

6 WORLD

- Russia launches first missile attack on Kyiv in months
- Diminished Biden heads to APEC summit in Peru

8 NATION

- Voter turnout in Wayanad LS constituency by-election drops
- 65 pc voter turnout registered in 43 assembly seats till 5pm

JANJATIYA GAURAV DIVAS

PM Modi to visit Bihar's Jamui tomorrow

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Bihar's Jamui on Friday to commemorate Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, marking the commencement of the 150th birth anniversary celebration of tribal icon Birsa Munda.

During his visit, Modi will also inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth over ₹ 6,640 crore, aimed at uplifting tribal communities and improving infrastructure in rural and remote areas of the region, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement.

Modi will visit Jamui to commemorate Janjatiya Gaurav Divas and this marks the commencement of the 150th birth anniversary celebration of 'Dharti Aaba Bhagwan Birsa Munda', the statement said.

At 11 am, Modi will unveil a commemorative coin and postal stamp in honour of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.



The Prime Minister will participate in the 'grih pravesh' of 11,000 'awas' built under the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN). He will also inaugurate 23 Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) launched under PM-JANMAN and an additional 30 MMUs under the Dharti

Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) to enhance healthcare access in tribal areas. Modi will inaugurate 300 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) to promote tribal entrepreneurship and support livelihood generation and 10 Eklavya Model Residential Schools, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

72.83 percent polling recorded in Assam bye-elections ● Sidli records lowest 71.50% voting

Samaguri records highest turnout despite pre-poll violence

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 13: The bye-election in five assembly seats in Assam was completed peacefully on Wednesday with overall voter turnout of 72.83 percent.

The highest voter turnout of 78.10 percent was recorded in Samaguri assembly seats while Sidli constituency witnessed the lowest turnout of 71.50 percent.

The Election Commission (EC) has not announced repoll in any constituency.

In Samaguri, some BJP supporters raised slogans against the Congress MP Rakibul Hussain and a vehicle of a journalist in Salpara area of the assembly constituency was attacked by some miscreants.



In two polling booths, Congress and BJP workers exchanged heated arguments; however, the situation

was brought under control by the security forces. The Samaguri assembly con-

stituency has witnessed sporadic pre-poll violence with supporters of BJP and Congress clashing with each other on several occasions during the campaign of the bye-elections this time.

In the previous week, suspected armed criminals opened fire on a BJP march that included Barhampur MLA Jitu Goswami, injuring at least three people.

Attackers targeted BJP politicians taking part in the march, including MLA Goswami, in the Moriputhi neighborhood of Samaguri.

According to witnesses, the attackers first pelted stones at the participants before striking them with (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Karbi Anglong hosts Eri Spinning training for local women

HT Bureau DIPHU, Nov 13: A three-day skill development training programme on Eri spinning and Eri yarn knitting, organised by the Assistant Director of Sericulture, Karbi Anglong, is underway at Reshom Bhavan's conference hall.

The training began on November 12 and will conclude on November 14. This programme aims to equip local women with skills in producing Eri yarns using spinning machines, including the cocoon-baking processes required for spinning yarns.

According to Longki Timung, the in-charge Assistant Director of Sericulture, 40 women trainees are participating in the programme.

Inaugurating the event, the executive member (EM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Lusing Teron, who oversees Sericulture and Irrigation,

stated that the programme's main purpose is to train participants in advanced Eri spinning techniques to boost productivity and quality in the sector.

The EM informed the trainees that they would receive certificates upon completing the training.

"The certificate serves as proof of participation in the training. It's also essential when applying for bank loans to support silkworm rearing or to establish Eri spinning centres," Teron explained.

Highlighting the traditional link between the Karbi community and silkworm rearing, the EM said, "Our women have long spun yarns from silkworm cocoons using traditional methods to make garments. However, times have changed, and we must adopt modern methods and embrace a competitive approach." He also mentioned Serdihun, a legendary figure (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Situation in West Asia matter of deep concern: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: India supports an early ceasefire in Gaza and it has consistently stood for resolution of the Palestinian issue through a two-state solution, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday.

In his opening remarks at a meeting with Saudi foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Jaishankar said the situation in West Asia is a matter of "deep concern", particularly the conflict in Gaza.

