said.

Forty-four out of the 67 candidates who were earlier declared toppers had scored full marks because of the marks awarded for that particular physics question. The number of toppers was later reduced to

61 with the agency withdrawing grace marks awarded to six candidates to make up for loss of time at few exam centres.

In a major setback to unsuccessful aspirants of NEET-UG 2024, the Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed the pleas seeking cancellation and re-test of the controversy-ridden exam, holding that there was no evidence on record to conclude that it was "vitiated" on account of "systemic breach" of its sanctity.

The verdict came as a shot in the arm for the embattled NDA government and the National Testing Agency (NTA), which were facing strong criticism and protests, on streets and in Parliament, over alleged large-scale malpractices like question paper leak, fraud and impersonation in the prestigious test held on May 5.

The CBI is probing alleged irregularities in NEET-UG 2024 and has lodged six FIRs.

The NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. (PTI)

## SC rejects Maran's plea against Delhi HC verdict in Spicejet arbitral award case

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** In a relief to SpiceJet, the Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea of Kalanithi Maran and Kal Airways against the Delhi High Court order that had set aside an arbitral award asking the low-cost carrier to refund ₹ 579 crore with interest to Maran and his company Kal Airways.

A single judge bench of the Delhi High Court had on July 31, 2023 upheld the arbitral award asking SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh to refund ₹ 579 crore plus interest to Maran and his company Kal Airways.

The award was granted by the arbitration tribunal on July 20, 2018. However, on May 17 this year, a division bench of the Delhi High Court, while dealing with an intra-court appeal against the order, set aside the single judge bench order that had upheld the arbitral award.

The division bench allowed the appeals of Singh and SpiceJet against the single judge bench order and remanded the matter back to the court concerned to consider the petitions challenging the arbitral award afresh.

Maran and Kal Airways moved the top court against the decision. "No, no...we will not interfere. Let it go back (to the high court)," a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala said while refusing to accept the submissions of senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Maran and his firm.

The top court was also critical of the single judge bench judgement of the high court.

"Come to the single judge order first...all that we can say about single judge is filling up 250 pages is not writing a judgment under section 34 (of the Arbitration and

Conciliation Act).

"This is atrocious. Just a number of the Supreme Court judgements (is cited) saying (scope of ) interference is limited. Let us not make any observations about this single judge. Where has he even applied his mind?" the CJI observed when Singhvi tried to refer to legal points of the case.

Section 34 of the Act deals with applications for setting aside the arbitral awards. Refusing to interfere with the high court's order, the top court said it was in agreement with the reasoning of the division bench sending it back to single judge for deciding the case afresh.

"The order has to be carefully articulated. On the other hand, the judge must apply mind to the grounds of challenge and then deduce if interference is warranted," the CJI said.

"The Delhi High Court should now assign the case to a judge other than the single judge who was assigned the case," the bench said, trashing the plea of Maran.

SpiceJet hailed the apex court's decision.

"SpiceJet Ltd. welcomes the Supreme Court's decision to dismiss an appeal filed by Kalanithi Maran and Kal Airways challenging a Delhi High Court division bench ruling in favour of the airline," the low-cost carrier said in a statement.

On July 31, 2023, the single judge had upheld the award announced by the arbitral tribunal on July 20, 2018 in favour of Maran and Kal Airways, saying the court was barred from entering into the merits of an award unless there was an error that was apparent on the face of the record or an illegality that goes to the root of the matter.

Singh had approached the single judge bench of the high court challenging the arbitral award.

The case dates to January 2015, when Singh, who owned the airline earlier, bought it back from Maran after it was grounded for months due to resource crunch.

While the arbitral tribunal had asked Maran, who also owns the Sun Group and several publications, to pay Singh and the airline ₹ 29 crore in penal interest, while Singh was asked to refund ₹ 579 crore plus interest to Maran.

The tribunal, created in 2016 on the orders of the Delhi High Court to adjudicate the share transfer dispute, had held that there was no breach of a share sale and purchase agreement reached between Maran and current promoter Singh in late January 2015.

In a relief to Singh, the tribunal had, however, rejected Maran's appeal for damages of ₹ 1,323 crore from the Gurugram-based carrier.

In February 2015, Maran of the Sun Network and Kal Airways, his investment vehicle, had transferred 58.46 per cent stake in SpiceJet to Singh for ₹ 2 (Rs two only) along with ₹ 1,500 crore debt liability, after the airline was grounded due to a severe cash crunch.

Singh was the co-founder of the airline and is now its chairman and managing director.

As part of the agreement, Maran and Kal Airways had claimed to have paid SpiceJet ₹ 679 crore for issuing warrants and preference shares.

However, Maran approached the Delhi High Court in 2017, alleging SpiceJet had neither issued convertible warrants and preference shares nor returned the money. (PTI)

## Over 2,500 people died in five years in human-elephant conflicts: Govt data

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Human-elephant conflicts resulted in 2,853 human deaths during the past five years, with the number of fatalities reaching a five-year high of 628 in 2023, according to government data.

Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh on Thursday said "elephants caused" 587 human deaths in 2019, 471 in 2020, 557 in 2021, 610 in 2022 and 628 in 2023. The data revealed that Odisha recorded 624 such deaths during this period, followed by Jharkhand with 474, West Bengal with 436, Assam with 383, Chhattisgarh with 303, Tamil Nadu with 256, Karnataka with 160 and Kerala with 124. The minister said the management of wildlife habitats was primarily the responsibility of state governments and Union Territory administrations and that the central government provided financial and technical support under the centrally sponsored Project Tiger & Elephant scheme for the protection of animals, their habitats and corridors, addressing human-animal conflict, and for the welfare of captive elephants. In February 2021, the ministry issued an advisory on dealing with human-wildlife conflict, recommending coordinated inter-departmental action, identification of conflict hotspots, adherence to standard operating procedures, and establishment of rapid response teams.

