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www.thehillstimes.in
THE HILLS TIMES
 PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU *Voice of the hills people*

Vol .No. XXV Issue No. 195 RNI-ASSENG/2000/12862 DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2024 PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8



Government of Assam

Striving relentlessly towards providing



Recruitment Figures

As of 15 July 2024	Total recruitment: 97505
26 July 2024	Additional recruits: 465
Total employment	97,970

Appointment letter distribution programme for



of Power, Education and Information, Public Relations, P & S Department

Appointment letters to be distributed by
Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
 Chief Minister, Assam

Department	Position	Number of candidates	Total
Power Department	Junior Manager	Assam Power Distribution Company Limited: 220	306
		Assam Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited: 86	
Directorate of Technical Education	Assistant Professor (Technical)	59	149
Directorate of Higher Education	Assistant Professor	58	
Directorate of Elementary Education	Teacher	9	
	Lower Division Clerk	3	
	Grade IV employee	11	
Department of School Education	Assam Education Service Officer	9	10
Information, Public Relations, P&S Department	Senior Information & Public Relations Officer	4	
	Junior Information & Public Relations Officer	6	

Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra, Guwahati

26 July 2024

11:00 am

Indexation is a mechanism to adjust the purchase price of an investment like a house to reflect the effect of inflation on such assets

Real estate LTCG transactions sans indexation practically beneficial for taxpayers: CBDT Chairman

NEW DELHI, July 24: The removal of indexation benefits from real estate transactions will turn out to be beneficial for taxpayers when it is seen through the prism of "actual market dynamics" rather than plain mathematics, CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal said on Wednesday.

The head of the direct taxes administration in the country told PTI in a post-budget interview that the department did "some calculations" in this context before the measure announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday in Parliament.

Agrawal also underlined that the new system says there will be "less tax obligation" for a taxpayer here. The Budget 2024-25 has reduced tax rates on capital gains earned from the sale of house properties held for the long term but has removed the benefit of indexation available to taxpayers.

The LTCG (long-term capital gains) has been reduced from 20 per cent with indexation benefit to 12.5 per cent without indexation for the real estate sector.

Indexation is a mechanism to adjust the purchase price of an investment like a house to reflect the effect of inflation on such assets.

Over the concerns raised by a section that feels taking away indexation will affect the real estate market adversely, Agrawal asserted that "practically, in most of the cases, the new scheme would be beneficial".

He said there were demands from various quarters and taxpayers to "simplify" the capital gains



regime. The CBDT Chairman said the intention of this Budget measure is to make this process simple as any "complicated structure brings with it disputes also".

Let us see practically, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) chief said, what is there in the market currently.

"Take the case of real estate, the property rates or gains have gone up in the last ten years substantially. Now, compare your indexation with the new regime in the last 10 years, suppose you bought a property in 2014, and you are selling it in 2024-25. The benefit of indexation would be only 1.5 times.

"So, consider if the property is some X, the index cost of the evaluation will be 1.5 times...in 10 years, it will only be going up by 1.5 times," he noted.

Now, we (CBDT and Income-Tax department) have done some calculations and found that if the property rate has gone up by three

times in 10 years, the new tax regime (as announced in the Budget) is beneficial, the CBDT chairman said.

"Practically, in most of the cases, property rates have gone up by more than three times. Leave aside the mathematics that says that if in ten years, the property rate has gone up two times or one-and-a-half times, then what happens and so on...the reality is that the property rates have gone up beyond three times and in realty sectors...tier one and tier two cities...circle rates have gone up...even the market rates.

"Property rates have gone up by much more in 20-25 years for 2001, as the base, and now in 2024, in these 23 years, if the property rate has gone up by seven times or seven-and-a-half times, then the new regime is beneficial. So, maths aside, when you come to the actual market, you find that the new tax regime is better," he said.

Effectively, Agrawal said, the

obligation of tax is less (in the new regime).

"We have been living with this indexation regime for long and have got used to it, and it has come into our psyche. But, if we actually start analysing it, not from the mathematics point of view, but from the actual market dynamics, then one would find that this scheme is better," he said.

The CBDT chief said the new regime is also aimed at simplification of the process -- one which should be easy to comprehend (for the taxpayer), easy to implement (for the tax department), and it also targets disputes arising out of "multiplicity of provisions" are minimised.

He added that in the case of old properties, the grandfathering clause, as per the 2001 indexation of fair market value, would be applicable.

The Budget has retained the indexation benefit for taxpayers on properties bought or inherited before 2001. However, the LTCG indexation proposal has been given effect "with immediate force".

Questioned about the rationale for the Budget hike in the securities transaction tax (STT) on futures and options (F&O) trade from October 1, the chairman said an "exponential increase in the transactions" here was being witnessed.

It was seen that "everyone was participating (in F&O)...there are more risks involved in this and also the fact that if there's so much participation, can we actually tap some revenue from that?" (PTI)

Dhoot Group's Aparajita initiative celebrates women achievers globally

GUWAHATI, July 24: The Dhoot Group unveiled the 13th edition of the Sanmarg Aparajita initiative with a grand pre-event meet held at ITC Sonar Bangla, Kolkata.

Dedicated to honouring and empowering women achievers worldwide, the event saw enthusiastic participation from nominees and stakeholders alike.

Aparajita, powered by BMD and Bengal Energy Ltd., aims not only to recognise exceptional women but also to cultivate a supportive ecosystem fostering their growth and impact.

The initiative has consistently celebrated stories of resilience and achievement, echoing the spirit of icons like Usain Bolt in its pursuit of excellence.

Ruchika Gupta, President of Sanmarg and Founder-Guardian of Aparajita, expressed her excitement for this year's event, emphasising the initiative's role in highlighting the journeys of women who have surmounted significant challenges to effect change.

Gupta likened the collaborative effort to raise and empower women to the adage that it takes a village to raise a child.

A notable aspect of the awards is their commitment to inclusivity, demonstrated prominently during the 10th edition when women from the New Light Foundation were employed as on-ground support.

Sensex, Nifty close lower on profit taking in banks after budget; fall for 4th day

MUMBAI, July 24: Extending the losing streak to the fourth day, benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 280 points on Wednesday due to profit booking in financial and banking shares after the government announced a hike in securities transaction tax and short term capital gains tax in the budget for 2024-25.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 280.16 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 80,148.88 with 19 of its components closing lower and 11 with gains. During the day, it tumbled 678.53 points or 0.84 per cent to 79,750.51.

The NSE Nifty dropped 65.55 points or 0.27 per cent to 24,413.50.

From the Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv declined by 2 per cent after its first-quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Adani Ports, Axis Bank and State Bank of India were the other big laggards.

However, Tech Mahindra, ITC, NTPC, Tata Motors and Sun Pharma were among the gainers.

Conglomerate ITC surged to 52-week highs before closing higher by 0.42 per cent in its second straight day of gains after the budget proposed no new tax on tobacco products.

"The budget event has gone by leaving a mixed bias while reshuffling of capital gain tax is only a short-term negative surprise. The broad market seems to be losing momentum due to lack of further traction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Nair added that domestic investors are biased but strong government fiscal and growth policy is attractive for FIIs, which will help to hold the ground. The

recovery noticed from today's low will be evident only post the monthly expiry on Thursday.

"Profit-taking continued as investors cut their position in banking and automobile stocks, which led to a fall in key benchmark indices. However, markets ended off their lows on selective buying support although concerns of higher valuations continue to weigh," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Analysts said that the ongoing Q1 results, which till date are muted, will decide the near-term trend. "Nifty fell for a fourth consecutive session on Wednesday logging its worst streak since May 2024," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped

1.91 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.68 per cent. Among the indices, bankex, financial services, auto were the laggards.

Energy, healthcare, industrials, utilities, telecommunication and power were among the gainers.

Key benchmark indices ended marginally lower in volatile trade on Tuesday as the government proposed to hike the securities transaction tax on futures & options in the Budget for 2024-25.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended marginally lower on Tuesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 2,975.31 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 0.75 per cent to USD 81.62 a barrel. (PTI)



BMW launches all-new 5 series long wheelbase in India

GUWAHATI, July 24: BMW Group has introduced the all-new BMW 5 Series Long Wheelbase to the Indian market, marking a significant milestone in luxury sedan



offerings. Locally produced at the BMW Group Plant Chennai, this model represents the pinnacle of modernity and comfort tailored specifically for premium clientele in India.

With an illustrious history spanning back to 1972 and over 10 million units sold globally, the BMW 5 Series continues its legacy as a leader in the executive sedan segment.

The eighth generation of this iconic vehicle sets new benchmarks in digital innovation and dynamic performance.

Vikram Pawah, President and CEO, BMW Group India, expressed enthusiasm about the launch, highlighting the car's enhanced comfort, digital features, and dynamic design.

He emphasised that India is the first right-hand drive market to introduce the long wheelbase version, which promises unparalleled space, luxurious comfort, and versatility for both business and personal travel.

Available exclusively in a petrol variant, the BMW 5 Series Long Wheelbase debuts at an introductory ex-showroom price of INR

72,90,000. This price excludes additional statutory taxes, fees, and insurance, and may vary at the time of purchase.

The vehicle offers four metallic paint options and features a fully vegan interior upholstery for the first time, reflecting BMW's commitment to sustainable luxury.

Customers can also benefit from Service Inclusive and Service Inclusive Plus plans, ensuring reduced cost of ownership through comprehensive service packages.

Furthermore, BMW India Financial Services provides customized financial solutions tailored to individual needs, enhancing the purchasing experience with options like extended warranty, BMW Service Inclusive packages, and BMW Secure package offering coverage throughout the loan tenure.

The launch of the all-new BMW 5 Series Long Wheelbase reinforces BMW's dedication to delivering cutting-edge technology, luxurious comfort, and unmatched driving pleasure in the Indian market.

Budget 2024-25 prioritises women, youth, and job creation

GUWAHATI, July 24: The recently presented Budget for 2024-25 has been hailed as a balanced approach with a strong emphasis on bolstering opportunities for women, youth, and job creation. Highlighting India's robust economic growth amidst global uncertainties, the finance minister underscored initiatives aimed at enhancing education, employment, and skilling.

A significant allocation of ₹ 1.48 lakh crore has been earmarked for education, employment, and skilling, with a focus on benefiting 2.1 lakh youths through employment-linked skills training. Noteworthy revisions include increasing the Mudra loan limit to ₹ 20 lakh and introducing a new credit assessment model based on digital footprints, which aims to expand financial inclusion for MSMEs.

Special provisions to empower women in the work-

force include setting up hostels, creches, and targeted skilling programs. The Budget also addresses agricultural digitization and proposes enhancements in educational loans and the upgrading of industrial training institutes. Industry-academia partnerships are set to strengthen, with plans to upgrade 1,000 industrial training institutes to align courses with industry needs.

The Budget also focuses on leveraging digital infrastructure for agricultural improvements and simplifying tax regimes to boost technological innovation and ease of doing business.

Furthermore, measures to support startups include abolishing the Angel Tax and launching internship opportunities for one crore youth over five years, funded partly through CSR initiatives. The Budget aims to harness India's talent pool effectively while fostering a conducive environment for economic growth and innovation across various sectors.

Rupee falls 1 paisa to revisit all-time low of 83.70 against US dollar

MUMBAI, July 24: The rupee depreciated 1 paisa to revisit its all-time closing low of 83.70 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by a strong dollar against major crosses overseas amid investors' weak appetite for riskier assets.

Forex traders said the increase in capital gains tax and removal of indexation benefits announced in the FY25 Budget on Tuesday was the main reason for dollar buying as foreign investors sold stocks.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.69 and touched an intra-day high of 83.68 and a low of 83.72 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at an all-time low level of 83.70 (provisional) against the American currency, registering a fall of 1 paisa from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee declined 3 paise to 83.69 against the US dollar after the government raised tax rates on capital gains in the FY25 Budget.

Forex traders said US dollar buying continued to be the theme after the increase in long-term capital gains tax (LTCG) and short-term

capital gains tax (STCG) and then the removal of indexation benefits.

The government on Tuesday proposed reducing the long-term capital gains tax on immovable properties to 12.5 per cent from 20 per cent but removed the indexation benefits to adjust for inflation, a move experts termed as "negative" for sellers.

As per the memorandum to the Union Budget, with rationalisation of rate to 12.5 per cent, indexation available under section 48 of the Income Tax Act is proposed to be removed for calculation of any long-term capital gains, which is presently available for property, gold and other unlisted assets.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.05 per cent at 104.50.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading higher by 0.79 per cent at USD 81.65 per barrel.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 280.16 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 80,148.88 points, and Nifty dropped 65.55 points or 0.27 per cent to 24,413.50 points. (PTI)

Indo-Bangla trade resumes after two days of shutdown

KOLKATA, July 24: Trade between India and Bangladesh, which was stalled for the last two days due to the violence in the neighbouring country, resumed on Wednesday.

Trade to all major land ports in West Bengal, including Petrapole, Gojadanga, Fulbari, and Mahadipur, resumed after Bangladeshi Customs resumed work and the restoration of the internet link, an export body official said.

"Trade has resumed from the Petrapole border since this morning after the Benapole side reopened to receive cargo," Kamlesh Saini, manager of the Land Port Authority of India (Petrapole), told PTI.

Petrapole, located in Bongaon in the North 24 Parganas district, serves as South Asia's largest land port and plays a crucial role in facilitating trade between India and Bangladesh.

"Benapole border has resumed functioning. Altogether 220 trucks entered Bangladesh from Petrapole while 27 trucks reached Bangladesh today," said Sajedur Rahman, general secretary of the Benapole C&F Staff Association. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Plane crashes

at Kathmandu Model Hospital. Of the deceased, 15 died on the spot while three died during treatment at a local hospital, authorities said. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Home Minister Ramesh Leksh separately visited the accident site to gather details about the incident and provide necessary directives.

Oli said he was deeply saddened by the tragic deaths in the crash and was at the site to inquire about the cause of the air crash with the Civil Aviation Authority's officials. He urged all for patience at this hour of grief.

According to Tribhuvan International Airport chief Jagannath Niraula, the plane flying from Kathmandu to Pokhara turned in the wrong direction. "As soon as it took off, it turned right instead of turning left," Niraula was quoted as saying by the BBC News Nepali.

However, "the cause of the accident has not been revealed yet," he said.

The accident happened less than a minute after the plane took off, Niraula said. The aircraft "suffered a runway excursion and burst into massive flames immediately", the Search and Rescue Centre of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal earlier said.

The aircraft, manufactured by the Canadian company Bombardier in April 2003, was the sixth of its kind purchased for use in Nepal, according to information from planespotter.com. Following the accident, services at the Kathmandu airport were halted briefly before being resumed, the airport authorities said.

According to the company's website, Saraya Airlines operates flights to five tourist destinations within Nepal, with a fleet of three Bombardier CRJ-200 jets. Nepal has been criticised for its poor air safety record in recent years but the reasons also include partly sudden weather changes and partly airstrips located in hard-to-access rocky terrains apart from human error.

According to Nepal's civil aviation body, 914 people have died in air crashes in the country since the first disaster was recorded in August 1955.

In January last year, all 72 people on board, including five Indians, were killed when a Yeti Airlines aircraft crashed in the resort city of Pokhara. The crash was attributed to a human error.

Yeti Airlines' 9N-ANC ATR-72 aircraft crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport minutes before landing on January 15, 2023, which was the 104th crash in Nepali skies and the third biggest in terms of casualties.

The only incidents in which more people were killed took place in July and September 1992. Those crashes involved aircraft of Thai Airways and Pakistan International Airlines and left 113 and 167 people dead, respectively. On May 29, 2022, all 22 people on board, including four members of an Indian family, were killed as a Tara Air plane crashed in Nepal's mountainous Mustang district.

In 2016, all 23 people aboard were killed when a plane of the same airline flying the same route crashed after takeoff. In March 2018, a US-Bangla Air crash occurred at the Tribhuvan International Airport, killing 51 people on board. (PTI)

Gaurav seeks urgent repair

no significant results have been achieved, he said. Gogoi said the Numaligarh to Jorhat section has similar issues and its riding quality is not up to standard due to a lack of proper supervision during construction.

He said the Jorhat to Jhanji portion onward to Dibrugarh remains incomplete, causing numerous fatal injuries and loss of life due to road accidents. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Teok (Jorhat) a few months ago and may have also witnessed the poor road condition in the area.

Despite that high-profile visit, the condition of NH 37 remains unchanged, Gogoi said underscoring the urgent need for immediate remedial action.

"I must say that the above portions were awarded to various contractors who lacked financial soundness and capability, resulting in prolonged delays spanning over a decade. Considering that Assam and the NE region experience heavy rainfall, it is suggested that concrete roads be constructed instead of bituminous roads to ensure durability and longevity.

"Therefore, I humbly request your prompt intervention to address these critical issues. Please oversee the urgent repair of the highway and ensure the timely completion of the 4-lane highway for the greater public interest. We look forward to a positive response," he said. (PTI)

Search ops continues for

have happened, but we are taking all angles into consideration. The SDRF is conducting a thorough search in the downstream of the river from Guwahati to Dhubri," he said.

A missing persons' complaint was filed by his family after Barua did not return till late in the evening on Monday. A radio artist of fame, he has composed music for several Assamese films, including Dr Bezbaruha, Baruar Songbar, Mukuta, Lalita, Kokadeta and Nati Aru Hati, among others.

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had directed the city police to mobilise all resources and take swift action to locate him. (With inputs from PTI)

Chinese scientists find

chemical form of lunar hydrogen has been determined", according to the Nature article.

The Chang'e-5 China's first lunar sample-return mission sent back the first on-site evidence of water on the surface of the moon in 2020. More discoveries were expected to follow with the return to Earth last month of China's Chang'e-6 moon mission with up to 2kg of material scooped and drilled from the moon's oldest basin on the lunar far side. "China's Chang'e-5 mission in 2020 initiated a new phase of in-depth studies on lunar samples after a 44-year hiatus, advancing our understanding of the moon's evolution," said Li Xianhua, an academician of the CAS.

However, prior to the Chang'e-6 mission, all ten lunar sampling missions in human history, including the Chang'e-5 mission, took place on the near side of the moon. "Our current knowledge of the moon primarily comes from research on samples collected from its near side, which does not represent a comprehensive scientific understanding of the whole moon," Li told state-run Xinhua news agency. (PTI)

NAME CORRECTION

My actual and correct name is Kamar Uddin F/N-Dudu Miyan M/N-Samrun Nessa D.O.B.- 31/12/1969 vill- Charing Pather, PO-Chowdhury Bazar, P.S.-Murajhar, Dist- Hojai (Assam). but in my passport bearing passport No-H7759293 in my name has been wrongly recorded as Uddin Mohammed Kamar F/N-Haji Dudu Mia M/N-Samsunnissa D.O.B. 02/03/1968 So I corrected the names by a notarial affidavit at sankardev nagar, Hojai.

6 WORLD

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- Ukraine's foreign min seeking 'common ground' with China

8 REGION

- District Road Safety Committee holds meeting in Tezpur
- Record allocation in railway budget to transform northeast: Ashwini

HT BRIEFS

Officials arrested
GUWAHATI: The forest department on Wednesday arrested two officials of the NRL in connection with the recent death and burial of a wild elephant on the premises of the PSU without informing the authorities concerned in Assam's Golaghat district, an official said. The forest department summoned NRL chief manager Ujjawal Nayan Handique and Manager Bedanga Kashyap and questioned them for six hours. The two were later handed over to the police for further legal proceedings. A female elephant was suspected to have been electrocuted on July 18 after coming in contact with an exposed power cable in the butterfly park, which is a part of the refinery. The NRL authorities had buried the elephant without informing the forest department and following the necessary protocols.

Heroin seized
MORIGAOON: Two persons were arrested in Assam's Morigaon district on Wednesday after heroin worth over ₹1.57 crore was seized from their possession, police said. Acting on a tip-off, a police team conducted a search operation in Barchal village and seized 875 gms of the narcotics substance from a house, an officer said. The heroin was hidden in 77 soap boxes and was brought to the district from Dimapur in Nagaland, he said. The police arrested the two accused persons and registered a case against them.

