

**6** WORLD

● Jaishankar meets UN chief, Belarusian and Tajikistan counterparts

● Israel makes largest West Bank land seizure in 3 decades

**8** NATION

● Modi invokes Emergency to counter Cong's 'protecting Constitution' pitch

● MP budget focuses on infra, women and tribal welfare; no new tax

## 11 wild animals drown in KNP ● Death toll goes up to 48

# No let-up in state scene, over 11.5 lakh hit hard

### Himanta blames it on geographical factors

GUWAHATI, July 3: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday addressed the ongoing flood situation in the state, attributing it to geographical factors beyond the state's control.

"The devastating second wave of floods in the state were mainly due to the cloudburst in neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh", he told reporters after reviewing the flood situation in Kamrup district.

Heavy rainfall in China, Bhutan and in the upper reaches of Arunachal Pradesh led to floods in Assam and this is 'beyond our control', he said.

"Several flood control measures have been initiated over the years and the 'impact as well as the suffering of the people has come down considerably but we will have to deal with the natural consequences in the best possible manner," Sarma said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

GUWAHATI, July 3: Assam continues to grapple with a severe flood crisis, affecting 11.50 lakh people across 23 districts, as the water level of major rivers, including the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, flows above the danger mark, an official report said.

The death toll in this year's floods, landslides and storms has increased to 48.

On Tuesday, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited Goghat district following breach of

embankments, inspected flood-hit areas, interacted with the suffering population and held meetings with officials to provide relief and rehabilitation to people reeling under the deluge.

The current second wave of floods have affected Barpeta, Biswanath, Cachar, Charaideo, Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karbi Anglong, Karimganj, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari,



Sivasagar, Sonitpur, Tamulpur, Tinsukia and Udalguri districts. Lakhimpur is the worst hit with over 1.65 lakh people suffering, followed by Darrang with more than 1.47 lakh people and Golaghat with almost 1.07 lakh people reeling under floodwaters, the report said.

The flood scenario in Kaziranga National Park is also critical with

vast tracts of forests inundated and a baby rhino drowning in floodwaters. Embankments, roads, bridges and other infrastructure have been damaged by floodwaters in most of the affected districts, the report added.

Meanwhile, eleven animals, mostly hog deer, have drowned while 65 other animals have been rescued from floodwaters in Kaziranga National Park in Assam.

Forty-two hog deer, two otters and sambar each and a Scops owl have been rescued, the official of the national park said. Of the 233 forest department camps in the Eastern Assam Wildlife Division, 173 have been inundated by gushing floodwaters, up from 167 on Tuesday, he said.

In the Agorotoli range of the national park, 24 of the 34 camps have been inundated, while 51 of 58 camps in the central range, 37 of 39 in Bagori, 13 of 25 in Burapahar and seven of nine in Bokakhat range are under floodwaters.

Altogether nine camps have been vacated by forest personnel so far, including two in Agorotoli, three in Bokakhat, two in the central range and one each in Biswanath and Nagaon wildlife divisions.

Forest department employees, including security personnel, stay in the camps inside the national park to conduct patrolling for the protection of flora and fauna. (PTI)

## Assam govt keen to develop clean source of coal for industries: Chief Secy

GUWAHATI, July 3: The Assam government is keen to develop the state as a sustainable and environmentally clean source of coal for relevant industries, chief secretary Ravi Kota said.

Kota said this while reviewing coal projects in the state with chairman and managing director of Coal India Limited (CIL) P M Prasad.

The state government, under the leadership of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, is also exploring ways to maximise exploration and utilisation of coal resources to accelerate economic growth, to reduce import of coal and to help in employment generation, Kota said while reviewing the progress of the ongoing projects of the North East Coalfields India

Limited (NECIL) with Prasad. A delegation of senior CIL officials, led by Prasad, called on the chief secretary.

At present, one coal mine in Margherita sub-division in Tinsukia district, under NECIL is actively extracting coal with an annual production of two lakh metric tonnes of coal. The production is likely to increase to three lakh tonnes per annum very soon and efforts are being undertaken to expand the same to 15 lakhs tonnes (1.5 mn tonnes) per annum, he said. "To achieve the same, coordinated action of the revenue and disaster management, environment and forest, and mines and mineral departments of Assam with NECIL will be undertaken. It is anticipated (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



## Preparations underway for NCPDR camp in Dokmoka

HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 3: An important meeting was convened on Wednesday at Circuit House, bringing together district commissioner (DC), magistrate, and officials from various departments.

The focus of the meeting was the upcoming National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) Block/District level bench/camp scheduled for July 10, 2024, at Dokmoka Higher Secondary School, Dokmoka, under the Samalengso Aspirational Block.

The event aims to address grievances related to the violation and deprivation of children's rights and entitlements, while also raising awareness about government schemes catering to children aged 0 to 18 years.

Madhumita Bhagwati, ACS, district commissioner of Karbi Anglong District, stressed the importance of each department showcasing their respective schemes at the camp to enhance awareness among children and parents. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## SC takes strong note of not taking Kuki undertrial prisoner to hospital in Manipur



NEW DELHI, July 3: The Supreme Court Wednesday took a strong note of an undertrial prisoner lodged in a Manipur jail not being taken to a hospital for treatment just because he belonged to the minority 'Kuki' community, saying it does not "trust the State".

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan made some strong observations against the State while hearing a plea filed by Lunghongam Haokip that he was suffering from piles and tuberculosis and was not taken to hospital by jail officials despite having severe backache.

"We do not trust the State...The accused was not taken to hospital because he is from the Kuki community. So sad! We direct him to be examined now. If the medical report reveals something serious, we will take

you to task," the bench said.

The counsel for Haokip claimed the jail officials did not pay heed to persistent requests for medical help.

The bench perused an order of the Manipur High Court and found that the undertrial prisoner was not taken to hospital since he was from Kuki community and "shifting him to a hospital will be hazardous taking into account the law and order situation".

Manipur has been in the grip of an ethnic conflict between the minority Kuki and majority Meitei communities.

The bench directed the jail superintendent and the state authorities "to make necessary arrangements for his transportation to the Gauhati Medical College and get him examined therein. The medical exam shall be as regards piles, TB, tonsillitis, abdominal pain as well as problems in lower lumbar spine".

It sought a detailed medical report on or before July 15 and asked the state to bear all the expenses including the treatment cost.

Manipur descended into chaos and violence in May last year over a high court order directing the state government to consider including the non-tribal Meitei community in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

More than 170 people have been killed and several hundred others injured since ethnic violence first broke out in the state on May 3 last year when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for ST status. (PTI)

## Adityanath announces judicial probe into Hathras stampede

HATHRAS (UP), July 3: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday announced a judicial probe into the Hathras tragedy while not ruling out the possibility of a "conspiracy" behind the stampede that killed 121 people.

He also said the "sevadars" (volunteers working for the 'satsang' organisers) should have taken the victims to the hospital. People were dying and the "sevadars" fled, he claimed.

Adityanath met those injured in the incident at the venue of the religious congregation here and obtained information from the eyewitnesses about the course of events preceding the tragedy.

Asserting the government will ensure that such incidents do not recur, the chief minister said a standard operating procedure might be put in place for religious congregations. "A judicial probe by a retired



high court judge will be conducted into the incident," he said. "If this is not an accident, then whose conspiracy is this? All of these will be probed. Retired officials of the police and civic administration will be part of the judicial inquiry and action will be taken against those found responsible."

Adityanath said the government

had formed a Special Investigation Team led by the additional director general (ADG) of police, Agra, which has given its preliminary report. "She (ADG, Agra, Anupam Kulshreshtha) has been asked to get to the bottom of this incident, he said. The chief minister said among the 121 killed in the stampede on (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Ashwin Noronha appointed as Chief Airport Officer at Guwahati Airport

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 3: The Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBI) on Wednesday said it has appointed Ashwin Noronha as its new Chief Airport Officer (CAO) with immediate effect said an official statement.

As per the statement, Ashwin moved to Guwahati Airport from his current role as the chief operating officer at Mumbai International Airport Limited.

A veteran of the Aviation industry, having served Qatar Airways Group, KPMG and Zurich Airports in India, Ashwin will steer Guwahati Airport in the direction of the overall vision of

Adani Enterprises.

Speaking on the same, Ashwin thanked his predecessor Utpal Baruah, who played an intrinsic role in the development of the Airport.

"I am excited to be an integral part of the journey of Guwahati Airport as we continue to build the airport of this region's future. Airport management is complex and challenging and can make a tremendous difference to the lives of the people. I genuinely look forward to this leadership opportunity, and to continue to make positive impacts", he added.

The Guwahati airport processed over five lakh passengers in May 2024 – almost 15% higher

than the corresponding month in 2023. To manage the tremendous growth and enable passenger delight, over the next few years, Guwahati Airport is expected to witness significant changes.

A new terminal that will accommodate over 13 million passengers is scheduled to be ready for operations by mid-2025, with an increased runway capacity, MRO facilities, helipad and cargo market to establish the Airport as an international hub for South-East Asia.

Development at the Guwahati Airport will focus on redefining the airport infrastructure through a regional footprint growth. There will be an increased focus (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Cong slams Modi's remarks on violence-hit state in RS

NEW DELHI, July 3: Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks on Manipur in the Rajya Sabha, the Congress on Wednesday said he made an "astounding claim" that the situation is normal there when in actuality it is still tense and pointed out that he has still not visited the state since violence erupted in May last year.

The opposition party's attack came after Prime Minister Modi said violence in Manipur is continuously declining and the schools have reopened in most part of the state, and efforts are being made to ensure a return of complete peace.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Modi said the Centre was working with the state government and others to restore normalcy in the state.

In his reaction to the remarks, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "Today in the Rajya Sabha, after months of absolute silence on the issue, the non-biological PM made the astounding claim that the situation in Manipur is normal." "In actuality, the situation is still tense as the MP from Inner Manipur pointed out in the Lok Sabha on 1st July. And the non-biological Pradhan Mantri has still not visited Manipur (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Opposition disrespecting constitutional values to hide its defeat: BJP

NEW DELHI, July 3: The BJP on Wednesday flayed the opposition members for staging a walkout during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the Rajya Sabha and said their intention was to only create ruckus in the House as they did not have the "strength" to hear the truth.

The opposition parties' INDIA bloc, led by the Congress, staged a walkout of the Rajya Sabha after the leader of opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was not allowed to intervene during Prime Minister Modi's reply on the motion thanking President Droupadi Murmu for her address to the joint sitting of Parliament. "The opposition is demoralized, aimless and anarchic due to its defeat (in the Lok Sabha polls) for the third time in a row. It is disrespecting our constitutional values? and is busy in conspiracy to hide its defeat," BJP chief and leader of the Rajya Sabha JP Nadda charged in a post on X.

"These negative efforts by them

cannot hinder the NDA government's journey towards achieving its goal of building a 'developed India,'" he added.

Nadda said that Prime Minister Modi paved the way for building a "developed India" in the Rajya Sabha in his reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address.

This will become a roadmap for the progress of people and rapid development of the country, he added.

Nadda said the last 10 years under Prime Minister Modi's leadership have been marked by "revolutionary decisions, historic progress and upliftment" of people.

"This journey of development will acquire new dimensions in 'Modi government-3.0'," the BJP chief said. "We will take the global prestige of the nation to new heights," he added.

Slamming the Opposition members, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged that they staged a walkout (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 16<sup>th</sup> edition of 'Nomadic Elephant' will last till July 16

# India-Mongolia start joint military exercise in Meghalaya

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 3: India and Mongolia have started a joint military exercise at Umroi in Meghalaya on Wednesday.

The 16th edition of the exercise, termed 'Nomadic Elephant', will continue until July 16 at the Foreign Training Node in Meghalaya.

Informing this on Wednesday, PRO Defence Lt. Col. Mahendra Rawat said that the Indian contingent, comprising 45 personnel, is represented by a battalion of Sikkim Scouts along with personnel from other arms and services. The Mongolian contingent is represented by personnel from the 150 Quick Reaction Force Battalion of the Mongolian Army.

Exercise Nomadic Elephant is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Mongolia. The last edition was held in Mongolia in July 2023.

The opening ceremony of Exercise Nomadic Elephant was at-



tended by Ambassador of Mongolia to India Dambajavyn Gambold and General Officer Commanding 51 Sub Area of the Indian Army Major General Prasanna Joshi.

"The aim of the Exercise is to enhance the joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter-in-

surgency operations in a sub-conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate. The exercise will focus on operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain," Rawat said.

Tactical drills during the exercise include response to a terrorist at-

tion, establishment of a joint command post, establishment of an intelligence & surveillance centre, securing a helipad/landing site, small team insertion & extraction, special heliborne operations, cordon & search operations, besides the deployment of drones and counter-drone systems, among others.

Major General Gyanbyamba Sunrev, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Mongolia, is scheduled to attend the closing ceremony on July 16 along with Lieutenant General Zubin A Minwalla, General Officer Commanding 33 Corps of the Indian Army.

"Exercise Nomadic Elephant will enable both sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques, and procedures of conducting joint operations. The exercise will also facilitate developing interoperability, bonhomie, and camaraderie between the two armies. This will further enhance the level of defence cooperation, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## HT BRIEFS

### Royal Bengal Tiger

GUWAHATI: A Royal Bengal Tiger on Tuesday had been sighted in Totoya village of Majuli island. The residents of Totoya village in Majuli are expressing worries after the sighting of the tiger in the area. Assam cabinet minister Ranaj Pegu verified the observation on Tuesday linking the tiger's appearance to the recent floods in Kaziranga National Park, which may have forced the large feline out of its usual environment. Pegu on micro-blogging site X stated, "A Royal Bengal Tiger has been sighted at Totoya village in Majuli. It must have strayed from Kaziranga due to flood."

### SOS examination

GUWAHATI: The Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC) on Tuesday released a statement declaring the postponement of the State Open School (SOS) exam for the Higher Secondary (HS) level, which was originally set for July 3, 2024. This decision has been made in light of the extensive flooding impacting numerous districts in Assam, as several rivers have surpassed the danger level.

### Arm-Wrestling

GUWAHATI: Arunachal Pradesh clinched the championship title at the 48th National Arm-Wrestling Championship in Palghar, Maharashtra, with a total of 102 medals. The event took place from June 28 to July 1. Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu took to social media platform X to praise Mesom Singhi for her exceptional performance. Following her victory at the 9th Commonwealth Karate Championship, she went on to claim another Gold at the 23rd Mito Open Karate Championship 2024. CM further extended his congratulations to Rakesh Jomyang for his outstanding performance at the 48th National Arm Sports Championships.

## Failed partnership talks, funding winter took toll Curtains down for Koo

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Koo, the Indian replica of Twitter (now X), is shutting down operations, its co-founders announced on Wednesday blaming the platform's failed attempts at partnerships and harsh funding winter for the closure.

The announcement brings curtains down on Koo - which was launched in 2000 and whose popularity in India soared around 2021 following the Indian government's spat with X (then Twitter). Back then, amid growing calls for expanding the ecosystem of home-grown digital platforms, several Union ministers, politicians and government departments had signed up on Koo.

In the days of its heady growth, Koo snapped up about 2.1 million daily active users and about 10 million monthly active users, and had marquee investors like Tiger Global, Accel, 3one4 Capital, and Kalaari Capital backing it.

However, prolonged funding winter and failed acquisition talks took a toll on the platform which later struggled with dwindling user base and resorted to layoffs, last year. In a post on LinkedIn on Wednesday, co-founders Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka announced that the platform will be discontinuing its services to the public and that the little yellow bird is bidding



a final goodbye (a reference to Koo's logo).

"We explored partnership with multiple larger internet companies, conglomerates and media houses but these talks didn't yield the outcome we wanted," the two co-founders wrote.

Flagging the unsuccessful attempts at partnerships, the co-founders said, while most did not want to deal with user-generated content and the wild nature of a social media company, a couple of them changed priority almost close to signing.

The duo said they would have liked to keep the app running but then "the cost of technology services to keep social media app run-

ning is high" and hence the "tough decision".

Koo, they said, was built with a "lot of heart" to "democratise expression" and enable a better way to connect people in their local languages (at its prime, the platform supported multiple Indian languages like Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Assamese and Punjabi).

"Most global products are dominated by Americans. We believe that India should have a place at the table," the co-founders said.

They asserted that Koo was just months away from beating Twitter in India in 2022, but rued that lack of capital brought the platform's ambitious march, to a halt.

According to the two co-founders, Koo was a globally scalable product built in a fraction of the time as X "with superior systems, algorithms and strong stakeholder first philosophies".

A funding winter, however, hit the company at its peak, hurting plans and forcing the platform to "tone down" its growth trajectory.

"Social media is probably one of the toughest companies to build even with all resources available as you need to grow users to a significant scale before one thinks of revenue. We needed 5 to 6 years of aggressive, long term and patient capital to make this dream a reality," the co-founders said in their note. They conceded that the mood of the market and the funding winter got better of the company.

"Koo could have easily scaled internationally and given India a global brand that was truly made in India. This dream will remain," according to the note.

The co-founders further said that Koo will evaluate making its assets into a digital public good to enable social conversations in native languages, around the world.

"What we have built is truly magnificent. We will be happy to share some of these assets with someone with a great vision for India's foray into social media," the note read. (PTI)

## Rupee settles 1 paise lower at 83.49 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, July 3:** The rupee settled 1 paise lower at 83.49 against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices.

Forex traders said the Indian rupee depreciated on strength in crude oil prices, which touched a two-week high on Tuesday. However, a firm tone in domestic markets and favourable macroeconomic data cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.51 and hit the intraday high of 83.49 and a low of 83.56 against the American currency during the session. It finally settled at 83.49 against the dollar, 1 paise lower than its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee depreciated 4 paise to settle at 83.48 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on softening of the US dollar and rise in global risk sentiments. Strength in the domestic markets may also support sentiments," said Anuj Choudhary - research analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

"However, elevated crude oil price and FII outflows

may cap sharp upside. Traders may take cues from ADP non-farm employment, weekly unemployment claims, ISM services PMI, Challenger job cuts, trade balance and factory orders data from the US. Investors may remain cautious ahead of FOMC meeting minutes," Choudhary said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.10 per cent lower at 105.61.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.09 per cent higher at USD 86.32 per barrel. In the domestic equity market, Sensex hit the historic 80,000-mark and Nifty scaled a fresh lifetime high. The 30-share BSE Sensex finally ended the day 545.35 points, or 0.69 per cent, up at 79,986.80 points. The broader NSE Nifty settled 162.65 points, or 0.67 per cent, higher at 24,286.50 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Wednesday, as they purchased shares worth ₹ 5,483.63 crore, according to exchange data. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Himanta blames it on geographical

The chief minister reviewed the situation in Garal Bhattapara Gaonburah ghat and also inspected the Dharapur Jangrabari Sluice Gate over River Khana. He reassured residents of repair work on damaged embankments and roads, alongside provisions of food and medical aid in relief camps. The chief minister said he will go to Majuli on Thursday where an embankment has breached, inundating vast tracts of land.

"We are working 24x7 to ensure that no further embankments are breached", he added. He said rainfall has declined in several of the affected districts and "if this trend continued, then the situation was expected to improve within a week". "If, however, incessant rainfall occurred in the catchment areas, then the situation will remain critical and we have to deal with it accordingly", he said. (PTI)

## Assam govt keen to develop

that the increased production of coal will not only meet the requirements of state-based industries but also increase the revenue to the state exchequer significantly", Kota said.

The chief secretary said that to improve the livelihood of the mining workforce of the state through targeted CSR activities, Coal India authorities may identify schools and hospitals in the areas of mining and work on infrastructural development wherever required. The concerned district administrations will provide necessary assistance as and when CIL shares the proposal in this context.

Highlighting the sporadic incidents of illegal mining activities, the chief secretary suggested that the CIL authorities in coordination with the respective district administrations must mitigate such incidents by considering area-specific issues like coal intake by locals residing near the extraction areas. (PTI)

## Preparations underway for

Key contributions from departments include the Medical Department arranging for Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), PMJAY card issuance, EKYC generation with Aadhaar card, and health check-ups for children aged 0-18 to identify disabilities. The District Rural Development Agency will facilitate Aadhaar registration, while Postal and Banking Services will assist in opening new savings accounts. Other departments such as Sports, Labour, and Education will also showcase and facilitate their schemes for children and women.

The District Social Welfare Department will serve as the nodal department for organising the camp, with the inaugural program scheduled to commence at 11:00 AM. Officials from NCPCKR are expected to attend the camp at Dokmoka Higher Secondary School on the designated day. This initiative underscores the concerted effort to empower and support children within the community, ensuring their rights and welfare are prioritised.

## Adityanath announces judicial

Tuesday, six were from other states - four from Haryana and one each from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Asked why religious preacher Saakar Vishwa Hari Bhole Baba has not been named in the FIR as an accused, Adityanath said, "Prima facie, the case has been filed against those who had applied for permission for the event. Whoever is responsible for this will come under its purview."

The Uttar Pradesh Police on Wednesday registered an FIR against the organisers of the congregation, accusing them of flouting conditions with 2.5 lakh people gathering for the event in which only 80,000 were permitted.

It also alleged the organisers did not cooperate in traffic management and hid evidence after the stampede that occurred as people gathered there stopped to collect soil from where the religious preacher's vehicle passed. The chief minister met the injured at the district hospital and enquired about the condition. At the police lines, he met the eyewitnesses of the stampede and gathered information about the sequence of the incident.

BJP state president Bhupendra Chaudhary, Uttar Pradesh ministers Lakshmi Narayan Chaudhary, Asim Arun and Sandeep Singh as well as the local MLA, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh and Sanjay Prasad, the principal secretary to the chief minister, were also present. After meeting the injured, Adityanath reached the stampede spot in Sikandrara where the divisional commissioner of Aligarh briefed him about the accident.

At a press conference, the chief minister said "When the gentleman's (Saakar Vishwa Hari Bhole Baba) preaching was over, he came down from the stage and his convoy moved forward, a group of women moved towards him to touch him. A crowd followed them and started climbing on top of each other."

Adityanath said, "The 'sevadars' kept pushing people leading to the accident. It is sad that the 'sevadars', who do not allow the administration to enter such events, tried to hush up the matter. But when the administration started taking the injured to hospital, most of the 'sevadars' fled." Action is being taken to fix accountability, he said, adding some special teams have been formed and after initial investigation, "we will take further action." Asked about opposition parties trying to corner the government over the stampede, the chief minister said, "Some people have a tendency to dig up politics in such tragic incidents."

Apparently referring to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, he said, "Everyone knows with whom that gentleman has a photo and who are his political connections... I think it is necessary to get to the bottom of it."

"Those who play with the lives of innocent people will also be held accountable," the chief minister said.

A photo of Vishwa Hari Bhole Baba with Akhilesh Yadav has gone viral on social media. Asked why the "sevadars" do not allow the administration to enter the venue, Adityanath said, "The administration assumes that it is a religious event and the 'sevadars' will take the responsibility." "Big events are organised this way. Police are deployed in the outer ring for security. Wherever people attend religious events, they remain disciplined. But when such events become tools in the hands of vested selfish elements, then it leads to indiscipline," Adityanath added. (PTI)

## Ashwin Noronha appointed as

on consumers and non-passengers. With a deeper investment in digital technology innovations, Guwahati Airport will enable a seamless passenger experience.

