

6 WORLD

8 NATION

- Harris warns Americans of consequences of putting Trump back in White House
- Ukraine says it has recaptured land in the Kharkiv region
- BJYM's rally: Police use tear gas shells, water cannons
- Countless questions waiting for BJP in UP: Akhilesh

Vol .No. XXV

Issue No. 224

RNI-ASSEN/2000/12862

DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2024

PAGES 12

PRICE ₹ 8

Protect and Prevent - Continue the fight against Japanese Encephalities

Remember, immediate medical treatment can save a life

Symptoms of JE

- High fever
- Irrelevant talk & confusion
- Convulsion
- Severe headache
- Unconsciousness
- Unable to speak properly

Preventive Methods

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

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

(NHM/D/2024-25/259)

HT BRIEFS

Training camp

HOWRAGHAT: The first phase of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) training camp for primary school teachers under basic literacy and numeracy nipun Assam concluded on Friday at town Janata Hindi High School, Bakaliaghat, Karbi Anglong district. The five-day FLN training was conducted for primary school teachers under Langsompri Education Block. FLN Consultant, Barith Timung from Diphu and Rajiv Ingti as key Resource Person were present at the training and observed the Teaching Learning Material demonstrated by the teachers. The training was conducted by Golap Baglari, Anukul Chakraborty, Diban Hakmausa, Maheshwar Das, Achinth Hazarika and Om Prakash Chouhan as Resource Persons. According to the resource persons, another group of teachers will be given FLN training in the second phase for primary school teachers.

Road conditions

GUWAHATI: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma addressed the urgent issue of the Barak Valley's deteriorating road conditions and announced that necessary repairs would be completed before the upcoming Durga Puja festival, chief minister's office informed on Friday. While acknowledging the poor state of the roads, Sarma criticised the superficial repairs carried out ahead of his three-day visit. He also emphasised the need for quality work, stating, "There is no point in allowing contractors to profit from substandard repairs. I ask for patience until Durga Puja, by which time the roads will be properly fixed." The chief minister made this commitment after performing the Bhumii Pujan for a new Government Model College at Borjalenga in the Dholai constituency of Cachar district.

Girl gangraped in Dhing, CM assures stern action

People from all communities hit streets seeking arrest of culprits

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: A 14-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by three persons in Nagaon district, triggering massive protests by people on the streets.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma promised that stern action would be taken against the perpetrators.

The girl was allegedly assaulted and raped by three persons while she was returning home from her tuition on her bicycle in Dhing area around 8 pm on Thursday, police said. Three persons came on a motorcycle and surrounded the girl, who was then allegedly raped by them and left in an injured and unconscious state on the roadside near a pond. The class 10 student was later rescued by locals, who informed the police.

She was initially taken to a health centre in Dhing and later shifted to a hospital in Nagaon for treatment and medical examination. "The criminals who dared to commit such a heinous crime against a minor Hindu girl of Dhing will not be spared by the law. I have directed the DGP and



Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika to rush to Dhing and take the toughest action," Sarma told reporters in Hailakandi.

Sarma alleged that after Lok Sabha elections, "a section of members of a particular community have become very active and have been encouraged to commit such crimes. We will, however, come down heavily on the perpetrators and nobody will be spared."

In the last two months, 22 such crimes against women have taken place and this is the 23rd such in-

cident in the state, he added.

"In Lower and central Assam and Barak Valley districts, where indigenous people have become a numeric minority, they are living in constant fear. People outside these regions cannot gauge this harsh reality," he said.

The chief minister urged all to be sensitive about these issues of the indigenous people. "We should identify the real perpetrators behind these heinous crimes and not be stuck in blaming communities within the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Hindus in US create group to rally support for Kamala Harris

WASHINGTON, Aug 23: Some Hindus in the US have come together to create "Hindus For Kamala Harris", a support group for the Democratic presidential nominee, saying she would be good for India, America and the world.

The group has been created "to support Kamala Devi Harris to become the 47th President of the United States of America", its founding members said.

On Thursday, Harris, 59, formally accepted the nomination of the Democratic Party to be its presidential nominee.

"We must help her win. This is the best outcome for America, India and the World! The alternative Trump is a disaster!" one of the members of the group said.

"There is a simple path to victory. Without rejecting the other side, promote Harris candidacy because of what it stands for and the solution it will provide," another member said, adding that the candidacy has a unique momentum to win.

The group is urging Hindus to vote in the elections, display signs of support near their house, and make donations in support of the Harris campaign. (PTI)

India-US together can ensure global peace, prosperity, stability: Rajnath

WASHINGTON, Aug 23: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is on an official visit to Washington, on Friday said India and the US, together, are a formidable force which can ensure peace, prosperity and stability in the world.

While interacting with the Indian diaspora here, Singh described India and the US as "natural allies", which are "destined to be strong partners", and this collaboration is growing continuously. "India and the US are the two forces which can bring peace, prosperity and stability in

the world," the defence minister said.

Singh, who arrived here on Thursday on a four-day official visit, re-asserted the fact that under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's stature has grown on the global stage.

"Earlier, India's words at international fora were not heeded; but today, the whole world listens carefully," he said.

Singh pointed out that before 2014, India was among the 'Fragile Five' nations, as coined by investment firm Morgan Stanley, and

today it finds itself among the 'Fabulous Five' economies of the world. He cited the firm's recent report, which says that India will become the third largest economy by 2027. He stressed that the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic ensured that the Indian economy was not adversely impacted as compared to other countries.

Singh highlighted the fact that the government has successfully brought 25 crore people above poverty line. He added that as per latest data, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Ex-general appointed as special assistant in Bangladesh's interim govt

DHAKA, Aug 23: Bangladesh's interim government chief Professor Muhammad Yunus on Friday appointed retired Lieutenant General Abdul Hafiz as his special assistant on security national reconciliation affairs with the status of an adviser or minister.

"He (Hafiz) will extend his assistance to the Chief Adviser (Yunus) on security and affairs related to the development of national reconciliation," an official gazette notification said.

According to the gazette, Hafiz would enjoy the status of an adviser in the interim government's council of advisers or ministers.

Officials familiar with his background said 67-year-old Hafiz, a former chief of general staff (CGS), belongs to the military's infantry corps.

During his career, Hafiz served as the force commander of UN peacekeeping missions in Western Sa-

hara and Cote d'Ivoire.

Beyond his professional courses in Bangladesh, he studied small and heavy arms of infantry in China, Advanced Infantry Officer's course in the US and graduated from the Defence Intelligence College of France.

Bangladesh descended into chaos after ousted premier Sheikh Hasina's government collapsed and she fled to India on August 5 amid violent protests over quota reforms for government jobs, while the Army stepped in to fill the power vacuum. Before that, the anti-government protests had killed more than 500 people since mid-July. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath as the chief adviser of the interim government on August 8. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

27 Indian pilgrims killed, 16 injured as tourist bus plunges into river in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Aug 23: At least 27 Indian pilgrims who arrived in Nepal from Maharashtra for a 10-day tour were killed and 16 others injured after a tourist bus veered off the highway and fell into fast-flowing Marsyangdi river in central Nepal on Friday, police said.

The incident occurred at Anubokhairani area in Chitawan district when the bus from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh carrying 43 passengers, including the driver and two helpers, was heading towards Kathmandu from Pokhara.

While 16 people died on the spot, 11 succumbed to their injuries while undergoing treatment, deputy spokesperson of Armed Police Force (APF) Shailendra Thapa told PTI.



Sixteen people who sustained injuries have been airlifted to Kathmandu and admitted at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, he said.

The dead bodies will be handed over to their family members after postmortem, Thapa said, adding

that the postmortem will be conducted on Saturday at Western Regional Health Science Academy in Pokhara. The bus with an Uttar Pradesh number plate that fell around 150 metre down the hilly road is still lying in the bank of Marsyangdi river and will be lifted with the help of a crane on Saturday, he said.

Thapa said 250 security personnel, including from Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police, were mobilised for rescue works. Twin rope was used to conduct the rescue operation as the accident site lies in a deep and narrow gorge near the Marsyangdi River, he said. The reason for the accident is not yet known. The accident site (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Excise policy case CBI justifies Delhi CM Kejriwal's arrest in SC

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday defended in the Supreme Court the arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying it was necessary as he chose to remain "evasive and non-cooperative" in his replies to questions about his role in the alleged excise policy scam. In its detailed affidavit filed in response to Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest by the central agency, the CBI alleged all critical decisions in the formulation of the now-scrapped excise policy were taken at his behest with the connivance of the then deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia.

Claiming that Kejriwal was attempting to "politically sensationalise" the case, the CBI said he was involved in the criminal conspiracy in the formulation and implementation of the excise policy, and his arrest on June 26 was necessary for a just conclusion of the probe as he

was "purposely derailing" the investigation.

"The necessity to arrest also arose based on the materials on record and since the petitioner chose to remain evasive and non-cooperative during his examination on June 25," the affidavit said.

The CBI's affidavit was taken on record by a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, which posted the matter for further hearing on September 5. "It is most respectfully submitted that the influence and clout of the petitioner is evident, and he commands influence not only over the Government of NCT of Delhi being the Chief Minister, but also over any or all relevant decisions, activities concerning the Aam Aadmi Party, being its supreme and national convenor. He enjoys a close nexus with the officials and bureaucrats," the agency said. It added (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

MGNREGA shows Cong's commitment despite govt's failures

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi accused the Centre on Friday of "undermining" the MGNREGA and said despite the Narendra Modi government's "failure to support" the scheme's potential, it continues to represent the Congress's commitment to social justice.

The former Congress chief recalled that on this day in 2005, the Congress-led UPA government enacted the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and envisioned an equal and inclusive approach for India's growth.

"Our vision was clear, simple, and singular: to uplift the poorest sections of our society and provide them with a life of dignity," Gandhi said in a Facebook post.

"We recognised that poverty and unemployment were significant barriers to development, and MGNREGA was conceptualised to address these issues head-on. It was a revolutionary step to empower the people by guaranteeing them a dignified basic minimum income," he added.

In the years since, the MGNREGA has stood as a shining example of India's strength, lifting 27 crore people out of poverty between 2005-06 and 2015-16, providing employment to millions more, and transforming infrastructure in rural areas, Gandhi said.

"Today, despite Prime Minister Modi's consistent criticism of the programme, he now relies on it while simultaneously undermining it. Budgetary allocations have been slashed to a 10-year low, over 7 crore workers' job cards have been deleted under the guise of AADHAAR and technology, payments to states have been delayed, and wages have (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

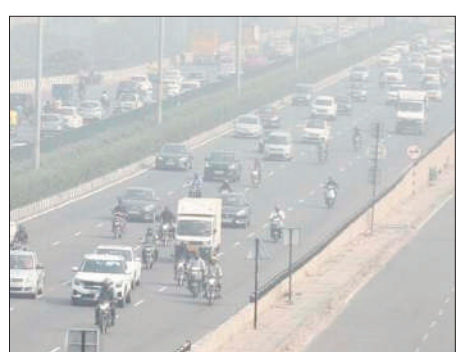
'Auto LPG emits 20 per cent less CO2 compared to petrol and 60 per cent less than diesel'

Real-world emissions much higher than lab tests, study shows

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Real-world vehicle emissions are much higher than laboratory tests suggest and CNG vehicles, once considered a cleaner alternative, actually emit high levels of nitrogen oxides, according to a new study.

Conducted as part of The Real Urban Emissions (TRUE) Initiative in collaboration with authorities in Delhi and Gurugram, the study utilised non-intrusive remote sensing technology to measure the emissions of on-road vehicles. The study, conducted with technical analysis by the global think tank International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), revealed that nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from BS-VI private cars were 81 per cent lower than those from BS-IV cars. Similarly, BS-VI buses produced 95 per cent lower NOx compared to BS-IV buses.

The study also found that compressed natural



gas (CNG) vehicle fleets emitted high levels of NOx, challenging the narrative of CNG being a "clean" alternative fuel.

For example, Class II light goods vehicles emit up to 14.2 times their NOx lab limits while

taxis emit four times the amount. This also means that to improve air quality, it is crucial to focus on the actual emissions from vehicles on the road, not just their lab results. Commercial vehicles, such as taxis and light goods vehicles, emit much more NOx than private cars, even if they meet the same emission standards.

"It is evident that real-world emissions from transport vehicles differ significantly from their laboratory values. For the first time in India, we have collected substantial emissions data from motor vehicles on the road. It is crucial to remember that what impacts our air quality is not the laboratory emissions but the pollutants released by these vehicles in operation," said ICCT India managing director Amit Bhatt. "Therefore, it is time to rethink our emissions testing regime and aggressively push for the adoption of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday slammed the Congress for its alliance with the National Conference for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls, accusing the party of repeatedly risking the country's unity and security in its greed for power.

The Congress has once again "exposed its ulterior motives by allying with the Abdullah family's National Conference," the BJP leader said on X and posted 10 questions for the national party and its leader Rahul Gandhi, while listing several of the manifesto promises of the regional party. Shah asked, "Does the Congress

support the National Conference's promise of a separate flag for Jammu and Kashmir? Do Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party support the JKNC's decision to restore Article 370 and 35A, and thereby pushing Jammu and Kashmir back into an era of unrest and terrorism?"

The full name of Farooq Abdullah-led party is Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC).

The Union home minister asked whether the Congress supports promoting separatism again by engaging in dialogue with Pakistan instead of Kashmir's youth and the National Conference's decision to start LoC trade with Pak-

istan, thereby nurturing terrorism and its ecosystem across the border.

His other queries fired to the Congress and Gandhi included whether the party supports reinstating relatives of those involved in terrorism and stone-pelting into government jobs, "thereby bringing back terrorism, extremism and the era of strikes".

The alliance has exposed the Congress party's anti-reservation stance, he said.

"Does Congress support the JKNC's promise to end reservations for Dalits, Gujjars, Bakarwals and Pahadi communities, thereby (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Sebi bans Anil Ambani, 24 others from securities mkt for 5-ysr for fund diversion

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Markets regulator Sebi has barred industrialist Anil Ambani and 24 others from the securities market for five years on charges of diversion of funds from Reliance Home Finance Ltd.

Additionally, Sebi has imposed a penalty of ₹25 crore on Ambani and restrained him from serving as a director or Key Managerial Personnel (KMP) in any listed company or Sebi-registered entity for five years.

Besides, a fine ranging ₹21 crore to ₹25 crore have been levied on 24 entities. Also, the regulator barred Reliance Home Finance from the securities market for six months and slapped a fine of ₹6 lakh on it. An email sent to Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group company remained unanswered.

After receiving multiple complaints alleging diversion/siphoning of funds of Reliance Home Finance Ltd, Sebi conducted an investigation for the period of FY 2018-19 to ascertain any regulatory violations.

In its probe, Sebi found that Anil Ambani, with the help of RHFL's KMPs -- Amit Bapna, Ravindra Sudhakar and Pinkesh R Shah -- have orchestrated a fraudulent scheme to "siphon off" funds from RHFL by disguising them as loans to entities linked to him.

Although the board of directors of RHFL had issued strong directives to stop such lending practices and review corporate loans regularly, the company's management ignored these orders. This suggests



a significant failure of governance, driven by certain KMPs under the influence of Ambani.

Given these circumstances, the company RHFL itself should not be held equally responsible as the individuals involved in the fraud.

Further, the remaining entities have played the role of being either recipients of illegally obtained loans or conduits to enable illegal diversion of money from RHFL, the regulator noted.

Sebi said that findings have established the "existence of a fraudulent scheme, orchestrated by Noticee No. 2 (Anil Ambani) and administered by the KMPs of RHFL, to siphon off funds from the public listed company (RHFL) by structuring them as 'loans' to credit unworthy conduit borrowers, and in turn, to onward borrowers, all of whom have been found to be promoter linked entities' i.e. entities associated/linked with Noticee 2 (Anil Ambani)".

Ambani has used his position as 'chairperson of the ADA group' and his significant indirect shareholding in the holding company of RHFL to orchestrate the fraud.

Sebi, in its 222-page order on Thursday, noted the cavalier approach by the company's management and promoter in approving loans worth hundreds of crores to companies that had little to no assets, cash flow, net worth, or revenue. This suggests a sinister objective behind the 'loans'. The situation becomes even more suspicious when considering that many of these borrowers were closely linked to the promoters of RHFL.

Eventually, most of these borrowers failed to repay their loans, causing RHFL to default on its own debt obligations. This led to the company's resolution under the RBI Framework, leaving its public shareholders in a difficult position.

For example, in March 2018,

RHFL's share price was around ₹59.60. By March 2020, as the extent of the fraud became clear and the company was drained of its resources, the share price had plummeted to just ₹0.75. Even now, over 9 lakh shareholders remain invested in RHFL, facing significant losses.

Accordingly, Sebi has barred these 25 entities including Ambani and former officials from "accessing the securities market and prohibited from buying, selling or otherwise dealing in securities, directly or indirectly, for a period of 5 years". Ambani and three former officials of RHFL (Bapna, Sudhakar and Shah) have been "restrained from being associated with the securities market including as a director or Key Managerial Personnel (KMP) in any listed company or any intermediary registered with Sebi, for a period of 5 years". Also, the regulator levied a fine of ₹27 crore on Bapna, ₹26 crore on Sudhakar and ₹21 crore on Shah.

Additionally, the remaining entities including Reliance Unicorn Enterprises, Reliance Exchange next Ltd, Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd, Reliance Cleangen Ltd, Reliance Business Broadcast News Holdings Ltd and Reliance Big Entertainment Private Ltd have been imposed a penalty of ₹25 crore each. These fines have been levied on them for either receiving the illegally obtained loans or acting as intermediaries to facilitate the illegal diversion of funds from RHFL. (PTI)

Sensex, Nifty edge up in volatile trade ahead of US Fed chief speech

Gold prices decline by ₹350, silver drops ₹200

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Gold prices declined by ₹350 to ₹73,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

In the previous session, gold of 99.9 per cent purity traded at ₹74,150 per 10 grams. Silver declined by ₹200 to ₹87,000 per kg from ₹87,200 per kg in the previous day.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also dropped by ₹350 to ₹73,450 per 10 grams against ₹73,800 per 10 grams on Thursday. The yellow metal extended losses on Friday, weighed down by rising US Treasury yields and a recovery in the dollar index, market experts said.

Precious metal were also influenced by the minutes of the last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released by RBI on Thursday. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said that the current policy rate of 6.5 per cent is broadly balanced, and any justification for policy easing at this juncture can be misleading, according to the MPC minutes. Governor Das and three other members voted for the status quo on the repo rate in the MPC, while two members advocated a rate cut. Globally, gold at Comex gained USD 18.20 to trade at USD 2,534.90 per ounce. Silver was trading 1.24 per cent higher at USD 29.84 per ounce in the international markets. Minutes from the US Federal Reserve's July meeting revealed a strong inclination toward a rate cut next month, a move supported by at least two Fed officials, Prathamesh Mallick, DVP- Research, Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies, Angel One Ltd, said.

"Speculators overstated the likelihood of an aggressive rate cut before the end of the year; now they trimmed their bets and are pricing three 25-basis-point cuts across the remaining three Fed policy meetings this year, down from around four cuts priced two days ago," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities. (PTI)

Foxconn infuses ₹1,200 crore in Karnataka unit

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Electronics manufacturing giant Foxconn has infused about Rs 1,200 crore - approximately USD 144 million -- into its Karnataka-based Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development Pvt Ltd, the company said in a recent regulatory filing.

The iPhone contract manufacturer's Singapore-based arm Foxconn Singapore Pte has bought over 120.35 crore stocks of Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development Pvt Ltd at Rs 10 per share on August 21.

The Karnataka government in a statement last week said Foxconn is planning to invest ₹25,000 crore to establish a massive manufacturing plant near Doddaballapur that will create 40,000 jobs.

"The unit in Karnataka will soon become the second-largest Foxconn plant after China's unit. It will create 40,000 direct jobs, especially for middle-level educated individuals, and our investment will not stop here; in the future, we plan to explore other sectors also," Foxconn Chairman Young Liu was quoted as saying in the statement. With the fresh infusion, Foxconn Singapore has invested over ₹13,800 crore in the Karnataka unit.

The Karnataka government has allocated 300 acres to Foxconn for its upcoming mobile manufacturing unit in the state. (PTI)

MUMBAI, Aug 23: The rupee traded in a narrow range and settled higher by 4 paise at 83.89 (provisional) against the American currency on Friday, as traders remained cautious ahead of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium.

Forex traders said weak US Dollar, foreign fund inflows and a positive tone in the domestic markets supported the rupee. However, overnight gains in crude oil prices capped sharp gains.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 83.93 and touched an intraday high of 83.85 against the US dollar.

The domestic currency finally settled at 83.89 (provisional), 4 paise higher from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee traded in a narrow range and settled lower by 3 paise at 83.93 against the American currency.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias as traders remain cautious ahead of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium which could provide some cues on Fed's path to cut interest rates."

"Weak US and Asian markets and a recovery in crude oil prices may pressure the rupee while pos-



itive domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary -- Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.10 per cent lower at 101.40.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, advanced 1.05 per cent to USD 78.03 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex advanced 33.02 points, or 0.04 per cent, to close at 81,086.21 points. The Nifty rose 11.65 points, or 0.05 per cent, to 24,823.15 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capi-

tal markets on Thursday as they purchased shares worth ₹1,371.79 crore, according to exchange data.

On the domestic macroeconomic front, the minutes of the last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday noted that the calibrated increase in policy repo rate by 250 basis points since May 2022 and subsequent change of stance to the withdrawal of accommodation have facilitated gradual disinflation over 2022-23.

According to RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, the current policy rate of 6.5 per cent is broadly balanced, and any justification for policy easing at this juncture can be misleading. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1..

Girl gangraped in Dhing,

Hindu society," Sarma said. The police said that one person had been already arrested and another detained while a search was on to nab the others. DGP G P Singh reached Dhing and visited the crime scene along with district police officials. He also visited the survivor's house and talked to her parents and other family members. "I have reviewed the incident site and the progress of the investigation which is moving in the right direction. A case has been registered under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and other relevant acts," the DGP told reporters in Dhing.

The police have gathered sufficient evidence and the additional director general of police (special branch) has been requested to provide the technical support regarding the mobile data details which will be made available soon, he said. The DGP reviewed the situation with IGP (central range) and the district commissioner and also discussed the recurrence of such incidents in some parts of the district. "Such incidents have earlier occurred in Samaguri, Rupohihat, Dhing, Juria and Lahorighat and I have directed that geo-tagging be done in areas where inter-community interface exists," he said. "If geo-tagging can be done in the next few days, then we can prepare an area security plan to ensure that such incidents do not occur in the future," Singh said.

Besides, the Nagaon superintendent of police has been directed to increase patrolling in the evenings, particularly in areas around girls educational institutions and tuition centres, the DGP said. A senior doctor of the hospital where the survivor has been admitted said that she is being treated by a multi-specialty team of doctors from the medicine, surgery and gynaecology departments. "After she was admitted, the sexual offences investigation team conducted all the formalities and the girl was treated by a team of doctors. The necessary tests were conducted and as per the law, some of the reports were handed over to the police," the doctor said. A team of psychiatrists have also been alerted to provide necessary mental support and counselling to the survivor to help her deal with the trauma, he added.

Meanwhile, people from all the communities hit the streets on Friday morning demanding the arrest of the culprits. Shopkeepers downed the shutters of their business establishments and social and political organisations demanded stringent action against the culprits and security for women and girls. (PTI)

27 Indian pilgrims killed

lies in the national highway some 90 km west of Kathmandu.

