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- Aid group says Israel hit convoy to hospital in Gaza
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Vol .No. XXV

Issue No. 231

RNI-ASSEN/2000/12862

DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 2024

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PRICE ₹ 8



## Protect and Prevent - Continue the fight against Japanese Encephalities

Remember, immediate medical treatment can save a life

**Symptoms of JE**

- High fever
- Irrelevant talk & confusion
- Convulsion

- Severe headache
- Unconsciousness
- Unable to speak properly

**Preventive Methods**

- Keep the drains around the house clean and do not allow water to accumulate in empty containers
- Use mosquito net while sleeping and use age appropriate mosquito repellents
- Wear long sleeve clothing and trousers
- Pig rearing should be done at least 100 meters away from human settlements
- Vaccinate pigs against common diseases at regular intervals



If you feel any JE-like symptoms, consult a doctor immediately

(NHM/D/2024-25/276)

## Cong, other INDIA bloc parties patrons of corrupts, rapists: BJP

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** The Congress and other INDIA bloc parties have become patrons of corrupts and rapists in the states ruled by them, the BJP said on Friday, launching a fresh attack against the backdrop of alleged scams in Karnataka and rape-and-murder case of a medic in West Bengal.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Prem Shukla slammed West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee over her "fire will spread" remarks and said that it is clearly visible that the "tukde-tukde gang" has penetrated deep into the INDIA bloc of the opposition parties.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had earlier issued a threat to set the country on fire, he said.

"The Congress and INDI alliance governments have become masters of those who indulge in corruption, immoral acts and rape.



Mamata Banerjee threatened common people and students in Bengal. She said this fire will reach Delhi travelling through Odisha, Assam and North East," Shukla said. He alleged that the INDIA bloc intends to burn the country.

"Rahul Gandhi has already threatened to set the country on fire. Before Lok Sabha elections, Akhilesh Yadav had also threat-

ened to set the country on fire.

"These INDI alliance leaders are repeatedly talking setting the country on fire to save corrupts and rapists. This clearly shows that the 'tukde-tukde' gang has penetrated deep into them," he added.

Raising the issue of corruption, the BJP spokesperson alleged "scam" in allocation of a five-acre land to (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## State's outstanding debt rises 107 pc in 5 years

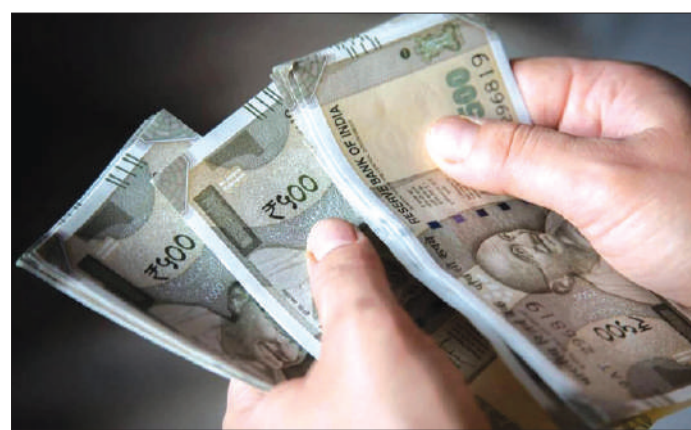
**CAG report for 2022-23 fiscal tabled in Assembly • Increased pressure on interest payment on public debt on cards: Report**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** The Assam government's outstanding debt increased by over 107 per cent from 2018-19 to 2022-23 with the growth rate of outstanding liability also rising during the period, a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report said on Friday.

The report for the 2022-23 fiscal, which was tabled in the assembly, noted that the capital expenditure by the state government decreased by over 20 per cent in FY'23 as compared to 2021-22.

The outstanding debt of the state "rapidly increased by 107.34 per cent from ₹ 59,425.61 crore in 2018-19 to ₹ 1,23,214.80 crore in 2022-23", the report said, adding that the growth rate of outstanding liability also increased from 20.60 per cent in 2018-19 to 23.32 per cent in 2022-23.

The outstanding liabilities-GSDP ratio also rose from 19.21 per cent in 2018-19 to 24.98 per cent in FY'23 due to increased bor-



rowings from the open market, the auditor said.

The public debt constituted 81.98 per cent of the total borrowing at the end of 2022-23.

During the year, it grew by 26.15 per cent, the second highest in the last five-year period, according to CAG.

The average growth rate of pub-

lic debt at 23.92 per cent also outpaced that of GSDP (11.91 per cent) during the year. "These all indicate that there would be increased pressure on interest payment on public debt in the forthcoming years," the report added.

The auditor said capital expenditure, which is incurred for creation of fixed infrastructure assets

such as roads and buildings, decreased by 20.51 per cent from ₹ 20,125.83 crore in 2021-22 to ₹ 15,999.71 crore in 2022-23.

Revenue expenditure in 2022-23 was ₹ 1,01,814.65 crore, constituting 84.88 per cent of the total expenditure of ₹ 1,19,952.20 crore, the report said.

There was a misclassification of ₹ 6,668.99 crore as grants-in-aid given by the state government to different bodies or individual entities were classified as capital expenditure instead of revenue expenditure, resulting in an over-statement of capex.

Committed expenditure of the government, like salary, pensions and interest payments, also increased steadily by ₹ 16,548.72 crore during the five years of 2018-23. The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), however, grew from ₹ 3.09 lakh crore in 2018-19 to ₹ 4.93 lakh crore in 2022-23, with a (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## HT BRIEFS

### One held

**JORHAT:** The Directorate of Vigilance & Anti-Corruption (DVAC), on Friday apprehended a public servant for accepting a bribe of ₹ 4,000, as per an official statement. The accused is identified as Tejendra Saikia, an inspector of drugs, Jorhat. Based on the statement, Saikia is said to have demanded a bribe amount of ₹ 5,000 from the complainant for allowing him to run his pharmacies without disturbance. Later, he had reduced the amount of bribe to ₹ 4,000. "Accordingly, a trap was laid by a team of DVAC, at the office of the Inspector of Drugs where Saikia was caught red handed".

### Bizarre incident

**DIPHU:** In a bizarre incident, 42 out of 48 hostellers have vacated the Diphu Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Girls Hostel in Karbi Anglong due to reports of a ghostly presence, sparking fear and panic among the students. According to a hosteller, the incident began on Sunday night when 15 students, including Rengasajir, Jirmika Rongpipi, Gracika Rongpharpi, Sertabon, Mirbon, Hummily, and Rasingia, exhibited strange behavior, such as crying, shouting, while being semi-unconsciousness. Following this, students and parents withdrew their wards from the hostel. Only six students are said to be present in the hostel now.

## NRL records revenue earning of ₹ 23,731 crore during 2023-24

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** The Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) has recorded a revenue earning of ₹ 23,731 crore and a net profit of ₹ 2,160 crore during the financial year 2023-24, chairman Ranjit Rath said here on Friday.

"The financial year ended on a positive note despite loss of operations during the first quarter of the financial year 2023-24 on account of planned refinery shutdown and an unforeseen fire incident", Rath said at a press conference after NRL's 31st annual general meeting held here.

NRL bounced back after the initial setback and a final dividend of ₹ 258.42 crore for the financial year was declared during the AGM, he said. The company has already paid an interim dividend of ₹ 452.24 crore with the total dividend pay-out for the year being ₹ 710.66 crore, representing 32.90 per cent of NRL's Profit After Tax (PAT) for the year.

The refinery processed 2,510 TMT of crude oil, equivalent to 100 per cent capacity utilisation for 10 months and during the year, the company's net worth soared to ₹ 13,926 crore, he said.

Asked about the impact of the Bangladesh situation on the movement of the refinery products to the neighbouring country, Rath said there has been no difference with the pipelines functioning normally



and products moving normally.

The refinery continued to show impressive performance with respect to Specific Energy Consumption (SEC) and Energy Intensity Index (EII), pointers that determine energy-efficient operations.

The company continued to contribute significantly to the central and state exchequer in the form of taxes, duties and dividends, with a contribution of ₹ 3,819 crore extended during the financial year.

The total product sales during the year was 2,720 TMT.

NRL's LPG bottling plant recorded the highest-ever capacity utilisation of 68 TMT during the year against an installed capacity of 42 TMT. NRL remains the market leader in the country with regard to wax production and sales. Sales within northeast were reg-

istered at 1,173 TMT, which was 43 per cent against 41 per cent of the total sales in the previous year, thus contributing towards reduction in freight under recoveries.

During the year, NRL recorded the highest-ever standalone capital expenditure of ₹ 8,502 crore, marking an increase of 24 per cent over last year, Rath added.

NRL has made significant progress in the ongoing mega Numaligarh Refinery Expansion Project with a train comprising of the 6 MMTPA Refinery, the 1,635 KM Paradip Numaligarh crude oil pipeline and crude oil import terminal at Paradip; which is expected to be completed by December 2025. The chairman pointed out that sustainability, diversification and thereby maximising stakeholder value has (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## VHP welcomes law mandating registration of marriage, divorce of Muslims in Assam

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** The Vishva Hindu Parishad on Friday hailed the passage of a bill in Assam assembly, which provides for compulsory government registration of marriage and divorce of Muslims, saying other states should also follow the suit for empowerment of women belonging to the minority community.

VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal said the enactment of the law will empower Muslim women and check atrocities against them. It will also end child marriage, he said. "Other states should also follow the suit for empowerment of women," he said in a post on X.

The Assam Assembly had on Thursday passed a bill for compulsory government registration of marriage and divorce of Muslim people.

The Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill, 2024, was introduced in the state assembly by Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Jogen Mohan on Tuesday.

While replying to queries, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said all earlier registrations of marriages conducted by Kazis will remain valid and only new ones will come under the purview of the legislation.

"We are not interfering with the marriages solemnised by Islamic rituals under Muslim Personnel Law at all. Our only condition is that Islam prohibited marriages will not be registered," he added.

Sarma said with the enactment of this new law, child marriage registration will be completely banned. In the Statement of Object and Reason, it has been said that the bill has been proposed for prevention of child marriages and marriages without consent of both parties. It will help check polygamy, enable married women (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Cong questions PM Modi's global peace focus while ignoring Manipur

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** The Congress on Friday wondered why Prime Minister Narendra Modi can't be the peacemaker by visiting violence-hit Manipur when he is going "all over the world" trying to play that role.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also asserted that Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh has "lost all credibility" and things cannot improve under him.

Ramesh's remarks came in response to Biren Singh's interview to PTI in which the chief minister has promised to fully restore peace in the state in six months with the Centre's help, and also ruled out stepping down, saying he has neither committed a crime nor spawned a scandal.

In his remarks, Singh said, "PM coming or not coming has been made an issue by people. The PM may not have come but he has sent his home minister. And PM has so often spoken about Manipur, even from Lal Qila on Independence Day...and whatever is being done here in terms of security, funding etc, is under his leadership only. In a complex situation a PM coming was not necessary."

Reacting to the remarks, Ramesh told PTI, "The people of Manipur want the prime minister to come to the state and the prime



minister has not gone. It is an extraordinary situation, he has gone all over the world but he has not found to go to Manipur even for a few hours. What the chief minister is saying about the PM is unacceptable, it is indefensible what he has done."

Ramesh said almost 16 months have gone by and there has been no peace, no harmony, no reconciliation, no semblance of normalcy in Manipur.

"The Supreme Court actually called it a breakdown of constitutional machinery. So I don't know which world the chief minister is living in?" Ramesh said.

He claimed that the chief minister has "lost all credibility". There have been revelations and audio recordings of what the chief minister has said which needs to be investigated, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Assam assembly abolishes 2-hr break for Friday 'namaz'

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** The Assam assembly will do away with a two-hour break provided on Fridays to facilitate Muslim legislators to offer 'namaz', chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The rule will be implemented from the next session, an assembly official said.

In a post on X, Sarma said, "By doing away with the 2 hour Juma break, @AssamAssembly has prioritised productivity and shed another vestige of colonial baggage. This practice was introduced by Muslim League's Syed Saadulla in 1937." "My gratitude to Hon'ble Speaker Shri @BiswajitDaimar5 dangoriya and our legislators for this historical decision," Sarma added.

For the last time, this two-hour break was provided on Friday, the final day of the Autumn session of the assembly, the official said.

An official statement circulated in the House, a copy of which was made available to reporters, said the Rules Committee of the assembly had unanimously agreed to drop this practice.

"Accordingly, today, the House adopted a motion to amend this rule so as to provide for sitting of the House for conduct of its proceedings on Fridays like any other day," the statement added. (PTI)

## Meeting on National Deworming Day held

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Aug 30:** The District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) held a meeting on National Deworming Day (NDD) in Diphu, Karbi Anglong, on Friday.

In preparation for NDD on September 10, 2024, the Karbi Anglong district health department has developed a comprehensive strategy to combat soil-transmitted helminths (STH), a significant health issue among children in the region. The meeting emphasised the need for inter-departmental coordination.

The NDD initiative is supported by collaboration among the Departments of Health and Family Welfare, Education, and Women and Child Development.

This effort aims to protect nearly one thousand children from the adverse effects of parasitic worms, which contribute to anemia, malnutrition, and impaired cognitive development. The initiative will involve deworming children and adolescents aged 1 to 19 years by administering Albendazole tablets in schools and Anganwadi centers. The Secretary (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

The plant will be supported by a 15 KW solar power Plant and a solar inverter

## NMCG approves 9 projects worth ₹ 265 crore to reduce pollution in Ganga

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has approved nine significant projects worth ₹ 265 crore aimed at reducing pollution and enhancing the ecosystem of the Ganga river, according to an official statement.

These projects were greenlit during the 56th executive committee meeting chaired by NMCG director general Rajeev Kumar Mital in New Delhi.

One of the projects involves the establishment of an eight kilolitres per day (KLD) capacity Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant in Dalmau of Uttar Pradesh's Raebareilly, it said. The plant will be supported by a 15 KW solar power Plant and a solar inverter.



Valued at ₹ 4.40 crore, the project operates on a Design, Build, Operate and Transfer (DBOT) model and includes five years of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) to ensure its long-term success. In Bulandshahr district's Gulaothi town, another project fo-

cuses on preventing pollution in the East Kali River, a tributary of the Ganga.

This initiative, having a budget of ₹ 50.98 crore, involves the interception and diversion of drains and the construction of a sewage treatment plant with a 10 MLD capacity. This project also includes a 15-year O&M period, ensuring sustained impact, the statement said. In preparation for the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, the committee approved the construction of an Arth Ganga Centre and the branding of the Chheeki Railway Station in Prayagraj for ₹ 1.80 crore.

This initiative aims to raise awareness about the Ganga and the environment while also generating employment (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



# Sensex, Nifty extend gains to scale fresh peaks on firm global cues

**MUMBAI, Aug 30:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty marched higher to scale fresh lifetime closing peaks on Friday, tracking a largely firm trend in global markets and renewed foreign fund inflows amid the US rate cut hopes gathering momentum.

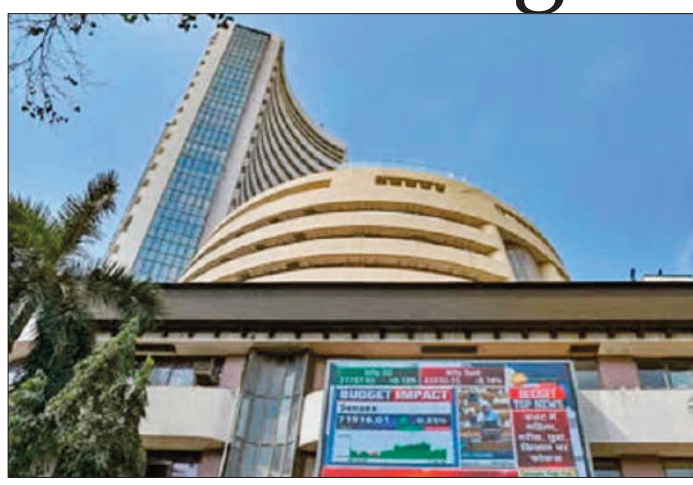
Buying in index majors Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and Infosys also fuelled the rally in domestic equities.

Rallying for the ninth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 231.16 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,365.77. During the day, it jumped 502.42 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a record intra-day peak of 82,637.03. A total of 2,228 stocks advanced, while 1,701 declined and 116 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In its best winning streak since its launch in 1996, the NSE Nifty soared 83.95 points or 0.33 per cent to hit a new lifetime closing high of 25,235.90, taking its victorious run to the 12th day in a row. During the day, it surged 116.4 points or 0.46 per cent to hit a new record intra-day peak of 25,268.35.

"Global markets are...resonating with the US Fed's pledges of a rate cut in September. The US and Indian markets have regained the recent highs, reflecting the continuation of this optimism," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,279.56 points or 1.57 per cent, and the Nifty soared 412.75 points or 1.66 per cent.

In nine days of rally, the BSE benchmark surged 1,941.09 points or 2.41 per cent. The Nifty zoomed 1,096.9 points or 4.54 per cent in



12 sessions.

"Nifty ended higher on Friday for the twelfth consecutive session, its best winning streak since its launch in 1996. Global shares mostly rose Friday as markets continued to be moderately optimistic about the prospects of technology companies helped by the prospect of lower interest rates amid signs of moderating inflation across the developed world," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, NTPC, Power Grid, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel and Tata Consultancy Services were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra and ITC were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 0.75 per cent, and the midcap index climbed 0.53 per cent.

All indices ended higher. Realty surged 1.88 per cent, healthcare

jumped 1.41 per cent, utilities (0.77 per cent), commodities (0.70 per cent), tech (0.63 per cent) and services (0.61 per cent). "Global shares mostly rose Friday as markets continued to be moderately optimistic about the prospects of technology companies helped by the prospect of lower interest rates amid signs of moderating inflation across the developed world," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled with gains. European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹ 3,259.56 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Domestic Institutional Investors lapped up equities worth ₹ 2,690.85 crore.

"Continuation of accumulation of quality large-caps by the DIIs (Domestic Institutional Investors)

and HNIs and the FIIs reducing their selling significantly and buying on certain days have contributed to the resilience of the market," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.08 per cent to USD 80 a barrel. "Though the domestic market is currently showing a positive bias, the Indian Q1 GDP growth is expected to be moderate, while premium valuation and a lack of fresh triggers could see further momentum buildup in value stocks," Nair said.

The BSE benchmark jumped 349.05 points or 0.43 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,134.61 on Thursday, extending its winning momentum to the eighth day in a row.

Rallying for the 11th straight session, the Nifty surged 99.60 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,151.95.

"Moody's upgraded India's GDP rating forecast to 7.2 per cent for 2024 and to 6.6 per cent for 2025 (earlier estimates of 6.8 per cent and 6.4 per cent) on back strong broad-based growth. This, along with healthy MSCI inflow, took markets to new highs.

"We expect the market to continue its northbound journey with stock-specific action. Global macro data, which will be released during the week will continue to provide cues to domestic equities. Sector-wise, Auto will remain in focus as OEMs will announce their monthly sales numbers," Sid-dhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. (PTI)

## HDFC Bank unveils GIGA: A comprehensive financial suite for gig workers

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, has launched GIGA, a comprehensive financial suite tailored specifically for gig workers and freelancers. This digital-first program aims to address the unique financial needs of the growing gig economy, which spans various sectors, from white-collar professionals like software programmers and investment advisors to blue-collar workers such as delivery partners and caregivers.

The launch of GIGA follows an in-depth consumer research study conducted by HDFC Bank to better understand the requirements of freelancers. The result is a range of customized products and services designed to offer financial flexibility and support to this diverse workforce.

## Initiative launch to Empower waste workers

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** The PepsiCo Foundation, in collaboration with Pyxera Global, has launched the "Cooperative for Solid Waste Management" (CSWM) in Guwahati, Assam. This initiative, which aims to transform the waste management ecosystem in the region, was inaugurated by Dr. B. Kalyan Chakravartthy, IAS, Principal Secretary of Cooperation, Government of Assam.

Aligned with PepsiCo India's guiding principle of "Partnership of Progress" (Unnotir Onshidartwa), the CSWM seeks to address the challenges faced by waste workers and elevate their role within the waste management system. Over the next 15 months, this initiative will focus on driving economic growth, professional development, and health improvements for waste collectors in Guwahati.

## Removed Angel Tax, taking policy measures to promote fintech sector: PM

**MUMBAI, Aug 30:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the government is making necessary policy changes, like removal of Angel Tax, to promote the fintech sector, even as he asked the regulators to take additional measures to check cyber frauds which can have a crippling impact on start-ups.

Lauding the fintechs for democratising financial services, Modi said the sector, which has attracted USD 31-billion investment in the last 10 years, has played a key role in denting the parallel economy.

The Prime Minister was addressing the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2024, jointly organised by the Payments Council of India, the National Payments Corporation of India and the Fintech Convergence Council.

He said the domestic economy and the capital market are in a celebratory mood at a time when the nation is also going through a festive period. Modi underlined that the government is making all necessary changes on the policy level to assist the fintech sector and gave examples of doing away with Angel Tax, allocating ₹ 1 lakh crore to encourage research and innovation in the country and implementing the Digital Personal Data Protection Act. Broadly, fintech refers to entities utilising technologies for providing financial services.

Expressing the need to put an end to cyber fraud, he urged the regulators to take major initiatives to boost digital literacy.

It is equally important to ensure cyber fraud does not come in the way of the growth of fintech and startups in the country, Modi said.

In his speech, the Prime Minister also cautioned about the dangers of a parallel economy for the world. Fintech, he said, has

played an impactful role in denting such a system and credited the emergence of transparency.

He said that digital technology has introduced transparency in India and gave the example of the implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer used in hundreds of government schemes that has prevented leakages in the system. "Today, people can see the benefits of aligning with the formal banking system," he said.

Modi further said the trinity of Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile have broken down the mentality of 'Cash is King' and made way for approximately half of the digital transactions in the world taking place in India.

"India's UPI has become a major example of fintech in the world," he said, adding that it has enabled 24x7 banking services in every village and city in all weather conditions.

Underlining the role of fintech in democratising financial services, the Prime Minister gave examples of readily available loans, credit cards, investments and insurance.

He said that fintech has made access to credit easy and inclusive, and gave the example of PM SVANidhi scheme that has enabled street vendors to avail collateral-free loans and further expand their business with the help of digital transactions.

"Sustainable economic growth is India's priority today," he said and emphasised that the government is creating robust, transparent and efficient systems to strengthen financial markets with advanced technologies and regulatory frameworks.

About 800 speakers, including policymakers, regulators, senior bankers, industry captains, and academicians, from India and other countries are participating in the fest. (PTI)

# GDP growth slows to 15-month low of 6.7 pc in Apr-Jun

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** India's economic growth slowed to a 15-month low of 6.7 per cent in April-June 2024-25, mainly due to poor performance of the agriculture and services sectors, government data showed on Friday. The gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 8.2 per cent in the April-June quarter of 2022-23. India, however, remained the fastest-growing major economy, as China posted a 4.7 per cent growth in April-June 2024. The previous low of 6.2 per cent was recorded in the January-March quarter of 2023. "India's GDP growth expectedly slowed down in Q1 FY2025 relative to Q4 FY2024 (to a five-quarter low of 6.7 per cent from 7.8 per cent), even as the GVA growth surprisingly accelerated between these quarters (to 6.8 per cent from 6.3 per cent). "This divergent trend was led by the normalisation of the growth in net indirect taxes, and the slowdown in the GDP growth is not a cause for alarm, in our view," said Icria Chief Economist, Head - Research & Out-

reach, Aditi Nayar said.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the agriculture sector gross value added (GVA) growth decelerated to 2 per cent from 3.7 per cent in the April-June quarter of 2023-24.

The expansion in 'financial, real estate and professional services' GVA too slowed to 7.1 per cent from 12.6 per cent in the year-ago quarter.

However, the GVA in the manufacturing sector accelerated to 7 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal compared to 5 per cent a year ago. "Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices in Q1 of 2024-25 is estimated at ₹43.64 lakh crore against ₹40.91 lakh crore in Q1 of 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 6.7 per cent," NSO said in a statement. It further stated that nominal GDP or GDP at current prices in Q1 of 2024-25 is estimated at ₹77.31 lakh crore against ₹70.50 lakh crore in Q1 of 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 9.7 per cent. (PTI)

*Contd. from Page 1..*

## Cong, other INDIA bloc

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's family in Karnataka and demanded a CBI probe into the matter. "The Karnataka government's social welfare department had asked for this land for a social welfare project but it was given to Mallikarjun Kharge. The land was allocated without an e-auction. The government would have earned revenue of ₹ 15-20 crore if the land was allocated through an e-auction," he claimed.

