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SC grants bail to AAP leader Manish Sisodia

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia, who has been in jail for 17 months, and sharply rebuked the courts below saying his long incarceration without trial had deprived him of the right to speedy justice.

Observing that "bail is rule and jail is exception", the top court said it is high time trial courts and high courts recognised this principle.

"As observed time and again, prolonged incarceration before being pronounced guilty of an offence should not be permitted to become punishment without trial," a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said, while describing Sisodia as a man with

"deep roots in society".

The top court granted him bail in the separate corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

Hours later, a Delhi court issued an order for Sisodia's release after accepting the bail bonds and surety bonds submitted by his advocates.

In its 38-page judgement, the apex court directed that Sisodia be released on bail on a personal bond of ₹ 10 lakh with two sureties of the like amount. The former deputy chief minister of Delhi was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on February 26, 2023 over purported irregularities in the formulation and implementation (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



'Demolition of hills to build new campus structures causing inundation in Guwahati' 'Flood jihad': Himanta blames Meghalaya varsity

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday accused a private university in neighbouring Meghalaya of engaging in a "flood jihad" by demolishing hills on its campus to build new structures, which he claims has led to large-scale waterlogging in Guwahati.

Sarma pointed the finger at the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM), founded by Mahbubul Hoque who is also its chancellor.

USTM officials could not be reached for comments.

Addressing a press conference here, Sarma claimed the university is demolishing all the hills on its campus to construct new buildings to start a medical college and that is "one of the reasons" for waterlogging in Guwahati.

"I feel that the USTM owner has started a flood jihad. No nature-loving people cut forests and hills



ruthlessly in this way. Nowadays, buildings can be constructed on the hills with proper architectural design," he added.

USTM is located in 9th Mile area in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya on the outskirts of Guwahati.

During heavy rain in Guwahati since Monday, in several places near USTM, such as Jorabat, which is the entry point of the city on the east side, the accumulated water flooded streets and reached the waist level.

"The USTM is located in Meghalaya, but 90 per cent of its students and teachers are from Assam. If our students and teachers stop going there, it will automatically stop destroying the hills," Sarma said. He said that a letter has been sent to Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on the issue and both the CMs are going to meet Friday night to discuss the problem.

Asked if the USTM is solely responsible for flooding in Guwahati, Sarma, however, said, "It is one of the reasons, not the main reason. Our people are also responsible for constructions on drains."

He said the government can flush out water from Guwahati in 3-4 hours in the normal course of waterlogging, but it will not be possible if USTM adds to the problem. "If there is rain in Guwahati, we are responsible and we can handle that. If there is no rain in

Guwahati, then USTM is responsible for flooding in Guwahati," the CM said.

Defending his government against severe criticism over flood management in Guwahati, Sarma and his cabinet colleagues have been claiming that water from Meghalaya inundated the city.

Heavy rain lashed the Assam capital on Monday, leading to large-scale water logging, inconveniencing commuters. People returning from office, school children and even ambulances were reportedly stuck till late in the evening due to inundated roads.

The Gauhati High Court on Wednesday said that time has come to deal with the problem of waterlogging in the state capital and the government is required to take steps to resolve this problem permanently, asking to submit a plan to mitigate the crisis by August 19. (PTI)

HT BRIEFS

Accused escapes

KOKRAJHAR: A person arrested in connection with a drug case escaped from police custody on Kokrajhar court premises on Friday. The person, who was arrested from Alamganj Part-9 village in Garupur police station area of Assam's Dhubri district on Thursday night, was being brought to court for a hearing. According to a police officer, the accused fled through a window after requesting to use the restroom. Authorities have initiated a search operation to locate and recapture the accused.

Drugs seized

GUWAHATI: Drugs worth over ₹ 120 crore were seized in an operation in Assam's Karimganj and Cachar districts in the Barak Valley on Friday, police said. Five persons have been arrested in connection with the recovery, they said. In Karimganj district, a joint operation led by IGP Partha Sarathi Mahanta was launched by the Special Task Force (STF) and the district police at Puwamara bypass, leading to seizure of huge quantities of drugs from inside the "secret chambers" of a 12-wheeler truck. The seized contraband includes 3,50,000 Yaba tablets and 1.3 kg of heroin hidden in 100 soap cases, Mahanta said. Yaba is a combination of stimulants, the most important being methamphetamine and caffeine. The value of the seized drugs is around ₹ 115 crore, Mahanta said.

Plantation drive

DIPHU: Under the Amrit Brikshya Andolan programme, a plantation drive was taken up at Diphu Medical College here on Friday. The event took place at the college premises at 7 am, drawing in enthusiastic participation from the college community, including Dr Sumitra Hagier, Principal of DMC&H and other employees. The collective effort aimed at supporting the Assam Government's Amrit Brikshya Andolan initiative, focuses on large-scale tree plantation to combat climate change and enhance green cover across the state.

KA protest for Article 244(A) in Delhi

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Aug 9: A delegation led by the Karbi Anglong Dima Hasao Autonomous State Demand Committee (KADHASDCOM) organized a sit-in demonstration on Thursday at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, seeking the implementation of Article 244(A) of the Indian Constitution to grant an Autonomous State.

The demonstration lasted for three hours, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and was attended by MP Amarsing Tisso, among others. Participating organizations included the Karbi Students' Association (KSA), Dimas Students' Union (DSU), Karbi Riso Adorbar (KRA), Karbi So'arlo Asong (KARSA), Kuki Students' Organization (KSO), Karbi Unemployed Youth Association (KUYA), United Khasi People's Organization (UKPO), All Tiwa Students' Union (ATSU), and Garo Students' Union (GSU).

Ajit Timung, president of KADHASDCOM, told The Hills Times, "The demonstration is led by KADHASDCOM, supported by various student, youth, and women's organizations from Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao. We have been advocating for the Autonomous State since 1986. We are in New Delhi to urge the Central government to immediately implement Article 244(A). We have submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Union Tribal Minister Jugal Oram."

The memorandum focuses solely on the implementation of Article 244(A).

KADHASDCOM has urged MP Amarsing Tisso to introduce a private member's bill in Parliament on the Autonomous State

issue in the next session. The memorandum includes signatures from MP Amarsing Tisso, the Chief Executive Members (CEM) of the two Autonomous Councils of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, MLAs from five LACs of the three hill districts, and the presidents and secretaries of various organizations involved in the movement.

Timung stated, "I call on all political parties, national and regional, to continue advocating for the Autonomous State. Both the BJP and Congress should engage with their national leaders, while regional parties like the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) and All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) should pursue this issue with both the State and Central governments. I urge all parties and organisations to focus solely on the demand for an Autonomous State and avoid accepting more power from the government. Any agreement should be for an Autonomous State, not additional powers."

He also encouraged like-minded organizations to join the movement.

At Jantar Mantar, KSA General Secretary criticized the BJP government, stating, "If the BJP-led State and Central governments continue to betray the people of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, the BJP will lose its presence in the hill districts."

Timung reminded the BJP of promises made by leaders like LK Advani and Rajnath Singh, who assured that Article 244(A) would be implemented if the BJP came to power in the Central government—a promise that has not yet been fulfilled.

DSU President Dhiraj Diphusa urged the government to avoid delaying tactics, stating, "The people of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao are ready to fight for" (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Committee formed to monitor situation along Indo-Bangla border: Shah

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The Narendra Modi government on Friday constituted a high-level committee, headed by a top Border Security Force (BSF) official, to monitor the situation along the Indo-Bangladesh border in wake of the ongoing state of affairs in the neighbouring country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.

Shah said the committee would be in touch with counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus and other minority communities living there.

"In the wake of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Modi government has constituted a committee to monitor the current situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB). The committee will maintain communication channels with their counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus, and other minority communities living there. The committee will be headed by the ADG (Additional Director General), Border Security Force, Eastern Command," Shah said in a post on X.



Apart from the BSF ADG, the four other members of the committee are the BSF's Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the South Bengal frontier, the IGP for the Tripura frontier, member (planning and development) of the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI), and secretary of the LPAI. While extending greetings to Muhammad Yunus, who took oath as the head of an interim government in Bangladesh on Thursday, Prime (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Govt issues clarification on documents needed for citizenship under CAA

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The Centre has expanded the ambit of the rules issued under the citizenship law CAA through which Indian nationality will be given to persecuted minorities coming from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan.

The Union home ministry announced that "any document" issued by the central or state governments or quasi-judicial body in India proving that either of the parents, grandparents or great-grandparents is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries will be acceptable.

The clarification of the home ministry came after many applicants seeking Indian nationality under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 were reported to be facing difficulties due to a particular clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024.

"Any document that shows that

either of the parents or grandparents or great grandparents of the applicant is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries i.e. of Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan," the earlier clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024 says.

In its latest clarification, the home ministry said: "It may be clarified that the documents under Sr No. 8 of the Schedule -IA may include any document issued by the central government/state government/ any judicial or quasi-judicial body in India such as land record, judicial order etc., identifying or representing that the applicant or the parents or grandparents or great grandparents had been a national of Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan." "The above clarification may be taken note of while deciding any citizenship application under Citizenship (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Hindu population declining in both Assam, B'desh: CM

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday claimed that the Hindu population in both Assam and Bangladesh have been declining rapidly and he has mentioned that the upcoming census will shed more light on this fact. Sarma compared the decline in Hindu population in Assam and Bangladesh over the last 60 years.

In 1951, the Hindu population was 70.78 percent of the total population while Muslim population was 25.37 percent.

In the 2011 census, Hindu population in Assam dropped to 61.47 percent; however, the Muslim population witnessed an increase and it reached 34.23 percent in 2011. According to the chief minister, the Hindu (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Ashok attacks Himanta, praises Sarba

BJP Ex-MLA finally joins Congress at Nalbari

HT Correspondent

NALBARI, Aug 9: Former BJP MLA of Nalbari constituency and RSS leader Ashok Sarma along with his several colleagues joined Congress on Friday.

Sarma joined the Congress party amidst a huge gathering at Rajiv Bhawan of Nalbari in the presence of APCC president Bhupen Kumar Borah, MPs Gaurav Gogoi, leaders Pradyut Bordoloi, Rakibul Hussain, leader of opposition Debabrata Saikia, MLA Diganta Barman among others.

Waving the flag of Congress party Sarma said that he left BJP due to the "injustice" meted out to him and against alleged autocracy that prevails in the party.

Congress leader Diganta Barman said that Sarma earned popularity



amongst masses for his developmental works he carried out in Nalbari constituency during his tenure as an MLA.

"On this day, the Quit India movement started to get Independent

from the British. I chose this day to join the Congress in recognition of the sacrifice made by the party and its leaders," Sarma said addressing the huge crowd. He said it was (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Targeted approach streamlines workflow and enhances overall efficiency

IIT-G researchers develop 'LEAP' for semiconductor industry

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (IIT-G) have developed an innovative machine learning framework named 'LEAP', marking a significant advancement in the field of Electronic Design Automation (EDA) used in the semiconductor industry.

The development of this cutting-edge solution enhances the design process of Integrated Circuits (ICs), a critical component in the USD 600 billion semiconductor industry that powers modern electronic devices, an official release said on Thursday.

Designing ICs involve navigating complex problems that can be challenging to solve and often yield less-than-ideal results.

A team of researchers, comprising Professor Chandan Karfa and



Dr Sukanta Bhattacharjee of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, along with BTech students Chandrabhushan Reddy Chingarapally and Harshwardhan Nitin Bhakkad, have leveraged machine learning to improve efficiency in IC design.

Another collaborator, Dr Animesh Basak Chowdhury of New York University, USA was also involved in the project.

The LEAP framework streamlines the technology mapping process within EDA, Karfa said. "Rather than evaluating thousands of potential configurations, LEAP intelligently identifies and

prioritises the most promising options, reducing the number of configurations the mapping tool must consider, by over 50 per cent," he said. The framework not only speeds up the mapping process but also improves the performance of the circuits, he said.

LEAP estimates the delay for various configurations and selects only the top ten options for each node in the design, as compared to the traditional method, which typically evaluates around 250 configurations, Karfa said.

This targeted approach streamlines the workflow and enhances overall efficiency.

This research holds real-world implications for the semiconductor industry, which is essential for the development of electronic devices such as (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Mizoram, Assam hold border talks after 20 months



AIZAWL, Aug 9: Mizoram and Assam discussed the border issues on Friday, twenty months after the two northeastern neighbours held a meeting to find an amicable solution to the inter-state boundary dispute, an official said.

The meeting between delegations of both states is being held in Aizawl. The two states held the last round of talks in November 2022 in Guwahati.

During Friday's meeting, the Assam delegation is led by Border

Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora while the Mizoram side is headed by Home Minister K Sapdanga, the official said.

This is the fourth ministerial-level talks between the two neighbouring states since August 2021 and the first meeting after the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) came to power in December last year.

Three Mizoram districts - Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit - share a 164.6 km border with Assam's Cachar, Karimganj and Hailankandi districts.

The dispute mainly stemmed from two colonial demarcations - 1875 and 1933. Mizoram claims that 509 square miles area of the inner line (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Sensex bounces back 819 pts on global stocks rally, gains in RIL, Infosys

MUMBAI, Aug 9: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded 1 per cent each on Friday following buying in blue-chips such as Reliance and Infosys amid a rally in global equity markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex bounced back 819.69 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,705.91 with 28 of its constituents closing in green and two in red. The index opened higher amid gains in Asian markets and later surged 1,098.02 points or 1.39 per cent to hit a high of 79,984.24.

The NSE Nifty soared 250.50 points or 1.04 per cent to 24,367.50. During the day, it rallied 302.75 points or 1.25 per cent to 24,419.75.

"Positive US jobless claims data eased the fears of recession and provided a favourable broader market reaction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Most of the Sensex firms settled in the positive territory. Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, Tech



Mahindra, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries and Infosys were the biggest gainers.

Kotak Mahindra Bank and Maruti were the laggards.

"The markets started strong, gaining over a per cent, buoyed by positive global cues," Ajit Mishra

— SVP, Research, Religare Broking

Ltd, said. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.21 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.79 per cent.

All the indices ended in the positive territory, with IT surging 1.59 per cent, consumer discretionary by 1.57 per cent, realty by 1.56 per cent, auto by 1.51 per cent, tech by 1.41 per cent and capital goods by

1.37 per cent.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark slumped 1,276.04 points or 1.57 per cent, while the Nifty declined 350.2 points or 1.41 per cent.

A total of 2,330 stocks advanced while 1,579 declined and 97 remained unchanged on the BSE.

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

European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended significantly higher on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 2,626.73 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.03 per cent to USD 79.18 a barrel. The BSE benchmark declined 581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade on Thursday. The NSE Nifty retreated to settle lower by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to 24,117. (PTI)

Sanitaryware maker Grotto to expand in Northeast

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: Luxury sanitaryware maker Grotto on Thursday said it is looking to expand its market in Northeast India over the next three months.

Grotto co-founder Dhermender Garg said in a statement that the company has plans to make its "innovative and high-quality products" available in dealer outlets across major cities in

the region. "We are excited to announce our plans to expand our product availability in Northeast India. This expansion is a significant step for us and we are committed to reaching more customers here," he said.

Garg said Grotto's vast range of bathroom and kitchen products are crafted around multiple design themes under various sub-brands,

each with its own ethos and style catering to distinct customer profiles.

"Grotto will be showcasing its extensive range of products at the BAIC Exhibition 2024, Northeast India's largest show of building materials, architecture, interior design and construction, from August 9 to 11 in Guwahati," he added. (PTI)

Indian Gold industry launches (IAGES) to elevate industry practices

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: In a landmark development for India's gold sector, the Indian gold industry has announced the formation of the Indian Association for Gold Excellence and Standards (IAGES). Pronounced as I-AAY-GES, this new self-regulatory organization (SRO) is established by the Indian gold industry for the Indian gold industry, with significant support from the World Gold Council.

IAGES is set to play a pivotal role in bolstering consumer confidence and trust within the Indian gold market. Its mission is to promote fair, transparent, and sustainable practices across the entire value chain. This will be achieved through encouraging regulatory compliance, establishing a comprehensive code of conduct, and introducing a rigorous audit framework. The organization draws inspiration from the World Gold Council's Retail Gold Investment Principles, providing industry stakeholders with a detailed set of best practices and a roadmap for implementation.

Sachin Jain, Regional CEO, India, World Gold

Council: "The gold industry is integral to the Indian economy, contributing approximately 2% to India's GDP and employing 3-5 million people. As India moves towards its goal of becoming a developed country by 2047, IAGES represents a significant turning point for the industry. The World Gold Council has long advocated for the creation of a self-regulatory organization to promote best practices. The launch of IAGES marks a crucial step towards enhancing trust and sustainability in the Indian gold market. This initiative reflects the unified commitment of the Indian gold industry to advance shared goals and ensure a robust future. We at the World Gold Council are fully committed to supporting IAGES, which has the potential to propel India's gold market to global prominence." The formation of IAGES signals a new era for India's gold industry, with a collective commitment to sustainable growth, transparency, and global leadership. As it prepares to become fully operational by 2025, the entire industry looks forward to the transformative impact this initiative is set to bring.

Cipla launches nationwide 'Breathefree Monsoon Yatra'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: As the monsoon season sweeps across India, bringing much-needed relief from the summer heat, it also ushers in a series of challenges for respiratory health. Increased humidity and damp conditions during this season can significantly aggravate lung conditions, underscoring the need for heightened precautionary measures. In response, Cipla has launched the "Breathefree Monsoon Yatra," a nationwide initiative aimed at improving respiratory health awareness and accessibility to screenings for chronic lung diseases such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

This three-month-long campaign will see the organization of over 4,000 camps across the country, targeting the screening of more than 350,000 individuals. The initiative is part of Cipla's broader commitment to proactive patient care, providing vital resources and education to help individuals better understand their respiratory health status.

"Monsoon brings a host of respiratory health challenges," said Dr. Kripesh Ranjan Sarmah, Consultant Pulmonologist in Guwahati. "Factors such as heightened humidity, mold, cold air, and increased risk of viral infections pose significant threats to those with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Allergens that thrive in humid conditions, like dust mites, can exacerbate asthma and COPD symptoms, potentially leading to severe attacks. In fact, research has shown a notable rise in asthma cases following thunderstorms, a phenomenon known as 'thunderstorm asthma.' Initiatives like the Breathefree Monsoon Yatra are crucial in offering timely screenings, disease management counseling, and education on proper treatment adherence, particularly during seasons that amplify these conditions."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.05 per cent to 103.15, on better-than-expected weekly unemployment claims data. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.18 per cent higher at USD 79.30 per barrel in futures trade. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on selling pressure from foreign investors and a positive US dollar. Ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may also pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. (PTI)

CIPACA launches franchise models to establish 24x7 ICUs nationwide

CHENNAI, Aug 9: Emergency healthcare provider CIPACA has launched its initiative to establish 24x7 intensive care units countrywide under franchise models, to fuel its next phase of growth.

The city-based company has opened up opportunities for franchisees to invest in setting up Intensive Care Units in rural hospitals.

CIPACA (Chennai Interventional Pulmonology and Critical Care Associates) has helped

hospitals particularly in rural areas to set up 24x7 ICU operations aimed at enhancing the health care services. By partnering with rural hospitals which face inadequate infrastructure and shortage of skilled manpower, CIPACA provides high-quality ICU services at affordable rates to rural populations.

A CIPACA ICU that has been established in a rural hospital treats up to 100-150 patients every month at one-fourth of

the cost of a city hospital ICU, a press release said on Friday.

"CIPACA is seeking franchisees to invest in ICU operations in small towns and rural areas, leveraging the company's expertise. The company under the franchise model has roped in Abtita GTM Pvt Ltd which specializes in business expansion and to recruit franchisees and expand ICU services across rural parts of the country." CIPACA said in the press release. (PTI)

Rupee rises 2 paise to close at 83.95 against US dollar

MUMBAI, Aug 9: The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 2 paise at 83.95 (provisional) against US dollar on Friday, supported by gains in the domestic markets.

Forex traders said the rupee edged up slightly on gains in the domestic markets. However, a surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains for the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.95 and touched an intraday low of 83.96 and a high of 83.88 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at 83.95 (provisional) against

the American currency, higher by 2 paise from its previous close.

The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on Monday. On Thursday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.97 against US dollar.

Forex traders said post the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy announcement, markets now wait for the US CPI data, India CPI, WPI and IIP data, and India's trade data, all scheduled to be released next week.

The Jackson Holes Symposium to be held after next week will also remain in focus,

traders said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.05 per cent to 103.15, on better-than-expected weekly unemployment claims data. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.18 per cent higher at USD 79.30 per barrel in futures trade. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on selling pressure from foreign investors and a positive US dollar. Ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may also pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. (PTI)

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SC grants bail to AAP leader

of the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy 2021-22. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested him in the money laundering case stemming from the CBI FIR on March 9, 2023. He resigned from the Delhi cabinet on February 28 last year.

Soon after the apex court's verdict, senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Delhi Education Minister Atishi said on X "Satyamev Jayate" (truth alone triumphs).

In a post on X in Hindi, AAP MP Raghav Chadha said, "The whole country is happy today as Manish Sisodia, the hero of Delhi education revolution, got bail. I express my gratitude to the Honourable Supreme Court from the bottom of my heart."

After the apex court pronounced its verdict, Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, who represented the CBI and ED, urged the bench that same conditions, as imposed by the top court on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal while granting him interim bail in the excise policy-linked money laundering case, be imposed on Sisodia.

While ordering Kejriwal's release on May 10 to enable him campaign in the Lok Sabha polls, the top court had laid down the condition that he will not visit the CM office or the Delhi Secretariat during the interim relief.

When Raju read out the conditions, Justice Gavai said, "We are not inclined."

"We have imposed conditions to address your concern," Justice Gavai told the law officer.

Raju said if there was any tampering with evidence, the probe agencies may move for cancellation of bail granted to Sisodia.

"That (option) is always there," Justice Gavai said, adding, "In the matters of liberty, every day counts."

Listing out the conditions for his bail, the top court said Sisodia will have to surrender his passport to the special trial court and not make any attempt to either influence witnesses or tamper with evidence.

Besides, he will have to report to the investigating officer every Monday and Thursday between 10-11 am, it said.

"We find that, on account of a long period of incarceration running for around 17 months and the trial even not having been commenced, the appellant (Sisodia) has been deprived of his right to speedy trial," the bench said.

"As observed by this court, the right to speedy trial and the right to liberty are sacrosanct rights. On denial of these rights, the trial court as well as the high court ought to have given due weightage to this factor," it said.

Over a period of time, the court has observed that trial courts and high courts have forgotten a very well-settled principle of law that bail is not to be withheld as a punishment, the bench said while referring to earlier judgments.

"From our experience, we can say that it appears that the trial courts and the high courts attempt to play safe in matters of grant of bail. The principle that bail is a rule and refusal is an exception is, at times, followed in breach," it said.

The bench said on account of non-grant of bail even in straightforward open and shut cases, the apex court is flooded with a huge number of bail petitions. This, it said, adds to the huge pendency.

Keeping Sisodia behind bars for an unlimited period of time in the hope of speedy completion of trial would deprive him of his fundamental right to liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution, the judges said.

The bench set aside the May 21 verdict of the Delhi High Court which had dismissed Sisodia's pleas seeking bail in both these cases.

It observed that citizens cannot be made to run from pillar to post in matters pertaining to life and liberty which are the most sacrosanct rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

It also said the trial court's finding that Sisodia was responsible for delaying the trial in these cases was not supported by the record.

