China's Xi calls on world powers to help Russia and Ukraine resume direct dialogue

 France's Macron keeps prime minister in place for 'stability of the country' after chaotic election

Jharkhand: Hemant Soren govt wins trust vote, 11 including ex-CM Champai sworn in as ministers

'Bharat Jodo Yatra' was inspired by Rajasekhara Reddy's 2003 yatra across Andhra: Rahul



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DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024

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Stronger ties between our nations will greatly benefit our people: PM Rahul's clarion call for aid to Assam flood-hit

MOSCOW, July 8: In his first trip since the start of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday travelled to Russia to hold summit talks with President Vladimir Putin -- a visit that is being seen as having a wider geopolitical context and signalling.

Shortly after landing in Moscow, Modi said he is looking forward to deepening bilateral partnership in futuristic areas and that stronger ties between India and Russia will "greatly benefit our people".

India seeks to play a "supportive role" for a peaceful and stable region, the prime minister said in his departure statement.

Modi was received at the Vnukovo-II airport by Russia's first deputy prime minister Denis Manturov. The Russian first deputy minister also accompanied the Indian prime minister to his hotel from the airport, officials said.

Manturov had received Chinese



president Xi Jinping during his visit

to Russia as well. On Tuesday, Modi will co-chair the 22nd India-Russia annual summit with president Putin, interact with the members of the Indian community and visit the Rosatom pavilion at an exhibition.

The prime minister is also sched-

uled to lay a wreath at the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier'

The focus of the 22nd India-Russia annual summit is likely to be boosting bilateral cooperation in the areas of energy, security, trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges. The Ukraine conflict is set to figure (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

He also urged the Centre to extend all possible help and support to the State expeditiously. "I stand with the people of Assam, I am their soldier in Parliament, and I urge the Central govt

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 8: Leader of

Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha

Rahul Gandhi on Monday said that

he stands with the people of Assam

and is their 'soldier in Parliament'.

to extend all possible help and sup-

port to the state expeditiously," he

wrote on micro-blogging site X. He further said that Assam needs a comprehensive and compassionate vision - proper relief, rehabilitation, and compensation in the short term, and a pan-Northeast water management authority to do everything necessary to control floods in the long-term.

extreme devastation caused by flooding in Assam is



Flood situation remains grim

Relief camps have sufficient essential items: Himanta

children like 8-year old Avinash being taken away from us. My heartfelt condolences to all the bereaved families across the state," he added. The LoP also said that Assam Congress leaders apprised him of the situation on ground where over 24 lakh people have people displaced and more than 60 people lost their lives.

Meanwhile, the flood situation in the state remained grim on Monday with a population of nearly 23 lakh affected in 28 districts as the water level of most rivers continue to flow above the danger mark.

As per flood report, the death

and storm was 78 with 66 succumbing in the deluge alone. Gandhi was scheduled to arrive

at Silchar on Monday and visit a flood relief camp at Fulertal in Cachar district en route to Ma-

On the other hand, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that all relief camps in floodaffected districts are well maintained and stocked with enough essential items till the situation

He said that the safety and hygiene of flood relief camps was a priority of the government with my team reaching out to all people staying there to gather real-time

Currently, nearly 23 lakh people in 3,446 villages of 28 districts were affected while 68,432.75 hectares of cropland have been inundated by (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

After the ambush on Monday,

the terrorists fled into the

retaliated.

nearby forest as the

army, assisted by po-

lice and paramilipersonnel.

An exchange of

fire between the

terrorists and secu-

rity forces ensued,

with reinforcements

trafficking racket, rescue minors

Police busted an inter-state human trafficking racket, arresting four persons hailing from Assam, Bihar, and West Bengal, rescuing two minor girls and preventing the abduction of another, a senior official said. Guwahati Police commissioner Diganta Barah on Monday said an FIR was lodged at Bhangagarh police station on June 29 by a woman who said her daughter and another minor girl had gone missing.

According to the woman's complaint, her daughter had been demanding a new mobile phone and, upon refusal, went to her friend's

"Thereafter, both the girls went missing. We immediately launched a probe to trace them," Barah said. He said while investigation was on, one person called the brother of the victim and demanded ₹ 30,000 for her release.

"The call was traced to Purnia in

GUWAHATI, July 8: Guwahati Bihar. Consequently, a police team from Bhangagarh was dispatched to Purnia from where they apprehended the caller and rescued both the girls," he said. Commissioner Barah said the girls, planning to travel to Delhi, encountered a man at Guwahati railway station who

> "That person handed over the two girls to a couple in Basistha locality of Guwahati. Along with another woman from Panjipara in West Bengal, they took the girls to Siliguri by bus and sold them to another person in Bihar for ₹ 1,10,000," he added.

offered to help them.

The girls were then transported to Purnia and forced to work in a brothel at Rauta in Bihar.

sufficient evidence against the culprits, police arrested four persons," he added. Investigation also revealed that the woman from West Bengal had been staying with the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Guwahati Police bust inter-state KAAC CEM adviser clarifies purpose of Sixth Schedule amid criticism

DIPHU, July 8: Elwin Teron, adviser to the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), has clarified the purpose, powers, and limitations of the Sixth Schedule following criticism stemming from a recent two-day workshop organized by 'Team Karbi Anglong' last Friday and Saturday.

Speaking at a press conference held at Hambi Hotel, Teron addressed criticisms made by JI Kathar, President of the All Party Leaders Conference (APHLC), regarding misconceptions about the Sixth Schedule.

"Kathar is misleading the public by suggesting that the Sixth Schedule is robust in its powers for protecting scheduled tribes and needs strengthening. He also proposes renaming Panchayati Raj as Ser Van Kep and other names," Teron stated. Teron traced the origins of the



Sixth Schedule back to the significant debate of 1969, when Article 244(A) was introduced. This allowed Karbi and Dimasa leaders to choose between remaining under the Sixth Schedule or opting for Article 244(A).

"In a meeting at Haflong on February 3, 1970, Assam ministers assured that legislative and executive powers, based on the Ashoka Mehta

Recommendation, would granted in hilly areas for rapid development," Teron recalled. "Karbi and Dimasa leaders subsequently agreed to abide by the Ashoka Mehta recommendation in Assam during a meeting in Diphu on February 20, 1979." Teron acknowledged that while initially hopeful that the Sixth Schedule would suf-

fice for (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Terrorist ambush in JK's Kathua claims lives of four soldiers, six injured

KATHUA/JAMMU, July 8: Ter- following a similar confrontation rorists ambushed an army truck in on June 12 and 13 that left two terremote Machedi area of Jammu rorists and a CRPF jawan dead. and Kashmir's Kathua district killing four personnel and injuring six others, officials said on Mon-

The attack occurred when terrorists targeted the Army vehicle with a grenade and gunfire during a routine patrol on the Machedi-Kindli-Malhar road near Badnota

imately 150 km from Kathua town, at around 3:30 pm, they said.

village in Lohai Malhar, approx-

quickly dispatched to the area to neutralise the

It is the second major attack in

attackers - believed to be three in number and heavily armed - who may have recently infiltrated from across the border, Director General of Police R R (CONTD, ON PAGE-2) Kathua district within one month,

Tripura successfully completes first kidney transplant

AGARTALA, July 8: A successful kidney transplant procedure was performed on a 20-year-old man at the state-run GBP Hospital in Agartala on Monday, in a first for Tripura, an official said.

Subham Sutradhar, a resident of Ramnagar who has been suffering from kidney ailments, met chief minister Manik Saha recently during his 'Mukhyamantri Samepeshu' programme and sought help for transplanting one of his kidneys.

Saha, who is a doctor by profession, took the matter up with the

GBP Hospital, officials said. "Following a request from the CM, we signed an agreement with Shija Hospital and Research Institute (SHRI) in Manipur to start a kidney transplant unit. Today, a group of surgeons from SHRI performed (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

EC allows Sharad Pawar-led NCP-SP to accept donations

NEW DELHI, July 8: The Election Commission on Monday allowed the Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar to accept donations keeping in mind the forthcoming assembly polls in Maharashtra.

The Sharad Pawar-led outfit had requested the commission to certify the status of the party for it to accept voluntary contributions from the public. The poll panel has authorised the party to "accept any

amount of contribution voluntarily offered to it by any person or company other than a government company" under the relevant sections of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which govern the contribution to all political parties.

An eight-member delegation of the NCP-SP party led by its working president Supriya Sule met the Election Commission on Monday.

"Earlier, we could not receive cheques as contributions to our party. We were not getting tax benefits for contributions like other political parties. We want to fight this (Assembly) election transparently, using only white money. I am grateful to the Election Commission for granting us a letter allowing us to raise money legally and transparently," Sule told reporters here.

The authorisation to the NCP-SP to accept donations

will be applicable till the final disposal of the petition in the Supreme Court against the Election Commission's decision.

In July last year, Ajit Pawar led a rebellion against his uncle Sharad Pawar and claimed the symbol as well as the party name Nationalist Congress Party, citing the support of over two-thirds of the outfit's legislators in the Maharashtra assembly.

The Election Commission upheld his claim and asked the Sharad Pawar-led faction to pick a new name as an interim measure in view of the Lok Sabha elections.

The authorisation to the NCP-SP to accept donations will be applicable till the final disposal of the petition in the Supreme Court against the Election Commission

The Sharad Pawar-led NCP-SP contested 10 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra and won eight, while Ajit Pawar's NCP contested five seats and managed to win

Sule said the NCP-SP also raised the issue of similar appearing poll symbols such as the "trumpet" and the "man blowing trumpet". The Election Commission had allotted the poll symbol "man blowing trumpet" to the NCP-SP. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

The world's sea surface in June was also the highest ever recorded for the month

Sanctity of NEET-UG breached: Supreme Court

NEW DELHI, July 8: Observing that the sanctity of the NEET-UG if the leak of its question paper has 2024 has been "breached", the Supreme Court on Monday said a re-test may be ordered if the entirety of the process is affected and sought details from the National Testing Agency and the CBI including the timing and manner of the paper leak, besides the numbers of wrongdoers, to know the

extent of its effect. "Let us not be in self-denial. Selfdenial is only adding to the problem," a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud told the Centre and the NTA, which conducts the prestigious test, in a string of strongly-worded observations.

"One thing which is very clear is that the leak has taken place. That the sanctity of the exam has been breached is beyond doubt. The question is how widespread is the leak," said the bench which also comprised Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

Posing a volley of searching queries, the bench said a re-test has to be ordered if the breach in sanctity affects the entirety of the process. The court said if the sanc-

if the leak of its question paper has been propagated through social media, then a re-test has to be ordered. It said the extent of question paper leak and the beneficiaries across geographical boundaries have to be ascertained before the top court may order a re-test in the controversy-ridden exam which was taken up by 23.33 lakh students at 4,750 centres in 571 cities including in 14 cities overseas.

It said if the breach was confined to specific areas and it was possible to identify the wrongdoers, then it may not be appropriate to order for a re-test in an examination of such a massive scale.

The apex court said it will have to scrutinise whether the alleged breach has taken place at a "systemic level", whether it has affected the integrity of the entire exam process and whether it was possible to segregate the beneficiaries of the fraud with untainted candidates

who undertook the test on May 5. "In a situation where a breach in sanctity affects the entirety of the process and it is not possible to segregate the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Elderly woman injured in road accident **HT Correspondent**

JORHAT, July 8: An elderly woman was injured and admitted to JMCH for treatment after the car she was traveling in with her son was hit by another car driven by a student at Thana Chariali in Jorhat.

According to a police source, the male student, who was driving the car, was allegedly in an inebriated condition. He was accompanied by two other girls, one currently studying at the same institute and the other an ex-student.

The incident occurred on Sunday night when the car carrying the three individuals was traveling from the Na-Ali side and collided with the other car coming from KB Road while crossing Chariali and moving towards Jail road.

The driver of the other car, along with his elderly mother, claimed that they were crossing Chariali after the traffic light turned green when suddenly the speeding car crashed into their vehicle at a right

The collision was severe enough to activate the airbags of the speeding car. The man mentioned that if the speeding vehicle had hit their car directly in the middle, the con-

June warmest on record; every month since July 2023 breached 1.5 deg C threshold

NEW DELHI, July 8: With millions of people across five continents experiencing scorching heat last month, the European Union's (EU) climate agency, Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), confirmed on Monday that June was the warmest on record.

It also marked the 12th consecutive month of global temperatures reaching 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average.

According to scientists at C3S, every month since June last year has been the warmest such month on

In January, the world completed an entire year with the mean surface air temperature exceeding the 1.5degree Celsius threshold. June was the 12th consecutive month with monthly average temperatures above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial



average. At the 2015 UN climate talks in Paris, world leaders committed to limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. However, a permanent breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius limit specified in the Paris Agreement

refers to long-term warming over a 20 or 30-year period. Earth's global surface temperature has already increased by around 1.2 degrees Celsius compared to the average in 1850-1900 due to the rapidly-increasing concentration of greenhouse gases -- primarily carbon dioxide and methane -- in the atmosphere. This warming is considered to be the reason behind record droughts, wildfires and floods worldwide. According to new data, June

2024 was the warmest on record, with an average surface air temperature of 16.66 degrees Celsius, 0.67 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average for the month and 0.14 degrees Celsius above the previous high set in June 2023.

"The month was 1.5 degrees Celsius above the estimated June average for 1850-1900, the designated pre-industrial reference period, making (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Cronyism' is Modi govt's primary economic policy: Congress



NEW DELHI, July 8: Accusing the Modi government of practising "cronyism", the Congress on Monday said companies must expand but at the same time, the government has a responsibility to ensure oligopolies or monopolies do not emerge and that undue advantage arising out of access to political power is not exercised.

Congress general secretary, in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh alleged that market concentration continues to grown under Prime Minister Modi's watch, and has reached a new high in key industries such as telecom, airlines, cement, steel, and tyres.

He also shared on X a media report which claimed market concentration continued to increase in India's key industries as top players grabbed a larger share of the business in 2023-24 either through organic growth or acquisition.

In his post on X, Ramesh said, "Cronyism is the nonbiological Prime Minister's primary economic policy. Market concentration continues to grow under Mr. Modi's watch, and has reached a new high in key indus-

tries such as telecom, airlines, cement, steel, and tyres." "Revenue share of the top two firms has risen across industries in the last two years. Most industries in India are either moderately or (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

THE HILLS TIMES

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Markets end on flat note amid muted trade

MUMBAI, July 8: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended almost flat on Monday amid a lacklusture trade as investors preferred to stay on the sidelines in the absence of any fresh trigger.

Weak cues from Asian markets also added to the muted trend in domestic equities.

After beginning the trade on a weak note, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 36.22 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at 79,960.38. During the day, it went lower by 264.77 points or 0.33 per cent to 79,731.83.

The NSE Nifty dipped 3.30 points or 0.01 per cent to

Among the Sensex pack, Titan, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra and Bajaj Finserv were the biggest laggards. ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Nes-

tle, HCL Technologies and Tata Motors were among the gainers. "The market is turning to a con-

solidation phase due to the absence

Tata Consumer Products to accelerate growth of core businesses



KOLKATA, July 8: Leading FMCG company Tata Consumer Products Limited (TCPL) will continue to invest in its brands and accelerate the growth momentum of the core businesses, tea, coffee and salt, the company's annual report said.

In the annual report for 2023-24, TCPL said that to strengthen and accelerate core businesses, contribution of modern trade to total sales within the country was 14 per cent driven by the growth of new businesses

During 2023-24, the company continued to undertake focused brand-building efforts and launched several products. TCPL said that central to the company's growth strategy was on focusing on the core businesses of tea, coffee and salt.

TCPL (formerly Tata Tea) said the company strengthened the tea and coffee businesses and also created new vectors of growth. The company was also successful in driving profitable growth in the key international markets of UK,

USA and Canada. The company's focus on innovation lay in its belief that it is a strong strategic pillar and plays a significant role in meeting future ambitions, both on top line (revenue) and bottom line (profit).

TCPL said in the report, "We aspire to be a leading player in the FMCG industry by expanding our play in the existing categories and venturing into new spaces", adding that the company has taken both organic and inorganic routes to capitalise on industry trends and tap new consumers and markets.

The company clocked a revenue of more than Rs 15,000 crore during the last fiscal. TCPL acquired Capital Foods and Organic India to address the needs of the diverse consumer spectrum.

In the last four years, TCPL's compounded annual growth rate of the tea business in India was nine per cent while revenue from coffee grew 29 per cent year-on-year.

The CAGR of salt during the last four years was 17 per cent, while that of packaged foods in India was 31 per cent. (PTI)



of major triggers to support the current premium valuation in the near term, prompting investors to book some profits. The earnings season is around the corner, and the initial expectation is subdued," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research,

Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.22 per cent while midcap dipped 0.14 per

Among the indices, consumer durables tanked 1.46 per cent, metal (0.80 per cent), telecommunication (0.78 per cent), services (0.69 per cent), auto (0.63 per cent)

Energy, capital goods, oil & gas, IT and teck were the winners.

and consumer discretionary (0.53

"Due to lack of any fresh trigger, markets witnessed a range-bound session throughout the day and

select profit-taking in banking, telecom and realty shares. Weak Asian cues also weighed on sentiment, while stretched valuations could see investors maintain caution for sometime," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower.

European markets were trading in the positive territory. US markets ended with gains on Friday.

In a volatile session on Friday, the broader NSE Nifty continued its record-breaking run and inched up 21.70 points or 0.09 per cent to close at its lifetime high of 24,323.85. The BSE benchmark, however, dropped 53.07 points or 0.07 per cent to settle at 79,996.60.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.97 per cent to USD 85.70 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹ 1,241.33 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. (PTI)

High prices of vegetables causing pain to consumers

KOLKATA, **July 8:** Retail prices for vegetables, eggs, and poultry meat remain high in Kolkata markets, causing suffering for the common man. Tomato prices have soared to Rs 80-100 per kg from Rs 45-50 a month ago, while Brinjal is selling for Rs 110-140 per kg, a jump of nearly 150 per cent from early June, greengrocers in several markets in the city said.

Prices of several other vegetables such as bitter gourd, green chilli and bottle gourd have also increased by an average of 50 per cent. Egg and poultry meat prices have risen by 20-30 per cent in local markets.

"Now tomatoes in Bengal are coming from other states. There is a short supply of tomatoes from Bangalore and Himachal Pradesh due to heat waves and heavy rain. The production was hit due to heat waves and disruptions in logistics due to heavy rain," a source in West Bengal Vendors Association

Agriculture Minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay said that people are reduced support for farmers in fertilisers and transport subsidies, while climatic conditions have also aggravated the situation.

"The West Bengal government continues to support our farmers who are facing a rise in input costs. On the other hand, the Centre is reducing various subsidies. Hence, both farmers and commoners are suffering," said Chattopadhyay, also a Trinamool Congress leader.

He said that the state government has a retail distribution network, 'Sufal Bangla,' the outlets of which sell vegetables and food articles at reasonable prices.

"In Sufal Bangla, tomatoes are priced at Rs 65 per kg against a minimum of Rs 80 in the retail market. Bitter gourd is sold at Rs 72 per kg, and brinjal at Rs 102 per kg, which are 10-20 per cent cheaper. We are planning to increase the number of outlets from 484 now," Chattopadhyay said.

"Over the last three weeks, the prices of vegetables, eggs, and poultry have surged. Tomato prices also inching higher. Inflation in es-

pain in one way or another," Manashi Sanyal, a homemaker, said.

Food inflation likely intensified in June from the 8.7 per cent rate observed in April and May. According to Crisil's food plate cost tracker, the cost of a home-cooked vegetarian meal increased by 10 per cent year-on-year, reaching a six-month high, while the cost of non-vegetarian meals hit a sevenmonth peak.

The RBI has consistently expressed concerns over rising food prices. Retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index moderated to a one-year low of 4.75 per cent

However, inflation in the food basket was 8.69 per cent, marginally down from 8.70 per cent in

However, fresh harvests from southern states are set to hit markets soon, which should ease prices within days, the consumer affairs ministry officials expect, adding that summer sowing of key have doubled, and onion prices are vegetables is expanding robustly

AICTE and OPPO India launch 'Generation Green' campaign

GUWAHATI, July 8: The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has partnered with OPPO India to launch the 'Generation Green' campaign, a 100-day initiative aimed at promoting green skills among the youth. Managed by 1M1B (One Million for One Billion), the campaign will provide 5,000 internship opportunities across colleges in India, making OPPO India the first electronics manufacturing

company to offer such internships through AICTE. In light of LinkedIn's Global Green Skills Report 2023, which indicates that job seekers with green skills are 29% more likely to be hired, this initiative is designed to cultivate climate-conscious skills in students, preparing them for future job opportunities.

"AICTE is proud to join hands with OPPO India for the Green Internship Programme," said Dr. TG Sitharam, Chairman of AICTE. "This is a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their skills and contribute to sustainability efforts, addressing environmental challenges and contributing towards an eco-friendly world. This campaign is a part of the 1 Crore Internships mission of AICTE, Ministry of Education, Government of India, and supports the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development

The programme is open to students from all streams, both technical and non-technical. Interns will engage in hands-on activities designed to enhance their skills in project management, sustainability practices, effective communication, collaboration, research, and data analysis, thereby boosting their overall employability. Participants will also take the Green Pledge and partake in awareness sessions, esurveys, and Green Day celebrations.

"At OPPO India, we align with the Net-Zero vision of the Government of India. Our goal is to create a



macro movement towards sustainability driven by the power of youth," said Rakesh Bhardwaj, Head of Public Affairs at OPPO India. "We are nurturing 5,000 sustainability champions who will influence the next generation of changemakers. Through this programme, we aim to equip at least one million students nationally with the knowledge and values necessary to support a sustainable community. We are delighted to partner with AICTE in this transformative initiative and will continue to amplify its impact through our collective efforts."

Dr. Buddha Chandrasekhar, Chief Coordinating Officer, AICTE, added, "The AICTE internship portal hosts over 5 million internships, with a target to reach 10 million by 2025. We are pleased to partner with OPPO India to offer 5,000 sustainability internships. Balancing development with sustainability is crucial for India. Engaging youth in effective e-waste management is essential, as their commitment and innovation can help build a cleaner, sustainable future. Students participating in these internships may also

Modi-led NDA govt should focus on raising farm productivity and improving supply chain: Goyal

NEW DELHI, July 8: RBI's monetary policy committee member Ashima Goyal has said the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led-NDA government in its third term should focus on raising farm productivity and improving supply chain to reduce volatility in food prices.

Goyal further said the prospects for robust growth and falling inflation continue with the return of a stable conservative government that will allow coordination of monetary and fiscal policy in the best interests of the country.

"Since the economy is doing well, continuity is very important. Feasible reforms that improve the supply-side and build on technology and youth advantage are required," she told PTI. Goyal emphasised that capacity needs to expand in health, education, environment, courts, policing as well as in infrastructure.

"Rising agricultural productivity and strong supply chains are necessary to reduce volatility in food prices," she said, adding that many of these require good coordination with the states.

Replying to a question on retail inflation, Goyal said policy has delivered on both low inflation and a robust growth recovery in the past



few years partly because it did not allow real interest rates to deviate from equilibrium levels. "In my view nominal rates therefore need to fall with inflation to prevent real rates rising.

"The majority view (RBI MPC members) wants to wait and watch for longer to ensure inflation is falling sustainably," she said.

