

6 WORLD

- Israel strikes Lebanon, hitting Beirut suburbs and north
- Army deployed in Islamabad and Lahore amid protests by Imran Khan's party

8 NATION

- Removal of 50 pc quota cap necessary to protect it: Rahul
- Recognise your power on 'day of change': Vinesh Phogat



Government of Assam



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With the continued efforts to ensure a merit-based and transparent recruitment process

Ceremonial Distribution of Appointment Letters



Recruitment Details

Till 26 September 2024 **1,24,645 candidates**
 7 October 2024 **385 candidates**

Total recruitment
1,25,030
 candidates

Chief Guest

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
 Chief Minister, Assam

In august presence of

Dr Ranoj Pegu
 Minister, Education, etc.

| Departments | Posts | Candidates |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Education | Directorate of Technical Education | Lecturer in Polytechnics: 136 Senior Instructor in Polytechnics and Engineering Colleges: 47 |
| | Directorate of Higher Education | Assistant Professor: 78 Librarian: 3 |
| | Directorate of SCERT | Lecturer: 20 |
| | Health and Family Welfare | Medical Officers (Ayur): 101 |

Distribution of Appointment Letters to
Total 385 candidates

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka reaches debt-restructuring agreement with sovereign bondholders

COLOMBO, Oct 5: Sri Lanka has reached a debt restructuring agreement with its sovereign bondholders, the government has said, marking a crucial step towards the cash-strapped island nation's economic recovery and strengthening.

In a statement on Friday, the Ministry of Finance said following the Agreement in Principle (AIP) reached with representatives of its international and local holders of International Sovereign Bonds (ISB) on September 19, the Sri Lankan authorities have "now completed their consultations" with the country's "Official Creditor Committee (OCC) and the IMF (International Monetary Fund)".

The statement from the Treasury department further said the OCC has confirmed that the terms of the AIP comply with both Comparability of Treatment (CoT) principle and the global lender has also confirmed that the terms of the agreement meet the IMF-supported programme.

The development came as the new National People's Power (NPP) government led by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake gave its nod to accept the agreement during the talks held earlier this week with the visiting IMF delegation here in Colombo.

According to the statement, following the presidential elections on September 21 and the installation of a new government on Sep-



tember 25, the Sri Lankan authorities reiterated their commitment to the debt restructuring plan. The new administration has endorsed the programme's debt targets and the AIP terms, with a focus on expediting the restructuring of ISBs in accordance with the agreed terms.

The President's economic and finance advisor Prof AJ Fernando said the primary objective of the delegation's three-day visit from October 2 to 4 was to "initiate discussions on the progress of the IMF Programme and necessary steps towards the release of the fourth tranche of the USD 2.9 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF)". The IMF made external debt restructuring conditional to the USD 2.9 billion four-year fa-

agreed on the "importance of continuing to safeguard and build on the hard-won gains" that contributed to the country's economic recovery. Asserting that it was "encouraged" by Sri Lanka's commitment to continue the reform efforts, the IMF said it remains a "steadfast partner" in supporting and assisting the country achieve its economic reform goals.

"The IMF team will continue its close engagement with Sri Lanka's economic team to set a date for the third review of the IMF-supported programme, the statement said.

Days before the presidential elections, the then Wickremesinghe-led government, which undertook the laborious task of debt restructuring, announced an in-principle agreement with external commercial creditors for the restructuring of approximately USD 17.5 billion of external commercial debts. Wickremesinghe, who was also the finance minister, was defeated in the presidential election last month.

The NPP, in the run-up to the election, had called the IMF deal a "death trap" and vowed to renegotiate it. In April 2022, Sri Lanka declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining Independence from Britain in 1948. The unprecedented financial crisis led Wickremesinghe's predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to quit office in 2022 amid civil unrest. (PTI)

Centre to finance 65 pc of Chennai Metro Phase 2 project: FinMin

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: The central government will finance 65 per cent of the estimated cost of Chennai Metro Phase-2 project, which will add up to over ₹ 41,000 crore, the finance ministry said on Saturday.

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal to construct three corridors under the Chennai Metro Rail project phase-2 involving a total estimated cost of ₹63,246 crore.

The Centre's share adds up to over ₹ 41,000 crore. In a statement, the finance ministry said the central government will finance almost 65 per cent of the estimated cost of Chennai Metro Phase 2.

This will include the entire required loan of ₹ 33,593 crore, besides the equity and subordinate debt of ₹ 7,425 crore. The balance 35 per cent of the estimated cost will be financed by the state government.

"The loans taken from multilateral and bilateral development agencies will be treated as the loans to the central government and will be provided directly to Chennai Metro Rail Ltd (CMRL) from the Central Government's budget," the statement added.

So far, the project was being implemented as a 'state sector' project with responsibility of the project financing being primarily on the Government of Tamil Nadu to the extent of almost 90 per cent of the estimated project cost.

The role of the central government was to finance 10 per cent of the project cost, excluding land cost and few other items as per the Metro Rail Policy 2017.

However, the central government had also assisted the state government in mobilisation of ₹ 32,548 crore as loans from bilateral and multilateral agencies to the state government directly, of which about ₹ 6,100 crore has been utilised so far.

Before the approval of the project by the Centre, the



responsibility of providing or arranging the loan financing for the project was on the state government.

The Union Cabinet's approval has freed up budgetary resources of the state government to finance other development activities to the extent of ₹ 33,593 crore, the finance ministry added.

"In pursuance of the Union Cabinet's approval, the Ministry of Finance will be approaching the bilateral and multilateral agencies, namely Japan International Cooperation Agency, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and New Development Bank for renegotiating the loan and project agreements," the ministry said.

The responsibility of repayment of the loan will be on the company (CMRL). The repayment would normally start after a moratorium of at least five years, i.e., more or less after the completion of the project.

"In the event of CMRL not being in a position to repay the loan, it would be the obligation of the State Government to provide financial support to the company to enable the repayment in those years," the ministry added. (PTI)

Akasa Air launches Dussehra special meal

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: In the wake of Dussehra, Akasa Air has launched its third edition 'Dussehra special meal', an official statement said on Saturday.

This unique meal features the flavourful Hinge Aer Dal Kochuri, a delightful combination of spices and lentils, complemented by Kaju Fulkopi, a local cauliflower dish and a decadent Baked Rasgulla for dessert, served with a beverage of choice.

"This speciality meal will be available throughout October 2024 across the Akasa Air network and can be easily pre-booked through Akasa Air's website or mobile app," the statement added.

Akasa Air has been committed to offering specially curated meal options that reflect regional specialties associated with various celebrations. "From Makar Sankranti to Valentine's Day, Holi, Eid, Mother's Day, International Yoga Day, Monsoon season, Navroz, Onam, Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussehra, Diwali, and Christmas, Café Akasa continues to enhance the flying experience with festive meals," it added.

The airline also offers a pre-selection of cakes on its regular menu for flyers who want to celebrate the birthdays of their loved ones in the skies.

Notably, 12 million passengers and connects with 27 cities, namely Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Delhi, Guwahati, Agartala, Pune, Lucknow, Goa, Hyderabad, Varanasi, Bagdogra, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Port Blair, Ayodhya, Gwalior, Srinagar, Prayagraj, Gorakhpur, Doha, Jeddah, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait.

Govt grants one-year extension to RBI Dy Gov

HT Bureau

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: The Government has extended the term of RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao for a period of one year, according to sources.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the re-appointment of Rao for a period of one year with effect from October 9, 2024 or until further orders, sources said quoting a Government order dated October 4.

The ACC is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rao was appointed as RBI Deputy Governor in October 2020 for a period of three years. Rao was elevated as RBI executive director in November 2016. An economics graduate and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Cochin, Rao joined the central bank in 1984. As a career central banker, he has exposure to various aspects of the RBI's functioning. (PTI)

PM Modi launches projects related to agri, animal husbandry in Maha

WASHIM, Oct 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched ₹23,300 crore initiatives related to agriculture and animal husbandry sectors at Washim in Maharashtra. Modi, who is on a one-day visit to Maharashtra, arrived at the Nanded airport in the morning, from where he was flown to Washim in a helicopter. In Washim, he offered prayers at the Jagdamba Mata temple in Poharadevi. He later paid tributes to Sant Sevalal Maharaj and Sant Ramrao Maharaj at their 'samadhis' (memorials) in Poharadevi. The PM then inaugurated Banjara Virasat Museum, celebrating the rich heritage of Banjara community. During an event held later, Modi disbursed PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi's 18th instalment of ₹ 20,000 crore to around 9.4 crore farmers. With the release of this instalment, around ₹ 3.45 lakh crore have

been released to farmers under this scheme, officials said. The PM also launched the 5th instalment of NaMo Shetkari Mahasamman Nidhi Yojana disbursing about ₹ 2,000 crore. He inaugurated more than 7,500 projects under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), worth over ₹ 1,920 crore. The major projects include custom hiring centres, primary processing units, warehouses, sorting and grading units, cold storage projects, post-harvest management projects among others. The PM also launched 9,200 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) with a combined turnover of around ₹ 1,300 crore. He launched the Unified Genomic Chip for cattle and indigenous sex-sorted semen technology. This initiative aims to increase availability of sex sorted semen at affordable price to farmers and reduce the cost by around ₹ 200 per dose. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 3.

Cong being run by gang

but when they left, successive Congress governments continued the trend and prevented the community from coming into the mainstream," the PM alleged. The PM also accused the Congress of leaving no stone unturned to make the lives of farmers miserable. "The governments run by the Congress used the money meant for farmers and irrigation schemes for corruption," he alleged.

Modi asked people to beware of Congress's propaganda about false assurances of farm loan waivers. "People in Telangana are still waiting for the loan waiver. In Karnataka, the Congress government stopped the irrigation schemes started by the BJP regime," he said.

Stating that Maharashtra has the capacity to lead the country to economic progress, Modi said the state government was giving double benefit to farmers in terms of financial assistance, in addition to what the central government was providing.

When the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government was in power, it put a speed breaker in the work of the Poharadevi pilgrimage centre upgradation, which was started during the chief ministership of Devendra Fadnis. But it has now been completed at a cost of Rs 700 crore, he said.

As long as MVA was in power in Maharashtra, it worked with only two agendas - to stop the projects related to farmers and to commit corruption in the money of these projects. The funds sent by the Centre were being diverted away from the beneficiaries by that government, he claimed.

The Prime Minister, who launched various initiatives of Rs 23,300 crore related to agriculture and animal husbandry sectors, expressed happiness over the completion of the Banjara Virasat Museum in Poharadevi.

This museum would introduce future generations to the ancient culture and vast heritage of the Banjara community, he said. "Our Banjara community has played a big role in India's social life and journey of development," he said. Modi paid tributes to several revered figures from the Banjara community, including Raja Lakhi Shah Banjara and Sant Sevalal Maharaj. "The Banjara community has given many such saints who have given immense energy to the spiritual consciousness of India," he said.

The PM highlighted their efforts in preserving and nurturing the country's cultural legacy over centuries and lamented that during British rule the entire Banjara community was branded as criminals. "Our government's every decision, every policy is committed to Viksit Bharat, and our farmers are a major foundation of this vision," PM Modi said.

Farmers in Maharashtra, especially Vidarbha, faced big hardships for many decades, he said. On the disbursement of the 18th instalment of the PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi worth about Rs 20,000 crore to around 9.5 crore farmers, the Prime Minister said the state government strives to provide double benefits to its farmers. Speaking about providing assistance to beneficiaries of Ladki Bahin Yojna, the PM said the scheme is empowering the capabilities of 'nari shakti'. (PTI)

SC 'losing patience' over

including giving ration cards to all migrant workers, who were distressed during the COVID-19 pandemic, registered with the 'e-Shram' portal.

The 'e-Shram' is a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) launched by the Union ministry of labour and employment with the primary aim of facilitating delivery of welfare benefits and social security measures to the unorganised sector workers across the country.

The top court, in the 2021 judgement, had termed as "unpardonable" the Centre's "apathy and lackadaisical attitude" towards creating the National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW) and ordered its commencement by July 31, 2021, so that all migrant workers are registered and welfare measures extended to them during COVID distress. It had ordered the states and UTs to frame schemes for providing free dry rations to them till the pandemic lasts, while the Centre will have to allocate additional foodgrains. (PTI)

Youth held for allegedly

Upon receiving the information, a police team from Gabharupathar Police Outpost promptly responded to the crime scene and recovered the body.

Meanwhile, the body has been sent for post-mortem, and further investigations are underway.

SC dismisses pleas seeking

directed the State Bank of India (SBI), the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit the details of electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019, to the Election Commission, which was asked to publish the information on its official website.

Under the electoral bonds scheme, ruling parties can coerce people and entities to contribute, the apex court had said and rejected as "erroneous" the Centre's argument that it protects the confidentiality of the contributor which is akin to the system of secret ballot.

The electoral bonds scheme, which was notified by the government on January 2, 2018, was pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring transparency in political funding. On March 13, the SBI told the Supreme Court that a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were purchased and 22,030 redeemed by political parties between April 1, 2019 and February 15 this year.

In a compliance affidavit filed in the apex court, the SBI said as per the court's direction, it has made available the details of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India before the close of business hours on March 12. The electoral bond controversy had become a major poll issue during the Lok Sabha elections as the opposition alleged it was an "extortion racket," while the ruling BJP defended the scheme, saying it had a laudable objective of bringing transparency in poll funding. (PTI)

India will lead in global

priorities. We have to invest more in technology." Director of MAGIC Prasad Kokil said applications for the innovation challenge are open till October 31, and the final round will take place in December. (PTI)

Guwahati sculptors worried

are hard-pressed to finish on time as rains have played havoc," he said, as he continued polishing off an idol. "The owners of this workshop, a husband-and-wife couple, are working day and night with us. We can only hope that the weather clears up a bit," Ranjan added, even as a light drizzle continued pattering on the tarpaulin sheet used to cover the front side of the shop.

Blue tarpaulin sheets cover the front of all idol-making workshops in Pandu as the workers scurry to complete the idols, with rains refusing to stop giving them anxious time. Faces fraught with concern, their hands move with dexterity in bringing alive the idols of clay in the form of Goddess Durga and her entourage as they sound confident of meeting the deadlines.

"We have made a commitment to deliver by Panchami and we will do so. Gods will help us, we know," Ratan Paul added optimistically.

As per the Regional Meteorological Centre, Guwahati, the city has received 106.4 mm of rain this month so far. It has forecast a generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers till October nine, with a prediction for rain or thunderstorm for October 10-11 in its weekly weather report for Guwahati. The city has been receiving rain for the past few days, also leading to waterlogging problems in many parts. (PTI)

Travelling to Pak for multilateral

Memorial lecture on governance, Jaishankar said "like with any neighbour, India would certainly like to have good relations with Pakistan."

"But that cannot happen by overlooking cross-border terrorism and indulging in wishful thinking. As the Sardar demonstrated, realism must be the foundation for policy," he said.

The decision to send the senior minister is seen as a display of India's commitment to the SCO. The ties between India and Pakistan came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack. The relations further deteriorated after India on August 5, 2019, announced the withdrawal of special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and the bifurcation of the state into two union territories. Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties with India after New Delhi abrogated Article 370.

India has been maintaining that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan while insisting that the onus is on Islamabad to create an environment free of terror and hostility for such engagement.

Pakistan's then foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited India in May 2023 to attend an in-person meeting of the foreign ministers of SCO nations in Goa. It was the first visit of a Pakistani foreign minister to India in almost 12 years.

In his address, Jaishankar also delved into India's historical ties with Pakistan. "Today, we may be tempted to speculate what Sardar Patel's approach would have been on the Pakistan-related issues that came up in the decade after his passing away," he said.

"For example, would he have extended his support to the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960? Or dismissed it like the then Prime Minister, as an issue just about a 'painful of water' that was negligible in the context of larger international politics?"

"There was an equally serious misjudgement of Pakistan by India. Within our system, Patel was the most forceful advocate of using all avenues of pressure on that country after the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir," Jaishankar said. "His reluctance to take the matter to the UN itself stemmed from the belief that Pakistan was better directly dealt with, rather than in a framework that Pakistan could manipulate," he said. (PTI)

Ola Electric launches 'BOSS - Biggest Ola Season Sale'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: India's largest pure-play EV company, Ola Electric on Saturday launched its 'BOSS - Biggest Ola Season Sale' campaign for the festive season. The company has announced entry into its S1 portfolio for as low as ₹ 49,999 under the campaign.

Additionally, the company has introduced festive benefits of up to ₹ 37,000, which include Hyper-charging credits, MoveOS+ upgrade, exclusive deals on accessories & Care+ coupled with irresistible exciting offers.

"We are excited to bring in the BOSS of all offers for our customers this festive season, making it the best time to buy an EV. BOSS is our biggest ever festive offering yet, as we continue with our mission to #EndICEAge and deepen EV penetration across the country. With the biggest discounts, best deals, and attractive financing offers, this would be the perfect time for EVs to scale up and give ICE vehicles a run for their money," an official statement quoted Bhavish Aggarwal, chairman and MD, Ola Electric.

Last month, Ola Electric announced the Network Partner Program with an aim to expand its sales and service network across India. Under the program, Ola Electric plans to grow the network to 10,000 by the end of 2025. Additionally, Ola Electric will train 1 lakh third-party mechanics to make every mechanic in India EV-ready.

Further, to redefine the after-sales experience for its customers, Ola Electric recently announced the #HyperService campaign. Under the campaign, the company plans to double its service network to 1,000 centres by December this year and has rolled out quick-service guarantee and industry-first AI-led proactive maintenance & diagnostics for its customers.

Ola Electric offers an expansive S1 portfolio with six offerings across attractive price points catering to customers with different range requirements. While the premium offerings S1 Pro and S1 Air are priced at ₹1,34,999 and ₹1,07,499, respectively, the mass market offerings include S1 X portfolio (2 kWh, 3 kWh, and 4 kWh) priced at ₹74,999, ₹87,999, and ₹101,999, respectively.

Meet Rishi Saikia: Ensuring Seamless Seller Experience this Festive Season at Amazon India

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: As the festive season begins, Amazon India celebrates its employees, associates and partners who contribute to the fast and reliable customer and seller experiences during the festive period and beyond. Hundreds and thousands of individuals work to ensure a smooth operation. Among them is Rishi Saikia, senior manager, marketing & seller success at Amazon, who has been with the company for six years and has contributed to the company's growth.

Rishi's expertise in sales, marketing, and general management, along with an MBA from IIM Bangalore, allowed him to de-

velop a well-rounded business acumen and a deep understanding of the consumer landscape in India, enriching his 20 plus years of experience in roles across cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bangalore.

Rishi was drawn to Amazon's customer-centric philosophy. He shares, "I've always admired Amazon's relentless focus on the customer. Whether it's the range of products, the seamless user experience, or the innovation in services, Amazon consistently raises the bar. Being a part of this environment has been transformative, both professionally and personally. At Amazon, I've found more than just a place to work;

I've found a platform that allows me to make a real difference in the lives of our customers and sellers. It's a place where passion, ownership, and growth come together in powerful ways."

His understanding of India's diverse consumer landscape supports Amazon & customer-centric mission, especially during high-demand periods like the festive season.

Preparation for the peak season involves meticulous planning and execution across multiple areas. From efficiently onboarding new sellers onto Amazon marketplace and equipping existing ones with the necessary tools and insights, Rishi and his team focus on help-

ing small and medium businesses maximise their sale potential during this business-critical time.

Rishi has been involved in scaling Amazon's seller ecosystem in India, which now includes over 1.6 million sellers, many from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. This achievement is particularly meaningful for Rishi, who takes great pride in empowering small and medium businesses to grow and succeed on a global platform.

He states, "Seeing sellers from small towns across India build thriving businesses on Amazon is incredibly rewarding. It's not just about sales; it's about enabling dreams and creating opportunities."

10 apprehended from Goalpara, Hojai dists: NIA

NIA arrests alleged terror operative during pan-India searches in 26 locations ● Himanta concerned about future of Assam

HT Bureau
NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI, Oct 5: In a massive pan-India crackdown against terrorists' outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), the NIA on Saturday conducted searches at 26 locations in five states and arrested one person and questioned several suspects, including 10 in Assam, involved in motivating youth into committing violent terror attacks across the country, according to an official statement.

Sheikh Sultan Salah Uddin Ayubi alias Ayubi was taken into custody after searches at 26 locations in Assam, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir, it said.

The accused was arrested on account of his incriminatory role in the conspiracy case, said the state-



ment issued by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

According to an official statement by the NIA, the investigative agency, based on a case registered in Delhi regarding Islamist Jihad activities, carried out the operation in

coordination with the Assam Police. Chief Minister Himanta Bishwa

Sarma, in the aftermath of the raids, told the media, "Today, a nationwide campaign was carried out by the NIA against Jaish-e-Mohammed. Among the individuals

arrested, 7 hailed from Goalpara district of Assam."

According to a NIA, some arrests were made in Hojai district.

Highlighting the grave threat terrorism possesses for the state of Assam, Sarma said, "Threats from terror groups are real in Assam. Time and again, it has been proven true. Whenever NIA carries out a raid across the nation, at least one individual is apprehended from Assam."

"Incidents as such prove that in the next 15-20 years, people of Assam will have to live in a deep state of fear. Such fundamental mentality will make sustenance of the locals difficult in Assam," He further stressed.

Meanwhile, all the suspects are in NIA custody as the investigation and legal procedures are going on.

Assam oppn parties rename alliance as 'Asom Sonmilito Morcha'

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: The conglomerate of opposition parties in Assam, including the Congress, on Saturday rechristened itself as 'Asom Sonmilito Morcha' or ASOM, as the alliance prepared new strategies to take on the BJP-led ruling dispensation, a senior leader of the forum said.

The platform of the opposition parties was previously known as the United Opposition Forum, Assam.