6 B'deshi arrested
AGARTALA: A total of six Bangladesh nationals, who crossed over to India without valid documents, were arrested from two places in Tripura, police said on Wednesday. Acting on a tip-off, a railway police team laid a trap at Agartala railway station on Tuesday evening. "Around 7 pm, the team arrested four suspected Bangladesh nationals from the railway station. After preliminary interrogation, the four people revealed they were from Bangladesh and were planning to go to Kolkata in search of jobs."

Himanta calls on Sitharaman, hails Union budget ● **Oppn protests budgetary allocations**

INDIA Bloc stages walkout in LS

NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI, July 24: INDIA Bloc MPs on Wednesday staged a walkout in the Lok Sabha protesting the alleged discrimination against opposition-led states in the Union Budget. As soon as the House met for the day, Opposition members tried to raise the issue of budgetary allocations. As Opposition members raised slogans, Speaker Om Birla cautioned them against disrupting the Question Hour. He said members from both the sides should follow parliamentary traditions. He questioned the opposition for disrupting House proceedings in a "planned manner". Both Birla and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju flagged the issue of MPs facing difficulty in entering Parliament House due to Opposition protests on the steps of the building. Birla said several members have



written to him over the difficulty faced by them. As they were disallowed to raise their issue, Opposition members staged a walkout. Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi and commended her for delivering an exceptional budget for Viksit Bharat. "This budget has an unprecedented focus on jobs, yuva shakti, nari shakti and small businesses,"

the chief minister posted on X. Sarma said that he also had fruitful discussions on a wide range of issues and "Hon'ble Finance Minister has reassured that all support as announced in the Union Budget, will be extended to Assam to help build a flood resilient economy". Assam also has a lot to benefit from various budget announcements pertaining to MSMEs, skilling and digital economy with all such proposals from the state to be duly expedited, he said. "I conveyed my gratitude for the excellent scheme for special assistance to states for Capex, and also offered our suggestion to make this scheme even more robust," Sarma said. The Union minister has also assured her that all issues pertaining to royalty from hydro-carbon industries in the state will be settled at the earliest, he said. (PTI)

Plane crashes after takeoff at Nepal's Kathmandu; 18 killed

KATHMANDU, July 24: A Nepalese private plane crashed and caught fire shortly after taking off from the Tribhuvan International Airport here on Wednesday, killing 18 people aboard, including a child, and seriously injuring the pilot - the only survivor. The Bombardier CRJ-200 aircraft of Saurya Airlines, carrying 19 people, including two crew members and technical staff of the airline, was bound for Pokhara International Airport for regular maintenance service when the accident occurred at 11.11 am (local time). "Shortly after takeoff from runway 02, the aircraft veered off to the right and crashed on the east side of the runway," said a statement issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal. It said rescue operations were initiated immediately and fire was brought under control. "One injured person (Captain Manish Ratna Shakya) was rescued and taken to the hospital, and 18 People were found dead," it added. The aviation authority identified one of the passengers as a child named Adhiraj Sharma, who was the son of Manu Raj Sharma, a technician of Saurya Airlines. Sharma's wife Priza Khatiwada and their four-year old son Adhiraj died in the crash. A statement issued by the airline said that Priza and her son were initially identified as employees of the company, but it was later revealed that they were passengers. Videos posted online showed the plane being enveloped in fire and smoke. Fire engines and ambulances were rushed to the spot after the incident. The deceased were identified as co-pilot S Katuwal and employees of Saurya Airlines and a Yemeni national (Aref Reda). Pilot Captain Manish Shakya, 37, is undergoing treatment (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Gaurav seeks urgent repair of NH37



NEW DELHI, July 24: Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday sought the intervention of Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in urgently repairing the National Highway 37 in Assam, saying the road is "causing significant inconvenience" to people due to its deteriorating condition. Gogoi met Gadkari and also gave a letter detailing the condition of

the highway. "I highlighted the deteriorating condition of NH 37 in Assam to him (Gadkari). I also informed him that the tender process for the Jorhat to Jhanji portion onward to Dibrugarh has been initiated and cancelled three times till date. I am skeptical whether the ongoing fourth round of the process will yield a positive outcome," Gogoi wrote on X. In his letter, the MP from Jorhat said the current condition of NH 37, a lifeline for the people of Assam, has reached a critical point, causing significant inconvenience to residents and commuters alike. "The rise in traffic volume, attributed to commercial activities, tourism, and regular transportation, has far outpaced the capacity of the road infrastructure, resulting in extensive wear and tear," he said. Gogoi said the Nagaon to Jakhalabandha section of the highway has undergone repairs multiple times due to "defective construction but cracks and uneven surfaces were visible within a year of construction". Despite bringing this to the notice of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and a subsequent meeting called by the Speaker with NHA officials and MLAs, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Search ops continues for Ramen Barua

GUWAHATI, July 24: A massive search was underway in the Brahmaputra river on Wednesday for noted Assamese music composer Ramen Barua who went missing, police said. Barua, 84, left his home in Guwahati's Latasil area on Monday morning after an altercation with a family member, and he was last seen on the road leading to the Brahmaputra near the new Gauhati High Court building, Police Commissioner Diganta Baruah said. Several people have been questioned in the case, including his daughter Barnika Barua and brother Dwipen Baruah who is a renowned singer, he said. "On the basis of the questioning, we have come to the conclusion that he had left home as he was emotionally upset following an altercation with a family member," Baruah said, refusing to identify the person.

Search ops continues for Ramen Barua



Ramen Barua daughter arrived at Latasil Police Station in Guwahati on Wednesday. UB Photos

"According to CCTV footage, he was last seen at 10.08 am on Monday on the road leading to the Brahmaputra near the new Gauhati HC building. His mobile phone was also tracked till 10.09 am, and the K-9 also led the investigators to the river bank," he said. Baruah said there is evidence that Barua went to the river bank but the police have no proof that he returned from there. "We are not concluding that any unfortunate incident may (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Chinese scientists find traces of water in lunar soil



BEIJING, July 24: Chinese scientists studying the soil samples of the moon brought by Chang'e-5 mission found water molecules in lunar soil, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The research - carried out jointly by researchers from the Beijing National Laboratory for Condensed Matter Physics and the Institute of Physics of CAS and other domestic research institutions - was published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Astronomy on July 16, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. Based on lunar soil samples returned by Chang'e-5 mission in 2020, Chinese scientists have found a hydrated mineral "enriched" with molecular water, CAS said on Tuesday. In 2009, India's Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft detected signs of hydrated minerals in the form of oxygen and hydrogen molecules in sunlit areas of the moon. Among its suite of instruments, it carried NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3), an imaging spectrometer that helped confirm the discovery of water locked in minerals on the Moon. In 2020, Nasa announced the discovery of water on the sunlit surface of the moon based on data from the airborne Stratospheric

Assam police search Cong MLA's home in MP over cheating case

TIKAMGARH (MP), July 24: A police team from Assam on Wednesday searched the residence of a Congress MLA in Madhya Pradesh's Tikamgarh city over a cheating case registered against his son, an official said. The team of cops reached the Congress MLA and former minister Yadendra Singh Bundela's home, located in the Tal Darwaja area of the city, he said.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Rohit Kashwani said a case of cheating has been registered against the lawmaker's son, Shashwat Singh, in Assam. "A team of Assam police has come here in this regard and they sought the help of local police," he said. Keshwani said the team returned after a search at the home of Bundela, who represents the Tikamgarh constituency, for three

hours under the protection of local police. The SP said he was not authorised to disclose more about the matter. The MLA has yet to react to the search. Sources said this is the second time the Assam police came to Tikamgarh. The Assam police had interrogated Shashwat Singh in September last year in connection with a multi-crore cheating case, they said. (PTI)

3 die of Japanese encephalitis in Morigaon

MORIGAOON, July 24: Three persons from Assam's Morigaon district have died due to Japanese encephalitis, an official said on Wednesday. At present, 11 patients are undergoing treatment for the disease, and their conditions are stated to be stable, he said. Among the deceased was Rajamani Medhi, 22, who died at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital on Wednesday, after being diagnosed with the disease last week, he added. "He was in ventilator support for last 4

days in GMCH battling for his life. But the youth faced untimely death. Medhi secured 1st class in Bsc physics," a local said. The other two deceased were seven-year-old Imrana Begum of Gagalmar village and Bhabakanta Nath, 66, of Shimuluguri, the official said. Five cases of malaria were also reported, and all the patients have recovered, District Malaria Officer Supriya Das said. Cases of both Japanese encephalitis and malaria were reported after the flood waters receded. (PTI)

কৃষি আৰু কৃষক কল্যাণ মন্ত্ৰণালয়
ভাৰত চৰকাৰ

“প্রধানমন্ত্রী ফচল বীমা যোজনাৰ বতৰৰ অনিশ্চয়তাৰ সৈতে জড়িত ক্ষতিশংকা কম কৰি পৰিশ্ৰমী কৃষক ভাই-ভনীৰ আৰ্থিক হিত বন্ধা কৰাত একেবাহে গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আহিছে। এই কৃষক হিঁচৈনী বীমাৰ লাভ কোটি কোটি কৃষকে পাব ধৰিছে।”
 - নৰেন্দ্ৰ মোদী, প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰী

ফচল বীমা কৰাওক
সুৰক্ষা কৰাওক

৪ বছৰৰ মুখ্য সাকল্যসমূহ

- ৪২ কোটিৰো বেছি কৃষকৰ আৱেদন গ্ৰহণ কৰা হ'ল
- ১৯.৬৭ কোটিৰো বেছি কৃষকৰ আৱেদনলৈ ফচলৰ ক্ষতিপূৰণৰ বন বিভণ
- ₹১.৬০ লাখ কোটিৰো বেছি বীমা দাবীৰ বন পৰিশোধ

সমগ্ৰ দেশ জোৰা হেল্পলাইন ১৪৪৭

আপোনাৰ পশু নামভেৰ-ক আপোনাৰ বীমা নামভেৰ-ক পোতাৰ বাবে বিত্তীয় সেৱাৰ বাবে QR ক'ড স্কেন কৰক।

আপোনাৰ ফচলৰ বীমা কৰোৱাৰ বাবে আজিয়েই যোগাযোগ কৰক

জানসেৱা কেন্দ্ৰ | শস্য বীমা এপ <https://play.google.com> | পোষ্ট অফি | বেঞ্চ শাখা | [PMFBY](https://www.facebook.com/PMFBY)

যোগাৰন সলুকে অফিছ জাৰিনৰ বাবে QR ক'ড স্কেন কৰক

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Show me your garden and I shall tell you what you are.
-Alfred Austin

Decoding FM's Budget strategy

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has employed a clever framework for her budget formulation, encapsulated in the acronym EMPLOYMENT. This stands for Employment and Education, MSMEs, Productivity, Land, Opportunity, Youth, Middle Class, Energy Security, New Generation Reforms, and Technology. However, beneath this surface-level strategy lies a more intricate index, which we term CONANDROM—an index calculating the Chances of Nitish And Naidu to Ditch the Rule of Modi. This index likely considers the number of MPs from both Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)) and Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP), their propensity to leverage their numbers to pressure the alliance, and their history of shifting allegiances. This could explain why Bihar, with fewer MPs (12) compared to Andhra Pradesh (16), received a significantly larger allocation. Bihar has been granted ₹ 26,000 crore for infrastructure projects including national highways, airports, medical colleges, and tourism development. This also includes the Bodhi Gaya temple corridor, an initiative akin to Varanasi's development. In contrast, Naidu's Andhra Pradesh receives ₹ 15,000 crore but with crucial backing for the Amaravati-Polavaram project, a venture previously unsupported by the Modi government during Naidu's earlier alliance with the NDA. The lack of support for this project led Naidu and the TDP to exit the alliance in 2018.

The CONANDROM index seemingly assigns higher weightage to Nitish Kumar's propensity for switching sides, earning him the moniker 'Palu Kumar' (turcoat), a stark departure from his former reputation as 'Sushasan Babu' (Mr. Good Governance). Kumar's political journey is marked by frequent shifts in alliances. In 2013, he broke from the BJP over Narendra Modi's nomination as prime ministerial candidate, which clashed with his own ambitions. In 2015, Kumar allied with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress, forming the 'Mahagathbandhan' or Grand Alliance, winning the Bihar assembly elections and becoming chief minister again. However, the alliance dissolved in 2017 over corruption charges against his deputy, leading Kumar to re-align with the BJP. This partnership lasted until 2022 when he again parted ways with the BJP, although he retained his CM position with RJD support. Ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Kumar surprisingly re-joined the BJP, maintaining his CM role while holding a significant position in the BJP camp. Similarly, Chandrababu Naidu has had a volatile relationship with the NDA and Narendra Modi. Naidu's strategic alliances have significantly influenced the political landscape of Andhra Pradesh and his national stature. In the early 2000s, Naidu aligned the TDP with the BJP-led NDA, advocating coalition politics. However, his tenure with the NDA under Modi was fraught with tension, especially over the issue of Special Category Status (SCS) for Andhra Pradesh. This status was promised during the state's bifurcation in 2014 to compensate for losing Hyderabad.

Naidu's calls for SCS were unmet by the Modi government, leading to a full-blown political confrontation. In 2018, frustrated by failed negotiations, Naidu and the TDP withdrew from the NDA. His return to the NDA now under more favourable terms highlights a tactical political manoeuvre, demonstrating Naidu's adaptability and influence. Nirmala Sitharaman's budget, through the lens of the CONANDROM index, reveals a strategic allocation of resources aimed at maintaining alliance stability, reflecting the nuanced dynamics of contemporary Indian politics.

War of dominance between Modi and Bhagwat acquires curious shape

By: Arun Srivastava

The battle for dominance between Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya, believed to be the protégé of the Modi-Shah duo, is only the prelude; the 'big fight' is between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat for the 'Hindu Hridaya Samrat' crown, though post Lok Sabha elections it will be intellectual dishonesty to think of Modi as a Hindutva icon. To a vast section of Hindus, Modi turned out to be a rolling stone who gathered no Hindutva moss.

And the RSS top brass is determined to find a replacement for Modi. This, despite Modi's lieutenants going all aggressive. They have declared war against BJP leaders close to the RSS. So much so, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, who till now had given Modi a long rope, has decided that Modi must go. On July 18, Bhagwat observed, while addressing cadres at Gumla in Jharkhand, "that man wants to become Superman, even Bhagwan". He didn't mention Modi by name, but the audience understood.

"Is there ever an end to progress? Development is such a thing that once we reach it, we realise we can go further. When we reach our goal, we see that there is still more to go... man then wants to become a superman... in movies they show Superman who has extraordinary powers. So a human wants to have such power... but he doesn't stop there. He then wants to become a Dev. But Devas say Bhagwan is bigger than us, so then he wants to become Bhagwan," the RSS chief elaborated.

Modi cannot complain. He created his own hell. Modi's "advisers", like Amit Shah and possibly JP Nadda, have made Modi self-delude that he is a "maker of destiny" for crores of Indians. Modi dared to even challenge the RSS. Post-2024 Lok Sabha elections, the chasm between the BJP and RSS has widened and Nadda went to the extent of saying that the BJP doesn't need the RSS. Meanwhile, Modi continues to be consumed by his autocratic hangover, not realizing that he was eroding the relevance of the BJP. Modi's autocratic style will be his political death.

Is it coincidence that the Yogi openly challenged Modi's authority by replacing the chief secretary loyal to Modi with his own favourite, Manoj Singh? NDA leaders Nitish Kumar, Chirag Paswan and Jayant Chaudhary, who are virtually the crutches of Modi, did not mince words when opposing Yogi Adityanath's attempt to arouse communal passions using the Kanwar yatra. The Yogi ordered shopkeepers, vendors, hand-cart hawkers on Kanwar routes to put their names on their shops and carts. It is part of a well-designed plan to snatch the initiative from Modi and present Yogi as the symbol of RSS's Hindutva. The claim that "it was done to avoid confusion" is not tenable. Yogi was desperate enough to use any weapon against Modi.

The RSS wanted to put an end to the raging controversy. RSS joint general-secretary Arun Kumar convened a two-day meeting of senior BJP leaders and ministers to sort out the differences between Modi and Yogi. But the July 20-21 meeting was cancelled after Modi-loyalists leaked the information. "RSS wanted the meeting kept a secret. The Sangh did not want to appear like a peacemaker between BJP leaders blaming each other for the party's dismal show in the Hindi heartland," a senior RSS leader said.

Arun Kumar had asked CM Yogi Adityanath, Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya, Deputy CM No.2 Brajesh Pathak and BJP state president Bhupendra Chaudhary to be at meeting. Yogi Adityanath cancelled all his programmes for the two days but, sensing the mood of RSS leaders, both Yogi and Modi loyalists wanted to skip the meeting, which would have laid bare the failures and fallacies of Modi and his major domo Amit Shah.

The Yogi was even ready with documents and other evidence to prove his case against Modi and Shah. Apparently, the duo was plotting against the Yogi. For public consumption it was said that the meeting had been "postponed" when in reality, the RSS did not want news of the meeting in the public domain. People shouldn't speculate if it favoured one particular

Amrit Brikshya Andolan: A green revolution in Assam



The lush green landscape of Assam is set to undergo a transformative journey with the second edition of the Amrit Brikshya Andolan, as unveiled by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on July 19. Building upon the resounding success of the inaugural event launched on September 17 last year, the upcoming edition promises to surpass previous achievements and further solidify Assam's commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability.

A look back at the inaugural edition

The inaugural edition of the Amrit Brikshya Andolan, launched on September 17, 2023, was a monumental event that left an indelible mark on Assam's environmental efforts. The distribution of saplings began on September 12, and the initiative swiftly gained momentum, culminating in the successful establishment of 10 Guinness World Records. These records not only highlighted the scale of the initiative but also showcased the collective spirit and dedication of the people of Assam.

During the first edition, a staggering 1.12 crore saplings were planted across the state, boasting an impressive survival rate of 90 per cent. The initiative saw widespread participation from various segments of society, including women groups, school children, teachers, tea garden workers, NGOs, and environmentally conscious citizens. The saplings were distributed free of cost by the state Forest Department, ensuring that everyone could contribute to this green revolution.

The second edition: Scaling up for greater impact

Encouraged by the success of the inaugural event, the State Forest Department has significantly ramped up its efforts for the second edition of the Amrit Brikshya Andolan. This year, a staggering 4 crore saplings have been prepared for plantation, demonstrating the state's unwavering commitment to environmental conservation. The initiative is set to take place from August 1 to 15, with the aim of surpassing last year's accomplishments and further promoting sustainability across Assam.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized the importance of the Andolan in fostering a greener and

more sustainable future for Assam. "We aim to build on last year's success and make an even greater impact this year," he said. "The Amrit Brikshya Andolan is a crucial step towards a greener and more sustainable future for our state."

The vision and objectives of Amrit Brikshya Andolan

The Amrit Brikshya Andolan is not just a plantation drive; it is a Jan Andolan, a people's movement, aimed at involving citizens in commercial tree plantation. Its primary objective is to increase Trees Outside Forest (ToF) areas, thereby giving a significant boost to the state's green economy and the Agroforestry Sector. By promoting commercial tree plantation, fostering sustainable practices, and enhancing Assam's green cover, the initiative seeks to create a ripple effect that will benefit the environment, the economy, and the society at large.

The plantation drive aims to augment tree cover outside the forest, thereby promoting the 'Tree Economy' in the state. This is a significant step towards enhancing the availability of raw materials to wood-based industries, attracting investment in the wood-based industry sector, and creating new employment opportunities for the people of Assam.

Achievements of Amrit Brikshya Andolan-2023

The achievements of the Amrit Brikshya Andolan in 2023 are a testament to the overwhelming response and active participation of the people of Assam. The programme, implemented through the 'Jan Bhagidaari' model, saw over 48 lakh beneficiaries registering themselves through the mobile app. After planting the seedlings, participants uploaded geotagged and time-stamped pictures of the planted seedlings on the portal, ensuring transparency and accountability.

