

Widespread technology outage disrupts flights, banks, media outlets and companies around the world

FRANKFURT, July 19: A global technology outage grounded flights, knocked banks and hospital systems offline and media outlets off air on Friday in a massive disruption that affected companies and services around the world and highlighted dependence on software from a handful of providers.

Cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike said that the issue believed to be behind the outage was not a security incident or cyberattack — and that a fix was on the way. The company said the problem occurred when it deployed a faulty update to computers running Microsoft Windows.

But hours after the problem was first detected, the disarray continued — and escalated. Long lines formed at airports in the US, Europe and Asia as airlines lost access to check-in and booking services at a time when many travellers are heading away on summer vacations. News outlets in Australia — where telecommunications were severely affected — were pushed off air for hours.

Hospitals and doctor's offices

Meta launches Meta verified subscription

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 19: Meta has introduced its Meta Verified subscription plans for businesses on Facebook and Instagram in India. This follows the successful initial launch last year and recent expansions, including the rollout of Meta Verified for businesses on WhatsApp announced at the Conversations Conference.

The Meta Verified business offering on Facebook and Instagram includes a verified badge, enhanced account support, impersonation protection, and features designed to improve discovery and connection. These enhancements aim to help businesses grow and address a variety of needs on Meta's platforms.

Meta Verified provides businesses with new ways to establish credibility and expand their brand presence. There are now four subscription plans available, tailored to different business needs. These plans are currently available for purchase on iOS or Android for Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp, with an option for bundled purchases for Facebook and Instagram.

Each plan includes the verified badge, account support, and impersonation protection, with additional features scaling according to the plan. Enhanced support includes access to chat or email with agents, callback requests, and dedicated case monitoring. Higher-tier plans also offer more links in Reels and profile enhancement features.

Meta Verified plans for businesses in India start at ₹ 639 per month for a single app and go up to ₹ 21,000 per month for two apps, with the latter being an introductory discounted rate.

Samsung launches Galaxy Watch7, Galaxy Watch Ultra, and Buds3 Series

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 19: Samsung, India's leading consumer electronics brand, has unveiled enticing pre-order offers for its latest wearable technology. Consumers can now pre-book the Galaxy Buds3, Galaxy Buds3 Pro, Galaxy Watch7, and the Galaxy Watch Ultra.

The Galaxy Watch7 and the Galaxy Watch Ultra represent the latest advancements in Samsung's wearable technology, designed to provide comprehensive wellness experiences. The Galaxy Watch Ultra, the newest addition to the lineup, offers enhanced fitness capabilities and advanced intelligence for superior performance. It features a new custom design for added protection, a Titanium Grade 4 frame, 10ATM water resistance, and the ability to operate at various altitudes, making it ideal for activities ranging from ocean swimming to extreme environment cycling.

ICSI plans overseas centres in Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea

KOLKATA, July 19: The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), the professional body set up for company secretaries in the country, plans to set up three more overseas centres in the near future, its president B Narasimhan said on Friday.

The proposed three overseas centres of ICSI are to be opened in Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea, he told reporters.

The institute has six overseas centres in UAE, US, UK, Singapore, Australia and Canada.

Narasimhan said that the new overseas centres in the three places are being planned on the basis of the strength of ICSI members in these countries.

"These centres will augment professional opportunities for the ICSI members, besides assisting and facilitating practical training for students and conducting examinations in these countries," Narasimhan said.



had problems with their appointment systems, while banks in South Africa and New Zealand reported outages to their payment system or websites and apps. At Hong Kong's airport, Yvonne Lee, 24, said she only found out her flight to Phuket in Thailand was postponed to Saturday when she arrived at the airport, saying the way it was handled would "affect the image of Hong Kong's airport very much."

Her already short five-day trip would now have to be further shortened, she said.

HONOR launches HONOR 200 series in India

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: HONOR has expanded its Indian market portfolio with the launch of the HONOR 200 Series, including the HONOR 200 Pro 5G and HONOR 200 5G. This latest addition to HONOR's Number Series lineup pushes the boundaries of mobile technology with advanced AI-powered portrait capabilities, immersive displays, and robust hardware performance.

The HONOR 200 Pro 5G, priced at ₹ 57,999, will be available in Ocean Cyan and Black. Sales begin at midnight on July 20 across Amazon.in, the brand website explorehonor.com, and mainline stores. From July 20 to 23, customers can enjoy an instant discount of ₹ 8,000. Additionally, ICICI and SBI Bank credit card holders can avail a further discount of ₹ 3,000, along with free HONOR gifts worth ₹ 8,499 or an instant coupon discount of ₹ 2,000 at selected stores.

The HONOR 200 5G, available in Moonlight White and Black, comes in two variants: 12GB+512GB priced at ₹ 39,999 and 8GB+256GB priced at ₹ 34,999. These models will also be available from midnight on July 20 with an instant discount of ₹ 1,000 and additional bank offers of ₹ 2,000. Customers can also receive free HONOR gifts worth INR 8,499 or an

instant coupon discount of ₹ 2,000. The HONOR 200 5G (8GB+256GB) can be availed for ₹ 29,999* from July 20 to 23.

HONOR is offering several service benefits for the HONOR 200 series, including a one-time ADLD within six months of purchase, assured buyback up to 90% ex GST valid 30 days from the invoice date, a six-month extended warranty, 18 months of door-to-door service, and three months of cyber security cover up to ₹ 50,000. The series will be available with zero down payment and other affordability options like NCEMI.

Both devices come with AI-powered eye-comfort and AMOLED Quad Curved Displays, running on MagicOS 8.0 (Android 14) with HONOR's MagicLM AI. The HONOR 200 Pro is powered by the Snapdragon 8s Gen 3, while the HONOR 200 uses the Snapdragon 7 Gen 3. The series includes a second-generation 5200mAh Silicon-carbon battery for exceptional battery life and reliable performance.

For productivity, the HONOR 200 series supports 100W Wired HONOR SuperCharge, charging the HONOR 200 Pro in just 41 minutes. The Pro variant also offers 66W Wireless HONOR SuperCharge, ensuring seamless online gaming and video streaming.

Nobody expects RBI to be cheerleader, coordination with govt helped fast revival in economy: Guv Das

MUMBAI, July 19: Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday said the Reserve Bank's relations with the government have been "smooth" during his nearly six-year term, and credited the close coordination between the two for the quick revival of the economy after the pandemic.

Speaking at an event organised by Financial Express here, the bureaucrat-turned-central banker said nobody has expected him to be a "cheerleader" for the government during his term.

"I am saying from my experience. Nobody expects RBI to be a cheerleader. I have had no such experience," he said, responding to a specific question about a lament made by one of his predecessors in a recent book.

Asked if he is open for a new term at Mint Road, Das said he is very focused on the current assignment and does not think of anything outside that.

Das said the RBI is optimistic that its estimate of 7.2 per cent growth for FY25 will be met, and added that with steady growth, the focus of the policy has to be "clearly and unambiguously" on inflation. The inflation elephant is



making pauses and grudgingly moving towards the forest or the 4 per cent target in an unidirectional way, he added.

He asked the banks to be watchful on the lag between credit and deposit growth and advised that the former should not exceed the latter.

The Governor also warned that the financial system can get exposed to "structural liquidity issues" due to the lag between the credit and deposit growth.

Amid concerns about Mule accounts being used by fraudsters, Das asked banks to strengthen their customer onboarding and transaction monitoring systems to check unscrupulous activities.

The RBI is working with banks and law enforcement agencies to check Mule accounts and digital frauds, he added.

HDFC Bank Parivartan Impacts Over 10 Crore Lives

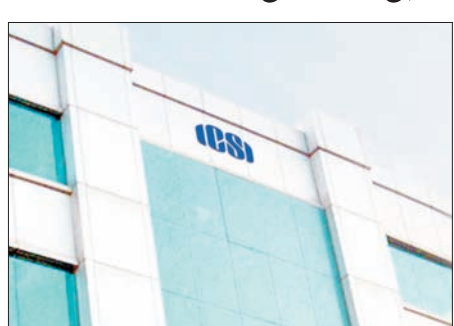
HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, has reported a substantial increase in its corporate social responsibility (CSR) expenditure for the Financial Year 2023-24. According to the bank's Integrated Annual Report, the total CSR spend reached ₹ 945.31 crore, reflecting an increase of nearly ₹ 125 crore from the previous fiscal year.

Through its CSR brand, Parivartan, HDFC Bank has made significant strides in social impact, touching the

lives of over 10.19 crore individuals across more than 9,000 villages. The initiative has reached over 10 lakh households and has extended its efforts to 85 out of the 112 districts identified under the Government of India's Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP).

Parivartan's efforts are concentrated on creating sustainable livelihoods for marginalized communities, with a particular focus on empowering women. The program operates across 28 states and 8 Union Territories, aiming to drive long-term social change and development.



He said ICSI is laying great thrust on companies to become ESG (environmental, social and governance) compliant in the coming days.

ICSI has already added two new subjects to its curriculum, ESG and artificial intelligence (AI), he said.

"ESG is the need of the hour. It has been

and former Head of Britain's National Cyber Security Centre.

DownDetector, which tracks user-reported disruptions to internet services, recorded that airlines, payment platforms and online shopping websites across the world were affected — although the disruption appeared piecemeal and was apparently related to whether the companies used Microsoft cloud-based services. Cyber expert James Bore said real harm would be caused by the outage because systems we've come to rely on at critical times are not going to be available. Hospitals, for example, will struggle to sort out appointments and those who need care may not get it.

"There are going to be deaths because of this. It's inevitable," Bore said. "We've got so many systems tied up with this."

Microsoft 365 posted on social media platform X that the company was "working on rerouting the impacted traffic to alternate systems to alleviate impact" and that they were "observing a positive trend in service availability." (AP)

Paytm Apr-Jun quarter loss widens to ₹ 840 cr

NEW DELHI, July 19: Fintech firm One97 Communications, which owns Paytm brand, on Friday said its loss has widened to ₹ 840 crore in the quarter ended June 30, primarily due to continued impact of restrictions on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd.

The company had posted a loss of ₹ 358.4 crore in the same period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by the company.

The consolidated revenue of Paytm declined 33.48 per cent to ₹ 1,639.1 crore during the reported quarter, from ₹ 2,464.2 crore in the same period a year ago.

Paytm spokesperson attributed the widening of loss and decline in revenue primarily to the disruption in business due to restrictions imposed on associate company Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The RBI barred PPBL from accepting deposits, credit transactions or top-ups in any customer accounts, wallets, and FASTags, keeping in view the interest of customers, including merchants from March 15 onwards.

"There were three factors which have led to this (decline in revenue and widening of loss) which are



primarily disruption on account of PPBL products like Wallet. We stopped using Wallet and some of the products," the spokesperson said. The company also temporarily stopped some of the products on which regulators may have concern at an industry-level.

"We temporarily stopped a lot of those products and those products are in the process of starting. The third (factor) is that because of the disruption, our merchant base and GMV (gross merchandise value) came down and that has an impact on the profitability overall," the spokesperson said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

CM predicts Muslims becoming

we do? The Muslim political leaders themselves have two children, but they never advice villagers about limiting the number of children to two," Sarma said. Sarma also opined that if earlier CMs "were not secular" and had spoken like him since 1971 or 1981 about population explosion, the state would have got positive results. "If the government had taken steps to educate the Muslim girls and against child marriage, this situation would not have developed. I cannot perform a miracle in just three years. If it (Muslims becoming majority) gets delayed till 2051, we will believe we have done something," he said.

Sarma claimed that when he was the health minister of Assam during the Congress tenure, one lakh male sterilisations took place in 2009.

"Gradually, the programme was stopped. If we can continue the process, we can be successful to a large extent... It is also not like this that all women want to give birth to five-eight children. There are some enabling factors, which help raise the numbers," he said.

Asked if the government's awareness drive regarding family planning has failed, Sarma said nothing has been done in this aspect, as compulsory family planning cannot be imposed in India.

"What awareness will work in Char (riverine islands) areas? If that had worked, the country would have progressed a lot. Therefore, we don't go for any awareness activities in Chars," he said.

The chief minister asserted that because of the rise of Muslim population, people from the community are visible in almost every sphere of life. "If you travel in app cabs in Guwahati, you will find that nine out of 10 are from one particular religion. You can go to Barpeta and Dhubri, and see the data," he added. (PTI)

NCST member Nirupam Chakma

He also emphasised the need for reservation of Scheduled Tribes in filling more than 18,000 vacant backlog posts within the state government. Regarding cases of atrocities against Scheduled Tribes women, Rongphar reported no such incidents witnessed within KAAC jurisdiction. Chakma confirmed that no cases of rape or atrocities against Scheduled Tribe women have been filed with the NCST.

Principal secretary Mukul Kumar Saikia will submit a draft report to NCST following the meeting.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, NCST Member Chakma stated, "I have visited two Sixth Scheduled autonomous councils, one in NC Hills and another here in Karbi Anglong, to understand the challenges faced by Scheduled Tribes under these Autonomous Councils and to raise awareness about NCST's plans and programs for their welfare. I am here to understand how the autonomous councils constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India operate."

Assam encounter: Hmar apex

Sarma too had termed the three youths as militants and said in a post on X, "In an early morning operation, @cacharpolice killed 3 Hmar militants from Assam and neighbouring Manipur. Police also seized 2 AK rifles, 1 other rifle and 1 pistol." Assam DGP on Thursday backed his force and Mahatta on X while sharing the press note distributed by the Cachar SP, saying it may be taken as authentic note on behalf of Assam Police.

According to Mahatta, police had received an input regarding movement of suspected militants at Krishnapur road under Kachudharam Police Station and three persons were arrested along with sophisticated weapons near Ganganagar while on way towards Bhuban Hills in an autorickshaw.

He had further said that as per preliminary investigation, the apprehended trio were members of a Hmar extremist organisation and trained cadres.

"During interrogation, they revealed that some of their cadres were hiding in a nearby jungle in Bhuban Hills and were planning to carry out some subversive activities along Assam-Manipur border," the SP had said.

Subsequently, a special operation was launched led by the district Additional SP along with commands in the Bhuban Hills side for apprehension of the suspected militants. The security team was being led by the apprehended culprits. "The moment we reached there, they started indiscriminate firing. There were 6-7 militants hiding behind the bushes. Police team immediately took their positions and retaliated. There was heavy exchange of fire from both the sides," Mahatta had claimed.

The apprehended militants, who were taken by the police team, were wearing bulletproof jackets and helmets. They sustained grievous injuries during the encounter and were immediately shifted to Sonai primary health centre and later were shifted to Silchar Medical College and Hospital, where the attending doctor declared them dead, he had added. He had also said three police personnel were severely injured during the exchange of fire and were admitted at the SMCH. The deceased militants were identified as Lallungawi Hmar (21), Lal-bikung Hmar (33) and Joshua (35), who hailed from Manipur. (PTI)

Sonowal plans Digboi refinery

across rail, road, air, and waterways, fostering industrial growth and youth employment in the region. "Under PM Modi's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' agenda, our goal is to elevate Assam's infrastructure alongside Dibrughar to unprecedented heights," Sonowal affirmed.

Highlighting youth empowerment as pivotal to the nation's progress, Sonowal stressed initiatives in technology, employment, and skill development. In a significant move towards local governance, Sonowal was sworn in as an ex-officio member of the Digboi and Makum municipalities.

Strategies formulated for

the Namsai Declaration in July 2022, to resolve the decades-old boundary dispute. Another member of the panel, Rajya Sabha MP Nabam Rebia, called for prior consultation with local authorities, community leaders and affected people before making any decision on the boundary issue to work out an amicable solution. (PTI)

Govt lists 6 new bills for

July 22 will conclude on August 12. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget on Tuesday, July 23. Other bills listed for introduction and passage during the session are the Boilers Bill to replace the pre-Independence era law, the Coffee (Promotion and Development) Bill and the Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has also constituted the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), which decides the parliamentary agenda.

The committee chaired by the Speaker has Sudip Bandyopadhyay (TMC), P P Chaudhary (BJP), Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu (TDP), Nishikant Dubey (BJP), Gaurav Gogoi (Congress), Sanjay Jaishwal (BJP), Dileshwar Kamait (JD-U), Bhartruhari Mahtab (BJP), Dayanidhi Maran (DMK), Baijayant Panda (BJP), Arvind Sawant (Shiv Sena-UBT), Kodikunil Suresh (Congress), Anurag Thakur (BJP) and Lalji Verma (SP) as members. (PTI)

Kharge criticises PM's 'eight

people like factory-workers, teachers, small shopkeepers etc., who had gone to their villages due to the pandemic, are having to work as agricultural labourers. The RBI report shows that there are 2.3 crore such people who did not return to their regular jobs between 2019-20 and 2022-23," Kharge said.

It is not clear how the RBI arrived at its 2023-24 numbers, given that it did not reveal the sector-wise breakup, something it did in previous years, the Congress chief said. "Modi ji, stop hiding the promise of providing 2 Crore Jobs per year, by misusing RBI and publishing FAKE reports," he said. (PTI)

Internal matter: India on deadly

the local authorities in view of the protests. Our High Commission remains in touch with local authorities for the safety of our nationals," the spokesperson said.

The protesters are demanding withdrawal of a quota system for jobs describing it as "discriminatory". (PTI)

AI has potential to revolutionise

Welfare. Apurva Chandra, acknowledged the significant strides AI has made, recognizing its potential to transform healthcare. He noted that while AI is not yet extensively used within the ministry, there are current applications being utilised in decision support systems, data mining, diagnostics, drug discovery and fraud analytics. He described how AI is used in decision support systems like HMIS software, integrated with e-Sanjivani and numerous hospitals and primary care centres to recommend medicines based on past behaviours and learnings.

Chandra stressed the need for industry collaboration to further integrate AI into healthcare, particularly in utilising the vast datasets available for public health outcomes, including predicting pandemics and managing non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases, and maternal and child health outcomes.

During the event, the 'CII Self-Regulatory Code of Conduct for Telemedicine' and a comprehensive report titled 'Mapping India's Corporate Health and Wellness Landscape' were launched. (PTI)

NFR introduces weekly special trains to manage summer rush

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: For the convenience of passengers during the summer rush, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has taken a proactive step to address the surge in passenger demand by introducing two more pairs of weekly special trains. One train will operate between Guwahati and Anand Vihar Terminal & another from New Tinsukia to Bhagat Ki Kothi. Both special trains will operate for four trips each in both directions on a weekly basis. These Express trains will improve rail connectivity between north-east, North Bengal, Bihar, and northern part of India, fostering trade and other economic activities. The regular services of these trains will run as per the following details.

Accordingly, Train No 05671 (Guwahati - Anand Vihar Terminal) special will depart from Guwahati every Wednesday from July 24 to August 14, 2024 at 15:00 hours to reach Anand Vihar Terminal at 8:50 hours on Friday. In the return direction, Train No 05672 (Anand Vihar Terminal-Guwahati) special will depart from Anand Vihar Terminal every Friday from July 26 to August 16, 2024 at 23:45 hours to reach Guwahati at 14:15 hours on Sunday. The special train will run via Kamakhya, Rangiya, New Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, New Alipurduar, New Coochbehar, New Jalpaiguri, Kishanganj, Malda Town, Bhagalpur, Jamalpur, Gaya, Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and Prayagraj in both directions. The train will have one AC 3-tier, eight Sleeper class and ten general second class coaches for the passengers.