In June the following year, the environment ministry issued guidelines to states and Union Territories on managing human-wildlife conflicts, including damage to crops. The guidelines promote the cultivation of crops in forest fringe areas that are unpalatable to wild animals, and the use of agroforestry models incorporating cash crops such as chillies, lemongrass, and Khush grass, mixed with tree and shrub species. In coordination with state forest departments, the ministry has also ground validated 150 elephant corridors across 15 elephant range states and asked states and Union Territories to take necessary steps to protect and conserve these corridors. (PTI)

## Mangrove plantation in 3 coastal districts of Odisha

**BHUBANESWAR, July 26:** People in three coastal districts of Odisha on Friday planted mangroves to regenerate denuded coastal forest cover. As International Day for Conservation of Mangrove ecosystem is being observed on Friday, mangrove plantations in cyclone-vulnerable areas of Odisha are being stepped up and awareness especially for youth and school children, are being organised by Reliance Foundation and its partnering organisations.

Mangrove ecosystem is an important wetland system which provides not just livelihood security to coastal communities, but also ecological security along the coastline. Around 55,000 mangrove plants were planted with Reliance Foundation's support in vulnerable areas in Balasore, Jagatsinghpur and Ganjam districts in the last five years, a statement by the foundation claimed. More than 50 residents of Kharsahapur village in Balasore district were involved in planting mangroves across a one-kilometre stretch of the coastline. Reliance Foundation has facilitated knowledge transfer from scientific experts, sourcing mangrove plant material and guided the community in management of plantation.

"The 1999 Super Cyclone severely affected my village as the landfall was in our gram panchayat. Villages that had mangrove cover were then less affected. We are regenerating our mangrove cover with Reliance Foundation to mitigate cyclone impact," said Sukhanto Kumar, a resident of Padmapur village in Jagatsinghpur district, who is a part of the mangrove efforts in his village. (PTI)

## Karnataka Sampark Kranti Express crew suspended for violating speed restriction in Mathura

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Agra Rail Division has suspended the crew of the Karnataka Sampark Kranti Express for violating a speed restriction of 20 kmph in Mathura section and putting the passengers' lives at risk.

The railways imposes speed restrictions for safe operation of the trains for various reasons such as track condition, ongoing track repair work, old railway bridges, station yard remodelling etc.

The suspension was done on July 21. "Disciplinary action has been taken against the crew and they have been suspended on the spot," Prashasti Srivastava, PRO, Agra Division, which comes under the North Central Railway Zone, told PTI on Friday.

"Both the loco pilot and the assistant loco pilot forgot to obey the speed restriction of 20 kmph while crossing Mathura and oversped, which amounts to serious violation of railway norms as it can cause an accident," a railway official from Mathura said.

This is the third reported incident in the past two months in the Agra Division in which the crew of an express train violated the speed restriction.

"There seems to be something wrong with the

loco pilots of the Agra Division under which Mathura section falls. It looks like they are under stress due to some reason.

"The Railway Board should take the matter very seriously and send a probe team to look into it before it gets too late and some untoward incident takes place," a railway official requesting anonymity said.

Earlier in May 2024, the drivers of Gatiman Express and Malwa Express were suspended along with their assistants for running their trains at 120 kmph in a section in Agra Division where the cautionary speed limit was restricted at 20 kmph.

According to Railways, before boarding the engine, the loco pilots and their assistants obtain a complete route chart along with advisories and cautionary speed limits from the concerned operating department and they are supposed to maintain the speed accordingly.

Railway officials said the assistant driver calls out these advisories loudly and cautions while the driver repeats them to confirm. It is very surprising how both of them missed out on it.

After the Gatiman and Malwa incidents, the Railway Board set up a committee also to find out the reasons for the violation of speed restrictions

by train drivers at various points between origin and destination.

The committee, in its first virtual meeting, interacted with over 180 loco pilots and loco inspectors through video conference to understand the issues related to the caution orders at the field level.

The participants came out with a lot of suggestions. While some drivers wanted the caution order to be given on bold letters with bigger font size on A4 size white paper, others said the drivers should be issued different colour highlighters to mark the restrictions for their convenience.

The participants also said it was also discussed in the meeting whether permanent speed restriction (PSR) should also be made a part of the caution order.

Normally only temporary caution orders are given to the drivers on a paper sheet but a suggestion was made that PSR should also be mentioned.

Railway sources said it was decided that the committee would look into all suggestions and deliberate upon other means to decide if there was a need to amend the operation norms concerning speed restrictions in the interest of safe train operations. (PTI)

## Leaders remember NCP veteran D P Tripathi launch special edition of journal

*The special edition of Think India was released by Joshi, Karat, JD(U) leader K C Tyagi, NCP working president Supriya Sule, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, international relations expert Pushpesh Pant among others*

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Leaders cutting across political ideologies, including BJP veteran Murli Manohar Joshi and former CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat, gathered here to launch the special edition of Think India Journal founded by senior NCP leader late Devi Prasad Tripathi.

The diverse gathering here on Thursday evening was seen as a tribute to the memory of Tripathi who was known to have embraced different ideologies with equal elan, endearing himself to a cross section of personalities with his intellect.

The special edition of Think India was released by Joshi, Karat, JD(U) leader K C Tyagi, NCP working president Supriya Sule, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, international relations expert Pushpesh Pant among others.

The Special Edition of Think India Journal features a collection

of articles, research papers, and essays by policymakers and thought leaders across diverse fields, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Shashi Tharoor, George Fernandes, Amrita Pritam, Javed Akhtar and Madhu Dandavate.

Tripathi's son Kanishka, Chairman, Vichar Nyas Foundation said the special edition has been brought out to commemorate the journal's commitment to the dissemination of progressive ideas aimed at fostering national and intellectual growth.

Joshi remembered Tripathi as a student who was an active member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), who joined the Jawaharlal Nehru University and later the Students Federation of India, the student wing of the CPI(M).

"I continued to have close ties with him whichever party he was in. It is difficult to find a personal-



ity like him. If we find 10-12 like him, life will be very refreshing," Joshi said, recalling his association with Tripathi, fondly called DPT by

friends and well wishers.

JD (U) leader K C Tyagi described Tripathi as "anarchist Marxist" quite contrary to the tra-

ditional Marxist such as Karat.

