

6 WORLD US and South Korea sign joint nuclear deterrence guidelines
8 NATION Determined to run in re-election, will defeat Trump: Biden
Special status demand triggers political slugfest in Bihar
Polling ends for Maharashtra council elections

Not aware of decision: CM on removal of Mahatma's statue in Assam town



GUWAHATI, July 12: Two days after a statue of Mahatma Gandhi was removed for the construction of a clock tower in Assam's Doomsdoma town, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said he was unaware of such a move and would verify the facts.

Sarma, reacting to a post by Mahatma's great-grandson Tushar Gandhi, wrote on X: "I am not aware of this decision taken by the district administration. Let me verify the facts."

Ratna Gopinath Bordoloi when the Congress party led by Nehru wanted to include Assam in Pakistan under the Grouping Plan," Sarma said on the microblogging site.

The statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the heart of the town was removed on Wednesday by the municipal authorities to "make way for a clock tower" to be constructed there, locals said.

Local people had staged a demonstration against the administration's move.

On Thursday, Doomsdoma MLA Rupesh Gowala assured them that a new and taller statue of the Father of the Nation would be erected at the same site.

The BJP legislator claimed that the statue was in a somewhat dilapidated condition and the new one would be installed within six months, along with beautification of the site. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Nearly 14 lakh people remain affected Dhubri worst-hit district Flood situation remains unchanged

GUWAHATI, July 12: The flood situation in Assam has shown no signs of improvement, with nearly 14 lakh people across 26 districts continuing to grapple with the deluge as of Friday, according to an official report.

A number of major rivers, including the Brahmaputra, were flowing over the danger level in different parts of the state, it added.

The toll in this year's floods, storms and lightnings has reached 99. The report said 13,99,948 people remained affected in 83 revenue circles and 2,545 villages spread across 26 districts.

The affected districts are Cachar, Barpeta, Kamrup, Nagaon, Dhubri, Biswanath, Goalpara, Hailakandi, Sivsagar, Dibrugarh, Morigaon, Tinsukia, Nalbari, Dhemaji, South Salmara, Lakhimpur, Karimganj, Charaideo, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Darrang, Jorhat, Kamrup Metropolitan, Majuli and Chirang. The affected population as on Wednesday was 14,38,900 in 25 districts.

Dhubri remained the worst-hit district with 2,41,186 affected, followed by Cachar (1,60,889) and Darrang (1,08,125). Currently, 41,596 displaced people are seeking refuge in 189 relief camps, while another 110 relief distribution centres are catering to 72,847 people. Multiple agencies, including the SDRF and local administrations, were engaged in relief and rescue operations.



The Brahmaputra was flowing above the danger level at Nematighat, Tezpur and Dhubri,

while the Burhidihing was over the red mark in Khowang, Disang in Nanglamuraghat and Kushiara in Karimganj.

Damage to various infrastructure, including houses, bridges, roads and embankments, have been reported from various affected districts, the report said. (PTI)

HT BRIEFS

Flood inspection

KHERONI: Minister of Water Resources, Assam, Piyush Hazarika visited West Karbi Anglong to take stock of the flood situation. The minister inspected the flood-hit areas, erosion and broken embankments of Kopili River. However, the minister was unable to inspect some of the places due to adverse weather condition. He promised to construct a 15 km long embankment at a cost of ₹ 35 crore after the monsoon season. Minister Hazarika was accompanied by the chief executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Member Tuliram Ranghang; MP Amar Sing Tisso; MLA Rupsing Teron and president of BJP, West Karbi Anglong District Committee, Radip Ronghang.

Review meeting

GUWAHATI: The Tourism Minister of Assam Jayanta Malhabrauh on Friday evaluated the flood conditions in the Hailakandi district during a meeting held at the District Commissioner's Office with the concerned officials.

Heroin seized

BOKAJAN: The police in Karbi Anglong in a routine checking at 8 am at Khakarajan police checking gate on NH 39 recovered heroin from a 120 N car bearing registration No. AS 01 BP 4004 which was coming from Dimapur, Nagaland. The heroin was packed in 30 packets weighing a total of 350 grams. In this connection Tanbir Hussain and Muhammad Yaqub Khan, both of Manipur were apprehended. Further investigation is going on.

Bodies of 2 more victims found, toll in Goalpara boat capsizes rises to 5

GOALPARA, July 12: The bodies of two missing victims of a boat capsized in Assam's Goalpara district were found on Friday, taking the toll to five, police said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, while visiting the accident site and meeting the bereaved family, announced ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh for the next of kin of each victim.

A small boat carrying about 20 people had sunk into flood waters at Simlitola in the Rongjuli police station area on Thursday, leading to the death of five persons. Three bodies

were recovered the same day, while the two others were found on Friday. The deceased have been identified as Gouranga Malakar, Uday Sarkar, Jitu Karmakar, Prasenjit Saha and Sujan Malakar -- all of them belonged to the same family.

Sarma said the people were returning after cremating one Anjana Malakar when the accident happened.

"Five people have died in the accident and all were relatives of Anjana Malakar. The entire village is mourning the deaths. We also visited the bereaved family to pay our condolences," he said.

My role is to translate state aspirations into reality: DoNER minister

GUWAHATI, July 12: Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia on Friday said his role would primarily be that of a facilitator, ensuring that aspirations of the states in the region are realised. He emphasised the importance of showcasing the North Eastern region's rich cultural heritage, traditions, and natural resources to the world.

Talking to reporters at the airport here on his first visit to the North East since assuming charge, Scindia said he will work towards realising the government's vision of making the region the "gateway of India's progress".

"Work to achieve it has already been on track for the last 10 years," he added. He said the budgetary outlay for the region has increased from ₹ 24,000 crore to almost ₹ 84,000 crore in the last decade, highlighting developments in infrastructure such as roads, railways, and airports, which have expanded from nine to seventeen. Scindia also pointed out advancements in social sectors including health, education, and sports, as well as potential growth areas like tourism, agarwood, and bamboo production.

"North East is a repository of our age-old traditions, rituals, cultural vibrancy, nature's abundance and that must be showcased to the world," Scindia said, adding that



the nation's 'Look East Policy' has been changed to 'Act East Policy' for this purpose. As part of his visit, Scindia is likely to meet Meghalaya chief minister in Shillong to discuss tailored development strategies, combining direct DoNER schemes and initiatives from other ministries to leverage the state's unique strengths. "I will have an interaction with Meghalaya chief minister for putting together a plan for the state, whether (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

All CBSE schools to implement Assam's Jal Doot initiative

GUWAHATI, July 12: Assam government's 'Jal Doot' programme, which recognises students' role in water conservation, will be emulated in all schools under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in the country, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

Posting a CBSE circular in this regard on X, Sarma said: "Another novel #Assampolicy initiative gets more eyeballs and followers!"

"CBSE has directed all its schools to implement 'Jal Doot', a brainchild of the Assam Govt. This practical programme weaves students into community efforts for water conservation," he said.

The Jal Doot programme, under the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign of the central government, focuses on rainwater harvesting, water conservation, intensive afforestation and other allied activities.

"This nationwide movement could significantly bolster India's efforts towards sustainable water use, environmental conservation, climate resilience and involving young minds in Jan Andolan for fresh idea and youthful energy," the CBSE circular said.

JJM-Assam has pioneered the initiative under which students of Classes 8 to 12 are made 'student champions', who provide an assessment of piped water supply schemes in their locality among other activities like water conservation, officials said. (PTI)

EXCISE POLICY SCAM: ED CASE

SC grants interim bail to Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, July 12: The Supreme Court on Friday granted interim bail to Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in a money laundering case lodged by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the alleged excise policy scam but he will remain in jail as the CBI had arrested him in a related matter.

A bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta referred to a larger bench, preferably of five judges, for in-depth consideration of three questions on the aspect of "need and necessity of arrest" under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Kejriwal was also arrested by the CBI on June 26 in connection with the corruption case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

The plea challenging his arrest by the CBI is pending before the Delhi High Court. The matter relates to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's ex-

cise policy for 2021-22, which has now been scrapped.

The top court said since it is referring the matter to a larger bench despite its findings on "reasons to believe" under section 19(1) of PMLA, which deals with ED's power to arrest, it deemed it necessary to grant interim bail to Kejriwal.

"Given the fact that right to life and liberty is sacrosanct, and Arvind Kejriwal has suffered incarceration of over 90 days, and that the questions referred to above require in-depth consideration by a larger bench, we direct that Arvind Kejriwal may be released on interim bail ..., on the same terms as imposed vide the order dated May 10, 2024," the bench said in its 64-page verdict.

While releasing Kejriwal on interim bail on May 10 to campaign for the Lok Sabha polls, the top court had imposed conditions on him that he will not visit the CM office or the Delhi Secretariat during the interim relief. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



125-year-old Assam tea company ventures into retail segment



GUWAHATI, July 12: Assam's 125-year-old Aideobarie Tea Estates has forayed into the retail segment and launched two CTC variants in the state, its proprietor said on Friday.

The company unveiled 'Rujani Tea' brand in Guwahati, while it was made available in Jorhat markets from mid-June, he said.

"We are bringing our experience of 125 years of tea making and the vast resources of selling premium quality tea in our home state. We will soon expand to other cities and towns of Assam, other parts of the northeastern region and then beyond," Aideobarie Tea Estates proprietor Raj Barooh said. The company has been selling its tea through e-commerce since 2016 when its website was launched in India.

It started selling tea in Australia through online channels in 2019.

"This is the first time we are venturing into the physical retail market. Our tea will be available in stores from the next month," Barooh said.

The marketing and expansion strategies will evolve in due course of time, highlighting that the retail segment is highly competitive with tea a 'personalised commodity'.

"We conducted surveys in Guwahati and Jorhat before the launch. We are trying to take the product as close to customer's preference as possible," he said.

Barooh said the need of the hour to branch out from its traditional role as producers and wholesalers led Aideobarie Tea Estates to foray into physical retailing. "Supply of tea is high and price realisation low, especially in Assam where 60-65 per cent of production (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India is currently the largest country in the world in terms of population

India's population to peak in early 2060s to 1.7 billion before declining: UN

UNITED NATIONS, July 12: India's population is projected to peak in the early 2060s at about 1.7 billion and then decline by 12 per cent, but the country will remain the world's most populous throughout the century, the United Nations has said. The World Population Prospects 2024 report, released here on Thursday, said that the world's population is expected to continue growing over the coming 50-60 years, reaching a peak of around 10.3 billion people in the mid-2080s, up from 8.2 billion in 2024. After peaking, the global population is projected to start declining gradually, falling to 10.2 billion people by the end of the century.

India, which surpassed China as the world's most populous nation last year, will continue to hold that position through 2100.

"The population of India, which is expected to remain the world's largest throughout the century, will likely decline by 12 per cent after reaching its peak in the early 2060s at about 1.7 billion," the UN report published by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division said.

According to the report, India's population in 2024 is projected at 1.45 billion and this will peak to 1.69 billion in 2054. After this,



India's population is projected to decline to 1.5 billion by the end of the century in 2100, but the country will still remain the most populous nation on Earth.

Responding to a question by PTI on population projections for India, Senior Population Affairs Officer, Population Division, UN DESA Clare Menozzi said at a press conference that "India is currently the largest country in the world in terms of population, and it is projected to stay so throughout the century. The population is currently estimated at 1.45 billion, and it's supposed to increase further" to 1.69 billion.

"It's supposed to peak around the 2060s in size and then it starts to slightly decline. So by the end of the

century, India is projected to be around 1.5 billion, but still the largest country in the world by a large margin."

The report said that China's population, currently 1.41 billion in 2024, will fall to 1.21 billion in 2054 and further decline to 633 million by 2100.

"It is anticipated that China, the country currently with the world's second-largest population, will likely experience the largest absolute population loss between 2024 and 2054 (204 million)," followed by Japan (21 million) and Russia (10 million). "Longer-range population projections are more uncertain" for China, it said. "However, due to its (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

PM should pay attention to basic economic issues of country: Kharge

NEW DELHI, July 12: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "used PR" to keep the government away from basic issues but people were now demanding accountability after the June Lok Sabha poll results.

Kharge took a swipe at the prime minister, saying that while he is holding meetings under the shadow of cameras for the upcoming budget, he must pay attention to the basic economic issues of the country. In a post in Hindi on X, the Congress president said, "Narendra Modi ji, Your government has ruined the lives of crores of people by pushing them into the pit of unemployment, inflation and inequality."

Listing the "failures" of the government, Kharge said that due to the unemployment rate of 9.2 per cent, the future of the youth is staring at naught. "For people aged 20-24 years, the unemployment rate has risen to 40%, highlighting the serious crisis in the job market among the youth," Kharge said.

The promise of doubling the income of farmers and MSP of cost plus 50 per cent has turned out to be false, he said.

Recently, on the MSP of 14 Kharif crops, the Modi government has again proved that it wants to use the MSP recommendation of the Swaminathan report only as an "election gimmick", he claimed. The Congress leader said, "3.84 lakh government jobs have been



lost in the 7 PSUs in which the majority of government stake has been sold! This has also led to the loss of jobs for SC, ST, OBC, EWS reserved posts."

He said 1.25 lakh people have lost government jobs in the 20 top PSUs in which the Modi government has sold a small stake since 2016. Manufacturing as a percentage of GDP has fallen from 16.5 per cent during the UPA regime to 14.5 per cent during the Modi government, he pointed out.

"Private investment has also fallen drastically in the last 10 years. New private investment plans, which are an important part of GDP, fell to a 20-year low of only Rs 44,300 crore between April and June. Last year, private investment of Rs 7.9 lakh crore was made during this period," he said. Kharge also alleged that the havoc of inflation is at its peak. The prices of flour, pulses, rice, milk, sugar, potatoes, tomatoes, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India to clock GDP growth of 7 pc in FY25: Virmani

NEW DELHI, July 12: The Indian economy will grow around 7 per cent in the current fiscal year and is on track to maintain a similar growth rate for several years, NITI Aayog member Arvind Virmani said on Friday.

Virmani said there are new challenges facing the country and they will have to be dealt with.

"Indian economy will grow at 7 per cent plus minus point 0.5 per cent... I expect that we are on track to grow at 7 per cent for several years from now," he told PTI in an interview.

Last month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) pegged the FY25 gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate at 7.2 per cent.

Responding to a question on the decline in private consumption expenditures in the last fiscal year, Virmani said it is actually recovering now.

"The effect of the pandemic was to draw down savings... and very different from previous financial



shocks," he said.

Explaining further, Virmani said it is like what he calls a double drought situation.

"We also had, of course, El Nino last year, but what the pandemic did was that it resulted in people having to draw down their savings... So, the obvious reaction is to rebuild your savings, which tend

to reduce current consumption," he noted.

If people were buying branded goods, they will buy less branded or ordinary goods and save part of that money, he said, explaining that this shows a slide in consumption.

Virmani said history shows that coalition partners can slow privati-

sation in states in which the regional ally is in power, but that is not a big issue.

"I see no reason why privatisation cannot happen in the other states and it may also happen in these states (where coalition parties are in power). I am just giving you a historical example," he said.

With support from N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and Nitish Kumar-led JD(U), along with other alliance partners, the NDA crossed the halfway mark in the recently held Lok Sabha elections to form the government at the Centre.

On the decline in foreign direct investments (FDI) to India, despite it being the fastest growing economy, Virmani said riskless return of investment is much higher in the US and other developed countries than in emerging markets.

"As soon as interest rates begin to come down in the US, I expect the FDI into emerging markets, including India, to increase," he said. (PTI)

Govt may introduce amendments to laws to push banking sector reforms in Budget session

NEW DELHI, July 12: The government is likely to introduce amendments to Banking Regulation Act 1949 and other laws to push banking sector reforms during the upcoming Budget session.

Apart from this, amendments in the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980 are needed for privatisation of public sector banks, sources said.

These Acts led to the nationalisation of banks in two phases and provisions of these laws have to be changed for the privatisation of banks, they said.

Amendments, if approved by Parliament, would help bring down government holding in state-owned banks below 51 per cent, improve bank governance and enhance investors' protection, sources said.

Parliament session beginning on July 22 would witness the Budget presentation on July 23 and conclude with the passage of the Finance Bill on August 12.

It is to be noted that the government had listed amendment to these laws to be taken up during the winter session in 2021, but these bills could not be tabled. "To effect amendments in Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Acts, 1970 and 1980 and incidental amendments to Banking Regulation Act, 1949 in the context of Union Budget announcement 2021 regarding privatisation of two Public Sector Banks," as per the list of legislative business for the winter session.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Budget for 2021-22, announced the privatisation of public sector banks (PSBs).

"Other than IDBI Bank, we propose to take up the privatisation of two PSBs and one general insurance company in 2021-22," she had said.

To ensure privatisation of a general insurance company, the government has already received approval from Parliament for the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2021, in the monsoon session ended in August 2021.

The government in April 2020 consolidated 10 PSBs into four and as a result, the total number of PSBs came down to 12 from 27 in March 2017.

As per the amalgamation plan, the United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce were merged with Punjab National Bank, making the proposed entity the second-largest PSB.

Syndicate Bank was merged with Canara Bank, while Allahabad Bank was subsumed in Indian Bank. Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank were amalgamated with the Union Bank of India.

In a first three-way merger, Bank of Baroda merged Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with itself in 2019. SBI had merged five of its associate banks -- State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Travancore, and State Bank of Hyderabad -- and also Bharatiya Mahila Bank effective April 2017. (PTI)

Mcap of BSE-listed firms hit fresh record peak



NEW DELHI, July 12: The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms soared to a new lifetime high of ₹ 452.38 lakh crore on Friday, with investors' wealth rising ₹ 1.17 lakh crore, amid a rally in equities where the Sensex hit its fresh all-time peak.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 622 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 80,519.34. During the day, it zoomed 996.17 points or 1.24 per cent to hit an all-time peak of 80,893.51. Thanks to the optimism in equities, the market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed firms hit a record peak of ₹ 4,52,38,553.68 crore (USD 5.42 trillion). Investors' wealth also climbed ₹ 1.17 lakh crore.

"Markets were encouraged by TCS Q1 results, which triggered a massive rally in other IT stocks and drove Sensex close to the 81,000 mark in early trades," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd.

Among the Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services climbed nearly 7 per cent after the country's largest IT services player reported 8.7 per cent growth for the June quarter net profit at ₹ 12,040 crore. Infosys, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank, JSW Steel, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro were the other major gainers.

Maruti, Asian Paints, Kotak Mahindra Bank and ICICI Bank were among the laggards.

Among the indices, IT surged 4.32 per cent, teck zoomed 3.29 per cent, energy (0.13 per cent), bankex (0.10 per cent) and services (0.06 per cent).

In contrast, realty, power, metal, utilities, auto, industrials and consumer discretionary were among the laggards. On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 522.74 points or 0.65 per cent, while the Nifty climbed 178.3 points or 0.73 per cent.

"We expect this momentum to continue supported by the expectation of healthy quarterly results, hope of a rate cut, and a pre-budget rally," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. (PTI)

Sensex, Nifty rally nearly 1 pc to scale fresh highs on sharp gains in IT shares

MUMBAI, July 12: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty soared nearly 1 per cent to hit new lifetime highs on Friday, fuelled by intense buying in IT and tech stocks after robust TCS earnings amid hopes of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

A rally in Reliance Industries and Infosys also boosted investor sentiments, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 622 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at a record closing level of 80,519.34. During the day, it zoomed 996.17 points or 1.24 per cent to hit an all-time high of 80,893.51.

The NSE Nifty surged 186.20 points or 0.77 per cent to settle at a record closing high of 24,502.15. Intra-day, it jumped 276.25 points or 1.13 per cent to hit a new lifetime peak of 24,592.20.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 522.74 points or 0.65 per cent, while the Nifty climbed 178.3 points or 0.73 per cent.

"Multiple tailwinds led the market to come out of the range-bound trajectory. The strong result from the IT bellwether and a drop in US inflation to a one-year low added optimism to the market. The chances of a rate cut in September are inching higher, which is evident in the fall of the dollar index,"

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said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

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Maruti, Asian Paints, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.22 per cent, while the smallcap index dipped 0.13 per cent. Among the indices, IT surged 4.32 per cent, teck zoomed 3.29 per cent, energy (0.13 per cent), bankex (0.10 per cent) and services (0.06 per cent).

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ers in transitioning from chemically intensive agriculture to "natural farming" methods, including organic residue use and crop diversification.

Dr Rattan Lal, honoured for his soil-centric approach to agriculture, said, "Soil health and sustainable agriculture are crucial to resolve the challenges of food security and fight climate change across the world."

The jury, chaired by former Chancellor of Germany Angela

Merkel, selected the winners from 181 nominations spanning 117 nationalities.

APCNF aims to reach all eight million farmer households in Andhra Pradesh over the next decade and is being replicated across 12 other Indian states.

Ant nio Feij, President of the Board of Trustees of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, said, "We believe their stories will inspire others to apply similar approaches in other regions and help us build

a sustainable future for all."

"Climate change and the resulting global warming have led to an increase in extreme weather events and are endangering food security around the world. ...This year's winners have demonstrated in an exemplary fashion how climate-resilient and sustainable food systems can be developed and put into practice," Merkel said.

The prize is an initiative of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, rewarding individuals and organisations who are leading society's efforts to tackle the biggest challenges facing humanity today: climate change and nature loss.

The award underscores India's growing role in addressing global food security and climate challenges through innovative agricultural practices. The recognition comes as climate change continues to disrupt food systems globally, highlighting the importance of sustainable farming methods.

Both Indian winners expressed hope that the prize would help scale their efforts and inspire similar initiatives worldwide. (PTI)

GRSE plans profit-sharing deals with startups it incubates

KOLKATA, July 12: Warship-maker Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) plans to enter into profit-sharing deals with startups it incubates at the stage of commercialisation during product development stage.

The Kolkata-based public sector company, part of the Ministry of Defence, has allocated a dedicated fund from its research and development budget to foster startups focused on the shipbuilding sector.

"We have earmarked a sizable portion of our R&D budget for nurturing and supporting startups in developing products and serv-

ices for captive use, which can later be commercialised," GRSE Chairman and Managing Director, Commodore P R Hari, Indian Navy (Retd), told PTI.

Regarding the commercial relationship with startups, Hari explained that GRSE will engage in profit-sharing agreements with these early-stage companies once the final product is developed and shows potential for commercial success. While terms are flexible, GRSE anticipates benefiting commercially from the intellectual property created through these collaborations.

The first product development is slated for completion by December 2024, with the second expected by mid-2025. (PTI)

In the inaugural edition of the GRSE Accelerated Innovation Nurturing Scheme (GAINS) in 2023, two companies emerged as winners and are currently undergoing incubation. "One is an MSME focused on AI-based material code generation and management systems, while the other is developing robots for ship exterior painting," Hari mentioned.