Train No 05919 (New Tinsukia - Bhagat Ki Kothi) Special will depart from New Tinsukia every Monday from July 22 to August 12, 2024 at 12:45 hours and will reach Bhagat Ki Kothi on Thursday at 7:15 hours. In the return direction, Train No 05920 (Bhagat Ki Kothi - New Tinsukia) Special will depart from Bhagat Ki Kothi every Friday from July 26 to August 16, 2024 at 05:30 hours and will reach New Tinsukia station on Monday at 04:00 hours. The special train will run via Simaluguri, Diphu, Lumding Jn., Kamakhya, Rangiya, New Bongaigaon, New Alipurduar, New Coochbehar, Kishanganj, Katihar, Hajipur, Gorakhpur, Ghaziabad, Rohtak, Suratgarh, Lalgarh Jn, Merta Road and Jodhpur Jn. The train will have two AC 3-tier, eleven sleeper class and eight general second class coaches for the passengers.

Waitlisted passengers of other trains travelling on these routes can avail the opportunity to travel with comfort during this summer on these special trains. The details of stoppages and timings of these trains are available on the IRCTC website and are also being notified in various newspapers and social media platforms of NF Railway. Passengers are requested to verify the details before undertaking their journey.

Minister Jayanta Malla reviews tiger situation in Dhing

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 19: Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah, along with BJP MLA Rupak Sarma, rushed to Dhing town on Friday to take stock of the situation involving a stranded Royal Bengal tiger that has created panic among the people of the greater Dhing areas for over a fortnight. During his visit, the minister also participated in a review meeting with the district's forest officials to assess the arrangements initiated to capture the stranded tiger. The minister interacted with some residents of Dhing, assuring them that the stranded tiger would be caged as soon as possible. It is pertinent to mention that the stranded tiger has already injured five persons, including a forest personnel, in the area. The forest personnel have persistently attempted to tranquilise the tiger, but all their attempts have been in vain, sources added.

Lion Club of Gauhati holds 56th installation ceremony

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: The 56th installation ceremony of the Lions Club of Gauhati, named Aarambam, was held on Friday. The chief guest of the program was Lion Pankaj Mehta, the international director, who duly installed the new office bearers and board of directors of the club headed by Lion Mahesh Sharma.

In this ceremony, the induction officer, district governor Lion Seema Goenka, inducted 15 new members into the organisation. Immediate past governor Lion Nirmal Bhura graced the occasion as the guest of honour. He launched the membership card at this program. The event was also graced by vice governor-1 Lion Pankaj Poddar and vice governor-2 Lion Manoj Bhajanka, who, being the LCIF coordinator, announced the names of 12 members who became Melvin Jones Fellows and received further commitments from 10 more members.

Conclave emphasises lifestyle choices and mental health for holistic well-being

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: Dr Ubedul Islam, assistant professor at Guwahati Medical College, highlighted the crucial role of lifestyle choices and mental health in maintaining good overall health.

Addressing a conclave on Health and Wellness organised by Nefocus at Nedfi Hall on July 15, Dr. Islam also stressed the significance of activities like yoga and exercise in achieving physical and mental balance. "Good lifestyle choices and mental well-being are pivotal for maintaining optimal health," he remarked during his presentation at the conclave.

The conclave featured various experts discussing strategies to combat lifestyle



diseases through dietary control, regular health check-ups, and maintaining mental equilibrium. A seminar focusing on dietary practices also attracted participation from renowned experts including Dr Sabin Yashar, Dr Indrani Dutta, and Gitartha Roy Medhi. On the other hand, Dr Sabur Uddin Ahmed from Gastrocity, Guwahati, shared insights on gastroenterology, underscoring the importance of digestive health in overall well-being. The event also witnessed contributions from Dr Arup

CEM Boro inaugurates Chino Basumatary Space Lab in Chirang

BTR launches NE India's first space lab at govt school, initiates plan for ten more across region

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, July 19: The Department of Education, government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), has added another feather to its cap with the inauguration of its first space laboratory on Friday, marking it as the first space lab in a government school in north-east India.

The chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Pramod Boro, inaugurated the 'Chino Basumatary Memorial Space Laboratory' at Sidli Kashikotra Higher Secondary School, Chirang, in the presence of a large gathering of students, senior government officials, and teaching staff.

The event was graced by the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including principal secretary of BTC, Akash Deep; secretary of Education, Amarjyoti Barman; and former senior space scientist at ISRO, Dr TN Suresh Kumar.

Dr Suresh Kumar is a former senior space scientist from ISRO with an illustrious career spanning over 38 years. He retired from the INSAT Master Control Facility, Department of Space, government of India, in July 2017. Dr Kumar's career began in 1978 at the Space Application Center, ISRO, Ahmedabad, after graduating in Electronics & Communication Engineering. Known for his diverse interests and extraordinary personal accomplishments, Dr Kumar has established himself as a pioneer in various fields, including education, exploration, and adven-

ture. Dr Kumar holds several "firsts" as an Indian scientist, including traveling to the 'Edge of Space-Stratosphere' and experiencing zero gravity flight at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Centre in Russia. He has explored the Ennedi Plateau region of the Sahara Desert, reached the summit of the active Nyiragongo Volcano in Congo, visited Easter Island, and traveled to more than 175 countries across all seven continents. Dr Kumar's unique blend of scientific expertise and adventurous spirit has allowed him to contribute significantly to both the field of space science and our understanding of the world through his extensive travels and explorations.

This inaugural space lab is named in honor of Late Chino Basumatary, a renowned social worker and journalist from the village of Bhualaguri, Kashikotra, in Sidli development block of Chirang. Born on April 13, 1954, to Late Sailandendra Basumatary and Late Sabeswari Basumatary, he passed away on December 29, 2015. Chino Basumatary's contributions to society were numerous and significant. He was the editor and publisher of 'ARONAI' newspaper (1981), 'Bodosa' weekly newspaper (1991), and 'Bodosa' daily newspaper (2006). He served as the founder president of 'Bodoland Journalist Association' and Kokrajhar Press Club.

A folk song artist & composer at All India Radio, he was also president of Tribal Youth Association and Sidli Chirang Anchalik Com-



mittee, ABSU (1973-76). He founded the Bodosa Institute of Advanced Education & Information Technology, Kokrajhar, and actively participated in the Roman Script Movement and Bodoland separate state movement. In recognition of his contributions, he was awarded the Dr Ambedkar Fellowship Award in 2005.

The space laboratory marks the first of ten such facilities to be established across the BTR, following an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed on February 23, 2024, between the government of BTR and M/S Vyomika Space Academy Private Limited, New Delhi.

The other selected schools for this pioneering initiative are Debagaoon HS School, Kokrajhar; Grahampur HS School, Gosagaon; and Tipkai Senior Secondary School, Parbatjhora in Kokrajhar district; Bijini Bandhab HS School, Bijini in Chirang district; Barama Girls High School,

Mushalpur; and Salbari Girls High School, Salbari in Baksa district; Tamulpur HS School, Salbari in Tamulpur district; Udalguri HS School, Udalguri; and Khoirabari HS School, Bhergaon in Udalguri district.

The initiative aims to ignite interest in space and its applications among BTR students through an innovative gamification approach. These space labs, specially designed for government school students, have been developed under the ISRO Space Tutor Programme by Vyomika Space Academy, a global learning platform offering world-class educational tools and resources on space and technology. Each space lab is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including telescopes, ISRO satellite models, ISRO rocket models, aircraft and drone models, robots, 3D printers, and other cutting-edge technology tools. This initiative represents a significant step towards enhancing STEM education in the BTR, pro-

viding students with hands-on experience and exposure to space technology and its applications. The remaining nine schools will see similar setups in the near future, bringing this innovative educational opportunity to students across the region.

CEM Pramod Boro, while at the event, said that the Bodoland region has reached for the stars and successfully established its first space lab in Chirang. He added that the BTR government is committed to working for the all-round development and welfare of the common masses across the region. He noted that the BTR government has launched and initiated several initiatives and missions while fostering a healthy educational environment.

"Chino Basumatary Memorial Space Laboratory at Sidli Kashikotra HS School, Chirang, was ceremonially inaugurated in the presence of students, teachers, and officials. It is regarded as the first space lab in a government school in north-east India. The government of BTR has initiated plans to establish ten space labs at various educational institutions to educate students on space science in the days to come. The government of BTR has also launched the Bodofa Super 50 mission to impart training and educational upliftment among students. The BTR government also launched the School Adoption Programme, through which schools are reaching new heights of development in the region," Boro added.

Conservation education workshop for Manas landscape held by Aaranyak

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 19: Region's premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak organised a two-day consultation workshop for planning conservation education for Manas landscape at its Manas Conservation and Outreach Centre (MCOC) situated near Manas National Park.

During the workshop held from July 13-14, conservation educationists, education practitioners, natural resource management specialists, habitat conservation experts, culture and folklore experts and social scientists from Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) actively participated and brainstormed on the Bodo traditional knowledge system and its association with nature.

Aaranyak says the organisation is committed towards conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and supporting the indigenous communities through Alternative Sustainable Livelihood activities, education and awareness programmes for residents in the Manas Landscape.

The initiative is supported by IUCN-KfW. Notable experts from the area Dr Rustam Brahma from Bodoland University, Dr Gaurisankar Narzary from Kokrajhar Government College, Dilip Narzary, a cultural activist and accredited folk dance trainer of Bodo Cultural Society and Chandra Kanta Basumatary, former president, Manas Maozigenidri Ecotourism Society (MMES) and former brand ambassador, Forest & Environment Department, Assam attended the workshop.

The programme is an initiative of the Participatory Natural Resource Management (PNRM) Programme under the Tiger Research and Conservation Division (TRCD) of Aaranyak, and Dr M Firoz Ahmed, scientist F & head of the division, also participated in the workshop. The programme was also enriched by various other senior conservation biologists of Aaranyak. The entire programme was moderated by Dr Jayanta Kumar Sarma, senior project coordinator, Natural Resource Management (NRM), TRCD, Aaranyak and Dr Simanta Kalita, CE expert.

Day one of the workshop commenced with a welcome address by Dr Ahmed, who highlighted that Aaranyak has been working closely with the communities around Manas National Park to address the conservation challenges in the region and stressed the key role played by dedicated conservation education campaigns during 2016-2022 in resurrecting the old glory of the World Heritage

Site through the prolonged effort of all the stakeholders. He highlighted the important contribution of the Bodo folklore 'Sandw Baudiyan Dukhu' that was enacted as a forum theatre during the conservation education campaigns with stakeholders and was supported by IUCN-KfW.

The keynote address was delivered by Chandra Kanta Basumatary. Basumatary shared that Manas had experienced a decline in its glorious nature following the political upheaval during the 1990s. However, as situations improved communities came forward and worked incessantly, with the support of different non-government organisations and the Forest and Environment Department to ensure the revival of Manas's natural wealth, and MMES was at the forefront of this revival. He also emphasised that to strengthen these initiatives further, one has to integrate traditional and modern scientific knowledge to achieve better results.

The business sessions of the workshop commenced with a short presentation by Dr Sarma, where the participants were provided with an overview of the present perceptions of the community around Manas regarding the natural resources, their connection with the culture and their conservation aspects.

During the presentation, Dr Sarma communicated the perspectives and expectations of the workshop and the modalities that would be followed during the sessions.

Following the presentation, the participants were divided into five groups that were assigned to map the subjects, develop a framework and the strategic approach, explore the cultural value and develop the ethical framework for aspects such as: community and village institution engagement, women engagement, gender issues and building social capital, NRM, engagement of farmers and youth in NRM, teacher-student engagement and interfacing with educational institutions, and TKS, heritage, culture, associated with nature, human wellbeing and altruism.

The workshop helped to develop a consensus and synthesis of a conservation education package for Manas landscape that focuses on the local knowledge system as its core, where cultural and spiritual practices and traditional ecological knowledge have been practiced traditionally across generations by the communities that find close connection with nature. It was proposed that this knowledge system and practices will be prioritised as part of the communications through intergenerational dialogue.

Rabindranath Tagore statue unveiled at RTU campus in Hojai

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, July 19: A life-sized statue of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was installed at the new campus of Rabindranath Tagore University at Sagar Basti in Hojai recently. Prof Amalendu Chakrabarty, vice chancellor, RTU formally unveiled the statue. Shiladitya Dev, chairman of Assam State Linguistic Minority Board and ex-MLA, along with many other esteemed guests graced the occasion. After inaugurating the statue, all the guests paid floral tributes to the polymath. Speaking on the occasion, VC Prof Amalendu Chakrabarty

said the statue of Kabi Guru stands as a symbol of the university's commitment to cultural and educational excellence. He said this will be a source of inspiration for everyone. He also remarked that a statue of Bir Tikendrajit will be inaugurated soon on the campus. "In the near future, more such statues and cultural markers of various communities will come up here," the VC added. Tilak Chandra Kalita, registrar i/c, RTU and Chaturthi Rani Biswas, chairman, Hojai Municipal Board, also spoke on the occasion. They said students should emulate the principles and ideologies of such

personalities, who contributed immensely to the betterment of mankind. The unveiling ceremony was met with great enthusiasm from faculty, the administrative staff, and guests, marking a significant milestone in the history of Rabindranath Tagore University. Notably, the eight-foot-tall statue made of Vietnam marble is built from the fund provided by the government of Assam through its United Fund (2020-21). In conjunction with the unveiling ceremony, Prof Chakrabarty and Shiladitya Dev jointly released the annual campus bulletin of RTU, namely 'Dhisakti'.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF S.E. WORKS

KAAC::SECRETARIAT

D I P H U-782460

No. KAAC/FIN-338(Pt)/CEMs Discretionary Fund/2023/ 32/262

/Dtd. 15 /07 /2024

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. on 12/08/2024 and will be opened on the same date place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any reason thereof and will not be bound to accept, the lowest tender quoted rate.

Sl. No	Name of Works	Tender Amount	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1	Construction of Interior Decoration at Guest House cum Conference Hall at Hamren, West Karbi Anglong.	Rs. 6,15,70,320.00	ST/SC/OBC = 1% General = 2%	180 days

Terms & Conditions

N.B

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/works for all division under CPWD for the year 2021
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted.
- The Contractor shall Repair/Re-Construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuse to repair/Re-construction the woks.
- The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W). KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
 - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate/GST.
 - Council Registration.
 - Call Deposit
 - Council receipt
 - Caste Certificate.
 - Aadhaar Card
 - Pan Card
 - Account number
 - Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund
 - The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer (Works)
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council
DIPHU.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.
-Jim Rohn

Transgender in police force?

In a remarkable achievement, Manvi Madhu Kashyam has become India's first transgender police sub-inspector. Hailing from a small village, Manvi's appointment symbolizes a significant stride towards inclusivity in the country. She is among three transgender individuals selected for this role, with the other two choosing to remain anonymous. Manvi's story has captivated national attention, shedding light on the struggles and triumphs of transgender individuals in India. Historically, the transgender community has faced severe stigmatization, often relegated to begging or performing at events for a living. Manvi's success represents a monumental leap from these traditional roles to a position of authority and respect within law enforcement. As a police sub-inspector, Manvi's responsibilities include maintaining law and order, gathering intelligence, investigating crimes, and participating in raids and encounters. These tasks demand resilience, bravery, and dedication—qualities that Manvi has displayed in abundance. Despite the hurdles, including rejections from numerous coaching institutes during her preparation, Manvi persevered. She credits Mr. Rahman from a supportive coaching center and her family for their unwavering support. This perseverance paid off when she emerged successful among 6,788 candidates, with only three transgender individuals qualifying. India's transgender population, officially recorded for the first time in the 2011 census, stands at 4.87 lakh. This milestone paved the way for recognizing and addressing the community's needs and challenges.

The court's 2014 judgment emphasized that gender identity is an intrinsic part of an individual's dignity, protected under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. This interpretation of dignity includes the right to self-expression, free from discrimination. Additionally, the right to equality (Article 14) and freedom of expression (Article 19(1)(a)) were recognized as gender-neutral, thereby extending to transgender persons. In 2019, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act was enacted, prohibiting employment discrimination against transgender individuals in both public and private sectors. This law underscores the necessity of creating an inclusive culture and establishing mechanisms to address rights violations. Manvi's appointment is more than just a personal victory; it is a beacon of hope and possibility for the transgender community in India. It illustrates that with determination and the right support, transgender individuals can achieve positions of power and respect.

Her success is a testament to the evolving legal and social landscape, driven by collaborative efforts between communities, government bodies, and development partners. Manvi's journey from a marginalized existence to a distinguished role in law enforcement challenges entrenched stereotypes and sets a precedent for others to follow. Her story is a powerful reminder that progress, though often slow, is undeniably happening. It is a call to action for continued support and inclusion of transgender individuals in all spheres of society. Manvi Madhu Kashyam's achievement is not just a personal triumph but a significant milestone in India's journey towards true inclusivity. Her example will inspire countless others, proving that with perseverance and support, barriers can be broken, and new possibilities can emerge for everyone, regardless of gender identity. Manvi's courage and determination serve as a powerful catalyst for societal change, inspiring future generations of transgender individuals to dream big.

Money bill challenge in Supreme Court worsens vulnerability of ruling party

By: K Raveendran

If Aadhaar is a money matter, anything can be interpreted to mean anything else. This will be one of the key dilemmas that the seven-member constitutional bench will consider when it begins deliberations on the petitions against the use of money bill route by the Modi government to overcome legislative hurdles in pushing controversial legislations. Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud this week decided that it is time the learned judges got down to work after the bench remained virtually dormant since October last year when the bench was announced.

The issue centres on the interpretation and application of Article 110 of the Indian Constitution, which defines what constitutes a money bill. Money bills, unlike ordinary bills, can be introduced and passed without the approval of the Rajya Sabha, effectively bypassing the scrutiny and potential obstruction by the opposition-dominated upper house. The government has provided a far-fetched definition of Aadhaar as an instrument to provide efficient subsidy to vulnerable sections to bring the Aadhaar law in the ambit of a money bill. But this had widely raised eyebrows.

Critics, including opposition parties and legal experts, argue that the government has been misusing the money bill provision to evade parliamentary oversight and undermine the Rajya Sabha's role as a check on hasty legislation. They contend that several bills categorized as money bills do not meet the constitutional criteria and have been wrongly categorized to circumvent opposition in the Rajya Sabha. This practice, they argue, erodes the principles of democratic deliberation and legislative scrutiny that are essential for robust governance.

The Modi government, faced with legislative impasses in the Rajya Sabha, has increasingly turned to this route to push through key reforms and landmark legislations. As far as the BJP and the Modi government are concerned, the situation portends a murky past and a murkier future. The strength of BJP in the Rajya Sabha has fallen to 86, affecting NDA's legislative leverage. With other partners included, the strength increases to only 101. This has significant implications for the passage of contentious legislation through the

upper house. On the other hand, the government faces heightened opposition following successive state elections where opposition parties have gained ground with increased tally.

With a reduced strength and growing opposition unity on critical issues, the government faces an uphill task in securing legislative mandates without resorting to contentious methods. The efficacy and legitimacy of governance through executive orders and ordinances have also been questioned in this context, reinforcing concerns about democratic governance and parliamentary accountability.

Petitions filed by various stakeholders question the validity of bills passed under the money bill label, alleging that such classification was arbitrary and designed to avoid debate and amendment in the Rajya Sabha. These petitions highlight specific legislative instances where controversial bills, such as those related to taxation and finance, were pushed through as money bills despite their broader implications beyond fiscal matters.