Retail inflation was 4.75 per cent in May. The RBI, which has been mandated to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent (with margin of 2 per cent on either side), mainly factors in CPI while arriving at its monetary policy.

On a question concerning the correlation between coalition governments and economic reforms, she said political stability does enable a government to take a long-term view and therefore gives better results over time.

"But a stable coalition can be equally effective," she said, adding that the recent elections and the smooth formation of a well-functioning coalition point to the deep roots of Indian democracy.

She pointed out that the two chief ministers (N Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar) in the current NDA coalition are committed to development, which aligns well with the primary objective of the NDA government as Naidu's TDP won the election on a development plank contrasted with the populism of the opposition.

"The partnership will also increase the secular credentials of the NDA government," she argued. With support from N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which won 16 and 12 seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, respectively, and other alliance partners, the NDA has crossed the halfway mark to form the government at the Centre. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Stronger ties between our

in the discussions. In the talks, Modi is expected to urge the Russian side to end recruitment of Indians as support staff to the Russian military and ensure the return of those still operating in the force. "Landed in Moscow. Looking forward to further deepening the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between our nations, especially in futuristic areas of cooperation," Modi said on 'X'. "Stronger ties between our nations will greatly benefit our people," he said. It is Modi's first trip to Russia since 2019, the first after the start of the Ukraine conflict in February 2022 and the first in Modi's third term as the prime minister. Russian president Putin is set to host a private dinner for Modi tonight.

"PM is set to hold substantive discussions with president Vladimir Putin to take forward the special partnership between the two countries. He will also interact with the Indian community in Russia," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on 'X'. The Indian prime minister was accorded a guard of honour at the airport. He was given a warm welcome outside The Carlton Hotel in Moscow by members of the Indian diaspora and a group of Russian artists who danced to the tune of Hindi songs. "A memorable welcome in Moscow! I thank the Indian community for their affection," Modi said in another post on 'X'. "The special and privileged strategic partnership between India and Russia has advanced over the past 10 years, including in the areas of energy, security, trade, investment, health, education, culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges," Modi said in his departure statement. "I look forward to reviewing all aspects of bilateral cooperation with my friend president Vladimir Putin and sharing perspectives on various regional and global issues," he said. "We seek to play a supportive role for a peaceful and stable region," he said without making any specific references. New Delhi has been stoutly defending its "special and privileged strategic partnership" with Russia and maintained the momentum in the ties notwithstanding the Ukraine conflict. India has not yet condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine and consistently pitched for resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. (PTI)

Rahul's clarion call for

the second wave of floods. Dhubri was the worst hit with 7,54,791 affected, followed by Cachar with 1,77,928 and Barpeta with 1,34,328 suffering in the swirling water. Altogether 53,689 people have taken shelter in 269 relief camps while 3,15,520 non-relief camp inmates have been provided with relief materials. The Brahmaputra was flowing above the danger mark at Nimatighat, Tezpur and Dhubri.

Other rivers that have breached the red mark are Burhi Dihing in Khowang, Dikhou in Sivasagar, Disang in Nanglamuraghat, Dhansiri in Numaligarh, Kopili in Dharamtul, Beki in Barpeta, Sankosh in Golakganj, Barak in BP Ghat and Kushiyara in Karimganj. Multiple agencies, including NDRF, SDRF and local administration, have been carrying out relief and rescue operations with 171 boats deployed in different parts. Altogether 70 people and 459 cattle were rescued in the last 24 hours by different agencies. Damage to roads, bridges, Anganwadi centres and fishery ponds, have been reported from across the state. (With inputs from PTI) Guwahati Police bust inter

Guwahati-based couple and was planning to traffic another girl to the brothel in Bihar. "All the four accused have been produced before the judicial magistrate and placed on police remand. Investigation confirmed that the case involves human trafficking, where girls are lured and subsequently sold

KAAC CEM adviser clarifies

their development needs, Karbis and Dimasas realized their mistake in 1972 when they found the councils lacked legislative power. This realization spurred the demand for an autonomous state, a movement that began with the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) in 1986.

"We must correct the misconceptions spread by Kathar about the Sixth Schedule," Teron asserted, alleging Kathar's lack of interest in making corrections or participating in the seminar on the Sixth Schedule. Teron concluded by noting that the Sixth Schedule has evolved significantly since 1986 through Memorandums of Understanding and Settlements

Terrorist ambush in JK's

Swain is personally overseeing the anti-terrorist operation in the dense forest area, connected to Basantgarh in Udhampur district, where several encounters have occurred in the past. The forest area is connected to Basantgarh in Udhampur district. A village defence guard Mohd Sharief was killed in an encounter with terrorists on April 28 in Panara village of Basantgarh. The officials said there were apprehensions that this route was used by terrorists to reach the hinterland after they managed to sneak in from across the border. The army vehicle, carrying ten occupants, bore the brunt of the attack, resulting in fatal injuries to four soldiers.

The Jammu region, known for its peaceful atmosphere, has been shaken in recent months by a series of ambushes and attacks by terrorists, particularly in the border districts of Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, and Reasi. The recent escalation in terrorist activities has been attributed to attempts by Pakistani handlers to reignite terrorism. Security agencies have been on high alert following a recent ambush in the Gandoh area of Doda district, where three foreign terrorists were killed in a gunfight on June 26. An army camp in the Manjkote area of Rajouri district was targeted in a firing incident, resulting in injuries to a soldier. One of the most tragic incidents occurred on June 9 when terrorists attacked a bus carrying pilgrims from the Shiv Khori temple in Reasi district, claiming the lives of nine persons and injuring 41 others. (PTI)

Tripura successfully completes

the surgical procedure successfully," GBP Hospital's Medical Superintendent doctor Sankar Chakraborty said. As part of the five-year MoU, a group of seven doctors from Tripura went to SHRI in Manipur and got training in the surgical procedure, he said. After three years, the GBP Hospital will be permitted to undertake kidney transplants independently, he added

The CM said, "Earlier, it was unbelievable that kidney transplant will be possible in the state. Now, this has become a reality. With the blessing of the people, the government will continue to perform better." (PTI)

EC allows Sharad Pawar-led

"In a democracy, there must be transparency. There should not be injustice done to any candidate. But injustice has taken place in Satara. Our poll symbol, the man blowing a trumpet, was placed next to a lookalike symbol of just a trumpet," Sule said. She said similar-looking symbols should not be allocated to parties or candidates. 'The Election Commission has said that they will study the matter and get back to us," Sule said. (PTI)

Sanctity of NEET-UG

beneficiaries of the wrongdoings from others, it may be necessary to order a re-test," the bench said. "One thing is clear that leak of question paper has taken place," it said and sought information from the NTA about the number of wrongdoers identified so far and the methodology adopted for it.

The court directed the investigating officer of the CBI, which is conducting a probe into the allegations of malpractices, OMR sheet manipulation, impersonation and cheating, to place before it a report indicating the status of the probe as on Monday. It said the NTA must disclose the steps taken so far for the identification of beneficiaries of wrongdoings. The bench asked the NTA to apprise it about the steps taken to identify the centres and cities where the question paper leak took place, the modalities followed for identifying the beneficiaries and their numbers ascertained so far. "Before we decide to pass an order for a re-test, we must understand what is the nature of leak," the bench said, adding it was tough to ask over 23 lakh candidates to re-appear for the examination.

"What is the modality in which the leak took place? If the modality of the leak is through electronic means like Telegram and WhatsApp ..., then there is a possibility that the leak is widespread," it said

"From this perspective, the NTA is directed to clarify on the basis of the materials in its possession: (i) When the leak of question paper first took place; (ii) the manner in which question paper was leaked and disseminated; (iii) the time duration between the occurrence of leak and the actual conduct of exam which took place on May 5," it said. While seeking information about the status of counselling of NEET-UG 2024, which has been deferred for the time being, the top court also asked the Centre and the NTA about the feasibility of using the data analytics from the cyber forensic unit or other expert agencies to ascertain suspect cases where they can be asked to take up re-test. (PTI)

'Cronyism' is Modi govt's

highly concentrated," he said. As former RBI Deputy Governor and noted financial economist Dr Viral Acharya established, five big conglomerates -- including the Adani Group -- are building monopolies in 40 such sectors, Ramesh said. "This growing monopolization is linked to India's shaky economic growth, unemployment crisis, and high inflation. In 2015, when a common man used to spend ₹ 100 on goods, ₹ 18 would go as profit to the business owner — in 2021, the owner now gets ₹36 in profits," he claimed.

"Firms must grow. Companies must expand. But at the same time, the Government has a responsibility to ensure competition is not stifled, oligopolies or monopolies do not emerge, takeovers are free and fair, and undue advantage arising out of access to political power is not exercised," Ramesh said. (PTI)

Elderly woman injured

could have been fatal for his mother. Police quickly responded from the nearby police station, located only 50 meters away, and took action against the youth involved.

June warmest on record

it the 12th consecutive month to reach or break the 1.5-degree threshold," C3S said in a statement. It was also the 13th consecutive month of record-high temperatures, a result of the combined effect of the 2023-24 El Nino event and human-caused climate change. While unusual, a similar streak of monthly global temperature records

happened previously in 2015-16. This is more than a statistical oddity and highlights a large and continuing shift in our climate. Even if this specific streak of extremes ends at some point, we are bound to see new records being broken as the climate continues to warm. This is inevitable, unless we stop adding greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and the oceans," said

Carlo Buontempo, the director of C3S. The European climate agency said the global average temperature for the last 12 months (July 2023-June 2024) is the highest on record, at 0.76 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average and 1.64 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average.

According to the IMD, 11 states recorded 20 to 38 heatwave days -- up to four times the usual number of such days -- during the April-to-June period. The mercury breached 50 degrees Celsius in parts of Rajasthan, with night temperatures hovering around 35 degrees Celsius in many places.

Temperatures were most above average over eastern Canada, the western United States and Mexico, Brazil, northern Siberia, the Middle East, northern Africa, and western Antarctica. (PTI)

EM Ranjit Basumatary announces comprehensive measures to streamline land processes & digitise records

BTR govt introduces land reforms under Mission Bwiswmuthi

HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, July 8: Ranjit

Basumatary, executive member (EM) of Land and Revenue, Forest and Environment, government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), disclosed the steps taken by the BTR government regarding reforms in land and revenue for the benefit of the region's people. Historically, there has been a lack of initiatives and clear policies on land reform, leading to misunderstandings among communities regarding land purchase, inheritance, mutation, settlement, and transfer processes. The BTC, created under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, includes tribal belts and blocks where land possession carries legal obligations.

Addressing reporters at a press conference on Sunday in Kokrajhar, executive member Ranjit Basumatary stated that an Executive Council meeting on July 4 discussed various land-related issues and implemented several reformative measures to resolve longstanding issues. He highlighted that many past conflicts stemmed from land disputes, emphasising the need for structured procedures under the BTC's constitutional framework. The council government has identified the root causes of these conflicts and aims to clarify community misunderstandings by simplifying document and certificate acquisition processes. Pre-



lakhs per bigha, with general caste

individuals required to pay 15 per-

cent of the total land valuation for

registration, while SC, ST, dis-

abled, and widows need to pay

13.5 percent for the same. This

step aims to facilitate easier land

conversion and registration for in-

Bwiswmuthi- 1.0' marks a revo-

lutionary step by the BTR gov-

ernment towards digitising land

records across all revenue vil-

lages in the region. This initiative

simplifies processes such as mu-

tation by right of inheritance,

post-deed registration mutation,

partition, reclassification of agri-

cultural land to non-agricultural

land under 1 bigha, issuance of

allotment certificates to periodic

patta (AC to PP), area correc-

tions, removal of names from

He emphasised that 'Mission

digenous people.

viously, there were no significant land reform initiatives or policies addressing decades-old issues, but the current government has launched 'Mission Bwiswmuthi', introducing several reform meas-

Basumatary highlighted that historically, there have been no standardised premium rates for land purchase, mutation, registration, and transfer, causing people to pay 75 percent of the total land valuation for registration. "People have faced significant costs for land registration, but under the present government, rural land premiums have been relaxed for Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), persons with disabilities, and widows, with registration fees set at just ₹ 1000," he explained. Basumatary added that urban land valuation is officially set at ₹ 24 number updates, certified copies of jamabandi and chitha, and land holding certificates. These services are currently available exclusively within the Bodoland Territorial Region. The executive member (EM) stated that for land zarip, the coun-

cil had already conducted drone surveys in 50 non-cadastral villages, with land patta (titles) set to be issued to them. He also noted that previous governments had never conducted such surveys. Regarding the inclusion of villages from Sonitpur and Biswanath districts into BTR, he mentioned that out of the 60 villages slated for inclusion, 41 have already been incorporated. Additionally, he announced that the FRC Committee would convene to address landrelated issues in these districts. Basumatary further reported that 1,00600 families have received land settlement certificates in

BTC. Regarding administrative matters, Basumatary disclosed that 84 employees of the BTC Secretariat, who have been serving since the inception of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) in 1993, will receive a one-time grant as pension benefits upon retirement. This decision was ratified during the Executive Council meeting, with the grant sourced from the council's revenue fund.

NITI Aayog's Sampoornata Abhiyan launched in Dima Hasao

Launch event features pledge, exhibitions, and stakeholder engagements across four aspirational blocks

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, July 8: Dima Hasao district launched NITI Aayog's Sampoornata Abhiyan under the Aspirational Blocks Programme for two days, on July 5 and 6. The program was first organised at the Diyung Valley Development Block Office in Maibang and Jatinga Valley Development Block at Mahur Higher Secondary School in Mahur on July 5, 2024. On July 6, 2024, the Diyungbra ITDP Block organised the program at Diyungbra Higher Secondary School, and New Sangbra Development Block held it at Karbi Club, Umrangso.

Sampoornata Abhiyan aims to achieve 100 percent saturation of 12 key social sector indicators in all Aspirational Blocks nationwide. Dima Hasao district, representing the Aspirational Blocks of Diyung Valley Development Block (Maibang), Jatinga Development Block (Mahur), New Sangbar Development Block, and Diyungbra ITDP Block, was selected to compete in the Aspirational Blocks programme. This initiative by the government of India seeks to improve the performance and ecodevelopment underdeveloped blocks.

pledge taken by all officials and attendees, followed by the inauguration of exhibition stalls installed by various departments, including the Social Welfare Department, Health Department, Agriculture Department, ASRLM, and SHGs. A signature campaign witnessed enthusiastic participation from block-level officials, frontline workers, community leaders, local artists, SHGs members, and stu-

The program began with a



The event was attended by Dima Hasao Autonomous Council EM Niranjan Hojai, district commissioner Simanta Kr Das, ACS, project director, NITI Aayog Dr Neelam Patel, ADCs, BDOs, and other line department officials.

Gracing the occasion as the chief guest, NCHAC EM Niranian Hojai emphasised the need for concerted efforts from all major departments to work in convergence and strive for transformation and upliftment in underperforming blocks. EM Hojai added that the three-month-long Sampoornata Abhiyan campaign aims to accelerate development in underdeveloped areas of the block. He reiterated the need for individual support and coordination for the effective implementation of the program. Referring to the health of children and pregnant women, Hojai also emphasised the importance of a balanced diet and healthy nutrition for physical and mental well-being.

Project director, NITI Aayog, Dr Neelam Patel, in her speech, highpoornata Abhiyan aligns with the Prime Minister's vision for allround development by involving all stakeholders to improve the indicators under the Aspirational Districts Programme and Aspirational Blocks Programme. She emphasised collaborative efforts from the government and the people for the overall development of the district and the block.

District commissioner, Simanta Kr Das, in his speech, highlighted the program's objective to bridge developmental gaps by achieving 100 percent saturation in six indicators of the Aspirational Blocks Programme. He identified the six indicators that needed improvement as health & nutrition, education, agriculture & water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure. He added that during the three-month-long Sampoornata Abhiyan campaign, various activities and awareness programs on these indicators would be held across the district, involving the participation of the concerned de-

Crackdown on counterfeit fertiliser ring in Daipam

HT Correspondent

DALGAON, July 8: In a daring joint operation, authorities cracked down on counterfeit fertiliser production at Chukabahi, Daipam, under Dalgon Police Station on Friday night. Acting on confidential information, a team of reporters accompanied Daipam Police in seizing 156 bags of potash fertiliser falsely labelled as manufactured by Bharatiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana (Bharat MOP), along with 6 bags of salt and 9 bags of Proxima Potash from the residence of illegal manufacturer Arabin Safiullah. The seizure and custody of the counterfeit fertiliser were overseen by Mahadev Ch Hira, in-charge of Daipam Police Outpost, who entrusted them to village head (gaonburah) Sammiruddin pending verification by district agricul-

Simultaneously, villagers intercepted a fertiliserladen truck with registration No AS01MC8143 near Chukabahi New Market and handed it over to local VDP Farid Ali, who allegedly failed to prevent its escape, arousing suspicion of complicity in the scam. Early Saturday, journalists, local police, and Agriculture officers arrived at the manufacturing site to find the seized counterfeit fertilizers missing. Upon questioning gaonburah, who claimed ignorance, police detained him briefly until recovering the missing bags from a nearby house during a search operation. OC Tanmoy Nath of Dalgaon broke open the locked house to retrieve 21 bags of seized fertilisers while the owner was absent.

Additional investigations on Sunday led to the recovery of 100 more bags of seized fertiliser discarded along the roadside, prompting authorities to initiate testing by agriculture officers and plan legal actions against the illegal manufacturers. Notably, main suspect Arabin Safiullah remains at large, and it's believed the fake fertilisers were distributed in upper Assam. Local farmers, long grappling with fair pricing of agricultural products, condemned the production of counterfeit fertilisers and demanded stringent actions against those involved. In-charge Mahadev Hira confirmed to this correspondent that an FIR will be filed by the Agriculture Department following the comple-

OBITUARY

ipankar Gogoi, a leading citizen of the town, working president of the Sivasagar Chamber of Commerce, a core member of Sampreety

Club, and a popular social worker, passed away at the age of 59 on Saturday due

to a serious illness. He leaves behind his wife and a brother. Many socio-cultural organisations, including the Chamber of Commerce, Sampreety Club, Rajhans Club, Barowari Puja Committee, Sivasagar Sports Association, and Sivasagar TT Club, mourn his death.

Severe soil erosion devastates Ledo 2 number Bisa Gaon



HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, July 8: Massive soil erosion has occurred at Ledo 2. number Bisa Gaon in the 83 no Margherita constituency of Tinsukia for many years. Due to torrential rainfall over the last few days, residents of the 83 no Margherita constituency in Tinsukia district are facing waterlogging.

However, the residents of Ledo 2 number Bisa Gaon under Khumchai Gaon Panchayat have lost 100 bighas of agricultural land, vegetable land, and tea gardens due to severe soil erosion.

A local resident stated that despite 77 years of our country's independence, no government has made efforts to develop their village, which suffers from poor road connectivity, severe soil erosion,

The residents have repeatedly requested assistance Margherita MLA Bhaskar Sharma. the Margherita Sub-Divisional Administration (Civil), and the water resource department officials, but their pleas have gone unheard.

Ledo 2 number Bisa Gaon is home to more than 400 voters, including 70 Adivasi households and other Gorkha and Assamese communities, but despite their long history in the area, they have seen no development.

As the upcoming panchayat and 2026 assembly elections approach, local residents have declared that they will prevent any representative from the ruling political party from entering their village.

Ledo 2 number Bisa Gaon is located 20 kilometres from the

Veteran car lifter arrested

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, July 8: Sonitpur Police have apprehended a suspect in connection with Tezpur Police Station Case No 148/24, under Section 379 of the IPC, from Moirabari in Morigaon district. The main accused, identified as Md Ikramul Islam (28 years old), son of Md Saiful Islam from Khagarijan under Thelamara Police Station in Sonitpur district, is known as a veteran car lifter.

The police have presented the accused before the Tezpur court for further legal proceedings.

Asom Chatra Parishad felicitates 600 meritorious students



HT Correspondent TEZPUR, July 8: The regional

political party Asam Gana Parishad's student wing, Asam Chatra Parishad, felicitated a total of 600 students who showed outstanding results in the recently declared HSLC and HS Final Examinations 2024 from various schools and colleges under Tezpur LAC. The felicitation took place during a special program themed 'Natun Digantaloi', organised by Tezpur Bidhan Parishad at the Assam Agitation Martyr Bhupen Deka Memorial Hall on Monday.

The felicitation program was presided over by the president of Asam Chatra Parishad, Trinayan Baruah, while AGP MLA Prithiraj Rabha, who initiated the program, delivered the welcome address. In his speech, he urged the students to become responsible citizens and stand by the nation in any critical moment, emphasising their obligations towards society and the na-

Notable personalities such as the principal of Darrang College, Polashmani Saikia, principal of Tezpur College, Jyoti Kamal Hazarika, vice president of AGP Apurba Kumar Bhattacharyya, general secretary of the party and observer of Asam Chatra Parishad, Prabin Hazarika, and Anajan Choudhury from Downtown Counseling, among others, graced

The dignitaries present at the program congratulated the meritorious students and encouraged them to develop into good citizens and valuable human resources, reflecting positively on the nation's

Pabitra Margherita

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, July 8: Union minister of state for External Affairs and Textiles, Pabitra Margherita, visited flood-affected areas including Konwar Gaon, Ekaratoli, Khanikor, and Khamun of Bokota under the Demow constituency on Sunday. He was accompanied by Thowra MLA Sushanta Borgohain and former MLA Kushal Dowati. During his visit, Pabitra Margherita interacted with the flood-affected people. Speaking to the media, he described the situation as devastating, noting that senior citizens informed him that such floods had not been seen in the area for 17 years. He mentioned that people and animals took refuge on embankments. Margherita appreciated the efforts of the District Administration, Thowra MLA Sushanta Borgohain, Former MLA Kushal Dowari, and local residents in supporting those affected by the floods.

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 8: The Nagaon

District Unit, in collaboration

with the Subdivision Unit and Na-

gaon Sadar Unit of All Assam

Students' Union (AASU), organ-

ised a special felicitation program

at Nagaon Swahid Bhavan last

Sunday to honour meritorious stu-

dents who excelled in the 2024

HSLC and HS Final Examina-

felicitation program,

16th biennial conference of Sonitpur District assesses flood impact College Employee Association concludes

HT Correspondent TEZPUR, July 8: The 16th biennial

conference of the undivided Sonitpur District College Employee Association (SDCEA) was held with a daylong program on Sunday at Tezpur Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Girls' College.

In the morning at 9 o'clock, the president of the undivided Sonitpur District College Employee Association, Kukil Bharali, unfurled the flag of the organisation. This was followed by the unfurling of the college flag by the principal of LGB Girls' College, Tapan Kumar Kalita. The shradhanjali program commenced with the working president of the central committee of the organisation, Chittaranjan Kakoti.