Addressing a press conference here, its secretary and Assam Jaitya Parishad (AJP) president Lurinjyoti Gogoi said, "Prior to the last Lok Sabha elections, the opposition parties had united and formed the 'Brodi Aikya Mancha, Asom.' Starting with 10-11 members, our strength has now grown to 16 parties."

He said the members are devising strategies and working with new vigour in preparation for the 2026 assembly elections.

"After discussion with the parties, it has been unanimously resolved to rename the conglomerate as Asom Sonmilito Morcha or ASOM



'mitrojut' (alliance)," Gogoi said.

The AJP chief exuded confidence about the alliance forming the next government in the state and said the opposition parties will unitedly fight all ensuing elections at different levels, including the panchayat polls slated for the end of the year.

Congress working president Jakir Hussain Sikdar, talking to reporters separately, said the decision to

change the name was taken as per people's opinion.

"The public told us that we should remove the 'opposition' word as they are confident that we will form the next government. Hence, this decision to change it," Sikdar said.

Besides the Congress and AJP, other members of the alliance include the Left parties, Rajgor Dal and Aam Aadmi Party. (PTI)

HT BRIEFS

Mild Earthquake

IMPHAL: A mild earthquake measuring 3.6 on the Richter scale was recorded in the Manipur-Nagaland border area on Friday, causing temporary concern among residents but fortunately resulting in no reported casualties or damage. The tremor was felt in Manipur's northern Ukhrul district and neighboring areas of Nagaland. This mountainous region, which shares a border with Myanmar, is no stranger to seismic activity, with frequent quakes keeping local authorities and residents on high alert. According to officials from Manipur's disaster management authority, the tremor occurred at a depth of 30 kilometers beneath the earth's surface, a relatively shallow quake, yet one that was felt over a broad swathe of territory.

STF raid

GUWAHATI: Acting on information, STF Assam under the Basistha PS Jurisdiction carried out a raid at Ganesh Nagar, apprehending a notorious drug peddler. In addition to the arrest, Police recovered many other items, including one soap box containing suspected heroin weighing 12.5 grams (without the soap box), one mobile phone, and cash of ₹300. The arrested individual is identified as Suchichangh Momin, aged 30, S/O: Lt. Farindra K Changma, resident of Pillingkata, PS: Khanapara, Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya.

Landslide

SHILLONG: The landslide that claimed these victims occurred early in the morning around 8 a.m., catching them by surprise while they were inside their homes. The five-year-old victim, Miardo P. Marak, was among the most heart-wrenching casualties, with rescue workers recovering his body from the debris hours after the landslide struck. Another victim, 18-year-old Sarika, lost her life in a similar way. Moralistic N. Marak, the 28-year-old daughter of Santa N. Marak, was among the survivors, though she sustained injuries in the incident. Aside from the fatalities, four others were reported injured during the catastrophic events. Among them were Frederick A. Sangma, a resident of North Hawakhana in Tura, who was with two women—Parcella A. Sangma, also from North Hawakhana, and the injured Moralistic N. Marak.

Cong being run by gang of urban Naxals: PM Modi

'Party maintained a derogatory attitude towards Banjara community'

WASHIM, Oct 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday alleged that the Congress is being run by a "gang of urban Naxals," and asked people to unite to defeat the "dangerous agenda" of that party.

He also accused the Congress of looting the poor and not improving their condition for its selfish politics. "They (Congress) think that if we all unite, then their agenda to divide the country will fail," Modi said, addressing a rally in Washim district of Maharashtra after launching various projects.

"Congress only knows how to loot the poor and keep them poor for its selfish politics. It only knows how to divide people. We have to be



alert and remain united. Congress is run by a gang of urban Naxals," he alleged. Everyone can see how closely Congress stands with those people who do not harbour good intentions for India, Modi said.

"Drugs worth thousands of crores of rupees were seized in Delhi recently. A Congress leader is sus-

pected to be the kingpin. Congress wants to contest elections from the money it gets by pushing the youth towards drugs," he said.

Modi alleged that Congress' thinking has been foreign from the very beginning.

"Like the British rule, this Congress family also does not consider Dalits, backwards, and tribals as their equals. They feel that India should be ruled by only one family. That is why they have always maintained a derogatory attitude towards the Banjara community," he said.

"Saints from the Banjara community inspired culture and spiritualism. Britishers harassed the community, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

SC dismisses pleas seeking review of verdict scrapping electoral bonds scheme

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: The Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its February 15 verdict, which had scrapped the Modi government's electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjay Khanna, B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra said there is no error apparent on the face of the record.

The top court also rejected the prayer for listing the review petitions in an open court.

"Having perused the review petitions, there is no error apparent on the face of the record. No case for review under Order XLVII Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013. The review petitions are, therefore, dismissed," the bench said in its order dated September 25 that was uploaded today.

The review pleas filed by advocate Mathews J Nedumpara and others contended that the matter related to the scheme falls in the exclusive domain of legislative and executive policy.

"The court failed to notice that even assuming the issue is justiciable, the petitioners therein having

not claimed any specific legal injury exclusive to them, their petition could not have been decided as if a private litigation for the enforcement of rights which are specific and exclusive to them," Nedumpara had submitted in his plea.

He had said the court failed to notice that the public opinion could be sharply divided and the majority of the people of this country could probably be in support of the scheme, brought into existence by their elected representatives, and that they too have a right to be heard as much as the petitioners.

"The court failed to notice that, if at all it is venturing into the forbidden domain of adjudicating upon a matter of legislative policy, they have a duty to hear the public at large and that the proceedings ought to be converted into representative proceedings," the plea had said.

Holding that the 2018 electoral bond scheme was "violative" of the constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression and right to information, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice of India Chandrachud had scrapped the scheme. The top court had also (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

SC 'losing patience' over delay in ration card to migrant workers

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: We have lost our patience, the Supreme Court has said while expressing concern over the delay by the states and Union Territories in providing ration cards to the migrant workers.

A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Ahsanuddin Amanullah granted a final opportunity to the Centre, states, and Union Territories (UTs) to take necessary steps in this regard by November 19.

"We have lost our patience, we are making it very clear that there will be no more indulgence."

"We are giving you one last window to comply with our order or your secretary will remain present," the bench said.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the

Centre, informed that only one ration card is issued per priority household under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana.

The top court was hearing a suo motu case registered in 2020 after taking cognizance of the problems and miseries of the migrant labourers during Covid-19.

The apex court had earlier asked the Centre to file an affidavit giving details about compliance with its 2021 judgement and subsequent directions on providing ration cards and other welfare measures to the migrant workers. The top court, in the June 29, 2021 judgement and subsequent orders, had passed a slew of directions to the authorities asking them to undertake welfare measures, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Youth held for allegedly strangulating mother to death

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Oct 5: In a horrific incident, a man has been arrested for allegedly murdering his own mother in Dibrugarh, eastern Assam, on Saturday.

The accused has been identified as Shankarjyoti Gogoi, a resident of Banipur Bylane No. 11, Dibrugarh. Confirming the incident, Dibrugarh SP Rakesh Reddy said the accused has been arrested, and the investigation is ongoing.

"The motive behind the crime is not known at this time, but further investigation will reveal the truth," added the SP.

According to reports, the incident took place on Friday night at their home in Banipur Bylane No. 11. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Exit polls say advantage to NC-Cong in J&K

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, Oct 5: Most of the exit polls predicted that the Congress-NC alliance has an advantage in the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir but the BJP remained hopeful of forming the government in the Union territory.

The C-Voter-India Today survey predicted 40-48 seats for the NC-Congress alliance and put the BJP at 27-32 seats in the 90-member J&K assembly. Dainik Bhaskar pegged the NC-Congress alliance at 35-40 and the BJP at 20-25. Peoples' Pulse saw the NC-Congress alliance with 46-50 seats as against the BJP's 23-27, while Republic-Gulistan put the NC-Congress tally lower at 31-36 as against the BJP's 28-30.

In different polls, the PDP was seen winning between 5 and 12 seats, while other candidates were also seen bagging 4-16 seats. The results of the assembly elections will be announced on October 8. (PTI)

Travelling to Pak for multilateral event, not to discuss bilateral relations: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday appeared to rule out any bilateral talks with his Pakistani counterpart Muhammad Ishaq Dar during his visit to Islamabad this month to attend a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

India on Friday announced that Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation at the SCO Heads of Government summit in Islamabad.

"I expect there would be a lot of media interest because of the very nature of the relationship," he said at an interactive session.

"I do want to say it will be for a multilateral event. I am not going there to discuss India-Pakistan relations. I am going there to be a good member of the SCO," he said.

Jaishankar's remarks came following a question on whether he will hold bilateral talks with his



Pakistani counterpart in Islamabad.

In the address at the event, the external affairs minister said like with any neighbour, India would certainly like to have good relations with Pakistan, but that cannot happen by overlooking cross-border terrorism.

It will be for the first time in nearly nine years that India's external affairs minister will travel to Pakistan even as the ties between the two neighbours remained frosty over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from

City received 106.4 mm of rain so far

Guwahati sculptors worried about completion of idols amidst incessant rain

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: An anxious Ratan Paul peeks towards the entrance of his smoke-filled workshop in Guwahati's Pandu area, hoping to catch a bright ray of sunlight without the raindrops cutting it out.

Paul claims not to have witnessed such a long spell of incessant rains in his career of nearly 50 years as a sculptor of idols as he, like other idol-makers in Assam's largest city, pray to the heavens to clear the weather so that they can complete their Durga idols in time.

"I have been in this profession for 49 years now and never has it rained for so long before Durga Puja. We are really worried about how to complete the idols," Paul told PTI while giving the finishing touches to special decorative



pieces of clay for the idols at his workshop. "We are using firewood, coal and even burners connected to LPG cylinders to dry the idols," he said, pointing to the

sculpted idols being placed in groups around lit stoves with the smoke filling the entire workshop. Paul's son, Kanchan, who joined his family business after gradua-

tion, added, "We are at wit's end on how to finish the work properly. We have to move on to the painting now and the sculptures are not even dry yet."

The Paul's workshop has about 20 orders this year, all from Guwahati barring one that needs to be delivered to Nalbari, about 70 km from here.

They have hired seven to nine additional hands to assist them in meeting the Puja orders, as they do annually, while a couple of others are employed on a regular basis.

Sharing their anxiety is Ranjan Paul, a workman at a nearby workshop that is run by a couple.

"I am from Goalpara and am here for the Puja orders. We have four orders for Durga idols this year and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India will lead in global defence exports: DRDO chairman

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, Oct 5: India will be among the leading exporters of defence equipment in ten years, and the imports will come down to five to ten per cent, DRDO chairman Samir V Kamat said here on Saturday.

Kamat said the country's defence imports have been decreasing, and out of the capital acquisition budget last year, nearly 90 per cent was used on indigenous systems. Kamat was speaking at Chhatrapati Shahu College of Engineering, where he inaugurated the Defence Innovation Challenge for Excellence (DICE) organised by the Marathwada Accelerator for Growth and Incubation Council (MAGIC).

"It is true that ten years ago, we were leading im-

porters of defence systems. But if we look at last year's figures, out of our capital acquisition budget, nearly 90 per cent was used on indigenous systems. I am confident that in ten years the imports will be negligible. A country can't make everything. So five to 10 per cent (import) will remain," he said.

India will be among the leading exporters of defence equipment in ten years, he added.

Talking to reporters after the event, Kamat said India has set a target to achieve exports worth ₹ 50,000 crore by 2028 and ₹ 1 lakh crore by 2035.

He said, "The spending on defence-related research should be more. However, we are not a developed country yet, and there are other (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assamese: A timeless legacy honored with classical language status

By: Dipak Kurmi

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recently made a significant announcement that is set to bolster India's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. The Cabinet has officially conferred the prestigious status of "Classical Language" to five more languages: Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali. This decision recognizes the profound historical and cultural importance of these languages, which have been a custodian of Bharat's ancient cultural heritage, serving as vessels for the historical milestones of their respective communities.

The evolution of classical languages in India

The concept of "Classical Languages" is relatively new in India's linguistic policies, first introduced on October 12, 2004, when Tamil was designated as the first Classical Language. This move underscored the significance of preserving languages that boast a long, rich history. The criteria for conferring the status of Classical Language were laid out during the same period, which primarily include high antiquity, the existence of ancient literature or texts considered valuable by generations, and the originality of the literary tradition.

The language should not have borrowed heavily from other speech communities, and there

may also be a recognized discontinuity between its classical form and the modern usage.

Initially, Tamil was the first to be recognized under these criteria. Later, in 2005, Sanskrit was also declared a Classical Language. Over the years, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia joined this illustrious list. With the inclusion of Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali, the number of Classical Languages in India has expanded significantly, reflecting the importance of preserving linguistic diversity.

The linguistic experts committee and revised criteria

The Linguistic Experts Committee (LEC), constituted by the Ministry of Culture under the Sahitya Akademi in November 2004, played a pivotal role in this process. After thorough examinations of language histories, the committee set out criteria for recognizing Classical Languages. Over time, the criteria were slightly revised, especially in November 2005, when Sanskrit was added to the list.

The revised guidelines required that a language should have a recorded history of at least 1500-2000 years, ancient texts that have served as valuable heritage for generations of speakers, and a distinct literary tradition. Additionally, the classical form of the language should be distinguishable from its modern form.

In 2024, this committee met

again to review the eligibility of languages such as Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali. During their meeting on July 25, 2024, the committee unanimously agreed that these languages fulfilled all the necessary criteria for Classical Language status.

The journey of Assamese towards classical status

One of the most prominent beneficiaries of this decision is Assamese, or Asamiya, a classical Indo-Aryan language spoken predominantly in the northeastern state of Assam. With over 15 million native speakers, Assamese is the official language of Assam and serves as the lingua franca for the wider region. On October 3, 2024, Assamese was formally designated as a Classical Language by the Government of India. This recognition was a significant milestone for the language, whose history dates back to ancient times and which boasts a unique literary and cultural tradition.

Assamese is an old language that evolved from the middle Indo-Aryan Magadhi Prakrit, along with other Eastern Indo-Aryan languages. Its close ties with languages like Bengali, Bishnupriya Manipuri, and Chakma highlight its historical linguistic significance. Over the centuries, Assamese developed its own script, an abugida system, which is written from left to right. It was the court language of the Ahom kingdom from the 17th century and has

long been a vehicle for artistic, literary, and intellectual expression in the region.

Historical and cultural evolution of Assamese

The history of Assamese can be divided into various stages. The earliest forms of the language are traced to the 9th-century Buddhist verses called Charyapada, which bear strong affinities with Assamese as well as Bengali, Maithili, and Odia. This period, when the Prakrit was transitioning into distinct regional languages, marked the beginning of a unique linguistic tradition in the region.

The Charyapada are not just valuable as linguistic artifacts; they reflect the cultural and spiritual life of early Assam. The expressiveness found in these early verses has a lasting presence in Assamese folk songs, such as the Deh-Bicarar Git. As Assamese developed over the centuries, it became deeply intertwined with the region's religious and cultural history.

The 13th-century works of Hema Sarasvati, including his poem Prahlada Carita, demonstrate the emergence of a distinctly Assamese literary form. In the 14th century, Madhava Kandali translated the Ramayana into Assamese, producing the famous Saptakanda Ramayana. This work, written in the court of the Kachari king Mahamanikya, solidified Assamese's role as a major literary language in eastern India.

One of the most important phases in Assamese literary history came in the 15th century with the rise of Sankardev and the Ekasarana Dharma movement. Sankardev's efforts to produce translated works, new literary forms such as Borgeets (devotional songs), and Ankiya Naat (one-act plays) infused Assamese literature with new life. His work was further developed by his followers, particularly Madhavdev. During this period, Assamese prose also took a leap forward with Bhattacharya's translations of the Bhagavata Purana and Bhagavad Gita into Assamese prose. This was a pivotal moment in Assamese literature, as Bhattacharya's prose was classical, elegant, and marked by a high usage of Sanskrit forms within an Assamese syntax.

Assamese during the Ahom Kingdom and beyond

The Ahom kingdom, which ruled Assam for several centuries, played a significant role in promoting Assamese as the court language. During the 17th century, Assamese moved into the state's administrative domain, becoming a formal language of diplomacy and governance. The Buranjis - chronicles dealing with statecraft, administration, and history - became a major literary genre during this period, and their influence on the language's development was profound.

The Buranjis not only standardized the prose style of Assamese

but also brought in elements of Arabic and Persian, reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of the Ahom court. It was during this period that eastern Assam's speech patterns became more homogeneous, leading to the establishment of a standard form of Assamese.

Modern Assamese and its struggles

The modern period of Assamese began in the 19th century with the introduction of printing, most notably the publication of the Assamese Bible in 1813 by the Serampore Mission Press. However, after the British East India Company took over Assam in 1836, Assamese faced a setback. The British introduced Bengali as the official language in Assam's schools, courts, and offices. This decision was influenced by the British administration's earlier move to promote Bengali as a replacement for Persian in Bengal.

Amidst this linguistic displacement, a revival effort was led by the American Baptist Mission (ABM), which established a press in Sibsagar in 1846 and began publishing Orunodoi, an Assamese periodical. The ABM also produced the first Assamese grammar and dictionary, arguing strongly with British officials to reinstate Assamese. Eventually, Assamese was declared the official vernacular of Assam in 1873, just before Assam became a Chief Commissioner's Province in 1874.

The future of Assamese

With its newly conferred Classical Language status, Assamese is poised for renewed growth and prominence. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with Sahitya Akademi, has laid out an ambitious strategy for promoting Classical Languages, including Assamese. This plan involves preserving and digitizing ancient texts, promoting research, and offering university courses focused on Classical Languages.

The recognition of Assamese as a Classical Language is more than just an academic or cultural honor. It is an acknowledgment of the deep roots of Assamese history, literature, and identity. The status will also create new employment opportunities in fields such as academia, translation, publishing, and digital archiving. Assam, and indeed all of India, will benefit from this recognition as it brings national and international attention to the language.

The recognition of Assamese as a Classical Language marks a significant milestone in the history of Indian linguistics. It highlights the rich history and cultural significance of Assamese, and acknowledges the immense contributions of the language to India's literary and cultural heritage. As Assamese joins the ranks of India's Classical Languages, it not only secures its legacy but also ensures its place in the future as a living, evolving language. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)*

Assamese: A classical language and its significance

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The recognition of Assamese as a classical language by the Union Cabinet of India is a monumental event in the cultural and linguistic history of Assam. This acknowledgment affirms the rich heritage, antiquity, and literary depth of the Assamese language. Spoken by millions of people primarily in Assam and across parts of Northeast India, Assamese has played an integral role in shaping the region's cultural, literary, and intellectual identity. The conferment of classical language status not only elevates the stature of Assamese but also ensures its preservation and promotion for future generations.

The historical roots of Assamese can be traced back to the 6th century, with its literary and linguistic evolution having deep connections to the larger Indo-Aryan language family. Over the centuries, Assamese has absorbed influences from both Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan linguistic traditions, while maintaining a unique identity that reflects the cultural diversity of the region. The recognition of Assamese as a classical language places it alongside other classical languages of India, such as Sanskrit, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia, all of which have been recognized for their ancient literary traditions and historical significance.

The criteria for a language to be granted classical status are stringent, ensuring that only languages with a proven antiquity and a rich body of literature receive this recognition.

A language must have an ancient history of over 1,500 years and an extensive corpus of classical literature. Assamese meets these criteria through its extensive body of literary works, including poetry, drama, religious texts, and philosophical writings that span centuries. This classical status serves to honor the literary heritage of Assam, safeguarding its linguistic history while promoting further study and exploration.

One of the most celebrated periods in Assamese literary history is the medieval Bhakti movement, which had a profound impact on the region's culture and language. The contributions of saints and scholars like Srimanta Sankardev and Madhavdev laid the foundation for Assamese literature and philosophy. Srimanta Sankardev, a philosopher, poet, and playwright, was instrumental in shaping the literary tradition of Assam. His works, which include the Borgeets (devotional songs), Ankiya Naat (one-act plays), and various philosophical writings, remain central to Assamese literature and culture to this day.

These texts not only highlight the spiritual and religious life of Assam but also underscore the linguistic sophistication of the Assamese language.

Sankardev's works are remarkable not only for their religious significance but also for their literary innovation. His Ankiya Naat, for instance, represents an early form of drama in the Assamese language, combining poetry, music, and dance in a unique format.

These plays were written in a form of Assamese that drew from both Sanskrit and the vernacular, making them accessible to a wide audience while also preserving the richness of classical literary forms. Sankardev's contributions to Assamese literature are an integral part of the claim for Assamese to be recognized as a clas-

sical language.

In addition to Sankardev, Madhavdev, one of his foremost disciples, made significant contributions to the literary canon of Assamese. Madhavdev's Namghosa, a devotional text composed in verse, is one of the most revered works in Assamese literature.

It reflects the spiritual and philosophical ideas of the Bhakti movement while employing the Assamese language in a manner that resonates with both religious and literary traditions. Together, Sankardev and Madhavdev created a literary legacy that has had a lasting impact on Assamese culture, contributing to the rich body of literature that underpins the claim for classical language status.

The recognition of Assamese as a classical language also has significant implications for the preservation of its ancient texts and manuscripts. Many of these texts are housed in monasteries, private collections, and libraries across Assam, and they are often fragile due to their age.

With the classical language status, there is an increased likelihood that resources

will be allocated for the preservation and digitization of these important literary works. This effort will ensure that future generations of scholars, researchers, and students have access to the rich literary heritage of Assamese.

In addition to the preservation of ancient texts, the classical language status will also foster the growth of academic programs dedicated to the study of Assamese language and literature. Universities and educational institutions in Assam and across India will now have greater opportunities to establish departments and programs focused on Assamese.