"Maintain the prestige of the Left and enjoy the privilege of the right," Tyagi quoted Tripathi as saying on many occasions when nudged about having some "ideological consolidation".

Tyagi recalled that Tripathi was known for his proximity to Amitabh Bachchan, who was then elected to the Lok Sabha from Allahabad, and was also close to the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Tyagi, a socialist leader, said they had succeeded in snatching Tripathi from the CPI(M), and it was the quality of socialists that ensured that he never returned to the Left.

"He used to be restless, but the qualities he had acquired never let him turn Leftist again. Even when he stayed with us, he was always a restless soul," Tyagi said.

Tripathi began his political in-

ings as an ABVP member and was also a member of the SFI, CPI(M), Congress and Sharad Pawar-led NCP, which made him a Rajya Sabha member. Tripathi died on January 2, 2020.

Karat recalled how Tripathi had the knack to bring people from conflicting ideologies together on the platform of Think India. "I recall that one of the issues of Think India was on Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and DPT asked me to write a piece on Upadhyaya ji," he said, adding that he had to decline as it would have required him lot of time to read about integral humanism before penning an article.

Karat recalled that Tripathi was always attached to the Left. "As general secretary of the NCP, Tripathi used to meet me every month and to give advice on how to run the CPI(M). He also had personal criticism on how I was not doing enough as general secretary," the CPI(M) veteran said. (PTI)

## LOST

I lost my land patta bearing Patta No. 155, Dag No. 455/1044 402, area 1 Bigha 2 Katha 10 Losa. Mouja- Phuloni. Jitram Chauhan, S/o- Late Ramchij Chauhan, Vill.- Rongkut Matikhola, Dist.- Karbi Anglong, Assam Mobile No.- 60010-28208



# 'Ulajh' is about a woman's journey in a man's world: Janhvi Kapoor

**MUMBAI, July 26:** It was refreshing to play a woman who is not a "damsel in distress" in "Ulajh", says actor Janhvi Kapoor about her upcoming film, which will see her in the role of a young diplomat and spy.

Directed by Sudhanshu Saria of "Loev" and "Sanaa" fame, the film also stars Roshan Mathew and Gulshan Devaiah in key roles.

"I feel it's a very different character for me. In my earlier films, I was a helpless, damsel in distress kind of role, Suhana (her character) is not like that. She is not an 'abla naari' and that was very exciting for me.

"When I was reading the script and what I was expecting and what usually is expected from the spy thriller, the film is more than that. It's a coming of age, emotional, thrilling and entertaining. It's also about a woman's journey in a man's world," the actor said at the launch of the film's song "Shaukan" here.

The musical event was also attended by Mathew, Saria, music composer Shashwat Sachdeva and singer Jubin Nautiyal.

Praising Saria and producers Jungle Pictures, the actor said it was great to be part of a team where everyone's voice was encouraged.

"As a woman, I felt great to be so heard creatively and be part of everything," Kapoor, 27, said.

"Ulajh" will be the second release of the year for the actor, who was also part of "Mr and Mrs Mahi" in May.

Mathew, who was earlier seen in Alia Bhatt's "Darlings" and Richie Mehta's series "Poachers", said he works in Hindi films only when he gets something interesting.

"I know that unless it's an 'unmissable opportunity', I have no reason to leave Malayalam (industry) and come here and do a film. So for me, the combination of story, character and the people who are involved in it has to be so exciting that I feel 'I can't leave this. I have to do it.'"

"I've been extremely fortunate with the kind of work that's been offered to me. Any actor can only pick from the choices they have been given."

"Ulajh" is written by Parveez Shaikh and Saria while Atika Chauhan has penned the dialogues.

Adil Hussain, Rajesh Tailang, Meiyang Chang, Rajendra Gupta, and Jitendra Joshi also feature in prominent roles. The film is slated to release in theatres on August 2. (PTI)



## Farhan Akhtar's home production film 'Boong' to premiere at TIFF

**MUMBAI, July 26:** Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani-backed film "Boong" is set to premiere at the upcoming edition of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

The movie is directed by debutante director Lakshmi Priya Devi, who served as a first assistant director on Akhtar and Sidhwani's Excel Entertainment movies such as "Luck by Chance", and "Talaash", besides Aamir Khan-starrer "PK", and Mira Nair's series, "A Suitable Boy".

The film will have its world premiere in the discovery section at the 49th edition of TIFF, which will be held from September 5 to 15, a press release issued by the makers read. Production company Excel Entertainment took to their official Instagram handle to share the news.

"Say hello to #Boong! Excited to share that #Boong will premiere at the prestigious @tiff\_net," the post read, alongside the poster of the film.

"Boong" follows the story of a young boy named Boong, from the valley of Manipur, who plans to surprise his mother with a gift. In his innocence, he believes that bringing his father back home would be the most special gift. His search for his father leads to an unexpected gift – a new beginning.

The upcoming film is produced by Excel Entertainment, Chalkboard Entertainment and Suitable Pictures. (PTI)



## NEED TO PRESERVE ART FORMS, TRADITIONS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH: KANGANA

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Actor-turned-politician Kangana Ranaut on Thursday made a strong demand in Lok Sabha for preserving the art forms and building traditions of Himachal Pradesh.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Ranaut said several art forms of Himachal Pradesh are on the verge of extinction and will soon become extinct. She urged the government to take steps to preserve them.

"We have the kath kuni style of building houses or the tradition of making clothes from sheep and yak wool or the musical traditions of Spiti, Kinnaur and Bharmour. They all are becoming extinct," said Ranaut, who represents the Mandi constituency in Lower House.

She said the traditional Himachali dresses such as jackets, caps and sweaters made from sheep and yak wool fetch a good price abroad and they need to be preserved.

Ranaut sought to know from the government the steps taken to preserve the traditions of hill state. (PTI)

## Indian entry wins award at the Jerusalem Film Festival

**JERUSALEM, July 26:** Sandhya Suri, a British-Indian filmmaker, has won the award for the best first feature film at the Jerusalem Film Festival (JFF) 2024.

Suri's film 'Santosh', shot in India with a local cast, revolves around a female police official who has been given a job on compassionate grounds after her husband's death, and how she unwittingly gets caught in a web of local social and political drama that she has no control over.