The delegate meeting started with a welcome address by Tapan Kumar Kalita, and the session was held under

the presidency of the SDCEA president. Kukil Bharali. At the end of the delegate session, the new committee of the organisation was formed, with Achyut Sarmah of Darrang College as president and Pranjit Saikia from Sootea College as secretary. Other members of the new body of the organisation include Paresh Kakati, vice president (Kolabari College), Swapna Mandal, assistant secretary (Rangapara College), Mridul Bhuyan as organising secretary (Behali College), Ananta Barthakur (Biswanath College), Biplab Sarmah (LGB Girls' College) as state members, and Dipjyoti Saikia, Pankaj Sarmah, Pulin Baruah, and Anil Goswami as executive members, with Ajit Bhuyan selected as au-

The open session followed. GB president of LGB Girls' College, Dr Abani Kumar Sarmah, inaugurated

the session by illuminating the ceremonial lamp. Ranjan Kalita, principal of Rangapara College, attended the program as the chief speaker. Among others present were ex-vice president of All Assam College Employee Association, Jairam Kalita, Sailen Das, teacher of LGB Girls' College, and Chandra Kamal Sarmah. In the meeting, two recently retired employees, Nilu Das from Darrang College and Basanta Borah from Kolabari College, were honoured with farewell felicitations.

Speaking on the occasion, principal of Rangapara College, Ranjan Kalita, highlighted how the nonteaching staff serving in various colleges across the region are the right hands for the colleges, dedicatedly carrying forward their work and reflecting the dignity of the colleges

Tuluni festival celebrated at Longtong village, Tinsukia

Sema Naga community marks harvest & cultural heritage at annual festival filled with traditional performances

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, July 8: The Tu-

of Tinsukia district.

Kahoto Sema, president, and Kasto Sema, vice president of the All Assam Sema Naga Council, emphasised that the Tuluni festival holds immense sacredness for the Sema Naga community. It is celebrated annually at Longtong village to mark the beginning of the new season, the harvest of new crops, and historical victories. The festival, adorned with cultural performances, takes place during the beautiful monsoon season.

'Tuluni', referred to as 'Anni', signifies the season of abundant crops. This festival also symbolises reconciliation, unity, harmony, and communal celebration, tran-



scending barriers of caste, creed, race, language, and religion, according to Kasto Sema. Traditional cultural programs at

the Tuluni festival include Ayekuzu Le by women's groups, Atuna nanu pepu kuxu by youth groups, Lejole by men's groups, and a traditional

fashion show by Sunday school students, as highlighted by Kasto Sema, vice president of the All Assam Sema Naga Council.

Swapnanil Deka. Dr Samujjwal Bhattacharya, Chief Adviser of AASU, attended the event as the chief guest. Educationist Dr. Sarat gaon, Dilip Bora, former AASU Shankar Saikia, along with central executive member of the students' organization Mriganka Shekhar

Bharali, were also present as spe-

cial guests and invitees. Bhaswat

Saikia, who cleared the Union

chaired by Simanta Bora, President of the Nagaon District unit of AASU, was inaugurated by Superintendent of Police, Nagaon, Borkatoki, Principal of Ramanujan Senior Secondary School, Naworker Amarjit Goswami, student leaders Debajit Bora and Gouri

AASU Nagaon felicitates top students Public Service Competitive Exams 2024, was felicitated during the program.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Samujjwal Bhattacharya emphasised the need for reforms in Assam's education system, stressing the importance of enhancing the number of departments in the state's colleges and universities. He pointed out the disparity, citing that Delhi University has 84 departments compared to 48 in Gauhati University and 29 in Dibrugarh University. Dr Bhattacharya expressed concern over brain drain from the state and urged the government to foster higher education within Assam, rather than students seeking education outside the state.

Dr Bhattacharya also announced AASU's initiative to introduce UPSC coaching for meritorious students in the state starting next year. He further advocated for the establishment of research institute for the Brahmaputra river to address long-standing issues like flood devastation across the state.

luni festival, the largest and most significant festival of the Sema Naga community worldwide, was celebrated on Monday at Longtong village in Margherita subdivision

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QUOTE OF THE DAY Trust, but verify. -Ronald Reagan

Historic shift in French politics

n July 7, French voters made history by decisively curbing the rise of the far-right National Rally (RN) led by Marine Le Pen. In a dramatic second round of national elections, the New Popular Front (NFP) emerged victorious with 182 seats, followed by President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance with 163 seats. The RN, which had topped the first round on June 30, was pushed to third place with 143 seats. This result has significantly brightened prospects for a left-centrist coalition government. The combined strength of the NFP and Macron's centrists now stands at 345 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, comfortably surpassing the majority threshold of 289. This coalition, if successfully formed, could stabilize French politics and counter the far-right's influence. The remaining 89 seats were distributed among other right and fringe left groups. This election marked a turning point for the French Left and Europe as a whole. Following the first-round results, which saw the RN leading, there were widespread predictions of a far-right majority and a potential neo-fascist government. In response, the NFP and centrists initiated discussions for a tactical alliance to thwart the RN. This led to coordinated withdrawals in over 200 constituencies, significantly impacting the final

The unprecedented voter turnout of 66.63%—the highest in any French national election since 1981—underscores the electorate's resolve to prevent a far-right takeover. This surge in voter participation was driven by joint efforts from the NFP and President Macron's centrists, who mobilized middle-class voters typically characterized by electoral apathy. The French Communist Party and its trade unions played a crucial role in this mobilization, campaigning vigorously against the far-right. President Macron and his team reciprocated by agreeing to tactical withdrawals, underscoring their commitment to defeating the RN. With the election results now in, President Macron, who was initially shaken by the June 30 results, is regaining confidence. His centrist alliance, now in a stronger position, faces the task of forming a new government. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal announced his intention to resign but remains open to staying on temporarily while the new government is established. Attal emphasized the unprecedented political situation and the need for stability as France prepares

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, leader of the NFP, insists that the President should invite the NFP to form the government. However, there are differing views within the outgoing administration. The Socialist Party, a key NFP partner, has adopted a pragmatic stance, emphasizing the need for dialogue and cooperation in a divided Parliament. Despite not achieving the expected results, the RN has gained more seats compared to the last Parliament, increasing from 88 to 143. While the immediate threat from the RN has been mitigated, the long-term challenge persists. Marine Le Pen is likely to contest the 2027 presidential elections. and the far-right could capitalize on any failures within the new coalition government. RN President Jordan Bardella criticized the anti-RN alliance as "disgraceful," while Le Pen remained defiant, claiming that the far-right's ascendancy is inevitable. The onus is now on the NFP and Macron's centrists to maintain unity and implement a common program to govern effectively. The NFP, comprising various parties, must avoid fragmentation to sustain its momentum against the farright. The French electorate has delivered a clear mandate against the

Ditching of India entry may mean bigger opportunity loss for Tesla

By: K Raveendran

lon Musk's reported decision to put Tesla's India ✓entry on hold might seem like a setback for the world's ket. But a closer look reveals a situation where this delay could sting Tesla more than India. India's potential as a future EV powerhouse, coupled with Tesla's current struggles, makes this a strategic misstep for Musk.

According to reports, Musk's team hasn't made any further inquiries with officials in New Delhi after the billionaire postponed a visit to India in late April. The cooling off is attributed to capital investment issues faced by the company.

India's EV market is a sleeping giant. The country, with its massive population and burgeoning middle class, is poised for explosive growth in the EV sector. The government's push for cleaner transportation, coupled with falling battery prices, is creating a perfect storm for EV adoption. A 2023 report by McKinsey & Company predicts that India's EV market could reach a staggering \$50 billion by 2030, making it a market no major EV player can afford to ignore. India would have been a most viable alternative to the Chinese market, where Tesla is increasingly in trouble due to competition from Chinese

Tesla, for all its technological prowess, faces headwinds in its home turf. Competition from established automakers like Ford and General Motors, along with rising EV startups like Rivian, is putting pressure on Tesla's market share. Additionally, the global chip shortage has hampered production, leading to delays and frustrated customers. In this scenario, the wide-open Indian market presents a golden opportunity for Tesla to expand its customer base and establish itself as a

leader in a new market segment. The import taxes on EVs in India, a point of contention for Musk, might seem like a hurdle. However, the Indian government has shown a willingness to negotiate. The recent relaxation of import duties for companies willing to invest and manufacture locally demonstrates the Indian government's commitment to attracting EV players. Tesla could leverage this flexibility to negotiate a winwin situation, securing a foothold in the market while contributing to India's burgeoning EV ecosys-

Beyond market size, India ofters a unique advantage for Tesia – a cost-effective manufacturing hub. Setting up a production facility in India would allow Tesla to tap into the country's skilled workforce and robust supply chain, significantly reducing production costs. This, in turn, could translate into more competitive pricing for Tesla vehicles, making them more accessible to the Indian consumer and further boost-

Furthermore, entering India would not only benefit Tesla's bottom line but also burnish its brand image. As a company at the forefront of clean energy solutions, establishing a presence in a country as committed to sustainability as India would solidify Tesla's position as a global leader in the fight against climate change. This positive brand association could have a ripple effect across other markets, strengthening Tesla's overall brand value.

Of course, the potential challenges Tesla might face in India cannot be overlooked. Infrastructure limitations and the domiof budget-friendly, nance fuel-efficient cars are certainly a deterrent. However, Tesla, with its innovative spirit, could work with the Indian government to improve charging infrastructure and develop car models tailored to the Indian market's price sensitivity. Additionally, Tesla's brand recognition and reputation for cutting-edge technology could attract a premium segment of Indian car buyers, creating a niche market for its products.

The Indian market would have offered Tesla a chance to expand customer base, reduce production costs, and solidify its brand image as a global leader in clean energy solutions. By engaging in constructive dialogue with the Indian government and adapting its strategy to the local market, Tesla could turn this perceived setback into a significant strategic win. The potential rewards for Tesla in the Indian market would have outweighed the initial challenges by far, making a delayed entry a gamble that could cost the company dearly in the long run. (IPA

Why did Bengal CPI(M) face disaster again in 2024 Lok Sabha polls?

saying, was a slap on the face of the BJP and signified its moral defeat. It has also been indicative of the comeback of the Congress and a signal to the regional parties that if they stick together, the cementing factor being secularism, then even the BJP can be successfully confronted. That way it is a moral victory for the anti-BJP coalition, represented, howsoever fragile it appeared, by the INDIA alliance. But amidst these two positive developments the most disturbing thing that has a dampening effect on the election scenario is the performance of the

In this context I would very specifically focus on West Bengal, because this time there was a feeling shared by many that the Left would score fairly well here, its tally reaching almost double digit figure. But what has happened is not only demoralizing for the Left, but quite ominous. First, in all the seats excepting two, the Left candidates have lost their deposits. Second, the BJP has virtually come up to the second position in almost all the constituencies, where the TMC has won. And this has happened in places where the BJP has no organizational base, no machinery for election campaign and where it fielded candidates who were totally nonentity, without virtually any public presence.

Third, in comparison, the Left, the CPI(M) in particular, brought in new faces, young and dedicated, conducted intense campaign, worked overtime day in and day out, and, apparently, made an impressive impact on the voters. Not only a section of the public, but quite a good number of pretty senior Left leaders confidently announced that this time the Left would open its account after a long spell of political

debacle requires deep introspection, a ruthless selfcriticism, but with an open mind, without being trapped in mental blocks shaped by obstinacy and wild, imaginary musings, unrelated to hardcore, although unpalatable, politi-

cal realities. But before indulging in this exercise, it needs to be kept in mind that the performance of the Left in West Bengal cannot be separated from the all-India perspective. Three crucial points demand attention of the Left, which cannot be brushed aside. One: At the all-India level its tally did

n o DEGREE OF THOUGHT a r m reach double Dr. Sobhanlal Datta Gupta tactics, digit

figure and the 8 seats it secured [CPI(M): 4, CPI: 2 and CPI (ML), Liberation: 2] were largely gifted by their powerful allies in their respective states. Two: the anti-BJP campaign was spearheaded by the non-Left forces, namely, Conthrough Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, Samajwadi Party and other regional parties, where the Left's presence was marginal. Three: In many places,

i.e., in Kerala, the Congress

allowed very little space to the Left. Had the Congress been more accommodative. the Left's performance could have improved. In other words, the Left, on the all-India plane, had very little leverage vis-àvis the non-Left forces. Frankly speaking, at the national level it was a BJPanti BJP binary, where the richest dividends were reaped by the Congress, followed by the non-Left, and the Left trailing them as a part of the anti-BJP constituency, but without the scope of playing any leading role.

It is precisely this scenario which was replicated in West Bengal and which the Left, the CPI(M) in particular, failed to under-

ভারতের কমিউনিস্ট পার্টি (মার্কসবাদী) পশ্চিমবঙ্গ রাজ্য কমিটি বাদ্ধত আধ্য

to be addressed at two levels. One: why the BJP-anti BJP binary worked? Two: what were the fault lines of

the Left? Level one: First, there was the consideration of security. Those who felt threatened by the TMC's

ing in mind its most inglorious track record over the last one decade, voted for BJP, the argument being that BJP with its money and muscle power was the only force which could unseat TMC and give them protection. Even sections of the Left, particularly in the rural belt, who were victims of TMC's political vendetta and misrule, were convinced by this logic. Again, this same insecurity syndrome deeply affected those vulnerable sections of society, for whom BJP was

a political and cultural

threat. They voted for

TMC, considering the latter

as the saviour.

It is for this reason that the entire minority vote shifted to TMC. Second, in this binary, even sections of the Left strongly believed that it is not the Left, which is a marginalized force in West Bengal after 2011, but TMC which can really challenge BJP and, therefore, despite the excellent candidature CPI(M)'s young brigade, to vote for them would be an electoral waste, leading to division of votes, and which would indirectly

Third, it is on this score that CPI(M)'s public cam-

strengthen BJP.

TMC constituted two sides of the same coin, that the TMC supremo had an understanding with the RSS and that she was guided by Nagpur in her everyday activities, was wholly rejected by the electorate.

This is an issue the complexity of which CPI(M) failed to gauge. This setting theory which was CPI(M)'s brainchild, went completely wrong on two counts. One: There are evidences galore that at the highest level there is, indeed, this setting between TMC and BJP, which explains why the TMC supremo and her cohorts at the top rung of the party are not touched by the CBI or ED, despite impeccable evidences, why they virtually continue to enjoy political immunity, notwithstanding the fact that the shadow boxing or the verbal duel between the Prime Minister and the TMC continues unabated, giving the public the impression that they are really at loggerheads and spitefully intolerant at each

Two: at the lower level, broadly speaking, this setting does not operate, because there are strong evidences which suggest that the considerations of control of power at the grassroots level inevitably lead to confrontation between BJP and TMC, where BJP is led by the outlook that it has to create and expand its own base, while TMC is driven by the imperative of retaining its base and not allowing BJP to enter its homeground.

In other words, both the parties, by sacrificing their

level, smoothly maintain their political equation at the top. Since the setting is invisible, while the conflict is visible, the campaign that the confrontation between BJP and TMC at the ground level is nothing but a staged phenomenon, has hardly convinced anyone.

Level two: This needs to be understood in terms of its multiple dimensions. One: In West Bengal, the Left thrived historically by riding on the waves of anti-Congressism and the confrontation between the Left, especially CPI(M) and the Congress, has an infamous, bitter history. When for electoral considerations the Left switched gear and struck up an alliance with the Congress, the cadres of the Congress did not take it lying down. It has been reported by many that a large section of Congress workers have actually voted for TMC and not the Left, although the Left has broadly sided with the Congress.

Two: The left failed to understand that the 18th Lok Sabha polls addressed an all India phenomenon, namely, whether BJP is to gain a thumping majority or its wings will be clipped? This was the essence of the binary and the Left in West Bengal hardly addressed this issue. For the Left, TMC and BJP being equivalent, it overrated the threat of TMC, allowing TMC to thwart BJP and marginalize the Left by default. This debacle, that way, was largely Left's own making.

Three: The Left's underestimation of BJP was guided by the wrong theoretical understanding that any kind of authoritarianism is not fascism and that despite all its fault lines and ignominious record of misrule TMC sans ideology and long term political strategy is no match for BJP, since it is guided only by the politics of immediacy. This precisely was properly understand the threat of BJP.

Four: the Left suffered from a feeling of complacency that the Bengali psyche is free from communal virus, failing to understand that there is a strong undercurrent of communalism flowing in the blood of an ordinary Bengali. This actually explains why the BJP came up to the second position without any groundwork, since communalism has gripped a large section of the Bengali Hindus, this being the foundation of a solid Hindu vote bank for the BJP in future. Five: the way TMC's populism, as manifest in its dole politics, was handled by the Left, as manifest in its ridiculing of the Chief Minister and her 'welfarist' programmes, was not liked by the ordinary masses, the women in particular. The massive voting by women for TMC candidates in the rural constituencies should be an eye opener for the CPI(M) leadership.

Through her cheap pop-

ulism, the TMC supremo, has, since 2011, succeeded in convincing the poor and the marginalized in particular, that the TMC government, through programmes aims to empower them, at times through cash transfer, at times by providing cheap health care or cycle or rice and pulse. Finally, the campaign conducted by the TMC that the BJP government was not releasing funds for the MGNREGA and thereby endangering the livelihood of the poor, making their life insecure, worked greatly in favour of the TMC. The CPI(M) completely failed to understand how the TMC chief used her populist strategy to win over the poor, especially the rural masses, and hoodwink the Left. Unless the CPI(M) looks at its own face in the mirror, it will be very difficult for the Bengal CPI(M) to turn around in the days to come. (IPA

India's victory in the T20 World Cup

By: Dipak Kurmi

The triumph of Team India in the T20 World Cup brought the entire nation together in celebration. Overcoming formidable odds, our cricketers clinched a thrilling victory against South Africa in the final held in Barbados. Their remarkable performance was marked by an unblemished record, remaining undefeated throughout the tournament.

In this tournament, every player played a vital role in the team's success, a stark contrast to past events where outcomes often hinged on the performance of just one or two stars. The Proteas seemed to have victory in their grasp, needing only 30 runs from the final five overs. South African batsman Heinrich Klaasen was in explosive form, relentlessly smashing sixes. Just when all hope seemed lost, Hardik Pandya managed to dismiss Klaasen, marking a pivotal moment in the

The tension peaked in the last over when Suryakumar Yadav made an incredible catch at the boundary off Hardik's delivery to send David Miller packing. Suryakumar skillfully maintained his balance, leaped back, and seSouth Africa's fate.

Despite facing criticism for his captaincy of the Mumbai Indians in this year's IPL due to the team's lackluster performance, Hardik managed to find his rhythm and excelled in the final and throughout most of the tournament. He stepped in for Rohit Sharma, who had been the beloved captain of Nita Ambani's franchise for many years, and demonstrated remarkable leadership and skill when it mattered

Jasprit Bumrah, with his exceptional pace and precision, continued to be both economical and effective with the white ball, showcasing his consistent brilliance. He found strong support in fellow fast bowler Arshdeep Singh, who delivered peak performances just when the team needed them most. Virat Kohli rose to the occasion

exactly when the team needed him most, delivering a stellar performance in the final that was crucial to our victory. Marking his last appearance in T20 Internationals, this moment will be etched in his memory forever. Fellow Indians will always remember the immense contribu-

cured the catch just before the tions of this big-hearted cricketer. stepped up during crucial mo- lies in their success on the grandball touched the ground, sealing I feel honored that he has chosen ments, while Chinaman bowler est stages of Tests, ODIs, or T20s. Mumbai, my city, as his permanent residence, respecting his

wife's wishes. Another cricketing giant bidding farewell to T20 cricket is the captain, Rohit Sharma. Over the years, Rohit has brought immense joy and entertainment with his batting prowess. Serving as the primary aggressor for both India and the Mumbai Indians, his effortless sixes and fours have thrilled fans in both international and league cricket.

While his performance in this World Cup was not as remarkable, save for a near-century in the Super Eight match against Australia, his legacy remains formidable. Rohit was also part of the Indian squad that clinched the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007 in South Africa. As he steps away from T20s, I extend a warm welcome to Rohit, born in Nagpur but who made Mumbai his home as a young cricketer.

Rishabh Pant, the flamboyant wicketkeeper-batsman, was a spectacle both behind the stumps and with the bat. He was joined by other power hitters like Survakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube, who added significant firepower. All-rounder Axar Patel

Kuldeep Yadav played his part effectively. The success of this team was a result of a tremendous collective effort, all driven by an outstanding leader.

Every opponent, whether it was the USA or Ireland, was approached with utmost respect. There was no space for complacency in any match, regardless of the opposition's stature.

There are valuable lessons our political leaders can glean from this victorious World Cup team, particularly in the realm of leadership. These lessons emphasize inclusivity, leveraging each individual's strengths, and maintaining respect for opponents rather than viewing them as mere obsta-

Even the RSS sarsanghchalak echoed similar sentiments following the BJP's underwhelming performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections, where significant ground was lost in Uttar Pradesh, traditionally a stronghold for the saffron party.

The announcement by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) of a Rs 125-crore reward for the team struck a discordant note. The greatest reward for those who represent the nation

The love, respect, and recognition from their fellow countrymen stand at the pinnacle of rewards. Amid our shared jubilation, the emphasis on monetary rewards seemed unnecessary.

The manner in which the cash rewards were announced seemed tactless and overly commercialized, reminiscent of a crass form of commercialism. This approach contradicts the essence of teachings found in the Bhagavad Gita, where the principle of performing one's duty without attachment to rewards is fundamental. It raises the question: why did the BCCI assume that the players were motivated primarily by monetary incentives in their pursuit of success?

Certainly, it's understandable to announce a fitting monetary reward, which is expected and deserved. However, it could have been distributed without the pomp and circumstance that might give the impression players are solely motivated by financial gain. What they truly seek is something far more profound: the admiration, love, and above all, the respect of the people of India. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

POST BAG

Ensuring safe streets: Mandating parking spaces for all vehicle owners

Sir/Ma'am

I am writing to highlight the ongoing issue of roadside parking by individuals and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. This practice not only congests our streets but also poses safety risks for pedestrians and drivers.

To address this problem, it is essential to implement a regulation that prohibits the purchase of vehicles without proof of a designated parking space or garage. By ensuring that vehicle owners have adequate parking facilities, we can significantly reduce the number of cars parked on roadsides, thereby improving traffic flow and enhancing public safety. This measure would also encourage the use of public transportation and contribute to a cleaner urban environment. It is high time that the government takes proactive steps to enforce such regulations for the benefit of all citizens

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Infrastructure challenges

Sir/Ma'am

The roof collapse at Delhi's busy airport during record rainfall isn't just a tragic event but a stark symptom of India's broader infrastructure challenges. This incident, amidst a backdrop of similar failures nationwide such as bridge collapses and monsoon-related havoc exposes systemic flaws in planning, execution, and maintenance across the country.

The issue goes beyond weather; inadequate drainage systems in rapidly urbanizing areas exacerbate flooding, turning urban growth into a hazard. The rush to complete projects, often timed with elections, prioritizes speed over quality, compromising infrastructure integrity. Infrastructure development must prioritize public safety over political expediency, ensuring long-term sustainability.

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of depression?

eople with depression experience distinct periods - lasting at least 2 weeks - of sadness, low energy, and loss of interest in things that they once enjoyed. People sometimes refer to these periods as depressive episodes. The experience of depression can vary significantly among individuals. For example, it may cause some people to oversleep and others to sleep very little. Each type of depression can have distinct symptoms and effects.

Types of depression Seven common types of depression are:

Major depressive disorder Major depressive disorder is the classic form of depression. People with major depression experience symptoms that may in-

- sadness
- · feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and
- · difficulty sleeping
- changes in appetite
- fatigue irritability
- · feeling "empty"
- thoughts of suicide

Depression can also cause physical symptoms, such as aches and pains. It can affect thoughts and concentration and lead to difficulties in making decisions and remembering things.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), approximately 17.3 million adults in the U.S. experienced at least one episode of major depression in 2017. This number equates to 7.1% of all U.S. adults. Major depressive disorder appears to be more common among women and in those between the ages of 18 and 25

Persistent depressive disorder

People with persistent depressive disorder have symptoms of depression that last for 2 years or more. Other names for this condition include dysthymia and dysthymic disorder.