This will encourage a new generation of students to engage with the language, furthering its preservation and development. Moreover, the recognition of Assamese as a classical language is likely to attract scholarly attention from both Indian and international researchers, leading to new studies and research on the language's history, literature, and cultural significance.

The designation of Assamese as a classical language is also a source of immense pride for the people of Assam. For many, it represents an affirmation of the language's historical importance and its contributions to Indian culture.

In a country as linguistically diverse as India, the recognition of Assamese underscores the importance of regional languages and their role in shaping the nation's cultural identity. The classical language status strengthens the cultural pride of Assam and reinforces the idea that linguistic diversity is a crucial aspect of India's heritage.

The benefits of classical language status extend beyond cultural pride and academic study. The Indian government provides financial support to classical

languages for research, translation, and publication projects. This support will allow for greater efforts to translate and publish Assamese literature, making it accessible to a wider audience both within India and internationally. The increased visibility of Assamese literature will also contribute to a broader appreciation of the language and its contributions to the cultural and literary traditions of India.

From an educational perspective, the recognition of Assamese as a classical language will have far-reaching effects. The status will likely lead to the inclusion of Assamese in classical language curricula across the country, introducing students from different regions to the rich literary tradition of Assam. This exposure will foster a deeper understanding of Assamese culture and history, promoting greater cultural exchange and appreciation.

The classical status of Assamese also has potential economic benefits, particularly in the areas of tourism and cultural preservation. Assam, with its unique history and linguistic heritage, is a cultural treasure trove. The recognition of Assamese as a classical language could boost cultural tourism, attracting visitors to explore the literary, historical, and cultural landmarks of the region.

A triumph for heritage and identity

By: Satyabrata Borah

The declaration of Assamese as a Classical Language on October 3rd, 2024 is a monumental event in Indian linguistic history. This recognition, approved by the Union Cabinet, acknowledges the rich cultural heritage and historical significance of Assamese, alongside Marathi, Pali, Prakrit and Bengali. This move brings Assamese into the esteemed league of languages such as Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia all of which have been recognized for their ancient literary traditions and cultural importance.

The classification of a language as "classical" is not arbitrary. It involves meeting specific criteria, which include:

A language must have ancient texts and a recorded history spanning over 1,500 to 2,000 years.

There must be a body of ancient literature considered a cultural treasure by its speakers.

The literary tradition of the language must be original and not derived from another speech community.

For Assamese, this recognition is a reflection of its centuries-old contributions to Indian literature, history and philosophy. Assamese literature with works dating back to the early medieval period, showcases its depth in genres ranging from poetry and religious texts to historical chronicles.

The newly conferred status opens up several opportunities for Assamese speakers and scholars. It will lead to:

Classical languages often receive more attention in research and educational institutions. Assamese will likely see more scholarly work, with universities and academic bodies encouraged to invest in deeper linguistic and cultural studies.

This status allows for greater efforts in preserving ancient manuscripts and literature in Assamese. Digital archiving and translations of classical texts will ensure that future generations have access to these rich resources.

The declaration reinforces the cultural pride of Assamese speakers by officially recognizing their language's contribution to India's cultural and intellectual heritage.

Along with the announcement, the government is expected to invest in institutions dedicated to promoting and preserving classical languages. For example, the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in Mysuru is already involved in similar efforts for other classical languages, and Assamese will likely benefit from such dedicated research centers.

This recognition is not just a linguistic honor but also a celebration of Assamese identity, offering a platform for its culture and heritage to gain more prominence nationally and globally. The move is anticipated to invigorate interest in the language, inspire new generations to study Assamese and elevate its status in the academic world. *(The author can be reached at satyabrata-borah12@gmail.com)*

Assamese gains classical status: A milestone in cultural and linguistic pride

By: Mowsam Hazarika

The recognition of Assamese as a classical language by the Union Government marks a significant milestone for Assam and its people. This status not only celebrates the rich history of the language but also honors its deep roots in the cultural, social, and intellectual fabric of India. By joining the prestigious ranks of classical languages like Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kan-

nada, Malayalam, Oriya, Marathi, Bengali, Pali, and Prakrit, Assamese exemplifies its antiquity and literary heritage, which stretches back over 1,500 years. The recognition comes with numerous benefits that will ensure the language's preservation and sustained growth.

A crucial turning point in this achievement was the tireless effort of Kula Saikia, then President of the Asom Sahitya Sabha, in 2021. Under his leadership, a 394-page report was meticulously compiled and submitted to the Central Government, highlighting Assamese's historical, literary, and linguistic merits. The hard work of scholars and researchers under Saikia's guidance was instrumental in securing this status. His leadership was key in ensuring that Assamese received its rightful recognition.

Without Kula Saikia and his team's contributions, Assamese could have been overshadowed by other regional languages like Bengali. Their dedication ensures that Assamese now proudly stands among India's classical languages, solidifying its place in the nation's cultural and linguistic history.

One of the most significant advantages of this recognition is the institutional support that accompanies the classical language status. The government provides increased financial and academic backing to promote, document, and preserve the language. This includes funding for research projects, language preservation initiatives, and special-

ized academic programs focused on Assamese, ensuring that this centuries-old language is passed on to future generations.

The classical language status also enables deeper academic engagement with Assamese. Universities and research institutions may create dedicated departments and courses exploring Assamese literature, linguistics, and history. This academic focus fosters a richer understanding of the language and its evolution, while nurturing a new generation of Assamese scholars who can continue its legacy.

On a global scale, this recognition elevates the standing of Assamese literature. Its vast body of work, including poetry, religious texts, folklore, and philosophical writings, can now attract international scholars and translators. This increased global attention could lead to more translations and publications of Assamese works, further introducing Assamese culture and intellectual heritage to the world.

For the Assamese-speaking community, this recognition brings visibility and pride. Language is deeply tied to identity, and this acknowledgment strengthens the position of Assamese within India's linguistic landscape. It celebrates the contributions of Assamese poets, writers, and thinkers who have shaped the language's growth and development.

Additionally, the classical language status draws attention to Assam's rich cultural heritage. The recognition highlights the state's traditions, festivals, and historical sites connected to Assamese culture and literature. This attention could boost cultural tourism, attracting people from India and abroad who are eager to explore Assam's literary and historical legacy, ultimately benefiting the region's economy.

In the field of education, this recognition may inspire efforts to further integrate Assamese language learning into curricula. Schools and educational institutions may place

greater emphasis on teaching Assamese, helping students remain connected to their linguistic roots. This not only fosters cultural continuity but also ensures the language's relevance in a changing world.

The classical status also positions Assamese as a central player in discussions about language preservation and diversity. As a classical language, Assamese gains a more prominent role in national and international conversations about protecting and promoting lesser-known languages.

Economically, this recognition opens doors for cultural exchanges, collaborative research projects, and partnerships with institutions. These opportunities could result in increased funding for Assamese language initiatives, contributing to the region's broader development.

Finally, the classical status will likely inspire new artistic and literary expressions in Assamese. Artists, writers, and poets may draw from the classical tradition of the language, blending its rich history with modern creativity. This blending of tradition and innovation can produce a vibrant cultural renaissance, helping to keep Assamese heritage alive and relevant for today's audience.

In conclusion, the recognition of Assamese as a classical language is a proud moment for Assam and its people. This status not only highlights the antiquity and richness of the language but also brings numerous benefits that will help preserve and promote it for future generations. The tireless efforts of Kula Saikia, then President of the Asom Sahitya Sabha, along with scholars like Dr. Bhaskarjyoti Sharma, Dr. Namita Devi, and Dr. Mridul Bardoloi, and the support from the Assam government, have been instrumental in achieving this significant milestone for the Assamese language. *(The author is a poet, freelance science journalist and People's Science Activist who can be reached at mowsam2000@yahoo.co.in)*

Margherita Tea Estate workers attacked

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Oct 5: Tensions are running high in Margherita Co-District, Tinsukia, following a brutal assault on two employees of the Margherita Dehing Tea Estate on Saturday.

The attack took place in the early hours of Saturday, September 5, around 2:45 AM, when Bijender Kumar and his colleague Shyam Sundar Tanti were heading home after their shift. As they traveled near National Highway 315, a white Bolero vehicle intercepted them.

Without warning, several individuals descended from the vehicle, with one assailant reportedly dressed in a police uniform. The attackers violently assaulted the two tea estate workers, leaving them severely injured. Their motorcycle was also vandalized during the attack. After the assault, the assailants bizarrely handed each of the victims ₹ 500 for medical treatment before fleeing the scene.

The motive behind the attack remains unclear, but the involvement of someone dressed in a police uniform has sparked serious concerns among the local community. Bijender Kumar, one of the victims, expressed shock over the incident and emphasized that the perpetrators showed no signs of robbery or theft, deepening the mystery around the attack.

Hari Nanda Goh, secretary of the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) Margherita branch, condemned the incident in the strongest terms and urged the authorities to take immediate action. He called on the Margherita Co-District Commissioner and local police to launch a thorough investigation, especially into allegations of police impersonation.

In response, the Margherita Co-District Commissioner assured the public that if the claims are validated, appropriate legal action will be taken against those involved. As investigations begin, the local community is on edge, eagerly awaiting justice for the victims and clarity on the perpetrators' motives.

AASU protests smart meter billing excesses in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Oct 5: Sivasagar District Students Union on Saturday took out a massive rally against the excess billing of smart meter in the district.

The protesters were led by Samiran Phukan, Dhruvajyoti Kalita, Manav Hazarika, Deepankar Shaikia, Aditya Sharma, Partha Pratim Barua, Manasjyoti Saikia, Pritam Bargohain and Ankur Bora.

A group of women from Konwarpur also participated in the protest march. The student body raised slogans and against government and the APDCL department for their failure to provide electricity during peak hours. So they demanded that the department not to raise tariff and power tariff must be reduced.

The protesters demanded resignation of the Power Minister Nandita Garlosa. They urged the government remove all the shortcomings of the department and urged the department to perform its duties with a dedicated attitude towards the people.

Preparations begin for 31st Shishu, Yuva, and Aaeematri Samaroh in KA

HT Correspondent

BAKALIAGHAT, Oct 5: Padadhikar of Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha (SSS), Bhabendra Nath Deka laid 'Lai Khuta' for upcoming 31st Edition of Shishu, Yuva and Aaeematri Samaroh at Bhuyin Bali Khetra, Bakaliaghat on Friday in presence of huge crowd.

The 31st Edition of Shishu, Yuva and Aaeematri conference will be held on November 8, 9, and 10.

Deka said the people of Karbi Anglong district had done hard work for the success of 2011 central conference of SSS at Bakaliaghat.

On the other hand General Secretary, Kushal Thakuria said the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has assured to help for successfully organising the conference. SSS is very satisfied over the Union Government who grants Assamese language as Classical Language status.

Secretaries, President of Various Sub-Committees of the conference were present during Lai Khuta laying ceremony.

Lakhipur inaugurated as Co-District, boosting regional development in Assam



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: In a significant step towards balanced regional development, Assam's minister for PHE, Skill Employment & Entrepreneurship, and Tourism, Jayanta Mallabaruah, inaugurated Lakhipur as a Co-District during a grand ceremony at Sadbhavana Bhawan, Fulertol, on Saturday.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including MP Silchar Parimal Suklabaidya, MLAs Mihir Kanti Shom and Dipayan Chakraborty, as well as Cachar Deputy Commissioner Mridul Yadav and Co-District Commissioner Dhruvajyoti Pathak.

Guardian Minister Mallabaruah highlighted the Assam government's commitment to ensuring equal development in both the Barak and Brahmaputra valleys under the leadership of Himanta

Biswa Sarma. He stated, "Assam's progress is incomplete without the Barak Valley," emphasizing that the new Co-District status for Lakhipur is a crucial step towards achieving equitable growth.

MLA Kaushik Rai expressed gratitude for the recognition of Lakhipur's potential and noted that this milestone would create new opportunities for development.

He thanked both the Guardian Minister and the Chief Minister for their support in making the Co-District status a reality.

MP Silchar Parimal Suklabaidya commended the government's commitment to holistic development, stating that the establishment of Lakhipur as a Co-District reflects a dedication to ensuring every region thrives. Cachar District Commissioner Mridul Yadav underscored the administrative importance of the new status, promising enhanced service delivery and collaboration with local leadership.

The inauguration of Lakhipur as a Co-District signifies a pivotal moment for the region, setting the stage for improved quality of life and development for its residents, as outlined in a press release from the regional office of Information Public Relations, Barak Valley Zone, Assam.

Co-District Lumding Inaugurated, marking a historic step in Assam's administration

HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Oct 5: The inauguration of Co-District Lumding under Hojai District took place on Saturday, led by Smt Nandita Garlosa, Minister of Power, Sports, and Youth Affairs.

The event was held at the Udali Block Development Office in Bamungao and attended by notable dignitaries, including Sibru Mishra, MLA of Lumding LAC, Ramkrishna Ghosh, MLA of Hojai LAC, and other officials like Bidyut Bikash Bhagawati, ACS, District Commissioner of Hojai, and Joy Shankar Sharma, ACS, Co-District Commissioner.

During her address, Minister Garlosa described the inauguration as a significant historic step, emphasizing that it would greatly enhance Assam's administrative system

and directly benefit grassroots communities. She praised Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma for his relentless efforts toward the overall upliftment of the state.

The program saw a strong turnout despite incessant rain, with hundreds of locals and BJP volunteers in attendance. The event also included participation from all Chairpersons of the four municipal boards—Hojai, Lanka, Lumding, and Doboka—as well as additional district commissioners, the additional superintendent of police, assistant commissioners, circle officers, BDOs, executive officers, and heads of various line departments.

The establishment of Co-District Lumding is expected to streamline governance and improve public service delivery in the region, marking a positive step forward for the local population.

NF Railway achieves steady growth in freight unloading for September 2024

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has reported steady growth in freight unloading on, ensuring the supply of essential and non-essential commodities across the states under its jurisdiction.

In September 2024, a total of 966 freight-carry-

ing rakes were unloaded in various goods sheds, marking continued progress in the region's logistics operations.

NF Railway facilitated the transportation of essential items such as FCI rice, food grains, sugar, salt, edible oil, and vegetables, as well as non-essential goods like coal, cement,

fertilizer, and automobiles.

Of the 526 rakes unloaded in Assam, 264 carried essential commodities. In other northeastern states, 64 rakes were unloaded in Tripura, 18 in Nagaland, 9 in Arunachal Pradesh, and 1 in Manipur. Additionally, 179 rakes in West Bengal and 169 rakes in Bihar

PM Modi releases 18th installment of PM KISAN for farmers

Karbi Anglong celebrates the occasion with live webcasts across eight ADO circles



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Oct 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 18th installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM KISAN) on Saturday, benefiting farmers across India.

The announcement was made during a grand Kisan Sammelan at 12 PM, broadcast live from Washim, Maharashtra.

In Karbi Anglong district, the Department of Agriculture organized a live webcast to mark the occasion at various venues in eight Agriculture Development Officer (ADO) Circles. The designated locations for the event included the DAO Office Conference Hall in Diphu, Tarabasa Seed Farm, and Forest IB in Kar Teron, CSC Chokihola, BRC Dokmoka, Howraghat Block Campus,

and ADO Office in Sarihanjan.

Farmers in Karbi Anglong were encouraged to attend the event to celebrate this milestone and connect with their peers. A total of 21,913 farmers in the district are set to receive the 18th installment under the PM KISAN scheme, which aims to provide direct financial support to eligible farmers to enhance their livelihoods.

The PM KISAN initiative has been pivotal in supporting farmers financially, enabling them to invest in agricultural inputs, improve their productivity, and secure a better standard of living. The ongoing support from the government through such schemes reinforces the commitment to uplifting the farming community in India.

With the release of this installment, the government continues to underscore its dedication to the welfare of farmers, further strengthening the agricultural sector. The live webcasts aimed to bring the farming community together, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among the beneficiaries.

AJYCP, KMSS protest against proposed hike of JMCH services

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Oct 5: The Jorhat district unit of AJYCP and KMSS on Saturday staged a massive protest in front of the administrative building of the Jorhat Medical College and Hospital (JMCH) against the proposed manifold increase of six types of services out of the total 536 services provided by the medical institute.

The protesters shouted slogans against the JMCH authorities seeking immediate withdrawal of the decision of the proposed hike in the user charges of the six services as they said that huge hike in the user charges would severely hit hard the poor and also the common people who were already facing lot of difficulties to meet their ends due to soaring prices of essential commodities.

JMCH authorities on Friday had announced proposed hike in user rates of six services provided by the institute which would come into effect after Durga Puja celebrations following Government approval.

The date on which the hike in the rates of the services would be implemented was not yet decided.

The authorities had announced that as per the State Government's directive asking the medical colleges to take steps to become self-sustaining, the Executive Council of the Society for Medical Education, JMCH under the chairmanship of Jorhat MLA Hitendra

Nath Goswami, who is the Chairman of the Government constituted said body, in a meeting held on September 21 last, had proposed hike in the rates of only six of the total 536 services.

The proposed hike of the user charges are: Bed charge (General Ward), from present ₹ 10 to ₹ 50, registration charge from ₹ 10 to 20, Caesarean Section (Paying Cabin) from ₹ 1800 to ₹ 3000, Normal delivery (Paying Cabin) from ₹ 600 to 1000, Laparoscopic surgery (General Ward) from ₹ 3000 to 5000, Routine Open Surgery (General Ward) from ₹ 600 to ₹ 3000 and Major Open Surgery (General Ward) ₹ 600 to 6000.

When contacted, the JMCH Superintendent Dr Manab Jyoti Gohain said that the decision to hike the rates of six services was taken at the meeting of the Executive Council in accordance with the Government direction, and the proposal has been sent to the Government for approval.

He said that it is only after the Government gives its nod the proposed hike of the rates would be applicable.

Sources said that MLAs of Dergaon, Mariani, Teok, Kaziranga MP KP Tasa, former Jorhat MP Topon Gogoi, are members of the Executive Council with the JMCH Principal (Dr) Professor Ratna Kanta Talukdar as Member-Secretary and the Superintendent Dr Gohain as a member.

Dhekiajuli Co-District inaugurated to enhance administration

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Oct 5: In a significant move towards administrative reform, Sonitpur District Minister Ashok Singhal inaugurated the Dhekiajuli Co-District and its temporary office building on Saturday. This initiative aims to modernize governance in the Dhekiajuli area, improving public services for residents.

During a public meeting held in the martyrs' city, Singhal highlighted the historical context of district formations dating back to the British era, which primarily focused on revenue collection and law enforcement. He emphasized that the creation of co-districts under the leadership of Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma is a step towards decentralizing power and enhancing the efficiency of administrative functions.

"Establishing a co-district is part of our efforts to create a more pro-public and effective administrative system," Singhal remarked. He noted that the co-district will provide residents of greater Dhekiajuli with improved services compared to the previous subdivision structure, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the community. He de-

scribed the launch as a "festive gift" during the puja season.

Singhal further spoke on various developmental activities undertaken by the state government, including employment generation for youth, the TATA semiconductor project in the region, and efforts to reduce child and maternal mortality rates. He criticized the opposition's criticisms, asserting that they would not hinder the government's development agenda.

District Commissioner Ankur Bharali welcomed attendees and explained the benefits of the new administrative structure. The program also included financial assistance presentations to beneficiaries from various social organizations under public welfare schemes such as Asam Darshan and PMGAY.

Key figures present included Sonitpur SP Barun Purakayastha, CEO of Sonitpur Zila Parishad Karabi Saikia Karan, and newly appointed Co-District DC Dyutiva Borah, along with various district administrative officials. Singhal announced plans for a permanent office building for the co-district, set to begin construction in January 2025.

Nagaon gears up for grand Durga Puja celebrations

Over 300 Puja Pandals planned, showcasing rich cultural heritage and artistic displays

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Oct 5: Extensive preparations are underway in Nagaon district for the upcoming Durga Puja celebrations, which reflect the region's rich literary, cultural, and spiritual heritage.

The Hatimura Durga Temple, following a 40-year tradition, is once again poised to host vibrant festivities, alongside various puja committees that have made elaborate arrangements to celebrate the festival with grandeur and numerous attractions.

This year, over 300 puja pandals will be set up across the district, including tea gardens, with budgets for many committees ranging from ₹ 10 lakhs to ₹ 15 lakhs. The puja committees are focused on captivating the public with stunning artistic displays and dazzling light arrange-

ments that promise to enhance the festive atmosphere.

The Hatimura Durga Temple located near Jakhalabandha and overlooking the Brahmaputra River, will continue its longstanding tradition of hosting Durga Puja. The ancient Kamakhya Temple in Silghat will also celebrate the festival, maintaining its age-old customs. Notably, the Beltoli Durga Puja, initiated by Janaki Sen 'Ukil' during the British era, has been celebrated by his family for 174 years, showcasing the deep-rooted traditions of the community.

Other well-established puja committees in Nagaon include the Binapani Natyamandir, Amulapattir, Nagaon Bangali, Fouzdaripatti, Haibargaon Bangali, and Jyoti Flower Mill. New entries like the Naton

Bazar, Haibargaon Malkali Sangha, Chamardapatty, Panigaon Chailai, Shankar Mission Path, ITI, Nazirajan, Khristanpatty, and Rajasthan Puja Committee have added to the vibrant tapestry of celebrations, bringing the total number of pujas in Nagaon town to over a hundred.

Preparations are also in full swing for the ancient Silghat Durga Puja, ensuring that celebrations throughout the district—spanning Kaliabor, Chamguri Puranigudam, Uriagaon, Rupahi, Barhampur, Chapanalai, Kathiatoli, Kampur, and more—will be marked by enthusiasm and devotion. With such extensive planning and community involvement, this year's Durga Puja promises to be a spectacular celebration of culture and tradition in Nagaon.

Gandhi Jayanti observed



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Gandhi Jayanti was observed at Patorikhat in Chhaygaon under the initiative of the Inner Circle Group, with the collaboration of the residents of Patorikhat and women's group.