The bench rejected the preliminary objection raised by the CBI and ED that Sisodia cannot be permitted to file a second set of special leave petitions to challenge the Delhi High Court's May 21 verdict which denied him bail in the excise policy cases. (PTI)

KA protest for Article 244(A)

an Autonomous State. This demand is a legitimate and constitutional right, and it is disheartening that the government is not addressing it."

Bidyasingh Rongpi, Media In-Charge of the BJP – East Karbi Anglong District Committee, participating in the demonstration, assured the media, "The commitment made by the BJP regarding the Autonomous State will not be forgotten. I assure you that during this BJP government, the implementation of Article 244(A) will be considered."

Committee formed to monitor situation

Minister Modi express hope for early return of normalcy and sought safety of Hindus and other minority communities in that country.

Bangladesh witnessed deadly unrest in recent weeks. More than 500 people, including police personnel, were killed in the anti-government demonstration that started with an anti-reservation protest by students.

Many of those killed died after the country's Supreme Court backed the students' demands and largely scrapped the quota system last month.

After Sheikh Hasina resigned as prime minister and fled to India on Monday, there were reports of attacks on Hindus and minorities in the neighbouring country. (PTI)

Govt issues clarification on documents

(Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), it said. The CAA was enacted in December 2019 for granting Indian nationality to persecuted Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Parsi and Christian migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who came to India on or before December 31, 2014.

After the enactment, the CAA got the president's assent but the rules under which Indian citizenship would be granted were issued only on March 11 this year, after over a delay of four years.

Since May, the government has been granting citizenship to those coming from the three countries under the CAA.

The nod to the CAA in 2019 sparked protests in different parts of the country with agitators terming it "discriminatory".

Over a hundred people lost their lives during the anti-CAA protests or police action in various parts of the country. (PTI)

Hindu population declining in

population witnessed a decline of 9.23 percent in Assam between 1951 and 2011.

He has also outlined the change in population pattern in Bangladesh also. In 1951, Hindu population was 22 percent of total population while in 2011, population of Hindu community dropped to just 8.5 percent.

"The Muslim population was 76 percent in 1951 and it rose to 90.4 percent in 2011—an increase of more than 14 percent," Sarma said.

Taking to his X handle, the chief minister wrote, "In both Assam and Bangladesh, the Hindu population is declining rapidly. Census data from 2021 will likely provide more detailed insights. Official census data up to 2011 of both places clearly demonstrate a demographic shift. The situation in West Bengal and Jharkhand is expected to be similar."

Ashok attacks Himanta, praises Sarba

a tough decision to join the Congress as his family, including all three brothers and two sisters, was associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"My political existence was at stake in the BJP. The party's arrogance to destroy Congress was also not well accepted by common party workers. After Himanta Biswa Sarma joined the BJP, the downfall started. Because of such an attitude, Congress will form a government again next time," he claimed.

During the Congress regime in Assam, the society was never divided and it was also not so during former CM Sarbananda Sonowal's tenure, he added.

"However, we are seeing only Hindu-Muslim politics in the last three years. I do not agree with the politics of division in society," Sarma said.

Along with him, scores of Nalbari district BJP leaders and workers also joined the Congress.

Borah said, "We are really happy to welcome Sarma into the Congress. We are happy that this joining programme is taking place at the Nalbari Congress office and we are not able to accommodate the supporters. It shows our growing popularity."

Gogoi said Sarma's joining Congress will create a "tremor" in BJP in lower Assam districts and more leaders will come to the opposition party in coming months.

On August 2, Sarma resigned from the primary membership of the BJP and also quit the post of chairman of Assam Plantation Crops Development Corporation Limited after expressing his dissatisfaction over the functioning of leaders of the party for several months.

He was an MLA from 2016 to 2021 and was considered to have a "good relationship" with Sonowal, the former CM and present Union minister.

Spending several decades in the BJP, soft-spoken Sarma rose from the grassroots level and has considerable clout in Nalbari. He had close links with the RSS too and carried a "clean image" all along.

His difference with party leadership started after he was denied a ticket in the 2021 assembly polls to accommodate former Congress leader and present minister Jayanta Malla Baruah, a close aide of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. (With inputs from PTI)

Mizoram, Assam hold border

reserved forest, notified in 1875 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) 1873, falls within its territory. Assam, on the other hand, regarded the map prepared by the Survey of India in 1933 as its constitutional boundary.

Vast areas within the inner line reserved forest now fall under Assam.

Similarly, a certain extent of the area, as per the 1933 demarcation line, is now on the Mizoram side.

There is no ground demarcation of boundaries between the two states. (PTI)

IIT-G researchers develop 'LEAP'

smartphones and computers. It will lead to faster, more efficient electronic devices with lower energy consumption, ultimately benefiting consumers and driving innovation across various technology sectors.

The results of this work have been published in the ACM/IEEE International Conference on Computer-Aided Design (ICCAD 2024), the release added. (PTI)

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from Akidujzman Chowdhury to Akiduzzaman Chowdhury by swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam) Akiduzzaman Chowdhury Vill-Farmarpar, P.O.-Kharikhana, P.S.- Lanka, Dist-Hojai (Assam)

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury to Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury by swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam) Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury Vill-Farmarpar, P.O.-Kharikhana, P.S.- Lanka, Dist-Hojai (Assam)

No. TE(Ex)Admn-1/2024/559

ONLINE COUNSELLING FOR ADMISSION INTO B.Tech/MCA courses

[Offered by the State Engineering Colleges of Assam]

The first round of online counselling for admission into the B.Tech/MCA courses of Government Engineering Colleges of Assam, based on the Joint Lateral Entrance Examination (JLEE) 2024 & Joint MCA Entrance Examination (JMEE) 2024 conducted by Assam Science & Technology University, Guwahati will be held from 16th August to 22nd August-2024.

The aspiring eligible candidates having JLEE 2024/ JMEE 2024 score are to participate in the online counselling process by logging in using their Application No. of JLEE 2024/ JMEE 2024 and Date of Birth, in the link given in the online portal which will be made available at <https://dte.assam.gov.in>

- The details of the counselling fees, schedule for allotment of seat, submission of acceptance letter by the candidates and parent/guardian will be notified in the DTE's website <https://dte.assam.gov.in> due course of time. Accordingly, candidates are requested to visit the website frequently.
- If a candidate uploads any forged documents or submit misleading information, his/her candidature will be forfeited at any stage during the provisional selection process or during the study period.

Sd/-

Director of Technical Education, Assam, Kahlipara, Guwahati-19.

Janasanyog/D/3924/24/10-Aug-24

CM attends 29th foundation day of NEDFi

NEDFi should partner with state for enhanced micro lending facilities: CM

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attended the 29th foundation day celebration of NEDFi at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati on Friday. During his address, he stated that the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFi) could collaborate with the Assam government to bolster women's empowerment and create more entrepreneurship opportunities in the state through micro-lending facilities.

The chief minister highlighted the potential partnership between NEDFi and the state government under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Scheme, which aims to support women in self-help groups. He outlined the scheme's two-phase structure: In Phase I, the government would grant a sum of



₹ 10,000 in the first year as seed funding to the women beneficiaries. This seed fund will be utilised to support business ventures. In Phase II of the scheme, in the second year, successful women entre-

preneurs will receive a sum of ₹ 25,000. Out of this amount, ₹ 12,500 will be provided as a bank loan, while the rest will be granted by the state government. He said that NEDFi could partner with the

government in providing loan amounts to the beneficiaries. He, therefore, requested NEDFi functionaries to review every component of the Mahila Udyamita Scheme to align with it.

Praising NEDFi for the success of its micro-lending scheme, which was launched in 2022, CM Sarma said that a total of 10,891 entrepreneurs have benefited from the scheme. The scheme has also opened doors of opportunity for entrepreneurs in the region. The chief minister also launched a Digital Mobile App for the NEDFi Micro Lending Scheme, aimed at lending a helping hand to small enterprises and entrepreneurs in the NE region.

Chief minister Sarma also thanked NEDFi for its role in providing assistance to micro, small, and medium enterprises in setting

up industrial and infrastructure projects in the north-east. He said that over the years, NEDFi has been a crucial force in providing quick and hassle-free loans to entrepreneurs, helping them become self-reliant. For several years, NEDFi has played a significant role in strengthening micro, small, and medium enterprises. He expressed hope that in the coming years, NEDFi would go the extra mile to enhance the volume of business generated from entrepreneurship in the region. The chief minister also felicitated Padma Shri awardees Sarbeswar Basumatary from Assam and Moirangthem Muktamani Devi from Manipur on the occasion.

Chief secretary Dr Ravi Kota, CMD NEDFi PVSLN Murty, along with a host of dignitaries, were present on the occasion.

Preparatory meeting held for 'Har Ghar Tiranga' prog in Tezpur



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 9: A preparatory meeting for the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme, along with a review of the preparations for the upcoming Independence Day celebration, was held on Friday under the chairmanship of district commissioner Deba Kumar Mishra at the conference hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Sonitpur. Welcoming all stakeholders to the meeting, the district commissioner first took stock of the progress regarding the forthcoming Independence Day celebration on August 15. He informed the gathering that parade rehearsals by various uniformed and non-uniformed contingents started on Thursday, with around 20 parade contingents expected to participate this year. He directed all concerned to consider the weather conditions for stage construction and field preparation. Issues such as proper arrangements for drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, stalls by various departments, and cultural programs were discussed.

Next, addressing the gathering about the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme, the district commissioner

mentioned that, as in previous years, the programme will be celebrated and observed this year as well. He added that all government offices are to hoist the national flag every day from August 12 to August 15, adhering to proper flag protocol and honour. Illumination of all government buildings is also to be done from August 12 to August 15. Various programs will be organised across the district, reaching the gaon panchayat and block levels in connection with the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme, and he urged public participation in all the events. The 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative aims to instil a spirit of patriotism and national pride among citizens by encouraging everyone to hoist the national flag, the Tiranga. Citizens can visit harghar-tiranga.com to learn more about the initiative and upload selfies. Superintendent of police Barun Purkayastha, DDC Gaya Prasad Agarwal, additional district commissioners, circle officers, executive officers of Municipal Boards, along with heads of departments and concerned officials of the district administration, attended the meeting on Friday.

7th DN Barua Memorial Lecture held at Tocklai Tea Research Institute

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 9: The 7th DN Barua Memorial Lecture was delivered by Rathi Kanta Ghosh, a renowned water technologist and director of Effluent & Water Treatment Engineers Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata, at the Tocklai Tea Research Institute (TTRI), Cinnamara, on Thursday. The lecture was part of the 2nd DN Barua Memorial Tea Colloquium.

An official of TTRI informed that Ghosh, in his lecture titled 'Water in Tea - The Road Ahead', spoke on the importance of optimising water resources for tea irrigation. Ghosh suggested ways for tea plantations to implement water treatment initiatives for optimal water management.

He also reminisced about his association with Dr DN Barua, whom he regarded as a treasure trove of knowledge on tea. It may be mentioned here that Ghosh had recently financially aided the Tea Research Association to establish a Water Technology Laboratory at the Tocklai Tea Research Institute, donating valuable literature and relevant equipment to the newly built laboratory.

Dr Sonali Ghosh, field director of Kaziranga National Park, who was the guest of honour on the occasion, in her presentation on 'Growing Rural Futures - Agroforestry in Assam', emphasised the importance of empowering rural communities in the state through sustainable agroforestry practices to enhance land productivity and promote environmental conservation.

Held in memory of the late DN Barua, a distinguished Tocklai scientist and a stalwart in tea science, the colloquium featured 18 technical presentations by young scientists and researchers from the Tea Research Association.

The colloquium featured participation in two separate categories - the first for scientists and the second for research associates/fellows/assistants. Dr Ibrahim Kaleel secured the first position in the scientists' category, while Dr Pritom Choudhuri and Dr Podma Pallab Sarma secured the second and third positions, respectively. In the research associates/fellows/assistants category, Avishek Dolai secured the first position, while Shuvam Datta and Manikandan Bose secured the second and third positions, respectively.

The event also saw the presence of TRA chairperson Nayantra Palchoudhuri, former TRA chairman and noted tea planter PK Bezboruah, TRA director Dr A Babu, Dr Gautam Barua, son of DN Barua, along with his wife Monmee Barua, DGM, SBI, and four distinguished judges from various agricultural and academic backgrounds, namely Dr Rajib Lochan Deka, professor, Assam Agricultural University, Dr Mantu Bhuyan, principal scientist CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat, AS Nain, COO, Jayshree Group, and Kailyanjeet Borah, head R&D, Amalgamated Plantations Pvt. Ltd.

Agricultural team evaluates jute & rice fields

HT Correspondent

MORIGAO, Aug 9: An agricultural team led by Kaushik Dutta, technical officer, government of India, and Dr Arunima Deb Choudhary, state consultant for the NFSM, visited the district on Friday to assess the condition of jute and rice fields. The team also participated in a ceremonial sowing of finger millet, greengram, and blackgram.

During their visit, they interacted with local farmers, discussing their challenges and opportunities in agriculture. The state team was accompanied by Ashok Kumar Sarma, DAO; Mehedi Arif Hussain, SDAO cum DNO, NFSM; Mushahid Faruque, senior ADO; Luna Barua, ADO; Dr Punam Saikia, program officer; Dibyajyoti Hazarika, AAI; Sankar Anand Sarkar, AAI; Sahidul Islam, AAI; Mohan Bora, AAI; and Abu Eusuf, AEA. The visit also included discussions with progressive farmers Mantu Deka, Rajumoni Bhuyan, Nazrul Islam, Junti Bhuyan, Rupa Deka, Tulsi Deka, and Tilen Deka, who shared their insights and experiences in agriculture.

Gender sensitisation workshop held

HT Correspondent

MORIGAO, Aug 9: A workshop on gender sensitisation for teacher trainees of the College of Education, Morigaon, was held on Wednesday, at the conference hall of the College of Education. The event was organised as part of the 100 Days Campaigning and Enrollment initiative by Sankalp: District Hub for Empowerment of Women, Morigaon, under the Women and Child Development Department, Morigaon, in collaboration with IQAC, College of Education, Morigaon. The workshop addressed various issues related to sex, gender, and gender discrimination, providing valuable insights into the prohibition of child marriage, women and child-centric laws, and the functioning of various organisations dealing with child support. The workshop was facilitated by Namita Devi, LPU DCPU; Iftikar Ahmed, advocate DLSA; Hasina Akhter, DCPU; Dr Doli Buragohain, principal of the College of Education; Manika Borthakur, DSWO.

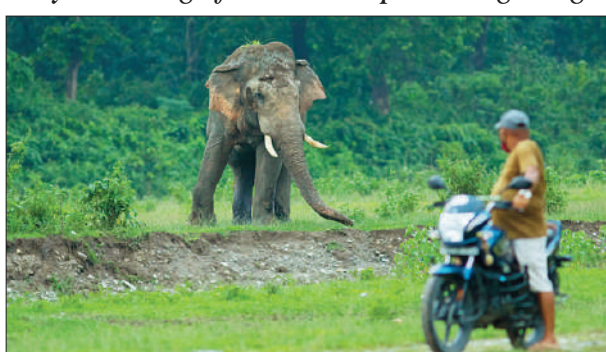
Aaranyak to launch HaatiApp to tackle HEC

The app will provide early warnings for wild elephant sightings to aid human-elephant conflict management

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: Adopting a citizen-science approach, the premier biodiversity conservation organisation of the region, Aaranyak, has developed a mobile application for all stakeholders, including the grassroots community, with the objective of facilitating the mitigation of the raging human-elephant conflict (HEC) and promoting coexistence in the state of Assam and the rest of the region.

The application, called 'HaatiApp' (ElephantApp), will act as an early warning system about the presence of wild elephants in the proximity of



human settlements, helping villagers avoid negative interactions with wild elephants.

According to Aaranyak's senior conservation scientist and the head of the Elephant Research and Conservation

Division (ERCD), Dr Bibhuti P Lahkar, the app will also include an ex-gratia application form for damages caused by wild elephants. The filled-out ex-gratia application form will be submitted to the respective

forest divisions by Aaranyak on behalf of the victims of HEC, complementing the Forest Department's efforts to pay compensation. The initiative is supported by the SBI Foundation.

In addition to 'HaatiApp', Aaranyak has compiled a handbook in Assamese on solar-powered fences, which are used as an effective tool for mitigating HEC. The handbook contains detailed information about solar fences, their utility in mitigating HEC, the functioning of each component of the solar fence, the procedure for installation, management, and maintenance of the fence, as well as

all the 'Dos and Don'ts' regarding such solar fences.

The handbook is expected to be useful for the grassroots community engaged in solar fence management. Forest Department personnel, contractor firms engaged by the Forest Department to install solar fences, and other conservation organisations interested in utilising solar fences for HEC mitigation. The British Asian Trust and Darwin Initiative have supported the solar fence manual brought out by Aaranyak. Both the HaatiApp and solar fence manual will be launched ceremonially on August 10 in a function organised here for the occasion.

Silver Jubilee celebration of Sankardev Senior Secondary School begins in Hojai

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Aug 9: The two-day silver jubilee celebration of Sankardev Senior Secondary School, Hojai (Sankardev Junior College), began on Friday with various activities at the school premises. The event commenced with the hoisting of the school flag, followed by the planting of saplings. As part of the celebration, an open session was organised, where Paritosh Paul, a retired teacher, graced the occasion as chief guest. Tapan Kar, principal of Sankardev Senior Secondary School, and advocate Samir Sarkar (ex-teacher), along with the faculty members, shared the dais.

The open session began with the lighting of the lamp by the guests. After that, the guests and teachers were felicitated. Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Paritosh Paul emphasised that there is no short-cut to excelling in life; one must be hardworking, perseverant, dedicated, and consistent. He appreciated the decorum and discipline maintained by the students, noting that the institution has repeatedly proven its mettle with outstanding



performances. Tapan Kar, principal of Sankardev Senior Secondary School, remarked that learning is a lifelong process and that one should never stop learning. He added that the curiosity to grasp positive things keeps both mind and body healthy. He further highlighted the institution's 25-year glorious journey and expressed gratitude to everyone who directly or indirectly contributed to making this educational temple one of the pioneering institutes in the entire district.

Ex-teacher Samir Sarkar ex-

pressed his happiness, stating that the seed sown two and a half decades ago has finally matured into a full-grown tree. He remarked that every beginning is small, but with utmost care, dedication, and passion, it grows large, and Sankardev Senior Secondary School serves as an exemplary lesson for all of us. All the teachers spoke on the occasion, sharing their thoughts and feelings.

Following the speeches, the school students enthralled the audience with their mesmerising performances in the cultural program.

Assam State Outsourced Power Workers Union protests in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Aug 9: The Assam State Outsourced Power Workers Union, comprising workers from APDCL, APGCL, and AEGCL divisions, staged a protest demonstration at the ASEB Kalibari Road office in Sivasagar on Thursday, demanding the fulfilment of their 11-point charter of demands. The demands include the regularisation of contractual employees' services, prioritising contractual workers in the recruitment of over 5,000 new employees by the Ministry, equal pay for equal work, medical aid for temporary workers in the event of accidents, among others.

Over 250 contractual workers from Sivasagar, Moran, Gargaon, Amguri, and Demow participated in the demonstration, demanding an end to the high-handed behaviour of some officers. Achyut Mech, organising secretary of the Union, stated that the Union has been agitating for a long time, but the concerned department heads and the government have not paid any attention to their demands to date. He emphasised that the workers are all Assamese youths who believe in a strong work culture but cannot tolerate discrimination and injustice. He added that 5,300 contractual workers have been working in various divisions, some for over 15 years. The workers alleged that Power Minister Nandita Gorlosa has not paid any attention to the plight of the contractual workers. Instead, the government has tried to create division among the workers by favouring one section while depriving others.

Walking zone inaugurated in Hojai

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Aug 9: Local legislator Ramkrishna Ghosh inaugurated a walking zone in Hojai on Thursday. The zone, extending from the Clock Tower at College Road to the NSCB Junction Point in Krishna Nagar, was established following a request from the Hojai District Senior Citizen Association. The association had sought a safe and hassle-free area for senior citizens to walk during the morning hours.

In response, district commissioner Lachit Kumar Das, exercising his authority under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), designated the area as a walking zone from 4 am to 7 am daily, starting Thursday. During these hours, all vehicular traffic in the zone will be strictly prohibited. "We had approached the district commissioner on August 2 to request a walking zone for our senior citizens. We are extremely pleased with the prompt action taken by the administration," said Anup Kumar Barthakur, a representative of the Hojai District Senior Citizen Association. He emphasised the association's commitment to the welfare of senior citizens in the district.

The inauguration was attended by Ashim Jyoti Kalita, Executive Magistrate, HMB; Chaturthi Rani Biswas, chairperson, HMB; and other officials. Additionally, Hojai police were present to enforce the vehicle restrictions during the designated walking zone hours, ensuring the safety and convenience of residents.

No. : SMED/DMC&H/TENDER/PT-II/2023-24/023/1611

NOTICE INVITATION FOR BID

Sealed Tenders (Two Bid system comprising of Technical Bid and Financial Bid) affixing court fee of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only are invited from the intending Govt. and authorized contractor/ Supplier/ Firm/ Dealer/ Manufacturer for "RATE CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF STATIONARY ITEMS IN THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENT OF DIPHU MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, DIPHU". The estimated value of the work is Rs. 19,75,000/-. The bidders are requested to submit the tender in separate sealed envelope with seal and signature. The tender documents along with the specification may be downloaded from the office website of DMC&H (www.dmcassam.in) from 13/08/2024 at 5 PM and to deposit the payment of Rs. 2000/- as tender fee (non-refundable) and EMD of Rs. 20000/- (refundable) in the form of demand draft in favour of Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent, Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu on or before 03/09/2024 along with the tender documents to be submitted before 1.00 P.M. The tender will be opened on the same date at 2.30 P.M. in presence of the tenderer or their authorized representatives. The tender is to be submitted to the office of the Principal cum Chief Superintendent, Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu on all the working days during office hours.

Sd/-

Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent

Janasanyog/C/2008/24/10-Aug-24

Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu, Assam

No. : SMED/DME&H/TENDER/PT-II/2023-24/023/1607

NOTICE INVITATION FOR BID

Sealed Tenders (Two Bid system comprising of Technical Bid and Financial Bid) affixing court fee of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only are invited from the intending Govt. and authorized contractor/ Supplier/ Firm/ Dealer/ Manufacturer for "RATE CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF LABORATORY CONSUMABLES IN THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENT OF DIPHU MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, DIPHU". The estimated value of the work is Rs. 19,50,000/-. The bidders are requested to submit the tender in separate sealed envelope with seal and signature. The tender documents along with the specification may be downloaded from the office website of DMC&H (m.dmeassam.in) from 12/08/2024 at 5 PM and to deposit the payment of Rs. 2000/- as tender fee (non-refundable) and EMD of Rs. 20000/- (refundable) in the form of demand draft in favour of Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent, Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu on or before 02/09/2024 along with the tender documents to be submitted before 1.00 P.M. The tender will be opened on the same date at 2.30 P.M. in presence of the tenderer or their authorized representatives. The tender is to be submitted to the office of the Principal cum Chief Superintendent, Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu on all the working days during office hours.