"The Karnataka government does not have money to pay the salary of transport department employees but it has ₹ 15-20 crore to shower on the Congress president," he said and demanded a CBI probe into the matter. Shukla also took swipes at the Congress over Himachal Pradesh chief minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu citing "grim financial situation" in the state and said wherever the party comes to power it brings misery along with it. Sukhu had announced on Thursday that he, his ministers, chief parliamentary secretaries and chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of boards and corporations would defer drawing their salaries and allowances for two months, citing the state's "grim financial situation".

The chief minister made the announcement in the assembly and also urged other members of the House to follow suit. "Among the nine hill states, Himachal Pradesh is worst affected by economic distress. Wherever the Congress goes, it brings misery along with it. "Rahul Gandhi used to say that money will be swiftly credited to people's accounts. Money did not come swiftly, though the bankruptcy came in quickly," Shukla said.

The BJP leader also condemned Telangana chief minister A Revanth Reddy's remarks on grant of bail to BRS leader K Kavitha by the Supreme court in cases linked to alleged Delhi excise policy scam and demanded that the Congress apologise to "all constitutional bodies" for insulting them.

In an interaction with mediapersons, Reddy had on Tuesday said there are doubts over MLC Kavitha getting bail in five months when Manish Sisodia got it after 15 months and Kejriwal is yet to get it.

"It is a fact that BRS worked for the victory of the BJP in the 2024 LS polls. There is also talk that Kavitha got bail because of the deal between BRS and BJP," he had alleged. The Supreme Court on Thursday took strong objection to Telangana chief minister's comments and said such statements might create apprehensions in the minds of people. (PTI)

## State's outstanding debt

compound annual growth rate of 12.27 per cent. The state could achieve a revenue surplus in only two years in the period between 2018-19 and 2022-23. The state was successful in containing the fiscal deficit below the target under the Assam Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (AFRBM) Act in two years in the five years under review. (PTI)

## NRL records revenue earning

been at the core of NRL's strategy and operations. Environmental clearance for the 360 KTPA Poly-Propylene Plant (PetchemProject) has recently been received which along with the 2.4 KTPA Green Hydrogen Project and imminent commissioning of the 2G Biorefinery being implemented through a joint venture with Assam Biorefinery Private Limited with the total investment of the ongoing projects being above ₹ 45,000 crore. (PTI)

## VHP welcomes law mandating

to claim their right to live in matrimonial house, maintenance, etc, and enable widows to claim their inheritance rights and other benefits and privileges which they are entitled to after the death of their husband, Mohan said. The bill will also prevent men from deserting wives after marriage and strengthen the institution of marriage, he added. (PTI)

## NMCG approves 9 projects

opportunities and supporting women's self-help groups in the Ganga basin, the statement said.

Additionally, the committee endorsed a restoration plan for lower-order streams and tributaries in the Upper Gomti River Basin through nature-based solutions. This ₹ 81.09 lakh project, proposed by the Babasaheb Bhim-rao Ambedkar Central University in Lucknow, focuses on rejuvenating streams and tributaries to improve the health of the Ganga.

In West Bengal, the committee approved a ₹ 7.11 crore project to install new penstock gates and renovate existing ones along the Beliaghata Canal in Kolkata. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation will oversee the project's O&M, which is set to operate under the DBOT model, the statement said.

Another significant development is the ₹ 25.89 crore Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the conservation of the Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary in Jharkhand, a crucial initiative for the sustainable management of the region's unique biodiversity.

The committee also sanctioned the renovation of electric crematoriums in Santipur, Garulia and Chakdha municipalities in West Bengal under the World Bank-funded PBIG component. This ₹ 2.89 crore project, also based on the DBOT model, includes a five-year O&M period. A major project in Bihar – the Munger Sewerage Network and Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) – was approved with a revised budget of ₹ 522.85 crore. This extensive project includes a 30 MLD capacity STP and a 175-km-long sewerage network, with O&M responsibilities transitioning to the state government after 15 years.

The establishment of a secretariat for the Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR) at Varanasi, to be executed by IIT-BHU, was approved. This project aims to leverage global expertise and sustainable practices to rejuvenate rivers across India, balancing environmental, economic and societal needs, the statement said. (PTI)

## Cong questions PM Modi's

Ramesh said. "I don't see on what strength the CM is claiming normalcy. This is absolutely contrary to the facts on the ground," he said.

The Congress leader said 15 months after getting a huge majority in the assembly elections, the state began burning and "it was made to blow up". "This is not accidental what has happened. The fact of the matter is that the prime minister has gone to Ukraine, the prime minister has gone to Russia, he has gone to Poland, he has gone all over the country, he has gone to other countries of the world but he has neither found the time nor the inclination to visit Manipur even for a few hours," Ramesh said.

"He is the PM of the country and Manipur is an exceedingly important and strategic state of our country and this is the way he deals with Manipur," he said. Ramesh said Modi has not met Singh and asked whether the chief minister can say that he has had a one-on-one meeting with the prime minister in New Delhi.

"Has the PM met the elected representatives of Manipur, he has not. The answer that the people of Manipur gave to all these bogus claims being made by the CM is the fact that in both Inner Manipur and Outer Manipur, the Congress has won and the BJP has lost (in the Lok Sabha polls) and they have lost by a good margin," he said. "I think the prime minister must go to Manipur. That is the most important requirement. The prime minister must go and begin the process of sending the healing touch, the process of reconciliation," he said.

Ramesh said it is not enough to speak for a few minutes in Parliament or outside and the prime minister must visit the state. Modi has to show he means business, he has to reassure all communities of Manipur -- the Meiteis, the Kukis, the Nagas and all the tribal communities, he added. Modi has to show that the agony of Manipur is the agony of India, Ramesh said.

"The non-biological PM is going all over the world trying to be the peacemaker, why can't he be the peacemaker by going to Manipur," he said. He said that one consequence of the PM not being able to go to Manipur is that he is not being able to go to Mizoram. "He (Modi) had to go to Mizoram for an election rally which had to be cancelled because the BJP thought that this would invite negative comments because he would have gone to Mizoram and not to Manipur," the Congress leader claimed.

"The prime minister goes to Tripura, he goes to Assam but he has neither the time nor the inclination to go to Manipur. It is complete neglect on the part of the PM. I hold the PM singularly responsible," Ramesh said.

"Ukraine is not complex? Russia is not complex? And the non-biological PM has found time to go there. Of course, the situation is complex but six autonomous district councils in Manipur, last time the elections for them were held in 2015. Why aren't elections being held to the ADCs in Manipur. Why is the CM constantly defensive?" he said. Going forward, Ramesh said the Congress wants peace, reconciliation and harmony in the state. He urged the Centre and state governments to talk to all sections of society and bring them together. "I don't think with the present CM, things are going to improve... It is going to be a long drawn out process," he said. Ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities has claimed more than 200 lives in Manipur since May last year. (PTI)

## Meeting on National Deworming

highlighted the importance of community involvement to ensure the campaign's success. The administration is also focusing on mobilising the community through awareness campaigns in schools and local organisations. Pre-event activities include district and block-level coordination meetings, distribution of Albendazole tablets, and training for teachers, Anganwadi workers, and ASHAs.

The Karbi Anglong district health department urges all stakeholders to actively participate in National Deworming Day 2024, ensuring a healthier future for the children of Karbi Anglong.

Rajeshan Terang, secretary of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Dr Borsing Rongpi, and other key department officials were present at the meeting.

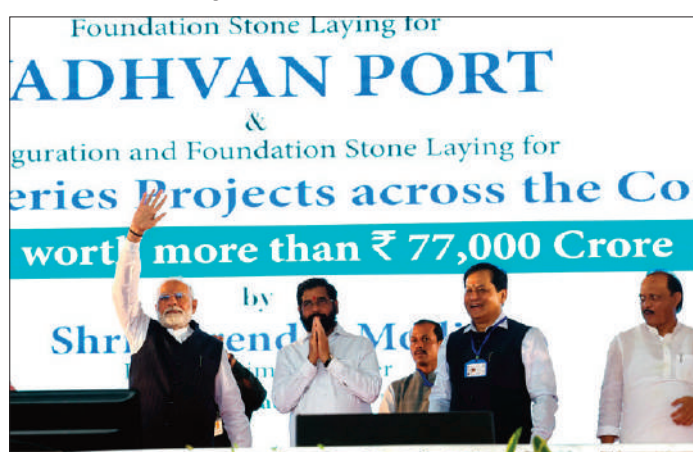
# Vadhvan Port in Maharashtra to generate 12 lakh jobs for youth, women: Sonowal

**MUMBAI, Aug 30:** The proposed Vadhvan Port in the Palghar district of Maharashtra will generate 12 lakh jobs for the local youth and women besides creating multiple facilities for the people of the area once it becomes operational, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said on Friday.

Speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the port project at CIDCO ground in Palghar, Sonowal also said that India has earned a name as a maritime nation in the world under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has taken a slew of initiatives for the maritime sector in the last 10 years. Modi laid the foundation stone for the mega project in the presence of Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan, state chief minister Eknath Shinde and deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar.

The prime minister during his visit to the state also inaugurated, laid foundation stoned for 218 fisheries projects worth ₹ 1,560-crore in Palghar besides addressing the 2024 edition of three-day Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai, which culminated here on Friday.

To be built as an all-weather, greenfield deep draft port 150 km from Mumbai, which got the Union Cabinet's nod in June this



year, the maritime project will see an investment of ₹ 76,200 crore, which includes the development of core infrastructure, terminals and other commercial infrastructure in public-private partnership (PPP) mode. The first phase of the port project is expected to be completed by 2029.

"This port project is a big gift from the Prime Minister to the people of Maharashtra and the country," Sonowal, the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, said.

Stating that the project will generate employment for the local youth, women besides providing benefits to the fishermen commu-

nity and offering opportunities to the coming generations, Sonowal said the upcoming facility will also play a big role in realising the mission of making India a self-sufficient nation in the next 25 years. The minister said that with the setting up of the port, Palghar district will establish its identity in the world as an attractive destination, adding that "around 12 lakh people will get jobs here through this port project because of the creation of multiple facilities like developments of various centres, medical facilities, markets, among others."

"This is a golden opportunity for us," Sonowal said adding that Vadhvan Port will be among the 10 top

ports in the world.

The port will be constructed by Vadhvan Port Project Limited (VPPL), an SPV formed by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) and Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB), with a shareholding of 74 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively.

The facility will comprise nine container terminals, each 1,000-metre long, four multipurpose berths, including the coastal berth, four liquid cargo berths, a Ro-Ro berth, and a Coast Guard berth.

The project involves the reclamation of 1,448 hectare area in the sea and the construction of 10.14 km of offshore breakwater and container/cargo storage areas.

Also, the project will create a cumulative capacity of 298 million metric tonne (MMT) per annum, including around 23.2 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalents) of container handling capacity.

State-run REC signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with JNPA last week for financing up to ₹ 45,000 crore for various upcoming projects, including the development of Vadhvan Port while another public sector firm, Power Finance Corp (PFC) has reportedly committed about ₹ 21,000 crore toward helping build the project at Palghat. (PTI)



## Two women killed in separate accidents

**HT Correspondent**

**MANGALDAI, Aug 30:** During their morning stroll on Friday, two women lost their lives in an accident while walking toward Sipajhar. The accident occurred at Shaktola in Pipradokan, Darrang. Reena Baruah and Jahnua Baruah of Patalshingpara were the deceased. An unidentified truck hit them from behind. One woman died instantly, while the other passed away en route to Mangaldai Civil Hospital.

In another incident at Bijulibari, Sipajhar, Ranjuwara Begum died immediately. The incident occurred during the day. Following the collisions, both vehicles fled the scene.

## Drug peddler arrested

**HT Correspondent**

**JORHAT, Aug 30:** Bikram Bora was arrested by police on Thursday night near Ujani Kebang Gaon under Cinamara Police Outpost on charges of drug peddling and was booked under Sections 21(b)/25 of the NDPS Act in Jorhat Police Station case number 354/24. Police recovered suspected heroin weighing about 10.48 grams from his possession. Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted Bora at Ujani Kebang Gaon when he was coming from Mariani on a two-wheeler.

## Mayur Borgohain files FIR against Congress leaders

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Aug 30:** Sivasagar District BJP president Mayur Borgohain filed a case in the Court of the District Judicial Magistrate on Friday, alleging that his name had been falsely implicated in two FIRs recently filed in Barpeta by Congress leaders Debabrata Saikia, Bhupen Bora, and Rajior Dal Supremo Akhil Gogoi.

Later, during a press conference, Borgohain launched a scathing attack on leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia, accusing him of conspiring to defame him.

Borgohain criticised the Congress leaders and Akhil Gogoi for not addressing the concerns of the 30 organisations that have been protesting against suspected foreign nationals exploiting the state's resources.

Instead, he claimed, they are now orchestrating attacks on the government, aligning themselves with Bangladeshi-sympathiser Sherman Ali.

## Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah chairs CEMs' meeting of Sixth Schedule Councils



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Aug 30:** A meeting of the chief executive members (CEMs) of Sixth Schedule Autonomous Councils was held at Janata Bhawan in Dispur on Friday. The meeting was chaired by Jayanta Mallabaruah, minister for Public Health Engineering (PHE), SEED, and Tourism Department, government of Assam. The focus was on strengthening cooperation, accelerating commercial relations, sharing knowledge, and enhancing resources among the Sixth Schedule Councils in the state.

The meeting was attended by executive members (EMs) and officials from the Sixth Schedule Councils. CEM Pramod Boro of the Bodoland Territorial Region also participated, engaging in discussions aimed at reinforcing integrity and cooperation among the councils.

CEM Boro described the meeting as highly productive, emphasising the discussions on enhancing cooperation and commercial relations among the Sixth Schedule Autonomous Councils.

"It was a pleasure to attend such a fruitful meeting with my counterparts. Chaired by Jayanta Mallabaruah, minister for PHED, SEED, and Tourism, the meeting concentrated on strengthening cooperation, boosting commercial relations, and improving resource and knowledge sharing among the Sixth Schedule Councils," Boro said.

## Tribal organisations protest in Margherita demanding justice for murdered student



**HT Correspondent**

**MARGHERITA, Aug 30:** Over 20 indigenous tribal organisations from the Margherita sub-division have been holding a sit-in demonstration at North Margherita Rangamancha from August 29 to 31, demanding justice for Gamrin Maket, a class 10 student from St Paul School, 4th Mile, Udaipur, who was brutally murdered and later hanged at the hostel verandah on August 1.

The sit-in demonstration was organised by the Singpho National Council and the All Singpho Students Union, in collaboration with several other organisations, including the All Assam Sonowal Kachari Students Union, All Assam Mech Kachari Students Union, All Rabha Students Union, All Assam Tangsa Students Union, All Assam Tribal Sangha Margherita Regional

Committee, Satra Mukti Sangram Samity, All Assam Man Tai Speaking Students Union, Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee, Pan Singpho Students Union, Asomiya Yuba Manchha, Margherita Regional Students Union, All Tai Ahom Students Union, and Tai Ahom Yuba Parishad Asom Margherita Sub-Divisional Committee. More than 300 people gathered at North Margherita Rangamancha to seek justice for Gamrin Maket.

Jawong Gam Gudung, general secretary of the Pan Singpho Students Union Central Committee, expressed his deep sorrow over the incident, stating that it is tragic that an indigenous and meritorious Singpho student, Gamrin Maket, who was studying in class 10 at St Paul School, 4th Mile, Udaipur, under the 83rd Margherita constituency of Tin-

sukia district, was found hanging at the hostel verandah on August 1, just one day after his parents had left him at the hostel on July 31.

Gudung asserted that Gamrin Maket's death was a premeditated murder and demanded an impartial CBI inquiry into the case, as well as compensation of Rs 1 crore for the deceased's family.

Sengram Lebram and Amio Ningda, the president and general secretary of the Singpho National Council, respectively, echoed Gudung's sentiments. They stated that following the brutal murder of Gamrin Maket, the organisation has conducted a series of protests at various locations under the Margherita sub-division. On Friday, they submitted a memorandum to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma through the Tinsukia district commissioner, demanding a high-level judicial inquiry led by a retired Guwahati High Court judge to ensure a fair investigation and punishment for the culprits under strict laws.

They also called for a forensic examination of the entire body, as they suspect the post-mortem report is flawed and may have been influenced by powerful individuals to weaken the case. Additionally, they demanded that all police officers in Assam be instructed to apply the relevant provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, as many cases of atrocities against tribal communities are often not registered due to the negligence of police officers, resulting in the deprivation of rights and justice for tribal people.

## Union minister L Murugan visits Chirang

Minister highlights women's empowerment, economic growth & agricultural initiatives during his two-day visit

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** Dr L Murugan, Union minister of state for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, visited Chirang on Friday, underscoring the government's unwavering commitment to women's empowerment, economic growth, and agricultural development.

As part of his two-day visit, Dr Murugan toured several significant sites, including the One Stop Sakhi Centre, the Kamardanga POL and LPG Project site of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), an Anganwadi Centre, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (Girls Hostel) in Shantipur, and Hatisar Forest Village.

During his visit to the Sakhi One Stop Centre at Dongagaon-Kajalgaon in Chirang district, Dr Murugan interacted with the Sakhis and other officials. He praised the centre as "a beacon of hope for women in distress," highlighting its extensive support services, including legal aid and counselling. The minister expressed his admiration for the dedication of the staff



in delivering these essential services to the community.

At the Kamardanga POL and LPG Project site, Dr Murugan emphasised the project's significance in fostering local development and creating jobs for the community. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to completing the project within two years.

During his visit to the Angan-

wadi centre at Pachim Silpata, Dr Murugan planted a tree as part of the 'Viksit Bharat, Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative. He also commended the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) and local administrations for their effective implementation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program. Additionally, he took the opportunity to serve food to the

school children.

In Serfanguri, Dr Murugan interacted with farmers and beneficiaries of the Oil Palm initiative, a key project under the National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP). Throughout his visit, Dr Murugan also engaged with farmers under the PM Kisan Saman Nidhi (PM KISAN) and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) schemes, gathering valuable feedback on these initiatives. Additionally, he inspected the ongoing construction at the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (Girls Hostel) in Shantipur, ensuring adherence to quality and timelines.

Accompanying Dr Murugan were Lok Sabha MP Joyanta Basumatary, Rajya Sabha MP Rungwra Narzary, district commissioner P Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, and additional district commissioner Fridos Alam Sheikh. The visit concluded with interactions with the community in Hatisar Forest Village, where the minister reinforced the government's dedication to grassroots development and welfare.

## Train services affected due to double line commissioning

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** To increase the efficiency of train operations and reduce traffic congestion in New Bongaigaon - Rangiya - Kamakhya section, NF Railway has undertaken various capacity augmentation works apart from doubling of that section.

In this connection, Pre Non-Interlocking works from August 31 till September 1, 2024 and Non - Interlocking works from September 2 till September 3, 2024 for commissioning of double line between Barpeta Road & Sorbhog railway stations under Rangiya division will be executed. The Non-Interlocking work will necessitate regulation of train services as per details given: Train no 15769/15770 (Alipurduar Jn - Mariani - Alipurduar Jn) Intercity Express commencing journey from September 1 till September 3, 2024 will remain cancelled; Train no 15753/15754 (Alipurduar Jn - Guwahati - Alipurduar Jn) Shifhung Express commencing journey from September 1 till September 3, 2024 will remain cancelled; Train no 05809 (New Bongaigaon - Guwahati) passenger commencing journey from September 1 till September 3, 2024 will remain cancelled; Train no 05810 (Guwahati - New Bongaigaon) passenger commencing journey from September 2 till September 4, 2024 will remain cancelled.

Train no 12506 (Anand Vihar - Kamakhya) Northeast Express commencing journey on August 31 & September 2, 2024 will be diverted via New Bongaigaon - Goalpara Town - Kamakhya.

Similarly, Train no 12505 (Kamakhya - Anand Vihar) Northeast Express commencing journey on August 31, September 1 & September 3, 2024 will be diverted via Kamakhya - Goalpara Town - New Bongaigaon.

Train no 15657 (Delhi - Kamakhya) Brahmaputra Mail commencing journey on September 1, 2024 will be diverted via New Bongaigaon - Goalpara Town - Kamakhya. Train no 15625 (Deoghar - Agartala) Express

commencing journey on September 2, 2024 will be diverted via New Bongaigaon - Goalpara Town - Kamakhya. Train no 15904 (Chandigarh - Dibrugarh) Express commencing journey on September 1, 2024 will be diverted via New Bongaigaon - Goalpara Town - Kamakhya.

Train no 20504 (New Delhi - Dibrugarh) Rajdhani Express commencing journey on September 2, 2024 will be diverted via New Bongaigaon - Goalpara Town - Kamakhya.

Train no 12424/12423 (New Delhi - Dibrugarh - New Delhi) Rajdhani Express commencing journey on September 2, 2024 will be diverted via New Bongaigaon - Goalpara Town - Kamakhya and Kamakhya - Goalpara Town - New Bongaigaon respectively. Train no 15631 (Barmer - Guwahati) Express commencing journey on September 2, 2024 will be diverted via New Bongaigaon - Goalpara Town - Kamakhya.

Train no 15634 (Guwahati - Bikaner) Express commencing journey on August 31, 2024 will be diverted via Kamakhya - Goalpara Town - New Bongaigaon. Train no 20501 (Agartala - Anand Vihar) Tejas Express commencing journey on September 2, 2024 will be diverted via Kamakhya - Goalpara Town - New Bongaigaon. Train no 12510 (Guwahati - SMVT Bengaluru) Express commencing journey on September 3, 2024 will be diverted via Kamakhya - Goalpara Town - New Bongaigaon. Train no 15961 (Howrah - Dibrugarh) Kamrup Express commencing journey on September 2, 2024 is rescheduled by six hours from its departure time from Howrah station.

Train no 20505 (Dibrugarh - New Delhi) Rajdhani Express commencing journey on September 2, 2024 is rescheduled by three hours from its departure time from Dibrugarh station.

## Orientation program for departmental SPOCs held in Kokrajhar

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** The Information & Public Relations Department of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) organised an orientation program on Friday for departmental Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) for Social and Print Media.

The program, held at the conference hall of the BTC Secretariat, Bodofo Nwgor, Kokrajhar, aimed to equip SPOCs with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage their departments' media activities.

Ractim Buragohain, joint secretary of BTC for Information and Public Relations, chaired the program and highlighted the plan of action required for effective dissemination of information and media coverage.

Speaking on the occasion, the joint secretary men-

tioned that the primary focus of the orientation was to develop a systematic approach to social and print media activities across various departments, as envisioned and directed by BTC chief Pramod Boro. This initiative is part of the broader strategy to enhance the visibility, transparency, and communication of the council's initiatives to the public.

The orientation program was conducted by joint secretary Ractim Buragohain and regional officer cum council head of the Department for BTC, Zahid Ahmed Tapadar. During the program, participants from various departments were trained on best practices for managing social and print media, creating engaging content, and ensuring media coverage. The orientation also emphasised the importance of maintaining a consistent and unified message across all platforms to better serve the community.

## National Deworming Day launched in West Karbi Anglong

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Aug 30:** The first round of National Deworming Day was launched on Friday at the conference hall of the Office of the Joint Director of Health Services, West Karbi Anglong, with the objective to deworm all preschool and school-age children between the ages of 1-19 years through the platform of schools and Anganwadi centres, in order to improve health, nutritional status, access to quality education, and quality of life.

Dr Jagat Singh Teron, joint director of Health Services, West Karbi Anglong district, officially inaugurated the program at Hamren on Friday.

District program manager Hilton Saikia inaugurated the event by lighting a ceremonial lamp. Swapna Katharpi, district community mobiliser,

briefed the ASHA workers on the process of distributing Albendazole deworming tablets.

The program was attended by Dr Jayanta Bora, sub-divisional medical officer, HQ, as a resource person.

In his speech, Dr Bora emphasised the responsibility of health workers and parents in raising awareness of deworming.

He also stressed the need to improve cleanliness, sanitation, and hygiene.

The event was moderated by Rahul Deka, district media expert, National Health Mission, West Karbi Anglong.

The event was attended by the CDPO of West Karbi Anglong, officials of Baithalangchu, Umanpali, Jinkending, and Dongkamokam BPHCs, as well as ASHA workers.