As part of the Adani Airports team since 2019, Baruah steered and guided various teams towards delivering a seamless passenger experience. During his stint as chief airport officer for almost three years, Baruah brought his invaluable experience in the field of aviation to turn LGBIA Guwahati into a world-class airport.

## Cong slams Modi's remarks

since it erupted on the night of May 3rd, 2023 - nor has he met with the political leaders of the state. The President's Address too was silent on the issue," he said. Replying to a debate on the motion to thank President Droupadi Murmu for her address to a joint sitting of the Parliament, the prime minister said that more than 500 people have been arrested and over 11,000 FIRs have been registered in Manipur. Modi further said Manipur was facing flood situation as well and the Centre has dispatched two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to the state.

Earlier in the day, the Congress hit out at the government over its second MP from Manipur not having been allowed to speak before Prime Minister Modi's address in the Lok Sabha. The Congress said the prime minister repeated his old allegations, cracked jokes and took jibes but did not have the patience to listen to the voice of the legislator from the violence-hit state.

The Opposition party also alleged it seems the prime minister is deliberately "turning his back" to the plight of Manipur. Manipur plunged into violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities in May last year. Since then some 200 people have been killed, while thousands have been displaced following large scale arson that has gutted homes and government buildings. (PTI)

## Opposition disrespecting

during the prime minister's speech as they did not have the strength to hear the truth.

"It's sad. They had boycotted the prime minister's speech in the last session. They created uproar (in the Lok Sabha) in the current session as well and boycotted (PM's speech) in the Rajya Sabha. This shows that perhaps, as the prime minister also said, they do not have the strength to hear the truth," he told reporters in Parliament complex, when asked for comment.

On the Opposition's charge that Kharage was not allowed to intervene during the prime minister's speech, Trivedi said the Leader of the Opposition spoke in the Rajya Sabha for about 90 minutes and the treasury benches listened to him "peacefully". "They started making noise when the prime minister was speaking. This clearly means that they did not intend to hear the truth. Their objective was not to hear the reply to their questions but only create uproar," the BJP MP charged. (PTI)

## India-Mongolia start

augmenting bilateral relations between the two friendly nations," Rawat added.

Earlier in May, India and France conducted the 7th edition of the joint military exercise 'Shakti' at the Umroi Joint Training Node in Meghalaya. The exercise aimed to improve military capabilities, develop camaraderie between the armed forces, and strengthen defence cooperation and bilateral relations. During Exercise Shakti, the Indian contingent included 90 personnel primarily from the Rajput Regiment, along with others from different arms and services.

## Gold rises ₹ 50; silver jumps ₹ 300

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Gold prices rose ₹ 50 to ₹ 72,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in line with firm trends in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at ₹ 72,500 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Additionally, silver prices also jumped ₹ 300 to ₹ 91,300 per kg. It had settled at ₹ 91,000 per kg in the previous session. "In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading at ₹ 72,550 per 10 grams, up ₹ 50 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, said. The yellow metal traded at ₹ 74,650 per 10 grams in local markets in the national capital, marketmen said. Silver traded at ₹ 92,300 per kg. Gold traded within range with a modest gain on Wednesday, as traders are awaiting the release of US macro data that could provide new insights into the timing of the Federal Reserve's interest rate cut, Gandhi said.

In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,339 per ounce, slightly up USD 4 from the previous close.

"Gold and silver prices rallied after a steady trade witnessed since the past few sessions, amid a fall in dollar index, while investors digested comments from Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and looked forward to US jobs data due later this week for more signals on US interest rate cuts," Manav Modi, Senior Analyst of Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal financial services Ltd, said.

Powell in his speech reiterated his hawkish stance from the recent Fed meeting. He mentioned that the unemployment rate is still very low and that the Fed does not see 2 per cent inflation this year or in the next. The Fed needs more data before any decision on interest rate cut or else it will create risk of rising inflation once again, Powell said. In addition, silver also quoted higher at USD 29.80 per ounce. It had ended at USD 29.50 per ounce in the previous session. (PTI)

## Mcap of BSE-listed firms hit all-time high ₹ 445.43 lakh cr amid record rally in stocks

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a record high of ₹ 445.43 lakh crore on Wednesday, driven by a sharp rally in equities, where the benchmark Sensex breached the historic 80,000-mark for the first time ever.

The 30-share Sensex hit the historic 80,000-mark for the first time earlier in the day. It surged 632.85 points, or 0.79 per cent, to hit a record intra-day high of 80,074.30. The benchmark later ended near the 80,000-level at 79,986.80, up 545.35 points, or 0.69 per cent. The market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed firms hit a record peak of ₹ 4,45,43,642.29 crore (USD 5.33 trillion).

The BSE Sensex breached the 78,000 level on June 25 and 79,000 for the first time on June 27.

"Markets continued their ongoing streak of making new highs supported by firm global trends. Nifty crossed the 24,300 mark while Sensex breached the historic 80,000 mark amid buying in banking stocks," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Among the Sensex pack, Adani Ports, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, IndusInd

Bank, State Bank of India, Power Grid, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers. Tata Consultancy Services, Titan, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors and Larsen & Toubro were the losers.

"While the record-breaking spree continued on the bourses, benchmark Sensex breached the 80K-mark for the first time in intra-day trade, primarily fuelled by upsurge in banking stocks. Optimism in global equities weighed positively on Indian markets, which also propelled gains in other sectoral stocks, including the telecom counters," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.86 per cent and the smallcap index climbed 0.86 per cent.

Among the indices, bankex rallied 1.75 per cent, financial services jumped 1.55 per cent.

Telecommunication (1.44 per cent), services (1.18 per cent), industrials (1.09 per cent), and FMCG (0.81 per cent) were also among gainers.

A total of 2,355 stocks advanced while 1,566 declined and 100 remained unchanged. (PTI)

## 'Poverty declines to 8.5 pc from 21.2 pc in 2011-12'

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Poverty in India is estimated to have declined to 8.5 per cent in 2022-24 from 21.2 per cent in 2011-12, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, according to a research paper by the economic think tank NCAER.

The paper titled 'Rethinking Social Safety Nets in a Changing Society', authored by Sonalde Desai of NCAER, used data from the newly completed Wave 3 of the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) as well as data from Waves 1 and 2 of the IHDS.

"According to the IHDS findings...poverty declined significantly between 2004-2005 and 2011-12 (from a headcount ratio of 38.6 to 21.2), and it continued to decline between 2011-12 and 2022-24 (from 21.2 to 8.5) despite the challenges posed by the pandemic," the paper said.

The paper said economic growth and poverty decline create a dynamic climate that requires nimble social protection programmes.

Traditional strategies designed

to address chronic poverty in a large segment of society may be less effective as accidents of birth become less important than accidents of life, it added.

The paper noted that ensuring social protection systems keep up with the pace of social transformation will be a key challenge for India as it strives towards equitable development.

According to the paper, during an era of economic growth, when opportunities increase, the long-term determinants of poverty may decline while accidents of life associated with natural disasters, illness and death, and changes in occupation-specific opportunities may become more important.

"Accidents of birth are more likely to affect long-term chronic poverty, accidents of life may have a transitory effect on moving in and out of poverty," it said.

Earlier this year, NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam had said the latest consumer expenditure survey indicates that poverty has come down to 5 per cent in the

## Supernova insolvency case NCLAT to wait for lenders' decision on settlement offer

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT on Wednesday said it will wait for the decision of lenders on a revised settlement offer by Supertech Realtors, which is developing a residential apartment, offices, retail and luxury hotels at its Supernova project.

NCLAT also directed the Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) not to constitute a Committee of Creditors. However, it said the construction work for the project would be continued under the supervision of IRP.

A three-member NCLAT bench observed that Supertech Realtors submitted a one-time settlement (OTS), and the lead bank principally agreed with the proposal and the proposal is under consideration by the consortium of banks. "In the meantime, we direct that the Committee of Creditors be not constituted. However, the ongoing project may be continued under the supervision of the IRP and the IRP shall extend all cooperation by the Corporate Debtor, its officers and employees in carrying out the construction," said the 8-page NCLAT order.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal further said bank accounts of the Supertech Realtors "shall be operated only with the joint signature of the IRP, only to carry out construction". The interim order came while hearing the appeal filed by Ram Kishore Arora, director of the suspended board of Supertech Realtors, challenging the order passed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) last



month. A Delhi bench of NCLT had admitted the insolvency plea filed by the Bank of Maharashtra over a default of ₹ 168.04 crore and appointed Anju Agarwal as interim resolution professional (IRP), suspending the board of Supertech Realtors, a step-down subsidiary of Supertech. The appellate tribunal issued notices asking lenders to file replies within three weeks and listed the matter for further hearing on August 8, 2024. Supertech Realtors, a subsidiary of Supertech, is developing the Supernova project at a cost of ₹ 2,326.14 crore on a land measuring 70,002 square metres at Sector 94, Noida.

Supertech is also facing a Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).

As per the plans, the Supernova project will have 80 floors and will be the tallest building in Delhi-NCR at a height of 300 metres.

During the proceedings of the NCLAT, the counsel appearing for Supertech Realtors said

he is not raising any dispute regarding the debt and default to Bank of Maharashtra. He said the realty firm has submitted a proposal to the Consortium of Lenders for settlement of dues from the investor, namely Kotak Advisors Ltd, via an ARC (asset reconstruction companies) sale.

The offer made by Supertech Realtors was 75 per cent of the running ledger book balance of the consortium lenders and the lead bank acknowledged the receipt of the revised proposal.

A meeting of lenders' was held on March 18, 2024, in which the Bank of Maharashtra also participated. Union Bank of India, the lead bank, after taking note of the proposal has principally agreed with the proposal, Supertech Realtors' counsel submitted.

However, Bank of Maharashtra representatives sought time to consult their head office and inform them about their decision.

Supertech Realtors submitted that as the proposal has been principally accepted by the lead bank and is under consideration, no purpose be served in initiating a Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process against it.

He further submitted Supernova Project is 80 per cent complete and an investor has also offered to infuse funds for the construction and completion of the project. However, counsel appearing for the Bank of Maharashtra submitted that the OTS proposal of the Corporate Debtor, which the bank earlier approved, was not honoured by the realty firm. (PTI)

## Union minister directs swift action and relief measures across affected areas, assures financial aid

# Sarba leads relief efforts in flood-hit Dibrugarh

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, July 3:** The Union minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal rushed to take stock of the flood situation plaguing the greater Dibrugarh region and reviewed the relief operations undertaken by the government for the benefit of the flood-affected people.

Sonowal visited the flash flood-affected areas of Dibrugarh city, including Graham Bazaar, AT Road, HS Road, RKB Path, Man-cotta Road, Thana Chariali, and Jhalukpara.

Sonowal also visited and reviewed the embankment sites at Tengakhat and Hatibandha.

Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal also visited the relief camp for flood-affected people at Tengakhat on Wednesday. Sonowal assessed the condition of flood-affected individuals, spoke with them to evaluate the material damage.

Sonowal instructed the district commissioner to maintain cleanliness in the shelter camps and implement measures to prevent disease outbreaks.

Sonowal also directed that medical treatment be provided at the camps and emphasised giving special attention to the elderly, women, and children.

The Union minister also directed officials to expedite all necessary



measures for flood victim relief and to intensify relief and rescue operations. The National Disaster Response

Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Indian Army, and Indian Air Force have joined forces with the district ad-

ministration to conduct relief and rescue operations in various locations within the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency.

Speaking on the situation, the Union minister, Sarbananda Sonowal said, "It is a matter of grave concern as the flood situation worsens in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, as well as many other parts of Assam. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also expressed his deep concern about the situation and is taking regular updates on it. Both the central and state governments have joined forces to fight this natural disaster and to take all necessary steps to provide relief to the flood-affected people. The government will also take steps to provide financial relief for the loss of materials due to this flood. I have also directed officials to urgently repair and build embankments."

Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal was accompanied by MLA of Dibrugarh LAC, Prashanta Phukan; the minister, government of Assam; MLA, Tinsukia LAC, Terash Gowalla; chairman, Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC), Rituparna Baruah; district commissioner, Bikram Kairi, IAS; mayor, Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation (DMC), Saikat Patra; deputy mayor, DMC & district president, Dibrugarh BJP, Ujjwal Kashyap, among others.

## MLA Keshab Mahanta rushes to address grievances

### Flood victims protest lack of relief



**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, July 3:** The flood situation in Kaliabor remains dire, with flood-affected people from the greater Jakkhalabandha area staging a protest at Jakkhalabandha market against the district administration and local MLA & minister Keshab Mahanta for failing to provide flood relief. During the protest, demonstrators voiced slogans criticising the MLA and minister Mahanta, as well as the district administration.

The protesters sternly criticised the MLA and minister Mahanta, alleging that despite assurances from

them and the district administration to provide food, water, and other essential supplies to flood victims, none had been provided even a water bottle in the last 24 hours. This neglect forced flood-affected people in the area to endure hunger until Wednesday.

Meanwhile, MLA and minister Keshab Mahanta hurried to the protest site to manage the situation. He instructed concerned officials from the sub-division to promptly deliver food and other essentials to flood victims in the area, according to sources.

## Weightlifting and bodybuilding camp



**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, July 3:** A 25-day-long weightlifting and bodybuilding camp organised by the Sonitpur district chapter of the Bodybuilding Association and Weightlifting Association commenced at Asamiya Club in the heart of Tezpur town on Wednesday. The event, which attracted participants from across the district, was formally inaugurated by Gautam Mahanta, forest officer of the Sonitpur district division of the Forest Department. In the program, Pankaj Kumar Borah, president of the Sonitpur District Bodybuilding Association; Hiranya Bhuyan, president of the Sonitpur District Weightlifting Association; Bibudh Deka, secretary of the Sonitpur District Bodybuilding Association; and Anu Devi, secretary of Asamiya Club, among other notable personalities, were present.

## AASAA marks 28th foundation day

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, July 3:** The 28th foundation day of AASAA was observed at Kharahat Durga Puja House Playground in Kharahat Tea Estate on Tuesday. The flag was hoisted by Rupam Das, president of the Kharahat Primary Committee. The smriti tarpan was offered by Artish Nayak. In the programme, Lalit Tanti, president of AASAA, Demow Regional Committee; Jitan Das, assistant secretary; Amarnath Nayak; Shiva Kalandi; and Debaru Kalandi, adviser, were present.

Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Indian Army, and Indian Air Force have joined forces with the district ad-

## Young man drowns in floods

**HT Correspondent**

**JAGIROAD, July 3:** One Aditya Saikia drowned in the rising flood of the mighty Brahmaputra river on Wednesday at Satibheti village in Mayong, in the district of Morigaon. The SDRF recovered the body six hours after the incident. The water level of the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries is reportedly flowing above the danger level. About 50 percent of the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is under flood, and the world-famous one-horned rhinos are also facing acute trouble.

## Assam Senior Citizen Forum celebrates foundation day

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, July 3:** The Foundation Day of Assam Senior Citizen Forum Demow branch was held at Demow Public Library with a day-long programme on Tuesday. On the occasion, the flag hoisting was conducted, and the smriti tarpan was offered. A chorus led by Sangita Guha Roy was sung on the occasion. An open session was organised, presided over by Tulan Bezbarua, president of Assam Senior Citizen Forum Demow branch. Pradip Borah, secretary of Assam Senior Citizen Forum Demow branch, spoke about the aims of the meeting.

## Jagiroad faces power cuts & artificial flooding woes

**JAGIROAD, July 3:** Frequent power cuts at Jagiroad have caused immense trouble to the consumers in general and the student fraternity in particular. When the people here are suffering a lot following continuous rain and artificial flooding, the severe power disruption every half hour is adding fuel to the fire.

It is alleged that Jagiroad, a prospective town with the proposed TATA Semiconductor Project, is suffering a lot due to a lack of proper planning and development. The natural water flow at the base of the Sonaikuchi Hills is now gradually blocked, resulting in the entire town, particularly the north side of the four-lane highway, being artificially inundated during continuous rain.

Further, it is also alleged that due to apathy on the part of the APDCL, Jagiroad sub-division in the heart of the town, the entire APDCL area is artificially inundated. Huge waterlogging behind the APDCL consumer complaint centre has turned into a hub for mosquitoes, causing a threat to nearby residents. The APDCL authorities are not maintaining any drainage system in the area and are not taking any steps to drain out the waterlogged low-lying areas. There is every possibility of mosquito-borne diseases in these areas, locals alleged.

The concerned section urged the district administration to look into the matter seriously for a safe and healthy environment.

## Awareness prog on beekeeping held in BTR

### Initiative by National Beekeeping & Honey Mission aims to boost apiculture skills

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, July 3:** An awareness program aimed at developing skills for scientific beekeeping in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) was conducted at the Tukrajhar Honey Processing Unit in Chirang district on Wednesday. Organised by the National Beekeeping & Honey Mission, the event sought to raise awareness about scientific beekeeping practices in the Bodoland region.

The government of BTR has been actively training numerous apiarists to promote awareness and develop skills for scientific beekeeping across the Bodoland region under the National Beekeeping & Honey Mission. The program included detailed discussions on scientific beekeeping procedures among participants. Additionally, several beehives were distributed to apiarists to en-



hance their feasibility support. Ranjit Basumatary, executive member of the Bodoland Territorial Region, graced the occasion and distributed the beehives. He

emphasised that the Bodoland region holds high potential for apiculture, leading to the launch of the Bodoland Sweet Mission under the auspices of the Department of For-

## ATTSA Margherita branch extends relief efforts

**HT Correspondent**

**MARGHERITA, July 3:** Since the torrential rainfall in the state over the past week, floods have wreaked havoc across the state. Unfortunately, Margherita MLA Bhaskar Sharma and Margherita sub divisional officer (civil) have not yet visited Khagoripathar village, one of the worst flood-affected areas in the 83rd Margherita constituency of Tinsukia district.

"The ongoing floods have brought significant challenges to our lives as we find shelter in a local school. Our homes and agricultural lands have been devastated. The village leader visited us once and provided some rice. We urgently need government assistance to address all aspects of our situation. The lack of boats is exacerbating our difficulties," said one local resident.

Khagoripathar village, under Bhittoipowai Gaon Panchayat of Margherita's 83rd constituency, is located 10 kilometers away from Margherita headquarters. It is a backward village with poor road conditions, no safe drinking water supply, no health center, no drainage system, no agricultural facilities, and only one Khagoripathar LP School serving a population of over 1000.

Tea Tribes/Adivasi communities, Gorkhas, and Assamese have lived in Khagoripathar village for



centuries under deplorable conditions.

On Wednesday, the Assam Tea Tribes Student Association (ATTSA) Margherita branch committee, with assistance from Hindustan Oil Exploration Limited, visited Khagoripathar village and distributed food items to the flood-affected people.

"It is very unfortunate that after the flood, Margherita MLA Bhaskar Sharma and Margherita sub divisional officer (civil) have not visited here, despite it being one of the most flood-affected areas in the 83rd Margherita constituency. Due to the flood, many diseases have emerged, and during this difficult time, everyone except the state government has

visited Khagoripathar village and provided assistance according to their capabilities," said a flood-affected woman.

"More than 1000 bighas of agricultural land have been submerged, ruining our efforts," lamented another flood-affected resident of Khagoripathar village.

Pranjal Baraik, joint publicity secretary of ATTSA Central Executive Committee, expressed disappointment, stating, "It is regrettable that Margherita MLA Bhaskar Sharma and Margherita sub divisional officer (civil) have not found time to visit Khagoripathar village, which is one of the backward villages in the 83rd Margherita constituency of Tinsukia district."

## Tiger attack injures two in Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, July 3:** Two persons, identified as Abdul Aziz and Akhtar Hussain from Juria Jengoni village under Dhing Police Station, were grievously injured in an attack by a stranded Royal Bengal tiger from Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, due to flooding in the sanctuary.

The injured individuals were immediately admitted to a local hospital in critical condition right after the incident, according to sources.

Following the incident, a large number of locals armed with sticks and other weapons chased the tiger towards the railway track. Forest personnel from Nagaon Wildlife Forest Division and Nagaon Sadar territory range rushed to the spot to control the situation. They are currently attempting to guide the tiger back towards the nearby forest of the wildlife sanctuary.



the wildlife sanctuary.

In response to the incident, district commissioner of Nagaon, Narendra Kr Shah, issued an official notification on Wednesday promulgating prohibitory orders under Section 163 BNSS across the affected localities. The order

prohibits assembly of five or more persons in one place, carrying arms or other lethal weapons, and making loud noises in the area until further notice. These restrictions have been enforced immediately in the concerned area to ensure the safety of the tiger.

## JMM, Cong replacing Champai Soren as Jharkhand CM deeply distressing: Himanta



**GUWAHATI, July 3:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday described the possible replace-

ment of Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Congress as "deeply distressing".

Soren is set to replace incumbent chief minister Champai Soren who assumed office when the former was jailed earlier this year in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

"The removal of a senior tribal leader from the post of Chief Minister in Jharkhand by the JMM and Congress party is deeply distressing," Sarma who is the co-in charge of Jharkhand posted on X.

The JMM and Congress are constituents of the ruling coalition in Jharkhand.

Sarma said he is certain that the people of Jharkhand will strongly condemn this action and firmly reject it.

The Assam chief minister has visited the state several times since the Lok Sabha elections and held meetings with senior BJP leaders over the forthcoming assembly elections.

Leaders and MLAs of the alliance government during a meeting at chief minister Champai Soren's residence here unanimously decided to elect Hemant Soren as JMM legislature party leader, they said. (PTI)

## Boat mishap

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, July 3:** Parmesh Sahani (40), a resident of Dhaibari near Nitaipukhuri, went missing in a boat mishap on Wednesday in the Brahmaputra River. According to information received, Sankar Sahani and his brother Ukil Sahani had gone to Jorhat Hatihai in Nimati to rescue their relatives from floods. On their return to Dhaibari in a small boat through the Brahmaputra, due to the strong current, they faced difficulty near Desangmukh Ofalia around 10:30 am on Wednesday. Shivalal Mala, Amarjit Mala from Nimati Hatihai, and Ukil Sahani managed to escape, but Parmesh Sahani is missing. SDRF has initiated a search operation in the Brahmaputra, but as of the filing of this report, Parmesh Sahani remains missing.

## Summer vacation drama workshop in Demow

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, July 3:** The Cultural Affairs Department of the state government is organising a Summer Vacation Drama Workshop in Demow constituency, in association with Demow Nritalaya. The workshop commenced at Demow Jyoti Bishnu Cultural Building on July 3 (Wednesday). Mrinal Ranjan Gogoi, a retired teacher, lit the ceremonial lamp to mark the beginning of the program. Kankana Saikia, assistant commissioner of Sivasagar, was present on the first day and inaugurated the workshop. Rupam Bezbarua served as the resource person for the workshop and provided training to the students. In attendance at the inauguration were Dr Gitali Saikia, HOD of the English department at HCDG College Nitaipukhuri; Pubali Thengal Gogoi, principal of Demow Nritalaya; theatre artists Janmoni Tamuli and Dulmoni Bordoloi; Bidyut Bikash Borah, a teacher at Demow Nritalaya; and Umesh Chetia, president of Demow Press Club. Prior to the workshop's start, students from Demow Nritalaya performed dances. The workshop will run from July 3 to July 18, 2024.