Sd/-

Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent

Janasanyog/C/2012/24/10-Aug-24

Diphu Medical College & Hospital, Diphu, Assam

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.
- Thomas Jefferson

Hope for AAP amid political turmoil

In a significant turn of events, Manish Sisodia, the former Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, was granted bail by the Supreme Court on August 9, after spending 17 months in jail. His release comes as a much-needed boost for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has been grappling with the absence of its top leadership as Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal remains incarcerated. Sisodia's arrest stemmed from allegations related to the Delhi excise policy, which he played a pivotal role in drafting. The policy, which aimed to overhaul the liquor distribution system in the capital, quickly became a lightning rod for controversy, leading to the arrest of several political figures, including Sisodia and K Kavitha, daughter of Bharat Rashtara Samithi Chief K Chandrasekhar Rao. The arrest marked a steep fall from grace for Sisodia, who was once lauded as a transformative education minister, even garnering praise from international outlets like The New York Times. Despite multiple attempts to secure bail, Sisodia remained behind bars until the Supreme Court intervened. Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan, while granting bail, remarked that it would be a "travesty of justice" to keep Sisodia incarcerated any longer, given the sluggish pace of the trial. With 493 witnesses and a mountain of evidence yet to be examined, the justices noted the improbability of the case reaching a conclusion in the near future. Sisodia's prolonged detention, in their view, was no longer justifiable.

The political ramifications of Sisodia's release are significant. AAP, which has struggled to maintain its momentum with Kejriwal in jail, now sees a potential resurgence with Sisodia back in the fold. His leadership could provide the stability the party desperately needs as it navigates the challenges ahead, particularly with crucial elections on the horizon. However, Sisodia's freedom comes with strict conditions. He has surrendered his passport, posted a ₹10 lakh bail bond, and committed to appearing before the Investigating Officer twice a week. Additionally, the court has prohibited him from influencing witnesses or tampering with evidence, restrictions that underscore the gravity of the charges against him. The decision to grant Sisodia bail has been met with mixed reactions. While AAP and its allies in the INDI-Alliance have celebrated the ruling, hailing it as a vindication of their stance, the opposition, particularly the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has criticized the decision, viewing it as a setback in the fight against corruption.

The broader public, meanwhile, remains divided. Sisodia's tenure as education minister earned him a reputation as a reformer, but the excise policy scandal has tarnished that legacy. His release, while welcomed by his supporters and family, does not equate to an exoneration. The charges against him remain serious, and the trial, once it gains momentum, could still bring more revelations to light. In the political theater of Delhi, Sisodia's return could be a game-changer. AAP, which has been on the defensive, may now find itself on firmer footing. But the road ahead is fraught with challenges. The Supreme Court's intervention may have provided a temporary reprieve for Sisodia, but the ultimate outcome of the legal battle remains uncertain. As AAP gears up for the future, the focus will be on how Sisodia steers the party through these turbulent times. His leadership will be crucial in maintaining the party's relevance and credibility, particularly as it seeks to expand its influence on the national stage.

The fall of Sheikh Hasina: A new era for Bangladesh

The seeds of discontent in Bangladesh were sown in June when the high court reinstated a 30% job quota for descendants of 1971 freedom fighters, only to be later reduced to 5% by the Supreme Court on July 21. This contentious policy, first introduced by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1972 and briefly abolished by Sheikh Hasina's government in 2018, has long been a point of contention. At its core, the quota system exposes a deep-seated divide between those who fought for independence from Pakistan and those who opposed it, highlighting a lingering legacy of conflict and collaboration that continues to simmer beneath the surface of Bangladeshi society.

In a shocking turn of events, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made a sudden and unexpected escape to India by helicopter on August 5, catching everyone off guard, including her Indian counterparts. Hasina's 15-year tenure, leading the Awami League party founded by her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had been marked by a mix of stability and controversy. The legacy of her father's assassination in 1975 still cast a long shadow, with many suspecting that Lt. Gen. Zia-ur Rahman, who seized power in 1977, had a hand in the conspiracy. Although never directly implicated, Zia's subsequent rehabilitation of the mid-level military officers involved and their appointment as diplomats abroad only fueled the whispers of complicity. As Hasina fled to India, the ghosts of Bangladesh's tumultuous past seemed to stir once more.

Bangladesh's political landscape remained fractured, with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), helmed by Begum Khaleda Zia since her husband's 1981 assassination, forming an uneasy alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami. The latter's reputation remained marred by its collaboration with Pakistan before 1971, fueling ongoing tensions. Meanwhile, President Zia-ur Rahman's strategic pivot towards the West, Saudi Arabia, and China reoriented Bangladesh's foreign policy, further complicating the country's delicate political balance.

The Bangladesh Army's grip on power finally loosened in 1990, when Lt. Gen. Hussain Muham-

mad Ershad was toppled in a wave of popular protests. In a striking parallel to Sheikh Hasina's own departure, Ershad's ouster was facilitated by a united front of opposition parties, including the Awami League, BNP, and Jamaat. As the Army relinquished control, democracy was reborn, but old rivalries and divisions quickly resurfaced, plunging the country back into a familiar cycle of political tension and strife.

Bangladesh's democratic fabric has been steadily eroded, not by political rivalry, but by the systematic undermining of fundamental institutions and norms. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's descent into authoritarianism, marked by the suppression of opposition and media, ultimately led to his tragic downfall. His daughter, Sheikh Hasina, has similarly concentrated power over the past 15 years, neutering the judiciary, media, and opposition parties. The final blow came when she abandoned the long-standing principle of neutral interim governments overseeing elections, prompting a predictable boycott by opposition parties in the January 2024 polls. This unfortunate tradition of electoral boycotts has its roots in the country's troubled past, echoing similar protests during President Ershad's rule. The consequences of such actions are clear: a democratic system hollowed out by the very leaders sworn to uphold it.

Under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh achieved significant economic and social progress, leveraging its position as a major garment export hub to capitalize on the shift of low-cost manufacturing from China. However, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted this growth trajectory, with exports declining from \$45.99 billion in 2019 to \$39.05 billion in 2020, before recovering to \$44.38 billion in 2021, still short of pre-pandemic levels. Despite subsequent growth to \$54.7 billion and \$55.79 billion in 2022 and 2023, respectively, the World Bank notes that Bangladesh's post-pandemic recovery has been hindered by a balance of payments deficit, financial sector vulnerabilities, and global economic uncertainty. Moreover, persistent economic fragility, exacerbated by US sanctions, loss of preferential tariffs,

and cronyism, has necessitated a \$4.7 billion IMF bailout, underscoring the need for structural reforms to ensure sustainable growth.

In the aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's election win, I warned in these pages on January 9 that her victory demanded caution, not complacency. However, the Indian government, distracted by its own impending Lok Sabha election, missed a critical opportunity for a candid and private conversation with its authoritarian ally in Dhaka. As the saying goes, 'pride comes before a fall.' The convergence of repressive politics and a fragile economy is a combustible mix, and Bangladesh's situation warrants careful attention. India's preoccupation with domestic politics allowed a crucial moment for introspection and course correction to slip away, leaving the region to wonder what the future holds for this strategically important nation.

Bangladesh, like its South Asian counterparts, has skillfully navigated the geopolitical rivalry between India and China, leveraging its strategic position to extract benefits from both nations. Consequently, India has been hesitant to counsel Sheikh Hasina to rein in her authoritarian tendencies, recognizing the delicate balance of power in the region. Moreover, the BJP's own questionable commitment to upholding democratic norms and institutions in India has rendered it an unlikely advocate for democratic reforms abroad. Sheikh Hasina's regime has been viewed as a crucial counterweight to Islamic influences in India's volatile Northeast, leading to a calculated decision to give her a long rope, despite concerns about her authoritarian drift.

A spark lit the flames of discontent when the government announced a 30% job reservation for descendants of 1971 freedom fighters, igniting protests among disillusioned youth. The Supreme Court's July 21 ruling overturning the reservations offered a fleeting chance for reconciliation, but the Opposition seized the moment, transforming the movement into a mass uprising. As demonstrations swelled, the regime's brutal crack-

down exacted a devastating human toll, with over 10,000 activists, protesters, and opposition figures dragged away. The economic consequences were equally stark, with remittances from abroad dwindling and the garment industry reeling from an estimated \$10 billion blow. The Opposition's defiant cry of a "March to Dhaka" echoed through the streets, even as the BNP's student wing, Shibir, was outlawed under draconian terrorism laws, casting a dark shadow over the nation's future.

The death toll surged past 100 on August 4, marking a grim tipping point: the crisis had spiraled irretrievably out of Sheikh Hasina's control, leaving her grasp on power hanging by a thread.

In a dramatic turn of events, Bangladesh Army Chief Lt. Gen. Waker Uz Zaman, who had taken command on June 23, orchestrated the evacuation of Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana to India, effectively ending her reign.

In a bid to restore order and accountability, the Army Chief vowed to ensure justice for every death and crime committed during the turmoil. At an all-party meeting, he announced the formation of an interim government, whose leadership is yet to be disclosed. In a surprise move, the Army Chief also ordered the release of BNP leader Khaleda Zia without a court order, a calculated attempt to appease public sentiment and signal a break from the past. This sudden turn of events marks a significant shift in Bangladesh's political landscape, as the Army seeks to navigate the country towards a more stable and just future.

India confronts a familiar quandary faced by major powers when a key ally is toppled by a popular uprising, akin to the US experience in Iran after the 1979 revolution. The US, having publicly criticized Bangladesh's democratic shortcomings, now has an opportunity to engage with the new leadership. In contrast, India's silence on the matter has become a liability, potentially limiting its influence in the region. As India navigates this delicate situation, it must carefully balance its relationships with the old and new orders

to protect its strategic interests.

As the dust settles, it is imperative that the wave of retribution against Hindus and Awami League supporters subsides, paving the way for a peaceful transition. However, the prospect of a free and fair election may yet pose a challenge for New Delhi, as a potential BNP-Jamaat alliance victory could lead to a shift in Bangladesh's foreign policy priorities. The China-Pakistan axis may gain favor, complicating India's strategic calculations. Moreover, the BJP's perceived anti-Muslim stance may hinder its ability to navigate this new dynamic, underscoring the need for a thoughtful and inclusive approach to mitigate the fallout and safeguard India's interests in the region.

The specter of a collapsed law and order situation in Bangladesh raises the ominous possibility of another military intervention, a scenario India might prefer over a BNP-Jamaat government. This development comes at a time when India's influence in the region is already waning, with Nepal and Maldives firmly in China's orbit and Sri Lanka teetering on the brink. The loss of a friendly government in Bangladesh prompts introspection about India's strategic missteps. Could India have bolstered Sheikh Hasina's position by abandoning the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act and persuading West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to compromise on the Teesta water-sharing agreement? Such moves might have prevented the current crisis, underscoring the need for India to reassess its policies and prioritize regional diplomacy to prevent further erosion of its influence.

Speculation aside, the grim reality is that a more destabilizing force is poised to seize power in Bangladesh, posing a significant threat to regional stability. India is confronting a familiar yet painful lesson: authoritarian allies can become liabilities when they collapse, dragging their patrons down with them. To avoid this fate, India must either exert control in a timely manner or prepare for a soft landing, lest it suffer the consequences of its own strategic complacency. **(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigpld@gmail.com)**

Across Europe, Gaza has become a litmus test for the Left parties

By: Nessim Achouche

If at Harvard earlier this year students received their degrees in the colors of Palestine, in Paris this same flag was waved by France Insoumise MPs in parliament. Each set of images remind us of a different time: the 1960s and '70s, when left-wing parties in Europe and the United States had close relations with the anti-colonial and peace movements.

Mobilizations for peace and for solidarity with the Palestinians have surely been growing over the last ten months, as the Israeli army pursues its massacre. In many European countries, student, anti-fascist, and anti-imperialist groups - as well as more traditional social justice movements and the radical wing of the trade unions - have formed the backbone of solidarity efforts.

But if the France Insoumise MPs' action in the National Assembly made headlines, how much are Europe's left-wing parties really bringing the Palestinian cause into the institutions? In truth, their record is rather mixed. Faced with this unique moment of popular protest at Israel's war and their own states' complicity, these parties' stance is also a litmus test of their own political viability.

The recent recognition of the Palestinian state by the Spanish government was, in general, credited to Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez of the center-left Socialist Party (PSOE). Much less has been said about the left-wing alliance Sumar, which is part of the ruling coalition together with Sánchez's party.

Sumar can rightly claim paternity of this move: in the coalition agreement signed last year, it insisted on recognition of Palestine as a shared policy agenda. Under Labor Minister Yolanda Díaz's leadership, Sumar insisted that this official recognition cannot be the beginning and end of Spanish government policy.

More than that, it calls for cutting diplomatic ties with Israel and imposing a total embargo on weapons. These demands seem much less audible in media, mainly due to the focus on Sánchez.

The fact that the latest country to officially recognize Palestinian statehood - Slovenia - is the only other European state where the Left (the democratic socialist party Levica) is part of the governing coalition cannot be overlooked, either.

In fact, Levica, which holds three ministries in a coalition led by the liberal Freedom Movement party, has headed calls for Slovenia to be the first European country to join South Africa in its prosecution of Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Levica's activism on this point in government echoes the demonstrations that have

happened in recent months - reaching the premises of the Slovenian parliament, and even interrupting one session.

For many left-wing parties, Palestine was also a key focus of June's EU election campaign. From strong positions in their manifestos to supporting protests and direct action, they refused to limit themselves to what some of their colleagues euphemistically call a "balanced approach." Instead, they opted to endure demonization by mass media and even the criminalization of their activities, in order to defend a pro-Palestinian line.

In Denmark, the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten), has a history of support for Palestine. It has been outspoken about the crimes in Gaza and the only party to point out the Danish government's responsibility through arms deals with Israel. But it has been slow in endorsing the regular large demonstrations, sit-ins, and student protests, in turn driving frustrations among its members.

Some of the demands and language voiced on during its pre-EU election congress in May - notably a sentence asserting Israel's right to "defend itself," months into the war - suggest that it is awkwardly "balancing" opposed positions.

Germany remains an outlier. The repressive institutional response to any display of solidarity or calls for peace has been shocking. The initial positioning of left-wing party Die Linke - including its leadership's refusal to call for a cease-fire and to take a clear stand against Israel's crimes - is often explained away as a response to the "specific German context."

Die Linke was built around the commitment to peace - but the shock over the Hamas war crimes on October 7 left it near-silent. Still, if the German historical relationship to Israel and its influence on reactions to the current war is well-documented, perhaps more attention should be paid to what most Germans actually think.

A recent poll showed a considerable shift in German public attitudes to the ongoing Israeli war in Gaza. If in November this "operation" had 63 percent polling support, now 61 percent are against. This trend should also be related to the massive number of German weapons daily used by the Israeli army to commit its massacres in Gaza.

We might imagine that the reality of the war and shifting public opinion would convince this left-wing party to change its stance, and back the urgent protests to oppose the war and Germany's role in it. Has Die Linke done that? No. Its European election manifesto did not even mention Gaza, or any cease-fire call, let alone the suspension of the EU's association agreement with

Israel or a specific ban on exports of weapons. The fact that another left-wing party like MERA25 used the term "genocide" and called in its manifesto to "stop German complicity" shows that the political space for platforming Palestine solidarity does exist.

Die Linke's choice to formally ignore this crucial issue raises many essential strategic and political questions at a time when it is constantly polling no better than 4 percent and lacks strong connections with larger organized groups or social movements in Germany.

The contradiction is even more striking given that Die Linke has often spoken of a "movement" strategy that would allow the party to be seen as organically connected with a range of social issues. Its catastrophic result in the EU elections, on under 3 percent support, shows that in Germany, like elsewhere, left-wing voters will not be rallied by a deafening silence.

Still, across Europe, most meaningfully left-wing parties have decided to adopt a proactive stance on Gaza and to join the social forces advocating for peace and justice internationally. This has usually also meant having to mount a direct confrontation with both the ruling elites and the mass media.

Their EU election campaigns' constant references to international law and alignment with countries in the Global South calling for a break with Israel and the United States are the sign that internationalism and anti-imperialism are returning as a central focus of left-wing politics in Europe. If the Russian invasion of Ukraine opened up divisions among the left-wing parties, the ongoing genocide in Palestine has, in the main, had the opposite effect.

The few parties that decided to keep their distance from the Gaza issue and the protests, out of fears of exposing their own internal contradictions, have naturally been punished at the polls.

In recent years, opposition to the neoliberal structure of the EU was the common defining point of the radical left in its relationship to Europe and its core electorate. In the European elections, it seems that the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the complicity of the EU created a new such reference point. It remains to be seen if the results of the European elections and the longer-term effects of ties with the Palestine solidarity movement will help the Left join together at a genuinely international level.

If an already weak left is seen to be stepping away from this battlefield, just as Syriza dropped the fight against austerity, we can imagine a similar end to the story - this time, at the expense of the Palestinians. **(IPA Service)**

Worries in Delhi grow if Yunus demands extradition of Hasina

By: Saleem Samad

The delay in ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina seeking asylum or stay in destination to North America, the United Kingdom or Europe, has caused the elites in India's South Block and Indian Prime Minister's Office in New Delhi to bite their nails.

With every day passing, Delhi is getting jittery for the unwelcome VVIP guest, who arrived unnoticed on a special military flight from Dhaka to Hindon Air Base in Ghaziabad, near the Indian capital Delhi.

On August 5, Sheikh Hasina flew in a helicopter from the Prime Minister's official residence Gonobhaban to Kurmitola Air Base. She departed on a Bangladesh Air Force C-130J transport aircraft (Flight No. AJAX 1431) and flew her to India.

After a safe landing at 5:45 PM, Hasina's transport plane landed at Hindon Airbase in Ghaziabad. Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval received her upon arrival and held an hour-long meeting high-level discussion. The agenda mostly centered around the current crisis in Bangladesh and her immediate plans.

Sheikh Hasina, the longest-serving woman prime minister in the world was elected to power for a fifth term only seven months ago in January. Her uninterrupted 15-year tenure as Bangladesh's Prime Minister came to a dramatic end on August 5, when she fled the country amidst a mass street uprising of students and also joined by millions of people.

The unrest, which began with protests over job quotas on 1 July and escalated into calls for Hasina's resignation, reached a tipping point with violent clashes in the first week of August.

The police and 'Helmet Bahini', armed vigilante gangs recruited from Awami League killed at least 400 people in the streets during the Red Revolution which lasted for the last six days of the student protests.

Hasina promoted her nephew General Waker-Uz-Zaman as the chief of the Bangladesh Army keeping in mind that she would protect her and her autocratic regime.

The military chief declared Hasina's resignation in a national broadcast and stated that the military would establish a caretaker government to restore order. He also announced the formation of an interim government.

Hasina was the first leader and head of government who fled the country to avoid the wrath of the angry students and the public.

The following day, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar convened an all-party meeting to discuss the Bangladesh crisis. The meeting was attended by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, and Mallikarjun Kharge.

Jaishankar said the government is in a "wait-and-watch" mode, but hands-on and in touch with the Bangladesh Army. He said Sheikh Hasina's presence in India is a courtesy move to ensure she settles down, recovers, and feels comfortable enough to discuss her plans.

He also described that Hasina is in a state of shock and the government is giving her time to recover before

it speaks to her over various issues, including her plans.

Jaishankar told the Indian parliament that Hasina has "requested at very short notice" to come to India following her forced resignation as Bangladesh Prime Minister.

The parliament was informed that an estimated 19,000 Indian nationals of which about 9,000 are students. The bulk of students returned in July.

Indian foreign minister also referred to an address by Bangladesh Army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman - made last Monday, shortly after Hasina stepped down - in which he said, "I have met opposition leaders... we have decided to form an interim government..." and appealed for the violent protests to end.

The interim government headed by Nobel Laureate Dr Mohammad Yunus arrived in Dhaka in the afternoon (Thursday) and took the oath of office in the evening. He also announced a 15-member Adviser in his interim government.

For the restoration of democracy, a tentative date of election for the inventor of micro-credit will be announced. He also

Earlier, in an exclusive interview with NDTV from Paris, where Yunus attended as a Special Guest at the Paris Olympics and had a minor operation a vile warning that "India's north-east, Myanmar will be affected if Bangladesh becomes unstable."

Yunus for the last 12 years faced several legal harassments and was even awarded six months imprisonment in a labour case.

Several times, Hasina humiliated Yunus and even said he is a "bloodsucker" and profits from exorbitant loan interests from disadvantaged rural women.

She blamed Yunus for jeopardising the financial support of the World Bank for the construction of the mega project, the Padma Bridge. In a hate speech, at the inaugural event of Padma Bridge, said she wished to dip the Nobel laureate and ailing former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia into the yawning Padma River.

Hasina has nowhere to go in the next several weeks, she will be stranded in a guest house on the outskirts of Delhi and India feel embarrassed to have her for long, which possibly dent the renewed bilateral relationship between two neighbours - Bangladesh and India of emerging new government under the rule of Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Several political observers understand, that Yunus after holding the reign of Bangladesh, is likely to appeal to global leaders to urge India to deport Hasina to stand trial for crimes committed against the people during her 15 years of repressive rule.

If Delhi bigwigs do not concede to Yunus's appeal to send back Hasina, not only bilateral relations and trade would be affected, but would also spark an anti-India campaign resulting in a call for 'Boycott India' and would also more persecution against Hindus in Bangladesh, which will difficult for the interim government to neutralise. **(The author is an award-winning independent journalist based in Bangladesh. A media rights defender with the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) inter. Recipient of Ashoka Fellowship and Hellman-Hammet Award. He could be reached at saleemsamad@hotmail.com)**

Career in Law through CLAT 2025

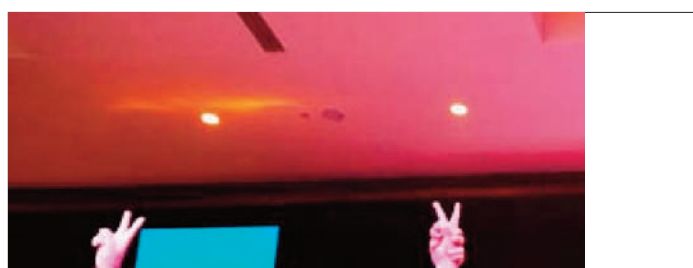
By: Ranjan K Baruah

We have seen how lawyers play an active role in the judiciary. The person in black coats is seen everywhere and whenever we see a person with black coats then we think of law and lawyers. Studying law and becoming a lawyer is a profession followed by many in our country. During the time of independence we have seen that many of our great leaders studied law.

We can study law after passing our senior secondary but in the past law was studied after passing graduation in any discipline. One of the best options at the present time is to appear in CLAT and get admissions in leading law institutions of the country. The Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) is a national level en-

trance exam for admissions to undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) law programmes offered by 24 National Law Universities in India.

Participating Universities for CLAT 2025 are as follows: National Law School of India University, Bengaluru; National Academy of Legal Study and Research University of Law, Hyderabad; National Law Institute University, Bhopal; West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata; National Law University, Jodhpur; Hidayatullah National Law University, Raipur; Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar; Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow; Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab; Chanakya National Law University, Patna; National University of Advanced Legal



Studies, Kochi; National Law University Odisha, Cuttack; National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi; National Law University and Judicial Academy, Guwahati, Assam; Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, Visakhapatnam; Gujarat National Law University Silvasa Campus, Silvassa; Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai; Maharashtra National Law University, Nagpur; Maharashtra National Law

University, Aurangabad; Tamil Nadu National Law University, Tiruchirappalli; Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla; Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur; Dr. B.R. Ambedkar National Law University, Haryana and National Law University Tripura, Agartala, Tripura.