The severity of the low mood is not as intense as with major depression or other types of depression, but it tends to last longer.

Even though people with persistent depressive disorder can function in their daily lives, they may feel as though they rarely or never experience joy. As with major depression, persistent depressive disorder can affect sleep, appetite, energy levels, and self-esteem.

The NIMH estimates that 1.3% of U.S. adults experience persistent depressive disorder at some point during their lives. It also appears to be almost twice as common in

women as in men. Postpartum and perinatal depression

Postpartum depression refers to depression that develops within the first year of giving birth. It differs from the "baby blues," which is a phenomenon that affects up to 80% of mothers after giving birth.

People with the baby blues experience relatively mild anxiety, fatigue, and sadness that typically persist for a few days before going away without treatment. Postpartum depression, on the other hand, causes more extreme symptoms of depression.

Postpartum depression affects almost 15% of births, with symptoms most commonly appearing within 1 week to 1 month of the delivery. Treatment is usually necessary for those with postpartum depression.

People can also experience depression throughout pregnancy. Doctors use the revised term perinatal depression to describe depression that occurs both during pregnancy and after the birth of the baby.

Major depressive disorder with psychotic features

Psychotic depression occurs when an individual has severe depression alongside psychosis. The revisions to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) have changed the name of this condition to "major depressive disorder" with the specifier "with psychotic features."

People with psychosis may have false beliefs (delusions) or hear or see things that are not happening (hallucinations).

The symptoms of psychotic depression usually have a "theme," such as delusions of guilt, illness, or poverty. The findings of a 2018 study suggest that the lifetime prevalence of psychotic depression ranges from 0.35–1%, with higher rates in older adults.

Major depressive disorder with seasonal pattern

Previously known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), major depressive disorder with seasonal pattern is a type of depression that occurs in the winter months. It is more common in areas that are farther away from the equator.

SAD causes symptoms similar to those of other forms of depression, including anxiety, fatigue, and weight gain. The American Psychiatric Association report that SAD affects approximately 5% of people in the

Experts believe that SAD occurs in some people due to the lack of natural light. However, they do not know why it affects some people and not others. Symptoms typically last from early winter to spring. A less common form of SAD, which is called summeronset seasonal affective disorder, occurs in the spring and summer months.

Situational depression

Situational depression, or adjustment disorder, occurs in some people who experience a traumatic or life-altering event. Doctors diagnose it more often in children and adolescents. Examples of such events

- divorce
- being the victim of a violent crime
- job loss
- bereavement · chronic illness

In children, stressful events may also include a family move, the birth of a sibling, and the separation of parents. To receive a diagnosis of situational depression, the person must show symptoms of depression that a mental health professional would consider unhealthy or excessive, given the situation.

While symptoms may resolve on their own, treatment is sometimes necessary to prevent the depression from getting worse or becoming chronic.

Major depressive disorder with atypi-

Atypical depression is a form of depression in which the symptoms differ from the usual symptoms of depression. Doctors do not understand this form of depression as well as they do other types. They may diagnose it as "major depressive disorder with atypical features." One key feature of atypical depression is that the person's mood temporarily lifts when something positive happens. Doctors call this "mood

Researchers state that a person must have two or more of the following symptoms in addition to mood reactivity to receive a diagnosis of atypical depression:

- significant weight gain
- increase in appetite hypersomnia, or sleeping too much
- · leaden paralysis, or a feeling of heaviness in the limbs and body

• sensitivity to rejection from others that results in significant social problems or issues at work

Older research indicates that atypical depression typically has a high prevalence rate, starts when a person is younger, and lasts longer than other types of depression. It is more common in those with bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders.

Diagnosis

To diagnose any form of depression, a doctor will likely carry out one or more of the following:

- a physical examination
- · blood tests to check for physical conditions that may be causing symptoms
- a psychiatric evaluation, which includes checking a person's symptoms against the

Treatment

Medication, therapy, and a combination of both are the most common treatments for most types of depression. However, some types of depression may respond well to other forms of treatment. For example, light therapy can be effective for those with

Several types of antidepressant medications are available. People vary in their response to different drugs, and there is often a period of trial and error before they find the right medication or combination of medications.

Types of antidepressants include: selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors

- serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)
- tricyclic antidepressants • monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)
- atypical antidepressants Other medications that can be helpful include anti-anxiety drugs, antipsychotics, and mood stabilizers. Individuals should discuss the benefits and potential risks of antidepressant use with their doctor.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy, or talk therapy, can be an effective treatment for depression. One form of psychotherapy that may be helpful for those with depression is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Other forms may also be beneficial. Therapy is most effective when people find the most suitable style of therapy and the right therapist for them.

Psychotherapy can help people adjust to their life circumstances, challenge negative thoughts, and learn healthy ways to deal with stress. It can also give people the awareness to identify issues that contribute to their depression and the space to set life

Other treatments

In severe cases of depression, a doctor may recommend a form of brain stimulation therapy, such as electroconvulsive therapy or transcranial magnetic stimulation. Light therapy can help people with SAD.

A doctor can recommend lifestyle changes to support depression treatment. These can include:

- eating a healthful diet
- exercising regularly
- developing stress-management tech-

They may also provide people with information about local or online depression support groups.

When to see a doctor

Individuals should see a doctor if they feel depressed, particularly if a low mood persists for 2 weeks or more or if it happens regularly. People should seek urgent help if they have thoughts of suicide or self-harm.

Anyone who thinks that they have postpartum depression should see a doctor right way, especially if their symptoms make it difficult to care for the baby or if they have thoughts of hurting themselves or the baby. A doctor can support the person to care for the baby and themselves.

Summary Depression is a very common mental health condition. There are several types of depression, each of which has different symptoms. Depression is treatable with medications and psychotherapy. Other

treatments may also be beneficial for some

Anyone who has concerns that they or a loved one may have depression should see a doctor. The sooner a person receives treatment, the sooner they can start to feel better. (Courtesy: Medical News Today)

What are the types Hathras tragedy: Has India become the epicentre of man-made catastrophes?

By: Brig Kuldip Singh (Retd)

The deadly stampede in Fulrai village of Uttar Pradesh's . Hathras district (2 July: 121 dead, including 112 women and 7 children) in the 'satsang' organised by Suraj Pal (aka Narayan Sakar Hari or 'Bhole Baba') isn't an isolated incident but stands preceded by a long list of stampedes particularly during religious or godmencentred gatherings (I have curated a list at the end of this article).

Clearly, in India, life is cheap The country witnesses such tragedies on a regular basis, and yet, there are many reasons why these recur with alarming frequency. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) published a comprehensive guide entitled Managing Crowds at Events and Venues of Mass Gatherings for State Governments, Local Authorities, Administrators and Organisers in 2014. Yet, a day after the Hathras tragedy, UP government minister Asim Arun stated that the state government has started work on SOPs to prevent such incidents in future.

Incidentally, during my long years in the NDMA, I assisted multiple administrations in preparing for mass gatherings like the Kumbh Mela, the Sri Amarnathji Yatra, and the 550th Birth Anniversary Celebration of Guru Nanak Devji, etc and there is a huge body of good practices on that subject available for anyone who's interested. Most of our revered places of worship are at least a century old, and back then, the size of crowds that would throng them in the 20th and 21st centuries couldn't be cognised. Add to this the construction of shops and other structures which further constrict the space around such places of worship. The recipe for a disaster is ready.

The sense of helplessness among the underprivileged sections of society tends to make them cling to religiosity, hoping to alleviate their

plight – and most godmen are really good at selling a heady blend of that hope. Preliminary investigations attribute the stampede to the pandemonium caused by a rush to collect the 'soil touched by Bhole Baba's feet'. People follow such 'godmen' because they often fill the void left by the administration, for e.g., Baba Ram Rahim ran schools and small hospitals, provided minor employment, etc, all of which offered cover for his nefarious activities. The aim of most such Babas is to enrich themselves. Hence, in most events, the organisers tend to usually outsource them as "voluntary work" to outsiders. Even where contractors are utilised, the workmanship is shoddy and there is no realisation that poorly insulated wires, overloaded electrical circuits, etc, can prove deadly in a tented colony. Entry-exit corridors cannot be mere, contiguous narrow lanes with no emergency evacuation lanes in between. Frail barriers will not hold crowds.

While inadequate forecasting of the anticipated crowd is a factor, the organisers also deliberately tend to underplay the total strength in order to obtain permissions easily, after which the administration is caught off-guard. In the case of Hathras, the organisers of the event had sought permission for 80,000 people, but around 2.5 lakh turned up. Uncontrolled access to the event, lack of marshals and public address systems (the latter play an important role in quelling rumours and stabilising a restive crowd), the absence of holding areas before an entrance(s): entrances and exits not opening to wider access; uncontrolled parking and movement of vehicles for VIPs, are all factors which contribute to such tragedies.

The distribution of 'freebies', the arrival of a VIP and the associated rush to catch a glimpse or obtain a darshan can easily trigger a surge and 'crush' an anxious and competitive crowd. Sub-optimal security deployment astride queues, inadequate briefing of security personnel on crowd-control measures, the paucity of structured communications networks, the absence or flawed composition of response groups, absence of rehearsals prior to the event, are other issues that catalyse a stampede. Here is a list of stampedes in the last 20 years that were caused during religious gatherings and events.

January 2005: 340 devotees were killed and several hundred others injured in a stampede at the Mandhardevi temple in Wai town, Maharashtra.

August 2008: 145 died at Naina Devi temple, Himachal Pradesh after rumours of a landslide triggered a stampede.

September 2008: 250 devotees were killed in the stampede at Chamundagar temple in Rajasthan.

March 2010: 63 pilgrims (over half were children) died from among the crowd that had lined up for free food and clothing at Ram Janki temple, Pratapgarh district,

January 2011: At least 104 Sabarimala devotees died and over 40 were injured in a stampede after a jeep crashed into pilgrims at Pulmedu, Idukki district, Kerala.

November 2011: Over 20 were killed in a stampede at Har-ki-

Pauri ghat in Haridwar. November 2012: Around 20 people died and several were injured during the Chhath Puja at Adalat Ghat, Patna, after a makeshift bridge on the river Ganga broke, triggering a stam-

February 2013: 36 devotees from among those who had come to attend the Kumbh Mela, died in the stampede at Prayagraj train station after officials announced a last-minute change in the train plat-October 2013: 115 died and

over a hundred were injured in a stampede at the Ratangarh temple in Datia, Madhya Pradesh. The tesy: The Quint

mours that a river bridge the devotees were crossing was about to

collapse. October 2014: 32 people were killed, and 26 others injured in a stampede at Gandhi Maidan, Patna, as Dussehra celebrations ended

July 2015: 27 were killed in a stampede at a major bathing site along River Godavari in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh.

October 2016: at least 24 killed and 20 injured in the stampede on a crowded bridge to an ashram in Varanasi, UP. The organizers had expected 3,000 devotees at the ceremony, but more than 70,000 thronged the religious event.

September 2017: 23 people lost their lives with over 40 being injured in the stampede on a narrow foot-bridge in Mumbai's Elphinstone Road suburban railway sta-

January 2022: 12 devotees died in a stampede at Vaishno Devi tem-

ple, J&K March 2023: Over 36 people died when a slab atop an ancient well collapsed during a 'havan' programme being conducted at a tem-

ple in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. The recurring stampedes and the infrastructure and climate disasters raise a question: has India become the epicentre of man-made catastrophes, with no end in sight? And after each tragedy and disaster, there are 'high-level' visits by political leaders and high-ranking bureaucrats, during which officials assiduously and slavishly point out what had transpired; FIRs are recorded; investigations are ordered; 'compensation' is also announced for the families of the victims (which is also a way of ensuring they do not rake the issue further), and there are suggestions of lofty lessons being learnt for the future. And after all that, life goes on for the administrations, till the next man-made disaster. (Cour-

The rise of influencer culture: Are they killing creativity and art?

By: Saumya Shanker

few weeks back, I woke up to another day scrolling through Instagram, only to find Gen Z teenagers dancing to the beats of Blue's early 2000s hit, "One Love." It instantly transported me to an era where we jammed to everything from Backstreet Boys and Britney Spears to the punk rock anthems of Green Day and the electronic rock of Linkin

It struck me then—whether it's Hindi or English, the music we grew up with is making a comeback. Remixes of Dua Lipa songs with old Bollywood classics, and SRK's timeless hits playing alongside modern beats, all made me wonder: has influencer culture killed true pop culture? The early 2000s were a golden era marked by the commercialization of the internet and the advent of mobile phones. Teenagers and young adults flaunted funky flip phones, and pop culture was saturated with lyrics about finding passions, rebelling against norms, and vibrant bursts of color everywhere.

The revolution of social media post-2014, especially in India, brought platforms like What-App, Facebook, and Instagram, keeping pop culture at its peak with dynamic fashion trends and viral challenges like the Mannequin Challenge. But just before the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of social media influencers began overshadowing traditional forms of pop culture. Ordinary people with internet access started gaining massive followings through short skits or vines. What began as a subculture quickly grew post-pandemic into an influencer culture, overshadowing traditional forms of pop culture.

Influencer management agencies emerged. propelling these micro-celebs into the limelight, hosting award shows, walking the runways at events like Lakme Fashion Week, and even gracing the red carpet at Cannes. Suddenly, influencers—who started with simple, entertaining skits—held more value than seasoned models, artists, designers, and musicians who had spent years honing their craft.

This blog is not a critique of social media influencers who create content on their platforms, but a critical examination of the branding and PR agencies that push these influencers to the point of replacing actual artists and their art.

The downfall of traditional artists The unchecked rise of influencer culture and PR and marketing agencies has led to a notice-

able decline in art, creativity, and genuine trends. Recently, Indian actress Neha Sharma shared in an interview how she was replaced by an influencer with a "million followers". Despite fitting the part and getting along well with the entire team, she was suddenly informed that the role would go to an influencer with a massive social media following. This isn't an

isolated incident. Fashion shows and marketing

agencies are prioritizing influencers for clout and coverage over models who have spent more than a decade in the industry. Former pageant winner, model, and fashion influencer Akash Choudhary believes that "the charm of the ramp is with models." He argues that influencers should stick to content their audience resonates with, while experienced models should continue to showcase designers' work on the runway. Fashion model Sonalika Sahay also asserts, "Ramp cannot be so accessible to all for the sake of some digital PR." The influx of influencers in these spaces undermines

the work and contributions of professional mod-

els and artists. 'Everyone is striving to be fa-

mous, no one wants to be great' – this statement aptly summarises the influencer culture. The influencer culture has set a low bar for success, where viral content and social media clout often trump talent and hard work. For instance, the "Vada Pav girl" gained immense popularity for her daily antics, earning a spot on the reality show Bigg Boss. "It is all about the algorithm," they say when one starts creating content for social media.

However, this isn't true with traditional mediums like movies, TV shows, or fashion events. In these areas, the public genuinely has to appreciate your art to follow and promote it, and

they tend to be more critical in assessing artists than social media influencers. This kind of mediocrity is replacing real talent, resulting in mediocre music, shabby designs in the name of street style, and influencers taking over roles meant for actors and models.

Movie producers are replacing talented actors with influencers, hoping to attract more attention during promotions. However, many films featuring influencers have flopped at the box office. Movies like "Jug Jug Jiyo" with Prajakta Koli and "Thank You for Coming" featuring Kusha Kapila and Dolly Singh failed to resonate with audiences. Influencers are now appearing on major talk shows like "Koffee with Karan," which has seen a decline in popularity since 2022. These influencers, despite their social media presence. often lack the talent and substance to sustain long-term interest.

Some may argue that this shift is merely a change, but it represents a decline. With the rise of influencer culture and PR agencies, there is a noticeable decline in art, creativity, and trends. Trends are recycling the same music, fashion. and aesthetics from our childhood, but with no fresh twists or innovations

When pop culture is reduced to 15-second reels, creativity is dead, and influencer culture is to blame. Marketing agencies are now pitching plans to brands where influencer marketing is at the forefront. These agencies have inflated the price of each influencer, presenting it in their social media toolkits under the guise of brand visibility and engagement. However, one day this bubble will burst. The future of our cultural landscape depends on recognizing and valuing genuine talent and creativity. By focusing less on algorithms and follower counts and more on true artistry, we can revive the vibrant, innovative pop culture we once knew. Let's not allow the influencer bubble to overshadow the incredible work of dedicated artists, actors, and models. It's time to de-influence and re-inspire, ensuring that creativity and hard work reclaim their rightful place in the spotlight. (Courtesy:

5 tips to raise money-savvy kids

By: Deepak Bajaj

inancial responsibility is an dimportant life skill that parents can teach their children when they are young. In today's complex financial times, money management is a lesson that forms the basis for future financial decisions. Here are five simple and effective tips that will instil financial responsibility and awareness in your children

1. The right perspective about money: When children are between five and seven years of age, they should be introduced to basic topics related to finance. You can tell them that, while money has a special importance in life, it is not

While earning money is very im-

portant, it is also your responsibil-

ity to tell your children under what

conditions and to what extent it

should be earned - for example,

how to maintain a balance between

greed, need, requirement and de-

sires. When children understand

this early on, their perspective

Similarly, it is not necessary that every person who has a lot of money also has culture, happiness, health and life values. Therefore, it

changes completely.

children that money has a certain place in one's life and it should remain there only. You can explain concepts like saving, spending and earning in very simple language by drawing

is very important to always tell

examples from real life. 2. Teach saving by giving an allowance: When your child is between eight and 10 years old, give her/him some money and explain its value and usefulness. This way, you can teach them the spirit of saving first, then spending it and fi-

nally sharing with others. 3. Teach from real experiences: We all know that children learn faster and better through experience. It is good to involve children in the family's important financial decisions so that they get firsthand practical knowledge.

It's also a good idea to take children along whenever you go out

shopping. Teach them to compare prices and shop within their limited budget. While doing this, you should always emphasise that they need to prioritise their needs over their desires

Similarly, when you plan for any big expense, make your children a part of the budget planning. Make them realise how to stay within the budget, how you are trying to save, etc. before making any big expenditure. Learning how to manage money in such cases increases their

Children will not only know how to design a budget, they will also able to make a balanced budget for themselves in the future.

4. Open a bank account for your child: You have to do this when your children are between 10 and 12 years old. When you start a bank account for your children, it automatically creates financial responsibility for them. Whenever you go to the bank, take your children with you and try to explain to them about deposit, withdrawal, interest and the types of loan. When children spend something, or you make them spend something from their account, show them their account statement issued by the bank. Along with this, show them the savings they have made so that they can understand

the format of spending and saving. While improving the psychology of children, understand that by having their own bank account, children feel responsible for money. They will gradually get familiar with the banking system on their own and this habit will save them from financial crises in the

future. 5. Set good examples

Always remember that children usually learn from their parents. Therefore, as parents, you will have to set ideal financial habits in front of them - such as always being transparent in front of children about the family's financial matters, openly discussing financial challenges in front of children and involving children in the making the household budget. (Courtesy: Rediff.com)

can come through Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

A two-story building at the chil-

dren's hospital was partly de-

stroyed. On the hospital's main

10-story building, windows and

doors were blown out and walls

Medical personnel and local peo-

ple helped shift the rubble as they

searched for children and medical

workers who could be trapped un-

derneath. Volunteers formed a line,

passing stones and debris to each

other. Smoke still rose from the

building, and volunteers and emer-

gency crews worked in protective

masks. It was the heaviest Russian

bombardment of Kyiv in almost

four months. The daylight attacks

included Kinzhal hypersonic mis-

siles, one of the most advanced

Russian weapons, the Ukrainian air

speed of sound, making it hard to

intercept. City buildings shook

from the blasts. An entire section of

a residential multistory building in

one district of Kyiv was destroyed,

The Kyiv city administration re-

The Kinzhal flies at 10 times the

were blackened.

China's Xi calls on world powers to help Russia and Ukraine resume direct dialogue

Orban's trip to China comes a day before NATO is due to hold a summit to mark its 75th anniversary

BEIJING, July 8: Chinese President Xi Jinping called on world powers to help Russia and Ukraine resume direct dialogue and negotiations during a meeting Monday with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

6 THE HILLS TIMES

Orbán made a surprise visit to China after similar trips last week to Russia and Ukraine to discuss prospects for a peaceful settlement in Ukraine

Orbán praised China's "constructive and important initiatives" for achieving peace and described Beijing as a stabilizing force amid global turbulence, according to CCTV.

Besides Russia and Ukraine, the end of the war "depends on the decision of three world powers, the United States, the European Union and China," Orbán

him shaking hands with Xi. Orbán met with Xi just two months ago when he hosted the Chinese leader in Hungary as part of a three-country European tour that also included stops in France and Serbia, which unlike the other two is not a member of the Euro-

Hungary under Orbán has built substantial political and economic ties with China. The European nation hosts a number of Chinese electric vehicle battery facilities, and in December it announced that Chinese EV manufacturing giant BYD will open its first European EV production factory in the south of the country.

pean Union or NATO.

"Peace mission 3.0" is how Orbán captioned a picture posted early Monday on the X social media platform depicting him after having stepped off his plane



pean leaders.

to everyone.

"The number of countries that

can talk to both warring sides is

diminishing," Orbán said. "Hun-

gary is slowly becoming the only

country in Europe that can speak

Hungary assumed the rotating

presidency of the EU at the start

of July and Russian President

Vladimir Putin suggested Orbán

He was being greeted by Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Hua Chunying and other

His previously unannounced visit comes on the heels of similar trips last week to Moscow and Kviv, where he proposed that Ukraine consider agreeing to an

immediate cease-fire with Russia. His visit to Moscow drew condemnation from Kyiv and Eurodismissed that suggestion and said Orbán had no mandate for anything beyond a discussion about bilateral relations. The Hungarian prime minister,

resentative of the European Coun-

cil. Several top European officials

widely seen as having the warmest relations with Putin among EU leaders, has routinely blocked, delayed or watered down EU efforts to assist Kyiv and impose sanctions on Moscow for its actions in Ukraine. He has long argued for a cessation of hostilities in Ukraine but without outlining what that might mean for the country's territorial integrity or future security.

That posture has frustrated Hungary's EU and NATO allies. who have denounced Russia's actions as a breach of international law and a threat to the security of countries in Eastern Europe. (AP)

Russian missiles hit a children's hospital in the Ukrainian capital and kill at least 20 elsewhere

KYIV, July 8: Russian missiles killed at least seven people and struck a children's hospital in the Ukarinian capital, Kyiv, on Monday, while another attack in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih killed at least 10.

The Russian barrage targeted five Ukrainian cities with more than 40 missiles of different types, hitting apartment buildings and public infrastructure, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a social media post.

At least 20 people were killed and around 50 people were injured across the country in the Monday morning onslaught, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said. In Kryvyi Rih, 31 people were injured in addition to the 10 deaths in what the head of city administration, Oleksandr Vilkul, said was a massive missile attack. Explosions were also reported by local officials in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk

At the Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv, rescuers were searching for people under the rubble of a partially collapsed wing of the facility, Zelenskyy said, adding that the number of casualties was not yet known.