## Mobile medical boat delivers baby girl

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAO, July 3:** A woman delivered a healthy baby girl aboard a mobile medical boat on the Brahmaputra riverbank in Jhargao, Jagiroad district, on Wednesday. The medical team on the boat had rescued the pregnant woman from Khandakhaiti Char, where she gave birth during transit to Jhargao Health Centre. Subsequently, the mother was admitted to the health center.

In conjunction, the Health Department orchestrated health camps across the char areas of the district. These camps, overseen by the Khandakhaiti Riverine Primary Health Center and Jhargao Block Primary Health Centre, were held at Khandakhaiti Char, Phaliamari Char, and Karaiguri Char on Wednesday.

Furthermore, hospitals throughout the district have mobilised doctors and health workers, ensuring they are prepared to facilitate health camps in areas affected by flooding.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

To draw you must close your eyes and sing  
- Pablo Picasso

## Monsoon fury

The arrival of the monsoon season has brought relief from the scorching summer heat across the country. However, it has also introduced significant challenges, especially in major cities where inadequate drainage systems lead to severe waterlogging. Flooding has exacerbated the situation in various regions, disrupting daily life and causing widespread distress. Recently, newly elected Members of Parliament shared images of their homes and neighbourhoods in Delhi inundated with muddy, filthy rainwater. They were unable to leave their homes, highlighting the dire state of urban infrastructure. This is a stark contrast to the recent past when Delhi grappled with a shortage of clean drinking water due to reduced supplies from upstream states, failing to meet the capital's demands during peak summer. Despite Delhi receiving less rainfall compared to other Indian cities, it still faces persistent waterlogging issues. This problem underscores the ineffective and visionless functioning of local bodies, including the capitals three municipal corporations. Disappointingly, when the new Parliament commenced its maiden session, these pressing civic issues were notably absent from discussions. Instead, the focus was on defining Hindus, the largest community in India, triggering widespread political turmoil. The Maharashtra Assembly witnessed derogatory exchanges, reflecting poorly on the quality of our legislative bodies.

It is concerning that our lawmakers lack mutual respect and fail to appreciate diverse viewpoints, leading to national embarrassment. How did India reach this juncture? A nation with a rich heritage and great traditions seems to have lost its lofty ideals. The BJP, facing an abusive opposition, must share the blame for not setting commendable precedents. If the opposition resorts to such behaviour today, they must be prepared to face similar responses in the future. A political brawl benefits no one and only leaves all parties injured. India boasts numerous academicians and professionals who embody formal, socially-acceptable behaviour and respect for differing perspectives. The neglect of high-quality education for all has resulted in a population prone to abusive conduct, both within legislative bodies and in public life. Lawmakers must focus on making laws and addressing public concerns, not defining religion. Currently, Delhi's municipal issues should be a priority in parliamentary discussions. The plight of political leaders in jail is highlighted, but millions of ordinary Indians are also imprisoned without similar attention. Lawmakers must remember their duty to the people and avoid prioritizing non-issues over significant concerns. This cycle of neglect will only cease when lawmakers stop imposing trivial matters on the legislative agenda. They must learn to prioritize the country's pressing issues, which emerge daily. In a populous nation like India, educated, intelligent, and productive citizens are an asset.

Conversely, a population marked by ignorance, idleness, and abusive behaviour hinders progress. Restoring order is achievable. Small, daily steps in the right direction can lead to substantial changes. Lawmakers should focus on improving law enforcement and justice systems, ensuring educational opportunities for all, including night schools for the elderly and productive activities for the literate. This positive approach should permeate society from the grassroots to the highest levels. Instead of fixating on religious definitions, our lawmakers must prioritize issues that genuinely impact citizens' lives. Addressing urban infrastructure, ensuring clean water supply, and promoting education are essential steps towards a more just and progressive society. Only then can we move towards a future where civic responsibility and effective governance prevail.

## Rahul Gandhi's blistering speech as leader of Opposition rattles BJP

For the first time in his ten-year rule, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, proclaimed to be the super-leader to shape the destiny of India, wore a pitiable, visibly shaken and dejected look sitting in the front row of the treasury benches in Lok Sabha, while Rahul Gandhi, who has been assigned the constitutional task of being the Leader of Opposition, shredded his assiduously-built and nurtured-at-massive-cost image of 'Hindu Hridaya Samrat'.

Modi, who arrogantly boasted of being the 'Vishwa Guru' and the 'creator of New India' would face this nature of jibe and derision from Rahul, the Gandhi scion who till recently was derided by him as "Pappu" and "Shahzada". Rahul did not simply berate Modi's brand of Hindutva based on fear and hate, he even told him on his face on the floor of the Lok Sabha "you are not a true Hindu". Rahul said: "Narendra Modi doesn't represent the entire Hindu samaj. BJP-RSS doesn't represent the entire Hindu samaj."

Something unimaginable happened in the house. Modi who usually preferred to skip the proceedings of the house, for the first time not only remained seated in his chair, instead he rose twice to defend himself. None could have imagined that Rahul, who till the other day, was not taken seriously by the urban middle class and dismissed by the BJP leaders as non-serious person, who is yet to attain the status of a master politician, would floor Modi on the mat. Members of the house and people across the country were witnessing the rare sight of a shaken Modi and Shah intervening repeatedly, and ironically enough, urging the Speaker for 'protection'!

Unable to face the onslaught from Rahul, Union home minister Amit Shah even lost his cool and went to extent of blaming the Speaker, Om Birla, who is a BJP member, known for having a harsh and tough approach towards the Opposition, of being soft towards Rahul. Shah said: "Aap ek tarfa niyomo ke upar jaake unko riyata de rahe ho, manyavar. Humein sangrakshit kariye, aise nahi chalta (You are ignoring rules to give them one-sided concessions. Protect us, this

isn't acceptable)".

No doubt, Rahul created a history in the Lok Sabha. Rahul took Modi head on. He exposed the PM's claim of being the 'Hindu Hridaya Samrat' by saying "Aap Hindu ho hi nahi! (You are not a Hindu). In the Hindu religion, it's written, 'Stand with the truth, don't step back from the truth, don't fear the truth'. Non-violence is our creed". Modi's two-decade-long Hindu saviour image, manufactured painstakingly from the days of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, was delivered a massive blow by Rahul's firebrand speech as the Leader of Opposition.

Modi and Shah desperately tried to turn the situation in their favour, but failed miserably. In their attempt to polarise Hindus, they tried to project Rahul as anti-Hindu. But this too did not work. Rahul succeeded in his mission to paint Modi as a communal leader who was using religion for his political gains. To substantiate his observation, Rahul cited the preaching of Lord Shiva. He said: "Shivji kahte hain, 'daro mat, darao mat' (Lord Shiva says, 'Don't be afraid and don't make others afraid'). He shows the fearless posture, talks about non-violence... and those who call themselves Hindu, they talk about violence, hatred and falsehood round the clock".

Though Rahul in past had questioned Modi's claim of representing the aspirations of Hindus, it was first occasion when he shattered this claim on the floor of the house. Citing the message of Abhay Mudra, he said that a true Hindu cannot indulge in violence and falsehood. He challenged Modi and Shah's claim of being real Hindus and presenting Hindu values.

Obviously, this was not at all palatable for them. Shah tried to generalize Rahul's pointed criticism by saying that the Leader of Opposition was accusing all Hindus of resorting to violence. Modi and Shah accused Gandhi of labelling Hindus as violent. Gandhi clarified that his remarks were targeted at the BJP, not Hinduism, emphasising that true Hinduism promotes courage and peace.

Even Rahul's admirers would have been astonished to see him so unsparing in his criticism of Modi and attacking him from the front. The intensity of Rahul's attack could be gauged from the simple fact that Amit Shah, the formidable home minister of India who is known for shouting down the opposition members, rose at least five times and even pleaded for "sanrakshan" (protection) from Speaker Om Birla. Rahul Gandhi invoked 'Abhay Mudra' of Lord Shiva to expose the religious hypocrisy of Modi and criticise the government for its "full-scale assault on the idea of India, the Constitution, and those who resisted these attacks". The message of Abhay Mudra (gesture of fearlessness) is quite significant. Lord Shiva in his sitting posture sends the message that do not fear. Fight the evil. Rahul Gandhi described 'abhay mudra' as the next step of Lord in the evolution of facing truth and non-violence and to illustrate the strength they derived from the deity. [Interesting coincidence then that the Congress' party symbol, the hand, has a striking similarity with the 'Abhay Mudra', and surely, there will soon be academic reflections on the political acuity of the reference.]

Rahul had brought placards carrying the pictures of various religious leaders and Hindu Gods. It was after being pointed out by Shah and other MPs, Birla interrupted Gandhi, advising him that "rules don't allow the display of placards". Though the remark drew immediate criticism from Gandhi, Birla did not ask him to remove those placards from house. Rahul replied: "I wanted to show the image because it represents ideas that we in the opposition defend."

Effectively, in one single stroke, Rahul smashed the edifice of Hindutva built by RSS, BJP and Modi over the last ten years of Modi Raj. Though Modi bhakts as usual were highly critical of Rahul's attacks, the people on the streets appreciated his bulldozing the structure of hatred created by RSS and Modi surrounding Hindutva. People were appreciative of the fearlessness of Rahul, his rare variety of courage and conviction to take

the BJP-RSS hate machine head on. Even while interrupting Rahul's speech, Shah tried to resort to his old tactics of terrorising his opponent. He urged the speaker to ask Rahul to apologise to the House and the country for hurting the feelings of crores of people who take pride in identifying themselves as Hindus.

The speech of Rahul was so absorbing and focused that Congress members consented to Speaker's query whether their time should be allotted to Rahul. While Rahul was focussed, none of the BJP stalwarts could counter his allegations through facts. On the issue of providing MSP, the concerned minister tried to counter the allegation by saying that it was being given, but he preferred to remain silent when Rahul pointed out that the farmers' demand for legal guarantee has not meet met with.

On the issue of providing compensation to Agniveer soldiers, defence minister Rajnath Singh was seen hedging around saying that a soldier was paid one crore as compensation. But on this count he could not reply to Rahul's observation that Agniveer soldiers and regular army soldiers are the best persons to certify the real position.

Modi and Shah today miserably failed in their attempt to divert the attention of the house and distract the debate. Unsurprisingly, Shah spoke of the Emergency and 1984 anti-Sikhs riots instead of replying to Rahul's charges. Shah said Rahul had no right to talk about non-violence when the Congress had spread "terror" in the country. But this attack from Shah could not deter Rahul in his pointed criticism of the Modi-Shah duopoly.

Commentators have already observed how in the backdrop of Modi's serial and staggering assault on the constitutional bedrock of the country, the charges against Indira Gandhi pale in comparison. She had formally suspended fundamental rights, imprisoned leaders and imposed censorship, but it was for a short period of two years. But India under Modi has been witnessing an undeclared emergency for the last ten years, since he took over the office of prime minister.

Many leading scholars and ac-

ademics, even social and political activists are languishing in jails for years. Journalists are terrorised and even killed. Father Stan Swamy, a prominent human rights activist, died while in custody on July 5, 2022. He was even denied a sippy cup despite having serious medical conditions.

Modi had showed to the world that emergency could be imposed even without using the Constitutional provisions. It was his intention to incapacitate the democratic system and functioning that he disregarded the parliament and its practices. The three draconian bills, the Bharat Nyay Samhita, which came in force from July 1, were never debated in the house.

They were adopted without vote after 146 members of Parliament were expelled from the house. There are many examples of this nature of wilful violation. It was quite revealing to listen to Rahul saying: "I was attacked on the orders of Prime Minister Modi. There were 20-plus cases (against me), (my) house was taken away, 55 hours of interrogation by the ED".

Gandhi accused Modi of a "systematic and full-scale assault on the idea of India, the Constitution, and those who resisted this attack. Some of the leaders are still in jail. Anyone who resisted the idea of concentration of power and wealth, aggression on poor & Dalits and minorities was crushed". He even said: "I was attacked by the order of Govt of India, by the order of the Prime Minister of India...The most enjoyable part of it was the 55 hours of interrogation by ED...".

Modi will certainly refute the accusations and allegations levelled against him by Rahul Gandhi while delivering his speech on the motion of thanks on President's address. Already, the entire corporate media ecosystem has been activated to discredit Rahul once again, describing him as 'anti-Hindu' and insinuating that he 'insulted Hindus'. However, no amount of saffron-washing will succeed in repairing the damage inflicted by Rahul Gandhi's scathing expose in the floor of the House. India finally has a worthy Leader of Opposition in the lower House of the Parliament. (IPA Service)

## The crowd gets trapped in the illusion of Babas

By: Privanka Saurabh

The various types of babas that have emerged in the last few decades have tarnished the nation's image. The influence of babas who commit heinous crimes ranging from physical exploitation, murder, and kidnapping of their female followers is increasing to such an extent that today, let alone the public, even well-meaning politicians, actors, officers, intellectuals, etc. have started getting scared of them. After all, what is the sociology of the huge web of these babas? Similarly, the question is what is the economics and psychology of the public running after them? Nowadays, different types of superstitions are prevalent in different social classes.

Despite so many awareness campaigns, even today you will get to hear stories of ghosts in villages and towns. The superstitions of the higher class are different. The feeling of insecurity is no less in this class as well. People of this class claim to be ultra-modern, but despite this, they do not hesitate to offer lakhs of rupees to gurus in air-conditioned ashrams and also believe that lucky charms are the reason for their success/failure.

Such beliefs are found not only in India but in all the countries of the world. The question arises from where so many people with irrational thinking came into society. The answer is the upbringing and environment that we give to our children. Under the education system, not as much effort is being made to develop scientific thinking in children as should be. The breakdown of joint families and the loneliness, mechanicalness, stress, etc. of the new lifestyle has created such a situation where every person has become troubled and restless. Amidst these social-psychological conditions, people knowingly or unknowingly start turning towards such babas who claim to relieve people from every sorrow and stress. The market has also learned the art of taking advantage by creating misconceptions in people. This is the reason why many festivals born by the market have taken a different form in the name of tradition. On some festivals, there is a trend of buying jewelry and on some, sacrificing expensive animals. Simple customs have now become completely colored by economic factors.

People also keep following them without realizing that they are the ones who are being harmed by this. Even today, a network of hypocritical babas and fakirs is spread in small towns whose nameplates often give the impression of them being multitalented (?). They often call themselves travel agents (claim to

arrange foreign trips), financial experts (claim to get stuck money out), relationship experts (claim to arrange love marriages, get rid of the second wife), and medical experts (claim to cure diseases like AIDS, cancer), etc. Many people fall into their trap and increase their bank balance. The ruling system in the country has remained relatively behind in fulfilling its socio-economic responsibilities. On the other hand, these babas started doing work related to education and health. Along with this, they started participating in social work like feeding the hungry. In this sequence, they also started working towards establishing a sense of equity.

Gradually, they started resolving disputes and conflicts of people. They also started doing such works which were the responsibility of the state power. Their popularity increased due to such works. Not only did the poor, deprived, and less educated people get caught in the spell of their welfare works, but their magic also worked on the relatively rich and educated people, who are entangled in various complexities of life and social-mental problems. In this way, by increasing their followers, they gain social legitimacy and then based on that, they become capable of getting political patronage. No political party is clean in giving political patronage to Babas. It is believed that political parties also use babas to spend and hide their black money. Since Babas have a good number of followers, they also act as vote banks for political parties. The tendency to blindly believe anything can make today's smartphone generation do irrational things.

People of this class blindly follow others and do not make decisions using their discretion. They do work only because it has been done for years, or many people are doing it, and never think about its utility. In other words, such people are caught in social, political, religious, and emotional superstitions. The IQ of these people is very low and they can be influenced very easily. They do not think rationally but are very emotionally charged.

Attachment or hatred for something can easily be created in their hearts and when this happens, they can go to any extent. Blind faith proves fatal not only for them but also for others. The gist of Kabir's teachings is to question every fact. Do not believe in it until you test it yourself. The philosopher Plato has also said that the ruler should always be an unbiased person. Today many people have the mentality of following the crowd. (The author is a Research Scholar in Political Science, a poetess, independent journalist and columnist)

## Trinamool cadres are running parallel administration in Bengal villages

By: Tirthankar Mitra

It is almost a month since June 4 when Trinamool Congress emerged victorious in 29 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal out of the total of 42 trouncing the BJP which was reduced to 12 from the earlier 18. Since then, reports of clashes between TMC and the BJP cadres have been reported, but the most embarrassing moment for the ruling party was when a video surfaced featuring party strongman Tajimul Islam beating a couple for their alleged extramarital affairs at Chopra in Uttar Dinajpur district of the state. The incident took place at a salish sabha, a mediation meeting and rightly evoked widespread outrage and condemnation in the state.

A morbid public spectacle was made of a private matter. Its provocation can be traced to an impunity that comes from a parallel syndicate of strong arm justice. This instance of turning a mediation meeting into a kangaroo court is no different from the persecution of young people in inter-religious relationship on the grounds of "love

jihad". Comparison can also be drawn with cases in which bull dozers were used in cases that extend beyond illegal construction.

Incidentally, Islam is nicknamed JCB, the short form of the name of construction equipment making multi-national company producing earth removers and loaders. Arguably the nickname can be traced to the penchant of this political enforcer who appears to have usurped the authority of the local administration to hold summary trials and administer punishment of assaulting a couple whom the law of the land had nothing to do with their alleged involvement.

Accusing the TMC administration of, "bulldozer justice" read "JCB justice" more prevalent in Uttar Pradesh readily comes to mind. Never mind, if TMC dispensation reeks of double standards not letting go of any opportunity to criticise the BJP-run administration of Uttar Pradesh.

A law unto himself, Islam overrode constitutional mechanisms without fear of reprisals. The incident of state abdication and failure to uphold the

constitutional rights of citizens took place at Lakhimpur gram panchayat at Chopra on June 28.

Warning bells have started ringing though they are a bit muffled. It is time for chief minister Mamata Banerjee to course correct. Islam has been arrested and taken into police custody. But the incident points to a festering crisis.. There are other Islams and all incidents are not reported unless some video comes out. Further, there is always the problem of fake videos as the ruling party TMC and the main opposition BJP are engaged in a battle for supremacy.

The incident comes soon after Sandeshkhali where another TMC leader, Shahjahan Sheikh was accused of intimidation, land grabbing and sexual exploitation of some local women. Before his arrest, a war of words had erupted between the Centre and the state...TMC also circulate another video showing that BJP leaders gave money to some local women for making complaints.

The latest incident at Chopra gives CM Banerjee and her party and gov-

ernment a bad name. It retards her effort to project TMC's image as a pioneer of promoting women's welfare in the country.

Lakshmir Bhandar, Kanyasree, Rupasree women oriented projects all are cases in point. The incident at Chopra unlike Sandeshkhali have been condemned from the very beginning by TMC leadership.

But it is a small compensation to the victims of the outrage. Structural lacuna is plaguing the TMC regime. It cannot be whitewashed by electoral triumph. With its 34year long regime which identified party with the state administration did not end well for the CPI(M)-run Left Front dispensation.

Banerjee's problem is that there are too many instances of wrongdoing. Mamata Banerjee has been working hard to dissociate herself and her party from scams before 2026 Assembly elections. The Trinamool is far less tightly knit outfit than it's predecessor. Chopra is a warning which Mamata Banerjee will fail to read at her peril, two years before the next assembly polls in 2026. (IPA Service)

## POST BAG

## The first Assamese male cricketer to be selected for the Indian national team

Sir/Ma'am

Cricket holds a special place in the hearts of everyone in the country. When eleven players represent the nation on the cricket field, people from all backgrounds — regardless of religion, caste, and race, or language — come together to bless and wish the Indian team for victory. Out of a population of nearly 1.4 billion, only 11 players get the chance to represent India in cricket. Representing a vast country like India in cricket is a matter of fortune and pride for every Indian player.

A piece of joyous news in the cricket world has given Assam and the entire Northeast region a reason to feel proud. Riyan Parag from Assam has been selected for the Indian national cricket team scheduled to tour Zimbabwe. Riyan Parag is the talented son of Ranji cricketer Parag Das and swimmer Mithu Baruah, known for her exploits in the water.

Today, Riyan Parag needs no introduction. For the past three years, Riyan Parag faced significant criticism from national and international media due to his inconsistent performances in the IPL. However, Riyan Parag's recent brilliant performance in the IPL was a fitting response to his critics. Even the critics had to admit that this was a new avatar of Riyan Parag.

Such instances of ups and downs have introduced Riyan Parag to the national and international levels. His performances in the IPL and domestic cricket tournaments have been a very high standard. Behind Riyan Parag's stellar performances are not just regular, rigorous practice sessions but also his strong willpower and determination to achieve his goals. Considering his remarkable performances, the selectors of the Indian national cricket team have included Riyan Parag for the upcoming tour to Zimbabwe.

It is noteworthy that the experienced players of the current Indian cricket team are resting for the T20 World Cup, providing an opportunity for emerging cricketers from different parts of the country to represent India on the Zimbabwe tour. The long-awaited dream of witnessing an Assamese player representing the nation in the Indian cricket team has finally come true after many decades. Riyan Parag's selection in the Indian national cricket team proves that if one remains steadfast in their goals and continues to strive, success is inevitable.

Riyan Parag's success has undoubtedly infused a new vitality into Assam's sports arena. The record of success for Assamese athletes on the international stage is quite long, but Riyan Parag's achievement has further strengthened that record.

Riyan Parag has demonstrated that even cricketers from Assam and the Northeast can secure a place in the Indian national team through outstanding performances.

Riyan Parag's journey sets an example for everyone, proving that failure is indeed the key to success. He is a living example that failure can never close the door to success. May Riyan Parag's journey continue to ascend to the pinnacle of success. May the journey that Riyan Parag has started with the Indian national cricket team include other cricketers from Assam and beyond as his companions. Now, we eagerly await to witness Riyan Parag donning the Indian cricket team's jersey on the field.

May Riyan Parag secure a permanent spot in the Indian national cricket team. Let Riyan Parag become an ideal for every aspiring young sportsman from Assam. Through the door that Riyan Parag has opened, may other emerging cricketers from Assam also represent the nation through the Indian national cricket team. May Riyan Parag's journey be everlasting for Assam and the Northeast, and that is the wish of everyone.

Deborshi Gautam  
Nalbari, Assam  
gautamdeborshi@gmail.com

# Will air pollution continue to kill innocent children?

By: **Amarpal Singh Verma**

A recent report on air pollution is frightening. The State of the Global Air-2024 report jointly prepared by the American organization Health Effects Institute (AEI) with UNICEF is not only warning about the ever-increasing dangers of air pollution, but also emphasizing on taking measures to avoid it. According to this report, in India, about 1.6 lakh children under the age of 5 have lost their lives due to air pollution related diseases in 2021.