GRSE has provided full financial support to these startups to develop viable prototypes.

The first product development is slated for completion by December 2024, with the second expected by mid-2025. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Not aware of decision: CM

Tushar Gandhi shared a news clipping of the local administration's move and wrote, "Not surprising that the BJP government in Assam decided to replace Babu's statue with a clock tower in Dibrugarh. Their slavish colonial hangover persists." (PTI)

My role is to translate

it be direct schemes under DoNER or related to other ministries," he said. "I will do that with all state governments. My role is to act as a facilitator to translate aspirations of each state into reality," the Union minister added. Scindia will be in Guwahati on Saturday. (PTI)

125-year-old Assam tea

cost goes into labour expenses. We felt that it was essential to enter the frontal business to sustain ourselves," he added. 'Rujani Tea' will sell two variants of CTC tea, which will initially be available in 250-gram pack size. These will soon be available in 25-gram and 500-gram packs. It will also launch a one-kilogram value pack. (PTI)

India's population to peak

large size and sustained low level of fertility, China is also likely to record the largest population decline of any country through the end of the century (786 million people). By 2100, China is projected to have lost more than a half of its current population and to have returned to a population size comparable to that recorded in the late 1950s (50 per cent probability)."

Responding to a question on the significantly low population projection for China, director of the Population Division at UN DESA John Wilmoth said that "it really relates to the level of fertility that's observed currently in China. The current number is right around one birth per woman on average over a lifetime."

"Given that you need 2.1 births to maintain the current population without migration, if fertility levels remain at such a low level, even if they come up slightly, any fertility level if it's below two, or especially below 1.8 or below 1.5, you're really getting into low levels of fertility and it produces a long run decline that's quite significant. And that's true for China. It's true for some other countries in this analysis," Wilmoth said. (PTI)

PM should pay attention

onions, and all essential food items are skyrocketing, he noted. The result is that the household savings of families are at the lowest level in 50 years, he added. Kharge said that economic inequality is the highest in 100 years, while wage growth in rural India is negative.

"Unemployment has increased significantly in rural areas and it has now increased from 6.3% in May to 9.3%. The average number of days of workers employed in MNRREGA has decreased," he said.

"Modi ji, It has been 10 years, you used your PR to keep the government away from the basic issues of the people, but after June 2024, this will not work anymore, the public is now demanding accountability," Kharge said.

The arbitrary tampering with the country's economy must now stop, he added. (PTI)

SC grants interim

Besides imposing a slew of conditions, it had asked Kejrival not to sign any official file unless absolutely necessary to obtain the Lieutenant Governor's sanction during the 21-day interim bail period.

The bench said it is conscious that Kejrival is an elected leader and chief minister of Delhi, a post holding importance and influence. "We have also referred to the allegations. While we do not give any direction, since we are doubtful whether the court can direct an elected leader to step down or not function as the chief minister or as a minister, we leave it to Arvind Kejrival to take a call," it said.

The top court said even this aspect whether an elected leader should step down from a constitutional post can be dealt by the larger bench.

The three questions referred to the larger bench include -- whether the "need and necessity to arrest" is a separate ground to challenge the order of arrest passed in terms of Section 19(1) of the PMLA and whether the "need and necessity to arrest" refers to the satisfaction of formal parameters to arrest and take a person into custody, or it relates to other personal grounds and reasons regarding necessity to arrest a person in the facts and circumstances of the said case?

The bench said the third one is if both the questions are answered in the affirmative, what are the parameters and facts that are to be taken into consideration by the court while examining the question of "need and necessity to arrest"?

It directed the registry to place the matter before Chief Justice DY

Minister Keshab Mahanta highlights importance of quality fish production National Fish Farmers' Day celebrated in Nagaon



HT Correspondent
NAGAON, July 12: NABARD Assam RO, along with the College of Fisheries (CoF), Raha, and the Department of Fisheries (DoF), government of Assam, organised an event to celebrate National Fish Farmers' Day (NFFD) on Wednesday last.

The event took place at the auditorium of CoF, Raha. Keshab Mahanta, minister of Fisheries, Transport, Excise, IT, Science & Technology, local MLA Sashi Kanta Das, the vice-chancellor of Assam Agriculture University Dr BC Deka, chairman of AFDCL Guru Jyoti Das, secretary of DoF Dr Kavayashree Mahanta, director of DoF Gauri Sankar Das, dean of CoF Dr PC Bhuyan, ADC of Nagaon Sauvik Bhuyan, AGM of NABARD Sankar Das, DDM-

NABARD Rajendar Perna, and KVK head Dr Niranjana Deka attended the programme as the chief guest and special guests. Additionally, DFDO, SDFDO, all the FMs from CoF, and over 300 fish farmers participated in the programme.

The event began with a presentation on the activities being undertaken by CoF. Speaking on the occasion, minister Keshab Mahanta congratulated all the fish farmers for their contributions to ensuring nutritional and food security in the State. He suggested that farmers not compromise on the quality of fish and its impact on human health. He indicated that in the present scenario of climate change, the state government will soon come up with the Assam Fish Policy. During the event, he also distributed

certificates of merit and fish seeds to selected fish farmers and appreciated NABARD, DoF, and CoF for organising the event.

Local MLA Sashi Kanta Das spoke about various schemes of the DoF for the upliftment of the farming community in the region. Dr BC Deka, vice-chancellor of AAU, highlighted the importance of certification of fish feed and the pivotal role played by AAU in the development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the state. Chairman of AFDCL Guru Jyoti Das also briefed about the prospects of beel fisheries in the state as well as the conservation of indigenous fish species through effective management. Dean of CoF Dr PC Bhuyan spoke about the relevance of NFFD and the role played by the College of Fisheries

in nurturing the next generation of faculties, aquapreneurs, human resources, and resolving sector-specific emerging issues.

Speaking on the occasion, AGM of NABARD Sankar Das and DDM-NABARD Rajendar Perna shared in detail the activities undertaken by NABARD for the overall development of the fishery sector in the state and the district. They spoke about the formation of exclusive Fishery FPC in Juria Block, the mobile marketing van provided to FPC, the LEDPs on scientific fish feed making and pearl culture, the collaboration with CoF for establishing Biofloc Fish Farming units, and the proposed DRE & Waste to Wealth management projects.

The event also featured technical sessions on topics like NABARD's role in strengthening fisheries infrastructure and the welfare of fish farming communities in Assam, prospects of fisheries & aquaculture for self-employment in Assam, etc. After releasing a video message recorded by NABARD OIC Loken Das, dean-CoF Dr PC Bhuyan, and MD, Fishfed Dr DJ Sarma regarding the ongoing breeding season of fish and a request to avoid harvesting of fish during this season, the event concluded with a seed-releasing programme in a community tank at Laophulabori, as stated in a press note here.

Flood devastates Nalbari, claims lives

Residents struggle with submerged town & damaged crops

HT Correspondent
NALBARI, July 12: The flood situation in Nalbari district has reached critical levels, claiming two lives, including a child in Gha-grapar and Mukalmuwa areas. Continuous heavy showers have submerged Nalbari town's 17 wards, leading to waterlogging on main roads and bylanes for hours. In some severely affected areas, rainwater has inundated homes and vehicles.

Several key locations such as the vegetable market, educational institutions, the Circle Office, DC Office, Circuit House, and various

other public and private establishments have also been submerged. Citizens of the town have attributed these recurring issues to faulty drainage systems that have plagued the area year after year.

On the agricultural front, farmers have not received the seed supplies for sali crops despite repeated demands. Thousands of hectares of seed planting land have been damaged due to the first heavy flood, caused by breaches in the embankments of the Buradia and Misa Pagaldia rivers at three points.

A planned drainage system proj-

ect worth ₹ 100 crores, initiated over a year ago, has reportedly failed to function effectively. Concerned senior citizens of Nalbari township have urged cabinet minister Jayanta Malla Baruah, also the local MLA for Nalbari, to intervene and ensure the proper implementation of this crucial scheme.

Areas severely affected by flooding include Barbhag, Kalag, Ghagrapar, Mukalmuwa, Pakhura, Purni, Makhibaha, Tihu, Amoni, Bariatapa, among others, where roads remain submerged due to incessant rains and floods.

Dhyanidristi sets record

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, July 12: Dhyanidristi Kashyap, daughter of Manoj Hazarika and Mayuri Srama Hazarika of Sankardev Nagar, is set to make an entry into the Asia Book of Records by drawing 838

Swastiks on a lotus leaf. She has been preparing diligently to have her name listed in the World Book of Records through her unique drawing style. A class 9 student, Dhyanidristi is also a talented singer and plays various musical instruments.



Records through her unique drawing style. A class 9 student, Dhyanidristi is also a talented singer and plays various musical instruments.

ABSU urges govt to prioritise state residents in recruitment

Calls for mandatory PRC and local language proficiency amid policy reversal

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, July 12: The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) has called for prioritising permanent residents of Assam and making both the Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) and knowledge of the local language mandatory for candidates in college-level recruitments within the Education Department.

In a press statement released on Friday, ABSU president Dipen Boro and general secretary Khanindra Basumatary highlighted that following widespread criticism across the state, the state government has rescinded its earlier decision to not make PRC mandatory for college-level recruitments.

"ABSU insists that priority should be given to permanent residents of Assam, and we urge the state gov-

ernment to require both PRC and proficiency in the local languages (official and associate official languages of Assam) for all candidates," the ABSU leaders emphasised.

Regarding the Assam Direct Recruitment Examination and the recently announced change in its pattern to include prelims, mains, and viva-voce, the student union has urged the government to revert to the previous examination model. They argued that the sudden change could disadvantage candidates who have already prepared under the previous system. The ABSU stressed the importance of consulting the interests and sentiments of students and indigenous people of the state before finalising any policy decisions or notifications.

NFR GM conducts safety inspection & reviews development progress



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 12: Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, general manager of NF Railway, undertook a comprehensive inspection across Kokrajhar, Fakiragram, Srirampur, and Alipurduar stations under the Alipurduar division on Friday. Accompanied by senior officials from headquarters and the division, the general manager focused on evaluating safety measures and reviewed ongoing developmental projects.

During the inspection, Shrivastava

interacted closely with railway officials to assess their vigilance regarding safety protocols and examined various safety equipment at the stations. He also provided guidance to railway staff at all levels to enhance safety, security, and passenger convenience.

Additionally, the general manager monitored progress on various developmental initiatives across the stations. At Kokrajhar station, he inspected the crew lobby, foot over bridge, platforms, and passenger amenities. At Faki-

gram station, he reviewed activities under the Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme aimed at enhancing passenger facilities, including the health unit and staff colony redevelopment.

Shrivastava conducted a window trailing inspection of tracks, bridges, and installations between Gossaigaon Hat and Srirampur stations, examining level crossing gates, curves, points, crossings, and bridges along different sections. He inaugurated a gang tool/rest room for track maintainers between Samuktala and Alipurduar stations and thoroughly inspected the crew lobby and carriage & wagon train passing office at Alipurduar railway station.

Later in the day, the general manager engaged with union representatives and divisional officers to discuss plans for infrastructural development and business expansion, aimed at bolstering the socio-economic landscape of the region. His comprehensive assessment underscores Northeast Frontier Railway's commitment to ensuring safe, efficient, and comfortable travel experiences for passengers through dedicated efforts and initiatives.

Drowning incident claims life in Chirang

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, July 12: In a tragic incident near Bhumiswar Hill in Chirang district, an 18-year-old girl, Janmoni Rabha from Tezpur, drowned in Kujiya River. Her body was recovered on Friday following the incident on Thursday at Kachugaon Rabhagara village. Janmoni had gone to visit her elder sister when she drowned while attempting to rescue her sister's 2-and-a-half-year-old daughter. Despite her brave efforts, Janmoni lost her life while the child survived.

Local sources reported that Janmoni fell from a bridge during the rescue attempt. The district administration of Chirang, along with NDRF and SDRF teams, conducted a thorough search operation leading to the recovery of her body, which has been sent for postmortem examination. Assam cabinet minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma and Rajya Sabha MP Rungwra Narzary visited the grieving family to offer their condolences and support during this difficult time. "We extend our deepest sorrow and sympathy to the bereaved family," stated minister Brahma, alongside Rajya Sabha MP Rungwra Narzary.

Wild elephant found dead in Margherita

Local community blames inadequate measures for wildlife management & rampant deforestation

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, July 12: A wild elephant was found dead in Seema Pather of 2 Number Makum Pather, Margherita, under the Digboi Forest Division in Tinsukia district, sparking significant concern among local residents. The carcass was discovered on Friday morning. According to locals, the elephant had been causing disturbances in the area for several days, breaking into homes in search of food. The sudden death of the animal has left the residents shocked.

"We don't know the cause of death. Whenever elephants are spotted in the area, Margherita forest officials are informed, but they arrive late and assess the situation just to fulfil their duty," a local resident of Seema Pather told media in Margherita.

Local residents alleged, "No arrangements have been made yet. The Margherita sub-divisional administration and Margherita Municipal Board have failed to install street lights in this area, where wild elephants frequently enter residential zones in search of food, regularly threatening life and property."

Prodipta Saikia, Margherita West Range forest officer, stated that the exact cause of the elephant's death has yet to be determined. Further details will be provided following a post-mortem examination of the pachyderm. Debojit Moran, noted environmentalist and general secretary of the Green Bud Society (NGO), Assam, stated that rampant deforestation in the forest reserve areas of the Margherita East and West Range Forest Offices, Lekhapani Forest Range Office, Jagun Forest Range Office, and Lekhajan Forest Beat Office under the Digboi Forest Division of Tinsukia district has forced wild elephants, monkeys, tigers, leopards, pythons, deer, and bears to enter nearby residential areas in search of food. This has resulted in many houses being vandalised and local residents being trampled to death. However, Assam Forest and Environment minister Chandra Mohan Patowary and higher forest department officials have failed to control illegal deforestation and take stringent action against those involved.



Assamese film & theatre icon Junu Baruah passes away

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, July 12: Eminent Assamese film and stage actor Junu Baruah passed away at her Tezpur Bishnu Nagar residence on Friday morning around 9:30 am. She had been suffering from a prolonged illness. Daughter of noted Gandhian Lakhidhar Sarmah, the late Junu Baruah got involved in the cultural field from her school days.

She began her acting career in 1963, performing in 'Simantar Jui', a play by Prafulla Bora staged at the historic Baan Theater. She acted in several plays and Assamese movies, including 'An Inspector's Call' directed by Natasurya Phani Sarmah, 'Nakal Hira' directed by Mancha Konwar Chandradhar Goswami, 'Nibarun Bhattacharyya', 'Tini Purokha', 'Senehor Chiga Khuti', and 'Kuwoli' directed by Sujit Singha, among many others.

Her roles in Assamese movies included 'Dr Bezbaruah', 'Duronir Rong', 'Bohagor Duporia', 'Mohaxomor', 'Dhrubatora', 'Rikshwala', 'Porinam', 'Tumi Mur Mathu Mur', 'Satyam Sivam Sundaram', 'Patni', 'Krishnasura', 'Akashitor Kothare', 'Jalanjali', and 'Rag-Birag'. Additionally, she won acclaim for her performances in several TV serials (Doordarshan), such as 'Dewta Aru Patni', 'Molok Guin Guin', 'Dolongor Xitu Par Nai', 'Ritu Ahe Ritu Jai', 'Anek Phular Xurabhi', 'Pratighat', 'Xondhya Tora', 'Torali', 'Rong Birong', 'Xahu Aai', 'Jowai', 'Kokaideo', 'Raj Hawlir Birangona', 'Bijoya', 'Utaran', and 'Hanumanor Xadhu', among others.

Late Junu Baruah, former vice president of Baan Theater, was associated with several socio-cultural organisations, including Tezpur District Mahila Committee, Bowa-Kota Samabay Samiti, Moitree Sangha, Samanay Sangha, Pusanjali Mahila Sangha, and Sadou Assam Lekhika Samaroh Samitee. A recipient of artists' pension, late Baruah received numerous prestigious awards for her contributions to Assamese theater and cinema, including the veteran actor late Bhola Kalita Memorial Award. Upon receiving news of her demise, people from various walks of life and organisations, including Baan Theater, Sonitpur Press Club, Journalists' Federation of Assam, and DC Sonitpur Deba Kumar Mishra, rushed to her residence to pay their last respects to the departed soul. She is survived by her daughter-in-law and granddaughters.

Assam Science Society hosts workshop for Biswanath Chariali students

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, July 12: A three-day workshop on mathematics organised by the Biswanath Chariali branch of Assam Science Society for students of classes 6, 7, and 8 at Assam Adarsha Vidyalaya, Borpam, commenced on Friday. The inaugural session of the workshop was chaired by Dr Pradeep Kr Mahanta, president of the Biswanath Chariali branch of Assam Science Society. Nripen Bordoloi, director of Assam Adarsha Vidyalaya, Borpam, delivered a welcome address facilitated by Barnali Kurmi. Dr Sanjib Upadhyaya, secretary of the Biswanath Chariali branch of Assam Science Society, outlined the workshop's objectives.

Mafij Ali, education officer of Monai-Jaisiddhi education block, expressed satisfaction at organising this much-needed workshop for students from the southern part of Sootea. Expert teachers such as Ripunjay Bordoloi, Science teacher of Chengamari HS; Sanjib Gogoi, mathematics teacher of Dolonguri HSS; Durga Nepal, retired subject teacher of Madhya Chhaiduar HSS; Bhaben Nath, mathematics teacher of Monai-Jaisiddhi HS; and Pran Ballav Bora, science teacher of Balidonga HS, attended the workshop. Rupj Das will impart training on vedic maths. A total of 150 students from Dolonguri HSS, Monai-Jaisiddhi HS, Chengamari HS, Diplong ME School, Dekorai HSS, and Assam Adarsha Vidyalaya, Borpam, participated in the workshop.

Pathshala High School goes plant-based for sustainability

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 12: In a groundbreaking move towards sustainability, Pathshala High School has launched the Plant-Powered Thursdays initiative in collaboration with NGOs A Just World, Samaya, and Jan Briddhi Foundation. Every Thursday, the school will serve completely plant-based meals, eliminating all animal products from its menu. This initiative will replace 7,200 meals annually with nutritious, plant-based alternatives.

Plant-Powered Thursdays signify more than just a dietary change; they represent a crucial step toward environmental conservation and animal welfare. Each plant-based meal saves an animal's life, conserves 4,164 liters of water, protects 3 square meters of

forested land, and reduces CO2 emissions by 9 kilograms.

Anupam Kakati, founder of Jan Briddhi, expressed enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "This program not only promotes healthier eating habits among students but also instills a sense of responsibility toward our planet and its inhabitants."

The initiative is generously funded by Thrive Philanthropy and Karuna Foundation, reflecting a shared commitment to fostering sustainable and compassionate communities.

Pathshala High School's principal remarked, "We are proud to pioneer this initiative. It aligns with our mission to educate our students about sustainability and empower them to make choices that positively impact the world."

Jorhat DLSA distributes flood relief

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, July 12: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) of Jorhat, guided by P Das, District and Sessions Judge and chairman of DLSA, distributed flood relief materials to the flood-affected residents of Jhanjimukh, located on the north-eastern outskirts of Jorhat. Alongside the distribution, DLSA organised an awareness programme focusing on health and hygiene.

DLSA secretary-cum-judicial officer Devojoyoti Bhuyan stated that the distribution programme was part of the legal body's initiative, "Helping Hand", and took place at Kaman Gaon, Jhanjimukh. Bhuyan reported that essential items such as sanitary pads, drinking water bottles, mosquito coils, bathing and detergent soaps, toothpaste, biscuits, and other necessities were distributed to over 100 families in the area.

ICMR-RMRC unveils world's most affordable TB detection system in Dibrugarh

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, July 12: The ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, North East (ICMR-RMRCNE) in Dibrugarh has developed the world's most affordable TB testing technology. The 'CRISPR Cas-based TB detection system' can identify TB bacteria using DNA from a patient's saliva for just Rs 35.

"This system can detect the bacteria at the earliest symptoms, testing over 1500 samples simultaneously within approximately two hours. It is so simple that it can be used even in the primary health center of a village," said a researcher at ICMR-RMRC Lakhawar.

This cost-effective, ultra-sensitive molecular detection system for Mycobacterium tuberculosis utilises CRISPR-Cas technology, making it suitable for near-point-of-care setups.

"This process employs a CRISPR Cas12a based fluorescence diagnostic system for the qualitative detection of Mycobacterium tu-



berculosis complex at the nucleic acid level. It uses the 'GlowTBPCR Kit' and 'Rapid-Glow device' (an incubator cum real-

time/end-point fluorescence reader) for result interpretation," explained another researcher.

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a global health challenge, necessitating the development of accurate and rapid diagnostic tools for effective disease management. Current diagnostic methods often exhibit limitations in sensitivity, specificity, speed, and cost, highlighting the need for innovative approaches.

Conventional TB diagnostic techniques commonly rely on culture (which requires 42 days to confirm as TB negative), microscopy, and nucleic acid-based methods. These are time-consuming and may require sophisticated equipment. Additionally, some molecular diagnostic methods, while offering improved sensitivity, may lack the desired specificity or face challenges associated with cost and ease of handling.

To address these problems, the CRISPR-Cas12a-based molecular diagnostic system, 'GlowTBPCR Kit', combined with an amplification step (using a thermal cycler) and the 'RapidGlow device', provides a promising solution.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

We have, I fear, confused power with greatness
-Stewart Udall

Expectations from FM's budget

As the Narendra Modi government prepares to present the third budget of its third term on July 23, the anticipation among financial circles is palpable. However, for the common masses, there seems to be little to look forward to. The BJP-led government, which touts its reforms, has increasingly favoured the interests of financial corporations over those of the general populace. Over the past decade, economic policies have strengthened the grip of corporate giants like Adani and Ambani on the Indian economy. The Modi administration's alignment with these conglomerates has led to significant economic imbalances, eroding the vibrancy of a public-sector-oriented economy. Despite the BJP's precarious minority status and pressure from allies in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, the government appears set to continue its corporate-friendly stance. President Droupadi Murmu's recent address to Parliament promised "historic steps" in the upcoming budget. Yet, these so-called historic shifts have largely benefited corporate finance at the expense of the people. Since the BJP's electoral victory on June 4, the stock markets have surged, reflecting the speculative opportunities that excite big businesses. However, this bullish sentiment starkly contrasts with the struggles of the productive economy and the common citizens.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has engaged with representatives from the infrastructure and energy sectors in pre-budget consultations, who are pushing for accelerated urbanization. This focus on urban land and real estate speculation neglects the needs of the MSMEs and manufacturing sectors. High and complex GST rates continue to stifle industrial production and sales, particularly for smaller enterprises. Data from the Bank of Baroda highlights a 20-year low in manufacturing investments, with just INR 44,300 crore in the June quarter. Despite claims of economic growth, this decline underscores a troubling trend. Big companies have raised a record INR 2.5 lakh crore in the equity market in the first half of this year, signalling a speculative boom. Meanwhile, Adani and Ambani epitomize the financialisation of the economy, with Adani's plans for shipbuilding at Mundra port going unchallenged despite environmental concerns. The proposed ultra-large port at Vadavan, which threatens rare mangroves and wetlands, exemplifies the government's disregard for ecological impacts in favour of private sector gains.