The external affairs minister described Saudi Arabia as an important force for stability in the region. Jaishankar and Al Saud co-chaired the second meeting of the Committee on Political, Security, Social and Cultural Cooperation (PSSC) held under the framework of the Strategic Partnership Council (SPC).

The Ministry of External Affairs



(MEA) said both sides discussed avenues to strengthen the India-Saudi Arabia strategic partnership, especially in the areas of trade, investment, energy, defence, security, culture and consular matters.

In his remarks, Jaishankar said Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and India's Viksit Bharat 2047 hold complementarities for the industries of the two sides to build new partnerships.

"Trade and investment are important pillars of our partnership, and we are strengthening our collaboration in new areas including technology, energy, renewable energy, including green hydrogen, connectivity, health and education," he said.

Al Saud is on a two-day visit to India.

On the situation in Gaza, Jaishankar said any response must take into account the international humanitarian law.

"The situation in West Asia is a matter of deep concern, particularly the conflict in Gaza. India's position in this regard has been principled and consistent," he said.

"While we condemn acts of terrorism and hostage-taking, we are deeply pained by the continuing death of innocent civilians. Any response must take into account the international humanitarian law. We support (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

UK oppn leader Kemi Badenoch to press for FTA with India

LONDON, Nov 13: The UK's newly elected Leader of the Opposition, Kemi Badenoch, said she will continue to press for the conclusion of the free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations, which she had worked towards as former business and trade secretary.

Addressing a special diaspora gathering to celebrate the festive season at the High Commission of India in London on Tuesday evening, the Conservative Party leader said she would continue to champion the "important" bilateral partnership from the opposition benches.

"I want everyone to know just how important the UK-India relationship is, not just to the government but also to the Conservative

Party," said Badenoch.

"In the Department for Business, I did everything we could to continue strengthening relations with India and just because the Conservatives are not in government anymore doesn't mean that work will not continue. We really do value this relationship. We will continue to press for the conclusion of the India-UK FTA," said the Tory member of Parliament who succeeded Rishi Sunak as party leader earlier this month.

"The elections in both our countries got in the way; elections are now out of the way, it's time for us to get back to business and make sure our two governments are working (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Drugs seized in Guwahati, 4 held

GUWAHATI, Nov 13: Drugs worth more than ₹ 3 crore have been recovered from Guwahati and four people, including a woman, have been arrested in this connection, police on Wednesday.

The Guwahati police, in a series of posts on X, said that narcotics substances like heroin and 'Yaba' tablets were recovered from a guest house in the Hatigaon area of the city.

"An EGPD team from Dispur PS seized 10,000 'Yaba' tablets, 11 grams of suspected heroin in 5 soap boxes after it carried out a raid," it added.

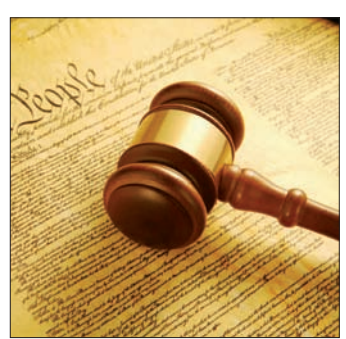
The team from the East Guwahati Police District (EGPD) also nabbed four peddlers, including a 40-year-old woman, and seized four mobile phones along with ₹ 5,000 in cash from their possession, it said. A senior official said that the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Rule of law umbrella concept to protect citizens against State's power: SC

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: The rule of law is an umbrella concept to protect citizens against the power of the State and it is necessary for democracy and good governance, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday.

Laying down pan-India guidelines on demolition of properties, the apex court said the rule of law ensures that actions of the government and its authorities are governed by established legal principles, rather than arbitrary discretion.

"Ensuring the preservation of the principle of rule of law and the protection of the civil rights and liberties of citizens is essential for protecting constitutional democracy," a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said in its 95-page verdict.



It said the law must be just and fair and should protect the human rights and dignity of all members of society.

"At the same time, the essential purpose of the rule of law is to prevent the abuse of power. The rule of law is an umbrella concept to protect citizens against the power of the State. It is integral to and

necessary for democracy and good governance," the bench said.