"It is very important that the world should not be silent about it now and that everyone should see what Russia is and what it is doing, Zelenskyy said on social media.

The attack comes on the eve of a three-day NATO summit in Washington, which will look at how to reassure Ukraine of the alliance's unwavering support and offer Ukrainians hope that their country

ported falling debris, presumably from intercepted missiles, in a handful of Kyiv areas, starting fires. Thick plumes of smoke rose from several Kyiv neighborhoods. The head of Ukraine's presiden-

officials said.

tial office, Andrii Yermak, said the attack occurred at a time when many people were in the city's streets. Kyiv Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said official assessments of the attack's consequences were still being carried out. (AP)

Gaza destruction likely helped push Hamas to soften cease-fire demands, several officials say

DUBAI, **July 8:** Several officials in the Middle East and the U.S. believe the level of devastation in the Gaza Strip caused by a nine-month Israeli offensive likely has helped push Hamas to soften its demands for a cease-fire agreement.

Hamas over the weekend appeared to drop its longstanding demand that Israel promise to end the war as part of any cease-fire deal. The sudden shift has raised new hopes for progress in internationally brokered negotiations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday boasted that military pressure - including Israel's ongoing two-month offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah - "is what has led Hamas to enter negotiations." Hamas, an Islamic militant group that seeks Israel's destruction and took control of Gaza in 2007, is highly secretive and little is known about its inner workings.

But in recent internal communications seen by The Associated Press, messages signed by several senior Hamas figures in Gaza urged the group's exiled political leadership to accept the cease-fire proposal pitched by U.S. President Joe Biden.

The messages, shared by a Middle East official familiar with the ongoing negotiations, described the heavy losses Hamas has suffered on the battlefield and the dire conditions in the

war-ravaged territory. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to share the contents of internal Hamas communications.

It was not known if this internal pressure was a factor in Hamas' flexibility. But the messages indicate divisions within the group and a readiness among top militants to reach a deal quickly, even if Hamas' top official in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, may not be in a rush. Sinwar has been in hiding since the war erupted last October and is believed to be holed up in a tunnel deep under-

U.S. officials declined to comment on the communications. But a person familiar with Western intelligence who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter said the group's leadership understands its forces have suffered heavy losses and that has helped Hamas move closer to a cease-fire

Two U.S. officials say the Americans are aware of internal divisions within Hamas and that those divisions, the destruction in Gaza or pressure from mediators Egypt and Qatar could have been factors in the militant group softening its demands for a deal. The U.S. officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the Biden administration's view of

Sister of NKorean leader Kim calls SKorea's live-fire drills 'suicidal hysteria'

SEOUL, July 8: The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called South Korea's recent front-line live-fire drills "suicidal hysteria" as she threatened unspecified military steps on Monday if further provoked.

The warning by Kim Yo Jong came after South Korea resumed firing exercises near its tense land and sea borders with North Korea in the past two weeks. The exercises were the first of their kind since South Korea suspended a 2018 agreement with the North aimed at easing front-line military tensions in June. "The question is why the enemy kicked off such war drills near the border, suicidal hysteria, for which they will have to sustain terrible disaster, Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by state media. She accused South Korea's conservative government of deliberately escalating tensions as a way to escape a domestic political crisis. She said the riskiness of the South Korean drills is clear to everyone as they happened amid "a touch-and-go situation" established after the US, South Korea and Japan recently held a new trilateral military exercise that North Korea views as a security threat. "In case it is judged according to our criteria that they violated the sovereignty of (North Korea) and committed an act tantamount to a declaration of war, our armed forces will immediately carry out its mission and duty assigned by the (North Korean) constitution," she said, without elaborating. (AP)

France's Macron keeps prime minister in place for 'stability of the country' after chaotic election



PARIS, July 8: French President Emmanuel Macron refused the resignation of the country's prime minister, asking him on Monday to remain temporarily as the head of the government after chaotic election results left the government in limbo.

French voters split the legislature on the left, centre and far right, leaving no faction even close to the majority needed to form a government. The results from Sunday's vote raised the risk of paralysis for the European Union's second-largest economy.

Macron gambled that his decision to call snap elections would give France a "moment of clarification", but the outcome showed the opposite, less than three weeks before the start of the Paris Olympics, when the country will be under an international spotlight.

France's main share index opened with a dip, but quickly recovered, possibly because markets had feared an outright victory for the far right or the leftist coalition.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal had said he would remain in office if needed but offered his resignation on Monday morning, Macron, who named him just seven months ago, immediately asked him to stay on "to ensure the stability of the country"

Macron's top political allies joined the meeting with Attal at the presidential palace.

Attal on Sunday made clear that he disagreed with Macron's decision to call the surprise elections. The results of two rounds of voting left no obvious path to form a government for either the leftist coalition that came in first. Macron's centrist alliance, or the far

Newly elected and returning lawmakers were expected to gather at the National Assembly to begin negotiations in earnest. Macron himself will leave later in the week for a NATO summit in Washington

Political deadlock could have far-

Ukraine, global diplomacy and Europe's economic stability. Still, at least

one leader said the results were a relief

"In Paris enthusiasm, in Moscow disappointment, in Kyiv relief. Enough to be happy in Warsaw," Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a former European Union Council head, wrote late Sunday on X. According to official results released early Monday, all three main blocs fell far short of the 289 seats needed to control the 577-seat National Assembly, the more powerful of France's two legislative chambers.

The results showed just over 180 seats for the New Popular Front leftist coalition, which placed first, ahead of Macron's centrist alliance, with more than 160 seats. Marine Le Pen's farright National Rally and its allies were restricted to third place, although their more than 140 seats were still way ahead of the party's previous best showing of 89 seats in 2022.

Macron has three years remaining on his presidential term. In announcing his resignation, Attal made clearer than ever his disapproval of Macron's shock decision to call the election, saving "I didn't choose this dissolution" of the outgoing National Assembly, where the president's centrist alliance used to be single biggest group, albeit without an absolute majority.

Rather than rallying behind Macron as he'd hoped, millions took the vote as an opportunity to vent anger about inflation, crime, immigration and other grievances — including his style of

The New Popular Front's leaders immediately pushed Macron to give them the first chance to form a government and propose a prime minister. The faction pledges to roll back many of Macron's headline reforms, embark on a costly program of public spending, and take a tougher line against Israel because of its war with Hamas. But it's not clear, even among the left, who could lead the government without

sensus," said Olivier Faure, head of the Socialist Party, which joined the leftist coalition and was still sorting out how many seats it won on Monday.

Macron warns that the left's economic program of many tens of billions of euros in public spending, partly financed by taxes on wealth and hikes for high earners, could be ruinous for France, already criticized by EU watchdogs for its debt.

"We need someone who offers con-

A hung parliament is unknown territory for modern France.

Despite the uncertainty, supporters on the left cheered in Republique plaza in eastern Paris when the first results came in, with people spontaneously hugging strangers and several minutes of nonstop applause.

Marielle Castry, a medical secretary, was on the Metro in Paris when projected results were first announced.

"Everybody had their smartphones and were waiting for the results and then everybody was overjoyed," said the 55-year-old. "I had been stressed out since June 9 and the European elections. ... And now, I feel good. Re-

The political agreement between the left and centre to block the National Rally was largely successful. Many voters decided that keeping the far right from power was more important to them than anything else, backing its opponents in the runoff, even if they weren't from the political camp they usually support.

"Disappointed, disappointed," said r-right supporter Luc Doumont, 66 "Well, happy to see our progression, because for the past few years we've

National Rally leader Le Pen, who was expected to make a fourth run for the French presidency in 2027, said the elections laid the groundwork for "the victory of tomorrow."

Racism and antisemitism marred the electoral campaign, along with Russian disinformation campaigns, and more than 50 candidates reported being physically attacked — highly unusual for France.

Unlike other countries in Europe that are more accustomed to coalition governments, France doesn't have a tradition of lawmakers from rival political camps coming together to form a majority. France is also more centralised than many other European countries, with many more decisions made in

Japan and the Philippines sign a defence pact in the face of shared alarm over China

MANILA, July 8: Japan and the Philippines signed a key defence pact Monday allowing the deployment of Japanese forces for joint military exercises, including live-fire drills, to the Southeast Asian nation that came under brutal Japanese occupation in World War II but is now building an alliance with Tokyo as they face an increasingly assertive China.

The Reciprocal Access Agreement, which similarly allows Filipino forces to enter Japan for joint combat training, was signed by Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa in a Manila ceremony witnessed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. It would take effect after ratification by the countries' legislatures, Philippine and Japanese officials said.

Kamikawa called the signing of the defence agreement "a groundbreaking achievement" that should further boost defence cooperation between Japan and the Philippines.

"A free and open international order based on the rule of law is the foundation of regional

Singapore approves 16 insects for human consumption



and strengthen this." Kamikawa and Japanese Defence Minister Minoru Kihara later held talks with their Philippine counterparts on ways to further deepen relations. The defence pact with the Philippines is the first to be forged by Japan in Asia. Japan signed similar accords with Australia in 2022 and with Britain in 2023.

Under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the Japanese government has taken steps to boost its security and defensive firepower, including a counterstrike capability that breaks from Japan's

postwar principle of focusing only on self-defence, amid threats from North Korea and China's growing assertiveness. It's doubling defence spending in a five-year period to 2027 in a move to bolster its military power and make Japan the world's third-biggest military spender after the United States and China.

Many of Japan's Asian neighbours, including the Philippines, came under Japanese aggression until its defeat in World War II and Japan's efforts to bolster its military role and spending could be a sensitive issue. Japan and the Philippines, however, have steadily deepened defence and security ties.

Kishida's moves dovetail with Marcos' effort to forge security alliances to bolster the Philippine military's limited ability to defend Manila's territorial interests in the South China Sea. The busy sea passage is a key global trade route which has been claimed virtually in its entirety by China but also contested in part by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

Sri Lankan SC dismisses petition to delay presidential election

COLOMBO, July 8: The Sri Lankan Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a petition seeking to delay the presidential election due to happen later this year until a clarification could be made on the presidential term.

A five-member bench dismissed the petition with costs without giving leave to proceed based on arguments by the attorney general.

Last week, an individual filed a fundamental rights petition urging the court to hold back the election until a clarification could be made on an ambiguity in the presidential term concerning Articles 30(2) and 82 in the Constitution.

While Article 30(2) had limited the presidential term to five years from six in terms of the 19th Amendment adopted in 2015, there was no referendum held to change Article 82 which says that a presidential term could be extended up to six years through a referendum. The petitioner therefore sought clarity on the term.

The attorney general argued this morning that there was no ambiguity on the presidential term which is five years.

The election is to take place on a date between September 17 and October 16, the election commission has indicated.

Sri Lanka's election commission on Sunday said that it will announce the date for the next presidential poll before the end of this month. Election Commission Chair-

man R M A L Ratnayake said the electoral body would be legally empowered after July 17 to announce the date for the election.

Ratnayake said the commission is currently in the process of putting final touches to the 2024 electoral register which will be the basis for the election. Over 17 million would be eligible to vote in the election as per the revised list, officials said.

The opposition has accused incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe of trying to postpone the election and continue his presidency for fear of

Wickremesinghe confirmed last week that the election would be held as planned. (PTI)

SINGAPORE, July 8: Singarequired to label their packaging so pore's food watchdog on Monday that consumers can make informed decisions on whether to purchase the product. Insect products will also be sub-

said it has approved some 16 species of insects like crickets, grasshoppers and locusts for human consumption, adding to the internationally-renowned menu of global foods including Chinese and Indian dishes in the multi-ethnic city-state.

The much-awaited announcement comes to the delight of industry players who have been gearing supply and catering in Singapore to insects grown in China, Thailand and Vietnam, The Straits Times newspaper reported.

The approved insects include various species of crickets, grasshoppers, locusts, mealworms and silkworms. The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) said that those intending to import or farm insects for human consumption or livestock feed must meet SFA's guidelines, including providing documentary proof that the imported insects are farmed in regulated establishments with food safety controls and are

not harvested from the wild. Insects that are not on SFA's list of 16 will have to undergo an evaluation to ensure that the species are safe to consume, the agency said.

Companies selling pre-packed

food containing insects will also be

SFA began public consultations on the possibility of allow-16 species of insects for consumption in October 2022

only country

selling them,

as a

study.

case

The

In April 2023, SFA said it would give the green light for these species to be consumed in the second half of 2023. This deadline was later pushed back further to the first half of 2024. Reporting the announcement, the broadsheet said House of Seafood restaurant's chief executive Francis Ng is cooking up a menu of 30 insect-infused dishes. Of the 16

ject to food safety testing and those

which are found to be non-compli-

ant with the agency's standards will

A UN report on the safety of lab-

grown meats cites Singapore, the

not be allowed for sale, SFA said.

approved species, the restaurant will be offering superworms, crickets and silkworm pupae on its menu. The insects will be added to some of its seafood dishes, such as

salted egg crab, for example. Before the approval, the restaurant had been getting five to six calls daily inquiring about its insectbased dishes, and when customers can start ordering them, Ng said.

Many of our customers, especially young people who are under 30 years old, are very daring. They want to be able to see

the whole insect in the dish. So, I'm giving them many options to choose

from, the Singapore daily quoted Ng as saying. He anticipates that sales from insect-based dishes will increase his

revenue by around 30 per cent. Javier Yip, founder of logistics company Declarators, has set up another business to import insects for sale in Singapore, offering a range of bug snacks from white grub to silkworms, as well as crickets and mealworms.

Insects have been touted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation as a more sustainable alternative to meat, as they have high protein content and produce less greenhouse gas emissions when farmed. Having already secured a licence to import these insects to Singapore, Yip is working with farms in China, Thailand and Vietnam to supply these bugs to the local market.

Japanese start-up Morus is looking to launch a range of silkwormbased products here, targeting both high-end restaurants and consumers, as they are high-income and health-conscious, said Ryo Sato, its chief executive.

Its products include a pure silkworm powder which can be used as a food ingredient along with matcha powder, protein powder and protein bars, which boast high protein and amino acid content, along with other key nutrients such as vitamins, fibre and minerals.

Acknowledging that Singaporean consumers do not have a history of consuming insects, Morus will also conduct more pop-up events and consumer workshops, Sato said.

PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi transferred to Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jai

LAHORE, July 8: Former Pakistan foreign minister and a close aide of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi was on Monday transferred from the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi to Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail and is set to be produced before an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in the May 9 riots cases, a media report said on Monday.

Multiple cases related to the May 9 violence are lodged against Qureshi, a senior leader of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, in Lahore. Oureshi, 68, was on Monday morning transferred amid tight security to Lahore where he would be produced before the anti-terrorism court established in Kot Lakhpat Jail, Geo News quoted the prison sources as saying.

Barrister Taimur Malik confirmed the judges of ATC Lahore will hear the May 9 cases in Kot Lakhpat Jail and the PTI leader will appear in the court on Monday. Qureshi is in prison since PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan and the former foreign minister were sentenced by a Pakistani court to 10 years in jail for violating the nation's Official Secrets Act by making a diplomatic cable public when Khan was in power. However, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on June 3 acquitted Khan and Qureshi in the Cipher case, suspending their 10year sentence but the two remain in jail as they are implicated in eight more cases in connection with the May 9 violence across Pakistan.(PTI)

Behavioral change needed to attract outside investments to Arunachal: Rijiju

'Even a single instance of law and order issue will create a bad image of the state'

ITANAGAR, July 8: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday advocated for a behavioural change among the people to attract outside investments to Arunachal Pradesh, which will help in creating jobs.

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024

The people of the state should create a conducive atmosphere by changing their behaviour towards outside investors so that investment flows to Arunachal Pradesh, a resource crunch state, the minister for parliamentary affairs and minority affairs said while addressing a function, organised to felicitate him for being inducted into the Union Cabi-

"A peaceful atmosphere should be created in the state so that people from outside who are willing to invest in private sectors feel secure. Even a single instance of law and order issue will create a bad image of the state," Rijiju, who represents the Arunachal West constituency,

"Employment is the biggest chal-



lenge in the state. Today, jobs cannot be obtained through degrees but it change our perception and will have to work to create job opportunities skill development," he

Rijiju said only the private sector

"For that, people need to change their behaviour towards outside investors and should create an atmosphere of peace and security so that the investors evince interest to invest, which in turn will create jobs,"

should shoulder the responsibility and only then Arunachal Pradesh could be a favourable investment and tourist destination in the near future, the minister said.

The land in Arunachal Pradesh belongs to the tribal community and the government cannot allot free land to investors to start their venture. Hydropower is the only sector for investment and people should cooperate with the power developers to invest in the sector," he said.

Expressing gratitude to the people of the state for their mandate to elect him for a fourth term, Rijiju said that the support would inspire him to work more dedicatedly for the development of the state.

The faith reposed on me by the eople of my state as well as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I assure you that I will leave no stone unturned to keep the aspirations alive," he asserted and added that he will go the extra mile to provide long-term support to the

Landslides snap surface communication to several Arunachal districts



ITANAGAR, July 8: Surface communication to several districts in Arunachal Pradesh was disrupted by landslides triggered by rains, officials said on Monday

Landslides buried a person in Shi-Yomi district on Friday, according to a report of the state disaster management department. So far four people have died in the state since April due to natural calamities. The Tezu-Hayuliang road remains blocked at Mompani area in Lohit and Aniaw districts, while landslides blocked the Dari-Chambang and the Palin-Taraklengdi via Langdang village PMGSY road in Kra Daadi district, they said.

NH 513 also remained blocked at Geying in East Siang district, a report said. Over 72,900 people and 257 villages have so far been affected by floods and landslides in Arunachal since April this year.

Floods and landslides also caused extensive damage to roads, bridges, culverts, power lines, electric poles, transformers and water supply systems. According to the report, 160 roads, 76 power lines, 30 electric poles, three transformers, nine bridges, 11 culverts, and 147 water

supply systems have been damaged so far. Besides, 627 kutcha and 51 pucca houses and 155 huts have been damaged, it said.

The state capital Itanagar has been reeling under a severe water crisis for the last couple of days due to damage in pipelines. Though the restoration process is on, it will take several days, officials said.

Damin, Parsi Parlo and Panyasang administrative circles under Kurung Kumey district are reportedly cut off from the rest of the state, following incessant rain this week that triggered major flashfloods and landslides.

Multiple blockades occurred on the road towards Damin via Parsi Parlo, reports said

A massive landslide occurred at Karsingsa block point along the vital NH-415 connecting Itanagar with Banderdewa, forcing the Capital Itanagar administration to close the road for commuters' safety.

After a thorough inspection of the site by Deputy Commissioner Shweta Nagarkoti Mehta, it has been decided to close the road and divert all traffic via Gumto. (PTI)

projects in Arunachal Pradesh

ITANAGAR, July 8: Union power, housing & urban affairs minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday reviewed various ongoing hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh.

"Pleased to meet Hon'ble Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Shri @PemaKhanduBJP & Deputy CM Shri @ChownaMeinBJP in Itanagar. Reviewed various ongoing hydropower projects, comprehensive scheme of transmission & distribution and the revamped distribution sector scheme in the state," the minister posted on X.

The state has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to enhancing its power infrastructure, resulting in significant strides in sustainability, Khattar added.

Taking to social media, chief minister Pema Khandu said, "A productive review meeting today chaired by Hon'ble Union Power Minister, Shri @mlkhattar Ji in Itanagar, focusing on the power sector of Arunachal Pradesh. Grateful to Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Shri @ChownaMeinBJP Ji. Advisor to Power Minister Shri Jikke Tako Ji, and officials from various power corporations for

their valuable insights." "We discussed on the status of hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh. Our ongoing projects are making steady progress, and we challenges to expedite their completion. These projects are not only vital for meeting the state's power needs, but also for contributing to the national grid and boosting our economy," Khandu said in another

The Union minister also attended a presentation by the state Urban Affairs department.

"Attended a presentation by the Department of Urban Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, alongside Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Shri @ChownaMeinBJP Ji and Hon'ble Minister for Urban Affairs, Shri @BaloRaja Ji,"

Khandu said in a post. Later in the day, Khattar called on Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik at Raj Bhavan and discussed harnessing the vast hydropower potential in the state and urban amenities.

The governor said Arunachal Pradesh with more than 58,000 MW of hydro potential has substantial untapped resources.

"The strategic importance of the state, given its geographical location and natural resources, underscores the need for developing its hydropower capabilities to meet both regional and national energy demands. Natural terrain and available water resources provide an attractive opportunity for the state and also for the nation," the gover-

Union power minister reviews ongoing No initiative taken for commuters' safety on NH-29: Nagaland PWD

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, July 8: The Naga-

land PWD (National Highway) said no earnest tangible initiative has been observed to be taken by the NHIDCL on the ground for the safety of commuters on Dimapur-Kohima 4lane of NH-29 with special regard to the Paglapahar stretch of the road despite the state government officially taking up the matter with the agency as many as 18 occasions.

The department issued the statement following the July 4 rockfall incident at Paglapahar stress of the NH in which a vehicle was severely damaged and four of its occupants were in-

Saying that the safety of commuters and the interest of people are of paramount concern of the state, the statement pointed out that the NHIDCL is the agency responsible for maintaining quality parameters and safety standards of the Dimapur-Kohima 4-lane highway.

The department said the state



government has been constantly impressing upon the implementing agency regarding the risks along the road and expeditiously put in place safety measures, especially on the stretches under Package-I considering the ter-

Exactly a year ago on July 4, two persons were killed and three others injured on the same

stretch when falling rocks smashed several vehicles.

The department said following the July 4, 2023, rockfall incident at Paglapahar, the state government had constituted a high level technical committee (HLTC) on July 5, 2023. The committee submitted its report and recommendations which were conveyed to the NHIDCl

The NHIDCL was directed to carry out short-term measures as per the recommendations of the HLTC, and undertake comprehensive study of the terrain, and take up necessary measures, as recommended, to address and

mitigate the risks in the future. The department said the state government is making all possiole efforts to make road travel safe for commuters.

However, it was very distressing to witness the occurrence of another incident at Paglapahar stretch of NH-29 where a rockfall resulted in injury of passengers and major damage to a vehicle

It added that the state government would take up the matter with the authorities concerned in all seriousness to effectively address the matter. The government also called for proactive and sincere response from the NHIDCL to achieve this collective goal for the safety of com-

Rahul Gandhi urges PM to come to violence-hit Manipur

IMPHAL, July 8: Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Manipur to give solace to the ethnic vi-

olence-affected people of the state. Gandhi also said that the Congress will do everything it can to bring peace to Manipur.

The tragedy of Manipur is "tremendous", the Raebareli MP told a press conference here.

"The Prime Minister should visit the state and listen to the woes of the people as it would give comfort to them," Gandhi said.

He said that he came to the state to listen to the woes of the violencehit people and build confidence in "We will do everything we can to

bring peace to Manipur... As somebody in the opposition, I have been trying to pressure the government,

Gandhi visited several relief camps where people displaced by the ethnic violence in the northeastern state are staying. The strife claimed over 200 lives since May last year. (PTI)

LoP visits relief camps in Manipur

IMPHAL, July 8: Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday visited relief camps in Manipur's Jiribam and Churachandpur districts and interacted with the inmates. People displaced by the ethnic violence in the northeastern state, which claimed over 200 lives since May last year, are staying in those relief camps. Gandhi, who is accompanied by senior Congress leaders, is visiting Manipur for the first time after the Congress won both Lok Sabha seats in the state.