According to a report in MyRepublica news portal, the passengers onboard the bus were part of a group of 104 Indian pilgrims who arrived in Nepal from Maharashtra in three buses two days ago for a 10-day tour of the Himalayan nation. They came from Bhusal village in Jalgaon district. After visiting Pokhara for two days, all three buses left for the capital Kathmandu on Friday morning. Madhav Pad Paudel, chief of the Armed Police Force (APF), Kurintar, said that most of the passengers travelling in these three buses were families and relatives. A list of names of the 43 passengers who were in the ill-fated bus has been released. "An Indian tourist bus travelling from Pokhara to Kathmandu with around 43 Indians fell 150 metres into Marshyandi River today," the Embassy of India said in a post on X. The mission is coordinating with local authorities undertaking relief and rescue. The bus that fell on the river bank was badly damaged. An MI 17 helicopter of the Nepal Army was deployed to transport injured passengers from the accident site at Anbu Khairani in Tanahun district with a medical team for the rescue operation, MyRepublica reported.

Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh government has sent a sub divisional magistrate to the incident site. An ADM has also been appointed to coordinate the relief work. Uttar Pradesh relief commissioner GS Naveen Kumar in a press statement said, "As per media reports and further confirmed from the MEA Nepal Division, today at about 11:30 am, a bus with registration number - UP 53 FD 7623 carrying approx 43 passengers from Maharashtra, including the driver and one assistant, fell around 150 metres into river Marshyandi in Ambukhereni region in the Tanahun District of Nepal." (PTI)

CBI justifies Delhi CM

Kejriwal has also been confronted with sensitive documents and statements of witnesses during his custodial interrogation, and having such knowledge, he is likely to influence the witnesses. The federal probe agency said Kejriwal was not entitled to parity with the other co-accused considering his role in the criminal conspiracy in the formulation and implementation of the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, more specifically when any or all decisions of the government and the party were taken only as per his directions.

"Even otherwise, bail granted to co-accused has no bearing on a petition challenging the legality of the arrest of the petitioner," it said, adding that Kejriwal's release on bail will "gravely prejudice" the trial of the case, which is at an initial stage and key witnesses are yet to depose.

It said the July 12 order granting interim bail to Kejriwal in an excise policy case related to alleged money laundering has no bearing on the CBI's case in which he stands accused of corruption. "As far as the averments regarding interim bail on medical grounds is concerned, it is humbly submitted that regarding the ailments, the treatment can be provided at the Tihar Jail hospital or any of its referral hospital as per jail rules & manuals, which is being already done. No case has been made out by the Petitioner to be released on medical bail, which ought to be granted only if the treatment is not possible in the jail," it said. The CBI said though Kejriwal does not hold any ministerial position, it has emerged over a period of time that all critical decisions in the formulation of the now scrapped excise policy were taken at his behest with the connivance of the then deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who held the excise portfolio.

"The petitioner was initially asked to join the investigation under section 160 CrPc being understood as one of the persons acquainted with the facts of the case. However, there was certain material which pointed a needle of suspicion towards him. As the investigation progressed, it started becoming clear that the petitioner (Kejriwal) has a pivotal role in the formulation of the new excise policy," it said. (PTI)

Ex-general appointed

According to a primary report of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published on August 16, between July 16 and August 11, as many as 650 people were killed in Bangladesh during the student-led protests and after the fall of the Awami League regime. (PTI)

MGNREGA shows Cong's

been kept at abysmally low levels," the Congress leader alleged. "Despite the government's failure to comprehend or support the potential of this visionary scheme, MGNREGA continues to represent our ongoing commitment to social justice and the empowerment of the marginalised," he said.

"It is through people-centric programmes like MGNREGA that we can truly fulfil the dream of an India that is strong, independent, self-reliant, and at the forefront of the world's nations," Gandhi said. (PTI)

India-US together can

retail inflation fell to a five-year low of 3.54% and foreign exchange reserves have reached an all-time high of USD 675 billion. The defence minister enumerated the steps taken by the government to achieve 'Aatmanirbhar' in defence, including the notification of Positive Indigenisation Lists comprising over 5,000 items. He emphasised that the consistent efforts are being made to ensure that state-of-the-art defence items are manufactured on Indian soil by domestic companies. Singh acknowledged the fact that the defence exports, which were ₹600 crore before the current government came to power, have now risen significantly to over ₹21,000 crore. He added that due to the measures taken to promote innovation, the number of start-ups in the country rapidly increased to 1.20 lakh from around 400 in 2014. He credited these achievements to the willpower along with the policies and planning of the government. Voicing Prime Minister Modi's vision, he said: "We want to develop India into a strong, secure and prosperous nation."

Singh concluded the address by urging the Indian community in the US to work with honesty and dedication, in line with the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (The World is One Family).

Meanwhile, in a post on X Singh said he had a lively interaction with the Indian community at Washington DC. "It's heartwarming to see how the Indian community continues to cherish and uphold their cultural values and maintain their connection to their roots," he said, sharing some photographs from the event. Coinciding with Singh's arrival, senior defence officials from both sides signed two major agreements - Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers. (PTI)

Real-world emissions much

zero-emission vehicles," he added. FIA Foundation deputy director Sheila Watson said the research clearly showed India and the rest of the world that CNG was not the clean alternative fuel that was promised. "While Delhi struggles with dirty air, a visible killer hanging over the city, TRUE has shown that this less visible but still deadly fuel is not the solution. For health and for the climate, the answers to dirty air lie in switching to walking, cycling, and shared electric mobility," she said. The report's release is timely, given the recent directive from the Supreme Court to finalise the Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) 170 and implement remote sensing in the National Capital Region.

AIS 170 will set the technical parameters for remote sensing devices and equip authorities with the necessary resources to measure vehicle exhaust in real time. "Remote sensing technology has the capability to non-intrusively screen tailpipe emissions from vehicles on a mass scale under real-world conditions and can help identify highly polluting vehicles. It is encouraging to see the Supreme Court and the (Union) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways moving forward with the implementation of this technology, beginning with the National Capital Region," said ICCT India researcher Anirudh Narla. "Remote sensing as an on-road surveillance method can not only help identify and remove the worst emitters but also helps understand emissions performance of different technologies and fuels. This shows that while the CNG transition has helped cut toxic particulate emissions from diesel vehicles during the early years, NOx emissions from on-road CNG vehicles without adequate controls can still be high. This builds a case for the next major transition to electrification to make tailpipe emissions not cleaner but zero," said executive director (Research and Advocacy) at the Centre for Science and Environment, India, Anumita Roychowdhury. (PTI)

Amit Shah slams Congress

inflicting injustice upon them? Does the Congress want 'Shankaracharya Hill' to be known as 'Takht-e-Suleiman', and 'Hari Hill' as 'Koh-e-Maran'?" he sought to know. Shah asked whether the Congress supports the politics of pushing Jammu and Kashmir's economy back into corruption and handing it over to selected Pakistan-supported families, and whether it endorses the National Conference's politics of "discrimination" between Jammu and the Valley. "Do the Congress party and Rahul Gandhi support the JKNC's divisive politics of granting autonomy to Kashmir?" he asked.

The former BJP president claimed that the Modi government ended years of discrimination against Dalits, tribes, Pahadis and backward communities by granting them reservations after the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A. "Does Rahul Gandhi support the JKNC manifesto, which calls for abolishing reservations for Dalits, Gujjars, Bakewals and Pahadis? After allying with the National Conference, he should now clarify the Congress Party's stand on reservation policy," he said. Restoration of Article 370 and Jammu and Kashmir's statehood as well as implementation of the autonomy resolution passed by the erstwhile assembly in 2000 are among the National Conference's 12 guarantees announced in its manifesto for the upcoming polls. (PTI)

Himanta launches major development projects in Cachar

CM's visit to the region signifies a pivotal move towards boosting connectivity, education & healthcare

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma laid the foundation for several key infrastructural and educational projects and reaffirmed his commitment to the holistic development of Cachar district. These initiatives, ranging from enhancing connectivity to bolstering educational facilities, reflect the state government's determination to improve the quality of life for the residents of Cachar.

During his visit, CM Sarma performed the 'Bhumi Pujan' for a new Model Degree College in Barjhalanga, under the Dholai constituency. The college, established under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), will cover an area of 7,861 square metres and feature 33 classrooms and 5 laboratories. The project, expected to be completed by August 2026, aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in the region. The event saw the presence of cabinet minister Jayanta Mallabarua, MPs Parimal Suklabaidya and Kri-



panath Mallah, among other dignitaries.

Furthering his vision for community development, CM Sarma inaugurated 10 Jagannath Community and Skill Centres across various tea estates, including Paloi TE, West Jalenga TE, and Maniarkhal TE, each representing an investment of Rs 1.5 crore. These centres aim to empower local communities by providing skill develop-

ment opportunities.

The chief minister also inaugurated three Piped Water Supply Schemes at Gandhinagar, Choto Salganga FV, and Chandrapur, with a total investment of ₹ 3.63 crore. These schemes are part of a broader initiative to ensure access to clean drinking water for all residents.

In a bid to improve early childhood education and nutrition, CM

Sarma laid the foundation for 42 model Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) at a cost of ₹ 10 crore. These centres will play a crucial role in strengthening the district's social infrastructure.

Earlier, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is on a 3-day visit to Barak Valley, reached Silchar on Thursday afternoon and laid the foundation stone for an RCC Bridge over the Barak River at Silghat on the Baskandi-Silghat Road.

The 340-meter bridge, estimated to cost ₹ 87 crore, will connect Sonai with Lakhipur Town, drastically reducing travel time and facilitating easier trade and transportation of agricultural products in the region. "This bridge heralds a new era of progress, prosperity, and pace in Cachar district," CM Sarma remarked during the ceremony.

Notably, the chief minister also announced plans to upgrade Dholai PHC into a 50-bedded hospital, construct a new hospital at Udarbond, and build a mini stadium with a budget of Rs 10 crore. Additionally, 5,000 eligible individuals will soon receive ration cards under the Orunodoi scheme, furthering the government's mission to uplift the underprivileged.

Later, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma visited the Cachar Cancer Hospital & Research Centre, where he inaugurated a new building equipped with PET-CT, GAMMA CAMERA, and LINAC facilities. In his speech, CM Sarma expressed his admiration for the hospital's work, stating, "Today I feel fortunate to have visited the Cachar Cancer Hospital and Research Centre and dedicated its services like Nuclear Medicine Facility and Nuclear Accelerator to the service of the people. This hospital is doing a remarkable job, and I hope it continues to serve the poor and needy, bringing back their smiles. I assure you that the government will extend all possible support to empower this institution to serve those afflicted with the disease."

The event was attended by the director of the hospital Dr Ravi Kannan and other dignitaries.

Minister Savitri Thakur reviews schemes & facilities in Morigaon

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, Aug 23: Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Savitri Thakur, concluded her two-day visit to Morigaon district on Friday, during which she interacted with beneficiaries, inspected facilities, and reviewed the implementation of various schemes.

During her visit, the minister inspected the Anganwadi Centre in Jaluguti, where she interacted with children, distributed gift hampers, and inspected the premises. She also visited the Assam Kayaking and Canoeing Coaching Centre, where she met medalists and sportspersons, inspected the canoes, and reviewed safety measures.

The minister also visited the Kumoi Kacharigaon Model AWC, where she interacted with children and officials, inspected the facilities, and reviewed the functioning of the centre. Additionally, she visited the Mobile Cancer Detection Unit, where she interacted with doctors and appreciated the initiative.

Moreover, the minister visited the Kumoi Kacharigaon M.E. School, where she interacted with students and took stock of the necessary arrangements. She also visited the PMAY house of Jumnonti Konwar, receiving a briefing about the construction of the house and the challenges faced by the beneficiaries.

The minister further visited the Yangli Farmer Producer Company (FPC), where she interacted with women involved in vermicompost production and weaving, emphasising the importance of women's empowerment. She inspected the vermicompost units, visited the display centre, and planted a neem sapling.

Additionally, the minister visited the handloom site, where she interacted with people showcasing traditional Assamese Mekhela-Sador. Lastly, she visited the Establishment of a Medium Re-circulatory Aquaculture System (RAS) under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), where she interacted with officials and provided valuable feedback. The minister's visit aimed to review progress, identify areas for improvement, and explore strategies for future development.

Sonitpur

TEZPUR, Aug 23: In collaboration with AROHAN, a special event, held at the missioner's Office of 114 meritorious schools chaired by district collector, Deba

In his address 2024-2025, the importance of every individual's role in achieving the vision of the state government.

Kamakhya Prasad, HPC, encouraged the students to acquire knowledge and skills, and become experts in their respective fields.

The guest of honour, Barun Choudhury, highlighted the significance of education in achieving the state's vision and the role of the government in providing quality education.

Chief executive officer, Karabi Saikia, highlighted the opportunities in the

Parthenium Awareness Week observed by AAU in Diphu

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: Assam Agricultural University - Zonal Research Station, Diphu, celebrated Parthenium Awareness Week from August 16 to 22, 2024, at Dilipi Mithiphang LP School to generate awareness among teachers, students, and staff members. A wide range of activities were conducted to spread awareness both in and around the school premises. The activities included parthenium uprooting, spraying herbicides, composting of uprooted biomass, a student rally, and leaflet distribution.

The awareness program was chaired by Dr K D Sinha, chief scientist at AAU-ZRS, Diphu, along with principal i/c Basapi Rongpi and subject teachers Basanti Brahma and Neetu Phonglo. The program was coordinated by all the scientists of AAU-ZRS, Diphu (Dr N Baruah, Dr M Maibangsa, Dr M Gogoi, Dr M Bathari, M/s H Terang, M/s K Bharadwaj, and M/s T Das) with support from students and field staff.

The scientific team interacted with school students and teachers, highlighting the integrated management of parthenium through uprooting, biological control, and composting. They emphasised the importance of the parthenium awareness program and sensitised participants about the harmful effects of parthenium, such as skin allergies (dermatitis), high fever, and asthma in humans. They stressed the need for integrated weed management and encouraged everyone to participate in uprooting parthenium plants in and around campuses, residential areas, and other locations to help create a parthenium-free environment. The program was highly successful and appreciated by all the teachers, students, and staff members present.

Kajali Teej celebrated in Hojai

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Aug 23: This year, the Kajali Teej took place on Thursday. In Hojai, married women, especially from Maheshwari and Daima families, gathered in the evening to pray for the well-being and longevity of their husbands. Dressed as newlywed brides, they offered prayers to Goddess Parvati and worshipped the neem tree, a key part of the tradition. After fasting from dawn until evening, the women broke their fast after sighting the moon and taking prasadam.

The celebrations also included the singing of Kajali hymns, the application of mehendi, and the sharing of traditional foods like kheer, puri, and sweets. The day was filled with joy as women took selfies and embraced the festive spirit.

'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' awareness prog held

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Aug 23: The Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL) Jorhat organised an awareness programme on the 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' at the Jorhat Science Centre and Planetarium auditorium on Thursday.

Jorhat district commissioner Pulak Mahanta urged residents to take advantage of the ambitious solar power scheme, which, jointly implemented by the central and state governments, offers up to 300 units of free electricity per month.

APDCL officials detailed the scheme's benefits and application process, informing attendees that applications can be submitted either at the APDCL office or online through the APDCL website.

The event was attended by district administration and APDCL officials, along with local residents.

District-level exposure visit held

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIAI, Aug 23: The district-level exposure visit for the mentees of class 9 was held in the Biswanath district on Tuesday, according to a press release. The mentees enjoyed the movie 'The Pursuit of Happiness' at Pavo Cinema Hall under the guidance of Dr Neha Yadav, district commissioner of Biswanath. The mentees also visited institutions like the Farm Machinery Center and Biswanath College of Agriculture, where interactions took place. The State Bank of India, Biswanath, presented gift packets to all the mentees. Lunch was provided at the DC's residence, where the mentees dined with Dr Yadav, Dhruvjayoti Das, ADC (Education), Hriday Kumar Das, ADC, assistant commissioner, and other administrative officers. An interactive cultural program was also held, where invitee singer Dibakar Bora and the mentees performed songs.

IIT Guwahati's Techniche 2024 set to ignite innovation & creativity

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: IIT Guwahati is set to take place from August 29 to September 1, 2024. This event promises to be a hub of innovation, creativity, and competition. Over the years, Techniche has evolved into a premier platform that gathers some of the brightest minds from across the nation, and this year continues that tradition with renewed excitement.

Techniche 2024 will attract participants from prestigious institutions such as the IITs, NITs, IIMs, ISBs, and other renowned regional colleges. Students from diverse academic backgrounds will compete in challenging events designed to push the boundaries of innovation and technical expertise. Notable competitions include Robowars, which showcases engineering ingenuity, and Aqua Wars, where participants navigate underwater robotics. Beyond competition, Techniche 2024 will feature the Nexus and Lecture Series, where distinguished speakers from various industries and academia will share invaluable insights, enriching students' educational journeys.

In line with its mission to contribute to society, Team Techniche has actively engaged in CSR activities with the support of esteemed sponsors. These initiatives include a Brahmaputra River cleaning drive, hand wash and sanitiser distribution in underprivileged areas, a sanitary pads drive in girls' schools, a blood donation camp on the IIT Guwahati campus, and a free dental checkup camp at the institute.

Sonitpur DRSC reviews progress and action plans

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 23: The 8th District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) meeting was held on Friday under the chairmanship of district commissioner Deba Kumar Mishra at the Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Sonitpur, Tezpur.

The district commissioner opened the meeting by welcoming all stakeholders and requested the concerned officials to present the Action Taken Report based on the decisions made in the previous DRSC meeting. The meeting included discussions on various topics, such as the progress of developing a truck stand/bus bay at the Dolabari point area, trimming of roadside trees posing traffic threats, and strategies for ensuring municipal registration of e-rickshaws, among other related issues. The district commissioner specifically directed the concerned officials to expedite the installation of road safety signage across the district, especially in accident-prone areas. The creation of a designated parking space for outside vehicles at Tezpur Medical College & Hospital was also discussed in the meeting.

The meeting was attended by superintendent of police, Sonitpur, Barun Purkayastha; additional district commissioner, Twhair Alam; additional SP, Madhurima Das; circle officer of Tezpur Revenue Circle; superintending engineer of PWRD, Sonitpur and Biswanath Road Circle, Tezpur, Ajit Kumar Medhi; along with all members and concerned stakeholders of DRSC.

Training on scientific soybean cultivation conducted in KA

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: Scientists from Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat, and AAU-Zonal Research Station (ZRS), Diphu, conducted a training program on 'Enhancing Livelihood Through Soybean Cultivation Among Tribal Farmers of Assam' at Tarabasa Seed Farm, Bokolia, Karbi Anglong. The program was organised by AICRP on Soybean, department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, AAU, in collaboration with AAU-ZRS, Diphu.

The event was graced by the presence of Madhura Lekhe, executive member of KAAC Diphu, responsible for Fisheries, Handloom, Textile, and Adult Education. He addressed the gathering and encouraged the farming community to adopt scientific cultivation practices for better income generation and improved economic status. He emphasised increasing cropping intensity, noting that large areas in Karbi Anglong district remain fallow.

Dr K D Sinha, chief scientist at AAU-ZRS Diphu, highlighted the potential of soybean cultivation in hill zones and its value addition. Dr I A Sheikh, principal scientist, department of Plant Breeding & Genetics, provided a detailed explanation of scientific soybean cultivation practices. He also introduced four suitable soybean varieties for Assam conditions: MACS-1407, JS 20-116, KDS-753, and DSB-32.

Dr Munni Borah, scientist in the department of



Plant Pathology, explained the process of preparing various value-added soybean products, such as soymilk, tofu, soy flour, Tinto Menthul (Karbi), and bird feed, along with plant disease management practices. Dr Manha Bathari, scientist at AAU-ZRS Diphu, provided insights into pest problems and their management in soybean cultivation. Krishna Bharadwaj, scientist at AAU-ZRS Diphu, discussed scientific agricultural practices for soybean.

The program concluded with the distribution of certificates to all participants and the distribution of sprayers and equipment for preparing soybean value-added products to the Siro Seuj Self Help Group and Jakve Farmer Producer Organisation.

CII organises inaugural TechNE conference in Guwahati

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised the 1st edition of TechNE on Friday at Guwahati. The central theme of the conference was 'Emerging Technologies Impacting Businesses and Livelihoods'. The focus of this conclave was to explore how technologies can drive not just business innovation but also social transformation.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Syedain Abbasi, special chief secretary - IT, PHE, Water Resources, government of Assam, stated that Assam is poised to become a tech hub with its conducive environment and emerging infrastructure. The state welcomes investments with open arms, offering full government support on a fast-track basis for genuine investors.

Arvind Kumar, director general, Software

Technology Parks of India, underscored that access to technology empowers people to bridge gaps and instil confidence, ensuring that social sector benefits reach every last mile and empowering even the most underserved communities to thrive.

Bhaskar J Phukan, chairman, CII Assam State Council & managing director, Numaligarh Refinery Limited, in his inaugural address, noted that the north-east is primed to harness emerging tech opportunities with its rich talent pool of skilled, young, and educated professionals in IT, engineering, and sciences.

Amit Malik, president - India & South Asia, Ciena India, highlighted that technology is rapidly evolving, with AI-driven innovation leading the way. Access to supportive platforms and adaptive infrastructure will be crucial in shaping

the pace of future growth. Steering AI with strong ethics and governance will help navigate this change. Dipankar Chakrabarti, immediate past chairman, ICT Subcommittee, CII Eastern Region & founder, CtoE Consultancy Services, spoke on the reach of technology, stating that emerging technologies are set to unlock the vast potential of the north-east, driving growth in livelihoods and fueling startup and entrepreneurship development. Strategic investments are key to accelerating this transformation.

Acknowledging the support extended by the government of Assam with a conducive investment environment, Shantanu Son, founder & CEO, Somantics Som Imaging Information Pvt Limited, announced the establishment of an AI-enabled document processing centre in Guwahati.

Dima Hasao Council eyes mithun rearing for farmer empowerment

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: An interactive session focusing on the scientific rearing of mithun, locally known as 'mithang' in Dimas, was held on Friday at the CEM's Conference Hall at the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC) secretariat. Organised by the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department of Dima Hasao in collaboration with ICAR-NRC on Mithun, Mediziphepa, Nagaland, the meeting aimed to explore the potential of mithun rearing as a viable income source for farmers in the Dima Hasao district.

The session was chaired by the CEM-in-charge and NCHAC executive member for Medical, Samuel Changsan, with the presence of other executive members, including Monjit Naiding, Donpoinon Thaoson, and Samsing Ingti.

Dr Girish Patel, director of ICAR-NRC on Mithun, Nagaland, highlighted the absence of official records

of mithun in Assam, noting that the species has been most prevalent in states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Mizoram. He emphasised that with scientific rearing practices, mithun could significantly benefit the farmers of Dima Hasao, pointing out the district's suitability for this livestock. He also mentioned ongoing government efforts to secure funding to support these initiatives.

Mithun, a domesticated bovine species native to the northeastern states of India, holds cultural, social, and economic importance among indigenous communities. Valued for its lean, high-protein meat, mithun has the potential to become a key resource for sustainable agriculture in the region.