The divestment and asset monetization targets for FY 2025, set at INR 1 lakh crore, mask the dismantling of the public sector. This policy, camouflaged under "miscellaneous capital receipts," effectively transfers public assets to big businesses. The mutual fund industry, too, is thriving, with net assets under management reaching 60 lakh crore, further fuelling speculative finance. Recent recommendations by SBI economists to reduce government participation in public sector banks and the stalled sale of IDBI Bank reflect ongoing efforts to privatize key financial institutions. Simultaneously, the FMCG sector is witnessing a slowdown, with a significant decline in sales growth in urban areas. Labour law violations and layoffs are becoming more common, and the government is considering amendments to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and the Companies Act to favour large firms. This move aims to reduce compliance burdens for big businesses, further easing their operations at the cost of regulatory oversight. The abolition of wealth tax and lax enforcement of tax obligations for billionaires underscore the skewed fiscal policies. The concentration of wealth and capital among a few, coupled with token "public charity," leaves the masses with bleak prospects. As financial capital gains prominence, the government must address the growing economic disparity and realign its priorities.

Centre permitting prosecution of writer Arundhati Roy after 14 years of her speech makes no sense



By: Harihar Swarup

Mahatma Gandhi is, of course, the Father of the nation but how often do we remember what he said and more importantly, how often do governments abide by his wishes? As you will soon discover this is not a rhetorical question. Actually, if we still have a conscience, it might be embarrassing one!

On March 18, 1922, writing in Young India, Gandhi explained his attitude to governments and those in authority over us. "I hold it as a virtue to be dissatisfied towards government", he wrote.

"One should be satisfied free to give the fullest expression to his satisfaction, so long as he does not contemplate, promote or to incite violence. These are words our government should have inscribed in stone and placed prominently in every minister's office.

Let me explain why they're relevant today. Fourteen years after she allegedly questioned whether Kashmir is an "integral" part of India and reportedly advocated the secession of the erstwhile state, the lieutenant governor of Delhi has granted permission for Arundhati Roy to be prosecuted under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The fact that for almost a decade and half - which includes -- 10 long years under government -- no decision was taken, or was considered necessary, speaks volumes. It also raises the question:

why now?

This is not the first time a prominent Indian, who is a globally known writer, has questioned the accession. In his maiden Rajya Sabha speech on May 1, 1962 C N Annadurai did precisely this: "Dravidians demand the right of self-determination.... We want a separate country for South India". Nehru may have blanched but Annadurai was not prosecuted. It wasn't considered anti-national.

Yes, offensive national distasteful it may have been but six decades ago, India accepted this part of right to free speech. At the time, we recognized the concept includes the right to offend. And we honoured Gandhi's famous statement----"I hold it as a virtue to be disaffected towards the government."

If anything, the world has taught us the need to be more tolerant and accommodating today. If the Scottish nationalist in Britain, the Parti Quebecois in Canada or the Catalans in Spain can campaign for secession and be considered respectable and not anti-national, doesn't that suggest that mature enlightened democracies, don't suggest call for secession anti-national?

Is it because the person who spoke out and upset us is Arundhati Roy? Is it because hers is an irresistible and usually convincing voice heard in sharp criticism of the government? Is it because she troubles our shallow peace of mind by raising doubts we do not want to confront. (IPA Service)

Indo-Russian relations: Modi's visit, geopolitical shifts, and global dynamics

Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarked on his first state visit to Russia since starting his third term, marking the 22nd Annual Summit between the two nations. Earlier in June, he was a special invitee at the G-7 summit in Italy. Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin undertook his first foreign trip since the onset of the Ukraine conflict in February 2022, visiting China, followed by subsequent visits to North Korea and Vietnam. This reflects India's predicament caught between a strategic axis formed by China and Russia on one side, and formidable opponents comprising the United States and its allies on the other. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine adds further complexity to the situation.

India's historical reliance on Russia for defense equipment and spare parts has waned in recent years with a shift towards American weaponry and platforms. Prime Minister Modi highlighted Russia's significant contributions in providing essential commodities like food, fuel, and fertilizers. During his visit, President Vladimir Putin joined Modi at the Atom Pavilion within the VDNKh exhibition, emphasizing bilateral cooperation in cutting-edge science and technology, particularly in peaceful nuclear applications.

India has reaped significant advantages from purchasing discounted Russian oil over the past two years. Prime Minister Modi emphasized its positive impact on Indian consumers and the economy, highlighting that this support has also contributed indirectly to global stability. He suggested that without India's demand being met by Russian oil, global oil prices might have surged due to increased international purchases by India.

The comprehensive 81-paragraph joint statement encompassed all the topics discussed or currently in play bilaterally during Mr. Modi's visit on July 8-9. However, the timing of his visit seemed peculiar, coinciding closely with the 75th anniversary summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Washington DC from July 9-11. The NATO summit's focal point remains the ongoing Ukraine conflict, which entered its second phase initiated by Russia in February 2022.

As a result, two immediate reactions emerged. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed disappointment and described the Modi-Putin embrace as a setback for peace efforts. Meanwhile, a spokesperson from the US State Department emphasized that they had conveyed their concerns.

expecting Prime Minister Modi to address the importance of upholding the UN Charter and respecting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in his discussions with President Putin.

The joint statement issued on July 9 delicately addresses these points. It mentions the "conflict around Ukraine," avoiding direct acknowledgment of Russia's military actions in eastern provinces and Crimea. The statement prioritizes ending the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, emphasizing adherence to international law and the UN Charter, aligning with American perspectives. In the words of T.S. Eliot, it reflects the gap "Between the idea and the reality,

Between the motion and the act, Falls the Shadow."

The joint statement casts shadows across its comprehensive scope, touching upon existing, future, and aspirational domains. For instance, in trade with Russia, it notes a significant doubling last year, surpassing the 2025 target. However, amidst a total trade volume of \$65 billion, India's exports stand modestly at \$4 billion. The majority of this trade surge stems from India's heightened imports of Russian petroleum products.

Addressing this imbalance requires more than just committees and exploratory mechanisms. China has entrenched itself deeply in the Russian market, leveraging its diverse range of manufactured goods. India faces a challenging path ahead; for instance, Chinese electric vehicles now dominate Russia's automobile imports, effectively countering US sanctions. Despite these obstacles, the new aim for Indo-Russian trade is to reach \$100 billion by 2030. The remaining paragraphs focus on strengthening the enduring and expanding partnership between India and Russia. Emphasizing the deepening of their special and privileged strategic partnership is crucial amid a challenging geopolitical landscape.

An intriguing proposition is the suggestion of a Free Trade Agreement encompassing goods and services between India and Russia under the sponsorship of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). This union seeks to attract former Soviet republics into a Russian-led economic partnership. Among the Central Asian republics, only Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are full members, while Uzbekistan holds observer status. This move is seen as a counterbalance to China's Belt and Road initiatives within what Russia perceives as its sphere of influence. However, the limits of this influence are evi-

dent, as Kazakhstan did not support Russia's actions in Ukraine. The energy partnership is prominently highlighted as a key pillar of the bilateral relationship. The joint statement outlines plans for new, long-term agreements encompassing fossil fuels such as petroleum and coal, alongside civil nuclear cooperation. It also acknowledges milestones like the completion of the Kudankulam nuclear power units and the ongoing selection process for another nuclear site.

The joint statement underscores cooperation in peaceful space activities, capacity-building, and highlights Indian achievements in these areas. Military cooperation is emphasized as another significant pillar, particularly focusing on joint research and development aligned with India's "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" initiative, promoting self-reliance and indigenous manufacturing.

The statement also addresses collaboration in education, science, technology, and joint research endeavors. It notes Russia's challenges in defense research, evidenced by its reliance on Iran for drones and North Korea for ammunition and artillery.

India continues to view the West, particularly the United States, as preferred sources for defense equipment technology. However, in a competitive global environment, there is merit in

exploring what Russia has to offer. Plurilateral groupings such as BRICS and the SCO are recognized as platforms for addressing issues impacting the Global South. However, India confronts challenges as these groups expand, potentially diluting their original agendas. There is also a growing perception that these platforms are evolving into mechanisms aimed at countering Western-led or US-dominated groupings. This echoes the historical issue India faced with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), where its founding principles sometimes veered off course.

An editorial in The Australian newspaper raised concerns about India's membership in the Quad alongside Australia, Japan, and the United States. It noted that gestures like a "Modi hug" could sometimes be misinterpreted beyond a simple handshake.

The Ministry of External Affairs faces the task of reassuring India's European and American partners regarding India's reliability in technology sharing and its role as a balancer vis-à-vis China. It is crucial to emphasize that a Russia under sanctions may further align with China, and Prime Minister Modi's gesture was aimed at maintaining equilibrium. (The writer can be reached at dipakurmi@gmail.com)

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

Empowering the Department of Agriculture, Assam: The need for specialized leadership

By: Mowsam Hazarika

The Department of Agriculture, Assam, plays a pivotal role in the development and implementation of agricultural schemes, extension services, and the overall advancement of the state's agrarian sector. However, the current leadership of this department and its sister organizations (Department of Horticulture and Food Processing, Assam Seed Corporation, and Assam State Agricultural Marketing Board) predominantly comprises non-technical officials, mainly from civil service cadres. While historically entrenched, this practice may not be the most effective approach for addressing the complex challenges faced by modern agriculture. There is a compelling argument for appointing agriculture graduates to lead these departments, given their specialized knowledge and expertise.

Assam's agriculture sector is the backbone of its economy, providing livelihoods to a significant portion of the population. The state's diverse agro-climatic conditions support a variety of crops, from rice and tea to horticultural produce. However, this diversity also brings a range of challenges, including flood management, soil fertility issues, pest infestations, and market accessibility. Addressing these challenges requires a deep understanding of agricultural science, which non-technical officials may lack. In contrast, agriculture graduates are equipped with the necessary technical knowledge to devise effective solutions.

One of the primary advantages of having agriculture graduates in leadership positions is their ability to make scientifically informed decisions. These individuals possess a comprehensive understanding of crop science, soil health, pest management, and sustainable farming practices. This expertise is crucial for formulating policies that can enhance productivity, improve crop yields, and ensure food security. For

instance, agriculture graduates can recommend appropriate crop varieties suited to specific soil types and climatic conditions, thereby optimizing production. They can also implement advanced pest management strategies that reduce reliance on chemical pesticides, promoting environmental sustainability.

Non-technical officials from civil service backgrounds, while bringing administrative skills and a broad understanding of governance, may rely heavily on advisors and technical staff for specialized agricultural knowledge. This reliance can lead to a disconnect between policy formulation and on-ground realities, resulting in less effective interventions. Additionally, civil service officials often rotate between departments, which can hinder the development of in-depth sector-specific expertise. Agriculture graduates, with their focused education and training, are better positioned to understand and address the nuances of agricultural challenges.

Innovation is another critical area where agriculture graduates can make a significant impact. The agricultural sector is evolving rapidly, with new technologies and practices emerging to address contemporary issues such as climate change, resource scarcity, and the need for sustainable intensification. Agriculture graduates are trained to stay abreast of these advancements and can effectively integrate them into local farming practices. For example, they can promote precision farming techniques that optimize input use and increase efficiency. They can also introduce modern irrigation methods, soil conservation practices, and climate-resilient crop varieties, all of which are essential for sustainable agricultural development. Moreover, agriculture graduates are well-equipped to lead effective extension services, which are crucial for disseminating knowledge to farmers. Extension services bridge the gap between research institutions and the farming

community, ensuring that the latest scientific advancements are translated into practical applications. Agriculture graduates, with their ability to communicate complex concepts in an accessible manner, can enhance the reach and impact of these services. They can organize training programs, workshops, and field demonstrations that empower farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to improve their practices and livelihoods.

The local context of Assam's agriculture further underscores the need for technically proficient leadership. The state faces unique challenges such as recurring floods, varying topography, and diverse soil types. Agriculture graduates, familiar with these local conditions, can develop tailored solutions that address these specific issues. For instance, they can recommend flood-resistant crop varieties and develop water management strategies to mitigate the impact of floods. They can also advise on appropriate soil conservation techniques and cropping patterns that optimize land use and minimize soil erosion.

Leadership in the agricultural sector also requires strong advocacy skills to represent the interests of the farming community. Agriculture graduates, with their deep understanding of the sector, can effectively communicate the needs and concerns of farmers to policymakers. They can ensure that agricultural policies are responsive to the realities on the ground and that the voices of farmers are heard in decision-making processes. This is particularly important in Assam, where the agricultural sector is characterized by small and marginal farmers who often lack the resources and political clout to influence policy decisions. Education and training are critical components of agricultural development, and agriculture graduates can play a pivotal role in capacity building. They can design and implement training programs that address the specific needs of the local farming community. This continuous

learning process is vital for the overall growth and development of the agricultural sector in Assam. For example, training programs on integrated pest management can help farmers reduce their reliance on chemical pesticides, promoting environmentally sustainable farming practices. Similarly, workshops on post-harvest management can teach farmers how to minimize crop losses and improve the quality of their produce, thereby increasing their marketability and income.

In conclusion, the current practice of appointing non-technical officials from civil service cadres to lead the Department of Agriculture in Assam may not be the most effective approach for addressing the complex challenges faced by the state's agricultural sector. Agriculture graduates, with their specialized knowledge and expertise, are better suited to lead this crucial department. Their technical proficiency, innovative mindset, and deep understanding of local agricultural conditions make them the ideal candidates to steer Assam's agricultural sector towards a sustainable and prosperous future.

By empowering agriculture graduates to lead, Assam can ensure that its agricultural sector thrives, securing the livelihoods of its farmers and contributing to the overall development of the state. In a rapidly changing world, where the challenges facing agriculture are becoming increasingly complex, the need for knowledgeable and skilled leaders in the Agriculture Department under the provision of Assam Agricultural Service Rules has never been more critical. Agriculture graduates, with their unique blend of scientific knowledge and practical skills, are best positioned to meet this need and guide Assam's agricultural sector towards a brighter future. (The author is a poet and People's Science Activist. He is also the Former Director, Assam Seed and Organic Certification Agency & Retired Joint Director of Agriculture, Assam)

Modi's Russia visit deepens economic partnership amidst Moscow's diplomatic isolation

By: K Raveendran

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia holds significant implications for the economic partnership between the two countries, spanning various sectors from energy to technology and beyond. As such, it is a pivotal moment for both countries, especially against the backdrop of evolving global dynamics and their mutual interests in enhancing economic ties.

Central to the discussions during Prime Minister Modi's visit is the deepening of economic cooperation between the two countries. Historically, the relationship has been characterized by robust collaborations in defence and space exploration. However, in recent years, both nations have increasingly focused on expanding their economic engagement, leveraging each other's strengths for mutual benefit. Energy cooperation remains a cornerstone of

economic relationship. Russia, endowed with extensive natural resources, including vast reserves of oil and natural gas, presents a reliable partner for India's energy security needs. Discussions during the visit are likely to revolve around enhancing cooperation in oil and gas exploration, production, and refining. Joint ventures such as the Sakhalin-1 project exemplify successful collaborations that contribute significantly to India's energy security strategy.

Furthermore, with global attention increasingly shifting towards renewable energy sources, discussions may also encompass potential partnerships in renewable energy projects. Russia's expertise in nuclear energy and India's ambitious renewable energy targets present opportunities for collaboration in areas such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power.

Beyond energy, the visit aims to strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties across diverse

sectors. Both countries have expressed interest in diversifying their trade basket beyond traditional sectors like defence and pharmaceuticals. Key sectors of interest include agriculture, manufacturing, information technology, and infrastructure development.

Investment is another critical aspect of the discussions. Russian investment in India, particularly in sectors such as steel, mining, and energy, has been significant. Indian companies, in turn, have shown increasing interest in sectors like pharmaceuticals, IT, and automotive manufacturing in Russia. Moreover, enhancing connectivity between India and Russia is pivotal for facilitating trade and investment flows. Improving air, sea, and land connectivity, as well as streamlining visa procedures for business travellers and tourists, can foster greater economic engagement. Strategic infrastructure projects, such as

the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which aims to create a multimodal transport network linking India, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia, could also be a topic of discussion.

Financial cooperation is another area of interest. Discussions on currency swaps, banking ties, and collaboration between financial institutions could facilitate smoother financial transactions and investment flows between the two countries. Strengthening financial cooperation is essential for supporting large-scale infrastructure projects and promoting economic growth. Modi's visit underscores India's commitment to maintaining a balanced foreign policy approach and diversifying its economic partnerships amidst global uncertainties. By deepening economic ties with Russia, India aims to ensure stability in its energy supplies, expand market access for its goods and serv-

ices, and tap into Russia's technological capabilities.

India is keen to reassure Moscow regarding a potential shift in India's policy, especially in view of New Delhi moving closer to Washington in terms of economic and technological cooperation. India had played a key role in enabling Russia to dodge western sanctions in the wake of the Ukraine war. India, along with China rescued Russia from a financial meltdown and international isolation. New Delhi has made it clear to western capitals that India's energy cooperation with Russia, which has in effect made a shift in the country's energy purchases, is in self-interest and has defended its policy, which is in contravention of western sanctions. Western nations, particularly Washington, have reconciled themselves to India's position and Modi's visit is particularly significant from this point of view. (IPA Service)



By: Ranjan K Baruah

We see hills and rivers around us but we don't see seas and oceans as they are far from us. Many of us visited different beaches and also carried out different adventurous activities related to seas or oceans. We can't imagine the vast resources oceans possess. We have seen that throughout

history, oceans and seas have been vital conduits for trade and transportation.

We should know that the ocean produces at least 50% of the planet's oxygen. The ocean is key to our economy with an estimated 40 million people being employed by ocean-based industries by 2030. Oceans absorb about 30% of carbon dioxide produced by humans, buffering

Oceans as a career choice

the impacts of global warming. Oceans are important and they matter to our life and health. There is no doubt that oceans drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe, are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea.

The importance of oceans has been realized and the global community felt that there should be celebrations related to oceans like other celebrations of events. The United Nations General Assembly designated 8 June as World Oceans Day (WOD) by its resolution 63/111 of 5 December 2008.

The concept of a WOD was first proposed in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro

as a way to celebrate our world's shared ocean and our personal connection to the sea, as well as to raise awareness about the crucial role the ocean plays in our lives and the important ways people can help protect it.

Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future. Marine protected areas need to be effectively managed and well-resourced and regulations need to be put in place to reduce overfishing, marine pollution and ocean acidification.

UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) sponsors the World Ocean Network, which has since 2002 been instrumental in building support for ocean awareness events on 8 June. "Awaken New Depths" is the theme for this year's celebration.

As we are discussing the importance of oceans, we need to know career options related to the same so that we can professionally get engaged in the conservation or preservation or using the resources in a sustainable manner. There are many career options but we can name a few like Ocean Engineering, Marine Biology, Marine Mammal Trainer, Marine Archeology, Marine Researcher, Marine Environment Educator/ Oceanography, Aquatic Veterinarian, Scuba Diving Instructor and Underwater Filmmaker, Marine Scientist, Marine Environment Economist, etc.

Oceanography is the study of the physical, chemical, and biological features of the ocean, including the ocean's ancient history, its current condition, and its future. Marine biology is the

study of marine organisms, their behaviors and interactions with the environment. Marine biologists study biological oceanography and the associated fields of chemical, physical, and geological oceanography to understand marine organisms.

Graduates in Physics, Agriculture, Microbiology, Zoology, Botany, Chemistry, and Applied Sciences or in other equivalent fields are eligible to pursue an M.Sc course in oceanography. Graduates who complete Oceanography have a wide range of career prospects both in governmental and other organizations.

Job designation may be working as scientist, engineers, and researchers at government sectors such as Meteorological Survey of India, Department of Oceanography, Geological Sur-

vey of India, marine life force, import and export department, environmental consultancies, ocean instrumentation manufacturing companies, water companies, energy supply companies, NGOs, media, etc.

As oceans are crucial to combating climate change so there would be more demands in different international organizations for the trained and qualified aspirants. Goal 14 of Sustainable Development Goals is focused on 'Life below water and why it matters' and this shows seriousness of the global community which also brings opportunity for the qualified individuals to work in this sector. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkrjanjan@gmail.com for any career related queries)*

IBPS Clerk recruitment 2024 – Online apply for 6128 posts

Last Date: 21/07/2024

Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) has released an employment notification to conduct online examination for the next Common Recruitment Process (CRP - XIV) to recruit 6128 Clerical Cadre posts. The exam is tentatively scheduled in August 2024 and October 2024. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Clerk
No of posts: 6128 posts

State-wise vacancy:

• Andaman & Nicobar Islands: 1	• Andhra Pradesh: 105
• Arunachal Pradesh: 10	• Assam: 75
• Bihar: 237	• Chandigarh: 39
• Chhattisgarh: 119	• Dadra & Nagar Haveli/ Daman & Diu: 5
• Delhi: 268	• Goa: 35
• Gujarat: 236	• Haryana: 190
• Himachal Pradesh: 67	• Jammu and Kashmir: 20
• Jharkhand: 70	• Karnataka: 457
• Kerala: 106	• Ladakh: 3
• Lakshadweep: 0	• Madhya Pradesh: 354
• Maharashtra: 590	• Manipur: 6
• Meghalaya: 3	• Mizoram: 3
• Nagaland: 6	• Odisha: 107
• Puducherry: 8	• Punjab: 404
• Rajasthan: 205	• Sikkim: 5
• Tamil Nadu: 665	• Telangana: 104
• Tripura: 19	• Uttar Pradesh: 1246
• Uttarakhand: 29	• West Bengal: 331

IBPS Clerk Vacancy in Assam
Total no of posts: 75 posts

Bank-wise vacancy:

Bank of India: 2
Canara Bank: 4
Central Bank of India: 64
Punjab & Sind Bank: 5

Eligibility Criteria of IBPS Clerk Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates age should be between 20 years to 28 years as on 1st July 2024. Candidate should be born between 2nd July 1996 to 1st July 2004 (both dates inclusive).

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.
Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe: 5 years
Other Backward Classes (Non-Creamy Layer): 3 years
Persons With Disabilities: 10 years

Educational Qualification: A Degree (Graduation) in any discipline from a University recognised by the Govt. of India or any equivalent qualification recognized as such by the Central Government. The candidate must possess valid Mark-sheet / Degree Certificate that he/ she is a graduate on the day he / she registers and indicate the percentage of marks obtained in Graduation while registering online.