The event began with flag hoisting by Dipak Choudhury, followed by lighting of the lamp by Ramcharan Thakuriyah, offering of garlands at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi by Dhaniram Saud, and homage to martyrs by Tarinicharan Saud. Tree plantation was done by Shankar Thakuriyah, Ganesh Thakuriyah, Sharad Saud, Bharat Saud, Bubul Saud, and Jyotish Saud.

The program concluded with a public meeting that included a tribute ceremony, a drawing competition, a quiz competition based on Assam, and a traditional dress competition. The quiz was conducted by Jintu Thakuriyah, Dabor Mani Ojha, and Sanjeev Das. The public meeting featured speeches from guests and the distribution of awards to the winners of the competitions. The event was further enriched by dance performances from child artists.

The meeting was presided over by social worker Madan Choudhury, with a speech from Professor Upendra Deka, head of the Assamese department at Sixgaon College.

NGO donates mobile shop to differently abled man

Initiative supports sustainable livelihoods while promoting tobacco awareness

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Pathik, one of the leading voluntary organisations in the state, recently donated a mobile shop to Bubul Das, a differently abled person, in Vijayanagar, the commercial hub of South Kamrup under the 'Hepah' project.

For the past year, Bubul Das had appealed to Pathik to do something to make his family's livelihood sustainable.

Accordingly, a team of Pathik visited Bubul Das's house, and after discussions with the family members, de-



cided to arrange a mobile shop under "Hepah" project. The shop was handed over to Bubul Das on the road con-

necting Dakhla near Vijayanagar police point.

Notably, Pathik has been raising awareness about ill ef-

fects of tobacco products and the dangers of cancer for the past 21 years. Accordingly the shop will not sell any tobacco products in the shop and the surroundings will always be kept clean. They are Victor Rajkumar, director, Pathikar, Minti Barua, vice-president, Rajalakshmi Rajshri, project coordinator and Mridu Goswami, senior member and project inspector Prakash Barua in the presence of prominent social worker Mahendra Jain of Vijayanagar.

He inaugurated the mobile shop and appreciated the kindness of the organisation. The

inaugural ceremony was hosted by Mridu Goswami. Bubul Das expressed his feelings and said that he would be indebted to Pathik for helping him.

In addition to the project Hepah, other initiatives of the organisation include self-rural carrying capacity, drinking water supply, cremation of poor or unidentified dead, organ donation, women's sanitation and self-reliance, child health and nutrition Pathik has been serving the people for the last 21 years with 12 projects including Swavalamban, Cancer care.

No. SLRC-G-IV/Assam/Advertisement for Analogous Posts-IV/2023-24/01/84

NOTICE

In continuation to the Notice No. SLRC-G-IV/Assam/Advertisement for Analogous Posts-IV/2023-24/01/57 dated 27-09-2024, this is to inform all concerned that the Admit cards for the written examinations to be held on 27-10-2024 for the Class-IV posts conducted by State Level Recruitment Commission for Class-IV Posts will be available for download from the official websites of Assam State School Education Board (erstwhile SEBA) [www.site.sebaonline.org] and Govt. of Assam [www.assam.gov.in] from 11:30 A.M. of 15-10-2024.

The candidates can download their Admit Cards by using their Application No. and Password used while filling up of the forms when applying for the posts.

The candidates will have to produce hard copy of the Admit Card and a Photo Identity Card issued by Government such as Aadhaar card, PAN card, Driving License, Voter-ID Card to appear in the Written Examination and must follow all the instructions mentioned in the Admit Card.

Candidates are advised to visit the official website <https://sebaonline.org> of Assam State School Education Board (erstwhile Board of Secondary Education, Assam) (SEBA) frequently for latest updates.

Technical support toll free number — 9582390055 (10 A.M. to 5 P.M.) (Working Days)

Sd/-
Secretary, State Level Recruitment Commission for class IV Posts

Janasanyog/D/7076/24/6-Oct-24

Alleged plots against US campaign are only the latest examples of Iran targeting adversaries

DUBAI, Oct 5: Iran has emerged as a twofold concern for the United States as it nears the end of the presidential campaign.

Prosecutors allege Tehran tried to hack figures associated with the election, stealing information from former President Donald Trump's campaign. And U.S. officials have accused it of plotting to kill Trump and other ex-officials.

For Iran, assassination plots and hacking aren't new strategies. Iran saw the value and the danger of hacking in the early 2000s, when the Stuxnet virus, believed to have been deployed by Israel and the U.S., tried to damage Iran's nuclear program. Since then, hackers attributed to state-linked operations have targeted the Trump campaign, Iranian expatriates and government officials at home.

Its history of assassinations goes back further. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran killed or

abducted perceived enemies living abroad.

For many, Iran's behavior can be traced to the emergence of the Stuxnet computer virus. Released in the 2000s, Stuxnet wormed its way into control units for uranium-enriching centrifuges at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility, causing them to speed up, ultimately destroying themselves.

Iranian scientists initially believed mechanical errors caused the damage. Ultimately though, Iran removed the affected equipment and sought its own way of striking enemies online.

"Iran had an excellent teacher in the emerging art of cyberwarfare," wryly noted a 2020 report from the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Saudi Arabia. That was acknowledged by the National Security Agency in a document leaked by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden in 2015 to The Intercept, which ex-



Iran has been suspected of carrying out that attack, called Shamoon, in 2012 and again in 2017.

"Iran, having been a victim of a similar cyber-attack against its own oil industry in April 2012,

has demonstrated a clear ability to learn from the capabilities and actions of others," the document said.

There also were domestic considerations. In 2009, the disputed reelection of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sparked the Green Movement protests. Twitter, one source of news from the demonstrations, found its website defaced by the self-described "Iranian Cyber Army." There's been suspicion that the Revolutionary Guard, a major power base within Iran's theocracy, oversaw the "Cyber Army" and other hackers.

Meanwhile, Iran itself has been hacked repeatedly in embarrassing incidents. They include the mass shutdown of gas stations across Iran, as well as surveillance cameras at Tehran's notorious Evin Prison and even state television broadcasts.

Iranian hacking attacks, given their low cost and

high reward, likely will continue as Iran faces a tense international environment surrounding Israel's conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah, Iran's enrichment of uranium to near weapons-grade levels and the prospect of Trump becoming president again.

The growth of 3G and 4G mobile internet services in Iran also made it easier for the public — and potential hackers — to access the internet. Iran has over 50 major universities with computer science or information technology programs. At least three of Iran's top schools are thought to be affiliated with Iran's Defense Ministry and the Guard, providing potential hackers for security forces.

Iranian hacking attempts on U.S. targets have included banks and even a small dam near New York City — attacks American prosecutors linked to the Guard. (AP)

Israeli strikes in northern and central Gaza early on Saturday have killed at least 9 people, including two children

Israel strikes Lebanon, hitting Beirut suburbs and north

TEL AVIV, Oct 5: Israel expanded its bombardment in Lebanon on Saturday, hitting Beirut's southern suburbs with 12 airstrikes and striking a Palestinian refugee camp deep in northern Lebanon for the first time.

The attack on the Beddawi refugee camp near the northern city of Tripoli killed an official with Hamas's military wing, along with his wife and two young daughters, the Palestinian militant group said in a statement. Tripoli is much further north than the majority of Israel's strikes, which have been concentrated in southern Lebanon and Beirut.

Israel has killed several Hamas officials in Lebanon since the Israel-Hamas war

began in October last year, in addition to most of the top leadership of Hezbollah.

At least six people were killed in more than a dozen Israeli airstrikes overnight and into Saturday, according to National News Agency, Lebanon's official news agency.

The Israeli military said special forces were carrying out targeted ground raids against Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon, destroying missiles, launchpads, watchtowers and weapons storage facilities. The military said troops also dismantled tunnel shafts that Hezbollah used to approach the Israeli border.

Some 1,400 Lebanese, including Hezbollah fighters and civilians, have been killed and



some 1.2 million driven from their homes since Israel escalated its strikes in late September aiming to cripple Hezbollah and push it away from the countries' shared border. On Tuesday, Israel launched what it called a limited ground operation into southern Lebanon.

Nine Israeli troops have been killed in close fighting in the area in the past few days, the military said.

Also on Saturday, Palestinian medical officials say Israeli strikes in northern and central

Gaza early Saturday have killed at least 9 people, including two children.

One strike hit a group of people in the northern town of Beit Hanoun, killing at least five people, including two children, according to the Health Ministry's Ambulance and Emergency service.

Another strike hit a house in the northern part of the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing at least four people, the Awda hospital said. The strike also left a number of people wounded, it said.

The Israeli military did not have any immediate comment on the strikes, but it has long accused Hamas of operating from within civilian areas.

The Israeli military warned

Palestinians to evacuate along the strategic Netzarim corridor in central Gaza, which was at the heart of obstacles to a ceasefire deal earlier this summer. The military told people in parts of the Nuseirat and Bureij refugee camps to evacuate to Muwasi, an area along Gaza's shore the military has designated a humanitarian zone.

It's unclear how many Palestinians are currently living in the areas ordered evacuated, parts of which were evacuated previously.

Almost 42,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza during the nearly year-long war, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths. (AP)

UK confirms final flight out of Lebanon for British nationals as conflict escalates



LONDON, Oct 5: The UK government on Saturday confirmed its final charter plane to fly British nationals out of Lebanon as the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel intensifies and tensions in the region escalate.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer once again urged British nationals still in the country to come forward to be evacuated.

"To everybody listening who may be in that position: now is the time to leave, we have got the plans in place.

So please come forward and we can make sure that they are evacuated," Starmer told reporters during a visit to Cheshire on Friday.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said after a chartered flight leaves Beirut on Sunday, there are no more scheduled flights due to a decrease in demand.

However, the situation will be kept under constant review as the UK urged all remaining British nationals who want to leave Lebanon to register with the government immediately.

"The situation in Lebanon remains volatile, so I am glad that we have helped the many people who have heeded our advice to leave the country immediately," said UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

"With demand falling and the security situation deteriorating, there is no guarantee other options to leave quickly will become available. I urge anyone who wants to leave to register now," Lammy said.

The UK has been advising its nationals to leave Lebanon amid a deteriorating security situation: three chartered flights have left Beirut and more than 250 additional people have been able to leave the country in the last week.

British nationals and their spouse or partner, and children under the age of 18 are eligible for Sunday's flight, with dependents who are not British nationals requiring a valid visa.

Sunday's flight will depart from Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport, and British nationals who have registered their presence with the government will be sent details on how to request a seat.

The FCDO said government officials have been working round the clock in London, Beirut and the wider region to provide support to British nationals.

An FCDO Rapid Deployment Team has also arrived in Lebanon to bolster the support offered by British Embassy officials.

The UK reiterated its call for a ceasefire between Lebanese Hezbollah and Israel to provide the space necessary to find a political solution that enables civilians on both sides to return to their homes in safety amid air strikes and ground incursions as the conflict escalates. (PTI)

Army deployed in Islamabad and Lahore amid protests by ex-Pak PM Imran Khan's party

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE, Oct 5: Pakistan authorities on Saturday called in the Army in Islamabad and Lahore to prevent rallies by supporters of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, amid rising tensions.

The call for protest was given by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party founder who has been incarcerated at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail for more than a year. The PTI is protesting for the release of Khan, to express solidarity with the judiciary, and against inflation. Pakistan Army troops were deployed in Islamabad to ensure security as PTI supporters moved forward with plans for a protest.

The army would remain in the city from October 5-17 to maintain law and order for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. Pakistan is hosting the SCO summit on October 15-16. The deployment came as PTI supporters led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur were moving ahead to reach the D-Chowk in the national capital to hold the protest. However, the convoy led by Gandapur faced intense police action as it approached Rawalpindi.

The police resorted to heavy tear gas shelling to disperse the protesters. The 72-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician Khan refused to postpone the protest despite calls by the government. According to the Dawn newspaper, Gandapur reached Islamabad on Saturday afternoon and was staying at the KP House. Heavy contingent of police and Rangers have entered the KP House to arrest Gandapur, it said.

The authorities are taking strict measures to stop PTI supporters from entering Islamabad or making it to the D-Chowk. All highways leading to the city have been blocked and pillion riding has been banned, while mobile phone services remained suspended for the second consecutive day. The authorities also imposed Section 144, banning public gatherings, political assemblies, and demonstrations in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad to outlaw any polit-



ical assembly or protest. The Metro bus services linking the twin cities were also suspended.

Police and paramilitary Rangers were also deployed to stop the protestors. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday warned, "Nobody will be allowed to disrupt law and order [in Islamabad]," directing the authorities to deal with the "miscreants" with iron hands. Meanwhile, the authorities on Saturday cut off Lahore from the rest of the country to stop PTI supporters from holding a rally at the historic Minar-i-Pakistan.

The PML-N government called in the Pakistan Army to maintain the law and order situation in Punjab province, especially in its capital Lahore. All roads leading to the ruling Sharif family's Jati Umra Raiwind Lahore residence were also blocked.

Hundreds of containers have been placed in different parts of the city and also at all entry and exit points. A curfew-like situation is created around Minar-e-Pakistan, which is also closed for any general public entry for an indefinite period. A heavy contingent of police has also been deployed there. The government has also suspended cell phone and internet services in different parts of Lahore. The PTI has called Saturday's protest a "do or die" situation.

PTI Punjab acting president Hamid Azhar said people of Lahore will come out in droves and reject the government's "fascism". He said the party also plans to celebrate Khan's birthday on Saturday and pass a resolution for "Haqeeqi

Azadi" (real freedom) at the Minar-i-Pakistan ground. Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar told a press conference in Lahore that he would not tolerate PTI's "anti-Pakistan" protest. He said the PTI want to sabotage the SCO summit, which the government will not allow.

The Punjab government has so far picked up over 700 PTI workers in Lahore and elsewhere. The government said the armed forces will maintain law and order and provide security to foreign delegates. The armed forces and police will also be deployed around the airbase/airport, routes, venues and accommodation falling within the territorial jurisdiction of the Punjab.

"Exact contours of deployment of Armed Forces will be determined by the military commander on ground in consultation with the police commander. Armed Forces will be allowed to take such measures as warranted by the situation, including the use of firearms," a notification issued by the Punjab government said.

According to Dawn newspaper, police on Saturday took multiple lawyers belonging to the PTI into custody from GPO Chowk in Lahore.

The law enforcers resorted to baton charge as well against the counsels protesting outside the Lahore High Court. One child is also among those arrested. Meanwhile, in a post shared on Khan's official X handle, the former premier urged "everyone to keep heading to D chowk".

"I am also asking our people from Punjab to move towards Minar-i-Pakistan in Lahore. If they cannot make it there they must join the protests in their cities. This is a fight for Haqeeqi Azadi," he said. Amid clampdown on PTI, the Punjab Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Saturday claimed to have arrested 18 terrorists. The CTD said the terrorists who have been arrested in Lahore and other districts of Punjab belong to ISIS, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and Al-Qaeda. Some 5.42 kg explosives, 18 detonators, a 53-foot safety fuse wire, one IED bomb, pistols with bullets and banned literature were recovered from them. (PTI)

Rescue teams search for missing after floods, landslides kill at least 16 in Bosnia

JABLANICA, Oct 5: Rescue teams on Saturday searched for those still missing after flash floods and landslides hit parts of Bosnia, killing at least 16 people and injuring scores more.

Construction machines worked to remove piles of rocks and debris covering the central town of Jablanica after the rainstorm early on Friday.

Huge quantities of rain fell in the area around Jablanica and nearby Konjic, causing sudden floods that broke into people's homes as they were sleeping.

Surging waters also triggered landslides that collapsed roads and hills, covering villages in mud and cutting off entire areas.

Bosnian media are reporting that rocks from a nearby quarry fell on the village of Donja Jablanica, burying houses.

Officials have said that at least 16 people are confirmed dead so far, including a baby.

At least 10 are still missing while dozens are injured.

Rescuers sealed off Jablanica, banning any entry for outsiders while

the search took place.

Some houses were submerged up to their roofs and as the water withdrew, rescuers could be seen walking over piles of rubble left behind.

Near the town of Konjic that was also hit by the storm, officials said some villages remained cut off on Saturday.

"Kilometres of roads no longer exist, nearly all bridges have been destroyed," Husein Hodzic from the local civil protection unit told regional NI television.

"There is no electricity, all power poles have been swept away. There are no phone lines."

Human-caused climate change increases the intensity of rainfall because warm air holds more moisture.

This summer, the Balkans were also hit by long-lasting record temperatures, causing a drought. Scientists said the dried-out land has hampered the absorption of floodwaters.

Flooding was also reported in Croatia and Montenegro in the previous days but caused less damage and no fatalities. (AP)

Ukraine downs Russian warplane; Russia claims gains in east

KYIV, Oct 5: Ukrainian forces said they shot down a Russian fighter plane on Saturday while Russia claimed it made gains in Ukraine's east. The Russian bomber was shot down near the city of Kostiantynivka in the Donetsk province, head of the Kostiantynivka Military Administration Serhiy Horbunov was quoted as saying by Ukraine's public broadcaster, Suspilne. Photos showed charred remains of an aircraft after it landed on a house that caught fire.

Also in the partially occupied Donetsk province, Russia's Defence Ministry claimed on Saturday that it had taken control of the village of Zhelanne Druhe. If confirmed, the capture would come three days after Ukrainian forces said they were withdrawing from the front-line town of Vuhledar, some 33 kilometers (21 miles) from Zhelanne Druhe, following a hard-fought two-year defense.

Zelenskyy will present his victory plan to allies

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday that he will present his victory plan at the October 12 meeting of the Ramstein group of nations that supplies arms to Ukraine.

We will present the victory plan clear,

concrete steps towards a just end to the war.

The determination of our partners and the strengthening of Ukraine are what can stop Russian aggression, he wrote on X, adding that the 25th Ramstein meeting would be the first to take place at the leaders' level.

Russia shells southern Ukraine and a Ukraine drone hits a bus

Meanwhile, two people died in Russian shelling in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, regional Gov. Ivan Fedorov said.

Ukraine's air force said that Russia had launched three guided missiles and 13 attack drones at Ukraine overnight into Saturday. It said the missiles were intercepted, three drones were shot down over the Odesa region and 10 others were lost.

Nine people were wounded when a Ukrainian drone struck a passenger bus in the city of Horlivka in the partially occupied Donetsk region, the city's Russian-installed Mayor Ivan Prikhodko said. Russia's Defence Ministry said on Saturday that air defences shot down 10 Ukrainian drones overnight in three border regions, including seven over the Belgorod region, two over the Kursk region, and one over the Voronezh region. (AP)

European cities brace for pro-Palestinian rallies amid high alert as Oct 7 anniversary approaches

ROME, Oct 5: Hundreds of thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators were expected to take to the streets across Europe on Saturday calling for a cease-fire as the first anniversary of the Hamas attacks on Israel approached.

Security forces in several countries warned of heightened levels of alert in major cities, amid concerns that the escalating conflict in the Middle East could inspire new terror attacks in Europe or that some of the protests could turn violent.

Massive rallies are planned in several European cities, including London, Berlin, Paris and Rome through next week, with the largest gatherings expected from Saturday to Monday. Events will peak on Monday, the date of the anniversary.

By midday Saturday, thousands had gathered in central London's Russell Square amid a significant police presence. Some of the march's organizers had said they planned to target companies and institutions they claimed were "complicit in Israel's crimes," including

Barclays Bank and the British Museum.

Protests are also taking place in other parts of the world. In the Philippines on Saturday, dozens of left-wing activists protested near the U.S. Embassy in Manila, where police prevented them from getting closer to the seaside compound.

On Oct. 7 last year, Hamas launched a surprise attack into Israel, killing 1,200 Israelis, taking 250 people hostage and setting off a war with Israel that has shattered much of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

More than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed since then in Gaza, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between fighters and civilians. It says more than half were women and children.

Nearly 100 Israeli hostages remain in

Gaza, with fewer than 70 believed to be alive. Israelis have experienced attacks — missiles from Iran and Hezbollah, explosive drones from Yemen, fatal shootings and stabbings — as the region braces for further escalation.

In late September, Israel shifted some of its focus to Hezbollah, which holds much of the power in parts of southern Lebanon and some other areas of the country, attacking the militants with exploding pagers, airstrikes and eventually, incursions into Lebanon.

Pro-Palestinian protests calling for an immediate cease-fire have repeatedly taken place across Europe and around the globe in the past year and have often turned violent, with confrontations between demonstrators and law enforcement officers.



Manik Sarkar urges Bangla govt to take measures to protect minorities

'Under Sheikh Hasina government, there were festivities for all faiths without fear and intimidation'

AGARTALA, Oct 5: CPI(M) politburo member Manik Sarkar on Saturday urged the interim government in Bangladesh to ensure safety and security of minority people in the neighbouring country.

His comment comes in the backdrop of reports of attacks on people belonging to minority communities in some areas of the neighbouring country.

While addressing a rally organised by the Left parties to protest against the recent attacks on minorities after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh, the former Tripura chief minister said a "responsible administration can't remain silent" over such atrocities.

"The chief of the interim government in Bangladesh (Mohammad Yunus) had promised for restoration of democracy in the country at the UN general assembly. We expect that his promise will be translated into action with effective measures to protect the rights of minorities there," Sarkar said.

He also urged "positive-minded people to come forward to put an end to the atrocities" on minorities in the neighbouring country.

The Left leader also recalled the mass exodus of Chakma people from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) to Tripura's Sabroom subdivision during the BNP regime.

"Due to systematic attacks on minorities in CHT, thousands of Chakma people had to leave their homeland and take shelter in Sabroom of South Tripura district. Then chief minister Nripen Chakraborty and the people of Tripura offered shelter and food to Chakma refugees. It happened during the BNP regime. The problem was solved after the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina returned to power," the veteran CPI(M) leader said.