The court said it is well settled that the rule of law has been described as a safeguard against the arbitrary use of State power.

"Whenever the citizens, in the form of mobs, have broken the law to vandalise or to declare threats, the court has cast an obligation on the State to prevent such threats or assaults," it said.

The bench said this obligation underscores the State's responsibility to maintain law and order and protect citizens from unlawful actions that undermine the rule of law itself.

"It is not necessary to state that the failure to uphold these obligations can erode public confidence in the justice system, leading to an environment (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Total shutdown affects normal life in Imphal Valley

IMPHAL, Nov 13: Normal life was affected in Manipur's Imphal Valley on Wednesday due to a total shutdown called by 13 civil rights organisations to protest the alleged abduction of three women and children each by militants in Jiribam district, officials said.

Business establishments and educational institutions in the five Imphal Valley districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Kakching and Bishnupur were closed due to the shutdown that commenced at 6 pm on Tuesday.

Both private and inter-district public transportation also remained off the roads and government offices recorded negligible attendance, they said.

The shutdown was called by In-



ternational Peace and Social Advancement (IPSA) along with All Clubs Organisations Association and Meira Paibi Lup (ACOAM Lup), Indigenous People's Association of Kangleipak (IPAK) and Kangleipak Students' Association (KSA) among others.

No untoward incident was reported in Imphal Valley during the shutdown. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Governor interacts with IPS probationers

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 13: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya interacted with 10 IPS probationers of the 76th RR (2024 Batch) Assam-Meghalaya cadre at Raj Bhavan on Wednesday, asking the probationers to become role models for others.

During the interaction, Governor Acharya demanded the probationers to work responsibly, recognising the high expectations placed on them. He asked them to be committed to their work and sport polite behaviour towards all individuals who interact with them.

He said, "It is a dream for many to be an IPS officer and when they have become one, they should carry out their responsibilities diligently." "Since law and order of the society (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

New Collective Quantified Goal Trillions of dollars needed to fight climate change: High ambition coalition

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Some developed countries on Wednesday acknowledged that trillions of dollars were urgently needed to address climate change and wealthy nations should continue to lead in providing climate finance.

These countries -- including Germany, Canada, France, and the Netherlands -- are part of an alliance known as the High Ambition Coalition, which advocates for bold climate actions.

"As we negotiate this new goal for climate finance, we must again overcome our differences, strengthen our commitment to global solidarity, and find the money to meet the planet's growing needs," the coalition said stressing that trillions of dollars were urgently needed.



The statement comes as countries spar over a draft for a new finance package to help developing countries cope with climate change -- or New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) -- that is expected to

be finalised at the ongoing UN climate talks in Baku, Azerbaijan. Harjeet Singh, a climate activist and global engagement director for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, said that while the

statement aligned with developing nations and civil society's demands, it fell short of what was truly needed.

The coalition demanded solutions to debt burdens and high capital costs that make fighting climate change difficult in many countries and called for a reformed international financial system to support their efforts.

It said climate finance should be primarily grant-based and concessional, particularly for adaptation and to address loss and damage. The right conditions must be in place for green investments to thrive.

"Developed countries must continue to take the lead and live up to existing finance commitments and innovative (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



IN MEMORIAM
LATE ANAI RAM NUNISA
Died on: 14-11-2010

We all remember you on 14th Death Anniversary
May your soul be in everlasting peace!

Sons: Dr. Motilal Nunisa, Pradip Nunisa, Dr. Ruplal Nunisa & Dr. Bishnu Ram Nunisa

Daughter-in-law: Jayanti Nunisa, Prabhati Nunisa, Dr. Ritu Nunisa (wife of Late ER. Nirmal Nunisa) & Anima Nunisa.