Computer Literacy: Operating and working knowledge in computer systems is mandatory i.e. candidates should have Certificate/Diploma/Degree in computer operations/Language/ should have studied Computer / Information Technology as one of the subjects in the High School/College/Institute.

Proficiency in the Official Language of the State/ UT: Candidates should know how to read/ write and speak the Official Language of the State/UT for which vacancies a candidate wishes to apply.

Application Fee:
• SC/ST/PWBD/EXSM: ₹ 175 (inclusive of GST)
• Others: ₹ 850 (inclusive of GST)

Payment mode: Online (Debit Cards (RuPay/Visa/MasterCard/Maestro), Credit Cards, Internet Banking, IMPS, Cash Cards/ Mobile Wallets)

Important Dates of IBPS Clerk Recruitment 2024

- Starting Date for Apply Online: 1st July 2024
- Last Date to Apply Online: 21st July 2024
- Date for Prelims Exam: August, 2024
- Date for Release of Result for Online Exam: September 2024
- Date for Mains Exam: October 2024

SSC CGL recruitment 2024 – Online apply for 17727 posts

Last Date: 24/07/2024

Staff Selection Commission (SSC) has released the official notification of Combined Graduate Level (CGL) Examination 2024 for the recruitment of approximately 17727 Group B and Group C posts in different Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations of Government of India and various Constitutional Bodies/ Statutory Bodies/ Tribunals, etc.

Name of posts:

- 1. Assistant Section Officer**
Ministry: Central Secretariat Service
Age Limit: 20-30 years
- 2. Assistant Section Officer**
Ministry: Intelligence Bureau
Age Limit: 18-30 years
- 3. Assistant Section Officer**
Ministry: Railway
Age Limit: 20-30 years
- 4. Assistant Section Officer**
Ministry: External Affairs
Age Limit: 20-30 years
- 5. Assistant Section Officer**
Ministry: AFHQ

Age Limit: 20-30 years

6. Assistant Section Officer
Ministry: Electronics and Information Technology
Age Limit: 18-30 years

7. Assistant/ Assistant Section Officer
Ministry: Other Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations
Age Limit: 18-30 years

8. Inspector of Income Tax
Ministry: CBDT
Age Limit: 18-30 years

9. Inspector, (Central Excise)
Ministry: CBIC
Age Limit: 18-30 years

10. Inspector (Preventive Officer)
Ministry: CBIC
Age Limit: 18-30 years

11. Inspector (Examiner)
Ministry: CBIC
Age Limit: 18-30 years

12. Assistant Enforcement Officer
Ministry: Directorate of Enforcement, Department of Revenue
Age Limit: 18-30 years

13. Sub Inspector
Ministry: Central Bureau of Investigation
Age Limit: 20-30 years

14. Inspector Posts
Ministry: Department of Post
Age Limit: 18-30 years

15. Inspector
Ministry: Central Bureau of Narcotics, Ministry of Finance
Age Limit: 18-30 years

16. Assistant / Assistant Section Officer
Ministry: Other Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations
Age Limit: 18-30 years

17. Executive Assistant
Ministry: CBIC
Age Limit: 18-30 years

18. Research Assistant
Ministry: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)
Age Limit: 18-30 years

19. Divisional Accountant
Ministry: Offices under C&AG
Age Limit: 18-30 years

20. Sub Inspector
Ministry: National Investigation Agency (NIA)
Age Limit: 18-30 years

21. Sub-Inspector/ Junior Intelligence Officer
Ministry: Narcotics Control Bureau (MHA)
Age Limit: 18-30 years

22. Junior Statistical Officer (JSO)
Ministry: M/s Statistics & Programme Implementation
Age Limit: 18-32 years

23. Auditor
Ministry: Offices under C&AG
Age Limit: 18-27 years

24. Auditor
Ministry: Other Ministry/ Departments
Age Limit: 18-27 years

25. Auditor
Ministry: Offices under CGDA
Age Limit: 18-27 years

26. Accountant
Ministry: Offices under C&AG
Age Limit: 18-27 years

27. Accountant
Ministry: Controller General of Accounts
Age Limit: 18-27 years

28. Accountant/ Junior Accountant
Ministry: Other Ministry/ Departments
Age Limit: 18-27 years

29. Postal Assistant/ Sorting Assistant
Ministry: Department of Post
Age Limit: 18-27 years

30. Senior Secretariat Assistant/ Upper Division Clerks
Ministry: Central Govt. Offices/ Ministries other than CSCS cadres.
Age Limit: 18-27 years

31. Senior Administrative Assistant
Ministry: Military Engineering Services, Ministry of Defence
Age Limit: 18-27 years

32. Tax Assistant
Ministry: CBDT
Age Limit: 18-27 years

33. Tax Assistant
Ministry: CBIC
Age Limit: 18-27 years

34. Sub-Inspector

Ministry: Central Bureau of Narcotics
Age Limit: 18-27 years

No of posts: There are approx. 17,727 vacancies.

Eligibility Criteria of SSC CGL Recruitment

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below

- SC/ST: 5 years
- OBC: 3 years
- PwD (Unreserved): 10 years
- PwD (OBC): 13 years
- PwD (SC/ST): 15 years

Educational Qualification:

Junior Statistical Officer:

Bachelor's Degree in any subject from a recognized University or Institute with at least 60% Marks in Mathematics at 12th standard level;

Or

Bachelor's Degree in any subject with Statistics as one of the subjects at degree level.

Statistical Investigator Grade-II:

Bachelor's Degree in any subject with Statistics as one of the subjects from a recognized University or Institute. The candidates must have studied Statistics as a subject in all the three years or all the 6 semesters of the graduation course.

Research Assistant in National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):

Essential Qualification: Bachelor's Degree from a recognized University or Institute.

Desirable Qualification:

- Minimum one-year research experience in any recognized university or recognized Research Institution;
- Degree in Law or Human Rights from a recognized university.

All Other Posts:

- Bachelor's Degree from a recognized University or Institute.
- The candidates appearing in the final year of their graduation can also apply, however they must possess Essential qualification on or before 01-08-2024.

Application Fee of SSC CGL Exam

- General/ OBC: ₹ 100
- SC/ ST/ Women/Ex-Servicemen: Nil
- Payment Mode: Through Debit/ Credit Card/SBI Challan/SBI Net Banking

Exam Centres of SSC CGL Exam in North Eastern Region (NER)

Here is the list of examination centres in North Eastern Region states:

- Itanagar (5001)
- Dibrugarh (5102)
- Guwahati (Dispur) (5105)
- Jorhat (5107)
- Silchar (5111)
- Dimapur (5301)
- Kohima (5302)
- Shillong (5401)
- Imphal (5501)
- Churachandpur (5502)
- Ukhrul (5503)
- Agartala (5601)
- Aizwal (5701)

Important Dates of SSC CGL Recruitment 2024

- Starting date of submission of online application: 24th June 2024
- Last date of submission of online application: 24th July 2024
- Date of SSC CGL Tier I Examination: Sep-Oct 2024
- Dates of Tier-II Examination (CBE): December 2024

Indian Bank Apprentice recruitment – 1500 posts, online apply

Last Date: 31/07/2024

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

Name of post: Apprentice
No of posts: 1500 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

- SC: 255
- ST: 77
- OBC: 351
- EWS: 137
- UR: 680

No of posts in Assam: 29 posts

Stipend:

- Metro / Urban Branches: ₹ 15,000 p.m.
- Rural / Semi Urban Branches: ₹ 12,000 p.m.

Eligibility Criteria of Indian Bank Apprentice Recruitment

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

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

- SC/ ST: 5 years
- OBC: 3 years
- PwBD: 10 years

Educational Qualification: Graduate Degree from recognized University/Institutes.

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

- General/OBC/EWS: ₹ 500
- SC/ST/PwBD: Nil

Important Dates of Indian Bank Apprentice Vacancy 2024

- Starting date of submission of online application: 10th July 2024
- Last date of submission of online application: 31st July 2024

Determined to run in re-election, will defeat Trump: Biden



WASHINGTON, July 12: A defiant US President Joe Biden has insisted that he is "determined" and fit to seek re-election and defeat his Republican rival Donald Trump in November, even as two excruciating gaffes marred his efforts to dismiss concerns over his age and fitness.

During a high-stakes solo news conference on Thursday at the conclusion of the NATO Summit here, Biden said that no poll or person is telling him that he can't win reelection currently. That is the only way he would consider ending his presidential bid.

"I'm determined to run," 81-year-old Biden, the oldest sitting US President, said. "The fact is that the consideration is that I think I'm the most qualified person to run for president. I beat him (Trump) once, and I will beat him again. Secondly, the idea that senators and congressmen are running for office worrying about the ticket is not unusual and I might add, there were at least five presidents running or incumbent presidents who had lower numbers than I have now later in a campaign," Biden said.

"So there's a long way to go in this campaign, and so I'm just going to keep moving, keep moving," he said.

Toward the beginning of the question-and-answer session, Biden mistakenly referred to Vice President Kamala Harris as former President Trump amid mounting questions surrounding his mental acuity.

He said Harris was qualified to be president as well, although he misnamed her in the endorsement.

"I wouldn't have picked vice-president Trump to be vice-president if she's not qualified to be president," Biden said. He made a similar mistake earlier in the day, accidentally calling Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky "President Putin" while introducing him during a NATO event.

He continued to defy the pleas from a growing number of Democrats to step down from the Democratic ticket.

Asked if he was determined to stay in the race despite the fears of some Democratic lawmakers, Biden said, "I'm determined on running, but I think it's important that I realise ally fears by seeing - let them see me out there. Let them see me out."

He said his campaign was strong

and working hard in "toss-up states." "...look, I got more work to do. We've got more work to finish. We made so much progress. Think about where we are economically relative to the rest of the world. Name me a world leader who wouldn't want to trade places with our economy. We created over 800,000 manufacturing jobs, ...so things are moving. We've got more to go," the president said.

"Working-class people still need help. Corporate greed is still at large. Corporate profits have doubled since the pandemic. They're coming down and so I'm optimistic about where things are going," he asserted.

Biden added that he is seeking his re-election not for his legacy.

"I'm in this to complete the job I started. As you recall, understandably, many of you and many economists thought my initial initiatives that I put forward can't do that because it's going to cause inflation. Things are going to skyrocket. The debt's going to go up. What are you hearing now from mainstream economists?"

"Sixteen economic Nobel laureates said I've done a hell of a job, that under my plan so far and what's going to happen in the future if I'm reelected, that things are going to get much better. Our economy is growing. I was determined when I got elected to stop the trickle-down economic theory that if the wealthy did very well, everybody else would do well," the president said.

Biden refuted reports that he told his aides that he needed to go to bed earlier and end meetings around eight in the evening.

"That's not true... what I said was, instead of my every day starting at seven and going to bed at midnight, it'd be smarter for me to pace myself a little more. And I said, for example, the 8:00, 7:00, 6:00 stuff, instead of starting the fundraiser at 9:00, start at 8:00. People get to go home by 10:00. That's what I'm talking about," he said.

When asked about what changed his mind when in 2020 he said that he would be the bridge candidacy for a younger, fresher generation of Democratic leaders, Biden said: "What changed was the gravity of the situation I inherited in terms of the economy, our foreign policy and domestic division." (PTI)

The consultative body was established as North Korea has sharply accelerated its missile testing activities and openly threatened to use nuclear weapons preemptively in potential conflicts. South Korea has no nuclear weapons

US and South Korea sign joint nuclear deterrence guidelines in face of North Korean threats

SEOUL, July 12: The US and South Korea signed joint nuclear deterrence guidelines for the first time, a basic yet important step in their efforts to improve deterrence toward North Korea's evolving nuclear threats.

Meeting on Thursday on the sidelines of a NATO summit in Washington, President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol commended what they called "the tremendous progress" that their countries' alliance have made a year after creating a joint Nuclear Consultative Group.

The two leaders authorized "the US-ROK Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula" that was signed by their defense officials earlier on Thursday, according to South Korea's presidential office. ROK stands for the Republic of Korea, South Korea's official name.

Last year, the US and South Korea launched the consultative body to strengthen communication on nuclear operations and discuss how to integrate US nuclear weapons and South Korean conventional weapons in various contingencies.

The US has long promised to use all its



capabilities, including nuclear weapons, to defend South Korea if it is attacked, but faced suspicions that it lacks plans on how it would exercise its extended deterrence for its Asian ally.

The consultative body was established as North Korea has sharply accelerated its missile testing activities and openly threatened to use nuclear weapons preemptively in potential conflicts. South Korea has no nuclear weapons.

"The presidents underscored that the Guidelines document provides a solid foundation for enhancing US-ROK extended deterrence cooperation in an integrated manner," said a joint statement by Biden

and Yoon.

Du Hyeogun Cha, an analyst at Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies, said the guidelines mark substantial progress in deterrence plans, but the allies will still need to fill in the details and conduct military exercises to test them.

Kim Tae-hyo, a deputy national security director in South Korea, told reporters that South Korea and the US will conduct joint military exercises to help implement the deterrence guidelines. He said the US would commit specific nuclear assets to a role in deterrence plans, but experts added that this does not mean it would place nuclear weapons in South Korea.

Specifics of the guidelines, which Seoul called confidential, were not available, though the US will certainly retain control of its nuclear weapons.

"The key is how to integrate South Korea's conventional weapons and America's nuclear weapons to launch joint, massive retaliation to North Korea, when it carries out nuclear strikes on South Korea," said Kim Yeol Soo, an expert at South Korea's Korea Institute for Military Affairs.

He said prospects for South Korea-US coordination are bright if Biden is re-elected in the November election, but could suffer a setback if former President Donald Trump returns to the White House.

North Korea is expected to respond angrily to the announcement, as it has previously accused its rivals of using the consultation group to plot a nuclear attack on the North.

Worries about North Korea have further deepened since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin in June signed a deal requiring each country to provide aid to the other if it is attacked, and vowed to boost other cooperation. Analysts say the accord represents the strongest connection between the two countries since the end of the Cold War. (AP)

65 people, including seven Indians, believed to be missing after landslide in Nepal: Media reports



KATHMANDU, July 12: At least seven Indian nationals are among over 60 passengers who are believed to be missing after two buses were swept away by a landslide and pushed into a swollen river in Nepal early on Friday, officials said.

The two buses carrying 65 passengers were missing in the Trishuli River in the Simaltal area along the Narayanghat-Mugling road in Chitwan district, myRepublica news portal reported quoting officials.

Chief District Officer of Chitwan, Indradev Yadav, confirmed the incident.

According to Yadav, the Kathmandu-bound Angel bus and Ganpati Deluxe, en route to Gaur from the Capital, met with the accident at around 3:30 am.

Twenty-four people were onboard the bus travelling to Kathmandu and 41 on the bus travelling to Gaur, police said.

Three of the passengers on the Ganpati Deluxe bus managed to escape after jumping out of the vehicle, The Kathmandu Post reported.

Details have been received of 21 passengers travelling from Birgunj to Kathmandu on Angel

Deluxe. According to the latest information, police have said that there were seven Indian nationals among the passengers on the bus.

The missing Indian nationals are identified as Santosh Thakur, Surendra Sah, Aditi Miyaan, Sunil, Shah-nawaj Alam, and Ansari. Another person has not been identified.

Yadav said that the rescue workers have started clearing the landslide debris.

Expressing grief over the disappearance of the two buses in the Trishuli River, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has issued directives for immediate search and rescue operations.

"I am deeply saddened by the loss of nearly five dozen passengers and the loss of property due to floods and landslides in different parts of the country when a bus was washed away by a landslide on the Narayanghat-Mugling road section. I direct all agencies of the government, including the home

administration, to search and effectively rescue the passengers," Prachanda posted on X.

The prime minister also expressed grief over the loss of life and property due to floods and landslides in different parts of the country. He urged citizens to take necessary precautions.

Nepal Police and Armed Police Force personnel are heading towards the incident sites for rescue operations, Superintendent of Police Bhawesh Rimal said.

Debris from landslides at various places has obstructed traffic on the Narayanghat-Mugling road section.

Meanwhile, in separate incidents, at least 11 people died in landslides and floods triggered by incessant rain in Kaski district on Thursday.

More than 1,800 people have lost their lives in a decade due to monsoon disasters. During this period, about 400 people went missing and more than 1,500 people were injured in the disaster. (PTI)

Teenager arrested after UK gurdwara attack with 'bladed weapon'

LONDON, July 12: A 17-year-old boy remains in custody after two women were injured in a suspected religiously aggravated incident involving a "bladed weapon" at a gurdwara in Kent, south-east England, local police said on Friday.

Kent Police said its officers were called to the Sri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara on Thursday evening to investigate reports that a male had entered the place of worship and attempted to assault members of the gathering. The gurdwara, among the largest in Europe, said that 'Guru Granth Sahib Ji' was not present in the Darbar Hall at the time of the incident.

"It was reported that a male had entered the location and attempted to assault those in attendance whilst armed with a bladed weapon. Nobody was seriously injured during the incident but two women required medical attention for cuts and bruises," Kent Police said in a statement. The officers arrested the teenage boy on suspicion of attempted murder and a religiously aggravated public order offence and also recovered the bladed weapon from the scene. The police have described it as an "isolated incident" and nobody else is currently being sought in connection with the attack.

"We understand the community's concerns in relation to the events at the gurdwara, however we are treating it as an isolated incident," said Detective Superintendent Ian Dyball of Kent Police. "Patrols will remain in the area for reassurance and we thank the community for their ongoing support and assistance," he said.

According to the gurdwara's management team, the suspect was spotted by its security team and police were called immediately.

"A person has been arrested by Kent Police on suspicion of attempted murder, after entering the gurdwara and creating an incident in one of the Darbar Halls. We can confirm that the incident happened after Sukhasan and 'Guru Granth Sahib Ji' was not present in the Darbar Hall," read a gurdwara statement. "The gurdwara is cooperating fully with Kent Police who are treating the incident very seriously, with the District Commander on site to support whilst the investigation is ongoing," the statement added. (PTI)

NC and UML united by fear, not by shared values: Nepal PM

KATHMANDU, July 12: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Friday sharply criticised the Nepali Congress (NC) and the CPN-UML for striking an alliance out of fear rather than shared principles and accused them of pushing the nation toward regression.

Addressing the House of Representatives (HoR) before seeking a vote of confidence, Prachanda, 69, voiced concerns about potential regression and autocracy, asserting that the NC and the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (UML) had joined forces as good governance began to take root in the country.

Prachanda was forced to take the vote of confidence after the former premier K P Sharma-Id CPN-UML withdrew its support for his government.

"If the NC and the UML were united by common beliefs or goals, I would not be concerned. Instead, you are bound by a fear of good govern-

ance," Prachanda said. He questioned whether the public had approved this alliance.

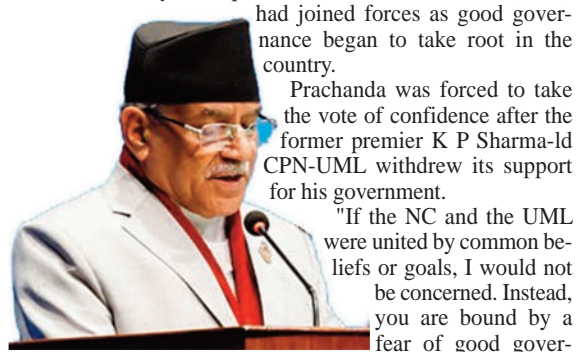
He argued that, in a healthy democracy, the main opposition party should not form the government, accusing the NC and UML of pushing the nation toward regression.

He asked them not to lead the nation to unnecessary conflict in the name of amending the Constitution by violating the agreement and engaging in deception.

Prachanda recalled that the process of making the Constitution in the Constituent Assembly was carried out through extensive deliberations and maximum national consensus.

"As a major leader of all these historical and epoch-making events, I say to my friends, do not lead the nation to an unnecessary conflict in the name of amending the Constitution by violating the agreement and engaging in deception," Prachanda said. He said that the initiative of national consensus can be taken in the light of day with open information of the people.

"If the intention was right, the discussion of national consensus could have been taken in this honourable parliament. The fact that you are in a conspiracy, not in a discussion, is confirmed by the place and time you have agreed upon. There is no fear of that level when working naturally and conscientiously," he said. (PTI)



India, Singapore well positioned to create new era of opportunity: President Shanmugaratnam

SINGAPORE, July 12: India and Southeast Asia are well positioned to create a new era of opportunity, equity and sustainability, despite the resurgence of industrial policies among the major economies, Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam said on Thursday.

Working with other responsible middle powers, both regions have the ability to strengthen multilateralism, which, despite its imperfections, has been an arrangement that has served nations both rich and poor well for decades, he said at a dinner celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), a think tank of the National University of Singapore.

Tharman also expressed optimism that Singapore-India relations will continue on an upward trajectory.

Industrial policies such as tax breaks and subsidies to promote specific industries domestically are returning at a rate not seen since the 1960s and 1970s, despite having largely failed then, Tharman noted.

For instance, the International Monetary Fund tabulated 2,500 industrial policy interventions in 2023, two-thirds of which were intended to discriminate against foreign interests.

Such interventions by governments are being made not because of any powerful new evidence or a cogent reappraisal of what brings about prosperity, but "by way of drift and tit-for-tat actions", he told about 180 guests who analyses Singapore's diplomatic-commerce relations with South Asia with a focus on India as a large investment destination and consumer-driven market. The result is a world where competition is unstable, and the trade and investment environment is shifting and unpredictable, he said.

"In other words, it is both a reaction to heightened geopolitical contestation and a further source of weakening of the global economic order," Tharman said.

But India and this region have the agency to respond and shape global reality in a way that secures both national interests and the global good, he said.

The event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat, who is

ISAS' patron, and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, who helped establish the autonomous institute at the National University of Singapore and promoted ties with India and South Asia during his tenure as Prime Minister of the city state.

For one thing, neither region is caught in the largest geopolitical conflicts of the times, nor are they involved in today's major tensions, Tharman said.

Both the regions also have societies where the majority of ordinary people are hopeful they can achieve a major uplift in their lives - a rarity today, he said. India and Southeast Asia also account for over a quarter of the global population and 15 per cent of its gross domestic product, and are the fastest-growing regions in the world, the Singapore President said.

"We have to make the most of this positioning of the two regions in the decade ahead," he said.

Tharman made three suggestions on how they can respond to this global trend of growing industrial policy. (PTI)



Imran Khan's party eligible for reserved seats in Parl, provincial assemblies: Pak SC

ISLAMABAD, July 12: In a major legal victory for Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party, the Supreme Court on Friday ruled that his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party is eligible for the allocation of reserved seats for women and minorities in Parliament and in the provincial assemblies.

The Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) had filed a plea challenging the Peshawar High Court (PHC) decision upholding the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) move to deny its share in reserved seats in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies.

A 13-member full bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa heard the case and the ruling in the keenly awaited judgment is viewed as a major setback to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's ruling coalition.

Candidates backed by Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, who had contested and won the February 8 elections as independents after their party was stripped of its election symbol, had joined the SIC to form a

coalition of convenience.

The apex court on Friday annulled the decision of the PHC and also declared the decision of the election commission "null and void", terming it "against the Constitution of Pakistan".

"[The] withdrawal of election symbol cannot disqualify a political party from elections," the court declared, referring to the election commission not allowing the PTI to use the cricket bat as its election symbol.

"The PTI was and is a political party," the bench ruled. Khan, a cricketer-turned-politician, founded the PTI in 1996.

The decision, announced by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, was made based on a majority of eight judges.

Meanwhile, reacting to the apex court's verdict, PTI said that the party "has been hopeful that the justice will be served in the end, given there was no provision in the constitution of Pakistan, that could strip a party off its proportionate quota neither the quota could be allot-

ed to other parties".

A post from the PTI's official X account also demanded the immediate resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja for "violating [the] Constitution of Pakistan".

Imran Khan's former aide Fawad Chaudhry echoed the party account's sentiments, also demanding the resignation of the chief election commissioner in a post on X. He said the PTI should "demand ECP resignation after SCP has now official charge-sheeted ECP".

The party spokesman Raouf Hassan also extended his "heartfelt congratulations" to the PTI on X, lauding the Supreme Court for "breaking the barriers of intimidation". "This is only the beginning of a long haul till we reach the final destination when Imran Khan shall take over as the Prime Minister of Pakistan," he said. "Soon, very soon."

Earlier, after concluding the hearing on Tuesday, the 13 judges spent two days in mutual consultations before announcing the verdict. (PTI)

China's iSpace rocket fails soon after launch, losing 3 weather satellites

BEIJING, July 12: A Chinese rocket start-up has suffered yet another launch failure, resulting in the loss of three satellites as part of a commercial constellation being assembled for global weather forecasting and earthquake prediction.

Hyperbola-1 - a 24-metre (79ft) high solid-fuel rocket produced by iSpace - lifted off on Thursday from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in China's Gobi Desert.

"The rocket's first, second and third stages flew normally, but the fourth stage suffered an anomaly and the launch mission ended in failure," the company said, adding that the specific reasons for the failure would be announced as soon as possible after detailed investigations, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Friday.

The relatively small Hyperbola-1, which can deliver a 300 kg (661 pounds) payload into a

500 km (311 miles) sun-synchronous orbit, was carrying Yunyao-1 weather satellites 15, 16 and 17 for the Tianjin-based Yunyao Aerospace Technology company.

The satellites did not reach orbit. Yunyao Aerospace Technology had planned to launch nearly 40 satellites this year to complete its 90-satellite Yunyao-1 constellation by next year, according to the Post report.

"Our constellation will break a foreign monopoly and provide high-resolution, high-precision, and all-scale weather monitoring and earthquake early warning services to Belt and Road Initiative countries," a Yunyao Aerospace representative told Tianjin Daily in January.

In 2019, iSpace became the first private rocket company in China to reach Earth orbit with Hyperbola-1.

But since then, the rocket has failed on three consecutive oc-



casions. Problems have ranged from a first-stage steering fin being damaged by falling insulation foam to a fuel leak in the altitude control system of the second stage.

Early this month a powerful Chinese rocket crashed after an "accidental launch" during a ground test due to structural failure, its company Space Pioneer said.

Space Pioneer, also known as Beijing Tianbing Technology, said that the Tianlong-3 rocket unexpectedly launched during a static-fire test at a facility in

Gongyi county in Henan province on July 1.

The nine engines of the rocket, stated to be the most powerful in the country, were fired and lifted off because of a "structural failure at the connection between the rocket body and the test platform", the company said.

Space Pioneer is one of a number of private aerospace companies that are developing medium-lift, reusable rockets to help China assemble its own satellite constellations comparable to SpaceX's Starlink. (PTI)

Low contribution by Livestock sector to Nagaland GSDP

Down by over 5% in 10 years

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, July 12: The share of the livestock sector in Nagaland's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has decreased dramatically from 7.31% in 2013 to 2.19% in 2024, impacting the state's economic security.

This was stated by Nagaland's director of economics and statistics Neidilhou Keditsu while addressing the regional training on the 21st livestock census for state and district nodal officers from Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura here on Friday.

Noting that livestock rearing is vital to the Naga households' income, he, however, expressed concern over a significant negative growth rate in the census data in the state, affecting per capita income and the GSDP.

Emphasising the critical role of the livestock census, Keditsu said the census provides essential data for understanding livestock numbers, as-



sessing government policies, and making future projections.

He urged meticulous data collection in the 21st livestock census to ensure reliable and accurate data, essential for effective policy execution and economic stability.

Attended by 66 trainees from Nagaland and other states, the training programme focused on software application and breed documentation

for the census.

The programme was conducted by the Union ministry of fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying and hosted by the Nagaland animal husbandry and veterinary services department.

Adviser (statistics), Union animal husbandry and dairying department (integrated sample survey), Jagat Hazarika, said the training is aimed

at equipping the state and union territory officers with the necessary tools, including a mobile app and software, for efficient data collection during the census, which will be conducted across the country between September and December this year.

Hazarika said the livestock census is the main source of data for proper planning and formulation of livestock welfare programme for bringing further improvement in future policies and for implementation of various programmes in the animal husbandry sector.

He exhorted the delegates to learn data collection, and get familiarised with the necessary skills to carry out the census task efficiently and effectively.

Director of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, Dr BP Mishra said the census aims to cover all states and union territories, ensuring comprehensive and reliable data for future use.

NE gas grid work in Tripura to be completed next year: Official



has been covered so far while the "remaining portion of the project, which is under various stages-land acquisition, pipeline welding and laying of the pipeline - will be completed by March 2025", she said.

"Payments for compensation for land acquisition have been delayed a bit because of non-availability of authenticated documents of the owners. However, the district magistrates (DMs) have resolved the issue and the payments are under process," she said.

Vishwasree stated that once the NEGG is functional, the gas supply will be easier with consistent pressure which is required for industry use or power generation plants.

The state government has already issued a licence to the public sector undertaking ONGC for five blocks to undertake exploration for oil and gas.

"If ONGC discovers gas reserve in the course of exploration, it will seek permission from the state to go for mining in five potential blocks", she said.

The northeastern state has an expected reserve of 8 billion cubic metres of gas. (PTI)

Next session of Manipur assembly from July 31

IMPHAL, July 12: The Manipur Cabinet has decided to convene the next session of the legislative assembly from July 31, a state minister said on Friday.

Information and public relations minister Sapam Ranjan told reporters here that the session will continue till August 6.

Among other developments, the cabinet decided that Village Defence Force (VDF) personnel, a unit of Manipur Police, shall henceforth be "transferable" from one district to another, he said.

Besides, it approved significant amendments, including revisions of the Manipur Private School Registration and Regulation Act 2017 and the Dhanamanjuri University Act to address the issue of selection of vice-chancellor, tenure and other details, he added. (PTI)

Bamboo Rural Haat inaugurated

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 12: Urban development & municipal affairs, advisor Zhalao Rio inaugurated Bamboo Rural Haat at Pihema under Medziphema sub-division in Chumukedima district on Friday.

The Advisor also inaugurated farmers marketing shed at Tsiempama Village in Chumukedima district on Friday. He said that the market shed have lot of potential as travelers and tourists visiting Nagaland passes through it while providing platform for villagers to sell their local and organic products.

92 General Class coaches attached to 46 trains

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 12: The Indian Railways has expanded the number of coaches in 46 different important long-distance trains. Altogether 92 new general category coaches have been attached in these trains. Further, 22 other trains have also been identified and a plan has been made to attach additional general class coaches in them, a PR stated. 15634/15633 Guwahati Bikaner Express, 15631/15632 Guwahati Barmer Express, 15630/15629 Silghat Town Tambaram Nagaon Express, 15647/15648 Guwahati Lokmanya Tilak Express, 15651/15652 Guwahati Jammu Tawi Express, 15653/15654 Guwahati Jammu Tawi Express, 15636/15635 Guwahati Okha Express, 12510/12509 Guwahati Bengaluru Superfast Express, 15909/15910 Dibrugarh Lalgarh Awadh Assam Express, 20415/20416 Varanasi Indore Super-Fast Express, 20413/20414 Kashi Mahakal Varanasi Indore Superfast Express, 13351/13352 Dhanbad Alappuzha Express, 14119/14120 Kathgodam Dehradun Express, 12976/12975 Jaipur Mysore Superfast Express, 17421/17422 Tirupati Kollam Express, 12703/12704 Howrah Secunderabad Falaknuma Express, 12253/12254 Bengaluru Bhagalpur Express, 16527/16528 Yesvantpur Kannur Express, 16209/16210 Ajmer Mysore Express, 12703/12704 Howrah Secunderabad Express, 16236/16235 Mysore Tuticorin Express, 16507/16508 Jodhpur Bengaluru Express, 20653/20654 KSR Bengaluru City Belagavi Superfast Express, 17311/17312 Chennai Central Hubli Superfast Express, 12253/12254 Bengaluru Bhagalpur Ang Express, 16589/16590 Bangalore City Sangli Rani Chennamma Express, 09817/09818 Kota Junction Danapur Superfast Express, 19813/19814 Kota Sirsa Express, 12972/12971 Bhavnagar Bandra Terminus Superfast Express, 19217/19218 Veraval Junction Mumbai Bandra Veraval Junction Saurashtra Janata Express, 22956/22955 Mumbai Bandra - Bhuj Kutch Superfast Express, 20908/20907 Bhuj Dadar Sayaji Nagari Superfast Express, 11301/11302 Mumbai Bengaluru Udayan Express, 12111/12112 Mumbai Amravati Superfast Express, 12139/12140 Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus Nagpur Sevagram Express would attach additional coaches, NFR stated.

7 Bangladeshis arrested from Agartala station

HT Bureau

AGARTALA, July 12: Seven Bangladeshi nationals were arrested from the Agartala railway station for entering India without valid documents, police said on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, vigil was intensified at the station on Thursday and a group that was heading to board a Kolkata-bound train was intercepted.

"They could not show any valid documents to travel in India. Accordingly, we arrested seven people -- three men and four women," said Tapas Das, the officer-in-charge (OC) of Agartala GRP.

Bangladeshi documents, mobile phones and Indian currency notes were seized from them, he said.

"They had plans to go to cities such as Bangalore, Kolkata and Delhi," he added.

Over 100 Bangladeshi nationals were arrested from the Agartala railway station over the last two months, triggering alarm among the law-enforcement agencies. (PTI)

Slow Loris rescued in Manipur

GUWAHATI, July 12: A team of wildlife volunteers in Manipur successfully rescued a Slow Loris, one of the world's most critically endangered primates, according to reports on Friday.

The slow-moving animal was spotted by members of the Philanthropic Club, Bishnupur, and Arunbai Tengol Unit in the wetland area of Hayaikol village in Bishnupur district, on Thursday evening around 8:30 pm. Recognizing the urgency of

the situation, the volunteers swiftly intervened to secure the primate's safety.

On Friday, the rescued Slow Loris, locally known as Yong Ikhai Thibi, was promptly handed over to officials of the Bishnupur district Forest department of Manipur government. This ensures the animal receives proper care and protection within the expertise of wildlife professionals.

The Slow Loris holds legal protection in India under Schedule I of

the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. This act prohibits hunting, capturing, killing, or selling these fascinating creatures.

Found throughout the northeastern Indian states of Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, and Tripura, the Slow Loris is the only nocturnal primate in the region. Its range extends beyond India, with sightings reported in parts of Yunnan and southwest Guangxi in China and the Chitragong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.

One held in connection to recovery of bodies case in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, July 12: One person was arrested in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district for allegedly being involved in the suspected murder of four people last week, police said on Thursday.

The four bodies with hands and feet tied and cut marks on the neck were found on July 6 in a forest on the outskirts of Umpleng village in the district.

"In connection with the recovery of bodies of four people, suspected to have been murdered, a case was registered and one

person was arrested during the investigation," East Jaintia Hills SP Giri Prasad told PTI. Efforts are on to nab his accomplices in the crime, the SP said, without divulging the details of the arrested person. Of the four deceased, the police have identified Nasar Kyndait (33) of Dkhih East Pohshong village in the district, and Ravi Rai (23) and Rajesh Rai (26) of Nepal. Another deceased is yet to be identified, police said. Three bodies have been handed over to their family members, an officer said. (PTI)

No HMB/SWM/Project/2023-24/592-97

CORRIGENDUM
Date: 11.07.2024

This is for general information to the bidder that in the Financial Bid document of the RFP No: HMB / RFP-2/2024 Dated: 10.07.24 the bids were invited without Taxes.

In this regard all the bidder are requested to quote the Rate / Amount inclusive of all Taxes whatever applicable.

All the quoted Rate / Amount etc. will be considered as inclusive of all Taxes.

Sd/-
Executive Officer
Hojai Municipal Board: Hoja

Janasanyog /CF/677/24/13-Jul-24

NFR takes action against misconduct by pantry car staff

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 12: The Tinsukia Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) took swift action in response to a video complaint posted on social media by a concerned citizen highlighting the irresponsible disposal of garbage from the pantry car of Avadh Assam Express on July 11.

"Upon receiving the complaint, the DRM of Tinsukia Division, responsible for the maintenance and operational integrity of the Avadh Assam Express, promptly coordinated with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to levy a significant fine of Rs 15,000 against the licensee involved. Additionally, a stern warning was issued to ensure strict adherence to cleanliness protocols on all trains. Furthermore, in a collaborative effort with the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of the East Central Railway, where the incident occurred, swift action was taken to identify and apprehend the contractual staff responsible for this misconduct. The pantry car employee in question has been arrested, and a case has been registered under the Railway Act to ensure accountability and deter such behaviour in the future," a PR stated.

₹150 cr allocated for CM's social security scheme in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, July 12: The Arunachal Pradesh government has allocated ₹ 150 crore under the Chief Minister's Social Security Scheme (CMSSS) for various pension schemes in the state.

Social Justice, Empowerment & Tribal Affairs (SJETA) department minister on Thursday said the Chief Minister's Old Age Pension Schemes (CMOAPS) will benefit around 64,096 people aged between 60-79 years, with 3,450 beneficiaries aged 80 years and above. Additionally, 13,209 people will receive support under the CM Widow Pension Schemes (WPS). Highlighting the inclusivity of the initiative, the minister pointed out that 6,120 divyangians (persons with disabilities) will also receive pensions from the allocated funds.

"The CM Divyangian Pension is part of the Chief Minister Pema Khandu-led BJP government's efforts to provide financial aid to differently abled people across the state," he added.

On the disbursement specifics, Jini mentioned that ₹ 1,173.562 lakh will be allocated for beneficiaries in the financial year 2023-24, with an additional ₹ 217.839 lakh earmarked to clear pending liabilities from 2022-23. (PTI)

Print is Here to Stay: The Hindu Group VP

Discussion on media's role in building professionals



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 12: "Print is here to stay because print is more trustworthy when there is incessant fake news on digital platforms. Everything becomes breaking news in the digital world." This was stated here on Friday by Sridhar Aranala, vice president of The Hindu Group while addressing the students of the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM).

Aranala conducted a special session on the "Role of Media in Building Future Dynamic Professionals" which was organised by USTM's Training and Placement Division.

In his address, Aranala emphasised the enduring significance of print media amidst the surge of digital platforms. "Print is here to stay because it is more trustworthy," he stated, highlighting the challenges posed by fake news prevalent on digital platforms. He underscored that scientific studies favour print for better comprehension, learning, and brand recall, while the digital realm often leads to distractions and "digital fatigue".

Aranala elaborated on the myriad benefits newspapers offer students, from enhancing

reading and writing skills, expanding general knowledge, and building vocabulary to promoting critical thinking, global awareness, and social consciousness. He stressed that newspapers make learning engaging and enriching, helping students to connect with current events and ideas from around the world.

He advised the students to focus on their purpose, excel in their endeavors, maintain attention to their intentions, work hard, and prioritize education over entertainment. "Media influences both career trajectories and intellectual development," Aranala noted, emphasising that various media platforms, including traditional news outlets and digital content streams, provide essential information and insights for career growth.

"Intelligence has to be communicated for good use of it. Communication and language are therefore very important," he stated, adding that life is driven by curiosity and inquisitiveness. He shared insights into the newspaper-making process and asserted that everyone is a natural salesperson. Discussing the adverse effects of mobile phone overuse, he advised aspiring entrepreneurs to create customers rather than merely be consumers.

Rony Gupta, regional head of The Hindu Group, and Runjun Gogoi from The Hindu's Guwahati office accompanied Aranala to USTM. R K Sharma, advisor at USTM, and Amit Choudhury, dean of the School of Technology and Management at USTM, also addressed the audience, enriching the session with their perspectives.

The session concluded with a dynamic interaction between Aranala and the USTM students, who engaged enthusiastically, seeking further insights and advice.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No. EE/Agri/KA/C. Works /Tender/2024-25/791

Dt. 12-07-2024

Sealed tender affixing Council Fee Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only (Non-refundable) are here by invited by the undersigned from the registered Govt. Contractors or firm under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu for Construction and repairing of works as mentioned below.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Location	Estimated Value Rs. In Lakhs	Earnest money 1% 2%	Time of Completion
1	Construction of Backside Iron Gate & boundary wall and distemping & colouring to the existing boundary wall at Taralango	Office of the Executive Engineer [Agri.] Karbi Anglong Division, Diphu.	1400000.00	14000.00 28000.00	60 days
2	Re-modeling & Renovation to Colony Road at E.E (Agriil) Colony, Diphu.		2300000.00	2300.00 46000.00	60 days
3	Construction of Brickwork, site development to the green house and car parking at Taralango, Diphu.		600000.00	6000.00 12000.00	60 days
4	Construction of Iron staging and water supply pipeline connection at Taralango, Diphu.		500000.00	5000.00 10000.00	45 days
5	Renovation to the Staff Qtr. Occupied by Sri. B. Rongphar at E.E [Agri.] colony, Diphu		350000.00	3500.00 7000.00	30 days
6	Renovation to the Staff Qtr. Occupied by Sri. S. Sangmai at E.E [Agri.] colony, Diphu		300000.00	3000.00 6000.00	30 days
7	Renovation & Tiles fitting to the Toilet cum bathroom and fitting & fixing of ceiling to the qtr. occupied by Sri. P. Shyam at E.E [Agri.] colony, Diphu		250000.00	2500.00 5000.00	45 days
8	Re-wiring to the Qtr. occupied by Sri. Robi Sing Tisso at E.E [Agri.] colony, Diphu		100000.00	1000.00 2000.00	15 days

Procedure for submission of Tenders:-

Tender papers will have to be submitted by the tenderer duly filled alongwith all document details and other general terms and conditions of tender alongwith tender papers may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on working days during the office hours from 15-07-24 to 30-07-24.

Tender [duly filled up tender with documents] will be received up to 1500 Hrs. on 30-07-24 in the office of the under signed and will be opened on the same date at 15:30 Hrs. in the same venue. If the office remains closed the tender will be received and opened on the next working day at the same time and the same venue.

The TIA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid/Tender, and to cancel/annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (Agri)
Karbi Anglong Division, Diphu.

Special status demand triggers political slugfest in Bihar

PATNA, July 12: The ruling NDA in Bihar and the opposition Mahagathbandhan on Friday crossed swords over the demand for special status to the state, which seems to have intensified ahead of the Parliament's budget session.

The demand was first made soon after the creation of Jharkhand robbed the state of its mineral wealth, though the Centre has been of the view that the grant of special status was no longer possible since the provision was scrapped by the 14th Finance Commission.

Senior Congress leader and former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar, whose party is a part of the opposition coalition in the state, took potshots at the BJP-JD(U) combine.

She said, "There could not be a greater irony that the BJP, which rules the Centre, is not accepting the demand raised by the JD(U) despite being dependent on the ally."

The allusion was to the JD(U), headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, passing a resolution at its national executive meeting held last month seeking special category status, or, adequate assistance in the form of a special economic package.



The Congress leader also took a swipe at the JD(U) supremo and said, "The PM should show some respect for his ally who has realigned with him after ditching us and making umpteenth volte-face".

The CM, who had helped the formation of the INDIA bloc, returned to the BJP-led NDA in January this year.

Kumar's deputy Vijay Kumar Sinha, who belongs to the BJP, was asked about a meeting, in Delhi a day ago, between Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Samrat Choudhary, another Bihar Deputy CM who holds the finance portfolio and is understood to have submitted before her the state's ex-

pectations from the upcoming budget.

Evading a direct reply, Sinha said, "The PM has made it clear that he wants a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India). That is possible only when Bihar, too, is developed. All that is needed for growth of each and every state, will be done."

State minister and senior JD(U) leader Shrawan Kumar alleged that the demand for special status was "ignored" by the previous Congress-led UPA government at the Centre and hoped that Modi would give Bihar its due.

Earlier, NDA partner Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) headed by Union minister Chirag Paswan had

also come out in support of the demand.

The party's MP Arun Bharti had told PTI-Video, "Our party has been in support of special status to Bihar since the very beginning. We are confident of some assistance, in the form of either special status or a special package."

Meanwhile, the RJD, which helms the Mahagathbandhan, lashed out at the NDA claiming that the ruling coalition was trying to hoodwink the people.

RJD MLA Bhai Virendra said, "The BJP and the JD(U) share power in the Centre as well as in the state. Yet, instead of taking the necessary steps, they are raising demands. Do they think the people are fools?"

The RJD leader, whose party was ruling Bihar when it was bifurcated in 2000, pointed out that the demand for special status was first raised by the Rabri Devi government.

"I do not wish to create much controversy by taking names. But the NDA was in power, at the Centre, at the time and its leaders deliberately denied Bihar special status fearing that my party would get the credit," claimed Bhai Virendra. (PTI)

With arrival of first cargo ship, Vizhinjam port has commenced operations: CM Vijayan

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, July 12: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday said though the arrival of the first cargo vessel at Vizhinjam sea port was a trial run, with this the operation of international deep-water trans-shipment port has commenced.

The CM formally welcomed the 300-metre-long Chinese mothership 'San Fernando' in a ceremony held at the port here in the presence of Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, Kerala Assembly Speaker A N Shamseer, several state ministers, UDF MLA M Vincent and APSEZ Managing Director Karan Adani.

The mothership had on Thursday docked at the port being developed by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd, (APSEZ), India's largest port developer and part of the Adani Group, in a public-private partnership model at a cost of around ₹ 8,867 crore.

Vijayan, addressing a large gathering of people who had arrived at the port to see the 300-metre-long mothership, said the Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited (VISL) will become a full fledged one by 2028, 17 years ahead of schedule.