He also said, "We expect the present government will take effective steps to protect the rights of minorities in Bangladesh to keep the promise of installing democracy there in true sense."

Meanwhile, Tipra Motha supreme Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma claimed that many Buddhist, priests and church leaders were still receiving threats in Bangladesh.

"The real test of the Bangladesh government will be if they can protect the minorities during the festive month of pujas. Many Buddhist, priests and church leaders have informed me about the continuous threats coming to them."

"Under Sheikh Hasina government, there were festivities for all faiths without fear and intimidation but today certain criminals are openly threatening the minorities there," he wrote on Facebook. (PTI)



Manik Sarkar speaking at a podium during a rally.

CPIM, Congress synonymous with liars and conspirators: Tripura CM

AGARTALA, Oct 5: Tripura chief minister Manik Saha recently said that the people have already rejected the CPIM and Congress, as during their rule, the democratic rights and voices of the people were suppressed.

Saha said this while attending a protest rally organized by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Sadar district, in Agartala.

"For a long time, the opposition has been spreading false and fabricated information, and in response to this, all the karyakartas have come together for this protest rally. The opposition political parties have been making many false claims, which is why everyone came out to protest. The opposition is conspiring against the state government. Karyakartas from Agartala and surrounding areas have gathered, and similar protests are being carried out in other mandals. We know that the CPIM and Congress are essentially the same and rely on lies for their politics. CPIM and Congress as synonymous with liars and conspiracy," said Saha.

He further stated that during the 35-year rule of the Left-Congress alliance, the democratic rights and voices of the people were suppressed.

"Opposition party supporters faced constant violence, intimidation, and harassment during that period. These parties are now attempting to create unrest in the state again.

They are always trying to confuse the public. From here, we are warning them to stop spreading lies, or they will face consequences, as seen today. In every election, we are winning, which proves that the people are with us and that we have the blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. People have trust and faith in PM Modi. Our party and government are working for the welfare of the people, and this is a transparent government. They cannot achieve anything by spreading lies and confusing the public. People no longer trust the CPIM and Congress, and the election results have shown that the public has rejected them," he added.

Movement against government inaction on demands related to drug menace: HYC

SHILLONG, Oct 5: The Hynniewtrep Youth Council (HYC) recently threatened to launch a public movement if the government fails to comply with its 7-point charter of demands for addressing the issue of drug menace in Meghalaya.

In a letter to chief minister Conrad K Sangma, HYC president Roypur Synrem said, "We hope and urge upon the State Government to consider the just and reasonable demands of our organisation for the welfare of the citizens of the State as a whole. And if no concrete and positive actions are taken by the government within a considerable period of time to the demands made by us, we would be launching a public movement to ensure that the government takes heed of our just and reasonable demands."

The seven demands include treatment & rehabilitation, free detoxification, OST and day-care centres in all vulnerable districts, establishing of fast-track courts/special courts for cases under NDPS Act, investigation and prosecution of cases under NDPS Act, 1985, strengthening the drug supply reduction strategy and establishing office of narcotics control bureau in Shillong.

The decision was taken following a meeting convened with various community leaders, headmen, seng longkme, seng samla and general public on September 28. The meeting resolved to launch a mission known as Drugs Elimination and Enforcement of DREAM (DEED) Mission.

He said the state government has launched the Drug Reduction, Elimination, and Action Mission (DREAM) on June 27, 2023, with an aim to transform our State into a "drug free Meghalaya".

"It is a comprehensive policy, no doubt, with a vision to eliminate substance use and establish a society free from the grips of substance addiction, which all of us are wishing for. But what concerns us is that this Mission/Policy is also becoming like any other documents of the Government which look good only on paper but failed to take off and implement as desired. Hence, in order to achieve the mandated provisions under the DREAM, we would like to demand for your urgent and immediate actions on the following (seven points)," Synrem stated in the letter.

Elaborating on the points, the HYC president said in Meghalaya, there are 10 existing rehabilitation centres that are either funded by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India (GOI), State supported or privately owned.

"Therefore, it is imperative that a State Sponsored Rehabilitation Centre be established in East Khasi Hills District at the earliest with a maximum possible intake capacity. Such Rehabilitation Centre should be equipped with proper high-quality services such as ensuring enough space for the patient for extra-curricular/recreation activities or therapies, outdoor games,

skills development etc. can be carried out during their stay at the centre," he said.

He said as envisaged in the DREAM Document launched by the State government and given the fact that the number of drug users in these vulnerable districts have increased day by day, it is imperative that there should be Detoxification, OST and Day Care Centres availing free services to the addicts in all these Districts.

"We urge upon you to kindly take immediate steps to ensure that the Fast Track Courts/Special Courts as envisaged under DREAM Project, for trial of cases under NDPS Act be established as soon as possible, especially for East Khasi Hills district. At present there are no Special Courts for trial of cases under NDPS Act, hence trial lingers on for years altogether and this discourages especially the witnesses and the general public to assist the State machinery in the fight against Drugs.

We want that Special Courts with Special Public Prosecutors as mandated under NDPS Act, 1985 be appointed in the State and especially in the vulnerable Districts and more importantly in East Khasi Hills District," Synrem stated.

On the demand for establishing the office of the narcotics control bureau in Shillong, the HYC president said at present the NCB has its Office in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. (NNN)

Sikkim's second CM's 84th birth anniversary observed

GANGTOK, Oct 5: The 84th birth anniversary of Sikkim's second chief minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari was observed across the Himalayan state on Saturday with fanfare.

Chief minister Prem Singh Tamang paid tributes to Bhandari on the occasion.

"By commemorating 'Shri Bhandari Jayanti', we honour the legacy of the 'Architect of Modern Sikkim', a visionary leader whose enduring contributions have profoundly shaped the destiny of our state," the CM said in a social media post.

The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) government resolves to remain steadfast in its pledge to follow the path and unwavering dedication shown by the



Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang paying tribute to Nar Bahadur Bhandari.

The SKM supreme recalled the inclusion of Nepali language in the eighth schedule of the Constitution as an enduring contribution of Bhandari and said that it was a monumental step that forever enshrined his legacy on both national and global platforms.

His leadership and vision continue to inspire us as we work towards realising the aspirations of Sikkim, Tamang said.

An official function was held at Samman Bhawan here to mark the occasion.

Bhandari succeeded LD Kazi as the chief minister of Sikkim in 1979 and served in the post for nearly 15 years till 1994 before being ousted by an illustrious proge-turned-bote noire Pawan Kumar Chamling.

Bhandari died in 2017. (PTI)

Centres of Excellence for scientific cultivation of vegetables, flowers in Tripura



AGARTALA, Oct 5: Tripura chief minister Manik Saha on Saturday said that the progress of the country is not possible without the development of farmers.

He also mentioned that the state government has launched a Unified Farmers Database to record farmers' details, link land records, and conduct real-time crop surveys.

Additionally, the government is establishing two Centres of Excellence for the scientific cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and flowers, as well as providing high-quality planting materials.

Dr. Saha said this after attending a virtual program for the release of the 18th installment of the PM-Kisan scheme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the State Agricultural Research Centre, Arundhuti Nagar, Agartala.

"I want to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi on behalf of Tripura, as around ₹ 47.68 crore will be received by farmers in this state. In the 17th installment, around 2.59 lakh farmers were benefitted. So far, we have received ₹ 737.49 crore, and now an additional ₹ 47 crore," he said.

Saha also noted that schemes like providing ₹ 6,000 annually to farmers will assist them with purchasing paddy, seeds, and other necessities.

"We had never heard of such support before. India was known as a poor country. However, after 2014, when Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, many new initiatives were introduced. Our country is largely agricultural, and if we fail to develop our farmers, the progress of the country will not be possible. Due to PM Modi's leadership, the economic growth of our country has significantly increased. After just one push of a button by PM Modi, the money is directly transferred to everyone's account through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer). This was unimaginable before. Now, there are no middlemen," said Dr. Saha.

He further highlighted that under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, around 13.89 lakh farmers are covered in Tripura. Additionally, the state has launched the Mukhya Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, benefiting 3.81 lakh farmers.

"We have created a Unified Farmers Database with 3.3 lakh farmers already uploaded to the portal. Now, everything must be digitized, including the registration of farmers, real-time crop surveys, and linking of land records. We have also decided to set up two Centres of Excellence at Lembuchara and Birchandra Manu for the scientific cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and flowers, as well as to supply the best quality planting materials," he added.

No. TE[Ex]Admn-1/2024/619

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE [CORRIGENDUM]

In continuation of earlier educational notice published vide No. Janasanyog/D/6875/24/4-Oct-24, it is brought to notice of all concerned that the spot round counselling which was scheduled to be held on 7th October, 2024, based on the Combined Entrance Examination [CEE-2024] has been postponed due to un-avoidable circumstances and next schedule will be declared later on.

Sd/-

Director of Technical Education, Assam, Kahlipara, Guwahati-39

Janasanyog/D/7026/24/6-Oct-24

Advertisement for the post of Non-Teaching Staff, Government Model College, Deithor, Karbi-Anglong-785 615

Advt. 1/2024

In pursuance of the approval accorded by the Government in the Higher Education Department vide letter No. 509264/47 dated 10-09-2024 and 413262/3 dated 19-09-2024, applications in Standard Form as published in the Assam Gazette in Part-IX, are hereby invited from the eligible candidates for filling up of the following vacant posts.

Grade-III: 3 nos. Post

01 (Library Assistant) (UR, RP-1)

02 (Junior Assistant) (OBC/MOBC, RP-2)

03 (Junior Assistant) (UR, RP-3)

Grade-IV: 5 nos. Post

01 (Grade-IV) (UR, RP-1)

02 (Grade-IV) (OBC/MOBC, RP-2)

03 (Grade-IV) (UR, RP-3)

04 (Chowkidar) (UR, RP-4)

05 (Chowkidar) (STP, RP-5)

Educational qualification: For Grade-III: Graduate in Arts/Science/ Commerce from a recognized College/ Institution affiliated to recognized University and must possess diploma /certificate of computer knowledge for minimum 3 (three) months duration. The candidate should have the knowledge in typing in MS word and simple Excel. (Candidates having working experience in similar fields are desirable).

Educational qualification: For Grade - IV: HSLC Passed

Age: Candidate should not be more than 40 years of age as on 01.01.2024. Age relaxation is applicable as per Govt. OM No. ABP.6/2015/51 dated 02/09/2020. In service candidates have to apply through proper channel with an NOC from the appointing authority. The candidate must submit PRC and must know the local language.

Application Fees: Application fee of Rs. 500/- for Grade-III and Rs. 300/- for Grade-IV must be deposited in favour of Principal, Government Model College, Deithor, Karbi-Anglong, payable at SBI, Murphulani Branch [A/C No.39675156780 IFSC Code-SBIN009864], Golaghat and the payment receipt along with the application must reach the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of the advertisement. The College authority will not be responsible for postal delay.

NB: No TA/DA will be entertained to the candidates called for interview. Incomplete/defective applications will be rejected at the time of scrutiny and no call letter will be issued to such candidates. For more details please visit college website.

Sd/-

Principal, Government Model College, Deithor, Karbi-Anglong-785 615, Assam.

Janasanyog/D/6998/24/6-Oct-24

Tripura likely to witness heavy rainfall, IMD issues alert

AGARTALA, Oct 5: The Durga Puja celebrations in likely to be affected due to heavy rainfall as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in Agartala have issued a three-day warning for moderate to heavy rainfall. An official from IMD Agartala stated that in the past 24 hours, light to moderate rainfall was recorded, with the highest rainfall reported in the West District. "Currently, one cyclonic circulation is located over Gangetic West Bengal, and another over Assam. Due to this, moisture-laden air is entering Tripura. The IMD has issued a three-day warning of heavy rainfall, along with thunderstorms," the official added.

Manipur govt urged to send recommendation on Meitei in ST list to centre



Manipur govt urged to send recommendation on Meitei in ST list to centre

IMPHAL, Oct 5: Fervently campaigning for the inclusion of Meiteis in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list of India, the Coordinating Body on ST Demand Committee has urged the Manipur State Government to send the recommendation necessary for the purpose to the concerned Central Government authorities.

Addressing a press meet recently at Manipur Press Club, Imphal, the Committee's convener, Waikhom Ananda asked the reasons for not sending the recommendation by the State Government till date.

He lamented that the State Government has not paid heed although the Meiteis have been demanding to include Meiteis in the ST List.

Saying that granting ST rights to the Meitei community is fair and reasonable in view of the various challenges faced by the Meiteis, the Convener asked all to participate in the public convention which has been called by the STDCM on Sunday, (October 6, 2024).

The convener went on to maintain that the STDCM along with the Meitei masses and various organisations have been striving hard to get the inclusion of the Meiteis in the ST list. (NNN)

Durgabari temple Durga puja to enter its 148th year

Only puja where devotees worship the two-handed Goddess Durga

AGARTALA, Oct 5: The worship of two-armed Goddess Durga at the Durgabari temple here, one of the oldest in Tripura, will enter its 148th year.

The goddess is offered a gun salute by Tripura State Rifles (TSR) and the national anthem is played as a mark of respect on the day of immersion of Durga idol.

The goddess is also offered meat, fish, and eggs as prasad apart from vegetables and rice during the puja.

"This time the puja enters its 148th year, the oldest puja in Tripura in its present location. It was Maharaja Krishna Kishore Manikya Bahadur, who first started worshipping goddess Durga in present-day Chittagong in Bangladesh around 500 years ago. Over the years, the goddess was worshipped from Chittagong to Amarpur in Gumati to Udaipur - before the puja permanently settled in Agartala," chief priest of Durgabari temple, Jayanta Bhattacharjee told PTI on Saturday.

The Durga puja will be held from October 9 to 12.

He claimed that this is the only puja where devotees worship the two-handed Goddess Durga, a unique custom introduced long ago.



"Long ago, Maharani Sulakshana Devi had fainted after seeing a ten-handed goddess at Durgabari and was taken back to the palace. On the same night, she received a divine message to worship a two-handed goddess instead of a ten-handed goddess from next year. Since then we are worshipping a two-handed goddess at Durgabari," the priest said.

During puja days, the goddess is offered prasad containing meat, fish, and eggs apart from vegetables and rice, he said.

Bhattacharjee said gun salute are also being given while the national anthem is played on the day of immersion of the Durga idol as a mark of respect.

As part of an old ritual, the idol is taken to the royal palace where family members of the Manikya dynasty pay respect before starting the immersion journey. (PTI)

No.KMB-42/SOPD/2024-25/Pt.-II/1790

INVITATION OF BIDS (IEB)

The Executive Officer, on behalf of Kokrajhar Municipal Board, Kokrajhar invites bids from eligible contractors/firms/suppliers registered under government for the following work. Details may be seen at the office of the Kokrajhar Municipal Board, Kokrajhar during office hours.

| Sl No | Name of works | EMD (In Rupees) | Cost of work (In Rupees) | Completion period | Cost of tender (In Rupees) |
|-------|--|--|--|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Cleaning of main canal & road side drain in South Kokrajhar from Bodoland Transport towards Narabari upto outlet | Rs. 18,000.00 (Rupees Eighteen Thousand) Only for ST, SC and OBC category or Rs. 36,000.00 (Rupees Thirty Six Thousand) Only for General category. | Rs. 18,000.00 (Rupees Eighteen Lakhs) only | 90 Days | 540.00 (Rupees Five Hundred Forty) Only |

Both (Technical & Financial) are to be submitted to the office of the Kokrajhar Municipal Board, Kokrajhar. Bids will be accepted up to 02:30 PM on 21/10/2024 and will be opened on 21/10/2024 at 3:00 PM in the office of the Kokrajhar Municipal Board, Kokrajhar. Cost of bid documents and earnest money deposit must be submitted offline. Cost of bid documents (Non-Refundable) must be in the form of demand draft / Bankers Cheques of any nationalized bank draw in favour of the Executive Officer, Kokrajhar Municipal Board payable at Kokrajhar for amount as mentioned above. Bids must be accompanied by security of an amount specified for the work as EMD in the above table in the form of Bank Guarantee or fixed deposit receipt from any nationalized bank pledged favor the Executive Officer, Kokrajhar Municipal Board payable at Kokrajhar. The Bid security should be valid for a period of 365 days.

Sd/-Executive Officer
Kokrajhar Municipal Board
Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/672

Constitution symbol of Shivaji's ideas

Removal of 50 pc quota cap necessary to protect it: Rahul

KOLHAPUR, Oct 5: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said removing the existing 50 per cent cap on reservation is necessary to protect the Constitution, and asserted that the INDIA bloc will ensure the passage of laws to this effect in Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha also attacked the BJP-led government, saying there was no use of bowing before Shivaji Maharaj after "scaring people, destroying the Constitution and institutions in the country".

Holding a copy of the Constitution, Gandhi called it a symbol of Shivaji's ideas.

This is Gandhi's second visit to western Maharashtra in a month. He visited Sangli last month to unveil the statue of late Congress leader Patangrao Kadam. His party wrested the Kolhapur and Sangli Lok Sabha seats from Shiv Sena and BJP, respectively after losing them in 2014 and 2019.

Speaking at the 'Samvidhan Samman Sammelan' here, Gandhi said the Congress and the INDIA bloc, a coalition of over two dozen opposition parties, will also bring out laws to enable a caste-based census.

"We will ensure in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha that the 50 per cent cap on reservation is removed and no power can stop it. Removing this 50 per cent limit is necessary to protect the Constitution," he said. Gandhi said when his party talks of caste census, it wants to add two more aspects to it:

J&K Assembly Polls: Candidates, supporters guard EVM strong rooms ahead of counting

RAJOURI (J-K), Oct 5: Candidates and their supporters from across parties have been camping outside the EVM strong rooms in this border district even as authorities have made robust arrangements.

Counting of votes of 90 assembly segments across Jammu and Kashmir will take place on October 8.

Jammu and Kashmir went to polls in phases on September 18, September 25, and October 1.

Rajouri district's Kalakote-Sunderbani, Nowshera, Rajouri (ST), Budhal (ST), and Thanamandi (ST) seats went to polls in the second phase.

The strong rooms, where the electronic voting machines are kept, have been set up in Government Boys Higher Secondary School near Gujjar Mandi in Rajouri town.

On September 30, the District Election Officer said that a robust three-tier security system is guarding these rooms in line with the Election Commission guidelines, dispelling some social media rumours that suggested police had been removed from the location.

The innermost perimeter (third tier) is being guarded by the Central Armed Police Forces, the second tier by armed police, and the outermost layer by district police, the officer said.

Candidates have been sent written communications, informing them to depute their representa-



identify the population of each community and how much control they have over India's financial system. The caste-based census will help gather data on the population of various communities.

He said the doors of opportunities are being closed on 90 per cent of the country's population.

Ninety top IAS officers decide India's budget but only three belong to the Other Backward Class (OBC) communities, which form at least 50 per cent of the country's population.

Dalits and Adivasis (tribals) comprise 15 per cent and eight per cent, respectively, of India's population but have only three and one such officer, according to the Congress leader.

tives at strong rooms for keeping a close watch.

Several facilities, such as rain-proof tents, have been provided for their comfort as they keep a vigil, with assistance of CCTV cameras that have been mounted for the purpose.

"We have some apprehensions and we want to protect the mandate of the public which is sealed in EVM strong rooms," National Conference candidate from Budhal Javed Iqbal Choudhary said.

He said more than 10 teams of workers are stationed around the EVM strong rooms to keep a close vigil.

Rohit Kohli, chief election agent of Congress-NC alliance candidate from Nowshera assembly constituency, said protecting the mandate of the public is their duty.

"Nowshera is 50 kms away from Rajouri (town) and three teams of our volunteers are working in shifts to perform their duties like soldiers to protect the mandate of the public," Kohli said.

Nowshera constituency is witnessing a keen battle between BJP J-K unit president Ravinder Raina and NC-Congress alliance candidate Surinder Choudhary. Raina had won the seat in 2014 assembly elections.

Officials said a detailed log-book is maintained by the CAPF, documenting all entries, exits, and the security personnel's duty roster. (PTI)

He said the caste census is like getting an X-ray done to identify anomalies but the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are opposed to it as they don't want the "truth" to come out.

The history of Dalits or OBCs was not being taught in schools, he said, alleging that efforts are now being made to erase that history.

The Congress leader said the public sector is being privatised, and stressed that it should be termed de-reservation. He accused the RSS and BJP of doing this for years. Gandhi called the Agniveer scheme – for short-term induction of personnel in the Army, Navy and Air Force – a ploy to snatch pension from 90 per cent of people.

"There are two ideologies in the country – one which protects the Constitution that talks of equality and unity. This is Shivaji Maharaj's ideology. The second ideology is the one that is into destroying the Constitution," Gandhi said.

"They get up in the morning and plan how to destroy the Constitution, which is based on the ideals of the Shivaji Maharaj. They attack

the institutions of the country, scare and threaten people and then bow before Shivaji's statue. There is no use of it. If you pray before Shivaji's statue, then you have to protect the Constitution," Gandhi claimed. He said the intentions are visible and cannot be hidden.

"They built Shivaji Maharaj's statue and in a few days, it collapsed. Their intentions were not right. The statue gave them the message that if you built Shivaji Maharaj's statue then you have to follow his ideals. Which is why the statue collapsed because their ideology is wrong," he said.

When Shivaji Maharaj was to be coronated, it was the same ideology that did not allow his coronation. This is not new, he said.

"This is the same ideology that Shivaji Maharaj fought with. Congress is fighting with the same ideology that Shivaji Maharaj fought with," Gandhi added.

Chhatrapati Shivaji's message to the world was that the country belongs to everyone. The Constitution is a symbol of his ideals, he said. "If people like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and social reformer Shahu Maharaj were not there, the Constitution also would not have existed," the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha said. Gandhi also interacted with Ajit Sandhe, a tempo driver.