Air pollution is continuously increasing due to huge factories, small and big factories, vehicles, brick kilns etc. around us. No village and city has remained untouched by it. Most people are unaware of the dangers of air pollution, but those who know about it and feel its ill effects also generally ignore them. We feel the ill effects of air pollution but innocent children are unable to understand what is happening. The number of such children is increasing, who first fall ill and then die at a young age.

Premature birth, low weight, asthma and lung diseases in children are increasing due to the impact of pollution related health effects. This report

shows how air pollution is increasing in our country. According to this report, India has reached third place among the 10 air polluted countries of the world. The air of 83 cities of the country is bad according to the air quality guidelines of the World Health Organization.

According to the report, more than 80 lakh people have died due to air pollution in the year 2021 in the world, including 21 lakh deaths in India and 23 lakh deaths in China. It is a matter of great concern that increasing pollution is proving to be fatal for children. In the year 2021, Indian children have been the most victims of air pollution. In the year 2021, 1,69,400 children have died in India due to pollution. In comparison, 114,100 children in Nigeria, 68,100 in Pakistan, 31,100 in Ethiopia and 19,100 in Bangladesh have had to pay the price of increasing pollution by losing their lives.

In the year 2021, more than 7 lakh children under the age of 5 died worldwide due to polluted air. It is a disturbing figure that in 2021, more than 2,60,600 children under the age of 5 died due to exposure to air pollution, which is the second largest cause of death for children of this age group in South Asia after malnutrition. This report



shows that the maximum impact of air pollution is visible on children. Children are very vulnerable to diseases caused by air pollution.

Children can suffer the damage caused by air pollution in the mother's womb itself and they may have to bear the effects of this on their health throughout their lives. This can cause children to be born prematurely, their weight can be reduced, they are at risk of asthma and lung diseases. 20 percent of newborn deaths worldwide are caused by air pollution, most of which are related to low weight and complications of premature birth.

Due to polluted air, millions of people are suffering from diseases that cause breathing problems. The treatment of these diseases is extremely expensive, which puts a burden on hospitals, the economy and

the entire society. Children under the age of five are the

*The death of millions of children every year due to pollution in India is a matter of concern, governments will have to take necessary steps*

most affected by polluted air.

In our country, pneumonia is a common disease in children, but how many people consider the air pollution around them responsible for this? Most people do not pay attention to air pollution. One in every five children in the world dies due to pneumonia. The lung capacity of children living in a polluted environment can be reduced by up to 20 percent. This effect is similar to the effect of growing up in a home with cigarette smoke. Air pollu-

tion is associated with pneumonia, the leading infectious cause of death in children globally. Polluted air also causes asthma, the most common respiratory disease in older children.

According to UNICEF, air pollution disproportionately harms children living in poverty, and is responsible for the majority of diseases and premature deaths in low- and middle-income countries. Poverty forces people to use polluting fuels and appliances

ing an adverse effect on their intellectual and attention span. Breathing polluted air during pregnancy and early childhood can negatively impact brain development.

The big question is how can we protect our children from air pollution? UNICEF has given many suggestions in this regard. According to UNICEF's suggestions, children should be kept indoors when the level of air pollution is high. If they have to go out, they should be protected with a filtering and well-fitted mask. If possible, install windows and air filters in the house. As far as possible, use clean fuel and technologies for cooking, heating the house and lighting. Provide children with food and beverages rich in Vitamin C, E and Omega-3 antioxidants.

These suggestions of UNICEF are correct in their place but crores of people in India have to struggle for two meals a day, for those people, masks for children, arrangements for air filters on the windows, use of clean fuel and technologies for cooking, heating the house and lighting is like a dream.

Governments, common people and industrial institutions will have to work together to stop air pollution. Governments

also have a big responsibility in this. Unless governments build the capacity of the health sector to detect, prevent and treat air pollution-related diseases, pollution-related deaths will continue to occur. Similarly, necessary steps will have to be taken to establish and maintain air quality monitoring systems and to make the public aware about this.

As suggested by organizations like UNICEF, the government will have to take steps like setting ambitious climate and environmental policies and targets, providing affordable, clean fuel options to adopt cleaner modes of transport, strengthening policies and investments to accelerate the transition to clean, efficient energy and transport, and implementing advanced emission standards.

Along with this, while steps will have to be taken to reduce pollution by planting more and more trees, the industrial units responsible for air pollution will have to be tightened. In the absence of this, air pollution will keep increasing and our children will be forced to bear its ill effects. *(The author is a senior independent journalist from Rajasthan who can be reached at vermaamarpal Singh@gmail.com)*

## What does 'carbon farming' mean for Indian agriculture?

By: **A. Amarendra Reddy & Tulsi Lingareddy**

Indian agriculture has undergone intense cultivation practices for the past six decades to ensure food security in the country. This has resulted in significant loss of soil organic carbon, deterioration of soil fertility and chemical pollution in major cultivated lands across the country. Further, intensive cultivation together with mono-crop cultivation of major cereals led to loss of biodiversity and exhaustion of ground water resources. These cultivation practices have also led to an increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to global warming and climate change.

The emissions from rice cultivation accounted for about 17.4% of total GHG emissions from agriculture sector in the country, according to the India Third National Communication, submitted in December 2023, to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In such a scenario, carbon farming or regenerative agriculture can provide a potential opportunity for improving soil fertility, improving yields and reducing emissions, while providing additional income for farmers through trading carbon credits in a voluntary carbon market (VCM).

**What is carbon farming?**

Although the concept of carbon markets has been around for a few decades, global participation in them started after legally binding emission reduction targets were set for developed countries in the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Subsequently, the Paris Agreement in 2015 made provisions under Article 6, allowing international cooperation to establish functional carbon markets. In simple terms, a carbon market is a marketplace where carbon credits are traded. One carbon credit is equivalent to one ton of emissions removed in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). At present, there are no set targets for emission reduction in the Indian agriculture sector and hence farmers can trade their carbon credits in voluntary carbon markets to earn additional income.

They can do this by taking up the specified farming practices on their land and receive carbon credits. This process is commonly known as carbon farming or regenerative agriculture. Such farming practices aim to help in removing the atmospheric carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) and store it in plants and/or soil. Some farming practices used in regenerative farming include: less tillage, agroforestry practices, rotation of crops, use of cover crops, reduction of chemical fertiliser use and improved water management and irrigation techniques. Farmers receive one carbon credit for removal of one tonne of carbon emissions. They can trade these to receive additional income while also benefiting from the improved soil fertility and better yields.

Global VCM was valued at around \$2.4 billion in 2023, according to the Voluntary Carbon Credit Market Report by Global Market Insights. As per the Voluntary Registry Offsets Database (v10) maintained by Berkeley Carbon Trading Project, a total of 1,978 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e of carbon credits were issued, from around 8,777 projects, across the globe till December 2023. However, agriculture accounted for only 1.4%, while forest and land use along with renewable energy accounted for more than 70% of total carbon credits issued.

India stood in first place with 1,586 projects and 321 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e of carbon credits issued till December 2023, accounting for 18% of total projects and 16% of total carbon credits. About 89% of the carbon credits were issued in the renewable energy sector in India, while agriculture received only 0.2%. As of the end of December 2023, there are 78 VCM projects in India's agriculture sector covering areas such as improved irrigation management, manure methane digestion, rice emission reductions, and sustainable agriculture. VCMs, at the moment, are largely functional through private sector agencies and companies. To encourage small and medium farmers to avail their benefits,

the agriculture ministry released a framework in January 2024. The framework aims to promote sustainable agricultural practices, and adopt regenerative farming to build climate resilience, in the country's food production system.

Apart from carbon credits, the green credit programme (GCP), which provides incentives in the form of green credits for specified activities, is also being implemented. GCP is overseen by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, while the implementing agency for VCM is the Bureau of Energy Efficiency. However, according to the agriculture ministry's framework, an activity generating green credits under GCP may also receive carbon credits.

Carbon credits currently fetch between ₹ 700 and ₹1,000 each in international markets. But their price is expected to increase substantially with the rise in demand in coming years. On average, a farmer may generate about 2-6 carbon credits per hectare, according to an agriculture ministry report. Although, at present, Indian agriculture is kept away from targeted emission reduction commitment, adoption of sustainable agricultural practices can help Indian the sector in mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the long run.

**Major challenges and the way forward**  
Indian agriculture is highly fragmented, with more than 80% of holdings being small and marginal. Hence, the size of holdings poses a major constraint, as pooling land across farms with diverse cropping patterns can be challenging. Another major challenge is the lack of awareness and knowledge to participate in VCMs. Moreover, it takes a considerable amount of time to receive the monetary benefits: up to 1.5 years to list and another 8 months to a year for receiving the money, studies show.

Transaction costs – in the form of measurement, monitoring, third party verification and certification etc – too add to the challenge. These costs may be very high, resulting in limited net monetary benefits for farmers.

Accurate measurement of carbon in the soil, before and after the implementation of proposed practices, is another major problem. Availability of technology, data and trained personnel are crucial for precise measurement. Carbon credit market in agriculture is in its nascent stage and requires a strict monitoring and regulatory system. There are concerns that asymmetric information, lack of transparency, and inadequate regulation could lead to unfair pricing practices for carbon credits, resulting in low earnings for farmers.

Additionally, the lack of knowledge and awareness among farmers and rural communities may lead to their exploitation. Given the fast-growing VCM in the country, there is an urgent need for policy measures to ensure transparency, regulation, and widespread awareness about VCM. These systems are essential for the efficient and transparent functioning of VCM in the country to ensure that the intended benefits reach farmers. At the same time, concerns regarding the calculation of credits under the GCP need to be addressed. Activists and experts have expressed doubt over the methodology used in the process, which may lead to further exploitation of natural resources instead of protecting and conserving them.

The future demand for carbon credits is expected to increase about 15 times by 2030, according to McKinsey and Company. To address the long wait time to receive carbon credits, GCP may provide initial incentives to encourage farmers' participation in VCM until they start receiving monetary benefits from carbon credits. It is essential to strengthen and equip the agricultural extension system in the country to create widespread awareness among farmers about the framework and processes of VCM, the direct and indirect benefits of regenerative agriculture, and its long-term positive impact on their cultivated lands and crop yields. *(Courtesy: The Wire)*

## How to avoid fast fashion's disastrous carbon footprint and build a sustainable wardrobe

By: **Marvse Côté-Hamel**

As sunny summer days return in the northern hemisphere, you may be looking to refresh your wardrobe. The allure of a whole "new you" is pervasive, and the foundation of many a successful marketing campaign.

Indeed, as the weather changes and we spend more time outdoors, you may need lighter summer clothing. However, before you run out to H&M, it is worth considering how you can sustainably add to your wardrobe while limiting its carbon footprint.

Sustainably adding to your wardrobe involves questioning your needs and taking your time shopping for each piece to understand how and where it was made – the antithesis of the fast fashion which has come to dominate global shopping trends.

These four tips can help you build a more sustainable wardrobe.

**Unsustainable clothing**  
Fast fashion refers to the rapid production and distribution of clothing to reflect the latest trends. Since the early 1990s, technological improvements, lower costs of production and streamlined supply chains have significantly shortened fashion cycles. Clothes today can be made and sold to consumers at a low price within just a few weeks of being designed.

Two seasons – autumn/winter and spring/summer – were common in the Western fashion industry just a few decades ago. Nowadays, some retailers offer tens of small seasons a year. This constant churning of trends pushes consumers to update their wardrobes frequently by encouraging disposability.

While easier on the wallet, the consequences of the fast fashion industry are myriad. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, the global fast fashion-dominated clothing and textile sector is responsible for 2%-8% of all global carbon emissions and 9% of annual microfibre pollution to oceans.

In addition, fast fashion uses about 215 trillion litres of water annually, the equivalent of 86 million Olympic-sized swimming pools. Moreover, workers are often exploited in inhuman conditions for little pay while shareholders pocket skyrocketing profits.

## "Close to 75% world's coral reefs bleached in last 17 months"

By: **Himanshu Nitnaware**

Almost three-fourths, or 72.1 per cent, of the world's coral reefs have experienced bleaching due to global heat stress, the highest recorded to date, NOAA said. Since January 2023, almost three-fourths of the world's coral reefs have been affected on a spatial scale and possibly more, said Derek Manzello, coordinator of NOAA Coral Reef Watch. In an interview with DTE, he said, "We still need the in-water coral data to really know what the impacts are. I'm slightly hesitant to say that this is the worst event on record because the last one lasted for three years, and for this one, we're in year two. It's my hope that if the heat stress goes away quickly, in the next several months, that maybe the impacts won't be as severe as they were over the three years."

The last severe coral bleaching, lasting from 2014 to 2017, impacted 65.7 per cent of the coral reefs. However, Manzello noted that some corals take a year or two before the actual impacts are seen. The world is experiencing the fourth global coral mass bleaching on record since 1998. Manzello highlighted that apart from the spatial scale, the magnitude of the current bleaching has also been severe. He mentioned that the north and southern Atlantic Ocean, stretching farther towards the Caribbean and Florida, saw record-setting heat stress in the summer of 2023. "It was two to three times greater than ever occurred before on record in the satellite record," he said.

Mass mortality events have been recorded among reef-building species such as Elkhorn and staghorn in Florida, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Brazil. A similar situation has been reported from the Great Barrier Reef, which has

In response to these criticisms, a growing number of fast-fashion retailers, such as H&M and Zara, are claiming to take steps towards reducing their environmental footprint. These outlets claim, for instance, that they have replaced synthetic fibres and polyester, made from oil and petroleum, with natural and recycled ones.

However, the ubiquity of greenwashing across the fashion industry makes it hard to tell if these claims have any weight.

**Sustainable fashion**  
In the face of such serious concerns, how can anyone hope to shop sustainably?

The first, and in many ways most crucial, step is to simply commit to slowing down your approach to fashion itself by embracing sustainable fashion and shopping ethically to help put the brakes on overproduction and overconsumption.

**1. Buy less, buy better:** While forgoing shopping or opting for hand-me-down and secondhand options is preferable to buying new from a sustainability standpoint, such avenues may not always be possible. Therefore, try and buy fewer items of a higher-quality from sustainably conscious brands. Being careful with where, and what, you purchase can help limit the negative environmental and societal impacts of our clothing purchases.

However, most fashion retailers do not control the entire supply chain and, thus, cannot guarantee the sustainability of their clothing. This means consumers must be diligent when shopping and make informed choices themselves. Recycling and clothing rental are valid options, however, it is worth noting that textile recycling can be expensive and not without environmental impact in terms of both materials and carbon footprint.

If you do opt for a clothing rental service, then avoid using online services that rely on delivery. Likewise, if you must purchase your clothes online, then avoid fast fashion sites like Temu in favour of buying directly from manufacturers you trust.

**2. Repair, reuse and recycle:** Prolonging clothing life by wearing pieces over several years and mending it when required, rather than throwing it away, can also be a great way to reduce the environmental footprint of your

wardrobe. Even paying for a pair of jeans to be professionally repaired will likely be considerably cheaper than buying new – saving you money in the long-run.

Patagonia, a California-based outdoor gear retailer, encourages consumers to "repair, reuse, and recycle" items. They practice what they preach, using materials, among others, made of recycled bottles since 1993.

The French government recently introduced a country-wide program to subsidize clothes and shoe repairs with the aim to reduce the amount of clothing thrown away. Check to see if your area has similar programs and petition for their creation if not.

**3. Prioritize natural fibres:** Opt for natural fibres such as organic cotton, linen, silk, hemp and bamboo. Ideally, clothing should be durable, locally manufactured and made from fair-trade, sustainably sourced natural materials.

While natural fibres are ideal for everyday clothing, synthetic high-performance materials are essential in athletic wear or water-resistant outdoor apparel that can withstand the elements. Recycled materials and other "circular" manufacturing processes should be sought out for these needs where possible.

**4. Choose simple, timeless pieces:** Clothing such as jeans, should be worn for as long as possible and be made from safe, recycled or renewable materials. The design of the garment should also be minimal. For instance, distressed jeans require the use of several toxic chemicals to give them their worn-out appearance. Forgo ever-changing trends – such as the short-lived Regencycore or Barbiecore – and add to your wardrobe slowly. Make sure that every item you buy is a good fit and aligns with your current lifestyle.

In today's world of high turnover fast fashion, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed or despondent at the relative lack of sustainable options. However, it is possible to add to your wardrobe sustainably by questioning your needs and taking your time shopping for each piece to understand how and where it was made. In time, you may even come to appreciate a smaller well-curated wardrobe of timeless pieces that you can wear for years, and not just a few weeks. *(Courtesy: Scroll.in)*

not experienced severe bleaching since 2022. In the Indian Ocean, coral reefs have been affected in Seychelles, Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania, Maldives, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Chagos Archipelago, among other places. He said scientists are documenting these events and mass mortality, and it could take another year to know the actual scale of the impact. He explained that corals respond to elevated temperatures and the duration of exposure to extreme heat stress. For instance, in Florida, the magnitude of heat stress was two to three times higher, and the bleaching started a month earlier than usual.

Manzello said that given the impacts of climate change resulting in frequent stops and bleaching events, it may become challenging for corals to recover in the long term. "The big issue is when you start having mass mortalities of corals, these reefs will start shifting to a net erosional state. And what that means is, they start losing all that architectural complexity that you see on a healthy reef with all those branching corals and everything. Basically, the reef becomes flattened over time, which is detrimental."

He added that reefs experiencing mass mortality require larvae and baby corals coming in from water columns from other parts of the ocean to regenerate. It may take about five to seven years for corals to show signs of recovery, and they are vulnerable to diseases during this phase. Full recovery can take about 15-20 years, depending on their location.

Corals are crucial to marine ecosystems as they are the rainforests of the sea. They provide habitat and food to 25 per cent of marine species globally. Mass mortality means these species lose their habitat and dependency on

the corals, he explained. Manzello noted that corals are also important for many species that have not been documented to date and are equally crucial for humans. He mentioned that some experimental cancer drugs are derived from compounds found in coral reefs.

"Hypothetically, there could be cures for all kinds of human diseases that we can source from coral reef organisms we don't even know exist. It's unfortunate that we're likely going to lose species that will never even be documented on coral reefs."

Regarding coral reef restoration exercises carried out across various parts of the globe, Manzello said the coral reef management science community's worst fear is that, given climate change, in the next 20-30 years, coral reefs may not recover due to high stress.

"We at NOAA, the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences, the University of Hawaii, the University of Miami, and others are engaged in the process of system evolution, where we are trying to find corals that have higher heat tolerance than others."

Manzello said the attempt is to identify those genes and successfully breed corals for the future that are more tolerant. "This has been successfully done in multiple locations now. There could be more outliers who have the natural ability to adapt and evolve as well."

However, he pointed out that the big issue is the scale of the problem. "For example, the Great Barrier Reef is bigger than the country of Italy. Any kind of restoration or intervention activities that take place are going to be very localised in scale." Manzello urged that it is climate change that needs to be addressed for a problem of this magnitude. *(Courtesy: Down To Earth)*

# Jaishankar meets UN chief, Belarusian and Tajikistan counterparts in Kazakhstan

## Israel makes largest West Bank land seizure in 3 decades

ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN), July 3: External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday met UN chief Antonio Guterres and discussed global hotspots and their larger implications apart from the reform of the UNSC.

Jaishankar, who is here to represent India at the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and carrying out various bilateral meetings on the sidelines, also met his Belarusian and Tajikistan counterparts Maksim Ryzhenkov and Sirojiddin Muhridin respectively. "Always a pleasure to meet UNSG @antonioguterres. Appreciate his insights on the state of the world. Discussed global hotspots and their larger implications," Jaishankar posted on the social media platform X.

He further said that he spoke about the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), preparations for the upcoming 'Summit of the Future' in September, and future prospects for



meaningful India-UN partnership.

Earlier, he had bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Tajikistan, Belarus and Russia. "Glad to meet Tajik FM Sirojiddin Muhridin today in Astana. Took stock of our bilateral partnership and cooperation on multilateral forums. Appreciate the exchange of views on the regional situation," Jaishankar posted on the so-

cial media platform X along with the photos of the meeting. "Pleased to meet FM Maksim Ryzhenkov of Belarus today. Welcome Belarus to the SCO as its newest member. Discussed our bilateral relationship and its future growth potential," the Minister posted earlier on X. The meeting of the two Foreign Ministers came days after the first-ever India-Belarus Consular Dialogue that was held on June 28 in Minsk. "The Indian delegation was led by Dr Aman Puri, JS (CPV), while the Belarusian delegation was led by Andrei Kozhan, Head of General Directorate for Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus," a statement from the MEA said on Tuesday. With nine member states -- India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan -- the SCO has emerged as an influential economic and security bloc and one of the largest trans-regional international organisations. (PTI)

JERUSALEM, July 3: An anti-settlement watchdog says Israel has approved the largest seizure of land in the occupied West Bank in over three decades.

The Israeli group Peace Now said Wednesday that authorities recently approved the appropriation of 12.7 sq km (nearly 5 sq miles) of land in the Jordan Valley. The group's data indicate it was the largest single appropriation approved since the 1993 Oslo accords at the start of the peace process.

The land appropriation was likely to worsen already soaring tensions linked to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Violence has surged in the West Bank since the start of the war, with Israel carrying out nearly-daily military raids that often spark deadly gunbattles with Palestinian militants.

The land seizure, which was approved late last month but only publicised on Wednesday, comes after the seizure of 8 sq km (roughly 3 square miles) of land in the West Bank in March and 2.6 sq km (1 square mile) in February.

That makes 2024 by far the peak year for Israeli

land seizure in the West Bank, Peace Now said.

The parcels are contiguous and located northeast of the West Bank city of Ramallah, where the Western-backed Palestinian Authority is headquartered. By declaring them state lands, the Israeli government has opened them up to being leased to Israelis and prohibited private Palestinian ownership.

The Palestinians view the expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank as the main barrier to any lasting peace agreement and most of the international community considers them illegal or illegitimate.

Israel's current government considers the West Bank to be the historical and religious heartland of the Jewish people and is opposed to Palestinian statehood.

Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three territories for a future state. Israel has built well over 100 settlements across the West Bank, some of which resemble fully developed suburbs or small towns. They are home to over 500,000 Jewish settlers who have Israeli citizenship. (PTI)

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (P.H.E.) HAMREN DIVISION, HAMREN WEST KARBI ANGLONG

No.PHEE/HRN/TB-23/2023-24/418

Dated 02/07/2024

#### EXTENSION NOTICE OF NIT NO. 01 of 2024-25

This is for general information to all concerned that due to incessant rain and flood situation in west Karbi Anglong, the last date for receipt of Tender for **NIT No.1 of 2024-25** for execution of different works as mentioned below in details under the jurisdiction of Hamren (PHE) Division invited vide memo No. **PHEE/HRN/TB-23/2023-24/367-77 Dated 18.06.2024** is hereby extended from **2:00 pm of 03/07/2024 to 2:00 pm of 08/07/2024** and accordingly the last date of issue of tender paper is extended upto **12:00 pm of 08/07/2024**. Other terms and condition will remain same.

The detail tender papers and other terms & conditions may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on all working days up to **12:00 PM of 08/07/2024** on payment of Rs.200.00 (Rupees two hundred) in cash or demand draft which should be pledge in favour of the undersigned.

The undersigned have reserved the right to accept or reject the tender as a whole or part without assigning any reasons thereof.