## Dibrugarh University hosts lecture on 'Global Trends in Higher Education & NEP 2020'

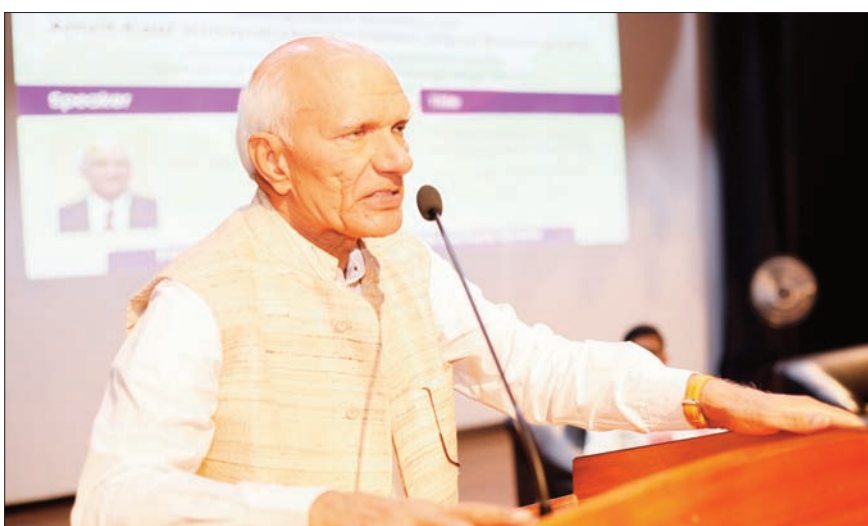
**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Aug 30:** The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Dibrugarh University organised a lecture on Friday titled 'Global Trends in Higher Education and NEP 2020', sponsored by ICSSR-NERC, Shillong. This lecture is part of the 'Amrit Kaal Vimarsh Lecture Series: Viksit Bharat @ 2047'.

The lecture was delivered by Professor Ved Prakash, a renowned internationally acclaimed educationist and former chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and vice-chancellor of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi. He was welcomed with a traditional phulam gamosa by Professor Aparup Das, the nodal officer of the Viksit Bharat Mission.

Professor Ankur Bharali, director of IQAC and Professor of Mathematics at Dibrugarh University, delivered the welcome address.

Professor Jiten Hazarika, vice-chancellor of Dibrugarh University, inaugurated the session, emphasising the need for the education sector to adapt to global changes. He stated that we are at a juncture where the entire world is facing various challenges as part of



rapid change.

Professor Ved Prakash's lecture covered the evolution of education in India, from the era of Raja Rammohan Roy to the post-independence period.

He highlighted the substantial investments

made by advanced countries in education and stressed that India needs to increase its efforts in this area.

He noted that the influx of foreign students enhances a country's global academic standing and encouraged Indian educational insti-

tutions to take proactive steps. He also advocated for greater attention to social sciences and humanities alongside science and technology.

Defining education as "enlightening the minds by enlightened minds," Professor Prakash responded to questions during the Q&A session. He praised the New Education Policy for emphasising soft skills and skill-based courses, asserting that it is the responsibility of educators and institutions to provide this training.

He also stressed the importance of incorporating human values into the curriculum. Concluding his lecture, he stated that wisdom arises from converting knowledge into practical understanding.

The event, marking the inaugural lecture of the Diamond Jubilee Lecture Series at Dibrugarh University, was attended by approximately 500 participants, including deans, faculty members, research scholars, and university officers.

The session was anchored by Dr Manashree Chetia, assistant professor at the Centre for Studies in Philosophy, Dibrugarh University.

## Workshop on earthquake risk mitigation held in Nagaon



**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Aug 30:** The District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Nagaon, in collaboration with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, organised a day-long workshop on 'Earthquake Risk Mitigation' at Hotel Refresh Ko, Nagaon, on Friday.

The workshop was inaugurated by Phyllis VL Hmunsiami Hrangchal, additional district commissioner and chief executive officer, DDMA, Nagaon.

The sessions were conducted by resource persons including retired HOD Ranju Mahanta from Nagaon Polytechnic, Prasanta Kr Gogoi, as-

sistant professor of ADP College Nagaon, Kankan Barman, executive engineer PWD Building, Nagaon division, Dr Jati Jibon Bora, deputy director, T&CP, and Silpi Rekha Pandit, assistant commissioner, Nagaon.

Over 60 participants, including civil engineers from different departments, builders, contractors, and architecture firms, took part in the workshop.

Gunajeet Kashyap, district development commissioner, Nagaon, attended the valedictory session and distributed certificates among the participants, according to an official press note.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Good questions outrank easy answers.  
-Paul Samuelson

## What lies ahead in Manipur?

Manipur's recent history has been marked by deep ethnic tensions between the Meiteis and the Kuki-Zo tribal communities, with conflict erupting on May 3, 2023, over the issue of tribal status for the majority Meitei community. Though violence has subsided in recent weeks, the situation remains precarious, and the path to peace is far from assured. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent statement in the Rajya Sabha, where he suggested that "hope for peace" is visible in Manipur, has been met with scepticism from the Opposition and many on the ground. The visible absence of a functioning civil administration and the continued reliance on extraordinary security measures underscore the fragility of the current calm. Thousands of displaced people still languish in relief camps, unable to return to their homes due to fears for their safety.

Complicating matters further is the political landscape in Manipur. Chief Minister N Biren Singh, once a strong figure, now finds himself in a weakened position. The BJP's central leadership, while still backing him, seems to be doing so more out of necessity than conviction. Singh's political fortunes have been tied to the influence of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, a key player in the BJP's North-East strategy. However, the recent loss of both of Manipur's Lok Sabha seats to the Congress indicates a growing discontent with the state's leadership. Despite this, Singh remains indispensable due to the lack of a viable alternative, a situation that places him in a precarious position within his party. At the national level, Union Home Minister Amit Shah appears to be increasingly involved in managing Manipur's affairs, further limiting Singh's authority. The political dynamics within the state are also complicated by the ongoing issues with Myanmar, whose internal instability continues to exacerbate cross-border tensions and illegal migration into Manipur. The Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement, originally signed in 2008 between the government and 25 armed Kuki groups, was intended to facilitate peace and dialogue. However, the agreement has failed to achieve its objectives, and the state government, with the backing of the Manipur State Assembly, has been pushing for its termination. The decision to withdraw from the SoO agreement with two insurgent groups in March 2023, citing their involvement in illegal activities, marked a significant escalation in the state's approach to handling the conflict.

Recent developments, including the visit of Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi to Manipur, have fuelled speculation that the central government may be considering the state's demands. General Dwivedi's discussions with the chief minister, coupled with his planned (though weather-impacted) visits to conflict-affected areas, suggest that the Centre is taking these demands seriously. However, the potential termination of the SoO agreement raises concerns about the resurgence of violence, particularly from the insurgent groups that were part of the accord. If the SoO is indeed terminated, it may necessitate a renewed military presence in the region, further complicating the situation. While Chief Minister Singh has expressed optimism that the Centre will act on his demands, the reality is that any move to end the SoO will need to be carefully managed to avoid reigniting conflict. While the reduction in violence is a positive sign, it is far too early to declare peace in Manipur.

## Why small businesses matter for a more resilient future

By: Simanta Barman

In today's parlance, when the whole world is moving at an unprecedented pace across sectors, a look back at the role of MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) is crucial as they are the backbone of an economy. With artificial intelligence and Industry 5.0 in action, focus is shifting more towards upgrading the small industry and upskilling the workforce so that efficiency is at par. During the observance of MSME Day on June 27 this year, the United Nations outlined key points on MSME's role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty eradication and mitigating crises.

The UN considers MSMEs as the closest sector to local communities, and hence brimming with scope to provide local employment. With collective efforts, they also have the strength to pan out critical pathways to development, they observe. The COVID pandemic enhanced the need for empowering local communities through MSMEs to a greater extent, as the world realized the fragility of our systems.

In India, the growth of MSMEs is even more significant than in a global context, as a greater portion of our economy relies on it. Whereas, globally, the sector covers around 90 per cent of all businesses, for India, it contributes to 30% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and over 45% in exports. Recent statistics suggest a projected growth stride to \$1 trillion by 2028 for MSMEs in India, with opportunities increasing across industries like agriculture, textiles, food processing etc.

In the Union Budget 2024-25, however, the MSMEs sector got a boost in terms of provisions. A package to cover the financial and technological support to MSMEs to spur their growth has been proposed. A credit guarantee scheme to facilitate term loans for machinery without provision of a collateral or third-party guarantee, a new assessment model for MSME credit by public sector banks, credit support to MSMEs during a stress

period, increase of Mudra loan limit from the current ₹ 10 lakh to ₹ 20 lakh, setting up of e-commerce export hubs to enable MSMEs and traditional artisans to make their mark in international markets, are some of the key takeaways.

Among the northeastern states, a boost to MSMEs is quintessential for progressive future. Although much is talked about than done and schemes get entangled in bureaucratic processes, there is a steady upsurge of small businesses evident across the eight states. In Assam, jute industry, fabric and textile industry, small tea garden industry, food processing units are blossoming. Similarly, in the other states also, a pull for utilizing local produce and resources and market them to the world is fuelling progress in the sector.

Whether it is a small café, a small homemade food business, garment designing, or pottery, entrepreneurs from North-east India are gradually creating a niche for themselves. In Assam's context, the incubation and training programmes given to early-stage startups and MSMEs under Assam Startup shall be mentioned for their efficacy. As per recent state government data, startups from Assam have managed to garner revenue of ₹ 40 crore in 3 years, with 4,900 jobs created in the process. With most of the startups in the state being from the MSME sector, a boost in the coming years can be empowering for a large section of youth and rural women.

As the whole NE region faces distinct challenges for economic growth, strategic approaches at the government level as well as at the individual level are crucial to planning for a thriving economy. Although it is a positive sign that more youth are getting the hang of entrepreneurship, more budgetary allocation and hassle-free processes at the bureaucratic level shall be ensured so that a holistic ecosystem can be envisaged. *(The author is a freelance journalist and entrepreneur based in Guwahati, Assam)*

# Smart meters: The new face of public discontent and protest

The transformation of India's energy sector has always been a subject of intense public interest and debate. From the days when kerosene lamps and hurricane lights illuminated our homes, the country has steadily moved towards modernization, embracing new technologies in the name of progress. However, this wave of change, which was once viewed with hope, has today become a source of terror and anxiety for many, particularly in the context of the recent mandatory installation of smart meters in households across Assam and other parts of India.

**The Arrival of Smart Meters: A Double-Edged Sword:** Smart meters, hailed as the next big step in energy management, were introduced with the promise of revolutionizing the way consumers interact with electricity. These devices, which can only be recharged much like mobile phones, were intended to bring about greater efficiency in billing and energy usage monitoring. The concept, on paper, appeared sound—curbing electricity theft, reducing losses, and increasing revenue for the state. However, the reality for the common man has been far from what was promised.

Initially, many people welcomed the introduction of smart meters, seeing them as a necessary measure to ensure that those who habitually defaulted on their electricity payments would be held accountable. But as the bills began to arrive, shock and disbelief spread among consumers. Monthly bills that once stood at ₹ 70-80 per month suddenly surged to ₹ 250-300, leaving many households struggling to cope with the sudden financial burden. What was once viewed as a progressive step forward quickly became a point of contention, leading to widespread public outrage.

**A Wave of Protests: From Social Media to the Streets:** As frustration grew, people took to social media to express their dissatisfaction. Videos and images surfaced, showing angry residents tearing out and discarding smart meters in protest. The movement quickly gained momentum, and what began as isolated incidents escalated into organized demonstrations.

One of the most significant protests took place on August 27, 2024, when the Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) staged a rally in Diphu. Led by KADCC president Bidyasing Rongpi, the protesters marched through the main thoroughfares of the Diphu market, demanding an immediate halt to the installation of smart meters. In their memorandum to the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL), the Congress leaders decried the smart meter initiative as a means of extorting money from the public, citing the abnormal increase in electricity bills as evidence of the system's defects.

Rongpi's sentiments were echoed by hundreds of members of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), who took to the streets in Dibrugarh on the same day. The protesters carried a makeshift funeral pyre symbolizing APDCL and marched through the city, chanting slogans against the power company. The protest culminated in front of the district commissioner's office, where the demonstrators set fire to the pyre, an act that was both symbolic and provocative. AASU Dibrugarh unit president, Tanuj Haloi, voiced the frustrations of many, stating that the installation of prepaid digital smart meters had made life unbearable, with electricity bills soaring three to four times higher than before.

**The Government's Response: A Disconnect with Public Sentiment:** In response to the grow-

ing unrest, government officials have repeatedly asserted that the billing rates for smart meters and traditional meters are the same. Assam's Chief Minister has assured the public that any discrepancies in billing are not the result of the smart meters themselves but rather the work of unscrupulous middlemen. Despite these assurances, the public remains unconvinced, and the protests have only intensified.

The government's insistence on the continued rollout of smart meters has led to accusations of ignoring the will of the people. In many rural areas, particularly in Assam, where agriculture is the primary livelihood, the introduction of prepaid smart meters has been met with staunch resistance. For day laborers and low-income families, the concept of near real-time energy

tracking and regular bill payments is not just inconvenient but also incomprehensible. The fear of being plunged into darkness without warning—unable to pay for electricity in advance—has only added to the anxiety.

Furthermore, with a significant portion of rural households lacking smartphones or access to reliable internet, the task of managing prepaid smart meters becomes even more daunting. The public has repeatedly called for a return to the previous system of manual meters, where bills could be paid after consumption, ensuring that households are not left without power simply because they cannot afford to recharge their meters in time.

**A Broader Political and Social Crisis:** The controversy surrounding smart meters is not just a technical issue but also a reflection of broader political and social discontent. The protests have highlighted the deep-seated frustration among the populace over

what they perceive as the government's failure to address their needs and concerns. The smart meter issue has become a lightning rod for broader dissatisfaction with rising costs, economic inequality, and perceived government indifference.

The Congress party, seizing on the public's discontent, has positioned itself at the forefront of the opposition to smart meters, organizing rallies and submitting memorandums to the government. The party has framed the smart meter issue as part of a larger pattern of government overreach and exploitation, arguing that the initiative is just another example of how the current administration is out of touch with the needs of ordinary citizens.

The situation in Assam is mirrored in other parts of India, where similar protests have erupted. In Biswanath, tensions over the smart meter issue escalated to such an extent that the district administration was forced to impose a curfew on August 27, 2024. District Magistrate Neha Yadav cited concerns over potential violence, noting that anti-social elements might exploit public sentiments to incite unrest. The curfew, which was imposed under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Samhita (BNSS), reflects the seriousness of the situation and the government's growing concern over maintaining public order.

**The Way Forward: A Call for Government Action:** The current crisis over smart meters poses a significant challenge for the government. On one hand, the National Smart Meter Program is a key component of the country's broader energy sector reforms, aimed at reducing losses, increasing revenue, and improving overall efficiency. On the other hand,

the government must engage in meaningful dialogue with the public, particularly with those who have been most affected by the smart meter rollout. This includes not only addressing technical issues but also rebuilding trust between the government and the people. The current wave of protests is a clear indication that the public feels ignored and marginalized, and it is up to the government to demonstrate that it is responsive to the needs and concerns of all citizens, not just the wealthy and powerful. The smart meter controversy is a microcosm of the broader challenges facing India today.

As the country continues to modernize, it must do so in a way that is inclusive and equitable, ensuring that the benefits of progress are shared by all. The government must strike a balance between innovation and tradition, between efficiency and fairness, and between progress and compassion. Only then can the dream of a truly modern and just society be realized. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com)*

## Tragic Nepal bus accident highlights the dangers of monsoon travel in the Himalayas

By: Arun Kumar Shrivastava

The Nepal bus accident on August 23, in which a tourist bus with 40-odd Indian tourists fell into the Marsyangdi river, killing 26 people on the spot and one at the hospital, comes across as a grim reminder of how dangerous Himalayan mountain roads can be during the monsoon. All the victims came from Jalgaon in Maharashtra and were travelling in a group of three buses. There were more than 150 people from the same village. One of these buses fell into the roaring monsoon river, killing 27 of these tourists, with one still missing after five days of the incident.

The loss of these innocent lives makes one wonder if travelling from Pokhara to Kathmandu during August, which is the peak monsoon season, was safe. Did these tourists know the full scale of risks in travelling by bus from one Himalayan tourist hotspot to another? Similar bus accidents had already claimed over a hundred lives before this accident in the ongoing monsoon season.

Surely enough, they did not know. The decision to travel to Nepal by bus during the monsoon season is never safe. Anybody living in Nepal or near the Nepal border in India knows this very well: travelling in the mountains in the rainy season is risky. People in these areas cut down on their travels and venture out only in case of unavoidable circumstances.

But these people from Jalgaon, whose knowledge of

mountains is based on their understanding of the rocky terrains of Western Ghats (the Sahyadri), which is much older and therefore more stable than the Himalayas, were unaware of the risks. It brings the discussion to the advisers and organizers of this travel.

If any company or agency makes people travel by bus through these Himalayan roads during the monsoon season, it's something that the government must look at and set safety standards for such travel.

The Himalayas and the other mountains in its vicinity are relatively very young, and their soil is loose, making them suitable for setting up orchards or agriculture farms.

Nepal gets abundant rain during the monsoon, creating over 6000 rivers. It gets so much water that half of Bihar is flooded, causing a perennial problem for Bihar and Indian rivers in this region swell up to dangerous levels. Nepal's water resources make it one of the most promising lands for hydro-electricity. Landslides and lighting are such massive problems that international institutions working on these natural occurrences have set up research institutes in Nepal.

Nepal is a tourist destination, but travelling in the monsoon season should not be on your plate. The right thing to do is go to Nepal before the monsoon season and rent a house or hotel room if you want to enjoy the monsoon season there. Avoid bus travel at all costs. All these 6000 rivers flow menacingly as they go down the slope.

The Dushera (Dasain) festival brings the first signifi-

cant break from the incessant rains, and on Diwali, people go from home to home, singing folk songs and seeking blessings. These songs depict the rain and advise how to walk or travel as the entire landscape is still damp and slippery.

Nepal is not just a destination for sightseeing; it's an example of how people live in the eco-sensitive Himalayas and the culture and traditions, the food and drinks, the dresses and festivals that have evolved in these places. Mumbai and the nearby cities nestled in the Sahyadri have no idea how the Himalayas are different.

People in Delhi and Kolkata who have closer access to Himalayan towns and villages have a better understanding of this. But sadly, Mumbai and Maharashtra don't have the same level of understanding of the fragile and perilous Himalayan ecosystem.

Taking appropriate lessons from this accident, the state governments, including Maharashtra, should prepare an advisory for unessential travels to risky mountain areas in India and neighbouring Nepal.

As the incident involved unsuspecting people from Maharashtra, the state government should see what it can do to lessen the pain of the families who have lost their members in this accident. It's surprising that political leaders are seen fighting over statues that strong Arabian Sea winds brought down and ignore families who fell hundreds of meters into the swelling monsoon river. It's about time they got priorities right! *(IPA Service)*

### POST BAG

## Pride of Assam resonates in New Zealand

Sir/Ma'am

I am thrilled to share a remarkable story of pride and cultural identity from across the globe. Sanjay Shaikia, an Assamese living in New Zealand, has chosen to express his deep connection to his roots in a unique way. He proudly displays the word "AXOMIA" on the license plate of his car, a gesture that

speaks volumes about his love for his heritage.

This heartwarming act of cultural pride is not just a personal statement but a beacon of Assamese identity in a distant land. It serves as a reminder of how our traditions and values continue to thrive, no matter how far we may be from our homeland.

Adding to the significance, a recent

photograph captures Shaikia alongside Dr. Bidyut Chandra Deka, Vice-Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University, and Dr. Manoranjan Neog, Director of Extension Education, Assam Agricultural University. This meeting of minds between those who nurture the roots of Assam and those who carry its spirit worldwide is truly inspiring.

Such instances make every Assamese

proud, as they reflect our collective resolve to keep our culture alive and respected on a global stage. Mr. Shaikia's gesture is not just about a license plate; it's about the pride of being Assamese—something that resonates deeply with all of us.

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## The Paris Olympics 2024 from an Indian perspective

Sir/Ma'am

On July 26, 2024, the Paris Olympics commenced with a grand opening ceremony. Under the supervision of the International Olympic Committee, 10,714 athletes from 206 countries will compete in 329 events across 32 sports. A total of 117 Indian athletes have qualified to represent India in the Paris Olympics 2024. Among them are 70 male athletes and 47 female athletes, who will compete for a total of 95 gold medals. India's best performance in the Olympics to date was in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where the country won a total of seven medals, including one gold, two silver, and four bronze. Based on this performance, it was anticipated that the Indian athletes would perform even better in the Paris Olympics 2024.

However, the performance of the Indian athletes in the Paris Olympics has not been as promising as expected. Contrary to the hopes of the nation, India was unable to secure even a single gold medal. Almost every athlete expected to

win a medal for India ended up disappointing the fans. There was a moment of hope when Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat won her bout against her opponent, but it was short-lived. According to the Olympic Committee, she was disqualified from the competition before the final match because her weight exceeded the limit by 100 grams. As soon as this news became public, various reactions started pouring in, but despite the uproar, her disqualification was not revoked.

In badminton, fans had high expectations from PV Sindhu, in table tennis from Manika Batra and Sharath Kamal, in boxing from Nikhat Zareen, in archery from Deepika Kumari, and so on. However, despite giving their best, these athletes fell short against their competitors. Even though the Paris Olympics 2024 didn't turn out to be very promising for India, it brought some positive signs for Indian sports.

Indian shooter Manu Bhaker made history by winning two bronze medals in the Air Pistol event, becoming the first Indian athlete to win two medals in a single

Olympic event. Additionally, young badminton player Lakshya Sen reached the semifinals in the men's category, an achievement no Indian male badminton player had accomplished before in the Olympics. Indian table tennis player Sreeja Akula became the first Indian to reach the pre-quarterfinals in the Olympics. Swapnil Kusale won a bronze medal in the 50m Rifle event, becoming the first Indian to win a medal in this event at the Olympics. After a gap of 52 years, the Indian hockey team defeated a strong opponent like Australia and managed to secure a medal in consecutive Olympics.

Amidst the disappointment of Vinesh Phogat's disqualification, wrestler Aman Sehrawat won a bronze medal, becoming the youngest Indian athlete to win an individual medal at the age of 21. India's "Golden Boy" Neeraj Chopra, from whom the country expected a gold medal, had to settle for silver. Thus, India was unable to win any gold medals in the Paris Olympics 2024, resulting in a lower position in the medal tally. Although In-

dian athletes were unable to win medals, their record-breaking performances in these Olympics are seen as a beacon of hope for Indian sports. Sports experts believe that these records will positively impact Indian sports in the future. If given the right training at the right time, Indian athletes have the potential to win medals in major competitions like the Olympics, as evidenced in Paris 2024. To ensure that Indian athletes perform their best in the next Olympics, training and practice should begin immediately. It is crucial that athletes are not only physically prepared to compete but also mentally strong. Every Indian sports enthusiast hopes that the positive messages from Paris 2024 will translate into medals in the next Olympics. By learning from the mistakes made this time and becoming stronger, Indian athletes can make the dreams of Indian sports fans come true without having to wait too long.

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# Wondering how to apply to top US colleges and obtain admission with full/substantial scholarships?

By: Sudarshan Saha

Do you think cost is the biggest factor in pursuing undergraduate studies in USA? It depends. As an applicant to U.S. colleges you will have to walk some extra miles to fetch substantial financial assistance to full scholarship. My two decades of experience says, yes, it is possible for you to be awarded full aid. This the right time to embark on the application process for admission in Fall 2025 (September). But, you can chalk out your action plan much earlier if you are in Class IX or X.

International students have limited sources of financial aid from U.S. colleges. Two common sources are (i) Need-based and (ii) Merit-based financial aid. Depending on your family financial status and your academic strength, you need to carefully select the colleges which meet your specific expectations.

There are a few top colleges or Ivy League institutions, such as, Amherst, Dartmouth, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and MIT, which offer Need-Blind scholarships. Students applying to these colleges will not be disadvantaged in the undergraduate application process due to their financial need. These colleges are the most competitive.

There are multiple factors in the undergraduate admission process to get into top colleges and to fetch substantial to full aid. These factors include outstanding or very good academic performance; meaningful co-curricular activities involvement; strong and effective recommendations; application essays that portray perfectly who you are; and high standardized test scores, if required.

Dartmouth says: "As part of the holistic review, we evaluate school transcripts, test scores, letters of recommendation, essays, and other information our applicants provide about how they invest their time when they are not in school."

Here are a few action items to make your application competitive:

1. If you are in Class IX or X, start doing some additional work beyond academics. Use your free time wisely on some community or social work. Reflect on your diary, why you do that and the social impact of your work. Keep some "action photos", NOT selfies. Maintain your social media account wisely.

If you have some unique talent – music, performing art, writing, or anything else at your age, keep records of your performance or creativity on social media. If possible, create a webpage with the help of a senior/family member. Remember that you do not need to be engaged in multiple activities. Do one or two activities you are passionate about.

Your school may play an important role in your applications. Talk to your school counselor. Remember that you need a recommendation letter from your school counsellor and two from your teachers. Please check if your counsellor is already aware of the (i) CommonApp, (ii) Coalition, and (iii) Quest-Bridge Applications and if he or she already assisted any seniors in applying to U.S. colleges.