During his visit, BJP workers staged a protest and showed black flags to Gandhi over his remarks on freedom fighter and Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar. (PTI)

Dubey said various countries that cannot digest the growth of India, which is on the trajectory of becoming the world's third-biggest economy, devised a "tool kit" to defame it by attacking its financial structure and the economy by dubbing important organisations like SEBI as corrupt. (PTI)

PAC head Venugopal working to defame govt, acting unconstitutionally: Dubey to LS Speaker

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Public Accounts Committee member and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey has accused the panel's chairman and Congress MP K C Venugopal of raking up non-existent issues to defame the central government and destabilise the country's financial structure and economy.

Dubey wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on September 9 alleging Venugopal misused his position, bypassed the PAC's remit and worked as part of a "tool kit" to damage the economy, following reports that the committee may summon SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, who has been accused of professional impropriety by US-based firm Hindenburg Research.

Incidentally, the PAC decided on October 4 to call Buch for deposition on October 24.

Accusing Venugopal of "unconstitutional and dis-

dainful" conduct, Dubey claimed that political motivations were guiding the committee's chairperson after the Congress was "compelled" by voters to sit in the opposition benches following the Lok Sabha polls.

There was no immediate reaction from the senior Congress leader. Venugopal was hand-picked by the Congress to devise ways and means to rake up those issues that are non-existent, with the sole intention of defaming the government and destabilising the financial structure and the economy, the BJP MP alleged.

Dubey said various countries that cannot digest the growth of India, which is on the trajectory of becoming the world's third-biggest economy, devised a "tool kit" to defame it by attacking its financial structure and the economy by dubbing important organisations like SEBI as corrupt. (PTI)

Congress believes in plundering the state through lying: Haryana CM Nayab

CHANDIGARH, Oct 5: Even as Haryana went to vote, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday accused the Congress of following the policy of plundering the state by deceiving the electorate.

"Congress does the politics of 'jhoth and loot' and the people of Haryana have understood this. They have made up their minds to bring back the BJP in Haryana for a third time," Saini told reporters on the day of the voting.

Congress has been regularly insulting the Dalit community and never made any scheme for the upliftment of Dalits, he said. Saini, among the earlycomers, came to the booth with his wife Suman and cast his vote in his native village, Mirza, in Ambala district's Naraingarh.

Voting for all 90 Assembly seats in Haryana, which began at 7 am, will conclude at 6 pm, while the counting of votes will be taken up on October 8.

Saini is contesting the polls from Ladwa in the Kurukshetra district.

Before he cast his vote, Saini prayed at Guru Ravidas temple and a gurdwara in his village.

"The mood of the people of Haryana is clear, the BJP is going to form a government for the third time with a big mandate," Saini told reporters.

He claimed that the BJP's "double-engine" government did excellent work in 10 years and the farmers who have been agitating on and off over minimum wage have been happy with his government's policies.

Meanwhile, former Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who cast his vote in Karnal, claimed Congress is racked with infighting. "There is a pall of gloom in the Congress' camp. It's chaotic there."

Asked about BJP leader Ashok Tanwar returning to the Congress fold just two days before polls, Khattar said Tanwar has revived the "aaya ram gaya ram" politics.

Both parties insisted they were going to win the election and form their government. Khattar claimed that the BJP will win more

Recognise your power on 'day of change': Vinesh Phogat urges Haryana voters

CHANDIGARH, Oct 5: Congress candidate and Olympic wrestler Vinesh Phogat urged people to recognise their power and exercise their franchise on Saturday in the Haryana assembly election, saying it is the day of change.

Polling for all 90 assembly seats in Haryana began on Saturday morning amid tight security arrangements. Phogat is contesting from the Julana seat in Jind district on a Congress ticket.

After casting her vote at Balali in Charkhi Dadri district, Phogat said, "People of Haryana have huge expectations from the Congress. Everyone should come and cast their votes."

Replying to a query, she said unemployment, drugs and women's safety are some of the major issues facing the state.

"We want to work in all areas in the coming five years. Today is the day of change, today is the day to awaken new hope. I appeal to the people of Haryana to come out of their homes and recognise their power," Phogat said.

The Congress nominee also said that the people of Haryana are fed up with the 10-year rule of the BJP and accused the party of committing atrocities against farmers and wrestlers.

Her rival candidate from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), wrestler Kavita Dalal, also appealed to voters to exercise their franchise.

She claimed that people would be voting on the issues of unemployment, health and education, adding that everybody would play their role in Julana's development.

Meanwhile, wrestler and Congress leader Bajrang Punia claimed that there is a Congress wave across Haryana. He said the party will win between 60 and 70 seats.

Speaking to reporters in Jhajjar, Punia alleged that the people of Haryana have understood that the BJP only played politics of casteism and hatred.

He also claimed that Phogat would win from Julana with a big margin.

Punia's wife Sangeeta Phogat said she voted for the first time on Saturday, exuding confidence that the Congress will form the government in Haryana.

"Everybody in the state wants a

change," she added.

Meanwhile, Vinesh Phogat's cousin and BJP leader Babita Phogat also urged people to come out of their homes and cast their votes.

"Celebrate this festival of democracy by casting your vote," the former wrestler said after casting her vote in Charkhi Dadri.

She also sounded confident of the BJP forming the government with a full mandate on October 8, the counting day.

Double Olympic medallist shooter Manu Bhaker, who also cast her vote for the first time in Jhajjar, said, "It is the duty of the youth to select their representatives."

Kurukshetra MP Naveen Jindal reached the polling station on a horse to cast his vote.

"Riding a horse is considered auspicious... People ride horses while going to attend weddings. That is why I came on a horse for an auspicious work," the industrialist-politician said.

On his mother Savitri Jindal contesting the polls as an Independent nominee from Hisar, Jindal said the people made her contest the elections and they were quite enthusiastic about her candidature.

"It is going to be a one-sided contest which Mata Savitri Jindal will win by a big margin," he claimed.

After being denied a ticket by the BJP, Savitri Jindal filed her nomination as an Independent candidate from Hisar, taking on senior BJP leader Kamal Gupta, who is seeking re-election.

A software engineer based in the US, Rashika Gupta said she has returned home to exercise her franchise. "I came here to vote for the development of Kaithal," she told PTI.

On youngsters from the state migrating to other countries, Gupta said, "There are more opportunities in other countries, along with more money which offers more opportunities to grow."

"India is also moving forward. The youth should vote in large numbers so that our state moves forward and creates more employment opportunities," she added. (PTI)

BJP state chief Surendran discharged by Kerala court from Manjeshwaram poll bribery case

KASARAGOD (KERALA), Oct 5: A Kerala court on Saturday discharged BJP state president K Surendran and five others from the Manjeshwaram election bribery case.

Surendran and the others were discharged by Kasaragod Sessions Judge Sanu S Panicker.

The judge, allowing the discharge plea of the accused, said that the first accused -- Surendran -- was discharged of the offences under various provisions of the IPC and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (prevention of atrocities) Act 1989.

"Since the first accused is discharged of the alleged offences, I do not find any ground to proceed against the other accused also. Hence, they are also discharged of all the alleged offences," the judge said.

The detailed order giving reasons is not yet available.

While the BJP state chief said that truth prevailed and that the case was fabricated to ruin his political prospects, the opposition Congress claimed that Surendran's discharge proves the CPI(M)-BJP mutual arrangement not to harm each other.

Earlier in the day, the BJP state chief's lawyer told reporters that the court said that prima facie the case would not stand.

The lawyer also said that the court accepted the defense argument that there was no need to go for trial in the case.

He further said that the defense

won only 40. Now Khattar is talking of getting 50 seats, you can imagine, how many seats they will end up with," he said.

BJP leader Anil Viji, who recently presented himself as CM candidate, told reporters in Ambala Cantt that BJP was coming to power for a third term.

When asked that he had last month said he would stake a claim for the chief minister's post if the party comes to power, said he has always dedicated himself to the party and never asked for anything.

"I have always obeyed my party's orders, but I said if the party makes me a CM, I will change Haryana's fate," he said.

INL's Abhay Chautala, after casting a vote in Sirsa district, said neither the Congress nor BJP will get the majority. "INL-BSP will come to power," he said.

JJP leader Dushyant Chautala, whose party is contesting polls in alliance with the Azad Samaj Party, said he was sure the public would choose the alliance on the back of JJP's work in the past. (PTI)

How long will people of Chhattisgarh remain poor: Forest minister defends coal mining

RAIPUR, Oct 5: Chhattisgarh Forest and Climate Change Minister Kedar Kashyap has defended coal mining and other developmental projects in the state, saying these are essential for improving the living standards of the people.

In an interview with PTI, Kashyap also said the state government will ensure strict implementation of the law in response to the Centre's recent directions to expedite the relocation of villages from core areas in tiger reserves.

Asked about protests against tree felling for a coal project in the biodiversity-rich Hasdeo Aranya forest, the minister acknowledged that some people have opposed coal and other development projects but stressed that most have supported these.

"How long will the people of this resource-rich region remain poor? Development and energy are equally important. People need jobs. Yes, if trees are cut, it is our responsibility to compensate for that loss. We must also ensure that the health and livelihoods of affected communities are protected," he said. On the issue of gram sabha consent for such projects, Kashyap said, "The law gives gram sabhas the power to say 'no'. In some cases, they have exercised that power, but in most cases, they have supported (coal mining and other projects)."



Chhattisgarh holds 57 billion tonnes of coal reserves, making it the third largest coal-bearing state in India after Jharkhand and Odisha. It ranks third among states with the largest forest cover, after Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh, with forests covering over 44 per cent of its total geographical area.

Spanning 1,701 square kilometres, the dense Hasdeo Aranya form one of India's most extensive contiguous forest tracts. They are home to 25 endangered species, 92 bird species, and 167 rare and medicinal plant species. Nearly 15,000 tribals depend on the Has-

deo Aranya forests for their livelihood, cultural identity, and sustenance.

There are three adjacent coal blocks situated in the Hasdeo Aranya coalfield region in Chhattisgarh's Surguja district: Parsa, Parsa East Kente Basan (PEKB), and Kente Extension Coal Block (KECB). All three coal blocks have been allocated to the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd.

The Hasdeo Aranya forest is spread over 1,70,000 hectares -- an area much larger than Delhi. According to the Indian Bureau of Mines, the forest holds coal re-

serves of 5,179.35 million tonnes.

In January, the National Green Tribunal took suo motu cognisance of protests against tree felling for Phase 2 of the PEBK coal mining project and sought a report from the state forest department.

The department, in its reply, said that the tree felling was being undertaken "in strict adherence to the approvals and permissions given by both central and state government authorities".

It added that the PEBK coal block covers 1,898 hectares of forest land. Phase 1 mining, covering 762 hectares, has been completed, and Phase 2 is ongoing in the remaining 1,136 hectares.

Tree felling for Phase 2 resumed in late August amid protests by local villagers.

In July, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav informed Parliament that 94,460 trees have already been cut for coal mining in the Hasdeo Aranya forest, with over 2.73 lakh more trees to be felled in the coming years.

He said that a total of 53,40,586 trees have been planted as compensation, for "mine reclamation and translocation", of which 40,93,395 have survived.

Asked about his view on the Centre's directive to expedite the relocation of villages from core areas of tiger reserves, Kashyap said: "We have been making a con-

scious effort to ensure the implementation of the law."

He said that people once lived in harmony with wildlife in the forests, but that dynamic has changed.

"Tigers used to roam just a few metres from my grandmother's house. Humans and animals knew their boundaries. But the situation has changed over the years."

"It is true that forests are being encroached upon, upsetting the balance in the wild and leading to human-wildlife conflict," he said.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority issued an order on June 19, directing forest officials to expedite the relocation of 64,801 families from 591 villages located within the core areas of 54 tiger reserves.

Tribal communities in several tiger reserves, including Achanakmar and Udanti-Sitanadi in Chhattisgarh, have launched protests against the directive, asserting their rights under the Forest Rights Act.

They are now planning to gather in Delhi to "demand justice" for their livelihoods and traditions that are closely tied to the forests.

However, central government officials maintain that the directives were issued in accordance with the law and emphasize that the relocation of villages from tiger reserves is "entirely voluntary". (PTI)

Chhattisgarh: 1,500 security personnel behind 48-hour operation that eliminated 31 Naxalities

DANTEWADA, Oct 5: A 10-km motorcycle ride through fields and dirt track followed by a 12-km climb of a hilly terrain take one to the site of Chhattisgarh's most successful counter-insurgency operation that eliminated 31 Naxalities.

About 1,500 security personnel covered this arduous route as part of their 48-hour operation in the forest along Narayanpur and Dantewada districts border to inflict a crushing blow to Maoists, said officials on Saturday.

This was the highest number of fatalities suffered by Maoists in a single operation since the state's creation 24 years ago and the offensive comes more than five months after 29 Naxalities, including higher-ranking cadres, were neutralised in an encounter with security personnel in Kanker district.

Nearly 1,500 jawans of District Reserve Guard (DRG) from Dantewada and Narayanpur and Special Task Force were involved in the offensive, Dantewada Additional Superintendent of Police RK Barman told PTI.

The crackdown was launched



based on inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to their company No. 6 and east Bastar division on the hills of Gavadi, Thulthuli, Nendur and Rengawaya villages, he said.

The operation, launched on October 3 and lasted for two days, turned out to be the biggest ever successful counter-insurgency operation in the state, he said.

The gunfight broke out between security forces and Naxalites at

around 1 pm on Friday and ended late in the evening in a forest between Nendur and Thulthuli villages, he said.

While bodies of 28 Naxalites were recovered from the encounter site on Friday, three more bodies were found on Saturday, he said, adding that the slain Naxalites were in uniform.

Reinforcement by the Central Reserve Police Force helped the search operation and the Naxalites'

bodies are being brought to Dantewada, he said.

Maoist posters could be seen at some locations along the heavily forested and hilly stretch. To enter the area, considered a Naxal den, one has to cross the Indravati river at Chhindnar village where an over-a-kilometre-long bridge has been constructed, said officials.

The identity of the Naxalites is yet to be ascertained but prima facie, it appears they belonged to PLGA (People's Liberation Guerilla Army) company No. 6, Platoon 16 and East Bastar division of Maoists, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Bastar Range Sundaraj P told PTI.

The input, which triggered the operation, was about the presence of DKSZC (Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee) members, Kamlesh and Neeti, and other senior cadres like Nandu and Suresh Salam, the IPS officer said.

Whether they are among those killed will be known after ascertaining the identities of the neutralised Naxalites, he said.

A DRG jawan sustained in-

juries in a blast in a shell of an Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (BGL) fired by Naxalites during the gunfight, the official said.

Along with the bodies, a cache of weapons, including an AK-47 rifle, one SLR (self-loading rifle), one INSAS rifle, one LMG rifle and one .303 rifle were also recovered from the encounter spot, the IGP said.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, who assumed office in December last year, hailed security forces for carrying out the successful operation and said the 'double engine' government (BJP government in the state and at the Centre) is determined to eliminate the Naxal menace.

After the latest encounter, 188 Maoists have been gunned down by security forces in separate gun battles in the Bastar region comprising seven districts, including Dantewada and Narayanpur, so far this year, police said.

On April 16, as many as 29 Naxalites, including some higher-ranking cadres, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Kanker district. (PTI)

Lt Gen Prashant Srivastava takes command of Srinagar-based Chinar Corps

SRINAGAR, Oct 5: Lieutenant General Prashant Srivastava on Saturday assumed command of the strategically important Srinagar-based Chinar Corps, which manages the country's border with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, besides fighting terrorists in the Valley.

Lt Gen Srivastava took charge from Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai, who will assume command as the director general of military operations at the Army headquarters, a defence spokesperson said.

The change comes shortly after the completion of the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir held after a gap of 10 years.

Following assumption of command, Lt Gen Srivastava paid his tributes at the Chinar War Memorial in the Badami Bagh Cantonment.

He also conveyed his warm greetings to the citizens of Kashmir, and reaffirmed his commitment towards synergy in thoughts and action with the civil administration, society and the citizens to promote peace and prosperity in the Valley.

Man accused of wiping out Amethi family shot in leg

AMETHI (UP), Oct 5: Police shot a 27-year-old man accused of gunning down an entire Dalit family in Amethi in his leg early Saturday while they were recovering the pistol used in the killing at his instance.

According to police, the incident happened when Sub-Inspector Madan Kumar Singh of Shivratnaganj Police Station was taking possession of the pistol found near a canal track.

Just when Singh was inspecting the pistol and his magazine, Chandan Verma, the accused, snatched Singh's gun from his holster and fired at him, intending to kill him, police in a statement said.

In defence, Inspector Sachchidanand Rai fired a gunshot which hit Verma in his right leg, they said.

Verma was arrested near a toll plaza in Noida Friday night while fleeing to Delhi.

Sunil Kumar (35), a government school teacher, his 32-year-old wife Poonam, and their two daughters, Drishti and Suni, aged six and

one, were shot dead in the Ahorwa Bhawani area of Amethi.

Poonam had once accused Verma of harassing her and also filed a police complaint against him. Police have seized the country-made pistol and the motorcycle, a black Enfield Bullet, used in the crime.

Meanwhile, Amethi Chief Medical Officer Dr Anshuman Singh said Verma was referred to the district hospital from the community health centre in Tiloi.

"He had sustained bullet injuries on his right leg. He is out of danger," the CMO said.

Dr Shubham Pandey, a physician posted at the Amethi district hospital, said Verma was brought to the facility between 5.30 am and 5.45 am.

According to Superintendent of Police Anoop Kumar Singh, Verma's attack on the family was a fallout of an affair he was having with Poonam, one of the victims.

The SP said Verma had been seeing the teacher's wife for the past 18 months.

Verma fired 10 shots and also tried to shoot himself, but the gun failed, the officer said.

Ahead of the Thursday rampage, Verma posted an update on a messaging app that there were going to be five deaths, his being the fifth.

Earlier police had found that Poonam had complained against Verma in Rae Bareilly on August 18 under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and for harassment.

"If anything happens to me or my family, Verma should be held responsible," she wrote in the complaint.

"Chandan Verma is a resident of Rae Bareilly district. It appears that he reached the house of the victim and got enraged due to some reason after which he began shooting the family members, killing all of them," the SP said at a press conference here.

Meanwhile, Verma while going to the court in police custody on Saturday, told reporters that he had no relation with Poonam. (PTI)

Girl's body found in Bengal, villagers torch police outpost, vandalise vehicles

KOLKATA, Oct 5: The body of a 10-year-old girl was found in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on Saturday, triggering arson at a police outpost by locals who alleged that the minor was raped and murdered, a senior officer said.

Villagers said the minor had been missing since Friday evening and the police "did not act on their complaint immediately".

As the body of the girl was recovered by locals from marshy land in Jaynagar area early this morning, a mob torched the Mahismari police outpost and pelted the policemen with stones.

They also vandalised several vehicles parked outside the outpost and the policemen were forced to leave the premises, a senior officer said.

A huge police force was sent to the area and tear gas shells were fired to quell the mob which tried to confine the SDPO and other senior personnel at the spot.

"The family members of the girl lodged an FIR at the Mahismari outpost in the area but the police did not act on the complaint immediately," a local claimed.

The police responded in the "same manner" as they did after the body of a woman doctor was found at R G Kar hospital in August, another villager said.

"We will continue our agitation till all those accused in the rape and murder of our minor daughter are arrested and convicts are punished. We also demand action against those who responded to the complaint late, which might have resulted in her death. Had the police acted promptly, the girl could have been rescued," Ganesh Dolui, a villager, said.

The police, however, said the action was taken immediately after the complaint was received and an accused was arrested in connection with the alleged rape and murder of the girl.

"After lodging of FIR at 9 pm on Friday, the police swung into action and arrested an accused this morning after an initial probe. Investigation is on and we are with the family of the deceased. Those involved in the arson at the police outpost and destroying of all important documents will be identified and action will be taken against them," the official added.

Kultali TMC MLA Ganesh Mondal was chased away by the villagers when he went to the spot to pacify the locals who accused him of trying to support the "police inaction". Mondal later told reporters that he understood the

grievances and anger of the people of the area but they should not take the law in their hands.

"I have requested the police to investigate the matter thoroughly and frame charges against the accused, he said.

TMC MP from Jaynagar Pratima Mondal was greeted with a go back slogan by a section of people when she went to Padmehat Rural Hospital where the body of the girl was taken for autopsy.

BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul, former state minister and CPI(M) leader Kanti Ganguly and DYFI leader Meenakshi Mukherjee went to the hospital separately and got engaged in heated arguments with police officials when they wanted to meet the family of the deceased.

Paul demanded that the body of the girl be preserved and the autopsy be done at "a neutral hospital which will not be influenced by the ruling party".

She also demanded that a magisterial probe be ordered into the incident.

Mukherjee demanded that all the outsiders be moved out of the room where the girl's body had been taken and the movement of people to the room must be videographed "so that the evidence cannot be tampered with like what happened in the R G Kar incident". Mondal said she would stay at the hospital to meet the parents of the deceased and hear what they want.

"I am not being allowed to meet the parents by the crowd. But I have been a grassroots political worker for a long. I cannot be forced to leave. Let me talk to the family first," she said.

As demanded by the BJP and the CPI (M), the body of the girl was finally taken to a morgue in Kolkata for subsequent autopsy at a hospital.

Expressing shock over the incident, Union Minister and West Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar said, "A Class 4 girl was forcibly lifted, raped and murdered while returning from tuition. The women of Bengal are not safe. They are being killed even during Devi Paksha (the 15-day period heralding the advent of goddess Durga since Mahalaya)."

"West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has failed to ensure the safety of women," he said on X.

Meanwhile, the BJP held a demonstration in Salt Lake area against the alleged rape and murder of the girl and raised slogan 'Dhikkar Dhikkar' (we condemn) against police personnel present at the spot. (PTI)

Man arrested for allegedly trying to derail Patal Express train in UP's Lalitpur

BANDA (UP), Oct 5: Police on Saturday arrested a man for allegedly trying to derail a train by placing iron rods on the railway track in Jakhoura police station area of Lalitpur district in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday night, a police official said.