The shows of the film have so far been house full as also of the other Indian entry, award-winning film 'All we Imagine as Light', Anat, an India enthusiast, told PTI on Friday.

The seven awards in the Israeli Feature Film Competition included the best Israeli feature prize, won by Yousef Abo Madegem's 'Eid', about a young man fighting for his dreams and against the marriage his parents have arranged for him.

The jury credited "its sensitive, completely mature, and authentic portrayal of the preservation of one's own self-respect in a rigid environment bound by traditions in contradiction with painfully unfulfilled love, yet leading to reconciliation and forgiveness."

Tom Neshet's debut feature 'Come Closer', about a woman whose grief at her brother's death spirals into obsession, won the most awards at the festival. It received two Israeli Feature Competition prizes – best Israeli first feature and best actress for Lia Elalouf – and one Israeli Cinema Awards prize – best original score for Ginevra Nervi.

Twenty-one awards were handed out across the competitive feature sections, with a total of 1m NIS (\$273,699) in prizes. Further winners included Jonathan Millet's 'Ghost Trail', recipient of the best feature film prize in the In the Spirit of Freedom Competition; and Danel El-Peleg's 'The Governor', about the director's military governor grandfather, which took best documentary in the Israeli Documentary Competition. (AGENCIES)

## Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, Jacqueliene Fernandez turn show stoppers for Isha Jajodia at ICW

**NEW DELHI, July 26:** Actor Jacqueliene Fernandez and entrepreneur Riddhima Kapoor Sahni turned the muses for Isha Jajodia's latest collection "Roseroom" which she showcased on the second day of the Hyundai FDCI India Couture Week here.

The collection was filled with intricate designs and ranged from saris to gowns depicting miniature embroidery, rhinestones and floral work. Inspired by the grandeur of French architectural landmarks with a blend of modern feminine strength, the designer managed to bring the essence of the same in the attires.

Fernandez, 38, took to the runway in a black embroidered mermaid gown adorned with a black veil stretching behind. She completed the look with a massive stone necklace and a high bun.

Sharing her experience of walking for Jajodia, the actor who was last seen in "Cirkus", said she is a big fan of the designer and believes they both have similar fashion sense.

"I love her work. I've been wearing her beautiful dresses, sarees, and gowns for a very long time. I'm a fan of hers," actor told PTI.

"I think I'm quite minimalist, and I love wearing simple yet stunning outfits like this black ensemble today. I feel like Isha and I share that fashion sense," she added.

"It's the most romantic collection you can imagine, with a beautiful blend of modern and vintage elements, and a lot of Indian craftsmanship," the actor said.

Fernandez said she has three projects lined up for release.

Sahni, 43, walked in an ivory lehenga with a floral design and pearl beads on it.

"It was surreal and the most amazing experience. Isha's (Jajodia) is a friend and when she asked me to walk for her, I was just over-excited and I knew she would put me in something that is very down my street."

Sahni, who will be seen in "Fabulous Lives Vs Bollywood Wives Season 3", alongside Neelam Kothari, Maheep Kapoor, Bhavna Pandey, Seema Sajdeh, Shalini Passi, and Kalyani Saha Chawla, said, "I'm very excited. It's going to be the most spectacular season and I'm nervous right now, but I hope you guys enjoy it. It's going to be amazing and I love my co-actors."

India Couture Week commenced on July 24 and will conclude on July 31. (PTI)





# India need to punch above their weight to win medals in hockey, play NZ in Oly opener

PARIS, July 26: Placed in a 'pool of death', the India men's hockey team will have to punch above its weight to better the colour of the bronze medal from the previous edition when it open its Paris Olympics campaign against New Zealand on Saturday. The expectations are high from the Indians after they managed to break a 41-year-old medal jinx at the Tokyo Olympics by bagging a historic bronze. It was a landmark moment for a rich hockey nation like India, who have a record eight Olympic gold medals to boast of.

And the bronze has only raised expectations of second consecutive podium finish, but it would be easier said than done.

The Indians are clubbed along side reigning champions Belgium, mighty Australia, Argentina, New Zealand and Ireland in a tough Pool B, while Pool A consists of Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, South Africa and hosts France. Four teams from each pool will progress to the quarterfinals. The first three pool matches of India against New Zealand, Argentina (on July 29) and Ireland (July 30) are very crucial as they would look for maximum points from these games before taking on Belgium (August 1) and Australia (August 2). The competition also provides the Harmanpreet Singh-led Indian side the perfect opportunity to give a fitting farewell to the 'Wall of Indian hockey', long-serving goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who will quit the sport after the ongoing Games.

The 16-member Indian team has



11 Olympic medallists, while Jarnmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Abhishek, Rajkumar Pal and Sanjay will be making their Games debuts. Sreejesh and Manpreet Singh, both of whom will be participating in their fourth Olympics, have been the team's pillars for one-and-a-half-decade.

The ongoing Games is expected to be Manpreet's last as well as the Indian team starts its rebuilding phase. While of late India have gradually dropped from third to the seventh spot in the world, rankings are never never a fair measurement in modern day hockey. A prime example being

the 2023 World Cup, jointly hosted by Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, where India lost to the Black Sticks, currently ranked 10th, in the shoot-out in a crossover match to finish outside top-eight.

India's chief coach Craig Fulton very well understands the significance of the first three games and is focussed on taking one match at a time. "It is the best pool we can get. In Olympics no match is easy. We are looking at the first games to set the tempo before we take on Belgium and Australia. We are taking one match at a time," Fulton told PTI. Playing the last interna-

tional tournament of his career, Sreejesh is expected to leave no stone unturned in front of the goal to help his side finish on the podium, while the defence will be guarded by skipper Harmanpreet, Amit Rohidas, Sumit along side Jarnmanpreet and Sanjay.