The detailed achievements in terms of registrations and seedlings planted are as follows:

Category	Total Registrations	Total Seedlings Planted
1. SHG Members	38,77,610	77,55,220
2. ASHA Workers	23,256	46,512
3. Anganwadi Workers	77,627	1,55,254
4. Educational Institutions	1,53,973	7,90,000
5. Police Department	3,94,915	7,89,830
6. Tea Gardens	12,434	8,00,000
7. Govt. Offices	10,00,000	
8. Others	3,11,598	6,23,196
Total	48,51,413	1,19,60,012

The remarkable participation resulted in the creation of 10 Guinness World Records, which included:

1. **Longest line of potted saplings:** Achieved on September 9, 2023, at Veterinary College Ground, Guwahati,

with 3,22,444 saplings covering 22.22 km.

2. **Largest donation of saplings in 24 hours:** Achieved on September 10, 2023, at Veterinary College Ground, Guwahati, with 3,22,444 saplings.

3. **Most viewers of an environmental sustainability lesson livestream on YouTube:** Achieved on September 11, 2023, with 70,490 viewers.

4. **Most trees planted by a team in 24 hours:** Achieved on September 13-14, 2023, at Feranga Camp, Bhaibrakunda, with 9,21,730 trees.

5. **Most trees planted by a team in one hour:** Achieved on September 15, 2023, at Abhoypur Village, with 3,31,929 trees.

6. **Largest potted sapling mosaic (image):** Achieved on September 16, 2023, in Margarita, Tinsukia District, with an area of 8563.01 sq m.

7. **Most people planting trees simultaneously:** Achieved on September 17, 2023, in Sivasagar District, with 1,229 people.

8. **Largest online photo album of people planting trees:** Achieved on September 17, 2023, with 55,29,904 photos uploaded.

9. **Most pledges received for an environmental sustainability campaign in one month:** Achieved between September 10-21, 2023, with 47,28,898 pledges.

10. **Most pledges received for an environmental sustainability campaign:** Achieved between September 10-21, 2023, with 47,28,898 pledges.

The road ahead: Amrit Brikshya

Andolan-2024

The Amrit Brikshya Andolan 2024 is set to continue the momentum with a well-structured timeline to ensure the smooth execution of the plantation drive:

• **July 15 - 29, 2024:** Seedling dispatch from Forest Nurseries to Stocking Points.

• **July 28 - August 12, 2024:** Seedling dispatch from Forest Nurseries/Stocking Points to Distribution Points.

• **August 1 - 12, 2024:** Collection of seedlings by beneficiaries from Distribution Points.

• **August 1 - 15, 2024:** Seedling plantation by the beneficiaries.

• **August 1 - 15, 2024:** Photo uploading on the portal.

In addition to the Amrit Brikshya Andolan, the Government of Assam is also promoting the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on World Environment Day 2024. This campaign encourages citizens to plant a tree in honor of their mothers, further embedding the values of respect and care for nature within the community.

The Amrit Brikshya Andolan stands as a beacon of hope and a model for environmental initiatives. It not only enhances Assam's green cover but also fosters a sense of community, responsibility, and pride among its citizens. As the state gears up for the second edition, the vision of a greener and more sustainable Assam is not just a dream but a rapidly approaching reality. (The writer can be reached at dipakurmigpltd@gmail.com)

RBI's record dividend payment to the govt for 2023-24 was under pressure?

By: Arun Kumar

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to pay a record dividend of ₹ 2.11 lakh crore to the Union government for 2023-24. Last year it paid ₹ 87,416 crore.

This is 0.64 percent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and helps the Union government reduce its budgeted fiscal deficit of 5.1 percent in 2024-25 by about 0.37 percent of the GDP, with other things remaining the same. The financial markets welcomed the news of the record dividends since it implies that the government will borrow less from the market.

The previous highest dividend was in 2018-19 when RBI declared a dividend of ₹ 1.76 lakh crore. The issue was contentious then too. The Union government wanted a large transfer to check its growing fiscal deficit and was putting pressure on RBI for it.

The matter was settled when the then RBI governor Urjit Patel prematurely resigned in December 2018 and RBI adopted the Bimal Jalan Committee Report on the Economic Capital Framework (ECF), which defined the safe levels of reserves required to be held by RBI (5.5 percent to 6.5 percent of the balance sheet size).

Officials have argued that the current large transfer is within this framework. The Opposition has not challenged this large transfer since it came during the ongoing general elections when the attention was focused on other critical political matters.

How does RBI, a Central bank, generate a surplus? It is not a usual economic entity, producing normal goods and services for a profit. It gets currency printed and circulated in the economy to enable transactions to take place.

This is a unique role in the economy. It is mandated to control inflation which is taken to be a monetary phenomenon. For this purpose, it sets interest rates in the economy to impact demand and decide on the amount of money available in the economy.

Further, it is a banker to the government, managing its accounts. It also acts to provide stability to highly volatile financial markets that are often buffeted by internal and external shocks and changes.

To perform these tasks, it acts like a financial institution that lends to banks and takes deposits from them. It is called a lender of last resort. To stabilise the money supply, banks have to hold a 'cash reserve ratio' (CRR) with RBI.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

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Heatwaves are killing India's fruit bats, crucial to pollination and seed dispersal

By: Shuchita Jha

Hundreds of Indian flying foxes (*Pteropus medius* formerly *Pteropus giganteus*), large fruit-eating bats, dropped dead in droves in the northern states of India due to intense heatwaves. In Rajasthan, where temperatures soared over 45 degrees Celsius in May, there were multiple mass deaths, with 400 in one case, and 300 in another.

"They died as all water bodies near their roosts had dried up and they could not drench themselves in water to cool off," said Dau Lal Bohra, a wildlife researcher and head of the Department of Zoology at Seth Gyaniram Bansidhar Podar College in Rajasthan. Municipal authorities sprinkled water near their roosts to provide some respite but the damage had already been done, Bohra said.

Bat deaths were also reported in Jharkhand, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh over the last month. While a number of flying foxes had died in the heatwaves last year, their numbers were in the dozens, unlike this year.

This particular bat species is found only in South Asia, and plays a vital ecological role as a pollinator, and the dispersal of seeds. Until recently, though, it has attracted little research interest. It is listed as being of "least concern" in the IUCN Red List, which means that although its population is declining, it is still plentiful in the wild.

There are no exact numbers available, but conflicts with fruit growers led to a culling of the flying fox in the Maldives, leading to 80% of the population being wiped out. More worryingly, heatwaves seem to be connected to the local extinction of the species in southern Pakistan, which borders northern India.

Vulnerable to heat

C. Srinivasulu, professor of zoology and director at the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Studies at Osmania University in Hyderabad, said that extreme weather fluctuations have also led to mass bat deaths in Australia. In 2014, as Australia experienced one of its hottest summers, about 23,000 spectacled flying foxes — a related species — dropped dead.

Baheerathan Murugavel, research associate at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Mohali, said that Indian flying foxes spend the day hanging in open tree branches, thus exposed to bright sunlight, making them vulnerable to high temperatures.

But in India, there are few studies

to estimate the impact of heatwaves on bat populations. One such study reporting mass mortality due to a heatwave in West Bengal was done in 2010.

Sumit Dookia, assistant professor at the University School of Environmental Science, GGS Indraprastha University in New Delhi said that summer months are the calving season for these bats, which adds to the problem.

"These bats only have one pup a year, meaning that if these babies die due to heat with the mothers, the survival of the population will be at stake if no efforts are made to protect them," he said.

Ecological losses, zoonotic diseases

Indian flying foxes play an important part in seed dispersal, providing a key ecosystem service. When seeds pass through the guts of these mammals, the acid in the gut dissolves the outer layer of the seeds, increasing their chances of germination.

A report on sustainable management of forests through ecosystem services of bats states that bat-dispersed seeds affect the natural recolonisation of the lost population of plant species as well as the propagation of many endemic trees that sustain other endangered fauna.

Srinivasulu told Dialogue Earth, "Though there are no scientific studies on this in India, [but our observations] have shown that in the places where fruit bat colonies have disappeared, regeneration of trees has gone down. We have around 200 species of trees in India that are dependent on bats for pollination," he said.

"In a local ecosystem around 18 to 20% of plant species are night-blooming, and of these around 50% are dependent on bats for pollination. This means that if fruit bats disappear, the ecological losses will be huge."

He added that fruit bats and plants dependent on them for pollination evolved together. The plants have wider funnels for the bats to drink nectar. As the bats drink, pollen from the plants gets stuck to their wide wings, and is then dispersed when the bats fly off, pollinating the area. If bats are lost, many of these plant species will be lost too.

Plants used in textiles, foods and medicine, like silk cotton tree (semal), bitter bean, cashew nut, and mahua are examples of a few bat-pollinated plant species in India. The economic benefits drawn from these plants are huge and spread across several sectors.

"Indian flying foxes can carry

seeds to more than 100 kilometres... and the decline in these bat numbers will directly affect the ecosystem services we get from them. But unfortunately, we do not have much research in India to quantify the losses," Murugavel explains.

Another concern is that, if the bat population falls steeply, there could be a spillover of diseases from them to humans. The Covid-19 pandemic was, according to some sources, linked to a virus found in bats. Srinivasulu said, "When we disrupt bats' habitats their stress mounts, rendering viruses more virulent. This stress-induced virulence can lead to the proliferation of viruses from one host to another, underscoring bats' potential to disseminate zoonotic diseases."

He added, "Every living organism, including humans, is a potential zoonotic vector. Some organisms harbour higher viral loads than others, while some, like bats, possess such robust immunity that pathogens have minimal impact on them."

Nonetheless, he suggested that emphasising the risk of zoonotic diseases may be counterproductive, as misinformation about the large bats has already sparked unnecessary fears, leading to indiscriminate bat killings.

Stigma hinders conservation

Up until the latest amendment of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the Indian flying foxes were listed under Schedule V of the Act, as vermin — making their killing acceptable — because they feed on fruit-bearing trees. The caretakers and owners of such orchards considered such feeding as damage to their crops. Indian flying foxes, though, were moved to Schedule II, which has severe penalties for killing animals in its list, from Schedule V, after the latest amendment of the Act in 2022.

But the bats are suffering also as part of the overall degradation of ecosystems. A study from Haryana shows that these bats prefer tall trees with broad canopies, but such tree cover is becoming harder to find. According to Global Forest Watch lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover from 2001 to 2023.

"Linear infrastructure development impacts these bat colonies as they roost for 50 to 60 years on the same trees. As urban areas expand laterally these bats will lose their suitable habitats. As per our estimates, around 80% of the Indian flying fox colonies currently known to us in India will be lost in the next 30 years," added Srinivasulu. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Unequal cities cannot be climate just: Urgent steps needed to curb climate impacts in Indian cities

By: Debabrat Patra & Sourish Bose

The first few days of the monsoon have seen Indian cities inundated by heavy downpours. However, the worst affected are slum dwellers who invariably reside in low-lying areas with minimal drainage and sewerage facilities. While affluent gated communities can swiftly pump out the water, slum dwellers must endure it until the water subsides or the government intervenes.

Just days ago, these same cities reeled under an intense heatwave, which claimed over 100 lives and caused an estimated 40,000 suspected heatstroke cases in India, primarily impacting urban informal workers. This erratic and extreme weather has become a regular occurrence and scientists warn it will only intensify in the future.

This necessitates an urgent overhaul of urban planning that addresses both inequality and climate change.

Context of Indian cities with a focus on Bhubaneswar
India's slum population, according to the 2011 census data, is a staggering 65 million. Three states — Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal — house a third of the slum population, at 28.4 million. Even smaller states like Odisha have over 1.5 million slum dwellers, with a city like Bhubaneswar having over 436 slums.

It is this slum population that endures abysmal conditions, with minimal access to water, drainage, and proper housing. They are also disproportionately impacted by climate-related disasters like heatwaves and flooding. With the arrival of the monsoons, their situation worsens as water inundates their homes, disrupting their livelihoods. Needless to say, such adverse events trigger numerous health problems, adding to their existing struggles.

"The drain beside our slum is a breeding ground for waterborne diseases and mosquitoes," said Nandini Khurti, a resident of Tuhtut, a slum located near a large drain in Bhubaneswar. "All year round, someone from our slum suffers from malaria or dengue. Regular fevers, coughs, and colds are commonplace in every household. During the rainy season, prolonged exposure to dirty water leads to skin diseases amongst many of us."

It is in these settlements that climate-resilient planning is essential to achieve urban climate justice for these communities who contribute the least to pollution and are often referred to as the city's backbone, providing cheap and accessible labour to the urban population.

Contradictions in urban infrastructure: Gated communities vs. slums

Even so-called planned cities like Chandigarh, Bhubaneswar, and Delhi have not factored informal settlements, including slums and homeless populations, into their initial planning stages. These very communities are the ones who built these cities.

While everyone is affected by climate change, the brunt of floods, cyclones, heatwaves, and cold waves is borne by the urban poor. The infrastructure has not kept pace with their population growth, even though they have become politically significant due to their voting power.

Contradictions in basic facilities: City builders vs. other city dwellers

Time and again, slum dwellers have demanded decent wages, safety regulations, social security benefits, skill development programmes, formal employment opportunities, enforcement of labour laws, and decent living conditions to enable them to continue serving the city and earn a living. The situation has shown gradual improvement, but much more needs to be done to keep pace with rapid climate change.

"We've been living in this slum since 1997," said Dali Sahoo, a 55-year-old resident of Panitanki slum in

Bhubaneswar. "Earlier, when the area was relatively empty, we never had waterlogging problems. But with new apartment buildings and hospitals coming up, waterlogging has become even worse. Being a low-lying area, rainwater seeps into my house, sometimes up to waist-deep for one to two days until the water is pumped out. We have yet to be provided with a pucca house [permanent house] as promised under the Jaga Mission."

City flooding has become a regular occurrence, highlighting the need to assess drainage, sewerage, and drinking water during the monsoon season. Livelihood loss is also highest during monsoons and disasters like cyclones that destroy homes. During Cyclone Fani, the entire city of Bhubaneswar came to a standstill. Slum houses were ripped apart, and there was no subsequent compensation for the damage. This indicates a failure to learn from the devastation of the 1999 super cyclone that ravaged Bhubaneswar.

The path forward

The most pressing need to tackle climate injustice and inequality in cities is to involve local leaders and establish a participatory approach to urban planning. The communities that build our cities and enable a good quality of life for city dwellers deserve respect and involvement. No successful city planning strategy can be developed without the significant participation of slum communities in each city. Without these participatory processes, inequality and urban climate disasters are likely to worsen in the future.

Visiting individual slums and interacting with residents will reveal low-cost solutions to many problems. Infrastructure improvements like drainage and sewerage can be done in consultation with slum dwellers. Some infrastructure, such as flood/cyclone shelters or homeless shelters, could be planned for the grounds of government schools or other multi-use open spaces.

Regarding individual housing, while some slum dwellers in Bhubaneswar have pucca houses, others have land rights certificates that are not legal patta (registered deeds).

One innovative programme in Odisha is the Aahaar scheme, launched in 2015 across five municipal corporations including Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Rourkela, and Berhampur. This scheme provides subsidised meals to those in need in urban areas. Such programmes should be continued, as they help the urban poor maintain their nutrition while they work hard.

Similarly, the urban employment guarantee scheme should be reintroduced to support the urban poor during lean seasons, like the monsoon. This scheme could be creatively used to clean drains and assist local authorities during this period.

Human settlement in the world's riskiest flood zones increased 122% since 1985

The government health infrastructure also needs to be revamped to better serve slum dwellers, who require it the most due to the unhygienic conditions they often live in. Finally, children should have access to good, affordable government schools. They also need support to complete their studies and find employment. New skill-building courses can empower them to break free from the cycle of poverty. Government scholarships for wards of those with labour cards through the Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board are a great benefit, but this needs to be extended to the entire slum population.

In conclusion, unequal cities cannot achieve urban climate justice. The urban poor are the ones who build and enable the growth of cities. By involving them in planning, we can create habitable, climate-resilient cities that are prepared to face the increasing intensity of climate change. (Courtesy: Down To Earth)

It's not just us: Other animals change their social habits in old age

By: Tim Vermimmen

Walnut was born on June 3, 1995, at the start of what would become an unusually hot summer, on an island called Rum (pronounced rum), the largest of the Small Isles off the west coast of Scotland. We know this because since 1974, researchers have diligently recorded the births of red deer like her, and caught, weighed and marked every calf they could get their hands on — about 9 out of every 10.

Near the cottage in Kilmory on the eastern side of the island where the researchers are based, there has been no hunting since the project began, which allowed the deer to relax and get used to human observers. Walnut was a regular there, grazing the invariably short-clipped grass in this popular spot. "She would always just be there in the group, with her sisters and their families," says biologist Alison Morris, who has lived on Rum for more than 23 years and studies the deer year-round.

Walnut raised 14 offspring, the last one in 2013 when she was 18 years old. In her later years, Morris recalls, Walnut would spend most of her time away from the herd, usually with Vanity, another female (called a hind) of the same age who had never calved. "They were often seen affectionately grooming each other, and after Walnut died of old age in October 2016, at the age of 21 — quite extraordinary for a hind — Vanity spent most of her time alone. She died two years later, at the grand age of 23."

Are old hinds left behind?

Such a shift in social life is common in ageing red deer females, says ecologist Gregory Albery, now at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, who spent months on the island studying the deer during his PhD training. (Males roam around more and associate less consistently with others, so they are harder to study.) "Older females tend to be observed in the company of fewer others. That was easy to establish," he says. "The more difficult question to answer has been why we are seeing this pattern, and what it means."

The first question one should ask, Albery says, is whether individual deer alter their behaviour to associate with fewer others as they age, or whether individuals that associate with fewer others tend to live to an older age. This is the kind of question that many researchers are unable to answer when simply comparing individuals of different ages. But long-term studies like the one at Rum can do so through long-term tracking of populations. Forty times a year, the deer are censused by fieldworkers like Morris who recognize the deer on sight and meticulously note where they are and with

whom.

When they accounted for the age and survival of the deer in their analysis, Albery and colleagues found that the link between age and number of associates remained solid: Social connections do, indeed, decrease as individuals age. Might this be because many of the older deer's friends have died? On the contrary, Albery and colleagues found that older deer who had recently lost friends tended to hang out with others more often.

So why do old hinds have fewer contacts? Part of the explanation may be that they don't range as widely as they grow older. Studying the deer for a couple of months would not have exposed this trend, says Albery: It was only revealed by tracking the same individuals through time. "Deer with a larger home range generally live longer," he explains, so an analysis at any single point in time would show larger ranges for older deer and suggest that home ranges expand with age. Tracking individuals through time reveals the opposite is true. "Their home ranges decrease in size as they age," Albery says.

It is unlikely that older deer move around less because they are concentrating on the core of their favorite habitat, says Albery. The center of their range shifts with age, and they are observed more often in taller and probably less nutritious vegetation, away from the most popular spots. This indicates there might be some kind of competitive exclusion going on: Perhaps more energetic, younger deer with offspring to feed are colonizing the best grazing patches.

On the other hand, older deer may also have different preferences. "Perhaps the longer grasses are easier to eat when your incisors are too worn to clip the short grass everyone else is after," Albery says. Plus the deer don't have to bend over as far to reach the longer grass.

A recent study by Albery and colleagues in Nature Ecology & Evolution found that older deer reduce their contacts more than you'd expect if their shrinking range was the only cause. That suggests the behaviour may have evolved for a reason — one that Albery procausally summarizes as, "Deer shit where they eat."

Gastrointestinal worms are rampant on the island. And though the deer do not get infected through direct contact with others, being at the same place at the same time probably does increase their risk of ingesting eggs or larvae in the still-warm droppings of one of their associates. "Younger animals need to put themselves out there to make friends, but perhaps when you're older and you already have some, the risk of disease just isn't worth it," says study coauthor Josh Firth, a behavioural ecologist at the University of Oxford.