On Thursday (October 3) night in Delwara railway station area, sparks started coming out of the engine of train number 12624 (Patal Express) as an iron rod was stuck in it. On the information given by the gateman, the loco pilot stopped the train, thus averting a major train accident.

Lalitpur Superintendent of Police (SP) Md Mustaque on Saturday said the station master of Delwara railway station had lodged a complaint with the Jakhoura police station on Friday stating that an unknown person had tried to derail a train by placing iron rods on the railway track on Thursday night.

The SP said taking cognisance of this complaint, an investigation was started and it was found that there is a place near the incident spot where the railway staff keep several iron rods and other items. A person named Satyam Yadav (32) used to steal iron rods from

there and sell them at other places, he said.

Mustaque said the Jakhoura police raided and arrested Yadav from his house on Saturday. Stolen iron rods and other items were recovered from his house, he added.

He said during interrogation, Yadav told the police that he was walking on the railway track on Thursday night after stealing iron rods. Suddenly the Patal Express train came and in a hurry he threw the iron rods on the railway track and ran away.

The incident assumes significance as it is a fresh one amid several cases of gas cylinders, pillars, boulders, stones and other objects being found on railway tracks in Uttar Pradesh. (PTI)

REPAIRING WORKS AT MALIGAON

E-Tender Notice No. 30 of 2024 Dated: 03-10-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN. No. 1. Tender No. DCESTMIG-20-2024. Name of work & Location:** Special repairs to Type-II Staff Quarters 24 units at Nambari Colony (Qtr No-61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 96, 72, 74), 44 units at West Gotanagar colony (Qtr No-216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237), 36 units at West Nambari colony (Qtr No- 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253) and 20 units at B.G. colony Qtr No- 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 301, 303, 305, 307 & 308 under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/Nambari. (Total 124 Units). **Tender Value:** ₹1,97,58,777.62/- **Earnest Money:** ₹2,48,800/- **SN. No. 2. Tender No. DCESTMIG-21-2024. Name of work & Location:** Special repairs to Type-III Staff Quarters at Nambari Colony Qtr No- 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28A, 28B & 303 (34 units), DS/419, 421, 422, 423 & 424 (20units) and 12 units at B.G. colony Qtr No- 287, 288, 289, 290, 291 & 292. (Total 66 Units) under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/Nambari. **Tender Value:** ₹98,62,366.21/- **Earnest Money:** ₹1,97,300/- **Date & time of closing of tender:** 13.00 hrs. of 25-10-2024 & opening at 13.00 hrs. of 25-10-2024. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.reps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Engineer/Estimate, Maligaon

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ICMR to study efficacy of Metformin, Inositol in PCOS treatment

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: India's apex health research body, ICMR, will undertake a study to evaluate the efficacy of two Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) drugs in improving fertility and birth outcome among women suffering from the ovarian condition.

The drugs that have been recommended by experts for this purpose are Metformin and Inositol which are used in the treatment of the condition.

The ICMR has recently invited expression of interest (EOI): "To undertake a multi-centric randomised controlled trial for evaluating the efficacy of Metformin vs Inositol to improve fertility and birth outcomes among PCOS women".

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex disorder ranging from mild to severe disruptions in reproductive, endocrine and metabolic functions, with key features including irregular menstrual periods (anovulation), hy-



perandrogenism, insulin resistance and abnormal gonadotropin secretion.

The prevalence of infertility in women with PCOS is high, varying between 70 and 80 per cent, the ICMR said in the EOI document.

Moreover, PCOS women have been found to have increased prevalence of pregnancy complica-

tions and less favourable pregnancy outcomes (live births, miscarriage, pregnancy rate) compared with women without PCOS, it stated.

In contemporary practice, the use of Metformin and Inositol for the treatment of PCOS is widespread.

"However, present evidence on

the efficacy of these two drugs in terms of improvement in fertility and other related outcomes is insufficient," the ICMR said in a document.

A Finnish study suggested that, as compared to placebo, metformin improved the pregnancy rate, live birth rate and ovulation rate in the studied population, the document said.

However, a Cochrane review with meta-analysis including three other smaller studies reported that as compared with placebo, metformin may have only marginal benefit for live birth rate outcome. Additionally, there is very limited data available globally on the effectiveness of Inositol for PCOS women, especially for birth outcome and cycle regulation.

"Evidence on the efficacy of both metformin and inositol in the Indian context is almost non-existent. To address the knowledge gap and to generate evidence on the management of PCOS for improv-

ing birth outcomes in the Indian context, the current ICMR call is being proposed," the document said.

The ICMR is looking to partner with interested researchers for the development of a multicentre randomised controlled trial for the management of PCOS in Indian women.

The selected researchers shall be invited to join the research team and shall collaborate to develop a full research proposal and roll out the multi-centre research project which will be coordinated by ICMR, the document said.

The research question is "Among women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), how does inositol in comparison to metformin work in terms of efficacy and safety on outcomes including pregnancy conception, menstrual cycle regularisation, and improvement in endocrinological and metabolic parameters?" (PTI)

LOST

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KHAJIA RAM BAGLARY
S/O - Aghun Baglary
Village - Mirdupather
P.O. - Kachu Pukhuri
P.S. - Bakalighat
District. - Karbi Anglong
Pin - 782482

ALIA BHATT TAKES BENGALURU BY SURPRISE AT ALAN WALKER'S CONCERT

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Actor Alia Bhatt made a surprise appearance at Norwegian DJ Alan Walker's recent concert in Bengaluru.

Videos circulating on social media showed the actor, dressed in a blue denim strapless co-ord set, walking onto the stage during the concert on Friday.

As she arrived, the track "Chal Kudiye" from her upcoming movie Jigra played in the background. Greeting the fans, the 31-year-old actor said, "Namaskara Bengaluru. Surprise, surprise."

Dharma Movies, the production banner behind the Vasana Bala-directed Jigra, also shared a video of Alia and Walker on its official Instagram page.

"Surprise, surprise! Thank you for your energy, #Bengaluru, and your love, @alanwalkermusic! #Jigra releasing in Hindi & Telugu — in cinemas this Friday," the studio posted. A prominent figure in the electronic music scene with hit tracks like "Faded" and "On My Way" to his credit, Walker is currently on a 10-city tour of India.

His 'WalkerWorld India' tour started in Kolkata on September 27, followed by stops in Shillong, Delhi, and Ahmedabad. It will conclude on October 20 in Hyderabad. Bhatt's Jigra is scheduled to be released in theatres on October 11.

The film, which Bhatt has also produced through her banner Eternal Sunshine Productions along with Karan Johar and Apoorva Mehta, follows the journey of Satya, a young woman who goes to great lengths to free her brother Ankur, played by Vedang Raina, who is imprisoned in a foreign jail. (PTI)



Alia Bhatt, Sharvari's 'Alpha' to release on Christmas 2025

MUMBAI, Oct 5: "Alpha", Yash Raj Films' next Spy Universe movie starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvari in the lead roles, will be released in theatres on December 25, 2025, the studio announced on Friday.

Billed as the first female-led YRF Spy Universe film, the movie is directed by Shiv Rawail, who previously helmed the banner's Netflix series "The Railway Men".

"On Christmas 2025, #ALPHA will rise! Get ready for an action-packed holiday! 25th Dec, 2025. @aliaabhatt @sharvari @shivrawail #YRFSpyUniverse," YRF posted on Instagram.

"Alpha" will see the actors join the spy franchise, which already boasts of blockbuster titles such as "Pathaan", "Tiger" and "War".

The YRF Spy Universe was launched back in 2012 with Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif's "Ek Tha Tiger". Its success spawned two sequels — "Tiger Zinda Hai" (2017) and "Tiger 3" (2023).

Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff's "War" released in 2019, which was followed by 2023's "Pathaan", starring Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone.

Besides "Alpha", "War 2", featuring Hrithik and NTR Jr, "Pathaan 2" with Shah Rukh, and "Tiger vs Pathaan", starring Salman and Shah Rukh are in the banner's pipeline. (PTI)

HUMA QURESHI WRAPS SHOOTING OF NEW FILM 'GULABI'

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Actor Huma Qureshi has wrapped shooting for her upcoming film "Gulabi".

The 38-year-old actor shared a post on her Instagram handle on Friday evening, announcing the end of the film's shooting.

The caption of the post read, "It's a wrap on #Gulabi ... can't wait to show u all . She is coming soon !!"

Directed by Vipul Mehta, the film is produced by Jyoti Deshpande of Jio Studios and Vishal Rana of Echelon Productions.

"Gulabi" is based on a true story and revolves around a woman autorickshaw driver in Ahmedabad, who dreams of higher education and in doing so, inspires others to rise above their circumstances.

The project was announced earlier this year on the occasion of International Women's Day.

In a statement, the actor said she tries to do the films that portray women as fearless characters.

"Gulabi" is a reminder that every woman has the right to dream big and reclaim her story," Qureshi said.

"My attempt as an actor has been to do films which tell stories of women who are fearless and have belief in themselves. Be it 'Leila', 'Tarla' 'Maharani' or 'Monica', I strive to be part of stories where women go against the tide to be able to achieve their dreams," she added. (PTI)



ANNE HATHAWAY RETURNING FOR 'PRINCESS DIARIES 3', ADELE LIM TO DIRECT

LOS ANGELES, Oct 5: Anne Hathaway will once again step into the fictional kingdom of Genovia for the third part of her smash hit movie franchise "The Princess Diaries". Hathaway, who became a star thanks to the 2001 surprise hit and its 2004 sequel, will reprise her role of Mia Thermopolis in the threequel, reported entertainment news outlet Variety.

The Oscar-winning actor also shared the news in a post on Instagram. "Miracles happen.. Back to Genovia with @adeleblim @disney @somewherepictures. The fairy tale continues," Hathaway posted. Adele Lim, best known for her work as a writer on Crazy Rich Asians and Raya and the Last Dragon, will direct the project for Hollywood studio Disney. Flora Greeson wrote the latest draft of the script.

"As a diehard fan of the original 'Princess Diaries,' I'm beyond excited to be a part of bringing the third iteration of this beloved franchise to life. We look forward to celebrating its core tenants of female power, joy and mentorship with audiences worldwide," Lim said in a statement. Based on the young adult book series by author Meg Cabot, The Princess Diaries film franchise started with a 2001 movie from director Garry Marshall.

It featured Hathaway as Mia Thermopolis, an awkward teenage girl who discovers she is the heir to the throne of the fictional European kingdom of Genovia. Her grandmother, Queen Clarisse Renaldi (Julie Andrews), guides her through royal training and navigating her new identity. The movie was followed by a 2004 sequel, titled The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement, which also starred Chris Pine. Debra Martin Chase, one of the producers of the original, will produce The Princess Diaries 3. Hathaway will also produce through her Somewhere Pictures banner. Naia Cucukov, who is Lim's producing partner, will serve as an executive producer alongside Melissa Stack. (PTI)



LUGGAGE LOST, FRIENDS FOUND: ANOUSHKA SHANKAR DELIVERS PACKED PERFORMANCE IN BERLIN WITH BORROWED KIT

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Sitarist Anoushka Shankar's cry for help in Berlin after she lost her luggage in transit caught the attention of many social media users who helped her source a "mizrab, makeup and more" — and saved her sold out concert at the Berlin Philharmonic.

It all started when Shankar, who was in Berlin on Wednesday for the last performance on her Europe tour, lost her luggage that included all her clothes other than her "super casual travel gear", but more importantly her 'mizrabs' - a custom-fitted finger pick or plectrum.

"Help!!! Anyone in Berlin play sitar and have mizrabs I can borrow for my show TONIGHT?! And any clothes smarter than my super casual travel gear?! Lost baggage strikes again!" Shankar wrote on X, tagging KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.

The 43-year-old musician and

daughter of sitar legend Pandit Ravi Shankar was on a tour of Germany, Netherlands, and Belgium, according to her website.

Social media networks got into action.

Some offered help by reaching out to contacts in Berlin and there were others who suggested stores in Berlin selling Indian clothes.

However, there was no further communication from Shankar till Thursday midnight when she put out a post on Instagram.

The concert happened, and was clearly a success.

Shankar posted a photograph of herself, wearing an elegant black dress and holding the sitar, thanking a Saurabh Shekhar Verma for the borrowed mizrab and social media at large for spreading her request across different platforms.

"What a whirlwind our final date of tour was, from



the moment we touched down in Berlin! Yesterday's airline-displaced suitcase with my sitar kit including mizrab (custom-fitted finger pick), in-ear monitors, plus all of my show outfits and makeup, was a pretty gnarly start to the day! "No matter though, because in true chaotic by-hook-or-by-crook tour fashion we sourced a locally-owned mizrab, makeup and more just in time for us to take to the stage for our sold out show at @berlinphil. (I'm glad I had one nice dinner outfit in my personal bag)," the London-based musician said.

She added that despite the inevitable stress of it all, "how beautiful it is to have a crew and a wider community that comes together so quickly

for a common goal".

Acknowledging the power of social media, she said she was in awe of how quickly her "cry for help" was tagged and reshared.

"And what a special show it was—no time to settle or get comfortable. We played on the tips of our toes last night, feeding off the energy of our incredible, generous audience, so alert to each other, so responsive. I'll never forget it. Special shout out to @saurabhshekhary for the borrowed mizrab- I couldn't have played properly without it!" she wrote.

If it weren't for social media, Shankar quipped that she had plans to use "duct tape, a roll of wire and little pliers" to create makeshift mizrabs. (PTI)

Paul Pogba doping ban reduced from 4 years to 18 months

LONDON, Oct 5: Paul Pogba has had his four-year ban for doping reduced to 18 months after appealing to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The ruling means the France World Cup winner will be free to resume his career in March 2025. CAS confirmed earlier reports that the ban was reduced when approached by The Associated Press on Friday. CAS did not elaborate on the decision.

"Finally the nightmare is over," Pogba said in a statement. "Following the decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, I can look forward to the day when I can follow my dreams again."

The Juventus midfielder tested positive for testosterone in August last year and was handed the maximum punishment by Italy's anti-doping court. At the time, Pogba said "the verdict is incorrect" and appealed to the Switzerland-based CAS.

Four-year bans are standard under the world anti-doping code but can be reduced in cases where an athlete can prove their doping was not intentional, if the positive test was a result of contamination or if they provide "substantial assistance" to help investigators. "I always stated that I never knowingly breached World Anti-Doping Agency regulations when I took a nutritional supplement prescribed to me by a doctor, which does not affect or enhance the performance of male athletes," Pogba said. "I play with integrity, and although I must accept that this is a strict liability offence, I want to place on record my thanks to the Court of Arbitration for Sport's judges who heard my explanation. "This has been a hugely distressing period in my life because everything I have worked so hard for has been put on hold." (AP)

India look to regain fight in crucial T20 WC game against Pakistan



DUBAI, Oct 5: India will have to regroup quickly and iron out the imbalances in team combination when they face arch-rivals Pakistan in a crucial second group A match of the Women's T20 World Cup here on Sunday. An early 58-run defeat to New Zealand on Friday has not just dented India's chances of entering the semifinals of the ICC showpiece, but it certainly has pushed them to a tight corner.

India's run-rate currently stands at a poor -2.99 and it makes big victories mandatory for them in the remaining three matches against Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Australia. The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side was wretched in all three departments of the game against the Kiwis in its World Cup opener, and India now need a reversal within 24 hours.

It's tough but that is the path they have to tread against Pakistan, high on confidence after beating a strong Sri Lanka in the first match on Thursday.

As a first step, India will have

to sort out their combinations ahead of the Pakistan game.

They went a batter light against New Zealand to accommodate an extra pacer in Arundhati Reddy and it meant a wholesale rejigging of the lineup.

It forced the promotion of Harmanpreet to No. 3, Jemimah Rodrigues to No. 4 and Richa Ghosh to No.5, not the usual slots for these batters.

For instance, Harmanpreet, who is a solid presence at No. 4, has never made a fifty in her previous 19 gigs at No.3 and to make her play precisely at that position in a World Cup was quixotic.

The inclusion of three pacers was not wrong move on the hindsight as there was no dew and the Kiwis pacers made full use of a hard deck.

But India made a hash of their three-pronged pace attack move, giving just one over to Pooja Vastrakar, the third-best bowler in T20Is this year with 20 wickets from 16 matches.

Also, the decision to go with the pace trioka cost India the presence of left-arm spinner Radha Yadav, their second most successful T20I bowler with 22 wickets from 13 matches.

So, head coach Amol Muzumdar will need to take a long look at the combination as another defeat will seriously hamper India's chances of progressing to the last-four stage from Group A.

But stats apart, India, particularly batters, looked mentally frozen against the Kiwis, evidenced by the highest individual score in their innings – a 15 by Harmanpreet.

In that context, India might just think of adding Dayalan Hemalatha to bolster the batting.

Though India have a head-to-head edge over Pakistan in T20Is, winning 12 out of 15 matches so far, they have the ammunition to stun any opposition.

Their bowling is especially formidable with the likes of experienced Nida Dhar, captain Fatima Sana and Sadia Iqbal leading the pack.

However, Pakistan will keep a close eye on the fitness lead pacer Diana Baig after she suffered a calf strain in the match against Sri Lanka, limping out after bowling just one ball.

Teams (from):

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, Yastika Bhatia (subject to fitness), Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil (subject to fitness), Sajana Sajevan Travelling reserves: Uma Chetry (wk), Tanuja Kanwer, Saima Thakor.

Pakistan: Fatima Sana (c), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali, Nashra Sundhu, Nida Dar, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal (subject to fitness), Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasmia Rubab, Tuba Hassan Travelling reserve: Najiha Alvi (wk). Match starts at 3.30 pm IST. (PTI)

Jamshedpur FC beat East Bengal 2-0 in a clinical display in ISL

JAMSHEDPUR, Oct 5: Jamshedpur FC edged past East Bengal FC in the Matchweek 4 of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 on Saturday at the JRD Tata Sports Complex.

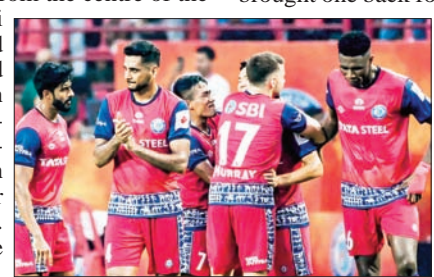
Rei Tachikawa scored in the first half to give Khalid Jamil's side the lead. In the second half, an own goal from Lalchungnunga sealed the deal for the Men of Steel.

Jamshedpur FC started the game on a high. In the fourth minute, a delightful cross from Imran Khan fell to Jordan Murray inside the East Bengal penalty box. However, Lalchungnunga came to his side's rescue to avert danger. Three minutes later, East Bengal took charge of the action. A long pass from Madih Talal was received by Anwar Ali from the centre of the

only Albino Gomes to beat, but the Brazilian forward hit it over the roof.

East Bengal FC started the second half well. Just two minutes from restart Nandhakumar found himself free with only Eze to beat. He dribbled past the defender and laid it off to Talal, whose feeble shot fell to Gomes.

Jamshedpur FC then went on to double their lead in the 70th minute to take complete charge of the game. A shot from Imran Khan was turned into his own net by Lalchungnunga. Yet, East Bengal FC had enough chances to come back. A cross from Crespo from the left channel of the penalty box fell to Hector Yuste, whose header flicked the crossbar in the 73rd minute. In the 83rd minute, Talal could have brought one back for his side, but



his long-range effort was parried away perfectly by Gomes with his fingertips. Imran Khan created three chances in this game against East Bengal FC, including one cross which caressed the post after a bounce.

The win also marks Khalid

Jamil's 4th win over East Bengal FC, in the five teams he has faced them, proving an impressive record against the Kolkata giants in ISL. Jamshedpur FC will next play Hyderabad FC at home on October 21. East Bengal FC's next adventure would be the Kolkata derby against Mohun Bagan on October 19.

Brief scores: Jamshedpur FC (Rei Tachikawa 21', Lalchungnunga 70' OG) 2-0 East Bengal FC. (AGENCIES)

Indian hockey team captain Harmanpreet credits HIL for personal growth, excited at league's return

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: National men's hockey team captain and ace drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh, who has scored 205 goals in 234 international appearances, on Saturday credited the Hockey India League (HIL) for playing a pivotal role in his career development.

From being named the Upcoming Player of the Tournament in the 2017 HIL to becoming one of the world's top drag-flickers, it has been a tremendous journey for Harmanpreet who highlighted how the league has helped him grow after rubbing shoulders with some of the best international players.

"Hockey India League was a huge part of my development. The league provided me with a stage to enhance my skills by exposing me to different playing styles under different coaches," Harmanpreet said in a Hockey India (HI) release.

"Playing in a League, sharing a dressing room with players from various countries opens up your mind and provides you with multiple perspectives and ways of thinking."

"All this was integral in the resurgence of Indian hockey and it certainly impacted our performance at the Tokyo Olympics where we won the bronze medal."

Harmanpreet said there could be nothing better for Indian hockey than the HIL and all the country's players would be excited to take part in the League.

"It will be a great opportunity for the youngsters as well to rub shoulders with the best players from across the globe, observe

the subtle differences in the way they think, the way they play and try to inculcate the good habits that they notice," he said.

HIL is slated for a return after seven years in a new avatar that will see a women's tournament for the first time running concurrently with the men's event.

The league will be played in two venues -- Rourkela for men and Ranchi for women -- from December 28 to February 1. The sport's world governing body, FIH has given sanction of 10 years for HIL.

The tournament will feature eight men's and six women's franchises.

The player auction for the HIL 2024-25 will be held from October 13-15 in New Delhi.