CLAT is organized by the Consortium of National Law Universities, comprising representative universities and several affiliate

universities and organisations also use the CLAT exam for admissions and recruitment respectively. The exams schedule has been announced for the admissions related to next academic sessions. All admissions to the 5-year integrated LL.B. and LL.M. programmes that commence in the Academic Year 2024-2025 shall be through the CLAT 2025

Online applications started from 15th July and it would continue till 15th October. Aspirants should fill in the details as soon as possible to avoid last hour rush. The offline test would be held on 1st December in different exam centres from all over India. There are different eligibility requirements for the UG Programme and PG Programme. The online application fee for both UG and PG is 4000 and 3500 for SC, ST, PwD and BPL candi-

dates.

The UG-CLAT 2025 would focus on evaluating the comprehension and reasoning skills and abilities of candidates. Overall, it is designed to be a test of aptitude and skills that are necessary for a legal education rather than prior knowledge, though prior knowledge occasionally may be useful to respond to questions in the Current Affairs including General Knowledge section.

The UG-CLAT 2025 shall be a 2-hour test, with 120 multiple-choice questions carrying 1 mark each. There shall be negative marking of 0.25 marks for every wrong answer. These questions would be divided across the following 5 subjects that includes English Language; Current Affairs, including General Knowledge; Legal Reasoning; Logical Reasoning and Quantitative

Techniques.

The PG-CLAT 2025 will feature an emphasis on the comprehension abilities of the students. The first section would include 120 objective-type questions carrying 1 mark each. There shall be a negative marking of 0.25 marks for every wrong answer. The paper will be based on the mandatory subjects of the undergraduate program and include Constitutional Law, Jurisprudence, Administrative Law, Law of Contract, Torts, Family Law, Criminal Law, Property Law, Company Law, Public International Law, Tax Law, Environmental Law, and Labour & Industrial Law. Aspirants may read more details from the official websites. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjank@gmail.com)*

LIC HFL Recruitment 2024 – 200 Junior Assistant Vacancy, Online Apply

Last Date: 14/08/2024

LIC Housing Finance Ltd. has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 200 Junior Assistant Vacancy. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Junior Assistant

No of posts: 200 posts

No of posts in Assam: 5 posts

Age Limit: Candidates age must be between 21 to 28 years as of 01.07.2024.

Educational Qualification: Candidate must be a Graduate (minimum aggregate 60% marks). Course completed through correspondence/ distance/ part time are not eligible.

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

Exam centres in Assam: Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Silchar, Jorhat

Application Fee: Candidates have to pay an application fee of ₹ 800. The above fee is applicable to all candidates and non-refundable. Candidates should pay the requisite fee through the online mode only from 25.07.2024 to 14.08.2024. Bank Transaction charges for Online Payment of application fees/information charges will have to be borne by the candidate.

Important Dates of LIC HFL Recruitment 2024

Starting date of submission of online application: 25th July 2024

Last date of submission of online application: 14th August 2024

NABARD Recruitment 2024 – 102 Assistant Manager Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 15/08/2024

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has released an advertisement for the recruitment of 102 Assistant Manager in Grade 'A' posts in the Rural Development Banking Service (RDBS) / (Rajbhasha) Service. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Assistant Manager in Grade 'A'

No of posts: 102 posts

Discipline wise vacancy:

AM (RDBS): 100 posts

1. General: 50 posts
2. Chartered Accountant: 4 posts
3. Finance: 7 posts
4. Computer/ Information Technology: 16 posts
5. Agriculture: 2 posts
6. Animal Husbandry: 2 posts
7. Fisheries: 1 post
8. Food Processing: 1 post
9. Forestry: 2 posts
10. Plantation & Horticulture: 1 post
11. Geo-Informatics: 1 post
12. Development Management: 3 posts
13. Statistics: 2 posts
14. Civil Engineering: 3 posts
15. Electrical Engineering: 1 post
16. Environmental Engineering/Science: 2 posts
17. Human Resource Management: 2 posts

AM (Rajbhasha): 2 posts

Pay scale: ₹ 44500 – 2500 (4) – 54500 – 2850 (7) – 74450 – EB – 2850 (4) – 85850 – 3300 (1) – 89150 (17 Years)

Eligibility Criteria of NABARD Recruitment

Educational Qualification:

Assistant Manager (RDBS)

(i) General:

Bachelor's Degree in any subject from any recognized University/Institution with a minimum of 60% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate degree, MBA/PGDM with a minimum of 55% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate OR CA/ CS/ICWA OR Ph.D from Institutions recognized by GOI/UGC.

(ii) Chartered Accountant:

Bachelor's degree in any discipline from a recognized University/Institution with Membership of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI). The Membership of ICAI must have been obtained on or before 01-07-2024.

(iii) Finance:

BBA (Finance / Banking) / BMS (Finance / Banking) from any recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR

Two years full time P.G. Diploma in Management (Finance) / Full time MBA (Finance) / MMS (Finance) degree with 55% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from Institutions / Universities recognized by GoI / UGC with Bachelor's Degree in any discipline. Candidates will be required to submit a certificate from Institution/University regarding specialization in finance.

OR

Bachelor of Financial and Investment Analysis with 60% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants - 55%)

iv) Computer/Information Technology:

Four years Bachelor's Engineering/Technology Degree in Computer Science/ Computer Engineering/ Information Technology / Electronics / Electronics & Telecommunications/ Electronics & Communication/ Electronics & Instrumentation / Data Science / Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence from any recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants 55%) in aggregate

OR

Post Graduate degree in Computer Science/ Computer Engineering / Computer Applications/Information Technology / Electronics/ Electronics & Telecommunications/ Electronics & Communication/ Electronics & Instrumentation / Data Science / Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence with 55% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution

OR

Graduate with 60% marks (SC/ST/PWBD applicants 55%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution AND having passed Department of Electronics and Accreditation of Computer Courses (DOEACC) 'B' Level.

(v) Agriculture:

Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture from any recognized University / Institution with a minimum of 60% marks (PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Two years full time Post Graduate Degree in Agriculture (Soil Science/Agronomy) with a minimum of 55% marks (PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University / Institution.

(vi) Animal Husbandry:

Bachelor's Degree in Veterinary Sciences / Animal Husbandry from any recognized University with a minimum of 60% marks (PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate degree in Veterinary Sciences / Animal Husbandry with a minimum of 55% marks (PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(vii) Fisheries:

Bachelor's Degree in Fisheries Science from a recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (ST/PWBD applicants 55%) in aggregate OR Post graduate degree in Fisheries Science with 55% marks (ST/PWBD applicants 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution

(viii) Food Processing:

Bachelor's Degree in Food Processing /Food Technology/Dairy Technology from a recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post graduate degree in Food Processing /Food Technology /Dairy Technology with 55% marks (PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(ix) Forestry:

Bachelor's Degree in Forestry from a recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post graduate degree in Forestry with 55% marks (PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(x) Plantation/Horticulture:

Bachelor's Degree in Horticulture from any recognized University with a minimum of 60% marks (PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate degree in Horticulture with a minimum of 55% marks (PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(xi) Geo Informatics:

Bachelor's degree in Geoinformatics from any recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post graduate degree in Geoinformatics with a minimum of 55% marks (PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(xii) Development Management:

Bachelor's degree in Social Work/Rural Development/Rural Management/Development Studies/Development Management/Development Administration/Economic/Development Economics from any recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (ST/PWBD applicants 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate degree in Social Work/Rural Development/Rural Management /Development Studies/Development Management/ Development Administration/Economic/Development Economics with 55% marks (ST/PWBD applicants 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution

(xiii) Statistics:

Bachelor's Degree in Statistics/Mathematical Statistics/Mathematical Economics/ Econometrics/Statistics & Informatics/Applied Statistics & Informatics from a recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (ST/PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate degree in Statistics/Mathematical Statistics/Mathematical Economics/ Econometrics/Statistics & Informatics/Applied Statistics & Informatics with a minimum of 55% marks (ST/PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(xiv) Civil Engineering:

Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from any recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate Degree in Civil Engineering with a minimum of 55% marks (PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(xv) Electrical Engineering:

Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering/Electrical & Electronics Engineering from any recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (ST/PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate Degree in Electrical Engineering/Electrical & Electronics Engineering with 55% marks (ST/PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(xvi) Environmental Engineering/Sciences:

Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Engineering/ Environmental Science from any recognized University/Institution with 60% marks (ST/PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate OR Post Graduate Degree in Environmental Engineering / Environmental Science with 55% marks (ST/PWBD applicants - 50%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

(xvii) Human Resource Management:

Bachelor's Degree from any recognized University/Institution AND Two years full time Post Graduate Degree/Diploma in Personnel Management/Industrial Relations/Human Resource/Human Resource Development/Labour Law) with 60% marks (SC/PWBD applicants - 55%) in aggregate from a recognized University/Institution.

Assistant Manager (RAJBHASHA)

(i) Bachelor's Degree from a recognized university in English or Hindi medium with Hindi and English as a compulsory or elective subject with a minimum of 60% marks (SC/PWBD applicants - 55%) or equivalent in aggregate AND

(ii) PG Diploma in Translation (minimum one year) in Hindi to English and vice-versa from any recognized University.

Candidates must have studied English and Hindi as subjects in at least 02 years of bachelor's degree course.

OR

Master's Degree in HINDI with a minimum of 60% marks in aggregate (SC/PWBD applicants - 55%). Candidates must have studied English as main/ elective subject in at least 02 years of Bachelor's Degree course.

OR

Master's Degree in ENGLISH with a minimum of 60% marks in aggregate (SC/PWBD applicants - 55%). Candidates must have studied Hindi as main/elective subject in at least 02 years of Bachelor's Degree course.

Candidates must be able to translate from English to Hindi and vice-versa.

Age Limit: The candidate must be between 21 and 30 years of age as on 01-07-2024, i.e., the candidate must have been born not earlier than 02-07-1994 and not later than 01-07-2003.

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

SC/ST: 5 years

OBC: 3 years

PwBD: 10 years

PwBD (OBC/NCL): 13 years

PwBD (SC/ST): 15 years

Application Fee of NABARD Recruitment

The category-wise application fee details are as mentioned below.

SC/ST/PWBD: ₹ 150

Others: ₹ 850

Staff: Nil

Important Dates of NABARD Recruitment 2024

Starting date of submission of online application: 27th July 2024

Last date of submission of online application: 15th August 2024

Oil India Limited Recruitment – 24 Assistant Fitter & Assistant Diesel Mechanic Posts

Last Date: 20 & 22/08/2024

Oil India Limited has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 24 contractual Assistant Fitter and Assistant Diesel Mechanic posts purely on contractual basis for immediate engagement for Field Headquarters, Duliajan in Oil India Limited. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

1. Assistant Fitter

No of posts: 14

Educational Qualification:

- (i) Class 10 from Government Recognized Education Board.
- (ii) Trade certificate in Fitter trade from Government Recognized Institute.
- (iii) Minimum 02 (Two) years post Educational Qualification work experience in relevant fields.

Emolument: ₹ 16,640 per month.

Age Limit: Minimum 18 years & Maximum 30 years.

2. Assistant Diesel Mechanic

No of posts: 10

Educational Qualification:

- (i) Class 10 from Government Recognized Education Board.
- (ii) Trade certificate in Diesel Mechanic Trade from Government Recognized Institute.
- (iii) Minimum 02 (Two) years post Educational Qualification work experience.

Emolument: ₹ 16,640 per month.

Age Limit: Minimum 18 years & Maximum 30 years.

How to Apply for Oil India Limited Recruitment ?

Interested candidate(s) should fill the Personal Bio-Data (given on the last two pages of this advertisement) and bring it along with the following documents on the above scheduled date(s) for the Walk-in-Practical/Skill Test cum Personal Assessment(s):

(i) 01 (One) recent 3cm X 3cm coloured photograph.

(ii) Original and self-attested photocopy of documents/certificates/testimonials as under:

Valid Identity Proof and valid Address Proof from Competent Government Authority.

Admit Card, Marksheet and Pass Certificate of Class 10 issued by the concerned Government Recognized Education Board; Document(s)/Certificate(s)/Testimonial(s) of essential qualification, as applicable; relevant work experience certificate, as applicable; valid Caste Certificate (SC/ST/OBC) from Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Non-Creamy Layer Certificate from Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Income and Asset Certificate to be produced by Economically Weaker Sections issued by the Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Disability Certificate from Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Discharge Book/Service and Release Certificate for Ex-Servicemen (Pages containing Personal Particulars and Service Particulars), if applicable and any other documents/certificates/testimonials from Competent Authority in support of candidature.

No-Objection Certificate from concerned employer, in original, in case the applicant is working in any organization.

Walk-in schedule:

Date: # Assistant Fitter: 20.08.2024 and

Assistant Diesel Mechanic: 22.08.2024

Time: 07:00 A.M. to 09:00 A.M.

Venue: Employee Welfare Office, Nehru Maidan, Oil India Limited, Duliajan, Assam

Russia declares a federal emergency in a border region that is under attack from Ukrainian forces

Russia declares federal level emergencies when there are more than 500 victims or damage exceeds 500 million rubles

KYIV, Aug 9: Russia's Ministry for Emergencies on Friday declared the situation in the Kursk region a "federal level" emergency, four days after hundreds of Ukrainian troops poured over the border in what appeared to be Kyiv's biggest attack on Russian soil since the war began.

Meanwhile, a Russian plane-launched missile hit a Ukrainian shopping mall late on morning Friday, killing at least nine people and injuring 26, authorities said.

The mall in Kostiantynivka, in the eastern Donetsk region, is located in the town's residential area. Thick black smoke rose above it after the strike.

"This is another targeted attack on a crowded place, another act of terror by the Russians," Donetsk regional head Vadym Filashkin said in a Telegram post.

"The operational situation in the Kursk region remains difficult," Kursk acting governor Alexei Smirnov said on Telegram.

Social services and civic associations are providing assistance to people forced to flee their homes by the fighting, he said. The last Russian figure for evacuations in Kursk was 3,000.

Little reliable information about the surprise Ukrainian operation has emerged, and its strategic aims are unclear. Ukrainian officials have refused to comment specifically about the incursion, which is taking place about 500 kilometers (320 miles) southwest of Moscow.

But a top adviser to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Thursday that border region attacks will cause Russia to "start to realize that the war is slowly creeping inside of Russian territory." Mykhailo Podolyak also suggested that the operation would improve Kyiv's hand in the event of negotiations with Moscow.

The assault came as the Ukrainian army toils to hold at bay an intense Russian push at places on the front line in eastern Ukraine, espe-



cially in the Donetsk region. Russian President Vladimir Putin has made clear he wants to capture the parts of Donetsk that the Kremlin's forces don't already occupy.

Russia declares federal level emergencies when there are more than 500 victims or damage exceeds 500 million rubles (about \$6 million).

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, says Ukrainian forces have pressed on with their "rapid advances" deeper into the Kursk region, reportedly going up to 35

kilometers (20 miles) beyond the border. "The lack of a coherent Russian response to the Ukrainian incursion into Kursk ... and the reported rate of Ukrainian advance indicates that Ukrainian forces were able to achieve operational surprise," the Washington-based ISW said late Thursday.

A Russian Defense Ministry statement Friday said only that the military "continues to repel the attempted invasion" and is responding with airstrikes, artillery and troops on the ground.

Ukraine has also kept up its strategy of hitting rear areas with long-range drones, targeting military sites, oil refineries and other infrastructure.

Ukrainian drones attacked Russia's Lipetsk region, which is about 300 kilometers (180 miles) from the Ukraine border, during Thursday night, authorities said. Drones operated by Ukraine's Security Service hit a military airfield there, a security official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The airfield was a base for fighter jets and helicopters and more than 700 powerful glide bombs in storage," the source said. Ukraine's Army General Staff also confirmed the strike on Lipetsk-2 airfield Friday morning, saying it was used as a base for multiple Su-34, Su-35 and MiG-31 jets. The Russian Defense Ministry said that 75 Ukrainian drones were shot down during the night, 19 of them over Lipetsk. (AP)

Israeli troops launch a new assault into Gaza's Khan Younis as mediators push for cease-fire talks

DEIR AL-BALAH, Aug 9: Israeli troops launched a new assault on Friday into the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, targeting Hamas fighters who the military claims still operate there despite repeated offensives, as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for Israel and Hamas to reach a cease-fire deal.

Israeli evacuation orders triggered yet another exodus of Palestinians from the heavily destroyed eastern districts of Khan Younis, where many had just returned less than two weeks ago — after the Israeli military's last incursion into the city in July.

Thousands fled Thursday, carrying essentials like small gas cylinders, mattresses, tents, backpacks and blankets.

Officials from Israel and the United States have said they believe Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' newly named top leader and one of the architects of the October 7 attack on Israel, could be hiding in tunnels under Khan Younis.

The military said Friday its warplanes struck 30 Hamas targets in the city, including fighters and weapons storage sites. It said troops were searching for Hamas tunnels and other infrastructure while engaging in combat "above and below ground."

After 10 months of war in Gaza, the mediators' push aims to resume indirect negotiations for a cease-fire that have been on hold since Sinwar's predecessor, Ismail Haniyeh, was assassinated in a presumed Israeli blast in Tehran on July 31. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office confirmed Thursday that it would send negotiators to talks that mediators have called for on August 15, to be held in either Qatar's capital of Doha or Egypt's capital of Cairo.

There was no immediate response from Hamas, which announced Tuesday that Sinwar, the group's leader in Gaza, would replace Haniyeh as the group's top leader. Haniyeh previously served as the key interlocutor in the negotiations.

Haniyeh's killing and that of a group, Sinwar has been in deep hiding in Gaza throughout the war as Israel vows to kill him.

Sinwar has already been closely involved in negotiations from behind the scenes. Hamas officials and mediators have said Hamas negotiators regularly sought his approval on the group's positions as it pressed for guarantees that a deal would bring a complete end to the war and withdrawal of all Israeli troops from Gaza, in return for the release of all hostages.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas after the Oct. 7 attack, in which militants from Gaza stormed into southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and abducting 250 others. After a round of release exchanges in November, Israel says 111 hostages remain in Gaza, including 39 bodies.

Its campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,600 Palestinians and wounded more than 91,700 others. More than 1.9 million of Gaza's pre-war population of 2.3 million have been driven from their homes, fleeing repeatedly across the territory to escape offensives. (AP)



Bangladesh's interim govt announces portfolios of council of advisors Yunus to oversee 27 ministries

DHAKA, Aug 9: Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus on Friday announced the portfolios of the newly-appointed council of advisors and took charge of 27 ministries, including defence, and named career diplomat Mohammad Touhid Hossain to head the foreign ministry.

Nobel laureate Yunus, 84, on Thursday took oath as the head of an interim government, replacing Sheikh Hasina who abruptly resigned and fled to India leaving the country in turmoil following deadly protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

He was sworn in as the chief advisor - a position equivalent to prime minister.

Other advisors were selected in consultation with student leaders, the military, and civil society representatives.

According to an official announcement, Yunus will oversee a broad array of ministries keeping to himself 27 portfolios including the defence, public administration, education, energy, food, water resources and information ministries.

Former foreign secretary Hossain has been entrusted with the charge of the foreign ministry while retired Army brigadier general M Sakawat Hossain was tasked

to oversee the home ministry. Hossain was the Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Kolkata from 2001 to 2005 and served as Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh from 2006 to 2009.

Former Bangladesh Bank governor Salahuddin Ahmed will be in charge of the finance and planning ministries while former attorney general A F Hassan Arif will oversee the local government ministry.

Two coordinators of Students Against Discrimination inducted in the interim cabinet M Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud were given the charge of telecommunications and information technology and youth and sports ministries respectively.

The group waged first the street movement to reform the quota system for government jobs last month which later turned into a public upsurge and ousted Hasina's 15-year regime and installed the interim government, visibly backed by the military.

Three members of the advisers' council, mostly civil society figures, could not take the oath on Thursday night at the Bangabhaban presidential palace as they were outside of the capital and officials presumed that Yunus might distribute some of the 27 portfolios to them. (PTI)

Prez Maduro suspends X social network in Venezuela for 10 days after exchange with Elon Musk

CARACAS, Aug 9: President Nicolás Maduro said he has ordered a 10-day block on access to X in Venezuela, accusing the owner Elon Musk of using the social network to promote hatred after the country's disputed presidential election.

Associated Press journalists in Caracas found that by Thursday night posts had stopped loading on X on two private telephone services and state-owned Movilnet.

"Elon Musk is the owner of X and has violated all the rules of the social network itself," said Maduro in a speech following a march by pro-government groups. Maduro alleged Musk "has incited hatred."

Maduro also accused the social network of being used

by his opponents to create political unrest.

Venezuela's president said he had signed a resolution "with the proposal made by CONATEL, the National Telecommunications Commission, which has decided to remove the social network X,

formerly known as Twitter, from circulation in Venezuela for 10 days so that they can present their documents." Maduro did not provide more details about the process taken against X.

X's press office did not immediately respond to an email from AP requesting comment. "X out for 10 days! Elon Musk out!" Maduro said.

The president's announcement comes after Maduro and Musk exchanged accusations

over Venezuela's disputed July 28 presidential election. Electoral authorities declared Maduro the winner but have yet to produce voting tallies. Meanwhile, the opposition claims to have collected records from more than 80% of the 30,000 electronic voting machines nationwide showing the winner was their candidate, Edmundo González.

Musk used the social network to accuse the self-proclaimed socialist leader of a "great electoral fraud."

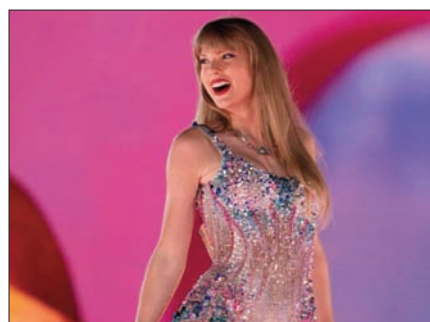
"Shame on the dictator Maduro," Musk said on Monday in a post.

Since the election, Maduro has expressed the need to "regulate" social networks in Venezuela.

Maduro also denounced that the social platform was used by his adversaries to threaten the families of his followers and political allies, military personnel, police officers and to generate a state of anxiety in Venezuela. (AP)



3rd person in custody over foiled plot targeting now-cancelled Taylor Swift shows in Vienna



VIENNA, Aug 9: A third teenager has been arrested in connection with a foiled attack on now-cancelled Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna, Austria's interior minister said on Friday.

Austrian Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said an 18-year-old was taken into custody on Thursday evening in Vienna after allegedly being in contact

with the main suspect. Karner announced the arrest during an unrelated news conference on Friday.

Investigators are scrutinizing the "networks" of the suspects, the Austrian interior ministry told The Associated Press on Friday, adding in a statement that investigators have turned to evaluating physical and electronic evidence. The 19-year-old main suspect and a 17-year-old were arrested on Tuesday, while a 15-year-old was also interrogated but was not arrested. None of their names were released, in line with Austrian privacy rules. Officials said Thursday afternoon that no additional suspects were being sought. They did not immediately offer further details on Friday.

Authorities say the plot appeared to have been inspired by the Islamic State group and al-Qaida. Investigators found bomb-making materials at the main suspect's home. Officials say that teenager has confessed to planning to "kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue" using knives or homemade explosives.

Officials say the main suspect and the 18-year-old arrested Friday both pledged "oaths of allegiance" to the Islamic State group.