In addition, says ecologist Daniel Nussey of the University of Edinburgh, another coauthor, "there are indications that the immune system of ageing deer is less effective in suppressing worm infections, so they might be more likely to die from them."

Bad news for old ewes?

This was the case in another study Nussey was involved in, on a remote island called Hirta, about 100 miles to the northwest of Rum, where the hardy Soay sheep flock on the hillsides of Village Bay. Founded and run by some of the same people who started the Rum Red Deer Project, the St Kilda Soay Sheep Project has tracked the lives of the sheep since 1985. Unlike the deer, the sheep are caught once a year, which allows the researchers to take blood samples to monitor their health.

In the blood, Nussey and colleagues identified an antibody that helps the sheep's immune systems resist the brown stomach worm *Teladorsagia circumcincta*. Higher blood levels of the antibody predict a higher chance of surviving winter, they found, and as animals age, the levels of the antibodies decline. "This doesn't mean the decline is causing the increased risk of death," Nussey specifies, "but there clearly is an association." Just as it seems for the deer, it might make sense for older sheep to keep a bit of distance from the others.

Though there are few published data yet on how social networks change in ageing sheep, one study did reveal that female sheep, like female deer, reduce the size of the area in which they roam. (Unlike the deer, older sheep are found in higher-quality vegetation, with the possible exception of the final year of their lives, when they might be pushed off of it.) This probably has the effect of limiting their contacts. But why would older sheep — or older deer — be unaware as they are of the infection risk, reduce their range?

Perhaps, given the physical decline that most ageing humans can probably relate to, and the potentially higher burdens of parasitic worms, the older sheep just don't feel so well. This might cause them to lag behind, move around less, and avoid others to stay out of trouble. "This is a behavioural tendency that also occurs in young animals when ill," says Nussey. "But older animals may feel this way more often."

If this can explain the patterns the researchers have observed, it would solve a problem that has long occupied Nussey: the "selection shadow." This refers to the well-established fact that natural selection does not operate as strongly in later life, since animals of that age have done their reproducing and

rearing and there isn't much fitness to be gained anymore. If elderly animals are just doing what their kind does when they don't feel well, their changing behaviour wouldn't require an explanation involving evolutionary adaptations specific to old age.

The first step to finding out what's really going on will be to study how social life changes in the Soay sheep. If a recent application for a research grant is successful, Nussey will collaborate on this with Erin Siracusa, a behavioural ecologist at the University of Exeter in England who has already been studying elderly social networks on the other side of the Atlantic, on the island of Cayo Santiago less than a mile east of Puerto Rico.

Who's grooming grandma?

In 1938, scientists released 409 rhesus macaques imported from India on this tiny, uninhabited island. The intention was to observe this species, which is important for medical research, in a more natural setting. The descendants of this population — there are about 1,800 today — have been studied there ever since, so the researchers know how old they are, whom they're related to, and with whom they often hang out.

Unlike sheep and deer, macaques dedicate much of the day to affiliating with one another. "They spend upwards of 20 per cent of their time engaged in cooperative behaviours like grooming," says behavioural ecologist Lauren Brent, also of the University of Exeter. Grooming helps to keep skin and fur healthy and clean and removes parasites, but it probably also just feels nice, and is therefore a great way to initiate and maintain friendships. These are important in this strongly hierarchical society, to avoid being attacked or mistreated.

Older females groom and are groomed just as often as younger animals are, Brent and Siracusa have calculated, but they do become more selective. "They're really shrinking the size of their social networks as they age," says Siracusa. "They tend to focus more on kin and on partners they've long had strong relationships with." And just as Albery found for the red deer, this isn't because older macaques have lost more friends or because macaques with fewer friends live longer. "On the contrary," says Brent. "Macaques that are less socially connected are more likely to die."

Perhaps, again, grooming with fewer others is a way for older and weaker animals that aren't feeling too well to reduce their chance of catching infections. It might be safer in other ways, too. "Macaques can really hurt each other," says Siracusa, "and older animals' wounds don't heal quite as well. Staying close with friends while avoiding others helps to avoid injuries."

After Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017, destroying nearly two-thirds of the vegetation, the macaques gained another reason to make friends, as shade became rare and proximity unavoidable. A new study by Brent and colleagues recently published in Science shows that after the hurricane, socially connected macaques were more likely to survive. Tolerance went up, even outside the shade, while aggression fell.

The Cayo Santiago work also revealed another interesting trend. Macaques that are lower in the social hierarchy lose friends faster as they age, and they are more often injured, while dominant ones maintain their positions and live longer. "You can be an elderly, infirm, hunchbacked, crusty-looking old rhesus macaque — and also the alpha female," says Brent.

This is eerily reminiscent of human societies, in which lower socioeconomic status — lower income, poorer living conditions, fewer connections and opportunities — is often associated with lower life expectancy.

Brent and Siracusa don't think it's appropriate to draw lessons from macaques, or red deer, or Soay sheep, and apply them to humans directly — there are obviously many differences between the species. But Brent does think there is a cautionary tale in these studies of ageing animals for medical scientists who conduct studies comparing the health of people of different ages rather than tracking many individuals to find out how they change over time. The former, says Brent, "might suggest interventions that aren't really helpful."

One example may be the focus today on loneliness in late life, which is inspired by studies showing that people with fewer social connections tend to have more health issues. "There may be other reasons why people have fewer friends and also poor health," says Brent, "and we may need more inspired solutions to improve their wellbeing than programs targeting loneliness itself. Plus, as we have learned in the pandemic, increasing people's number of social contacts is not without risk."

This is not to say, of course, that positive social contacts can no longer brighten the days in our twilight years. Like other animals, when we're young and healthy and natural selection is in full force, we are eager to make friends and find a mate even if that comes at a cost. Then, when we get older and enter the selection shadow, we can afford to be choosier and shrink our social networks to the size of our comfort zone. With little fitness left to gain, evolved adaptations may no longer be helping us. But close friends and family certainly can. (Courtesy: The Wire)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also is to meet with Biden and Harris on Thursday, and Trump at Mar-a-Lago on Friday

Netanyahu looks to boost US support in speech to Congress, but faces protests and lawmaker boycotts

WASHINGTON, July 24: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks before Congress on Wednesday in hopes of bolstering US support for continuing Israel's fight against Hamas and other adversaries, even as the Biden administration is urging him to focus on closing a deal ending the devastating nine-month war in Gaza.

Netanyahu is assured a warm welcome from Republican lawmakers who arranged his speech in the House chamber, an appearance making him the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress four times, surpassing Winston Churchill.

But many Democrats and independents plan to boycott his appearance. The most notable absences will be behind Netanyahu as Vice President Kamala Harris, who serves as president of the Senate and traditionally would sit behind whatever dignitary is speaking, says a long-scheduled trip will keep her away. The next Democrat in line, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, is declining to attend.

Republicans targeted the ab-

sence of Harris — the new Democratic front-runner for the presidency — as a sign of disloyalty to an ally. But Donald Trump's running-mate, JD Vance, said campaigning would also make him a no-show for the Israeli leader's speech.

And outside the Capitol, demonstrators angry over the deaths of nearly 40,000 Palestinians, or over Netanyahu's inability to free Israeli and American hostages, are promising massive protests.

In anticipation, House Speaker Mike Johnson warned of a "zero-tolerance policy" for any signs of disturbances in the Capitol building. "It is our tradition to acknowledge every guest speaker's right to free expression even if we disagree with their viewpoint," the Louisiana Republican wrote to members Tuesday.

Johnson arranged the address, an honour that marks both the two countries' historically warm bonds and the political weight that support for Israel has long carried in US politics. But the attention for the visit has been diminished some by American



political turmoil of recent weeks, including the assassination attempt against Trump and President Joe Biden's decision not to seek another term.

Netanyahu hopes to project the image of a tough, respected statesman for an increasingly critical domestic audience back home in Israel. That may be difficult given the wide division among Americans over Netanyahu's conduct of the war.

Many Democrats who support Israel but have been critical of Netanyahu see the address as a Republican effort to cast itself as the party most loyal to Israel and to provide the prime minister with a much-needed political reprieve.

"I don't know all the motiva-

tions for Speaker Johnson initiating the invitation but clearly he wanted to throw a political lifeline to Netanyahu whose popularity is very low in Israel right now," Sen. Chris Van Hollen, among the dozens of Democrats set to boycott, said Tuesday.

Netanyahu also is to meet with Biden and Harris on Thursday, and Trump at Mar-a-Lago on Friday.

The United States is Israel's most important ally, arms supplier and source of military aid as Israel battles to break Hamas since the group attacked Israel on October 7. Netanyahu's visit is his first abroad since the war started, and comes under the shadow of arrest warrants sought against him by the International

Criminal Court over alleged Israel war crimes against Palestinians. The United States does not recognise the ICC.

Netanyahu says his aims for the US visit are to press for freeing hostages held by Hamas and other militants in Gaza, to build support for continuing Israel's battle against the group, and to argue for continuing to confront Hezbollah in Lebanon and other Iranian-allied groups in the region. The US, France and others are seeking to calm border fighting between Hezbollah and Israel, fearing a larger war.

Netanyahu in his speech also may address a new China-brokered deal between Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah to form a government together. The agreement was an attempt to resolve a rivalry that could make it even harder for Palestinians to secure a role governing Gaza whenever the war ends. Israel immediately denounced the pact, and State Department spokesman Matthew Miller called Hamas a terror group that should have no role in governing Palestinians. (AP)

Ukraine's foreign min seeking 'common ground' with China in talks on ending war with Russia

BEIJING, July 24: Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has said he is seeking "common ground" in talks this week with his Chinese counterpart on ending his country's war with Russia.

Kuleba met Wednesday with Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Guangzhou, a major commercial and manufacturing center in southern China. It is the first visit to the country by a Ukrainian foreign minister since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has strained Ukraine's relations with China.

"I am convinced that a just peace in Ukraine is in China's strategic interests, and China's role as a global force for peace is important," Kuleba said in opening remarks.

China has close ties with Russia and has pushed for an end to the war that would take into account the interests of both sides. That position has put it at odds not only with Ukraine but also Western European countries and the United States, which are demanding a Russian withdrawal as the basis for any settlement.

China did not participate in a peace conference in Switzerland last month that did not include Russia.

Kuleba was expected to lobby Chinese officials to attend another peace conference planned for sometime before the American presidential election in early November. His visit reflects a calculation that any peace deal favorable to Ukraine would likely be a non-starter without China on board. Chinese officials maintained that the two countries have friendly

and cooperative relations. Noting the growth in trade between them, Wang said in his opening remarks that ties have continued to develop normally "despite complex and ever-changing international and regional situations."

Kuleba arrived in China on Tuesday and is scheduled to depart on Friday. In a video posted late Tuesday on his social media accounts, Kuleba said he would have extensive negotiations to look for common ground in the pursuit of peace in Ukraine.

"We need to move to a just and stable peace," he said, according to a translation posted by Euromaiden Press, an English-language news site on Ukraine. "China can play a significant role in this. Let's go."

His visit follows a rare public rebuke of China by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in June. Zelenskyy accused China of helping Russia block countries from participating in the Swiss peace conference. China denied pressuring others.

It was the first time Zelenskyy had departed from careful attempts to court Beijing away from its strong relationship with Moscow.

China published a separate six-point peace plan with Brazil ahead of the conference. The move and the timing likely angered Ukrainian officials who were in the midst of seeking support for their peace proposal.

"We must avoid the competition of peace plans," Kuleba said in his social media video this week. (AP)

Bangladesh crawls back to normalcy after violent clashes that killed nearly 200 people



DHAKA, July 24: Bangladesh was crawling back to normalcy with limited internet and office hours on Wednesday after more than a week of chaos over student protests involving government job quotas. Nearly 200 deaths were reported in just over a week of violence.

Most of the country remained without internet, but thousands of cars were on the streets of the capital after authorities relaxed a curfew for seven hours.

Offices and banks opened for a few hours Wednesday while authorities restored broadband internet in some areas in Dhaka and the second-largest city of Chattogram. Since July 16, at least 197 people have been killed in violence, the leading Bengali-language Prothom Alo daily reported

Wednesday. The Associated Press could not confirm the death toll from any official sources.

Schools and other educational institutions have remained shut until further notice.

Clashes have occurred since July 15 between the police and mainly student protesters demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971.

The chaos became deadly after the country's main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and right wing Jamaat-e-Islami party extended their support to the protests. While violence spread across the country, many government establishments were also under attack in Dhaka.

On Sunday, the Supreme Court ordered that 1971 war veterans' quota to be cut to 5 per cent. Thus, 93 per cent of civil service jobs will be merit-based while the remaining 2 per cent reserved for members of ethnic minorities as well as transgender and disabled people. On Tuesday, the government issued a circular, accepting

a Supreme Court verdict that reformed the quota system for the government jobs. The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina welcomed the verdict and said it was ready to implement the verdict.

The protesters took time to respond to Sunday's verdict, and on Tuesday they said that the Supreme Court verdict and the subsequent government circular were in favour of the protesters, but the government should answer for the bloodshed and deaths involving the protests.

The protests have posed the most serious challenge to Bangladesh's government since Hasina won a fourth consecutive term in January elections that the main opposition groups boycotted. Universities have been closed, the internet has been shut off and the government has ordered people to stay at home.

Protesters had argued the quota system was discriminatory and benefited supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, and wanted it replaced by a merit-based system. (AP)

Germany bans group accused of Iran links and Hezbollah support, carries out raids

BERLIN, July 24: The German government on Wednesday banned a Hamburg-based organisation accused of promoting the Iranian leadership's ideology and supporting Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, as police raided 53 properties around the country.

The ban on the Islamic Centre Hamburg, or IZH, and its various sub-organisations elsewhere in Germany followed searches in November. Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said material gathered in the investigation "confirmed the serious suspicions to such a degree that we ordered the ban today."

The IZH "promotes an Islamist-extremist, totalitarian ideology in Germany," while it and its sub-organisations "also support the terrorists of Hezbollah and spread aggressive antisemitism," Faeser said in a statement. Her ministry alleged that "as the direct representative of Iran's Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution," the IZH disseminates "the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in an aggressive and militant way and seeks to bring about such a revolution in the Federal Republic of Germany." (AP)

Democrats hope Harris' bluntness on abortion will translate to 2024 wins in Congress, White House

WASHINGTON, July 24: President Joe Biden might not often use the word "abortion" when he talks about the overturning of Roe v. Wade, but Vice President Kamala Harris sure does. She's also toured a Planned Parenthood clinic where the procedure is performed, and routinely links the fall of Roe to the larger issue of rising maternal mortality nationwide.

Now that Harris is running for president in place of Biden, Democrats and advocates for reproductive rights are hoping that her bluntness on abortion — coupled with the administration's policies — will help sway voters to deliver them not just the White House

fighting for reproductive health issues, especially Black maternal health.

"We who believe in reproductive freedom will stop Donald Trump's extreme abortion bans, because we trust women to make decisions about their own bodies and not have their government tell them what to do," she said to loud cheers at a Wisconsin rally.

The Supreme Court on June 24, 2022, overturned abortion rights that had been in place since 1973. Since then, roughly half the states have put some sort of ban in place.

The consequences of these bans go far beyond restricting

Trash dropped by a North Korean balloon falls on South Korea's presidential compound

SEOUL, July 24: Trash from at least one North Korean balloon fell on the South Korean presidential compound on Wednesday, raising worries about the security of key South Korean facilities from North Korean provocations.

The rubbish that fell on the ground at the compound in central Seoul contained no dangerous material and no one was hurt, South Korea's presidential security service said in a statement. But experts say South Korea needs to shoot incoming North Korean balloons at border areas next time, as it's not clear whether North Korea would put in hazardous items in future campaigns.

North Korea's latest balloon launches came days after South Korea boosted its frontline broadcasts of K-pop songs and propaganda messages across the rivals' heavily armed border. Their tit-for-tat Cold War-style campaigns are inflaming tensions, with the rivals threatening stronger steps and warning of grave consequences.

Seoul officials earlier said North Korea had used the direction of winds to fly balloons toward South Korea, but some of the past balloons had timers that were likely meant to pop the bags of trash midair. The security service gave no further details about the rubbish found at the presidential compound, like whether balloons were discovered along with the trash.

If North Korea is found to have used timers or any other device to deliberately dump trash on key South Korean facilities like the presidential office, it would certainly invite strong response by South Korea.

But experts say dropping balloons at ground targets is extremely sophisticated technology and that North Korea would certainly lack such an ability.

The security service refused to disclose whether President Yoon Suk Yeol was in the office at the time. Yoon's office earlier said he has no official schedule on Wednesday.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier Wednesday that North Korean balloons were flying north of Seoul after crossing the border and had urged people to be alert for falling objects.

It was North Korea's 10th such launch since late May. The more than 2,000 huge balloons so far have dropped wastepaper, scraps of cloth, cigarette butts and even manure on South Korea. North Korea has said it was responding to South Korean activists scattering political leaflets across the border via their own balloons. (AP)

Taiwan prepares for a strong typhoon that worsened monsoon rains in the Philippines, killing 13

TAIPEI, July 24: Taiwan shuttered offices, schools and tourist sites across the island on Wednesday ahead of a powerful typhoon that already worsened seasonal rains in the Philippines, killed at least 13 people and displaced 600,000.

Typhoon Gaemi's outer skirt was bringing heavy rain to much of Taiwan, where a direct landfall was expected Wednesday evening in the northern county of Yilan. Fishing boats were recalled to port amid turbulent seas, while air travellers were rushing to board overseas flights before the storm arrives, amid numerous cancellations.

On Wednesday morning, the typhoon was east of Taiwan moving at 18 kilometres per hour with maximum sustained wind speeds of 183 kilometres per hour, the Central Weather Administration said. In the capital Taipei, heavy rain was falling, but high winds had not yet arrived.

Gaemi, which was called Carina in the Philippines, did not make landfall in the archipelago but enhanced its seasonal monsoon rains. The



rains set off at least a dozen landslides and floods over five days, killing at least eight and displacing 600,000 people, including 35,000 who went to emergency shelters, the Philippines' disaster risk mitigation agency said.

A landslide buried a rural shanty Tuesday in the mountainside town of Agoncillo in Batangas province, and the bodies of a pregnant woman and three children, aged 9 to 15, were dug out Wednesday morning. A rice porridge vendor was hit by a falling tree in another Batangas town Tuesday night, raising the toll in the country to 13 dead.

In the densely populated region around the Philippine capital, government work and school

classes were suspended after nonstop rains flooded many areas overnight, trapping cars in rising floodwater and stranding people in their homes.

Residents who ventured out of their homes waded into knee- and chest-high floodwaters with some using improvised dinghies and paddling their way alongside cars, trucks and SUVs.

In Marikina city in the eastern fringes of the Manila region, the continuing downpour swelled a major river, prompting many residents to flee to safety. The strong currents swept away a steel cargo container, refrigerators, pieces of home furniture and tree trunks, according to Associated Press journalists at the scene.

Some residents called radio stations and asked to be rescued by authorities from rooftops or upper floors of their low-slung houses amid rising floodwaters. Mayor Jeannie Sandoval of Malabon, a flood-prone city in the northern section of the capital region, assured one alarmed mother that rescue boats and trucks have been scrambling all day to help trapped residents like her. (AP)

Last Sunday was Earth's hottest day in all recorded history, European climate agency says

WASHINGTON, July 24: On Sunday, the Earth sizzled to the hottest day ever measured by humans, yet another heat record shattered in the past couple of years, according to the European climate service Copernicus on Tuesday.

Copernicus' preliminary data shows that the global average temperature Sunday was 17.09 degrees Celsius (62.76 degrees Fahrenheit), beating the record set just last year on July 6, 2023 by .01 degrees Celsius (.02 degrees Fahrenheit). Both Sunday's mark and last year's record obliterate the previous record of 16.8 degrees Celsius (62.24 degrees Fahrenheit), which itself was only a few years old, set in 2016.

Without human-caused climate change, records would be broken nowhere near as frequently, and new cold records would be set as often as hot ones.

"What is truly staggering is how large the difference is between the temperature of the last 13 months and the previous temperature records," Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo said in a statement. "We are now in truly uncharted territory and as the climate keeps warming, we are bound to see new records being broken in future months and years."