The session was attended by several notable figures, including Dr KK Baruah, ICAR GB member from New Delhi, and other distinguished scientists from ICAR-NRC on Mithun, Nagaland, as well as officials from the NCHAC and Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

Tezpur University celebrates National Space Day

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Aug 23: The department of Physics at Tezpur University organised National Space Day on Friday, celebrating India's successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon on this very day. The university invited noted scientist Dr V Girish, deputy director of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), for the occasion. Dr Girish delivered a captivating keynote lecture titled 'The Moon, an Enigma' at the KBR Auditorium.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Girish highlighted that the Moon, Earth's only natural satellite, has been a source of fascination and mystery for humanity since ancient times. He discussed the scientific

and practical benefits of studying the Moon. "The Moon's geological record provides clues about the early history of our planet. By examining lunar samples and craters, scientists can learn about the formation of the Solar System," the ISRO scientist said. He further added that the Moon is believed to contain valuable resources, such as water ice and helium-3, which could be crucial for future human exploration and settlement beyond Earth.

Addressing the gathering, Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, vice chancellor of Tezpur University, highlighted the importance of the event. "The theme of this year's National Space Day—"Touching



Lives while Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga"—reflects India's extraordinary journey in space exploration and its impact on

society," Prof Singh said. He also noted that Tezpur University has been collaborating with ISRO, and TU alumni have been part of

Heavy vehicle ban imposed on Borkhola-Kalain road

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: In a significant move to safeguard public safety, the executive engineer of PWRD, Borkhola & Katigora Territorial Road Division, has announced a new restriction on heavy vehicles along the Borkhola-Kalain Road, currently under construction as part of the Asom Mala Project. The prohibition, effective immediately, applies to all vehicles with a Gross Total Weight (GTW) exceeding 15 metric tons (MT) on the Borkhola-Khambarbar stretch of the road. This measure comes in response to regular damage to the ongoing construction caused by the frequent movement of heavily loaded commercial vehicles, leading to severe disruptions for pedestrian traffic and smaller vehicles.

To alleviate these issues and prioritise public interest, the ban will remain in place until further notice. However, LPG carriers have been granted an exemption, provided they enter and exit through the Borkhola side only.

The executive engineer urges all concerned to adhere to this notification, ensuring the smooth progress of the road construction and minimising inconvenience to the public.

ISRO's prestigious space science programs, including Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1. In addition to the lecture, led by Prof Gazi Ameen Ahmed from the department of Physics and chairperson of the organising committee, the university organised several activities to celebrate the day. The Astronomy Club conducted astronomical observations, outreach programs were held in nearby villages, and a poster session was organised to mark the occasion.

Earlier, students, faculty, and staff members of the university watched the live streaming of President of India Droupadi Murmu's address to the nation on National Space Day.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I always entertain great hopes.
—Robert Frost

BSNL's 4G Launch

BSNL, the public sector telecom giant under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has been struggling to keep pace with private competitors. Despite being left behind in the race for technological advancements, the company's much-awaited 4G launch, now set to be completed by March next year, may offer a glimmer of hope. Yet, the question remains: Will it be enough to revive the once-dominant PSU? The launch of BSNL's 4G services has faced multiple delays over the past 18 months, with several internal deadlines proving to be overly optimistic. However, recent indications from DoT suggest that the government is keen on rolling out the service by December, with a final deadline set for March if further delays occur. This push comes as the company attempts to regain relevance in a market dominated by private giants like Reliance Jio, Airtel, and Vodafone Idea (VI). BSNL's reliance on Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) for the software and Tejas Networks for hardware, along with the involvement of DoT-administered ITI and C-DoT, adds layers of complexity to the project. The implementation of one lakh 4G/5G Radio Access Network (RAN) sites across the country is a massive undertaking, and BSNL must ensure that its vendors meet the ambitious deadlines.

Despite the challenges, there are some positive signs. BSNL has reported a steady increase in users porting to its network under the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) scheme. Since July, when private telecom companies raised their tariffs by 10-25%, BSNL has seen over 2.5 lakh new subscribers. By the end of 2023, the company had gained around 8 lakh subscribers, bringing its total new user base to an estimated 25 lakh in regions like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and parts of South India. The company's competitive tariff strategy, aimed at being "rational, affordable, and user-inducing," could play a key role in attracting more users, particularly in rural areas. However, whether this will be enough to stabilize the company's financial position remains uncertain. BSNL's market share currently stands at a mere 8%, a distant fourth behind its private sector rivals. Achieving even a modest 15% market share over the next three to four years will require sustained efforts and strategic initiatives. One potential area for growth is the tourism sector, where BSNL's network coverage in remote areas gives it a competitive edge. Tourists often prefer BSNL SIM cards as a secondary option due to the availability of its towers in far-flung locations.

However, BSNL faces an uphill battle. The company's decline over the past decade has been steep, and even with the 4G rollout, regaining a significant market position will be challenging. To achieve this, BSNL must also focus on revitalizing its landline services, which have seen a significant decline due to customer defections to private competitors. The company's weak financial position has hindered its ability to refund deposits to former landline customers, further eroding its reputation. The road ahead is difficult, but BSNL's survival may hinge on its ability to adapt and innovate in a rapidly changing telecom landscape. The upcoming 4G launch, if executed well, could mark the beginning of a turnaround. However, the company must remain vigilant and committed to ensuring that this opportunity does not slip through its fingers once again. As BSNL approaches the five-year anniversary of its revival package approval, the stakes have never been higher.

Forgiving is about freeing yourself from the burden of resentment

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabhi

Nelson Mandela once said, "Forgiveness is not about forgetting or ignoring harm, but freeing yourself from the burden of resentment." This statement highlights the essence of Mandela's approach to dealing with personal and political adversity. For Mandela, forgiveness is a means of freeing himself from a destructive cycle of bitterness and hatred. Instead of dwelling on past injustices, it is a conscious choice to focus on healing and reconciliation, thereby promoting the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious society. Mandela's journey from anger and resentment to forgiveness after 27 years of imprisonment exemplifies his belief in the liberating power of forgiveness. Despite the immense suffering Mandela endured, he chose to promote reconciliation rather than retribution after his release. Mandela's leadership during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy demonstrated his commitment to national healing. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was intended to address the atrocities of the past through dialogue and forgiveness.

By advocating for forgiveness, Mandela helped unite a deeply divided nation. His willingness to engage with former opponents, including apartheid leaders, was crucial in building a new, inclusive South Africa. Mandela's emphasis on forgiveness rather than vengeance gave him a moral authority that transcended national boundaries. His global reputation as a peacemaker was further enhanced by his ability to forgive, thereby setting an example for others. Mandela's legacy of forgiveness inspires movements for peace and justice around the world. His teachings influence contemporary leaders and activists who advocate nonviolent solutions to conflicts. Mandela's ability to forgive despite immense personal suffering exemplifies resilience and strength. His forgiveness was not a sign of weakness but a symbol of profound inner strength. Forgiveness showed its practical effectiveness as a strategic tool in Mandela's nonviolent resistance against apartheid. It helped facilitate peaceful negotiations and ultimately the end of apartheid.

Mandela's approach to forgiveness can guide contemporary peace

processes. In post-conflict societies such as Rwanda, the spirit of forgiveness has been crucial in reconciliation efforts following the genocide. Forgiveness helps nations move beyond historical grievances. Germany's post-World War II reconciliation efforts with its neighbours have been based on mutual forgiveness and acknowledgment of past wrongs. Forgiveness can break the cycle of revenge and violence. Efforts to forgive past atrocities in Northern Ireland have been essential to maintaining peace. Forgiveness can empower individuals affected by conflict to reclaim their lives. Victims of violence in Colombia's civil conflict have found inner strength and solace through forgiveness initiatives. Forgiveness promotes inclusiveness and unity in diverse societies. Post-apartheid South Africa's policies of inclusiveness were deeply influenced by Mandela's policy of forgiveness. Forgiveness promotes open dialogue and understanding.

Ongoing dialogues between conflicting parties in the Middle East are supported by principles of forgiveness and mutual respect. Mandela's concept of forgiveness can bolster international peace efforts. UN peacekeeping missions often incorporate strategies of reconciliation and forgiveness to bring stability to post-conflict areas.

Nelson Mandela's belief in forgiveness as a means of liberation from resentment is not only a testament to his strength but also a powerful strategy for peace and reconciliation. In contemporary global conflicts, embracing forgiveness can pave the way for healing and unity, breaking the cycle of violence and promoting a more just and peaceful world. Mandela's legacy inspires us, reminding us that the path to true peace lies in the courage to forgive and move forward together.

Someone once said that forgiveness means letting go of the idea that your past could have been different. When we forgive, we let go of the burden of hurt and resentment that so easily overwhelm us and prevent us from living a full and joyful life. Real forgiveness is hard and reflective work that we practice one day at a time, one experience at a time. It is a path to healing and peace that begins and ends with compassion for ourselves and our feelings. Perhaps instead of "forgive and forget," our new saying should be "forgive and live."

“Until merely a few hundred years ago, feudalism and monarchy were the norm for the mode of the state to be. While there were spurts of democracies here and there, the larger political unit was seldom so.

Even in the 'democratic' city-states of ancient Athens and Rome, once elected, the leaders usurped monarch-like powers with the commoners having little say in decision-making.

A true democracy is marked by decentralisation of power. The average citizen has the ability to not just choose the decision makers but also influence the decisions. From the 18th century onwards, the world has seen the emergence of states which are largely, if not truly democratic.

Yet war remained a prerogative of states. A violent interaction between the state and an individual or a group of civilians, for instance, would be labelled as rebellion or terrorism. Rightly so, for such interactions were often either sporadic or localised or both. The asymmetry with the state's forces was dealt with through tactical means such as guerrilla tactics or anomisation.

Declaration of war has significant political connotations, both internal and external. Such a declaration, however, also gives

the state access to a broader set of mechanisms which would otherwise be deemed illegitimate. Thus, the status of war is invoked only in the face of major threats, which till recently, only organised militaries of foreign states were capable of posing.

Non-state actors have existed within various states for long. But never before has the impact of their attacks been to the extent seen today. The emergence of and ease of access to new-age technologies like offensive UAVs and automated weaponry has transformed the economics of war.

A quantitative analysis of available weaponry, once an ipso facto criterion for adjudging the relative strengths of warring sides, is now reduced to a secondary tool.

The low cost and ease of access to such technologies have balanced the asymmetric nature of such conflicts. Developed for commercial purposes, the offensive capabilities have been exploited in delivery drones. Some have been modified to establish hard-to-disrupt supply lines to the frontline. Others have been loaded with explosive payloads to obtain Kamikaze or loitering munition characteristics.

While not as sophisticated as the ones possessed by major militaries like the US, their effectiveness on



the battlefield cannot be undermined. Using such techniques, the Houthi rebels have been able to dominate and disrupt a critical shipping line in a region having advanced presence of multiple advanced Navies of the world. On the Indo-Pak border, the reduction in mule infiltration attempts can be attributed to the use of drones for Narcotics and weapons smuggling.

The economic and human costs on the infiltrating side have thus reduced, enabling more frequent bids towards the endeavour. The ease of access to funding through channels like Cryptocurrency and dark web has further accentuated the abilities of such groups.

In the absence of effective mechanisms to deal with the looming threat, the defending state is often compelled to resort to traditional and disproportionately more resource-intensive methods. The potential threats

warrant such actions. However, the absence of specialised defences, makes the system vulnerable to getting overwhelmed with the constant barrage of adversaries. The costs involved for the attackers made it an extremely unlikely occurrence for a country with adequate defences till recently. But this deterrence has quickly vanished.

The recent entourage of 300 'projectiles' fired by Iran towards Israel was led by around 170 drones. Despite being known for its air defences, and being actively assisted by allies such as the US and UK, merely 99% of the projectiles were intercepted.

The David's Sling apparatus, likely used for the purpose, costs more than 5 times the unit (allegedly Shahed drones) it seeks to counter. The much touted cheaper alternative, Iron Dome is significantly less effective against navigable

drones with unpredictable trajectories. The Israeli response a few days later exemplifies the case, when it used cheap quadcopters to mislead and render toothless the Iranian defences. Up North, Hezbollah has been successful in repeatedly penetrating the Israeli air defences to cause non-trivial damage to civilian and even military installations on Israeli Soil.

More recently, the Houthis successfully targeted Tel Aviv all the way from Yemen. In the recently concluded Armenia-Azerbaijan war, the drones proved to be pivotal in the establishment of air superiority by Azerbaijan over Armenia.

A hoard of low-cost drones would be flown towards the enemy, engaging with which would expose the location and nature of the defences. These sitting ducks would then be eliminated, leaving the airspace undefended.

While there is a widespread consensus on the tactical advantages the drones provide on the battlefield, some commentators have underplayed their strategic significance. It is true that at present drones play a tactical role. It is one however which has quick and major strategic implications.

Would the establishment of air superiority not give one side a decisive advantage? Does the large-scale

annihilation of traditional frontline equipment such as tanks and armoured vehicles, as seen in Ukraine, not obliterate the adversary's strategic plans? Not to mention the jarring effect on the morale of the soldiers in the face of an invisible enemy. The intelligence gathered using drone surveillance can prove decisive.

Future developments such as 'loyal wingman' could have a clear and direct strategic role. The freshly acquired ability of non-state actors to pose strategic challenges to the states has transformed the nature of interaction between them.

Given the stakes at play and willingness to scramble resource-intensive responses, the war room outlook towards such groups has shifted from a mere nuisance to a full-scale war. This is despite the lack of de jure recognition of the challenger. The emerging nature of diplomatic interactions between states and non-state groups resembles in many ways the inter-state interactions, albeit unofficially.

The monopoly of states on the global high table is set to be disrupted. War has been democratised. The implications, while still blurry, are set to reshape international order, as we know it today. (The author can be reached at pranshu.agrawal1812@outlook.com)

Uncertainty in Bangladesh: BNP, army differ on election timing

By: Nitya Chakraborty

More than seventeen days after the abdication of former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina from power in Bangladesh on August 5 and taking political shelter in India, conflicting trends are visible in the functioning of the interim government headed by Dr. Muhammad Yunus, as also in the activities of the political parties in the faction-ridden country. Three major trends are visible now.

First, the interim government, especially the students are not favouring immediate elections - within three months as demanded by the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. The student leaders in the interim government have announced their decision to form a new political party and that process will take months, perhaps even more than six months. The army is also not in favour of immediate national elections. They want more time to stabilise. So is the view of Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the head of the interim government.

Second, as regards the operations of the political parties in post-Hasina phase, the Awami League leaders are under attack. Most of the mere hiding. Some of them tried contacting India for shelter through their sources, but did not get favourable response.

The Awami League organisation is in a mess. BNP and Jamaat are taking full advantage of the present anti-Awami League sentiment to cripple the AL organisations. All-out attacks made against the senior Awami League leaders are being engineered by the fundamentalists who are now seizing the opportunity, as the state police administration is still paralysed. The Hindu community organisations have to field their own volunteers and seek help of local communities to protect themselves. They cannot depend on the police for protection.



Third, the present situation is a free run for the U.S. and Chinese diplomats. US ambassador in Bangladesh Peter Haas and the Chinese ambassador Yao Wen are the most sought after by the politicians and the important people of Bangladesh. China has much more influence compared to U.S. on the defence forces, economy and political parties in Bangladesh. US diplomats were not allowed to get free access before the January elections, but things changed after February this year, with the US ambassador taking active interest in establishing good relations with the Hasina government.

US has solid relations with the BNP, and even with a section of the Awami League which is of noose now. On the contrary, China has kept good relations with the BNP while maintaining excellent relations with the Hasina government. Awami League leaders as well as a good section of the students and media. All these have put China in a more advantageous position in Bangladesh now, as against the USA as both try to influence the course of events in the conflict-prone nation. Russia did a lot for Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League government in terms of giving economic assistance but with Hasina gone, Russia now has

little leverage.

BNP has always avoided Russia at the instance of U.S. As regards India, rightly South Block is monitoring the developments in Bangladesh patiently and it will take sometime for India to take forward steps to establish new relations and cultivate the new rulers in Dhaka.

As regards Jamaat, this is the best of times. The party has started getting big inflow of foreign funds from many foundations from different countries of the world. Hasina crippled the organisation financially by tightening the funds in flow. Similar is the position of BNP. The party gets funds from both the U.S. and China. BNP supremo Begum Khaleda Zia earlier gave instructions from hospital bed after August 5.

Now, she is free and back home after treatment. She will be more active now indirectly contacting with interim government. She

may not be liked by Md. Yunus but she has contacts in army. She will cultivate that.

Bangladesh has always been a nation with corruption reigning at every level. The Awami League leaders were no exception. In the last five years, this corruption of the ruling party politicians increased. Apart, there is menace of foreign funds which go to all sections of political parties, including the media.

The post August 5 situation is no different. The only difference is that the Awami League leaders are in the no-go category. Excepting them, the funds have been flowing to every section including those who are trying to form a new political party. The situation is bizarre.

The immediate challenge for India is to deal with the demand

number of murder charges estimated at eighteen now, and the mood is such that if Hasina is extradited, harshest punishment will be given to her. This may include even hanging. The internal situation is such, that the Awami League cannot expect transparency legal process to be followed. There will be a mob and media trial of Hasina. Only international human rights lawyer scan intervene effectively, but Hasina's record of 300 deaths in police firing in the last one month preceding August 5 puts her as a fit case for International Crimes Tribunal. So the situation is very tricky.

India has the option of refusing Hasina's extradition on the ground that the accusations made against Hasina are noting good faith in the interest of justice. But this is just not a bilateral issue, it involves the issues of humanitarian justice. India has to talk to USA on this issue to see that the situation does not reach that level where the interim government will

US has solid relations with the BNP, and even with a section of the Awami League which is of noose now. On the contrary, China has kept good relations with the BNP while maintaining excellent relations with the Hasina government, Awami League leaders as well as a good section of the students and media. All these have put China in a more advantageous position in Bangladesh now, as against the USA as both try to influence the course of events in the conflict-prone nation. Russia did a lot for Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League government in terms of giving economic assistance but with Hasina gone, Russia now has little leverage

for extradition of Sheikh Hasina, if it is officially made by the interim government of Bangladesh headed by Dr. Md. Yunus. So far, only BNP has made the demand and it has been mentioned in general terms by a member of the interim government. But if finally, the demand comes officially, then what will be the position of India? India and Bangladesh signed an extradition treaty in 2013 and it was amended in 2016 to simplify the process.

Hasina has been accused of a

give ultimatum to the Indian government to extradite Sheikh Hasina.

Dr. Yunus will not take any step on extradition issue without consulting the US and China. India may have some problems in talking to China, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi must take up the issue with the US administrations that no ultimatum is sent by Bangladesh. The issue should be resolved on the basis of mutual discussions involving international assistance. (IPA Service)

POST BAG

Embracing economic interdependence with confidence

Sir/Ma'am

The ongoing discussions about the economic exchanges between states, particularly focusing on rice consumption from Punjab and Haryana, have sparked feelings of inferiority and misplaced pride in some quarters. However, it is essential to recognize that these exchanges are vital to our national economy, and there is no need to feel inferior or overly proud about them.

While we do consume rice from Punjab and Haryana, it is equally important to note that Assam's own products, such as Black Rice, Assam Lemons, Bhot Jalokia, Tezpur Litchi etc are sought after worldwide. This mutual exchange is not a new occurrence; historically, Assam's crude oil, coal, and tea have

been in demand across the globe. These economic interactions are the lifeblood of our country, allowing different regions to prosper and contribute to the national economy.

If economic exchanges were to cease, all states, including Assam, would suffer. We are active participants in the market, purchasing goods and services we require, just as others purchase our products. This system is driven by mutual necessity and value, not by charity. The jobs that emerge from these exchanges are earned through merit, not through mercy, and are crucial for sustaining livelihoods.

The perception that we are somehow inferior because we consume products from other states is both unproductive and baseless. We do not reject technol-

ogy or consumer goods simply because they are manufactured abroad; we use them because they are part of the global economy. Similarly, our products are consumed by others, and it is this interdependence that fuels economic growth.

It is important to remember that the children of Assam are making significant contributions as scientists, doctors, engineers, professors, and researchers in developed countries. Their achievements reflect our state's potential and should fill us with pride. The idea that we are a nation dependent on others is a narrative that undermines our self-esteem and diverts attention from the real issues at hand.

The current situation calls for us to discard this inferiority complex and recognize the true value of our contribu-

tions to the national and global economy. Instead of fixating on the origin of rice or other products, we should take pride in our role within the broader economic landscape. The struggle to protect our language, culture, and economy is indeed our constitutional right, but it should not be confused with baseless concerns about economic exchanges.

Let us move forward with a balanced perspective, understanding that mutual dependence in trade and commerce is not a sign of weakness but of strength. This interdependence is what fosters growth and prosperity for all.

Mowsam Hazarika
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Career as Humanitarian Worker

By: Ranjan K Baruah

There are disasters around the world out of which some are natural and some are manmade. In any disaster and emergency situations we need people who give assistance and support. There are many humanitarian staff around the world. 2023 was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers and 2024 is also not good in many places.

The Humanitarian Access SCORE Report says that in Gaza - the first six months (March 2024) estimated that more than 30,000 civilian deaths have included over 150 aid workers, an

unprecedented number for a single context in such a short period. The 2024 Global Humanitarian Overview requires \$48.65 billion to assist 186.5 million people in need. As of the end of July 2024, reported GHO funding amounts to \$12.26 billion or 11 per cent less than last year at the same time.

From Sudan to Myanmar and beyond, the first half of 2024 was characterized by attacks against health, education and water and sanitation facilities that left millions of people without access to the services they need to survive. (Global Humanitarian Overview 2024). These facts lay bare a glaring truth: the world is failing hu-



manitarian workers and, by extension, the people they serve.

Despite universally accepted international laws to regulate the conduct of armed conflict and limit its impact, violations of

these laws continue unabated, unchallenged and unchecked. And while civilians, including aid workers, pay the ultimate price, the perpetrators continue to evade justice.

This World Humanitarian Day (WHD), we demand an end to these violations and the impunity with which they are committed. On 19 August 2003, a bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killed 22 humanitarian aid workers, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Five years later, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as WHD.

Humanitarian crises, such as conflicts, natural disasters and pandemics, often result in human rights concerns. Deteriorating human rights situations may also trigger crises and increase the hu-

manitarian needs of affected populations. We need trained and professional workers who could work and bring positive changes. There are many international agencies that hire humanitarian workers.

One may choose courses like Social Work, Disaster Management, Human Rights, Development Studies, etc. There are different job profiles who would like to work in humanitarian support activities. Health workers like doctors or nurses can also join this profession and work for organisations like Red Cross, World Vision, or agencies of the United Nations, etc.

UN Human Rights main-

streams a human rights-based approach to humanitarian action. To achieve this, it works at both field and global levels, ensuring that the voices of affected communities are integrated in strategic, operational and policy approaches. It brings opportunity for the qualified and trained and skilled people to work with different international agencies to bring positive changes. There are opportunities to become a volunteer or intern with many organisations who work in this field. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjan@gmail.com for any career related queries)*

RRB JE Recruitment 2024 – 7951 Junior Engineer & Other Posts

Last Date: 29/08/2024

Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India has released an employment notification CEN No. 03/2024 for the recruitment of 7951 Junior Engineer, Depot Material Superintendent, (Chemical & Metallurgical Assistant, Chemical Supervisor (Research) and Metallurgical Supervisor (Research) Posts in various RRBs. The online application process for RRB JE Vacancy 2024 has started from 30th July 2024 to 29th August 2024. Interested and eligible candidates may read the advertisement and apply online.

1. Chemical Supervisor/ Research and Metallurgical Supervisor/ Research
No of posts: 17
Age Limit: Candidate age must be between 18 to 36 years as on 1st January 2025.