The legal challenge before the Supreme Court is not just about the technical interpretation of constitutional provisions but also about the broader implications for India's democratic framework. It raises fundamental questions about the balance of powers between the executive and legislative branches and the role of judicial oversight in upholding constitutional principles.

In response to these challenges, the government has defended its use of the money bill route as a necessary tool to overcome legislative gridlock and ensure the implementation of crucial reforms. It contends that the classification of bills as money bills was done in accordance with legal advice and parliamentary practice, emphasizing the need for expeditious decision-making in matters of economic and fiscal policy.

The Supreme Court's eventual ruling on these petitions is eagerly awaited as it holds the potential to set a precedent for future legislative practices and the interpretation of constitutional provisions. Beyond the immediate legal implications, the case has broader ramifications for India's democratic governance, judicial independence, and the balance of power between different branches of government. (IPA Service)

The evolution of GST: Challenges, achievements, and future directions

When the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was rolled out seven years ago, on July 1, 2017, there was widespread apprehension about its implementation. Many deemed the decision to proceed with its launch risky, especially coming on the heels of the tumultuous demonetisation period just a year earlier. Economists and tax experts made dire predictions, arguing that the country was ill-prepared for such a sweeping tax reform. Nonetheless, then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley made the decisive call to introduce GST without further delay. In hindsight, this decision proved astute, as the economy would have faced prolonged uncertainties had implementation been delayed for broader readiness among stakeholders.

It's important to note that the idea of a single-point tax had been under discussion for nearly 18 years before its implementation. Originating during the Vajpayee government in 1999, the concept stemmed from recommendations by the Vijay Kelkar task force. This task force advocated for a unified tax structure to replace numerous indirect taxes levied by both the Central and state governments. Studies supported this approach, highlighting that countries adopting

such systems experienced increased efficiency and economic growth through simplified compliance and enhanced economic integration.

In 2000, an empowered committee of state Finance Ministers, led by then West Bengal Finance Minister Asim Dasgupta, laid the groundwork for what would evolve into today's GST Council. This council, representing all states, ensures that revenue matters are jointly deliberated by the Centre and states in a collaborative manner. The committee initially drafted the GST Bill and navigated intricate negotiations to garner state support. Despite achieving a broad consensus by 2016,

hesitation lingered regarding the launch of GST, culminating nearly two decades of preparation and deliberation.

One significant challenge arose from the complexity introduced into the initial idea of a single-point tax. This complexity stemmed largely from states' concerns about potential revenue losses from existing taxes. As a result, the GST system that emerged is multi-layered and operational today. It includes an integrated GST for interstate goods movement, along-



side Central, state, and union territory GST components. Furthermore, the system incorporates four tax slabs, ranging from five to 28 percent, reflecting varying rates for different goods and services.

In addition to these complexities, states insisted on excluding their biggest revenue sources—petroleum and alcohol—from the GST framework. There was considerable anxiety at the time of its launch about whether states could sustain their finances with the revenue generated from this new indirect tax system.

However, these concerns have proven unfounded. In reality, GST revenue collection has far exceeded initial expectations. Recent data indicates that GST collections reached ₹ 1.74 lakh crore in June, compared to an average monthly inflow of

around ₹ 90,000 crore during its first year. Furthermore, a Reserve Bank of India study reveals that states' own revenue shares have increased over the past two years compared to the pre-GST period.

As states demonstrate increased revenue resilience, there's potential to reduce reliance on the compensation mechanism originally integrated into the GST framework. Initially slated for five years, its extension to 2026 was necessitated by the Covid-19 impact. Continued robust revenue growth may pave the way to eventually phase out this provision altogether.

Despite numerous implementation challenges, particularly in streamlining bureaucracy and simplifying procedures, the GST Council, comprising representation from all states, convenes regularly to address issues promptly. Initially, a major hurdle involved integrating small and micro busi-

nesses into the GST network through computerization, which initially caused significant disruption to the sector. At first, GST was criticized as detrimental to small industries. However, contrary to initial fears, it has successfully onboarded thousands of small enterprises into the digital economy, marking a transformative shift.

There was significant concern that GST would increase the tax burden on the average consumer. However, these fears have been dispelled by recent studies revealing that 60 percent of consumer goods are taxed at the lowest slab of five percent or are exempt. In contrast, only three percent of items face the highest tax rate of 28 percent. However, it is evident that there is a pressing need to rationalize the GST rate structure. While achieving the original goal of a single-point levy may not be immediately feasible, reducing the number of tax slabs is essential for long-term simplicity.

Another crucial reform is to broaden the GST base to include high-value items. This includes petroleum products, with suggestions now extending to electricity and land as well. Initially, products like aviation turbine fuel and natural gas could be incorporated into GST,

marking a necessary first step.

However, it's increasingly urgent to also include petrol and diesel in the GST ambit. Alcohol remains a sensitive issue for states due to its significant revenue contribution, yet its eventual integration into GST is inevitable and should be addressed promptly. During its latest session, the GST Council implemented measures to support micro and small enterprises, including granting amnesty for legacy disputes and increasing the appeal ceiling for disputes. There is also growing recognition of the necessity for a GST appellate tribunal to expedite the resolution of appeals related to disputes.

There is ample room for enhancing GST implementation, which includes streamlining procedures and rationalizing tax rates. However, achieving the initial goal of a single-point levy hinges on bringing key sectors such as petroleum into the GST framework. While the Centre must lead this effort, it is equally vital for states to adopt a pragmatic, forward-looking approach. This collective action is essential for GST to effectively catalyze economic growth as intended. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)

Cash-based beneficiary schemes: The hidden costs of eroding work culture and long-term effectiveness



By: Mowsam Hazarika

Cash-based beneficiary schemes have become a popular tool for governments aiming to deliver financial assistance to those in need. These schemes, designed to provide direct monetary support to beneficiaries, are often touted for their simplicity and efficiency. However, beneath the surface of these seemingly straightforward programs lie a range of issues that has far-reaching consequences for work culture and overall effectiveness.

One of the primary concerns with cash-based schemes is their tendency to erode the intrinsic motivation of public sector employees. When cash transfers become the primary means of addressing social issues, the role of government employees shifts from one of active engagement and problem-solving to mere administrators of funds. This shift can diminish job satisfaction and commitment among workers who joined the public sector with a desire to make a meaningful impact. The reduction of their roles to processing payments rather than addressing complex issues undermines their professional growth and satisfaction, fostering a culture of disinterest and disengagement.

Moreover, cash-based schemes often lead to a detachment from the real needs of the community. Government employees, when merely tasked with disbursing cash, are less likely to engage with beneficiaries and understand their actual circumstances. This detachment weakens the connection between the administration and the community, which is crucial for crafting effective policies and programs. As a result, there is a risk that the schemes become mere financial transactions rather than components of a broader strategy to improve social welfare.

Another significant issue is the potential for corruption and mismanagement. The sheer volume of cash transactions can create opportunities for unethical behavior, including the diversion of funds or falsification of records. The lack of accountability mechanisms in many cash-based schemes can exacerbate these problems, leading to a culture of suspicion and mistrust among both beneficiaries and employees. When employees see or hear about corruption within the system, it can demoralize them and lead to a more cynical and disengaged workforce. The reliance on cash-based schemes also fosters a culture of dependency among beneficiaries. While these pro-

grams are designed to provide immediate relief, they do not necessarily contribute to long-term solutions for poverty or social issues. By focusing on direct financial aid rather than creating opportunities for employment, education, or skill development, these schemes can perpetuate a cycle of dependency rather than addressing the root causes of poverty. This dependency mindset can also affect work culture by reinforcing the perception that government assistance is a permanent solution rather than a temporary measure.

Additionally, cash-based schemes can undermine the importance of comprehensive, multi-faceted approaches to social problems. Complex issues like poverty, health, and education require a range of interventions that address various aspects of the problem. By prioritizing cash transfers, these schemes can overshadow other important initiatives that might offer more sustainable solutions. This narrow focus can lead to a reduction in the scope and ambition of public sector work, as employees may become accustomed to addressing only immediate, surface-level issues rather than engaging with the deeper, systemic challenges.

The administrative burden associated with cash-based schemes also has implications for work culture. Although these schemes are often designed to streamline processes, they can introduce a range of new administrative tasks that were not present in previous, more holistic programs. This can lead to an increase in bureaucratic procedures, paperwork, and reporting requirements.

Employees may find themselves overwhelmed by the volume of administrative work, which detracts from their ability to engage in meaningful, impactful activities. The added burden can contribute to job dissatisfaction and burnout, further weakening work culture within the public sector.

Furthermore, cash-based schemes can create disparities among different regions or communities. The uniform distribution of cash without considering local needs and conditions can lead to inequities. Some areas may face more significant challenges that require tailored interventions, while others might benefit less from a one-size-fits-all approach. This inequity can create a sense of unfairness among both employees and beneficiaries, undermining morale and cooperation.

In the long term, cash-based beneficiary schemes risk diminishing the role of the public sector in addressing social issues. When financial assistance is prioritized over other forms of support, the broader mandate of government agencies—to provide comprehensive services, advocate for policy changes, and engage with communities—can be sidelined. This shift can lead to a reduction in the effectiveness and scope of public sector work, as well as a decline in the perceived value of government employment as a means of creating positive social change.

In conclusion, while cash-based beneficiary schemes offer a straightforward method for providing financial support, they come with a range of ill effects that can undermine work culture and the effectiveness of government programs. These schemes can lead to a disengaged workforce, foster corruption and dependency, and shift the focus away from more comprehensive solutions to social problems. By emphasizing the need for more holistic and integrated approaches, it is possible to address these issues and build a more effective and motivated public sector that truly serves the needs of the community. (The author is a writer, poet and people's science activist. He is the former Director, Assam Seed and Organic Certification Agency & Former Joint Director of Agriculture (Pulse), Department of Agriculture, Assam)

POST BAG

When will the permanent solution to the flood problem be achieved?

Sir/Ma'am

Every year, the people of most places in Assam live in fear during the monsoon season due to the recurring flood problem. Despite the fact that the people are aware of the seriousness of this issue, it seems that the government has not given it the due importance it deserves. The allegation that Assam's flood issue does not receive special attention from the central government is not new; it is a centuries-old complaint. There are certain areas in Assam where, with the arrival of the monsoon, people only worry about the potential devastation the floods might bring.

To date, no effective solution has been found for Assam's long-standing flood problem. Even though science and technology have advanced significantly, Assam's flood problem remains as it was in the past century. It's high time that Assam's flood issue is approached with scientific and technological perspectives to find a permanent solution.

Long-term plans need to be implemented to increase the water-carrying capacity of rivers and prevent the indiscriminate discharge of water into them. It is cru-

cial to present Assam's flood issue as a serious problem to the central government and to adopt a permanent solution with its cooperation. Instead of spending crores of rupees annually on constructing temporary embankments, utilizing those funds for a permanent solution would be more beneficial for the riverside communities. However, plans should not be made just to impress the people; only scientifically-based steps can yield positive results. The conscious people of Assam hope that the government will take scientific measures with the help of science and technology to resolve the flood issue permanently. Floods not only damage homes and property but also shatter the dreams of many students.

When schools remain closed for a week or ten days due to floods, electricity is cut off, students are deprived of education, and connectivity with other areas is severed, it severely impacts the students' progress. This aspect is rarely discussed. Such problems directly or indirectly affect students' lives, studies, and performance in competitive exams. Many students who start their education with determination and aspirations for a successful career often have to abandon their dreams due to the overwhelming impact of floods.

We only hear about the success stories of students who achieve great things through their talent, but the untold stories of many talented students whose lives are devastated by floods remain hidden. It's often said that challenges can't be an excuse for failure, but the narratives of those who succumb to these challenges are seldom heard. The impact of floods on a village, a home, a family, or an individual's life can be profound beyond our estimation. We only focus on the visible aspects of the issue. Simply rescuing flood victims and providing them temporary relief does not solve the problem. Aid and assistance cannot restore what has been lost or rebuild shattered dreams.

Hence, the government and administrative departments need to conduct a proper assessment and devise a scientific and permanent solution to prevent annual floods in Assam. Such a solution will play a crucial role in advancing Assam in financial, educational, political, and other aspects.

Deborshi Gautam
Nalbari, Assam
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Enhancing sporting skills for livelihoods

By: Ranjan K Baruah

Part from studies and being good in academic performance we might be good at games and sports. The recent success of team India has brought more confidence amongst those who dream cricket as a career. We have seen some of the best performances by Indian athletes in international events like Olympics or world championships. Sports or games are not only for players but there are many other individuals who are associated directly or indirectly with the sports industry.

If we play well or practice hard we may also become successful in any sport but career in

sports does not limit to only playing. Let us explore a few avenues which are in demand and the best thing is someone with limited academic qualifications may be part of these and get engaged for livelihoods.

We are aware that the sports sector is extremely crucial for the development of the country's economy. Apart from players there are many other opportunities in the sports industry. Other countries have already leveraged sports for employment generation, tourism promotion by conducting marquee events, infrastructure and economic development. Besides this, major sporting nations have performed exceedingly well on health indicators as well.

The irony is that More than 90 per cent of the sports persons who take up sports as a passion leave sports because of non-availability of opportunities within the sports sector. The limited employment opportunities act as a deterrent for those who want to pursue sports because only 2-5 per cent reaches excellence in sports. The skill development in the sports sector could bring back hopes and positivity amongst many who want to continue sports as their passion.

There are many opportunities apart from being players. few options which can be chosen by our young people includes Fitness Trainer, Group Fitness Trainer, Personal Fitness Trainer, Strength and Conditioning



Coach, Fitness Centre Head, Yoga Assistant-Sports, Yoga Trainer-Sports, Yoga Instructor-Sports, Sports Nutritionist, Physical Education Assistant (Early Years), Physical Education Assistant (Primary Years), Physical Education Trainer, Community Sports Coach, Physical Educa-

tion Head, Pool Maintenance Worker, Lifeguard Pool, Swimming Instructor, Advance Lifeguard Open Water, Beach Captain, Rescue Operation Head, Self-Defense Assistant, Self-Defense Trainer, Unarmed Self-Defense Instructor, Sports Masseur, Sports Goods Manu-

facturing Helper, Sports Bat & Racquet Craftsperson (Junior), Sports Ball Craftsperson (Junior), Sports Goods Craftsperson, Sports Goods Production Supervisor, Sports Goods Factory Manager, Golf Club Junior Technician (Fitting & Repair), Golf Caddie, Caddie Master, Golf Instructor, Store Sales Executive-Sports, Sports Gear Specialist, Store Manager-Sports, Camping & Trekking Guide, Gym Equipment Service Technician (Junior), Gym Equipment Service Technician, Gym Equipment Service Supervisor, Essentials of Self-Defense, Fundamentals of Physical Fitness, Fundamentals of Special Population Fitness, Fundamentals of Sports Injury Prevention

& First Aid, Fundamentals of Strength and Conditioning, Fundamentals of Yoga, etc . There are different training providers across the country and aspirants may choose their field and take necessary training. There are also facilities to go abroad and get further training which would bring more chances when it comes to getting employment. The increase of sporting events brings more opportunity for the trained and skilled person in the country and abroad. *(The author is the Advisor of Skill Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of Bodoland Territorial Region, Kokrajhar and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjank@gmail.com)*

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

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

NEEPCO Recruitment 2024 – 4 Executive Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 28/07/2024.

North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 4 Executive (Medical and Security) posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

1. Executive (Medical), E-4

No of posts: 1 (One), (UR-1)
Age Limit: 35 years as on 01-05-2024

Period of Engagement: Initially for 3 (three) years and extendable by further 2(two) years on yearly basis based on the performance and requirement.

Educational Qualification: MBBS preferably with Post graduate Degree / Diploma in one of areas of Medical Science (+) Registered with the Indian Medical Council. Experience: Minimum 3 (three) years' experience in large industry / reputed Hospital after completion of Internship.

2. Executive (Security), E-5

No of posts: 3 (Three), (UR-3)
Age Limit: 40 years as on 01-05-2024

Period of Engagement: Initially for 3 (three) years and extendable by further 2(two) years on yearly basis based on the performance and requirement.

Educational Qualification: Graduate in any discipline, recognised by Govt. of India.

Experience: Four years or more with minimum 3 years' experience in Armed Forces in the rank of Captain / Major/ Lieutenant Colonel or in the rank of DSP/ SP or equivalent in Central/ State Police Organizations, with experience in different areas of overall Security System.

Application Fee:

- # General/ EWS/ OBC: ₹ 300
- # SC/ ST/ PwDs/ESM/Female: Nil
- # Payment Mode: Online

Important Dates of NEEPCO Vacancy 2024

- # Starting date of online application submission: 8th July 2024
- # Last date of online application submission: 28th July 2024

Indian Air Force Recruitment 2024 – Agniveer Vayu Online Application

Last Date: 28/07/2024.

Indian Air Force has released the official notification for the recruitment of Agniveer Vayu vacancy under Agnipath Scheme or Agneepath Scheme across the country. Interested and eligible candidates who want to enter Indian Air Force as a soldier may apply online.

Name of post: Agniveer Vayu

No of posts: To be updated later

Name of batch: Agniveer Vayu Intake 02/2025

Name of scheme: Agnipath Scheme

Duration of service: 4 Years

Name of department: Indian Air Force

Name of ministry: Ministry of Defence, India

Date of launch of the scheme: 14th June 2022

Job location: All India

Eligibility Criteria of Indian Air Force Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates born between 3rd July 2004 and 3rd January 2008 (both days inclusive) are eligible to apply for Agniveer Vayu posts. In case, a candidate clears all the stages of the Selection Procedure, then the upper age limit as on date of enrollment is 21 years.

Educational Qualification:

Science Subjects: Candidates should have passed Intermediate/ 10+2/ Equivalent examination with Mathematics, Physics and English from an Education Board recognised by Central, State and UT with minimum 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English.

OR

Passed Three years Diploma Course in Engineering (Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics/ Automobile/ Computer Science/ Instrumentation Technology/ Information Technology) from a Central, State and UT recognized Polytechnic institute with 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English in diploma course (or in Intermediate/Matriculation, if English is not a subject in Diploma Course).

OR

Passed Two years Vocational Course with non-vocational subject viz. Physics and Maths from State Education Boards recognised by Central, State and UT with 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English in vocational course (or in Intermediate/Matriculation, if English is not a subject in Vocational Course).

Other Than Science Subjects: Candidates should have passed Intermediate/ 10+2/ Equivalent examination in any subject approved by Education Boards recognised by Central, State and UT with minimum 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English.

OR

Passed two years vocational course from Education Boards recognised by Central, State and UT with minimum 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English in vocational course or in Intermediate/Matriculation if English is not a subject in Vocational Course.

Mandatory Medical Standards

General Medical Standards for Agniveer Vayu are as follows:-

- **Height:** Minimum acceptable height is 152.5 cms (For Male candidates) and 152 cms (For Female candidates).
- **Chest:** The chest wall should be well proportioned with minimum range of expansion of 5 cms.
- **Weight:** Proportionate to height and age.
- **Corneal Surgery (PRK/ LASIK)** is not acceptable. Visual requirements as applicable as per Indian Air Force standards.
- **Hearing:** Candidate should have normal hearing i.e. able to hear forced whisper from a distance of 6 meters with each ear separately.
- **Dental:** Should have healthy gums, good set of teeth and minimum 14 dental points.
- **General Health:** Candidate should be of normal anatomy without loss of any appendages. He should be free from any active or latent, acute or chronic, medical or surgical disability or infection and skin ailments. Candidate shall be physically and mentally FIT to perform duty in any part of the world, in any climate and terrain.