Daughters: Usha Hojai, (wife of Late Dr. Dhruva Hojai), Alo Thaosen

Son-in-law: Ramesh Thaosen & all grand children

New rules ban false claims in coaching ads

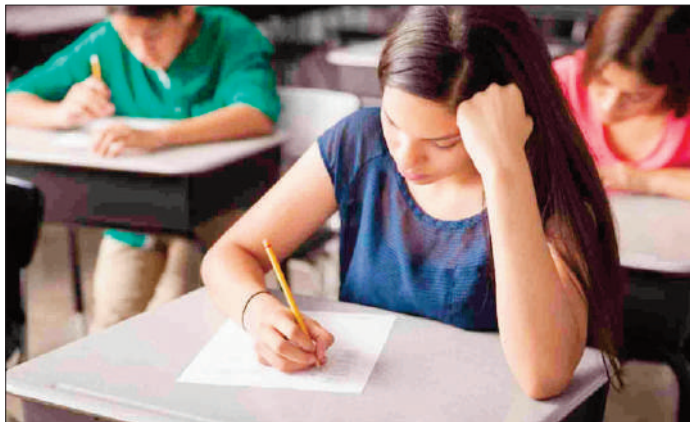
Centre issues guidelines to crack down on misleading ads by coaching centres

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: The Centre on Wednesday released new guidelines to regulate misleading advertisements by coaching institutes, prohibiting false claims like 100 per cent selection or 100 per cent job security.

The final guidelines, drafted by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), come in the wake of several complaints on the National Consumer Helpline. The CCPA has issued 54 notices and imposed penalties of about ₹ 54.60 lakh till date.

"We have seen coaching centres deliberately concealing information from prospective students. Therefore, we have come out with the guidelines to provide guidance to people involved in the coaching industry," Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare told reporters.

The government is not against the coaching centres but the quality of advertisements should not undermine the consumer rights, she said.



Under the new guidelines, coaching centres are prohibited from making false claims regarding courses offered and duration; faculty credentials; fee structure and refund policies; selection rates and exam rankings; and guaranteed job security or salary increases.

The guidelines define 'coaching' to include academic support, education, guidance, study pro-

grammes and tuition, but exclude counselling, sports and creative activities.

Coaching centres cannot use names, photographs or testimonials of successful candidates without written consent obtained after selection. They must display disclaimers prominently and disclose important information about courses.

"Many UPSC students clear pre-

lims and mains on their own and take only interview guidance from coaching centres," Khare said, advising prospective students to verify what courses successful candidates were actually enrolled in.

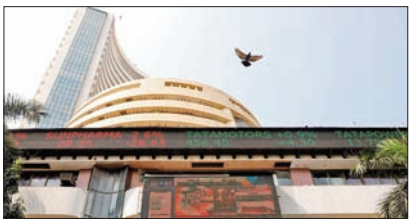
The guidelines, titled 'Prevention of Misleading Advertisement in Coaching Sector', cover all forms of advertising across academic support, education, guidance and tuition services. However, they exclude counselling, sports and creative activities.

Khare, who is also CCPA chief, said coaching centres should accurately represent the service, facilities, resources and infrastructure. They should truthfully represent that the courses offered are duly recognised and have the approval of a competent authority such as AICTE, UGC, etc.

The provisions are in addition to existing laws.

Violations will attract penalties under the Consumer Protection Act, Khare added. (PTI)

Sensex slumps 984 pts to close at more than 4-month lows; banking, auto shares major drag



MUMBAI, Nov 13: Benchmark Sensex plunged 984 points to close at a more than four-month low on Wednesday following heavy selling in banking, auto and capital goods shares amid retail inflation soaring to a 14-month high in October and unabated foreign fund outflows.

The BSE Sensex slid to 77,690.95, down by 984.23 points or 1.25 per cent, marking its second straight day of losses. During the day, it slumped 1,141.88 points or 1.45 per cent to 77,533.30. Registering its fifth day of decline, the NSE Nifty tumbled 324.40 points or 1.36 per cent to 23,559.05, a level not seen since June 24, 2024.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, Adani Ports, JSW Steel, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the biggest laggards.

Tata Motors, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints and Infosys were the gainers.

"Relentless selling by FIIs amid weak corporate earnings and a sharp surge in domestic inflation to a 14-month high have further impacted investor sentiment, dashing hopes for a near-term rate cut by the RBI," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Nair added that markets are jittery about future US policy actions, including trade-related implications for the world economy,

which is reflected in a stronger US dollar and rising bond yields.