While 2024 has been extremely warm, what

kicked on Sunday into new territory was a way toastier than usual Antarctic winter, according to Copernicus. The same thing was happening on the southern continent last year when the record was set in early July.

But it wasn't just a warmer Antarctica on Sunday. Interior California baked with triple digit heat Fahrenheit, complicating more than two dozen fires in the U.S. West. At the same time, Europe sweltered through its own deadly heat wave.

"It's certainly a worrying sign coming on the heels of 13 straight record-setting months," said Berkeley Earth climate scientist Zeke Hausfather, who now estimates there's a 92% chance that 2024 will beat 2023 as the warmest year on record.

July is generally the hottest month of the year globally, mostly because there is more land in the Northern hemisphere, so seasonal patterns there drive global temperatures.

Copernicus records go back to 1940, but other global measurements by the United States and United Kingdom governments go back even further, to 1880. Many scientists, taking those into consideration along with tree rings and ice cores, say last year's record highs were the hottest the planet has been in about 120,000 years. Now the



first six months of 2024 have broken even those.

Scientists blame the supercharged heat mostly on climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas and on livestock agriculture. Other factors include a natural El Nino warming of the central Pacific Ocean, which has since ended. Reduced marine fuel pollution and possibly an undersea volcanic eruption are also causing some additional warmth, but those aren't as important as greenhouse gases trapping heat, they said.

Because El Nino is likely to be soon replaced by a cooling La Nina, Hausfather said he would be surprised if 2024 sees any more monthly records, but the hot start of the year is still probably enough

to make it warmer than last year.

Sure Sunday's mark is notable but "what really kind of makes your eyeballs jump out" is how the last few years have been so much hotter than previous marks, said Northern Illinois University climate scientist Victor Gensini, who wasn't part of the Copernicus team. "It's certainly a fingerprint of climate change."

University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann said the difference between the this year's and last year's high mark is so tiny and so preliminary that he is surprised the European climate agency is promoting it.

"We should really never be comparing absolute temperatures for individual days," Mann said in an email.

Yes, it's a small difference. Gensini said in an interview, but there have been more than 30,500 days since Copernicus data started in 1940, and this is the hottest of all of them.

"What matters is this," said Texas A&M University climate scientist Andrew Dessler. "The warming will continue as long as we're dumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and we have the technology to largely stop doing that today. What we lack is political will." (AP)

Arunachal minister presents ₹ 993-cr deficit budget for FY'25; focus on infra, urban development

'Share of central taxes for the 2024-25 budget has been pegged at ₹ 21,431.59 crore, an increase of 19.42 per cent over the 2023-24 estimate'

ITANAGAR, July 24: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Wednesday presented a ₹ 993.08-crore deficit budget for 2024-25, focusing on infrastructure, urban development and "healthy human resource".

Mein, who also holds the Finance, Planning and Investment portfolios, said the budget estimate is pegged at ₹ 35,840.79 crore, a 20.85 per cent increase over the 2023-24 figure.

"Our vision is people-centric and progressive... We are committed to fulfill the aspirations of every person, especially our youth, women and farmers. Staying on this trajectory, by the time we complete the third term in government, there should be no development gaps in the state.

"We shall be guided by the transformative idea of 'Viksit Bharat, Viksit Arunachal as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,'" Mein said.

The deputy chief minister said the share of central taxes for the 2024-25 budget has been pegged at ₹ 21,431.59 crore, an increase of 19.42 per cent over the 2023-24 estimate.

The key allocations in this year's budget include - ₹ 830 crore to improve rural infrastructure, ₹ 709 crore for the health sector, ₹ 621



crore for agriculture and allied sectors, ₹ 337 crore for upgradation of power sector infrastructure, ₹ 291 crore for smart urbanisation and ₹ 44 crore to upgrade transport infrastructure and services.

"We are continuously aiming for productivity and resilience in agriculture. Our efforts to facilitate youths, the indigenous population, women and the vulnerable groups and enhancement of social security nets are a testament to our resolve for inclusive human resource development and social justice," Mein said.

Together, these priorities align with "our budget pillar of healthy

human resource", he said. The focus on industrialisation and skill development "mirrors" the Union Budget priorities on manufacturing and services, employment and skilling, Mein said.

"Further, we are fostering a strong startup ecosystem with this year's focus on establishing incubation hubs at higher education institutes," said the minister.

"With respect to... robust infrastructure coupled with smart urbanisation strategies, we have managed to capture and reflect the Union Budget priorities on infrastructure and urban development. In addition,

the state's hydropower initiatives can be some of the biggest contributions to the country's energy security," Mein said.

Mein said to underscore the commitment and gratitude for the significant role the youth are playing in developmental activities, the government has declared 2024-25 as 'Year of Youth'.

An allocation of a minimum of ₹ 100 crore towards various activities for the empowerment of the youth has been made, he said.

Hailing the budget, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said in a post on X: "It gives me immense satisfaction to see Arunachal Pradesh Budget for FY 2024-25 placing a strong emphasis on industry-led development, with a key focus on enhancing youth employment and skill upgradation."

A total allocation of ₹ 23 crore has been earmarked specifically for initiatives aimed at equipping the youth with industry-relevant skills and facilitating their employment in various sectors, he said.

"With a total allocation of ₹ 372 crore for women and child development, we have exhibited our continued commitment towards empowering women of the state and ensuring the health and well-being of our children," the CM added. (PTI)

Tripura rights panel issues notices to DGP, Dhalai DM on Gandatwisa violence, seeks reports



AGARTALA, July 24: The Tripura Human Rights Commission has served notices to DGP and Dhalai DM on violence in Gandatwisa earlier this month, and sought to know what action has been taken against those involved in arson and looting houses in the area. The rights panel asked Director General of Police Amitabh Ranjan and Dhalai District Magistrate Saju Vaheed to submit their reports within three weeks.

Many houses were looted and set on fire by a mob on July 12, following the death of a 19-year-old man in a clash between two groups in Dhalai district.

"Before initiating a formal inquiry, the commission likes to ask for a report from the DGP, Tripura as to what action has been taken by the law enforcement agencies to nab the offenders of such gasty incident and whether any criminal

case has been registered, and if so, under what penal sections and whether any miscreant has been arrested in connection with the alleged offence," Tripura Human Rights Commission Chairperson Justice S C Das said in the notice.

The rights panel also directed the DM, Dhalai district to inquire into the incident through the civil agency and to submit a report as to "what sorts of actions have been taken to rehabilitate the victims and to settle them in the same position before the alleged incident".

"Inaction or negligence on the part of public servants in preventing the commission of violation of human rights is/are actionable and, therefore, the notices are issued to submit the preliminary report within three weeks for further course of action", Justice Das said.

The commission will take the matter on August 8. (PTI)

Nagaland Madrigal Singers felicitated

DIMAPUR, July 24: Nagaland Chief Minister, Neiphiu Rio felicitated the Nagaland Madrigal Singers during a dinner hosted in their honour at Nagaland House, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Road, New Delhi on Tuesday. The Nagaland Madrigal Singers led by Hito Kihon won two gold medals at the recently held 13th World Choir Games at Auckland, New Zealand from July 19 to 20, 2024.

The dinner was hosted by the Chief Minister and his wife Kaisa Rio and was also attended by Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton, Minister Tourism and Higher Education Temjen Inma Along, Advisor Agriculture & Commerce, Hekhani Jakhalu Kense, Chairman IDAN Abu Metha and Chairman TaFMA Theja Meru. (NNN)

Arunachal shut 600 schools with zero, low enrolment: Minister

ITANAGAR, July 24: Arunachal Pradesh Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona on Wednesday said the state government has shut around 600 schools, which were either non-functional or had zero enrolment.

Replying to a question from lone Congress MLA Kumar Wai in the assembly, Sona said the government is planning to close more such schools with zero or low enrolment.

Nearly 600 such schools have already been shut or merged with other schools, he said.

Arunachal Pradesh has over 2,800 government-run lower primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary schools, with more than 7,600 regular teachers.

Sona also said shortage of teachers is being managed by appointing teachers on a stop-gap arrangement under the Mukhya Mantri Shiksha Kosh (MMSK).

The government has placed a requisition with the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) for conducting recruitment exams for teachers, the minister said. (PTI)

Biren Singh encourages people to plant more trees

IMPHAL, July 24: In order to combat global warming, the Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh encouraged its people to plant more trees.

"We need nature to survive but nature doesn't need us", Biren Singh elaborated the need for mass tree plantations.

He further added, "Global warming and climate change led to natural calamities in the state. Mass tree plantation has been conducted and we are targeting to plant around 70 lakhs tree saplings in the State till September 2024".

Biren said this while attending the 75th Van Mahotsav, 2024 under the theme "Ek Ped: Maa ke Naam" at Chingpu Sabi Lairembi Ching, Lam-lai Imphal East recently. (NNN)

Conrad Sangma lays foundation for multi facility centre for Bee farmers

SHILLONG, July 24: Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma recently laid the foundation for Construction of Apiculture Multi Facility Centre at Mellim in South West Garo Hills in presence of education minister Rakkam A Sangma and MLA Sanjay A Sangma. About 200 beekeepers are expected to benefit from the Apiculture Multi Facility Centre at Mellim in South West Garo Hills in Meghalaya.

The sanction of ₹ 1.52 Cr for the establishment of the project was handed over to the Mellim Area Beekeepers Society, and the first instalment for the project amounting to ₹ 67 lakh was released. The project includes construction of building, approach road, boundary wall and equipment for processing and storage of honey. There are close to 200 farmers engaged in the production of honey in Mellim area. The decision to set up the centre was taken based on the feedback and suggestion given by the Beekeepers Society during CM's visit to the area on July 6.

"It is our endeavour as a government to respond to the aspirations of the people and create avenues and opportunities for sustainable enterprises to grow. I am confident that this facility at Mellim will further promote honey production and will ensure processing of quality organic honey", the Chief Minister said.

He also said that the government has identified Apiculture, Floriculture and Mushroom cultivation as key programmes under CM's Office to push the programmes on a mission mode. "On a cluster approach, we will take up projects on the three missions in Khasi, Jaintia

and Garo Hills, which will be personally monitored by me," he added.

He said that the project will further empower beekeepers in Mellim, and will also function as a training centre.

He also said that the government will promote by-products of honey like wax and mead for production of wine from honey, which has great value in the international market.

On promoting agriculture and horticulture products, he said that the government has been setting up processing unit in different parts of the State to add value to different products. "In remote Rongara in South Garo Hills, the government has set up a jackfruit processing unit, which is producing chips and other value added products, which has not only created a brand for quality jackfruit chips but has elevated the lives of many people living in the area," he said.

He informed that the government is working to transform the rural economy and is focusing on the farming and allied sector, which can create a turn around. "As a government, we have been promoting SHGs, producers groups, with a concerted approach to build a rural economy. In the next few years, our farmers should be able to contribute significantly to the growth story of Meghalaya," he added.

Talking about the focus approach to promote development in remote rural areas, he said that rural infrastructure is a priority for the government, and investments are being made for different sectors to elevate the lives of the people. (NNN)

Arunachal govt regularly monitors pollution level of iron smelter industry: Minister

ITANAGAR, July 24: The Arunachal Pradesh government regularly monitors the Iron smelter industry at Lekhi, near here, to oversee the compliance of environmental norms and directives are issued to plug the loopholes for any non-compliance, an Arunachal Pradesh minister said on Wednesday.

The emission from ferro alloys industries comprises particulate

matter, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide and when these pollutants are released beyond the prescribed standards, they cause damage to the environment and public health, he said.

The Environment, Forest & Climate Change Minister Wangki Lowang, said this while responding to a question by NPP MLA Thangwang Wangham in the assembly.

Lowang said that the industry was shut down in 2020 and 2022 for non-functioning air pollution control devices till their restoration was complete.

"The industry has installed bag filters, induction draught fans, emission stack height of 30 meters and fume extraction system to control pollution. The Pollution Control Board has also taken several measures to ensure compliance

with environmental norms by the industry," the minister said.

Lowang added that the raw materials consumed by the industry include quartz, mill scale, charcoal and coke.

Responding to a supplementary question from the MLA, the minister said that pollution is unavoidable up to the permissible level if the state plans to set up industries, which is almost non-existent so far. (PTI)

Shortage of administrative officers in Arunachal: Khandu

ITANAGAR, July 24: Admitting a shortage of administrative officers in various districts, Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday said that recruitments could not be made since 2022 after the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) paper leak case.

Responding to a query from senior BJP MLA Wanglin Lowangdong in the assembly during the Question Hour, Khandu said the recruitment for APCS entry-grade officers would be done soon with the commission being re-constituted.

The transfer and posting of all grades of APCS officers, including those in the later entry grade, is under consideration and the government will look towards filling the sanctioned posts rationally, the CM said.

"Out of 236, the total sanctioned strength of entry grade officers in the state, at present there are only 130 such officers with a deficit of 106 officers in the rank of circle officers (COs). There has been no fresh recruitment and lateral entry of officers in the past two years due to the APPSC fiasco. With the start of the recruitment process, the government will fill up the vacancies accordingly," he said.

Responding to a supplementary question, Khandu said that out of the 17 sanctioned posts of administrative officers in the Tirap district, there are only eight officers.

"Once the recruitment process begins, officers will be posted in the district that borders Myanmar and Nagaland," he added. (PTI)

Top security officials brief Manipur Governor



IMPHAL, July 24: Lt. General H.S. Sahi, GOC HQ 3 Corps (Spear Corps) along with Inspector General of Assam Rifles (South) Major General Ravroop Singh called on Governor of Manipur Anusuiya Uikey this evening at Raj Bhavan in Imphal and briefed about the prevailing security situation in Manipur.

A Raj Bhavan source said General Sahi highlighted the security preparedness made by the Army to face any situation in the state and also highlighted various activities taken up to ensure safety among the masses.

The army officers highlighted the relief activities taken up to support displaced families in different parts of the state. He informed the Governor that the Army will always work to maintain peace and stability in the State of Manipur. This was a farewell visit of Gen. Sahi as GOC HQ 3 Corps, the Raj Bhavan source added.

"The Governor appreciated the efforts made by the Army and asked them to extend support to the administration in the restoration of complete peace and tranquility in the State. She also wished Gen. Sahi on his next posting and his future endeavours," it added. (NNN)

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NOTE

JAWAHAR NAVODAVA VIDYALAYA, DIPHU (KARBI-ANGLONG) ASSAM-782462

1. HOW TO APPLY FOR JNV SELECTION TEST TO BE HELD ON 18/01/2025 (FOR ADMISSION IN CLASS VI)

- The online registration has been started & will close on 16/09/2024.
- Registration can be done free of cost through the admission portal NVS linked through the www.navodaya.gov.in or www.nvsadmissionclassix.in
- The eligible candidates have to fill up the online form and upload the certificate issued by the Headmaster/Principal where the candidate is studying in class v with the photograph, along with signatures of both candidate and parents/guardians. The attachment should be uploaded in jpg format of the size between 10-100 kb only.
- Application may be submitted from any source like desktop, mobile, tablet etc.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

- Only the candidates from the district concerned where the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya has been opened.
- Candidate should born between 01/05/2013 to 31/07/2015 (both dates are inclusive).
- The candidates appearing must be studying in class V for the academic session 2024-25.

For any queries (Contact):

1. L. Muchahari (Mob no: 7002943381,9957616502)

Sd/-

Sh. Dipak Kumar Paul
(Principal)

JNV Diphu (K/A).

Nestlé India, in partnership with FDA, Meghalaya, and NASVI expands Project 'Serve Safe Food'

To train over 500 street food vendors to further elevate food hygiene and safety

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 24: Expanding the geographical footprints of Project 'Serve Safe Food' in Meghalaya, Nestlé India has continued its collaboration with FDA, Meghalaya, and National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) to train over 500 street food vendors in East Khasi Hills, taking the total to 1,500 street food vendors in the state.

R M Kurbah, IAS, deputy commissioner, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, said, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have been associated with the Project, Commissionerate of Food Safety, Meghalaya, NASVI and Nestlé India. The initiative has helped more than one thousand street food vendors in the past few years and I am confident that it will



continue to strengthen them in the future. I extend my best wishes to the entire team and wish them all the best."

Sanjay Khajuria, director, Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Nestlé India said, "Project Serve Safe Food embodies our commitment to improve the food safety environment by going be-

yond the quality and safety of our own products. The project has been working towards empowering the street food vendors by upgrading their skills through relevant trainings on hygiene and food safety practices. We are confident that we would continue to work closely with our partners and make a positive impact

in the society."

Since its inception in 2016, Project 'Serve Safe Food' has benefitted over 68,500 street food vendors across 26 states and 4 union territories by bringing together various stakeholders to create a comprehensive training programme.

Nestlé India launched Project Serve Safe Food in 2016 and has trained street food vendors across states including Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

Excise raid in Margherita



HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, July 24: An excise raid, search, and patrolling duty was conducted by Margherita Excise staff on Tuesday evening at Margherita Tea Estate, 4 No Line, under Margherita Police Station in Tinsukia.

A total of two cases were detected during the operation. The excise team seized and destroyed the following articles: 25 litres of ID liquor, 20 kilograms of pachwai, and 1.98 bulk litres (BL) of IMFL (intoxicating liquor) intended for sale in Assam only.

Dr Lila Gogoi remembered on 30th death anniversary in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, July 24: On Tuesday, Rangpur Prachin Kirity Sinha Sangrakhyan Samity (RPKSSS) observed the 30th death anniversary of Dr Lila Gogoi at the Sivasagar Press Club. Recalling their close association with the former president of Asom Sahitya Sabha and a versatile writer, Dr Lila Gogoi, Bhadravati Gogoi, retired professor of HCDG College, Nitaipukhuri, and senior journalist Manirul Islam Bora said that Dr Lila Gogoi was an inspiration for all, having achieved great heights in his literary and educational career from a humble origin in Cherekapar Hatimuria Gaon.

Writer-poet Samsul Barik, Prof Pabin Sarmah, assistant professor of Sibsagar Girls College, Dr Bipul Gogoi, former professor of Demow College, Naren Baruah, secretary of RPKSSS, Bipul Gogoi, assistant professor of Gargaon College, Dr Lila Gogoi's cousin Jharna Gogoi, Priyanka Gogoi, a student, and Hemanta Changmai, chief adviser of Tai Ahom Yuva Parishad, spoke on different aspects of Dr Lila Gogoi's historical writings, children's literature, novels, and research works.

Earlier, Umesh Gogoi, president of RPKSSS, lit the ceremonial lamp. Phulbar Dihinia, vice president of RPKSSS, delivered the welcome address, and joint secretary Dr Zakirul Alam spoke on the objectives of the meeting. Dr Alam said a commemorative volume on Dr Lila Gogoi will be published. Rajlakshmi Dihinia recited a poem.

Meeting addresses truck stand development, e-rickshaw regulation & stricter traffic enforcement

District Road Safety Committee holds meeting in Tezpur

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, July 24: The District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) meeting for July 2024 was held on Wednesday under the chairmanship of district commissioner Deba Kumar Mishra at the Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Sonitpur, Tezpur.



The district commissioner opened the meeting by welcoming all stakeholders and requested a brief on the 'Action Taken Report' concerning decisions made at the last DRSC meeting. The meeting covered various topics, including the progress on developing a truck stand/bus bay at the Dolabari Point area, steps to control the untoward movement of e-rickshaws, and the organisation of a meeting involving the district administration, Municipal Board, and e-rickshaw Santha to address related issues. Emphasis was placed on taking stringent action against traffic rule violations, including drunken driving and speeding.

Superintendent of police, Sonitpur, Barun Purkayastha, additional district commissioner (Magistracy) Pranjit Deb, circle officers, executive officers of Municipal Boards under Sonitpur district, joint director of Health Services, superintendent engineer of PWRD, Sonitpur and Biswanath Road Circle, Tezpur Ajit Kumar Medhi, and other DRSC members and stakeholders were present at the meeting.