Pay Scale of Air Force Agniveer Post

Year	Customized Package	In Hand (70%)
1st Year	₹ 30,000	₹ 21,000
2nd Year	₹ 33,000	₹ 23,100
3rd Year	₹ 36,500	₹ 25,580
4th Year	₹ 40,000	₹ 28,000
Exit after 4 year	₹ 10.04 lakhs plus accrued interest	
Life Insurance Cover	₹ 48 lakhs	

Examination Fee: Examination fee of ₹ 550 plus GST is to be paid by the candidate while registering for the online examination. The payment can be made by using Debit Cards/ Credit Cards/ Internet Banking through payment gateway. The examination fee can also be paid by Challan payment at any Axis Bank Branch.

Important Dates of Indian Air Force Agniveer Vayu Recruitment 2024

Starting date of submission of online application: 8th July 2024

Last date of submission of online application: 28th July 2024

Date of issue of Admit Card: 15th October 2024 Onwards

Date of exam: 18th October 2024 Onwards

Release of provisional select list: 14th May 2025

Release of final enrollment list: 30th May 2025

Latest clashes follow the bloodiest day of the protests to date, with local media reporting 22 people killed as protesting students attempted to impose a 'complete shutdown' on the country

Bangladesh security forces fire bullets and sound grenades as protests over govt jobs escalate

DHAKA, July 19: Police and security officials in Bangladesh fired bullets and tear gas at protesters and banned all gatherings in the capital on Friday, as internet and mobile services were cut off after days of deadly clashes over the allocation of government jobs.

The protests, which began weeks ago but escalated sharply on Monday, represent the biggest challenge to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since she won a fourth consecutive term in a January election that was boycotted by the main opposition parties.

The latest clashes follow the bloodiest day of the protests to date, with local media reporting 22 people killed as protesting students attempted to impose a "complete shutdown" on the country.

Somoy TV reported that more than four people were killed on Friday. Authori-



ties could not be reached to immediately confirm figures for the deaths.

The chaos has highlighted cracks in Bangladesh's governance and economy and the frustration of young graduates who face a lack of good jobs.

The government has deployed police and paramilitary forces across the capital to lock down campuses and break up protests.

On Wednesday, universities including the country's largest suspended classes and closed dormitories, and on Friday Dhaka police said they

were banning all gatherings and demonstrations in the capital.

An Associated Press reporter saw border guard officials fire at a crowd of more than 1,000 protesters who had gathered outside the head office of state-run Bangladesh Television, which was attacked and set on fire by protesters the previous day.

The border guards shot at the right crowd with rifles and sound grenades, while police officers fired tear gas and rubber bullets. Bullets littered the streets, which were also marked by smears of blood.

A news producer and re-

porter at Bangladesh Television on Thursday told the Associated Press that protesters had broken through the main gate and set fire to vehicles and the reception area. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

"I escaped by leaping over the wall but some of my colleagues got stuck inside. The attackers entered the building and set furniture on fire," the producer said by phone.

Internet services and mobile data were widely disrupted on Thursday night and remained down on Friday in the capital, Dhaka. Social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp were also not loading.

It coincided with a widespread internet outage on Friday that disrupted flights, banks, media outlets and companies around the world, but the disruptions in Bangladesh were substan-

tially greater than seen elsewhere.

A statement from the country's Telecommunication Regulatory Commission said they were unable to ensure service after their data centre was attacked Thursday by demonstrators, who set fire to some equipment. The Associated Press has not been able to independently verify this.

Student protesters said they will extend their calls to impose a shutdown on Friday as well, and urged mosques across the country to hold funeral prayers for those who have been killed. Major universities have said they will close their doors until tensions ease. The protesters are demanding an end to a quota system that reserves up to 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971 against Pakistan. (AP)

Drone strike by Yemen's Houthi rebels kills 1 person and wounds at least 10 in Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV, July 19: An Iranian-made drone sent by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck Tel Aviv on Friday, leaving one person dead and at least 10 wounded in the group's first lethal strike into Israel.

The aerial strike — the first lethal Houthi attack in Israel — rumbled through the center of the city near the U.S. Embassy, causing shrapnel to rain down and spreading shards of glass over a large radius.

"We are holding an investigation today and in the coming days to understand exactly from where the threat was fired and what are the needed responses to defend the country and what are the attacking responses against who is threatening the state of Israel," said Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, a spokesperson for Israel's military.

The Houthis have launched drones and missiles toward Israel throughout the country's war with Hamas. But until Friday, all were intercepted by either Israel or Western allies with forces stationed in the region. Yahya Sare'e, the Houthis' spokesperson, claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement published on the social media platform X. He said it was in retaliation for the Israel-Hamas war and had hit one of many of the group's targets.

Israel's military said it believed

the drone — an Iranian Samad-3 upgraded to travel long distances — had traveled from Yemen, but rebuffed the Houthis' claim that their arsenal was capable of bypassing Israel's aerial defenses.

An Israeli military official said the explosive-laden drone was identified on Thursday but penetrated Israel because of "human error" in operating the system. The assessment of aerial threats has not changed because, the military said, Israel's adversaries have attempted such attacks for months.

The Houthi strike, the first to threaten Tel Aviv, hit at around 3:10 a.m. Local police said it reverberated to nearby cities and physically injured at least 10 people.

Israel's military said they had not determined whether the drone exploded in the air or directly struck buildings, but it blew out windows and damaged cars throughout the coastal neighborhood. People thronged to the area as police helicopters hovered overhead. For many, it reaffirmed feelings of disillusionment with how the military has handled the war over the past nine months.

Yossi Nevi, a retired evacuee from Kiryat Shmona living in a nearby hotel, said the blast shook him awake to watch the aftermath from his balcony and decreased his faith in the army's management of

the war. Hearing it was human error, Nevi said, made him lose "all trust in the army, not that I had much after the past nine months."

Eldad Namdar, who owns a camera store next to the intersection where the drone is believed to have exploded, said he hopes the war ends soon, but he also wants it to be concluded in a way that secures his future. "I don't want this to happen again in six months, I want them to finish this situation until the end," he said.

The Houthi strike hit hours after Israel's military confirmed one of its airstrikes had killed a Hezbollah commander and other militants in southern Lebanon. Israel has so far not made attacks on the Houthis, allowing its allies instead to take the lead as it focuses its efforts on the war in Gaza and ongoing fighting with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group.

The Houthis have routinely claimed responsibility for hitting targets in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Analysts and Western intelligence services have long accused Iran of arming the group, a claim that Tehran denies. In recent years, U.S. naval forces have intercepted a number of ships packed with rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and missile parts on route from Iran to Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. (AP)

Vietnam Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong, dies at age 80

HANOI, July 19: Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party and the country's most powerful politician, has died following months of ill health, official media said Friday. He was 80.

"General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party Nguyen Phu Trong passed away at 13:38 on July 19, 2024, at the 108 Central Military Hospital due to old age and serious illness," the Nhan Dan newspaper said. Official media said a state funeral would be held. Trong had dominated Vietnamese politics since 2011, when he was elected party chief. During his tenure, he worked to consolidate the Communist Party's power in Vietnam's single-party political system. In the decade before he took the top role in Vietnamese politics, the balance of power had shifted more toward the governmental wing led by then-Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

Born in 1944 in Hanoi, Trong was a Marxist-Leninist ideologue who earned a degree in philosophy before becoming a member of the Communist Party at the age of 22. He viewed corruption as the single gravest threat in maintaining the party's legitimacy. "A country without discipline would be chaotic and unstable," Trong said in 2016 after being reelected to the party's helm. Officially, Vietnam has no top leader, but the Communist Party chief is traditionally seen as the most powerful. (AP)

Russia seeks 18-year sentence for US reporter on trial for spying in highly politicised legal system

YEKATERINBURG, July 19: Russian prosecutors sought a prison sentence of 18 years on Friday for Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who is on trial on espionage charges that he was not seen, with no explanation given. Espionage and treason cases are typically shrouded in secrecy.

Gershkovich, 32, was arrested March 29, 2023, while on a reporting trip to the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg. Authorities claimed, without offering any evidence, that he was gathering secret information for the US. He pleaded not guilty, according to the court, and The Wall Street Journal and the US government have called the trial a sham.

Gershkovich appeared in court for a second straight day Friday as the closed-door proceedings in Russia's highly politicized legal system picked up speed. A verdict is expected later in the day, according to court officials.

Unlike previous sessions

in which reporters were allowed to see Gershkovich briefly before sessions began, there was no access to the courtroom this week and he was not seen, with no explanation given. Espionage and treason cases are typically shrouded in secrecy.

Court officials said the prosecutors requested an 18-year sentence in a high-security prison during closing arguments.

Russian courts convict more than 99 per cent of defendants, and prosecutors can appeal sentences that they regard as too lenient. They even can appeal acquittals.

"Evan's wrongful detention has been an outrage

since his unjust arrest 477 days ago, and it must end now," the Journal said Thursday in a statement.

"Even as Russia orchestrates its shameful sham trial, we continue to do everything we can to push for Evan's immediate release and to state unequivocally: Evan was doing his job as a journalist, and journalism is not

to date, Russia has provided no evidence of a crime and has failed to justify Evan's continued detention." Russian President Vladimir Putin hinted earlier this year that he would be open to swapping Gershkovich for Vadim Krasikov, a Russian serving a life sentence for the 2019 killing in Berlin of a Georgian citizen of Chechen descent. (AP)

Bring him home now." The US State Department has declared Gershkovich "wrongfully detained," committing the government to assertively seek his release.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Wednesday at the United Nations that Moscow and Washing-



Eyeing White House, Trump calls for unity in his first major speech after surviving assassination attempt

MILWAUKEE, July 19: In his first major public address since surviving an assassination attempt, Donald Trump gave a clarion call for unity as he accepted his Republican party's presidential nomination with a pledged to deliver a government that will begin four greatest years in American history if he is elected in November.

The 78-year-old former US president took to the stage at the Republican National Convention Thursday night to accept his party's nomination for a third consecutive presidential bid. Trump also gave details about the attempt on his life last week and thanked Americans for their "outpouring of love and support."

"So tonight, with faith and devotion, I proudly accept your nomination for president of the United States," Trump said to applause. In his speech, Trump urged Americans to help him win the race for the White House on November 5.

"Tonight, I ask for your partnership, for your support, and I am humbly asking for your vote. Every day, I will strive to honour the trust you have placed in me, and I will never let you down," Trump said.

"To all of the forgotten men and women who have been neglected, abandoned, and left behind, you will be forgotten no longer. We will press forward, and together, we will win, win, win," he said. In his first speech after the assassination bid on him on Saturday in Pennsylvania, Trump said he stands before Americans with a message of confidence, strength, and hope.

"Four months from now, we will have an incredible victory, and we will begin the four greatest years in the history of our country," Trump said.

"In an age when our politics too often divide us, now is the time to remember that we are all fellow citizens. We are one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," he said.

The former president basked in the adoring cheers of thousands as he called for unity behind his effort to return to the White House after the attack.

"The discord and division in our soci-



ety must be healed. As Americans, we are bound together by a single fate and a shared destiny. We rise together. Or we fall apart. I am running to be president for all of America, not half of America because there is no victory in winning for half of America," he said.

Standing alongside firefighter's gear that belonged to slain Trump rallygoer Corey Comperatore, Trump claimed that divine intervention saved him from also being killed in the attack last weekend.

"As you already know, the assassin's bullet came within a quarter of an inch of taking my life. So many people have asked me what happened, and therefore, I'll tell you what happened, and you'll never hear it from me a second time, because it's too painful to tell," he said.

"I felt something hit me really, really hard. It was a bullet, [and] my head was covered with blood. But I felt very safe because I had God on my side," he said.

He said he was standing before Americans only by the grace of the almighty God. "Despite such a heinous attack, we unite this evening more determined than ever. Our resolve is unbroken, and our purpose is unchanged—to deliver a government that serves the American People. Everything I have to give, with all of the energy and fight in my heart and soul, I pledge to our nation tonight," he said.

This election should be about the issues facing the country and how to make America successful, safe, free, and great again, Trump said.

"Nothing will sway us. Nothing will slow us. And no one will stop us," he said. He said no danger or obstacle would divert him from his path to save the country. (PTI)

Ukraine's Zelenskyy urges Britain to help it strike deeper inside Russia as he addresses UK Cabinet

LONDON, July 19: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Britain's new government to help Ukrainian forces attack deeper inside Russia to stop deadly missile strikes on his country, as he gave a rare address by a foreign leader to a UK Cabinet meeting.

Zelenskyy said "long-range capability" to destroy sites where Russian weapons are concentrated is key to Ukraine's defence.

"I ask you to show your leadership" in lifting restrictions on Ukraine's use of Western weapons, Zelenskyy told Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Russia has deployed devastating firepower as it pursues a summer offensive in eastern Ukraine, reducing villages to rubble and pushing back Ukrainian troops in places. It has also

launched missile and drone attacks across Ukraine, killing dozens and hitting targets including a Kyiv children's hospital.

Some of Kyiv's allies are reluctant to let Ukraine use their weapons to strike Russian territory because of concerns that the West could be drawn into direct conflict with Russia. The British government has said it's up to Ukraine how to use missiles supplied by the UK, as long as international law is upheld.

In an interview with the BBC, Zelenskyy said he was seeking clarification about Ukraine's ability to use Storm Shadow missiles supplied by Britain against targets in Russia. The Storm Shadow is an air-launched cruise missile with a range of more than 250 kilometres.

"We need a decision about

long-distance weapons, long range, to use it," Zelenskyy said. "We need it very much. They're targeting our hospitals, schools. We just want to answer exactly to the point where from they target us."

UK Defence Secretary John Healey said Ukraine already has permission to use the missiles against Russia, but the rules for exactly what can be targeted and under what circumstances are "complex questions" that are the subject of intense negotiations.

"We're providing weapons to Ukraine for their defense of their sovereign country, and that does not preclude their hitting targets in Russia, but that must be done by the Ukrainians. It must be done within the parameters and the bounds of international humanitarian law," Healey told the

BBC.

The United States, Ukraine's biggest military backer, recently shifted its position, with the Pentagon saying last month that Ukraine could use longer-range missiles provided by the US to strike targets inside Russia if it is acting in self-defence.

Since the beginning of Russia's 2022 invasion, the US had maintained a policy of not allowing Ukraine to use the weapons it provided to hit targets inside Russia for fear of further escalation.

Zelenskyy received a standing ovation from Starmer's government as he entered the Cabinet room at 10 Downing St. The last foreign leader invited to address a Cabinet meeting in person was US President Bill Clinton in 1997. (AP)

Japanese and Taiwanese coast guards hold joint search and rescue drill off Japan's eastern coast

TOKYO, July 19: Japanese and Taiwanese coast guards conducted what is believed to be their first joint drill off Japan's eastern coast, officials said Friday, a move seen as an effort to expand maritime cooperation amid concern about China's increasingly assertive activity in regional seas.

The drill was held amid escalating tension between China and Taiwan. Beijing claims Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out using force to take it. China routinely sends coast guard vessels into waters surrounding Japanese-controlled disputed islands in the East China Sea, confronting Japanese patrol ships. However, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi Friday denied the drill targeted any specific country, including China.

"It was part of practical cooperation and exchanges in the area of maritime search and rescue operations," Hayashi said, adding, "we do not have China or any other third country in mind."

Thursday's drill involved a Japan Coast Guard patrol boat Sagami and Taiwan's Hsun Hu No. 9 off the southern coast of Chiba, officials said, but declined to give any other details. (AP)

Hindus largest minority community in Pakistan with 3.8 million population

ISLAMABAD, July 19: The population of Hindus in Pakistan increased from 3.5 million in 2017 to 3.8 million in 2023 to make it the largest minority community in the Islamic nation, according to the official data of last year's census.

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) released results of the 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 on Thursday, the Dawn newspaper reported. The country's total population in 2023 stood at 240,458,089.

It showed that the share of Muslims in the total population decreased slightly from 96.47 per cent in 2017 to 96.35 per cent in 2023, while the population of all major religious minorities increased in the past six years. However, their share in the percentage of the total population gives a mixed picture.

The population of Hindus increased from 3.5 million in 2017 to 3.8 million in 2023, but their share in the total population went down from 1.73 to 1.61 per cent, which showed other minority communities in-



creased at a faster rate.

The population of Christians, also increased from 2.6 million to 3.3 million, with their share in the total population also going up from 1.27 to 1.37 per cent.

Ahmadis witnessed a decline in their real population as well as their share in the total population. The size of their community was reduced by 29,053, from 191,737 (0.09 per cent) in 2017 to 162,684 (0.07 per cent).

The population of the Sikh community stood at 15,998 and Parsi at 2,348.

The data showed that the country's population increased from 207.68 million in

2017 to 241.49 million in 2023 at a growth rate of 2.55 per cent. At this rate, the data showed that Pakistan's population is expected to double by 2050.

According to the population breakdown, the total number of males stood at 124.32 million, compared to 117.15 million females, with a gender ratio of 1.06. The population of transgender has been reported at 20,331.

Data showed that 67 per cent of the total population in 2023 was below the age of 30 and 80 per cent below 40. Those of 67 years or above constituted only 3.55 per cent of the total population. In 2017, 66.12 per cent of the total population was married, compared to 64.79 in 2023.

The percentage of the divorced population has reduced from 0.42 per cent in 2017 to 0.35 per cent in 2023.

The data also revealed a stark difference in the growth of rural and urban populations, with the former going up at the rate of 1.88 per cent and the latter 3.67 per cent. (PTI)

KSU to intensify scrutiny of migrant workers

Original MRSSA or even the amended MRSSA, open to both: KSU chief

SHILLONG, July 19: The Khasi Students' Union (KSU) announced its decision to continue intensifying checking of documents of migrant workers on Friday till the government is ready to put effective anti-influx mechanisms in place.

The announcement was made by KSU chief, Lambokstarwell Mangar after attending a meeting called by the chief minister Conrad K Sangma at the government secretariat.

"We will intensify further in checking till we see the government is ready to put in place effective anti-influx mechanisms by ensuring that the inner line permit (ILP) and Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security (MRSSA), 2016 is implemented at the earliest," Mangar told reporters.

The KSU chief said that the chief minister had told the delegation that he would soon call a meeting with all NGOs to discuss the issue related to the MRSSA.

"We are even yet to see the observations made by the Centre while returning the MRSSA but despite this we insist that the MRSSA, 2016 should be implemented where the district task force (DTF) has been constituted and are being headed by the DCs and SPs besides traditional heads but it seems that the DTFs are functional only in 7 localities of Shillong city so therefore, we insist that the government should address the issue of people coming to the state without proper documentation," he said.



Mangar also maintained, "If discussions will only end in the government examining these long pending demands then we will have no choice but to examine them outside the secretariat on the things that we need to get done. If the government continues to take so much to examine important laws, we too don't have time to wait but to take action on the ground."

"The ongoing exercise is a wake up call to the state government that its duty is to aggressively take up with the Centre for immediate implementation of the ILP in Meghalaya," he added.