Pay: Pay level-7 with initial pay of ₹ 44,900, plus other allowances admissible at that time

2. Junior Engineer, Depot Material Superintendent and Chemical & Metallurgical Assistant
No of posts: 7934
Age Limit: Candidate age must be between 18 to 36 years as on 1st January 2025.

Pay: Pay level-6, with initial pay of ₹ 35,400, plus other allowances admissible at that time.

Other Criteria of RRB JE Recruitment

Age Relaxation: The relaxation of upper age limit for reserved categories are as follows:

Category	Age Relaxation
OBC-NCL	3 years
SC/ST	5 years
PwBD - UR & EWS	10 years
PwBD - OBC/NCL	13 years
PwBD - SC & ST	15 years

Educational Qualification:

Chemical Supervisor/ Research: Degree or its equivalent in Chemical Technology from a recognized University/ Institution covering any one or more of the following fields: a) Petroleum Products, b) Paints and Corrosion Prevention c) Polymers. Knowledge of any computer language will be essential.

Metallurgical Supervisor/ Research: Degree or its equivalent in Metallurgical Engineering from a recognized University/ Institution. Knowledge of any computer language will be essential.

Junior Engineer Electrical: Three years Diploma in (a) Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics Engineering OR (b) a combination of any sub stream of basic streams of Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics Engineering from a recognized University/ Institute

Junior Engineer Civil: (a) Three years Diploma in Civil Engineering or B.Sc. in Civil Engineering of three years duration or (b) a combination of any substream of basic streams of Civil Engineering from a recognized University/ Institute.

Junior Engineer/ Track Machine: (a) Three years Diploma in Mechanical/ Production/ Automobile/ Electrical/ Electronics/ Instrumentation and Control Engineering OR (b) a combination of any sub stream of basic streams of Mechanical/ Production/ Automobile/ Electrical/ Electronics/ Instrumentation and Control Engineering from a recognized University/ Institute.

Junior Engineer Mechanical: Three years Diploma in (a) Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics/ Manufacturing/ Mechatronics/ Industrial/ Machining/ Instrumentation and Control/ Tools and Machining/ Tools and Die Making/ Automobile/ Production Engineering OR (b) a combination of any sub stream of basic streams of Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics/ Manufacturing/ Mechatronics/ Industrial/ Machining/ Instrumentation and Control/ Tools and Machining/ Tools and Die Making/ Automobile/ Production Engineering from a recognized University/Institute.

Chemical and Metallurgical Assistant: Bachelor's Degree in Science with Physics and Chemistry with a minimum of 45% marks from a recognized University/ Institute.

Junior Engineer/ Diesel Electrical: Three years Diploma in (a) Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics Engineering OR (b) a combination of any sub stream of basic streams of Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics Engineering from a recognized University/ Institute.

Junior Engineer/ S and T/ Telecommunication: Three years Diploma in (a) Electrical/ Electronics/ Information Technology/ Communication Engineering/ Computer Science and Engineering/ Computer Science/ Computer Engineering OR (b) a combination of any sub-stream of basic streams of Electrical/ Electronics/ Information Technology/ Communication Engineering/ Computer Science and Engineering/ Computer Science/ Computer Engineering from a recognized University/ Institute.

Depot Material Superintendent: Three Years Diploma in Engineering in any discipline from a recognized University/ Institution.

Examination Fee of RRB JE Recruitment

Candidates have to pay an examination fee as mentioned below as per their categories or community:

Category	Fee
SC/ST	₹ 250
Ex-Serviceman	₹ 250
Female	₹ 250
Transgender	₹ 250
Minorities	₹ 250
Economically backward class.	₹ 250
Others	₹ 500

Payment Mode: Candidates can pay their exam fee through online mode using options like Internet Banking, Debit Card, Credit Card, or UPI.

Important Dates of RRB Recruitment 2024

Starting date of submission of online application: 30th July 2024
Last date of submission of online application: 29th August 2024
Date for modification of application form: 30th August to 8th September 2024.

SDS India Guwahati Recruitment 2024 – Research Fellow & Graphic Designer Posts

Last Date: 31/08/2024

SDS India, Guwahati, a consulting firm based in Guwahati has released an employment notification for the recruitment of Research Fellow & Graphic Designer Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

1. Research Fellow (Agriculture)

No of posts: 1

Job Location: Guwahati, Assam

Education Qualification: M.Sc. (Agriculture) or equivalent

Desirable Qualification: Minimum 1 (one) year research experience in the field of agriculture research preferably in North East.

Job Description: The Research Fellow (Agriculture) will work in 'Research and Study' cell of SDS and conduct research in the field of Agriculture Northeast India. This role involves field study, data collection, analyzing data, report writing, presentation of research findings etc.

Role and Responsibilities:

Collect data through surveys, fieldwork, or other methods specified in the research plan.

Ensure the integrity and accuracy of data by following established protocols and procedures.

Manage and organize collected data in a way that facilitates analysis.

Analyze data using appropriate statistical methods or software tools.

Interpret results and discuss their implications in the context of the research objectives.

Conduct thorough reviews of existing literature to contextualize the research within the broader academic and scientific landscape.

Identify gaps in the existing literature that the current project aims to address.

Prepare research reports, papers, and presentations to communicate findings to the academic community, stakeholders, and funding bodies.

Contribute to the drafting and editing of manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

Coordinate with other team members, including research assistants, technicians, and students, to ensure the smooth execution of the project.

Attend meetings and provide updates on the progress of the research

Foster collaborations with other researchers, institutions, and industry partners.

Attend conferences, workshops, and seminars to present research findings and network with other professionals.

2. Graphic Designer (Associate)

No of posts: 1

Job Location: Guwahati, Assam

Job Description: We are seeking a highly skilled and experienced Graphic Designer to join our dynamic and creative team. As a Graphic Designer, you will play a pivotal role in conceptualizing and executing design solutions that align with our brand identity and marketing objectives.

Educational Qualification: Graduate/Diploma in Graphic Design or Bachelor/Masters in fine art, with 1-2 years of experience in NGO, Media & Advertisement agency

Other requirement:

Demonstrated trustworthiness and integrity

Experience and knowledge working in design software like Coral Draw, Illustrator, and InDesign

Sound knowledge and skill working on PowerPoint, Excel, and Word

Excellent knowledge of multiple designer platforms for website, newsletter, etc.

Especially with design and photo-editing software

Exceptional creativity and innovation

Excellent time management and organizational skills

Accuracy and attention to detail

An understanding of the latest trends and their role within a commercial environment

Professional approach to time, costs, and deadlines

Role and Responsibilities:

Develop and maintain a deep understanding of brand guidelines, ensuring all designs adhere to brand consistency and standards.

Manage multiple design projects simultaneously, ensuring timely delivery and high-quality outcomes.

Working with project managers, briefing and advising them with regard to design style, format, print production and timescales.

Develop concepts, graphics and layouts, logos.

Design books and publications.

Preparing rough drafts of material based on an agreed brief.

Reviewing final layouts and suggesting improvements, if required.

Application fee if any: NIL

How to Apply for SDS India Guwahati Recruitment?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online by visiting official website of SDS India Guwahati.

Last Date for submission of application is 31st August 2024.

About SDS India Guwahati

SDS India, Guwahati is a consulting firm based in Guwahati. SDS operates in 11 states of India which includes all Northeast India states, Bihar, Odisha and Karnataka serving the needs of Central & State government, Doner, CSR agency, not-for-profits, PPOs, individual entrepreneurs and other development organisations.

SDS is committed to provide enabling services to organisations or individuals to unlock potentials to impact the life of the poor and disadvantage section of the society. This is possible with a team of highly professional & technically qualified personnel, who have a vast and practical experience of working at grass roots with undeserved segments of the society.

DME Assam Recruitment 2024 – 2008 Grade III & Grade IV Posts

Last Date: 31/08/2024

Directorate of Medical Education (DME), Assam has released 2 employment notifications for the recruitment 2008 Grade III (Technical & Non-Technical) and Grade IV vacancy in different Medical Colleges and Hospitals of the State under the establishment of the Directorate of Medical Education, Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here starting from 20th August 2024 to 31st August 2024 in Tinsukia Medical College and Hospital (only for Grade-III (Technical) posts).

1. Grade-III (Technical)

No of posts: 1031 posts

Educational Qualification: Individual post-wise educational qualification may be checked with the official Advertisement Details.

Pay Scale: ₹ 14,000 - ₹ 60,500, GP: Check Advertisement Details .

2. Grade-III (Non-Technical)

No of posts: 320 posts

Educational Qualification: Individual post-wise educational qualification may be checked with the official Advertisement Details.

Pay Scale: ₹14,000 - ₹ 60,500, GP: Check Advertisement Details .

3. Grade-IV

No of posts: 657 posts

Educational Qualification: Candidates must be Class VIII passed from any recognized institute.

Pay Scale: ₹ 12,000 to ₹ 52,000 with Grade Pay of ₹ 3,900

The resumed online application process is only to fill the posts of Staff Nurses in the recently established Tinsukia Medical College and Hospital. Hence, candidates

can apply only for Grade-III (Technical) posts during this period of 20th August 2024 to 31st August 2024 . For candidates who are going to apply, the age limit will be calculated as on 01.01.2024.

Other Criteria of DME Recruitment

Nationality: Candidate must be an Indian citizen.

Age Limit: Candidates age should not be less than 18 years and not more than 40 years as on 1st January 2023.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise upper age limit relaxation is as mentioned below -

OBC/MOBC: 3 years

ST/SC: 5 years

PwD: 10 years

Employment Exchange Registration: Candidates must be registered in any of the Employment Exchanges of Assam.

Application Fee: No application is to be paid the applicants.

Helpline: For any query candidates may contact following number.

Number: 7977259728

Timing: 10A.M to 6P.M

Documents to Upload with DME Application Form

Candidates must upload following documents along with online Application Form of DME Assam Recruitment under Govt. of Assam.

Passport Size Photograph.

Signature of the Applicant. Candidates must upload their scanned passport size photographs and signature with following specifications.

Photograph:

Parameter	Dimension
Maximum File Size	50 KB
File Type	JPG or JPEG
Height	250 to 320 Pixels
Width	150 to 220 Pixels

Signature:

Parameter	Dimension
Maximum File Size	30 KB
File Type	JPG or JPEG
Height	100 to 180 Pixels
Width	150 to 220 Pixels

Important Dates of DME Assam Recruitment 2023

Starting Date of online application submission: 7th February 2023

Last Date of online application submission: 28th February 2023

Starting Date of online application submission: 20th August 2024 (Tinsukia)

Last Date of online application submission: 31st August 2024 (Tinsukia)

Transport Department Recruitment – 27 Enforcement Inspector Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 13/09/2024

Transport Department, Assam has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 27 Enforcement Inspector (EI) vacancy under the Transport Department, Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Enforcement Inspector (EI)

No of posts: 27 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 14

OBC/ MOBC: 6

TT/ Adivasi: 1

SC: 2

STP: 2

STH: 2

Department: Transport Department, Assam

Scale of Pay: ₹ 22,000 to ₹ 97,000 Grade Pay: ₹ 9,400

Eligibility Criteria of Transport Department Assam Recruitment

Citizenship: Candidates must be Indian Citizens as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India.

Residency:

(i) The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.

(ii) The candidate must produce PRC issued in Assam for educational purpose/ Employment Exchange Registration certificate will be treated as proof of residency.

Educational Qualification: Candidates must possess a Degree in Arts/Science or Commerce of a University recognized by the Govt. of Assam or H.S.S.L.C with 3 (three) years Diploma in Automobile or Mechanical Engineering from a recognised Institute of Govt. of Assam/Govt. of India and also duly recognised by AICTE.

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01/01/2024.

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

SC/ ST: By 5 years .

OBC/ MOBC: By 3 years .

Application Fee: The category-wise application is as mentioned below.

General/EWS: ₹ 297.20

SC/ST/OBC/MOBC: ₹ 197.20

BPL: ₹ 47.20

Payment Mode: Online

Important Dates of Transport Department Vacancy 2024

Starting date of submission of online application: 13th August 2024

Last date of submission of online application: 13th September 2024

'In many ways, Donald Trump is an unserious man, but the consequences of putting Donald Trump back in the White House are extremely serious'

Harris warns Americans of consequences of putting Trump back in White House

WASHINGTON, Aug 23: Kamala Harris has used her presidential acceptance speech to present herself as a leader who could unite all Americans to chart a "new way forward" and warned them of "extremely serious" consequences of putting her Republican rival Donald Trump back in the White House.

Vice President Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, on Thursday night accepted her party's nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, becoming the second woman to do so for the Democratic Party after former first lady Hillary Clinton.

The 59-year-old leader walked on stage to thunderous applause and a standing ovation from the audience. Chants of "Yes You Can!" erupted before her remarks.

Taking the stage at the United Center in Chicago to accept her nomination, Harris, who was a tough prosecutor in California before becoming US Vice President, said she is no stranger to unlikely journeys.

"On behalf of the people, on

behalf of every American, regardless of party, race, gender or the language your grandmother speaks, on behalf of my mother and everyone who has ever set out on their own unlikely journey on behalf of Americans, like the people I grew up with, people who work hard, chase their dreams and look out for one another, on behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on earth, I accept your nomination the United States," she said.

She fondly remembered her mother Shyamala Gopalan and said that she misses her every day, especially when she is on the verge of breaking the highest glass ceiling of the United States. She said the November 5 election is the most important in America's history.

"Our nation with this election has a precious, fleeting opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past. A chance to chart a new way forward. Not as members of any one party or faction, but as Americans," she said in her 40-minute speech.



Vice President Harris outlined her plans for a "new way forward" if she's elected to be the 47th president of the United States.

"I will be a president who unites us around our highest aspirations. A president who leads -- and listens. Who is realistic, Practical and has common sense. And always fights for the American people. From the courthouse to the White House, that has been my life's work," Harris said.

She laid out the consequences of electing former president Trump, 78, to a second term.

"In many ways, Donald Trump is an unserious man, but

the consequences of putting Donald Trump back in the White House are extremely serious," she warned.

She spoke about the "chaos and calamity" of his years in the Oval Office and also pointed to him questioning election results in 2020 when he lost his reelection bid to Biden.

"Donald Trump tried to throw away your votes. When he failed, he sent an armed mob to the United States Capitol where they assaulted law enforcement officers. When politicians in his own party begged him to call off the mob and send help, he did the opposite. He fanned the flames," she said.

Harris also highlighted that Trump was convicted on 34 felony counts in a hush-money case and that a federal jury in his civil defamation trial found that the former president had sexually abused writer E Jean Carroll.

"He was found guilty of fraud by a jury of everyday Americans, and separately found liable for committing sexual abuse," she said.

In describing her "unexpected" ascent to the top of the Democratic ticket after President Joe Biden decided to leave the race in July, Harris said that she is "no stranger to unlikely journeys."

"America, the path that led me here in recent weeks was no doubt unexpected. But I'm no stranger to unlikely journeys," Harris said.

Harris said she remembers her mother every day and the values that she instilled in her and said that she misses her every day, especially when she is on the verge of breaking the highest glass ceiling in the United States. (PTI)

Ukraine says it has recaptured land in the Kharkiv region, reversing some Russian gains there

KYIV, Aug 23: Ukrainian forces say they have recaptured territory in the eastern region of Kharkiv, where Russia launched a large offensive in the spring that brought initial gains but the operation soon stalled.

Ukraine's 3rd Separate Assault Brigade said in a statement late on Thursday that its forces advanced nearly two square kilometers (about three-quarters of a square mile) in that area.

It was unclear when the attack was launched, its scale, and the area of the offensive, and it's hard to predict if it will have further impact on the battlefield. Ukraine's reported counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region comes as its forces have gained new momentum and altered the battlefield this month.

Kyiv launched a shock offensive into Russia's western Kursk region on August 6, while simultaneously intensifying a drone war against military and fuel targets that sparked blazes deep in Russia this week.

On Friday some new details emerged about damage and injuries caused by some of those attacks.

A Ukrainian drone attack targeting a distant Russian air base in its Volgograd region caused significant damage to an airfield that reportedly housed glide bombs used by Moscow in the war, satellite photos analyzed Friday by The

Associated Press showed.

Meanwhile, an attack on a cargo ferry at the port of Kavkaz in Russia's Krasnodar region on Thursday injured 13 people, Russia's state news agency Tass reported on Friday. Citing health officials, Tass said that four of the injured have been hospitalized and one other person remained unaccounted for.

Ukraine's gains have reshaped the battlefield and buoyed the morale of Ukrainians 10 years after Russia first invaded their country, and 2 1/2 years after Moscow launched a full-scale invasion that has led to mass death and destruction and created Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II.

Ukraine and its Western allies hope that the regained momentum could strengthen Kyiv's hand on the diplomatic front. A visit to Kyiv by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is meeting Friday with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, is being closely watched. Modi, who has maintained cordial ties and economic relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, could play a role in forging a mediated peace.

But the incursion into Russia itself is risky. It has highlighted Russian vulnerabilities but also further stretched Ukrainian forces, who were already fighting on a frontline running for hundreds of kilometers. (AP)

Last body from sunken superyacht has been recovered off Sicily

ROME, Aug 23: Italian rescuers brought ashore the body of the final missing person who was on a superyacht that sank off the coast of Sicily.

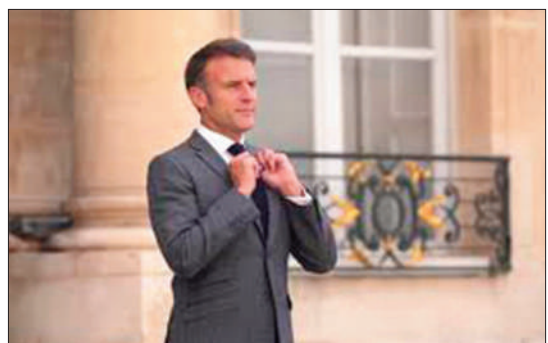
The woman's body was detected on Friday, the Coast Guard said. She has not been officially identified, but Hannah Lynch, the 18-year-old daughter of British tech magnate Mike Lynch, is reportedly unaccounted for. The Lynch family was aboard The Bayesian, a 56-meter (184-foot) British-flagged yacht, when went down in a storm early Monday.

Civil protection officials said they believe the ship was struck by a tornado over the water, known as a waterspout, and sank quickly.

Mike Lynch's body was recovered Thursday. He had been celebrating his recent acquittal on fraud charges with his family and the people who had defended him at trial in the United States.

His wife Angela Bacares was among the 15 survivors. Divers struggled to find the six bodies trapped in the yacht's hull 50 meters (164 feet) underwater. (AP)

France's Macron holds talks with key political players in a bid to form a new government



PARIS, Aug 23: After the excitement of the Paris Olympics and a Mediterranean vacation, now French President Emmanuel Macron has to figure out how to make his country governable again.

Faced with a hung parliament, social tensions and ballooning debt, Macron kicked off talks on Friday with key political players in a bid to choose a new prime minister who would form a government and end the deadlock created by snap legislative elections last month.

Members of the left-wing New Popular Front coalition that won the most seats pressured Macron for a quick decision. Their nominee for prime minister, little-known civil servant Lucie Castets, said after Friday's meetings in the Elysee Palace that she was ready to govern, and ready for compromise to get things done.

But the party only has about a third of the seats in the National Assembly, France's powerful lower house of parliament, and no party has a majority. Macron's centrist alliance came in second and the far-right National Rally came in third.

There's no rulebook that requires Macron to name a candidate from the party that won the most

seats, or lays out a timeline for a decision. The absence of any dominant political bloc is unprecedented in France's modern Republic.

Centrists and conservatives are also meeting with Macron on Friday, while National Rally leaders Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella are expected at the Elysee on Monday.

Macron's office said he will name a prime minister based these consultations, which are aimed at "moving towards the broadest and most stable majority possible."

Castets said that in her meeting with Macron, he "recognized that a message was sent by the French during the elections" but seemed reluctant to allow an opposition party to form a government.

Left-wing leaders have decried Macron's decision to delay the prime minister nomination while he spent time at the Olympics and at the presidential holiday retreat in Bregancon on the French Riviera.

"We need a response on Tuesday," said the national secretary of the Greens party, Marine Tondelier.

"There are urgent issues, and leaving weeks roll by without facing them is grave, and even ir-

responsible."

The New Popular Front, which includes the hard-left France Unbowed, the Socialists and the Greens, has insisted that the prime minister should come out of their ranks as the largest group.

Macron last month appeared to dismiss Castets, saying in a televised interview "the issue is not a name provided by a political group" and stressing instead the need for a parliamentary majority behind the candidate.

Politicians from the center, the right and the far right have suggested they would try to bring down any government that includes members from France Unbowed.

Macron appears more keen to seek a coalition that could include politicians from the center-left to the traditional right.

Other names that have emerged in French media as potential prime minister candidates include center-left politician Bernard Cazeneuve, who served as France's top cop during a series of bloody terror attacks in 2015, and Xavier Bertrand, a former minister considered relatively moderate within the French right.

Conservative politician Michel Barnier, EU's chief negotiator for post-Brexit talks, is also considered a potential candidate.

As president, Macron has sole power to name the prime minister according to the French Constitution.

The French president said last month he would keep the outgoing centrist government on a purely caretaker role to "handle current affairs," notably during the Olympics that ended on Aug. 11. (AP)

Security is stepped up at a NATO air base in Germany due to a 'potential threat'



BERLIN, Aug 23: Security at a NATO air base in western Germany has been raised because of intelligence information pointing to a "potential threat," and all staff not essential to missions have been sent home as a precaution, NATO said.

The Geilenkirchen air base, near the border with the Netherlands, is where the alliance's Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS, aircraft are based. A post on the NATO AWACS fleet's account on social media network X late Thursday night announcing that "we raised the security level" did not elaborate on the nature of the potential threat. It said that "operations continue as planned."

The Geilenkirchen base said Friday that it had nothing to add to the statement and "the situation at the moment is unchanged." German news agency dpa said a reporter saw police cars on the grounds of the air base. Police confirmed a deployment on Thursday night but gave no details, and offered no information on Friday morning.

Last week, a major German air force based near Cologne was locked down for several hours amid fears that its water supply might have been tampered with. An investigation found no evidence of such sabotage. There were also reports of suspicious observations at Geilenkirchen and a person was briefly detained for questioning near the base, dpa reported at the time, but there turned out to be nothing untoward.

The incidents come at a time of jitters about the possible vulnerability of infrastructure to attempted Russian sabotage.

On Thursday, prosecutors in Flensburg, in Germany's far north, said they were investigating suspicions of espionage for the purpose of sabotage, without elaborating on who might be behind it. German media reported that drones had been spotted over a chemical park in Brunsbüttel, on the North Sea coast. (AP)

Bangladesh interim govt revokes ousted PM Sheikh Hasina's diplomatic passport

DHAKA, Aug 23: Bangladesh's interim government has revoked ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's diplomatic passport along with all members of the former Cabinet, over two weeks after she resigned and fled to India following a student-led uprising against her government.

A statement by the Security Services Division of the Home Affairs Ministry on Thursday said diplomatic passports received by the former prime minister, ex-PM's advisors, ex-cabinet members and all members of the recently dissolved Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) and their spouses would be revoked immediately, the official BSS news agency reported.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin in August dissolved the 12th Parliament after Hasina, 76, fled the country. Currently, an interim government led by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad

Yunus is running the country.

Diplomatic passports of the officials would also be revoked immediately upon termination of their tenure or appointment, it said.

The release said ordinary passports may be issued in their favour based on the reports of at least two investigating agencies, it added.

Hasina fled to India after being forced to resign in the face of a student-led mass uprising on August 5.