#### Name of works against NIT No. 01 of 2024-25.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Group No.	Estimated Cost (In Rupees)
1.	Construction of Longchor scheme Including springshed management in Nokterank, marlu langso under Hamren (PHE) Division	I	Rs. 9,00,000.00
2.	Construction of Longchor scheme springshed management at Linchika tiri pelang under Hamren (PHE) Division	II	Rs. 7,00,000.00
3.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Artubong long under Hamren (PHE) Division.	III	Rs. 6,00,000.00
4.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Rongbang Bapthali arong under Hamren (PHE) Division.	IV	Rs. 7,00,000.00
5.	Repairing of intake weir including supply, fitting and fixing of GI pipes at Borman Phangcho Longchor Scheme under Hamren (PHE) Division.	V	Rs. 10,00,000.00
6.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Phang hongtor under Hamren (PHE) Division.	VI	Rs. 7,00,000.00
7.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Ronghidi rongkhelan bey arong under Hamren (PHE) Division.	VII	Rs. 3,00,000.00
8.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Hamren Habe Rongkimi under Hamren (PHE) Division.	VIII	Rs. 8,00,000.00
9.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Langni bey arong under Hamren (PHE) Division.	IX	Rs. 3,00,000.00
10.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Rongireng under Hamren (PHE) Division.	X	Rs. 11,00,000.00
11.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Amselam teron under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XI	Rs. 8,00,000.00
12.	Construction of longchor scheme including springshed management at Phoogjangie Tokbi arong under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XII	Rs. 6,00,000.00
13.	Construction of Longchor scheme Including springshed management at Sai terang arong under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XIII	Rs. 11,00,000.00
14.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Phung apam under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XIV	Rs. 7,00,000.00
15.	Construction of Longchor scheme Including springshed management at Parbot under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XV	Rs. 3,00,000.00
16.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Rongchingdon under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XVI	Rs. 8,00,000.00
17.	Construction of Longchor scheme including Springshed management at Sompong hey arong under Hamren (PHE) Division	XVII	Rs. 6,00,000.00
18.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed matutgement at Bey arong Nokterank under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XVIII	Rs. 9,00,000.00
19.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Rong Arok under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XIX	Rs. 7,00,000.00
20.	Construction of Longchor scheme Including springshed management at Langpampi under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XX	Rs. 5,00,000.00
21.	Construction of Longchor scheme including springshed management at Klillimulong, Meghalaya Border under Hamren (PHE) Division.	XXI	Rs. 5,00,000.00
22.	Construction or water Reservoir at Rongpi Gaon Harlongive	XXII	Rs. 3,00,000.00
23.	Repairing & renovation pf Kheroni Sub-Division office building	XXIII	Rs. 10,00,000.00
24.	Repairing & color washing of Staff quarter presently occupied by Debojit Hoia at Hamren (PHE) colony.	XXIV	Rs. 2,80,000.00
25.	Repairing & color washing of Staff quarter presently occupied by Buda Das at Hamren (PHE) colony.	XXV	Rs. 1,50,000.00
26.	Repairing & color washing of Staff quarter at Hlamren (PHE) colony.	XXVI	Rs. 1,50,000.00
27.	Repairing & color washing of Staff quarter No. TVII- I3A at Hamren (PHE) colony	XXVII	Rs. 2,80,000.00
28.	Improvement of Approach road from Hamren NEC road to PHE colony by cleaning the jungle constructing masonry drain GSB.WBM-III and ICBP works	XXVIII	Rs. 11,50,000.00
29.	Split jati bamboo Zenana fencing upto 1800 mm high with well matured Malan bamboo at the staff quarters	XXIX	Rs. 4,00,000.00
30.	Installation of DIW by using Rotary rig including development of well and supply, fitting and fixing of SHP 3-phase submersible pumpset at Kuthepi PWSS.	XXX	Rs. 11,00,000.00
31.	Installation of new distribution transformer (25K VA) at Mugasung pwss.	XXXI	Rs. 2,70,000.00
32.	Construction of Officer Chamber of Microbiologist for Hamren DLL.	XXXII	Rs. 4,00,000.00
33.	Shifting and realignment of CWGM pipeline including supply of 150 mm din GI pipe and also fitting, fixing of GI specials in Augmentation of Donkamukant PWSS	XXXIII	Rs. 8,00,000.00
34.	Reparing of Rongkumi PWSS campus	XXXIV	Rs. 1,70,000.00
35.	Recharging of Rapid sand filter 16 sqm at Hamren PWSS	XXXV	Rs. 1,00,000.00

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Bidder should quote their rates distinctly both in figures & words in percentage basis as per above below the Schedule of rates / departmental approved rates / estimated rates
- The tender should furnish their full name and address distinctly in the tender papers.
- Earrest money in to deposited of 2% for General and 1% for ST, SC, OBC & MOBC.
- GSHN will be deducted as applicable.
- The work should be completed within the stipulated time. The work should be stand after signing necessary agreement in consultation with the AEE (PHE/ SO (PHE) i/c.
- Payment will be made subject to availability of fund released by the authority of KAAC. Diphu.
- No advance payment will be made for the work.
- Approximate value of the works may vary as necessary.
- Necessary Challans etc. against Forest products utilized in the work will have to be submitted with the Bill.
- Non tribal tenderer most posituse up to date KAAC trading license along with the tender documents.
- All other terms & contlitims will be followed as per APWDF-2 form of tender.
- The right of settlement allotment of an work to the tenderer is reserved by the Authority of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council. Diphu.

Sd/-

Executive Engineer (PHE)  
Hamren Division, Hamren

Memo No. PHEE/HRN/TB-23/2023-24

# Violence declining in Manipur, schools reopened in most parts: PM Modi

Centre working with state to restore normalcy, claims PM

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that violence in Manipur is continuously declining and educational institutes along with businesses have opened in most parts of the state.

He asserted that all efforts are being made to ensure a return of complete peace in the state.

Replying on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address to a joint sitting of Parliament, Modi said the Centre is working with the state government and others to restore normalcy in the state.

The Prime Minister noted that more than 500 people have been arrested and over 11,000 FIRs have been registered in Manipur.

Modi further said Manipur is facing flood situation as well, and the Centre has dispatched two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to the state.

Recalling his elaborate speech concerning Manipur in the previous session of Rajya Sabha, Modi reiterated that the "Government is continuously making efforts to bring



normalcy in Manipur".

"We must acknowledge the fact that the incidents of violence in Manipur are on a continuous downward trajectory," he said, adding that this meant the hope for peace is a definite possibility in Manipur.

Modi informed the Upper House that schools, colleges, offices

and other institutions are now functioning normally in Manipur.

The Prime Minister underlined that the central and state governments are in discussion with all the stakeholders to ensure peace and cordiality in Manipur.

Modi said the Union home minister himself led the efforts of peace

from the front by being in Manipur. He further added that even the senior officials were pressed into the task of finding solutions to the problems and ensuring peace.

Many opposition members, including Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, had criticised the prime minister for not visiting Manipur.

The Prime Minister also expressed concern about the difficult flood situation in Manipur currently. He informed that two companies of NDRF have been deployed for the flood relief work.

Modi stressed that the central government is closely working with the state government in relief efforts.

"We must all rise above politics and cooperate towards normalising the situation there. It is our responsibility," he said.

Modi asked the dissidents to stop provoking and further endangering the security situation of Manipur.

"I want to warn the elements trying to add fuel to fire in Manipur to stop such activities. A time will come when Manipur itself will reject such

people," he said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the social conflict in Manipur is deeply rooted with a long history, leading to the imposition of President's rule 10 times since Independence. He also mentioned about the five-year-long social conflict in Manipur from 1993 onwards.

Modi emphasised that there is a need to handle the situation with wisdom and patience. He invited all the like-minded people to help him in his efforts to ensure normalcy and peace in Manipur.

Prime Minister Modi said the Northeast is fast becoming the gateway of the nation's progress as he highlighted steps taken by the government for the development of this region.

He mentioned about the unprecedented growth of infrastructure in the Northeast.

Modi expressed hope for a long-lasting impact of the efforts to ensure permanent peace in the region as boundary disputes among the states are being addressed in a meaningful manner with consensus. (PTI)

## Flood situation remains grim in Arunachal, over 60,000 affected

**ITANAGAR, July 3:** The flood situation in Arunachal Pradesh remained unchanged on Wednesday, as major rivers continued to surge above the danger mark, officials said.

Four districts - Namsai, Lohit, Changlang, and East Siang - bore the brunt of severe flooding, while other districts witnessed landslides following incessant rains over the past few days, they added.

In Papum Pare district, a cloudburst in Sagalee triggered the release of a significant volume of water from the Pare Hydropower Project (PHEP).

The district administration has cautioned the public to stay away from waterbodies. Taba Gagang Tebw, Assistant General Manager (Technical) of PHEP, urged residents downstream to remain vigilant and avoid riverbanks for fishing in the coming days.

In Bordumsa, under Changlang district, the overflowing Burha Dehing river flooded Bijoypur, Makantong, and Wagun-III and -IV areas, causing damage to bridges, culverts, crops, and livestock.

A high flood alert has been issued for Namsai district and Wakro circle in Lohit district, where water levels have exceeded

danger levels, officials said. Sources from the state water resources department reported that 34 villages in Namsai and Wakro have been affected by floods so far.

According to official reports, five villages in Lohit district, 11 in the state capital, 16 in Changlang district, and four in West Kameng district have also been hit.

The ongoing rains and resultant floods and landslides have affected a total of 61,948 people across the state. Approximately 300 people have been evacuated to relief camps in the state capital, Changlang, and Namsai districts, officials said.

The calamity has also impacted 143.58 hectares of agriculture and horticulture land in the state.

Meanwhile, a major water supply line feeding Itanagar township has been disrupted between Zoo Road and Ganga Lake due to landslides, affecting water supply to areas such as C-sector, ESS, Gandhi Market, and others.

Restoration efforts are underway, with officials estimating it will take about a week to fully restore the supply.

In the interim, the PHE department has deployed water tankers to ensure adequate water supply wherever needed. (PTI)

## NDMA team surveys landslide affected areas in Sikkim's Mangan district

**GANGTOK, July 3:** A team of experts from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday conducted a comprehensive survey of the landslide-affected areas in Sikkim's Mangan district, officials said.

Accompanied by officials of the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA), the NDMA team led by Deputy Commandant Rajat Malhotra visited Mangshila, Naga, Sanklang and Phidang areas.

They identified several key factors, including heavy rainfall, steep slopes, challenging topography and unstable soil composition as the reasons behind the occurrence of landslides in the strategically located Mangan district in north Sikkim.

The team also recorded the significant damage to infrastructure, including roads, houses and agricultural land, besides displacement of the local people and the impact on the local economy and livelihood, they said.

The NDMA team also interacted with the locals and took note of their grievances and assured them of long-term solutions to their woes.

The team was briefed by Mangan District Magistrate Anant Jain about the overall situation arising out of the natural disaster in the region and suggested that the previous reports in this regard should be taken into account to understand the gravity of the situation.

The visiting NDMA officials said that a comprehensive report will be submitted to the higher authorities and the ministry concerned for formulation of a long-term plan to address the issue.

Torrential downpour in Mangan district last month had extensively damaged roads, leaving around 1,500 tourists stranded for a week, while six people were killed. (PTI)

## 13,661 govt jobs given in last six years: Tripura CM



**AGARTALA, July 3:** Tripura chief minister Manik Saha on Wednesday said that a total of 13,661 people have been appointed in various state government departments in the last six years.

The BJP has been ruling the northeastern state since 2018. The highest number of job vacancies of 12,289 posts were filled up in the Group C category to boost the lower level of the administration, while 541 appointments were also made in the Group A category, he said.

"Opposition parties are hitting the streets alleging there has been no appointment in the government sector even as a substantial number of posts are lying vacant for several years but in reality, 13,661 posts have been filled up in the last six years," the CM said while speaking at an appointment letter distribution programme here.

"These appointments are in addition to the contractual and outsourcing appointments in various departments. Besides, lakhs of women are engaged in self-employment programmes. The opposition's allegation of lack of fresh employment opportunities is not true," he said.

Attacking the previous Left Front government, he claimed there was a time when job aspirants needed to have good relations with the ruling party for appointment in the government sector.

"However, that convention has gone now. Transparency has been strictly maintained in the recruitment process under the BJP-led government. Those selected for government jobs have proven their skills during the course of interview," he said.

Saha claimed his government has been working to make Tripura a prosperous state by implementing various projects.

"The state has made good progress in the digitisation drive in the government sector, from the state secretariat to the gram panchayats. Now, we are able to discuss anything with the gram panchayat pradhan through the digital mode. This also ensures transparency in various works," he said.

Saha also distributed some appointment letters to selected candidates in various posts. A total of 473 candidates were given appointment letters. (PTI)

## Necessary steps to be taken for NRC implementation in Manipur



**IMPHAL, July 3:** Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikhey has said that necessary steps will be taken to ensure that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) is implemented in the state.

Uikhey told a delegation of the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) and United Naga Council (UNC) on Tuesday that the matter has been discussed with President Droupadi Murmu, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and home minister Amit Shah, according to a statement issued by Raj Bhavan.

"Governor assured the representatives that necessary steps will be taken to ensure the NRC be implemented in the state and it is just a matter of time. Governor said the matter has been discussed with the President of India, Union finance minister and home minister and the Center is aware about the situation in the state," it said.

"She also assured the delegation that all necessary action will be taken in best interest of the people of Manipur," it added.

The delegation, led by COCOMI coordinator Thokchom Somendro and UNC president NG Lorho, submitted a memorandum to the governor, advocating for the expedited implementation of the NRC with 1951 as the base year in the state, the statement said.

The delegation urged the governor that NRC should be implemented at the earliest so that a "scientific method of identification" may be applied to detect illegal immigrants and ensure that no further infiltration occurs in the state henceforth, it said.

"Random village recognition without verification must be stopped. They further mentioned that the abnormal increase of villages in specific districts should be examined and corrective measures must be taken up," the statement said. (PTI)

## Parts of Manipur flooded after heavy rain, schools closed till today

**IMPHAL, July 3:** Incessant rainfall has caused flooding at several places in Manipur's Imphal West and Imphal East districts, after two major rivers breached embankments, officials said on Wednesday.

The state government has declared a holiday for all government offices on Wednesday, while schools will remain closed till Thursday in view of the flood situation, they said.

The Imphal river breached its embankment at Singjamei Oinam Thingel in Imphal West, and the Kongba river at Kongba Irong and parts of Keirao in Imphal East, a senior official said.

The Iril river also overflowed at Sawbung and parts of Ksheteigao

in Imphal East.

"Huge volumes of river water entered residential localities... Over a 3-km stretch of the India-Myanmar road has also been flooded and more than 1,000 people were affected," he said.

Relief and rescue operations are underway for the affected people, he added.

Meanwhile, the body of a 25-year-old man, who fell into the Senapati river on Tuesday afternoon, was retrieved by a team of the Indian Red Cross Society with help from locals, the officials said.

Several parts of the northeastern state have been lashed by heavy rain in the last few days. (PTI)

## Tripura govt urges Centre to introduce inland waterway transport in state

**AGARTALA, July 3:** The Tripura government has urged the Centre to introduce inland waterway transport in the northeastern state.

In a letter to Union minister for ports, shipping and waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday, state transport minister Sushanta Chowdhury sought that linkage of Gomati River in Tripura with Meghna River system in Bangladesh be set up through the Sonamura-Daudkandi protocol route.

"Initiative may be taken for linking Sonamura-Daudkandi waterway to ports in Bangladesh such as Ashuganj, Mongla and Chittagong... further connecting with important Indian rivers such Ganga, Brahmaputra, Barak and

ultimately to connect Haldia port in West Bengal through sea routes and Sit-twe port of Kaladan project in Myanmar," he stated in the letter.

Experts have pointed out that the cost of transporting goods between India and Bangladesh will come down if the Sonamura-Daudkandi protocol route is operationalised.

Chowdhury also requested the Centre to approve the proposal to purchase six to ten passenger vessels to boost tourism and ease crossing of Gomati River by commuters.

He also requested Sonowal to approve the purchase of a cruise ship and six passenger vessels to boost tourism in Dumbur Lake in the northeastern state. (PTI)

# Kidney transplants to be done at GBP Hospital in Tripura

Tripura govt to set up 7 super-speciality departments at GBP Hospital and AGMC

**AGARTALA, July 3:** Asserting that his government was working to transform Tripura into a healthcare hub, Chief Minister Manik Saha has said that kidney transplants will soon be done at GBP Hospital and Agartala Government Medical College.

Speaking after the inauguration of a Public Health Centre (PHC) at Kancharbari in Unakoti district on Tuesday, Saha said his government has already begun the process of setting up seven super speciality departments at GBP Hospital and AGMC.

"There has been a persistent demand for kidney transplants at GBP Hospital. Our doctors and paramedical staff have already got training in renal replacement therapy from a Manipur-based hospital. Patients are also ready to undergo surgical procedures. We will start kidney transplants soon," he said.



"While six assistant professors have already been appointed, the process for appointing 18 professors and associate professors is on," he added.

At present, nephrology, urology, cardiothoracic and cardiovascular departments are functional at the hospital. (PTI)

23<sup>RD</sup> ASSAM POLICE BATTALION HEAD QUARTER SILONI  
KARBI ANGLONG, ASSAM.

**RE-TENDER NOTICE**

The earlier re-tender notice floated vide this office Memo No. BN.23RD/AP /Q/ 135/VOL-III/2023/ 1895-A. Dated. 20/06/2024 is hereby cancelled due to non-receipt of any tender from the firm/contractors on fixed date and time.

Sealed re-tender affixing non-refundable Court fee stamp [of Rs.25 (Rupees Eight and paise twenty five)] only are hereby invited from the registered firm/contractors for supply of the following Misc./Hardware/Machinery articles and Electrical goods (list enclosed) for the financial year 2024-2025 in accordance with the APPR-2017 (Assam Public Procurement Act., 2017) and APPR-2020 (Assam Public Procurement Rule, 2020) under the terms and conditions stated below. The tender will be received by the undersigned on or before 06/07/2024 up to 1400 hrs. and will be opened on the same day in presence of the tenderers or their authorized representatives.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

- Tender without court fee stamp will not be accepted.
- No tender will be received after the above schedule date and time.
- The rate should be furnished including others eligible charges against each item, but excluding of GST.
- The firm/ supplier will have to submit the following documents alongwith the tender, failing which no tender will be accepted.
  - Attested copy of firm registration certificate.
  - Attested copy of GST clearance certificate.
  - Attested copy of income tax clearance certificate.
  - Attested copy of PAN Card.
  - Attested copy of Trade License.
  - Attested copy of Voter-ID-card.
  - Attested copy of AP HQ Registration Certificate.
- Tenderers must deposit Rs. 5000.00 (Rupees Five Thousand) only as earnest money in the form of call deposit pledged in favour of the undersigned for each of the tender.
- The earnest money of unsuccessful tenders will be released after completion of tender process and earnest money of the successful tenders will be retained as security money. The security money will be forfeited to the govt. in case the selected supplier/firm fail to supply as per indent.
- The successful tenders will be have to sign agreement with the undersigned.
- The selected tenders will be required to deliver the articles in the office of the undersigned on receipt of the prop indent immediately. No delivery charge will be paid to the suppliers/Firms by the undersigned for delivery of the articles in the office.
- The selected tenders will be bound to supply the articles at his quoted rates throughout the year and no representation what's ever will be entertained for enhancement of rate subsequently.
- Only the best quality Articles/ materials will be accepted. The approach supplier will be requested to take back the rejected articles at his own costs.
- Payment of the bills will be made depending upon the availability of fund.
- Earnest money of the successful tenders who will refuse to supply after final selection by the undersigned will be forfeited to the Govt.
- The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest bid and reserves the right to reject without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-  
Commandant,  
23 rd, AP Battalion,  
HQ, Siloni, Karbi Anglong.

**Janasanyog/C/1024/24/4-Jul-24**

# PM Modi invokes Emergency to counter Cong's 'protecting Constitution' pitch

'Opposition 'unable to digest' the mandate given by 140 crore people to the NDA'

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday took the Congress to the cleaners over making the 2024 general elections about the protection of the Constitution, saying Indians voted on the plank only once when they threw out the Indira Gandhi government in 1977 after the Emergency.

Speaking in Rajya Sabha, he gave an account of the situation in strife-torn Manipur, promised action in the NEET paper leak case, and listed out achievements of his past two terms and priorities for the third.

A day after his spirited response to the debate in Lok Sabha on a motion to thank President Droupadi Murmu for her address to the joint sitting of Parliament, Modi launched an all-out attack on the Congress, saying it speaks with a forked tongue, opposing celebration of the Constitution Day while doing the "drama" of protecting the Constitution during polls.

This infuriated INDIA bloc parties, who shouted slogans and calling Modi a "liar".

Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge wanted to intervene but was not allowed, leading to the opposition MPs trying to drown out Modi's speech by raising slogans. Later

they staged a walkout. The sloganeering did not deter Modi who continued his speech and said the Congress was running away as it does not have the courage to hear the truth. Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar also condemned the walkout, calling it an insult to the Constitution.

In his nearly two-hour-long speech, Modi listed out his previous government's achievements: from raising minimum support price for crops to giving the poor access to the banking system and loans, and fuelling India's rise to become the fifth largest economy in the world.

With development and self-reliance as pivot, Modi said, India will "definitely" become the third largest economy in the world in his third term.

The prime minister, who started his first term in May 2014, said people have given mandate to the BJP-led NDA to make India a developed nation.

He said the Opposition is "unable to digest" the mandate given by 140 crore people to the NDA. "I understand your pain," he said, targeting the Opposition.

"They are not able to digest the mandate given by 140 crore people to us. Their all efforts failed yesterday. Today they did not have



courage to fight that and therefore they left the field. I am bound by my duty. I am not here to score in a debate. I am servant of the country. I am here to give a detailed account of our work and it is my duty," he said as the Opposition walked out of the House.

Referring to the Congress party's repeated claim during elections that BJP would change the Constitution, Modi said, "I want to remind them. Will you continue this fake narrative? Have you forgotten the 1977 elections when newspapers and radio were shut. There was no freedom of speech. People then voted on one issue - re-establishing the

Constitution and protection of Constitution."

There has not been more painful election than the one held in 1977 in the world, he said.

"The 1977 elections clearly shows how (the urge of) saving the Constitution was alive in the hearts of people. Are you misleading the people (now)? At that time, people threw (Indira Gandhi) out of power," he said.

He said that for his party, the Constitution is not just a compilation of articles but its spirit and words are very important too. The Constitution is like a lighthouse which shows his government direc-

tion, Modi said.

He also attacked Congress allies, saying they too were the victims of the excesses committed during the Emergency, but have now joined hands for political opportunism.

On the Manipur situation, Modi said violence in the state is continuously declining and educational institutions have reopened and businesses are operational in most part of the state.

"The government is making continuous efforts to bring normalcy in Manipur," he said, and informed over 11,000 FIRs have been filed in connection with violence in the state and more than 500 people have been arrested.

He stressed the central and state governments were talking to everyone there for opening the door to peace. The prime minister also spoke on the alleged irregularities in the conduct of competitive exams, and asserted tough action will be taken against those involved in paper leaks.