The 18-year-old "comes from the social environment" of the main suspect, Karner said. "He had been in contact with the main perpetrator, but is not directly connected to the attack plans," the minister said. "But, as was found out a few days ago, he took an oath of allegiance specifically to the IS on Aug. 6." Three sold-out concerts were canceled Wednesday because of the plot, devastating Swifties from across the globe. Many of them had dropped thousands of euros (dollars) on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city to attend the Eras Tour shows at the Ernst Happel Stadium. Concert organizers in Austria said they had expected up to 65,000 fans inside the stadium at each concert and as many as 30,000 onlookers outside, where authorities said the suspects planned to strike. The foiled attack was planned for Thursday or Friday, according to Karner.

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer defended the decision to cancel the concerts, saying the arrests took place too close to the shows, scheduled for Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

"I understand very well that those who wanted to experience the concert live are very sad," Nehammer told a news conference on Thursday. "Moms and dads are looking after their daughters and sons, who were full of enthusiasm and anticipation for this concert. But it's also important that in such serious moments as now, it's inevitable that safety comes first."

Concert organizer Barracuda Music said in an Instagram post late on Wednesday that it had "no choice but to cancel the three scheduled shows for everyone's safety."

Barracuda said all tickets would be refunded. The same message was posted under the Vienna dates on Swift's official website.

Swift is also scheduled to perform at London's Wembley stadium in five concerts between Aug. 15 and 20 to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour. London Mayor Sadiq Khan said that while he understood Vienna's reasons for cancelling, "We're going to carry on." Khan said the capital's authorities were prepared for shows there following lessons learned from a 2017 attack by a suicide bomber at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, that killed 22 people. (AP)

3 suspected Houthi attacks target a ship off Yemen, authorities say

DUBAI, Aug 9: Three suspected attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a ship in the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait linking the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, including one that saw private security guards shoot and destroy a bomb-loaded drone boat, authorities said on Friday.

The Houthis didn't immediately claim the assaults, though they follow a monthslong campaign by the rebels targeting shipping through the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Since November, Houthi attacks have disrupted the \$1 trillion of goods that flow annually through the region, while also sparking the most intense combat the U.S. Navy has seen since World War II.

After a recent two-week pause, their attacks resumed following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, amid concerns of a wider regional war. Iran backs the Houthis as part of what it calls a regional "Axis of Resistance."

"The operations are ongoing —



our operations toward occupied Palestine to target the Israeli enemy, our operations at sea, the inevitable forthcoming response, as well as coordination with the axis in any joint operations," warned the Houthi's secretive leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, in a speech Thursday. "The decision to respond is a collective decision, at the level of the entire axis and at the level of each front individually."

In the first attack, a rocket-propelled grenade exploded close to the ship on Thursday, according to the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center. Two smaller craft, with men aboard wearing white and yellow raincoats, launched

the RPG, the UKMTD said.

The second attack came early Friday, with a missile "exploding in close proximity to the vessel," the UKMTD said. "The vessel and crew are reported to be safe."

The private security firm Ambrey reported that the ship was hit by a drone that caused no injuries or physical damage.

"The vessel was assessed to be aligned with the Houthi target profile," Ambrey said. "The vessel was assessed to have been targeted earlier in the day."

Then came the third attack with the drone boat, where private security guards on board "opened fire and (were) able to successfully destroy the vehicle," Ambrey said. The UKMTD later

reported the incident as well.

Though the Houthis didn't immediately claim the attack, it sometimes can take hours or even days to acknowledge their assaults. They've also claimed others that apparently haven't happened.

The Houthis have targeted more than 70 vessels with missiles and drones in a campaign that has killed four sailors since the start of the war in Gaza in October. They have seized one vessel and sunk two in the time since. Other missiles and drones have been either intercepted by a U.S.-led coalition in the Red Sea or splashed down before reaching their targets.

The rebels maintain that their attacks target ships linked to Israel, the United States or the U.K. as part of a campaign they say seeks to force an end to the war. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran.

The Houthis have launched drones and missiles toward Israel, including an attack on July 19 that

reported the incident as well. killed one person and wounded 10 others in Tel Aviv. Israel responded the next day with airstrikes on the Houthi-held port city of Hodeida that hit fuel depots and electrical stations, killing and wounding a number of people, the rebels say.

After the strikes, the Houthis paused their attacks until Saturday, when they hit a Liberian-flagged container ship traveling through the Gulf of Aden.

Meanwhile on Thursday, U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor fighter jets arrived in the Middle East from a base in the United Kingdom, authorities said Thursday.

U.S. Central Command posted images online of the fighters, saying their presence in the region was "to address threats posed by Iran and Iranian-backed groups."

The U.S. has declined to say where the aircraft landed because of host nation sensitivities.

Central Command later said that it destroyed two Houthi anti-ship cruise missiles and one Houthi ground control station, as well as a drone boat in the Red Sea. (AP)

Meet America's newest giant pandas, Yun Chuan and Xin Bao

SAN DIEGO, Aug 9: California's governor flew in for the young bears' debut. Throngs of media gathered inside the zoo, while the city of San Diego warned of traffic jams ahead of the much-anticipated event on Thursday. The San Diego Zoo rolled out the red carpet for the first public showing of its celebrity residents, who were already dressed in black-and-white attire. The two giant pandas, the first to enter the U.S. in two decades, seemed unfazed by all the attention, sunbathing and chowing down on bamboo in their new home.

For years, the Chinese government has loaned pandas to zoos around the world in a practice called "panda diplomacy." These fuzzy ambassadors have long been a symbol of the U.S.-China friendship, ever since Beijing gifted a pair of pandas to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., in 1972.

But in recent years, China stopped renewing panda loans to zoos and calling back home the animals it had given to Western countries as relations soured. The San Diego Zoo's previous pandas left in 2018 and 2019.

Then in February, the China Wildlife Conservation Association announced it was sending two more pandas to San Diego and also

signing agreements with the zoo in the Spanish capital of Madrid, quelling fears that Beijing was ending its historic panda diplomacy. San Diego's pandas arrived in June and have been acclimating to their new home before being seen by the public.

"This is about something much deeper, much richer, than just the two beautiful pandas we celebrate," Gov. Gavin Newsom said at the opening ceremony that included dancing, music, and remarks from Chinese ambassador Xie Feng, and other local officials. "It's about celebrating our common humanity." For the occasion, Newsom proclaimed Aug. 8 as California Panda Day and recognized the San Diego Zoo as the first organization in the U.S. to establish a cooperative panda conservation program with China.

Xie said he met someone on his flight who had traveled all the way from Washington, D.C., to see the pandas.

"Two little panda fans from California wrote several letters to me proposing giving

China grizzly bears to get pandas," Xie said, eliciting laughs. Only four other giant pandas currently reside in the United States, all at the zoo in Atlanta. However, the Smithsonian's National Zoo will receive a new pair of pandas by the end of the year after its last bears returned to China last November. As part of the loan agreement, U.S. zoos typically pay \$1 million a year toward China's wildfire conservation efforts, and all cubs born in the U.S. must return to China by age 4.

Both pandas at the San Diego Zoo were born at the Wolong Shenshuping Panda Base in China's Sichuan province. Yun Chuan is a nearly 5-year-old male panda described by the zoo as "mild-mannered, gentle and lovable." He is the grandson of Bai Yun and Gao Gao, who both lived at the San Diego Zoo for more than a decade. His mother, Zhen Zhen, was the fourth cub born at the zoo. Xin Bao is a nearly 4-year-old female panda described by the zoo as a "gentle and witty introvert with a sweet round face and big ears."



"Her name means a treasure of prosperity and abundance, and we hope she will bring you good luck," Ambassador Xie said. He also spoke about China being California's top trading partner as well as the large Chinese community in the state and the abundance of Chinese tourists.

Among the pandas' biggest fans are two kids who were proudly wearing "Panda Ridge" T-shirts and carrying plushies at the zoo on Thursday morning. "Pandas are their favorite animals, if you could only see what our house looks like in terms of stuffed animals," their father James Metz said. It was also his 7-year-old daughter's birthday, making it an extra special occasion. For weeks, the family has been eagerly watching live panda feeds from China in anticipation of the bears' arrival.

Yun Chuan and Xin Bao were hanging out and relaxing after eating, Metz said.

At the ceremony, officials unveiled a portrait of one of the panda's grandmothers, who lived at the zoo for more than 20 years. It was created by California-based artist Shepard Fairey, who is best known for designing the "Hope" imagery in former President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign. (AP)

Calls for ban on Bangladeshi products, cancellation of medical visas

Protests erupt in Tripura over attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Aug 9: A wave of protests has swept across Tripura in response to reports of attacks on Hindu minorities in Bangladesh following the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Protesters are demanding a ban on Bangladeshi products in India and the cancellation of medical visas for Bangladeshi nationals.

In a press conference, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) called on India to take steps to protect Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. Sourav Kanti Das, a representative of the VHP, expressed concern over the situation, stating, "Our neighboring country Bangladesh has plunged into uncertainty, violence, and anarchy following the resignation of Sheikh Hasina's government. During this crisis, India remains a steadfast friend to all of Bangladeshi society."

Das highlighted recent incidents where Hindu religious sites, busi-



nesses, and homes were vandalized in various districts of Bangladesh. He mentioned specific cases, such as the destruction of 22 houses in Panchagarh district, 20 houses in Jhenaidah, and 22 shops in Jashore by fundamentalist groups. "Even Hindu crematoriums, temples, and Gurdwaras have not been spared. There is hardly a district

in Bangladesh that has not witnessed violence and terror," Das remarked. He also pointed out the dwindling Hindu population in Bangladesh, which has decreased from 32% to less than 8%, with minorities facing continuous persecution.

Das stressed the importance of safeguarding Hindu homes, businesses,

women, children, and places of worship in Bangladesh. He warned of potential border infiltration and called for the restoration of a democratic and secular government in Bangladesh. "India, both its society and government, will continue to support Bangladesh in upholding human rights and ensuring its financial progress," he affirmed.

In addition to the VHP's statements, local protests erupted in Agartala, where demonstrators demanded a boycott of Bangladeshi products and an end to the attacks on Hindus and their temples in Bangladesh. "Our Hindu brothers and sisters in Bangladesh are under constant assault. We demand immediate action to stop these attacks," one protestor declared.

The protests have also gained momentum on social media, with calls for the cancellation of medical visas for Bangladeshis and a halt to the supply of power from Tripura to Bangladesh.

Cong MLAs walk out of assembly in Manipur

IMPHAL, Aug 9: MLAs of the opposition Congress in Manipur walked out of the assembly on Friday and decided to boycott the remainder of the session.

Congress legislature party leader Okram Ibobi Singh alleged that MLAs of his party were not being allowed to raise pertinent issues in the House.

"There has been no solution to the crisis in the state for more than 15 months. Earlier, we urged the government to shorten the nine sittings to three or four days and discuss thoroughly how to resolve the crisis as well as take a concrete resolution to approach to Centre, particularly the PM, for intervention," he said.

"However, the government did not listen to what we have proposed. Today, we moved five private member resolutions to seek an appointment with the PM," he added.

Singh said all sixty MLAs of the state, including the 10 Kuki legislators, must request PM Modi to give an audience. (PTI)

Arunachal CM announces master plan for twin capital cities

ITANAGAR, Aug 9: Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu on Friday said the state government is preparing a master plan for the long-term development of the twin capital cities, Itanagar and Naharlagun.

Inaugurating a drinking water supply project at the Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHMS) in Naharlagun, Khandu said the plan will focus on beautifying the state capital and upgrading colony roads.

The new water supply project will significantly increase the institute's water capacity from 200,000 to 1.9 million litres daily, ensuring a more reliable water source, he added.

"This futuristic project demonstrates our commitment to improving infrastructure and services in the capital region. Alongside this, we are planning a super specialty complex for TRIHMS and establishing a state cancer institute at Midpu," Khandu shared on X.

In another social media post, Khandu reiterated that a master plan is being developed for the long-term growth of Itanagar and Naharlagun, emphasising the focus on beautification and road upgrades.

He congratulated TRIHMS and thanked the Itanagar Smart City Mission and the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) for their contributions to the water supply project.



"Congratulations to TRIHMS, and thanks to the Itanagar Smart City Mission and PHED for making this valuable project a reality," Khandu said, highlighting that the initiative reflects the government's dedication to enhancing infrastructure and services in the capital region.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by several ministers and officials, including Mama Natung, Balo Raja, Biyuram Wahge, MLA Techi Kaso, and Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) Mayor Tame Phassang. (PTI)

18 guides, 14 scouts, two rangers and one rover from Dimapur, Kohima and Wokha districts qualified for the award Nagaland Guv honours 36 cadets of BSG

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Aug 9: Nagaland Governor La Ganesan on Friday honoured 36 cadets of Nagaland State Bharat Scouts and Guides (NSBSG) with Governor's Award at an award ceremony at Dr. Imkongliba Ao hall in Raj Bhavan, Kohima.

The Governor's Award, also called Rajya Puraskar, is the highest award a scout, guide, rover and ranger can earn at the state level.

In his address, Ganesan expressed his happiness that this year, 18 guides, 14 scouts, two rangers and one rover from Dimapur, Kohima and Wokha districts qualified for the award.

He hoped that the awardees would prepare for the next award, the Presi-

dent's Award, which is the highest award for a scout, guide, rover and ranger in the country.

Ganesan also congratulated the NSBSG for coming out second in the 7th North East Mini Jamboree held in Sikkim from January 12 to January 16 this year.

"It was heartwarming to learn that Sano Vamuzo, life member and former vice-president, state commissioner (guide) and state organizing commissioner (guide), was awarded the Padmashree which adds a feather to the cap of the Nagaland State Bharat Scouts and Guides," he added.

Ganesan called upon the young scouts and guides to emphasise the importance of remembering and honouring the sac-

rifices made by our freedom fighters.

"As young citizens of this great nation, it is your duty to draw inspiration from these historical events and the individuals who shaped our country's history."

"Let their struggles and sacrifices fuel your spirit of patriotism. Emulate their selflessness and commitment in your everyday lives. Inculcate a strong sense of national pride, and let that reflect in your actions," he said.

He reminded the scouts and guides about the ideals of the Bharat Scouts and Guides—duty to God, duty to others, and duty to self—that blend beautifully with the principles of patriotism.

"Let the principles of loyalty, responsibility, and service to society be your guiding stars," Ganesan said.

Govt moved people from one area to another to save lives: Manipur CM

IMPHAL, Aug 9: Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh said his government moved people from one area to another after violence broke out in May last year to protect them.

Responding to the opposition's queries on shifting of people from Churachandpur and Moreh to Imphal Valley and from the state capital to the hills, Singh said on Thursday, "The night violence broke out (May 3), we couldn't sleep. We were in the office discussing things to be done immediately."

"Those affected in Moreh were kept at an Assam Rifles camp and those in Churachandpur were in the Secretariat. Initially, we thought of keeping them there but there were constant cries for help and there was pressure from all sides claiming the affected were not safe in their present locations. Hence, with saving lives being our top priority, the government decided to evacuate them," he said.

Questions are now being raised as to why they were shifted from Churachandpur and

Moreh to Imphal Valley and vice versa but had they not been shifted and had there been unfortunate incidents, it would have raised a different question, and created much frustration, the CM said.

Singh said, "Mobs numbering tens of thousands had assembled and you cannot simply fire on the people indiscriminately."

"There are plenty working to sabotage the peace process. Only a day after peace initiatives were announced in Jiribam district, there were incidents of arson. There were many who still want the conflict to continue as well as build it up," he alleged.

"Still, we are seeing signs of peace. Recently, 133 people who had fled their homes in Jiribam have returned. We are working to ensure that those displaced also return to their homes," he said.

More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless after ethnic violence broke out between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and hills-based Kukis in May last year. (PTI)

Mizoram cabinet approves amendment bill to strengthen Lokayukta

AIZAWL, Aug 9: The Mizoram cabinet on Friday approved an amendment bill to strengthen the Lokayukta, the state's anti-corruption ombudsman formed in 2018, an official said. The meeting of the council of ministers chaired by Chief Minister Lalduhoma discussed in length the Mizoram Lokayukta (Amendment) Bill 2024 and approved it, she said. The amendment bill is likely to be presented in the assembly during a two-day session to be held on August 20 and August 21, the official said. The cabinet also gave its nod to the proposal for construction of a greenfield airport in the southern part of Mizoram. At present, Mizoram has one airport in Lengpui, around 31 km from state capital Aizawl. Besides, the cabinet also approved the Mizoram State Higher Education Council Rules 2024, the Mizoram Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill 2024 and the draft of the Mizoram Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) (Amendment) Rules 2024, the official added. (PTI)

PUBLIC NOTICE

No. SSA/TT/Consultant etc./FLN/308/2023/1572

In pursuant to the advertisement published vide No. SSA/TT/Consultant etc./FLN/308/2023/10423 dated 17.02.2024, it is for general information to all concerned that the skill test/interview for the following posts of FLN, under Samagra Shiksha Axiom as mentioned below :

Sl.No	Name of the post	Date of written test	Time of test	Venue
1	Data Analyst of FLN at State PMU	18.08.2024	9.30 am to 11.00 am	Assam Engineering Institute, Guwahati
2	Data Analyst of FLN at District PMU	18.08.2024	11.45 am to 1.15 pm	Assam Engineering Institute, Guwahati
3	Consultant of FLN at District PMU (Language)	20.08.2024 & 21.08.2024	9.30 am	State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha Axiom, Kahilipara, Guwahati
4	Consultant of FLN at District PMU (Numeracy)	22.08.2024	9.30 am	State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha Axiom, Kahilipara, Guwahati

The list of short-listed candidates is uploaded in the official website of Samagra Shiksha Axiom at <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>

The short-listed candidates are requested to attend in the skill test/interview before one hour of the scheduled date and time.

The short-listed candidates of Data Analyst of FLN at State PMU and Data Analyst of FLN at District PMU name may be downloaded their admit card from the official website of Samagra Shiksha Axiom at <https://ssa.assam.gov.in> w.e.f. 15.08.2024 and in case of Consultant of FLN at District PMU (Language) and Consultant of FLN at District PMU (Numeracy), call letters have been sent.



Sd/-Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha Axiom
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog /DF/747/24/10-Aug-24

E-mail ID:dc-udalguri@nic.in

Telephone No.03711-224433

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

A walk-in-interview will be held on 17.08.24 from 10.00 A.M. onwards in the Office of the District Commissioner, Udalguri for engagement in the following temporary contractual post under District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC), Udalguri. The engagement is purely on temporary basis and does not confer any right for a permanent post. The engagement shall be discontinued immediately in case of any lapse/misconduct/indiscipline/breach of trust etc committed on the part of the engaged person. Remuneration will be paid subjected to availability of fund for the same sectioned by authority. The candidate must be a citizen of India and must have completed 21 years as on 01.01.2024.

Interested candidates shall be mandatorily required to bring an application as per the standard format along with all the original certificates, two passport size colour photographs, experience certificate, if any and also a set of self attested copies of the same.

Sl. No	Name of Post	Qualifications	No. of post	Honorarium (in Rs)
1	Clinical Psychologist/ Rehabilitation Psychologist	Clinical Psychologist: a) M. Phil. Clinical Psychology b) Professional Diploma in Clinical Psychology Rehabilitation Psychologist : a) M. Phil. Rehabilitation Psychology b) Post Graduate Diploma in Rehabilitation Psychology (PGDRP)	01	Rs.24600/- 1020 (per visit)
2	Sr. Physiotherapist	BPT	01	24600/- 1020 (per visit)
3	Occupational Therapist:	BOT	01	24600/- 1020 (per visit)
4	Sr. Prosthetist / Orthotist (OH category)	Bachelor in Prosthetics and Orthotics (BPO) from any Institute recognized by RCI	01	24600/- 1020 (per visit)
5	Prosthetist / Orthotist Technician	Diploma in P&O or Certificate in P&O with 3 years experience	01	17400
6	Audiologist & Sr. Speech Therapist	Bachelors in Audiology and Speech & Language Pathology (BASLP) or B.Sc. Speech & Hearing	01	24600/- 1020 (per visit)
7	Hearing Assistant/ Jr. Speech Therapist	Diploma in Speech & Hearing with knowledge of hearing aids repair/ ear-mould making	01	17400
8	Speech & Hearing Technician	Diploma in Hearing Language and Speech (DHLs)	01	17400
9	Ear-Mould Technician	Diploma in Hearing Aid Repair and Ear Mould Technology (DHAREMT)	01	17400
10	Multi-Purpose Rehabilitation Worker	Matriculation & Certificate / Diploma in Mobility preferably Bachelor in Mobility Science (B.M.Sc.) or D. Ed. Spl. Ed. / B.Ed. Spl. Ed. in Visual Impairment	01	17400
11	Accountant cum Clerk cum Storekeeper	Post Graduate Diploma in Community Based Rehabilitation (PGDCBR)/ Diploma in Community Based Rehabilitation (DCBR)/ Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID)/ MRW	01	17400
12	Attendance cum Peon cum Messenger	B.Com/ SAS with 2 years experience	01	11400
13	Vocational Counselor cum Computer Assistant	Class VIII pass	01	17400
14	Early Intervention Therapist	Diploma in Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) / Advanced Diploma in Child Guidance and Counseling (ADCGC)/ Bachelor of Rehabilitation Science (B.R.Sc)	01	17400
15	Trans-Disciplinary Special Educator	PGDDT/ PGDEI/ BMRI BRSC/ BRT / MRSc / MSc-EI	02	17400
16	Caregiver	a) DeDSE/ BeDSE in Hearing Impairment b) DeDSE/ BeDSE in VI/ ID/ CP/ ASDI MD/ Db/ SLD	01	7500

Sd/-
District Commissioner,
Udalguri.

Janasanyog /D/3890/24/10-Aug-24

No.DDB/15th FC/2022-23/1387

Dated 08/08/2024

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tender affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five) only with a validity period of 180 Days, which will subsequently be to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered Contractors of Class-II and Class-I (A, B & C) category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC, according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the works under 15th Finance Commission (Tied Grant) for the year 2022-23 during 2024-25 as stated below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 12.00 Noon on 02/09/2024 and will be opened on the same date & place at 3.00 P.M.

Sl. No.	Name of works	Tender Amount (Approx)	Cost of Tender Paper	Time of Completion of Work
1	Construction of Community Toilet at Jartaluk Gowlabil under 15 th FC (Tied Grant) for the year 2022-23 during 2024-25	Rs. 11.00 Lac	Rs. 500/-	3 (three) Months from the date of issue of F.W.O.

Detail N.I.T. may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agents from 12/08/2024 to 02/09/2024 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of Demand Draft/Banker's Cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC Kokrajhar, payable at Kokrajhar.

Sd/- Block Dev. Officer,
Dhamdhama Dev. Block, Baganpara

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/262

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR COMPREHENSIVE LINEN HANDLING OF THE MECHANIZED LAUNDRY

EOI No. M/TSK/EOI/2024/01; Dated: 07-08-2024. Tender No.: M/TSK/EOI/2024/01. Name of work: Expression of Interest for Comprehensive Linen Handling of the Mechanized Laundry at Dibrugarh along with transportation, loading and unloading of linens in trains. Location of work: Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. Cost of Tender Document: ₹2,000/-. Last date and time for submission of tender: 30-08-2024 at 13:00 hrs. Date and time of opening of tender: After 15:00 hrs. of 30-08-2024. Website particulars where complete details of the tender can be seen and downloaded: www.indianrailways.gov.in.