Initially it was envisioned that by 2045, phases two, three and four of the port would be completed and it

would become a fully equipped port, he said.

However, it will become a full-fledged port by 2028, with an investment of ₹ 10,000 crore, for which an agreement will be signed soon, he said. Vijayan said the then LDF government in 2006 had said that it would try to get permission for building a port at Vizhinjam, where building of a port has been considered since the royal times.

In March 2007, VISL was made the nodal agency, but subsequently, the then Manmohan Singh government denied permission for the port, he said.

He further said that it was only due to the over 200 days-long public protests led by the LDF that the permission for the port was granted.

"When we came to power in 2016, the port construction work commenced," he contended.

His remarks come in the wake of the opposition Congress claiming that the port was "the baby" of the UDF and party stalwart late Oommen Chandy was the driving force behind it.

Vijayan said that as Vizhinjam emerges as an international port, it will further increase the importance of India globally.

"But certain forces, especially international lobbies, tried to create hurdles to prevent this from becoming a reality. Many commercial lobbies too were against the Vizhinjam port," he said.

The CM said that despite these adversities, the government was clear that the port should come up and that vision was executed.

"Our only concern was that it should not be turned into an avenue of corruption or exploitation," he added. Vijayan said that the port's location just 11 nautical miles from the international shipping lanes and its natural deep depth of 20 meters made it perfect for being the "port-of-ports or motherport".

He said the coming up of the port would also create employment opportunities as more than 5,000 jobs would be available as part of it.

"It is estimated that once this port becomes fully operational, Kerala will become the hub of container business in the country. It is also expected that the Vizhinjam port will lead to major development in the fields of industry, commerce, transport and tourism and thus, the general economic growth of the state," the CM said.

He said the port will also benefit India's neighbouring countries.

Karan Adani, who also spoke at the event, said the berthing of the mothership at the port was "a symbol of a new, glorious achievement in Indian maritime history". (PTI)

Govt to observe June 25 as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to commemorate Emergency



NEW DELHI, July 12: The government has decided to observe June 25, the day the Emergency was declared in 1975, as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to commemorate the "massive contributions" of those who endured inhuman pains of the period, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Friday.

He also said the observance of 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' will help keep the eternal flame of individual freedom and the defence of the democracy alive in every Indian, thus preventing "dictatorial forces" like the Congress from "re-

peating those horrors".

A gazette notification issued on Friday by the Union Home Ministry notes that Emergency was declared on June 25, 1975, following which there was "gross abuse of power by the government of the day and people of India were subjected to excesses and atrocities".

The people of India have abiding faith in the Constitution and the power of its resilient democracy, it said.

"Therefore, Government of India declares 25th June as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to pay tribute to all those who suffered

and fought against the gross abuse of power during the period of Emergency and to recommit the people of India to not support in any manner such gross abuse of power, in future," says the notification.

Shah said that on June 25, 1975, then prime minister Indira Gandhi, in a "brazen display of a dictatorial mindset, strangled the soul of India's democracy by imposing the Emergency on the nation".

Lakhs of people were thrown behind the bars for no fault of their own, and the voice of the media was silenced, he said.

"The Government of India has decided to observe the 25th of June every year as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas.' This day will commemorate the massive contributions of all those who endured the inhuman pains of the 1975 Emergency," he said in a post on X.

"The decision made by the government led by PM Shri @narendramodiji is intended to honour the spirit of millions who struggled to revive democracy despite facing inexplicable persecution at the hands of an oppressive government," he said. (PTI)

Polling ends for Maharashtra council elections; all 274 MLAs cast their votes

MUMBAI, July 12: Amid threat of cross-voting, polling for the biennial elections to 11 seats in the Maharashtra Legislative Council concluded at the Vidhan Bhavan Complex on Friday afternoon.

Voting was held between 9 am and 4 pm, officials said. The votes will be taken up for counting after 5 pm and the results are expected in the evening, they said.

There are 12 candidates in the fray for the 11 seats in the upper house of the state legislature where the 274 current members of the legislative assembly form the electoral college.

According to officials, all the 274 MLAs cast their votes. Shiv Sena's Sanjay Gaikwad was the first to cast his vote through the secret ballot system.

The biennial elections are being held to fill in vacancies of members whose term ends on July 27. Each winning candidate would need a quota of 23 first-preference votes.



In the morning, the Shiv Sena (UBT) said it would request the state electoral officer to extend the voting timing by an hour due to heavy rains in Mumbai.

As voting progressed, the Congress wrote to the returning officer, urging that BJP MLA Ganpat Gaikwad not be allowed to cast his vote.

Gaikwad, who represents the Kalyan East assembly constituency, was arrested in February for allegedly opening fire on

a Shiv Sena functionary inside a police station at Ulhasnagar in Thane district over a land dispute.

The Congress said since Gaikwad is in judicial custody, he cannot vote under Section 62(5) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said allowing the BJP lawmaker to vote in the council polls would amount to misuse of power.

"Gaikwad can come out from jail to vote, but Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik were also in jail (during the 2022 council polls) and were not allowed to vote. This is use or misuse of power," he said.

The BJP is the largest party in the assembly with 103 members, followed by the Shiv Sena (38), NCP (42), Congress (37), Shiv Sena (UBT) 15 and NCP (SP) 10.

The BJP has fielded five candidates and its ally Shiv Sena two. Their Mahayuti partner NCP has nominated two candidates.

From the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) bloc, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress have fielded one candidate each, while the NCP (SP) is backing the PWP nominee Jayant Patil.

The MVA does not have numbers on its side to get the third candidate elected, but it is banking on some MLAs of the NCP and the Shiv Sena to cross-vote in their favour.

Over the last few days, the NCP (SP) has claimed that some MLAs of the rival camp led by Ajit Pawar are in touch with the opposition party for a possible return after MVA's impressive performance in the Lok Sabha polls. (PTI)

Difficult to get funds for development works because of guarantees: K'taka CM's economic advisor

BENGALURU, July 12: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's economic advisor Basavaraj Rayareddi has said that huge allocations to the five guarantees of the state government have made it difficult to get funds for developmental works.

The Congress MLA from Yelburga in Koppal district was speaking at a farmers' meeting after launching work at a lake at Mangaluru village in his Assembly segment. "The Chief Minister has made me his economic advisor, and as I interact with him daily, this money has come (for the lake project), or else it wouldn't have come...impossible. This is the only work that is happening in the entire state, because guarantees will itself finish things... ₹ 60,000- ₹ 65,000 crore

we have to spend for it (guarantees). I know how difficult it is, internal finance" Rayareddi said. Opposition BJP and JD(S) have been accusing the Congress government in the state of not taking up any developmental works, because of the large spending to fulfil the guarantees promised by the party during the Assembly elections.

Reacting to Rayareddi's claims, Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress President D K Shivakumar has said "there are no difficulties, we are streamlining. We have fulfilled our promises. We will continue the guarantee schemes..."

"...we did not bring in guarantee schemes for votes, it was with an intention to improve the quality of lives of the people, who were

suffering with price rise. We are confident that people will cooperate with us," Shivakumar said. Siddaramaiah has set aside ₹ 52,009 crore for his government's flagship five guarantee schemes in the current financial year.

The five guarantee schemes are: 200 units of free power to all households (Gruha Jyoti), ₹ 2,000 monthly assistance to the woman head of every family (Gruha Lakshmi), payment of cash in lieu of the additional 5 kg of rice to every member of a BPL household (Anna Bhagya), ₹ 3,000 every month for unemployed graduate youth and ₹ 1,500 for diploma holders for two years (YuvaNidhi), and free travel for women in public transport buses (Shakti). (PTI)

Diversion of SC, ST fund in Karnataka exposes Rahul's double standards: BJP

NEW DELHI, July 12: The BJP on Friday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of diverting the fund meant for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to fulfil the guarantees promised by Rahul Gandhi during the state elections.

Addressing a press conference, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said what the Congress government is doing in Karnataka is in violation of the Constitution and demanded action.

"People are being deceived in Karnataka," he said, claiming that Gandhi's double standards have been exposed.

On the one hand Rahul Gandhi is moving around carrying a copy of the Constitution, while Constitutional values are being violated in the state, he said. Citing a report, he claimed over Rs 14,730 crore

of Rs 39,121 crore meant for the SC and ST welfare has been diverted to implement various sops the Congress has promised under its guarantees during the 2023 assembly polls. Meghwal accused the Congress of spreading a fake narrative during the recent Lok Sabha polls, an apparent reference to the opposition's charge that the Modi government wanted to change the Constitution by seeking a big mandate.

"They might have succeeded in winning a few seats but can never win people's hearts," he said. Asked about the Supreme Court's recent verdict which said a divorced Muslim woman has the right to seek maintenance from her husband, he said the apex court's judgment should be respected by everyone. (PTI)

Andhra police book ex-CM Jagan, two senior IPS officers in 'attempt to murder' case

GUNTUR (ANDHRA PRADESH), July 12: Andhra Pradesh police registered an "attempt to murder" case against former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, two senior IPS officers and two retired officials, following a complaint lodged by a TDP MLA, an official said on Friday. The complaint was lodged by the ruling party's Undi MLA K Raghurama Krishna Raju, who was a YSRC Lok Sabha MP between 2019 and 2024 but had a fallout with Reddy at an early stage. Besides Reddy, police booked senior IPS officers PV Sunil Kumar and PSR Sitaramanjanyulu and retired police officer R Vijay Paul and former Guntur Government General Hospital superintendent G Prabhavathi, the official said.

Vijay Paul and Prabhavathi have superannuated. "Raju sent his police complaint through mail one month ago and after taking legal opinion, I registered a case at 7 pm on Thursday against the former CM and others," the official told PTI.

Raju, a former MP, also alleged that he was subjected to "custodial torture," the official added. Police booked the five accused persons under IPC Sections 120 B, 166, 167, 197, 307, 326, 465 and 506 read with 34.

Police invoked the Indian Penal Code (IPC) as the case is three years old. The case was booked at Nagarampalem police station in Guntur. TDP leader Raju's 2021 arrest case came to the fore in Andhra Pradesh after he lodged a complaint against Reddy and some officials over it on June 10.

He accused the former CM and the senior officials of "plotting" a criminal "conspiracy" against him.

Raju, 62, alleged in his complaint that senior IPS officers Sunil Kumar and Sitaramanjanyulu, police officer Vijaya Paul and government doctor Prabhavathi were part of that "conspiracy."

He was arrested in May, 2021 in the middle of the Covid-19 second wave. "A false case was registered against me by the CB-CID of the Andhra Pradesh government. On May 14, 2021, I was arrested without due process, I was bullied, unlawfully physically pulled inside the police vehicle, and forcibly taken to Guntur the same night," Raju alleged in the complaint.

When Raju was arrested, Kumar was heading the CID, Sitaramanjanyulu the Intelligence wing, Paul was ASP CID and Reddy was the CM. (PTI)

Dhankar said the size of Indian economy in 1990 did not even match those of cities of London and Paris; now, it is ahead of the economies of the UK and France

India's rise in next 5 years will be like a gravitational force defying rocket, says VP Dhankar

MUMBAI, July 12: India's rise in the next five years will be like a rocket that defies gravitational force, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar said on Friday as he attributed exponential growth in the country's economy to a transparent, accountable mechanism that is in place now.

Calling India's rise incremental and unstoppable, he asserted that the world's fifth largest economy has reached a stage in the last one decade where global institutions are now seeking its advice instead of giving it one.

Delivering a lecture at the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) University here, Dhankar maintained India is getting accolades from global institutions.

He said education is the most impactful transformational mechanism for securing equality.

"India was taken to be a sleeping giant but not any longer. We are on the move, our rise is incremental, unstoppable and (it is) getting accolades from global institutions," he emphasised.

Painting a rosy picture of the country's future, Dhankar declared that India's rise in the next five years will be like a rocket that defies gravitational force.

The vice-president insisted India has reached a level where global institutions that once tried to give advice to it are now seeking its suggestions and added all this has happened



just in a decade.

The decision-making process in the country is currently inspired by a transparent, accountable mechanism and as a result it has witnessed an exponential growth in economy, he pointed out.

Dhankar said the size of Indian economy in 1990 did not even match those of cities of London and Paris. Now, it is ahead of the economies of the UK and France.

The vice-president emphasized on the crucial role of higher education in shaping the fu-

ture of the nation.

"As we commemorate the centenary of our independence (23 years from now in 2047), the vision of a developed India beckons us with profound responsibility and promise. Higher educational institutions are the bedrock upon which this vision will be realized, nurturing not just knowledge but also innovation, entrepreneurship, and societal values," he underlined.

Dhankar urged educators to foster interdisciplinary approaches, industry collaborations,

and a curriculum that equips students with the skills and mindset to tackle contemporary challenges with creativity and conviction.

As India moves towards 2047, it is imperative for the country to preserve and promotes its rich cultural heritage while embracing global best practices, he said.

"You have the responsibility of instilling in our youth a sense of pride in our civilizational ethos, even as you prepare them to be global citizens," the vice-president told the gathering.

Further, he said, the concept of Viksit Bharat - a developed India - is not merely a goal but a sacred mission that calls upon every citizen and institution to contribute their utmost.

Higher educational institutions are pivotal to the mission of achieving a developed nation status, serving as the "architects of tomorrow's India" through the knowledge they impart, the skills they nurture, and the values they instill, Dhankar pointed out.

Emphasising on the need to create solutions that are accessible, affordable, and sustainable, the vice-president said "Viksit Bharat will not be built in air-conditioned offices alone."

"It will be built in the villages, in the urban slums, in the far-flung areas of our country. As you progress in your careers, always keep an ear to the ground. Understand the real challenges faced by your fellow citizens," he told the audience at the prestigious management institute. (PTI)

Amritpal Singh's brother Harpreet, two others held by Jalandhar police in drug case

CHANDIGARH, July 12: Radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh's brother Harpreet Singh and two others have been arrested by Jalandhar police in a drug case, officials said on Friday.

Harpreet Singh alias Happy was nabbed along with another accomplice, identified as Lovepreet Singh alias Luv, on Thursday evening while the duo was preparing to "consume" drugs, Senior Superintendent of Police (Jalandhar Rural) Ankur Gupta said in Jalandhar.

One more person identified as Sandeep Arora, a resident of Ludhiana's Haibowal area, from whom the duo had allegedly procured the drug, has also been arrested, the SSP said.

Four grams of ICE (methamphetamine) drug was recovered during checking of the car in which Harpreet Singh and Lovepreet Singh were present, Gupta said.

A case under provisions of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act has been registered in the matter, he added.

SSP Gupta said that Punjab Police has been running a special drive against drugs.



"During patrolling, a suspicious car with dark panes and a mesh was found parked on one side of the national highway in Phillaur," he said.

"Two persons, identified as Lovepreet Singh alias Luv, son of Gurpreet Singh, under Beas police station in Amritsar district, was at the driver's seat. Another person in the car was identified as Harpreet Singh alias Happy, son of Tarsem Singh, Jallapur Khera, Amritsar district," the SSP said.

"The car was searched in the presence of a DSP and metham-

phetamine drug weighing 4 grams was recovered. A lighter, silver foil and some other articles were also recovered," Gupta said.

He said that the duo had bought the drug from a man identified as Sandeep Arora from Ludhiana. "They had even made a payment of Rs 10,000 digitally to him and procured the drug from him," the SSP said.

When the police caught the duo, they were preparing to consume the drug, Gupta said, adding that their dope test was positive.

Another police official said that during the checking of the car, a small polythene was recovered from Harpreet Singh and the drug kept inside was seized.

From Lovepreet Singh, two lighters, a silver foil paper and a pipe for consuming the drug were recovered, the official said.

Harpreet Singh is aged between 30-35 and "was into some dispatching work in transport", he said. Both him and Lovepreet Singh hail from Amritsar, the official added. Meanwhile, reacting to his son's arrest, Harpreet Singh's father Tarsem Singh alleged that it was a "big conspiracy to defame our family".

"We have been raising our voice against drug menace and it could be a trap, a conspiracy to defame our family," Tarsem Singh said in Amritsar.

He claimed that Harpreet Singh left home at around 1 pm on Thursday and was alone at that time.

"After a few hours, when we tried to contact him, his phone was switched off," Tarsem Singh said.

"We don't know how he reached the Jalandhar area," he added.

Tarsem Singh said that they did not get any information about Harpreet Singh's arrest from the government or the police and learnt about it from the media.

Harpreet Singh is currently lodged in a prison in Assam's Dibrugarh district for offences under the National Security Act (NSA). Recently, Amritpal was flown to Delhi on a four-day custody parole for taking oath as a Lok Sabha member.

Having fought the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as an independent, Amritpal Singh won from the Khadoor Sahib seat defeating Congress candidate Kulbir Singh Zira.

Amritpal Singh, who heads the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit and has styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was jailed along with nine of his associates under the NSA.

He was arrested in Moga's Rode village after he and his supporters on February 23 last year barged into the Ajnala police station breaking barricades, brandishing swords and guns, and clashed with police personnel in an attempt to free one of his aides from custody. (PTI)

Authorities shut Gujarat school after fire

Parents accuse management of hiding incident

AHMEDABAD, July 12: The authorities in Gujarat's Ahmedabad have ordered a private school to shut its campus and initiated an inquiry after parents alleged that the management tried to hide a fire on its premises by terming it as a "mock drill", an official said on Friday.

The school authorities have claimed the blaze that erupted on Thursday was minor and doused in five minutes, but parents alleged that the management called it a "mock drill" when they inquired after learning about their children's ordeal.

On learning about the protest by parents at Shanti Asiatic School in the Bopal area, District Education Officer (Rural) Krupa Jha reached the spot and ordered an inquiry into the allegations by parents.

Talking to reporters, Jha said, "Prima facie, we found negligence on the school's part. We will conduct a detailed investigation into the incident and conduct a safety audit to ensure the building is safe for children. We will take strict action against those found guilty after the probe."

He said the school premises will remain shut for students till the probe is on, and classes will be conducted online during this time.

"State Education Minister Kuber Dindor is in touch with us and gave a message that all necessary steps will be taken," the official said.

On Friday morning, several parents rushed to the school and alleged that though there was a fire and resultant smoke on the premises on Thursday afternoon, the management claimed



students were evacuated as part of a "mock drill".

"The CCTV footage clearly shows a fire in an air conditioning unit in a room in the basement, where students gather for activity. Our children were evacuated by teachers following smoke on the premises. However, when we inquired, the management told us that it was a mock drill and there was no such incident," an angry parent said.

Another parent claimed that the school management had immediately painted that room and changed the switchboard to cover up the incident and mislead parents and officials.

Meanwhile, school director Abhay Ghosh claimed that the fire was minor and was put out in five minutes.

"We are not hiding anything. Our trained staff immediately took control of the situation. It was not a major fire. The smoke was more than the actual fire. There was a miscommunication from someone that it was a mock drill. If parents feel we were hiding something, we are ready to apologise," Ghosh said. (PTI)

Water level in India's main reservoirs rise to 26% of total live storage capacity: CWC

NEW DELHI, July 12: Amid heavy rains in different parts of the country, water levels in 150 main reservoirs of the country have increased to 26 per cent of the total live storage capacity, still lower than in the same period last year, according to official data. Last week, the water level was at 22 per cent.

The current live storage stands at 46.311 billion cubic meters (BCM), which is 26 per cent of the total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. This is a significant drop compared to the same period last year, when the live storage was 58.864 BCM, according to Central Water Commission's (CWC's) Friday bulletin.

The reservoirs being monitored have a combined total live storage capacity of 178.784 BCM, representing 69.35 per cent of the overall estimated live storage capacity in the country.

Despite the extensive storage capacity, the current figures reveal that the available storage is only 79 per cent of last year's levels and 90 per cent of the normal storage, which is calculated based on the average storage over the past 10 years.

The northern region, encompassing Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, is experiencing a notable shortfall.

The 10 monitored reservoirs have a total live storage capacity of 19.663 BCM, with the current live storage at 5.979 BCM (30 per cent of capacity). This is significantly lower than last year's 63 per cent and the normal storage level of 35 per cent.

The eastern region, which includes Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, and Bihar, also shows a decrease.

The 23 reservoirs in this region have a combined live storage capacity of 20.430 BCM, with current storage at 4.132 BCM (20 per cent of capacity). Last year, the storage was at 22 per cent, and the normal storage level was 24 per cent.

In the western region, covering Gujarat and Maharashtra, the 49 reservoirs have a total live storage capacity of 37.130 BCM.

Currently, the storage is 9.398 BCM (25 per cent of capacity), down from 32 per cent last year and the normal storage level of 27 per cent.

The central region, comprising Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, has 26 reservoirs with a total live storage capacity of 48.227 BCM.

The current storage is 13.035 BCM (27 per cent of capacity), lower than last year's 39 per cent and the normal storage level of 32 per cent.

The southern region, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, shows a mixed trend. The 42 monitored reservoirs have a total live storage capacity of 53.334 BCM, with the current storage at 13.767 BCM (26 per cent of capacity).

This is better than last year's 22 per cent but still below the normal storage level of 27 per cent. (PTI)

SC refuses to entertain plea on protection of doctors from violence, says existing laws sufficient

NEW DELHI, July 12: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a Delhi Medical Association plea seeking directions for the protection of doctors from violence, saying laws already exist to deal with such instances.

However, a bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna, Sanjay Karol and Sanjay Kumar gave liberty to the Delhi Medical Association (DMA) to approach appropriate forums in case of any particular instance of violence.

"I had to visit a hospital recently, I saw placards placed there saying violence against doctors is a serious offence. You see laws are already there to deal with such instances," Justice Khanna told senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, appearing for the DMA.

The apex court was hearing the DMA's petition which also sought directions to the authorities to ensure adequate security at hospitals and medical centres to prevent attacks on doctors and healthcare workers by patients' relatives and others.

Hansaria submitted that the concern is about preventive measures to be put in place as incidents of violence against doctors are occurring quite often.

Justice Khanna said the court cannot direct legislation and nowadays, every hospital has a police officer or security in place to thwart any such incident.

The senior advocate said this is not the situation in all hospitals and most of the medical institutions in rural areas lack such security apparatus.



Observing that anybody who indulges in violence can be dealt with under the Indian Penal Code, the bench said the only question is the implementation of the law. "We are not inclined to entertain the petition. In case of any difficulty in any particular case, the petitioner association of doctors is at liberty to take up the said issue before the competent court," it said.

On September 5, 2022, the top court, while hearing the petition which was filed in 2021, said the Centre and state governments cannot be expected to provide security cover to private hospitals.

It had observed that private hospitals and medical centres are business enterprises and must make their own security arrangements and in so far as government hospitals are concerned, security is arranged by the con-

cerned hospitals.