KSU general secretary Donald V Thabab said, "The government had assured us to look into these matters but as we have stated, we are tired with the word of 'examination' as it might take one-two months or it might take 5-10 years. Therefore, the KSU will continue to be vigilant in checking the entry of people into the state."

jail penalty then it will affect them and there is a chance for them to be blacklisted. Therefore, jail penalties should be there," he asserted.

Asked, Thabab said that the delegation was informed that the BJP-led NDA government had told the NPP-led MDA government that implementation of both ILP and MRSSA will infringe with Article 19 of the Indian Constitution whereby it will restrict the movement of people in certain parts of the country. However, there is no official communication yet from the Centre on ILP as well as inclusion of Eighth Schedule to the Constitution.

"So our question is if ILP in Meghalaya will violate Article 19 why the NDA government granted ILP to Manipur in 2019? That is the question if they can give to them why not us. Centre says it is because of Article 19 but our question is that if ILP in Manipur and other ILP states like Nagaland and Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh are not violating Article 19 how can it be a violation in our state and apart from that the chief minister also argued that we have the Sixth Schedule, yes we have Sixth Schedule and how can Sixth Schedule fully protect us because if we look at non-scheduled areas like Pynthorukhrah, Laban and others we see that non-tribal population have overwhelmed the indigenous, so Sixth Schedule cannot be compared to ILP," he said.

Furthermore in regards to the delay to set up entry and exit

points, the KSU general secretary said, "The MRSSA was implemented (enacted) in 2016, we can call it the principal Act but at that time when an entry gate is constructed at Umthing then this government decided to amend the Act which is according to them was in order to fill in the loopholes but then the Governor refuses assent and it attracts the intention of the MHA. So now the question we got news that the MHA has returned the MRSSA to the state government. They told us that the government of India is still examining the MRSSA so that's why there are a lot of examinations and we cannot wait for these examinations."

"Any Act can be amended once it becomes obsolete so the principal Act has not yet been fully implemented so how can it be obsolete. We are pushing for the implementation of the original MRSSA or even the amended MRSSA, we are open to both," he declared.

To another question, Thabab said that it is not in the habit of the KSU to demand the release of its jailed members or demand police to stop issuing summon orders to its members.

"Our focus or objective is on the issues be it MRSSA, ILP or Eighth Schedule. If you go and talk to our members, who are in jail or those who are being summoned they will tell you the same thing - we are not afraid of going to jail and not afraid of appearing before the police station but what we want is ILP or MRSSA," he added. (NNN)

BJP MLA raises concern over China's under-construction mega dam near Arunachal



ITANAGAR, July 19: Expressing concern over the under-construction mega dam by China near Arunachal Pradesh which poses a threat of a flood-like situation in the state, senior BJP MLA Ninong Ering on Friday urged the government to take up the issue with the Centre.

China is building a 60,000 megawatt dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Medog, near the international border.

Tsangpo is known as Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and Brahmaputra in Assam. The main channel of this river is the Jamuna, which flows through Bangladesh before joining the Bay of Bengal.

Participating in the motion of thanks to the governor's address in the assembly, Ering, a former Union minister said, "We cannot trust our 'neighbour'. You never know what they can do. They can either divert the entire river flow dry

up our Siang or release water at once causing unprecedented floods havoc downstream."

He added that not just India, but the construction of the dam might also affect Bangladesh.

"People's safety and country's security cannot be compromised. Our motto should be 'Nation First' and we have to think for India's security," the former minister of state for minority affairs said.

While supporting construction of dams with storage capacity to check floods in the region, the MLA from Pasighat West assembly constituency informed that there is no water treaty between India and China so far.

Referring to the opposition by anti-dam protagonists, the lawmaker suggested that they should be consulted before constructing dams so that the interest of the people could be looked at.

"Hydropower is Arunachal Pradesh's only resource," he added.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu in September last had informed that the Centre has proposed to construct a large barrage on the Siang river to keep the area secure in view of the potential threat from the huge dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo river.

"In case of release of excessive water, we need to have big structures to protect ourselves from floods. The Centre, too, has expressed concern about the position of the Siang river once the Chinese project is completed. We have to keep Siang alive. If there is diversion of water by China, massive land erosion will take place," Khandu had said. (PTI)

Illegal ILP making outlets in Imphal

IMPHAL, July 19: Manipur

chief minister N Biren Singh informed that raids were conducted at five locations where there was widespread illegal issue/ sale of Inner Line Permit (ILP). Addressing a press briefing today at his office, the chief minister said that so far nine persons have been arrested including one LDC in the Labour department in this connection.

N Biren Singh said that on investigation, so far it has been revealed that around 3500 number of ILPs have been prepared through the said 5 outlets in Imphal. A Special Investigating Team (SIT) led by an Additional SP rank officer shall be instituted for further investigation

of the case, he added.

During the raid, certain items were seized including computers and laptops, the Chief Minister said. The State Government views the issues of ILP very seriously, he said, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had granted the implementation of the ILP in the State to save the indigenous population. He further called on all the officers and officials involved in its implementation to act with sincerity, dedication and nationalism.

The chief minister also clarified that only the concerned deputy commissioners and the Labour Commissioner are the ILP card issuing authorities and that they cannot authorize their

subordinate officials to issue these cards. Stressing that anyone with fake ILP cards should surrender before the police or concerned authorities at the earliest, the chief minister said that the government has already implemented the ILP Facial Recognition System to identify ILP defaulters.

He further warned of stringent actions as per the law of the land against anyone found misusing the ILP. He said steps have also been taken up to strengthen all ILP monitoring cells. Further stating that the base year for ILP has been adopted as 1961, he said that steps will be taken up to verify all ILP holders through the issuing authorities and Labour department. (NNN)

Cong won't let Tripura become second Manipur: Gaurav Gogoi

AGARTALA, July 19: Senior Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi on Friday said his party would not let Tripura, which has been rocked by violence over panchayat elections, turn into another Manipur.

Gogoi, the deputy leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, led a delegation of his party that visited the violence-affected areas of the state.

"The Congress firmly stands with its leaders, workers and the people of Tripura during these difficult times. The Congress will not bow down to terror tactics of the BJP," he said, addressing a press conference at the party's state headquarters in Agartala.

"We will inform the party high command what we saw in Tripura during our two-day visit. PM Narendra Modi is saying that India is the mother of democracy but what we saw here is nothing short of murder of democracy," he added.

Gogoi said the Congress suspected there was a ploy to turn Tripura into a "second Manipur", but it won't let that happen.

"We will raise the issue of violence in Tripura, injustice and threat to democracy in the upcoming Budget session of Parliament," he said. Senior Congress MP Tariq Anwar alleged law and order had collapsed in Tripura.

"Constitutional provisions are being ignored with candidates failing to file nominations for the panchayat polls. We met Governor N Indrasena Reddy and shared our concerns over the violence in the state. We expect the governor will do the needful," he said.

Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman said at least 3,383 party candidates could not file their nominations for the panchayat polls because of the violence.

"We gave prior information to the police to provide security to our candidates so that they could submit their nomination papers but the police did not help," he alleged.

Roy Barman himself was attacked near Tepania RD Block in Gomati district on Thursday when he was escorting Congress candidates to file nomination papers. At least three party leaders were injured in the attack. (PTI)

Kom Union warns against unauthorized community statements

IMPHAL, July 19: Kom Union Manipur (KUM) has appealed to all not to publish any press statement relating to the Kom community without its knowledge.

Addressing a press conference on Friday at KR Lane, Imphal, KUM president Serto Aha Kom said that using the name of the union, one individual identified as S Kom had written a press release in Kuki language and uploaded it on social media on July 16 last.

Serto Aha clarified that S Kom does not belong to the Kom tribe. "We came to learn he is from Phailien village in Kangpokpi district which is not a Kom village. "As such, the press release uploaded on social media is not related to the Kom tribe and KUM has no knowledge about it," Serto Aha said. "His motive and intention are purely to implicate the Kom tribe into the present conflict", he added.

Serto Aha Kom then said that the Kom tribe will remain as it is (Kom tribe) while stating that the tribe/community will maintain its neutrality and stand for peaceful co-existence among various communities in the state. (NNN)

3 bills introduced in Arunachal assembly on first day of budget session



ITANAGAR, July 19: Three bills were introduced on the first day of the Arunachal Pradesh assembly's budget session on Friday, including one that seeks to curb irregularities and use of unfair means in recruitment examinations.

Chief minister Pema Khandu introduced the Arunachal Pradesh Public Examination (Measures to Prevent Unfair Means in Recruitment) Bill, while the Arunachal Pradesh Amending Bill and the Balipara/Tirap/Sadiya Frontier Tract Jhum Land Regulation (Amendment) Bill were tabled by two other state ministers.

The bill on recruitment tests is aimed at providing ef-

fective measures to prevent and curb offences of question paper leaks and use of unfair means in examinations for the purpose of recruitment to any post under the state government, officials said.

A provision dealing with designation of a special court for speedy trial of such offences has also been provided in the bill, they said.

According to the bill, any person resorting to such unfair means would be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than three years, which may be extended to five years, and with a fine up to ₹ 1 crore.

Law, Legislative and Justice Minister Kento Jini introduced the Arunachal Pradesh Amending Bill, which will substitute the words Indian Penal Code 1860, Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act 1872, by the words Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suiraksha Sanhita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023, respectively, in several state acts.

The Balipara/Tirap/Sadiya Frontier Tract Jhum Land Regulation Bill in its amended form was tabled by Land Management Minister Balo Raja. The bill deals with land compensation procedures. (PTI)

Meghalaya org claims touts take ₹ 10,000-₹ 20,000 to facilitate entry of illegal Bangla immigrants

SHILLONG, July 19: Social organisation Hynniewtrep Achik National Movement (HANM) called on Meghalaya DGP I Nongrang and claimed that touts in the state are taking ₹ 10,000 to ₹ 20,000 per person to facilitate illegal entry of Bangladeshi immigrants through damaged or unfenced portions of the border.

Speaking to PTI, HANM president Lamphrang Kharbani said a team of the organisation met the DGP on Thursday and sought her intervention to stop the illegal entry of Bangladesh nationals into the state through certain parts of the border.

He claimed touts are charging ₹ 10,000-₹ 20,000 per person to facilitate the entry of Bangladesh nationals.

Around 20 per cent of the international border in Meghalaya remains unfenced due to steep terrain, presence of rivers and corridors left for migration of wild animals.

A senior home department official said, "There are serious concerns over illegal entry of Bangladesh nationals and the government will leave no stone unturned to ensure that such illegal activities stop forthwith."

He said the matter has also been taken up with the BSF for coordination and action.

With violence erupting across Bangladesh, pro-ILP activists in Meghalaya have urging the ante and alerted members across the state to check for infiltration of Bangladesh nationals. (PTI)

Rail line that will connect Mizoram likely to be complete by July 2025: Officials

'Railway project will boost Mizoram's economy'



AIZAWL, July 19: The Bairabi-Sairang railway line, which will put Mizoram on the country's railway map, is likely to be commissioned by July next year, officials said on Friday.

About 93 per cent of work for the 51.38-km line has already been completed, officers of the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) told Governor Hari Babu Kamb-

hampati during a review meeting for the project.

There are four stations on the line -- Hortoki, Kawnpui, Mualkhang and Sairang, and the governor was informed that the line till Hortoki will be commissioned in the next few days, Raj Bhavan officials said.

A successful trial run has already been done on the Bairabi-Hortoki section, they said. Services till the Mualkhang station would also be started in the next few months, they added. The line till Sairang near state capital Aizawl will be eventually commissioned by July next year, officials said.

The railway project will boost Mizoram's economy, besides helping the state's tourism industry, they said.

NAME CHANGE

I, Jasmal Ali of the below mentioned address do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my name has been recorded in my school documents as Md Jasmal Ali in place of Jasmal Ali and my father's name as Md Sair Uddin Ahmed and in my birth certificate my father's name has been recorded as Md Sairuddin in place of Sairuddin. That Jasmal Ali and Md Jasmal Ali are the same and one person and Sairuddin, Md Sairuddin and Md Sair Uddin Ahmed are the same and one person

Sd/-
Jasmal Ali
SO- Sairuddin
RO- Barujhar, PO-
Bechimari
Dist- Darrang (Assam)

No. e. DME/RIPANS/120/2012/Pt./523932/1

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

In pursuance of letter vide No. T.11011/1/2024-RIPANS/11, Dated 15/07/2024, applications are invited from candidates intending to undergo 4 (Four) years Degree in following courses at Regional Institute of Paramedical and Nursing Sciences, (RIPANS) Aizawl, for the session 2024, against seats allotted to the Govt. of Assam. The format of application is available in the official website of this Directorate www.dme.assam.gov.in

1.	B. Sc Nursing	-	4 seats
2.	B. Sc -MLS	-	3 seats
3.	B. Pharm	-	3 seats
4.	B. Sc- MRIT	-	3 seats
5.	B. Optometry	-	3 seats

Candidates who have appeared in the B.Sc. Nursing Entrance Examination, 2024 and Bachelor in Pharmacy (B. Pharm) Entrance Examination, 2024 conducted by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences will be eligible for admission into B. Sc Nursing and B. Pharm courses respectively.

Eligibility Criteria:

- For admission into B. Pharm course the A.I.C.T.E. Admission Regulation specified that Admission in the Degree in Pharmacy shall be 10+2 passed in Science stream with a minimum aggregate of 50% of marks in PCB/PCM and English or Diploma in Pharmacy with a minimum aggregate of 50%. Relaxation of marks by 5% for the candidates belonging SC/ST/OBC/PwD, etc. is admissible.
- For admission into B. Sc (N), B. Sc-MLS, B. Sc-MRIT & B. Optometry shall be 10+2 passed in Science stream with a minimum aggregate of 50% marks in PCB and English and must have passed in all subjects. Relaxation of marks by 5% for the candidates belonging SC/ST/OBC/ PwD, etc. is admissible.
- The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.

Following documents duly attested are to be submitted along with the application:

- Permanent Residential Certificate.
- Address proof.
- Mark sheet & Pass certificate of HSLC/Class X & HS (10+2) (Sc)/Class XII examinations.
- Admit card of Class X examination or any other document Government document in support of age.
- A copy of recent passport size photograph.
- Caste Certificate (if belong to SC/ST/OBC).
- Admit card and score card of B.Sc. Nursing Entrance Examination, 2024 or Bachelor in Pharmacy (B. Pharm) Entrance Examination, 2024 conducted by SSUHS, for candidates applying for B. Sc Nursing and B. Pharm course respectively.

Duly filled in application form (format is available in the official website of this Directorate www.dme.assam.gov.in) in sealed envelope with above mentioned documents must be dropped in the drop-box available at the office of the Director of Medical Education, Assam, Sixmile, Khanapara, Guwahati-22 (2nd Floor) Room No. 5 on or before 25th July, 2024. Application sent by post or email shall not be considered.

Candidates are advised to visit the official website www.dme.assam.gov.in regularly for any update.

Sd/-
Director of Medical Education,
Assam
Janasanyog/D/2711/24/20-Jul-24

DDB-159/15th FC/Tied/2023-24/688

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Did-18/07/2024

Sealed Tenders are invited with affixing non refundable court fee of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and twenty-five paise) only by the undersigned, BTC, Kokrajhar from the intending Contractors/Suppliers/Firms for the works mentioned below under 6th FC for the year 2023-24.

Sl. No.	Name of Activity	Estimated value (in Rs.)	EMD/Bid Security. (in Rs.) 1% ST, SC & 2% Gen	Tender fees (in Rs.)	Pre-bid Date & Time	Last Date & Time of Bid submission	Date & Time of Bid Opening
1	Const. of Community Toilet at Chithila High School.	15,00,000/-	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	500.00	23/07/2024 10:30 A.M.	09/08/2024 02:30 P.M.	09/08/2024 02:30 P.M.
2	Const. of 1 No. Culvert of Dhani Patti Mukhigaon at Shaktiashram VCDC.	3,60,000/-	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	100.00	23/07/2024 10:30 A.M.	09/08/2024 02:00 P.M.	09/08/2024 02:30 P.M.
3	Const. of 1 No. Culvert at Singimari Hari Mandir to Tilipara Kali Mandir of Chukapara Binnyachara VCDC	3,50,000/-	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	100.00	23/07/2024 10:30 A.M.	09/08/2024 02:00 P.M.	09/08/2024 02:30 P.M.

The Tender document can be seen/obtained from the undersigned during Office hours a pre-bid meeting will be held as mentioned above.

The address for the meeting is BDO's Chamber Dotma Dev. Block Dotma. The bid will be opened in the Office of the undersigned as per the schedule mentioned above.

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

Sd/-
Block Development Officer,
Dotma Dev. Block, Dotma
IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/154

SC to examine Art 361 granting immunity to governors

Rahul Gandhi 'blackmailed' voters with fake narrative: Athawale

WB Governor molestation row

NEW DELHI, July 19: The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine the contours of Article 361 of the Constitution which grants 'blanket immunity' to governors from any kind of criminal prosecution.

The top court's order came on a plea of contractual woman employee of West Bengal 'Raj Bhavan' who has alleged molestation by Governor C V Ananda Bose and her wrongful confinement by the officials there.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra also issued a notice to the West Bengal government on the plea of the woman and granted her liberty to make also the central government a party.

It also sought the assistance of Attorney General R Venkatarani in dealing with the constitutional issue.

At the outset, senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for the woman whose name has been redacted from the judicial records, said, "It cannot be that there is no investigation. Evidence has to be gathered right now. It cannot be deferred indefinitely till the governor demits office."

The plea said the immunity granted to the governors under clause 2 of Article 361 cannot bar the investigation and moreover, the time is the essence in such probes.

"The petition raises the issue pertaining to the ambit of the protection which is afforded to the governor under clause (2) of Article 361 of the Constitution," the bench said in its order of issuing notice to the state government and others.

The Article deals with the protection of President and the governors and its clause 2 reads: "No criminal proceedings whatsoever shall be instituted or continued against the President, or the Governor of a State, in any court during his term of office."

The woman petitioner has also sought directions to frame specific guidelines under which governors enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution.

"This court has to decide whether a victim like the petitioner can be rendered remediless, with the only option being to wait for the accused to demit his office, which delay will then be inexplicable during the trial, and render the entire procedure a mere lip service, without any justice to the victim herein," the plea said.

The plea has also sought a probe into the case by the West Bengal Police and protection for her and her family along with compensation from the government for her loss of reputation.

The contractual woman employee of Raj Bhavan had lodged a complaint with the Kolkata Police alleging that she was molested by Bose in the governor's house on April 24 and May 2.

She accused Bose of orchestrating a "ridiculous drama" to deflect attention from his actions, emphasising that he should have provided the CCTV

footage from premises to police at the outset of the investigation.

Footage from two CCTV cameras positioned at the main (north) gate, from 5.32 pm to 6.41 pm on May 2, was shown to a select group of people and journalists at the Central Marble Hall on the ground floor of Raj Bhavan.

In the first footage, the employee, dressed in jeans and a top, was seen hurrying to the police outpost housed within the governor's house amid a significant number of police personnel who were deployed in the premises for the scheduled visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on that day.

The second footage, which lasted for around 10 minutes, showed various vehicles including fire tenders arriving at the north gate of Raj Bhavan and policemen lining up for their regular duties. The victim, however, could not be spotted.