2. Although many colleges presently have Test-Optional admission policy, still some may need test scores of SAT or ACT. Some may change their policy in the coming years, as did Harvard, Dartmouth and others. Prepare for these tests well ahead so that you get competitive test scores. One of the English proficiency tests (IELTS/TOEFL/PTE/ DuoLingo) is mandatory. Some colleges may have higher expectations – Yale needs at least 100 in TOEFL (maximum score 120).

3. Most important task is choosing colleges. First step is to identify colleges which have: (i) Need-Based aid for students from low-income family; (ii) Merit-Based – for students who are academically strong and (iii) five Need-Blind colleges, highly competitive, for outstanding

Table A - U.S. Colleges which provide substantial to full financial aid						
College/University	Type of Institution	Competitiveness	Funding Type	Admissions Statistics 2023		
				Applicants #	Admits #	%
1. Harvard Univ, MA	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	56,937	1,966	3.4%
2. Yale Univ, CT	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	51,803	2,332	4.5%
3. MIT, MA	Private	Most Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	26,914	1,291	4.8%
4. Princeton Univ, NJ	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	39,644	1,782	4.5%
5. Amherst College,	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	12,725	1,237	10.0%
6. Dartmouth College	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	28,841	1,797	6.2%
7. Duke Univ, NC	Private (Research)	Most Difficult	100% Need-based	41,651	3,229	7.8%
8. Cornell Univ, NY	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-aware	67,846	6,664	9.8%
9. Brown University	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	51,316	2,686	5.0%
10. Columbia University	Private (Ivy)	Most Difficult	Need-based	57,129	2,246	3.9%
11. Vanderbilt Univ, TN	Private (Research)	Most Difficult	100% Need-based	47,120	2,645	5.6%
12. Smith College, MA	Private (Women)	Very Difficult	100% Need-based	9,968	NA	20.0%
13. Williams College, MA	Private	Very Difficult	100% Need-based	11,465	1,145	10.0%
14. Skidmore College, NY	Private	Very Difficult	Partial Need-based	12,144	2,784	23.0%
15. Washington & Lee Univ, VA	Private	Very Difficult	100% Need-based	6,825	1,185	17.4%
16. Pomona College, CA	Private	Very Difficult	100% Need-based	12,121	757	6.3%
17. Wellesley College, MA	Private (Women)	Very Difficult	Need-based	8,184	1,138	13.9%
18. Bowdoin College, ME	Private	Very Difficult	Need-Blind Aid	10,956	879	8.0%
19. Pitzer College, CA	Private	Very Difficult	Need-based	NA	NA	16.7%
20. Tufts University, MA	Private (Research)	Very Difficult	100% Need-based	34,002	3,444	10.1%

and well-rounded students. The majority of these colleges are private.

Please remember that there are many colleges which are also competitive and provide substantial financial aid but may not be widely known – a few examples are shared in this essay. Carefully select 6-10 colleges based on your profile which are a good match for you.

4. Timeline/Online Application/Platforms/Application Components

• **August:** Select one or more online application platforms, create account/s and start filling out the form/s - Common Application (<https://www.commonapp.org/>); Coalition Application on Scoir (<https://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>); QuestBridge (<https://www.questbridge.org/>).

• **October:** Create CSS Profile (<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>) and if required, any college-specific form(s) for financial aid consideration

• **Oct-Nov:** Take SAT/ACT and one English

proficiency test

Complete online application/s Essays and Writing Supplement Recommendation letters - from School Counsellor and two subject teachers School Report/transcript Supplementary Materials/Portfolio (Architecture, Performing/Visual Art)

• **Nov-Dec:** Submit complete application along with all components including CSS profile or college specific financial aid form by the deadline

**Early Action/Decision:** Nov 1 (check with individual colleges)

**Regular Deadline:** Dec 1 onward

• **End-Mar:** Admission decisions and financial aid awards announced.

• **"Table A"** lists colleges which offer full or substantial financial aid to admitted students. Please do check their website for most updated information. In addition, here are examples of a few colleges (there are many more) which are

not so well-known among international students/parents but have good academic programs and offer substantial financial aid too:

**Lycoming College, small liberal arts college in Williamsport, PA:** "International students can qualify for generous, merit-based scholarships based on their academic achievement." Students are automatically considered for these awards at the time of admission and do not need to fill out an additional application.

**Clark University at Worcester, MA, a research university:** offers limited number of Presidential Scholarship that covers full tuition, room & board. In addition, Clark offers merit and need-based aid to international students (meet around 45% of total cost).

**University of Vermont, a public research university:** International students are eligible for merit scholarships of up to \$25,000 per year. Applicants are automatically considered for a merit scholarship, no separate application needed.

**Michigan State University (MSU), is a large public research university:** all international students admitted to MSU are automatically considered for Non-Resident Scholarship.

**College of Wooster, a small liberal arts college in Ohio:** International students are automatically considered for merit-based scholarship and can opt into consideration for a need-based scholarship too when completing their application for admission - need-aware admission process.

Berea College, a small liberal arts college in Kentucky: an exceptional institution, no application fee, "provides 100% funding to 100% of enrolled international students for the first year of enrolment" - very competitive. (*The author is a former Education USA Adviser. He is the Founder and Head Center for Study Abroad (CSA) Guwahati, Assam. He can be reached at 76359 44841 or ssaha@csa-india.in*)

## TTRI Jorhat recruitment – Project Fellow & Project Assistant posts

Last Date: 06/09/2024

Tea Research Association, Tocklai Tea Research Institute (TTRI) Jorhat has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 2 Project Fellow & Project Assistant Posts under a project entitled "Studies on the Dissipation and Residue of Valxtra (Hexaconazole 5% + Validamycin 2.5% SC) & Mitofix (Fipronil 2.5% + Propargite 35% SE) in Tea Leaf, Black Tea, Soil" funded by Willowood Chemicals Ltd.. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

### 1. Project Fellow

No of posts: 01 (One)

**Essential Qualification:** M.Sc. in Chemistry/ other discipline of Chemical Science/ Agricultural Chemicals.

**Desirable Qualification:** Experience in conduction of supervised field trials, operation of LC-MS/MS & GC-MS/MS, pesticide residue analysis from food material, plant, soil, water using modern sample preparation technique, knowledge of computer applications, statistics, knowledge on NABL accredited laboratory requirements will be preferred.

**Fellowship:** ₹ 20000 + 8% HRA per month.

**Age Limit:** Upper age 30 years.

### 2. Project Assistant

No of posts: 01 (One)

**Essential Qualification:** B.Sc. in Chemistry/ other discipline of Chemical Science.

**Desirable Qualification:** Experience in pesticide residue analysis from food material, plant, soil, water, knowledge on laboratory requirements will be preferred.

**Fellowship:** ₹ 15000 + 8% HRA per month.

**Age Limit:** Upper age 28 years.

### How to Apply for TTRI Jorhat Recruitment?

Candidates should submit a soft copy of duly filled-in-application form as enclosed below to the email id [r.pal@tocklai.net](mailto:r.pal@tocklai.net) on or before 6th September 2024 positively.

## PGCIL Apprentice recruitment 2024 – 106 vacancy, apply online

Last Date: 08/09/2024

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 106 Apprentice vacancy for its North Eastern Region in different trades. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

**Name of post:** Apprentice

**No of posts:** 106 posts

**Duration of Apprenticeship:** 1 Year

### State-wise vacancy:

Arunachal Pradesh	24
Assam	40
Manipur	5
Meghalaya	18
Mizoram	4
Nagaland	4
Tripura	11

### Stipend:

# Graduate Apprentice/ HR Executive/ CSR Executive/ Law Executive/ Rajbhasha Assistant: ₹ 17500

# Diploma Apprentice: ₹ 15000

# ITI Electrician: ₹ 13500

# Payment of an additional ₹ 2500 in case no company accommodation is provided.

### Eligibility Criteria of PGCIL Apprentice Recruitment

#### Educational Qualification:

# Graduate Electrical: Full Time (4 years course) –B.E./B.Tech./B.Sc.(Engg.) in Electrical Engineering.

# Graduate Civil: Full Time (4 years course) –B.E. / B.Tech. / B.Sc.(Engg.) in Civil Engineering.

# Graduate (Electronics/ Telecommunication Engineering): Full Time (4 years course) - B.E./ B.Tech./ B.Sc. (Engg.) in Electronics/ Telecommunication Engineering

# HR Executive (Payroll and Employee Data Management): Full Time (2 years course) - MBA (HR) / MSW / Post Graduate Diploma in Personnel Management / Personnel Management & Industrial Relation.

# Diploma Electrical: Full Time (3 years course) - Diploma in Electrical Engineering.

# Diploma Civil: Full Time (3 years course) - Diploma in Civil Engineering.

# Electrician: ITI in Electrician (Full-Time course).

# HR Executive: MBA (HR)/Post Graduate Diploma in Personnel Management/ Personnel Management & Industrial Relations (2 years full time course) or equivalent.

# **CSR Executive:** 2-year full time Master in Social Work (MSW) or Rural Development / Management or equivalent.

# **Law Executive:** Graduate Degree in any discipline and Bachelor Degree in Law (LL.B) (minimum 03 years professional course) OR 05 Years Integrated LLB Degree (Professional).

# **Rajbhasha Assistant:** B.A. (Hindi) with proficient knowledge of English language.

**Other Criteria:** Candidates are not eligible to apply for the apprenticeship in any case -

# Awaiting the results of their final examination.

# Not completed the 18 years of age

# Undergone apprenticeship training in any organisation for any duration.

# Job experience of more than 1 year

### Important Dates of PGCIL Apprentice Vacancy 2024

# **Starting date of submission of online application:** 20th August 2024

# **Last date of submission of online application:** 8th September 2024

## Assam Skill University recruitment 2024 – 3 Professor posts

Last Date: 09/09/2024

Assam Skill University (ASU), Mangaldai has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 3 Professor Posts for Assam Skill University. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**Name of post:** Professor

**No of posts:** 3

### School-wise vacancy:

# Dept. of Mechanical & Civil: 1

# Dept. of Civil: 1

# School of Management and Finance: 1

**Age Limit:** Below 60 Years for regular employment & up to 62 Years in case of contract engagement.

**Pay scale:** ₹144200- ₹ 218200 of Academic Level 14

**Educational Qualification:** As per UGC or AICTE norms.

**Application Fee:** Category and post-wise application fees are as under.

Category	Fee
UR/ OBC/ MOBC	₹ 1500
SC/ ST	₹ 750
EWS	₹ 750
Ex-Service Men & Women	₹ 750

### How to Apply for Assam Skill University Recruitment ?

# Completed copies of application in prescribed form along with necessary enclosure must reach the office of The Registrar, 3rd Floor, Dect Building, Employment Office Complex, Rehabari, Guwahati-781008 (Assam) latest by 09.09.2024.

# The Application fee to be paid through demand draft from any commercial bank in favour of Assam Skill University, Payable at Guwahati.

# The name of the post and school must be written on the envelope of the application.

# Those in employment should submit their applications through proper channel or submit the NOC from the concerned authority along with the application. This is mandatory, failing which they will not be called for the test/ interview even if eligible.

### Important Dates of Assam Skill University Recruitment 2024

# **Starting date of submission of application:** 23rd August 2024

# **Last date of submission of application:** 9th September 2024

## GMDWSB Recruitment 2024 – 3 Specialist & Executive Posts

Last Date: 09/09/2024

Guwahati Metropolitan Drinking Water & Sewerage Board (GMDWSB) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 3 Contract Management & Procurement Specialist, Environmental Specialist and Procurement Executive Posts purely on contractual basis to be engaged under Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of South East Guwahati Water Supply Project (SEGWSP).

Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

### 1. Contract Management & Procurement Specialist

**No of posts:** 01 post

**Remuneration range:** ₹ 1.00 lakh to ₹ 1.50 lakh per month.

#### Eligibility Criteria:

# Full time B.E./B.Tech in Civil/Mechanical Engineering from a recognized University or AICTE affiliated Institution with a professional diploma/degree/certification in Public Procurement.

# Or, Full time Master degree in any discipline (Engineering, Public Procurement, Finance, Business or Commerce) from a recognized University or AICTE affiliated Institution and having experience in procurement norms of the funding agencies like World Bank/Asian Development Bank/National Development Bank for externally aided project.

# Minimum 08 years of experience in procurement and contract management for the above. Minimum 10 years of experience in procurement and contract management is required for candidates having no professional diploma/degree/certification in Public Procurement

# Candidates having experience in procurement and contract management in any externally aided project shall be given preference.

**Age Limit:** 60 years.

### 2. Environmental Specialist

**No of posts:** 01 post

**Remuneration range:** ₹ 0.50 lakh to ₹ 1.00 lakh per month.

#### Eligibility Criteria:

# Full time Masters/post Graduate Degree in Environment Engineering/ Environmental Science/ Environmental Planning or any relevant discipline from a recognized University or AICTE affiliated Institution.

# Or, full time Graduate in Civil Engineering with post Graduate Diploma in Environmental Science or any relevant discipline is a must from a recognized University or AICTE affiliated Institution.

# Minimum 08 years of professional experience as Environmental Expert. Working Experience in externally aided projects will be given preference.

**Age Limit:** 60 years.

### 3. Procurement Executive

**No of posts:** 01 post

**Remuneration range:** ₹ 0.50 lakh to ₹ 0.80 lakh per month.

#### Eligibility Criteria:

# Full time graduate in Engineering/Commerce from a recognized University with certification in Certificate Program in Public Procurement (CPPP).

# Atleast 03 (three) years of experience in handling procurement related functions and in financial management. Having experiences in any externally aided project (EAP) shall be given preference.

**Age Limit:** 60 years.

### How to Apply for GMDWSB recruitment?

Eligible candidates may submit their CVs along with self-attested documents of Educational Qualification, Work Experience, Proof of birth certificate and Colored passport size photograph to the office of the Project Director, SEGWSP, via email [career.segwsb@gmail.com](mailto:career.segwsb@gmail.com), latest by 5:00 P.M. on 09th September, 2024.

## Supreme Court Of India recruitment – 80 Junior Court attendant posts

Last Date: 12/09/2024

Supreme Court of India has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 80 Junior Court Attendant (Cooking Knowing) Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

**Name of post:** Junior Court Attendant (Cooking Knowing)

**No of posts:** 80 posts

**Pay:** Level 3 of Pay Matrix with Basic Pay of ₹ 21700 plus usual allowances as admissible under the Rules

**Name of organisation:** Supreme Court of India

**Helpline No:** +91 9513233016

#### Eligibility Criteria of Supreme Court of India Recruitment

**Age Limit:** Candidates should not be below 18 years and above 27 years of age as on 01.08.2024.

**Age Relaxation:** Usual relaxation in age will be admissible to SC/ ST/ OBC/ Physically Challenged/ Ex-Servicemen/ Widow/ Divorcee Women/Judicially separated Women and are not re-married and dependents of Freedom Fighters as per Government Rules. There will be no age limit for employees of Supreme Court who have completed 3 years regular service in the Registry. No relaxation in age will be allowed to the candidates working in other Government departments etc.

#### Educational Qualification:

(a) Xth standard conducted by any Board/ Institute recognized by the Government.

(b) Minimum One year full time diploma in cooking/culinary arts from a recognized Institute.

**Experience:** Three years of cooking experience in a prestigious Hotel/Restaurant/ Government department/Undertaking etc.

**Application Fee:** The candidates will be required to pay application fee of ₹ 400 (₹ 200 for SC/ST/Physically Challenged/Ex-Servicemen/Dependent of Freedom Fighters/ Widow/ Divorcee Women/ Judicially separated Women and are not re-married).

### Important Dates of Supreme Court of India Vacancy 2024

# **Starting date of submission of online application:** 23rd August 2024

# **Last date of submission of online application:** 12th September 2024 (24:00 Hrs)



*Harris eluded questions about Trump's claims over her racial identity, calling those a part of the same old tired playbook*

## America ready to 'turn the page' on Trump: Kamala Harris

WASHINGTON, Aug 30: The American people are ready to "turn the page" on Donald Trump, Kamala Harris has said, asserting that her Republican challenger is pushing an agenda which "divides" the country and "diminishes the character" of its people.

In her first major television interview of her presidential campaign, the 59-year-old US Vice President, who will face Trump in the November 5 elections, said the American people are ready for a "new way forward".

"I think sadly in the last decade, we have had in the former president someone who has really been pushing an agenda and an environment that is about diminishing the character and the strength of who we are as Americans — really dividing our nation," Harris, in a joint interview with her running mate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, told CNN.

"And I think people are ready to turn the page on that," Harris, the Democratic Party's candidate, said.

"The American people are ready for a new way forward. Our former president has pushed an agenda that diminishes the character and strength of who we are as Americans, and divides our nation.

People are ready to turn the page,"



she said in a post on X, linking an interview snippet.

Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, also refused to engage in Trump's identity politics during the interview.

She eluded questions about Trump's claims over her racial identity, calling those a part of the "same old tired playbook".

Last month, Trump questioned Harris' racial identity at the National Association of Black Journalists conference in Chicago, suggesting she had previously identified as South Asian but "happened to turn Black" for political purposes.

Her refusal to comment aligned with

her campaign's strategy to avoid leaning into identity politics following Trump's remarks, CNN reported.

Responding to a question about a previous debate on the decriminalisation of US borders, she said, "I believe there should be consequence. We have laws that have to be followed and enforced that address and deal with people who cross our border illegally. And there should be consequence."

Harris added that she is the "only person" in the presidential race who has "prosecuted transnational criminal organisations who traffic in guns, drugs, and human beings".

"I'm the only person in this race who actually served a border state as attorney

general to enforce our laws. And I would enforce our laws as president going forward. I recognise the problem," she said.

Calling the border issue a "very significant" immigration issue to the American people and the security of the US, she said a border security bill was crafted under the administration of her boss - incumbent President Joe Biden.

She said that Trump killed the bill that would have put 1,500 additional agents at the border as it "would not have helped him politically".

Speaking about Biden, she said that serving with him for almost four years was "one of the greatest honours of my career".

"He has the intelligence, the commitment and the judgment — disposition that I think the American people rightly deserve in their president," she said.

Last month, Biden dropped out of the presidential race, saying it was in "the best interest" of the Democratic Party and the country to withdraw from the race. He endorsed Harris to be the nominee of the party.

Harris also said she would name a Republican to serve in her Cabinet if elected. (PTI)

## Aid group says Israel hit convoy to hospital in Gaza. Israel says it hit gunmen who seized the car

DUBAI, Aug 30: An Israeli missile hit a convoy carrying medical supplies and fuel to an Emirati hospital in the Gaza Strip, killing several people from a local transportation company, the American Near East Refugee Aid group said on Friday. Israel claimed without immediate evidence that it opened fire after gunmen seized the convoy.

The strike killed several people employed by a transportation company that the aid group was using to bring supplies to the Emirates Red Crescent Hospital in Rafah, said Sandra Rasheed, Anera's director for the Palestinian territories.

The strike happened Thursday on the Salah al-Din Road in the Gaza Strip and hit the convoy's first vehicle.

"The convoy, which was coordinated by Anera and approved by Israeli authorities, included an Anera employee who was fortunately unharmed," Rasheed said in a statement. "Despite this devastating incident, our understanding is that the remaining vehicles in the convoy were able to continue and successfully deliver the aid to the hospital. We are urgently seeking further details about what happened."

Anera planned to release more information later Friday.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday from The Associated Press. However, Israeli military spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee posted to the social platform X that "gunmen seized a car at the head of the convoy (a jeep) and began driving."

"After the seizure operation and after confirming the possibility of attacking the militants' vehicle alone, the raid was carried out,



as the rest of the convoy vehicles were not harmed and reached their target according to the plan," Adraee wrote. "The operation to target the militants removed the risk of seizing the humanitarian convoy."

He added: "The presence of armed men inside a humanitarian convoy in an uncoordinated manner makes it difficult to secure the convoys and their staff and harms the humanitarian effort."

The United Arab Emirates, which reached a diplomatic recognition deal with Israel in 2020 and has been providing aid to Gaza since the Israel-Hamas war began, did not immediately acknowledge the attack.

Israeli forces have opened fire on other aid convoys in the Gaza Strip. The World Food Program announced Wednesday it is pausing all staff movement in Gaza until further notice over Israeli troops opening fire on one of its marked vehicles, hitting it with at least 10 rounds. The shooting came despite having received multiple clearances from Israeli authorities.

On July 23, UNICEF said two of its vehicles were hit with live ammunition while waiting at a designated holding point. An Israeli attack in April hit three World Central Kitchen vehicles, killing seven people. (AP)

## NSA Doval calls on Lankan Prez, discusses ongoing economic collaboration

COLOMBO, Aug 30: India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Friday called on Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe and discussed the ongoing bilateral economic collaboration.

Doval arrived here on Thursday to attend the Colombo Security Conclave to be held on Friday.

Doval called on President Wickremesinghe at the Presidential Secretariat this morning, the President's Media Division (PMD) said.

They discussed the ongoing economic collaboration between Sri Lanka and India.

Senior Advisor to the President on National Security, Sagala Ratnayake, also attended the meeting, the PMD said.

The Colombo Security Conclave brings together National Security Advisers and Deputy NSAs from India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Mauritius.

Bangladesh and the Seychelles have observer status at the conclave.

The conclave deals with maritime security counter-terrorism and cyber security with India bringing to the fore its own strategic concerns in the Indian Ocean. (PTI)

## Japan's defense ministry seeks record budget as it faces growing threat from China

TOKYO, Aug 30: Japan's Defense Ministry Friday sought a record 8.5 trillion yen (\$59 billion) budget for the next year to fortify its deterrence on southwestern islands against China's increasing threat, while focusing on unmanned weapons and AI to make up for the declining number of servicemen as a result of the country's shrinking population.

The ministry's request for 2025 marks the third year of Japan's rapid five-year military buildup plan under the government's ongoing security strategy. Japan aims to spend 43 trillion yen (\$297 billion) through 2027 to double its annual military spending to around 10 trillion yen, making it the world's third-largest military spender after the United States and China.

The budget request was approved at the Defense Ministry meeting Friday ahead of a submission to the Finance Ministry for negotiations through December.

Japan has been rapidly building up the defense of the southwestern region in recent years amid China's growing military threats and tension in the regional seas. China has escalated clashes with the Philippine coast guards in disputed waters in the South China Sea and sent a fleet of coast guard boats to routinely violate territorial waters around Japanese-controlled



disputed islands in the East China Sea that Beijing also claims.

A hefty 970 billion yen (\$6.7 billion) of the budget request for 2025 covers the cost of bolstering strike-back capability with the development and purchases of long-range missiles and equipment for their launch, including from an Aegis-class destroyer. About one-third of it goes to a satellite constellation aimed at bolstering the capability to detect missile-related activity, as North Korea, China and Russia develop hypersonic missiles that are harder to detect and track.

While pushing military buildup, Japan must deal with a shrinking troop size and is focusing on developing and buying more drones for surveillance and combat, requesting 103 billion yen (\$710 million). It also seeks 314 billion yen (\$2.17 billion) to build three new multi-purpose compact destroyers that

require 90 crewmembers, less than half the crew size currently needed.

Japanese defense officials say combat drones are "game changers" that can be on hours-long missions and lower human losses in combat and consider it a main pillar of Japan's ongoing military buildup. The unmanned weapons can also help a country struggling with its aging and shrinking population.

Japan has been struggling to fulfill SDF troop levels at 247,000 people.

The Self-Defense Force has faced difficulty attracting young applicants in recent years and fulfilled only half of its recruiting target of 19,598 last year, making it the lowest in the 70 years of SDF history. Last year, 6,258 mid-career personnel left, the highest number in 30 years.

"Due to declining childbirths and working age population, it is inevitable

that Japan will face a society of serious labor shortage," the ministry said in an interim report on human resources, also released Friday. "We need to build an organization that can fight in new ways while strengthening defense power."

Shrinking younger population and private companies that offer better salaries and benefits make "the environment surrounding recruiting servicemen the worst since the end of World War II," the ministry report said.

It requested 18 billion yen (\$124 million) to introduce an AI surveillance system at 40 SDF bases across Japan, aiming to free up 1,000 service personnel. It is also asking 4.3 billion (\$29.7 million) for automated supply storage for launch in 2027 in Okinawa.

In the interim report released Friday, the ministry called for reforms to improve salary, working environment, more training and learning opportunities, as well as support for working mothers to lure more women.

The ministry has been hit by a series of revelations of sexual assaults, harassment and abuse of power in recent years. Its internal investigation last year criticized cover-up attempts and a lack of sense of responsibility among supervisors. It came under fire in July over the leak of classified information and corruption scandals. (AP)

## Pak PM Sharif speaks to Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Yunus

ISLAMABAD, Aug 30: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday spoke to Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus during which the two leaders agreed to work closely for the progress and prosperity of the people of both countries.