Sr. OME, Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

TRACK MAINTENANCE WORKS IN LUMDING DIVISION

Tender Notice No.: LMG/Engg/129 of 2024. Dated: 06-08-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Brief Description of Item: Track maintenance work including SEJ renewal works, casual renewal of Rails, Distressing operation of LWR, pulling back of Rails, Assistance to Track Machine, pre & post working during machine working in section and other ancillary works under the jurisdiction of ADEN/III/Lumding. Tender Value: ₹2,47,94,759.16/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,74,000/-; Date & time of closing of above tender at 15:00 hrs. on 02-09-2024 and opening at 15:00 hrs. on 03-09-2024. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 02-09-2024 in website www.reps.gov.in.

DRM(W), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"

ASSAM UNIVERSITY
SILCHAR-788011, ASSAM

Employment Notification No: 1/2024 Dated 29th July 2024

In supersession to employment notification no 2/2023 dated 7th July, 2023 and 4/2023 dated 7th September, 2023 Online applications (Link: <https://ausnt.samarth.edu.in>) are invited from Indian nationals to fill the following Non-Teaching posts in Assam University at its HQ Silchar. (i) Finance Officer (1UR) (ii) Director, CDC (1UR), (iii) Internal Audit Officer (on deputation basis), (iv) LDC-1(UR) (viii) MTS -03 (UR), (ix) Laboratory Attendant (1 UR).

Diphu Campus: (i) LDC (1UR)

Backlog Vacancies: (i) Library Attendant-(01 OBC), (ii) Hindi Translator (1 PwBD), (iii) LDC-2 (1 OBC, 1 SC), (iv) MTS -05 (1 SC, 3 OBC, 1 ST), (v) Laboratory Attendant (2 PwBD). **Diphu Campus:** (i) LDC (1 SC)

Please Note: (a) Those who have previously applied under employment notification no 2/2023 and 4/2023 are required to resubmit their application in the Samarth portal indicating the application number. Candidates in this category are not required to pay any application/registration fees. (b) If suitable candidates are not found, for the posts reserved for PwBD with a specific disability, the vacancy will be open for all other types of disabilities. Any PwBD candidate may apply against the posts reserved for PwBD. The deadline for submitting the filled-in application from is 7th September, 2024. Detailed eligibility criteria, application fees, instructions etc. can be found on the University's website <http://www.aus.ac.in> or <https://ausnt.samarth.edu.in>. Any changes/amendments/addendums related to this notification will be available only on the university website.

Sd/-
Registrar

CBC - 21240/12/0002/2425

Sonowal introduces two shipping-related bills in LS

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Ports shipping and waterways minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday introduced two bills -- Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024, and the Bills of Lading Bill, 2024, in the Lok Sabha.

The Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024, seeks to comply with the international convention and with the changing global scenario in the shipping industry.

The Bill also seeks to provide the responsibilities, liabilities, rights and immunities attached to carriers with respect to the carriage of goods by sea and for matters connected therewith or related thereto.

The Bills of Lading Bill, 2024 seeks to make provisions for the transfer of rights of suit and all liabilities to the consignee named in a bill of lading and every endorsee of a bill of lading, to whom the property in the goods mentioned in the bill of lading shall pass.

The Bill was enacted to amend the law relating to Bills of Lading with a view to address aspects including transferring all rights in respect of the contract contained in the bill of lading along with the property to the consignee or endorsee of the bill of lading. And ensuring that a transferred bill of lading in the hands of a bona fide holder be treated as conclusive evidence of the goods being laden on board.

In October 1922 delegates at the International Conference on Maritime Law held at Brussels agreed unanimously to recommend their respective governments to adopt the unification of certain rules relating to bills of lading on the basis of a Convention draft.

Saugata Roy (TMC) opposed the introduction of the bill saying that the Indian Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1925, has been serving its purpose for the past 100 years and The Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024, only has some minor amendments. "This superfluous legislation should be done away with, it does not help the country," Roy said.

Since the endorsement of rights over bills of lading is an important aspect of its use in the carriage of goods by sea, the Bill said provisions of the said Act have extensive commercial applicability and are crucial to determine the transfer of rights of suit and liabilities to endorsee and consignees to whom any bill of lading has been transferred. (PTI)

Bill seeks to give greater freedom to banks in deciding the remuneration to be paid to statutory auditors

Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill introduced in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Minister of state for finance Pankaj Chaudhary on Friday introduced in the Lok Sabha the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which seeks to give customers an option to increase the number of nominees per bank account to four, from existing one, among others.

Another proposed change relates to redefining 'substantial interest' for directorships, which could increase to ₹ 2 crore instead of the current limit of ₹ 5 lakh, which was fixed almost six decades ago.

Congress member Manish Tewari opposed the introduction of the Bill saying the power to legislate with regard to cooperative societies vests with state governments.

Responding to opposition's remarks, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the banking regulation act and the cooperative



banks do have a relationship and hence any amendment has to be taken through this route.

"There is no attempt to undermine the cooperatives, particularly cooperatives dealing with everything other than banks. Banks, cooperatives with a licence for banking will have to

have a rule and therefore we have shown this," Sitharaman said.

The Bill also seeks to give greater freedom to banks in deciding the remuneration to be paid to statutory auditors.

It also seeks to redefine the reporting dates for banks for regulatory compliance to the 15th and

last day of every month instead of the second and fourth Fridays.

The Bill, which was approved by the Union Cabinet last week, proposes to amend the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the State Bank of India Act, 1955, the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970 and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980.

The announcement about amendments to the Banking Regulation Act was made by the Finance Minister in her 2023-24 Budget speech.

"To improve bank governance and enhance investors' protection, certain amendments to the Banking Regulation Act, the Banking Companies Act and the Reserve Bank of India Act are proposed," she had said. (PTI)

Face-off between chairman Dhankhar and Jaya Bachchan in Rajya Sabha



Opposition walks out

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and actor-politician Jaya Bachchan were involved in a face-off on Friday after Bachchan raised objection to his "tone" while giving her floor to speak and the former asserting that even a celebrity like her needs to follow decorum.

Opposition parties also staged a walkout following the exchanges between Dhankhar and Bachchan, a Samajwadi Party MP.

Later, while talking to reporters in the parliament complex, Bachchan said she was upset with the tone of the Chairman, and also the way the mic of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was switched off when he stood up to speak in the House.

The trouble started when the SP member wanted to make a point on an ongoing heated discussion between Opposition parties and the Chairman in the Rajya Sabha over certain remarks made by BJP MP Ghanshyam Tiwari on Kharge a few days ago.

Dhankhar allowed her saying, "Jaya Amitabh Bachchan" make your point.

Bachchan rose to say: "I Jaya Amitabh Bachchan want to say, I am an artist. I understand body language and expressions. Forgive me but your tone is not acceptable. We are colleagues, Sir. You may be sitting in the Chair, and I remember when I went to school..."

On this, a visibly angry Dhankhar interrupted, saying "Enough of it".

"You may be anybody, you may be a celebrity, you have to understand the decorum, no, nothing doing...Never carry an impression that only you build reputations...we live up to reputations, nothing doing," he said.

When an Opposition party member raised an objection to how Dhankhar could call Bachchan a celebrity when she was a senior Member of Parliament, the Chairman retorted: "(Does) a senior member of Parliament has a licence to run down the reputation of the Chair... to question the tone and tenor?"

The Chairman further said he has the highest respect for all members as Kharge tried to make a point.

Dhankhar further said he cannot be a party to the House being converted into an "epicentre of disturbance".

Talking to reporters in the parliament complex, the SP leader said she "objected" to the tone used by the Chair.

"We are not school children, some of us are senior citizens. I was upset with the tone and specially when Leader of Opposition stood up to speak he had switched off the mic. How can you do this? This is against the tradition. You have to allow the leader," she said. (PTI)

BJP MPs meets PM over SC observation on SCs, STs creamy layer



NEW DELHI, Aug 9: A delegation of BJP MPs on Friday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed concern over the Supreme Court's observation on identifying the creamy layer among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Schedule Tribes (ST).

After the meeting, Modi said on X, "Met a delegation of SC/ST MPs today. Reiterated our commitment and resolve for the welfare and empowerment of the SC/ST communities."

On August 1, Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavai had said states must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the SCs and STs, and deny them the benefit of reservation.

BJP Rajya Sabha member Sikander Kumar, who was part of the delegation, told PTI, "All of us were concerned over the Supreme Court's observation. We were getting phone calls from people expressing concern over the matter."

"A delegation of MPs representing SCs and STs met the prime minister this morning and expressed their concern in this connection," he said in the Parliament complex.

The prime minister held a serious discussion with the MPs and assured that the government will not let the apex court's observation be implemented, Kumar said. "We express our gratitude towards the prime minister for this," he said. BJP MP Faggan Singh Kulaste said the delegation in its memorandum to the prime minister urged that the apex court's observation on the issue of creamy layer should not be implemented.

"The prime minister was also held a similar view. He assured us that he will look into the matter and asked us not to worry, saying it will not be implemented in the SC and ST category," he told PTI. (PTI)

Committed to conducting polls in J-K at earliest: CEC



JAMMU, Aug 9: Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Friday said that the EC was committed to conducting polls in Jammu and Kashmir at the earliest and would not allow any internal or external forces derail the electoral process.

Addressing a press conference here, Kumar said all parties in Jammu and Kashmir are "batting strongly" for holding assembly elections.

"We are committed to conducting polls in Jammu and Kashmir at the earliest and we will not let any internal or external forces derail the election," Kumar said.

"All political parties in Jammu and Kashmir are batting strongly for holding assembly elections as soon as possible," he added.

An Election Commission delegation led by Kumar is in Jammu and Kashmir on a three-day visit to review the preparedness of the administration as well as the security agencies for the conduct of the

polls.

On the second day of their visit on Friday, the EC delegation that also includes Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu, held discussions with Jammu and Kashmir chief secretary Atal Dullo and the Union Territory's police chief R R Swain, officials said.

Assembly polls have not been held in Jammu and Kashmir since 2014. The polls were due to be held in early 2019 following the dissolution of the legislative body of the erstwhile state in 2018.

However, after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into Union territories in August 2019, the Assembly polls could not be held due to various reasons, including a delimitation exercise completed in 2022.

In December of last year, the Supreme Court directed the Centre to conclude the election process by September 30, 2024. (PTI)

Oppn silence on situation of minorities in Bangladesh 'unfortunate': BJP



NEW DELHI, Aug 9: BJP MPs on Friday criticised opposition parties, saying their silence on the situation of Hindus and other minority communities in Bangladesh is unfortunate.

Several Hindu temples, households and businesses have been vandalised in violence in Bangladesh since Monday when prime minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India, leaving the country in turmoil following deadly protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

During the Zero Hour of the Lok Sabha, BJP MP Anurag Thakur tried to corner the Leader of Opposition and Congress MP, Rahul Gandhi, by alleging that he has not spoken on ensuring the safety of minorities in Bangladesh.

"When the interim government of Bangladesh took over, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated them but at the same time he asked them to ensure the safety of minorities," he said.

"It is unfortunate that the Leader of Opposition extended congratulations to the interim government (of Bangladesh) but did not mention the safety and security of Hindus and the minorities. What was the compulsion? You spoke about Gaza but not about minorities in Bangladesh," Thakur said.

Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath as the head of the interim government of Bangladesh

on Thursday, replacing Hasina. BJP MP from Odisha's Dhenkanal constituency, Rudra Narayan Pany, while raising the issue of Hindu temples being attacked in Bangladesh, said the government of India should interfere to ensure their safety.

"Hindu temples have been attacked in Bangladesh, and the photos that have come out show that the statue of Lord Jagannath was attacked. This is unforgotten, condemnable and painful..." Pany said. "What is this mentality behind damaging Hindu temples?" he asked.

Pany said this has hurt not just the people of Odisha but people all across India. "The Government of India should talk to Bangladesh to ensure that the guilty are punished," he said.

BJP MP from Assam's Darrang constituency Dilip Saikia also raised concerns over the situation in Bangladesh and urged the government to strengthen security along the India-Bangladesh border.

"India wants peace to be restored in Bangladesh. India has a 4,096-kilometer border with Bangladesh," he said and added that security along the Indo-Bangladesh border should be as strong as that along the India-Pakistan border.

He also said the Indian government should ensure that minorities are protected in Bangladesh.

BJP MP from Andaman and Nicobar Islands Bishnu Pada Ray said, "My father came to West Bengal in 1946 from East Pakistan to save his life. Then he went to Andaman... What is happening in Bangladesh today..."

"Congress, CPI(M) and TMC should condemn what is happening in Bangladesh. They are sitting quietly," he said and added that they are quiet due to their "vote-bank".

He also said that the Parliament should pass a resolution on the situation in Bangladesh. (PTI)

Motion for naming 21 members for joint panel on Waqf Bill

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The joint committee of Parliament to examine the Waqf (Amendment) Bill will have 31 members -- 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha -- and will submit its report by the next Parliament session.

The Lok Sabha on Friday adopted a motion naming 21 of its members to be part of the committee.

Kiren Rijju, who is the minister of parliamentary affairs as well as minority affairs, moved the motion that the Waqf (Amendment) Bill be referred to a joint committee of Houses consisting of 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha.

The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a joint parliamentary panel after a heated debate, with the government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the opposition calling it targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution.

According to the motion moved by Rijju, the Rajya Sabha has been asked to name 10 of its members to serve on the panel and communicate the same to the Lower House.

The committee will submit its report to the



Lok Sabha by the last day of the first week of the next session.

The 21 members from the Lok Sabha included in the panel are Jagdambika Pal, Nishikant Dubey, Tejasvi Surya, Aparajita Sarangi, Sanjay Jaiswal, Dilip Saikia, Abhikrit Gangopadhyay, D K Aruna (all BJP), Gaurav Gogoi, Imran Masood and Mohd Jawed (all

Congress), Maulana Mohibullah (SP), Kalyan Banerjee (TMC), A Raja (DMK), Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu (TDP), Dilleshwar Kamait (JDU), Arvind Sawant (Shiv Sena-UBT), Balya Mama Suresh Gopinath Mhatre (NCP-Sharad Pawar), Naresh Mhaske (Shiv Sena), Arun Bharti (Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas) and Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM). (PTI)

Don't 'mislead' society on SCs creamy layer: Law minister to opposition

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Friday asked the opposition not to "mislead" the society on the "observations" of a Supreme Court judge on carving out a creamy layer for exclusion from SC/ST reservations. Meghwal was replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha when Shiv Sena-UBT member Bhausaheb Wakchaure raised the issue of the Supreme Court judgment on creamy layer in SC/ST quotas.

"The reference to creamy layer in the sub-categorisation of SC/STs is an observation by a Supreme Court judge and not a part of the decision. The member should not make an attempt to mislead the society," Meghwal said. He said the Constitution does not have any provision for reservation for SC/STs in the Rajya Sabha or Legislative Councils in various states.

"There is no proposal under consideration to provide reservation to the SCs/STs in Rajya Sabha," Meghwal said.

The Law Minister said under article 332 of the Constitution, seats are reserved for the SCs and STs in the State Legislative Assemblies, in proportion to their population.

Earlier this month, a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled in a 6:1 majority judgment that State governments were permitted to sub-classify communities within the SC list based on empirical data. Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavai had said that States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation. (PTI)

Waqf (Amendment) Bill was introduced in LS was referred to a joint parliamentary panel

Bihar minister supports Centre's decision to refer Waqf Bill to JPC

PATNA, Aug 9: A key aide of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar on Friday welcomed the Centre's decision to send the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 to the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for scrutiny, emphasising that the "apprehensions of the minority community about the Bill must be addressed."

Talking to reporters here, Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, a senior minister in Nitish Kumar's cabinet and JD(U) leader, said, "From the outset, there were significant apprehensions about the Bill within the minority community. Their concerns must be thoroughly addressed before it is finalised. The JD(U) welcomes the central government's decision to send the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 to the JPC for scrutiny."

He added, "Our leader, Nitish Kumar Ji, believes that issues concerning minority communities must be handled with utmost sensitivity."

Chaudhary, Bihar's Parliamentary Affairs



Minister, is considered one of the most trusted colleagues of the JD(U) supremo, having been a member of the Assembly

since 1982.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday and re-

ferred to a joint parliamentary panel after a heated debate, with the government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the opposition calling it targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution.

Asked about the support of senior JD(U) MP and Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh for the Bill in its current form, Chaudhary declined to comment directly, reiterating, "I will once again emphasise that the apprehensions of the minority community about the Bill must be addressed before it is finalised."

During a discussion in the Lok Sabha, Singh had said, "The Bill is not about a mosque or temple but aims to bring transparency to an institution. How is it against Muslims? This law is intended to promote transparency."

Following intense criticism from opposition parties, Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju proposed sending the Bill to a JPC. (PTI)

Green and Sustainable Development Partnership is long-lasting partnership: German envoy to India

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The German-Indian Green and Sustainable Development Partnership is a "long-lasting partnership" and will lead to "very good results" when Chancellor Olaf Scholz meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi in October, Ambassador Philipp Ackermann said.

In an interview with PTI at the German embassy in New Delhi on Thursday, the German envoy also said the partnership reflected the "intensity and closeness" in the friendship between India and Germany.

Scholz and Modi, in May 2022, signed the German-Indian Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (GSDP), which gears cooperation between the two countries across different sectors towards the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

"India and Germany have developed a partnership, the partnership for green and sustainable development, and this partnership is covering many, many aspects of climate change, smart city initiatives, biodiversity, and these climate talks which we hold today is in the framework of this partnership," Ackermann said.

"It's a very important partnership, which is well-funded and which reflects the intensity and closeness in the friendship between India and Germany," he added.

The German envoy said progress in the partnership during the two years had been good.

"The progress has been good,



we have a lot of different projects over the years. Every year we identify new projects and we bring projects to an end. So, when on October 25, the chancellor will come and sit down with Prime Minister Modi, and take stock ... we will have very, very good results of this partnership," he said.

Asked if Scholz was arriving on October 25, he said, "So, that is the plan. He is arriving in the second half of October. The chancellor will come for the intergovernmental consultations that will be held in Delhi in 2024."

In June, Ackermann had told reporters that the date for Scholz's visit were being finalised and it was set to take place in the second half of October.

Scholz is set to visit India to hold wide-ranging talks with Modi, with a focus on boosting bilateral trade and economic relations.

Ackermann had earlier said that "the ease of doing business" in

India would be on the top of the agenda during Scholz's trip.

On Thursday evening, the German ambassador took part in a panel discussion on "Women as Agents of Climate Action" at the embassy.

"Germany and India have concluded this partnership green and sustainable development. It is a well-funded, long-lasting partnership, a partnership we are very proud of. The partnership is very concrete," he told the gathering.

Asked if there was an academic collaboration between the two sides on issues related to studying, analysing or posing possible roadmaps for tackling climate change and measures to mitigate its impact, he said the good thing about the Indo-German partnership was that "it goes way beyond government-to-government".

"GSDP is a government-to-government programme but, out of this context, we have a lot and lot of partnerships and that includes,

of course, academic partnerships, between IITs and technical universities in Germany, Potsdam Institute for Climate (Impact) Research. And both sides are getting together to find good solutions," he added.

He also spoke on the defence co-operation between the two sides in light of the ongoing air exercise 'Tarang Shakti' in Tamil Nadu's Sullur.

"I had the enormous privilege to go to Sullur on Tuesday with the Indian Air Force (IAF). It was a fantastic moment to see all the fighter jets coming in. I must say, the German air chief flew one of the fighter jets for five hours from Malaysia and Sullur, and the (IAF) vice-chief also flew an Indian plane and escorted the German fleet. It was really, quite a moment," he said.

"I think it is a wonderful opportunity to show how close the Indian Armed Forces and the German Air Force work together and this is certainly the start for a series of joint exercises in the years to come," the envoy said.

Ahead of the air exercise, Ackermann on Monday said this was the first time that the German Air Force was exercising with the IAF and this extensive exercise "deepens our security and political ties" with India. The first phase of 'Tarang Shakti' -- the largest multilateral air exercise in the country -- is set being held in from August 6-14. It will see participation of four countries -- Germany, France, Spain and the UK -- with their assets. (PTI)

SC stays Mumbai college circular banning 'hijab, burqa, cap and naqab' on campus

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed a Mumbai college's decision banning 'hijab, burqa, cap and naqab' on the campus and said girl students must have the freedom to choose what they wear.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar came down heavily on the Chembur Trombay Education Society, which runs the 'N G Acharya and D K Marathe College' for issuing such a circular and asked whether it would ban 'bindi' and 'tilak' also.

During the hearing, Justice Kumar asked senior advocate Madhavi Divan, appearing for the society, how was the college empowering the girl students by issuing such a circular.

"How are you empowering the women by telling them what to wear? I think it's less said the better. Where is the freedom of choice for the women? Where is freedom of choice of what to wear to the girl students? Educational institutions should not force their decisions on the girl students on what to wear," said Justice Kumar.

Divan contended that the college is a co-educational institution and the intention behind the directive is to ensure that the religious faiths of the students are not revealed. The lawyer said the circular was not limited to 'hijab, burqa or naqab' but extended to even ripped jeans and other such attire.

Unimpressed, Justice Khanna asked "Will the students' names not reveal their religious identity?" and added "Religion is in their names also. Do not impose such rules."

Justice Kumar further observed,



"You have suddenly woken up to the fact that they are wearing it and come out with instructions. It is unfortunate. After so many years of Independence, you have come to know there are so many religions in this country."

The bench issued notice to the education society and sought its response by November 18.

"We partly stay clause 2 of the impugned circular to the extent that it directs that no hijab, no cap, no badges will be allowed in the campus. We hope and trust this interim order is not misused by anybody," the bench ordered.

It granted liberty to the educational society and the college to approach the court in case of any misuse of the order.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves and advocate Abiha Zaidi, appearing for the petitioners, including Zainab Abdul Qayyum, submitted that students were not able to attend the classes due to the circular.

The girl students have been wearing hijab for the past four

years, Gonsalves said, adding that now they are being stopped from attending the classes.

Divan submitted there are 441 girl students from the Muslim community who are happily studying in the college and they are given lockers and to keep their burqa or hijab in them.

"None of the 441 girls had any problem except for these three girls, who approached the high court against the circular," she said. "You may be correct as many of them come from different backgrounds. Maybe family members of some could ask them to wear it or they wear it (of their own accord). But let all of them study together. Don't implement these rules," the court told the lawyer.

Justice Khanna told her, "You cannot make it like this. Solution to a lot of this is proper, good education. Yes, you may be right that no burqa can be allowed to be worn by girls inside the classroom and no religious activities can be permitted on the campus." (PTI)

Himachal tragedy

Toll touches 27 after recovery of 5 bodies from Shimla district

SHIMLA, Aug 9: The death toll in the flash floods triggered by cloudbursts in three districts of Himachal Pradesh on July 31 mid-night rose to 27 with recovery of five bodies on Friday, officials said. As the search operation to trace about 30 missing people entered the ninth day, the families of the victims have lost hopes of seeing their loved ones alive.

The tragedy occurred in Kullu's Nirmand, Sainj and Malana, Mandi's Padhar and Shimla's Rampur subdivision. The worst hit was Samej village on the border of Shimla and Kullu district where about 20 people are still missing.

Four bodies were found in Dogri area near Sunni Dam in Shimla district while one was found near Nogli, taking the death toll in Samej to 15. As per preliminary investigation four of the deceased are women and one is a teenage boy. They are yet to be identified. The body Kalpana Kumari was found in Nogli.