In the wake of the controversy, Bose filed a defamation case against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on June 28, a day after she claimed that she had been approached by women saying they were afraid to visit the Raj Bhavan because of the "activities" there. (PTI)

AHMEDABAD, July 19: Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on Friday said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi "blackmailed" voters by creating a fake narrative that the BJP would change the Constitution if it won 400 Lok Sabha seats, leading to losses to the ruling party in several states.

The Union minister of state for social justice and empowerment also said despite such moves Prime Minister Narendra Modi emerged victorious and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance got a clear majority with 292 seats.

"In the 2019 general elections the BJP got 303 seats and the NDA got 353 seats. On the basis of work done in the last five years, PM Modi gave the slogan of 'abki baar 400 paar'. However, the opposition united just for the sake of defeating the PM and spread fake narratives. Rahul Gandhi blackmailed voters but he failed," he told reporters.

Asked how Gandhi blackmailed voters, Athawale said, "He created a narrative that the BJP will change the Constitution and abolish reservations if it won 400 Lok Sabha seats. People were swayed by this fake narrative and we lost seats in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and West Bengal," the senior Dalit leader and Republican Party of India (A) chief asserted.

The PM considers the Constitution his mother and the BJP and NDA will never change the Constitution, he asserted.

"However, despite such fake narratives, the opposition could not defeat PM Modi. We (NDA) got a clear majority with 292 seats. The TDP's Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar are with NDA and the Modi government will complete five years," Athawale said.

He also congratulated Rahul Gandhi for becoming leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha.



Rahul Gandhi speaking at a podium.

Athawale was here to chair a meeting to review the implementation of schemes of his ministry in Gujarat.

The social justice empowerment ministry is very important as it looks after the welfare of weaker sections of society and ensures their social and economic upliftment, Athawale said.

"In the last 10 years we have taken 25 crore people out of poverty. In the next five years, we will try to bring out the rest. The upcoming Union budget will ensure growth of every section of society," he said. (PTI)

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1984 ANTI-SIKH RIOTS CASE

Delhi court reserves order on framing charges against Tytler

NEW DELHI, July 19: Delhi court on Friday reserved its order on whether to frame charges against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler in an anti-Sikh riots case in which three people were killed.

Special judge for Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) cases Rakesh Siyal reserved the order after hearing arguments by the counsel for the central probe agency and the defence.

The court is likely to pronounce the order on August 2.

The CBI, while quoting a witness, had alleged in the charge sheet that Tytler stepped out of a white ambassador car in front of Gurudwara Pul Bangash on November 1, 1984 and instigated a mob to kill Sikhs.

"Kill the Sikhs, they have killed our mother," Tytler, a former Union minister was alleged to have told the mob that led to the killing of three people.

Anti-Sikh riots had erupted in several parts of the country in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards on October 31, 1984.

A sessions court had in August



Jagdish Tytler.

last year granted anticipatory bail to Tytler in the case.

The court had also imposed certain conditions on Tytler, including that he will not tamper with the evidence or leave the country without its permission.

The central agency has invoked charges under Sections 147 (rioting), 109 (abetment of an offence) read with 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), among others, against Tytler. (PTI)



Shyam Divan.

Shyam Divan, appearing for the woman whose name has been redacted from the judicial records, said, "It cannot be that there is no investigation. Evidence has to be gathered right now. It cannot be deferred indefinitely till the governor demits office."

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He also congratulated Rahul Gandhi for becoming leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Goa govt to resume celebration of Opinion Poll Day

LUCKNOW, July 19: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said excessive use of fertilizer is adversely affecting not only humans but also animals and birds and there is a need to revisit ancient farming practices to address health issues.

"There is a significant difference between the farming practices that we have been taught in the last 100-150 years and the science of ancient times. We will have to turn the pages of history again. Today, due to excessive use of fertilizer, a 'slow poison' is entering our arteries, which is adversely affecting not only humans but also animals and birds," he said while addressing a programme on natural farming here.

Observing that agricultural production has definitely increased due to the Green Revolution, he said, "this is an incomplete truth. There is need to examine the production rates from natural farming in India in the 17th and 18th centuries when the earth was in its natural form and the grain production was also high."

Adityanath added that soon an agricultural university will exclusively work on natural farming in Uttar Pradesh.

He also said that a large number of people now a days request money for treatment of cancer from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. A few years ago, the situation was not so horrifying, he added.

"Today, in every village, some youths are suffering from kidney disorders, heart problems and cancer. The reason for this is that our food habits have changed giving rise to new diseases. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a new mantra of natural farming to prevent this," he added.

He said that 12 to 14 cows suddenly died at the destitute cow shelter in Amroha. After investigation it was found that the fodder contained large quantities of fertilizer resulting in death of cows.

"If cows cannot tolerate excessive fertilizers, then what will be the condition of humans?" he wondered.

The Chief Minister said there is a huge possibility for natural farming in UP which has 12 per cent of the country's land and 17 per cent of the country's population. Also, UP produces 20 per cent of the country's food grains. There is adequate water resources in the state.

"We need to focus on the quality as per today's requirement as it can take our happiness index to a higher level," he said.

Adityanath said that UP has four agricultural universities, with plans underway for a fifth one. The state is home to 89 Krishi Vigyan Kendras and two Central Agricultural Universities.

He also emphasized the need to accelerate the certification process for products derived from natural farming. Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat and Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan and others were also present on this occasion. (PTI)

Yogi Adityanath advocates for natural farming to combat health issues

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Farmers should do natural farming on part of land: Chouhan

LUCKNOW, July 19: Union agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday asked farmers to carry out natural farming in at least one part of their farms and the government will give subsidies for their crop losses for initial two years.

In the initial two years, when farmers practice natural farming, the yield will be less and in such a situation the government will give subsidies, Chouhan said at a programme on natural farming here.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat were also present at the programme -- 'Praagritik kheti ki vigyan par kshetreya paramarsh karyakram'.

"While fulfilling the prime minister's dream of saving mother earth from chemicals, we will try our best to ensure that in the coming times, farmers do chemical-free farming, so that the coming generations remain healthy," Chouhan said.

He said that farmers will get 1.5 times more price by selling grains, fruits and vegetables grown through natural farming.

The Union minister also said that laboratories will be set up in the agricultural universities of the country to facilitate research on natural farming, which will help in filling the food reserves of the country.

At least one crore farmers will be made aware about



A farmer working in a field.

natural farming so that they can go to every corner of the country and promote it, he said, adding that the central government will carry out a nation-wide awareness campaign in consultation with all the stakeholders.

In his address, Gujarat Governor Devvrat said natural farming requires less water and is very beneficial for farmers. (PTI)

After Muzaffarnagar, UP govt extends across state order on Kanwar Yatra route eateries

LUCKNOW, July 19: Days after the Muzaffarnagar police asked all eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route to display their owners' names, the Uttar Pradesh government on Friday extended the controversial order across the state.

The order issued by the Muzaffarnagar police on Monday has been slammed by opposition parties and some members of the ruling alliance, who say it targets Muslim traders.

An Uttar Pradesh government spokesperson said a formal order for all eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route in the state was likely to be issued soon.

On Monday, the Muzaffarnagar police ordered eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route in the district to display the names of their owners to avoid any "confusion".

"About 240 kilometres of Kanwar Yatra route falls in the district. All the eateries, including hotels, dhabas and carts, on the route have been asked to display the names of their proprietors or those working on these shops," district police chief Abhishek Singh had said.

"This has been done to ensure that there should be no confusion among kanwariyas and no law-and-order situation arises. All are following this voluntarily," he told reporters then.

Justifying the move, V K Mishra, in-charge of the weights and measures department of Meerut, said Friday that as per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, every restaurant and dhaba 'sanchalak' (person running the eatery unit) needed to display the name of the firm, the owner's name and the licence number.

The Muzaffarnagar police advisory came in for severe criticism from several quarters.

Union minister and BJP ally Chirag Paswan unequivocally opposed it and said he would "absolutely never support or encourage" any divide in the name of caste or religion.

Another BJP ally, the Janata Dal (United), also criticised the advisory. JD(U) leader KC Tyagi said the Muzaffarnagar police should be withdrawn as it may cause communal tension and there should not be any discrimination

based on religion or caste.

The main opposition party Congress alleged that the directive was intended to normalise the economic boycott of Muslims. Its spokesperson Pawan Kherra called the order "state-sponsored bigotry".

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi compared the Muzaffarnagar police advisory to the Apartheid and Judenboycott, the boycott of Jewish businesses in Hitler's Germany.

The BJP, which is in power at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh, however, defended the measure, claiming that it allows fasting Hindus who may want to eat at a pure vegetarian restaurant, where the likelihood of them being served 'satvik' food is higher.

But senior BJP leader and former Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi expressed apprehension that it might spread the "disease of untouchability".

Both Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati hit out at the Muzaffarnagar police advisory. (PTI)

It's being prepared to make crony capitalists richer: Cong targets govt ahead of Budget

NEW DELHI, July 19: Days ahead of the presentation of the Union Budget, the Congress on Friday alleged that it would be aimed at making a few crony capitalists richer rather than addressing concerns such as unemployment, rising inequalities and "drying up" of FDI.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete also alleged that this government has nothing to do with common people, farmers, youth, women and middle class, and claimed that the upcoming budget, like in the past years of the Modi government, is being prepared to build more monopolies in various sectors.

In the wake of the recent train accidents, she also asked what is being done to make the railways safer and will Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocate more funds which would in turn be used to protect people.

"On July 23, 2024, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present her seventh budget. Before preparing this budget, she met some industrialists, bankers and farmer organisations and discussed issues with them but has she met the families who are unable to eat three meals a day? Has she met the women who are struggling with inflation? Has she met the farmers who are

struggling to get fair prices for their crops? Has she met the youth who are suffering due to paper leaks? Has she met the real India?" Shrinete asked.

"It is clear that she has not met them. This budget is being prepared to make a few crony capitalists richer," she said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here.

Displaying slides with economic data at the presser, Shrinete said the foreign direct investment (FDI) is drying up and India has traded deficit with nine of the top 10 trading partners.

She claimed that monopolies have been increasing in sectors such as cement, telecom, aviation and tyres, and said this budget will see more monopolies being built.

Citing a farmer's suicide, Shrinete said Finance Minister Sitharaman or Prime Minister Narendra Modi do not know anything about them, hence the budget has not been made for them.

"Local Circles report states that 48% of the country's families are facing financial crisis. People's income has decreased and they are living their lives with the help of savings," she said.

Shrinete said the crumbling railings in Gujarat with job-seekers at a hotel and



Supriya Shrinete speaking at a podium.

the lakhs of people flocking to Mumbai for aviation jobs exposes the false arguments of this government on unemployment.

"Due to economic mismanagement and policies such as demonetisation, half-baked GST and inefficient Covid management, the economy suffered a loss of ₹ 11.5 lakh crore. More than 1.5 crore jobs were lost in the country," she claimed.

ty's wealth due to which the rich are becoming richer, the poor, poorer.

"Will this budget do anything to bridge this gap," she asked.

Shrinete said food inflation has remained consistently above 9% and the vegetable prices have increased by more than 30%.

"It may not matter to the rich, but you (government) have made the vegetables disappear from the plate of the poor. This inflation is everywhere, be it transport, school fees or clothes etc. So the question is: will this budget be able to stop inflation?" she asked.

Noting that consumption accounts for 60% of our economy, Shrinete said the data shows that despite price cuts, fast-moving consumer goods sales have halved in April and May.

"Vehicles worth ₹ 60,000 crores are lying unsold. The situation of inflation is such that even those who want to buy a car are not able to do so," the Congress leader said.

She said there is a culture of savings in India and this culture has kept our economy strong but today "we are suffering so much from unemployment, inflation and low income that the domestic debt, which never went above 25% of GDP, is

close to 41% today".

Household debt has risen to 41% of the GDP, causing household savings to fall to less than 6% of the GDP, she said.

"Talking about petrol and diesel, five big companies saved about 900 billion rupees by buying cheap oil from Russia. But did petrol and diesel become cheaper for the public?" she asked.

Shrinete also pointed out that the growth rate of agriculture in the financial year 2024 was 1.4% as against 4.7% in the previous financial year.

The Modi government has continuously reduced the budget of the agriculture sector, where most of our people work, she said.

The Congress leader further said the investment in the country is "completely sluggish", while the investment during the UPA government was 30% of the GDP, today it is at 20-25%.

"We have a trade deficit with nine out of the top 10 trading partners of India. We are importing more from them and exporting less to them. That means we are buying more goods from them but selling less to them," Shrinete said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget on July 23. (PTI)

Airline operations face disruption after global computer outage

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, July 19: Indian airlines experienced technical and operational disruptions after a widespread global computer outage created chaos at airports as passenger check-ins were delayed with airlines resorting to issuing manual boarding passes.

IndiGo, SpiceJet, and Akasa Air saw disruptions in their online check-in but stock exchanges and financial institutions, including banks remained unaffected by the outage. Union Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu assured the passengers that his ministry and Airports Authority of India (AAI) are actively managing the situation using manual methods to ensure minimal disruption.

"We have instructed all airlines and airport authorities to keep passengers informed about their flight status and provide necessary assistance," Naidu said.

IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said his ministry was in touch with Microsoft and added that NIC network is not affected.

In a post on X, IT Minister Vaishnaw said the reason for this outage has been identified and updates have been released to resolve the issue.

CERT is issuing a technical advisory, he wrote.



"MEITY is in touch with Microsoft and its associates regarding the global outage... NIC network is not affected," the minister said. Meanwhile, CERT-In has issued an advisory on the Microsoft outage caused by CrowdStrike update, and rated its severity as "critical". "Our systems are currently impacted by a Microsoft outage, which is also affecting other companies. During this time booking, check-in, access to your boarding pass, and some flights may be impacted," IndiGo said in an update on X. "We are all hands-on decks and are working to restore stability and normalcy. Our digital team is also coordinating closely with Microsoft Azure to resolve these issues swiftly," it stated.

Budget carrier Akasa said, "Due to infrastructure issues with our service provider, some of our online services, including booking, check-in and manage booking services will be temporarily unavailable. Currently we are following manual check-in and boarding processes at the airports."

The airline requested its passengers with immediate travel plans to reach airport early to check in, as a precautionary measure.

SpiceJet also said it is experiencing technical challenges with its service provider, affecting online services including booking, check-in, and managing booking functionalities.

"As a result, we have activated manual check-in and boarding processes across airports," it stated.

Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport saw as many as 23 flights -- 12 departures and 11 arrivals -- including IndiGo's flights to Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru being cancelled.

"We are closely working with all our stakeholders to minimise the inconvenience to our flyers. You may please get in touch with the airline concerned for updates on your flight information. We thank you for your support and understanding," the airport, run by GMR, said in a post on social media platform X.

In Bengaluru, IndiGo, Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa issued handwritten boarding passes. Passengers complained of harrowing time following the disruption in flight services and were seen anxiously waiting for their delayed flights. The lounge of the KIA was overcrowded due to the disruption in flight services.

"A global outage with the Navitaire Departure Control System (NDCS) has been affecting operations of some airlines across their network, including BLR Airport since 10.40 IST on July 19, 2024,"

a Bangalore International Airport Ltd spokesperson said in a statement.

Indigo, Akasa, and SpiceJet in Terminal-1 and Air India Express in Terminal-2 are among the affected airlines, BIAL said, adding that the Common Use Terminal Equipment (CUTE) and Common Use Self Service (CUSS) systems are also experiencing disruptions.

"In response to this situation, IndiGo, Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa have taken proactive measures by initiating manual check-ins to ensure minimal disruption to passengers and flight schedules," the spokesperson said.

Country's leading stock exchanges NSE and BSE on Friday said they are not impacted due to the global outage of Microsoft systems. Microsoft users globally, several in India, have reported massive outages in services, with outage tracking website Downtoctor showing users flagging disruptions across various services.

"NSE (National Stock Exchange) and NCL (NSE Clearing Ltd) are working normal today," NSE's spokesperson said in a statement.

Separately, a BSE spokesperson said the bourse is "not impacted due to Microsoft issue. Our operations are running normal." (PTT)

DSEU revokes fee waivers for SC, ST, and EWS students



NEW DELHI, July 19: The Delhi Skills and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU) has revoked a 20 per cent fee concession for SC and ST students and a 10 per cent waiver for the EWS category, raising concerns among those affected.

Several students said they were concerned not only by the revocation of waivers, but also a recent fee hike and the rule to exempt "fee defaulters" from taking exams. The DSEU, a state established and funded Institute has revoked the concession provided to Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Economically Weaker Section (EWS) students starting the 2024-25 academic session and has hiked the fees by up to nine times for majority of its 80 courses, except the master's programmes, Aawaz, the varsity's students' body, said.

The revised fees can be viewed in DSEU's admission brochure -- Information Bulletin 2024 -- which provides the complete fee structure of courses offered at the university. Asked about the fee hike and revocation of the concession for SC, ST, and EWS students, DSEU Vice-chancellor Ashok Kumar Nagawat told PTI that the hike has been effected based on the recommendations of the Finance Committee considering the funding crunch and financial burden on the varsity. He added that the committee is slated to meet next on July 31 and will discuss the matter.

According to the bulletin available on the website, the fees of Bachelor of Optometry for first-year students has increased to around ₹ 1.10 lakh per annum (including other annual charges) from ₹ 29,700 in 2023-2024. The fees have been increased to the same amount in other courses such as BSc Data Analytics (previous fees ₹ 41,580) and Bachelor of Computer Science (previous fees ₹ 34,940), the document shows.

"There will be an annual increase of 10 per cent in the fees. The semester fee will be accordingly based on that," the bulletin also states.

On June 17, the varsity issued a list of hundreds of "fee defaulter" students, barring them from sitting in the end term examination as well as from taking classes, the students' body alleged. The list was released on an official WhatsApp group of the administration which was shared by the respective campus directors with students, Awaaz claimed. (PTI)

US ambassador Garcetti describes ties with India as 'multiplicative relationship'

KOLKATA, July 19: US ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, on Friday described the ties between the two countries as "multiplicative" and said the world's largest and the oldest democracies are moving forward because they "love each other".

Stating that in his 16-17 months as the US ambassador to India, he has visited 23 states and Union territories and stitched together the marvellous view of a country that is rising in the world and of an economy that is the strongest in the developing world. Speaking at an education meet here, Garcetti described the India-United States relations as a "multiplicative" relationship. "It's a relationship not of addition... it's not India plus the United States when India and the US are together, it's a multiplicative relationship," he said. Garcetti said that India and the US are moving forward together because "we love each other." Lauding India's leadership in organising the G20 summit in 2023, he said the two countries are working together on climate change, women empowerment, financial institutional reforms, security and peace and the principles of non-violence. "All the things we have been able to do are examples of how India and the

US are able to multiply our relationship together," the US ambassador said. Maintaining that India and the US have close security and military ties and regularly hold joint military exercises, Garcetti said that the US has also worked with India in times of conflict by way of intelligence sharing and training. Garcetti said the US and India are working together closely in the field of artificial intelligence.

He said that the two countries working together can also ensure that people are not dependent on equipment from any single country in the telecommunications sector.