Manpreet, vice-captain Hardik Singh and Vivek Sagar Prasad will be the midfield mainstay, while Lalit Upadhyay, Mandeep Singh, Gurjant Singh, Abhishek and Sukhjeet will have to shoulder the goal scoring responsibility. Harmanpreet, regarded as one of the world's best dragflickers, will be India's go to man from penalty

corners, but he will also have the support of Rohidas and Sanjay. Under Fulton, there has been a shift in strategy -- from emphasising attack to also prioritising defence, while being flexible at the same time. India secured direct ticket to Paris by winning the Asian Games gold in 2023, and has had decent results in the build-up to the Games. In the Bhubaneswar and Rourkela legs of the FIH Pro League in February, India beat Spain twice, won and lost against the Netherlands once each, lost against Australia twice, and beat Ireland twice.

The Indians, however, were no match for their nemesis Australia in the Test series in Perth in April, where they lost all five matches but put up a close fights in some matches. In the Pro League matches in Antwerp and London that followed, India beat Argentina twice, but suffered two losses apiece to Belgium, Germany and Great Britain with some of the matches witnessing close affairs. India captain Harmanpreet understands the expectations from the countrymen. "After very long, the Indian hockey team is travelling to the Olympics as reigning medallists. I know there are a lot of expectations from us back home, and we are ready to deliver on our promises. "Our team has shown tremendous growth and resilience in recent years. As we gear up for Paris 2024, we're focused on doing our best to change the colour of the medal, and represent India with pride," he said before their opener. (PTI)

*Gambhir is contemporary, will come up with fresh ideas: Shastri*



DUBAI, July 26: Former India captain Ravi Shastri expects Gautam Gambhir to flourish in his new role as head coach, saying he is a "contemporary" mentor who has taken over the reigns of a relatively "mature and settled" team. Shastri, a former India coach, believes the 42-year-old Gambhir can make an immediate impact in his new role as he is already close to the team, having played with and mentored quite a few players.

The former left-handed opener served as a team mentor for Lucknow Super Giants and Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL. He's (Gambhir) contemporary, he just had a great season in the IPL. I think he's the right age where he's young, he'll come with fresh ideas. He knows most of the players, especially in the white-ball format, having been part of teams in the IPL. So I think it's refreshing," Shastri said on the recent episode of The ICC Review.

"And we know with Gautam, he's a no-nonsense guy. He'll have his ideas as well. And the good thing for him is he's got a mature team. He's got a settled team, a mature team. I think even though you might think you're mature, you might benefit from some fresh ideas. So I think it'll be interesting times."

Shastri feels managing the workload of players, especially bowlers, will be Gambhir's biggest challenge.

"Obviously, player management becomes the key as a coach. So it'll be interesting to see how he goes. I think he's got the tools, he's got the goods for the job and he's got

the experience."

Gambhir's first assignment as India coach is the white-ball series in Sri Lanka which starts with a three-match T20 series in Pallekele on Saturday.

With stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja retiring from the shortest format after last month's T20 World Cup triumph, Gambhir's other task would be to find replacements for the trio.

"There's so many (good India) players out there and it's just about getting the right mix. I think a lot of the players that won this T20 World Cup will still be around two years later (at the 2026 T20 World Cup)," Shastri said.

"You mentioned the three players who were retired, but barring them, I think most of the others will be still fit to be in that T20 World Cup team two years down the line in India."

The former India cricketer feels there will be problem of plenty for Gambhir.

"I don't think there's much to be done there. In fact, you will get a problem on your hands because you'll have to choose from the new lot that's coming and there's some real exciting talent there."

"It's the other way around. It's how do you get those guys in there that they're bursting at the scenes to get it. There's a queue out there and that will be his biggest challenge, but it's a good headache when you have that kind of talent."

Player management is another aspect which will be pivotal to Gambhir's success, believes Shastri. (PTI)

## Bogey free Vidhatri cruises to 2-shot lead in 10<sup>th</sup> leg of Hero WPGT

BENGALURU, July 26: Vidhatri Urs cruised ahead of the field with a bogey free 3-under 69 in the second round of the 10th leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour at Prestige Golfshire here on Friday.

The newly-minted pro, who already has a win in her three pro starts, indicated that she was about to add to that as she took a two-shot lead over the up-and-coming pro Jasmine Shekar (74-72), who was searching for her maiden success.

Vidhatri, who shot 3-over 75 with three bogeys and no birdies on the first

day, reversed that with three birdies and no bogeys with Jasmine as her playing partner. On a day when play was delayed because of rain, Vidhatri parred her first four holes and then found her first birdie on the fifth.

She added 10 pars after that to be 1-under after 15 holes. She then added birdies on the 16th and the 18th for a steady and superb round of 69.

Jasmine had four birdies and four bogeys in her 72 that followed her first round effort of 74.

Sneha Singh, last year's Hero Order of Merit winner, had a six-shot improvement on her first round score of 77. She carded 1-under 71, the only round other than that of Vidhatri that was under par.

Sneha was tied third at 2-over 146 and four behind the leader.

Hitaashee Bakshi, the first round leader, slipped back to tied third with a second round card of 78 with just one birdie against one double and five bogeys. Sneha and Hitaashee were tied for third with Khushi (74-74) and Amandeep Drall. The

experienced Amandeep, who slipped after a first round 72, had four birdies against six bogeys and one double bogey for a second round 76. Rhea Jha (76-73) was seventh, while Saanvi Somu (78-72) was the top amateur in the eighth spot.

Another amateur Mannat Brar (74-77) was tied for ninth with Neha Tripathi (73-78), who is coming back from an injury. A total of 27 golfers made the cut at 161 in the Rs 13 lakh event and the prominent players to miss the cut included Durga Nitur. (PTI)

## Dr B C Roy Trophy Jr Boys' Nat'l Football C'ship from tomorrow in Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 26: Dr B C Roy Trophy Junior Boys' National Football Championship will be kicked off on July 28 at Nagaon Nurul Amin stadium here and the final of the championship will be played on August 11 at the same stadium here. The tournament was hosted by Nagaon Sports Association in association with Assam Football Association under All India Football Federation.

While addressing a press conference at the conference hall of Nagaon Sports Association this afternoon, the president of Nagaon Sports Association and local MLA Rupak Sarma intimated it to the local media persons here.