"We wanted there should be no politics on a sensitive issue like paper leak, but the opposition is used to it. I assure the youth of India that action is being taken to ensure that those who play with the future of youths are handed down strict punishment," he said. (PTI)

## MP budget focuses on infra, women and tribal welfare; no new tax

**BHOPAL, July 3:** Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday presented the state budget for 2024-25 with an outlay of ₹ 3.65 lakh crore, marking major allocations for the infrastructure development and welfare of women and tribals.

No new taxes were announced in the budget, which state Finance Minister Jagdish Devda termed as "sarvparashi" (all-inclusive).

Devda presented the budget in the state legislative assembly amid ruckus created by the opposition Congress over the issue of an alleged nursing college scam.

The CBI is probing the alleged scam pertaining to gross irregularities in the functioning of several nursing colleges that lacked infrastructure while some existed only on paper.

Talking to reporters after presenting the budget, Devda said the behaviour of the opposition members in the House was highly condemnable.

"The budget for the year 2024-25 has been made keeping in view the doubling of the budget size in next five years, increasing capital investment, expansion of roads, irrigation and electricity facilities, quality health facilities, attracting investment for employment generation and good governance," Devda said in his speech.



Amid continuous sloganeering by the opposition, the government presented an outlay of ₹ 3.65 lakh crore for the financial year 2024-25, which is 16 per cent more than that of the previous year.

The budget for the women and child development department has been substantially raised to ₹ 26,560 crore from 14,686 crore in the last fiscal.

Devda said there will be an estimated increase in capital expenditure by 15 per cent in 2024-25, compared to the budget estimate for 2023-24.

The capital outlay for 2024-25 is estimated at 4.25 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product.

The minister said the fiscal deficit in 2024-25 is estimated to be 4.11 per cent of the GSDP.

The allocation for infrastructure sector has been increased to ₹ 53,460 crore from ₹ 49,009 crore in the previous fiscal, while the allocation for the urban and rural development sec-

tors has been increased to ₹ 44,588 crore from ₹ 39,326 crore in the last FY.

The government has allocated ₹ 40,804 crore for the Scheduled Tribe sub-plan while the allocation for the Scheduled Caste sub-plan stands at ₹ 27,900 crore.

A budget allocation of ₹ 18,984 crore has been made for 'Ladli Behna Yojana', the BJP government's flagship scheme under which eligible women are provided ₹ 1,250 per month.

The budget also has a provision of ₹ 15,509 crore for the establishment of government primary schools and ₹ 9,258 crore for middle schools.

For the agriculture sector, the budget has been increased to ₹ 26,126 crore from ₹ 22,732 crore in the previous FY.

Devda said the budget size will be doubled in the next five years.

As the House assembled for the budget presentation, Leader of Opposition Umang Singh and other Congress members demanded the resignation of minister Vishvas Sarang, who had previously held charge of the medical education department, over the nursing college "scam".

The opposition members remained stationed in the well of the House, demanding resignation of Sarang, who is currently the sports

and youth affairs minister.

Before Devda could complete his speech, the opposition members led by Singh staged a walkout from the House and sat on a dharna in front of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the assembly complex.

Before the start of budget speech, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said appropriate time was given to the opposition for raising the issue on Tuesday and they should participate in the budget presentation as per the House tradition.

Legislative Affairs Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya intervened in the matter and said the assembly proceedings will run as per rules and traditions of the House and the opposition should raise their grievances through an appropriate procedure.

Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar also said the issue was already raised by the opposition on Tuesday after relaxation of the House rules.

However, the opposition members did not pay any heed to Vijayvargiya's suggestion and kept raising slogans in the well of the House.

After standing for a while before the speaker's podium, the opposition members squatted on the floor of the well.

The budget speech remained inaudible in the din even as the finance minister continued with the presentation. (PTI)

## Opposition walkout during PM's speech sets 'dangerous precedent': Dhankhar



**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday said the Opposition has set a "dangerous precedent antithetical to democratic values" by walking out during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply during discussion on the motion of thanks to President's address.

In his concluding remarks of the 264th session of Rajya Sabha before adjourning the House sine die, Dhankhar also termed the instance of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge walking into the well of the House during the session "a disgrace to parliamentary conduct and propriety".

Summing up the proceedings of the session, the chairman said while there was active participation from both the treasury as well as opposition benches, he was constrained to make some observations that "weighed heavily on my mind over the disruptions that marred the proceedings".

"Witnessing seasoned members conduct themselves irresponsibly was particularly disheartening. I wish to reiterate that disruption not only impedes the transaction of the listed business but also erodes the prestige of this esteemed institution," he asserted.

Pointing out the instance of Kharge entering the Well of the Rajya Sabha on Friday, Dhankhar said, "It was extremely painful to note that even the Leader of the Op-

position walked into the Well of the House and that was a disgrace to parliamentary conduct and propriety." He asked the members of the House to "exemplify their conduct so that this becomes a temple for deliberations, discussion, dialogue and debate".

"Their walkout today was extremely painful. It was a historic occasion. The government was in its third term with the prime minister heading it continually after six decades. They walked away from their constitutional ordainment and that has set a dangerous precedent antithetical to democratic values," Dhankhar said.

The 264th session of the Upper House began with President Droupadi Murmu's address to both houses of Parliament, which the chairman described as "an important tradition that set the tone and outlined the government's agenda".

The House also witnessed Modi introducing his new council of ministers after he was sworn-in as the prime minister for the third consecutive term.

"The Motion of Thanks to the President's address witnessed lively participation by 76 members for over 21 hours. The House also heard maiden speeches by 19 newly-elected members," Dhankhar said.

The Rajya Sabha chairman said while the prime minister gave a "spirited address while participating in the debate", the House lost 43 minutes due to forced adjournments but the shortfall was "made up by continuing discussion during lunch break and sitting beyond the scheduled time".

"Due to extended sitting, the total duration of business was finally extended by three hours beyond the scheduled time and, therefore, we scored more than 100 per cent in our productivity," he added. (PTI)

## Hemant Soren likely to return as Jharkhand CM following consensus among JMM-led alliance MLAs

**RANCHI, July 3:** JMM executive president Hemant Soren is likely to return as chief minister of Jharkhand for the third time following consensus among legislators of the party-led alliance in the state, sources said on Wednesday.

Leaders and MLAs of the alliance during a meeting at Chief Minister Champai Soren's residence here unanimously decided to elect Hemant Soren as JMM legislature party leader, they said.

"A decision was taken in the meeting to replace Champai Soren with Hemant Soren," a party source told PTI. If sworn in, he will be the 13th chief minister of Jharkhand, which was carved out of Bihar on November 15, 2000.

Congress's Jharkhand in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir and its state president Rajesh Thakur also attended the meeting, besides Hemant Soren's brother Basant and wife Kalpana.

Hemant Soren was released from jail on June 28 after nearly five months, as the high court granted him bail in a money laundering case

linked to an alleged land scam. He had resigned as the CM before his arrest on January 31.

Meanwhile, in a post on X, BJP MP Nishkant Dubey said: "The Champai Soren era is over in Jharkhand. In the family-oriented party, people outside the family have no political future. I wish the chief minister drew inspiration from Bhagwan Birsa Munda and stood up against the corrupt Hemant Soren ji."

The sources said Champai Soren, who had taken oath as the 12th chief minister of Jharkhand on February 2 after Hemant Soren's arrest, may resign from the post soon.

Against 12 berths, the Jharkhand Cabinet at present has a strength of 10.

Earlier, on February 16, a total of eight MLAs were inducted in the cabinet in addition to three on February 2, including Champai Soren. Of the 11, Rural Development and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Alamgir Alam tendered his resignation on June 11 after his arrest by the Enforcement Di-

rectorate in a money laundering case.

After the Lok Sabha elections, the strength of the JMM-led alliance in the state has reduced to 45 MLAs - JMM-27, Congress-17 and RJD-1.

Two JMM MLAs, Nalin Soren and Joba Majhi, are now parliamentarians, while Jama legislator Sita Soren resigned to contest the general elections on a BJP ticket. The JMM expelled two more legislators - Bishunpur MLA Chandra Linda and Boriyo MLA Lobin Hembrom - from the party, but they are yet to resign from the assembly.

Likewise, the BJP's strength in the assembly has reduced to 24, as two of its MLAs - Dhulu Mahto (Baghmara) and Manish Jaiswal (Hazriganj) - contested the Lok Sabha elections and are now MPs. The saffron party has expelled Mandu MLA Jaiprakash Bhai Patel after he joined the Congress to contest the polls. However, Patel is yet to resign from the assembly.

The current strength of the 81-member Jharkhand assembly is 76. (PTI)

## Zika cases in Maharashtra: Govt asks states to maintain vigil, focus on screening pregnant women

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** In view of some cases of Zika virus reported from parts of Maharashtra, the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday issued an advisory to all states highlighting the need for maintaining a constant vigil over the situation in the country.

States have been urged to focus on screening pregnant women for Zika virus and monitor the growth of foetus of expecting mothers who tested positive for the infection.

Besides the advisory by Director General of Health Services Dr Atul Goel, the ministry also asked health facilities to identify a nodal officer to monitor and act to keep the premises free of Aedes mosquito infestation.

Zika is an Aedes mosquito-borne viral disease like dengue and chikungunya. Though non-fatal, Zika is associated with microcephaly (a condition where the head is much smaller than ex-

pected) in babies born to affected pregnant women which makes it a cause of major concern.

As Zika is associated with microcephaly and neurological consequences in the foetus of the affected pregnant women, states have been advised to alert the clinicians for close monitoring, the advisory stated.

States are urged to instruct the health facilities in the affected areas or those catering to cases from affected areas to screen pregnant women for Zika, monitor the growth of the fetus of expecting mothers who have tested positive for the infection and act as per Central government guidelines.

The advisory has emphasised on the importance of strengthening entomological surveillance and intensifying vector control activities in residential areas, workplaces, schools, construction sites, institutions and health facilities.

The states have been urged to

## Jailed radical preacher Amritpal Singh likely to take oath as MP tomorrow

**CHANDIGARH/AMRITSAR, July 3:** Jailed radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh, who recently won the Khadoor Sahib parliamentary seat in Punjab, is likely to take oath as Lok Sabha member on Friday.

The chief of the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit, who is currently lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail along with nine associates under the National Security Act, has been granted a four-day parole to enable him to take oath, officials in Amritsar said. Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa, an Independent MP from Faridkot, said Amritpal Singh is likely to take oath as MP on July 5.

"I went to meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at his residence in Delhi on Wednesday. He said the oath will be administered on July 5," Khalsa told PTI over phone.

He also said that clearances and permissions from various quarters to enable Amritpal Singh to take oath have come.

"I understand that he will be flown in from the prison for taking oath, which will be in the private chamber of the Speaker," he said.

Khalsa said the sole purpose of his meeting the Speaker on Wednesday at the latter's Akbar Road residence in the national capital was regarding Amritpal Singh's oath taking issue.

About parole, Deputy Commissioner-cum District Magistrate, Amritsar, Ghamshyam Thori told PTI, "Amritpal Singh has been granted parole for up to four days or less beginning 5th July with certain conditions that has been communicated to Jail Superintendent Dibrugarh."

In response to another query about the parole, Thori said in a brief statement, "...granted by District Magistrate, Amritsar, after authorisation by the Home Department."

According to Rajdev Singh Khalsa, a lawyer of Amritpal Singh who meets him in jail, said he (Amritpal), through the Dibrugarh jail superintendent, had recently sent a letter to the Amritsar deputy commissioner, who in turn forwarded it to the state government for necessary clearance to allow the jailed preacher to take oath.

His temporary release was sought under Section 15 of the National Security Act.

Having fought the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as an independent, Amritpal Singh won from the Khadoor Sahib Lok Sabha seat after he defeated Congress candidate Kulbir Singh Zira. He won by a margin of 1,97,120 votes. Amritpal Singh, who styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was arrested in Moga's Rode village on April 23 last year following an over a month-long manhunt.

The Khalistan sympathizer had escaped the police net in Jalandhar district on March 18, switching vehicles and changing appearances.

The Punjab Police had launched the crackdown after the February 23 Ajnala incident last year in which Amritpal Singh and his supporters, some of them brandishing swords and guns, broke through barricades and barged into the police station on the outskirts of Amritsar city, and clashed with police for the release of Lovepreet Singh Toofan, one of his aides.

He and his associates were booked under several criminal cases related to spreading disharmony among classes, attempt to murder, attack on police personnel and creating obstructions in the lawful discharge of duty by public servants. (PTI)

## Bihar CM asks officials to complete land survey in state by July 2025



**PATNA, July 3:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday asked officials of the Revenue and Land Reforms department to expedite the ongoing work of survey and settlement of lands across the state and complete the task by July 2025.

Kumar said the state government started the special aerial survey and settlement of lands across the state in 2013.

"It's a well-known fact that more than 60 per cent of incidents of crime in the state occur mainly because of land-related disputes. Now with the

appointment of 9,888 more officials, the department must complete the special survey and settlement of lands across the state by July 2025," the CM said while speaking at a function to distribute appointment letters to newly recruited officials of the Revenue and Land Reforms department.

The CM distributed appointment letters to 20 newly recruited officers in Patna.

"Our main aim behind conducting special surveys and settlement is to reduce the cases of land disputes in the state. The government has taken several steps to reduce the cases of land disputes. The work of special survey and settlement is an important step in this direction," Kumar said.

Bihar Revenue and Land Reforms minister Dilip Kumar Jaiswal, Chief Secretary Brajesh Mehrotra, Additional Chief Secretary Dipak Kumar Singh and other senior officials were also present on the occasion. (PTI)



promote awareness through precautionary IEC messages in social media and other platforms to reduce panic among the community as Zika is like any other viral infection with most cases being asymptomatic and mild.

The Health Ministry said that though Zika is reported to be associated with microcephaly, no report of any such Zika-associated microcephaly has been reported in the country since 2016, the Health Ministry said.

For timely detection and control of any impending upsurge or outbreak of the infection, state au-

thorities have been advised to be vigilant and ensure the availability of appropriate logistics at all levels.

States were also urged to immediately report any detected case to the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC).

In 2024, till July 2, Pune has recorded six cases in Pune and one each in Kolhapur and Sangamner.

Zika testing facilities are available at the National Institute of Virology, Pune; the National Centre for Disease Control, Delhi, and a few selected virus research and diagnostic laboratories of the Indian Council of Medical Research.

The Directorate General of Health Services issued an advisory on April 26 while the director of the NCVBDC issued two advisories in February and April 2024, to forewarn states on Zika, dengue and chikungunya. (PTI)

# Delhi HC trashes appeal to debar PM Modi from LS, asks petitioner 'are you well?'

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** The Delhi High Court on Wednesday dismissed an appeal seeking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's debarment from the Lok Sabha over claims that he plotted a fatal air crash and indulged in anti-national activities, saying the allegations levelled in the plea are a figment of imagination and bereft of any material particulars.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Mamohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said they were in agreement with the single judge, who had earlier rejected the plea, that the petition and the appeal are replete with "unsubstantiated, disjointed, scandalous and preposterous allegations".

"Are you well?" an exasperated bench asked the appellant, adding he needs "medical help". The division bench directed the Station House Officer (SHO) of the police station concerned, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and the District Judge to keep a watch on him in view of the provisions of the Medical Health Act. The plea filed by captain Deepak Kumar alleged that Modi and his accomplices attempted to destabilise national security by planning a fatal crash of an Air India flight in 2018 which the petitioner commanded as a



pilot. He alleged that Modi "made a false oath or affirmation which otherwise must be made after the nomination paper has been submitted to RO (returning officer)". Arguing before the court, Kumar alleged that Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia indulged in anti-national activities and they were debarred from the Lok Sabha. While dismissing the plea, the bench said, "All the allegations in the present appeal are a figment of imagination of the appellant and bereft of any material particulars." During the hearing, the bench said, "Are you well? Your application is inchoate. It is going from one

end of the spectrum to another. It is going from they have taken false oaths to the three people you are naming be debarred from contesting elections to saying that the plane you were flying crashed to your daughter being missing to some former CJI trying to kill you. Are you well? No human being can understand the petition".

Responding, the petitioner said, "Yes I am well, Sir. The petition is very clear, Sir. Yes, my daughter is being kidnapped, there is a police report to this effect. I was also kidnapped and taken to a police station where they bargained with me that if I keep my mouth shut, they will hand over my child back to me."

The bench told him the plea makes no sense and the single judge was right in holding that it was replete with unsubstantiated allegations. While dictating the order, the division bench said it was of the opinion that the appellant, if not suffering from hallucination, is conjuncting facts and certainly needs medical help.

"But the appellant insists he is well and needs no medical help. However, keeping in view the provisions of the Mental Health Act, this court directs the SHO of the local police station, SDM and district judge to keep a watch on the appellant and if required, may exercise the discretion conferred on them, individually or collectively, under the said statute," it said.

The bench directed the registry to forward a copy of the order to the SHO of the area where the appellant resides. The plea alleged that the prime minister gave a "false" oath or affirmation before the returning officer to show he is eligible for contesting elections. It also alleged that Modi is accused of destruction of evidence by influencing and playing an active role in the sale of Air India Limited, which cancelled his pilot's licence and ratings by fabricating his service records. (PTI)

# BNS makes sexual offences gender neutral; new clauses for crime against children, women

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** The newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which replaces the British-era Indian Penal Code, has made sexual offences "gender neutral" for the victim and the perpetrator, according to official documents.

"Both boys and girls could get procured for sexual exploitation. The word 'minor girl' in section 366A of the IPC has been replaced with the word 'child' in clause 96 of the BNS to cover both male and female children below the age of 18 years and the offence of procurement has been made punishable," an explanatory note for the new criminal law said.

It said Section 366B in the IPC has been made gender neutral by replacing the phrase "importation of girl from a foreign country" with "importation of girl or boy from a foreign country".

It has been introduced as clause 141 in the BNS to cover the offence of importing into India any girl under the age of 21 years or any boy under the age of 18 years with the intent that such person will be forced or seduced to illicit sexual acts with another person, it said.

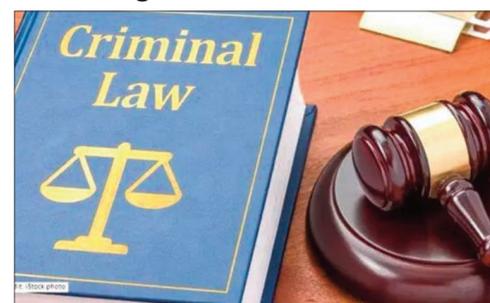
The BNS, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) came into effect on July 1. They replace the IPC, Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc) and the Evidence Act respectively.

The BNS also introduces a new chapter titled 'Offences Against Women and Children' to deal with sexual offences, according to the documents.

Similar offences under the IPC were part of the chapter on 'Offences Affecting the Human Body'. Additionally, the law (BNS) proposes changes to provisions relating to rape of women under the age of 18.

It renumbers existing rape provisions and harmonises the treatment of gang rape of minor women with the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), the documents said.

Further, it said, the BNS has introduced age-based classification



of rape victims from the IPC and POCSO and prescribes different sentencing options for the rape of minors under the ages of 18, 16 and 12.

The range of punishments for rape of minors of different ages is largely the same across the IPC, POCSO, and the BNS, according to the explanation.

It further said that Clause 64(1) punishes a rape accused with 10 years to life imprisonment whereas Clause 64(2) punishes aggravated forms of rape with 10 years to life imprisonment for the remainder of a person's natural life.

Additionally, Clause 70(2) of the BNS introduces a "new offence" of gang rape of a woman under 18 years of age.

This clause of the BNS merges sections 376DA and 376DB of the IPC and removes age-based qualifiers to consider gang rape of a minor woman as an aggravated offence. "This new offence proposes that gang rape of all minor women be punishable with death or with whole life sentence. The IPC currently provides this sentencing option only for the gang rape of a woman under 12 years under section 376DB," it said.

Another "significant change", as per the explanatory statement, is that the age of consent for a married woman under the definition of rape (Clause 63 BNS and section 375 IPC) has been increased from 15 to 18 years.

"Exception 2 to section 375 IPC provides that sexual intercourse

between a man and his own wife, wife not being under the age of 15, is not rape. The change in the age of consent seeks to give legislative effect to the Supreme Court's judgment in Independent Thought vs Union of India (2017), where the marital rape exception was read down to the extent that it allowed sexual intercourse between a man and his minor wife over the age of 15 years," it said.

Clause 63 of the BNS retains the marital rape exception. "There are some changes made for crimes perpetrated against children.

"The newly added Clause 95 of the BNS punishes a person who hires, employs or engages any person below the age of 18 years to commit an offence.

"The punishment will be the same as that provided for the offence committed by the child as if the offence has been committed by such person himself," it said.

The explanation to Clause 95 states that using a child for sexual exploitation or pornography is included within its meaning.

Additionally, Clause 137 of the BNS proposes to make changes to section 361 of the IPC.

Under the IPC, this section criminalised the kidnapping of girls below the age of 18 years along with the kidnapping of boys under 16 years. Clause 135 of BNS proposes to make kidnapping of all children below 18 years of age an offence, as per the official explanation. (PTI)

# ED questions TV actors in fraud forex trading app case

**MUMBAI, July 3:** The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday recorded the statement of two television actors here as part of a money laundering investigation linked to the operations of an "illegal" online forex trading platform that is alleged to have duped investors to the tune of ₹ 500 crore, official sources said. The sources said actors Krystal Dsouza and Karan Wahi were called for questioning in order to elicit information about some payments being made for promotions of the app named OctaFx which also had a website -- www.octafx.com.

The statements of the two have been recorded as the ED is investigating this case under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

Another TV actor and model Nia Sharma has also been summoned, the sources said. It is understood that the agency wants to understand

the operations of the platform and these actors may not be seen as wrongdoers or accused. The money laundering case of the ED stems from a Pune Police (Shivaji Nagar police station) FIR filed against the app and its promoters who are alleged to have duped numerous investors by luring them with high returns. The federal agency had earlier said that the app (OCTAFX) and its website were "not authorised" by RBI to deal in forex trading.

It had said that the platform was widely promoted on social networking sites and is following referral-based incentive models for acquiring users.

"It has emerged in the investigation that multiple accounts of different Indian banks were being shown to investors/users on OctaFx trading app/www.octafx.com for collecting funds in the guise of facilitating forex trading. "It was found that

OctaFx has manipulated trade activities and information shown on its platform ultimately resulting in net loss to the traders," the ED alleged in a statement after it conducted raids against the company and its promoters in April in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Delhi.

These accumulated funds, after "defrauding" these investors/users, were transferred to multiple e-wallet accounts or to bank accounts of dummy entities, it claimed. "This way, OctaFx India Pvt Ltd, OctaFx, and their entities have cheated investors in the guise of forex trading thereby earning a profit of more than ₹500 crore from the Indian region," the ED said. A portion of these funds, as per the agency, were "layered" through a web of complex transactions with the help of shell entities and remitted abroad to its related entities in the garb of bogus freight services, import of services, etc. (PTI)

# Odisha to plant mangroves in coastal village to mitigate cyclone impacts

**BERHAMPUR, July 3:** Odisha Forest department will plant mangroves in a coastal village in Ganjam district to mitigate cyclone impacts and curb soil erosion, officials said on Wednesday. The plantation drive will be taken up at Purunabandh, a village located near the mouth of river Rushikulya under Khallikote range of Berhampur forest division.