According to the Indian visa policy, Bangladeshi citizens holding diplomatic or official passports are eligible for visa-free entry and a stay of up to 45 days, The Daily Star newspaper said.

As of Thursday, Hasina has already spent 18 days in India.

Hasina does not hold any passport other than the diplomatic passport issued in her name, the paper said quoting government sources.

The cancellation of her diplomatic passport and its associated visa privileges may put her at risk of extradition.

The extradition of Hasina, who is facing 51 cases, including 42 for murder, falls within the legal framework of the extradition treaty signed between Bangladesh and India, the BSS report said.

According to the treaty signed in 2013 and amended in 2016, "extradition may be refused if the offence for which it is requested is an offence of a political character."

It also says that certain offences -- like murder -- "shall not be regarded as offences of a political character" for the purposes of the treaty.

However, one of the grounds for refusal of extradition is if the charges being pressed have not been "made in good faith, in the interest of justice," the report said. (PTI)

The twins are here! A second set of giant panda cubs has been born in Berlin

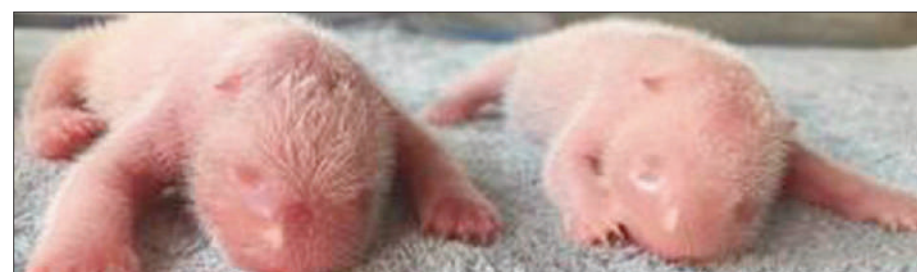
BERLIN, Aug 23: The Berlin Zoo announced on Friday that longtime resident giant panda Meng Meng has given birth to twins -- for a second time.

The cubs were born on Thursday, the zoo said in a statement. They were born only 11 days after ultrasound scans showed that Meng Meng, 11, was pregnant.

Their sex has not yet been determined "with certainty." "Now it's time to keep your fingers crossed for the critical first few days," the zoo said. The cubs are tiny, weighing just 169 grams and 136 grams (about 6 ounces and 4.8 ounces) respectively, and are about 14 centimeters (5.5 inches) long.

As with other large bears, giant pandas are born deaf, blind and pink. Their black-and-white panda markings only develop later.

"I am relieved that the two were born healthy," zoo director Andreas Knieriem said. "The little ones make a lively impression and mom



Meng Meng takes great care of her offspring."

The zoo said that giant pandas usually only raise one cub when they give birth to twins, so it will "actively support" Meng Meng's child care in cooperation with two experts from China's Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding who are in the German capital.

"With around 20 births a year, they have much more experience and are better able to assess development," panda curator Florian Sicks said.

The cubs will alternate being with their mother every two to three hours to drink milk and are otherwise

being cared for in an incubator donated by a Berlin hospital. Meng Meng and male panda Jiao Qing arrived in Berlin in 2017.

In August 2019, Meng Meng gave birth to male twins Pit and Paule, also known by the Chinese names Meng Xiang and Meng Yuan, the first giant pandas born in Germany.

The twins were a star attraction in Berlin, but they were flown to China in December -- a trip that was contractually agreed from the start but delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

China gifted friendly nations with its unofficial mascot for decades as part of a

"panda diplomacy" policy. The country now loans pandas to zoos on commercial terms.

Giant pandas have difficulty breeding and births are particularly welcomed. There are about 1,800 pandas living in the wild in China and a few hundred in captivity worldwide. Meng Meng was artificially inseminated on March 26.

Female pandas are fertile only for a few days per year at the most. The new arrivals and their mother won't be on show to the public for the time being -- but visitors can still see Jiao Qing, 14, as male pandas don't get involved in rearing cubs. (AP)

We are doing everything possible: Tripura CM

Conducts aerial survey of flood



HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Aug 23: Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha on Friday said that the state government is working tirelessly and doing everything necessary to support people in distress during the flood situation.

In the morning, Dr Saha boarded an MI-17 helicopter at MBB Airport to head to Gomati District and South Tripura to assess the flood-hit regions. Today, Dr Saha conducted an aerial survey of flood-affected areas including Shantirbazar, Belonia,

Matabari, Melaghar, Charilam, Bishalgarh, Amarpur, Karbook and Agartala by air.

Dr Saha also visited the relief camps at Khilpara Higher Secondary School and Khilpara Market Shed in Gomati District to review the management of the camps.

Later, he visited the banks of the Laugang and Muhuri rivers and also inspected one relief camp set up at West Bokafa XII School in Santirbazar. Later, Dr Saha told reporters that he had been visiting the flood-

affected areas as well as the relief camps.

"Ministers and MLAs are also visiting the affected areas. We are doing everything possible. Our state government is fully engaged. The Central government has been very supportive. I want to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for their assistance. They have provided us with everything we asked for, including flood relief and rescue support," said Dr. Saha.

He added that additional NDRF teams, helicopters, and boats have been deployed, and food packets are being distributed among the flood-affected people.

"We are doing everything needed for those in distress. I have also received reports that many people have lost important documents due to the floods. There is no need to worry; I have instructed the officials to assist people in this matter," he said.

During the visit, higher officials of the Tripura government also accompanied Dr Saha.

'Kuki-Zo' non-inclusive and assimilative: Manipur MLA

IMPHAL, Aug 23: Three Manipur MLAs from the Paite and Hmar tribes have expressed concerns about the use of the term 'Kuki Zo' in press statements and social media, arguing that it does not adequately represent their tribes and fails to honour their distinct identities.

In a statement on Friday, Tipaimukh MLA N Sanate said, "I remain committed to upholding the aspirations and dreams of my people. I would like to make a solemn clarification that I have never endorsed, nor will endorse, any platform, organisation, or statement that excludes the Hmar nomenclature."

Thanlon MLA Vungzagin Valte said, "The recent usage of the term 'Kuki Zo' is perceived by many within my community as non-inclusive and assimilative. I cannot accept or endorse any term that does not respect the individuality and dignity of all groups that form the fabric of my constituency."

Valte emphasised that he is a "Paite scheduled tribe belonging to the Zomi community" and urged stakeholders to promote a term that unites and honours their shared history and future aspirations. Kuki and Zomi are terms used to describe various sub-tribes sharing related customs and identities.

The term 'Kuki' became popular during the 19th and 20th centuries under British rule, while 'Zomi' is a collective identity adopted by some Kuki-Chin language speakers in India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. Zomis generally reject the labels 'Kuki' and 'Chin.' (PTT)

No. BCDIM/NIT/PMKSY-HKKP/1/2023-24/03

Date: 20 -08-2024

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders in the prescribed form affixing non-refundable Court fee stamps of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only and eventually to be drawn in the A.P.W.D F-2 Form of contract are hereby invited from the intending registered Contractors of appropriate category having up to date registration under Irrigation Department, Assam for the year 2023-24 for the following works and will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 1.00 P.M. on 02/09/2024 and will be opened on the same day at 2.00 P.M in the same place & date by the undersigned or officers authorised to open in presence of the intending tenders or their authorised agents who wish to be present. In cash of the date of receiving and opening of tender is non-working day, the tender will be reached and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

Rates should be quoted on percentage i.e Below/As per/Above the estimated rate.

Earnest Money: - 2% against work value for General Category and 1% for SC, ST, OBC & MOBC etc. in the form of Bank Draft/F. D/Call Deposit, duly pledged to the Executive Engineer, Barama-Chapaguri Division (Irrigation) Mushalpur, Baksa along with Tender Papers for each Group Separately.

The details particulars of works, term and condition, specification etc. may be seen in the office of the undersigned during office hours on all working days upto 12.00 Noon of 02-09-2024

The details tender papers will be issued on written request and on payment (Non-Refundable) of Rs.300.00 (Rupees Three Hundred) only in the form of Cash/IPO pledge in favour of the Executive Engineer, Barama-Chapaguri Division (Irrigation) Mushalpur, Baksa during office hours up to 12.00 noon on 02/09/2024.

This N.I.T. will form Part of the Contract Agreement in addition to A.P.W.D. F-2 form.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Barama-Chapaguri Division
(Irrigation) Mushalpur, Baksa

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/383

Tripura flood causes ₹ 5000 Cr damage

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Aug 23: Due to very heavy and continuous rainfall since August 19, Tripura is facing an unprecedented flood situation. Gomati, South Tripura, Unakoti and West Tripura Districts have been severely affected. However, there was comparatively less rainfall (the highest 17mm at Sonamura) in the last 24 hours on August 23, bringing some relief to the people.

Today the chief minister conducted an aerial survey and made a physical visit to the flood-affected areas at Khilpara in Gomati and Bokafa in South Tripura Districts along with senior officials of the state administration.

He is regularly monitoring rescue, relief and response operations, as informed by the secretary of the revenue department Brijesh Pandey during a press meet held at the State Emergency Operation Centre today.

Giving detailed updates on the flood situation in the state the revenue secretary said that the water level of rivers is now below the danger level in all rivers except Gomati at Sonamura.

A total of 558 relief camps have been opened by the District Administration since August 19 to provide shelter to approximately 1.28 lakh persons in the State. The District Administration is providing necessary emergency relief, including food, drinking water, medical help etc., in relief camps. Notably, communications have been restored to many parts of Gomati and South Tripura District.

The revenue secretary informed that to date, 24 persons have lost their lives, 2 are injured and 2 persons are reported to be missing. Preliminary reports suggest extensive damages to physical infrastructure (like roads, power, buildings) and agriculture crops, houses, fishery ponds, livestock etc.

The actual figures will be known only after the field assessment is completed. As per preliminary estimates, the State expects damages to property to the tune of approximately ₹ 5000 crore. Many areas are yet to be visited for preliminary damage estimates, as the focus has been on relief and rescue operations.

The rescue operations are now continuing only in Gomati and South Tripura Districts. As of now 6 Teams of NDRF and 6 Teams of SDRF are conducting rescue operations. Helicopters have conducted sorties for relief operations in marooned vulnerable locations.

As of today, over 11,000 food packets have been dispatched for distribution. The distribution process is ongoing in affected areas. It will continue tomorrow also.

As per the IMD (Indian Meteorological Department) forecast, light to moderate rainfall will continue to occur for today and tomorrow in many parts of the State. Due to the improvement of weather, the situation is improving slowly. But the administration advises people to take precautions as heavy rains are predicted in many parts over the next few days.

Roundtable meet between StartUp Nagaland and Austrian embassy

KOIHMA, Aug 23: In a significant step toward fostering international collaboration in entrepreneurship, StartUp Nagaland, in partnership with the Department of Industries & Commerce, hosted a roundtable discussion today at the Innovation & Incubation Space (IIS) in Kohima.

The event brought together key officials from the Austrian Embassy, government representatives, industry stakeholders, and local startups to explore potential partnerships aimed at bolstering Nagaland's startup ecosystem.

The roundtable discussion was graced by Ajay Singh, Head of Technology and Innovation at the Austrian Embassy's Commercial Section, and Aran Verma, Advisor on Organizational Matters at Vantage Info.

The session was also attended by Shanavas, Secretary to the Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Nagaland, P. Tokugha Sema, Director of the Department of Industries & Commerce, and representatives from various key stakeholders, including the Department of Information Technology & Communication (IT&C), the Investment & Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN), the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), BAN and the five state-empaneled incubators: YouthNet Incubation Center, Educentre School of Business, NEILIT, NTTC, and Nagabots along with StartUps and Entrepreneurs. The meeting began with welcome remarks from P. Tokugha Sema, who extended a warm reception to the Austrian Embassy officials and other distinguished guests.

Following this, Shanavas, delivered an insightful welcome speech, emphasizing the critical role of international partnerships in nurturing the startup ecosystem in Nagaland. His remarks set the tone for the discussions, highlighting the state's commitment to fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial environment.

During the session, the Austrian guests were given the opportunity to share their perspectives and explore avenues for collaboration with local stakeholders. Ajay Singh and Aran Verma spoke about the potential for innovation, technology exchange, and capacity building, offering insights into how Austrian expertise and resources could be harnessed to support the growth of local startups.

Local startups were invited to showcase their innovative business models and products, providing a dynamic platform for exchanging ideas and identifying potential areas for collaboration. The engagement was highly interactive, allowing participants to directly communicate with each other through their speeches and messages.

The exchange of ideas was dynamic and fruitful, with both sides identifying several areas where co-operation could lead to tangible benefits, including the possibility of joint ventures, mentoring programs, and market access initiatives.

The roundtable discussion proved to be highly productive, with all participants expressing optimism about the future of Nagaland's startup ecosystem. The Austrian officials commended the state for its efforts in fostering a vibrant startup culture and emphasized their commitment to supporting the region's economic development through sustained partnerships. The Austrian Embassy's Commercial Section is visiting Nagaland as part of a broader fact-finding mission to explore the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northeast India. This mission is focused on identifying potential avenues for collaboration, innovation, and economic growth in the region. (NNN)

Centre releases ₹ 40 cr flood relief package

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Aug 23: The Government of India has approved the release of ₹ 40 Crore in advance to provide relief to the flood-affected people of Tripura. Since August 19, Tripura has been witnessing massive floods caused by heavy rainfall that has forced over 60,000 people to take shelter in over 400 relief camps while the death toll reached 20. On Friday, union home minister Amit Shah announced about the package. "Given the flood situation in Tripura, the central govt, under the leadership of Modi Ji, has approved the release of ₹ 40 crore in advance, as the central share from SDRF, to provide relief to the affected people. The 11 NDRF teams, 3 columns of the Army, and 4 helicopters of the Air Force deployed by the Centre are already assisting the state govt. in relief and rescue operations," the post of Shah reads.

He further said that no matter what, sisters and brothers in Tripura will find the Modi govt standing shoulder-to-shoulder with them to battle these difficult times. However, the situation improved from Friday morning as the state didn't receive rainfall from Thursday, resulting in a decrease of the water level in major rivers. (NNN)

Colombo calling for Tage Rita Takhe

CM Khandu sends his wishes



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu took to X to express his appreciation for Tage Rita Takhe, a woman entrepreneur from the region who has been invited by Vital Voices Global Partnership and the US Embassy in Sri Lanka to participate in the 2024 International Alumnae Component in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

He wrote on X, "Heartiest congratulations to Rita for making us so proud. Coming from the breathtaking Hong village in Ziro Valley, you have taken the entrepreneurial world by storm."

Takhe, who did engineering in agriculture from NERIST (North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology) in Nirjuli, Arunachal Pradesh, brought laurels to the entire country through her wine venture.

Hit with the idea of setting up a winery while enjoying a glass of wine, Takhe used to prepare wine from fruits, particularly peach, kiwi, pear, and plum and went on to establish her own wine-making company called as Naara Aaba.

The company is also a major source of income for many households in the Ziro Valley.

The event, Vital Voices Global Partnership, to be held at NH Collection, Colombo, from August 25th to 30th, 2024, will have a series of meetings where all participants will share business and leadership best practices with fellow businesswomen from South and Central Asia.

CM Khandu further stressed the achievement of Tage Rita Takhe as a source of inspiration for all the women in the state and the country. He wrote, "As we remain committed to building a Viksit Arunachal Pradesh and Viksit Bharat under the visionary guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, I want our 'Naari Shakti' to come forward and make seminal contributions in realizing our common goals and well-being of all."

He sent her the best wishes for the event while concluding the tweet.

No. DPRD/BTC/(Gen)-238/2023/149

Dated Kokrajhar the 22nd August, 2024

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders with a validity period of 180 (one hundred eighty) days from the date of receipt in prescribed form affixing non-refundable court fee stamps of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and paise twenty five) only subsequently to be drawn up in printed F-2 form are hereby invited from the Govt. registered PWD (Roads/ Building), Irrigation, Water Resources, PHE others Govt. Contractor's under Class-I (A, B, C), Class-II and Class-III category from approved firm/ suppliers of 2020-21/2021-22 according to tender limit of eligibility for the following works and will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 2.00 pm on 13/09/2024 and will be opened on the same date and place at 2.15 pm in the presence of willing contractors or their authorized agents.

Sl. No.	Name of Dev. Block	Name of Scheme	A.A Amount (Rs.)	Tender Amount (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender in Rs.	Time for completion in days	Pre-Bid meeting date & time
1	Borobazar TD Dev. Block	Const. of Community toilet at Dwisanguri Bazar near Danswangr ME School	Rs. 1100000/-	Rs. 1047602/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 350/-	3 months	9-9-2024
2	Borobazar TD Dev. Block	Const. of Community toilet at West Gomurgaon Brahma Mandir	Rs. 1100000/-	Rs. 1047602/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 350/-	3 months	9-9-2024
3	Borobazar TD Dev. Block	Const. of Community toilet at Koilamola community centre	Rs. 1100000/-	Rs. 1047602/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 350/-	3 months	9-9-2024
4	Manikpur Dev. Block	Const. of Community toilet at Noapara Library	Rs. 1100000/-	Rs. 1047602/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 350/-	3 months	9-9-2024
5	Manikpur Dev. Block	Const. of Community toilet at Oabari under Mongolian Bazar	Rs. 1100000/-	Rs. 1047602/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 350/-	3 months	9-9-2024
6	Sidli-Chirang Dev. Block	Const. of Community toilet Debadangi Bazar	Rs. 1100000/-	Rs. 1047602/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 350/-	3 months	9-9-2024
7	Sidli-Chirang Dev. Block	Const. of Community toilet at Dadgari Hatisar High School	Rs. 1100000/-	Rs. 1047602/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 350/-	3 months	9-9-2024
8	Manikpur Dev. Block	Const. of Samsan Ghat at Kawadi No.2 near Manash river	Rs. 952408/-	Rs. 904788/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 300/-	6 months	9-9-2024
9	Manikpur Dev. Block	Const. of Samsan Ghat Dongagaon village	Rs. 952408/-	Rs. 904788/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 300/-	6 months	9-9-2024
10	Sidli-Chirang Dev. Block	Const. of Community Hall at Goibari	Rs. 1700000/-	Rs. 1622641/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 520/-	6 months	9-9-2024
11	Sidli-Chirang Dev. Block	Const. of Community Hall at No.2 Fakriguri	Rs. 1700000/-	Rs. 1622641/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 520/-	6 months	9-9-2024
12	Manikpur Dev. Block	Const. of Crematorium at Batuarari village	Rs. 1000000/-	Rs. 952379/-	(ST, SC, OBC-1 % & Gen-2%)	Rs. 320/-	6 months	9-9-2024

Details NIT may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent up to 12.00 Noon on all working days from 22/08/2024 to 13/09/2024 in the office of the undersigned on payment of in the form of Banker cheque/ Demand draft of any nationalized Bank (Preferable SBI) duly pledged to the Director, P&RD, BTC, Kokrajhar. The Cost of tender (Non-Refundable) must be in the form of Demand Draft/ Banker Cheque of a Nationalized Bank drawn in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar and payable at SBI, Kokrajhar (Court para) to be deposited 0.03%.

Sd/- Director,
Panchayat & Rural Development,
BTC, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/378

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR SOIL CONSERVATION (HILLS)::: KARBI ANGLONG:::DIPHU adschills@gmail.com

Dated Diphu the 23/08/2024

NOTICE

No.Addl.Est-2/Recruitment/Pt-81/2024-25/210: In pursuance to previous advertisements No. Addl. Est-2/Recruitment/(Pt-8)/2024-25/84 dtd. 07/06/2024 published by the DIPRO in the various local vernacular news papers on 09/06/2024, relating to recruitment of Grade III & IV posts in the Soil Conservation Department under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu, it is hereby informed to all eligible candidates that the written test will be held as follows:

For Grade III post:

1. Soil Conservation Demonstrator (Jr.) on 08/09/2024

2. Soil Conservation Field Work on 08/09/2024

All eligible candidates are requested to collect their call letters and confirm examination venue etc., from the office of the Additional Director of Soil Conservation (Hills), Karbi Anglong, Diphu during the office hour from 27/08/2024 onwards.

Sd/-
Member Secretary
Cum
Additional Director, Soil Conservation (Hills)
Karbi Anglong, Diphu.

Memo No. Addl./E-2/Recruitment/Pt-8/2024-25 /

Dated

Workers break barricades

BJYM's rally: Police use tear gas shells, water cannons

RANCHI, Aug 23: The Jharkhand Police on Friday lobbed tear gas shells and used water cannons to disperse Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) workers who broke barricades during a protest rally here against the "injustice" meted out by the Hemant Soren government and its "failure to fulfil election promises".

The protesters, gathered in the rally, tried to march towards Chief Minister Hemant Soren's residence, which is located near the Morabadi Ground, the venue of the protest programme, and the police baton-charged them.

BJP leaders claimed several workers were injured during the baton charge by the police with party leader Amar Kumar Bauri claiming that the "time has come to wipe out the JMM-led coalition from the state".

"No one can stop us," he said. The district administration enforced Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), which replaced Section 144 of the CrPc, within a 500-metre radius of the Morabadi Ground, excluding the premises.

The prohibitory orders banned public meetings, rallies, dharnas, demonstrations and gatherings of five or more people within this perimeter from 11 am to 11 pm on Friday.

Additionally, carrying arms, ammunition, explosives and traditional weapons such as lathis,

spears, bows and arrows is prohibited and using loudspeakers is barred in the area, an official release said.

A police official said BJYM workers violated the prohibitory orders.

Ranchi Senior Superintendent of Police Chandan Kumar Sinha said, "Permission has not been sought for the rally, it was sought for 'sammelan' or meeting, which has been granted. Beyond the periphery of Morabadi Ground, we have promulgated prohibitory orders so no rally is allowed. We have made sufficient deployment. We have also appealed to the organisers to limit the programme to meeting only."

Another police official said, "We have erected barricades near the chief minister's house and Morabadi Ground to prevent any untoward incident."

The police personnel baton-charged the protesters to prevent them from going towards the CM's house, he said.

Workers of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha gathered in the Morabadi Ground where leaders of the BJP were scheduled to address the 'Yuva Aakrosh Rally'.

A scuffle broke out between police personnel and BJYM and BJP workers led by party leader CP Singh during the rally.

The BJP termed the imposition of prohibitory orders as an attempt to "stifle voices" of



Bharatiya BJYM workers against the "injustice" meted out by the Hemant Soren government and claimed that hardly two months are left before the government would be shown the exit door in the assembly elections.

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan attacked the JMM government, alleging that it was attempting to "stifle the voices of workers", which would prove to be "the last nail in its (the JMM government's) coffin".

The order noted concerns that some organisations or parties are planning to hold dharnas, demonstrations and rallies and there is a possibility that protesters may gherao the chief minister's residence.

"Such activities may cause disruption in government work, traffic movement may get affected, law and order situation may arise and public places may witness disturbances. Therefore

2,721 loots, 485 dacoities and 2,73,261 other crimes.

"Infiltrators are grabbing tribal land, there is open loot everywhere. When BJYM workers asked about poll promises like 5 lakh jobs, efforts are on to stifle their voices," he alleged.

Chouhan claimed that days were numbered for the present JMM-led regime and said, "When former prime minister Indira Gandhi could not stop our voices, how can you stifle our voices".

Union Minister Sanjay Seth alleged that the Hemant Soren government was "scared of the BJP as it failed to fulfil the promises made to the youth".

Rajya Sabha MP and former BJP state president Deepak Prakash said the people have given a clarion call to "vacate the throne".

"The message is clear for Hemant Soren that 'sinhasan khali karo, janta aati hai', he added.