During the telephone conversation, they further agreed that "greater regional cooperation could play a vital role in uplifting the lives of the people of South Asia", according to an official statement here.

Sharif's telephone call to Yunus marks the first high-level direct contact between the leaders of the two countries since the change of government in Dhaka.

Prime Minister Sharif highlighted the importance of "revitalizing bilateral relations" through enhanced cooperation across various domains. He emphasised the shared historical, religious, and cultural bonds and expressed a "keen desire to boost commercial relations, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts."

Sharif congratulated Yunus on his assumption of the leadership of Bangladesh's interim government. He expressed his best wishes to the Chief Adviser and hoped that the goodwill between the two countries would be translated into substantial cooperation for the benefit of their peoples.

Sharif expressed sympathies over the devastation caused by the recent floods in Bangladesh and expressed his willingness to provide support.

Yunus thanked Sharif for the phone call and the congratulatory message received from him following his swearing-in as the Chief Adviser.

The 84-year-old Nobel laureate was sworn in as Bangladesh's interim leader on August 8, vowing to "uphold, support and protect the constitution".

He flew into the capital, Dhaka, just days after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to step down and flee to India. (PTI)

## Germany deports 28 Afghan nationals to their homeland, the first since the Taliban takeover in 2021

BERLIN, Aug 30: Germany deported Afghan nationals to their homeland on Friday for the first time since August 2021, when the Taliban returned to power.

Government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit described the 28 Afghan nationals as convicted criminals but did not immediately respond to a request for comment to clarify their offenses.

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser called the move a security issue for Germany.

Germany does not have diplomatic relations with the Taliban, requiring the government to work through other channels. It's unlikely that Friday's actions will lead to a wider thawing of relations between Germany and the Taliban, especially after last week's issuing of the first set of laws to prevent vice and promote virtue

in Afghanistan. They include a requirement for a woman to conceal her face, body and voice outside the home.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has slammed the morality laws in posts on X.

While Hebestreit said the deportations have been in the works for months, they occurred a week after a deadly knife attack in the town of Solingen in which the suspect is a Syrian citizen who had applied for asylum in Germany.

The suspect was supposed to be deported to Bulgaria last year but reportedly disappeared for a time and avoided deportation. He was ordered held Sunday on suspicion of murder and membership in a terrorist organization pending further investigation and a possible indictment.



The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for last Friday's attack, without providing evidence. The extremist group said on its news site that the attacker targeted Christians and that he carried out the assaults "to avenge Muslims in Palestine and everywhere." The claim couldn't be independently

verified.

There has also been debate over immigration ahead of regional elections Sunday in Germany's Saxony and Thuringia regions where anti-immigration parties such as the populist Alternative for Germany are expected to do well. In June, Chancellor Olaf Scholz vowed that the country would start deporting criminals from Afghanistan and Syria again after a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant left one police officer dead and four more people injured.

Faeser on Thursday announced a plan to tighten knife laws, according to German news agency dpa. Along with other officials in the governing coalition, she also pledged during a news conference to make deportations easier. (AP)

## A mudslide triggered by heavy monsoon rain kills 12 people, mostly children, in northwest Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Aug 30: A mudslide triggered by heavy monsoon rain hit a house in a remote part of northwestern Pakistan, killing 12 people, mostly children, a rescue official said on Friday.

Inayat Ali, an official of the state-run emergency service, said the mudslide happened overnight in Upper Dir in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa near Afghanistan. He said rescuers retrieved the bodies of nine children, two women and a man.

Ali provided no further details.

Authorities have warned that ongoing heavy rain, which began last month, could cause landslides and flash floods across Pakistan. Since July 1, more than 275 people have died in rain-related incidents in various parts of the country.

Pakistan's annual monsoon season runs from July through September. Scientists have blamed climate change for heavier rains in recent years.

In 2022, downpours inundated one-third of the country, killing 1,739 people. (AP)

## Taipei zoo's veteran giant panda Yuanyuan celebrates her 20th birthday

TAIPEI, Aug 30: With politics set aside, well-wishers gathered to wish the Taipei zoo's senior panda a happy 20th birthday.

Visitors crowded around Yuanyuan's enclosure to take photos of her with a birthday cake in the shape of the number 20.

Yuanyuan was born in China and arrived in 2008 with her partner Tuantuan. He died in 2022 at age 18 but not before fathering two female cubs, Yuanzai and Yuanbao, now 11 and 4 respectively and still living at the zoo.

Danielle Shu, a 20-year-old Brazilian student in Taiwan, said she found online clips of the pandas an enjoyable distraction. "And I just find it really funny and cute," Shu said.

Giant pandas are native only to China, and Beijing bestows them as a sign of political amity. Yuanyuan and Tuantuan arrived in Taiwan during a period of relative calm between the sides, which split amid civil war in 1949. China claims the island is its own territory, to be annexed by military force if necessary.

Faced with declining habitat and a notoriously low birthrate, giant panda populations have declined to around 1,900 in the mountains of western China, while 600 pandas live in zoos and breeding centers in China and around the world. (AP)

## The King was a key figure in the Kiingitanga movement, which unites Māori tribes and preserves their culture

# New Zealand's Māori King dies after 18-years on the throne

NUKU'ALOFA, Aug 30: New Zealand's Māori King, Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII, died on Friday at age 69, days after the celebration of his 18th year on the throne.

He was the seventh monarch in the Kiingitanga movement, holding a position created in 1858 to unite New Zealand's Indigenous Māori tribes in the face of British colonization.

Tuheitia died in hospital after heart surgery, said Rahui Papa, a spokesperson for the Kiingitanga, the Māori King Movement, in a post on Instagram. The movement's primary goals were to end the sale of land to non-Indigenous people, stop inter-tribal warfare, and provide a spring-

board for the preservation of Māori culture, the Waikato-Tainui tribe website said.

The monarch has a largely ceremonial but still consequential role in New Zealand, where Māori make up close to 20% of the population.

"The death of King Tuheitia is a moment of great sadness for followers of Kiingitanga, Māoridom and the entire nation," Papa wrote on social media.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon paid tribute to Tuheitia, saying his "unwavering commitment to his people and his tireless efforts to uphold the values and traditions of the Kiingitanga have left an indelible mark on our nation."

"I will remember his dedi-

cation to Aotearoa New Zealand," Luxon said, using the country's Māori and English names, "his commitment to mokopuna (young people), his passion for te ao Māori (the Māori world), and his vision for a future where all people are treated with dignity and respect."

In recent months, Tuheitia has coordinated national unity talks for Māori in response to policies of Luxon's center-right government.

Critics accuse the government of being anti-Māori in its efforts to reverse policies favoring Indigenous people and language.

King Charles III, New Zealand's constitutional head of state, and his wife, Queen Camilla, were "profoundly



saddened" by Tuheitia's death. "I had the greatest pleasure of knowing Kiingi Tuheitia for decades. He was deeply committed to forging a strong future for Māori and Aotearoa New Zealand founded upon culture, traditions and healing, which he carried out with wisdom and compassion,"

Charles said in a statement. The week before Tuheitia's death, thousands traveled to Turangawaewae Marae, the Māori King Movement headquarters in the town of Ngāruawāhia, for annual celebrations of the king's ascension to the throne.

The seat of the king is held

by the Tainui tribes in the Waikato region, and it was not yet clear who will take the throne.

"It is expected that Kiingi Tuheitia will lie in state at Turangawaewae Marae for five days before he is taken to his final resting place on Taupiri Mountain," Papa said. (AP)



# Door closed for CM N Biren Singh

## Separation from Manipur only solution: Kuki leader

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** Amidst the ongoing violence in Manipur, the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum, an umbrella organisation of Kuki bodies, announced that talks, if any, will only be held on their terms on Friday.

They moreover said that the talks will only happen with the Centre, virtually closing the door to negotiations with an emissary appointed by Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh.

In an interview with PTI Videos on Thursday, Singh revealed that he had appointed Dinganglung Gangmei, a Naga MLA and chairperson of the Hill Area Committee, as an emissary to hold talks with Kuki-zo and Meitei leaders. Singh emphasised on the importance of dialogue and said that it is the only way forward. "Dialogue is the only way," he said.

"We can meet. But this talking will be on our terms," ITLF spokesperson Ginza Vualzong said, adding that the



Kuki-zo community will only hold talks with the Central government.

"Separation from the Meitei (Manipur) government is the only solution for us. We can no longer be under the same government that killed us, that drove us away and burnt our properties and places of worship," Vualzong told PTI.

The ITLF view underscores the deepening divisions between the Kuki-zo community, the Manipur state government, and the majority Meitei community. The ethnic clashes that started last May and cleaved the state along community lines have claimed more than 200 lives and displaced thousands of families.

In his interview with PTI, the chief minister expressed confidence that peace and reconciliation will be restored in five to six months with the Centre playing a key role and applying "finishing touches" in brokering ethnic rapprochement.

To this, Vualzong said there was a need for transparency and accountability. He said Kuki-zo Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) remain distrustful of the state government.

The ITLF spokesperson also referred to a 48-minute audio recording, presented to the judicial committee appointed by the Union Home Ministry, in which Singh is purportedly heard discussing bombing Kuki-dominated areas.

"Now that the audio clip of Biren has been put under investigation, Biren needs to come up with a good alibi," Vualzong said.

The Manipur government has dismissed the recording as doctored. (PTI)

## UCM stages protest against bomb attacks

**IMPHAL, Aug 30:** Members of various civil society organisations staged a sit-in protest at the front of the United Committee Manipur (UCM) office located at Lamphel-pat in Imphal West in protest against the bomb attack at the office.

Notably, two hand grenades, reportedly hurled by unknown persons, went off inside and outside the office premises of UCM on Thursday around 7.45 pm. Interestingly, unknown persons set ablaze the office of UCM which is a parent organization of various civil bodies on February 23 this year.

Meanwhile, placards which read "We condemn the bomb attack at UCM office", "Bomb attack at the UCM office is an act of coward" and "Individuals involved in the attack must clarify at the earliest" among others were displayed during the protest.

Speaking on the sideline of the protest, UCM leader YK Dhiren condemned the bomb attack and termed it as the "most unfortunate".

He said that UCM has been working for the integrity of Manipur and the peaceful coexistence of the communities in the state.

"Attacking at the office of such a civil society organisation at a time when the state is facing mayhem is very unfortunate. If there is any dissatisfaction with the working of the organisation or something which likes to be done more by the same, everything can be resolved peacefully through dialogue," Dhiren added.

The UCM leader also appealed to all concerned not to carry out such an attack in the future.

All Manipur Kanba Ima Lup (AMKIL) president Lourembam Nganbi demanded the individuals or organizations involved in the attack on the UCM office to clarify on the matter at the earliest.

Asserting that UCM was formed as a parent organization of various civil bodies when the state faced a stiff challenge on Manipur integrity, she said that the organization was attacked for the second time on Thursday. (NNN)

## Committee to review constitution order: Lyngdoh

**SHILLONG, Aug 30:** Meghalaya Social Welfare Minister, Paul Lyngdoh today assured the assembly session that the government will constitute a committee to study the proposal for amending the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 and come up with a report within three months' time.

"The department will constitute a Departmental Committee to study the matter in depth and come up with a final report in 3 months' time," Lyngdoh said while replying to a resolution moved by opposition VPP legislator Adelbert Nongrum in the Assembly.

The resolution seeks to impress upon the Union government on the crucial need to further amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 to make necessary exclusions and substitutions to the list of tribes in Part XI of the schedule pertaining to the state of Meghalaya, in keeping with the actual demographic of the state.

"We will engage with the stakeholders and obtain their views before finalising the report. And thereafter it will be forwarded to the Registrar General of India, and we will duly follow up the matter as per prescribed procedure," Lyngdoh assured.

Part XI of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 (Part III - Rules and Orders under the Constitution) is the list of notified Scheduled Tribes in Meghalaya which currently has 17 notified tribes as Scheduled Tribes.

Lyngdoh said that in June 1999, the government approved modalities for deciding claims for inclusion in or exclusion from the lists of Scheduled Tribes. According to these approved



guidelines, only those claims that have been agreed to by the concerned state government, the Registrar General of India and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes will be taken up for consideration.

Wherever representations are received in the Ministry of Tribal for inclusion of any community in the list of Scheduled Tribes of a State/UT, the Ministry forwards that representation to the concerned State Government/UT administration for recommendation as required under Article 342 of the Constitution. If the concerned state government recommends the proposal, then the same is sent to the Registrar General of India (RGI), he said.

The RGI, if satisfied with the recommendation of the State government, recommends the proposal to the central government. Thereafter, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs referred the proposal to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for their recommendation, he added. (NNN)

## Key to ensuring safety during festival

### AMC issues strict Durga Puja guidelines

**HT Correspondent**

**AGARTALA, Aug 30:** The Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) has issued detailed guidelines for the Durga Puja festival to ensure safety and prevent any untoward incidents during the celebrations.

Speaking to reporters, AMC Mayor Dipak Majumder stated that the number of Durga Puja celebrations within the Agartala Municipal Corporation areas may increase this year.

The Mayor urged Puja organizers to register their names with the AMC and directed that no Puja committee may set up Puja mandaps in a manner that obstructs the movement of common people.

"Gates should be constructed outside the road. Puja committees must obtain permission from the Traffic Department, Fire Service, Public Works Department, and Power Department. If any government property is

damaged during the construction of the Puja mandap, the respective Puja committee will be required to pay compensation for the loss," said the Mayor.

He further emphasized that Puja mandaps with a height of more than 20 feet must receive approval from the Civil Engineering Department. "Every year during Durga Puja, some Puja committees raise the mandap too high, causing safety concerns. Therefore, Puja mandaps should be constructed at least 8 feet away from power lines. No one will be permitted to set up temporary shops without a vendor license during Durga Puja. The place of worship and its surroundings should be kept clean at all times. All Puja committees registered with the Agartala Municipal Corporation will be provided with two cleaning staff by the Municipal Corporation," said the Mayor.

the importance of responsible journalism.

President of the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS), Y D Thongchi, a Padma Shri awardee, lauded the Arunachal Press Club as one of the best in the country.

He expressed gratitude to the state government for providing the necessary funds to construct the new building.

Thongchi further suggested that APC leaders obtain books from the state research department on various tribes to enrich the library's collection.

Earlier, APC president Dodum Yangfo recounted the journey of the press club from its humble beginnings in a small building to the present site.

He informed that the new library would be equipped with a wide range of books covering diverse subjects and would be open to all club members, including students from mass communication departments of various colleges and universities.

Yangfo also announced plans to organise periodical reading sessions with the support of the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS). (PTI)

## Arunachal education minister urges journalists to embrace reading habit

**ITANAGAR, Aug 30:** Arunachal Pradesh Education and Libraries Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona called upon journalists to inculcate the habit of reading books to enhance their professional expertise on Friday.

Speaking at the inauguration of a new library block at the Arunachal Press Club (APC) here, Sona, an avid reader himself, stressed that the habit of reading should be cultivated from childhood.

He emphasised that reading plays a crucial role in keeping people well-informed, a trait particularly important for those in the media profession.

"Reading not only enriches the mind but also equips professionals with the knowledge needed to excel in their fields," Sona remarked.

He expressed hope that the new library would serve as a valuable resource for journalists, fostering a culture of continuous learning within the press community.

"The newly inaugurated library block is expected to become a hub for journalists seeking to broaden their knowledge and stay updated on current affairs, further



contributing to the quality of journalism in the state," Sona added.

Information and Public Relations (IPR) secretary Nyali Ete in his address suggested that the new library should be digitised and make it accessible to all.

"I have very high expectations from the scribes in the state. Please be ethical while disseminating news," Ete added, stressing

GOVT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER

PWD (R&B), ASSAM, DIPHU

No. ACEH/TECH/EM-R. Bangalow/02/2024-25/05

Date: 29.08.2024

CORRIGENDUM

This is for information to all concerned that due to some technical issues, all bidders are requested to upload their required technical papers in "Plinth Area Rates" in Technical Cover for the work "Construction of Executive Member Residential Bungalow & MAC Hostel Council Colony, Diphu on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Model-I basis" published vide Press Notice No. ACEH/TECH/EM-R Bangalow /02/2024-25/03 dtd. 06.08.2024.

All other terms and conditions will remain the same.

Sd/-

The Additional Chief Engineer

PWD (R&B), Hills, Assam,

Diphu

Memo No. No. ACEH/TECH/EM-R. Bangalow/02/2024-25/05(A)

Date:29.08.2024

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR::TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING,

DIPHU:::KARBI ANGLONG.

No. DPU/TPE-24/2024-25/

Dated Diphu, the August 29, 2024.

SHORT NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION

Short Sealed Quotation (inclusive of all taxes) are invited affixing non-refundable KAAC Cash Receipt of Rs.10 (Rupees Ten) from reputed Finns/Authorized distributors/ Suppliers of Diphu for supply/repair of the following Stationery, Office equipment including Computers and Accessories etc. for the Department of Deputy Director, Town & Country Planning, Diphu Karbi Anglong. The tender will be received from August 30<sup>th</sup> 2024 10:00 AM onwards upto 2:00 PM on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2024 and will be opened on the same day at 4:00PM in case the tender opening day happens to be holiday then the next working day shall be treated as tender opening day.

Non-Exempted			
Sl. No.	Head of Account	Particulars	Amount
1	2217-03-001-0794-000-04-04-EE-KE-V	Office Equipment including Computer and Accessories	1,10,000.00
2	2217-03-001-0794-000-04-05-EE-KE-V	Stationery and Printing of Forms	1,10,000.00
3	2217-03-001-0794-000-04-06-EE-KE-V	Office Furniture	2,20,000.00
4	2217-03-001-0794-000-04-99-EE-KE-V	Supply of Furniture and Others items	11,00,000.00
5	2217-03-001-0794000-19-99-EE-KE-V	Repairing of Office Materials	1000.00
6	2217-03-001-0794-000-26-99-EE-KE-V	Repairing of Office Computer Accessories	1000.00
Total: -			1542000.00

Terms and Conditions:-

- The rate quoted should be inclusive of all charges and GST; no extra charge shall be given above the rate offered.
- The intending tenderer(s) shall have to enter all details and stationaries at the office of the undersigned.
- The tender must be accompanied by required earnest money (General 2%, ST/SC & OBC 1%) in the form of NSC or Bank Draft duly pledge in favour of the Deputy Director, Town & Country Planning Diphu.
- The tenders must enclose the following document duly attested requisite documents as mentioned in terms and conditions.

a) Caste certificate for ST/SC Tenderer and trading License for Non-ST/SC

b) Professional Tax Clearance (Up-to-date)

c) GST registration Copy (up-to-date)

d) Photocopy of Pan Card

e) Photocopy of Bank Pass Book
- The supplier will submit a delivery challan in course of supply of office articles and there after bill in.
- The lowest bidders will qualify for supply of materials but becoming lowest bidders will not be the criteria for awarding of purchase order unless the rates are reasonable and justified. If the first lowest bidder fails to supply, then the undersigned has the right to call 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest bidders to supply the same. The Supply materials should be of good quality.
- The bill will be submitted in triplicate.
- The undersigned reserves the right to seek clarification of any information supplied by the bidder.
- The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any thereof.
- Those interested tenderer shall collect the concerned particulars from the office of the undersigned during Office hours.
- Payment will be made subject to availability of Fund from the Government.

Sd/-

Deputy Director,

Town & Country Planning,

DIPHU.

Memo No. DPU/TPE-24/2024-25/160 (A)

Dated Diphu, the August 29, 2024.



## Protest against medic rape-murder

## BJP leaders symbolically lock Women's Commission office

**KOLKATA, Aug 30:** Senior BJP women leaders and members of the party's Mahila morcha on Friday put up the giant-sized model of a lock on the gate of West Bengal State Women's Commission alleging it has failed to issue a single statement after the rape and murder of a woman doctor at a state-run hospital.

A five-member delegation, including BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul, former MP Locket Chatterjee and former union minister Debasree Choudhury, went inside the commission office after prolonged arguments with police.

"We went inside the commission building at Karunamoyee, met commission officials including Chairperson Leena Gangopadhyay to protest its deafening silence fol-

lowing the rape-murder of the sister doctor within a supposedly safe and secure R G Kar Hospital premises," Paul told PTI.

She said, "We put up the cardboard image of a lock on the gate of the state-controlled commission and handed over a 'symbolic death certificate' to the commission chairperson proclaiming the failure of the panel in upholding the right of livelihood and safe movement of women of the state."

Earlier in the day, the rally, led by senior BJP women leaders including Paul, Choudhury and Chatterjee managed to reach the road outside the women's commission head office at Karunamoyee.

After heated arguments with senior officials, the police finally suggested a five-member team of



protestors go inside the commission office and hold discussions with the members and they re-acted.

Ignoring rains, hundreds of women shouted "We want Justice" and squatted outside the office as

the five-member delegation was led inside the building.

Criticising police action, Chatterjee said, "Police cannot ensure the safety of women in the state. They cannot prevent the destruction of evidence related to the Kar

hospital crime but can brutally lathi-charge peaceful protesters. Our protest is symbolic and peaceful. Why are the police so scared?"

Earlier in the day another group of BJP women's wing members were stopped from entering the office, and detained amid shouting of slogans.

Union Minister and BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar had earlier announced that party members would lock the Women's Commission office in protest against the panel's alleged silence on the case, accusing the panel of acting in a partisan manner.

On August 9, the police recovered the body of a woman post-graduate trainee doctor from the seminar hall of Kar Medical College and Hospital. (PTI)

## JMM MLA Ramdas Soren takes oath as minister



**RANCHI, Aug 30:** JMM legislator Ramdas Soren on Friday took oath as a minister in the Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand. The Ghatshila MLA replaced former chief minister Champai Soren in the state cabinet.

Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar administered the oath of office and secrecy to Ramdas Soren at a function in Raj Bhavan here in the presence of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, senior leaders of the JMM-led alliance and several government officials. The CM, in a post on X, congratulated Ramdas Soren and extended best wishes to him for taking the oath "as a minister in the Jharkhand government".

Soon after the swearing-in ceremony, Ramdas Soren met JMM chief Shibu Soren at his residence along with the CM and senior JMM-led alliance leaders.

Ramdas Soren was inducted into the state cabinet after Champai Soren had on Wednesday resigned as a minister and an MLA. He is scheduled to join the BJP this afternoon.

Champai Soren, who had taken

oath as a minister in the Hemant Soren cabinet last month, also quit the JMM on August 28, claiming that the state government's "present style of functioning and policies" compelled him to leave the party which he served for many years. He became the chief minister of Jharkhand on February 2, shortly after Hemant Soren resigned as the CM before being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

Champai quit the post on July 3 and Hemant took oath as the CM again on July 4, after he was released on bail.

Ramdas Soren won the assembly elections in 2009 and 2019 and is also the JMM's East Singhbhum district president.

He was active in the Jharkhand movement along with JMM supremo Shibu Soren and Champai Soren.

He was arrested several times during the Jharkhand agitation and is considered one of the influential leaders from the Kolhan region. (PTI)

## Sit next to NCP ministers but it's nauseating: Sena minister



**MUMBAI, Aug 30:** Shiv Sena minister Tanaji Sawant has said that he sits next to his NCP peers at Maharashtra cabinet meetings but feels like vomiting after coming out, exposing the fissure within the ruling alliance.

An upset NCP said it would be better to leave the government than put up with such statements.

Speaking at an event on Thursday in Dharashiv, formerly Osmanabad, Sawant, who is also the state health minister, called himself a "hardcore Shiv Sainik who never got along" with Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leaders.

"Even if we sit next to each other in the cabinet, I feel like vomiting after coming out," Sawant said. The BJP, Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar's NCP are partners in the state's ruling Mahayuti coalition in the state.

Hitting back, the NCP said it is better to quit the alliance than to listen to such statements.

"My request to our senior party leaders would be that we quit Mahayuti rather than listen to such statements. Either Tanaji Sawant should be sacked or we should quit the alliance," party spokesperson Umesh Patil said.

NCP spokesperson and Member of Legislative Council (MLC)

Amol Mitkari condemned Sawant's remark and asked whether it was the responsibility of only his party to keep the alliance intact.

Sawant has made remarks in the past that have hurt the NCP, he said.

"We are quiet only to maintain the coalition dharma," Mitkari said.

It is only the chief minister who can "treat" his nausea, the NCP leader added.

The rival NCP (SP) latched onto Sawant's remark, saying it's time for the BJP to throw Ajit Pawar's party out of Mahayuti. It's also the time for Ajit Pawar to "wake up and smell the coffee," quipped the rival party led by his uncle Sharad Pawar. NCP (SP) spokesperson Clyde Crasto said Sawant's remark shows that Mahayuti does not need the NCP any longer. The RSS' mouthpiece (Organiser) had questioned the BJP why they aligned with Ajit Pawar. The BJP cadre is also posing the same question, he said.