The top court said that a large number of hospitals, nursing homes and medical centres in the country are private ones.

It had also questioned the petitioners on what kind of norms could be laid in the matter and asked the association why it had not approached the high court on this issue.

The plea, filed through advocate Sneha Kalita, also sought directions to the Centre and states to have a distress fund to grant compensation to the victim or the family of the deceased healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, in case of such violence.

The petition says there is an increase in the number of such assaults and verbal abuse, and "extreme incidents of public lynching" that have led to the death of doctors and health workers.

"The petitioners are seeking appropriate directions in the form of guidelines to have a security system in place to ensure a safe working environment for the medical service personnel/professionals and the health care workers," it said.

"At present, there is no substantial central legislation which has a holistic mechanism of preventive, punitive and compensatory measures which can address the above-mentioned issues of violence against medical service personnel/professionals and the health care workers," the plea claimed. (PTI)

Proposal to introduce Manusmriti for LLB students not found appropriate: Delhi University VC

NEW DELHI, July 12: Delhi University (DU) Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh on Friday said the proposal to introduce Manusmriti for LLB students was rejected as it was not found appropriate, and that there are other texts which can be used for teaching Indian knowledge.

In an interview with PTI, Singh said he exercised his emergency powers to scrap the proposal during a pre-screening of the agenda for the Academic Council meeting on Friday.

The vice-chancellor (VC) held back the proposal to introduce Manusmriti for LLB students on Thursday and clarified that no such text would be taught by the university after a section of teachers objected to it.

The proposed changes in the syllabus of the jurisprudence paper pertained to semesters one and six of



LLB.

According to the revisions, two readings on Manusmriti -- 'Manusmriti with the Manubhaya of Medhatithi' by G N Jha and 'Commentary of Manu Smriti - Smritichandrika' by T Krishnasawmi Iyer -- were proposed to be introduced for the students.

A committee headed by Singh decided that the proposal made by the Faculty of Law was not appropriate to be introduced for deliberations

and rejected it before it could be tabled before the Academic Council, the highest decision-making body of DU.

"When this proposal was put forward in front of a committee headed by me, we did not find it appropriate and rejected it. There are many other texts to teach Indian knowledge and we should not rely on any one text," Singh told PTI.

The proposal drew flak from a section of teachers who said Manusmriti is "regressive" towards the rights of women and marginalised communities and against a progressive education system.

Several students from the Left-affiliated All India Students Association (AISA) staged demonstrations outside the VC's office against the rejected proposal, terming it a step towards "saffronisation" of the university. (PTI)

NIA charge-sheets two, including Libya-based ISIS terrorist, for promoting anti-India agenda



MUMBAI, July 12: The National Investigation Agency on Friday charge-sheeted two men, including a Libya-based ISIS terrorist, for allegedly being part of a conspiracy to promote anti-India agenda.

They had conspired to recruit vulnerable youth to carry out terror attacks at sensitive installations across India, said the anti-terror agency in a statement.

"Mohammed Zohab Khan, arrested by NIA in February this year following searches at multiple locations, has been charge-sheeted by NIA along with Libya-based Mohammed Shoaib Khan in the conspiracy to promote ISIS' anti-India agenda," it said. The charge sheet, filed on Friday before an NIA special court here, named the duo as key conspirators in the ISIS terror conspiracy case connected with the "global terror network's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad), Maharashtra, linked module".

Investigations into the case by the anti-terror agency have revealed a web of anti-India activities involving the two accused. The NIA, which has been working to dismantle the ISIS network of modules in India, found the two men had taken a pledge of allegiance towards the self-proclaimed Khalifa of ISIS.

The accused, who had planned to flee to Afghanistan or Turkey after executing a series of terror attacks in India as part of the conspiracy, were also found to be actively involved in developing a website for the promotion of the extremist and violent ideology of ISIS, the statement said.

They planned to attract youth from around the world into the ISIS fold through the website, the NIA said.

Investigations further revealed that Mohammed Zohab Khan, who was recruited by Mohammed Shoaib Khan, had created a WhatsApp group.

He had added more than 50 youths from Aurangabad area to the group with the intent to radicalise and recruit them for furthering the nefarious activities of ISIS in India, the NIA said. The accused had been sharing videos related to the manufacturing of explosives and fabrication of IEDs.

"They had also prepared a detailed plan of action, which included planning, preparation and execution of terror attacks at multiple places in India and actions to be taken after the execution of attacks," it said.

The accused had conspired to endanger the safety and security of India, its secular ethos and culture, and the democratic systems of governance, NIA investigations had revealed. (PTI)

Snow cover in Himachal Pradesh river basins declined by 12.72% in 2023-24

SHIMLA, July 12: The seasonal snow cover in Chenab, Beas, Ravi and Sutlej river basins in Himachal Pradesh decreased by 12.72 per cent in 2023-24 compared to 14.25 per cent in 2022-23, a statement issued here on Friday said.

During the early winter months of 2023-24 (October to November), the Chenab, Beas and Sutlej basins showed negative trends in snow cover, whereas the Ravi basin showed a marginal increase, reflecting a positive trend, the statement quoting a study said.

However, results for the peak winter months indicated significant declines in all the basins -- 67 per cent in Sutlej, 44 per cent in Ravi, 43 per cent in Beas and 42 per cent in Chenab in January 2024, according to the study conducted by the State Centre on Climate Change, under the aegis of the HP Council for Science, Technology, and Environment



(HIMCOSTE).

In February, a positive trend was observed in all basins, with an increase in snow cover, continuing into March 2024.

Based on the analysis, it was observed that the decline was

15.39 per cent in the Chenab basin, 7.65 per cent in Beas, 9.89 per cent in Ravi and 12.45 per cent in Sutlej in 2023-24, leading to an overall decline was 12.72 per cent, Director-cum-Member Secretary (HIMCOSTE) DC Rana said.

"We have information about the total snowfall during the winter season from the various observatories operating throughout the State but its spatial extent reflecting that how much area is under snow, cannot be ascertained. But it

has now become possible to map the geographical extent of the area covered under snow during winter season from October to April by using satellite data of different resolutions," Rana said.

Based on various studies, the temperature in the Higher Himalayan Region is comparatively higher than the low-lying areas, which is affecting Himalayan reserves, evidenced by the fact that most of the glaciers are losing mass, Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena said.

A significant shift in snowfall patterns during winters has also been observed, affecting river discharge during the peak summer season, Saxena said. Shimla has experienced almost negligible snow spells during the last two winters, indicating major changes in weather patterns and if this continues, water shortages may occur in the coming years, he added. (PTI)

Controversial IAS officer Puja Khedkar may be terminated if found guilty: Official sources

NEW DELHI, July 12: Probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar, who is at the centre of a controversy over alleged misuse of power and privileges, may be terminated from service if found guilty, official sources said on Friday.

They said all documents presented by her to secure her candidature in the civil services examination and then for selection in the service will be re-examined by a single-member committee constituted by the Centre on Thursday.

"The officer may be terminated from the service if found guilty. She may face criminal charges also in case she is found to have misrepresented a fact or done any sort of manipulation in documents relied upon for her selection," a source said.

Khedkar, a 2023 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, is under probation and currently posted in her home cadre Maharashtra.

The 34-year-old officer is in the eye of storm over for allegedly misusing the disability and Other Backward Class quota to secure a position in the IAS.

The single-member probe committee of Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Additional Secretary in the Department of Personnel and Training, has been asked to submit its report within two weeks, the sources said.

In the meantime, Khedkar had on Thursday assumed her new role as assistant collector at the Washim District Collectorate in the Vidarbha region after being transferred from Pune where she allegedly bullied everyone around and also placed a red beacon atop her private Audi (a luxury sedan) car.

Khedkar has been under intense scrutiny for allegedly manipulating benefits under the physical disabilities category and OBC quota to secure her position in the Indian Administrative Service. (PTI)

UPGRADATION OF RPF BARRACK AT LUMDING

Tender Notice No. : LMG/Engg/109 of 2024; Dated: 01-07-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Brief Description of Item: At Lumding - Upgradation of RPF Barrack (Ladies) at Officer's Colony. Tender Value: ₹32,41,854.98; Earnest Money: ₹64,800/-; Date & time of closing of above tender at 15:00 hrs. on 25-07-2024 and opening at 15:00 hrs. on 26-07-2024. For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

DIRECT RECEPTION FACILITY & PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL GOODS LINE

E-Tender Notice No. S&T/APDJ/06 & S&T/APDJ/07 Dated: 10-07-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: SN.1. E-Tender No. AP-ST-06-2024-25. Name of work: Basugaon-Direct Reception facility at Basugaon by Providing Crossover at Salakali end. (S&T associated work). Advertised Tender Value: ₹41,97,063/-; Earnest Money: ₹84,000/-; SN.2. E-Tender No. AP-ST-07-2024-25. Name of work: Provision of additional goods line at Dhugguri for simultaneous loading and unloading and handling two rakes at a time (S&T associated Work). Advertised Tender Value: ₹55,84,147/-; Earnest Money: ₹11,11,700/-; Date & time of closing of tender: 15:00 hrs. of 05-08-2024 and opening at 05-08-2024 after closing E-Tender. For details please visit www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (S&T), Allpurdur Division NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Serving Customers With A Smile

We have arrived: Kim Kardashian on reaching Mumbai for Anant Ambani-Radhika Merchant's wedding



MUMBAI, July 12: American media personalities and sisters Kim Kardashian and Khloe Kardashian arrived in India to attend the grand wedding of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant, set to be held in Mumbai on Friday.

According to videos circulating on social media, Kim, 43, and Khloe, 40, landed here early Friday morning with their staff and security detail.

In one of the videos, Kim could be seen exiting the airport and giving a quick wave to the paparazzi waiting outside with Khloe following her as they stepped into a car.

"We have arrived," she captioned a video of her waving to the paparazzi calling out to her for a picture. Earlier in the day, Kim also shared a series of videos and photos on her Instagram Stories upon her arrival in India.

This is both Kim and Khloe's first visit to the country, according to media reports.

In a video, a security personnel for the Kardashian sisters can be seen urging the paparazzi, who were busy clicking away their pictures and making reels, to make way for the car.

She captioned this clip as: "Hi" accompanied by the Indian flag.

An Instagram Story featured Kim saying "Thank you!" after she received a warm welcome from the hotel staff, who put a 'teeka' on her forehead and presented a shawl as well as a bouquet of flowers to her.

In the next slides, she posted glimpses of the decorations at the hotel along with the staff leading the sisters to their rooms to the sound of a live flute performance as they held salvers decorated

with 'diyas' and flowers in their hands.

In a video shared by Khloe on her Instagram Stories, a production crew with cameras, lights and microphones were seen following the sister duo around.

After four months of star-studded pre-wedding celebrations, Anant Ambani, youngest son of Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, will tie the knot with Radhika Merchant, daughter of pharma tycoons Viren and Shaila Merchant.

Several other notable celebrities from different walks of life will also be a part of the celebration.

On Thursday, actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas reached Mumbai accompanied by her singer husband Nick Jonas to attend the wedding.

The pre-wedding festivities kicked-started in March in Gujarat's Jamnagar which witnessed the performances by pop diva Rihanna and the three Khans -- Shah Rukh, Salman, and Aamir -- along with Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Deepika Padukone, and Alia Bhatt.

In June, the celebrations continued overseas when guests embarked on a luxury cruise across Italy and South of France and featured stage acts by the Backstreet Boys, singer Katy Perry and Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli. Singer-songwriter Justin Bieber performed at the 'sangeet' ceremony last week in Mumbai.

The wedding on Friday will take place at Jio World Convention Center in Mumbai, followed by dinner receptions on the following days.

Besides the Kardashians, the extravaganza is expected to be attended by former UK prime ministers Boris Johnson and Tony Blair, futurist Peter Diamandis, artist Jeff Koons, self-help coach Jay Shetty, former US Secretary of State John Kerry, former Canadian PM Stephen Harper, sources said.

Indian film stars Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Janhvi Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan and Ram Charan are also expected to attend. Anant and Radhika got engaged in a traditional ceremony last January. (PTI)



Money sorted, to get emergency certificate: Divyanka Tripathi gives update after robbery in Florence

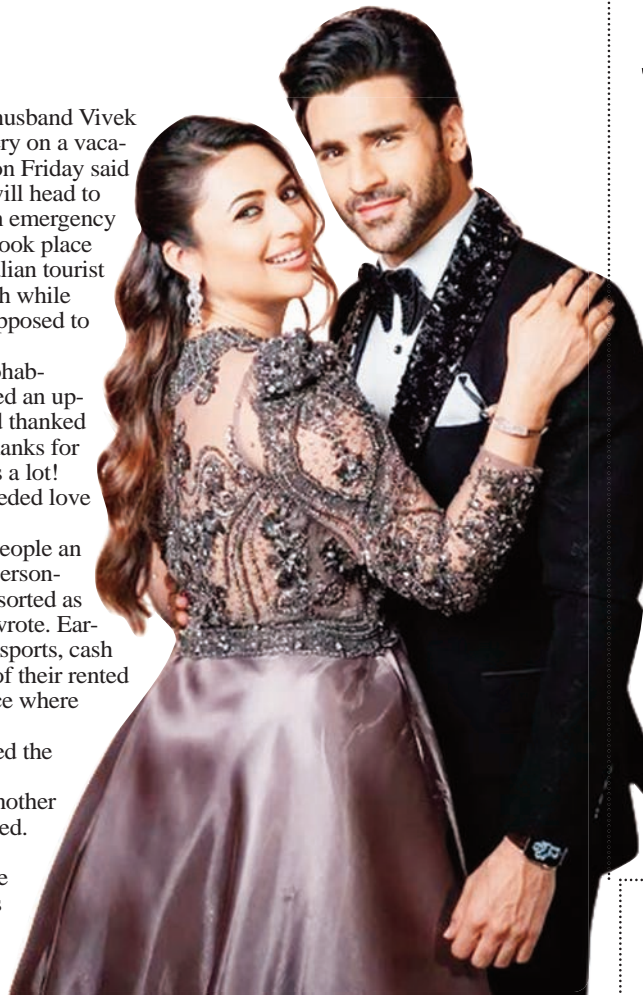
NEW DELHI, July 12: Days after she and husband Vivek Dahiya lost their passports and cash to a robbery on a vacation in Florence, TV actor Divyanka Tripathi on Friday said their money situation is sorted and now they will head to the Indian embassy in another city to obtain an emergency certificate for their return home. The robbery took place on Wednesday afternoon (local time) in the Italian tourist town when the actors stepped out to have lunch while their car was parked in the resort they were supposed to check in.

Tripathi, star of shows such as "Yeh Hai Mohabbatein" and "Banoo Main Teri Dulhann", shared an update on her Instagram Stories on Thursday and thanked friends and well-wishers for their support. "Thanks for your immense love and support. It truly means a lot! After losing so much, thankfully, the much-needed love is not lost!"

"Giving our loved ones and the concerned people an update as we are unable to reply to everyone personally. Currently, our money situation is kind of sorted as we've got some help from a dear friend," she wrote. Earlier, Tripathi said she and Dahiya lost their passports, cash and cards when thieves smashed the window of their rented car while they were at a resort close to Florence where they are currently on a vacation.

In the update, the actor said they had replaced the rented car as it was "insured".

"We'll be heading towards the embassy in another city today to get the emergency certificate sorted. Also, we have not lost everything as being reported (sic) We have a few things left that were in the boot of the car. Also, left with our spirits intact! No one can snatch away," she added. (PTI)



State-backed OTT platform 'Hello Meghalaya' launched, to promote local talents



SHILLONG, July 12: Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma launched the OTT platform 'Hello Meghalaya' to promote filmmakers and musicians from the state.

Speaking at the programme on Thursday evening, he said it is among the country's first state-backed OTT platforms, and it would provide opportunities to filmmakers, content creators and musicians from the state to showcase their work. "We can only pro-

vide the platform and it is up to the creators to keep up the momentum and sustain the platform. We are also providing financial incentives to creators who garner a pre-requisite viewership," Sangma said. "Because of this platform, they will get a large audience. We are trying to create an ecosystem where every artist can sustain themselves and earn a livelihood," he added.

Sangma said the intent of his government was to

promote the languages of the state. He also launched a formal collaboration between the Meghalaya Grassroots Music Project-MGMP and Hard Rock Cafe. As a part of this collaboration, bands from the state will perform at Hard Rock Cafes in cities such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune, New Delhi and Kolkata. The CM also said theatres would be set up in various districts for screening of local content. (PTI)

Shiva Rajkumar joins Ram Charan's next film with Buchi Babu Sana

NEW DELHI, July 12: Kannada actor Shiva Rajkumar is the latest addition to the cast of "RRR" star Ram Charan's 16th film, directed by Buchi Babu Sana of "Upenna" fame.

The untitled movie, currently referred to as "RC 16", also stars Janhvi Kapoor.

Production banner Mythri Movie Makers shared the update on its official X handle on the occasion of the actor's 62nd birthday on Friday.

"Welcoming 'Karunada Chakravarthy' @NimmaShivanna on board for a pivotal role that resonates with his stature," the post began, further extending the wishes to the actor on his birthday.

"Team #RC16 wishes #Shivanna a very Happy Birthday."

Billed as a "pan-India entertainer", the film is produced by Vriddhi Cinemas, Sukumar Writings and Mythri Movie Makers. Music maestro AR Rahman will compose music for the movie.

Sana will also write the film, which is produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru. (PTI)



When two people are in love, nothing else matters: Sonakshi Sinha on wedding

MUMBAI, July 12: Actor Sonakshi Sinha says nothing else should matter when two people are in love and she is happy that she got to follow her heart by marrying long-time boyfriend Zaheer Iqbal.

Sinha and Iqbal, also an actor, had a civil marriage ceremony followed by a star-studded reception on June 23.

"...I feel that when two people are in love, nothing else matters. And I hope people have the strength to follow their heart which is what I did and I'm happy," the actor told PTI, adding that she hopes that everyone gets to live in harmony and should "appreciate and respect each other wherever they come from".

Asked about the most special instances from her wedding, Sonakshi said there were several moments of joy that she vividly remembers, including the ceremony where they signed the marriage documents.

"... Just before we left for the reception and the house started to get empty as everyone was proceeding towards the venue, it was just the two of us and we took a moment. We went up to the house that we were going to make (a home) with each other and (paused) to take it all in. We looked out at the city and just held each other," she said.

Sinha, who currently stars in the horror comedy "Kakuda" with Riteish Deshmukh and Saqib Saleem, is enjoying a career upswing with the success of "Dabaad" last year and "Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar" this year. Like "Heeramandi", Sinha has also played a double role in "Kakuda", directed by Aditya Sarpotdar of "Munjya" fame. "It's very interesting, especially when you are getting to do it in the same film. You are playing two very different characters and you have to show that differently. I enjoyed it a lot." (PTI)



PARIS OLYMPICS

Sindhu, Prannoy get easy groups; tough task for Lakshya, Tanisha-Ashwini

KUALA LUMPUR, July 12: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy were on Friday handed easy groups for the Paris Games beginning on July 26. Sindhu, who won the silver medal at the Rio Games and followed that with a bronze in Tokyo Olympics, has been seeded 10th.

The World number 13 has been drawn in Group M of the women's singles alongside Kristin Kuuba of Estonia (WR 75) and Maldives' Fathimath Nabaaha Abdul Razzaq. (WR 111). While Sindhu, who is vying for a third Olympic medal, has a relatively easy group, she could face China's sixth seed He Bing Jiao in the round of 16.

If she gets past Jiao, Sindhu will likely face Olympic champion Chen Yu Fei of China in the quarterfinals.

The 29-year-old has not had the smoothest of runs in the lead up to the Olympics and it will take a special effort from her to a complete a hat-trick of medals at the Summer Games.

Meanwhile, Prannoy, who will be making his Olympic debut, has been seeded 13th and will have to go past Vietnam's Le Duc Phat (WR 70) and Fabian Roth (WR 82) of Germany in Group K of the men's singles event.

The second Indian in the men's singles, Lakshya Sen, ranked 19,



has been drawn in Group L.

The unseeded Lakshya has third seed and world number three Jonatan Christie of Indonesia in his group. They both are joined by Guatemala's Kevin Cordón (WR 41) and Belgium's Julien Carragi (WR 52). Lakshya has an inferior 1-4 head-to-head record against Christie with the Indonesian getting the better of the 22-year-old twice this year already.

If both Prannoy and Lakshya can top their group, they will

meet each other in the round of 16. World number 19 pairing of Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa has been drawn in a difficult Group C in the women's doubles event. The Indians have been clubbed alongside world number 4 Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida of Japan. Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist South Korea's Kim So Yeong and Kong Hee Yong (WR 7) and Australians Setyana Mapasa and Angela Yu (WR 27).

The star Indian men's pair of

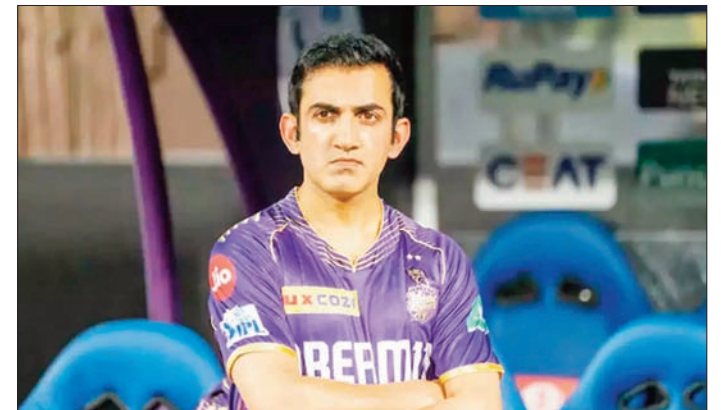
Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty is probably India's best bet for a medal. The duo has been seeded third in men's doubles event.

However, the men's doubles draw for the Paris Olympics was postponed due to a Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) hearing over the number of pairs in the draw. The Badminton World Federation (BWF) is yet to confirm the date of the draw. The badminton events at the Olympics will begin on July 27. (PTI)

Himanta wishes luck to Lovlina Borgohain for Paris Olympics

GUWAHATI, July 12: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma wished luck to boxer Lovlina Borgohain, the lone entrant from the state in the Paris Olympics, a release said on Friday. Lovlina won a bronze in the 2020 Tokyo Games, becoming the first from the Northeastern state to win an Olympic medal. Sarma signed a 'good luck' gamosa for Lovlina. The signature was collected on Thursday, in an initiative of the Assam Amateur Boxing Association (AABA) to send good wishes to the pugilist. After collecting the good wishes from players and other notable personalities, AABA secretary Hemanta Kumar Kalita, who is also the secretary general of the Boxing Federation of India, will hand over the 'good luck gamosa' to Lovlina. (PTI)

Gautam Gambhir will be a 'team coach' feels Avesh Khan



HARARE, July 12: Gautam Gambhir's single-minded objective of winning at all costs and striving to extract cent percent out of his players make him a 'team coach', reckons fast bowler Avesh Khan, who is aiming for a longer and consistent run in the national set-up under the newly-appointed gaffer.