"His third visit to Manipur post-violence shows his unwavering commitment to the people's cause," the Congress said in a post on X.

Gandhi first visited Manipur weeks after ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3 last year. He also began his 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' from the state in January 2024. The former Congress president first visited a relief camp set up at Jiribam Higher Secondary School. State Congress president Keisham Meghachandra told reporters that the in-

mates at Jiribam told Gandhi about the experiences they went through. "He also enquired about what they need. One girl told Gandhi that neither the Prime Minister nor the chief minister had come to visit them. She also

urged Gandhi to place the matter in Parliament," Meghachandra said. People came out in thousands to greet Gandhi in Jiribam and many of them

wept while talking to him, the state Congress president said. From Jiribam, Gandhi came to Imphal airport via Silchar in Assam and reached by road a relief camp in Tuibong village in Churachandpur district. There also he interacted with inmates. (PTI)

Tura MP to push for ILP, inclusion of Khasi, Garo languages
SHILLONG, July 8: Congress MP from Tura Parlia-

with the Centre for implementation of Inner Line Permit (ILP) and inclusion of Khasi and Garo languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India. "I would definitely follow up whatever Vincent H

Pala has already taken up. For example, he had already talked about ILP and inclusion of Khasi and Garo languages in the Eighth Schedule in the floor of the parliament...," Sangma said after he was felicitated at a function organized by the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC). Asserting the need to revive the Congress in Meghalaya, the Tura MP said, "We are not oing to give up just because we have lost here in Khasi Hills region." He also predicted that the Congress will bounce back to power in 2028.

Stating that the truth has helped him win Tura parliamentary election, Sangma said, "My winning in Garo Hills is because we tried to spell the truth and that is happening within the state and country. We did not try to lies or make false promises during our campaign but we were just trying to show people how we are being scammed, how we are being cheated, about the education system, health system, about society, about drugs, about cheating revenue and smuggling out of the state - so these are areas we are trying to show people and give them the truth. Any kind of convention pertaining to society we try to spell the truth, as truth prevails and God will be our side. We should not play politics at the cost of people." (NNN)

Firing in Manipur's Jiribam district



IMPHAL, July 8: Unidentified gunmen opened fire in the Gularthal area of Manipur's Jiribam district in the early hours of Monday, officials said.

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, is scheduled to visit relief camps in the district later in the day and meet victims of ethnic violence. "Gunmen fired several

rounds around 3:30 am towards the Meitei area of Gularthal, prompting security forces to retaliate. The exchange of fire continued till 7 am," an official said.

Security personnel have been deployed in the surrounding areas as a preventive measure.

One bulletproof vehicle of the state police also was hit by gunshots during the attack, the official said. (PTI)

Recruitment Notice

Farmer Producer Company Recruitment for the post of CEO & Accountant under

Applications invited from suitable candidates for recruitment to the following positions of CEO & Accountant, under Farmer Producer Company on purely contractual basis under Morigaon District for the scheme of "Formation & Promotion of 10k FPO scheme" implemented by Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare (MoA & FW).

Interested eligible candidates who are citizens of India and fulfil the eligible norms of education qualification, experience, age etc. as per respective Terms of Reference (ToR), may submit the scanned copies of the prescribed application form (Annexure I) along with certificates/documents relating to qualification, experience, age, identity proof, two passport size colored photographs etc. to the respective FPC mail id or before 5 P.M of 15/07/2024. The date, time and venue for the walk-in interview and skill test will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates through email.

Eligible Candidates are allowed to submit applications for only one position within the below given vacancy list.

Vacancy details are as follows:

vacancy actains are as 1010 vis.									
SI. No.	Name of the FPC	Position	No. of Post	FPC Email ld					
1	Rudali Asomi Mahila Farmers Producer Company Limited	CEO & Accountant	CEO -1 Accountant 1	rudaliasomi@gmailcom Dandua.Kopili,Morigaon PIN-782104					
2	Bramhaputra Asomi Mahila Farmers Producer Company Limited	CEO & Accountant	CEO -1 Accountant 1	bramhaputraasomi@gmail. com Mikirbheta.Bhurbandha. Morigaon PIN-782106					
3	Swabalambi Asomi Mahila Farmers Producer Company Limited	CEO & Accountant	CEO -1 Accountant 1	seujiasomi@gmail.com Kushtoli, Laharighat, Morigaon PIN-782127					

For ToR and application form please scan the QR code or use the link provided below.



https://bit.ly/TOR-FPC

District Project Manager DMMU, Morigaon, Assam

Pays tribute to 1962 war heroes Additionally, the museum

Khandu visits Nyukmadung

War Memorial

Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu visited the Nyukmadung War Memorial near Dirang in West Kameng district and paid floral tributes to the 1962 war heroes.

He laid a wreath in honour of the Sino-India war martyrs on Sunday.

"Visited the Nyukmadung War Memorial to pay tribute to the brave heroes of the 1962 war. Their valour and sacrifice will continue to inspire us all," Khandu posted

The chief minister also inspected the ongoing construction of the cultural and heritage museum at the memorial site, which is a collaborative effort between the



and historical artefacts. I

have suggested that the col-

lection include items from all

tribes of Arunachal to truly

reflect the diverse heritage of

our state," Khandu said.

16th Madras Regiment, the 46th Infantry Brigade, and the Indian Institute of Her-

itage (IIH). "The museum will not only chronicle the events and bravery of the 1962 war but could highlight the contributions of brave local heroes who aided the army during the 1962 war, ensuring their stories are preserved and honoured, the chief minister added. He commended the Nyuk-

madung-based 16th Madras Regiment, 46th Infantry Brigade and the IIH for their commendable initiative.

"Today, I proudly join my voice with the valiant soldiers of the Madras Regiment in shouting their legendary war 'Veer Madrassi, Adi Kollu, Adi Kollu, Adi Kollu!' Salute to their bravery, sacrifice, and dedication to our nation. Jai Hind!," Khandu said in another post while sharing a video clip. (PTI)

No. UDB/Tender /01/2022-23/

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tender affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paisa) only with a validity period of 180 Days which will subsequence to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F- 2 form are invited form the registered contractors of Class -II and Class -I (A,B, & C) category of Assam PWD (Road & Building) and BTC according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the works under SOPD & various schemes under BTR for the year 2023-24 & other financial years as stated below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 12.00 Noon on 31/07/ 2024 and will be opened on the same date & place at 2.00 P.M.

2024 that will be opened on the static de place at 2.00 1.14.							
Sl. No.	Name of work	Tender Amount (In Lakhs)	Cost of Tender Paper	Time of Completion of Work			
	Improvement & sand gravelling at No 1 Sapkhaity(Adivasi subba) village road, village-No 1 Sapkhaity,VCDC-N01 Sapkhaity under Adivasi Welfare & Development Council for 2023-24	10.00	Rs.500.00	3(three) months from the issue of Formal Work Order			
2	Construction of toilet at Udalguri District jaik under 15th	18.40	Rs.500.00	3(three) months from the			

Detailed N.I.T. may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agents from 10/07/2024 to 31/07/2024 in the office of the undersigned on

> Block Development Officer Udalguri Development Block

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/118





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Jharkhand: Hemant Soren govt wins trust vote, 11 including ex-CM Champai sworn in as ministers

RANCHI, July 8: Former Jhark hand chief minister Champai Soren and 10 other leaders of the JMM-led coalition took oath as ministers in the Hemant Soren government after it won a trust vote in the assembly amid a walkout by opposition members on Monday

A total of 45 MLAs, including nominated member Glen Joseph Galstaun, voted in favour of the confidence motion.

BJP and AJSU legislators walked out of the House as the headcount for voting started. The BJP-led opposition has 24 legislators of the saffron party and three of the AJSU Party.

After winning the trust vote, Hemant Soren said, "Today, everyone again got to witness the unity and strength of the ruling alliance. I thank the Speaker and all the alliance

He said the JMM-led alliance has been performing strongly since coming to power in 2019 by following the constitutional procedures and it was again witnessed during the day.

During his speech on the confidence motion in the assembly, the chief minister said, "One could see the conduct of BJP legislators after seeing me again in the House."

"The BJP doesn't have any agenda for the state. The people of the country held a mirror to the BJP in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls. In the upcoming assembly



elections, they will face strong resistance from the JMM-led alliance,' the CM said

Speaking on the confidence motion, Leader of Opposition Amar Bauri alleged that the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance government did not fulfill even a single promise in

Earlier, BJP legislators trooped into the well seeking Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahto's permission to allow MLA Bhanu Pratap Sahi to speak, which was turned down by the Speaker.

Seventy-five MLAs were present in the assembly during the voting. Independent legislator Saryu Roy abstained from voting.

After the trust vote, Jharkhand

istered the oath of office and secrecy to the 11 leaders, including Champai Soren, at a function in the Raj Bhavan in the presence of Chief Minister Hemant Soren and other senior

Champai Soren had resigned from the post of CM on July 3, a day before JMM executive president Hemant Soren took oath as the 13th chief minister of Jharkhand on July

politicians of the JMM-led alliance

and government officials.

After taking oath as a minister, Champai Soren said, "Whatever I have done in a short span as the CM is before everyone. Now let's see what responsibility is given to me."

Radhakrishnan, after administering the oath, said, "My best wishes new chief minister (Hemant Soren). We always go by the Constitution, which calls for addressing the needs

of the poorest of the poor. I expect only that from the new government." The new faces in the 12-member cabinet, which includes the chief minister, are Congress's Jamtara

MLA Irfan Ansari, Mahagama MLA Deepika Pandey Singh and JMM's Latehar MLA Baidynath Ram. Ram's name had been excluded at Janata Dal the last moment from the list of ministers in the previous Champai Soren

Those who retained their ministerial berths include Rameshwar Oraon and Banna Gupta of the Congress, besides JMM's Mithilesh Kumar Thakur, Hafizul Hasan, Dipak Birua and Bebi Devi and RJD's Satyanand Bhokta.

cabinet, which he had termed as an

JMM chief Shibu Soren's youngest son Basant Soren and Congress's Badal Patralekh, who were road construction and agriculture ministers respectively in the former Champai Soren government, have been dropped as ministers in the Hemant Soren dispensation.

Hemant Soren was released from jail on June 28 after the Jharkhand High Court granted bail to him in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. He had resigned as the CM shortly before his arrest on January 31 by the Enforcement

The ruling alliance comprises the JMM, Congress and the RJD while it is supported from outside by the lone CPI (ML) Liberation legislator.

After the Lok Sabha elections, the strength of the JMM-led alliance has been reduced to 45 MLAs in the 81member House, with 27 of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, 17 of the Congress and one of the Rashtriya

Two JMM MLAs -- Nalin Soren and Joba Majhi -- are now parliamentarians, while Jama legislator Sita Soren resigned to contest the Lok Sabha elections on a BJP ticket.

The JMM expelled Boriyo MLA Lobin Hembrom from the party and suspended Bishunpur's legislator Chamra Linda.

Similarly, the BJP's strength in the assembly has reduced to 24, as two of its MLAs - Dhulu Mahto (Baghmara) and Manish Jaiswal (Hazaribag) – are now MPs. The saffron party expelled Mandu MLA Jaiprakash Bhai Patel after he joined the Congress.

The current strength of the 81member Jharkhand Assembly is 76. The ruling JMM-Congress-RJD alliance had handed over a support list of 44 MLAs to the Governor when Hemant Soren staked his claim to form the government on July 3.

Assembly elections are due in Jharkhand later this year. (PTI)

'Bharat Jodo Yatra' was inspired by Rajasekhara Reddy's 2003 yatra across Andhra: Rahul

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also hailed Reddy on his 75th birth anniversary

NEW DELHI, July 8: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said his over 4,000 km Kanyakumari to Kashmir 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' was inspired by party veteran Y S Rajasekhara Reddy's 2003 foot march across Andhra Pradesh.

In a video message on the former Andhra Pradesh chief minister's 75th birth anniversary, Gandhi said that he was a true leader of the masses and his grit, dedication and commitment to the upliftment and empowerment of the people of the state and India has been a guiding

"I personally learnt a lot from Rajasekhara Reddy ji. My 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', the walk from Kanyakumari to Kashmir was inspired by Rajasekhara Reddy ji's yatra across Andhra Pradesh. I remember the visuals of Rajasekhara Reddy ji walking through the heat, walking through the rain and walking with the people of Andhra Pradesh," said the Leader of Opposition in the Lok

"We took some of those ideas and merged them into our 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'," added Gandhi, who led the over 4.000 km 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' which passed through 12 states and two Union territories between September 2022 to January 2023.

In 2003, Reddy had undertaken a 1,400-km padyatra in Andhra Pradesh. He had led the Congress to

a resounding victory a year later, defeating the incumbent Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam Party

Hailing Reddy, Gandhi said that he was a person who lived for the people of Andhra Pradesh.

"It is a tragedy that we lost him and I am absolutely certain that if he was here today, Andhra Pradesh would be a completely different place, it would not be facing the tragedies and the difficulties, it is facing. (YS) Sharmila ji is his daughter...I am confident she is going to take forward Rajasekhara Reddy ji's legacy and she is going to do it because she has the same sentiment, the same tenacity, the same grit and the same affection and love for the people of Andhra Pradesh that he had," the former Congress

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also hailed Reddy on his 75th birth anniversary.

"A compassionate and visionary leader, he dedicated his life to the welfare and development of Andhra Pradesh, leaving an enduring impact on the lives of its people through his innovative schemes and programmes," Kharge said.

"In remembrance, we cherish his legacy and pay our homage to a leader who will always be adored for his unwavering commitment to

Centre should set up 'religious fund' for victims of Hathras-like incidents, says Rakesh Tikait

Tikait criticised the use of provocative language used in the Hathras stampede

NOIDA, July 8: Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait on Monday said if the NDA government wants to make India a Hindu nation, it should set up a "religious fund" for compensation Hathras-like tragedies.

The Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) spokesperson made the jibe when he visited Hathras and demanded Rs 50 lakh compensation to the victims of the Hathras stampede that killed 121 people on July 2. Talking to reporters, he said there is no responsibility of anyone in "accidents" like these and urged the authorities to learn from the incident in order to prevent future tragedies. Advocating governmental responsibility, Tikait said, "If the government wants to make it a Hindu nation, then it should also create a 'Dharmik Fund' (religious fund) for disbursing compensations in such accidents. If not the government, then who will compensate for such acts?

Responding to queries about the political implications of the gathgious programmes are the government's agenda.

He alluded to broader political strategies, and said, "For the next 'Dharmik Yudh' (religious war), the government has already said Mathura is our agenda. This area (Hathras) falls in the 'paridhi' (range) of Mathura. Such programmes will be held.'

Asked about the timing and context of the event, Tikait remarked, "The agenda was started 20 years ago, much before 2014," and highlighted the longstanding nature of religious and political movements in the region. He said India is based on "krishi" (agriculture) and "rishi" (saints). "Any fiddling with either will lead to 'andolan'

(protests), "he said. Tikait, who had played a leading role in the year-long farmer protest against the three farm laws which were later withdrawn, referred to recent government initiatives and said, "If in Ayodhya, the government is running free trains, then how would anyone stop such events here?" he added.

Tikait stressed the need for compensation and preventive measures in the wake of the stampede after the 'satsang' of self-styled godman Surajpal, who is also known as Narayan Sakar Hari and Bhole Baba, at Fulrai village in Hathras' Sikandra Rau area.

"The victims should get a compensation of Rs 50 lakh, like it was done in the Lakhimpur Kheri case. Give them the compensation and it will help victims," he said.

In the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, some farmers were mowed down allegedly by a car linked to ering, Tikait alleged that the reli- the then Union minister Ajay Mishta Teni in October 2021.

Tikait criticised the use of provocative language used in the Hathras stampede.

"The soil of the place where the event took place is 'Dharmik Mitti' (religious soil). The administration should make sure such words are not used in the future to prevent crowding at one place in such events," he said.

Tikait was referring to the Hathras stampede which took place after the devotees reportedly rushed towards Bhole Baba, apparently to have a 'darshan' and to collect some soil from the spot he

had walked upon and the 'sevadars' shoved them away.

"In accidents, there is nobody responsible. There is nobody to blame but only lessons to be learned from accidents," Tikait asserted. He dismissed the efficacy of lodging cases or conducting a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe, suggesting instead that such inquiries merely serve to acknowledge the possibility of accidents at crowded events.

Prior to Tikait's visit, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also met with victims' families and called for a hike in compensation awarded to them.

The Centre and the UP government have announced Rs 2 lakh each for the dead and Rs 50,000 for those injured in the July 2 stampede. So far nine people, including the chief organiser and fund-raiser of the July 2 event, Devprakash Madhukar, have been arrested as part of the police investigation into the case which does not mention the name of preacher Surajpal as

Separately, a judicial commission headed by a retired high court judge and a special investigation team led by an additional director general of police are carrying out

their inquiries into the episode. Government agencies, including police, have so far blamed the organisers for mismanagement at the event, noting that the size of the crowd exceeded to over 2.50 lakh from the permitted 80,000, even though the lawyer of the 'godman' on Saturday claimed "some poisonous substance" sprayed by "some unidentified men" triggered the stampede. (PTI)

Excise 'scam': BRS leader K Kavitha moves court seeking default bail in CBI case

NEW DELHI, July 8: BRS leader K Kavitha on Monday approached a Delhi Court seeking 'default' bail in the corruption case linked to the alleged excise scam.

Special CBI Judge Kaveri Baweja sought the CBI's stand on the bail application which claimed that Kavitha should be granted 'default bail' as the investigating agency filed an "incomplete chargesheet" within the stipulated time of 60 days.

The trial court also reserved order on the point of taking cognizance of the third chargesheet filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the matter.

While the bail application was listed for further consideration on July 12, the trial court said it will pronounce order on the point of cognizance on July 15.

Kavitha, the daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao, was arrested by the

CBI from Tihar Jail in April where she was lodged after her arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case related to the alleged scam.

The scam pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and implementation of the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 which was later scrapped. The ED arrested Kavitha (46) from her Banjara Hills residence in Hyderabad on March 15.

Kavitha is currently in judicial custody (JC) in both the cases.

Last month, the CBI had filed a supplementary charge sheet against Kavitha, claiming there was sufficient evidence to prosecute her in the corruption case linked to the al-

The CBI officials had earlier questioned Kavitha inside the prison after obtaining permission from a special court.

The BRS leader was asked about the WhatsApp chats recovered from co-accused Buchi Babu's phone and documents related to a land deal, after which an amount of Rs 100 crore was allegedly paid to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in kickbacks to swing the excise policy for the national capital in favour of a liquor lobby.

In her bail plea, Kavitha said the chargesheet is "incomplete", which gives her the "indefensible right to cant," the bail plea said. (PTI)

default bail" under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). It said while the law mandated the CBI to file a complete chargesheet within 60 days of arrest, Kavitha has already spent much more than that time in cus-

"It is amply clear that the third supplementary chargesheet has been filed with the sole purpose of obviating, scuttling and preventing the release of the applicant on default bail as also to circuitously violating the mandate of Section 309(2) of the Cr.P.C. Such inchoate and incomplete investigations aimed at violating the applicant's right of release on default bail cannot be countenanced in law and this Hon ble Court would not be deterred to ensure that such sharp tactics do not come in the way of dispensation of justice to the appli-

Rajasthan Cong's newly elected MLAs to be given training today

meeting will be held here on Tuesday to discuss strategy for the budget session of the assembly, following which the newly elected MLAs will be given training,

a party leader said. The party's Rajasthan in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa will welcome the newly elected MPs of the

Congress, 'India' bloc and Bharat Adivasi Party. Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee general secretary Swarnim Chaturvedi said that on July 9, a meeting of the legislature party will be held at a hotel here at 4 pm under the chairmanship of Leader of Opposition in the assembly Tikaram Jully. After this meeting, training will be organised for the newly elected MLAs. Chaturvedi said that after an hour-long training programme, the newly elected MPs of the Congress and the 'India' bloc will be welcomed by the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee. (PTI)

Congress slams govt over 'private investment plans' slumping to 20-year low'

NEW DELHI, July 8: Expressing concern low," Ramesh said in a post on X. slumping to a 20-year low in the first quarter of this fiscal, the Congress on Monday alleged India has suffered due to "random policy changes" and an atmosphere of "fear and intim-

Congress general secretary, in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh, in a statement alleged that everyday in the "Modi-Made Anyay Kaal" is a new record of economic failure.

"We have already seen a 45-year high unemployment rate, a 50-year low household savings rate, and the first-ever decrease in real rural consumption. Now, we have another disturbing fact to reckon with. The Hindu reports that in the April-June quarter of this 2023/24 fiscal year, fresh investments announced by corporates is just Rs. 44,000 crore. This is a 20-year

nvestment plans reportedly "Compare the decade of Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister with that of the non-biological PM. Investment as percentage of GDP (average over time) was 33.4% during the UPA and 28.7% in the Anyay-kaal," he said. The FDI as percentage of GDP rose from 0.8% in 2004 to 1.7% in 2014 under Manmohan Singh's stewardship, Ramesh said, adding that as of 2022, it is now 1.5%. Manufacturing as percentage of GDP (average over time) fell from 16.5% in UPA to 14.5% under the current government, he said. Ramesh said Gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) in India, or the total investment in fixed assets, has been lower for the entire Modi regime than the lowest point of

GFCF touched 35% of GDP in 2007 and it has averaged 32% under the UPA, he said. (PTI)

AIADMK chief tells DMK regime to give 'free hand' to police

SALEM (TN), July 8: AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Monday said law and order could be handled well only by giving full freedom to the police department and slammed Chief Minister M K Stalin over the

Just after the state government replaced Chennai police commissioner Sandeep Rai Rathore with senior officer A Arun, Palaniswami, the leader of opposition said that merely by transferring an official, law and order maintenance cannot become effi-

The high profile transfer comes days after the murder of BSP state unit chief K Armstrong.

Speaking to reporters here, Palaniswami said that only by making sure proper governance, law and order could be guarded. It is the Chief Minister who holds the portfolio of police department and had he led the department efficiently, law and order could have

been maintained well. However, he is a 'puppet Chief Minister, an inept CM, and there is no complete freedom for police officials and hence they could not properly maintain law and order, the former Chief Minister alleged. (PTI)

Won't let influential persons manipulate system: Shinde on hit-and-run cases



MUMBAI, July 8: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday stressed the state administration's zero tolerance for injustice and directed the police to handle hit-and-run incidents involving powerful and influential individuals with utmost seriousness to ensure justice is

Shinde's statement follows a hit-and-run incident involving a BMW car allegedly driven by the son of a Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader who fatally knocked down a 45-year-old woman riding pillion on a scooter in Mumbai.

Expressing his deep concern over the rising number of hit-and-run cases in Maharashtra, Shinde said, "It is intolerable that the powerful and influential misuse their status to manipulate the system. Such miscarriages of justice will not be tolerated by my government.'

He underlined the importance of protecting the lives of ordinary citizens and directed the state police to treat these cases with the highest priority.

'The lives of ordinary citizens are precious to us. I have directed the State Police Department to handle these cases with the utmost seriousness and ensure justice is served. In addition, we are implementing stricter laws and harsher penalties for hitand-run offenders," Shinde added.