Now, Shinde Sena leaders are saying derogatory things like "feeling nauseating when they sit next to NCP leaders", Crasto said. "The time has come when the BJP will, slowly but steadily, throw Ajit Pawar out of Mahayuti.

All is not well and cracks are getting bigger by the day.

"It is time for Ajit Pawar to wake up and smell the coffee," Crasto said.

Mahesh Tapase, another NCP (SP) spokesperson, claimed that Ajit Pawar has lost his self-respect and there is growing discontent within the ranks of the Shinde-led Sena over the alliance with NCP.

"I never imagined that Ajit Dada, who once commanded immense respect within the NCP, would compromise his self-respect for power," Tapase said.

The growing discomfort among Shinde Sena members over Ajit Pawar's inclusion in the government has now been starkly revealed through Sawant's remarks, Tapase said.

Minister Tanaji Sawant's statement has effectively erased Ajit Dada's political standing, and yet, his own party members remain silent, Tapase said.

Given the current state of affairs, the NCP might not even secure 25 seats in the upcoming assembly polls in Maharashtra, and it is this desperation that has led to such humiliating treatment, Tapase further claimed.

The Sharad Pawar-founded NCP split in July 2023 when Ajit Pawar and MLAs loyal to him broke away to join the Mahayuti. Subsequently, the Ajit Pawar faction got the party name and its clock symbol. Since the split, both factions have been targeting each other.

The rumblings within the Mahayuti have become louder after it won only 17 of the 48 seats in Maharashtra in the Lok Sabha elections. The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (SP) and Congress, performed better by winning 30 seats. (PTI)

## Ex-Jharkhand CM Champai Soren joins BJP

**RANCHI, Aug 30:** Two days after he quit the JMM, former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren joined the BJP on Friday.

Soren along with a large number of his supporters crossed over to the saffron camp in the presence of Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at a ceremony here.

The veteran politician visibly became emotional after he was welcomed into the saffron fold.

The joining of the 67-year-old tribal leader to the BJP was seen as a shot in the arm for the saffron party's efforts to boost its connection with the Scheduled Tribes, a community which has been the main voter base of the JMM.

He was a close aide of JMM supremo Shibu Soren. Champai Soren quit the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Wednesday, asserting that the state government's present style of functioning and its policies compelled him to leave the party he served for many years.

Champai has earned the nickname 'Jharkhand's Tiger' for his contribution to the fight to create a separate state in the 1990s.

Jharkhand was carved out of the southern part of Bihar in 2000. The elections to the 81-member assembly are due later this year. (PTI)

## Mehbooba calls for lifting of ban on Jamaat

**SRINAGAR, Aug 30:** Calling democracy a "battle of ideas", PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti urged the government on Friday to lift the ban on the Jamaat-e-Islami to enable it to contest elections.

She also described as "regrettable" National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah's claim that the Jamaat-e-Islami once considered elections "haram (forbidden)" but now as "halal (permissible)".

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) president told reporters in Srinagar, "If the Jamaat-e-Islami wants to contest elections, it is a good thing. Democracy is a battle of ideas. The government should lift the ban on it. All its institutions and assets that the government has frozen and seized should be unfrozen and returned."

Hitting back at Abdullah over his comments about the Jamaat-e-Islami, the former chief minister said, "It is a regrettable statement. It has been a call of the National Conference that elections become 'halal' when it gets power and 'haram' when it loses power."

Abdullah on Tuesday said it was "better late than never" for leaders of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami leaders to participate in the assembly elections.

"We were told that elections are 'haram' but now the elections have become 'halal'. It is better late than never," he had told reporters at Pahalagam in Anantnag district.

"For 35 years, Jamaat-e-Islami followed a particular political ideology, which has changed now. It is good," he had said.

Reacting to Abdullah's statement, Mehbooba said the National Conference considered Jammu and Kashmir as its fiefdom and accused the party of starting the "haram-halal" debate.

"When (National Conference founder) Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became prime minister, then elections were 'halal'; when he was dismissed, they became 'haram'. For 22 years, it talked about a plebiscite. In 1975, when Sheikh Abdullah became chief minister, they (elections) became 'halal' again," the PDP president added.

Noting that the Jamaat-e-Islami had contested elections before, Mehbooba asked, "(Separatist leader and late Hurriyat Conference chairman) Syed Ali Shah Geelani became a part of the election process much before. But who made the participation of the Jamaat-e-Islami or other parties, including the MUF (Muslim United Front), in the elections 'haram'?"

The former chief minister was referring to alleged rigging in the 1987 polls.

"In 1987, the National Conference committed irregularities in the elections because it did not want a third force to come forward. When the third force came forward in the shape of the MUF, it committed irregularities by which it shut the doors of elections for other parties forever," Mehbooba alleged.

Elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will be held in three phases on September 18, September 25 and October 1 and the results declared on October 4. (PTI)

## Akal Takht declares Sukhbir Badal 'tankhaiya' for 'religious misconduct'

**AMRITSAR, Aug 30:** The Akal Takht on Friday declared Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal 'tankhaiya' -- guilty of religious misconduct-- for the "mistakes" committed by his party and the party's government from 2007 to 2017.

Soon after the declaration, Badal said he bows his head and accepts the order of the Akal Takht.

In a post on X in Punjab, Badal said he will soon appear before the Akal Takht to apologise.

After a meeting of the five Sikh head priests, the jathedar of the Akal Takht Giani Ragbir Singh asked Badal to appear before the supreme temporal seat of the Sikhs within 15 days to seek apology for the decisions he took as the deputy chief minister and as SAD chief that deeply harmed the image of the 'Panth' and caused damage to Sikh interests.

Badal would remain a 'tankhaiya' until he apologises for his "sins", Singh said while pronouncing verdict from the Akal Takht complex here.

The members of the Sikh community, who served as ministers in the Akali government from 2007-17, were also directed to appear at the Akal Takht in person to submit their written explanation in 15 days, he said.

The Takht Jathedar did not give details of the "mistakes" committed by Badal. But incidents related to the theft of a 'bir (copy)' of the Guru Ganth Sahib, putting up of handwritten sacrilegious posters and torn pages of the holy book found scattered at Bargari had taken place in Faridkot in 2015 when the Shiromani Akali Dal was in power.

The Sikh clergy in the meeting included Takht Damdama Sahib Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh.

A day before the meeting of five Sikh head priests, Badal had appointed senior leader Balwinder

Singh Bhundar as the party's working president.

Badal has sought "unconditional forgiveness" for "all mistakes" committed when the SAD was in power in Punjab. He had recently submitted his explanation after the Jathedar asked him to appear in person before the highest temporal seat of Sikhs, following allegations levelled by the party's rebel leaders, who have asked him to step down.

In his letter earlier, Badal had said he was a "humble servant" of the Guru and dedicated to the Guru Granth Sahib and the Akal Takht.

Badal submitted his explanation after the Jathedar asked him to appear in person before the highest temporal seat of Sikhs, following allegations levelled by the rebel leaders.

Rebel Shiromani Akali Dal leaders, including former MP Prem Singh Chandumajra and ex-Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) chief Bibi Jagir Kaur, had appeared before the Jathedar on July 1 and sought forgiveness for "four mistakes" committed during the party's government between 2007 and 2017. Earlier this month, the Akal Takht Secretariat in Amritsar had released a copy of the three-page letter that Badal submitted to Giani Ragbir Singh, the Akal Takht Jathedar on the rebel leaders' accusations, on July 24. A section of party leaders have revolted against Badal, asking him to step down.

Badal, in his letter, had said he and his companions will accept with humility every order issued by the Akal Takht, according to 'Gurmata' traditions.

Badal also attached a copy of an October 2015 letter written by his father and the then chief minister Parkash Singh Badal to the Akal Takht regarding "some tragic incidents" that took place in Punjab from 2007 to 2015. (PTI)

## Mamata seeks stringent central legislation in rape and murder cases

**KOLKATA, Aug 30:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reiterating her request for stringent central legislation and exemplary punishment on heinous crimes like rape and murder.

Banerjee, who wrote to Modi a few days ago on the issue following nationwide uproar over the rape and murder of a doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9, sought mandatory provision for time-bound disposal of cases of rape/rape and murder. Banerjee had on Wednesday said an amendment to existing laws will be passed in the state assembly next week to ensure capital punishment to convicted rapists.

Stating that she is yet to receive a reply from the PM on the issue flagged by her, Banerjee wrote that she has, however, received a communication from the Union Women and Child Development minister.

Maintaining that the letter by the WCD minister "barely attends the gravity of the issue" raised by her, Banerjee wrote, "The seriousness of the subject and its relevance to the society have not been adequately appreciated while sending out this generic reply."

The CM wrote that 10 exclusive POCSO (Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences Act) courts have been approved by the state government. She further mentioned that 88 fast-track special courts and 62 POCSO-designated

courts are already functioning in West Bengal on state funding.

Banerjee wrote that helpline numbers 112 and 1098 are functioning in the state and additionally, Dial-100 is extensively used in emergency situations.

WCD Minister Annapurna Devi had on Wednesday said the situation of women in West Bengal has been "deteriorating" and slammed the Mamata Banerjee government for failing to implement central schemes such as fast-track courts and emergency helplines to deal with crimes against women.

Devi claimed that the fast-track special courts (FTSCs), which were allocated to West Bengal, are yet to become operational in the state. (PTI)

## Need parliamentary reforms, can consider having presiding officers from judiciary: Manish Tewari



an unwritten convention that facilitates a far more impartial role as the arbiter or parliamentary proceedings.

"Unfortunately, we haven't had those conventions in India. So under those circumstances time has come to revisit the entire manner in which the presiding officers are elected or selected. Maybe the time has come to pierce the Chinese wall and really think about having presiding officers from the apex judiciary on secondment for a particular period of time," Tewari said.

In the United Kingdom, he said, the outgoing speaker is not subject to a re-election in terms that nobody puts up a candidate against him or her — freeing him from the stains of being partial — which is

liament, Tewari said disruption is not a phenomenon which is confined to the past 10 years.

"I remember that between 2004 and 2014 (during the UPA government) this was more the norm than the exception and entire sessions of Parliament were wiped out. Under those circumstances, it is unfortunate but the Indian parliamentary system has been travelling down that road for a very long time," he said. "To my mind, I have always held this view that if we keep going down this road, we will make legislative institutions irrelevant to India's democratic discourse," Tewari told PTI.

The Chandigarh MP also asserted that the responsibility of running Parliament is not of the Opposition and lies squarely with the government.

"Parliament is not only to transact government business. There are people's issues which need to be articulated and I have once in an informal conversation told one of the presiding officers.

"Ultimately what is it all about? It is all about the opposition wanting space to articulate their views so everyday from 6-9 PM in the

evening, at least three days in a week, why don't you allow a rule 193 discussion and which the joint opposition agrees to," Tewari said.

"Therefore if you have three rule 193 discussions in the Lok Sabha in a week between 6-9 PM in the evening, the opposition would have found its space," he said.

Tewari said there was a time in 1952 when Parliament used to meet 150 odd days in a year which has come down to 55 days, the Congress leader said.

"The biggest problem is that the anti-defection law, which is actually a well-intentioned law to try and curb the menace of defections, has failed to do that but has sucked democracy out of legislative institutions. No longer members of Parliament and members of legislative assemblies are free to exercise their conscience," he said.

Tewari pointed out that he keeps moving a private member bill almost every session that seeks to strike a balance between stability which the anti-defection law seeks to bring, and which it has failed in bringing, and the space for legislators or parliamentarians to articulate their point of view. (PTI)



# New simplified pension application form launched for central govt employees

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** In a significant move aimed at enhancing the ease of living for senior citizens and pensioners across the nation, Union minister Jitendra Singh on Friday launched a single simplified pension application form.

A total of nine different forms have been merged into 'Form 6A' -- that was launched by the minister through video-conference.

"The newly launched unified form is designed to streamline the process for pensioners, reducing the complexity of handling multiple forms and significantly cutting down on the time and effort required," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

This user-friendly approach is expected to benefit millions of senior citizens, enabling them to manage their pension-related matters with greater ease and convenience, he said.

Singh said the government remains committed to its vision of



empowering senior citizens and harnessing their wisdom and experience for the development of the nation.

This latest initiative is a testament to the continued efforts to simplify and improve the systems that directly impact the lives of our elderly population, the minister said.

As the government continues to roll out such reforms, Singh said it

is committed to ensuring that the elderly enjoy their golden years with dignity and peace of mind, while also contributing to the growth and development of a 'Viksit Bharat'.

The newly launched initiative reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to simplifying processes for senior citizens, enabling them to contribute effectively to the vision of a 'Viksit

Bharat' by preserving their energies and expertise while saving their valuable time, he said.

Singh said the launch of the single simplified pension application form and digital integration of Bhavishya with e-HRMS is another milestone and a feather in the cap of the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, which has consistently introduced reforms to improve the lives of senior citizens. "This step is not just about convenience; it's about respecting the time and experience of our elders, and ensuring they can lead dignified, hassle-free lives," he added.

Bhavishya, an online system, provides online tracking of pension sanction and payment process by the individual as well as the administrative authorities for all actions preparatory to grant pension and other retirement benefits as well as payment of monthly pension after retirement. It also allows individuals to download ePPO

(Pension Payment Order).

eHRMS is referred to as the electronic Human Resource Management System which has details that include service records of government employees. Singh recalled the special campaign for family pension grievances and shared that it has crossed the mark of 96 per cent redressal rate including resolution of several long pending cases of dependent minor children, divyang daughters, widow/divorced daughters, dependent mothers and widows of war veterans. Explaining the details, the minister said "the retiring officials, who are on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A through e-HRMS (only superannuation cases) and the retiring officials, who are not on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A in Bhavishya.

He said that form submission by the pensioner with a single e-sign (Aadhaar-based OTP) will be enough. (PTI)

## Engineering college management hushed up hidden cameras issue: Students to AP Minister

**GUDLAVALLERU (ANDHRA PRADESH), Aug 30:** Female students of an engineering college here complained to Mines Minister K Ravindra on Friday that the management attempted to hush up the issue of hidden cameras allegedly found in a women's washroom and also went to the extent of threatening students who lodge a complaint over the matter.

Hundreds of students have been staging protests at S R Gudlavalleru Engineering College in Krishna district since Thursday night over the alleged incident.

The students poured out their woes to Ravindra, who reached the college with the district collector and superintendent of police, following instructions from Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

"We (students) don't have faith in the college management as it has been trying to hush up the matter (alleged hidden cameras issue) for the past three days. The college management threatened to act against us if we complain over this

issue," said an official statement, quoting the students' complaint to Ravindra. Demanding justice at any cost, the students vowed not to attend classes until then, while the minister said that truth would come out and the culprits would be punished.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister discussed the issue with the district officials and ordered an inquiry into the allegations of hidden cameras found in the girl students' washroom in the college.

If the crime of capturing videos through hidden cameras is proven, then the CM directed officials to take stringent action against the culprits, said an official statement.

In the event of students possessing any evidence regarding the incident, Naidu urged them to share it with him.

A case was registered in connection with the alleged incident. However, the police maintained that there were no such hidden cameras found in the students' washroom. (PTI)

## PM Modi to flag off two Vande Bharat trains today: Southern Railway

**CHENNAI, Aug 30:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off two Vande Bharat services in the region on August 31, Southern Railway said on Friday. The PM will flag off the service from Dr MGR Chennai Central to Nagercoil as well as the one from Madurai to Bengaluru Cantonment through video conferencing, an official release here said.

Only the inaugural special of the Nagercoil-bound service will be flagged off from Dr MGR Chennai Central station but the regular service will be from Chennai Egmore, the release added. It will run on all days except Wednesday.

Train No 20627 will leave Chennai Egmore at 5 am and reach Nagercoil at 1.50 pm the same day. It will stop at Tambaram, Villupuram, Tiruchirappalli, Dindugal, Madurai, Kovilpatti and Tirunelveli, before reaching Nagercoil Junction. Train No 20628 will depart from Nagercoil Jn at 2.20 pm and arrive at Chennai Egmore at 11 pm, the release said. The Vande Bharat service between Madurai and Bengaluru Cantonment will be operated six days a week, except on Tuesday. Train No 20671 will depart Madurai at 5.15 am and arrive at Bengaluru Cantonment at 1 pm, the release said. It will depart Bengaluru Cantonment at 1.30 pm and reach Madurai at 9.45 pm, and the stoppages on either sides are Dindugal, Tiruchirappalli, Karur, Namakkal, Salem and Krishnarajapuram. (PTI)

## Excess allocation of seats in college creates burden on infrastructure: Delhi HC

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** Excess allocation of seats in a college would not only create a burden on the limited available infrastructure but also impair the institute's ability to impart quality education to its students, the Delhi High Court has said.

The court's observation came while dealing with an argument of St. Stephen's College that instead of allocating students against the sanctioned intake, excessive allocation of seats has been made by the Delhi University.

According to the university, it was for convenience as normally all the students do not take admission, resulting in some seats remaining vacant.

"This court is further of the view that the appellant's (Stephen's College) argument that excessive allocation has been made by the university has not been rebutted with specificity by the university.

"This court would like the university to appreciate that excess allocations of seats in a college would not only create a burden on the available limited infrastructure but would also impair the ability of the college to impart quality education to its students. Such action could also jeopardise the careers of young students," a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said. While the order was passed Thursday, it was uploaded on the court's website on Friday.

The division bench was hearing an appeal by the college challenging a single judge's interim order directing that six students be granted provisional admission in accordance with the allocation by the varsity.

The bench said though the single judge's August 23 order stated that provisional ad-

mission be granted to these students, it was of the opinion that the order virtually granted the relief sought by them in the main petition.

It, however, advanced the date of hearing from September 11 to September 5 in the petition pending before the single judge and said the six students must not attend their classes till the plea is decided.

"Since the final hearing before the single judge has been expedited and with a view to balance the equities, this court directs that till the disposal of the writ petition, the respondents no.1 to 6 (six students) shall not attend the classes at the appellant-college," the bench said.

During the hearing, senior advocate Romy Chacko, representing the college, said the institution is much sought after and students allotted different programmes of study ordinarily accept whichever course is offered, and the number of vacancies after the initial allotment is minimal or not at all.

He said after protesting against such a policy, the university agreed that excess allotment to the college would be limited to 5 per cent in each programme.

The senior counsel submitted that contrary to the commitment, the varsity allotted more students. Advocate Mohinder JS Rupal, appearing for the university, submitted that the varsity has allocated only 5 per cent extra seats in the unreserved category in the college. The court also pulled up the varsity for allotting more students to the college than the sanctioned strength.

"The university must understand that they are playing with the students' careers. You are not playing a game of chess that you are settling for. It is a very serious matter," the division bench observed orally. (PTI)

*Undelivered mails, police patrols to check thefts, selfie seekers*

**WAYANAD, Aug 30:** A post office littered with parcels of the dead and missing, a special police unit deployed to stop 'selfie tourists' and patrols to check thefts in abandoned houses is all that remains in the three Wayanad villages that were wiped off during the deadly landslides that occurred exactly a month ago.

An eight-km radius of Panchirimattam, Chooralmala and Mundakkai villages in the district was devastated by at least two massive landslides that hurtled down with ferocious volumes of water and debris around 2 am on July 30 claiming more than 231 lives even as 218 different human body parts have been found, as per latest official data.

The Kerala state highway no 39 leading to these picturesque villages of the hill district of Wayanad, over 470 kilometres from state capital Thiruvananthapuram, bear a testimony to the heart wrenching tragedy as police vehicles, heavy earth movers, ambulances and rescue teams line up the stretch in anticipation of any emergency in view of the continuing downpour. Houses -- many damaged or partially crumbled and some intact -- lay abandoned as the inhabitants have been moved by the government authorities to public shelters and rented houses, while a few others have shifted to the homes of their kin. Some of the residents occasionally come to check on their houses with a hope to find their belongings that are buried under mounds of slush comprising huge rocks and tree trunks. The 10-day long rescue operations has now ended with slim chances of finding more survivors, a civil defence official stationed in the area said. (PTI)

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE ADDL. CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (R&B),HILLS, ASSAM, DIPHU.

NO.ACEH/E(G)/30/2023-24/42,

Dated Diphu, the 28<sup>th</sup> August'2024.

#### RESULT

The Interview Board & Selection Committee for the Recruitment of the existing sanctioned vacant Grade-III & IV Post of PWD under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu hereby declares today , the 28th August,2024, the result of the recruitment for the post of (i) Lower Division Assistant (Jr. Asstt) (ii)Section Assistant (iii)Computer Operator (iv)Welder (v)Plumber (vi)Peon and (vii) Chowkidar, as per Advertisement Vide No. ACEH/E(G)/30/2023-24/5, Dated 20th October, 2023. The Interview Board & Selection Committee has completed the process of selection and recommended the following Roll Nos. for the post on the basis of merit.

Name of Post: Lower Division Assistant (Jr. Asstt.)

034	126	773	416	968
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Name of Post: Section Assistant

657	50	405	975
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Name of Post: Computer Operator

103
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Name of Post: Welder

16
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Name of Post: Plumber.

13
----

Name of Post Peon

200	124	1038	318
-----	-----	------	-----

Name of Post: Chowkidar

221	18	07
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For any further information regarding the result, the same may be obtained from the office of the undersigned with effect from 02/09/2024 to 15/09/2024 personally by the candidate on producing Admit Card or Voter Id During office hours.

Sd/-

Addl. Chief Engineer, PWD(R&B),  
Hills, Assam, Diphu.

Memo No. ACEH/E(G)/30/2023-24/42 -A,

Dated Diphu, the 28<sup>th</sup> August' 2024.

DDB-176/15<sup>th</sup> FC/2023/740

Dtd-28/08/2024

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDER.

Sealed Tenders are invited with affixing non refundable court fee of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and twenty-five paise) only by the undersigned, BTC, Kokrajhar from the intending Contractors/Suppliers/Firms for the works mentioned below under 15th FC (Tied & Untied) for the year 2023-24.

Sl. No.	Name of Activity.	Estimated value (in Rs.)	EMD/Bid Security. (in Rs.1% ST, SC & 2% Gen)	Tender fees. (in Rs.)
1	Const. of Community Toilet at U.N. Brahma Library Complex at Boragari.	Rs. 11,00,000.00	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	350.00
2	Const. of E/F and S/G from Middle Bomgari link Road to Brahma Mandir via Mithisar Brahma house.	Rs. 19,99,999.00	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	600.00
3	Const. of Crematorium Ground at Shikarbil village.	Rs. 19,04,809.00	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	600.00
4	Const. of E/F and S/G from Pramline Main Road to Moimuk Tinali villageRoad	Rs. 18,71,500.00	1% for reserve category & 2% for unreserve.	600.00

Pre-bid Date & Time: 31/08/2024 at 10:30 A.M.

Last Date & Time of Bid submission : 17/09/2024 upto 02:00 P.M.

Date & Time of Bid Opening : 18/09/2024 at 02:30 P.M.

The Tender document can be seen/obtained from the undersigned during Office hours a pre-bid meeting will be held as mentioned above. The address for the meeting is BDO's Chamber Dotma Dev. Block Dotma. The bid will be opened in the Office of the undersigned as per the schedule mentioned above. The TIA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid/ tender and to cancel/annual the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award.

Sd/- Block Development Officer,  
Dotma Development Block, Dotma.

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/410

No.DDB-159/15<sup>th</sup> FC/Tied/2023/731

Dtd.27/08/2024

#### CORRIGENDUM.

Due to some unavoidable circumstances Tender for the following works are Extended upto 05/09/2024 instead of 09/08/2024. Which was published on 20/07/2024 in Agradot and Bodosa daily News Paper vide IPR No.- "IPR(BTC)/2024-25/154".

#### Name of Works :-

1. Construction of Community Toilet at Chithila High School.
2. Construction of 1 nos. Culvert of Dhani Patti Mukhigaon at Shaktiashram VCDC.
3. Construction of 1 nos. Culvert at Singimari Hari Mandir to Tilipara Kali Mandir to Chkapara Binnyachara VCDC.

Sd/-

Block Development Officer,  
Dotma Development Block, Dotma.