The ambassador said that India and the US can work together on climate change which is showing its vicious signs with some extremely hot days and very heavy rain in short periods of time. Garcetti said that Indian and US expertise are being used together to help third countries in fields like healthcare as done in Fiji and the Philippines. He said that the two countries will also work together with Tanzania as part of such triangular cooperation. He said that India has been, for the second year in a row, the number one source of higher education students for American universities and colleges. (PTI)

Search operations continue to trace 3 people, including Kerala lorry driver, missing after landslide

BENGALURU/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, July 19: Search operations are continuing in Shirur village in Karnataka's Uttara Kannada district to trace three people, including a lorry driver from Kerala, who are missing after a massive landslide, police said on Friday.

One more body was recovered today, taking the toll in the July 16 landslide to seven. "Seven bodies have been identified so far and three more are reported to be missing including the driver from Kerala. Our search operation is underway," Deputy Commissioner of Uttara Kannada district Lakshmi Priya K told PTI.

When asked about the missing lorry driver from Kerala -- Arjun from Kozhikode, she said: "We are unable to locate the lorry yet both inside the river as well as on the landslide site; it is not seen yet. We are doing the restoration work."

Lakshmi Priya said the body recovered today could be that of a driver from Tamil Nadu

"One more body has been recovered now. We have got only the lower portion of the body. So, we are unable to identify whose body it is. It is a male body. So, it could be that of the driver from Tamil Nadu," she said. "We are doing a DNA test done on the body and we have requested the family of the tanker driver to come from Tamil Nadu to give their samples and if it matches, we will be handing over the body to them," Lakshmi Priya said.

Superintendent of Police (Karwar), Narayana M, said: "Karnataka Police is doing all the possible ways to remove the debris but continuous rains are hampering operations. But we are hopeful that we will be able to locate

(those missing). We are with the family (Arjun's). We will do whatever possible ways to trace out the lorry."

According to Arjun's family, his lorry is suspected to be trapped under the debris and his phone rang twice but there was no response.

The global positioning system-installed vehicle was tracked to the area where parts of the hill collapsed, they said.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has directed Chief Secretary Dr V Venu to take necessary action.

As per the Chief Minister's instructions, the Chief Secretary is in constant contact with the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police at the scene of the incident, a CMO official said. Kerala's Leader of Opposition V D Saatheesan spoke to Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar over phone and requested urgent action to trace Arjun.

"Shivakumar assured that rescue operations are being expedited and all necessary steps are being taken," the LoP's office said in Thiruvananthapuram.

According to Karwar police, after an intensive rescue and search operation by the local police, a team of National Disaster Response Force, Fire and emergency services and officials of other agencies, four bodies were recovered by Tuesday evening.

On Thursday, two more bodies were recovered, police said, adding, among the four dead were members of the same family, who ran a road-side eatery.

Vehicular traffic has been temporarily suspended on National Highway 66 following the landslide. (PTI)

UP train accident: Death toll rises to 4, number of injured at 31

GONDA (UP), July 19: The death toll in the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derailment in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda has risen to four, while 31 people were injured in the incident, an official said on Friday.

Eight coaches of the train had derailed between Motiganj and Jhilahi railway stations, about 150 km from the state capital, on the Gonda-Gorakhpur section of the Northeast Railway on Thursday afternoon.

District Magistrate of Gonda, Neha Sharma, said, "So far, four passengers have died and 31 are injured. Of the injured, the condition of around half a dozen is critical."

"The deceased include Rahul, 38, Saroj Kumar Singh, 31, and two unknown passengers. The body of one of the unknown passengers was retrieved on Friday morning," Sharma said.

"The bodies of the four have arrived at the district headquarters. Their post-mortem examination will be conducted after their relatives arrive," Sharma said, adding orders have been given to conduct a magisterial inquiry into the incident. Sharma said she was present at Mankapur Junction when a special train with 600 passengers of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express left for Assam on Thursday night, hours after the accident, according to an official statement.

The official said she interacted with several passengers and none of them complained about any of their co-passengers missing. She also said that work to restore the railway track is going on, and it will be completed soon.

The district magistrate reached the district hospital on Friday morning and met the injured admitted there. She directed the chief



medical superintendent of the hospital to provide proper treatment and care to the injured.

The DM asked the chief medical officer and the district to take special care of the lone passengers injured in the train.

Speaking to reporters at the hospital, she said two of the critically injured passengers are undergoing treatment at Lucknow's trauma centre while four patients each are admitted to the district hospital and the railway's empanelled hospital.

A railway official said a high-level investigation has begun to ascertain the cause behind the derailment. The railway technical team, which reached the spot late last night, collected samples from the accident site and took photographs. Meanwhile, the railway administration is trying to restore traffic by removing the damaged coaches from the track.

A railway official said the restoration work was carried out through the night using light from a generator. A team of about 800 railway employees has been engaged in repair work since Friday morning, he added.

General Manager of Northeast Railway Saumya Mathur is present

at the spot and monitoring the situation, officials said.

The damaged coaches have been separated using a gas cutter while the work of straightening and removing the overturned coaches using JCB and crane is underway. Efforts are also being made to lay the rail track that was completely uprooted in the accident, they said.

The Gonda-Gorakhpur rail section is a fully electrified line. Electric poles and electric wires were completely destroyed in the accident, and work is underway to re-install them, officials said. Mathur told PTI Videos, "Our effort is to ensure that the down line is restored at the earliest. The upline was restored for diesel (locomotives) last night itself."

The railway ministry on Thursday said a high-level inquiry has been ordered, apart from the probe by the Commission of Railway Safety.

The ministry had also said an enhanced ex-gratia amount of Rs 10 lakh will be given to the relatives of those killed. The grievously injured passengers will get ₹ 2.5 lakh and those with minor injuries ₹ 50,000. (PTI)

SC agrees to hear plea against HC order on removal of protesters from Chandigarh-Mohali road

NEW DELHI, July 19: The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear a plea challenging an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which asked the authorities to clear the Chandigarh-Mohali road of protesters.

In May this year, the apex court had stayed the operation of the April 9 order of the high court while hearing a separate petition.

On Friday, a bench of Justices B R Gavai, K V Viswanathan and N Kotiswar Singh sought responses from an NGO, on whose petition the high court had passed the order, and others on the fresh plea. It tagged the plea with a pending petition raising the same issue.

In its April 9 order, the high court had said despite repeated opportunities given, neither the state of Punjab nor the Union territory of Chandigarh has been able to redress the grievances of the commuters of Chandigarh and SAS Nagar in Mohali. "Only on account of the fact that some of the protesters have been hiding behind a shield of religious legitimacy by placing the Guru Granth Sahib would not as such give the State reason not to act against the persons concerned, who are misusing the religious sentiments," the high court had said.

It had passed the order on a plea by an NGO which contended that local residents and commuters were facing unnecessary harassment because of the protest on the Chandigarh-Mohali road that has been going on since February 2023.

The protesters have been seeking the release of Sikh prisoners, including Devinderpal Singh Bhullar, a 1993 Delhi bomb blast convict.

The fresh plea, filed in the apex court by 'Kaumi Insaaf Morcha', said it has been leading a non-violent and peaceful protest for over a year and half there. The plea, filed through advocate Satya Mitra, has claimed that the high court had "erroneously ordered the forceful removal of protesters from the site, despite the state govern-



ment's affidavit to the court indicating that the protesters had not disrupted traffic and that traffic flow around YPS Chowk was normal".

"The longstanding demand for the release of Sikh political prisoners have been a sensitive and emotional issue for the people of Punjab. The movement is giving a representation to those demands through a peaceful sit-in which is neither causing any disturbance of public tranquillity and nor falls under the reasonable restrictions specified in Article 19(2) of the Indian Constitution," it said. The plea claimed that the high court, in its impugned order, cast aspersions on the motive of the protesters by wrongly claiming they were hiding behind Guru Granth Sahib, using the holy book as a shield. It said these observations of the high court were unreasonable and excessive. In its April 9 interim order, the high court had observed that "on account of handful persons sitting and blocking the road, inconvenience is being caused to the commuters and residents of the Tri-city and the misery is continuing". The high court, while deferring the proceedings, had further said it was hoping that Punjab and Chandigarh administration will "wake up from their slumber" and keep in mind the observations of the apex court given in various verdicts related to protests on roads. (PTI)

'Atmanirbharta' cannot be at cost of nation's defence: VCAS

NEW DELHI, July 19: Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal A P Singh, on Friday said 'atmanirbharta' is "not just a buzzword", it is something that all stakeholders need to put their heart and soul into, even as he underlined that this 'atmanirbharta' cannot be at the cost of nation's defence. In his address at a CAPS seminar here, he asserted that "nation's defence comes first and foremost". The VCAS said defending a nation is "everybody's job and not just the job of persons in uniform".

Pitching for 'atmanirbharta' in defence, he said the DRDO, private industries and others can bolster armed forces' capabilities in radars, communications and a plethora of other things.

"Atmanirbharta" is "not just a buzzword", it is something that all stakeholders need to put their heart and soul into, and make sure technologies and weapons are developed and manufactured in India, "so that we are not relying on an outside agency who could change its alliance or stop flow of weapons to our country" when the time comes, he said. Air Marshal Singh emphasised that the "biggest lesson that we have learned from today's geopolitics is to be self-reliant". As they say, there is no permanent enemy or permanent friend, there is only permanent interest, he said. In his address, the VCAS pitched for fostering greater 'atmanirbharta' but with a rider.

"Atmanirbharta is what we are riding on. Majority of contracts are with Indian partners, Indian industry... But, this atmanirbharta cannot be at the



cost of nation's defence. Nation's defence comes first and foremost," he said. "And, if the IAF and Indian forces have to ride on this atmanirbharta, it is only possible if everyone, from DRDO to DPSUs to the private industry, hold our hands and take us on that path. And, don't let us deviate from that path. Because, when it comes to national defence, there will be compulsions to deviate from that path in case we do not get the things that we need, or the kind of systems or weaponry required to survive in today's world," the air marshal said. He urged that "we all have to work in unison" and at a "much, much faster pace".

However, the VCAS flagged that "the rate at which we are getting our equipment at the moment, is too low" and there was a need to increase it. "When we look at our adversaries, the rate at which they are growing, the rate at which they are imbibing these technologies and still growing in numbers... we have a long gap to

catch up with and this gap is widening further. This is something that we need to look at as a whole and we need to find a solution to this gap that is building," he said.

During the seminar exhibition on air and missile defence hosted by the think-tank at Subroto Park here, many speakers also spoke about various lessons from ongoing conflicts in the world. The VCAS in his address also said the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict has demonstrated the integration of multiple forces in domains of air, land, sea, cyber, information and space, and how they are "united" to achieve the goal. "One thing is certain, if we need to do something, we need to stay... in the game, we need to modernise, we need to continue to grow, continue to innovate and we need to continue being ahead of the curve. Otherwise, we lag behind and we are just chasing," Air Marshal Singh said.

Technological advancements, the rapid pace that is being seen in peo-

ple's normal life, has also "infused themselves into our weaponry, defence systems". Today, what was unthinkable or unimaginable few years back, is a reality, he said, adding, impact on the defence forces, on the warfighting, has made it clear that "we need to be agile and flexible in our thoughts as well as actions".

The ongoing conflicts that has been alluded about, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the multi-domain battlespace. It is a "classic example of what is going on today and what we are likely to face in our future conflicts", the Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) said. "This conflict has also demonstrated the integration of multiple forces in domains of air, land, sea, cyber, information, space and how they are united to achieve the goal. I am sure everyone present here, including my friends from other services will agree that the air domain has clearly emerged as a singular trans-domain link and strong force across domains, a strong method for cross-domain application of force. It is not just an enabler, it has become a force multiplier," he asserted.

The VCAS also referred to the Israel-Hamas war to underline the importance of air domain. Even in the urban warfare construct that is seen in Israel-Hamas war, the air domain has been used extensively, whether it is utilising those fighter aircraft with precision weapons or the formidable Iron Dome (air defence) system or utilising those low-cost rockets and loiter munitions by Hamas in challenging that very formidable and very costly system itself, he said. (PTI)

'MY SPY THE ETERNAL CITY' A LOVE LETTER TO ITALY: DIRECTOR PETE SEGAL

NEW DELHI, July 19: A real-life personal story served as the starting point for his latest release "My Spy: The Eternal City", says filmmaker Pete Segal, who describes the film as his "love letter" to Italy.

The movie, a sequel to Segal's 2020 action comedy "My Spy", brings back Dave Bautista and Chloe Coleman as veteran CIA operative JJ and his high school-going stepdaughter and protege, Sophie.

"My Spy: The Eternal City", which started streaming on Prime Video from Thursday, sees the action shift from Chicago to Italy when Sophie's high school choir goes on a tour to the European country. The trip is interrupted by a nefarious nuclear plot targeting the Vatican which compels the duo to reunite to save the world again. "The choir trip (in the film) is based on a real choir trip that I was actually a chaperone on for my children's high school. They have a tremendous choir, led by the real Dr Brookie, who we portrayed with another actor in the film, and the tour started in Venice.

"Then, they took the kids to Florence on the train and then they all performed before the Pope in the Vatican and I just wanted to capture that same adventure on film... So, it's a bit of a love letter to Italy, and I'm excited for people to see the characters they love but in this new, bigger environment," Segal told PTI in an interview when asked why he chose to move the plot in the follow-up film to Italy.

The sequel is bigger and grander than "My Spy", which was made on a USD 19 million budget, he said, adding Amazon Studios gave the team "triple" the amount to mount the new movie. "We were the beneficiaries of our success on the first movie. It was the third biggest movie of 2020. And so our budget originally was USD 19 million. And Amazon rewarded us with triple that to do the sequel. So, we knew we had a lot more money to make a bigger canvas.

"We wanted the set pieces to be bigger. We wanted the action to be bigger. We wanted new characters. You have to challenge yourself not to repeat. Just because a joke worked in the first movie, don't do it again. Try to be as fresh and original as you can," he added. The director, best known for comedies such as "50 First Dates", "The Longest Yard", "Anger Management", and "Get Smart", said "My Spy: The Eternal City" is one of the few films to be shot inside the Colosseum, the historical landmark in Italian capital Rome, in a while. And that's what made filming the climax of the movie one of his favourite sequences.

"... The fact that we were able to shoot for real in Rome. Obviously stuff inside the Vatican had to be faked. That was visual effects because no one is allowed to film inside the Vatican, but there is access even to the Colosseum. It apparently is very rare. Only four films have been granted access to film inside the Colosseum in the last 25 years," Segal said. Growing up, characters like Inspector Jacques Clouseau from "The Pink Panther" movies and James Bond starring Sean Connery and Roger Moore were his favourite spies. "I liked Inspector Clouseau. He was a lot of fun. But I've always loved James Bond. Going back to Sean Connery and Roger Moore. 'Moonraker' (is) one of my favourite movies when I was a kid. "And also 'Moonraker' was shot quite a bit in Venice, Italy. So I thought about that when I was there. I thought about where Roger Moore came up into St Mark's Square on the gondola that became a car. Those things went through my head because they're iconic."

The director already has "a couple of thoughts" for a third part in the action comedy franchise, but all will depend on the response to "My Spy: The Eternal City".

"We'll see how this one does. And if we have the same kind of success that we did on the first one, then I'll really think about it," he said. His film "50 First Dates", a popular rom-com film starring Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore, completed 20 years in February.

The 2004 movie followed Henry Roth (Sandler), a womanising marine veterinarian who falls for an art teacher named Lucy Whitmore (Barrymore), who resolves to win her over again every day when he discovers she has amnesia. "I think everyone should have the patience of Henry Roth to woo that woman that you love over and over again, every day from scratch. Let's just say that's not me, but very inspirational to me and hopefully to everyone," he said. (PTI)

It might be a small role but I wanted to be associated with it: Tanya Maniktala on 'Kill'

MUMBAI, July 19: At the heart of "Kill", which has been touted as the most violent Indian movie ever made by its producers, is its leading lady Tanya Maniktala, who knew she was in for a "ride" when she first read the script by director Nikhil Nagesh Bhat.

The filmmaker had written down every little detail about the elaborate fight sequences in the movie that features Maniktala, Lakshya and Raghav Juyal in main roles.

The story follows the story of army commando Amrit (Lakshya) who boards the same train in which his girlfriend is travelling with her family. They soon realise that they are trapped in the train as it has been taken over by Fani (Juyal) and his gang, who begin to mercilessly kill the passengers.

"After I was finalised, I went through the script and all the action sequences that you see in the movie were in the script. He (Bhat) had written down everything and was still fleshing out and creating more nuances. When you read something like that, you try to create it in your head, and you know that you're in for a ride.

"It might be a small role, but it's so important and I wanted to be associated with something like this, I wanted to be the catalyst for this fire, and that is how things started," the actor told PTI.

Maniktala, who has starred in prominent roles in OTT series like "Flames", "A Suitable Boy", "Tooth Pari" and "P I Meena", remembers discussing her role with the

director who was confident that her portrayal will bring an emotional heft to the story.

"Nikhil sir told me this is what is on paper, but I want to see how you make your character come alive because there's only so much I can do to her on paper. After all, action is what we are playing with, but how you make yourself the underlying emotion behind all of that is entirely up to you.

When people tell me they connected with her and felt empathy for her, I feel 'I did my job'."

When the team was filming the intense action sequences, Maniktala said she was concerned for Lakshya and Juyal. She consciously decided not to watch it in person because she wanted to experience the unfiltered intensity of the movie on the big screen.

"In the scenes, where I witnessed action happening in front of me, I was holding on to things so tightly, I was so scared. I was like, 'Is everybody okay?'"

The boys are so well-trained, it's muscle memory for them, they know exactly what they're going to do and what's

going to happen next," she said, adding that the off-camera environment was a lot of fun.

Looking at the men doing all the action, Maniktala claimed she kept pestering the director saying, "Let me hit one or two guys".

Although her wish remained unfulfilled with "Kill", she hopes to explore action genre in future projects.

"I would love to be associated with something like that, where there's 'maar dhaar'. Women doing action is simply kick-a**, and I would love to do that," the Delhi-born actor said.

Asked her if she was worried about "Kill" receiving flak for the depiction of violence, Maniktala said that "Kill" does not "glorify violence", and rather portrays action as an "art form".

"By keeping it as real as possible, Nikhil sir has made it clear that in no way he intends to glorify violence or action. We are trying to create a chain of something new."

About parallels between "Kill" and the iconic romance-drama "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge" as both begin on train, the actor said, "Guneet ma'am (Monga, producer) pointed out that if 'DDLJ' had been an action movie, it would be 'Kill'."

"...It's a huge compliment because it's not just action, romance, comedy, and drama. It's driven by all these human emotions and is a full package combined," Maniktala said.

"Kill", which is still running in cinemas, has garnered significant acclaim and has amassed over Rs 16 crore at the box office.

The actor also reflected on the reception to her debut film "Mumbaikar", which released on JioCinema last year.

She starred alongside Vikrant Massey, Vijay Sethupathi, Sanjay Mishra, and Sachin Khedekar in the film, a remake of the 2017 Tamil movie "Maanagaram".

Despite the great names associated with the film and the directorial prowess of Santosh Sivan, the timing of the release was not good, she believes.

"We shot 'Mumbaikar' in 2020 and it was released at the end of last year, so all of my expectations were done by that time because I thought we already sort of missed it with the timeline. Like had it been released way earlier, it would have picked up."