Two-day event to feature cultural ceremonies, policy discussions & support for local farmers
Former ULFA Unity Forum to convene biennial meet
HT Correspondent
HOWRAGHAT, July 24: The former United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) Unity Forum, Karbi Anglong District Committee is set to hold its biennial gathering on July 27-28, 2024. The event will take place at Bakaliaghat Higher Secondary School in Howraghat.

The two-day program features a variety of activities, including a flag-raising ceremony, martyrs' tarpans, inaugurating a camp, and convening delegate meetings. The agenda also includes an evening lamp-lighting ritual, an open forum on the second day, and the distribution of farming supplies and other goods to local agriculturists.

Several prominent figures are expected to participate, such as former ULFA Unity Forum advisor Anup Chetia, and Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council chief executive member Tuliram Ranghang. Other notable attendees include human rights advocate Lachit Bardoloi, as well as local MLA Bidyasing Inglang and Howraghat MLA Darsing Ranghang. Representatives from various ethnic organisations within the district will also be present.

Dead body recovered

HT Correspondent
DEMOW, July 24: A dead body was recovered from a pond in Pathar in Dhemochi near Demow on Wednesday. According to sources, the deceased has been identified as Tarun Phukan, a resident of Dhemochi Phukan Chuk. The person had been missing since Wednesday morning. The police reached the scene and recovered the body.

Record allocation in railway budget to transform northeast: Ashwini Vaishnaw



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 24: Ashwini Vaishnaw, minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, on Wednesday, held an interaction with media persons of north-east virtually from New Delhi in connection with the allocation for the Railway Ministry in the General Budget 2024-25. While addressing the media persons, the minister of Railways informed that a record allocation for capital investment of ₹ 2.62 lakh crores has been provided for the railways. A large part of it, i.e. ₹ 1.08 lakh crores, will be utilised on safety-related activities such as replacement of old tracks with new ones, improving signalling systems, installation of Kavach system, construction of road under bridges/road over bridges by replacing existing level crossing gates.

He further said that this budget focuses on introduction of new rolling stocks like Amrit Bharat Trains, Vande Metro, and Vande Bharat Sleeper. Railways' direction on safety first, comfort of passengers, capacity augmentation and improving the infrastructure of railways are prioritised. An advanced version of 'Kavach 4.0' has got recent approval, which will be installed at a rapid pace. 'Kavach 4.0' is a combination of hardware, software, optical fibre, telecom tower, on-track system, stations and data centre administration. The minister of Railways informed that due to the rising demand for general coaches, railways had decided to manufacture 2,500 general coaches in this current fiscal year. Further, it has been decided to manufacture an additional 10,000 general coaches to cater to the rising demand.

The minister of Railways said that the gross budget allocation for NF Railway for the FY 2024-25 is ₹ 14,183.69 crores. The allocation for north-eastern states is ₹ 10,376 crores, which is about 5 times higher than the average allocation of ₹ 2,122 crores made during 2009-14.

During the interaction, GM informed that adequate funds have been allotted for all infrastructure & safety related works as compared to previous years. The general manager announced that electrification of 921 RKM was done during 2023-24. 1,573 RKM of tracks are targeted to be electrified during 2024-25. This will complete the electrification of all the NE states. ₹ 694.69 crores have been allocated for electrification works over NF Railway.

This year's budget allocation shows unprecedented growth in several segments for NF Railway. Around ₹ 8,378.53 crores have been allocated for new line and doubling projects. Keeping safety and operations as top priorities, ₹ 1,305.07 crores have been allocated for track renewal works and bridge works and ₹ 170 crores for signalling & telecom works. ₹ 537 crores have been allocated to improve passenger amenities in station premises. A total of 18 railway infrastructure projects of 1,368 km length with a total investment of ₹ 74,972 crores are going on in the entire north-eastern region.

It is to be mentioned here that 60 stations of NF Railway will be redeveloped with world-class facilities under the Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme. Out of these, 50 in Assam, 4 in Tripura and 1 each in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Sikkim will be upgraded. A record number of 470 road over bridges/road under bridges have been constructed since 2014 over NF Railway by replacing existing level crossing gates to enhance safety for road and rail users.

The budget emphasises changing the overall infrastructure scenario of railways in addition to providing safety. The north-east connectivity will boost further with the record allocations as never before, which will also further augment the contribution of Indian Railways towards transforming north-eastern states.

LGBRIMH signs MoU for addiction treatment centre with govt



HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, July 24: The Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health in Tezpur, a prominent mental health institute in the North East, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of an Addiction Eradication Treatment Center at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi, on Monday.

The meeting exclusively discussed various aspects of eradication and treatment of drug addiction witnessed throughout the nation and the government of India's emphasis on adopting a plan to establish addiction eradication centres across the country, with special focus on the North Eastern region, through the Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health, which would be implemented through government hospitals.

The event was attended by Dr Shailendra Kumar Deuri, director, LGBRIMH; Dr Hemanta Dutta, head, Department of Addiction Eradication; and Dr Jyoti Hazarika, director-secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, government of India, among other officials.

50 students attend summer camp on conservation and education

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 24: Fifty students attended a 20-day-long nature camp organised during the current summer vacation by the biodiversity conservation non-profit organisation Aaranyak and Orang National Park authority at Sengelimora Luit Jatiya Bidalaya, Orang in Darrang district.



The summer nature camp was organised in collaboration with local NGOs Wild Wings and Fatasimolu Eco Development Committee with support from the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF). Besides facilitating academic classes and extracurricular activities, the summer camp, which was held from July 5 to 25, also promoted environmental awareness and education.

Arif Hussain, manager of the Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak, attended the camp as a resource person on the inaugural day and conducted sessions on wildlife and nature conservation. Sabrina Begum, a research scholar from Tezpur University and a member of Aaranyak, also conducted a session on environmental conservation and awareness. Baharul Islam, president of the Fatasimolu Eco Development Committee, and Babul Islam, headmaster of the school, were also present and interacted with the students.

SANKALP, DHEW conducts awareness & enrollment campaign at Raha

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, July 24: As part of the 100-day special awareness cum enrollment drive for Mission Shakti, SANKALP, DHEW under the District Social Welfare Department, Nagaon organised a special event at Raha Girls High School on Wednesday. The prime objective of the event was to raise awareness about women-centric legislation related to issues like domestic violence, prohibition of child marriage, sexual harassment in the workplace, and others.

Besides, during the event, it aimed to inform all about the government-sponsored schemes being implemented for the welfare of women in the district, such as Shakti Sadan, Sakhi Niwas, Palna, One Stop Centre, 181 Women Helpline, and PMMVV, etc.

Rafika Laila from the District Legal Service Authority, Nagaon attended the event as the chief resource person. Rashmi Rekha Borkakoti, CDPO, Raha, Anima Das, vice chairman of Raha municipality, and Janapriya Kalita, gender specialist, were present at the event as special guests. Over a hundred participants, including CDPO, ward members, AWWs, ASHA workers, adolescent girls, local women, and teaching staff of Raha Girls High School attended the event.

The programme was mentored by Queen Borah, district programme coordinator cum district mission coordinator, SANKALP DHEW, and was guided by ADC Kaku Moni Saikia and district social welfare officer, Nagaon Bholanath Pegu.

Rashmi Rekha Borkakoti, CDPO, Raha, shared the objectives of the event and also delivered the vote of thanks, asserted in a press note here.

Doctors from Indian Academy of Pediatrics conduct CPR training in Guwahati



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 24: A team of esteemed doctors from the Guwahati city branch of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) has taken a commendable initiative to educate the public about Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Dr Ranjit Agarwal, Dr Rashna Dass Hazarika, Dr Devajit Sharma, Dr Bhobesh Doley, and Dr Sailendra Das have been conducting training sessions at various locations in Guwahati, including shopping malls and other public places.

On Tuesday, they conducted a training session at the City Centre Mall in Guwahati. The sessions aimed to equip individuals with the vital skills needed to perform CPR, a life-saving technique crucial in emergency situations such as heart attacks or near-drowning incidents. By spreading awareness and providing hands-on training, these doctors hope to empower the community to act swiftly and effectively in critical moments, thereby increasing the chances of survival for victims.

Secretary of the Guwahati unit, Dr Ranjit Agarwal, emphasised the importance of immediate response, stating, "Every second counts during a cardiac arrest. Knowing how to perform CPR can make the difference between life and death." Dr Rashna Dass Hazarika added, "Our goal is to make CPR knowledge as widespread as possible. By conducting these trainings in accessible locations like shopping malls, we reach a diverse audience and foster a safer community."

The initiative has received positive feedback from participants, many of whom expressed newfound confidence in their ability to respond to emergencies.

No.DPRD/BTC(15th FC)UT(VI)UdI-06/2024/08 Dated Kokrajhar the 22nd July, 2024
PRESS NOTICE
(e-Procurement)
The Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar invites bids for implementation of work "Const. of road with E/F and S/G from Goradak NELC Church to Dhanibasti including 2 Nos. HPC" for an amount not exceeding of Rs. 28,00,000.00 (Rupees twenty eight lakhs) only under 15th Finance Commission to BTC for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25 under Untied Grant from the registered contractors of Class-I & Class-II (A, B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads) / (Building), BTC.
Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the Office of the undersigned during office hours.
Sd/- Director,
Panchayat & Rural Development,
BTC, Kokrajhar
IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/177

No.DPRD/BTC(15th FC)UT(VI)UdI-07/2024/08 Dated Kokrajhar the 22nd July, 2024
PRESS NOTICE
(e-Procurement)
The Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar invites bids for implementation of work "Const. of road with E/F and S/G from Surjya Basti to Nipen Chowk including 1 Nos. Slab culvert" for an amount not exceeding of Rs. 23,00,000.00 (Rupees twenty three lakhs) only under 15th Finance Commission to BTC for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25 under Untied Grant from the registered contractors of Class-I & Class-II (A, B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads) / (Building), BTC.
Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the Office of the undersigned during office hours.
Sd/- Director,
Panchayat & Rural Development,
BTC, Kokrajhar
IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/176

India-UK FTA negotiations floor not ceiling of our ambitions: British Foreign Secretary David Lammy

India is emerging superpower of the 21st century, the largest country in the world with 1.4 billion people and one of the fastest growing economies in the world

NEW DELHI, July 24: British Foreign Secretary David Lammy on Wednesday began a two-day visit to India to galvanise negotiations for an ambitious Free Trade Agreement and reset the overall bilateral partnership in crucial areas such as clean energy, new technologies and security.

As he embarked on the high-profile trip, Lammy described the negotiations for the trade deal as the floor and not the ceiling of the ambitions to unlock shared potential and deliver growth.

The British foreign secretary's visit to New Delhi is the first high-level engagement between India and the UK after Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government came to power on July 5.

"India is the emerging superpower of the 21st century, the largest country in the world with 1.4 billion people and one of the fastest growing economies in the world," Lammy said.

"Our Free Trade Agreement negotiations is the floor not the ceiling of our ambitions to unlock our shared potential and deliver growth, from Bengaluru to Birmingham," he said.

A British government readout said, Lammy will push for a "reset" of the UK-India partnership, including through reinforcing London's commitment to securing a free trade agreement that will benefit both economies.

It said the foreign secretary will also galvanise support for accelerated action on the climate crisis with India as an "indispensable partner", driving forward the clean energy transition and creating opportunities for British and Indian businesses. He will discuss partnering on Indian-led global initiatives to build clean power access, climate resilience in the global south and small island states, it said.

"We have shared interests on the green transition, new technologies, economic security and global security," Lammy was quoted as saying in the readout.

"I am travelling to India in my first month as Foreign Secretary because resetting our relationship with the Global South is a key part of how this government will reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home," he said.

In a post on 'X', External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Lammy's visit will strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

Lammy and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will hold wide-ranging talks this evening that is expected to focus on the FTA and New Delhi's concerns over activities of pro-Khalistan elements in Britain, people familiar with the

matter said.

The British foreign secretary is also scheduled to meet Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal during which both sides are likely to reaffirm their commitment to the proposed free trade pact, they said.

It is learnt both sides have already agreed on almost 90 per cent of the trade pact but the remaining 10 per cent comprised several sticky issues such as import duties on automobiles and scotch whisky and visas for business people. The British readout said Lammy will highlight the importance of a new partnership with India that focuses on economic, domestic and global security.

Economic, domestic and global security will be at the heart of the foreign secretary's first visit to India as he travels to New Delhi to unlock the full potential of the UK-India partnership.

He will tell his Indian counterpart that he wants to drive forward greater growth for both countries, it said.

The foreign secretary will underscore the importance of the "living bridge" between the UK and India.

It represents the 1.7 million people with Indian heritage that have made their home in the UK and make an exceptional contribution to British life, the readout released by the UK high commission in New Delhi said.

"In a visit to India's third largest technology company, the Foreign Secretary will meet business leaders to highlight how the UK and India are working together on shared ambitions such as cutting-edge science to encourage innovation, boost trade, and improve the livelihoods of working people in both countries," it said.

The foreign secretary will also hold high-level talks with members from the Indian government, including Jaishankar, it said.

Lammy will reiterate the extraordinary contribution of British Indians, saying that they enrich the UK's social and economic landscape and are the epitome of modern Britain, it added.

In their talks, Jaishankar and Lammy are also expected to review the implementation of the India-UK roadmap that seeks to broaden the ties in a range of areas.

In 2021, India and the UK adopted the 10-year roadmap to expand ties in key areas of trade and economy, defence and security, climate change and people-to-people connections among others.

Jaishankar and Lammy are also likely to deliberate on pressing global challenges, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the situation in the Middle-East. (PTI)

Jharkhand: 27 'stranded' labourers return to Ranchi from Cameroon



RANCHI, July 24: A total of 27 labourers from Jharkhand, who were reportedly stranded in Central Africa's Cameroon, returned to the state on Wednesday, officials said.

The labourers had sought help from the state government, through a recent video message, claiming they were not receiving their salaries from the employer and also facing trouble in arranging for daily meals.

Subsequently, Jharkhand Chief

Minister Hemant Soren wrote a letter to the Ministry of External Affairs, urging the safe return of the migrant workers, according to an official release.

"We received information about the problems of 27 people of Jharkhand stranded in Cameroon, Africa. Thereafter, the Jharkhand government took the initiative and got the outstanding amount of about ₹ 30 lakh paid to them, and brought them back to the state," Soren said on X.

He said financial assistance of ₹ 25,000 was also provided to each labourer upon their return.

Earlier in the day, the workers arrived at the Parasnath Railway Station in Giridih. Of the 27 labourers, 18 belong to Bokaro district, five are from Hazaribag and four from Giridih, the release said.

One of the labourers said an agency took them to the African nation on March 29.

"We worked there under a contractor for four months, but received no payment. We also started facing food-related problems," he told reporters. Jharkhand Labour Secretary Mukesh Kumar said his department has 10 lakh registered labourers. (PTI)

No.DLSA/CHD/2024/302

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from the intending eligible advocates for engagement of the following full time Legal Aid Defense Counsels in the Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office in Charaideo:-

Sl. No.	Name of Post	Number of post	Honorarium
1	Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	2 (two)	Rs. 40,000/- & above
2	Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel	6 (six)	Rs. 20,000/- & above

Qualifications:-

1. Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel

- Practice in Criminal law for at least 7 years
- Excellent understanding of criminal law
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Skill in legal research
- Thorough understanding of ethical duties of defense counsel. Ability to work effectively and efficiently with others. Must have handled at least 20 criminal trials in Sessions Courts. May be relaxed in exceptional circumstances by Hon'ble executive Chairman ASLSA
- IT knowledge with proficiency in work

2. Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel

- Practice in Criminal law from 0 to 3 years.
- Good oral and written communication skills.
- Thorough understanding of ethical duties of defense counsel.
- Ability to work effectively and efficiently with others.
- Excellent writing and research skills
- IT knowledge with high proficiency in work.

Work Profile:-

1. Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel

- Conducting trials/ appeals remand work/bail applications/visits to prisons etc., as assigned by Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel.
- Filing and arguing appeals and bail applications in Courts.
- Maintaining complete case files.
- Doing legal research in legal aided cases and guiding assistant legal Aid Defense Counsel in legal research.
- Proper client interviews at various stages for quality research work and representation at remand, trial and appellate stage.
- All or any of the work of the Chief Defense Counsel as per assignment.
- Any work/duty assigned by Legal Services Authority.

2. Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel

- Filing of cases, conducting trials in Magistrate trial cases.
- Remand/bail and other miscellaneous work.
- Legal research in legal aided cases.
- Visits to Prison and Legal aid Clinics as per directions.
- Providing assistance at pre-arrest stage to suspects.
- Assisting Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel and Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel(s) in conduct of legal aid cases.
- Assisting in developing a defense strategy after sifting through all of the evidence collected by the prosecution and after hearing the accused's version of what happened during the alleged crime in question.
- Visiting location/area of alleged crime, having discussions with family members etc, for effective and meaningful input of defense strategy.
- Handling queries of legal aid seekers,
- Updating legal aid seekers about the progress of their cases.
- Assisting in maintaining complete files of legal aided cases.
- Handling legal queries relating to criminal matters on telephone.
- Any other work related to legal aid assigned by Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel.
- Any work/duty assigned by Legal Services Authority.

Code of Ethics:

Personnel engaged in the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall observe the following code of ethics:

- No personnel shall act in any matter in which he/she has a direct or indirect personal or financial interest.
- No personnel shall willfully disclose or use, whether or not for the purpose of pecuniary gain, any information that he/she obtained, received or acquired during the fulfillment of his/her official duties and which is not available to members of the general public.
- No personnel within the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall make use of his/her office or employment for the purpose of promoting or advertising any outside activity.
- No personnel within the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall engage in any outside activity or act as an independent practitioner.
- No personnel within the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall solicit, agree to accept or accept, whether directly or indirectly, any gift, favour, service, or other thing of value under circumstances from which it might be reasonably inferred that such gift, service, or other thing of value was given or offered for the purpose of influencing him/her in, or rewarding him/her for, the discharge of his/her official duties.
- Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall devote his/her full time to his/her duties for the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel and shall not engage in private practice of law during the term of employment.
- Every Personnel of the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall strive to preserve the public's confidence in the office's fair and impartial execution of its duties and responsibilities.
- Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall also follow the code of ethics prescribed by Bar Council of India for lawyers.

Terms and conditions:-

- Candidate must be a citizen of India.
- The appointments shall be purely temporary and on contract basis and does not entitle the person to be regularized.
- The Legal Aid Defense Counsels shall be engaged on contract basis initially for a period of 2 (two) years with stipulation of extension of yearly basis subject to satisfactory performance. The Service may be extended subject to the approval of the Hon'ble Executive Chairman, Assam State Legal Services Authority, Guwahati.
- Duly filed application forms along with self attested photocopies of all the relevant testimonials including certificate of length of practice etc. and 02 (Two) copies of recent passport size Photographs, should be addressed to the Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Charaideo. The Name of the post applied for should clearly be mentioned overleaf the envelope. Providing of Contact number with email ID is compulsory
- Applications may be dropped in the drop box installed at the Office of the District Legal Services Authority, Charaideo, or may be sent by post. The last date of receiving the applications is till 31/07/2024 during Office Hours. The office of the District Legal Services Authority, Charaideo shall not be responsible for any postal delay.
- Applications received after due date shall summarily be rejected. Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected without assigning any reason.
- The scope of work, selection procedure, qualification, work profile, termination of service, code of ethics, entitlement of leave etc. of the Legal Aid Defense Counsels will be as per the guideline of NALSA/ASLSA.
- The undersigned reserves the right to cancel the Advertisement and to alter/modify the terms and conditions mentioned in this advertisement.
- List of shortlisted eligible candidates will be notified in the Official Notice Board as well as uploaded in the Official website of Charaideo District Judiciary, i.e.

https://charaideo.dcourts.gov.in for interview.

- Canvassing directly or indirectly will disqualify the candidate.
- No TA/DA will be provided for appearing in the interview.