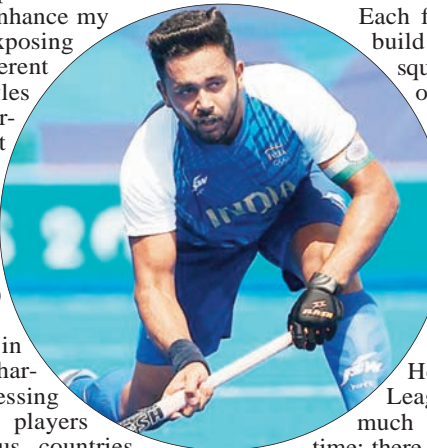
Each franchise will build a 24-player squad, consisting of at least 16 Indian players (with a mandatory inclusion of four junior players) and eight international stars.

The Hockey India League will be much bigger this time; there will also be a women's League that will run at the same time in both venues.

"I am confident this experience will turn out to be invaluable for the Indian women's hockey team in their journey to be one of the best teams in the world," he said.

Players will be auctioned in three categories with base prices of Rs 2 lakh, 5 lakh and 10 lakh each.

"The auction is coming up soon and I would like to wish all the best to all the players taking part. As for myself, I cannot wait to see which team I will represent and begin the hockey revolution again," he signed off. (PTI)



Khel Maharan 2.0: Diphu DC Phangchopi targets over 60,000 participants this year

HT Bureau DIPHU, Oct 5: The Department of Sports & Youth Welfare, Assam announced the launch of Khel Maharan 2.0, a flagship initiative designed to promote grassroots sports participation across the state. Building on the success of the previous edition, this year's competition aims to create a more inclusive sporting environment, offering opportunities for individuals aged 14 and above to engage in various sports and showcase their talents.

In this context, the District Sports & Youth Welfare Office, Diphu, convened a meeting at Circuit House, Diphu, at 11 am. The meeting was chaired by District Commissioner, Nirala Phangchopi with key officials in attendance, including Superin-

tendent of Police, Sanjib Kr. Saikia; Secretary, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Rajeshan Terang; Secretary of Karbi Anglong Sports Association, Dr.

Pankaj Teron along with Head of Departments from P & R D, D R D A, B D O s, the Inspector of Schools, and prominent personalities such as Jibon Ch. Pathak, Ex-Executive Member of KAAC, and mountaineer Khorsing Terang among others.

During the meeting, the District Sports Officer presented the Khel Maharan 2.0 agenda and informed the gathering that online registration for participants aged 14 and above is currently underway with 6,000 participants already registered.

Out of a total of seven sports events, two events will be held in Guwahati, while the others will be conducted at the Member of Autonomous Council constituency and LAC levels. The registration portal is

available at dsywassam.com/khel.

The District Commissioner urged all departments, particularly the Education, P&R, and BDO offices to collect data from students and rural areas to ensure that facilities for online registration are accessible, particularly in regions with limited internet connectivity. She also requested the appointment of Nodal Officers to assist with the registration process.

DC Phangchopi highlighted the need to increase participation this year, with a target of registering 60,000 to 70,000 participants, compared to last year's 38,000. She stressed that many talented athletes from the district, especially those from rural areas, lack the necessary opportunities

at

to reach their full potential. Khel Maharan 2.0 represents a significant step in cultivating a robust sports culture spanning every corner of Assam. The event seeks to inspire mass participation, identify promising athletes, and provide a platform for talent to flourish, starting from village-level competitions and culminating in state-level championships.

This initiative also promotes physical, mental, and personality development through sports. The competition will feature various sports disciplines, including athletics, football, kabaddi, chess, road cycling, volleyball, and swimming.

It will begin in October 2024, with state-level finals scheduled for January 2025.

We can't stay stuck at this game because every match is now crucial for us: Jemimah Rodrigues

DUBAI, Oct 5: Middle-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues urged India to "move on" from the forgettable defeat against New Zealand and focus on the upcoming matches, which she termed as "crucial" for her side's survival in the Women's T20 World Cup.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side crashed to a heavy 58-run defeat against the Kiwis on Friday night, and the Women in Blue will now face cross-border rivals Pakistan on Sunday in the second Group A match.

"This would be the game we would like to forget, because this is a World Cup. We need to keep moving on and keep picking ourselves up. We can't stay stuck at this game. I think that will show the character of this team," Rodrigues said in the post-match press meet.

Rodrigues exhorted the team not to get panicked but to focus on the process that earned it some good wins in the past.

"We have been doing really well as a team, sticking to the process and taking one game at a time. We know every game from here is so crucial

for us. We're going to go one game at a time and just make sure we stick to our process."

"And I think if we can do that, if we play our best upcoming matches, which she termed as "crucial" for her side's survival in the Women's T20 World Cup.

The 24-year-old from Mumbai said they were expecting New Zealand to come hard in the match, but failed to respond to the challenge.

"They (NZ) came out with a lot of intent. We did create opportunities, but unfortunately, we didn't make the most of them."

"But I think then the way we came back after the start (of NZ) was – I mean not many positives in this game – but still going forward we need to have the right approach because this tournament's not over," she noted.

Rodrigues said playing at No. 4 did not offer any different challenge to her, but the batter rued the fact that she did not stay at the crease long enough to build a partnership.

"Playing at number four...I think it's not much change for me in my mindset because I know with my game, I'm ready to bat anywhere the team



wants me to bat. I was batting well, I had some form going on, even in the warm-up games. "It was my responsibility that I should have made sure we build a partnership

after losing wickets," she said. On the controversial run-out episode involving Amelia Kerr, Rodrigues said the team felt a bit hard done at that time, but they didn't have

much choice other than going by the umpire's decision to call the ball dead.

"I was not there when the umpire gave the cap to Deepti. New Zealand were pretty sure that it was a double run and Amelia Kerr went out which showed that the over was not called out yet. We all thought that we got that run out.

"What if that run out wouldn't happen? Would they give us a two for that? At the end, we respect the decision of the umpire and we were okay with that. But yeah, it's a bit harsh when Amelia Kerr herself walked out, because she knew she was out," she explained.

But Rodrigues said the team handled the whole situation with a lot of maturity.

"We know how important Amelia Kerr's wicket is and at that moment it felt a little, you know, why didn't it go in our favour? But I think we did what we can. We spoke to the umpire, and then we had to accept the decision and move on."

"So, I think that's what we did really well, and I think we got her out pretty soon, so that worked for us," she said. (PTI)

Mayank faces fitness and form test, chance for fringe players to shine

GWALIOR, Oct 5: Pace sensation Mayank Yadav is expected to unleash his raw speed while the absence of India's T20 regulars will provide another opportunity to the fringe players in the three-match series against Bangladesh, beginning here Sunday.

Having consistently generated speed in excess of 150kmph in his maiden IPL earlier this year, Mayank had drawn the attention of the cricketing world before a side strain ruled him out of the tournament.

Usually, one has to prove fitness in domestic cricket to be considered for national selection but the 22-year-old has been fast-tracked into the side considering his special talent.

The series against Bangladesh will be a test of his fitness and temperament. It remains to be seen if he can display the same accuracy and control that he exhibited in the IPL.

Besides Mayank, fellow Delhi pacer Harshit Rana and all-rounder Nitish Kumar could also make their India debut over the course of the series.

Nitish was picked for the Zimbabwe tour post the T20 World Cup but got injured while Harshit did not get to play in the five-match series in Harare.

With Tests against New Zealand given preference, Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Mohammed Siraj and Axar Patel have been rested from the T20s against Bangladesh.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya are the two big names in the squad while the other two who were part of the triumphant World Cup unit here are Shivam Dube and Arshdeep Singh.

The break to the regulars will give opportunity to the likes of Abhishek Sharma to



build his credentials following a hundred in Zimbabwe at the top of the order. Sanju Samson could get to open alongside the southpaw in the series-opener.

Riyen Parag has got six T20s since July but he could not replicate the sizzling form he showed in IPL 2024. The Bangladesh games give him another chance to make a strong impact.

The series will mark the comeback of mystery spinner Varun Chakaravathy, whose international career came to an abrupt halt following the disastrous 2021 T20 World Cup in the UAE. The other specialist spinner in the squad is Ravi Bishnoi.

Jitesh Sharma, who has been picked as the reserve wicket-keeper, has not played since the IPL in June. The Vidarbha cricketer has

not done much to write home about in the nine T20s he has been part of. He will be desperate to get a game.

The three games will serve as an audition for the four T20s in South Africa next month with majority of the T20 regulars remaining unavailable due to the proximity of the Australia Tests, starting November 22. The series will also provide the IPL franchisees more clarity on the Indian players they want to retain ahead of the mega auction.

It is almost impossible to fill the shoes of someone like Shakh Al Hasan but Bangladesh will have to plan life without the champion all-rounder. Shakib recently announced his retirement from Tests and T20s, leaving a huge void in the team.

Bangladesh were outplayed in the preced-

ing Test series but with majority of the T20 players not part of those two games, they won't be carrying any baggage into the white-ball leg of the tour.

Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz has been recalled to the side after 14 months. Veteran batter Mahmud Ullah stands at the crossroads of his career and a productive series against the world champions might give him an extra dose of motivation to continue.

Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Stadium, build on the outskirts of the city, will make its international debut on Sunday. Organising an international match in a smaller centre does have its fair share of challenges but host MPCA is ready despite a few hiccups.

A wall on the periphery of the stadium had caved in last month following unusually heavy rains in the region but has been repaired.

Captain Roop Singh Stadium in the city had hosted Gwalior's last international match in 2010 when Sachin Tendulkar smashed a famous double hundred.

Squads:
Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (Captain), Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon, Tawhid Hridoy, Mahmud Ullah, Litton Kumar Das, Jaker Ali Anik, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Shak Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Rakibul Hasan.

India's squad for 3 T20Is against Bangladesh: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Rinku Singh, Hardik Pandya, Riyen Parag, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Varun Chakaravathy, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Mayank Yadav. (PTI)

Kotian makes hundred as Mumbai seal 15th Irani Cup after 27 years; RoI held



LUCKNOW, Oct 5: Tanush Kotian's gritty unbeaten hundred laced Mumbai's 15th Irani Cup victory which was sealed by virtue of their first innings lead over Rest Of India on the fifth and final day here on Saturday.

Mumbai's last Irani Cup victory came 27 years ago during the 1997-98 season and since then the domestic powerhouse appeared in eight more finals without success and the last of which was in the 2015-16 season.

Mumbai, who started the final day from overnight 153 for six, declared their second innings at 329 for eight for an overall lead of 450 runs.

Kotian, who scored 64 in the first innings and resumed his innings on 20, remained not out on 114 off 150 balls, hitting 10 fours and a six.

Knowing the futility of chasing 451 in little over a session, the Rest of India skipper Rituraj Gaikwad shook hands with his opposite number Ajinkya Rahane, signalling the draw and victory for Mumbai, the defending Ranji Trophy champions, at the same time.

Kotian, who showed remarkable maturity to steer Mumbai innings after the early departure of Sarfaraz Khan (17) and Shardul Thakur (2), received good support from No. 10 Mohit Avasthi.

Mumbai were 171 for seven at that stage.

Avasthi remained unbeaten on 51 off 93 balls, striking four fours and a six, and helped Kotian to add

valuable 158 runs for the ninth wicket.

Off-spinner Saransh Jain took six wickets (6/121) but his efforts could only delay the inevitable.

Mumbai skipper Rahane was understandably delighted. "Winning the trophy after 27 years feel amazing. It was a red-soil wicket. I will like to pick Tanush Kotian for his performances in the previous season and this match."

"The Ranji Trophy and Irani Cup belong to everyone - from the maiden cricketers to everyone playing cricket in Mumbai."

Sarfaraz was adjudged player of the match for his double hundred in Mumbai's first innings.

"I follow the process well and came into the tournament with practice. You build up experience by playing in different grounds. You get a knowledge on how to play on different pitches."

"I have a lot to learn by being around the Test team and can improve every facet of my game," said Sarfaraz.

Mumbai Cricket Association president Ajinkya Nayak lauded the team for the win.

"Congratulations to the Mumbai Team for clinching the Irani Cup! Once again, Mumbai demonstrated an outstanding example of grit and determination," said Nayak.

Brief scores: Mumbai: 537 all out and 329/8 declared in 78 overs (Tanush Kotian 114 not out, Mohit Avasthi 51 not out, Prithvi Shaw 76; Saransh Jain 6/21) drew Rest of India: 416 all out. (PTI)

SA take ODI series from Ireland with another big win

ABU DHABI, Oct 5: South Africa shared the Twenty20 International series with Ireland. It will not share the one-day international honors.

South Africa won the ODI series with a game to spare after thrashing Ireland by 174 runs in the second game on Friday.

The South Africans posted 343-4 with a maiden ODI century from Tristan Stubbs in his sixth match, then bowled out Ireland for 169 in the 31st over.

Every South African bowler took a wicket, led by medium-pacer Lizaad Williams' 3-36.

Captain Temba Bavuma injured his left elbow while diving to make a run and retired hurt on 35. He didn't return and Rassie van der Dussen led South Africa to the finish.

Bavuma, Van der Dussen's 35 and Ryan Rickelton's 40 put South Africa in a good space when Stubbs came in.

He and Kyle Verreynne, 67 off 63 until he was stumped, ensured South Africa reached 246-3 after 40 overs.

Stubbs and Wiaan Mulder then scored most of the 97 runs in the last 10 overs.

Mulder was out going for a big hit in the 49th over for 43 off 34. Stubbs reached 100 off 75 and finished 112 not out off 81.

Ireland needed to break its own record run chase to square the series but lost half of its wickets in the power play.

Williams got Andy Balbirnie to inside edge onto his stumps in the second over, and took two wickets in two deliveries when Curtis Campher edged behind on 17 and Stephen Doherty was trapped first ball.

Paul Stirling's leg stump was bowled by Lungi Ngidi and Harry Tector chased and edged behind a wide one by Oitneil Baartman to leave Ireland a no-way-back 50-5 after 10 overs.

With the pressure off, Nos. 10 and 11 batsmen Craig Young and Graham Hume delayed the outcome for seven overs by sharing a 52-run last-wicket stand. Young finished a team-best 29 not out.

South Africa won the first game by 139 runs on Wednesday. They series ends on Monday. (AP)

Divanshi's second gold leads India's clean sweep at ISSF Junior Worlds

LIMA (PERU), Oct 5: Indian pistol shooter Divanshi secured her second individual gold in the women's 25m standard pistol event, leading a remarkable clean sweep in the event at the ISSF Junior World Championship here.

India's young shooters added five more medals to their kitty, including two gold on Friday taking the tally to 21 medals to remain at the top of the standings -- 13 gold, two silver and six bronze.

Norway remained a distant second with 10 medals -- four gold, three silver and three bronze -- while China occupied third place (3-1-0).

Divanshi dominated the event with a score of 564 out of 600, finishing ahead of

teammate Parisha Gupta, who shot 559 for silver.

Manvi Jain completed the Indian sweep with a bronze-winning score of 557, marking India's first-ever clean sweep in this competition.

Shikha Chaudhary narrowly missed a podium finish, placing fourth with a score of 554, just one point ahead of Estonia's Marja Kirss.

In the corresponding junior men's event, Suraj Sharma claimed gold with a score of 571, edging out Poland's Ivan Rakitski, who shot 568 for silver.

Mukesh Nelavalli, who already has four gold medals in the championship, shot 568 but settled for bronze after a countback.

RCB hand over two fully restored lakes to local community

BENGALURU, Oct 5: In a noble gesture, the Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Saturday handed over the fully restored Ittgalgura and Sadenahalli lakes to the local authorities, a long-term project the IPL outfit undertook under its Go Green Initiative.

From here on, the local community will maintain the lakes for water security and combat the risk of water crisis in the surrounding regions.

"RCB's Lake Improvement Works Project, launched in October



2023, was designed to improve the drought resistance in highly water stressed areas in Bengaluru which lack access to natural source of water and are totally dependent on groundwater and surface water," said Rajesh Menon, Vice President and Head of RCB.

For this project, RCB entered into an implementation partnership with the India Cares Foundation and Friends of Lakes. As part of the nearly 300-day project, over 50,000 tons of silt and sand were meticulously removed, with much of it repurposed by local farmers for plantation efforts.

Furthering the project's ecological vision, RCB also planted over 3,000 trees along the newly widened bunds of the lakes to help manage flooding and add to the local biodiversity. (PTI)

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Expecting pitch to play slow: Bangladesh batter Towhid Hridoy

GWALIOR, Oct 5: Bangladesh middle-order batter Towhid Hridoy is expecting the pitch to play slow in the T20 series opener against India as both teams enter unknown territory with the Shrimant Madhavrao Stadium hosting its first international match on Sunday.

Bangladesh took part in their third practice session here on Saturday.

"T20 is a game of runs, every team want to score runs. But no international match has happened here, it is a new venue. We don't know what will be the condition."

"Looking at the practice wicket, I feel it is a slow pitch. In such wickets having a high scoring game is very less. No IPL match has also happened here," said Hridoy.

Hridoy also stressed the team is here to win the series though it will miss the services of champion all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who recently retired from T20 and Test cricket.

"Pressure is always there, but if we think about that then we will not be able to perform well, our focus is always on process and how to perform. Shakib bhai is not there, we will miss him but everyone has to go one day, we are hopeful we will be able to beat them," said the 23-year-old.

Morne Morkel 'unhappy' with Hardik Pandya's bowling approach in nets, has intense chat with all-rounder before 1st T20I While the field of play is ready in the newly-built facility, organisers are making a last gap attempt to giving finishing touches to the work going in the stands and around the stadium.

A bevy of VIPs is expected for the landmark fixture and considering that, desperate repair work is underway on the road leading to the stadium located in the outskirts of the city. Heavy rain lashed the city last month, causing significant damage to roads. A wall around the periphery of the stadium had caved in couple of weeks ago.

On entering the stadium, one could see work going on at a frenetic pace a day before the game. Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association has flown in a team from its hub in Indore to ensure a smooth operation.

"We have been here for more than a week. It takes more time to get work done in Gwalior compared to Indore. The elevators in one of the stands only got installed in the morning. Thank god it is a day night game, otherwise fans would have a tough time sitting in stands without a roof," said an official. (PTI)

New stadium in Gwalior will allow us to host India matches alternatively with Indore: MPCA chief



GWALIOR, Oct 5: International cricket will return to Gwalior after a 14-year gap on Sunday but going forward the city will not have to wait that long to host high-profile matches as the newly built stadium will allow MPCA to stage games "alternatively" with Indore, the state association's president Abhilash Khandekar informed PTI

on Saturday. The state-of-the-art Shrimant Madhavrao Stadium was inaugurated in June and is the new home of big ticket cricket in the city replacing the deteriorating Captain Roop Singh Stadium, which is run by the local corporation.

Speaking to PTI ahead of the India-Bangladesh T20I, Khan-

dekar said Gwalior is a city with a rich cricketing history and therefore deserved a world-class venue.

"The ICC and BCCI want an exclusive stadium for cricket and we have two now in Gwalior and Indore."

"Going forward, whenever MPCA is allotted matches by the BCCI, we would want to use

Gwalior and Indore alternatively. Both are traditional venues with rich history of the game," said Khandekar.

The Holkar Stadium located in the heart of Indore has hosted international matches across formats including three Tests. Khandekar wants Gwalior to also host a Test in the near future. Both the stadiums are owned by MPCA.

"We would surely want to host a Test here. The people of Gwalior would like to see that as well."

"The city is excited about the T20 and I hope we can have a red-ball game here soon," said Khandekar, who said tickets for the series opener are sold out with 30,000 spectators expected on the match day.

Organising an international match in a smaller centre poses plenty of challenges but that is not a deterrent for Khandekar and his team.

"With the heavy rain in Gwalior there were a few challenges but we have overcome that. All the MPCA staff members working on the game are thorough professionals, they got here well in advance to prepare for the game," he added. (PTI)

Russell, Pooran among four Windies seniors to opt out of T20Is against SL

ST JOHN'S (ANTIGUA), Oct 5: West Indies will be without their senior players Andre Russell, Nicholas Pooran, Akeal Hosein and Shimron Hetmyer as the quartet has opted out of the upcoming three-match T20I series in Sri Lanka citing "personal reasons."

The revamped selection committee under head coach Darren Sammy recalled opening batter Evin Lewis and Brandon King, while handing maiden call-ups to pace bowling all-rounders Terrance Hinds and Shamar Springer, according to a CWI release.

Lewis makes a comeback after the 2022 T20 World Cup, while King returns after recovering from a side injury that largely kept him out of the T20 World Cup earlier this year.

Rovman Powell was retained as the captain with Roston Chase continuing in his role as vice-captain.

"The tour of Sri Lanka gives us a chance to test our depth and assess players in different situations, especially with several senior players missing out for various reasons, including a need for rest and rehabilitation from injury. We are confident in the squad's ability to compete strongly against Sri Lanka," Sammy stated in the release.

WI have moved to third spot in



the rankings following 3-0 clean sweep of South Africa earlier this year and they will now tour Sri Lanka for a three-match T20I and ODI series from October 10-27.

Shai Hope will continue as ODI captain, and Alzarri Joseph as his deputy. This series provides an opportunity for CWI to focus on building its ODI team ahead of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027.

A notable inclusion is Jewel Andrew, the young Antiguan wicket-keeper-batsman who has impressed the selectors to earn his place in the squad.

The squad also sees the return of several key players, including King

and Sherfane Rutherford.

West Indies' T20I Squad: Rovman Powell (c), Roston Chase (v-c), Fabian Allen, Alick Athanaze, Andre Fletcher, Terrance Hinds, Shai Hope, Alzarri Joseph, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Evin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd and Shamar Springer.

ODI Squad: Shai Hope (c), Alzarri Joseph (v-c), Jewel Andrew, Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Evin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Sherfane Rutherford, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd and Hayden Walsh Jr. (PTI)