The latest data showed retail inflation breached the Reserve Bank's upper tolerance level, soaring to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October, mainly on account of rising food prices.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,024.31 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Mid and small-cap stocks were the worst hit, while the financials and auto sectors also showed significant weakness. The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 3.08 per cent and midcap slumped 2.56 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended lower. Realty tumbled the most by 3.23 per cent, followed by industrials (2.95 per cent), capital goods (2.72 per cent), services (2.54 per cent), metal (2.54 per cent) and commodities (2.45 per cent).

A total of 3,299 stocks declined while 670 advanced and 98 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"Markets extended their corrective phase, declining by nearly one and a half per cent, continuing the existing downward trend," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower while Shanghai ended in the positive territory. European markets were trading higher. The US markets ended in the negative territory on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.93 per cent to USD 72.56 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark tumbled 820.97 points or 1.03 per cent to settle at 78,675.18 on Tuesday. The Nifty tanked 257.85 points or 1.07 per cent to 23,883.45. (PTI)

India Game Developer Conference 2024 set to boost gaming industry

GUWAHATI, Nov 13: The India Game Developer Conference (IGDC), organised by the Game Developer Association of India (GDIA), is set to return for its 16th edition from November 13-15 at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC). Recognised as one of the top three gaming developer conferences globally, IGDC 2024 will bring together over 20,000 attendees, 250 speakers, and over 150 sessions led by global gaming icons and founders of leading video gaming companies.

The conference will feature policy roundtables with IT ministers from various states and global gaming experts to discuss strategic initiatives for India's gaming industry. Attendees can expect potential investment discussions worth over \$100 million in Indian video gaming, facilitated

by 100+ investor-publisher meetings.

The three-day event will also host an expansive expo of top gaming companies and indie developers, and include workshops, networking sessions, and the IGDC Awards Night on November 14th. Key sessions will cover emerging trends and innovations, featuring industry leaders such as Jordan Weisman, Tim Morten, and Bryce Johnson.

According to Sridhar Muppidi, Chairperson of GDIA, "IGDC is a vital platform for developers, investors, and policymakers to collaborate and elevate India's position in the global gaming industry."

With its comprehensive agenda, IGDC 2024 aims to further India's role as a game development hub, fostering policy support, talent growth, and international collaboration.

Digital learning and scholarships for underprivileged students HDFC Bank to launch SMART classes in 3,500 schools

GUWAHATI, Nov 13: HDFC Bank, marking Children's Day, has announced ambitious new goals through its CSR initiative, Parivartan, aimed at transforming the education landscape for underprivileged students across India.

By 2025, the bank plans to introduce SMART classes in 3,500 schools, award scholarships to 25,000 students, and help 20 lakh students reach age-appropriate learning levels.

Over the past decade, Parivartan has made a significant impact in India's educational sector, reaching more than 2.16 crore students, training over 20.22 lakh teachers, and providing support to over 2.87 lakh schools nationwide. The program has already introduced smart classrooms, improved educational infrastructure, and fostered digital learning environments, allowing students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access quality education.

One inspiring example is Jamapur in Varanasi, where chil-



dren from tribal families, including Kalash and Komal, have been able to continue schooling thanks to the new SMART school facilities established through a collaboration between HDFC Bank Parivartan and Ambuja Cement Foundation. The school now offers digital classrooms, modern libraries, science labs, and sports facilities, significantly increasing attendance and, for the first time, bringing more girls into the classroom.

Kaizad M Bharucha, Deputy Managing Director of HDFC

Bank, stated, "Education is the cornerstone of a brighter and more equitable future. Through Parivartan, we are committed to creating educational opportunities, empowering teachers, and supporting resilient communities. This Children's Day, we reaffirm our dedication to helping every child realise their potential."

Parivartan's initiatives align with the government's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on critical areas such as teacher training, career guidance, and in-

frastructural development. In addition to education, Parivartan supports rural development, healthcare, and financial literacy, investing over INR 5,100 crore in sustainable socio-economic growth since its launch in 2014.

Nusrat Pathan, Head of CSR at HDFC Bank, highlighted the programme's collective approach, saying, "We are actively collaborating with government bodies, NGOs, and community organisations to bring educational resources to those who need them most, raising the standard of education across government schools and providing students with tools to thrive."