"Kill" is produced by Dharma Productions and Sikhya Entertainment. (PTI)

Tabu makes appearance in second teaser of HBO Max series 'Dune: Prophecy'

NEW DELHI, July 19: The second teaser of HBO Max's "Dune: Prophecy", a prequel series to Denis Villeneuve's blockbuster "Dune" movies, has offered a first look at Bollywood star Tabu, who essays the role of Sister Francesca. The Warner Bros Discovery-owned streamer released the second teaser on Thursday evening and also revealed that the six-episode series will premiere in November this year.

Tabu, known globally for movies such as "The Namesake" and "Life of Pi" as well as BBC miniseries "A Suitable Boy", makes a brief appearance towards the end of the teaser clip. Her character of Sister Francesca is described as a "strong, intelligent, and alluring" character, who leaves a lasting impression in her wake.

"Once a great love of the Emperor, her return to the palace strains the balance of power in the capital," the makers said. The series is set 10,000 years before the events of Frank Herbert's seminal novel "Dune", which was recently adapted by Villeneuve in two parts.

In the two films, which were released in 2021 and 2023, Charlotte Rampling played Reverend Mother Mohiam, the Emperor's Bene Gesserit Truthsayer, while Lady Jessica (Rebecca Ferguson) was the Bene Gesserit mother of the protagonist Paul, played by Timothee Chalamet. (PTI)

IMPRESSED BY WRITERS' ABILITY TO RESPOND TO WHAT'S GOING ON IN WORLD: THE BOYS STAR SUSAN HEYWARD

NEW DELHI, July 19: Actor Susan Heyward says she is a big fan of "The Boys" for the way it mirrors problems of the real world through its satirical take on the superhero genre.

Heyward, best known for playing Tamika Ward in dramedy series "Orange Is the New Black", joined the show's cast in its fourth season, which currently streams on Prime Video.

"I was a huge fan of the show before joining. I really was always impressed by Eric (Kripke) and the writers' abilities to respond to what was going on in the world, seemingly almost immediately, or what would happen in the world in kind of like a prophetic way, like they can see where our culture is headed and somehow we're watching it when it's happening," the actor told PTI in a virtual interview.

"With what the writers have created this season, I'm hoping for the first

time they'll be wrong because they wrote some bats**t crazy scenes. And I'm hoping the world will maybe go a different direction," she added.

"The Boys" tackles a world where superheroes are worshiped as celebrity figures by the masses but deep inside, they are rotten, corrupt and unhinged personalities who are the puppet of an evil business corporation called Vought. Their adversary is the titular band of everyday guys who have only one mission -- to expose the real nature of the so-called superheroes.

The series, which is based on best-selling comic by Garth Ennis and Darick Robertson, had a smash hit debut with its first season that came out in 2019, earning major praise for flipping the superhero genre on its head.

In the fourth season, Heyward essays the role of superhero Sister Sage, dubbed as the world's smartest person.

"Sister Sage wouldn't necessarily show her cards that much, and I'm not sure she is seeking the totality of the world. I think she's mostly concerned with her place," the actor said about her character.

The fourth season also introduces Valerie Curry as Firecracker, a new member of the superhero group called The Seven.

What Curry liked about the show was its "unapologetic point of view" about what's happening in the world.

"Particularly in those early seasons, there was an intelligent and incisive portrayal of Me Too (movement). And like how corporate culture interacts with politics and celebrity. The writers don't dance around things. They're willing to really name things and quote people and be specific in what they're commenting on. That's brave and something that I wanted to be a part of,"

Curry said. The character of Firecracker comes across as a political commentator and the host of a far-right show called The Truth Bomb.

Asked to explain the moral compass of the character, Curry said every villain thinks they're a hero.

"I think from the outside, it's pretty clear to see where she stands in terms of her moral compass. But what I find intriguing about her playing her is really grounding into her vulnerability. She's actually a character who's experienced and continues to carry a lot of pain with her and she's putting on a face all the time for everyone.

"She does care about the world and people. She sees people's pain and wants to be a voice for them. And it feels very at odds with how just loud and awful she is but it's kind of a means to an end," she said. (PTI)



Play fearlessly and without pre-conceived notion: Ashok Dhyanchand to hockey players

NEW DELHI, July 19: The Indian hockey team has been handed an unenviable draw at the Paris Olympics and the legendary Ashok Dhyanchand reckons that the players will have to play "fearlessly" and "without pre-conceived notions" to negotiate the challenge. India had clinched a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 under Manpreet Singh to break a nearly four-decade-long jinx. There are huge expectations from Harmanpreet and Co. to achieve success in Paris. But India's performance

over the last few months, especially against Australia and in the Pro League, has become the talking point as the team heads into the Games, commencing in less than a week's time. Ashok, the son of the hockey wizard Dhyanchand, conceded that India will have its hands full, but added that if they are able to control their nerves at crucial junctures, they would be successful. India have Australia, Belgium, Argentina, Ireland and New Zealand in their group. "They have always given us a tough fight. The pool is very

tough. The team must play with a fresh mind. They are capable and they have the capability," said Ashok during a panel discussion on India's preparations for Paris Olympics on Friday. India recently lost a five-Test series in Australia, while the European leg of the Pro League, which was billed as extremely crucial for Olympic preparations, too didn't go as planned with the team finishing seventh among nine participating countries. "I hope they play fearlessly and with a fresh mind, other-

wise definitely the pool is hard. Also, they need to control their nerves at those particular (crucial) times. Let the mind work according to the situation," was Ashok's advice to the Harmanpreet-led side. "For the athletes, it should only be a match where they can sustain the pressure and not let it get the better of them... that we are playing

against Belgium or Argentina or New Zealand or Australia," said Ashok, who was a member of the 1972 Munich Olympics bronze-winning side. The legend also felt that the Paris Olympics would be the swansong for several players and it was an opportunity for them to bow out on a high. "It should only be a match

where they have to implement their technique and tactics learnt over the years. These 11 players have been playing together for so many years, they are experienced. The only thing is to be organised and settled before the games. "Agreed, the group is heavy (tough) and they have suffered some setbacks during the Pro League. But if you look at the performance in the Asian Games (where India won gold)... we played well in the World Cup as well (in Bhubaneswar) but lost. It's not such a big deal.

"The players should not go with preconceived notions in their mind. They will have to play for a medal, no doubt about that, because for many of them, this will be their last Olympics. They have to keep that fire burning, if they keep it that way, then we will get success... I am very hopeful that our team will stand on the podium." Ashok lamented that the aura around hockey had faded because of several reasons but, given the rich history, the romance with the sport continues. (PTI)

So near yet so far: India's tryst with fourth-place Olympic heartbreaks

NEW DELHI, July 19: It's often said that finishing fourth in the Olympics is peak agony.

If coming last carries the sting of embarrassment, securing the fourth place inflicts the pain of being so near yet so far, something that can either drive an athlete to future glory or leave them completely crushed.

India's affair with near misses at sport's grandest stage has been a long-standing one, beginning way back in 1956.

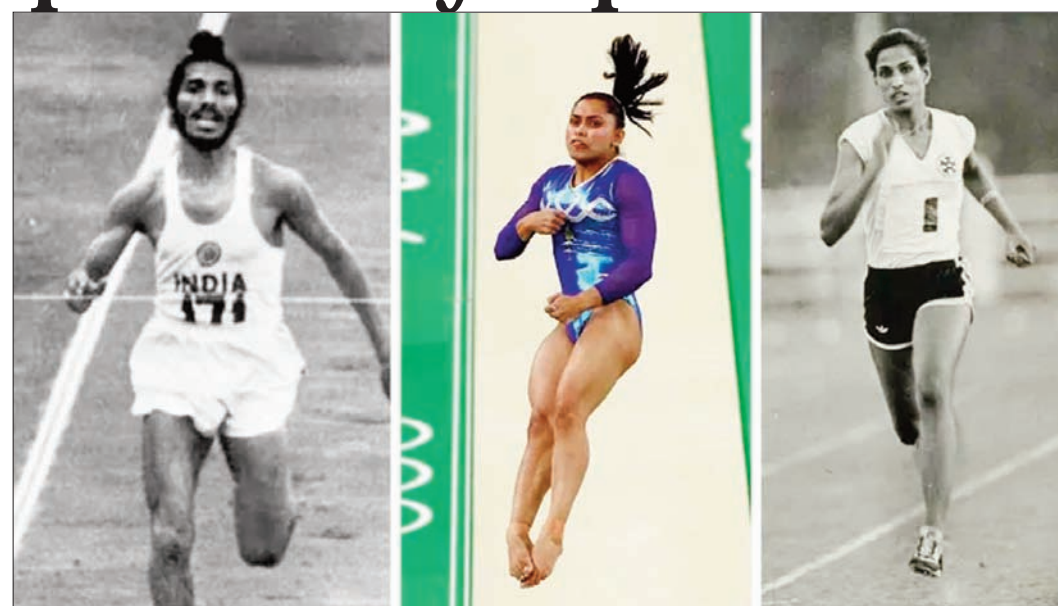
Here is a look at the instances when Indian athletes came close but ended at just that.

1956, Melbourne
The Indian football team made the semifinals after beating hosts Australia 4-2 in the quarterfinals, with Neville D'Souza becoming the first Asian to score a hat-trick at the Games.

By giving his team the lead, Neville looked like doing an encore in the last-four clash against Yugoslavia. But the Yugoslavians came back strong in the second half to seal the contest in their favour.

In the bronze medal classification match, India lost to Bulgaria 0-3, drawing to a close an eventful few days which the great P K Banerjee would often reminisce with a hint of understandable anguish.

1960, Rome
The legendary Milkha Singh missed out on a bronze by the narrowest of margins.



Competing in the 400m final and touted as a medal contender, the 'Flying Sikh' fell short by a mere 1/10th of a second after slowing down to steal a glance at his fellow competitors, an error that he would regret for the rest of his life.

This would go down as his worst memory after losing his parents in the aftermath of the partition.

Milkha almost gave up the sport after this loss and it required a lot of persuasion for him to hit the track again and win two gold medals in the 1962 Asian Games.

1980, Moscow

With top hockey nations such as the Netherlands, Australia and Great Britain boycotting the Moscow Games over the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan, the Indian women's hockey team had a great chance to finish on the podium in its first attempt itself.

But the team endured the agony of narrowly missing out on a medal, losing its last match to erstwhile USSR 1-3 to finish behind Zimbabwe, Czechoslovakia and the hosts.

1984, Los Angeles
LA Olympics brought back memories of Milkha in Rome when PT Usha missed the 400m

hurdles bronze by 1/100th of a second, making it the closest-ever miss for an Indian athlete in any competition.

Known as the 'Payoli Express', she ended fourth behind Romania's Christina Cojocaru, but her heroic effort left a lasting impression and she became a household name.

2004, Athens
After a long gap of 20 years, the curse of the fourth place returned to haunt the Indian contingent when the celebrated duo of Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi missed out on the podium at the Athens Games. Arguably India's greatest dou-

bles pair in tennis, Paes and Bhupathi missed out on a bronze medal after losing a marathon match to Croatia's Mario Ancic and Ivan Ljubicic 6-7 6-4 14-16 to end fourth.

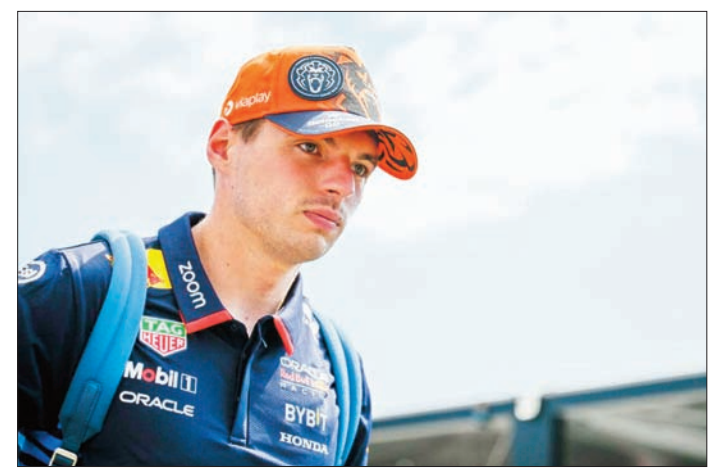
2012, London
Shooter Joydeep Karmakar experienced the terrible feeling of finishing a place behind the bronze medal winner in this edition. Karmakar had finished seventh in the qualification round of men's 50m rifle prone event, and in the finals, he ended just 1.9 points behind the bronze medal winner.

2016, Rio de Janeiro
Gymnast Dipa Karmakar became the first Indian woman gymnast to compete at the Games. After making the final of the women's vault event, she finished fourth overall with a score of 15.066 and missed the bronze medal by 0.150 points.

At the same Games, Abhinav Bindra's illustrious career was headed for a fairytale finish but a shooter of even his class was not spared of the curse of the fourth, as he missed the bronze medal by a whisker, eight years after his historic gold medal at the Beijing Games.

2020, Tokyo
A little more than four decades after the 1980 Moscow Games, the members of the Indian women's hockey team once again endured a similar pain at the Tokyo Olympics, missing out on the bronze. (PTI)

Verstappen's Red Bull battling three-headed threat as F1 season hits midpoint in Hungary



BUDAPEST, July 19: Just when Lewis Hamilton decided he needed to switch teams, here comes Mercedes and finally gives him a competitive car.

Mercedes has elbowed its way into the most tightly contested Formula One season since three-time reigning champion Max Verstappen wrested the mantle of serial winner from Hamilton in 2021.

But the seven-time world champion and Mercedes teammate George Russell have won back-to-back races, with Russell finishing first in Austria before Hamilton surprisingly took the victory at Silverstone, and the team arrives to this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix with renewed hope after a long spell of self-doubt.

Hamilton's win at the British GP was his first victory since the second-to-last race of the 2021 season. The British driver also knows better than anyone how to win on the Hungaroring's tight corners. He holds a record eight wins here, with his last triumph coming in 2020. He also scored a pole position on this track last year. "It's game on, we're fighting, we're chasing, and we're going to try and win as many races or compete for as many wins as possible," Hamilton said while preparing for the race weekend.

Hamilton stunned the sport by announcing that he was leaving

for Ferrari in 2025. He has since insisted that his focus in completely on making the most of his final months with Mercedes.

"We are united as a team, and we're going to try and make sure we finish the season on a high."

With five different winners in the last seven races, it is clear that it is no longer a foregone conclusion that Red Bull will sweep up most of the victories.

Verstappen still commands a healthy lead on 255 points, with McLaren's Lando Norris in second with 171. But the Dutch driver is now facing fast challengers from three different teams when you include the Ferrari's of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz.

Verstappen acknowledged that the gap between his car and the best of rest has largely disappeared. "The last few races we've not been the quickest car, so I don't expect that to suddenly now be any different," said Verstappen, who has won here the past two years. "Of course we will bring upgrades, hopefully that will give it a good boost, but at the moment just one to try and see how that will work this weekend."

Red Bull is under more pressure in the constructors' championship, which combines the points taken from each team's two drivers. Red Bull has 373 points; Ferrari 302, McLaren 295, and Mercedes 221. (AP)

Ghoshkata unit lifts trophy in football tournament



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, July 19: The Ghoshkata unit lifted the 4th edition of the U-13 football tournament of Banargaon Anchalik Committee, ABSU defeating Khagrabari unit by 5-4 goals in the final match being held at the Kanthalguri Udangshri Club playground in Kokrajhar on Friday. The U-13 boy's football tournament was organised under the aegis of Banargaon Anchalik Committee of All Bodo Students Union to hunt sporting talents amongst the citizens in the region, and accordingly nine teams participated to the tournament. In the final match on Friday, Ghoshkata unit ABSU beat the Khagrabari unit ABSU by 5-4 goals. In the first half, Khagrabari was led the match by 2-1 goals against the Ghoshkata unit ABSU. In the second half, Ghoshkata unit have been earned four more goals against the Khagrabari, and accordingly won the tournament by 5-4 goals while Khagrabari also scored another two more goals against the Ghoshkata unit.

Giyansu Brahma of Khagrabari unit ABSU was adjudged as best player, and awarded the best

player trophy. Kampa Basumatary, general secretary of the Kokrajhar district committee, ABSU graded the prize distribution ceremony as chief guest and handed over the championship trophy and cash prize money. Hantigiri Narzary, UPPL media secretary and Kalendra Basumatary, headmaster of Kanthalguri LP School have handed over the runners up trophy and cash prize money to the runners up team.

Both, Narzary and Basumatary have contributed the cash prize money for winning & runners up team, and trophies & medals respectively in the football tournament.

The final match event was chaired by Karuna Kanta Basumatary, chairman of the conduct committee.

Among others, ABSU leaders from Banargaon Anchalik Committee, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Boro Somaj, Tribal Sangha, Banargaon Development Committee were prominent attendees in the event.

A beautiful bodo cultural demonstration dance was also showcased on the occasion.

Staying out of the national team has made Panghal stronger, feels boxer Akhil Kumar

NEW DELHI, July 19: Former Commonwealth Games champion boxer Akhil Kumar believes a battle-hardened Amit Panghal, who persevered through the setback of being dropped from the national team before roaring back to qualify for the Olympics, will be among the most mentally strong Indian athletes competing in the Paris Games.

After the first-round exit from Tokyo Olympics, Panghal lost his spot in the team on the basis of Boxing Federation of India's evaluation system, which was drafted by then High Performance Director Bernard Dunne.

"Amit is in a strong place now because he has made a comeback and seen the tough times in the past few years," Akhil told PTI on the sidelines of a panel discussion on India's Olympic prospects hosted by the Delhi Sports Journalists Association in collaboration with the Sports Authority of India.

The snubs severely dented Panghal's confidence and made him question his abilities.

However, when the opportunity came, India's lone men's world championships silver-medallist grabbed it with both hands to secure an Olympic quota in the 51kg category. The Games begin on July 26.

"When he was not in the team he must have had sleepless nights, he trained hard. He must have felt things that he cannot put into words. He has walked out of all that stronger and should take it as a motivation," Akhil added.

A former world number one,



Panghal has medals in the all big-ticket events barring the Olympics.

He once stood at the pinnacle of his sport with gold medals at the Asian Games and Asian Championships and a historic silver at the World Championships.

Akhil believes Panghal's experience of beating some of the best in the world makes him a force to reckon with at the Paris Games.

"Amit has a medal in every tournament apart from Olympics and I hope he gets that (missing medal). He has defeated so many talented boxers over the years so hopes and expectations from him increase." Akhil, who won the gold at

the 2006 Commonwealth Games, feels all the boxers in India's six-member Paris squad are capable of winning medals as most of them have proved themselves in marquee tournaments.

The trio of Nishant Dev, Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain head to the Games after clinching world championship medals in 2023, while Jaismine Lamboria and Preeti Pawar snared bronze medals at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games respectively.

"The boxers have done well recently. Most of them have medals in big tournaments. Nishant is very talented, I have seen his bouts, he plays really well," he said. (PTI)



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- Seedlings to be available at **Distribution Points** from 30 July till 12 August 2024
- New **Registration**/ Renewal of Registration to open shortly in aba.assam.gov.in
- All individuals & organisations, who registered for Amrit Brikshya Andolan 2023, can **renew** their registration
- **Upload** of plantation photographs in aba.assam.gov.in or Amrit Brikshya Andolan mobile app from 1 to 15 August 2024
- Beneficiaries can download **District Specific Mobile App** for uploading photographs from 25 July 2024 onwards
- New Registration/Renewal of Registration to remain open till **31 July 2024**



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