Approximately 15,000 mangrove saplings will be planted across a six-hectare area near the village under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-funded Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) project, Sunny Khokkar, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Berhampur and the project's nodal officer, said. The project, costing an estimated ₹ 33 crore, aims to enhance climate resilience across 33 panchayats in four coastal blocks - Chikiti, Rangelunda, Khallikote, and Ganjam, primarily benefiting the fishing community. Collaboration among various departments including agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, animal resources development, and watershed management is pivotal for its implementation, Khokkar emphasised. Experts have advocated for mangrove plantation in coastal Ganjam, identified as vulnerable to floods and cyclones. Mangrove forests serve as natural barriers during cyclonic events, they noted. Ganjam district faced severe impacts from cyclones Phailin in 2013 and Titli in 2018. The DFO outlined plans to conduct mangrove plantation on a trial basis in saline zones along the riverside near Purunabandh, ensuring it does not disrupt the mass nesting of Olive ridley turtles. These endangered turtles annually flock in large numbers near the village for mass nesting, although they did not arrive this year. A mangrove nursery has been set up near Purunabandh to facilitate the plantation. According to the Forest Survey of India-2021, Odisha's mangrove cover spans approximately 259 square kilometres, spanning across five coastal districts- Kendrapara, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, and Puri. (PTI)

# Army chief reviews security situation along LoC in J&K

**POONCH/JAMMU, July 3:** Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi reviewed the security situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, exhorting the troops to remain steadfast to meet all security challenges, officials said.

This was his first visit to the Jammu region after taking charge as the 30th chief of the Indian Army on June 30, and it assumes significance in view of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra and massive anti-terror operations underway, especially in hilly districts.

The Army chief reached Jammu in the morning and flew to the border district of Poonch to review the security situation and operational preparedness along the LoC, the officials said.

In a post on 'X', the additional directorate general of public information of the Army said Chief of Army Staff Dwivedi, along with Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Suchindra Kumar and General Officer Commanding of Jammu-based White Knight Corps Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva, visited forward locations of the 'XVI corps', as known as the White Knight Corps, to review the security situation along the LoC.

"He was briefed on the operational preparedness by the commanders on the ground. The COAS lauded all ranks for maintaining high standards of professionalism and exhorted them to remain steadfast to meet all current and emerging security challenges," the additional directorate general of public information said. In photos shared by the Army, Gen Dwivedi can be seen interacting with troops.

Earlier, the officials said, the Army chief chaired a meeting of field commanders on reaching Poonch before leaving for the forward areas. (PTI)

## LOST

I, Agni Debnath daughter of Abhijit Debnath and Susmita Terangpi resident of Joy Sing Hanse Village, Manja, Karbi Anglong lost my HSLC Marksheet year 2021. If anyone finds the lost document kindly contact : 6002903317.

## NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from Mohmmed Abdul Latif to Abdul Latif by swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam)

## NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from Mohammed Parul Ahmed to Parul Ahmed by swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam)

**GOVT. OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADDL. DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIES & COMMERCE**  
**DISTRICT INDUSTRIES & COMMERCE CENTRE::KARBI ANGLONG::**  
**DIPHU**  
[dicc.karbianglong@gmail.com](mailto:dicc.karbianglong@gmail.com)  
No. KADIC.1185/Mat./Pt./2024-25/04 Dtd. 01/07/2024

**SHORT TENDER**

Sealed quotation affixing non-refundable KAAC Receipt Rs.10.00 (Rupees ten) only are hereby invited from the interested local firm/supplier etc. for supply of materials for the year 2024-25 mentioned below. The quotation will be received by the undersigned up to 3 P.M. of 18th July, 2024 and will be opened on same day.

The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all quotation without assigning any reason thereof and doesn't bind himself to accept the lowest rates. The rates should be quoted inclusive of all taxes.

Group - A 2/60s mercerized (cotton) yarn (Red/Yellow/Green/White/Black) Rate (4.50 Kg Per Bundle)  
Group - B Rate of Foot Sewing (USHA) machine  
Group - C Rate of Embroidery (USHA) machine  
Group - D Rate of Knitting (SIMEX) Double reed machine  
Group - E Rate of HP All- in- One Computer 13th Generation, Intel Core i5 27" FHD 16 GB RAM, 1 TB SSD, White Keyboard & Mouse Combo ( Win 11 Home). (including Computer Table & UPS) Antivirus Kaspersky TS  
Group - F Rate of Printer (EPSON Model No. L3216)  
Group - G Rate of Visitor's Chair  
Group - H Rate of Godrej Almirah for office use.  
Group - I Rate of Cane & Bamboo tools kits.  
Group - J Rate of Door/Window Curtain with complete fitting & fixing.

Sd/-  
Addl. Director of Industries & Commerce  
District Industries & Commerce Centre  
Karbi Anglong, Diphu

Memo No. KADIC.1185/Mat./Pt./2024-25/ Dtd. 01/07/2024.

**GOVT. OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADDL. DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIES & COMMERCE**  
**DISTRICT INDUSTRIES & COMMERCE CENTRE :: KARBI ANGLONG :: DIPHU**  
[dicc.karbianglong@gmail.com](mailto:dicc.karbianglong@gmail.com)  
No. KADIC.1188/T-Pt/24-25/ Dtd. 01/07/2024

**SHORT TENDER**

Sealed Tenders affixing non-refundable KAAC cash receipt of Rs. 10.00 (Rupees ten) only are hereby invited from the interested persons having background of fulfilling the eligibility criteria for execution of the following works. The tender will be received by the undersigned up to 3.00 PM on 18/07/2024 and will be opened on same day at 3.00 PM in presence of interested tenderers or their authorized representatives. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in lakh)	Time of completion
1	Construction of water staging alongwith bowering & pipe line connection etc. (Hamren)	35.00	25 days
2	Construction of brick boundary wall at Dillaji, Diphu	20.00	30 days
3	Round Cuta fencing on the top of the wall at the office of the DI&CC, Complex Wall	8.00	20 days

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:**

- Earnest Money to be deposited @ 1% of total cost for ST/SC & @ 2% of total cost for General.
- Earnest Money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of Call Deposit/Bank Draft and should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The following legible documents should be attached with tender :
  - Up to date Professional Tax clearance certificate.
  - Photocopy of GST Registration.
  - Caste certificate for ST/SC tenderers and Trading License for Non ST/SC.
  - Legible photocopy of Personal Bank Passbook with A/C no. & IFSC.
  - Photocopy of PAN Card.
- Payment will be made subject to availability of fund.

Sd/-  
Addl. Director of Industries & Commerce  
District Industries & Commerce Centre  
Karbi Anglong, Diphu

Memo No. KADIC.1188/T-Pt/24-25/ Dtd. 01/07/2024

# 'Mirzapur', 'Masaan' made me want to tell stories that investigate humanity: Shweta Tripathi Sharma

**MUMBAI, July 3:** Actor Shweta Tripathi Sharma says she wanted to be a conventional big-screen heroine who would dress up in a yellow salwar-suit and run across a farm, until she became a part of acclaimed films such as "Masaan", "Haraamkhor", and popular web series "Mirzapur". Shweta said she found "joy" in doing projects that gave her an opportunity to investigate humanity through different characters and stories. Before she tasted nationwide fame as Gajagami 'Golu' Gupta, her "Mirzapur" character, the 38-year-old had also made a name for herself with acting credits in "Haraamkhor", "The Trip" and "Suite Life of Karan and

Kabir". "It is important to remember why you wanted to act... I wanted to become a heroine wearing a yellow suit and dupatta in a farm because I didn't know that this kind of world ("Mirzapur") exists, I was interested in acting. Thankfully, when 'Masaan' or 'Haraamkhor' happened to me, I realised that there's a joy in doing these kinds of films. "When I did those films, I realised this is what I want to do, I want to do cinema that tells stories where the perspective and heart (of a film) is emotions... Investigating humanity through characters and stories, and getting to know and understanding their pain, loss and happiness, but we don't talk

about all these emotions (often)," Shweta said in an interview here. The drama and getting into the skin of her character is a major draw for her. "You'll have to break stereotypes and it is not easy because people love to put actors in boxes as we don't want to imagine (different things). What's amazing is the casting of Rasika (Dugal) for the role of Beena or Divyendu as Munna, so this casting is a testament that as actors we should keep trying (to do different things). "As actors, you have to keep at it no matter what, there are days when you are frustrated and crying, and you feel, 'When will I get that work that I want to do'. But I realised that this

journey is long and projects will be coming in, what we have to do is keep trying (to do different things)", she added. Over the two seasons of the gangster drama, Shweta's Golu has undergone a major arc shift from an intelligent college student, who advocates non-violence, to a woman seeking to avenge the murder of her loved ones. "I haven't seen a character like this before and this has nothing to do with gender. But someone's graph is such because of the situation and events that have happened in her life. Her dreams are snatched away, she wanted to get into a different direction but now it is survival of the fittest. (PTI)

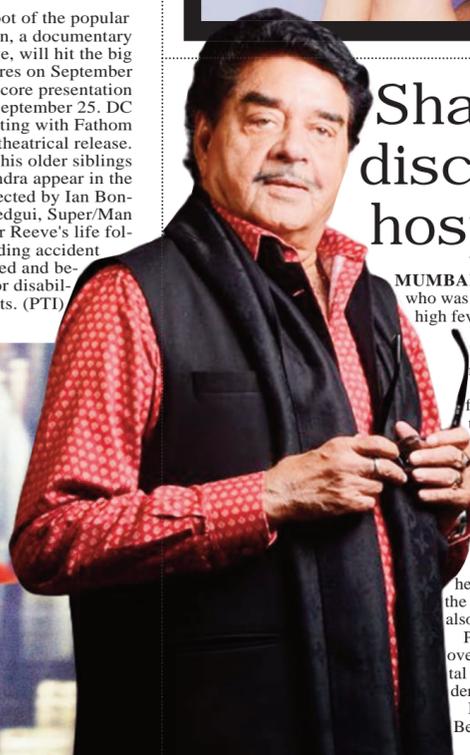
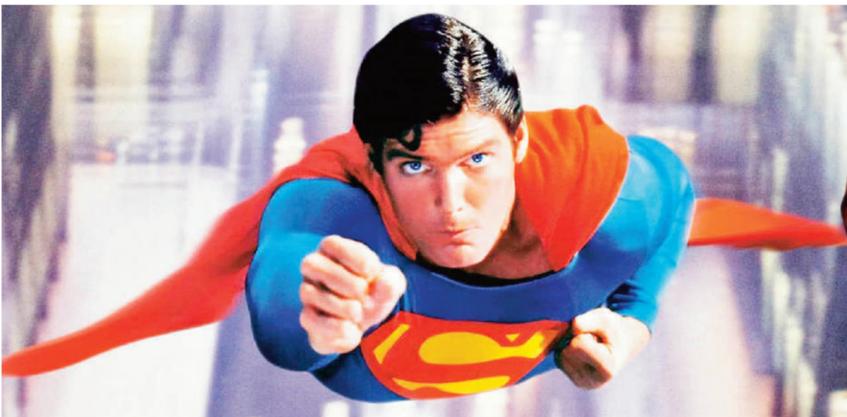


## CHRISTOPHER REEVE'S SON WILL REEVE TO MAKE A CAMEO IN JAMES GUNN'S 'SUPERMAN'

**LOS ANGELES, July 3:** Will Reeve, son of the late Superman star Christopher Reeve, is set to have a cameo in James Gunn's upcoming DC movie Superman. Christopher Reeve was the first Hollywood actor to portray the superhero, also known as Clark Kent, on the big screen. Gunn's Superman will be fronted by David Corenswet, with Rachel Brosnahan and Nicholas Hoult as Daily Planet star reporter Lois Lane and Lex Luthor, Superman's arch nemesis, respectively. Will Reeve, who is a journalist and an ABC News correspondent, will play a TV reporter in

the film, reported entertainment news outlet Variety. Christopher Reeve starred in and as 1978's Superman, which marked the beginning of the film franchise. It was followed by Superman II (1980), Superman III (1983), and Superman IV: The Quest for Peace (1987). Gunn is directing Superman's latest revival from his own script. He also serves as the co-head of Warner Bros-owned DC Studios along with Peter Safran. Superman, currently under production in Cleveland, Ohio, also features Anthony Carrigan, Isabela Merced and Nathan Fillion. The film is slated to release in July 2025.

Before Gunn's reboot of the popular character, Super/Man, a documentary on Christopher Reeve, will hit the big screen in select theatres on September 21 followed by an encore presentation on his birthday, September 25. DC Studios is collaborating with Fathom Events on the theatrical release. Will Reeve and his older siblings Matthew and Alexandra appear in the documentary. Directed by Ian Bonhote and Peter Ettedgui, Super/Man follows Christopher Reeve's life following his horse riding accident that left him paralysed and becoming an activist for disability rights. (PTI)



## Shatrughan Sinha discharged from hospital

**MUMBAI, July 3:** Veteran actor and TMC MP Shatrughan Sinha, who was admitted to a private hospital last week after developing high fever, is back home, said his son Luv Sinha on Wednesday.

The 77-year-old, popular for '70s and '80s films such as "Kalicharan", "Vishwanath", "Kaala Patthar", "Jaani Dushman" and "Kranti", was discharged on Tuesday, he added. Sinha also underwent a routine check-up at the medical facility. "My father has been home since yesterday and was there (at the hospital) for three days to recover from a high fever and get all his tests done," Luv told PTI in a WhatsApp message.

On Monday night, Sinha shared a series of pictures from his hospital room on X, saying he was away from the "controversy and confusion" created by a section of social media influencers and spent some time with family and friends as he recovered.

Some on social media had speculated about the actor's ill health just days after his daughter, actor Sonakshi Sinha tied the knot with her longtime partner Zaheer Iqbal. There were also rumours that Sinha had a minor surgery.

Previously, Luv thanked well-wishers for their concern over his father's health, saying he was admitted to the hospital after he developed a "strong fever" and not because he underwent any surgery.

Last month, Sinha was elected as the TMC MP from West Bengal's Asansol in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. (PTI)

## FILMMAKERS TRUST ME TO PULL OFF OUT-OF-THE-BOX ROLES, SAYS TABU

**MUMBAI, July 3:** Be it Vishal Bhardwaj, Sriram Raghavan or Neeraj Pandey, Tabu says filmmakers tend to approach her with out-of-the-box ideas, a pattern she finds difficult to decipher.

The actor, fresh from the success of heist comedy "Crew", will next be seen in director Pandey's musical romance drama "Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha".

The film reunites her with frequent collaborator Ajay Devgn.

"It's a pattern of filmmakers coming to me with absolutely out-of-the-box ideas, and by out-of-the-box, I don't mean one kind of a film. If a filmmaker has made a gritty suspense film or an emotional drama with me, the next filmmaker comes with a comic caper. Or, somebody will come with a cop's role, and then with (comedy) 'De De Pyaar De'."

"So, it's a mix of so many things that I can't explain why it happened but I'm sure there is some kind of trust factor that filmmakers feel that I can pull it off or that I'll be good at it," Tabu told PTI in an interview here.

The National Award winner said her approach to choosing projects is rooted in the equation she shares with directors Bhardwaj ("Maqbool", "Haider", "Khudiyaa") or Raghavan, with whom

she did "Andhadhun".

She admits whenever Bhardwaj approaches her with a project, her response is instinctively affirmative.

"My approach is very characteristic to me; I can't put it in a few words or dissect or explain it. There are many factors, like my body of work of the past so many years, there is a certain kind of equation that I've with directors like Vishal and Sriram," she added.

"Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha" reunites Tabu with Devgn, her longtime industry friend and co-star of films such as "Vijaypath", "Haqeeqat", "Thakshak", and "Drishyam" franchise.

The actor said her bond with Devgn is built on mutual respect.

"We have an unspoken understanding and appreciation for each other's talent. I really value what he brings with him to a film. His understanding of cinema, of technique is just amazing and I really respect that," she said. "Both of us are very conscious about what we are doing and it has happened that whatever has come to us, we've agreed and been on the same page. It's been great to find one co-actor in your profession that has occupied that space and that whole phenomena gave you that

platform to experience one person at different stages of your career," she added.

Asked about the box office success of her last film "Crew", Tabu said the movie worked because of several factors, including the story and a predominantly female cast.

Also starring Kareena Kapoor Khan and Kriti Sanon, the film earned Rs 150 crore globally at the box office.

"Rhea (Kapoor, producer) was always convinced that it would do very well. I was always convinced that it would do very well. There are many factors for a film to do well. But the fact that we did something like this and it worked in such a big way is definitely exciting."

"Crew", which released in March, revolves around three air hostesses working for a fictional airline called Kohinoor, which is on the verge of bankruptcy.

How they seek to turn around their future after they find a dead crew member smuggling gold biscuits forms the core of the story. Since its release, many people who have worked as cabin crew have come up to the actor and said "we loved the film", the actor said.

"It's a happy, fun film that did well so it feels different. It's a

different kind of chemistry and rhythm to this film. It's not that we are narrating the story of one person, the format was different. I'm happy that it worked and I'm happy that it could make people laugh. So, it's great."

"You want to not disappoint people, or at least give them an experience that they will enjoy, and by enjoy I don't just mean laugh and have fun, which is also great but to be able to do movies that give people a different experience than they expected," she added.

"Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha" revolves around Krishna (Devgn) and Vasudha (Tabu), a couple who separates when Krishna is jailed for murder.

They cross paths after 20 years when he is released from prison. Shantanu Maheshwari and Saiee Manjrekar play the younger Krishna and Vasudha, respectively.

The film is produced by Narendra Hirawat, Kumar Mangat Pathak (Panorama Studios), Sangeeta Ahir and Shital Bhatia.

It was scheduled to be released on Friday, but the makers postponed its premiere on the "request of exhibitors and distribution fraternity".

The new release date will be announced soon. (PTI)



# Satwik-Chirag eyeing 'great things' at Paris Olympics after cracking service variation challenge

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Star Indian men's doubles pair of Satwik-sairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has "cracked" the service variation challenge and is focussing on "comprehensive physical and mental conditioning" to ensure peak performance at the upcoming Paris Olympics.

Satwik, 23, and Chirag, 26, have been troubled by the wide variations of tumble, spin and wide serves that their opponents, mainly the Koreans and Indonesians, have employed against them during the recent tournaments. Chirag said they have addressed the "new challenge" and remains confident of negotiating it during the Paris Games. "Regarding serve variations, they are a new challenge, but placing complete importance on

that wouldn't be right," Chirag told PTI in an email interview.

"There was a time when we struggled with receiving them, but we eventually cracked it. We know what to do, we've been practicing, and we're confident we'll come out strong at the Olympics to counter that." The current world number 3 pair had narrowly missed out of a quarterfinal berth in the last Olympics when despite winning two of their three group matches, the duo couldn't qualify for the knockout stage as it was settled on the basis of the number of games won and lost.

"The experience of playing in the Tokyo Olympics has been invaluable in our preparation for the Paris Games. Competing at such a high level has taught us crucial les-

sons about handling pressure, staying focused, and adapting to different playing conditions," Satwik said.

Chirag added: "The intensity and atmosphere of the Olympics are unparalleled, and having been through it once, we now have a better understanding of what to expect and the initial jitters of being at the Olympics for the first time are also not going to be there.

"Additionally, winning the French Open has naturally given us a significant confidence boost." In the last couple of years, the duo worked its way to become the world number one after a series of sensational performance, including winning the Commonwealth Games gold medal, a bronze at the World Championships in 2022,

and gold in the Hangzhou Asian Games. They also played a crucial role in India's epic Thomas Cup win in 2022. Satwik and Chirag have won the French Open and Thailand Open this year after reaching the finals at the Malaysian Super 750 and India Super 750.

"As the Olympics draw closer, our approach is becoming more focussed and strategic. We're fine-tuning every aspect of our game to ensure peak performance when we step onto the court in Paris," Satwik said.

"This includes developing specific game plans for our potential opponents by studying their strengths and weaknesses in detail, concentrating on targeted drills, and enhancing our on-court posi-

tions and shot selections. "We are taking a holistic approach to our preparations. We're in a good rhythm and are eagerly looking forward to be back at the Olympics. Comprehensive physical and mental conditioning is at the heart of our preparation."

The duo has been troubled sometimes by the left-right combinations such as Korean Seo Seung-jae and Kang Min-hyuk and Danish Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen but Chirag feels they don't have any problem against any particular pair. "I can't really pinpoint a specific pair that we find particularly tricky to play against. On any given day, if a pair plays well, they can pose a challenge. However, I believe that if we

play at our best, we can beat anyone," he said. "So, there's no specific pair or lefty-righty combination that particularly affects us. That said, all our competitors in the Olympics will be quite good..."

On expectations and handling pressure at the big-ticket event, Satwik said: "We understand Olympics is the greatest, biggest tournament there is and naturally there are hopes and wishes from each Olympic-bound athlete.

"We don't want to think so much about the pressures, we're looking to go out there, enjoy the atmosphere, have a great time on court and take it one game at a time and see how it goes. We do not want to put ourselves under any pressure from the word go.

"We're used to the expectations and pressures that come along in our game... we're primarily looking to go out there and do great things on the court and have fun while doing that."

Chirag and Satwik are also mentors of PNB MetLife Junior Badminton Championship (JBC), which will begin on August 1 in the national capital.

"JBC offers a fantastic opportunity to nurture budding badminton talent in India. JBC also offers players access to mentoring, coaching, and training from veterans in the sport. Badminton has significantly shaped my life, and I want to share its benefits with the next generation, helping them achieve their dreams," Chirag said. (PTI)

## Turkey beat Austria 2-1, sets up a Euro 2024 quarterfinal against Netherlands

**LEIPZIG (GERMANY), July 3:** A first-minute goal and a stellar save in the final seconds helped send Turkey into the quarterfinals of Euro 2024.

Merih Demiral scored twice, including the opener after just 57 seconds, and goalkeeper Mert Gunok pulled off one of the saves of tournament deep into injury time as Turkey beat Austria 2-1 in the round of 16 on Tuesday.

"Our team spirit showed until the last minute," Turkey coach Vincenzo Montella said.

Gunok showed great reflexes and agility, diving to his right to palm away a close-range header from Christoph Baumgartner four minutes into added time.

That save set up a quarterfinal on Saturday against the Netherlands, a team Montella said "fight like lions." "We will gather our mental and physical strength and keep following our path," he said.

Austria had 21 attempts compared with Turkey's six, regularly testing Gunok.

"I'm sure that if Baumi had scored to take the game to extra time, we would have gone on to win the match," Austria coach Ralf Rangnick said. "The only thing we could be accused of is that we didn't score enough goals from the chances we had, and that we didn't work well twice for set pieces." The game got off to a ferocious start. Both teams had chances inside the first 30 seconds before Demiral scored when the



Austrian defense failed to deal with a corner.