With these initiatives, HDFC Bank Parivartan aims to bridge educational gaps, encourage school attendance, and provide underprivileged students with the support they need to pursue their dreams. Through a combination of SMART classes, scholarships, and policy-aligned programmes, the initiative is helping to build a brighter, more inclusive future for millions of young Indians.

Contd. from Page 1...

PM Modi to visit Bihar's Jamui

worth around ₹ 450 crore, dedicated to tribal students. He will also inaugurate two Tribal Freedom Fighters' Museums in Chhindwara and Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, and two Tribal Research Institutes in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, and Gangtok, Sikkim, to document and preserve the rich history and heritage of tribal communities, the statement said. Modi will also lay the foundation stone of 500 kilometres of new roads to improve connectivity in tribal regions and 100 Multi-Purpose Centres (MPCs) to act as community hubs under PM-JANMAN. He will lay the foundation stone of 25 additional Eklavya Model Residential Schools, worth over ₹ 1,110 crore, furthering the commitment to quality education for tribal children.

The Prime Minister will also sanction various development projects that include 25,000 new 'awas' under PM-JANMAN worth around ₹ 500 crore and 1.16 lakh 'awas' under DAJGUA worth over ₹ 1,960 crore; 66 hostels under PM-JANMAN and 304 under DAJGUA worth more than ₹ 1,100 crore; 50 new MPCs, 55 MMUs and 65 Anganwadi centres under PM-JANMAN. (PTI)

Samaguri records highest

sticks. Three people were then hurt when unidentified persons opened fire on the group. The attack also caused some damage to Goswami's car. In the byelections, the BJP and Congress are having a direct contest in three assembly constituencies. The ruling party is fighting in three seats while its allies—Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) have given candidates in two places.

Byelections in five assembly constituencies—Dholai, Samaguri, Behali, Bongaigaon, and Sidli became due following the elections of five legislators in the lower house of the parliament in this year's Lok Sabha polls.

The Dholai assembly constituency is reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC) community and Sidli seat is reserved for Scheduled Tribe (ST). Except in Samaguri, where Congress heavyweight Rakibul Hussain has been winning since 2001, the rest of the four seats are with the BJP-led alliance.

The BJP has given candidates in three seats—Dholai, Samaguri and Behali.

Diplu Ranjan Sarma has been given ticket in Samaguri while Diganta Ghatowar and Nihar Ranjan Das will fight for the BJP in Behali and Dholai assembly segments respectively.

BJP's former cabinet minister Parimal Suklabaidya successfully contested in the Silchar Lok Sabha seat and his earlier assembly seat Dholai got vacant. Meanwhile another senior BJP leader Ranjit Dutta was elected to the lower house of the parliament this time. He was representing the Behali seat in the assembly.

Meanwhile, another ally of the BJP—Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) will contest polls in the Bongaigaon assembly constituency. United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) gave a ticket to Nirmal Kumar Brahma, who is the current district president of the party in Chirang.

Karbi Anglong hosts Eri

in Karbi culture, as the first to introduce various patterns on clothes. The EM further informed the trainees that the Sericulture department now purchases silkworm cocoons directly from farmers at Rs 1,000 per kg, providing an alternative to selling in the open market. Timung emphasised the need to first establish plantations of silkworm food plants such as Kesseru, Mulberry, and Som to support silkworm rearing.

During the training, resource person Bgan Kemprai from Haflong demonstrated Eri spinning using a machine and cocoon-baking techniques. Additional director of Sericulture Rongbong Rongphar and superintendent of Sericulture Gobinda Kemprai also attended the inaugural function.

Situation in West Asia matter

an early ceasefire," Jaishankar said. "India has consistently stood for resolution of the Palestinian issue through a two-state solution. We have also contributed to the building of Palestinian institutions and capacities," he added. Delving into India-Saudi ties, the external affairs minister said both sides maintained a good tempo of high-level engagements and coordination across multilateral fora.

"Our defence partnership has witnessed several 'firsts' over the past few years including the first ever land forces joint exercise 2024; and two editions of our joint naval exercises," he said.