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

APPLICATION FOR ENGAGEMENT AS FULL TIME LEGAL AID LAWYER IN LEGAL AID DEFENSE COUNSEL SYSTEM

STATE _____

DISTRICT _____

Application No. _____
(For Office use)

Photo

APPLICATION FOR CHIEF/DEPUTY/ASSISTANT LEGAL AID DEFENSE COUNSEL

- Applicant's Name
- Father/Husband's Name
- Date of Birth
- Age (as on 01-08-2022)
- Gender
- Residential Address
- Office Address
- Chamber Address (if any)
- Telephone no. (O)
- Telephone No. (R)
- Mobile No.
- Fax No.
- E-mail ID
- PAN No.
- AADHAR No.
- Educational Qualification (Please enclose self-attested copies of documents):

Course	Name of Board/ University	Year of Passing	Obtained Percentage (aggregate)
Graduation			
Professional Degree LLB			
LLM			
Any other (if any)			

- Date of Enrollment as Lawyer:
- Enrollment No. _____
(Attach self-attested copy of enrollment certificate issued by Bar Council)
- Experience in Bar _____
(Duration of actual practice)
(Attach an experience certificate issued by the Bar Association/Council)
(a) Total no. of cases handled: _____
(b) Nature of cases handled: _____
(Attach extra sheet, if required)
(c) Specialization, if any _____
(The details of a few important cases, the Applicants have dealt with/handled and reported judgement if any.)
- Whether empanelled as Central/State Government or Government undertaking counsel/pleader _____
(Indicate period: attach documents)
- The Courts where the Applicant is regularly practising _____
(Enclose Bar Association Membership Certificate)
- Specify whether earlier remained on the panel of HCLSC/DLSA or TLSC _____
(Indicate period, number of legal aid cases handled & result) (attach documents)
- Whether any disciplinary case/Complaint is/was against the Applicant with any Bar Council : YES NO
(If yes, specify details of both disposed & pending with documents)
- List of the documents to be attached.
 - Self-Attested copy of Certificates in support of educational qualifications.
 - Self-Attested copy of Certificate in Enrollment issued by the Bar Council under the Advocates Act, 1961.
 - Self-Attested copy of Photo Identity Card, Address Proof.
 - Self-Attested copy of ITR for last 3 years (if available).
 - Photo copies of judgments in 5 Sessions cases, represented as Defense lawyer, (for the post of Chief/Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel).
 - Photocopies of at least 5 cross examinations in Sessions cases (for Chief/Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel).

(Signature)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all the statements made in this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. In the event of any information being found false/incorrect at any stage, my candidature is liable to be cancelled. I have read and understood the instructions and terms of the engagement and agrees to abide by those. I declare that I fulfil the eligibility conditions for the category to which I am seeking engagement. I declare that I have never been penalised by any Bar Council in any Disciplinary Proceedings. I also undertake to maintain absolute integrity and discipline as required thereunder. I agree with the remuneration structure and all the terms and conditions notified by SLSA/DLSA concerned.

(Signature)

Place: _____
Date: _____

Janasanyog /D/2940/24/25-Jul-24

ELECTRICAL WORKS
E-Tender No. RE-NJP-TENDER-ENGG-WT-298; Dated: 22-07-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Name of work: Insertion of 400 nos. In-Situ Glued Joints (mostly 52 Kg) required at different station yard with all other ancillary works between (i) Furkating Jn.-BBNG-Mariani Jn. (ii) Tinsukia-Makum Jn.-Dangari & (iii) MJNTRIP single line section in Tinsukia Division in connection with the Railway Electrification work of N.F. Railway. (Gr.-310). Advertisment value: ₹ 1,23,99,700.18; Earnest Money: ₹ 12,00,00.00; E-tenders will be closed 12:00 hrs. on 14-08-2024. The complete information and tender document of e-Tender will be available at www.treps.gov.in
CEE-II/CON/Maligaon
Northeast Frontier Railway
(Construction Organisation)
"Serving Customers with a smile"

I WISH I ENJOYED IT MORE: Matthew Macfadyen on playing 'Mr Darcy' on 'Pride and Prejudice'

LOS ANGELES, July 24: Actor Matthew Macfadyen says he did not enjoy playing Mr Darcy on Joe Wright's 2005 adaptation of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" as he was worried he was not "dishy enough" to play one of literature's favourite romantic heroes. "I didn't really. I feel bad saying that. There were moments I had a good time, but I wish I enjoyed it more. I wish I was less worried about it."

"I felt a bit miscast, like, 'I'm not dishy enough'. But it worked out," the actor said on CBS Mornings.

Macfadyen, who played the popular character of Tom Wambsgans on "Succession" and stars in "Deadpool & Wolverine", is, however, happy with the way things turned out finally. "The most flattering thing that happens to me now is people say, 'Were you Mr. Darcy?' It's a good 20 years later. So I think, 'I can't be aging that badly,'" the actor said about the movie, which also featured late Donald Sutherland, Rosamund Pike, Jena Malone, Tom Hollander, Judi Dench, Carey Mulligan, Talulah Riley and Rupert Friend.

Macfadyen's portrayal of Mr Darcy opposite Keira Knightley's Elizabeth Bennet in the movie has many admirers with a special internet segment devoted to the scene where Mr Darcy flexes his hands just after he has helped Elizabeth Bennet's character into a carriage.

But Colin Firth's take on the character in 1995 series remains a favourite on the screen with his wet shirt scene often being recreated and referenced by filmmakers.

It was most recently done in "Bridgerton" season 2 when Jonathan Bailey's Anthony Bridgerton emerges from a lake after accidentally falling into it in an obvious hat tip to Firth's portrayal of Mr Darcy. (PTI)



Aparshakti Khurana's 'Berlin' to premiere at Indian Int'l Film Festival of Melbourne

MUMBAI, July 24: Actor Aparshakti Khurana's film "Berlin" is set to premiere at the Indian International Film Festival of Melbourne. Khurana, 36, shared the announcement on his Instagram handle on Tuesday. "The thrilling journey of #Berlin continues! The film is set for its Australian premiere at the 15th edition of the prestigious @iffmelbourne #IndianFilmFestivalOfMelbourne," the actor shared in a post.

Directed by Atul Sabharwal, the film also features Ishwak Singh, Rahul Bose, and Kabir Bedi in pivotal roles. "Berlin" has previously screened at the Red Lorry Film Festival. In addition to "Berlin," Khurana will star in the upcoming horror-comedy "Stree 2" alongside Shradha Kapoor and Rajkumar Rao. Directed by Amar Kaushik, the film is produced under Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films and is scheduled for release on August 15 this year. Furthermore, Khurana is currently filming "Badtameez Gill" with co-stars Paresh Rawal and Vaani Kapoor. He will also appear in the documentary titled "Finding Ram" produced by Applause Entertainment. The Indian International Film Festival of Melbourne runs from August 15 to August 25 in Melbourne, Australia. (AGENCIES)



which came as a major confidence boost for Bhat, who had previously made films such as "Brij Mohan Amar Rahe" and "Hurdang" and now shows "The Gone Game" and "Rasbhari".

The maximum action in those projects, he explained, would probably include a slap but "Kill" was a challenge as it revolved around a man who transforms into a killing machine during things go south.

Having Sikhya and Dharna as backers helped find the right people to execute his vision for the movie.

"It was my first action film and I was trying to ensure that when the audiences see it, they feel like they are on the train as passengers and going through the tragedy. It was an important challenge and everything hinged on that because if I manage that, I will involve them in the story and its emotions," he said.

The action in the movie had to be designed in a way that it captured the "contained pressure cooker" like situation inside the confined space of a train compartment. "You cannot change the setting or location so the only thing you can change is the way each killing is depicted. During the writing phase, I would wake up and imagine myself as the protagonist and his adversaries and ghost fight in those scenes before writing them. I wrote each and every kill so that when my action choreographers come, they, at least, have a blue print to build upon," he said. The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival's Midnight Madness section to positive reviews last year. Asked about the violence in the movie, Bhat said while the film is "gory and full of action", the portrayal makes it different from a regular revenge drama.

"I have actually shown the consequences of violence and how it brings pain and agony no matter which side you are on. We become so dehumanised with violence sometimes and feel the need to glorify it but I have tried to go the other way and not glorify it at all. It is very important to look at it not with bravado or swagger," he said.

Praising the relative newcomers at the heart of the story -- Lakshya in his debut film as Amrit, host-comedian Raghav Juyal as the antagonist Fani and actor Tanya Maniktala as Tulika -- Bhat said the three actors held his hand throughout the difficult process of directing the movie.

Lakshya was the first to come on board as the filmmaker was impressed by the way he responded to the story that he didn't even want to meet other actors who were supposed to audition for the role. (PTI)

It's a phase, we should focus on films that did well: Rohit Shetty on Bollywood performance in 2024

MUMBAI, July 24: Bollywood movies not doing well at the box office this year is just a phase and one should focus on films that have been successful, says filmmaker Rohit Shetty as he hopes his much-awaited "Singham Again" makes viewers happy.

Other than small and mid-budget movies like Kiran Rao-directed "Laapataa Ladies", Dinesh Vijan's home production, "Munjiya", Kareena Kapoor Khan and Tabu-starrer "Crew", Ajay Devgn's "Shaistaan", and Rajkumar Rao's "Srikanth", the first half of the year has been dismal for the Hindi film industry with the failure of "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan", "Maidaan" and "Yodha".

But Shetty, known for making big budget, star-studded blockbusters, is not worried.

"It's a phase which comes every five to six years, where a year or two goes bad business-wise. Like, we have had 'Pathaan', 'Jawan', 'Gadar 2', and 'Oh My God 2', so it's like missing time syndrome. So, we focus on that, we don't look at films that did well," the filmmaker told PTI in an interview.

"For instance, 'Gadar 2', it's not like they did business of Rs 100 or Rs 200 crore, it did Rs 500-600 crore plus business. We need to focus on the good part. It happens, you've phases. It's a cycle."

Following the commercial success of films like "Pathaan", "Jawan", and "Gadar 2" last year, many thought action genre was going to be the flavour of the season but Shetty said such assumptions are wrong.

"We come to a conclusion very soon that only action will work or comedy will not work. Films have to be taken individually, irrespective of the genre. We don't know which film will work, which won't and that's a fact of life," he said.

The 50-year-old director is optimistic about "Singham Again", his next directorial venture with frequent collaborator Ajay Devgn, which opens in theatres on November 1 on the occasion of Diwali.

"It is a big responsibility. I hope when it comes, it will make everyone happy like how 'Sooryavanshi' opened in theatres after COVID-19. I hope this one also makes everyone happy. If that is done, then my job is

done," Shetty added.

The upcoming action film is the third film in the "Singham" series, which started with 2011's "Singham" and was followed by "Singham Returns" in 2014. These movies are tied with the storylines of "Sooryavanshi", led by Akshay Kumar and "Simmba", starring Ranveer Singh.

Shetty, however, is wary of comparisons between his cop universe and Avengers movies.

"I can't compare 'Singham Again' with 'Avengers'. They are too big. Ours is a cop universe, we've Ajay, Akshay, Ranveer, and Kareena, and then there are new characters this time. We are trying to work in our world and the way it is shaping up, I think people will get what they want from 'Singham Again'."

The idea, he said, is to create content that appeals to a wide segment of audience.

"You need to up your game every time because there's a lot of exposure that the audience has, so you need to be on that level. We've to be on that level," he said.

In "Singham Again", Devgn will

reprise his fan-favourite cop character of Bajirao Singham, and Arjun Kapoor will be seen as the antagonist. Kareena Kapoor Khan, who played Devgn's love interest in the second part will be seen in the third part.

"Singham Again" is the fifth part in Shetty's cinematic cop universe, which includes Ranveer Singh's "Simmba" (2018) and Akshay Kumar's "Sooryavanshi" (2021).

The upcoming film also boasts star-studded appearances including Ranveer Singh, Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff, and Deepika Padukone.

Shetty, who recently wrapped the shooting of "Singham Again", said CGI in stunts is increasingly becoming an industry standard.

"It depends on what kind of action it is, if it's hand-to-hand combat then CGI is not for me, I try to keep it real. Other than that, all the stunts that we do...CGI is very important because it's safe, easier and it's costlier also. But that's the new thing and you can't be left behind."

Shetty is returning as the host of "Khatron Ke Khiladi" season 14 on Colors TV from July 27. (PTI)



Lankans should take advantage of Indian retirements: Jayasuriya



PALLEKELE, July 24: Sri Lanka's interim head coach Sanath Jayasuriya on Wednesday revealed that IPL side Rajasthan Royals' high performance director Zubin Bharucha has helped his batters prepare for the upcoming T20 series against India where he expects them to take advantage of the recent retirements by stars like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Rohit, Kohli and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja retired from the

T20 Internationals after India's World Cup triumph last month. The T20 series against Sri Lanka will get underway here on July 27.

Jayasuriya revealed despite some of the Sri Lankan players' involvement in the Lanka Premier League, they have held a six-day camp with Bharucha.

"We just started the sessions just after the LPL. Most of the players are playing the LPL, so they were busy with cricket and what we wanted (for them) was

to play cricket as much as possible," he said.

"We got Zubin from Rajasthan Royals and we had about six days of work and also with the other cricketers who finished with the LPL. I hope the players have learnt what you (management) wanted to do in terms of practice and their technique. The preparation was good, and we have two more days in Kandy before the T20 starts," he added.

Jayasuriya said the sessions

with Bharucha were intense and the players have been able to learn a lot from him.

"It is important to learn as international cricketers new techniques, new approaches and shot making to be effective," he said. India also have a new captain in Suryakumar Yadav for T20Is and Jayasuriya, while acknowledging the struggles of his side, urged them to make the most of the opportunity.

"Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are best players in the

world. Looking at their talent and the kind of cricket they have played we all know where they belong, along with Jadeja," Jayasuriya was quoted as saying by Associated Press during a press meet.

"Their absence will be loss to the Indian team and we have to take maximum advantage out of that," he said.

Heads rolled in the top management of Sri Lanka team after the debacle in the T20 World Cup in the Americas.

After Sri Lanka made a preliminary round exit, upon return the team captain Wanindu Hasaranga, head coach Chris Silverwood and high performance consultant Mahela Jayawardena all resigned.

When asked about Sri Lanka's current state, Jayasuriya hoped the players are able to develop themselves.

"It is up to the players, we have been doing all the work in terms of practice, we have given training, we have got best coaches. I think Sri Lanka Cricket has provided most of the things and now it is up to the players," he said.

"For the present cricketers to come to that level, we have been doing all the necessary work and I hope in next two years there will be a lot of development in these boys," the batting great added.

"We need to give a little bit of time. I know, for the cricket-loving public it is frustrating sometimes but be patient, give us time, we are working on it. It is really hard work on it with the players and they will do well." (PTI)

For TT great Sharath Kamal, running into Roger Federer tops favourite Olympic memories

PARIS, July 24: From lurching alongside tennis icon Roger Federer to taking a set off Chinese legend Ma Long, India's flag-bearer for Paris Olympics, Achanta Sharath Kamal, on Wednesday recalled the most memorable moments from his five appearances at the Games so far. The 42-year-old table tennis legend helped the Indian men's team qualify for the first time in history and is believed to be set for his final appearance at the Games.

The multiple-time Commonwealth Games gold-medallist believes that qualifying as a team could become the catalyst of growth for table tennis in India.

For someone who has a huge bank of memories from the Olympics having made his first appearance in 2004, Sharath recalled running into Federer at a dining hall in his debut Games.

"One day I was just out for lunch and as I was entering from this side, there was another person coming from the other side with a tennis bag and hair let loose. I feel like I have seen him somewhere. I couldn't recognise who he was with his hair let loose," he said in a release from Ultimate Table Tennis.

"We pass each other -- we actually cross paths -- (and) he goes to give his bag at the baggage keeping area. I walk in, take my plate looking at what to eat and it suddenly strikes me. Man, it's Roger Federer!"

Sharath said he was rather shy at that time but nonetheless searched for the Swiss ace.

"He was sitting at one of the tables all by himself. I went as close as possible. I didn't want to get in his place but still got close and I was eating (on the same table)," he continued.

"Suddenly, a guy comes in with a reverse hat and shorts and they are clapping hands. I look at him and it's Andy Roddick," Sharath recalled.

With the Tokyo Olympics postponed by one year during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sharath recalled facing difficulties in training and yet he was able to make a dent in Long's march to the gold medal.

"Out of the five times I have played with him, I have won just one set against him and that was in Tokyo. And I am very proud of what happened there, especially coming in after COVID," he added.

India had a very tough situation especially after the second wave. People in the rest of the world started their training back and mid-way in the lockdown in India, we were still confined to home workouts. I was playing on my terrace. It was very tough.

"I was training all the time in India with the limited resources we had. From that difficult mindset to getting to the Olympics and doing my best, I really feel I did well," Sharath continued. (PTI)

Mind Games: The psychological challenge of being an Olympian

MUMBAI, July 24: Human excellence is often closely linked to human fortitude and Olympics is the prime example of it.

The Paris Games, starting on Friday, will be a gathering of 10,500 athletes, 117 of them from India, competing for a mere 329 medals.

Needless to say, talent alone won't decide who finishes on the podium. It will also boil down to the mind and how one can discipline it to cope with the grandeur and pressure of the big moments.

Visualisation, blocking out the noise and being focussed are among the techniques that are often talked about but are they as easy to implement in a highly competitive environment?

"There is a lot of pressure (already) in sports and when you compete at the Olympics, you have to be someone who has gone through a lot of highs and lows as well," explains Dr Divya Jain, a sports psychologist with Fortis Healthcare.

"In sports, you're confronted with winning and losing on a day-to-day basis, so it's not about

winning every time; it's about how you recover, how quickly you bounce back from a mistake," she said while explaining the difference between Olympians and other athletes.

"There is public scrutiny, staying away from family, the noise of the Games... All of these aspects that athletes have to cope with at a psychological level," she added.

For the next few weeks athletes will try to be at the peak of their form. To do that, they have trained physically and mentally but the medal winners will be those who are a tad more tenacious and focussed than the rest.

"Not only do they have their own high expectations, but they also carry the hopes of their entire country and scrutiny of a global audience," says Keerthana Swaminathan, a sports psychologist and president of the Indian Sport Psychologists Association.

"Being away from families, friends and home is a part of sportspersons' lives but in Olympics, with all eyes on them, it could lead to further stress and anxiety. (PTI)

IOC approves French Alps bid to host the 2030 Winter Olympics

PARIS, July 24: The French Alps was named as the 2030 Winter Games host by the International Olympic Committee on Wednesday, though with conditions attached and signoff required from whoever is the next Prime Minister of France.

French President Emmanuel Macron helped present the bid to IOC members and gave assurances that the national government being formed in office after the 2024 Summer Games in Paris will underwrite all the organizational guarantees that must still be signed.

IOC members accepted his guarantees and gave their approval in an 84-4 vote with seven abstaining.

"We would like to thank you for your confidence and trust," Macron said in a brief acceptance speech. "We will be there and we will respect our commitments."

National governments in Olympic host countries need to formally underwrite financial and security promises that are essential to organize and run the games.

A deadline of Oct. 1 was set by



the IOC for the next French Prime Minister to sign a document guarantee key promises for the 2030 project. The national assembly elected this month must ratify that document by March 1, IOC president Thomas Bach said.

Those guarantees sought by the IOC have not been possible in France in recent weeks because of the snap parliamentary elections called by Macron that concluded July 7. It failed to pro-

duce a majority government yet stalled the momentum built by far-right parties.

The French bid was the only candidate — preferred by the IOC with exclusive negotiating rights since November — and is a project centered on ski resorts in the French Alps and ice sports venues in the coastal city Nice.

Barely 5 1/2 years ahead of the scheduled opening ceremony, the 2030 Winter Games has the shortest lead-in time to prepare

for any modern Olympics.

Macron and bid officials acknowledged the challenges of climate change for snow sports and Winter Games hosting.

"We have now to invent a new model, a sustainable one, for people living in the mountains," Macron acknowledged in a speech in English. "We do believe in the future of Winter Games. We do believe in the future of our mountains."

The leader of the regional government in the French Alps acknowledged the difficult future.