BJP state president Babul Marandi said they had sought permission for the programme.

"The police are acting as a JMM worker in a bid to prevent our activists from reaching here. Democracy gives us the right to rally," Marandi said.

BJP's youth wing members planned the rally to protest against the Hemant Soren-led government for allegedly failing to fulfil promises made during the last assembly elections. (PTI)

Countless questions waiting for BJP in UP: Akhilesh



LUCKNOW, Aug 23: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav posed around two dozen questions for the BJP on Friday, saying people across Uttar Pradesh are waiting for the ruling party with these queries.

Listing questions on topics including stray cattle, unemployment, law and order and farmers' issues in a long post in Hindi on X, Yadav said, "Countless questions are waiting for the BJP's allies on every footpath, panchayat, street corner, market, square and chowk."

"Now, the public is impatient to tell the BJP's allies that we will not talk to those who are not with the public," he added.

Referring to the poor show of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Lok Sabha polls, Yadav claimed that after the election results, factions in the saffron party have lost faith in each other.

By blaming each other, they will neither be able to win back that trust nor any upcoming election, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said.

Pointing towards the 10 Assembly bypolls to be held in Uttar Pradesh in the near future, he said, "Now that the BJP's allies are saying that they will go to the booths and take care of the arrangements, it clearly means that in view of the historic defeat in the Lok Sabha polls, they are assuming that the BJP workers have left the booths out of despair or the power-hungry allies of the BJP, wearing masks, no longer have

faith in the BJP workers."

"Actually, after the election defeat, the BJP factions have lost trust among themselves. Another aspect is that the BJP's allies want to show that they were not the reason for the defeat, they are still powerful, it is the BJP that has become weak," Yadav added.

He claimed that in both scenarios, it is proved that the BJP members have accepted defeat and are extremely worried about the future.

"But by blaming each other, they will neither be able to win back that trust nor any upcoming election," the SP chief said.

In the recently-concluded Lok Sabha elections, of the 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh, the SP won 37 and its ally Congress won six, while the BJP won 33 and its ally Rashtriya Lok Dal won two and Apna Dal (S) one seat. One seat was won by the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram).

Political parties are busy preparing for the bypolls to the 10 Assembly seats that fell vacant after nine MLAs were elected to the Lok Sabha and one MLA was sentenced to jail by a court.

Hitting out at the BJP, Yadav said, "Those who indulge in the politics of divisions have themselves become divided."

"Have the 'Panna Pramukhs' that the BJP used to talk about under its Chanakya Niti become history now? If they are not available today, there are some important reasons behind it," he added.

The BJP has appointed a "panna pramukh" for every page of the voter list in Uttar Pradesh. Taking a dig at the saffron party, Yadav said, "Now, the few BJP workers who are left in the party are frustrated thinking that in the current situation, when 90 per cent of the PDA (backwards, Dalits, minorities) communities have woken up and are standing with those who talk about PDA, whom should they go to asking for votes." (PTI)

Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar in Delhi to discuss MUDA 'scam' with Congress high command

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar arrived in the national capital on Friday for crucial meetings with top Congress leaders.

Sources indicate that the primary focus of these discussions will be to formulate a strategy ahead of next week's high court hearing on the controversial Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) 'scam' case. The MUDA 'scam' has been a thorn in Siddaramaiah's side, with allegations of illegal land dealings involving the chief minister and his wife Parvathi flying thick and fast. At the heart of the controversy are claims that Parvathi received 14 plots in exchange for 3.16 acres of land, which was allegedly acquired illegally by MUDA.

Adding to political pressure, Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot has recently sanctioned investigations under the Prevention of Corruption Act, intensifying scrutiny of the chief minister.

Sources privy to the matter suggest that the Delhi meetings will also address pending corruption cases against the state BJP leaders. The Congress leadership is expected to devise a counter strategy to exert pressure on the governor.

Accompanying Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are several key state ministers, including Home Minister G Parameshwar, Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa and Minority and Housing Minister B Zameer Ahmed Khan, MLC K Govindaraju and Power Minister K J George. (PTI)

Pension restored for elderly in city: Atishi

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Delhi Finance Minister Atishi on Friday said the elderly in the city have now started getting pension, and accused the BJP-led Centre of stalling it for the last five months by not contributing its share. Out of the one lakh beneficiaries in the city, 90,000 have received their past dues on Thursday itself. The rest will also get in due course, she said. "Under the scheme, the Delhi government pays ₹ 2,200 and the Centre ₹ 300 per month to the beneficiaries. The pension was pending for the last five months because the BJP-led Centre was not paying its contribution," the minister claimed. The terms and conditions of the scheme are such that pension of one lakh beneficiaries was stuck because of pending payments, though small, by the Centre, she said. Earlier in a post on X, Atishi said, "Good news for the elders of Delhi! For the last 5 months, the BJP central government had withheld the old age pension of 1 lakh elderly people of Delhi. The elders were very worried". (PTI)

Chouhan praises Modi govt's efforts for backward classes, criticises Cong for 'lip service'

PATNA, Aug 23: Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday praised the Narendra Modi government for its efforts to uplift backward classes and accused the Congress-led opposition of merely offering "lip service" to the cause.

The Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development was addressing a party function in memory of Ramphal Mandal, a freedom fighter who went to the gallows at the age of 19 for killing three British officials who were blamed for a police firing during the 1942 Quit India movement.

Chouhan, a former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, noted that Mandal was a "dhanuk", a backward class "known for its contribution in nation building, in my home state as well as Bihar".

"Our opponents only pay lip service to backward classes who have got their due only under the current BJP regime, with an 'ati pichhda' (extremely backward class) Narendra Modi at the helm", said Chouhan.

He added, "It is Modi who gave 27 per cent reservation to the OBCs in entrance tests like NEET. It is this government which granted constitutional status to the National OBC Commission. Compare this with the Congress which slept over recommendations of the Kalelkar Commission".

Chouhan's avowed comes in the backdrop of the opposition, led by Rahul Gandhi, making a strong pitch for "caste census", which implies enumeration of social groups other than SCs, STs and religious

minorities, which was last undertaken about a century ago.

The BJP leader said, "Mere talks will not do. We need to make a difference to the lives of the common people. The Modi government is committed to build 13 lakh houses in the next four years for the benefit of the homeless. Entrepreneurship is being encouraged among women through schemes like Lakhpati Didi".

"We are also trying to ensure an increase in agricultural output, alongside a reduction in cost of farming, so that agriculture is not seen as an economically unviable activity. Activities like horticulture and floriculture are also being encouraged and farmers are being provided support when they face losses because natural calamities", the agriculture minister said.

Earlier, Chouhan held a discussion with farmers and said he was "amazed" to see stalls of local items like makhana, rice, honey and maize put up at the state-of-the-art 'Krishi Bhavan'.

"In Bihar, we do not have large tracts of land. More than 90 per cent of cultivators are marginal farmers. But they are working wonders", remarked Chouhan.

The Minister also said that "makhana" (fox nuts), which is cultivated mostly in Bihar, is in huge demand abroad and its export would bring immense benefits to farmers.

"Diversification of agriculture is on the government's roadmap... along with traditional crops, we will encourage cultivation of items which could bring in more money", the minister added. (PTI)

Balodabazar arson case

Cong leader Pilot slams arrest of MLA Yadav in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR, Aug 23: Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Friday slammed the BJP government in Chhattisgarh for arresting his party MLA Devendra Yadav in connection with the June 10 arson in Balodabazar city and dubbed it as politically motivated.

The BJP was targeting political opponents both at the Centre and the state using central agencies and police, the former Rajasthan deputy chief minister and the Congress' in charge for Chhattisgarh told reporters outside Raipur Central Jail after meeting Yadav.

"An unfortunate incident happened in Balodabazar which was the result of the state government's failure. Neither the Centre nor the state government is able to ensure protection to Satnamis, Dalits and Adivasis. Instead of taking action against the anti-social elements involved in that incident, our two-time MLA Devendra Yadav was arrested as part of a political conspiracy," he said.

Pilot also claimed there were re-



ports of alleged involvement of those linked to the ruling party in the arson.

Yadav was summoned by police and he was cooperating in the interrogation but the state government has presented a bad example by arresting him with an intention of vendetta without any evidence against him, he alleged.

"The Congress and our leaders

Rahul Gandhi ji and Mallikarjun Kharge ji have struggled for Dalits, Adivasis and backwards and Yadav had also gone to Balodabazar to extend support to people there who were facing problems. His arrest is clearly political vendetta. If they will do such things against their political opponents then people will not tolerate it," he said.

The law and order situation in

the state has collapsed but the BJP government, instead of checking crimes, is targeting political opponents who are raising their voices for citizens, Pilot claimed.

"I met Yadav today in jail and he is ready to fight for tribals, Satnamis and backwards. We will fight against his arrest both politically and legally. On Saturday, Congress workers will stage protests across the state against Yadav's arrest," he said. Yadav, who represents Bhilai Nagar constituency in Durg district, was apprehended on August 17 by Balodabazar-Bhatapara district police.

He was charged under sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 120B (criminal conspiracy), 147 (punishment for rioting), 186 (voluntary obstruction of a public servant from performing their duties), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 307 (attempt to murder) of India Penal Code and provisions of Prevention of Damage to Public

Property Act.

Unidentified persons had vandalised 'jaitham' or 'victory pillar', a sacred symbol worshipped by the Satnami community, near the Amar Gufa at Giroudpur Dham in the Balodabazar-Bhatapara district in the intervening night of May 15 and 16 this year.

During a protest called on June 10 over the desecration, a mob set fire to a government office building and more than 150 vehicles were damaged. Congress leaders, including Yadav, had allegedly attended a public meeting during the demonstration held by Satnamis at Dussehra Maidan.

Around 150 people, including members of National Students' Union of India (NSUI) and the Bhim "Regiment" were arrested in connection with the June 10 arson.

The influential Satnami community, founded by medieval-era social reformer Baba Guru Ghasidas, represents the largest Scheduled Castes group in Chhattisgarh. (PTI)

Withdraw cases against Badlapur protesters, or we have to hit the streets: Uddhav



MUMBAI, Aug 23: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday demanded the withdrawal of cases against those who had protested in Badlapur against the alleged sexual abuse of two kindergarten girls, warning that the opposition would have to hit the streets if it is not done.

Addressing a news conference, Thackeray said the August 24 'Maharashtra Bandh' called by the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is not political but against "perversion" and urged people cutting across caste and religion to participate in it.

He claimed the bandh would be observed on behalf of the people of the state. Slamming the Eknath Shinde government's action over the Badlapur protest, Thackeray said, "Arrests are still taking place in Badlapur. The cases against the protesters must be withdrawn or else we have to hit the streets."

A massive protest rocked Badlapur

town in Thane district on Tuesday after thousands of people hit the streets and spilled onto railway tracks to protest the alleged sexual assault of two four-year-old girls by a male attendant at a local school. At least 25 police personnel were injured in the incidents of stone-pelting at the railway station and other parts of Badlapur during the protest.

Police have arrested 72 persons in connection with the violence during the stir.

The accused was arrested on August 17. He has been sent to police custody till August 26.

Thackeray said the bandh should be "strictly" followed till 2 pm, ensuring that emergency services remain operational. He said people are entitled to express their anger not just during elections.

When all roads are shut, justice is sought in the court of people, he said.

The bandh is to make the government realise that the system should discharge its duties diligently.

The former chief minister said even the Bombay High Court, which has taken suo motu cognisance of the alleged sexual assault of the young girls in Badlapur, has slammed the government.

During a hearing on the matter on Thursday, the HC said, "Unless there is a strong public outburst, the machinery won't move." (PTI)

President Murmu voices concern over increasing space debris

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: President Droupadi Murmu on Friday voiced concern over increasing space debris as a result of numerous satellites being placed in orbit and lauded ISRO for setting itself a target to make future space missions debris free by 2030.

Murmu was speaking at the maiden National Space Day celebrations to mark the first anniversary of the landing of India's Chandrayaan-3 project.

"Space debris can cause problems for space missions," she said during the event at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi that was attended by Union minister Jitendra Singh, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath, engineers, ISRO scientists and representatives of the country's nascent space industry.

The president appreciated the ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Operations Management Facility, which ensures continuous progress of space research activities.

"I am also happy to note that India is moving forward to make all its space missions debris free by 2030," Murmu said.



The president presented awards to winners of the Robotics Challenge and the Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon on the occasion.

During her speech, Murmu made a mention of the research paper on the Chandrayaan-3 data that proved that the Moon was an ocean of molten magma which cooled down later.

The findings were made by scientists from Ahmedabad's Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) after studying the data from Chandrayaan-3 and published in the scientific journal Nature.

of India's space sector was extraordinary.

"Be it a successfully completed Mars mission with limited resources or the successful launch of more than a hundred satellites at once, we have made many impressive achievements," Murmu said.

The president said space exploration had increased the capabilities of human beings and transformed imagination into reality.

"But space exploration is a challenging task. Research conducted to solve the problems during space exploration accelerates the development of science and improves human life," she said.

The president said many sectors, including health and medicine, transportation, security, energy, environment and information technology, had benefited from developments in the space sector.

She pointed out that with the opening of the space sector to private entities, the number of startups had increased at a very rapid pace.

"This has not only brought progress in space research but also

given new opportunities to our youth to showcase and hone their talents," Murmu said.

The president said she was happy to note that just a few months ago, an Indian company successfully launched a single-piece 3D-printed semi-cryogenic engine-powered rocket, the first such achievement.

The ISRO chairman said the space agency's System for Safe and Sustainable Operations Management tracks active and dead satellites, and space junk that is formed due to the collision of objects in space.

Somanath said the system also tracks movement of unwanted satellites and anything that is above 10 cm in size.

"We have created a mathematical model, we can model them, we can understand them, we can predict their movement. We already have certain observational capabilities. And are now trying to expand it," he said.

Somanath said ISRO has also announced that India will not litter in space and will bring satellites back to the Earth after the completion of their mission life. (PTI)

'Forensic science cornerstone of truth and justice' VP hails passage of new criminal laws

GANDHINAGAR, Aug 23: Forensic science is not just a technical field but the cornerstone of truth and justice, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said here on Friday as he called upon forensic experts to apply their skills to combat terrorism, organised crime as well as address environmental degradation and cyber crimes.

Forensic science ensures justice is served to the perpetrators and, more importantly, it helps in establishing innocence, Dhankhar said, adding that a "society that cannot listen to the cry of an innocent person is a society that is bound to slide down".

Delivering a special address at the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), he hailed the passage of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam and said it had unshackled us from our draconian colonial legacy.

"(With passage of the three criminal laws) we unshackled from the colonial legacy, we tested our freedom. Our trust with freedom in the criminal jurisprudence system happened with these laws. 'Dand Vidhan' became 'Nyay Vidhan.' Not just a change, a big change, a much-needed change, unshackling us from the draconian colonial legacy where the determining factor of law was how to deal with the subject in a stringent manner," he said.

The criminal justice system of a



nation defines its democracy and is the first to come to anyone's mind since it touches upon our liberty, he said.

Asserting that forensic science is not merely a technical field but the cornerstone of truth and justice, he said the actions of those in the field of forensic science were the "ultimate refuge for the innocent" and "you help pin down the one who would be suffering ultimate culpability".

"Miscarriage of justice is a very demoralising factor for a society, and without application of forensic science, miscarriage of justice is not avoidable. Forensic science is more than just a tool to bring the perpetrator to justice. It's much beyond that. Perpetrators of justice do really suf-

fer, but this also helps in establishing innocence as well," he said.

"A society that cannot listen to the cry of an innocent person in a system is a society that is bound to slide down. You are bulwarks between an innocent person being held guilty on oral testimony that is prejudiced and motivated. Your skill comes to the aid of the innocent, and to the surprise of those who seek to wreak vengeance," he added.

As the cyber security field witnesses paradigm shift, it poses a challenge to institutions, society and individuals and increases the need for forensic experts who can investigate such crimes, Dhankhar said.

"As cyber threats become more sophisticated, exponential, the need for forensic experts who can inves-

tigate cyber crimes and protect our digital infrastructure has never been greater. Cyber security becomes all the more important as India witnesses rapid growth in digitisation," he said.

"We account for more than 50 percent of global direct transactions. Our internet usage per capita is more than the US and China together. A 100 million farmers thrive a year benefit from direct transfer. Therefore, security is all important. It is your expertise that helps keep away cheats who seek to destabilise the system," he said.

The work that is being done in this domain is crucial for safeguarding our nation's security, protecting sensitive information and maintaining public trust in the digital system, he said.

Dhankhar said India has been ahead of other nations in this field so far but added that forensic experts will have to be on their toes as challenges are emanating every day.

Forensic science can also play a diverse affirmative role in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and ecological degradations by helping identify sources of pollution, track wildlife poaching and monitor compliances with environmental regulations, he said.

"The need to keep our planet safe for our future generations requires convergence of all human energy and forensic science can play a

major role. The ability to scientifically determine the course of environmental damage is essential for holding violators accountable and preserving our natural resources for future generations," the Vice President pointed out.

The VP said as India grows, the challenges are also becoming complex, with many of them coming from "within and without".

"We find people failing to respect our nationalism. It is our bounden duty as citizens of this great country to keep national interest uppermost, much higher than political or self-interest. There are people quick to capitalise on disturbance in this country," Dhankhar said.

"What a pain, my young friends, (when) people in authority who are great lawyers, have been ministers, members of foreign services, say what happened in neighbouring countries can happen in this country. Not a chance. Such people must not be dealt with by your silence," he added. Dhankhar urged forensic science students to ensure these narratives that are sinister and are designed to destabilise the largest functional democracy on the planet are neutralised.

"Your contribution to forensic science should not only meet global standards but also make new benchmarks as India's continual rise is exponential and trajectory is geometric," he said. (PTI)

4 labourers among 5 killed as under construction roof caves in

MHOW (MP), Aug 23: Five persons -- four labourers and their contractor -- were killed after the roof of an under-construction cottage at a resort collapsed in Indore district amid heavy rains, a police official said on Friday.

The incident occurred at Choral village in Mhow tehsil, about 40km from the district headquarters, on Thursday night when four labourers and their contractor were sleeping under the freshly laid concrete slab, which suddenly came crashing down, trapping them, he said. Two of the deceased were brothers.

Police were informed about the roof collapse at around 6.30 am and they immediately rushed to the spot and started a rescue operation, Indore (Rural) Superintendent of Police Hitika Wasal told PTI over the phone from the construction site which is surrounded by forests and hillocks.

The operation ended with the recovery of five bodies, which were sent to a hospital, she said, adding "We have launched an investigation into the incident."

The accident came to light in the morning when other labourers turned up for work at the site, said inspector Amit Kumar of the Simrol police station.

The deceased were identified as labourers Hariom Malviya (22),

Ajay Malviya (20), Gopal Prajapati (45), Raja (22) and their contractor Pawan Panchal (35), Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Umakant Chaudhary said.

Hariom and Ajay Malviya were brothers, he added.

"The roof slab which collapsed was constructed just one or two days ago," Chaudhary added.

The police officer said six cottages were being readied at the resort and their structures appeared weak at the first glance.

The department concerned will check the quality of construction work, Chaudhary added.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed grief over the tragedy and announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each to the family of the deceased.

Indore District Magistrate Ashish Singh said, "According to initial investigation a lawyer was getting the resort built."

He said authorities were ascer-

taining if the owner took required permission from the village panchayat for the construction of the resort spread over an area of four acres.

A local resident, Sanjay Yadav, said the labourers and their contractor had taken shelter under the partially built cottage to escape from downpour and were asleep when the tragedy struck. (PTI)

Improved reservoir levels across India, but northern region faces lower-than-normal level: CWC

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: The overall water-storage levels across the country's major reservoirs have improved significantly compared to last year but certain areas, particularly in the northern region, are facing lower-than-normal storage levels, which could impact water availability in the coming months.

This marks a notable increase from the 114.657 BCM recorded during the same period last year, indicating that the current storage is 114 per cent of last year's level and 112 per cent of the average storage over the last 10 years.

The report highlights regional variations in water-storage levels, with some areas experiencing better storage than others. In the northern region, which includes Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, the storage levels are below normal, with reservoirs holding only 53 per cent of their capacity.

However, the report also notes that certain areas, particularly in the northern region, are facing lower-than-normal storage levels, which could impact water availability in the coming months.

This marks a notable increase from the 114.657 BCM recorded during the same period last year, indicating that the current storage is 114 per cent of last year's level and 112 per cent of the average storage over the last 10 years.

The report highlights regional variations in water-storage levels, with some areas experiencing better storage than others. In the northern region, which includes Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, the storage levels are below normal, with reservoirs holding only 53 per cent of their capacity.

This is a significant drop from the 84 per cent recorded last year.

Conversely, the southern region, covering states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, shows a more positive trend, with reservoirs at 80 per cent capacity, a substantial improvement from the 52 per cent recorded during the corresponding period last year.

The eastern region, comprising states such as Assam, West Bengal and Bihar, also reported an increase in the water-storage levels.

The reservoirs in this region are currently at 60 per cent capacity, a marked improvement from the 43 per cent recorded last year.

Similarly, the western region, which includes Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa, has seen an increase in the storage levels, with

reservoirs now at 74 per cent capacity, up from 69 per cent last year.

In the central region, which includes Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the reservoirs are currently holding 76 per cent of their total capacity, reflecting a moderate improvement from the 73 per cent recorded during the same period last year.

This region's storage is also higher than the 10-year average, which stood at 68 per cent.

The CWC report concludes that the overall storage position across the country is better than both last year and the 10-year average, which is a positive sign for water availability in various sectors, including agriculture, hydroelectric power generation and drinking water supply. (PTI)

Extortion calls from foreign-based gangsters continue

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Extortion calls from foreign-based gangsters continue to give sleepless nights to Delhi's businessmen as three such cases have been reported in the last 10 days from separate areas of the city, official sources said on Friday.

They said the calls were made in the names of fugitives Anmol Bishnoi and Himanshu Bhau to a jeweller in Shahdara, a businessman in Outer Delhi and a property dealer in Dwarka.

Anmol Bishnoi is the brother of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi. While Anmol Bishnoi is believed to be hiding in the United States, Bhau is stated to be hiding either in Spain or in Portugal, according to the sources in the Delhi Police.

During one of the calls, the caller reminded the receiver about the Rajouri Garden Burger King case and said "hawa mein goli nahi chalegi (bullets will not be fired in the air)", the sources said. According to a police officer, who did not wish to be named, the cases have been registered at the local police stations and transferred to the Special Cell and the Crime Branch for further probe.

The jeweller from Shahdara has got a police complaint filed, stating that a person called him on behalf of the Anmol Bishnoi Gang, demanded ₹ 2 crore and asked him to arrange the money in five days.

The call was received on Thursday, the officer said. The Dwarka-based property dealer has told police that he received a call from Bhau on August 15. The Outer

Delhi-based businessman also received a call from Bhau on August 14, the sources said.

According to the Delhi Police's statistics, accessed exclusively by PTI, a total of 133 extortions cases were reported from across the national capital this year, till August 15.

A total of 141 such cases were reported in the same period last year. At least 110 extortion cases were registered in the corresponding period in 2022, according to the statistics. At least 204 cases of extortion were reported throughout 2023 and 187 in 2022.

A police officer, who often deals with such cases, said the callers mostly use VOIP numbers or WhatsApp numbers taken on fake SIM cards.

The sources said police have identified 11 gangs involved in making extortion calls, threatening businessmen, shootings and killings in the National Capital Region in the last few months.

The issue of the growing menace of these gangs was raised in an interstate meeting held at the Delhi Police headquarters earlier this month. Officers from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan also attended the meeting.