Deputy Commissioner Shimla Anupam Kashyap said. Of the total 27 bodies, 15 have been recovered from Rampur, nine from Mandi's Rajbhan village and three from Nirmand/Bagipul in Kullu district. The search operations are going on in about 85 km area.

Family members of 30 missing people who have been camping at the sites since the tragedy struck have now lost hope and are praying for the recovery of the bodies of their loved ones so they can respectfully perform their last rites. (PTI)

BSF foils Bangladeshi infiltration bid at Bengal's Cooch Behar border

KOLKATA, Aug 9: Tension prevailed at the Sitalkuchi fenced land border area of Cooch Behar district in West Bengal on Friday morning after panicked Bangladeshi nationals, numbering nearly a thousand, assembled on the other side of the fence in their bid to cross over to India and seek refuge.

The attempt was, however, foiled by the BSF which maintained a strict vigil at the border. The Bangladeshis were later removed from the spot by the Border Guards Bangladesh personnel, the Border Security Force confirmed.

The crowd, allegedly comprising mostly Bangladeshi Hindus, assembled some 400 metres away from the fence alongside a water body at the Genduguri and Doikhawa villages in the Lalmonirhat district of Bangladesh.

Heavy deployment of the 157 Battalion of the BSF at the Pathantuli village, maintaining vigil on automobiles and on foot, made the infiltration bid of the foreigners impossible.

The disappointed Bangladeshis were heard raising slogans in support of their demand for entry into Indian soil.

When inquired about the incident, a senior BSF official confirmed that a large number of Bangladeshis had assembled at the border but were later taken back by the BGB.

The Bangladeshis had gathered at the border, but none were able to enter the country as the border was completely sealed. They were later taken back by the BGB into their own country, the official said.

In a statement released later in the day by the Guwahati Frontier of the BSF, the organisation called the development a new border challenge.

This emerging challenge is new to the BSF, which is primarily entrusted with the security of India's borders along both Bangladesh and Pakistan. Faced with the delicate task of managing humanitarian concerns while ensuring border security, the BSF demonstrated exceptional professionalism, with its officers and men swiftly responding to the situation, the statement read.

It outlined how the force promptly approached its Bangladeshi counterpart, the BGB, to take the people away without escalating tension.

This operation underscores the BSF's unwavering commitment to safeguarding India's borders while



also recognizing the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns with compassion and strict adherence to international standards, the statement added.

Severe and bloody anti-government protests in Bangladesh over the past three weeks, which led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government and the taking over of the country's administration by an interim government led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, has resulted in an overall death of 469 people till reports last received.

Local media outlets have reported severe persecution of minorities in that country in the wake of the violence leading to several attempts by panicked Bangladeshis to illegally cross over to India over the past few days.

Coinciding with the development, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced the setting up of a high-level committee to monitor the eastern border situation of the country and ensure safety of Indian citizens living in those areas.

In a post on his X handle, Shah wrote, In the wake of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Modi government has constituted a committee to monitor the current situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB). The committee will maintain communication channels with their counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus, and other minority communities living there.

The committee will be headed by the ADG, Border Security Force, Eastern Command, the statement added. (PTI)

SC seeks response of bar leader on plea of ex-district judge in contempt case

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from bar leader Rajiv Khosla on a plea of former Delhi district court judge Sujata Kohli challenging his exoneration by the Delhi High Court in a contempt case for allegedly interfering with the administration of justice.

The high court had in February discharged Khosla, a former president of the Delhi High Court Bar Association (DHCA), in the contempt case which was initiated against him for allegedly obstructing the court proceedings against him.

Chaos had erupted in a courtroom in Delhi's Tis Hazari court on November 30, 2021, with lawyers chanting slogans and standing atop tables and chairs as they awaited the pronouncement of an order on sentencing against Khosla in the assault case lodged by Kohli.

Kohli had alleged that Khosla grabbed her by hair and dragged her in August 1994. She was a lawyer at Tis Hazari court at the time of the incident and later went on to become a judge in the Delhi judiciary. She retired as a District and Sessions Judge in 2020.

The contempt case against the bar leader had arisen on account of the alleged chaos and obstruction caused by the lawyers supporting him when the trial court was about to pronounce the sentence against him.

Amid chanting of slogans by the lawyers, the trial court had convicted Khosla and directed him to pay a total compensation of Rs 40,000 to the State and Kohli.



A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the submissions of senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for Kohli, assailing the high court verdict exonerating him.

Besides issuing notice to Khosla, the bench asked the Registrar General of the Delhi High Court to supply in sealed cover the report of the then district judge about the incident of November 30, 2021.

The matter will be taken up after three weeks.

"She was a practising lawyer, when this gentleman pulled her hair in court premises, thereafter she became a judicial officer," Jaising said, adding that on the judgement day, a "mob" of lawyers attempted to prevent the judge from performing the duties. "The grievance is really against the leader of the Bar. He went on to become the President of DHCA...This is happening very

often...even other judges had to come to the courtroom to pacify protesting lawyers," she said.

The high court, in its order, had said that the former judge did not produce any material to compel it to form an opinion that Khosla committed any criminal contempt.

It had said the CCTV footage of the incident showed that the courtroom was "fully packed" on the day of arguments on sentencing, quite possibly because the convict was an office bearer of the Delhi Bar Association as well as the DHCA, and the "voice of the alleged contemnor was not properly audible".

It had said the transcript of the footage too did not reflect utterances attributable to Khosla that could suggest contempt.

"There is nothing before us which may indicate that the contemnor had scandalized or lowered the authority of any Court or interfered or tried to interfere with the due course of any judicial proceedings," the high court had concluded while discharging him.

On October 29, 2021, a trial court had convicted Rajiv Khosla in the assault case for offences punishable under Sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

In her petition before the high court, Kohli had alleged that after his conviction, Khosla made an appeal to the Bar bodies to join him and they sided with him while deciding to go on a strike.

She had added that Khosla's conduct inside the courtroom was also objectionable. (PTI)

Post Wayanad landslides, Goa govt reactivates disaster management committee

PANAJI, Aug 9: In light of the recent landslides in Kerala that claimed more than 200 lives, the Goa government has reactivated its high-level committee on disaster management, making ground-level revenue officials responsible for reporting illegal hill cutting.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday chaired a high-level meeting of the state disaster management committee, for which state Revenue Minister Atanasio Monserrate and other high-ranking officials at Porvorim were present.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Sawant said the state government has woken up after the Wayanad landslide, reviving its machinery to prevent such incidents in Goa. Goa shares Sahyadri Hill ranges with Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra.

Sawant said the committee will now be called the state disaster management authority, with dedicated officers working around the year.

He recalled landslides in Sattari taluka inside the forests of Sattrem, Karanzol and Mauxi villages in 2022 and said the committee formed to probe the incident had concluded that it happened due to heavy rains and deforestation. The chief minister said minor landslides have been reported in Bardez, Mormugao, Sattari, Bicholim, Pernem and Salcette talukas in the last few years.

The committee will identify landslide-prone areas, he said.

The main focus would be on the areas on the foothills, and the committee has the power to immediately stop hill-cutting if they find that it could be dangerous to people living in the vicinity.

Sawant said another committee comprising mamlatdars (local revenue officers), zonal agriculture officers and range forest officers will monitor the situation in their respective areas. Guidelines would be issued to the revenue, forest, town and country planning, public works department, panchayat and urban development departments, which will not allow construction in no development zones and eco-sensitive areas, he said.

Sawant said the state will also take help from the National Disaster Management Authority to identify landslide-prone areas and develop techniques such as early warning systems. (PTI)

HC quashes order detaining Youtuber under Goondas Act

CHENNAI, Aug 9: The Madras High Court on Friday set aside an order of the Chennai City Police Commissioner, detaining Shankar alias 'Savukku' Shankar, a well-known Youtuber under the stringent Goondas Act.

Allowing a Habeas Corpus Petition filed by Shankar's mother A Kamala, the bench directed the Youtuber, lodged in the Coimbatore Central Prison to be set at liberty forthwith if he was not required in any other case.

Setting aside the detention order dated May 12, 2024, a division bench comprising Justices S M Subramaniam and V Sivagnanam said "In fine, we have arrived at an irresistible conclusion that the impugned order of detention is not in compliance with the essential requirement and ingredients as contemplated under Act 14 of 1982. Thus, the detention order issued by the Commissioner of police is set aside." The bench said the detaining authority had registered both the adverse complaints on the same day i.e., on May 7, 2024. One complaint was registered after a lapse of nearly six years, whereas the other complaint was pertaining to derogatory remarks against Women Police Officers given by a



social activist.

The manner in which both these complaints were registered, one with an inordinate delay and another which was pertaining to police officers raises several questions as to the intentions behind the detention order.

Further, these two adverse cases do not form sufficient ground to culminate into a case of Preventive detention under Act 14 of 1982. Further, the inconsistencies in the ground case also shakes the foundation of the detention order. Hence, in case of preventive detention, if there was any doubt, whether rules have been strictly observed, that doubt must be re-

solved in favour of the detenu, the bench added.

In the age of internet, information was overflowing from all quarters and booking each and every person for spreading false information was an impossible exercise. The threshold shall be to see if the publication of information causes any threat to public disorder. There were lakhs of people expressing their view in various forms across various mediums. If the State Machinery starts hunting down each and every views and opinion, the voices will neither be brought down nor will this yield any viable result, the bench added. It added, a State going behind

each and every social media post or YouTube videos will not change any one's views. Instead it will make the people feel stifled of their right to free speech. The beauty of our democracy lies in the Constitutionally guaranteed freedom and when the State Machinery themselves starts stifling it, people lose faith in democracy, the bench added.

The bench said the regulatory mechanisms for all other mediums has been achieved to a certain extent, whereas social media still remains an unregulated space, thereby paving the way for more infractions. The regulations for the content creators have become essential to curb such violations on other's rights. It was also an incumbent duty of every citizen to use his/her rights in a responsible manner, the bench added.

The bench said preventive detention laws cannot be used to curb speeches where there was no disturbance to public order or security of the State. Speeches, in order to be attracted under the preventive detention laws such as Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 must instill a sense of fear and harm to the public at large and incite a grave danger to public order. Breach of law and

order by itself cannot be termed as public disorder, the bench added.

The court said individual freedom cannot be clamped down at the whims and fancies of the State. Extreme care and caution was a precondition to invoke preventive detention laws and must not be used in a routine manner to suppress fundamental rights of the citizens. Excessive usage of such laws to restrict the right to free speech will deter other citizens from enforcing their right to criticism or give opinions against the State thereby fracturing the spine of democracy, the bench added.

The bench said the exchange of views and opinions of citizens about governance of the State was present from time immemorial. It was through such expression and speeches that the stifled voices found an awakening during the freedom movement, paving the way for an Independent India.

"And in this month of 77th Independence Day celebrations, can the voices of the citizens be stifled again? This Court cannot narrow the walls of Article 19(1)(a) (right to freedom of speech and expression). The soul of a healthy democracy lies in free speech," the bench added. (PTI)

SANJAY LEELA BHANSALI'S DEBUT FILM 'KHAMOSHI: THE MUSICAL' TURNS 28



MUMBAI, Aug 9: Filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's debut directorial "Khamoshi: The Musical", starring Manisha Koirala and Salman Khan, turned 28 on Friday. Bhansali's production banner shared a post on the Instagram handle to celebrate the film's release anniversary. "Here's to the timeless tale of love and music! Celebrating 28 years of LKhamoshi: The Musical with moments that continue to touch our hearts," they captioned a collage of scenes from the movie.

"The dialogue, the moment, and their love, forever etched in our hearts. Celebrating 28 years of unforgettable moments. #28YearsOfKhamoshiTheMusical," they said in another post.

"Khamoshi: The Musical" follows the love story of Koirala's Annie, the daughter of a hearing and speech-impaired couple, played by Nana Patekar and Seema Biswas, who crosses paths with Raj. He helps her realise her dream of becoming a singer. But her parents refuse to accept her marriage with Raj.

The film's success paved the way for Bhansali, now 61, to become one of the most popular directors in Hindi cinema who went on to make films like "Devdas", "Bajirao Mastani" and "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam".

He most recently made his streaming debut with "Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar", which released in May this year on Netflix and is already one of the most successful shows to come out of India on the streamer.

"Heeramandi" also reunited him with Koirala, his friend since the making of "Khamoshi".

The series, which was set in the red light district of Lahore during the independence struggle, has been renewed for a second season and will most likely bring back Koirala and other primary cast of Sonakshi Sinha, Sanjeeda Sheikh, Shermin Segal and others. (PTI)

I was not first choice for 'Khamoshi': Manisha Koirala on friend Bhansali's film

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: She was not the first choice for "Khamoshi: The Musical", says Manisha Koirala about her much remembered role in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's directorial debut that marks 28 years since its release on Friday.

Bhansali and she were friends long before they collaborated on the 1996 film and the director was clear that his preferred lead would be either Madhuri Dixit or Kajol, Koirala recalled with a laugh. The two friends got together again in "Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar", his OTT debut.

"I had done 'Khamoshi' 28 years ago and I was not his first choice for the role. I remember, we had become friends and he just said, 'Manisha, I have written this script, just go through it. You are not acting in it, Kajol and Madhuri are my choices'," the actor told PTI in an interview.

Koirala said she was impressed by what she read and gave Bhansali her feedback.

"It was a brilliant script for any actress. I told him 'Ye dono nahi mili to main hoon, haan?' Luckily, that worked for me," she said.

"Khamoshi: The Musical" has Koirala playing Annie Braganza, a musically inclined woman caught between following her passion and taking care of her deaf and mute parents, played by Nana Patekar and Seema Biswas.

She was then supposed to work with Bhansali in "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam" and "Devdas" but things didn't work out, right until "Heeramandi" that released this year.

The 53-year-old said she was "chilling, gardening and in a different world altogether" in her hometown Kathmandu when she got the call for "Heeramandi" and was just "thrilled" to work with the director again after all these years.

In "Heeramandi", a drama set in the red light district of Lahore at the time of India's freedom struggle, Koirala plays Mallikajaan, who rules over the courtesans of Shahi Mahal.

The series has been a big success for the streamer and been renewed for a second season. (PTI)



AP Dhillon's 'Old Money' brings together Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt



MUMBAI, Aug 9: Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt, the actors who gave hits such as "Saajan" and "Chal Mere Bhai", are back together as mentors and guide to Indo-Canadian rapper AP Dhillon in his new track "Old Money", which brings back the nostalgia of 90s Bollywood. In the video, shot like an action film, Dhillon and his friends are set out on a mission when Salman Khan's Bhai warns them that he should not come to rescue them this time. But that's what he ends up doing in the end. Dutt dials up Dhillon to threaten him but lets the singer go when he gets to know that he is Khan's protege.

Dutt tells the musician, "God has given you skills, use them instead of bullets, kill them with your work."

Khan and Dutt have collaborated after a decade.

Dhillon shared a post on his Instagram handle on Friday and captioned it, "Old Money" Out Now. Shoutout to Bhai and Baba for Believing in the Boy. I hope you love it as much as I do." In a release, the musician spoke about what inspired him to come with the track. "Cold Money" is the perfect way for me to start my next era. I came up with a concept that was influenced by all my favourite action movies that I grew up watching," he said. It is the first release in Dhillon's newly minted partnership with Republic Records in alliance with Universal Music Canada.

A high-octane fusion of Punjabi rhythms and cinematic grandeur, "Old Money" also features Dhillon's longtime collaborator Shinda Kahlon besides AzizTheShake, Gray Hawken, Luca Mauti, Brendan Thomas and Madeleine Kay on production credits.

The 31-year-old singer rose to fame after his track "Brown Munde" (2020) topped the charts emerging as the game-changer for the Canada-based singer. His other songs include "Excuses", "With You" and "Insane" to name some. (PTI)

INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSICIANS GET APPRECIATED OUTSIDE, NOT IN INDIA, SAYS GRAMMY WINNER RICKY KEJ

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Indian classical musicians continue to shine at the global stage and win accolades but domestically, people don't appreciate them for their achievements, says multiple award-winning composer Ricky Kej. "I believe that Indian classical musicians have constantly been getting accolades all over the world for a very long time. It's just that we do not appreciate them the same way the Western audiences do. If you look at a person like Pandit Ravi Shankar- he has broken cultural barriers, collaborated with some of the top musicians over the world," Kej told PTI.

"He spread Indian classical music everywhere in the world, but if you talk to anybody within India and ask them to name one song or album of Pt. Ravi Shankar, no one can. It's really sad that we in India are not appreciating our traditional art forms, whereas

Western audiences are appreciating it," he added.

While a Bollywood musician's concert is attended by people from the Indian diaspora, Kej said it is not the case with classical artists.

"Classical musicians have broken cultural barriers where they're reaching out to people who are not of Indian origin. I believe that Indian music is being appreciated.

"Even the Grammy awards- whoever has won the Grammy awards has been an Indian classical musician or somebody who's been a traditional Indian musician. So, I believe that classical music forms need to be encouraged more within our own country," he added. Kej, 43, recently announced a new rendition of the national anthem "Jana Gana Mana", which will be available to audiences around the world on August 14.

The new rendition features performances by music maestros, such as Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Rakesh Chaurasia, Rahul Sharma, Amaan & Ayaan, Sheikh Mahaboob Subhani and Kaleeshabi Mahaboob and Giridhar Udupa.

The anthem also features almost 14,000 students from the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, which helped Kej create the Guinness world record.

Asked about his experience collaborating with Bansuri maestro Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Kej said he has been a fan of the veteran's music since childhood.

"Working with him was an incredible experience because I've grown up listening to him and going to his concerts. He is basically one of the greatest musicians ever to walk our planet.

"When he walked into the studio, I

remember touching his feet and getting blessings from him."

Kej said though he performs his compositions at concerts, he loves taking Indian folk songs and coming up with new renditions of them.

"I have done that for a lot of folk songs. The other group of people that I love working with are the tribal singers and tribal musicians in India. I have done a lot of collaborations with tribal musicians in Araku Valley, North Karnataka, and the Northeast," he said.

Kej was recently in headlines after he complained last week on social media that Air India downgraded his business class ticket for the Mumbai-Bengaluru flight. At the time, the airline said the aircraft was changed into an all-economy configuration, regretting the inconvenience caused to all the passengers and initiated the refund process. (PTI)



Marta plays for Olympic Gold one more time when Brazil meet US in women's soccer final



PARIS, Aug 9: For her final international tournament with Brazil, Marta is back where it all started.

The six-time world player of the year was just 18 when she first played in the Olympics 20 years ago.

Back then, Brazil reached the gold medal match in Athens but fell to the United States 2-1. The two teams met in the final again at the 2008 Beijing Games, and Brazil again came away with the silver with a 1-0 loss.

So it's fitting that for her international sendoff Brazil again faces the United States in the Olympic final. The two teams meet Saturday at Parc des Princes in Paris.

Marta, now 38, has said that after six Olympics and six Women's World Cups, it's time to hand over the team to the next generation. She has never won a major international title — either at the Olympics or World Cup.

So winning gold and beating the nemesis United States at the

same time would be a sweet way to walk away.

"It's been so much of my life, since I was 14, I left home and then I just live soccer every single day," she told The Associated Press before the tournament. "I just feel like maybe it's time to just take a little bit away from that and let the young players shine."

Marta is well known to the young players on the U.S. team, not just because she's one of the best women to ever play the game, but also because she plays

in the United States with the Orlando Pride.

"Marta is for sure the player I looked up to growing up," U.S. forward Sophia Smith said. "Whenever I would watch highlights of players with my dad, it was always Marta."

The 23-year-old Smith plays for the Portland Thorns.

"We get to play against her in the NWSL, we're really lucky for that," she said, "and to play against her in this game, in this magnitude of the game, is so spe-

cial. I know she would want us to give her our best game. That's that's the highest level of respect you can give someone."

Better known just by her first name, Marta Vieira da Silva has scored a record 119 goals in 184 international appearances.

Marta grew up playing street soccer with the boys in Dois Rios, a town in eastern Brazil some 1,250 miles north of Rio de Janeiro. She was just 17 when she appeared at the 2003 World Cup, held in the United States.

She has the career record for most World Cup goals with 17, and she has 13 Olympic goals, one away from matching compatriot Cristiane's record.

"It goes without saying, Marta has changed the game of soccer around the world," U.S. forward Trinity Rodman said. "She is such a talented soccer player, but also a great human, which speaks volumes. I've always looked up to her. I think we all kind of do. She's a legend forever."

Marta's journey in her final big tournament has not been smooth.

She was handed a red card for a foul on Spain's Olga Carmona in the Brazil's final group-stage match. That merited a two-match suspension from FIFA, so she missed the quarterfinals against hosts France and the semifinals, again against Spain.

Brazil upset the Women's World Cup champions 4-2 in a match Tuesday in Marseille.

"Honestly, in these games Marta was out, we did it for her," teammate Angelina said. "We want to give her a really great sendoff. It was a dream of mine to play with Marta — and now it's a dream come true." (AP)

Julian Alvarez set to leave Man City to join Atletico Madrid

BORDEAUX, FRANCE, Aug 9: Argentina striker Julian Alvarez is heading to Atletico Madrid from Manchester City in a deal reportedly worth more than \$100 million after telling Pep Guardiola he wanted a new challenge following two successful years at the English champions.

Guardiola said Friday there is an agreement between both clubs for the transfer of Alvarez, who is the first-choice striker for his country but wasn't at City.

"If you are not happy, why should you be here?" Guardiola said. "When you believe happiness is around another corner, you have to go there to take a look."

City could get up to 95 million euros (\$104 million) for the 24-year-old Alvarez, who joined from Argentine team River Plate in 2022 for 14 million pounds (now \$17.8 million).

He helped City win the Premier League in both of the seasons he was in England, as well as the Champions League and the Club World Cup.

Alvarez, however, was behind Erling Haaland in the pecking order of strikers and was often a substitute.

"We have won everything together ... he was incredible, and there's an incredible love from the team for his behavior," Guardiola said. "But like I said

many, many times about the players, if he wants to leave, (he can have) a new challenge. Atletico Madrid is a top, top club in Spain and Europe.

"When they suggest to me through the club that they want to leave, it's OK if you want to leave. Imagine staying here if he doesn't want to stay? But at the same time, we have to reach an agreement with both clubs. It has happened, both clubs are happy and we wish him all the best."

Guardiola said Alvarez told him he "feels there is work he needs to do."

"Last season he played a lot, some moments he played with Erling as well," Guardiola said.

"But I understand in certain moments, important moments, maybe he thought he wasn't going to play. I respect it a lot."

Asked if City would be replacing Alvarez in the squad ahead of the new season, which starts next week, Guardiola said: "I don't know yet. We talk every day, we see what happens."

City's only signing in this transfer window is Brazil winger Savio.

City will play Manchester United on Saturday in the Community Shield, the traditional curtain-raiser to the English season between the Premier League winners and the FA Cup winners.

United beat City in the FA Cup final. (AP)



Sport climbers celebrate decision to split events and award extra medal at Paris Olympics



LE BOURGET (FRANCE), Aug 9: The sport climbing competition is coming to a close at the Paris Games with athletes celebrating the decision to separate the speed discipline from boulder and lead.

The sport made its Olympic debut in Tokyo three years ago and awarded only one medal each for the men and women, combining the results from all three disciplines in an unpopular decision.