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/409

ADMN-13012/1/2017-ADMN

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT OF NER  
NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL SECRETARIAT  
NONGRIM HILLS, SHILLONG -793003  
Website: <https://necouncil.gov.in>  
Date 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2024

The North Eastern Council Secretariat is looking for the services of suitable officers for filling up 17 (seventeen) posts of Stenographer Grade - II on deputation basis in the pay scale of Rs. 5000-150-8000/- (5<sup>th</sup> CPC)/PB-2 Rs. 9300-34800/- plus Grade Pay of Rs. 4600/- (6<sup>th</sup> CPC) corresponding to pay scale of Rs. 44900 - 142400/- (Level 7) of the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC Pay Matrix. The details of the post are as under:

1. Method of Recruitment and Eligibility Criteria	2 <sup>nd</sup> Method.
2. Period of deputation and maximum age limit for the post	By deputation. Officers under the Central Government or State Government or Union Territories or Statutory Organisations holding analogous post or with eight years regular service in post in the scale of Rs. 4000-100-6000 (5 <sup>th</sup> CPC)/PB-1 Rs. 5,200-20,200/- + GP Rs. 2400/- (6 <sup>th</sup> CPC) corresponding to pay scale of Rs. 25500 - 81100/- (Level 4) of the 7 <sup>th</sup> CPC Pay Matrix or equivalent.
3. Job requirement / Duties and Responsibilities of the post	(a) To function as PA to senior officers. (b) Taking shorthand dictation in English and typing in the computer (English). (c) Maintenance of Visitors Diary, files and dak movement registers of the Officer/ Sector/Section where he/she has been attached. (d) Maintenance of tour details of officer(s) with whom he/she has been attached. (e) Performing any other task assigned to him/her by his/her officer with whom he/she has been attached/Secretary/Deputy Secretary/Director (Admin.) from time to time.

The pay and other terms and conditions of deputation will be regulated in accordance with DoPT's O.M. No. 6/8/2009-Estt. (Pay-II) dated 17.06.2010 and No. 2/11/2017-Estt. (Pay-II) dtd. 24.11.2017 as amended from time to time. Cadre authorities/Head of Departments are requested to forward applications of eligible and willing candidates whose services can be spared on deputation basis immediately so as to reach the Director (Admin.) within 60 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News For Curriculum Vitae (Annexure-I) and other details, the candidates are advised to visit and download from the NEC website <http://necouncil.gov.in>.

LIST OF ENCLOSURES TO BE ACCOMPANIED WITH THE APPLICATION/CERTIFICATES TO BE GIVEN BY THE OFFICE/DEPARTMENT WHILE FORWARDING THE APPLICATION

1. Application in prescribed format-Annexure II duly completed, signed by the applicant and countersigned by the Cadre/Appointing authority.
2. Attested copies of ACRs/APARs for the last five (5) years duly attested on each page with seal by an officer not below the rank of Under Secretary to the Govt. of India or equivalent.
3. Integrity Certificate.
4. Vigilance Clearance.
5. Cadre Clearance Certificate.
6. Major or minor penalty certificate for the last 10 years of service.
7. A certificate to the effect that the particulars furnished by the applicant have been verified and found correct as per service records.

Note: The candidates applying for the post(s) would not be allowed to withdraw their candidature subsequently.

Sd/-  
Director (Admin.)

CBC 11104/11/0005/2425



# MY FATHER NEVER LAUNCHED ME AS IT IS NOT A TRADITION IN MY FAMILY, SAYS VARUN DHAWAN

**MUMBAI, Aug 30:** Actor Varun Dhawan on Friday said his father David Dhawan didn't direct his debut film as it is not a tradition in his family to launch family members.

Dhawan, who started his career with Karan Johar's 2012 movie "Student of the Year", attended the launch event of his niece Anjini Dhawan's debut film "Binny And Family". "She is my niece but I am here as sort of an elder brother... It is a good film that is why I am here. Like my father never launched me because that tradition is not there in my family, he doesn't believe in that. We have no hand in what she has done and it will be wrong for me to take credit for any of her success."

"Genuinely, she has done it on

her own and I am very proud of her that she has done this journey," Dhawan told reporters here.

Helmed by Ssanjay Tripathy, "Binny And Family" is a family drama exploring the relationship and complexity between three generations. Anjini plays the titular role of Binny.

Dhawan said he hopes that people shower love and praise on Anjini, just like he and his father received from the audiences over the years.

"It's an emotional day for me because my uncle Anil Dhawan is a big reason why I'm in the movies. No matter how much I speak, she's backed up this film... She was not cast because of me or my daddy," he added.

Dhawan said people from his

niece's generation are smart and don't live in a bubble.

"They know life is difficult.

While I was growing up, everyone was telling me the life ahead won't be easy but this generation knows already and they are ready to work towards it. So, I think this generation is teaching us something," he said.

About her debut movie, Anjini said she felt it was a right story for her as she was very close to her grandparents.

"I've had a very close relationship with my grandparents. They're way cooler and modern than my parents. I was really close to my Nana growing up. I lost him just a year before I heard the script. I was in a place where I was not doing so well emotionally.

"And Sanjay sir has written this story with all heart, honesty and a whole lot of emotion. And when I heard it for the first time, nothing felt so right. I felt like it was a sign... It's not the most common topic in films today. I felt it was sent to me from him and it just felt really right," she added.

Present at the event was Pankaj Kapoor who plays the role of her grandfather. The veteran actor revealed he is very attached to his grandchildren in real life and treated Anjini as her own granddaughter.

"My grandchildren are currently very young but I am very attached to them and I know they are also very attached to me," said Kapur, who is the father of Bollywood star Shahid Kapoor. (PTI)



## Vijay Sethupathi's 'Viduthalai Part 2' to come out in December

**MUMBAI, Aug 30:** The second part of "Viduthalai", directed by critically-acclaimed filmmaker Vetrimaaran, will be released in theatres across the country on December 20, the makers have announced. RS Infotainment as well as the film's lead star cast -- Vijay Sethupathi and Soori -- shared the news on their social media handles on Thursday evening.

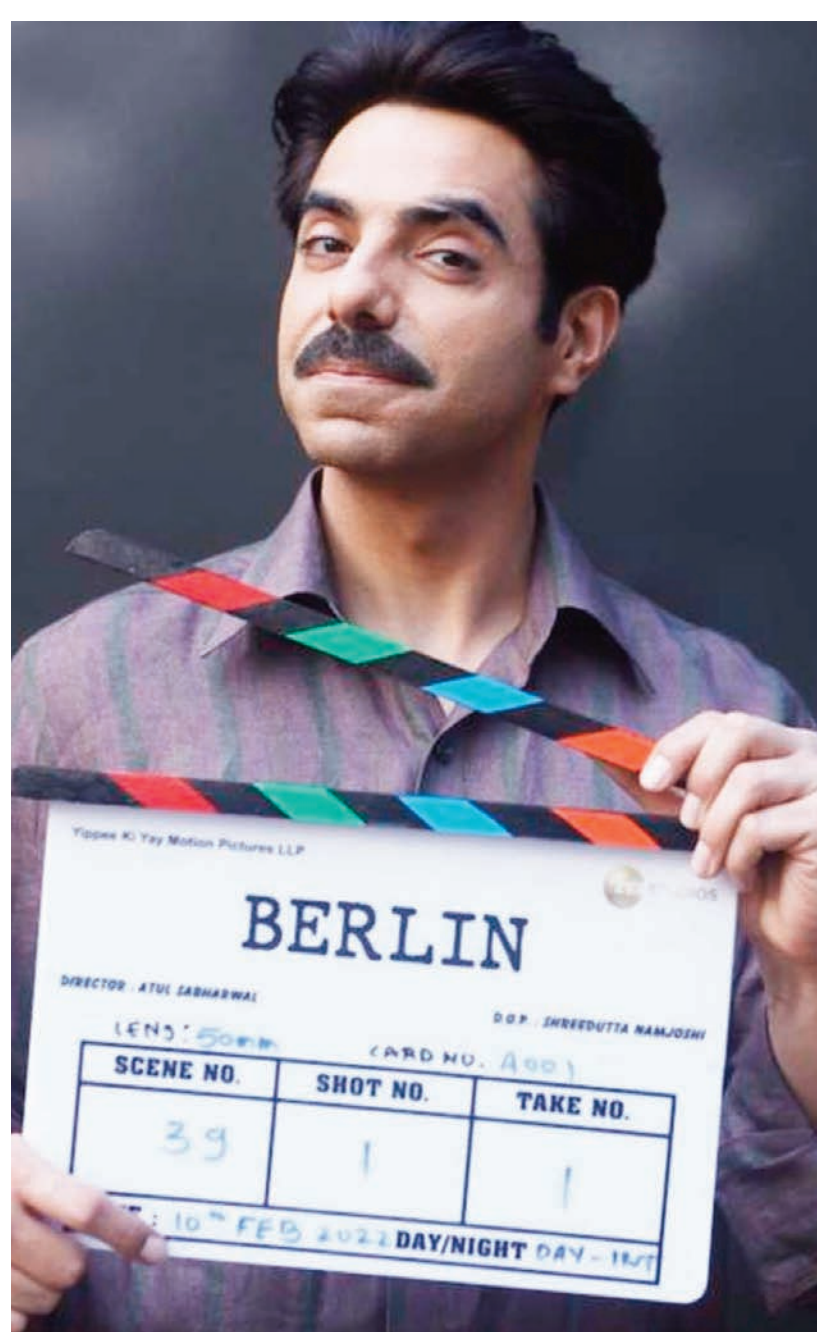
"We are excited to announce that Viduthalai Part 2 is coming to theatres worldwide on December 20. Get ready for the next chapter! Directed by #VetriMaaran

#ViduthalaiPart2FromDec20," the studio posted.

The first part of the Tamil-language drama was released in March 2023 to rave reviews from the critics. Set in 1987 in Tamil Nadu, "Viduthalai" follows the police crackdown on The People's Army, an armed anti-government outfit, that poses a big threat to the stability of the government in the region.

It follows Kumaresan (Soori), a new police recruit, who feels conflicted by the actions of police. Sethupathi stars as Perumal "Vaathiyaar", the leader of an extremist group called Makkal Padai. Vetrimaaran is best known for his nuanced take on pertinent social issues through films such as "Asuran", "Vada Chennai" and "Visaranai".

The first part also featured Bhavani Sre, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Rajiv Menon, Ilavarasu, Balaji Sakthivel, Saravana Subbiah, Chetan, Munna Ramesh and Pavel Navageethan. (PTI)



## Aparshakti Khurana and Ishwak Singh's 'Berlin' to release on Sep 13 on ZEE5

**MUMBAI, Aug 30:** Actors Aparshakti Khurana and Ishwak Singh-starrer "Berlin" is set to release on September 13 on ZEE5, the streaming platform announced Thursday. The spy thriller is directed by Atul Sabharwal of "Class of 83" fame. Set in the politically-charged atmosphere of 1990s New Delhi, the film unfolds when authorities arrest a deaf-mute young man (Singh) on suspicion of being a foreign spy. The case takes a complex turn as a skilled sign language expert (Khurana) is brought in to interpret, only to find himself drawn into a web of intrigue.

Khurana said "Berlin" would present him in a never-seen-before avatar. "'Berlin' is a film with which I am emotionally connected as it brought out the best in me. Atul Sabharwal pulled me out of my comfort zone and threw me into such a challenging world. It's like being the wildcard in a high-stakes poker game where every player holds a secret.

"Trust me, this isn't your typical binge-watch -- it's a mind-bending puzzle that'll have you playing detective from your couch. It's a character and a role I have never explored before... so, get ready for a surprise. 'Berlin' is where the laughs stop, and the intensity begins," the actor, who is basking in the success of "Stree 2", said in a statement. Singh, best known for his nuanced performance in the series "Pataal Lok", said working on "Berlin" has been an extremely rewarding experience for him. "From the word go I knew this was a special film. I found the character and the story very intriguing and much like the plot it was a mystery how I would crack it. I trusted my instincts and believed in Atul Sabharwal's vision and things just fell in place. (PTI)

## Richie Mehta to executive produce upcoming movie 'Boy from Andaman'

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** "Delhi Crime" creator Richie Mehta will executive produce "Boy from Andaman", an upcoming movie from first-time filmmaker Parinaz Jal.

Mehta, best known for creating Netflix's International Emmy-winning series "Delhi Crime" and "Poacher" for Prime Video, has partnered with Imagine Entertainment and Harman Baweja's Baweja Studio for the project, a press release said.

Based on an original idea by Manu Chopra, the script is written by Jal and Chopra. It follows the story of Mohan, a post office worker in Mumbai who comes across a letter addressed to "God" from a young boy who has survived the deadly tsunami of 2004 in the Andaman Islands.

"An unlikely friendship develops between the two through a series of letter exchanges before Mohan decides to travel to Andamans and save the boy," the official plotline read.

"Boy from Andaman" will be produced by Rick Ambros, Bhaskar De and Sharmila Pinheiro and Harman Baweja. Janice Chua is spearheading the project on behalf of Imagine Entertainment.

Mehta said he is excited about bringing a "powerful tale to life" with the film.

"When Janice Chua approached me about this story, I was instantly taken by the simplicity, potency, and beauty of it, and felt that as a collaboration between Imagine, Bhaskar, Rick, Parinaz, Harman and myself, we could make something magical. I couldn't be more excited to embark on this adventure and bring this powerful tale to life," the Indo-Canadian director said.

Baweja said "Boy from Andaman" has a story that is both heartwarming and inspiring.

"Working alongside such a talented team, including Richie Mehta, Janice Chua, Rick Ambros, and Bhaskar De, is a privilege. The story of Mohan resonated with me, and I knew it was something we had to bring to life. I can't wait for audiences to experience this beautiful journey of faith and humanity," he added. (PTI)

## We backed Amitabh Bachchan, he gave us a great performance: Javed Akhtar

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan is a brilliant actor who in his heyday churned out more hit films in a year than screen icon Dilip Kumar, veteran screenwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar said on Thursday.

Javed Akhtar, along with writing partner Salim Khan, gave Bachchan his much needed breakthrough in the film industry with 1973's action crime film "Zanjeer", which gave birth to the 'Angry Young Man' phenomenon.

The writer, who has done around 14 films with Bachchan including "Sholay", "Don", "Deewar", and "Amar Akbar Anthony", praised the superstar for his work ethic.

"He is exceptionally good, we have to accept it. He is a brilliant actor. After Dilip saab, the second man who came was Amitabh Bachchan. His turnover was much more than him (Kumar). Dilip saab used to do one film in two years, he (Bachchan) gave seven superhits in a year alone..."

"We backed him, he gave us a great performance... He had tremendous discipline and focus. (He had) Total control over his tongue, he would never make a statement which could be controversial in so many years. Seven o'clock shift would mean, he would be there quarter to seven in spite of being a star," Javed Akhtar said at an event.

He was speaking at the third edition of the Indian Express' six-part series Expresso, held in Mumbai. He was also joined by his daughter, filmmaker Zoya Akhtar.

The 79-year-old said, as Salim-Javed, he and

his writing collaborator were intelligent enough to recognise Bachchan's acting abilities.

"I never had any complaint from him that he didn't say the dialogues well. At times, I'm thankful for him saying the lines as he did because he added that (emotion) to them that wasn't there on paper. We were intelligent and sharp enough to see that there is great talent..." he added.

Like 1975's "Deewar", which explored the anger and dissatisfaction of the masses with the then government, is there any film that reflects what's going on in India now? In his reply to the question, Javed Akhtar said: "If you show what is going on (in the country), the picture will be banned." Zoya Akhtar, on the other hand, thought hard and said "I guess, there's a disconnect." Referring to the enduring resonance of the iconic dialogue "Mere paas maa hai" from "Deewar", Javed Akhtar said society tends to put "so much premium" on mothers so that they can misbehave with other women.

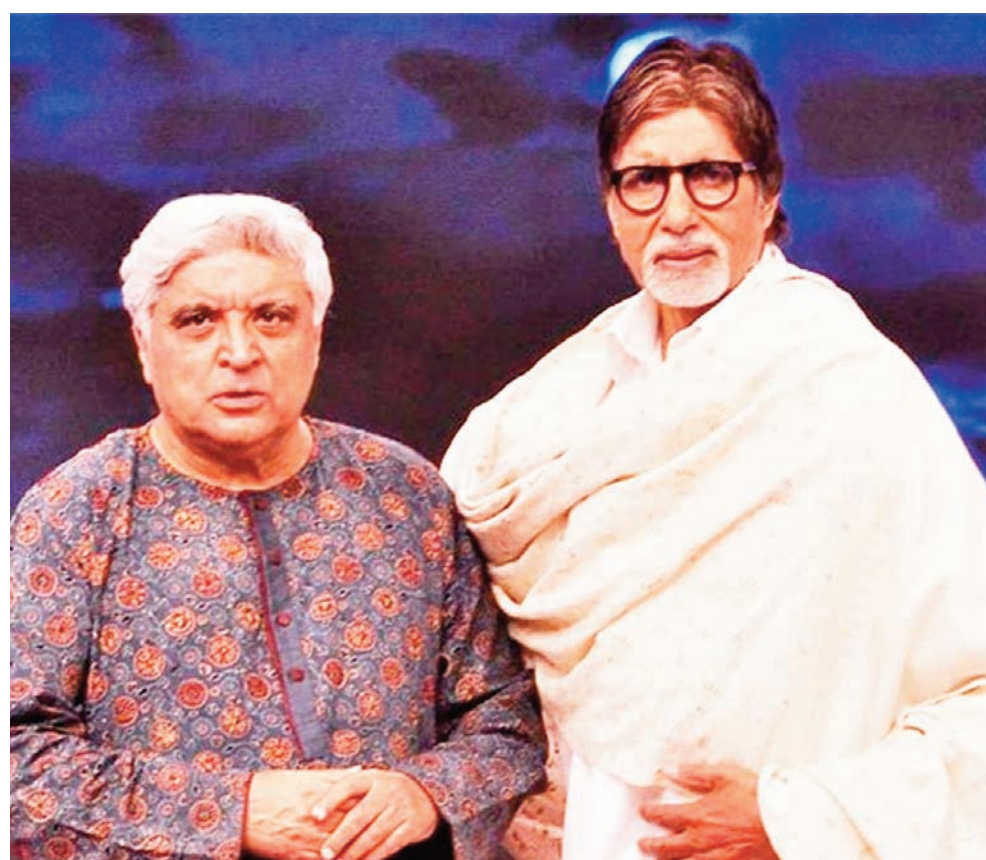
"In any society where there is a lot of premium on mothers, it means women are in a bad shape. They are in trouble. 'Maa ki pooja hone chahiye (We should worship mothers)'. 'But what about the women you don't worship, which also coincidentally includes your wife? People should respect my mom but what about the mother of my kids? This is all rubbish," he said.

Zoya Akhtar, who serves as an executive producer on "Angry Young Men", a docuseries on Salim-Javed, was asked why did the Prime Video project not show the writing partners sitting together.

"It was a directorial choice," she said, adding series director Namrata Rao would be in a better position to answer the question.

The event was moderated by Anant

Goenka, executive director, The Indian Express Group and Head of New Media at The Indian Express along with Pratap Bhanu Mehta, columnist and contributing editor at The Indian Express. (PTI)





# NEW TRACK, NEW COLORS, NEW CONFIDENCE FOR FERRARI HEADING INTO HOME RACE AT ITALIAN GP

**MONZA (ITALY), Aug 30:** New track, new colours and renewed confidence for Ferrari as the Formula One team heads into its home race at Monza.

Ferrari did better than expected at last weekend's Dutch Grand Prix, with Charles Leclerc earning a second straight podium finish and teammate Carlos Sainz Jr. surging from 10th on the grid to place fifth.

That was a surprise in what was expected to be a weekend of damage limitation before planned car upgrades at the Italian Grand Prix.

Although it was a well-timed morale boost for a

team which started 2024 fighting for wins but had dropped out of contention, Leclerc was quick to temper expectations.

"I don't let the last two races change our expectations," he said. "We are in a difficult moment for the team. We are struggling a little bit with pace at the moment."

"I think we understood quite a few things since Zandvoort ... it was a good race. In Spa, it was good as well."

"Here, it should be a bit more in the direction of Spa, so hopefully we'll be a bit more in the fight for the

podium. However, for the win, I don't think we quite have that yet."

Indeed, Ferrari has only won one of the past 13 editions of the Italian Grand Prix, with Leclerc delighting the passionate red-clad fans in 2019.

Since then, the famed Italian Scuderia's only two podium finishes have been Leclerc's second place in 2022 before he was beaten to third place by Sainz last year.

"I wouldn't say the feeling is that we must do better," Leclerc said. "However, there's definitely a huge motivation because it's not only a normal weekend that starts

from the Thursday to the Sunday, but it starts already from Monday in Maranello where we have so many tifosi (fans), and that obviously motivates everybody."

"It seems and it looks like we've had a pretty strong car with a very low-downforce package even in the last few years where performance was not as good. That's positive because it's our home race and as much as it's giving exactly the same amount of points as other races, emotionally speaking and for the whole team it's definitely a special one."

New looks  
Monza is one of the oldest

and most historic circuits on the F1 calendar, but there have been considerable changes to the Temple of Speed this year.

Modernisation works cost more than 20 million euros (USD 22 million), and the track has completely resurfaced for the first time since 1922 and will have a much darker appearance. Moreover, some of the iconic kerbs have been modified — much to the dismay of several drivers.

"They've changed the kerbs," Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo said on Thursday after inspecting the new look by bicycle.(AP)



## Man United to play at José Mourinho-coached Fenerbahce in new Europa League format

**MONACO, Aug 30:** Manchester United will face former coach José Mourinho's new club Fenerbahce among its eight opponents drawn Friday in the new format of the Europa League.

Mourinho led Man United to win the Europa League in 2017 during his 2½ years at Old Trafford and took the Fenerbahce job in the offseason.

The date of the game in Istanbul will be confirmed by the Union of European Football Associations on Saturday. The competition starts on September 25, a week after the Champions League opens.

As in the Champions League, the traditional group stage of the Europa League has been abolished and replaced with an expanded league phase with all 36 teams competing in a single standings.

Clubs wanted UEFA to provide more revenue from more games against a wider range of higher-profile opponents. Each Europa League team will play eight games against eight different opponents through January 30. Man United will host Rangers, PAOK, Bodo/Glimt and Twente, and also travel to Porto, Viktoria Plzen and FCSSB, the club known as Steaua



Bucharest when it won the 1986 European Cup.

Man United avoided being paired with Ajax, the former club of its coach Erik ten Hag and the team it beat in the 2017 final. Fenerbahce and Mourinho also will host Lyon and Athletic

Bilbao but avoided the two previous clubs he coached, Tottenham Hotspur and Roma.

Tottenham's eight games include hosting Roma, travelling to Glasgow to face Rangers and to Istanbul to face Galatasaray. Rangers, the 2022 Europa

League beaten finalist, gets two Scotland-England rivalry games and a trip to face Nice, Man United's sibling club in France.

Man United's minority investor Jim Ratcliffe owns chemicals giant Ineos, which had to put its ownership of Nice into a

blind trust this season to comply with UEFA integrity rules.

The Europa League had been played since the 2008-09 season as a 48-team group stage, leading to a 32-team knockout phase.

The top eight in the standings in January go directly to the pre-quarterfinals in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into the knockout playoffs in February. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated.

The final is on May 21 at Athletic Bilbao's stadium. The title holder gets direct entry to the next Champions League.

The Europa League prize fund is 565 million euros (USD 626 million), less than 25% of the Champions League total of about 2.5 billion euros (USD 2.77 billion).

Each team gets a basic 4.3 million euros (USD 4.77 million) with group-stage bonuses of 450,000 euros (USD 500,000) per win and 150,000 euros (USD 1,66,000) for a draw. Bonuses rise for advancing through each knockout round.

More money is allocated based on each team's historical record in European competitions and the value of global and national broadcast deals. (AP)

## Carlos Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam win streak ends in loss to Botic van de Zandschulp

**NEW YORK, Aug 30:** After double-faulting to fall behind two sets to none — a deficit he's never overcome — in the second round of the U.S. Open, Carlos Alcaraz slung his equipment bag over a shoulder and trudged toward the locker room.

Glancing in the direction of his coach, 2003 French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero, Alcaraz pointed his right index finger at his temple, then wagged that finger, as if to say, "I'm not thinking straight."

He might have been excused for being confused by what was transpiring under the closed retractable roof at Arthur Ashe Stadium on a chilly evening, and one set later, Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam unbeaten streak was over with a sloppy 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 loss to 74th-ranked Botic van de Zandschulp.

"It was a fight against myself, in my mind, during the match. In tennis, you are playing against someone that wants the same as you — to win the match — and you have to be as ... calm as you can, just to think better in the match and try to do good things," Alcaraz said. "Today I was playing against the opponent, and I was playing against myself, in my mind. A lot of emotions that I couldn't control."

The result eliminated the pre-tournament men's favorite and certainly was hard to predict beforehand, given the No. 3-seeded Alcaraz's standing in the game, his excellence of late and his opponent's far-lesser resume.

It followed another exit in Ashe for a past U.S. Open champion, Naomi Osaka, who was sent home Thursday by Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-6 (5). That one, though, was not nearly as out-of-nowhere as what happened to Alcaraz.

He won the French Open in June and Wimbledon in July to raise his career total to four major championships, including taking the title at Flushing Meadows in 2022. Then, in early August, Alcaraz won a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, losing to Novak Djokovic in the final.