"We are not skiing today as we used to ski in the past," Renaud Muselier, president of the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region, said. "Climate change is a reality with an impact on the mountains."

"We want to be optimistic but realistic," Muselier said in translated comments, promising the greenest-ever Winter Games "on a human scale."

France previously hosted the Winter Games three times: the inaugural 1924 edition in Chamonix, 1968 in Grenoble and 1992 in Albertville. (AP)

Pierre de Coubertin - the greatest forgotten hero

PARIS, July 24: Pierre de Coubertin, the visionary behind the modern Olympic Games, is buried in the pages of history.

Inspired by historian and educator Thomas Arnold, who had introduced sports in British schools, Coubertin initially used sports as a tool to bring about educational reforms in France.

Eventually, the dream took a better shape and in 1894, he founded the modern Olympics, which gradually grew into the greatest sporting show on the planet. Convinced that sports can play a key role in character building, Coubertin, born into a French aristocratic family, conceived an international sports competition. He was a co-founder of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Athens hosted the first ever Olympic Games in 1896. When France became host for the second time in 1924, that was the last instance when Coubertin, who held the title of Baron, was actively involved in the organization of the spectacle.

Unfortunately, the man who created the show, died in obscurity in Geneva in 1937.

A century later when France is ready to conduct the Games in the grandest fashion, is Pierre de Coubertin just a memory? Do the people of France remember him?

"This is a hard question to answer," his great-great-grandniece Alexandra de Navacelle de Coubertin told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"In France, there are more than 600 places that have his name, sports stadium, streets, and schools, so he is definitely known and remembered, but since he lived over 100 years ago, people do not remember exactly what he did," she admitted. Alexandra is a part of the fourth generation of Coubertin's descendants.

In 2016, they decided to form the Pierre de Coubertin Family Association as a representative of the 30 descendants that exist today. "All the descendants of Pierre de Coubertin come from his sister Marie de Coubertin who he was very close to. After Marie's husband died, he took care of her and her children. He was therefore a second father to my direct family. "Since his death in 1937, there has always been a nephew of his at the IOC to represent his spirit. This role has been passed on from generation to generation." (PTI)

Women's boxing fights its way to parity with the men's game, just 12 years after its Olympic debut

COLORADO (USA), July 24: Charley Davison's husband and their three young children were already in bed back home on the east coast of England before she pulled on her headgear and stepped into the World Boxing ring in southern Colorado earlier this year.

The 30-year-old Davison was able to pursue her Olympic dreams half a world away from her family only because of the spectacular growth of women's boxing. In just over a decade, the sport has proliferated from its Olympic debut with only 36 fighters in three weight classes in London to become an equal part of the tournament in Paris, where half of the 248-fighter field will be women competing in a record six weight classes. The addition of a 54-kilogram bantamweight division at the Paris Olympics changed the game for fighters like Davison.

"After the Tokyo Olympics, if there wasn't going to be a 54 (division), I would have hung my gloves up," said Davison, a former youth champion who left

boxing for seven years before returning to get in shape after having kids.

"Because 51 (kilos) was getting too hard, and 57, I'm not quite big enough for that one, I feel," she added. "So 54 was a blessing. As soon as I heard that weight, I knew it was for me. Every kilo makes a difference. I know I'm not the only one who's grateful. I think it's ideal for a lot of women to have this many weight classes. It makes such a difference for the sport."

Davison fought for Britain in Tokyo, but lost early. Three years later, she has the opportunity to try again only because of the IOC's commitment to the sport's growth. Boxing essentially has reached gender parity along with the rest of the Olympic program, and dozens more women are getting a shot.

"Since I've started, especially on the international level, the level (of women's boxing) has raised incredibly," said Canada's Tammara Thibault, the middleweight world champion and an Olympic quarterfinalist in



Tokyo headed to her second Games. "That makes us all better, because we elevate each other. That's how a sport grows, and we're really growing right now." Women's boxing entranced athletes like Australia's Tiana Echegaray, who had never boxed just five years ago. She was 25 and working at a boring office job in the music business in Sydney when she threw herself into training — and now she's an Olympian.

"I think maybe the creative

side of me saw boxing as an art," said Echegaray, who studied music. "It's really pretty, you know? When you see really skilled boxers compete, it's the prettiest thing I've ever seen. It's so cool to watch."

"It's not just the sport itself, but the community around the sport," she added. "It's the people. Boxing teaches you so much about life. I'm so grateful that I found it now. I think I would have loved to have found it younger, but I don't think I

would have had the emotional maturity to get punched in the face and be all right with it."

Britain's Chantelle Reid was a teenage pugilism prodigy who returned this year after a lengthy break. She was bowled over by the sport's growth in her absence. "The level in women's boxing has increased massively in the six years" since her return, Reid said. "There's so much talent out there now. It just makes me push a little bit harder to be on top. It's exciting."

Sport science has come into the sport a lot, and everyone is just much more strong. They've all got that grit, whereas before it was more point-fighting boxing. No one really had that grit, but I'm seeing that a lot now."

Reid is among the many fighters in the Paris field who got hooked when they watched the inaugural women's boxing competition in London as girls.

"(Gold medalist) Nicola Adams and Katie Taylor, they've set a high standard now," Reid said. "They've set an amazing example for women's

boxing. We're just trying to reach that level now, and hopefully the next generation is that much better."

Indeed, women's boxing has changed dramatically in the 12 years since its Olympic debut in London — and not just on the amateur level.

The women's sport spent decades as a professional sideshow, with its fighters being paid a fraction of the men's purses and given a fraction of the respect. Although it hasn't reached the worldwide prominence of the men's sport, pro boxing is now a viable career path for hundreds of women in a way it never was before the Olympic tournaments sparked fan interest and tantalized top promoters.

On the first Saturday of the Olympics, two-time gold medalist Claressa Shields' WBC heavyweight title fight will headline a card in Detroit. On the second Saturday, Britain's Caroline Dubois and Uruguay's Maira Moneo will headline a show in England. (AP)

Archers aim to break medal jinx, aim for first Games medal in Paris

PARIS, July 24: A different year and another Olympics, but for Indian archers, the target will be the same -- fetching their first ever medal at the Games.

More or less regular at the Olympics since debuting back in 1988, the archers will kick off the nation's Paris campaign here on Thursday with the qualification rounds at the Les Invalides gardens here.

For the first time after London 2012, India will have a full six-member squad after both the men's and women's teams qualified on the basis of rankings. This means they will compete in all the five events.

Veterans Tarundeep Rai and Deepika Kumari, appearing in their fourth Olympics, will lead their young teammates, hoping to securing at least a top-10 finish in the qualification round to ensure a favourable draw.

Each archer will shoot 72 arrows and the scores in the qualification round of 128 athletes from 53 countries will decide the seeds for the main knockout competition beginning with the women's team finals on Sunday.

The qualifying round will be crucial for the Indians, who have often slipped in the seedings and ended up losing to heavyweights Korea, tipped to top the qualifications.

At the Tokyo Olympics, all the male archers finished outside the top-30 and got the ninth seeding as a team. Deepika, the sole woman archer there, also got a ninth place in rankings. Both ended up losing to top-seed Koreans in their respective quarters.

On form front, India will have high hopes from the men's team, which won a historic World Cup this year in Shanghai, upsetting Korea for the first time in a final.

They will have the experience in Rai and Tokyo Olympian Pravin Jadhav, while debutant Dhiraj Bommadevara will be on a high after beating Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist Mauro Nespoli of Italy en route a bronze at the World Cup Stage-3 in Antalya just a month back.

Individually, debutant Dhiraj is seen as a



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bright prospect as he has tasted success by winning the Asian Games team silver last year, albeit with different teammates.

Known to be "ice cool" in tough situations, Dhiraj would look to overcome the bitter memories of Hangzhou Asian Games where he botched up his release twice to exit in the individual quarters.

Deepika will fight against herself in a redemption act.

All eyes would be on her especially after her stunning comeback to win a World Cup Stage-1 silver in Shanghai in April this year, less than 16 months after becoming a mother.

Last time in Tokyo, An San of Korea was her nemesis as she went on to become the gold-medallist.

There is no An this time, but they have another Korean in Lim Si-hyeon who has defeated Deepika twice this year including in the Shanghai World Cup final.

"If she gets going, Deepika churns out perfect 10s at ease. But at the same time, she suffers from inconsistency and makes silly mistakes at crunch times. If she overcomes her mental blockade, there is no stopping her," India's high performance director Sanjeeva Singh said.

Dhiraj and Deepika, if they manage to top their ranking rounds, would be an exciting prospect for the recurve mixed team.

Dhiraj's composure and Deepika's skills would complement each other well at the highest level.

The women's team, on the other hand, will be low on experience barring Deepika. Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur, who have been Indian regulars in this Olympic cycle and won a World Cup Stage-4 bronze here in 2023, are slated for their respective Games debut.

They have together won the Asian Games bronze last year and will look to draw inspi-

ration from that.

Twenty-six-year-old Ankita, who hails from Bengal but represents Tata Academy, is relatively more experienced having won a clutch of World Cup team medals including a gold and silver, both in Paris in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

The archers Olympic build-up was marred by their foreign coach Baek Woong Ki's return to India after not getting accreditation to enter the Games.

The South Korean, who was contracted by the Archery Association of India for the Olympics at an approximate annual contract of ₹ one crore, had accompanied the team to their 10-day preparatory camp in Jaux.

But he had to return after AAI failed to procure an accreditation for him as the sports body was engaged in a blame game with national federation (IOA).

While there would be no Baek, India will have men's and women's team coaches in Sonam Singh Bhutia (Army) and Purnima Mahato (Tata) whose archers have made the side.

In absence of Baek, it remains to be seen how the Indians will cope with crunch moments especially while taking on arch-nemesis Korea in the knockouts.

Indian archers have never been able to go past the quarterfinal hurdle.

The script has been the same all these years, barring in Sydney 2000 where India could not qualify for the Games.

In terms of cumulative performance, the best ever show was at the last Olympics in Tokyo where the India men's team, mixed team and Deepika individually, all fell by the wayside in the quarters.

India were awarded the team quotas after topping the men's and women's rankings among non-qualified nations in the Olympic cycle.

The men's team finals will be on Monday, while the individual eliminations will get underway on Tuesday.

The mixed team finals are slated for next Friday, followed by women and individual finals over the same weekend. (PTI)

It's a now-or-never situation for me: Tarundeep Rai



PARIS, July 24: It's a "now-or-never situation for me", says veteran Indian archer Tarundeep Rai as he seeks to win a maiden Olympic medal in his fourth appearance at the Games while also serving as the team's unofficial mentor in Paris.

The 40-year-old Rai has won medals in every championships at the global and continental level but not the Olympics.

He has two silver at the World Championships (2005, 2019), nine World Cup medals, including three gold, a silver and a bronze in Asian Games, two silver and a bronze in Asian Championships.

"It's emotional every day. It's the fourth time. It's a now-or-never situation for me, and that's what I tell my teammates too. Maybe someone playing his first or second Olympics should think like it's now or never. You have to put in an effort as if it's going to be your last," Rai told PTI in an interview.

The veteran archer from Sikkim was part of the Indian teams at the 2004 Athens, 2012 London and 2021 Tokyo Olympics. He exited in the first round in the individual event in Athens, and in the second round in both 2012 and 2021 editions.

In Tokyo, the men's team, which had Tarundeep Rai in it its ranks, reached the quarterfinals. "Olympics is a dream for everyone, and I'm no different. You need an extreme level of preparation for this, and you have to put in a lot of hard work to qualify and win a medal. The colour of your sweat sometimes turns red," Rai said ahead of the Paris Games.

"This Olympics, I'm playing with a three-year gap. Positive sign. Many changes. Tokyo, whatever I lacked, the objective is to rectify. Will do my best," said Rai who hails from Namchi in Sikkim.

More or less regular at the Olympics since debuting back in 1988, the Indian archers will be aiming to fetch their maiden medal as they began the country's campaign here on Thursday with the qualification rounds.

"There are always expectations. We had the potential to win, but for small margins, we have returned empty-handed," Rai rued.

"We have kept that in control (this time). Coaches, management, players' mentality, we have kept that in check. Everyone is in their best form."

For the first time since London 2012, India will have a full six-member squad after both the men's and women's teams qualified on the basis of rankings. This means they will compete in all the five events. Rai failed to make it to the Hangzhou Asian Games last year and said it was a wake-up call for him.

"Yes, the Asian Games was a realization period and gave me a lot of positive vibes. If that did not happen, maybe I would not have made it to my fourth Olympics and reached here.

"That shock made me aware of my weaknesses and what I needed to work on. I took that positively and worked on it."

Rai said he has set up an academy in Sikkim to pass on his knowledge to the future generation.

"Coaching or not, you have to give something back to the sport. This is one thing we have lacked. Transfer of technique, transfer of experience. Senior archers leaving should come back. This gap we have to fill up. (PTI)

IOC awards 2034 Winter Games to Salt Lake City; Utah last hosted the Olympics 32 years ago

PARIS, July 24: Salt Lake City will be an Olympics host again after the IOC formally awarded the 2034 Winter Games to the United States bid on Wednesday. The capital city of Utah was the only candidate since the International Olympic Committee gave Salt Lake City exclusive negotiating rights last year in the process that was fast-tracked for 2034 and led to U.S. being awarded the games.

The campaign team presenting the bid on stage to IOC members included the Governor of Utah Spencer Cox, Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall and Alpine ski great Lindsey Vonn. Back home, a 3 a.m. public watch party gathered to see a broadcast from Paris.

Salt Lake City's final approval in a vote by those members will bring back the Winter Games 32 years after first hosting in 2002. (AP)

Ollie Pope reckons England can make 600 Test runs in a day's play



LONDON, July 24: Ollie Pope reckons England can breach the 600-run mark inside a day's play in Test cricket while ruling out any let up to their ultra aggressive 'Bazball' approach with the bat.

England hold the record for the most runs scored in a day when they piled up 588 for 6 on the second day of the Manchester Test against India in 1936, and Pope believes the current side under Ben Stokes can eclipse that.

"Sometimes we might score 280 to 300 in a day but that's OK and probably because we're reading situations. There might also be a day where we go and get 500 to 600 at some point in the future as well. And that's a cool thing to have," Pope was quoting as saying by 'BBC Sport'.

In December 2022, England smashed 506 runs on the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan in Rawalpindi.

England are currently 2-0 up in the three-match Test series against the West Indies after they followed up a victory by an innings at Lord's with a comprehensive 241-run win at Trent Bridge, Nottingham last week.

The third and final Test starts on Friday at Edgbaston.

The win in Nottingham was the first time England scored 400-plus in both innings of a Test match with totals of 416 and 425. Pope (121 in first innings) was one of three England centurions in the second Test alongside Joe Root and Harry Brook.

Pope said there might be times England batters will have to "manage the game a little bit more" but that their attacking Bazball style under coach Brendon McCullum and captain Stokes has now become second nature.

"I got asked on day one at Trent Bridge 'do you get told to play like that?'. No, we don't. It's just our natural games and the way we go about it," Pope said. (PTI)

Indian women team's mantra has been to take one game at a time: Deepti Sharma

DAMBULLA (SRI LANKA), July 24: Senior player Deepti Sharma said India's mantra in the Women's T20 Asia Cup has been to take one game at a time as conditions haven't really changed from the last time the team played here.

India marched into the semifinals with a thumping 82-run win over Nepal on Tuesday after fireworks with the bat from Shafali Verma (81 off 48 balls) and Deepti's impressive 3/13 with the ball. India amassed 178 for 3 after batting first and then restricted Nepal to a paltry 98 for 9 in their 20 overs.

"From the first game we are pretty confident about each (match) and every situation and the condition as well. We are looking forward to semi-final as well," Deepti told the media after the match. She said not much has changed in terms of the nature of the pitches and conditions in



Sri Lanka from the team's previous 2022. "Nothing (has) changed, just

keep it very simple and just focus for another match. I played (here) last time also and yeah, nothing changed," she said.

"We (are) only backing ourselves and you know, conditions are really (the) same."

The right-arm off-spinner is topping the bowling charts with eight wickets in three matches and she credited her success to her readiness to bowl in all situations.

"I (am) always ready to bowl in any kind of situation. I like to take the challenges from the front. (It's) nothing, just (that) I'm enjoying each and every match, plan accordingly and what we discussed in the meeting. I just apply myself," she said.

"If we win the toss, it's (a) positive (approach) from the upfront. As a batting unit also, we are doing really well from the game one and we finished also well," she added. (PTI)

Neeraj's advice boosting his confidence, high jumper Kushare aims final round in Paris

NEW DELHI, July 24: "Just focus on training and don't get scared by the fame of the opponents" is the mantra Paris Games-bound high jumper Sarvesh Kushare learnt from none other than Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra.

Kushare said Chopra's advice has boosted his confidence as at one point in time this year, he was not even sure of making the Paris Games cut. He made it to the Olympics through world ranking quota. The Paris Games automatic qualification mark was 2.33m.

From doing practice on fodder-made makeshift mat to becoming the first Indian high jumper to qualify for the Olympics, Kushare has come a long way.

"I have not met Neeraj bhai for a long time, but when we met last time, he told me to focus on training and not be afraid of the fame of the opponents. He always keeps giving important tips," Kushare told PTI Bhasha in an interview from Poland where he is training along with other Paris-bound Indian athletes.

"He (Chopra) is my idol and he gave us confidence by winning the first ever Olympic medal in athletics. We also want to be like him and bring pride to the country," said the high jumper, who hails from Deogaon village, a few kilometres from Nashik in Maharashtra.

With a personal best of 2.27m and season's best of 2.25m, making it to the final round in the Paris Games can be a realistic target. The 29-year-old, who is making his Olympic debut, though, claimed that he has been jumping over 2.30m mark frequently during practice.

"It is only my height that is small but I



am also very strong from within. There is no fear of seeing my opponent's personality. It is important to be in top form at the right time and have faith in your preparation," Kushare, who stands at 5 feet 9 inches, said.

"Right now the focus is on the qualification round which will be held on August 7 at 10 am. The first goal is to make it to the finals. I will plan for the rest later."

Kushare, who is currently training at Spala, Poland, along with other Olympic-

bound Indian athletes, started the sport on a makeshift mat made of waste from corn which was used as fodder for cows.

"There was no high jump mat in our village, so the corn fodder collected for the cow was used as a mat with a foam cover on it. It was used as a landing area and we used to do practice on it," he recalled.

"I started playing under the guidance of my school's PT teacher R W Jadhav sir. Then I went to the Army Sports Institute

and also got support from Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ) which sent me to America for training." He became a father nine months ago but he will be able to see his newborn daughter only after the Olympics.

"I have a nine-month-old daughter but I have not met her since November. Initially, I stayed with her for just five days and now I will meet her only after the Olympics," he said.

It will, however, be a tough task for Kushare to be in the medal bracket in Paris.

At least nine athletes have jumped 2.33m or above in the last one year.

Qatar's Mutaz Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy shared the gold medal in Tokyo with an identical jump of 2.37m. Tamberi is the leading the chart this season with 2.37m while Barshim has been struggling a bit with a season best of 2.31m.

At one point in time, Kushare, who won gold with a jump of 2.25m in the National Inter-State Championship in Panchkula in June, was uncertain whether he would qualify for the Paris Olympics or not.

"Before June, my ranking had gone down to 36 because I could not play in May when competitions were going on all over the world. I was afraid whether I would be able to play in the Olympics or not. I was under a lot of pressure but then I qualified by performing consistently well in Malaysia, Kazakhstan and Panchkula," he said.

"I had a lot of problems due to an ankle injury but now my confidence has increased by practising well consistently.

Talking about his daily training routine at Spala, he said, "Practice includes gym, speed work, strength training. The recovery sessions here are very good. We just rest in our free time because it is very important to give rest to the body." He said when asked about his routine.

"I talk to a sports psychologist regularly for mental preparation. He tells me how to deal with pressure and how to keep myself mentally fresh. I do yoga and meditation every morning."

The Indian athletics team has been training at Spala from July 8 and will leave for Paris on July 29. (PTI)