The chief minister further stated that no one, including offspring of bureaucrats or ministers, regardless of their wealth, influence, or political connections, would have immunity as long as he is in office. "I have zero tolerance for injustice. Let

be clear: my administration stands firmly with the victims and their families. We are committed to creating a safer Maharashtra for all its citizens," he added. The BMW crash issue was raised in the state legislature earlier in the day, prompt-

ing Deputy Chairperson Neelam Gorhe to

direct the government to make a statement

in the Upper House on Tuesday. Nearly two months before the Worli hitand-run incident, a Porsche car allegedly driven by the teenage son of a Pune-based builder had fatally knocked down two IT professionals riding a motorcycle, causing a huge outrage.

In another hit-and-run incident, a Swift car allegedly driven by a 24-year-old man rammed into a motorbike of two policemen on patrolling duty, leaving one of them dead and another injured, in Pune city on Sunday. The accused youth at the wheel was arrested. (PTI)

Prez Murmu takes stroll on Puri beach. stresses need to protect, conserve environment



PURI (ODISHA), July 8: Highlighting the recent spate of heatwaves in India and frequent extreme weather events worldwide, President Droupadi Murmu asked people on Monday to take "smaller" and "local" steps to protect the environment for a better tomor-

A day after participating in the annual Rath Yatra, Murmu spent some time on the beach in this holy city and later, penned her thoughts about the experience of being in close commune with nature, a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

In a post on 'X', she said oceans and the rich variety of flora and fauna have suffered heavily due to pollution but people living in nature's lap have sustained traditions "that can show us the way" to conserve the envi-

"Inhabitants of coastal areas, for example,

know the language of the winds and waves of the sea. Following our ancestors, they worship the sea as God," Murmu said while suggesting ways to protect and conserve the environment.

The President began her four-day tour of Odisha on July 6.

"There are places that bring us in closer touch with the essence of life and remind us that we are part of nature. Mountains, forests, rivers and seashores appeal to something deep within us. As I walked along the seashore today, I felt a communion with the surroundings - the gentle wind, the roar of the waves, and the immense expanse of water. It was a meditative experience," she

Murmu said it brought "to me a profound inner peace that I had also felt when I had a darshan of Mahaprabhu Shri Jagannathji yes-

"And I am not alone in having such an experience; all of us can feel that way when we encounter something that is far larger than us. that sustains us and that makes our lives meaningful," she added.

In the hustle and bustle of the daily grind, people lose this connection with Mother Nature, the President said, sharing pictures of

her spending time on the beach. "Humankind believes it has mastered nature and is exploiting it for its own short-term benefits. The result is for all to see. This summer, many parts of India suffered a terrible series of heatwaves. Extreme weather events have become more frequent around the globe in recent years. The situation is projected to be far worse in the decades to come,"

Murmu said. More than 70 per cent of the Earth's surface is made up of oceans, and global warming is leading to a rise in the sea levels, threatening to submerge coastal areas, she

said in a series of posts. The President said there are two ways to meet the challenge of protection and conservation of the environment.

"Broader steps that can come from governments and international organisations, and smaller, local steps that we can take as

citizens," she said. "The two are, of course, complementary. Let us pledge to do what we can do - individually, locally – for the sake of a better tomorrow. We owe it to our children," Murmu added. (PTI)

Two dead, over 130 injured during Rath Yatra in Odisha

two persons died and over 130 were injured in two different incidents during Lord Jagannath's Rath Yatra in Odisha, officials said on Monday.

A resident of Bolangir district died allegedly due to suffocation in a stampede-like situation on Sunday during the Rath Yatra in Puri, a health official

"When we put him in the ambulance, his pulse was running. We took him to the hospital and gave him CPR. However, doctors declared him brought dead," said Sushant Kumar Patnaik, assistant commandant of St John ambulance service.

According to sources, the devotee fainted on Grand Road while pulling the chariot of Lord Balabhadra. He was immediately rushed to the Puri District Headquarters Hospital, where the doctor declared him brought dead.

Expressing grief over his death, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased.

He also instructed officials concerned to ensure the best available medical care for the injured devotees.

In another incident, a devotee allegedly died after coming under the wheels of a chariot during Rath Yatra in Jharsuguda district on Sunday, police said.

The mishap occurred during the pulling of the chariot of Jagannath temple at Kukujangha village in the district. The deceased has been identified as Shyam Sundar Kishan (45).



While pulling the chariot, he accidentally fell down and the wheels of the chariot ran over him. He was immediately rushed to the district headquarters hospital, where he died while undergoing treatment.

More than 130, including a few police personnel, were also injured during the Rath Yatra in Puri, a health officer of Puri district said.

Half of the injured persons have been discharged after treatment on the same day while at least 40 persons are undergoing treatment, he said.

More than 600 people have visited hospitals and medical camps in Puri. However, only over 130 have been admitted to hospital, said Director of Health Services, Bijay Mohapatra.

"Such admission in hospital during Rath Yatra is normal. None of the injured is in very serious condition. We are providing treatment to the injured destination at Shree Gundicha Temple on Monday after being stranded for the night on the Grand Road here.

This year, the Rath Yatra in Puri is being celebrated for two days after 53 years due to some celestial arrangements. In a departure from tradition, some of the rituals, including 'Nabajouban Darshan' and 'Netra Utsav', were conducted in a single day on Sunday. These rituals are generally held ahead of the Rath Yatra.

'Nabajouban Darshan' means youthful appearance of deities, who were behind the doors for 15 days in a ritual called 'Anasara' (quarantine), conducted after 'Snana Purnima'.

According to mythology, the deities fall ill due to excessive bathing on 'Snana Purnima' and therefore remain indoors.

Prior to 'Nabajouban Darshan', the priests performed the special ritual called 'Netra Utsav' in which the eyeballs of the deities are painted afresh.

Tight security arrangements have been put in place, with the deployment of 180 platoons (one platoon comprises 30 personnel) of security personnel, a police officer said.

Artificial Intelligence-based CCTV cameras have been installed at Badadanda, the venue of the festival. and other strategic locations in the pilgrim town, he said.

Altogether 46 fire tenders were deployed in various parts of the town and along the sea beach for the Rath Yatra, said DG. Fire Services, Sudhanshu

Man planning 'lone-wolf' attacks on security forces helped kin of slain SIMI activists: MP ATS



BHOPAL, July 8: A 34-year-old man arrested for allegedly planning "lone-wolf" attacks on security forces was helping families of eight SIMI activists killed in an encounter with police in 2016, a senior official of the Madhya Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad said on Monday.

The ATS last week arrested Faizan Sheikh, a mechanic who was influenced by the ideologies of the Indian Mujahideen (IM) and the Islamic State (IS), from the communally-

sensitive Khandwa town. "Sheikh was bringing together and helping the families of SIMI activists killed in an encounter with police. He conducted recees to carry out lone-wolf attacks on police personnel in Khandwa town," Inspector General (IG-ATS) Ashish told PTI.

The accused was arrested on July 4 and remanded to ATS custody for five days, he said. The IG, however, denied that

Sheikh wanted to avenge the death of SIMI activists with plans to attack

Sheikh was highly radicalised by

the ideology of the Indian Mujahideen (IM) and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), he said.

The ATS recovered four mobile phones, a pistol, live cartridges, and literature and videos of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, IM and IS from Sheikh.

He has been booked under relevant sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the official said.

According to ATS sources, Sheikh was desperate to get arms and ammunition to carry out the lone-wolf attacks on security personnel to establish himself as bigger than IM cofounder Yasin Bhatkal and jailed SIMI and IM terror operative Abu Faisal, aka Doctor, who is currently in the Bhopal jail

Sheikh was allegedly in touch with gunrunners and SIMI operatives outside Madhya Pradesh, sources said. He was on the radar of the ATS for

being in regular touch with members of the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), they

Army flags off motorcycle expedition to mark 25th anniversary of Kargil war

SRINAGAR, July 8: The Army on Monday flagged off the final phase of a D-5 motorcycle expedition to commemorate the 25th anniversary of India's victory over Pakistan in the 1999 Kargil war.

The expedition, comprising five officers, four JCOs and 17 soldiers including women riders from the Corps of Military Police, was flagged off from the National War Memorial in Delhi on June 26 for the final phase of the journey culminating at the Kargil War Memorial in

"In a poignant tribute to the valour and sacrifice of heroes who sacrificed their lives during the Kargil War, the Indian Army has embarked on a pan India D-5 Motorcycle Expedition to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Indian victory over Pakistan in the Kargil war of 1999," a defence spokesperson said in a statement here. He said the expedition, which reached here on Saturday, was flagged off for onward journey on Monday.

The pan India expedition has covered 10,000 km on five different commencing routes Dhanushkodi, Dwarka, Dinjan, Delhi and converging at Drass, the spokesperson said.

He said the rally aims to pay homage to the Indian Army's bravehearts who brought victory in the Kargil war. "Riding with a sense of purpose, the motorcycle rally will move through challenging terrain, echoing the spirit and determination displayed by the Indian Army on the battlefield," he added. (PTI)

Babbar Khalsa member tries to escape from police, injured in firing

CHANDIGARH, July 8: A suspected member of the proscribed Khalistani outfit Babbar Khalsa International was injured in police firing after he tried to escape from custody in Jalandhar, the Punjab Police's top official said on Monday. Simranjit Singh alias Bablu is an accused in the murder of former militant Rattandeep Singh in SBS Nagar on April 3, said Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav.

He was arrested during a special check in Jalandhar's Deol Nagar Colony late on Sunday. Hours after his arrest, a police team was escorting him to a location near Wadala along the Jalandhar-Nakodar Road where he claimed to have concealed the pistol suspected to have been used in Rattandeep Singh's murder.

"On reaching the location, the accused tried to escape after pushing away a police officer, forcing the team to open fire that resulted in gunshot injuries (to Bablu)," the DGP said and added the accused was taken to the nearest

hospital. Bablu suffered bullet injuries on both legs. The police seized two sophisticated weapons -- a .32 Webley revolver and

a .32 pistol, alongside a magazine and 19 live rounds -- from Bablu. Yadav said preliminary investigations revealed Bablu was working on the directions of Pakistan-based terrorist Harwinder Rinda and US-based Gopi Nawanshehria, who tasked him and the other assailant -- identified as Jaspreet Singh alias Jassi Kulam -- with Rattandeep Singh's murder.

Jassi Kulam managed to flee abroad after committing the crime. Bablu is a hardcore criminal and facing numerous cases of murder, attempt to murder, the police said.

He was also allegedly involved in the assassination of an assistant sub-

Migratory birds and crows

among suspected in spread

of bird flu to Kerala farms

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, in from outside the state.

July 8: Migratory birds and crows

from the forests in Kerala are sus-

pected to be the carriers of the

avian influenza virus, causing its

spread to domestic duck and poul-

try farms in the state, according to

a study by a government-ap-

state Animal Husbandry Minister

The panel submitted its report to

The team was appointed in view

of rising cases of bird flu in the

state, particularly in Alappuzha,

Pathanamthitta and Kottayam dis-

tricts, causing heavy losses to

The minister said that the gov-

ernment will carefully review the

report's recommendations and

take appropriate action. The expert

team included specialists from the

Animal Husbandry Department

and scientists from the Veterinary

"The team found that the dis-

ease may have spread through the

movement of birds from one place

to another. These birds were likely

infected by migratory birds and

also spread the disease through

their sale," a government release,

The remains of birds that died

of bird flu, as well as their feed

and droppings, were not scientifi-

cally disposed of, leading to the

spread of the disease to other

birds, it said. The study noted that

the uncontrolled movement of

birds from one farm to another has

contributed to the spread of the

disease. Additionally, the move-

ment of supervisors from inte-

grated farms in Cherthala and

Thanneermukkom in Alappuzha

district to other farms has also

played a role in the spread of the

disease. The report suggests that

the disease may have spread

through infected crows and that

there is a possibility of the disease

spreading from birds in the forests

that have the virus to domestic

It clarifies that there is no evi-

dence of the disease being brought

ducks and other chicken farms.

quoting the study, said.

pointed panel of experts.

J Chinchurani on Monday.

duck and poultry farmers.

University.

DRM among 5 railway officials held for bribery

day night. Revenue Minister Suresh

Pujari said, "One person died while

many others were admitted after sus-

taining injuries in stampede, dehydra-

tion, dysentery and other reasons. No

vailing in Puri on Sunday, many peo-

ple suffered in the hot weather

As hot and humid weather was pre-

The doctors and other medical staff

along with volunteers have performed

an excellent job, said the minister.

adding, "We hope that the injured peo-

ple will be discharged from the hospi-

of Lord Jagannath and his siblings-

Devi Subhadra and Lord Balabhadra

resumed on Monday around 9.30 am.

gannath, sounds of gongs, conches and

cymbals, the chariots of three holy

Amid chants of Hari Bol and Jay Ja-

Meanwhile, the pulling of chariots

one is serious.

condition also, he said.

tal by Monday evening.

NEW DELHI, July 8: Five railways officials, including the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of the South Central Railway, were arrested for allegedly accepting cash and jewellery to award project contracts, officials said. The CPRO of the South Central Railway said that the matter was being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The CBI arrested the accused on July 5, 2024, after they allegedly received huge bribes "in the award of various tenders, in the execution of awarded works and expeditious processing of the bills.

Besides the DRM Vineet Singh, the other senior officials, Kunda Pradeep Babu, Sr Divisional Finance Manager and U Akki Reddy, Sr Divisional Engineer, were also arrested.

Acting on a tip-off, CBI prepared a list of ornaments Singh accepted as a bribe and conducted search proceedings on July 4 and July 5, 2024, at his residential premises. It recovered one diamond studded necklace and one pair of diamond studded earpieces were recovered, the CBI said in their statement.

When asked about other items, "Shri Vineet Singh informed that he hid the said item behind a portion of the washbasin pedestal of the washroom attached to a room adjacent to the master bedroom, and he showed the place where he hid that item to all the present," the statement said. (PTI)

directing CBI probe into allegations in Sandeshkhali NEW DELHI, July 8: "Why should someone?" the Supreme Court said on Monday while dismissing the West Bengal government's plea chal-

lenging the high court's order, directing a CBI probe into the allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali. "It is all related to Sandeshkhali. You (state) didn't do anything for months," a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan told sen-

ior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who

was appearing for the West Bengal

government. Singhvi told the apex court that farreaching directions issued by the Calcutta High Court to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at the most could be restricted to two FIRs related to an attack on the Enforcement Directorate officials Sandeshkhali.

"The impugned order (of high court) goes into ration scam," he said, adding that in the alleged scam, 43 FIRs were registered.

"FIRs were registered four years back. Who are the accused? When were the arrests made," the bench asked. "Why should the state be interested

in protecting someone?" it observed. On the last date of the hearing, the counsel appearing for the state said the matter be adjourned after the apex

SC rejects WB govt's plea against HC order

court asked this specific query, it

The bench dismissed the plea filed by the state government and clarified that any observations made in the high court's order shall not influence the CBI in conducting the investiga-

"Thank you. Dismissed," it said. The top court was hearing the state government's plea challenging the

Calcutta High Court's April 10 order. While hearing the plea on April 29, the apex court asked the West Bengal government why the state should come in as a petitioner for "protecting the interest" of some private individ-

The counsel appearing for the state then said it was aggrieved by some of

Leader of Opposition in Lok

Sabha Rahul Gandhi visited Assam,

which is grappling with floods, say-

ing that he stands with the people of

the state and is their "soldier in Par-

He urged the Centre to extend all

possible help and support to the state

"I stand with the people of Assam,

I am their soldier in Parliament, and

I urge the central government to ex-

tend all possible help and support to

the state expeditiously", Gandhi

posted on 'X', after visiting the flood

Gandhi said Assam Congress

leaders apprised him of the situation

on the ground where over 24 lakh

people have been affected, 53,000

and above people displaced and

more than 60 people lost their lives.

mals have died so far in the Kazi-

ranga National Park while 96 others

The park is experiencing the

worst-ever deluge in recent years

with the previous large-scale devas-

have been rescued, an official said.

Meanwhile, at least 131 wild ani-

relief camp at Fulertal.

immediately.

the comments made in the high court

In its plea before the apex court, the state government said the high court's order demoralised the entire state machinery, including the police

"The high court in a very generic order directed the State to provide the required support to the CBI without any guidelines, which amounts to usurping the powers of the state police to investigate any cognisable offence in the Sandeshkhali area, even if the same is not related to the allegations levelled by the PIL petitioners," the plea had said.

The CBI is already investigating the attack on the ED officials in Sandeshkhali and has registered three

Noting that the investigation will be monitored by the court, the high court directed the CBI to file a comprehensive report on the alleged illegal conversion of agricultural land into water bodies for pisciculture after conducting a thorough inspection of revenue records and physical inspection of land alleged to have been con-

FIRs related to the January 5 incident

The high court also directed the CBI to investigate allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali and submit a comprehensive report to it on the next date of hearing.

ED officials were attacked on January 5 by a mob when they went to Sandeshkhali to search the premises of now-suspended Trinamool Congress leader Shahjahan Sheikh in connection with a ration distribution

Several complaints in the form of affidavits, including those of alleged sexual atrocities, land grabbing and other crimes such as assault and destruction of property, have been submitted before the high court by petitioner-lawyer Priyanka Tibrewal

The high court said it decided to hand over to the CBI the probe concerning allegations and complaints of people of Sandeshkhali as the central agency is already investigating the attack on ED officials there. (PTI)

Heavy rain lashes parts of country, cripples Mumbai

The panel has recommended that the 2021 National Action Plan for the prevention and control of The sale and movement of birds (both within and outside) in all districts affected by bird flu should

be banned until March 2025, it "Government farms and hatcheries in the surveillance area should also be closed until March 2025. The remains of dead birds should be disposed of in a proper and scientific manner. Samples should be collected and tested every month in the Kuttanad region until March 2025.

"Registration of private chicken and duck farms should be made mandatory at government veterinary hospitals. Local self-government institutions should also make licensing of private chicken and duck farms mandatory," according to the report.

The panel has recommended

that a detailed study be conducted

on the broiler chickens and ducks

brought in from other states for

breeding purposes. It also suggests

that a detailed genetic study of the

bird flu be strictly implemented.

virus is necessary.

It further said that screening for the presence of bird flu virus should be conducted on eggs and chicks coming from other states.

"Every four months, the government should conduct compulsory bio-security audits in private poultry farms. Only 3,000 to 5,000 ducks should be allowed to be raised in a duck farm. The number of ducks that can be raised in a panchayat area should be determined based on the land area of that region," the report said.

It stated that only approved slaughterhouses should be given licenses for chicken and duck meat processing.

"Disposal of waste from chicken and duck farms into rivers and canals should be banned." said the report, recommending short-term and long-term plans to prevent bird flu. (PTI)

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, July 8: The monsoon spelt mayhem in several parts of the country on Monday, particularly Mumbai where local train services and flight operations were hit and everyday life disrupted as well as Assam that was grappling with floods yet again.

As Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde stepped in to review the situation in the state capital and other parts and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visited a flood relief camp at Fulertal in Assam's Cachar district, the hill states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh as well as the desert state of Rajasthan also bore the brunt of heavy rains.

The rain mayhem led to the inundation of several low-lying areas in Mumbai, impacting vehicular movement, while all schools in the city, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts remained shut.

Both Houses of the Maharashtra legislature were adjourned as many members and officials could not reach the Vidhan Bhavan due to the downpour.

Maharashtra Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation and Disaster Management Anil Patil and NCP MLC Amol Mitkari alighted from the Howrah-Mumbai train and walked on the tracks for some distance, a video of which went viral.

Chief Minister Shinde took stock of the heavy rain situation by chairing a meeting at the Mantralaya and visiting the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) control

Train services on the fast line of the Central Railway's (CR) main corridor between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in south Mumbai and neighbouring Thane were suspended for a few hours due to waterlogging at various places and later resumed, officials said.



avoid travelling unless unavoidable. Heavy rain and low visibility led

to the suspension of runway operations at the Mumbai airport from 2.22 am to 3.40 am on Monday and the cancellation of 50 flights, according to sources.

A spokesperson of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking in the morning said at least 40 bus routes in the city and suburbs were either diverted or curtailed due to waterlog-In neighbouring Thane district, a

landslide occurred on a hillock, which led to residents of four houses being evacuated, while 54 people were rescued after their houses were inundated, civic officials said. At least 275 houses in different

areas suffered damages and around 20 vehicles were swept away, the Thane district administration said in a release. Teams of the National Disaster

Response Force have been deployed in Kurla and Ghatkopar areas of Mumbai and in other parts of Maharashtra.

Incessant rain also lashed Goa for

tation occurring in 2017 when over 350 wildlife died in the flood waters and in vehicle hits while migrating through animal corridors to the highlands. In neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh, surface communication to several districts was disrupted by landslides triggered by rains, officials said. In Uttarakhand, incessant rain re-

sulted in flooding rivers in the Kumaon region, blocking hundreds of rural motorable roads and leaving several villages in Champawat and Udham Singh Nagar districts heavily waterlogged. However, the Char Dham Yatra

resumed on Monday after remaining suspended for a day given the Met Office's prediction of heavy rain following an improvement in the

weather in the Garhwal region. The Kali, Gori and Sarvu rivers in Pithoragarh, which received 125.50 mm rainfall, were flowing close to the danger mark while more than 200 rural motorable roads across the state were blocked by debris from landslides, the State Emergency Operation Centre in Dehradun said.

Heavy waterlogging in the Purnagiri division of Champawat district, besides Khatima and Sitargani in Udham Singh Nagar district, prompted police, National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force personnel.

The release of water from dams in Uttarakhand and widespread rainfall in river catchment areas caused severe flooding in several districts in the Terai region and the plains of Uttar Pradesh.

Many villages in Pilibhit, Lakhimpur, Kushinagar, Balrampur, Shravasti and Gond districts have been affected by floods due to widespread rainfall in river catchment areas and the release of dam water. (PTI)

Delhi's air quality 'satisfactory for 2nd consecutive day

NEW DELHI, July 8: Delhi's AQI was recorded in the 'satisfactory' category for the second consecutive day following days of rain and wind.

recorded in the 'satisfactory' category with a reading of 56 at 6 pm, according to Central Pollution Control Board data. The national capital recorded a maximum temperature of 32.2 de-

The Air Quality Index (AQI) was

grees Celsius, a drop of three degrees from Sunday and four notches below normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The maximum temperature was 35.8 degrees Celsius on Sunday and

to IMD data. The relative humidity during the day oscillated between 76 per cent and 83 per cent.

34.7 degrees on Saturday, according

For Tuesday, the weather office has predicted generally cloudy skies with light rain.

Delhi's Air Quality Index was below 100 for seven days in June and has improved further in July due to the rain and wind.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. (PTI)

CORRIGENDUM - 01

Corrigendum-01 for Tende Notice No. CON/2024/JUNE/01 dated, 19-06-2024 against Tende No. CE/CON/DMV/EPC/2024/01 RT-2 has been issued. For details please visit in websit www.ireps.gov.in.

CE/CON/1, N. F. Railwa NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

'Kalki 2898 AD' surpasses ₹900 crore with worldwide box office collection



MUMBAI, July 8: Kalki 2898 AD continues to rule over the box office and has crossed ₹ 900 crore globally in 11 days, makers announced on Monday.