The police commissioner had directed the officers to curb the activities of these gangs by invoking the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) and other stringent local laws wherever applicable. The MCOCA is also applicable in Delhi. (PTI)

40 children injured after school balcony collapses



BARABANKI (UP), Aug 23: At least 40 children were injured, five of them seriously, after a portion of the first-floor balcony of their school here collapsed on Friday, police said.

The children are being treated at the district hospital. The condition of five students is stated to be "critical", Barabanki Superintendent of Police (SP) Dinesh Kumar Singh said.

Singh said the incident took place at the Awadh Academy School, a private institution, when a large number of children gathered on the first-floor balcony while going down to attend the morning assembly.

The 40 injured children were rushed to the Jahangirabad Primary Health Centre, around 300 metres from the school, and after they were given first aid, they were referred to the district hospital, police said. Many of the students were pulled out from under the debris of the collapsed balcony, they said. At the hospital, the children are being treated for injuries to their face, neck, hands and legs. (PTI)

Air India penalised by DGCA



NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Aviation regulator DGCA has imposed a penalty of ₹ 90 lakh on Tata Group-owned Air India for operating a flight with non-qualified pilots.

Besides, the watchdog has slapped fines of ₹ 6 lakh and ₹ 3 lakh on Air India's Director of Operations Pankul Mathur and Director of Training Manish Vasavada, for the lapse.

In a release, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the pilot concerned has been warned to exercise caution to prevent such occurrences in future. "Air India Ltd operated a flight commanded by a non-trainer line captain paired with a non-line-released first officer which has been viewed by the regulator as a serious scheduling incident having significant safety ramifications," the release said.

For the violations, DGCA has imposed a fine of ₹ 90 lakh on Air India, ₹ 6 lakh on the Director of Operations and ₹ 3 lakh on the Director of Training.

After the incident came to its notice through a voluntary report submitted by the airline on July 10, the regulator investigated the operations of the carrier, including examination of documentations and spot check of the scheduling facility.

"Based on investigation, it was prima facie revealed that there are deficiencies and multiple violations of the regulatory provisions by several post holders and staff, which could significantly affect safety," the release said.

DGCA also said the flight's commander and the post holders of the airline were provided an opportunity to explain their position through show cause notices issued on July 22.

The reply submitted by the concerned persons failed to provide satisfactory justification. As such, DGCA has initiated enforcement action in terms of provisions of the extant rules/regulations and imposed the above penalty, the watchdog noted. (PTI)

Two Naxalites surrender in Chattisgarh

SUKMA, Aug 23: Two Naxalites, allegedly involved in attacks on security personnel, carrying a cumulative bounty of ₹ 16 lakh, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Friday, police said.

The Naxalites turned themselves in before senior officials of the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), citing disappointment with atrocities committed by senior Maoists and "inhuman" and "hollow" Maoist ideology, an official said. They said they were also impressed by the state government's Naxal elimination policy and Sukma police's rehabilitation drive "Puna Narkom" (a term

coined in the local Gond dialect, which means New Dawn, New Beginning), he said. Madkam Sanna (35) and Madkam Muya (22) were members of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) battalion no.1 of Maoists, which is active in south Bastar, and were carrying a bounty of ₹ 8 lakh each, he said. Sanna was allegedly involved in several on security personnel, including the 2017 Burkapal Maoist ambush, in which 25 CRPF personnel were killed and the incident in Tekalguda where 22 troopers lost their lives in 2021, the official said. Muya was allegedly involved in attacks on police teams, he said. (PTI)

Police book man for 'pronouncing' triple talaq to wife

BAHRAICH (UP), Aug 23: Police have booked a man and seven members of his family for allegedly pronouncing triple talaq to her after she praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP Chief Minister for the development of Ayodhya.

Earlier, he had also beaten her and hurled hot 'dal' at her, Maryam alleged in her complaint to police in Bahraich where her parents live.

The family of the husband, who lives in Ayodhya, allegedly also

tried to strangle her on the day the man pronounced instant triple talaq. "I am a resident of Mohalla Sarai, Thana Jarwal Road in Bahraich. On December 13, 2023, I was married to Arshad, son of Islam, a resident of Mohalla Delhi Darwaza of Kotwali Nagar, Ayodhya. My father got me married with the consent of both the parties and by spending more than his means," the woman is heard saying in a video clip that has surfaced online. "After the marriage, when I went out in the city, I liked the roads of Ayodhya Dham, the beautification, the development and the atmosphere there. On this, I praised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in front of my husband," she said in the video. Following this, Maryam's husband, Arshad, got angry and sent her to her maternal home in Bahraich. After some relatives intervened, she returned to Ayodhya to live with her

husband, Jarwal Road Police Station Incharge Inspector (SHO) Brijar Prasad said.

However, Arshad hurled abuses at the chief minister and the prime minister and gave her triple talaq by uttering "talaq, talaq, talaq", SHO said. Maryam further alleged that her mother-in-law, younger sister-in-law and brothers-in-law tried to strangle her. Her husband also beat her on the day he pronounced triple talaq to her. (PTI)

A female school dropout's book now taught in universities

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Aug 23: Dhanuja Kumari spends her days walking through the narrow streets of Ravi Nagar in Ambalamukku here, calling out to the residents: "Chechi, we've come to collect plastic waste."

Dressed in a green overcoat over a pale yellow churidar, she carries a plastic sack as she visits each doorstep.

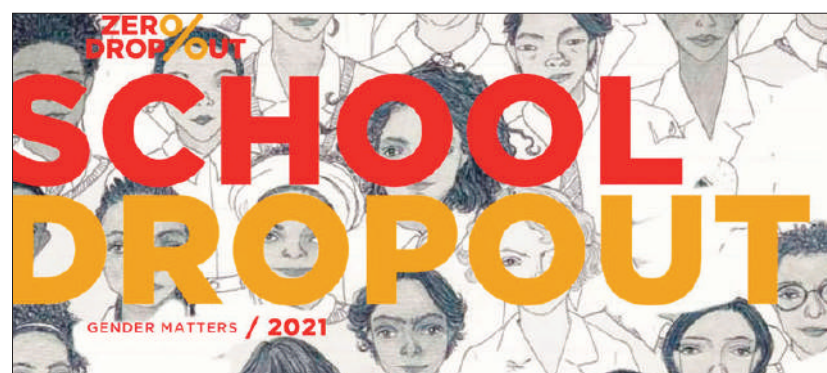
At 48 years, Dhanuja looks much older with stress marks etched on her face, but she always wears a happy smile.

Dhanuja dropped out of school in the 9th standard when her parents married her off to a 19-year-old 'Chenda' (a famous Kerala percussion instrument) artist.

She spent years living in Chengalchoola, a slum in Thiruvananthapuram, facing many struggles. But these challenges would later shape her journey as a writer.

She penned a book recounting her struggles as a slum dweller, and it is now part of the curriculum for BA students at Kanur University and MA students at Calicut University.

The book, "Chengalchoolayile Ente Jeevitham" ("My Life in Chengalchoola"), is



now in its fifth edition.

"I am not an imaginative writer. What I have written is what life gave me in Chengalchoola. I do not think it is literature, but my life," Dhanuja Kumari told PTI, sitting in her one-room house in Rajaji Nagar, earlier known as Chengalchoola.

Her house is built using tin sheets erected on four rows of cement hollow bricks, with a roof made of similar tin sheets. The house has no windows and has a small area for cooking and washing.

An automatic top-loading washing ma-

chine is the most expensive piece of equipment in her house.

Sitting on her queen cot, which occupies almost 90 per cent of the space in her one-room house, Dhanuja recalled how she became a writer. "Our colony was notorious at that time, and we will be writing police petitions almost every day. They used to call me to write petitions, as I used to write them elaborately. That is what helped me sharpen my language," Dhanuja said, with a smiling face as always.

Dhanuja had a troubled childhood, with

her parents quarrelling between them regularly.

"They had small issues, but sometimes they stopped seeing each other for a year or more. So they had sent me to a Christian convent, where I stayed and studied," she said, recalling that a practice the convent insisted all students follow was her introduction to writing.

"The convent teachers asked us to write down whatever we had done during the day in a small notebook. The bad things we did and the good things we did. Those were my first writings," Dhanuja said.

She continued doing the same when she moved into the present single room house along with her husband at the age of 14.

"My husband was just 19, and we were not mature enough to run a family. There were so many problems, and the discrimination we faced on the basis of caste and our life in the colony was too difficult to bear. I wrote all my pains, experiences, and little happiness we had in between," Dhanuja said.

As she grew up, she continued to be active in society and wanted people to have a different view of her colony and its people.

She fought fiercely for the rights of the colony people to have a dignified life.

"I used to tell everyone--the social workers, the researchers who visited our colony--that they were only interested in their study materials and not in our lives. I used to give public speeches. Hearing this, a noted writer, Vijila, prompted me to compile my writings as a book."

She published the book when she was 38 years old, which was very well accepted by the readers, and the universities have now included it in their curricula. Dhanuja is writing the second part of her book. "This book again would be my experiences. I do not know how to write in the language of literature," Dhanuja said.

Apart from newspapers and children's books, Dhanuja never got a chance to read Malayalam literature.

"I had no opportunity to get those books, and my language is still the language of a class 9 dropout," she said.

Now Dhanuja is heading a women's collective in Rajaji Nagar called 'Wings of Women', where they have their own library and engage in social activities. (PTI)

REPLACEMENT OF TYPE-II QUARTER AT LUMDING

E-Tender Notice No. Sr.DEE/LMG/17 of 2024-25 Dated: 21-08-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. EL/LM/24-25/08-RT-1. Name of works: At Lumding- Replacement of Type-II quarter 4 block, type-III quarter 4 block & Type-IV quarter 2 block under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/IV/Lumding (Electrical portion). Tender Value: ₹ 18,750,361/- Earnest Money: ₹ 14,400/- Date & Time of closing of tender: 11:00 hrs. of 12-09-2024 & opened at 11:30 hrs. of 12-09-2024. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 11:00 hrs. of 12-09-2024 in website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DEE/G&OP, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

REPLACEMENT OF RPSF GO'S MESS UNDER LUMDING DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/133 of 2024; Dated: 21-08-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Tender No.: DyCEE-PS-MLG-HQ-24-25; Name of Work: At Lumding- Electrical work in connection with modification/upgrade of PCSC's office at HQ Complex. Advertised Value : ₹ 8,36,700/- Earnest Money: ₹ 16,700/- Date and time of closing of tender at 15:00 on 04-09-2024. For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM/Works, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

ELECTRICAL WORKS

Tender Notice No.: Dy.CEE/PS/MLG/HQ/28/24-25. Dated: 14-08-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Tender No.: DyCEE-PS-MLG-HQ-24-25; Name of Work: At Lumding- Electrical work in connection with modification/upgrade of PCSC's office at HQ Complex. Advertised Value : ₹ 8,36,700/- Earnest Money: ₹ 16,700/- Date and time of closing of tender at 15:00 on 04-09-2024. For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. CEE/PS/Mailagong/HQ
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

SINGAPORE, Aug 23: The second season of "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" will be like a psychological thriller, co-creator JD Payne said at the premiere of the first two episodes from the new chapter here.

The fantasy series made its grand return to Singapore at Shaw Theatres Lido on Thursday evening as eager fans gathered to witness the start of a new season in the Middle-earth saga, set thousands of years before the events of J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" book series. The two episodes, which were showcased at the packed theatre, offered a glimpse into the epic scale and rich storytelling that "The Rings of Power" promises to deliver. "It's really a spectacular season, it's both broader, deeper and bigger. And we go into more worlds. The psychology gets really dark and twisted. There's a sort of a psychological thriller this time and there are bigger creatures, action and scale that we've never seen before," Payne, who developed the show with co-creator Patrick McKay, said.

The new season will debut on Prime Video on August 29. The screening was also attended by the fantasy show's director Charlotte Brandstrom as well as cast members Charlie Vickers, Markella Kavenagh, Ismael Cruz Cordova, Charles Edwards, Cynthia Addai-Robinson, Trystan Gravelle, Megan Richards and Tyroe Muhafidin. The Rings of Power is primarily based on the appendices of Tolkien's famed book series, specifically the description of Middle Earth's Second Age, and includes younger versions of some of the key characters from the original trilogy. In season two, Sauron, who has been banished and without any allies or army, aims to regain power and oversee the creation of the Rings of Power, which will enable him to subjugate the people of Middle-earth. Vickers plays Sauron, one of the greatest literary villains, who was disguised as human Halbrand in the first season of the show. The character has a different look this time, said the actor. "For me, it was about approaching and trying to find a through line from the first season to the second season. He's very good at working his way into people's minds and becoming what they need. So Sauron this season is all about this man Celebrimbor. He comes in a guise and he manipulates and makes a lot of rings with him," he said. Edwards, who stars as Celebrimbor, the Elven-smith who forges the Rings of Power,

'The Rings of Power' co-creator JD Payne on season two: Spectacular, dark and twisted

said the team rarely gets a chance to watch each other's work in the show that features diverse characters like Elves, Harfoots, dwarves, orcs, wizards, and mortal men. "The excitement of this season is seeing what everybody else has been doing while we've been filming our little bits in our little worlds. You've no idea what all your colleagues have been up to. So watching these screenings and doing these junkets and press tours gives us a chance to celebrate each other as well as the show and the fans. So it's a really wonderful opportunity," Cordova plays the role of Arondir, a Silvan Elf, and he said the show is a "monumental labour of love". "It takes a lot of blood, sweat and tears, very long hours. And I think we all have you in our hearts every moment that we're making the show... This season has everything and then some more. We infused it with so much love and so much heart for you all," he said. Addai-Robinson said it was her first visit to Singapore and the fans have been very generous towards the whole team. She portrays Miriel, the queen-regent of the island kingdom of Numenor. (PTI)



Sarkata in 'Stree 2' most warped form of patriarchy: writer Niren Bhatt

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: What ties all movies in the Maddock Films horror comedy universe together is the representation of social fallacies and Sarkata, the newest villain in "Stree 2", is the symbol of all that is wrong about patriarchy, says writer Niren Bhatt.

The Bhavnagar-born screenwriter, who ditched a high paying corporate job to join showbiz around 2007, is delighted with the response to "Stree 2" but admits the numbers are a "bit crazy".

"People have been asking for the film for six years, but we don't dwell much into expectations," he said, referring to the much awaited sequel to 2018's "Stree" which released on August 15 and is nearing Rs 500 crore mark globally.

Bhatt, who also wrote other successful films in the horror-comedy franchise "Bhediya" and "Munjya", said all these fantastical characters represent something about society.

"Some people complain that there is a lot of humour but less horror or vice versa but these are not horror films where actual ghosts are haunting people. All our ghosts are fallacies of our society. Sarkata is the most warped form of patriarchy.

"Stree is the symbol of matriarchy, she is not a witch. Bhediya is the protector of the forests. We have designed these characters in a certain way. We are not talking about hocus pocus or spirits out of the blue," the writer told PTI in an interview. While "Stree" revolved around a female ghost, who was wronged in her mortal life, its follow-up focuses on a headless villain called Sarkata with a connection to the eponymous character.

Directed by Amar Kaushik, the new film brings back the original star cast of Rajkumar Rao, Shraddha Kapoor, Abhishek Banerjee, Pankaj Tripathi, and Aparshakti Khurana. "Stree 2", which follows Sarkata abducting women with an independent voice, hits harder in the backdrop of the Kolkata alleged rape-murder and the Justice Hema Committee report on women's exploitation in Malayalam cinema. (PTI)



I have liberty to choose my subject, says director Vivek Agnihotri

KOLKATA, Aug 23: Director Vivek Agnihotri, who was accused of making propaganda movies, said he has the liberty to choose his subject.

Agnihotri's 2022 film 'The Kashmir Files' depicts the exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from the North Indian state following members of the community being killed by terrorists. His 2019 film, 'The Tashkent Files', revolves around the mysterious death of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in Uzbekistan in 1966.

Agnihotri told PTI that a significant part of his upcoming film, 'The Delhi Files', will focus on undivided Bengal's violent history, with references to the Noakhali riots of 1946, the Muslim League, Congress, Ma-

hatma Gandhi and Md Ali Jinnah. "There are people who ask why Vivek Agnihotri is not making a film on the situation in the north-eastern region. There are so many filmmakers. Let anyone among them take up the task. Let me choose my subject. Can't I create awareness about the issue chosen by me," he added.

The 'Vaccine War' director came to Kolkata to participate in a rally on Wednesday protesting against the alleged rape and murder of a woman doctor in state-run R G Kar Hospital here.

"There are so many women MPs in India. Why are they not protesting against such an incident, why don't they sit on the street? You cannot trust politicians. India has been destroyed by politicians," he said.

To a question, he said he wanted to join the rally as a citizen of the country and to express solidarity with the protesters, but he would not make any film on the ghastly incident.

"I have a daughter and a sister.

I don't want to exploit such an issue for commercial reasons. Let politicians do that. They are like vultures," the filmmaker said.

On West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's criticism of his film 'The Kashmir Files' in the past, he said it was "unwarranted". Banerjee may have thought it is an anti-Muslim film but it is not true, Agnihotri said.

He also alleged that the West Bengal government tried to stop his team's research for the film 'The Delhi Files'.

To a question, he said, "I am not a politician. I am a filmmaker. My job is not to file FIRs. I can't go to court," Agnihotri said asserting that he believed in approaching "the people's court".

The director said he was in West Bengal in his childhood.

"I had been inspired by four personalities - Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, writer Saratchandra Chattopadhyay and later on by the works of filmmaker Satyajit Ray," Agnihotri said. (PTI)

Storyteller Himanshu Bajpai says his 'Dastan' on Wajid Ali Shah challenges colonial narrative

LUCKNOW, Aug 23: Lucknow-based storyteller Himanshu Bajpai is set to present a compelling Dastan (story) on Wajid Ali Shah, the eleventh and final king of Awadh, which he says is aimed at challenging entrenched colonial narratives.

The Dastango (storyteller) says that through "Dastan-E-Jaan-E-Aalam" his attempt is to highlight the cultural and historical significance of the monarch, whose story has been subject to differing interpretations over the years.

Bajpai, who has received accolades from Sahitya Akademi, former President Ram Nath Kovind and praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi in "Mann ki Baat", described the story as a culmination of years of research and personal dedication.

Ahead of the August 24 public premiere of the Dastan here, Bajpai told PTI said that his fascination with Wajid Ali Shah began early in life, influenced by the rich storytelling traditions of Lucknow, where the stories about the king are widely shared.

"From childhood, I was immersed in stories about Wajid Ali Shah. It became evident that he was a remarkably interesting character, with narratives deeply embedded in the fabric of old Lucknow," He said that while the British established a "negative portrayal" of Wajid Ali Shah to justify the annexation of Awadh, the local sentiment in Lucknow tells a different story. The colonial narrative, as Bajpai elaborated, portrayed Wajid Ali Shah

as an ineffective and indulgent ruler, suggesting that his removal was necessary for the welfare of the people.

"The British aimed to discredit Wajid Ali Shah to legitimize their control over Awadh. They depicted him as a failure and his removal as a necessity," Bajpai said and criticised this portrayal as a distortion designed to serve colonial interests.

Bajpai said local perspective on Wajid Ali Shah is starkly different. "For the people of old Lucknow, Wajid Ali Shah is a cherished figure. His reign is remembered for nurturing the Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb, an amalgamation of cultural and religious traditions," he noted.

He emphasised that the king's contributions to music, theatre, and the arts significantly shaped the cultural landscape of Lucknow.

The storyteller described his mission as both a personal and cultural endeavour. "As a Lucknowi, I felt a deep sense of protest against the colonial myths that have overshadowed the true legacy of Wajid Ali Shah," Bajpai said. He said the Dastan is intended to present the king's story as it is remembered by those who lived through his era, capturing the elements of love, beauty and social progress.

The research process for the Dastan was extensive, involving three to four years of meticulous work.

Bajpai compiled primary sources, including books and oral histories from local experts and elders.

"Gathering material from various sources, including books in English, Hindi, Urdu, and Bangla, was a monumental task. The challenge was to piece together an authentic narrative from a wide range of perspectives," he explained.

Bajpai also addressed the political significance of the Dastan, noting that it aligns with the broader theme of revisiting historical narratives in the context of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. "This Dastan is not only a tribute to Wajid Ali Shah but also a political act aimed at correcting historical distortions. It represents an Indian narrative that stands in opposition to the colonial version," Bajpai asserted.

He said the free and open for all performance at the Sahu Theatre here on August 24 is set to be aimed at reinvigorating public memory about Wajid Ali Shah's contributions and correcting longstanding misconceptions.

Bajpai added, "I hope this Dastan will bring to light the true essence of Wajid Ali Shah's legacy and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Lucknow. It is a long-overdue correction to the myths that have persisted for over 150 years." Bajpai will be joined by frequent collaborator Pragya Sharma in narrating 'Dastan-E-Jaan-E-Aalam'. "Sharma who has a PhD in economics quit her government job some years ago to pursue her passion for storytelling. We have performed several shows together within India and abroad," he said. (PTI)

18 INDIAN FILMS WILL BE FEATURED AT MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL FILM WEEK

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: Moscow is hosting Moscow International Film Week held from August 23 to August 28. The festival will open a calendar of business events with a great emphasis on Indian film industry - 18 Indian films and major representatives from the Indian film industry will be featured and hosted during the event.

Moscow International Film Week will be held in the Russian capital city on August 23-28. The event will transform Russia's capital into a vast cinematic hub with participation from over 40 countries, including distinguished delegations from India, China, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Thailand, and CIS countries; the festival promises to be a major event for the international community.

It notes that the film market will bring together representatives of the film industry from India, China, Indonesia, Brazil and Russia. Among the delegates are top government officials - Sudhir S Mungantiwar, Minister of Cultural Department of the Maharashtra Government, Vikas Kharage, Principal Secretary of the Chief Minister Office and Cultural Department, Dil Raju, President of Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce; and also the leaders of the film and media industry - Sandeep Marwah, Founder of Noida Film City, Shruti Rajkumar, Vice President Invest India and the Head of FFO (India), Rajiv Chilaka, CEO of Greengold Studios, Ankur Bhasin, CEO of Media & Entertainment Association of India, Rathana Sam George, Global Head of Production at Toonz Media, Marijke de Souza, Head of production, Dharma Productions, Gayatri Gulati, Senior Vice President, Viacom18 Studios.

Earlier, in April this year, during the visit, a delegation from Moscow familiarized itself with the Bollywood film industry in Mumbai. They agreed to strengthen ties in the field of joint film production. The current visit and the participation of the Indian delegation in the festival demonstrates the beginning of closer cooperation and the transition to action in this area.

Many films have already been shot using the platform, demonstrating the city's appeal as a filming location. A notable example is the film "Greatest of All Time" by Indian director Venkat Prabhu, which utilised Moscow's unique settings to enhance its narrative. The Cinema market in India is projected to grow by 5.50% (2024-2029) resulting in a market volume of US\$6.05bn in 2029.

Both sides are seeing much of the potential to explore in this regard. In addition to Indian films, the Moscow International Film week will feature over 300 screenings, showcasing Russian and more than 70 international films.

"Moscow is actively developing ties with Indian colleagues in the field of film industry. Moscow International Film Week will acquaint Russians with the latest Indian films and contribute to the creation of joint projects between Moscow and India, as a large business program is planned and the Indian delegation is one of the largest. We consider India to be one of our key partners and see great potential in the further development of joint initiatives," said Alexey Fursin, Minister of the Moscow Government and Head of the Department of Culture of the City of Moscow.