Maybe, Alcaraz acknowledged, a tennis schedule he called "so tight" drained him too

much. "Probably, I came here with not as much energy as I thought that I was going to (have)," he said. "But, I mean, I don't want to put that as excuse."

What's clear is he never found his footing against van de Zandschulp, a 28-year-old from the Netherlands. Alcaraz was way off, repeatedly missing the sorts of shots he usually makes routinely.

The 21-year-old from Spain came in with a 16-2 record at the U.S. Open, where he never lost before the quarterfinals in three previous appearances. This also was Alcaraz's earliest defeat at any major tournament since bowing out in the second round of Wimbledon in 2021 as a teenager; he's never been beaten in the first round at a Slam event.

In contrast, van de Zandschulp only once has been to a Grand Slam quarterfinal, getting that far at the U.S. Open in 2021.

Otherwise, though, he is not someone most folks would have expected to pull off this sort of monumental upset. Consider: van de Zandschulp was just 11-18 for the season at the start of this week and hadn't won consecutive matches at a tour-level event in 2024 until now.

"Actually, I am a little bit at a loss for words," he said. "It's been an incredible evening for me."

Sure was.

The key stat probably was that van de Zandschulp won the point on 28 of his 35 trips to the net.

The opening set was unbelievably lopsided. With van de Zandschulp's powerful forehands and serves at up to 132 mph finding their marks, Alcaraz never seemed to get comfortable.

He did not produce a single winner in that set and was nearly doubled up in total points, 24-13. The second set was a bit better for him, but not enough so, and a double-fault gift-wrapped a service break that put van de Zandschulp up 6-5. When Alcaraz pushed a forehand wide to end the next game, van de Zandschulp finished off a hold at love that gave him the initial two sets after 1 1/2 hours of action. (AP)

## Jurgen Klopp joins the crowd at the Paralympics, cheering on long-time friend playing badminton

**PARIS, Aug 30:** Former Liverpool coach Jürgen Klopp is used to being at the center of attention. On Thursday he was more than happy to be on the sidelines, cheering for his longtime friend Wojtek Czynz as he competed in badminton at the Paris Paralympics.

"I stood next to Elena, his incredible wife, and we both had tears in our eyes," Klopp said after watching Czynz lose to Britain's Daniel Bethell in the men's singles. "I couldn't be prouder of him. I know sports are all about results, but just seeing him on the court was so touching, and I couldn't get my head around that."

Their friendship began about 20 years ago when Czynz, a promising soccer player, suffered a devastating injury in a collision with a goalkeeper that led to the amputation of his lower left leg. During his rehabilitation Czynz met Klopp, who was managing FSV Mainz 05, a second-division German club at the time.

They made an immediate connection that grew deeper over the years. Klopp, who stepped down as Liverpool coach this year after more than eight seasons, often uses Czynz's story as a source of inspiration for others. "Wojtek is constantly doing things I'm not brave enough to do," Klopp said at the La Chapelle Arena in the north of Paris. "Yesterday, he was telling me how easy it is to swim with sharks," he added, referring to Czynz's experience as a licensed diving instructor.

Following his injury, Czynz started competing in para athlet-

ics, winning gold medals for Germany in the 100 meters, 200 meters and long jump at the 2004 Paralympics. After he quit the sport in 2013 he and his wife Elena Brambilla-Czynz bought a catamaran and sailed around the world, helping amputees living on remote islands to get prosthetics.

They arrived in New Zealand in 2019 where Czynz decided to take up badminton. After just a few years, he got so skilled at the the sport that he earned a spot at the Paris Paralympics, competing for New Zealand.

However, Bethell, the No. 2 seed, proved to be difficult for the 44-year-old Czynz in the SL3 category for players who practice standing and have a disability in one or both legs. Bethell won in straight sets 21-5, 21-2.

Still, Czynz said Klopp's support meant a lot.

"Jürgen is family to me," Czynz said. "It was great having him in my corner, despite the tough loss today. We need people like Jürgen putting the spotlight on us."

It was a special moment also for Bethell who received a thumbs-up and a "Great job, Dan" from Klopp.

"That was surreal, seeing him (Klopp) in the stands," Bethell said.

Despite the loss, Czynz's journey in Paris is not over. He will face Ukraine's Oleksandr Chyrkov in a decisive second group stage match.

Will he invite Klopp to watch again?

"Given my performance today, I'll have to think about it," Czynz joked. (AP)

## Anuj Rawat, Sujal Singh record second-highest opening T20 partnership in DPL

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** Anuj Rawat and Sujal Singh entered record books with second highest opening partnership in T20s of 241 in the Delhi Premier League in the clash between East Delhi and Purani Dilli 6 here. Rawat, who has played for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the IPL, and Sujal put the opposition bowlers to sword while bringing up their respective centuries.

Japan's Lachlan Yamamoto-Lake (134) and Kendel Kadowaki-Fleming (109) hold the record of highest T20 partnership for the first wicket for putting on 258/0 in 20 overs against China in February this year. Anuj clobbered 11 sixes and six fours to make 121 from just 66 balls while Sujal smacked nine sixes and seven

fours to score 108 off 57 balls. Chasing 242, Purani Dilli fell short by 26 runs as they made 215/8 in 20 overs.

"We are really happy because in the beginning, we did not think we both would get our respective centuries but as the game progressed and the shots started to flow it became possible," Anuj told media at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Thursday. Sujal said communication was the key to stitch the mammoth opening stand.

"I would not say our approach was calculated, it was just about going with the flow of the game," he said.

"We made each other comfortable with the communication which was simple as I was taking the opportunity to score boundaries and when I was

struggling, Anuj was taking the initiative, so this communication worked wonders for us," he added.

Sujal also effused praise on Anuj for helping him.

"I get to learn a lot as Anuj is also very friendly with us youngsters. We get a lot of confidence as well after talking to him and he shares his experience which is also very valuable to us," he said.

"I am batting with Anuj for the first time in this tournament and I am grateful to bat with him because he has had a big role to play for me because when any youngster performs then a senior's role becomes important there."

Despite his stellar hundred, the IPL auction is not on Sujal's mind. (PTI)

## Indian Racing Festival: Chennai all set for historic night races

**CHENNAI, Aug 30:** The Indian Racing Festival will witness India's first-ever night race as Chennai gears up to make history this weekend.

The 3.5 km street circuit here has 19 turns, multiple chicanes and fast straights.

The IRL cars are expected to exceed speeds of 200 kmph, and the street track will push drivers to their limits.

Six city-based franchise teams from the Indian Racing League (IRL) -- Chennai Turbo Chargers, Goa Aces JA Racing, Speed Demons Delhi, Bangalore Speedsters, Shrachi Rath Bengal Tigers, and Hyderabad Blackbirds -- and two more teams (Ahmedabad Apex Racers and Godspeed Kochi) will be competing in the event.

Speaking on the occasion,

local driver Chethan Korada said, "It's a great honour to be part of this event, and I'm deeply grateful to the government for this incredible opportunity. Reaching this point hasn't been easy, and I want to thank Arman Ibrahim for the scholarship that made this possible." Adding to the context, Shrachi Rath Bengal Tigers driver Nikhil Bohra stated, "It is such a glamorous event that is not only a statement for Indian motorsport, but it's just a statement around the world."

"I just have a huge respect for everyone who put this together. So, thank you for inviting me back, and I'm looking forward to this weekend."

Also, woman driver Gabriela Jikova, racing for Goa Aces, opened up on how the mixed-



gender competition makes it even more exciting.

"Motorsport, much like on the men's side, has traditionally been male-dominated, but we're seeing a significant change,"

she reckoned. "Comparing it to my early days in karting, there were far fewer girls back then. It's exciting to see women's motorsport growing, and I'm thrilled to be a part of it."

The event will kick off at 2 pm on both Saturday and Sunday, presenting the spectators with plenty of entertainment, including car stunts and "hot laps" by bike riders. (PTI)



# Paralympics: Avani retains gold; Mona clinches bronze in historic 10m air rifle double for India



**CHATEAUX, Aug 30:** The incredible Avani Lekhara became the first Indian to claim successive Paralympic gold medals with a record-shattering top finish in the women's 10m air rifle (SH1) shooting competition and had a bronze-winning Mona Agarwal for company on the podium in a historic double for the country here on Friday.

Winner of the Tokyo Paralympics gold three years back, Avani, 22, shot a superb 249.7 to erase her own Paralympic record of 249.6 set in the Japanese capital three years back.

The 37-year-old Mona, who dabbled in several sports including shot-put, powerlifting and wheelchair volleyball before settling on shooting, notched up 228.7 for the third-place finish.

This is the first time in India's Paralympic history that two shooters have pulled off medals in a single event.

Avani, who hails from Jaipur, endured a tough buildup to the Paralympics.

She grappled with a host of health issues, including a gallbladder surgery, which forced her to take a recovery break of one and half months.

But the committed shooter, who is an assistant conservator of forest with the Rajasthan government, did not let health concerns distract her from her aim of Paralympic glory.

She lost quite a bit of weight following the surgery but the determination to overcome all odds was all too evident during the national camp at the Karni Singh ranges,

where she worked hard on regaining her strength and mentally steeling herself for Paris.

"I am happy to win a medal for my country. I am thankful to my team, my coaches and my parents," said Avani after the match.

The SH1 category is for athletes who have movement affected in their arms, lower trunk, legs or have no limbs.

The youngster, who is wheelchair bound after a car mishap left her paralysed below the waist as an 11-year-old, had become the first woman shooter from the country to win medals in shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021.

In a nerve-wracking final, Avani was trailing her rival Lee Yunri by a few decimal points but the South Korean wilted under pressure and had an awful last shot of 6.8, while

Avani kept her cool to shoot a superb 10.5 to clinch the gold with a Paralympic record.

The success will come as a huge boost for Avani ahead of the 50m rifle 3-positions event, where she is also a firm favourite for a medal after winning bronze in the previous edition of the Games in Tokyo.

Earlier, Avani came up with another sterling performance by qualifying for the final in second place, while Mona, who too has been in sublime form in the last one year, also made it to the eight-shooter summit clash in fifth place.

While Avani shot a 625.8 to be placed second behind Ukraine Iryna Shchetnik, who broke the Paralympic Qualification Record with a score of 627.5, Mona, the two-time Tokyo Cup gold medalist, shot 623.1.

Avani had credited the "positive environment" in the national camp for helping her overcome her fitness worries.

"I think we have been in a very positive environment throughout. We are just focussing on the process rather than the outcome.

"There, obviously, will be expectations but those expectations only motivate me and inspire me more to give my best. I am also more mature in my technique," she had said before leaving for Paris.

As the lead changed hands between Avani, Mona and Yunri, it was all too evident who was the strongest of them all in terms of mental fortitude. The bespectacled shooter kept striking consistently, with just one shot below 10, even as the other two succumbed to pressure. (PTI)

## Badminton at Paralympics: Suhas, Nitesh seal semifinal spot; Manasi, Manoj out



**PARIS, Aug 30:** Tokyo silver medallist shuttler Suhas Yathiraj and Nitesh Kumar continued their impressive run to secure spots in the men's singles SL4 and SL3 semifinals, respectively, at the Paralympics here on Friday.

Suhas, a 2007 batch IAS officer, defeated Korea's Shin Kyung Hwan 26-24, 21-14 in his second match, topping the three-man Group A in the SL4 category.

Meanwhile, Nitesh, a 29-year-old IIT Mandi graduate, dominated China's Yang Jianyuan with a convincing 21-5, 21-11 victory, ensuring a top-two finish in the four-man Group A of the SL3 category.

In the SL4 class, the group topers advance to the last four, while in the SL3 class, the top two players from each of the two groups qualify for the semifinals. Nitesh, who suffered permanent leg damage due to an accident in 2009, will next face Thailand's Bunsun Mongkhon in his final Group A match.

However, it was a disappointing day for Manasi Joshi and Manoj Sarkar, as they both suffered their second consecutive defeats, ending their chances of reaching the semifinals in their respective groups.

Manasi, the 2019 World Cham-

pion, narrowly lost to Ukraine's Oksana Kozyna 21-10, 15-21, 21-23 in her second women's singles SL3 Group A match. She had previously lost her opening match to Indonesia's Qonitah Ikhtiar Syakuroh on Thursday.

Tokyo bronze medallist Manoj also faced another setback, losing 19-21, 8-21 to Bunsun in his second Group A match. Manoj had earlier lost to compatriot Nitesh on Thursday and will meet Yang on Friday.

The SL4 class is designated for athletes with lower limb impairments and minor balance issues in walking or running, while the SL3 class is for players with more severe lower limb disabilities, requiring play on a half-width court.

On Thursday night, Nitesh and Thulasimathi Murugesan were defeated by the Indonesian pair of Ramdani Hikmat and Oktika Leani Ratri 15-21, 8-21 in their second mixed doubles SL3-SU5 group stage match.

Suhas Yathiraj and Palak Kohli also suffered a 15-21, 9-21 loss to France's Lucas Mazur and Faustine Noel in their second Group A mixed doubles match. The SU5 class includes athletes with upper limb impairments. (PTI)

## Persistent rain in Rawalpindi washes out Day 1 of 2<sup>nd</sup> test between Pakistan and Bangladesh

**RAWALPINDI, Aug 30:** Persistent rain washed out the opening day of the second test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday. Bangladesh leads the two-match series 1-0 after it notched a historic 10-wicket win at the same venue last week when Pakistan was bowled out for an embarrassing 146 in the second innings on the fifth and final day.

Players and team officials stayed in the hotel and umpires called off the play at 12:05 p.m. local time with rain still pouring down and leaving the outfield submerged.

Both teams are in the bottom half of the World Test Championship standings with Bangladesh at No. 7 and Pakistan at No. 8, just above last-place West Indies.

An embattled Pakistan, which has lost four test matches in a row since Shan Masood was elevated as captain last year, hasn't won a home test since it beat South Africa in December 2021. The remaining four test matches against New Zealand and Australia were drawn.

Pakistan dropped rusty fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi and named another left-arm Mir Hamza along with leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed in its 12-man squad.

Afridi, who was playing his first test in eight months, was ineffective and had to wait until Pakistan took the third new ball to claim 2-88 as Bangladesh replied to Pakistan's 448-6 declared with a strong total of 565. Abrar was surprisingly released from the first test squad and was asked to play in a four-day game against Bangladesh 'A' in Islamabad and Pakistan's play to go with an all-out pace attack in a home test match after 28 years backfired.

In contrast left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan and off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz took seven wickets in between them on a dramatic fifth day to skittle out Pakistan for its lowest-ever total against Bangladesh in 14 test matches.

Bangladesh batters, led by Mushfiqur Rahim's resilient 191, were also among the runs with Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Litton Das and Mehidy all scoring meaningful half centuries. (AP)

## Seine water quality issues resurface for para triathletes at Paralympic Games

**PARIS, Aug 30:** Concerns over water quality in the Seine River resurfaced at the Paralympic Games when organizers changed the schedule for para triathlon races.

All 11 medal events are to be held on one day, Sept. 1, instead of two as originally planned, Paris 2024 organizers said in a statement. "The decision to hold all medal events on one day was taken in view of the weather forecast and to provide athletes and coaches with as much certainty as possible. The course of the swim remains unchanged," organizers said.

Water quality in the Seine River was also a major issue at the Olympics. Bacteria levels in the long-polluted Paris waterway fluctuate constantly depending on weather. Heavy rains cause wastewater and runoff to flow into the river, causing bacteria levels to rise.

The organizers said the river's water quality and flow will continue to be monitored each day and that decisions on preparatory swims for para triathletes to train over the next couple of days, and on the morning of Sept. 1, will be made before each event.

Organizers said events can be pushed back to Sept. 2 and 3 "if needed."

Thursday's familiarization swims took place as planned in the morning. (AP)

## Sophie Devine to step down as New Zealand's women's T20 captain after World Cup



**CHRISTCHURCH, Aug 30:** New Zealand's star all-rounder Sophie Devine will step down as captain of the national T20 team after the World Cup in October to focus on her playing role and nurture "future leaders" in the format.

The 34-year-old will, however, continue to lead New Zealand's ODI team.

Devine, who has been a key figure in New

Zealand's cricket since her debut in 2006, has scored 3,268 runs in 135 T20Is. She took over the T20I captaincy in 2020, succeeding Amy Satterthwaite, and led the team in 56 matches.

"I'm very proud to have had the privilege to captain the White Ferns in both formats," Devine said in a statement.

The veteran also acknowledged that cap-

taincy comes with additional workload and can be "challenging at times". Under Devine's leadership, New Zealand won 25 and lost 28 games in the shortest format.

"Stepping away from the T20 captaincy will take a bit off my plate so I can focus more of my energy on my playing role and nurturing the future leaders," she said.

Currently recovering from a foot injury ahead of the T20 World Cup, Devine would continue to play for New Zealand in both the white-ball formats.

"I'm not ready to give up ODI captaincy just yet. But I won't be around forever, so I think stepping away from captaining one format at a time gives the next leaders time to find their feet," said Devine.

While New Zealand Cricket are yet to name her successor, team head coach Ben Sawyer praised Devine, calling her "epitome of a fearless leader".

New Zealand are set to announce their 15-member squad for the women's T20 World Cup on September 10.

The squad will depart on September 16 to play three T20Is against Australia in Mackay and Brisbane as part of preparation for the World Cup. (PTI)

## National Sports Day celebrated

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Aug 30:** National Sports Day was celebrated by Gauhati University National Service Scheme (NSS) Unit on August 29 at the University campus. National Sports Day marked the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand and it is celebrated on August 29 every year.

Inaugurating the programme Dr Ranjan Kr Kakati, Director of Students' Welfare, Gauhati University said that Sports are an integral part of life. Sports activities are fun to play and improve our health and physical fitness. Dr Kakati appealed to the student community and NSS volunteers to make a daily physical exercise routine and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Many indoor and outdoor sports events were organised among the students to celebrate the day. Dr Rituparna Bora, NSS PO, GU campus was also present in the program. Certificates and prizes were distributed to the winners.

## Defence-wary Mohun Bagan seek record-extending 18<sup>th</sup> title, NEUFC chase history



**KOLKATA, Aug 30:** Mohun Bagan Super Giant will seek a record-extending 18th title when they face first-time finalists NorthEast United FC in the Durand Cup summit showdown here on Saturday, hoping the injury concerns over skipper Subhashish Bose would not come in their way.

For a team that did not concede a single goal in the group stage, Mohun Bagan went 0-2 down after their defensive mainstay, Bose, struggled with an injury and was substituted at the half-hour mark in their semifinal against Bengaluru FC.

The Blues made full use of the defensive frailty to go 2-0 up. The Mariners fought hard to restore parity before Vishal Kaith's brilliance under the bar sealed a glorious 4-3 win in the tiebreaker.

Bose had a light training with his teammates on Friday and it remains to be seen whether coach Jose Molina will risk starting the team's captain in the tournament's biggest match.

While Mohun Bagan's defence seemed to be their weak link, the cohesion in the midfield and incisive attack led by Jason Cummings and Dimitri Petratos showed the way for the Mariners.

Among Indians, Liston Colaco and Aniruth Thapa have been impressive and the latter's peach of a goal in the 84th minute had turned it around for them against the Blues.

Goalkeeper Kaith has been phenomenal in the last two knockout matches, saving four penalties, first against Punjab FC and then versus Bengaluru and he will once again be the key against the spirited NorthEast United FC.

"It feels great to play successive finals. We gave our 100 per cent and made a great comeback after the two-goal deficit. Full credit to the team to score the two crucial goals and bring the match to the tie-breaker," Kaith said.

Unlike the quarters and semis, the final will have extra-time and Mohun Bagan will look to seal the issue in the regulation

time.

Playing at home will also give Mohun Bagan a big boost as about 30,000-plus fans are expected to cheer for the Mariners.

But the John Abraham-owned Highlanders should not be underestimated as they have shown their prowess by blanking fierce rivals Shillong Lajong FC 3-0 at the latter's home ground to make their first ever final in the Durand Cup.

Under the guidance of coach Juan Pedro Benali, NEUFC have demonstrated their supremacy in the group stages, winning all three matches while netting an impressive 10 goals and conceding only once.

They are known for their tactical brilliance and defensive solidity, and it will be as much an off-the-pitch fight between the two Spaniard coaches as it is on-field.

Spanish recruit Guillermo Fernandez has emerged as one of the key performers for NorthEast United FC.

The 31-year-old boasts an impressive resume with over 430 appearances across top European leagues, including La Liga and the UEFA Champions League, and has made a significant impact for the club.

Fernandez is the joint top scorer for NEUFC in this Durand Cup and is tied with Jithin MS for second overall with four goals.

Jithin, 26, has also been a revelation for NEUFC this season with not just scoring but setting up and the duo will give Mohun Bagan defence some anxious time.

On head to head, Mohun Bagan lead 7-2 against NEUFC with one being a draw. In their last meeting, Mohun Bagan had defeated NEUFC 4-2 in the ISL last season here.

Kickoff: 5.30pm. (PTI)

## Bhavina-Sonal ousted in quarterfinal stage in Paris Paralympic

**PARIS, Aug 30:** Indian para table tennis players Bhavina Patel and Sonalben Patel bowed out of the women's doubles WD 10 contest with a 1-3 quarterfinal loss against A Young Jung and Sunghya Moon at the Paralympics, here on Friday.

The eighth seed Indians went down 5-11 6-11 11-9 6-11 in a 39-minute contest to their South Korean opponents here at the South Paris Arena.

Both Bhavina, the Tokyo Paralympics silver medallist, and Sonalben will be in action in their respective singles event.

Bhavina, who became the first-ever Indian table tennis player to win a medal at

the Paralympics during the Tokyo Games in 2021, was diagnosed with polio when she was 12 months old. She competes in class 4 category.

Like Bhavina, Sonalben was also diagnosed with polio when she was six months old, which later affected both her legs as well as her right hand, leaving her with 90 per cent disability. She competes in class 3 category.

There are 11 classes in total (five sitting, six standing): TT1-5 are for wheelchair athletes, TT6-10 are for standing athletes and TT11 is for athletes with intellectual impairments. (PTI)

## Pooja Singh breaks U20 NR in high jump to qualify for final at World U20 C'ships

**LIMA (PERU), Aug 30:** India's Pooja Singh rewrote the national U20 women's national record in high jump to qualify for the final with a ninth-place finish in the qualification round at the ongoing World Athletics U20 Championships here.

The 17-year-old, who hails from Fatehabad district of Haryana, cleared a height of 1.83m to finish second in qualification round group B and ninth overall late Thursday night and qualify for the final to be held on August 31.

Daughter of a mason, Pooja broke her own national U20 record of 1.82m set last year in Korea while winning a silver medal at the Asian U20 Championships.

Nine athletes in group A and three in group B made the cut for the final.

Pooja, who started her journey at the Parta Sports Academy under coach Balwan Singh without proper landing mat or equipment, had won gold in the U-14 girls' category with a jump of 1.41m but picked up a quadriceps injury which kept her out for 15 months. (PTI)

## West Delhi Lions pip South Delhi Superstarz

**NEW DELHI, Aug 30:** West Delhi Lions pipped South Delhi Superstarz by four runs in the rain-affected match of the Delhi Premier League here on Friday.

Krish Yadav struck 106 off 68 balls, guiding the Lions to 178 for five in the 20 overs.

The Superstarz began the chase on a blistering note but were left reeling at 123 for five in 15 overs and were four runs short as per the DLS score, when the play ended due to rain and owing to the cut-off time.

For the Superstarz, Priyansh Arya (25 off nine balls) smacked 16 runs in the opening over, but Saurabh Deswal endured a golden duck after being dismissed by Saksham Gahlot in the next.

Ayush Badoni (30 off 7 balls) pummelled four sixes in the same over to take his team to 40 for two after the second over.

Badoni fell after having smashed a total five sixes, whereas the Superstarz managed 70 runs in the powerplay, post

which they lost a couple of more wickets quickly.

Sumit Mathur and Vision Panchal took South Delhi to 123/5 but rain intervened proceedings after the 15th over.

Earlier, the Lions' openers Ankit Kumar (28) and Yadav amassed 61 runs in the powerplay before the former fell prey to Digvesh Rathi in the ninth over. Yadav brought up his half-century in 41 deliveries.

The Lions were poised for a big total after being in a comfortable position at 120 for one.

But South Delhi struck twice with Hritik Shokeen (16 off 18) falling in the 16th over at 141 for two, whereas Yadav brought up his ton in 62 deliveries in the 18th over.

Brief scores: West Delhi Lions 178/5 in 20 overs (Krish Yadav 106, Ankit Kumar 28; Raghav Singh 2/33) beat South Delhi Superstarz 123-5 in 15 overs (Ayush Badoni 30; Deepak Punia 1/8) by 4 runs via D/L method. (PTI)