Featuring a star-studded cast comprising of Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, Deepika Padukone, Disha Patani and Prabhas in the lead, the film has been staying ahead of the competition with its collection. The makers shared an update on the X about the film's collection with a poster featuring Prabhas' character from the film. It mentioned, "Epic Maha

Blockbuster 900 + crore worldwide." The caption of the post read, "Raging towards the magical

milestone #EpicBlockbusterKalki in cinemas." Directed by Nag Ashwin, who has previously helmed the projects like "Mahanati" and "Yevade Subramanyam" the film has been produced by Vyjayanthi

It crossed the mark of ₹ 500 crore at the box office during its opening week and if continues at the same pace, the film is expected to surpass ₹ 1000 crore worldwide.

Bachchan, 81, who essayed the role of immortal warrior Ashwathhama in the film, earlier expressed his admiration for the project in a lengthy post on his personal blog.

Calling it a "massive spectacle", the actor said the film is a "merger of myth and reality" and a "learning to the film makers on the process of putting the mammoth together for a viewing audience." Kalki 2898 AD is reportedly the most expensive film ever made in India with a budget of ₹ 600 crore. The film had a global release on June 27 in five different languages, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi and English.

The film is currently running in theatres. (PTI)

Filmmakers must focus on storytelling instead of making projects based on equations, says Imtiaz Ali



NEW DELHI, July 8: Director Imtiaz Ali says it is important that the film industry trains its focus on the essence of storytelling over designing films as projects based on "mathematical equations"

Ali, who released his last film "Amar Singh Chamkila" on Netflix, said filmmakers must understand that a certain X factor draws the audience to the theatres, something which can't be quantified.

"It's just that we make projects in a certain way. We feel that we need mathematical equations... and there is an algorithm and therefore, there will be a recovery. Each time this calculation is done, it turns out to not be accurate.

"Because in every film, you can have all the ingredients, the same actors and a certain director make two films like that but they'll not have the same outcome financially. So there is always that X factor, which perhaps is the audience coming to watch. You got to focus on that, which is actually the essence of storytelling in filmmaking," he said.

Ali was speaking at the second edition of the Indian Express' six-part series Expresso, held in Hyderabad. Also present at the event was actor Taapsee Pannu. The director, also known for films such as "Jab We Met", "Socha Na Tha", and "Love Aaj Kal", said there is always a period of uncertainty in the industry.

"When I came in, people were saying, 'This was the worst time in the film industry, nothing is working and all films are flopping'... I remember we were all struggling at that point of time to make a film.

"This was a period of great uncertainty and insecurity for the film industry. and then we came in and said. 'We know. You should make 'Socha Na should make 'Black Friday'," he added.

Crisis ultimately turns out to be a great opportunity, Ali said.

"This particular phase that we are sitting on where many movies have not done well, people don't know whether they want to go to theatres anymore and OTT is doing its thing but we don't know what and where will it stand later, will turn out to be a very positive thing because filmmakers will have to leave some old habits behind and it is very disconcerting to do so. Unless we do that, no creativity can

Pannu, who was last seen in "Dunki", said the need to restructure arises whenever "redundancy sets in".

"It happens every five to six years because you are following the same formula and there comes a point that the formula stops working, so you feel uneasy... This is the right phase to break that monotony and redundancy," said Pannu, who has also produced films such as "Blurr" and "Dhak Dhak"

Asked if she would have said yes to a film like "Animal", the actor said, "On paper, ves.

One of the most controversial films of 2023, the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer "Animal" earned over ₹900 crore at the box office. A sequel of the film, directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, is in the works. Pannu said it was "a little strange to hear cheers and whistles" at certain moments where she wouldn't have liked the background score to grow like that. "... where the audience is forced to cheer, clap and whistle at certain moments. That's the issue," she said, adding she doesn't mind playing grey characters. (PTI)

Director Michael Sarnoski teases sequel of 'A Quiet Place: Day One'

LOS ANGELES, July 8: Michael Sarnoski, director of "A Quiet Place: Day One", says he hopes his sci-fi horror film gets a sequel treatment from Paramount Pictures. The starring Lupita Nyong'o and Joseph Ouinn, is rec ing rave reviews and has already grossed USD 118 million worldwide since its release on June 28.

"A Quiet Place: Day One" is a spin-off movie, which is based on an idea from actor-filmmaker John Krasinski, who directed and starred in the first two films in the "A Quiet Place", a post-apocalyptic horror franchise. Asked about the possibility of a part two, Sarnoski told Variety: "Absolutely. I bet you will. But I don't know — at this point, I'm just recovering from making this one. So I'm sure Paramount will come up with something very fun next."

"A Quiet Place: Day One" follows the story of Sam, a cancer patient, who gets trapped in New York City invaded by sound-sensitive aliens. As she tries to escape the danger along with her service cat Frodo, she meets Eric, a young English law student trying to save his life from the invaders.

The director, also known for his 2021 directorial "Pig", said he would like to see "something similarly off-beat", like an unexpected character in this world.

"What attracted me to this story was the uniqueness of Sam, following this dying person who isn't even really fighting for survival.... The 'Quiet Place' universe does open itself up to any characters that you want to follow and want to explore. I'm not sure. (PTI)





LOS ANGELES, July 8: Actor Emma Roberts says she would love to work with her aunt and Hollywood star Julia Roberts in a film but she is yet come across the "perfect

Emma, 33, admitted filmmakers still come to her with an opportunity to co-star with Julia, one of Hollywood's romantic film icons.

"I would love to find the perfect project for me and my aunt, and I know that there will be something. But it's never been the right thing. She's the best, and I want to do something with her. We send each other books and talk about stuff but it hasn't been right.

"I watch her movies when I'm on location and I'm by myself. I have movies of hers downloaded on my computer that I watch for comfort. 'My Best Friend's Wedding' and 'America's Sweethearts' are my safe movies," the actor said in an interview with Variety.

Julia, 56, is best known for romance dramas and comedies such as "Pretty Woman", "Notting Hill", "Mona Lisa Smile", "Eat Pray Love", and "Runaway Bride".

Emma also addressed the critical and commercial failure of the superhero film "Madame Web".

The actor, who played Mary Parker in the 2024 movie, said she really enjoyed the film fronted by Dakota Johnson

"I thought everyone in it was great. The director, S.J. Clarkson, I think, did an amazing job. She's the reason I wanted to do that movie.

"If it wasn't for internet culture and everything being made into a joke, I think that the reception would've been different. And that's what bums me about a lot of stuff, even stuff that I've done, is people just make such a joke out of everything now," she added.

Emma has starred in movies, in-

cluding "Aquamarine", "Wild Child", "Nancy Drew", "Holidate", "The Art of Getting By", "Billionaire Boys Club" and "Empire State".

Her latest release is Liz W Garcia's directorial "Space Cadet", which also stars Tom Hopper, Poppy Liu, Gabrielle Union, Kuhoo Verma, Desi Lydic, Sebastian Yatra, Yasha Jackson, Andrew Call, Troy Iwata, Josephine Huang, Dave Foley, Sam Robards and Joshua Harto in pivotal roles.

In the film, Emma portrays the role of Tiffany "Rex" Simpson, who dreams of going to space but things don't go as planned. (PTI)



Indian men's

hockey team leaves

for Switzerland

Alcaraz and Sinner reach the Wimbledon quarterfinal

LONDON, July 8: There Carlos Alcaraz was, down on his backside at a baseline below the Royal Box, briefly taking a seat in the grass after doing the splits when he slipped while running to hit a forehand during his fourth-round

So now what? Give up on the point and get ready for the next? Ha. Not this kid. Alcaraz popped to his feet, sprinted to his left to get to a backhand wide of the doubles alley, then raced forward to reach a short shot and, eventually, watched his opponent send a vol-

That allowed Alcaraz to claim the second set of what would become a 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 7-5 victory against No. 16 seed Ugo Humbert at Centre Court. The defending champion at the All England Club celebrated the moment by raising his right index finger in a "No. 1" gesture and shouting "Vamos!" as thousands of spectators rose to

The 21-year-old Spaniard is making a habit of turning the impossible into the possible, figuring out ways to win points many other players would concede and, in the bigger picture, breaking new ground time after time. He's been the first teenager to reach No. 1 in the ATP rankings, and last month's French Open championship made him the youngest man to win Grand Slam titles on three surfaces: hard, grass and clay courts.

Asked during his on-court interview how he'd describe the remarkable sequence against Humbert, Alcaraz offered a huge



able, I guess. I just try to fight every point, every ball. It doesn't

matter what part of the court.' Unbelievable, maybe, but certainly not unprecedented. For him, at least. Later, at his news conference, he recalled having made that same sort of recovery from a fall during his thrill-a-minute marathon against rival Jannik Sinner at the 2022 U.S. Open, a tournament Alcaraz went on to win.

"I think," Alcaraz said, "that I can reach every ball."

There is a possible rematch against the No. 1-ranked Sinner looming in the semifinals. Each iust needs to win once more to get there. In Tuesday's quarterfinals, Alcaraz will face No. 12 Tommy 2021 U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev.

Sinner was bounced in last year's Wimbledon semifinals by Novak Djokovic, who then lost to Alcaraz in a five-set final.

Sinner earned his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January, and he advanced Sunday with a 6-2, 6-4, 7-6 (9) win against No. 14 Ben Shelton, breaking the big-serving left-hander four times

— the same total number of breaks others had managed against the 21year-old American through 15 sets entering the day. Like Alcaraz, Sinner is capable

of some improvised racket wizardry, as he displayed in the third set, bringing his racket around his

between-the-legs shot that he fol-

lowed up with a passing winner. "I'm not kind of player to have a lot of trick shots. But in this case, it was still the easiest shot. I didn't have space to go right and left," Sinner said, calling it a "lucky

Paul reached his first quarterfinal at Wimbledon by using a 41-14 edge in winners to extend his unbeaten run to nine matches, all on grass, with a 6-2, 7-6 (3), 6-2 victory over Roberto Bautista Agut. Medvedev moved on when Grigor Dimitrov stopped playing because of a leg injury in the first set.

There was another midmatch retirement in a women's fourthround match: 2017 U.S. Open smile and responded: "Unbeliev- Paul, and Sinner goes up against back at the baseline and flicking a runner-up Madison Keys hurt her

leg, took a medical timeout and then briefly tried to continue. But she was wiping away tears as she walked to the net when she decided she needed to quit at 5-all in the third set against Jasmine Paolini, who was a finalist at this year's French Open.

"I'm so sorry for her. To end the match like this, it's bad. What can I say?" Paolini said. "I'm feeling a little bit happy, but also sad for her. It's not easy to win like that."

Paolini next meets No. 19 Emma Navarro, who defeated reigning U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-3 in the day's last match. The second-seeded Gauff's exit comes the day after No. 1 Iga Swiatek lost and leaves just two of the top 10 seeded women in the bracket: No. 4 Elena Rybakina, the 2022 champion, and No. 7 Paolini.

The other women's quarterfinal established Sunday is Lulu Sun against Donna Vekic. Sun eliminated 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 to become the first woman to get through qualifying and reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals since 2010, and the first woman from New Zealand to get that far at the All England Club in the Open era, which began in 1968.

Vekic dropped to her knees at No. 2 Court after getting past Paula Badosa 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 in a match disrupted by three rain delays to make her first quarterfinal at the grass-court event in 10 appear-

"I feel," said Vekic, a 28-yearold from Croatia, "like I'm living

dian men's hockey team on Monday departed for renowned adventurer Mike Horn's base in Switzerland which will be followed by a training camp in the Netherlands ahead of the Paris Games

The three-day arduous camp in Switzerland is designed to instill mental toughness and from there the Indian team will head to the Netherlands to play practice matches before finally heading to the French capital.

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh said the upcoming experiences will ensure that the players are "in the best state of mind and body before we begin our Olympic journey."

We just completed a grueling two-week camp in SAI Bengaluru and after a short detour in Switzerland with Mike Horn, who is reputed for his extreme adventures that conquer his fears, the Team will play some practice matches against the Netherlands and Malaysia.'

Following the final block of training, India are scheduled to arrive in Paris on July 20.

"The team is in high spirits and is looking forward to the final block of training," Harmanpreet

said before stepping onto his flight. India will begin their Paris Olympics journey in Pool B, with a match against New Zealand on July 27, followed by a match against Argentina on July 29.

The Tokyo bronze medallists will then face Ireland and Belgium on July 30 and August 1 respectively, with their final group stage game against Australia on August

India need to finish in top-four to make the knockouts.

"The team has prepared well so far, we identified areas that needed improvement from the London and Antwerp stages of FIH Pro League 2023/24 and worked on it in the training camp in SAI Bengaluru,' said India vice-captain Hardik

"The best teams in the world will take part in the Paris 2024 Olympics but this squad is ready to seize the opportunity and bring glory to India. We are confident in our abilities and excited about the journey ahead." (PTI)

India eye improved bowling show in final women's T20I final

CHENNAI, July 8: Desperate to level the three-match series after the second game was washed out, India would hope weather doesn't play spoilsport, besides eyeing a much-improved bowling effort in the final women's T20I against South Africa here on Tuesday.

India are trailing the three-match series 0-1 after losing the opener by 12 runs. Their problems compounded after the second game here on Sunday was washed out midway due to persistent drizzle. And with 30 to 40 per cent of

ans are left on the mercy of weather gods. In both the matches, the Indian bowlers cut a sorry figure as South

rain forecast for Tuesday, the Indi-

Africa amassed 189 for 9 and 177 for 6 respectively. Barring Pooja Vastrakar, who picked up two wickets each in both the games, and spinner Deepti Sharma, most of the Indian bowlers failed to shine against the

Proteas women. Renuka Singh leaked runs in the first game and was subsequently replaced by Sajeevan Sajana in the

Mentor Yuvraj must

Abhishek Sharma

HARARE, July 8: India opener

Abhishek Sharma has revealed that

his mentor Yuvraj Singh was de-

lighted when he got out for a duck

back strongly to set the stage ablaze

"I spoke to him yesterday (Satur-

in a video posted by BCCI.

only helping him hone is skills on

the cricket field but also supporting

him in his life away from the field.

the hard work he has put in (shap-

ing) me. (For) two-three years, he

has worked really hard not only on

well." (PTI)

"It's all because of him as well,

be proud now:

second T20I but the latter also didn't her cause.

Shrevanka Patil and Radha Yadav picked up a wicket each on Sunday but continued to leak runs. India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur would want her bowlers to pull up their socks with the series

On the batting front, it has been a decent show by the Indians in the first game. The likes of Jemimah Rodrigues (53 not out), Smriti Mandhana (46), Harmanpreet (35), Shafali Verma (18) and Daylan

Hemalatha (14) all making double digit scores.

> Uma Chetry, who made her T20I debut on Sunday, is likely to persisted with as Harmanpreet and the team management would like to see her exploits with the bat.

> South Africa, on the other hand, has been rock solid with the bat with Tazmin Brits, who hit consecutive half-centuries, leading the

Besides Brits, skipper Laura Wolvaardt, Marizanne Kapp and Anneke Bosch have contributed

with the bat as well for the visitors. South Africa's only concern is Chloe Tryon, who has scored identical 12 runs in the two games.

And with the upcoming T20 World Cup in Bangladesh in mind, Tryon will be desperate to prove her detractors wrong. Teams:

India Women: Harmanpreet Kaur(c), Smriti Mandhana(vc), Ghosh(wk), Dayalan Hemalatha, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Amanjot Kaur, Shreyanka Patil, Sajeevan Sajana, Deepti Sharma, Asha Sobhana, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, Shabnam Shakil, Pooja Vastrakar and Radha

Yadav. South Africa Women: Laura Wolvaardt(c), Tazmin Brits, Mieke de Ridder(wk), Sinalo Jafta(wk), Anneke Bosch, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Marizanne Kapp, Sune Luus, Chloe Tryon, Ayabonga Khaka, Masabata Klaas, Eliz-Mari Marx, Nonkululeko Mlaba and Tumi Sekhukhune.

Match starts: 7.00 pm (IST).

Have been living a dream past few days: Bumrah

NEW DELHI, July 8: India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Monday said he has been "living a dream" for the past few days as he expressed gratitude for the stupendous reception that he and the rest of his teammates got for winning the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean.

The 30-year-old, who picked up 15 wickets in the mega-event that concluded on June 29 in Barbados, was a key figure in India's second overall and first in 17 years world trophy in the shortest format. He was adjudged Player of the Tournament for his performance. "I am so thankful for the last few days. I've been living a dream and

it has filled me with happiness and gratitude," Bumrah posted on X, along with a video of him enjoying the rapturous homecoming that included a breakfast meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a victory parade attended by lakhs of fans in Mumbai. The 42-second clip featured the audio of Virat Kohli's speech during

the felicitation function after the parade last Thursday where the champion batter had lauded Bumrah's contribution

The fast bowler had combined with all-rounder Hardik Pandya to turn it around wonderfully for India in the final.

The two were brought in for their second spell in the match at a time when South Africa needed 30 off 30 balls. They wreaked havoc to ensure that the Proteas eventually fell short by seven runs.

Kohli had called Bumrah a "once in a generation" player during the speech at the Wankhede Stadium, prompting the assembled crowd to chant the bowler's name in appreciation

"What I would like everyone to do is to applaud a guy who brought us back into games again, and again, and again. It was phenomenal. He is a once in a generation bowler. I am so glad he plays for us," Kohli, who retired from T20 Internationals at the end of the World Cup, had

Bumrah was welcomed with flower petals after arriving at his

Jayasuriya named Sri Lanka's interim coach



COLOMBO, July 8: Former captain Sanath Jayasuriya was on Monday named the interim head coach of Sri Lanka's cricket team ahead of this month's white-ball home series against India with the country's board saying that he is 'well-positioned" to guide the side till a "permanent solution" is found in the next few months.

The Indian team will be touring Sri Lanka for three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs, starting July 27. Jayasuriya, who has also served as a chief selector in the past, will continue in the post till Sri Lanka's Test tour to England in August-September, comprising three games.

"Sri Lanka Cricket wishes to announce the appointment of Mr. Sanath Jayasuriya as the 'Interim Head Coach' of the national team. He will function in the position until the completion of Sri Lanka's tour of England in September 2024," the SLC said in a statement. The 55-year-old, a swashbuckling opener in his prime, was named for the interim post after Englishman Chris Silverwood resigned last week as Sri Lanka head coach.

Silverwood stepped down in the wake of the country's disastrous T20 World Cup campaign, during which it was ousted from the league stage itself.

One of the most attacking batters of his time, Jayasuriya had recently been a consultant for the team during this year's T20 World Cup in the USA and Caribbean.

"Jayasuriya is currently serving as the full-time 'Cricket Consultant' of Sri Lanka Cricket. His new appointment comes into immediate effect."

"Sanath with his wealth of international cricketing experience is well positioned to guide the national team, until we find a permanent solution," said SLC CEO Ashley De Silva. Jayasuriya featured in 110 Tests between 1991 and 2007, scoring 6973 runs at an average of 40.07, with the help of 14 centuries and 31 fifties.

In the 445 ODIs he played, the left-hander struck 13,430 runs at an average of 32.36, with 28 hundreds and 68 half centuries.

He was a key member of the Sri Lankan team that won 1996 ODI World Cup. He also served as Member of Parliament from 2010-

India is set to field its largest ever contingent with more than 125 athletes

Current generation of athletes is not chicken hearted: Abhinav Bindra

on his T20I debut against Zimbabwe here as the swashbuckling **NEW DELHI, July 8:** India's first-ever Olympic champion Abhiformer all-rounder, for reasons best nav Bindra feels the current generknown to him, felt it was a "good ation of athletes is much more Making his India debut, Abconfident than the "chickenhishek was out on duck as the Men hearted" players of his time but advised the Paris-bound Indian in Blue lost the first T20I against hosts Zimbabwe by 13 runs on Satcontingent to not make the mistake urday. But the 23-year-old came of thinking about either past or fu-

with a blistering maiden century (a Bindra, who won a shooting gold in 2008 Beijing Games, was speak-47-ball 100) to fashion India's 100run win in the second game a day ing during a panel discussion organised by the Embassy of France with the Indo-French Chamber of day) also, and I don't know why he Commerce & Industry (IFCCI) on was very happy when I got out on the country's preparations for the zero. He said that's a good start but Olympic Games, starting July 26. he must be very happy and proud India is set to field its largest ever

just like my family," Abhishek said contingent with more than 125 athletes qualifying for the biggest He credited the hero of India's sporting event on earth. 2011 World Cup triumph for not

"I came from a generation that was chicken hearted, in nature. These athletes are much more confident, have self belief. They want to go and win and not just win but win gold medals and it comes out very clearly. That is a reflection of our society, how it has developed my cricket but off the field (life) as over the years," said Bindra.

The 41-year-old said the way



sport is looked at and spoken about have changed but what has not changed is the stiff competition that athletes face.

"The conversations are different now. But there are similarities, they have to show up in Paris and perform on that particular day. It's not going to get easier in any way. They have to learn to soak in the pressure and focus on process perfected over years, process of execution of their skills.

"The biggest mistake athletes

make is that they are either living in the past or thinking about what the future holds. They forget about the only reality that exists, remaining present in moment." Thierry Mathou, the Ambassador of France to India, said Paris was ready to deliver exceptional Games.

He said that innovation, sustainability, solidarity, gender equality, employment, education and inclusivity was at the heart of their organisation of the Games.

Mathou also informed that

India and France have signed an MoU for co-operation in sports and it becomes crucial when India aspires to host Olympic Games in

There is intense speculation and debates around the number of medals India will win in the 2024 edition, considering the efforts that have gone into preparing the athletes. The officials are optimistic that India will be able to better the Tokyo performance where the country won seven medals.

When asked about the same, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) President Adille Sumariwalla presented his perspective.

"Neeraj is Asian champion, CWG champion, World and Olympic champion. Every time he has thrown, somewhere in the world someone has thrown better that him. But on that day, Neeraj did his best. It was not 90m, it was 89 and it was gold.

"Will he do well, yes, will others do well, I hope they do. Yesterday Avinash Sable created a national record again, will that help him win, we don't know. At last Worlds he could have won gold with same years we will see a jump." (PTI)

time but yesterday he was sixth. It's difficult to predict," he said. Sumariwala said for him progress means not just the number

of medals won.

"We have to see how many athletes were in London, Rio, Tokyo and how many now. How many made the finals then and how many now. If the number is up, is that a progressions, yes. That's how I measure.

Bindra said for India to start dreaming of winning 30-40 Olympic medals a lot of work is required at the grassroots level.

"We have to start looking at sport differently. At present we are looking at it how athletes are doing at world level. It makes us stand tall. We need to see sport's larger role in nation building.

"The 50 per cent of the population is under 25. How we integrate sports at grassroots level, make it more inclusive for kids that they just play and enjoy sport. When that number increases, the number of athletes making the elite level will also increase. If that happens, in 8-10

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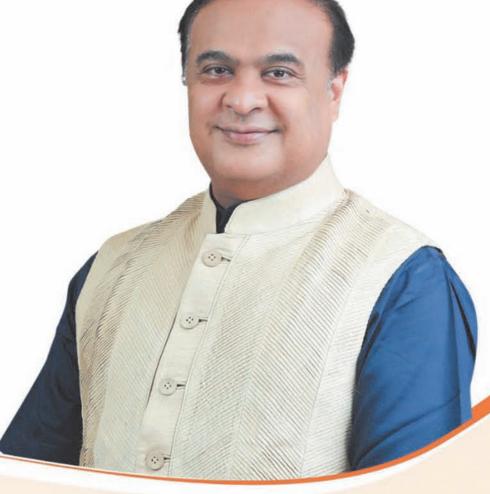
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