It was like having a "sprinter only competing in the decathlon," said Austrian climber Jakob Schubert, a lead and boulder specialist. It's "almost like different sports," he added.

"The decision was just really beneficial for everyone," Schubert said. "These disciplines are just not really connected. So I think it really made sense. And I think every athlete was happy."

While the speed discipline is more about power and explosiveness — a "mix of climbing and athletics," as Schubert noted — the lead and boulder are more about technique and problem solving.

In speed, climbers have to go up a 15-meter (49-foot) wall as fast as possible while competing side-by-side against an opponent. In boulder, they face short technical routes on a 4-meter (13-foot) wall, having to overcome the most "problems" in the lowest number of attempts. In lead, climbers need to go as high as they can on a 15-meter (49-foot) wall within a 6-minute time limit.

The decision to separate the

disciplines allowed athletes to focus on their strengths and ultimately improved the overall performance of athletes. It was noticed through a high number of world records broken in Paris.

"Definitely makes a big difference," American boulder and lead specialist Colin Duffy said. "Speed took a decent chunk out of our training, just learn how to do it, and then from there, make progress. So I think the level of the sport has really increased in the last three years as people are starting to specialize more."

Aleksandra Mirosław of Poland won the speed event in Tokyo three years ago with a world-record time but missed out on the podium with a fourth-place finish after the results were combined with lead and boulder.

"That speed was separate doesn't mean that it was easier," Mirosław said after winning the speed gold in Paris this week.

There is talk of possibly also splitting boulder and lead for the Los Angeles Games in 2028, adding a third medal to sport climbing. It would not mean such a drastic change as now, as the disciplines are more connected than they are with speed, but some climbers already said they would welcome another medal opportunity. "We have had World Cups and world championships in all three disciplines for the longest time," Schubert said. "So I think it's fine to have a combined, but you still need a medal in each discipline." (AP)

Ricky Ponting keen to coach in IPL again, reveals DC want an Indian at helm

DUBAI, Aug 9: Ricky Ponting remains keen on taking up coaching opportunities in the Indian Premier League following his exit from Delhi Capitals, revealing that the franchise is likely to replace him with an Indian coach. Ponting, who left his role as Delhi Capitals' head coach last month after a seven-year stint, acknowledged that the lack of silverware led to his exit from the IPL side, but he wants to throw his hat in the ring again.

"I'd love to coach again in the IPL. I've had a great time every year that I've been involved, whether that was in the early days as a player or the couple of years I had at Mumbai as head coach there," he said on The ICC Review podcast.

"I've had seven seasons at Delhi, which unfortunately didn't really work out the way that I would have wanted and certainly the way that the franchise would have wanted."

"Me going there was all about trying to bring some silverware to the team and that didn't happen," he conceded.

Ponting said Delhi Capitals could be looking for someone



who can give more time in the off season.

"What you'll find is that they'll probably end up with an Indian-based head coach. Certainly that's some of the dialogue that I've had with them anyway," he said.

"They made it pretty clear that they wanted to head in a different direction with someone that could give them a bit more time and a bit more availability through the off-season," he said. "More than anything, to be

able to spend a bit more time in India with a lot of the local players. I just couldn't do that with the other stuff that I've got going on," Ponting said.

"But I'm really thankful for my time that I had there, met some great people, worked with some great people and obviously worked with some great players through the years as well. There could be a few opportunities for me popping up in the next couple of months and I'd love to be back coaching in the IPL again next

season," he said.

England will need to fill up the spot of head coach left vacant by the exit of Matthew Mott but Ponting has categorically stated he is not interested in coaching roles in the international arena.

"No, I wouldn't ever consider doing that actually," he said.

Ponting was approached for taking over England's Test side but New Zealand's Brendon McCullum eventually took up the role.

"I'm on record saying that international jobs for me right now, are not really where my life is at, as there's just so much more time taken up with an international job," he said.

"Coaching other international teams is one thing, coaching England for an Australian is probably something slightly different, but right now there's sort of enough on my plate as I've got a bit more coming up in the next couple of months in the UK," he added.

Ponting said he will be a part of commentary team during Australia's tour of England next month comprising three T20Is and five ODIs. (PTI)

Happy for Neeraj, equally happy for Nadeem, he is also our child: Chopra's mother



NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Elated at her son's silver medal, Neeraj Chopra's mother Saroj Devi also expressed happiness for Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who broke the Olympic record to beat the Indian defending champion in Paris, saying that the latter is also like her "child".

Chopra clinched the silver medal at the Paris Games with a season's best throw of 89.45m after Nadeem pulled off an Olympic record-breaking effort

of 92.97m on Thursday night. With the silver win, Chopra became only the third Indian and the first in track-and-field to win back-to-back individual Olympic medals.

"We are very happy with the silver, the one who got gold is also our child and the one who got silver is also our child....all are athletes, all work hard," Saroj told PTI Videos in Khandra, Panipat, where the family is based. "Nadeem is also good, he plays

well, there is no difference between Neeraj and Nadeem. We got gold and silver there is no difference for us," she added in the interview given on Thursday night. Both Chopra and Nadeem are good friends off the field despite being rivals on it.

Chopra's fondness for "desi khana" is well-documented and his family is planning to welcome the two-time Olympic medalist with his favourite dish "Churma".

"He did really well. We will welcome him with churma which is his favourite. I am delighted, people are lighting firecrackers, we are making ladoos," Saroj added. Chopra's performance is creditable also because of the highly-competitive field in which as many as seven athletes went beyond the 86m mark.

"We are very happy. He produced his season's best. All were near 88-89m so competition was very tough. It's not about winning a gold or silver, but about winning a medal, and he did his best," Chopra's aunt Kamlesh said. Chopra is one of India's

most decorated athletes, having won the gold at every tournament including the Olympics, World Championships, Diamond League, Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games.

"After Tokyo there was no medal left except for silver, that was also needed so he got it," Kamlesh said.

She said that the family had an inkling that Chopra was unlikely to win a gold after Nadeem's monstrous throw.

"After Nadeem's throw (92.97m) we had a feeling that he will win gold but he is also our son, we are happy with him."

"He's also Asia's son. We don't differentiate between Nadeem and Neeraj. Both have got gold and silver and we are very happy," she added. Maryam Nawaz, has announced a 10 crore (PKR) cash prize for javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem, who smashed the Olympic record en route an unprecedented gold in Paris, a remarkable turnaround for the athlete who had to seek crowd funding for a new javelin months before the Games. (PTI)

Chi Chi Rodriguez, Hall of Fame golfer dies at 88

LONDON, Aug 9: Juan "Chi Chi" Rodriguez, a Hall of Fame golfer whose antics on the greens during and inspiring life story made him among the sport's most popular players during a long professional career, died Thursday. He was 88.

Rodriguez's death was announced by Carmelo Javier Rios, a senator in Rodriguez' native Puerto Rico. He didn't provide a cause of death.

"Chi Chi Rodriguez's passion for charity and outreach was surpassed only by his incredible talent with a golf club in his hand," PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan said in a statement.

"A vibrant, colorful personality both on and off the golf course, he will be missed dearly by the PGA Tour and those whose lives he touched in his mission to give back. The PGA Tour sends its deepest condolences to the entire Rodriguez family during this difficult time."

He was born Juan Antonio Rodriguez, the second oldest of six children, in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, when it was blanketed with sugar cane fields and where he helped his father with the harvest as a child.

The area is now a dense urban landscape, part of San Juan, the capital of the U.S. island territory.

Rodriguez said he learned to play golf by hitting tin cans with a guava tree stick and then found work as a caddy. He claimed he could shoot a 67 by age 12, according to a biography provided by the Chi Chi Rodriguez Management Group in Stow, Ohio.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1955-57 and joined the PGA Tour in 1960 and won eight times during his 21-year career, playing on one Ryder Cup team.

The first of his eight tour victories came in 1963, when he won the Denver Open.

He followed it up with two the next year and continued through 1979 with the Tallahassee Open. He had 22 victories on the Champions Tour from 1985-2002, and had total combined career earnings of more than \$7.6 million. He was inducted into the PGA World Golf Hall of Fame in 1992. (AP)

Chopra is excellence personified, he'll continue to inspire future generations: President, PM

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Neeraj Chopra's silver medal in the Paris Games was hailed as a feat which will inspire the future generations in pursuit of excellence as President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the country in lauding the superstar javelin thrower's achievements.

Tokyo Games champion Chopra on Thursday became the first Indian track-and-field athlete to win two successive Olympic medals with a silver in men's javelin throw in the ongoing edition in Paris.

"Neeraj Chopra is excellence personified! Time and again he's shown his brilliance. India is elated that he comes back with yet another Olympic success. Congratulations to him on winning the Silver," PM Modi wrote on X. "He will continue to motivate countless upcoming athletes to pursue their dreams and make our nation proud."

President Murmu said the country would look forward to more medals from Chopra.

"Heartiest congratulations to Neeraj Chopra on winning silver medal in Paris Olympics and scripting history. He is the first Indian athlete to win a gold and a silver medal in two successive Olympic Games."

"India is proud of him. His feat will inspire generations to come. India looks forward to Neeraj Chopra bringing home more medals and glory in the future."

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya chimed in to congratulate the 26-year-old.

"What a moment for Bharat! A Silver Medal for @Neeraj_chopra1. He has won his 2nd consecutive Olympic medal! This incredible achievement is historic—no individual in independent Bharat has ever done it before in athletics," Mandaviya posted.

"Congratulations Neeraj, you've inspired a nation and shown the world what determination and excellence look like. We couldn't be prouder! Thank you for making India shine on the global



stage!" he added.

Star pistol shooter Manu Bhaker, who created history by becoming the first Indian to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics in the Paris Games, also lauded Chopra for his feat.

"ONWARDS AND UPWARDS! He has done it once again, this time in Paris.

@Neeraj_chopra1 you are truly one in a million. Congratulations on yet another medal at the Olympics!!," Bhaker tweeted.

"Heart of GOLD gave us a Silver lining today . @Neeraj_chopra1 your hard work dedication perseverance and above all Humility is something all athletes need to emulate. ..Congratulations and best wishes for LA2028 ..I'll be cheering for you .CHAMPION," Olympic medallist shooter Gagan Narang said.

Chopra clinched the silver medal with a season best throw of 89.45m on Thursday night at a packed Stade de France.

"Back-to-back Olympic medals for our star, Neeraj Chopra! India's first silver medal at the #Paris2024 Olympics, and what a way to achieve it! You might have fallen short of the gold, but your commitment and effort in the final were really inspiring!" BCCI secretary Jay Shah said.

Indian cricket team head coach Gautam Gamb-

hir said, "The icon never returns without bringing joy to every Indian!#NeerajChopra."

"Congratulations to Neeraj Chopra for clinching the silver medal at the Olympics. Your perseverance and passion continue to inspire the nation. You've shown once again that there are no limits to achieving dreams through hard work and dedication," India pacer Mohammed Shami wrote.

"Congratulations #NeerajChopra on winning the silver medal at the #ParisOlympics. Amazing effort to win two back to back olympic medals," former Indian batter VVS Laxman wrote.

"Your dedication, hard work, and passion have brought immense pride to our nation once again! Congratulations @Neeraj_Chopra1 on winning the silver in javelin at the #Paris2024! Your journey inspires a billion, and we celebrate this incredible achievement with you! #JaiHind," Legendary Indian cricketer Krishnamachari Srikkanth said. (PTI)

Was just pushing myself due to Olympics, have to take decision on surgery now: Neeraj Chopra

PARIS, Aug 9: India javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra opened up about his injury woes after clinching a silver medal in the Olympics, revealing that he might have to undergo a surgery soon after having pushed himself extremely hard to compete here while battling a constant fear of breaking down.

Chopra was dealing with a nagging adductor niggle (a problem related to muscles in the thigh) in the run up to the Paris Games. But he managed a season's best effort of 89.45m to secure a silver medal, making him the first track-and-field athlete from India to have two Olympic medals, the first being an unprecedented gold in Tokyo.

Chopra finished behind Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who stole the show with an Olympic record-shattering throw of 92.97m to become the first individual Olympic gold-medallist from his country.

"I have a lot on my mind. When I am throwing, 60-70 per cent focus of my is on the injury. I don't want to get injured. Whenever I go for a throw, you will see that my speed is low. I am pushing myself," he said.

"The doctor told me to go for surgery but I didn't have that much time to take that decision before the world championship or after the world championship because it takes a lot of time to prepare for the Olympics," he added, referring to



the 2023 world championship where he won gold.

The 26-year-old, despite not being at his best here, became only the third Indian to win back-to-back Olympic medals after PV Sindhu and Sushil Kumar.

"I am still pushing myself," he said with a hint of frustration.

"It's not good in sport, it's not good to push and continue. If you want to run a long career then you have to be fit and healthy but there are competitions where you can't

make a decision. Now we will work on this and work on the technique," he added.

Chopra said he will talk to his team and then "take a decision".

He also detailed how the last seven years have been tough for him as far as fitness is concerned. "I felt this in 2017. After that, I got a lot of treatments. But I will have to take a big decision for this," he said.

He didn't mention the 90m mark but Chopra said he has potential to

achieve bigger throws. Chopra's career-best remains 89.94m which was achieved back in 2022.

"The distance that I had in me in 2016, especially in 2018, when I scored an 88m in the Asian Games, after that, I feel that I still have a lot of throws left. So, until that happens, I won't be able to find peace. And I want to tell you that there is a lot inside," he said without getting into the specifics.

"And I will do it. I will keep my mind ready for the future. I will

work on things. I will keep myself fit."

Chopra, perhaps for the first time, talked about just how badly the niggle has affected him.

"I am not able to throw from a full runway. I have been throwing for the past year or two. Maximum throwers throw 40-50 in a session. It took me 2-3 weeks to complete a session because there is a fear of injury.

"It is very difficult. I am forcefully pulling it."

He also explained that his lower body is as important as the throwing arm in getting the right elevation and speed.

"If the rest of the body doesn't work, it won't help. I can go for a heavy and fast heave but when there is a broken leg, there are a lot of technical things. It is very difficult to throw with just the arm, to put all your power on it.

"It gets wasted if the legs don't work properly. So there are a lot of technical things. I will not go into it, you won't understand."

Chopra said he finds it painful to miss competitions because of fitness concerns.

"My coach always says that if you get a good blocking leg and a good groin then the throw will be 2-3-4 meters ahead and then I have to send a message saying, 'Sorry, I have to withdraw'.

"Personally, I don't like it at all," he said.(PTI)

Sreejesh to join Bhaker as India's flag-bearer in Olympics closing ceremony



PARIS, Aug 9: Celebrated

hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will join star shooter Manu Bhaker as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games here on Sunday, a fitting honour and recognition for his contributions to the team.

Before homing in on Sreejesh, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief PT Usha spoke with Neeraj Chopra, and she said even the superstar javelin thrower wanted to see the retiring legend as flag-bearer.

Chopra claimed a silver here to become the first Indian track and field athlete to win two Olympic medals. He won a historic gold in the Tokyo edition three years ago.

"I spoke with Neeraj Chopra and appreciate the spontaneity and grace with which he agreed that Sreejesh should be the flag-bearer at the Closing Ceremony," Usha said in a statement.

"He told me 'Ma'am, even if you had not asked me, I would have suggested Sree bhai's name'. It is reflective of the immense respect Neeraj has for Sreejesh and his contribution to Indian sport," she revealed.

Usha said Sreejesh was "both an emotional and popular choice" within the IOA leadership, including Chef-de-Mission Gagan Narang, and the entire Indian con-

tingent.

The legendary Sreejesh retired from the game after India's bronze medal-winning feat at the ongoing Games, bringing to an end a glorious career spanning 18 years.

"The Indian Olympic Association is delighted to announce the nomination of hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh as the joint flag-bearer with pistol shooter Manu Bhaker at the Closing Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games," the IOA said in a statement.

The 2-1 triumph over Spain, in the bronze medal playoff match here on Thursday, was a fitting farewell for the 36-year-old custodian who has served the team with distinction for so long.

"Sreejesh has served Indian hockey in particular and Indian sport in general admirably through more than two decades," Usha said.

Sreejesh was also the flag-bearer in the closing ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Games last year.

The IOA had earlier named Bhaker as the female flag-bearer after she became the first Indian athlete post Independence to win multiple medals in a single Olympic Games.

She won bronze medals in the women's 10m air pistol and the 10m air pistol mixed team (with Sarabjit Singh). (PTI)

Olympic's digi platforms get a massive push

PARIS, Aug 9: Ace Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's silver medal and the hockey team's bronze-medal success have led to a massive spike in the number of users following the progress of the country's athletes on the Paris Olympics website and dedicated app for the Games. Christian Klau, the International Olympic Committee's Corporate Communications and Public Affairs Director, said on Friday that 273 million users had visited the Olympic website and app, with the maximum number coming from India owing to the success of Neeraj and the hockey team that won its second consecutive bronze medal in the quadrennial showpiece. (PTI)

Antim Panghal returns to India after Olympic controversy

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Indian wrestler Antim Panghal, who found herself in a soup following a disciplinary breach at the Olympic Games' athletes village in Paris, returned to country on Friday.

The wrestler grabbed headlines on Wednesday after she tried to facilitate her sister's entry into the athletes village through her accreditation card, after which they were summoned by the police.

The incident left the country embarrassed and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) furious and the apex sports body promptly decided to fly Panghal and her support staff back home after the act of transgression was brought to its notice by the French authori-

ties. Although the world championship bronze medallist said she did not "intend to do anything wrong," she is expected to face disciplinary action for violating the rules inside the athletes village.

Clad in a team India jersey, Panghal quickly exited the Indira Gandhi International Airport, refusing to speak to the waiting scribes on the controversy.

Panghal was knocked out of the competition after losing her opening 53 kg freestyle bout 0-10 to Turkey's Yetgil Zeynep on Wednesday morning.

Following the loss, Panghal, who claimed she was unwell, allegedly gave her accredi-

tation card to her younger sister Nisha and sent her to the Games Village to collect her belongings.

However, she was stopped by the village security personnel. By late Wednesday evening, both Panghal and her sister found themselves at the police station within the village.

"I was not well and there was confusion. All of this happened due to confusion," Panghal had said in a video message to PTI.

To make matters worse, Panghal's support team, comprising coaches Bhagat Singh and Vikas, were also involved in a separate matter involving a Parisian taxi driver and the police.

They allegedly refused to pay the cab fare and behaved inappropriately with the driver before quickly retreating inside. The cab driver later reported the incident to the police. (PTI)

US men's basketball team rallies to beat Serbia at Paris Olympics, will face France for gold medal

PARIS, Aug 9: Down by 11 in the fourth quarter, against what looked like overwhelming odds, the U.S. Olympic men's basketball team got a spark. Six points in two seconds.

Kevin Durant and Devin Booker provided that wild sequence to start the comeback. Stephen Curry had a scoring night like almost none other in U.S. Olympic history, and the Americans will play for gold at the Paris Games. Curry scored 36 points, including a go-ahead 3-pointer with 2:16 left, and the U.S. beat Serbia 95-91 in a semifinal classic on Thursday night.

LeBron James had the fourth triple-double in Olympic history for the U.S., which trailed by 17 points in the first half and faced an 11-point halftime deficit — the biggest one successfully overcome by an American team since NBA players were added to the Olympic mix in 1992.

"I've seen a lot of Team USA basketball," Curry said. "And that was a special one."

Serbia led by 11 with 7:19 left. The rest of the way, it was all U.S. The Americans won a game where they led for 3 minutes, 25 seconds. Serbia led for 35:12 — nearly 90% of the game. But it'll be the U.S. against host France for gold in a dream matchup for the host nation on Saturday, while Serbia will face Germany earlier Saturday for bronze. The gold-medal game is a rematch from the Tokyo Games three years ago, where the Americans prevailed 87-82.

"I'm really humbled to have been a part of this game," U.S. coach Steve Kerr said, tipping his hat multiple times to Serbia. "It's one of the greatest basketball games I've ever been a part of. They were perfect. They played a perfect game. Our coaches were saying Villanova-Georgetown, for all of our older readers and viewers out there. (AP)

Neeraj Chopra: A legendary athlete on field, a superstar without pretension off it

PARIS, Aug 9: Neeraj Chopra is all about greatness without pretensions.

A fierce competitor, a superstar of Indian sports, a humble human being who would make no bones about his limitations or desires, the double Olympic medallist from India, is all rolled into one.

He may want the top prize for himself but would not be envious if the rival pips him. He would tell himself to accept what he got, and work harder to achieve what he desires.

He would not pretend that he does not care for brand endorsement. He certainly wants it, money matters, but would not compromise on his training for that.

The 17-minute interaction with the Indian media after winning a silver medal in the Paris Olympics was more than just a routine question-answer session.

"Your first throw was foul then in the second..." the scribe had not even completed his question

before Chopra quipped, "Saari throw fouls hi thi sir sirf doosri hi theek thi (All throws were foul, except the second one)," he said, chuckling, and the 50-strong group joined him in laughter.

It was not a great deal for him to say he fouled five of his six attempts.

The long Q and A session was largely in Hindi with Indian and Pakistani journalists asking questions, but when the volunteer requested an answer in English for the benefit of few foreign scribes, Chopra laid bare his simplicity.

"Now I need to motivate myself to speak in English, the way I motivate myself for competition," he said with a smile, as the gathered group burst out in laughter.

"Can you describe the competition between you and Nadeem, India and Pakistan," the foreign scribe asked again, requesting the answer in English.

Well, he explained pretty well,

effortlessly.

"It was a really great competition. Maybe one of the greatest competitions in history. Arshad threw really well. I was also in good shape. But I don't know. My runway was not that good today," he responded quickly, without having to think much.

It was inevitable that he would be asked about the missed competitions in the 2024 season, leading up to the Paris Games. It led to speculations whether he was carrying injury into the Paris Games.

He had skipped the Paris Diamond League in July, just before the Games, though he later clarified that the event was not part of his competition calendar.

He revealed how difficult it becomes for him to say no to the organisers despite fitness concerns.

With a wide grin, he said, "Of course I need to play more but then I send those carefully drafted messages that I have suffered a strain and I won't compete.

"In few competitions I have played just for the sake of organisers so that they don't feel bad. I keep thinking that I have entered the competition and if I don't go, they will say I am making excuses. Personally I love to compete as much as possible.

"I make plans but then you tell your team, 'let's draft a good message, saying sorry for pulling out,'" he said, laughing, but the pain of missing the event was writ large.

"No happiness is greater than playing. You work hard to compete only. Whatever strength God has given me I do."

Then came a tricky one. He was asked about the pressure of sponsors in the Olympic cycle. How he finds that balance between brand endorsements, obligations and training?

Again, he came up with an honest answer.

"I put my game on top priority after Tokyo and after Tokyo Games only I got the opportunity to get associated with brands. It

is difficult for us that brands come after you, and if you get it, why will you leave that opportunity. Just do it," he said, with all honesty.

"It also opens the way for kids (next generation), 'nahi to shreer hi tootega khel khel key, last mein kuch nahi rahega."

How many athletes say that so openly?

"So I balance it. Priority is sport. This was an Olympic year, so whatever commitments I had, I fulfilled in the first half.

"You have seen I have been training outside since Tokyo." He could be upset inside for not being able to defend his title but accepted that Thursday was Nadeem's day.

Lastly, volunteers did their best to push him out of the mixed zone but he would keep coming back either to sign autographs or honour the request for selfies.

After all, he knows how to find a balance between different things and saying no is the most difficult thing for him. (PTI)