Chaos at Chelsea: A high-risk, \$1.3B spending spree has left the club fractured and vulnerable

LONDON, Aug 23: In the years to come, the experiment unfolding at Chelsea under their American investors will be a fascinating case study about running a soccer club.

Because no one in England or beyond has ever seen anything like what has been happening at Stamford Bridge over the last two years.

Just take this in: Chelsea has spent nearly \$1.3 billion on 39 players across five transfer windows since a consortium fronted by Los Angeles Dodgers partner Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital bought the Premier League club from its long-time owner, Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, for \$3.2 billion in May 2022.

Throw in the club having four different full-time managers in this period — plus another coach on a temporary basis — and the revolving door at Chelsea, a six-time English champion and two-time European champion, simply hasn't stopped spinning.

"It's not a mess like it looks from the outside," Enzo Maresca, the latest Chelsea manager, said Wednesday as he attempted to explain the wisdom behind taking the number of



players in the squad to 43 by signing two wingers — Pedro Neto and Joao Felix — for a combined \$130 million over the past week.

This while already having five wingers in the squad, including one — Mykhailo Mudryk —

signed for more than \$100 million just last year and another — Raheem Sterling — who was the first signing of this unprecedented two-year trolley dash for nearly \$60 million.

Sterling has been stripped of his squad number following the

arrival of Neto and is one of around 20 players "training apart," Maresca said. Among them is striker Romelu Lukaku, signed three years ago for a then-club record of \$135 million, and goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga, the world's most

expensive keeper signed for \$92 million.

Not much seemingly makes sense in Chelsea's brave new era that has so far brought underwhelming Premier League finishes in 12th and then sixth place last season.

"It's been a crazy one to follow so far," Dr. Dan Plumley, sports finance expert at Sheffield Hallam University, told The Associated Press, "and it shows no sign of slowing down."

Plumley said the Chelsea owners' initial "aggressive" play in the transfer market to overhaul the squad was not unexpected, even if spending \$280 million in the summer of 2022, \$350 million in January 2023 and more than \$400 million in the offseason of that year was unprecedented for a soccer club. In the current window, the outlay is more than \$250 million on 10 players.

"You are thinking, That's the initial burst but now you have to rein it in a little bit," Plumley said in a phone interview. "But they seem to be carrying on, which raises a few question marks around what the actual strategy is there and what are the owners looking to do." (AP)

Not many takers as PCB sells broadcast rights for nearly half of reserve price

KARACHI, Aug 23: The Pakistan Cricket Board has settled for nearly half of its reserve price kept for selling broadcasting rights for the international home matches between the period of August 2024 and December 2026.

The broadcasting rights for the Pakistan region have been sold for PKR 1.72 billion, which is at least PKR 1.48 billion less than the initial reserve price of PKR 3.2 billion the board kept for selling the rights. However, the PCB officials, without having sharing any figures, claim that the rights were sold at more than twice the amount from the previous rights cycle (FTP 2021 to 2024).

As per available details, the PCB recently sold its Pakistan region broadcasting rights for the 28-month period to a Pakistani consortium of ARY and Tower Sports and claimed to have sold it for a higher amount when compared with the last contract.

The PCB said that the rights were awarded "following a transparent tender process" in which several bids were received.

The rights are for 11 Tests, including seven in the 2024-25 season, 26 ODIs and 24 T20Is.

The ODIs include a couple of three-nation ODI series in the current and next season.

The fact that no high profile foreign broadcaster showed interest in the Pakistan international home season rights is an indication that the PCB is facing problems in generating revenues expected from broadcasting rights.

Even Pakistan Television, the state owned network, bid PKR 1.6 billion and didn't bother to increase the amount even though the eventual successful bid was for PKR 1.72 billion.

"It is far less than initially what the PCB had anticipated while keeping its reserve price of PKR 3.2 billion," a source aware of the developments said.

Additionally, the PTV bought the broadcasting rights after securing the sub-licensing for PKR 500 million from the consortium.

Therefore, both the consortium and the PTV earned profitable deals but PCB failed to make the most jam-packed season financially.

Interestingly, the PCB is now finding it difficult to get a broadcaster in the UK to show the Pakistan and England Test series in October-November with Sky Sports showing no interest at all in securing rights for the UK territory. (PTI)

Olympic champion Wanyonyi runs 4th fastest 800 meters all-time in first major meet after Paris Games

LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND), Aug 23: Olympic champion Emmanuel Wanyonyi ran the fourth-fastest 800 meters time in history Thursday at the first major track meet after the Paris Games.

Wanyonyi clocked 1 minute, 41.11 seconds — 0.08 faster than his winning time in Paris two weeks ago — to tie Wilson Kipketer's mark in 1997 that was a world record then. Only Wanyonyi's fellow Kenyan David Rudisha has run the 800 faster.

"I'm so happy to have run that crazy time here in Lausanne," Wanyonyi said. "I really loved the crowd here."

It was a fast early start to the storied Athletissima meet as the global Diamond League circuit resumed after a pause for the Olympics. Jakob Ingebrigtsen regained his authority in the men's 1,500 — after a shocking fourth place in Paris — to beat Olympic champion Cole Hocker by more than two seconds.

In the men's 200, Olympic champion Letsile Tebogo kept his form despite a return trip home to Botswana to win in 19.64 seconds easing into the line. "It was a great race for me here today," said the 21-year-old Tebogo, who said on the eve of the race he had not trained in the previous week.

Tebogo still finished 0.14 ahead of Erryon Knighton, who placed fourth in Paris. Noah Lyles, who took bronze in 200 in

Paris after becoming the Olympic champion at 100, skipped the Swiss meet.

The standout performance was by the 20-year-old Wanyonyi, who surged past Marco Arop on the back straight and finished 0.61 clear of the Olympic silver medalist from Canada.

Wanyonyi was 0.20 off Rudisha's world record of 1:40.91 set winning the first of his back-to-back Olympic titles in 2012 in London.

Ingebrigtsen's winning time of 3:27.83 was a meet record in Lausanne though still would have been fast enough only for fourth place at the Olympics.

"For me, a lot of it has been mental including going home, taking some easy days and then getting back to work," said Ingebrigtsen, who did win Olympic gold in the 5,000. "Tonight's race gave me good answers." Hocker acknowledged it had been "a new challenge being announced as Olympic champion," though the American's 3:29.85 time was second fastest in his career behind his 3:27.65 in Paris. Dina Asher-Smith won the women's 100 clocking her season-best time of 10.88. That would have won a bronze medal in Paris where the British star failed to make the final.

"After the Olympics I took some time to refocus and now I'm just enjoying running, feeling fit and injury free," Asher-Smith said. (AP)

NCC Unit NER trophy unveiled at ADP College Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Aug 23: Major General Gagan Deep, Addl. Director General of NCC, North East Region (NER) Directorate, Shillong visited the 8th Assam Bn NCC, Nagaon on Wednesday last here to unveil the best NCC unit NER Trophy at ADP College, Nagaon which was also awarded the best NCC College in NER 2023-24.

The Principal of ADP College Dr. Sadananda Payeng felicitated Major General and delivered an welcome address on behalf of the College. The felicitation programme was initiated under the supervision of Commanding Officer

Col Amar Sing, Sena Medal, 8 Assam Bn NCC, at ADP College for unveiling the best NCC unit NER Trophy, achieved by 8 Assam Bn NCC, Nagaon.

The General awarded 3 ADG Medal to ANO Lt. Jalin Chetia, Lt. Jyotirupa Deka and Lt. Neeta Basumatary of the unit for their outstanding contributions and achievements towards NCC.

A cultural programme was also organised in honour of the ADG by the cadets.

The ADG inaugurated the newly constructed NCC Office of ADP College unit and interacted with the cadets at the Indoor Stadium of the

College. He advised them to work harder in such a competitive era for their higher studies as a primary task and should also to take part simultaneously in the NCC activities to enhance their skills, potentialities as well as capabilities. The cadets of the different colleges attended the ADG's programme with much zeal and enthusiasm. Meeting the ADG, the cadets became very happy and they were inspired by the valuable speech delivered by ADG.

Principals of various colleges of Nagaon town, ANO's felicitated the General with traditional Pholam Gamusa and mementos, a press note added here.



2024 US Open: Coco Gauff's rising career hits a bump before she defends her first Grand Slam title

NEW YORK, Aug 23: Yes, Coco Gauff is a Grand Slam champion. Yes, she's been ranked No. 1 in doubles and No. 2 in singles. Yes, she's already a big star who transcends her sport and was a flag bearer alongside LeBron James at the Paris Olympics ... and has a signature shoe ... and is featured on Wheaties boxes and ... and ... And yet, back in New York for Monday's start of the U.S. Open, which she won a year ago for her first major trophy — the first American teen to do so since Serena Williams in 1999 — Gauff still occasionally might sound like someone who deals with impostor syndrome.

Put simply: She does not quite understand what all the fuss is about.

"I just thought I was nobody," Gauff said. "The whole flag bearer thing is still mind-blowing to me. Like, 'Why am I up there?'"

Gauff was popular among other athletes at the Paris Olympics. As she wandered around the athletes village, Gauff often was stopped by other Olympians hoping they could pose with her for a photo.

"I'm like, Can I get a selfie with you, too? I just wasn't really expecting this," the Floridian said. "Maybe I just don't get it."

When she was asked less than a month ago for her thoughts on the U.S. Open and its importance to her still-nascent career, Gauff replied: "It hasn't been on my mind." Gauff said she was instead focused on the 2024 Games and soaking up that experience fully.

"She's really embraced her star power, kind of," said Jessica Pegula, a top-10 singles player and Gauff's frequent doubles partner, "but at the same time, she's like a kid." On court vs. off court for Gauff, the off-court aspects of Gauff's Olympics debut were a huge success: meeting James; collecting pins; the college-style getting to know folks of various backgrounds; chatting at breakfast with athletes such as 100-meter dash gold medalist Noah Lyles.

"He's probably the most confident (athlete) I ever met in my life," Gauff said, "other than maybe Serena."

The on-court results in France? Not as gratifying.

Gauff exited in the third round of singles after arguing with the

chair umpire over a late call, then lost her second match in both women's doubles and mixed doubles. "I'll try to take the positive out of it," Gauff said, "and do better next time."

Gauff is going through a slump as she goes back to the U.S. Open. With her title defense — a term she says she doesn't love — about to begin, Gauff is going through a rough stretch of results.

She was eliminated in the fourth round at Wimbledon while visibly upset at her coach, Brad Gilbert. After the struggles at the Olympics, she moved to the hard courts to prepare for New York and that did not go well: Gauff lost her second match in Toronto and her first in Cincinnati. Her ranking slid from No. 2 to No. 3. (AP)

Gukesh, Prag draw again in Sinquefield Cup

SAINT LOUIS (USA), Aug 23: World Championship challenger D Gukesh enjoyed an advantageous position against tournament co-leader Alireza Firouzja of France but eventually settled for a draw in the fourth round of the Sinquefield Cup, here.

Gukesh, who is set to play the World championship match against Ding Liren of China next November, proved that he is made of sterner mettle as he made Firouzja's life tough.

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa also drew his game against Anish Giri of Holland and almost at the half way stage in this 10-player round-robin tournament, the Indians stand at a level fifty percent score.

The day when Wesley So of United States won the lone decisive game, the news doing the round through unconfirmed sources was that Firouzja has been offered to play for United States.

For Prag things were not difficult as he meticulously handled Anish Giri with black pieces and even though the Dutchman believed he had some chances, they were thwarted in no time.

After three decisive games in round three the fourth round yet again produced just a lone decisive game with Wesley So overcoming Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia.

With Wesley winning and Nepomniachtchi on the losing side, the former joined Firouzja in lead on 2.5 points after four rounds and they are now followed by Fabiano Caruana of United States, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Nepomniachtchi, Praggnanandhaa and Gukesh.

Abdusattorov and Giri share the ninth spot with 1.5 points each. (PTI)

I'm more mature in my technique; Paralympics just another competition: Avani

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Avani Lekhara would have never taken up shooting if not for the persuasion of her parents two years after a catastrophic car mishap left her paralysed waist down and confined to a wheelchair at the age of 11.

As the 22-year-old, who is one of the most recognisable faces in Indian para sport, embarks on a journey to win more medals for the county in rifle events at the Paris Paralympic Games, she thanked her family for giving meaning to her life at a time she was struggling to overcome the trauma.

Just six years after trying her hand at archery and then shooting at the Kendriya Vidyalaya No.3 in Jaipur during the summer vacations in 2015, Avani became the toast of the nation by winning India's first medals in shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics in SH1 category — 10m

air rifle gold and 50m rifle 3-position bronze.

"Before the accident I was not into any sport and after that too I was not at all thinking about joining any sport. But my parents always thought that I need to do something other than studies. I went back to school two years after the accident. I went to KV No. 3 Jaipur.

"They have these regional games, national games, so my parents also thought of enrolling me in some sport, and then I went there during my summer vacations in 2015 and I tried archery, I tried shooting.

"I liked shooting more because it was an indoor game, I thought 'ok, let's start'. Then I started competing, started liking it more...that's how it went after that," Avani, a former world No.1 in 10m air rifle (SH1), who is also an assistant conservator of forest with the Rajasthan gov-



ernment, told PTI.

For Avani, the Tokyo success brought with it lots of expectations but the vivacious shooter, who has a new set of rifles and feels more "mature" in her technique going into the Paris Games, said it only motivates her to do better.

"I think we have been in a

very positive environment throughout. We are just focussing on the process rather than the outcome. There, obviously, will be expectations but those expectations only motivate me and inspire me more to give my best. I'm also more mature in my technique.

"And whatever it is, even if it

a negative or a positive motivation, I try to keep it outside the (firing) lane. When I go to the lane, I am only focusing and concentrating on my process rather than thinking about other things."

For her a competition, be it the World Cup or the Paralympic Games, is just an extension of her training regimen, which has to be followed to the tee.

"I like to keep it (competitions) as similar to training as possible. If there is something which will happen in a match, I try it during training so that when I go into a competition I don't feel any uncertainty. I just try to control the controllable.

"I try to keep my focus, my concentration... all the regimen that I follow, be it physical or mental training, all of it I try to keep it as similar as possible," said Avani.

Her preparations have been

Neeraj finishes second in Lausanne Diamond League with season's best 89.49m

LAUSANNE, Aug 23: Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra finished second in the Diamond League here after producing a season's best effort of 89.49m from his last attempt in a gritty performance despite lingering fitness concerns.

The 26-year-old was at the fourth spot till the fourth round before sending his spear to 85.58m in his fifth attempt. He saved the best for the last and his final attempt measured 89.49m on Thursday, a marginal improvement on the 89.45m achieved in the Paris Olympics a few days ago.

He was in danger of missing the sixth throw but his fifth round effort of 85.58m saved him. Only the top three after five rounds get their respective final attempts.

Two-time world champion and Paris Olympics bronze-medallist Anderson Peters of Grenada won the event with a monster throw of 90.61m in the second round while Julian Weber of Germany took the third spot with 87.08m.

"The feeling wasn't great at first, but I am happy with my throw, especially the second (career) best throw on my last attempt. It was a tough start, but the



comeback was really nice and I enjoyed the fighting spirit I showed," Chopra said after the event.

"Even though my early throws were around 80-83m, I pushed hard in the last two attempts finishing strong. Competing at this high level, it's important to stay mentally tough and fight through."

Peters, who had struggled to find form last year, led the competition here from beginning to end and he stamped his class with the

90m-plus throw in the last round. He has a personal best of 93.07m achieved in 2022.

With seven points from Thursday's second-place finish, Chopra is joint third alongside Weber in Diamond League standings with 15 points. Peters jumped to top spot with 21 points.

Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch, who finished seventh (82.03m) on Thursday, is in second spot with 16 points.

Nursing a long-standing groin

injury, Chopra claimed a silver in the Paris Olympics on August 8 adding to his historic gold in the Tokyo edition of the Games three years ago.

Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem had beaten Chopra for the gold in Paris with an Olympic record throw of 92.97m. Nadeem was missing from the field here.

On Saturday, Chopra had confirmed his participation here, postponing a decision on a possible surgery till the end of the season.

Chopra had won the Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlejch in the winner-takes-all Diamond League final in Eugene, USA, last year.

This season's DL finals will be held in Brussels on September 14. He needs to finish in the top-six of the series standings to qualify for the finale.

There is another DL meeting -- in Zurich on September 5 -- which has a men's javelin throw event on its roster. Chopra is yet to win a DL meeting this year. He finished second behind Vadlejch in Doha on May 10. The Indian has been managing his groin injury since winning the gold in the Budapest World Championships last year. (PTI)

ICC planning multi-million dollar fund to save Test cricket: Report

SYDNEY, Aug 23: The International Cricket Council (ICC) is mulling a dedicated fund of at least USD 15 million for Test cricket that will help increase the players' match fee and address the migration of talent to lucrative T20 franchise leagues.

The initiative, which was proposed by Cricket Australia (CA), has the support of BCCI Secretary Jay Shah, who is the front-runner to become the next ICC Chairman, and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), a report in 'The Sydney Morning Herald' stated.

The fund would increase the minimum match payment for Test players and cover the cost of sending teams on overseas tours. It would support national boards like the West Indies that currently struggle to compete with the wages offered in global T20 competitions. "The fund would ensure a minimum Test payment for all players, thought to be USD 10,000, and pay the costs of overseas tours for struggling countries," the report stated.

"It's fantastic to see some momentum behind the Test match fund," CA chairman Mike Baird, who floated the concept in January, said. "We need to take away



the barriers and encourage Test cricket to be the best of the best. To retain that history and that legacy, which goes alongside the newer forms of white ball cricket," he added. The fund is unlikely to benefit the three wealthiest cricket nations - India, Australia, and England - since they already offer substantial salaries to their players.

However, how much money is available for Test cricket from the ICC is also likely to depend on a dispute with broadcaster Star, the report added.

The Star network wants to renegotiate a 2022 broadcast deal with the ICC and reduce its value to half of the original cost of over USD three billion.

The BCCI had introduced an incentive scheme for India's men's Test cricketers earlier this year to encourage players to prioritise Test cricket and reward consistent performances in the longest format of the game. Under the new scheme, a player who plays at least 75 per cent of India's Test matches in its annual cycle, from October to September, will earn a whopping Rs 45 lakh per match in addition to the Test match fees of Rs 15 lakh.

The players who feature in the 50-75 per cent games bracket will earn a bonus of ₹ 30 lakh per match. The non-playing members -- if selected in the squad -- will be paid half the amount. (PTI)

Sri Lanka-New Zealand opening Test at Galle to have a rest day

DUBAI, Aug 23: Sri Lanka's opening Test against New Zealand at Galle next month will be a six-day affair with the provision of a rest day owing to the presidential election in the island nation.

The Test, scheduled to commence on September 18, will have a rest day on September 21, "owing to the Presidential Election of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka", said an ICC release on Friday. It will be the first time in more than two decades that Sri Lanka have been scheduled to host a Test across six days, with their match against Zimbabwe in Colombo in 2001 also including a rest day due to Poya Day (full moon), said the ICC.

The two-match series is part of the ongoing ICC World Test Championship cycle with the second Test scheduled at the same venue from September 26-30. Rest days were a common feature in Test cricket in the last century, with several matches in the cricketing world being played across six days with Sunday usually being an off day. More recently, Bangladesh played a Test-series opener against Sri Lanka in December 2008, which was a six-day affair because of a parliamentary election. (PTI)

If Jay Shah becomes ICC chairman, no clear favourite for BCCI secretary's post

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: The numbers will favour Jay Shah to mount the saddle as the next ICC Chairman but there is no clarity if he decides to join the world governing body, who will replace him as BCCI secretary.

Shah is supposed to have the backing of 15 out of 16 members in the ICC Board but has less than 96 hours to decide if wants to make the move when he still has one year left in his second consecutive term as BCCI secretary.

The new ICC chairman will take charge on December 1, and the last date for filing nomination is August 27.

The mandatory three-year cooling off period to make a come back to the wealthiest cricket board will start for Shah after completion of his term in October 2025.

But there is a big question mark as to who will replace Shah in the

BCCI since neither he himself nor the people close to him have yet divulged his immediate plans.

PTI takes a look at possible candidates:

Rajiv Shukla: There is a possibility that BCCI rejigs the positions and asks current vice-president Shukla, a Congress MP in Rajya Sabha, to do the job for one year. Shukla wouldn't certainly mind becoming a secretary as BCCI vice-presidents are more like rubber-stamp.

Ashish Shelar: Then there is Maharashtra BJP heavyweight Shelar, who is BCCI treasurer and big name in MCA administration. Shelar however is a consummate politician and BCCI secretaryship is a time consuming job. However, being an influential name, he could be in the mix. Arun Dhumal: The IPL Chairman has requisite experience to run the board. He has been a treasurer

and now heads cash-rich league. Dhumal and Shukla swapping designations could be the easiest way out but often BCCI throws up names that no one could envisage.

There is joint secretary Devajit 'Lon' Saikia, not the most popular name but a vital cog in current BCCI administration, who could also be elevated.

Whatever be the permutation and combinations at play, there will be one new candidate in the office-bearers' list if Shah is officially ready to take the plunge.

Among the younger administrators, there is DDCA president Rohan Jaitley or former CAB president Avishek Dalmiya, whose names could come up for discussion. Other young state unit officials include Punjab's Dilsher Khanna, Goa's Vipul Phadke and Chattisgarh's Prabhtej Bhatia, a former IPL Governing Council member. (PTI)

India A bowlers fight back but Australia A's lead surges to 192 on Day 2 of unofficial Test

GOLD COAST (Australia), Aug 23: India A bowlers led a spirited fightback but Australia A tightened grip on the unofficial one-off women's Test, with the hosts' overall lead surging to 192 runs here on the second day on Friday.

India A skipper Minnu Mani completed her match haul of 10 wickets but Kate Peterson returned an impactful 12-5-16-5 to hand Australia a slender 28-run lead in the first innings, as the visitors were bowled out for 184 in reply to the host's 212.

Resuming at 100/2, India A looked on course to take a substantial lead but fell short as Peterson ran through the middle order.

India's set batters Tejal Hasabnis (32) and Shweta Sehrawat (40) were the first to fall as the tourists lost five wickets for 27 runs before Sayali Satghare (21), Mani (17) and Mannat Kashyap (19) put up 56 runs to deny Australia a huge lead.

Mani then swung into action with the ball immediately as Australia A batters' once again struggled against Indian spinners. The

off-spinner first removed opener Georgia Voll and her Australian counterpart Charli Knott for ducks in consecutive overs to reduce the hosts to 0/2 at one stage.


Mani, who claimed a five-wicket haul in the first essay, also got rid of Nicole Faltum (16) before she cleaned up Tess Fintoo with an off-break.

However, opener Emma de Brouge continued to hold fort from one end as she scored 58 runs off 117 balls before falling prey to rookie leg-spinner Priya Mishra.

Wicketkeeper Maddy Drake took matters into her own hands by hitting an unbeaten half century (54 not out of 100 deliveries) to lead Australia's recovery further as the hosts reached 164/7 at the end of play.

Drake added 54 for the sixth wicket with Maitlan Brown (26 off 45) before the latter became Mani's tenth wicket in the game.

Brief Scores: Australia A 212 and 164 for 7 (Emma de Brouge 58, Manddy Darke 54 not out; Minnu Mani 5/47) lead India A 184 (Shweta Sehrawat 40, Tejal Hasabnis 32; Kate Peterson 5/16) by 192 runs. (PTI)



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