He said that a total of 19 states of the nation ensured their participation in the championship this time and the players from 10 states had already arrived at Nagaon. Besides, the rest of the teams from other states will reach Nagaon tomorrow by afternoon, Sarma added further. He informed that the local guardian minister Pijush Hazarika will inaugurate the junior national football championship in the afternoon on July 28. Noted football player of the state Heli Charan Narzary will attend the in-

augural session of the championship as the special guest.

Four matches out of which two in the morning session and two matches in the afternoon session will be played daily in two separate football courts prepared at the same Nurul Amin stadium here.

It's reported that Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Manipur, Lakshadweep and Haryana will participate in Group A while Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Jammu and Kashmir and Gujarat will participate in Group B. Similarly, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Assam will take part in Group C while Rajasthan, Pondicherry, Bihar and Telangana will play in Group D of the tournament.

It's pertinent to mention here that Dr B C Roy Trophy Junior Boys' National Football Championship was first held in Assam in 1970 and 1984 in Jorhat and then in 1987 in Dibrugarh and this time it is going to be held for the fourth time in the state and for the first time in Nagaon in 2024 after it was being disrupted and postponed since 2019 due to the COVID pandemic situation across the globe.

medals in the Wushu Sanda event, 6 players got gold medals, 5 players got silver medals, and 7 players got bronze medals and brought laurels to Sivasagar district. Mridul Borah was the coach of the Sivasagar Wushu Team. Plabon Borah, general secretary of the Sivasagar District Wushu Association extended his heartfelt congratulations to the players. The XXI Sub Junior (Boys & Girls) All Assam Inter District Wushu Championship 2024 concluded on July 24.

## Sivasagar District emerge best team in Wushu Sanda Event

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, July 26: The Sivasagar district Wushu team emerged as the best team in the Wushu Sanda event in Assam in the XXI Sub Junior (Boys & Girls) All Assam Inter District Wushu Championship 2024 organised by Kamrup (M) District Wushu Association at DTRP Indoor Stadium, Guwahati from July 22. In the XXI Inter-District Sub-Junior Wushu Championship, the Sivasagar District Wushu Team got a total of 18

medals in the Wushu Sanda event, 6 players got gold medals, 5 players got silver medals, and 7 players got bronze medals and brought laurels to Sivasagar district. Mridul Borah was the coach of the Sivasagar Wushu Team. Plabon Borah, general secretary of the Sivasagar District Wushu Association extended his heartfelt congratulations to the players. The XXI Sub Junior (Boys & Girls) All Assam Inter District Wushu Championship 2024 concluded on July 24.

## Verstappen in defensive mode against hard-charging McLaren at Belgian GP

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS (BELGIUM), July 26: When Max Verstappen raced at the Belgian Grand Prix last season, he was cruising to a third straight Formula One world championship.

One year later, the Dutch driver heads into the same race on Sunday with what's looking like a fight on his hands.

The Red Bull ace still holds a relatively comfortable 76-point lead -- with 265 points to 189 for Lando Norris. But Norris' McLaren has erased the speed gap with Verstappen this summer while Mercedes and Ferrari remain real threats for individual victories.

In 2023, Verstappen finished first at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps to claim an eighth straight victory and enter the mid-season break with a 125-point lead over teammate Sergio Pérez. Verstappen would go on to make it an F1 record 10 wins in a row as Red Bull dominated the season. Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was the only non-Red Bull driver to top the podium. And Verstappen appeared to be off to another title march this year after winning four of the first five races. But since then he has just three wins in the last eight grand prix and has now gone three consecutive races without a victory for the first time since 2021.

His frustration was evident last weekend in Hungary when he finished fifth despite having started from third. Verstappen bickered with his team over the radio regarding their pit-stop strategies after his car was unable to match the pace of the McLarens, which locked out the front row both in qualifying and the race.

"From my side I think it was quite clear that the strategy was wrong and of course I'm very driven like everyone else in the team. We want to try and be perfect," Verstappen said Thursday, reflecting on the tough race in Budapest, which included contact with Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes

that sent his Red Bull airborne. "Now I know that every single race to do that is very, very hard. I think we came very close last year, but when things are not going how they should have been, I think it's quite normal that you can share your frustration." Possible Penalty Verstappen, who was born in Belgium but drives under the Dutch flag, won here the past three years at the track set in the forested hills of the Ardennes.

But Verstappen said that it is possible he would have to take a 10-grid penalty at Spa for exceeding the allotted number of engines, further hurting his chances to end his mini-streak of winless races. "I

knew of course that it is coming. It's not a surprise to me," he said about the possible penalty. "If you look at our last few races where we haven't particularly been the fastest, I wouldn't say that with 10 places extra we have a chance of winning." Radio Drama Oscar Piastri became the seventh different winner in 13 races this season after leading a one-two by McLaren ahead of Norris at the Hungaroring. While the papaya pair of cars were uncatchable, the real drama of the race played out on the McLaren team radio where the team engineer had to plead with Norris to give back the race lead to Piastri. (AP)

## Indian hockey team has all qualities to finish on podium again: Harendra



to be a champion team. He knows how to deal with crunch situations. He has good experience of European and Indian style of hockey," added the former coach of USA men's team.

Harendra has served in various coaching and managerial capacities for senior and junior national teams, across prestigious events like the 2000 Sydney Olympics, 2005 men's Junior World Cup, 2006 men's World Cup, 2006 Asian Games, 2009 men's Asia Cup, and 2010 men's World Cup.

He took over the head coach's position of the national men's junior team in 2014 and then guided India to the junior World Cup title two years later in Lucknow.

Harmanpreet was part of that junior World Cup-winning team and Harendra had predicted back then that the dragflicker will scale greater heights in his career.

"Harmanpreet is a great captain. I want to disclose that in October 2015 before junior

team's departure for Johor Cup. I told him (Harmanpreet) in front of the entire team that if you keep your head down and keep improving, not going too hard, one day you will lead the Indian team," said Harendra, who was the coach of 2017 Asia Cup-winning Indian women's team. "The best thing about him is he remains cool in every situa-

tion. He never lets pressure affect him in any situation. This is his strength and being a defender he is leading the team the way it should be. He can make good decisions because of his calmness and that is why he is one of the best dragflickers in the world at this moment. "I think he is one of the best captains Indian hockey has produced in recent years. He has

the capability to execute plans," he said.