Gambhir, who was officially unveiled as India's next head coach earlier this week, will start with an away white-ball series comprising three T20Is and as many ODIs in Sri Lanka from June 26.

Avesh, who has played under Gambhir's mentorship at IPL side Lucknow Super Giants, shared a few insights on his style here on Friday.

"Whatever I have learned from him, it is about the mindset that you should always look to get the better of your opponent and give your 100 per cent," Avesh told BCCI ahead of India's fourth T20I here on Saturday against Zimbabwe.

"In team meetings, as well as one-on-ones, he would speak less but would convey his point as to what is to be done. He would assign tasks and roles to players and he has always been a 'team coach', he always wants to win and everyone to give their 100 per cent," Avesh said.

With six wickets in three outings, Avesh said he has enjoyed bowling at the Harare Sports Club.

"We have played on different wickets here. We played the first two matches on the same deck, there was good bounce in the first match but in the second it had flattened out. The conditions are good, since it is an open ground

the ball also swings a bit," he said. "But since these matches are played in daytime, sometimes the wicket dries up but as a bowler you should be prepared to bowl in all situations."

"I always try to take wickets for my team and with bigger boundaries here, as a bowler that is enjoyable," Avesh added.

Talking about his evolution, Avesh said his focus has been on making his captain's job easier.

"I try to give a freehand to the captain, in terms of using me whenever he wants to. If a captain has a bowler who can be used in all three stages — powerplay, middle overs and in the death — his number of options increases," he said.

"As a bowler, I always think of providing that as an option, bring in new elements such as developing a slow bouncer or a leg-cutter from outside off-stump or near the wide line," Avesh added.

Avesh said Jasprit Bumrah's clarity of thoughts in execution as a bowler sets him apart, which is something he wants to emulate as well.

"Like Virat bhai said, he is once in a generation bowler, it is true and we all believe so. His style of bowling and his mindset are different, but main (thing) is his execution, for which we all practice," he said.

"Whenever I speak with him, he tells me to focus on the execution. If you are thinking of sending down a yorker, then it has to be a yorker; it cannot be a full toss or a half volley, a bouncer has to be on the shoulders; a length ball has to be (aimed at) the top of off (stump)," Avesh added. (PTI)

Indian hockey defender Jarmanpreet, who once served doping ban, geared up for Olympics debut

NEW DELHI, July 12: A frustrating doping ban jolted Jarmanpreet Singh's career in 2016, but he has long forgotten that bitter episode and the defender is all geared up for his Olympics debut in Paris later this month.

Jarmanpreet, a regular member of the Indian hockey team in the last few years, was picked in the 16-member Indian team for the Paris Games.

"It was not easy. It was one of my darkest phases, with many uncertainties," said Jarmanpreet on the doping ban from 2016

to 2018. "Players don't usually emerge from a setback like this. To sit out of matches for two years is a big gap in the sport," he recalled.

Jarmanpreet was then a promising player on his way to playing for India at the Junior World Cup 2016 when he was slapped with the doping ban.

The Punjab player did not give up and served out the two-year period in exile before making a return to competitive hockey and then to the Indian senior team. "But I was persistent and I knew I had

to bounce back. I don't think I could have done this without a strong domestic structure where I could show the selectors that I still had it in me," said Jarmanpreet, who is now an Income Tax officer, in a Hockey India release.

"In 2018, after the Hockey India Senior Men National Championship, I was among the 50 probables in the camp. Hockey India gave me a chance to rebuild my career. I was selected for the national programme for senior men where I was given an opportunity to catch up with my

peers and make my senior India debut.

"They saw that potential in me and I didn't give up on my dream to play for India at the Olympic Games," he noted.

The 27-year-old has played in 98 international matches since making his India debut at the 2018 Champions Trophy in Breda, the Netherlands, where India won the silver medal.

He was a part of the Indian team that won a gold medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023 and silver-winning squad at the 2022 Commonwealth Games. (PTI)

Stakeholders should ensure athletes are in best possible shape for Olympics: Mandaviya

NEW DELHI, July 12: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday asked all stakeholders involved in the preparation of Indian athletes for the Paris Olympic to ensure the elite players are in the best possible mental and physical shape to excel on the grand stage.

A total of 118 athletes, including 48 women, across 16 sports disciplines will compete at the Paris Games. While 72 athletes have qualified for Games for the first time, 26 have come through the government's ambitious programme, Khelo India.

"As our athletes enter this critical phase of preparation and competition, it's essential that we ensure they are in the best physical and mental condition to excel," said Mandaviya, while chairing a high-level meeting to review India's preparation for the Olympics.

During the meeting, Mandaviya expressed satisfaction that over 80 per cent of the qualified athletes were already training at various locations in Europe, ensuring they would not encounter acclimatisation issues.

The Government is committed to providing comprehensive support to Indian athletes through the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), ensuring they have the best possible preparation for the Paris 2024 Olympics. This includes the engagement of world-class coaches and experts to enhance training programs, organising competitive exposures to give athletes vital experience, and taking initiatives focused on rehabilitation and injury management.

For the first time, a recovery centre with sports science equipment will be available for Indian athletes at the Games Village. Additionally, India House has been set up at the Park of Nations in Paris, joining 14 other countries, including France, with similar houses. Importantly, all decisions are made with a focus on the athletes' needs and perspectives.

These efforts underscore the dedication to optimizing athletes' performance and well-being, demonstrating a strong commitment to their success and achievement. (PTI)

BSA's two-day summer school football tourney ends

HT Correspondent

HOWRAGHAT, July 12: Bakaliaghat Sports Association's (BSA) 2 day summer school football tournament for the schools of Bakaliaghat concluded on Friday at BSA Stadium. In the Under-15 final between Rajapathar Higher Secondary School and Bakaliaghat English Higher Secondary, the former defeated the latter by 2-0. Lachit Inghee and Navjit Boro scored one goal each for the winning team. In the final of Under-17 category Rajapathar Higher Secondary School defeated Bakaliaghat English Higher Secondary School by 5-3.

Sable says he can win medal in Paris Olympics



NEW DELHI, July 12: India's top 3000m steeplechaser Avinash Sable does not want to be just a participant at the Olympics and believes he can win a medal at the Paris Games beginning later this month.

The 29-year-old Sable, who recently broke his own national record, will be competing in his second Olympics. He had failed to make it to the finals at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

"I don't want to just participate, I believe I can win a medal. I am working hard with my eyes set on that goal, if everything falls into place I win a medal," Sable said when asked about the Paris Olympics.

"I used to think Olympic medallists had a unique and difficult approach to training, but

my experiences over the past two years have boosted my confidence," he said in a JioCinema release. Sable had clocked 8 minutes and 9.91 seconds to break his earlier national record while finishing sixth at the Paris Diamond League earlier this month. At the Paris Olympics, he will face at least seven competitors who have run at better time than him this year.

The likes of legendary Indian athletes like Milkha Singh, Sri Ram Singh and PT Usha have inspired Sable to aim for an Olympic medal.

"Their performances at the world level have deeply inspired me. If my role models can excel globally, so can I. I've been taught to focus on my own progress rather than others. My

competition is with my timing," he said. "My goal has always been self-improvement rather than focusing on the competition. This mindset has allowed me to break the national record ten times," said the reigning Asian Games gold medallist.

He said his silver medal winning performance at the 2022 Commonwealth Games gave him the confidence that he can compete against the best in the world.

"My aim at the Commonwealth Games was to compete against the Kenyan athletes. Finishing second by a fraction of a second gave me the confidence that we can compete against the best in the world," said Sable, who had broken Kenyan medal monopoly in 3000m steeplechase in the CWG. (PTI)

Ashwin's Tales: How MS schooled Sreesanth, 'Mankading' debut and 'Raman Effect'

NEW DELHI, July 12: An irate Mahendra Singh Dhoni deciding to send erstwhile enfant terrible S Sreesanth back home in the middle of a match, his 'Mankading' debut as a teenager and W.V. Raman's efforts into making him a potent off-spinner are some of the eminently readable stories in Ravichandran Ashwin's autobiography.

The 184-page book titled 'I Have The Streets - A Kutty Cricket Story' is co-authored by senior journalist Sidharth Monga and published by Penguin Random House. It covers Ashwin's journey from his formative years till India's epic World Cup win in 2011.

There aren't any sob stories or over-dramatization in the book but a lot of funny anecdotes besides an occasional deep dive into an experimental mind, which always wants to try something out of the box.

Easily the most compelling read was how an angry Dhoni, in the midst of a limited overs game against South Africa in Port Elizabeth (now known as Gqeberha) in 2010, had instructed Ashwin to tell team manager Ranjib Biswal to book S Sreesanth on the next available flight back home.

Reason: Sreesanth repeatedly ignored skipper's calls to sit in the dug-out with other reserves for a massage in the dressing room.

"I take water. MS drinks. Two overs later, I take more. He drinks more. Then again, I have carried more water for MS than anyone else. When I go in for the drink break, MS asks, 'Where is Sree?' Ashwin narrates.

"It is possibly the most neutral way of asking a question. It is also the MS way. You just can't make out why he is asking. I don't know what to tell him because I don't know what it might lead to. MS insists on finding out."

"I tell him Sree is upstairs in the dressing room. He tells me to tell Sree he has to come down and sit with the other reserves."

"Anyway, on the way back from the drinks break, I am wondering how, while keeping wicket in an international match, MS



even noticed that Sree was not sitting downstairs. I go back and tell M. Vijay, who is in his cooling glasses with his feet up on another chair, Hey, Monk, MS asked Sree to come down."

Monk tells me, Hey, you go and tell him. Don't expect me to do that. ".....I go into the changing room and I tell him, Sree, MS wants you to come down." Why? You can't carry water?" responds Sreesanth.

"I tell him I didn't say anything. He said he wants you to come down. He said the reserves should be together for the game. Sree says, Okay, you go. I will come."

"I return to my drink duties. The next time I have to go with a helmet. This time I can sense MS is angry, and I have never seen him lose his cool. Where is Sree? What is he doing?" MS asks sternly.

"I tell him he is getting a massage. MS doesn't say anything. In

the next over, he calls me to return the helmet. He is calm now. While giving me the helmet, he says, 0 one thing. Go to Ranjib sir. Tell him Sree is not interested in being here. Ask him to book his ticket for tomorrow so he can go back to India."

"I am stunned. I'm not sure what to say. I am just staring at his face. MS goes, What happened? You don't understand English either now?"

With certain amount of hilarity, Ashwin reveals how it worked like magic.

"Sree quickly gets up and gets dressed. Not only that, but now he assumes the drinks duties. The next time MS needs a drink, Sree makes sure he charges out. Instead of taking the drink from him, MS motions for me to come over. Did you tell Ranjib sir or not?" he asks me. "MS and Sree sort it out later, but during that period I am caught in a situation in which I would ideally be laughing but am too scared to do so," wrote the second Indian bowler to take 500 wickets in Tests. (PTI)

Young Indian stars look to translate dominance into series victory over Zimbabwe

HARARE, July 12: Back to their collective best, a clutch of young Indian stars will be eager to usher in a new era in the shortest format with a series victory when they face Zimbabwe in the fourth T20I here on Saturday.

After an unexpected defeat in the first match, the Shubman Gill-led side rediscovered its mojo in the second and third games to take a 2-1 lead with comprehensive wins.

Under the existing cricketing landscape, a series win over Zimbabwe will not rank high in the pecking order, but it will certainly spark ambitions inside some young players who are keen to take the team forward post the retirement of some modern-day greats.

None provide more compelling cases of that scenario than Washington Sundar and Abhishek Sharma.

Post the retirement of Ravindra Jadeja from T20Is, Washington is eyeing the spin-all-rounder slot and the Tamil Nadu man has shown some promising signs against Zimbabwe, taking six wickets at a fine economy of 4.5.

Whenever the selectors sit together to pick the Indian squad for the upcoming white-ball tour to Sri Lanka, they now will have to consider Washington's name seriously.

The 24-year-old has given this Indian side the option of a bowler flexible enough to operate inside and outside the Power Play, and a handy lower-order batter, who if the need arises, has the technique to come up the order as well.

Abhishek bludgeoned a 47-ball hundred in the second T20I here, underscoring the hope around him



as a long-term India material.

India will no longer have the services of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in the ultra-abridged version, and Yashasvi Jaiswal is the frontrunner to occupy one of those top-order slots.

Abhishek will hope to further buttress his claim for the other vacant top-order spot, for which there are other strong contenders in Shubman Gill and Ruturaj Gaik-

wad, with a bruising knock against the African side here on the morrow.

But this is not to say that some of the more established names such as Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube have nothing to gain from this series.

They linked with the squad here after taking part in India's victory parade in Mumbai post the T20 World Cup triumph, where they

had limited or little role in that epochal run.

So, the remaining two matches of this series will be an opportunity for Dube and Samson to keep themselves in the front row of players who will carry India into the future, producing some valuable efforts.

Indian management will also be pleased by the outing of their bowlers, particularly that of leg-

spinner Ravi Bishnoi, whose googlies were indecipherable for the home batters.

Bishnoi has six wickets, numbers similar to Washington and pacer Avesh Khan, who proved a nippy customer in this series.

Mukesh Kumar might come in place for left-arm pacer Avesh Khan after getting a rest in the previous match, but the pacer, though he has taken four wickets, will certainly like to be more economical.

On other hand, Zimbabwe have slipped a few rungs below after beating India in the first match.

There have been lonely sparks in their line-up like searing spells by impressive pacer Blessing Muzarabani and a well-paced fifty by Dion Myers.

But they need to harness them to meaningfully challenge the Indian unit, which is currently operating at one level higher.

Teams:
India: Shubman Gill (c), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Abhishek Sharma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (wk), Dhruv Jurel (wk), Shivam Dube, Riyan Parag, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Tushar Deshpande.

Zimbabwe: Sikandar Raza (c), Akram Faraz, Bennett Brian, Campbell Johnathan, Chatura Tendai, Jongwe Luke, Kaia Inno-cent, Madande Clive, Madhevere Wessly, Marumani Tadiwanashe, Masakadza Wellington, Mavuta Brandon, Muzarabani Blessing, Myers Dion, Naqvi Antum, Ngarava Richard, Shumba Milton.

Match starts at 4:30 PM IST. (PTI)

704 wickets and out: England great Jimmy Anderson bows out of test cricket in win over West Indies



LONDON, July 12: It's 704 wickets and out for Jimmy Anderson.

The most prolific fast bowler in test history bowed out of international cricket by helping England complete a win by an innings and 114 runs over the West Indies at Lord's on Friday.

The 41-year-old Anderson's 188th and last test ended with him taking 3-32 in the West Indies' second innings as they were dismissed for 136 a little over an hour into the third day's play.

One of those wickets came on Friday, with Anderson enticing an edge behind off Joshua Da Silva with a delivery that seemed away. It was classic Anderson — unlike the caught-and-bowled chance he dropped off Gudakesh Motie with England needing just one more wicket for victory.

He fell to his knees and covered his face with his hand.

Soon, he was walking off the field at the home of cricket to a

standing ovation after Gus Atkinson took the final wicket.

The morning had started with Anderson, who doesn't like being the center of attention, looking emotional after being given a guard of honor from both teams — and a first standing ovation from the crowd — when he came out at the start of the day's play.

Atkinson, who represents the future of English pace bowling, took two of the wickets after the Windies resumed on 79-6 — still 171 runs adrift of making England batting again — and had match figures of 12-106. He became the first England bowler to get a 10-wicket haul in a test at home since Alec Bedser in 1946.

Anderson finished his test career four wickets behind the late Australia legspinner Shane Warne's tally of 708 wickets. Only one bowler has more than him: former Sri Lanka spinner Muttiah Muralitharan with 800. (AP)

Women's Asia Cup: Indo-Pak league clash on July 19, free entry for fans

COLOMBO, July 12: India will meet arch-rivals Pakistan on July 19, the opening day of the Women's T20 Asia Cup at Dambulla, while hosts Sri Lanka will play Bangladesh in their first game a day later, Sri Lanka Cricket announced on Friday.

Apart from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the four teams expected to make it to the last-four stage, the other four sides are Thailand, UAE, Nepal and Malaysia.

India are clubbed with Pakistan, UAE, and Nepal in Group A, while Group B comprises Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Thailand.

In all 15 games will be played, including two semifinals and the final. "All the games will be broadcast live across international platforms, and the stadium will be kept open for the public to enter for free in order to witness the games," the media release stated.

The Executive Committee of SLC and the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) have jointly appointed Ravin Wickramaratne as the Tournament Director.

"Sri Lanka Cricket, with the support of the Asian Cricket Council, is planning to conduct a highly successful tournament, as a successful outcome of this tournament will help advance women's cricket on the world stage," said Wickramaratne, who is also the vice-president of Sri Lanka Cricket. (PTI)

India showed resilience to win T20 WC and celebrations told that story: Laxman

NEW DELHI, July 12: Batting great VVS Laxman hailed India's "resilience" while winning the recent T20 World Cup "from the jaws of defeat", and said the passionate celebration by players and former head coach Rahul Dravid exemplified the value of that triumph to them.

India won their first ICC trophy after 11 years and their second T20 title after 17 years when they beat South Africa by seven runs in the final in Barbados on June 29.

"The kind of finish we had after we were under pressure with South Africa batters needing 30 runs off 30 balls. And from there to show character, resilience and self-belief to pull off the match from the jaws of defeat, it shows the character of the entire team," Laxman said in a video posted by the BCCI on its 'X' handle.

"The amount of hard work they put in, the celebrations (by the players and support staff) told the bigger story behind this victory."

The 49-year-old Laxman, who is currently heading the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru, said the fervent celebrations by the team showed how much the victory meant to each of the players and the support staff.

"Obviously, it is a special feeling winning the World Cup. When you are playing against



the best and win the trophy, it means a lot to all the players participating in the tournament.

"Everyone showed their emotions and it showed how much it meant to each and every player in the squad, as well as the support staff, the emotions were really high. You saw Hardik Pandya breaking down once he bowled the last delivery. You saw Rohit Sharma on the ground."

"The entire country is rejoicing this win. It was a special feeling keeping in mind we had come close (to winning the title) six months back (ODI World Cup). We should have won the 50-over World Cup, dominating

the entire tournament but not being able to cross the final hurdle," he said.

Laxman made a special mention of the expressive celebration of Dravid, who generally abhors public show of emotions.

"Someone like Rahul with whom I have played so much cricket, knew him for so many years, but for him to show that emotions, first when the last ball was bowled and then the various conversations he was having with the team members and when he lifted the trophy.

"I thought it was a great gesture by Rohit and Virat Kohli to hand over the trophy to him

IOC and Saudi Arabia agree on 12-year deal for video gaming Esports Olympics



LAUSANNE, July 12: Saudi Arabia and the IOC are teaming up for their first commercial deal together with the oil-rich kingdom set to host the first Esports Olympics next year.

The gaming partnership will be for 12 years "with Olympic Esports Games held regularly," the International Olympic Committee said in a statement Friday.

The announcement was made during the two-month Esports World Cup being staged in Riyadh.

The IOC said last month it planned to launch video gaming Olympics to try to attract and retain young fans and audiences.

The Saudi deal must be approved by the IOC membership which meets July 23-24 in Paris on the eve of the Summer Games. (AP)

INDIA WOMEN HOLD MYANMAR TO A 1-1 DRAW IN FOOTBALL FRIENDLY

YANGON (MYANMAR), July 12: Indian senior women's football team came up with a much improved display, holding hosts Myanmar to a 1-1 draw to break a string of losses in their second and last friendly match here on Friday.

The Blue Tigresses, who had suffered a 1-2 defeat in the opening match on Tuesday, dominated the first half in a rain-lashed kick-off but were kept in check by a solid Myanmar defence and a soggy penalty area. India's Pyari Xaxa finally broke the stalemate in the 48th minute, scoring her scored goal in as many games. However, the home team's all-time top-scorer Win Theingi Tun scored the equaliser two minutes later. Both sides created several chances after that but neither could find the winning goal.

India head coach Chaoba Devi made one change in the side that had lost the opening friendly, replacing Sandhiya Ranganathan with Karishma Shirvoikar. Mousumi Murmu, 19, came in the second half to make her senior India debut.

India attacked in waves from the start and came close to taking the lead in the initial few minutes. Soumya Guguloth's neatly-struck ball over the top of the hosts' backline was collected by Myanmar goalkeeper Myo Mya Nyein before an outstretched Anju Tamang could connect.

Minutes later, Anju's corner landed at Sangita Basfore's feet but the midfielder was unable get the ball out of the puddle just six yards from the goalmouth.

Xaxa's chance in the seventh minute was perhaps India's best in the first half as she went clean through on the goal but was thwarted by the goalkeeper. India attacked with more intent than in the first game as a result the ball constantly remained in the Myanmar half in the first 45 minutes.

As the rain eased up, the game became more free-flowing. India missed a decent chance at the half-hour mark, with Karishma Shirvoikar firing wide from outside the box. (PTI)

A joy to watch you bowl: Tendulkar heaps praise on Anderson

NEW DELHI, July 12: As England great James Anderson ended his over two-decade long career on Friday, legendary Sachin Tendulkar paid a handsome tribute to his 'old foe', saying it was a "joy to watch" him bowl.

The 41-year-old Anderson walked away with impressive numbers of 704 wickets from 188 Tests with 32 five-wicket hauls after England defeated the West Indies by an innings 114 runs at Lord's.

"Hey Jimmy! You've bowled the fans over with that incredible 22-year spell. Here's a little wish as you bid goodbye," Tendulkar wrote on his 'X' account.

"It has been a joy to watch you bowl - with that action, speed, accuracy, swing and fitness. You've inspired generations with your game," he added.

Tendulkar, who retired in 2013, wished Anderson to have a won-



derful time with his family away from the rushes of professional

cricket. "Wish you a wonderful life

ahead with good health and happiness as you put those new shoes on

for the most important spell of your life - the time with family," wrote Tendulkar.

The respect was mutual was Anderson had termed the Indian batting maestro as the "best bowler" he bowled against in his career.

"The best batter I would have to say is Sachin Tendulkar. I don't remember having a specific game plan against Sachin Tendulkar. Once he came on, I would just think that I cannot bowl a bad ball here, he was that kind of player.

"He was a key for India as well. If you get him out in India, the whole atmosphere, in the ground changes. He was such a big wicket," Anderson had told Sky Sports.

The Lancastrian claimed 149 wickets in 39 Tests against India with six fifties, while Tendulkar amassed 2,535 runs in 32 Tests against England at 51.73 with seven centuries and 13 fifties. (PTI)