Baumgartner's attempted clearance rebounded back off teammate Stefan Posch to goalkeeper Patrick Pentz, who scooped it off the line only for Demiral to pounce on the rebound and score.

It was the second-fastest goal ever at the Euros — Albania scored after 23 seconds against Italy in the group stage.

Demiral's goal set off wild celebrations among the majority of fans in the stadium — and plenty

outside it, too. Germany is home to some 3 million Turks or people with Turkish roots, making them the country's largest ethnic minority, and the team has been enjoying fevered support at Euro 2024. Austria almost responded but Demiral somehow did enough to keep Baumgartner from scoring on the line. The Austrians emerged with renewed vigor after the break, but a corner gave Turkey respite. A shower of beer cups failed to put off Arda Guler as he delivered a perfect cross for

Demiral to head in his second goal in the 59th. Austria's corner-taker, Marcel Sabitzer, was also pelted with beer cups at the other end and at one point went down on the ground clutching his head to indicate he had been hit. But was quickly back on his feet.

Stefan Posch headed on Sabitzer's delivery for the unmarked Gregoritsch to volley home at the back post. Neither team could add any more despite a flurry of chances in the rain, with Gunok coming up with his biggest save

in the final seconds.

Both teams were without regular captains. Turkey's Hakan Calhanoglu was suspended and Austria's David Alaba, arguably the country's best player, is still recovering from a knee injury that kept him from playing in the tournament. Alaba was there to support the team as it surprisingly topped a group with France and the Netherlands, and he shared a warm embrace with Guler, his Real Madrid teammate, before kickoff. (AP)

## Colombia draw Brazil 1-1, to play Panama in quarterfinals

**SANTA CLARA (US), July 3:** Colombia coach Néstor Lorenzo challenged his team to stay sharp and energized through every physical and emotional moment against mighty Brazil, all the way through two scorching-hot halves of soccer and nearly another 10 minutes of stoppage time.

"This was a match that we all wanted to have our strong moments of play, and I think we have taken another step forward," Lorenzo said. "With Brazil, you cannot be careless not even one second."

Daniel Muñoz scored the tying goal in the first-half stoppage time, and Colombia won its first-round group at the Copa America with a 1-1 draw against Brazil on Tuesday night that extended its unbeaten streak to 26 games.

Colombia goalkeeper Camilo Vargas saved Brazil's final chance on a shot by Andreas Pereira in the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time.

Colombia plays Panama in a quarterfinal on Saturday in Glendale, Arizona, while Brazil fell into what appears to

be a more difficult game against Uruguay later that night at Las Vegas.

"It will be a difficult game against Uruguay, but they also know they will have a difficult game against Brazil," Brazil coach Dorival Júnior said.

Los Cafeteros, who finished with seven points to Brazil's five, had back-to-back scoring chances in the 84th minute but couldn't capitalize.

Brazil went ahead in the 12th minute when Raphinha launched a left-footed free kick into the upper right corner of the net just above the outstretched hand of Vargas.

The Brazilian winger jumped and pumped his fist as the seasoned Seleção struck first at Levi's Stadium, home of the NFL's San Francisco 49ers.

Players put on an entertaining show in the Group D finale, with Brazil's Bruno Guimarães calling Colombia "a stone in our shoe" in the lead-up to Tuesday.

"There's a sense of satisfaction after playing such a strong opponent," Lorenzo said. "Now we need to think about Panama." (AP)

## Netherlands beat Romania 3-0 to reach first Euros quarterfinal in 16 years

**MUNICH, July 3:** The Netherlands could be peaking at just the right time.

The Dutch team reached its first European Championship quarterfinal in 16 years with a 3-0 win over Romania on Tuesday after its best performance by far at Euro 2024. Cody Gakpo broke the deadlock in the 20th minute and substitute Donyell Malen scored two late goals to send the Dutch to their first quarterfinal in the tournament since 2008.

"I think the whole performance today was outstanding and that's what we need to have

a chance to continue in this tournament," coach Ronald Koeman said. "This is the level. If you go down in that level, then we don't reach the final." The Netherlands had missed a plethora of earlier opportunities to add to the lead and captain Virgil van Dijk also hit the woodwork. It was nevertheless a much-improved display compared to its disappointing group stage performance, which ended in a 3-2 loss to Austria. Koeman's side could get a quick rematch in Berlin on Saturday if Austria beats Turkey in the final round of 16 match later Tuesday.

"Sometimes it's difficult to explain why you play bad," Koeman said. "Even today, the start was difficult. They were really aggressive. But finally we found our ball position. "What we created was good football ... Maybe one critical point was that it took too long to score the second one. ... It's difficult to explain why one time you play badly and the next time you are really sharp from the beginning." It was nevertheless a match to remember for Romania and its loud mass of yellow-clad fans, who have lit up the tournament. It was only the second time Roma-

nia had qualified for the knockout stage at a European Championship and it did so as group winner.

The bouncing yellow wall at one end of the stadium gave its team such a magnificent send-off — singing and applauding the players long after the final whistle — that it was almost as though Romania had won the game. "Today we ended a great story, which we started two years ago. We continued that story here in Germany along with the fans of the national team," Romania coach Edward Iordanescu said. (AP)

would play in the National Inter-State Championships (June 27-30) and it's going to be held in Panchkula in Haryana but it was very near to the Paris Olympics," Chopra had said.

"Since I was playing in Doha which is near to India. Moreover, there is Paris Diamond League (on July 7) between National Inter-State and Olympics. So, we decided to compete here (Federation Cup)," Chopra had said.

"Further competition schedule will be decided later according to situation and my body. Otherwise, I will go to Paris from there (after competing in Turkey)."

Chopra, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian to win a track and field medal at the Tokyo Olympics, had won the gold at the Paavo Nurmi Games last month.

Following this, he had opened up about his adductor niggle which has affected his season, saying he will consult "different doctors" after the Paris Olympics. (PTI)



**SAARBRUCKEN, (GERMANY), July 3:** Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Wednesday clarified that Sunday's Paris Diamond League was never a part of his competition calendar this year.

The statement came after a media report stated that Chopra pulled out of the event due to the adductor niggle that has been troubling him for the past couple of months.

The 26-year-old took to 'X' to say that there was no question of a withdrawal when he had not even entered his name.

"Hello, everyone. Just to clarify: the #ParisDL wasn't part of my competition calendar this season, so I haven't 'withdrawn' from it. I'm focusing on getting ready for the Olympic Games.

"Thanks for your understanding and support, and wishing all the athletes competing all the best! #RoadToOlympics," Chopra posted.

He was exempted from last

week's National Inter-State Championships, which was a mandatory event for all Indian athletes, by the Athletics Federation Of India.

The AFI said the relaxation was given to him due to the short turnaround time between the domestic event and the Diamond League on July 7.

"We have made it very clear that every athlete will compete in India at the Inter-State Championships," AFI president Adille Sumariwalla had said.

"But Paris Diamond League is clashing with the Inter-State Championships and we feel that Paris Diamond League will be very important for him (Neeraj) before the Olympic Games therefore he is the only guy who has been given special permission to participate in the Federation Cup," he added.

However, Chopra had indicated last month that his schedule will be decided according to the state of his body.

"We had a discussion that I

## U13 football tourney kicks off in Kokrajhar

**HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, July 3:** The 4th edition of the 14th U-13 Inter-Unit Football Tournament, organised by the Ramfalbil Anchalik Committee of the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), kicked off on Wednesday at the Kumguri playground near Serfanguri in Kokrajhar district.

In the inaugural match, Belguri faced off against the Athabari unit, providing sporting amusement for the sports lovers in attendance. Kripesh Daimary, president of the Kokrajhar district committee of ABSU, graced the occasion as the chief guest and inaugurated the football tournament.

The sports event is organised annually under the mission of Bodofa's sustainable

development in the fields of sports and social welfare amongst the citizens in the region. Daimary emphasised that the event aims to hunt for sporting talents across the region and has been receiving huge applause from sports lovers. He mentioned that the tournament is organized every year due to its growing popularity and support.

He also highlighted that the students are rendering humanitarian welfare services towards the upliftment of the Bodo community as well as indigenous tribal peoples in the state.

Leaders from various social organizations, including ABSU, Tribal Sangha, and Bodo Sahitya Sabha, were present at the event.

## All Assam Inter District Wushu C'ship 2024 begins

**HT Bureau GUWAHATI, July 3:** The opening ceremony of the XXI Junior and Youth (Boys and Girls) All Assam Inter District Wushu Championship 2024 was held on Wednesday at the DTRP Indoor Stadium, Nehru Stadium, Guwahati.

The event was graced by the august presence of chief guest Pradip Timung, ACS, Director of Sports and Youth Welfare, Assam. Other notable attendees included Dr. Bishnu Ram Nunisa, Vice President of AOA, Muralidhar Choudhury, President of



the Wushu Association of Assam, Alok Tripathi, Honorary Secretary of the Assam Kabaddi Association, and Ranjit Boro, Secretary of the Wushu Association of Assam. Various dignitaries, referees, players, and media personnel were also present at the opening ceremony.

# Gill-led new-look Team India lands in Harare for T20Is against Zimbabwe

**HARARE, July 3:** A young Indian cricket team led by skipper Shubman Gill and with National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman as coach arrived here to play a five-match T20 International series against Zimbabwe beginning July 6.

The team was seen exiting the airport with their luggage in a video posted by Zimbabwe Cricket on X. The entire squad had departed from Mumbai on Tuesday, while Gill, who was a travelling reserve with the T20 World Cup side in the Americas, arrived here from New York after a break.

"We welcome T20 World Cup champions India," wrote ZC on Tuesday night in a post on 'X'.

Young top-order batter Riyan Parag, who will be making his India debut in the series, said in a video posted by BCCI that he had a childhood dream of travelling like this (with the national side).

"The feel of donning India jersey, travelling with the side is dif-



ferent. Coming from Assam, I had this dream of playing for India. Really happy. There will be a special connection for Zimbabwe when I play my first match.

"That will be a special moment for that ground and myself, which would be very sacred," he said.

"After misplacing my passport, to phones, we are finally here after a 20 hour journey. Now, really looking forward to the tour," Parag

added. Another newcomer, medium pacer Tushar Deshpande, said the feeling of being in the national setup is "slowly sinking in and it's like a dream come true for me. Playing for the country is a very special thing."

"Travelling with the team is the most important and getting to know them, knowing the atmosphere of the team and most important for me is the fun we have

during travel," added Deshpande.

Big-hitting left-hander Abhishek Sharma said from the day he started playing cricket, he had only one dream, which was to play for the country.

"I know if I continue working hard, I will get an opportunity but I didn't know I will get it outside India in Zimbabwe.

"I got a call from (skipper) Shubman after my name was announced in the squad. Everyone has been giving me so much of affection. For me it was a very big thing," added Sharma.

"When I reached home after my name had been announced, I saw my family members giving interviews. So, I think, that was one moment I will always remember," he said.

India will play their opening match against the Sikandar Raza-captained Zimbabwe on July 6 at the Harere Cricket Ground. The remaining four games will also be played at the same venue. The series

will conclude on July 14.

T20 World Cup travelling reserves Sanju Samson and Yashasvi Jaiswal along with all-rounder Shivam Dube were slated to join the Zimbabwe-bound group but are stranded in Barbados due to hurricane Beryl.

Sai Sudharsan, Jitesh Sharma and Harshit Rana were on Tuesday named as replacements for trio in the Indian squad for the first two matches of the series.

Samson, Jaiswal and Dube along with the other senior players will be arriving in India aboard a charter flight on Thursday morning. The players will later be felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

Pacer Khaleel Ahmed and batter Rinku Singh, travelling reserves for the T20 World Cup, are also currently in Barbados.

The BCCI has not named replacements for the duo even though they are in the squad for Zimbabwe series. (PTI)

# Hardik Pandya becomes first Indian to occupy top spot in ICC T20I all-rounders' rankings



**DUBAI, July 3:** Hardik Pandya rose two places to become the first Indian to occupy the number one spot in the ICC's T20I all-rounders' rankings on Wednesday, as the country's cricketers improved their standings following their title-winning performance in the just-concluded World Cup.

The 30-year-old, who handed telling blows to South Africa in the T20 World Cup final on July 29 by dismissing half-centurion Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller in his 3/20 effort, climbed up two places to go level with Sri Lankan star Wanindu Hasaranga as the top-ranked men's T20I all-rounder.

Following a topsy-turvy IPL where he was the target of fans' boos as Mumbai Indians' new captain, Pandya turned it around in style in the T20 World Cup in the USA and the Caribbean.

Pandya made impactful cameos down the order with the bat and made breakthroughs with the ball when the team needed him to. He finished with 144 runs at a batting strike-rate of over 150 and also took 11 wickets in the tournament.

His best performance came in the final when he triggered a dramatic South African collapse after the Proteas needed 30 runs from 30 balls with Klaasen in full flow.

Pandya gave the decisive blow by dismissing Klaasen in the first ball of the 17th over.

He went on to bowl the tense final over and defended 16 runs to help India pip South Africa by seven runs and win their second T20 World Cup title.

India's star fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who won the Player of the Tournament award at the T20 World Cup for his 15 wickets, moved up 12 spots to be just outside the top-10. He's at 12th, his highest position since the end of 2020.

There were other movements in the top 10 of the T20I all-rounders' rankings, with Marcus Stoinis, Sikandar Raza, Shakib Al Hasan and Liam Livingstone rising by one spot each.

Mohammad Nabi moved down four spots to go out of the top five.

In the T20I bowling rankings, South Africa's Anrich Nortje rose seven places to a career-best second spot to be just behind top-ranked Adil Rashid with 675 rating points. (PTI)

# T20 World Cup winning Indian team to take part in open bus road show, felicitation at Wankhede

**MUMBAI, July 3:** The T20 World Cup-winning Indian cricket team will take part in an open bus road show followed by a felicitation ceremony here at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday.

The Indian team is expected to reach New Delhi early on Thursday morning (6:20am) after departing from Barbados' Grantley Adams International Airport in a chartered flight which has a special call sign - AIC24WC - Air India Champions 24 World Cup.

The departure of the Indian squad was delayed due to Hurricane Beryl. However, the team, its support staff, the players' families, some board officials and travelling Indian media finally managed to leave Barbados in the charter flight arranged by the BCCI early on Wednesday morning (4:50am local time).

"The team has left from Barbados on a special Air India flight hired by the BCCI. The Indian journalists who were stuck there (Barbados) are also coming on the same flight along with BCCI



president (Roger Binny) and secretary (Jay Shah), who are looking after all the arrangements," BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla told PTI.

"The flight will land at Delhi airport tomorrow 6 am. The team will meet PM Narendra Modi at 11 am at his residence. After this, the team will fly to Mumbai, where a ceremony has been organised.

"There will be a road show from Nariman Point in an open bus and later we will honour and felicitate the players with the prize money of ₹ 125 crore as announced," he added.

BCCI secretary Shah welcomed all fans to join the victory parade on Thursday evening.

"Join us for the Victory Parade honouring Team India's World Cup win! Head to Marine Drive and Wankhede Stadium on July 4th

from 5:00 pm onwards to celebrate with us! Save the date! #TeamIndia," Shah wrote on 'X', formerly twitter.

Victorious India captain Rohit Sharma also took to social media to welcome the fans.

"We want to enjoy this special moment with all of you. So let's celebrate this with a victory parade at Marine Drive & Wankhede on July 4th from 5:00pm onwards.

"It's coming home," Rohit posted on 'X'.

A felicitation event at the Wankhede Stadium is also planned for the members of the Indian team.

A similar road show was held here 14 years ago when Mahendra Singh Dhoni's team had beaten arch-rivals Pakistan in the final of the inaugural 2007 World T20 in South Africa.

Rohit and his men won the title after pulling off a thrilling seven-run win over South Africa in the final on Saturday at the Kensington Oval. (PTI)

# Taskin was dropped from T20 WC match against India after missing team bus, pacer denies

**DHAKA, July 3:** Bangladesh allegedly dropped vice-captain Taskin Ahmed from the crucial Super Eights clash against India at the T20 World Cup as he overslept and missed the team bus, a claim the pacer refuted, stating it was for team combination reasons.

Bangladesh lost the game, held on June 22 in North Sound, Antigua by 50 runs with the Tigers making only one change, replacing Taskin with Jaker Ali.

"I was a little late, but I reached at the ground before the toss," ESPN Cricinfo quoted Taskin as saying to Dhaka-based newspaper Ajker Patrika.

"I arrived at the ground around 30-40 minutes before the toss. I missed the team bus. The bus left the hotel at 8.35am.

"I left for the ground at 8.43am. I almost reached the ground with the bus. It is not as if they didn't pick me because I arrived late. I wasn't going to play anyway," he added.

Taskin made his way back into the playing XI for Bangladesh's next game, against Afghanistan on June 24.

Although Taskin apologised for his actions, veteran all-rounder and former captain Shakib Al Hasan said the pacer's late arrival made it "difficult" for him to be selected.

"The bus usually leaves at a certain time. It is the rule that the team bus doesn't wait for anyone," Shakib told reporters on Tuesday.

"If by chance someone misses the bus, they can arrive in the managers' car or a taxi. West Indies is a

difficult place for transport. He arrived 5-10 minutes before the toss, so naturally it was difficult for the team management to select him.

"It was also a difficult situation for the player. Taskin apologised to the team, and everyone took it very normally. It was an unintentional mistake. It ended there."

According to the report, there was no fine levied on Taskin for the incident.

When questioned about the incident, Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan, said,

"When I saw that Taskin wasn't in the XI, I called (team manager) Rabeed (Imam), who told me that Taskin missed the team bus," Hassan said. "But (Rabeed said that) he is now in the field, he arrived a bit late. (PTI)

# 30 swimming prospects to get training at IIS for Olympic & Asian Games glory

**BELLARY, July 3:** As many as 30 "high-potential" swimmers have been identified for training as part of a newly-launched 'Mizuho Elite Programme' at the Inspire Institute of Sports here to prepare them for the 2026 Asian Games and the 2028 Olympic qualifiers.

Inspire Institute of Sports has entered into a partnership with Mizuho Bank for this. The two entities have identified swimming as one of the key sports which can be developed at the grassroots level and announced a partnership to support 30 swimmers.

Launched in 2023, the IIS Swimming Programme features two state-of-the-art pools, and promises technical coaching, competition exposure, and support in sports science, strength and conditioning,

nutrition, education, mental health, and residential facilities.

Talented young swimmers Maana Patel, Kushagra Rawat, Ishaan Mehra, Astha Choudhary, Ashmitha Chandra, and Bikram Changmai are part of the programme. Maana Patel said the partnership will go a long way in helping them realise their potential.

"I am grateful to be a part of such a programme. Mizuho has been generous in their donations, which has allowed us to participate in various competitions globally, buy heating plant and other various training equipment for the pool," she said. Parth Jindal, Founder of IIS, echoed the sentiment.

"It energises our mission to make India a sporting superpower. Their belief in our swimming programme

is inspiring, and I am excited for the future," he said.

"Mizuho's support will significantly raise our standards. Our rapid growth and success promise a transformative impact on Indian sport," Rushdee Warley, CEO of IIS, added. Mizuho, a leading global bank with over 28 years in India, operates five branches and four entities, including Mizuho Bank and Mizuho Securities.

Piyush Agarwal, Senior Managing Director & Head - Corporate & Institutional Banking (India) at Mizuho, said, "We believe India, with its youthful population, deserves a place on the global podium. Sports build essential skills like resilience and teamwork, and we hope to inspire many through this initiative." (PTI)

# Yarraj set to be first Indian 100m hurdler in Olympics as WA updates list of qualified athletes

**NEW DELHI, July 3:** Jyothi Yarraj is set to be the first Indian 100m hurdler to compete in the Olympics while shot putter Abha Khatua made a surprise cut through world rankings for the upcoming Paris Games.

The World Athletics on Tuesday published the list of those who made the cut through direct qualification by breaching entry standard as well as through world ranking quota.

It will, however, be up to the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) to select among those who made the grade through the world ranking quota.

The National Olympic Committees must inform WA of their intention to decline a quota by July 4 midnight. During the period from July 4-6, WA will reallocate the declined quota places to the next best ranked athlete in the same event. It will then publish the final list on July 7.

Yarraj ran 12.78 seconds in a

Finland event in May, just one-hundredth of a second outside the automatic qualification time of 12.77 seconds. She is at 34th in the world ranking quota list while 40 athletes will compete in the event in Paris.

Khatua, who set a national record (18.41m) at the Federation Cup, was outside the world ranking quota place but her gold-winning performance (17.63m) at the National Inter-State Championships which ended on Sunday took her to 23rd spot while 32 athletes will compete in the Olympics.

High jumper Sarvesh Anil Kushare, who won gold at the National Inter-State Championships with an effort of 2.25m, also made the grade.

Javelin thrower DP Manu also made the cut but he is set to miss the Paris Games after his dope flunk last week. Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Jena have already made direct qualification. (PTI)

# Neeraj is in best condition to win another medal in Paris Olympics: Spencer Mackay

**VIJAYNAGAR (KARNATAKA), July 3:** Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is in best physical condition to claim a medal at the Paris Games, said Spencer Mackay, the head of strength and conditioning at Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS).

The 26-year-old Indian, who had undergone rehabilitation at IIS for an elbow injury before winning the Olympic gold in Tokyo in 2021, has been troubled by an adductor niggle for the past couple of months.

Chopra is not participating in Sunday's Paris Diamond League and will straight away compete at the Olympics.

Mackay said he is "keeping a close track of him."

"He is in excellent physical condition and well-prepared," Mackay said in an interview with PTI videos.

"His past injuries and recent niggles are now an afterthought. When the Olympic finals begin,

Neeraj will be in a fantastic position to win another medal for the country."

The Olympic and World champion Chopra had returned to competitions in June after a month-long break to fetch his maiden gold medal at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland. He had finished second at the Doha Diamond League in May.

Chopra also participated at the National Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar, where he secured the gold medal.

"For an athlete, it is not warranted to perform at the best all the time, especially for athletes like Neeraj who compete at the highest level. But his plan is very clear: to keep himself fit, strong, and well-balanced to give his best shot at the Olympics."

The Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS) here has been a go-to place for various Indian athletes over the years for injury recovery and reha-



ilitation.

Spencer, who has been at the state-of-the-art facility since its inception, pointed out that sports science and rehabilitation are vital components of modern athletic training, playing a pivotal role in enhancing performance, preventing injuries, and promoting effective recovery.

"India has a lot of scope to enhance the performance of their athletes which will result in better results."

"As long as the scope for sports training supplemented with sports science, development of coaches, the scope for India to massively increase the medal haul come the next Olympics games is going to

be clear."

Talking about the rehab programs, he said: "Our elite performers train offsite but our main focus is to tailor rehab programs based on the situation and the injury sustained based on the data we have about them. "We also have in mind the psychological aspect of an athlete suffering a specific injury and the way he or she suffered it in mind."

"If we have more contact with them, we can do more based on the capability of the athlete and how much we have been able to expose him or her to development over time being a key component of the rehabilitation process during the injury situation.

"But regardless we are happy to be in a situation where we have been able to affect athlete rehabilitation in a positive way and to see them returning back to the performance level they had before, is an incredibly rewarding position." (PTI)