"He is also one of the main goal scorers for India and inspires others by his own performance. Harmanpreet can single handedly turn a match in India's favour," said the 55-year-old, a member of India's 1990 Asian Games silver medal-winning side.

Harendra said a medal will be fitting farewell gift for long-serving goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who will quit the sport after the Paris Games.

"Wo mera Jangoo (Sreejesh is affectionately called) hai and a medal will be a good salute to him. We started our journey almost together and today he is going to play his fourth Olympics," he said.

"Modern day hockey is very demanding. Since his (Sreejesh's) debut India has played more than 1000 matches and to keep himself fit physically and mentally and perform at optimum level is truly incredible. A big salute to him." (PTI)



## All eyes on Nikhat, Lovlina as boxers open Olympic campaign hoping to negotiate difficult draws

**PARIS, July 26:** World Championship medalists Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain and Nishant Dev will wade through draws that are at best tricky in their quest to achieve India's best Olympic medal tally in boxing when the competition kicks off here on Saturday.

Indian boxers have fetched three medals in the Olympics so far, all bronze. While Vijender Singh remains the only male to have achieved the feat back in the 2008 Beijing Games, women stars MC Mary Kom (London, 2012) and Borgohain (Tokyo, 2021) later added to the overall haul.

The six boxers in Paris were handed draws ranging from slipper to difficult on Thursday. Expectations are high from the group and two-time reigning world champion Zareen is at the forefront.

The 28-year-old has an uphill

task ahead as three of the top medal contenders in the light-flyweight (50kg) division -- China's Wu Yu, Thailand's Chuthamat Raksat and Uzbekistan's Sabina Bobokulov -- are in her half.

Zareen opens her campaign against Germany's Maxi Klotzer on Sunday, following which she will meet top-seeded Asian Games and reigning flyweight world champion Wu.

If Zareen crosses this hurdle, she may meet either eighth-seeded Asian Games silver medalist Raksat or Bobokulov.

Both boxers have defeated the Indian recently. While Raksat got the better of Zareen at the Asian Games last year, Bobokulov beat her at the Strandja Memorial final in February.

But the tenacious Hyderabad would be up for the challenge and if she gets through two rounds, she would become a favourite for gold.



The seasoned Amit Panghal (51kg) has had a rollercoaster of a ride this Olympic year -- from not being the first choice in his weight class in the national team to making the cut for Paris in the one and

only chance he got.

Time out from the national team deflated his confidence but he has unfinished business to address, having made a first-round exit in Tokyo.

Panghal has received a first-round bye and meets African Games champion, Zambia's Patrick Chinyemba, who had lost to the Indian at the Commonwealth Games, in the round of 16.

He faces Asian Games silver medalist Thitsan Panmod of Thailand in the quarterfinals and could potentially meet Rio Olympics and reigning world champion Hassanboy Dusmatov from Uzbekistan or Tokyo bronze-winner Kazakh Saken Bibossinov in the semifinal.

The immensely talented Nishant, one of the most consistent performers in the Indian squad, has got the best draw. With a first round bye, the debutant will take on Ecuador's Rodriguez Tenorio in the pre-quarters on Thursday.

If Nishant gets past Tenorio, he will meet Mexico's Pan American Games champion Merco Verde in the quarterfinals. He may come up

against top seed Sewon Okazawa of Japan in the semifinals.

Borgohain will be chasing history, to add to her 69kg bronze. The Assamese boxer, who has bulked up to 75kg, will clash with Norway's Sunniva Hofstad in the first round.

However, Borgohain has a tough test waiting for her in the quarterfinal in the form of Chinese Li Qian, the reigning Asian Games champion and also a two-time Olympic and world medalist.

Although Borgohain defeated Qian at the world event last year, she lost in the previous two meetings -- Asian Games and the Czech Grand Prix.

A win in the quarters may pit Borgohain against either fifth-seeded world silver medalist Australian Caitlin Parker or Morocco's heavyweight world champion Khadija El-Mardi.

Asian Games bronze medalist

Preeti Pawar (54kg), competing in her debut Games, will fight with Vietnam's Vo Thi Kim Anh in the first round. A win will take her to the round of 16 where world silver-medallist Yeni Arias of Colombia awaits her.

Another debutant Jaismine Lamboria, who has dropped from 60kg to 57kg just ahead of the final qualifier, has got perhaps the most difficult draw.

She takes on Tokyo silver-medallist, former world champion Nesthy Petecio of Philippines, in her opening bout. Should she win, Jaismine would be up against France's European Games champion and world bronze winner Amina Zidani.

The boxing events at the Paris Games will take place at two venues. The early rounds will be held at the North Paris Arena while the iconic Stade Roland-Garros will host the semifinals and finals. (PTI)

## World champions India look to maintain dominance in new era of SKY and Gambhir

**PALLEKELE, July 26:** India's newly-forged coach-captain combination of Gautam Gambhir and Suryakumar Yadav will look to make instant impact against a Sri Lankan team in disarray when the familiar South Asian rivals face off in a limited-overs series, starting with three T20Is, here on Saturday.

Two-time World Cup winner Gambhir is now at the helm of the ship as India's head coach while the T20I reigns have been handed over to one of the best batters in the format, Suryakumar.

Gambhir, who has built his coaching reputation in the corridors of IPL with three title wins for Kolkata Knight Riders -- twice as captain and once as mentor -- succeeds the immensely popular Rahul Dravid.

The new coach has his task cut out given that the team under his predecessor reached the final in each of the ICC events in their respective last editions.



Gambhir's tenacity as well as his intense approach will make him a different coach to work along for the players, who will also have to learn the ways of the new T20I skipper Suryakumar.

Suryakumar's elevation came as a slight surprise given he leapfrogged Hardik Pandya for the

job. The selectors also ignored his comparative lack of experience as captain.

Ajit Agarkar and Co. made it clear that they wanted a captain who was on the park "more often than not" and went by "dressing room feedback" while hitting the reset button on the T20I side.

The next T20 World Cup, to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka in 2026, gives the selectors plenty of time to rebuild the side which has also suffered a severe talent drain.

The overhaul follows the World Cup triumph last month and T20I retirements of seasoned campaigners Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja.

With the side in transition, young batting gun and vice-captain in the white-ball formats, Shubman Gill sees this as an opportunity to cement his place and others like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh and even Riyan Parag will look to do the same.

While the like-for-like replacement Axar Patel fits in perfectly for Jadeja in the eleven, India also have riches in the all-round department given Pandya, Shivam Dube and an in-form Washington Sundar are also available.

Jasprit Bumrah has been deservedly rested from this tour which

gives the pair of Arshdeep Singh and Mohammed Siraj to make the most of favourable conditions at the Palkele International Stadium, where the surface tends to assist pace and bounce.

On the same metric, Sri Lanka will feel depleted since two of their experienced bowlers Dushmantha Chameera (bronchitis and respiratory infection) and slinky Nuwan Thushara (broken finger) have been ruled out.

The hosts have added Asitha Fernando and Dilshan Madushanka, who took a five-for the last time India and Sri Lanka played in the ODI World Cup, as replacements.

The 2014 T20 World Cup winners, Sri Lanka are wading through turbulent times following their first-round exit from the last edition.

Skipper Wanindu Hasaranga, coach Chris Silverwood and consultant coach Mahela Jayawardene tendered their resignations after the debacle in the Americas. (PTI)

**DAMBULLA, July 26:** Pacer Renuka Singh's three-wicket burst followed by Smriti Mandhana's brisk unbeaten fifty underlined India's ruthless performance as the defending champions walloped Bangladesh by 10 wickets and marched into their record-extending ninth women's Asia Cup final, here on Friday.

Defending champions India will face the winner of the second semifinal between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in the title clash on Sunday.

Shafali (26 not out, 28b, 2x4) and Mandhana (55 not out, 39b, 9x4, 1x6) were on song from the word go, as India overhauled the target of 81 without breaking a sweat. India ended up at 83 for no loss in 11 overs.

Mandhana and Shafali's knocks were filled with trademark shots around the ground as India motored to 46 for no loss in the Power Play. Shafali, who was dropped on 21 off Rabeya Khan, played those

powerful heaves across the line to find the fence.

Mandhana, at the other end, unfurled those exquisite drives on the off-side, such as the one the left-hander played through the covers against pacer Marufa Akter.

Mandhana also displayed her power while pulling pacer Jahanara Alam for a six over deep square leg as India trotted to a victory that was a long-forgone conclusion once Bangladesh were limited 80 for eight.

Renuka (3/10) upfront and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav in the middle overs (3/14) rattled Bangladesh with excellent spells.

In fact, Bangladesh hardly recovered from the deep wounds inflicted by Renuka in the first six overs. Renuka, who bowled four overs on the trot during her 3/10 spell, received ample support from left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (3/14) after Bangladesh elected to bat first. (PTI)

## Smriti, Renuka shine as India wallop Bangladesh by 10 wickets, enter Women's Asia Cup final

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

### AROHAN

#### Towards a new horizon

A career mentoring programme for meritorious students of Class IX-XII  
Aimed at nurturing and augmenting their potential

| Tentative Date                  | District  | No. of targeted Mentees | Total |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------|
| 30 July-2 August 2024 (Batch 1) | DARRANG<br>TINSUKIA   | 137<br>115              | 252   |
| 6-9 August 2024 (Batch 2)       | SIVASAGAR<br>UDALGURI                                       | 147<br>89               | 236   |
| 20-23 August 2024 (Batch 3)     | CHIRANG<br>GOLAGHAT<br>NALBARI                              | 52<br>171<br>164        | 387   |
| 27-30 August 2024 (Batch 4)     | HAILAKANDI<br>DIBRUGARH<br>JORHAT                           | 56<br>160<br>172        | 388   |
| 3-6 September 2024 (Batch 5)    | BARPETA<br>KOKRAJHAR  | 307<br>95               | 402   |
| 10-13 September 2024 (Batch 6)  | KAMRUP<br>KARIMGANJ   | 273<br>110              | 383   |
| 18-21 September 2024 (Batch 7)  | LAKHIMPUR<br>BISWANATH                                      | 287<br>98               | 385   |
| 24-27 September 2024 (Batch 8)  | CACHAR<br>KAMRUP (METRO)<br>WEST KARBI ANGLONG<br>CHARAIDAO | 167<br>117<br>44<br>62  | 390   |
| 1-4 October 2024 (Batch 9)      | BONGAIGAOIN<br>HOJAI  | 79<br>73                | 152   |
| 22-25 October 2024 (Batch 10)   | NAGAON<br>BAKSA<br>DIMA HASAO                               | 226<br>192<br>44        | 462   |
| 27-30 October 2024 (Batch 11)   | MORIGAON<br>GOALPARA  | 121<br>124              | 245   |
| 10-13 November 2024 (Batch 12)  | DHEMAJI<br>SOUTH SALKARA MANIKACHAR<br>SONITPUR<br>MAJULI   | 159<br>35<br>112<br>72  | 378   |
| 13-16 November 2024 (Batch 13)  | DHUBRI<br>KARBI ANGLONG                                     | 168<br>96               | 264   |
| Grand Total                     |   |                         | 4,324 |

#### Institutions/Organisations/Places to be visited by Mentees during Exposure Trip

- ✦ IIT, Guwahati
- ✦ AIIMS, Guwahati
- ✦ Guwahati Biotech Park
- ✦ Narangi Military Station, Guwahati
- ✦ Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara, Guwahati
- ✦ Regional Science Centre, Khanapara, Guwahati
- ✦ Planetarium, Guwahati
- ✦ State Museum, Guwahati
- ✦ State Zoo, Guwahati
- ✦ Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra, Panjabari, Guwahati

To further empower this initiative, the people of Assam residing within and outside the country may contribute by providing mentorship to the selected students

Published by Directorate of Information & Public Relations, Assam

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Janasanyog /DF/652/24/27-Jul-24