"We had regular exchanges on training and capacity building. And our cooperation has now expanded in the field of defence industry and exports as well," he said.

Jaishankar also noted steady growth of security cooperation between the two sides.

"We are collaborating in counter-terrorism, combating extremism, terror financing, and drug trafficking," he said.

"We welcome efforts to promote culture, tourism and youth exchanges. And we see considerable potential for cooperation in the field of media and entertainment," he said.

In the meeting, the two sides also deliberated on issues relating to the G20, the BRICS, the IMEEC (India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor) and other regional and global issues.

In his opening remarks, Jaishankar said India and Saudi Arabia have a similar interest in preserving the stability of the region and in driving the economies towards greater prosperity. (PTI)

UK oppn leader Kemi Badenoch

towards this," added Badenoch. Her intervention came as the latest Department for Business and Trade (DBT) statistics revealed that the annual two-way trade in goods and services between both countries had registered a 9.7 per cent hike over the past year to hit GBP 42 billion.

India and the UK have been negotiating an FTA since January 2022 under the then Conservative-led government, something the Prime Minister Keir Starmer-led Labour Party has committed to pursuing.

"We enjoy a thriving trade and investment partnership, which, through a future free trade agreement and Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), could create one of the strongest and most prosperous relationships and partnerships in the world, which we're very proud of," said UK Treasury minister Tulip Siddiq in her keynote address to the London Global Convention organised by the Institute of Directors (IoD) this week.

"The UK and India alike have businesses crying out for greater access to export markets, and through the combination of a new trade strategy and, of course, a free trade agreement, we can provide that access. We are confident as a new government that we can realise the full potential of the commercial ties between our two nations, which is already worth 42 billion pounds a year," said Siddiq.

The British Bangladeshi Labour MP from London oversees financial services policy reform and regulation in her role as the government's economic secretary to the Treasury and city minister.

She added: "Against the backdrop of our strategies for trade and industry, imagine how many more success stories we can create and how much more growth we can generate through a UK-India trade deal and investment treaty." (PTI)

Drugs seized in Guwahati

total value of the seized drugs will be over ₹ 3.08 crore as per Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) standards. 'Yaba' or 'crazy medicine' in Thai is a tablet form of a mixture of methamphetamine (a powerful and addictive stimulant) and caffeine. (PTI)

Rule of law umbrella concept

where the rule of law is compromised by lawlessness," it said. The court said the concept of the rule of law is not abstract but is reflected in the substantive content of various legal domains.

It added that the processes enshrined in constitutional law, criminal law and procedure are facets of the rule of law and, thus, serve to regulate the exercise of executive power. Referring to the doctrine of separation of powers, the top court said the executive cannot replace the judiciary in performing its core functions.

It said if the executive acts as a judge and inflicts the penalty of demolition on a citizen on the ground that he is an accused, it violates the principle of "separation of powers".

"We are of the view that in such matters, the public officials, who take the law in their hands, should be made accountable for such high-handed actions," the bench said.

It also referred to the aspect of the rights of an accused under the Constitution.

"While we consider the issue in this case, we will have to reiterate that even the incarcerated individuals, whether accused, undertrial or convicts, have certain rights, as any other citizen," it said.

"They have a right to dignity and cannot be subjected to any cruel or inhuman treatment. The punishment awarded to such persons has to be in accordance with law. Such punishment cannot be inhuman or cruel," the bench said. It added that even an accused or a convict has certain rights and safeguards in the form of constitutional provisions and criminal law. (PTI)

Total shutdown affects

Two trucks carrying goods were, however, set ablaze allegedly by armed militants near Old Kaiphundai in the Naga-dominated Tamenglong district near Jiribam. Suspected hill-based militants stopped the trucks along NH 37 by firing several rounds in the air and then torched the trucks, an official said.

Rongmei Naga Students Organisation, Manipur strongly condemned the incident and alleged Kuki militants were behind it. The trucks were transporting rice, onions and potatoes for Noney and Tamenglong districts, the students' body claimed in a statement. The Manipur Police said 10 suspected militants were killed in a fierce gunfight with security forces on Monday after insurgents in camouflage uniforms, armed with sophisticated weapons, fired indiscriminately at the Borobekra police station and an adjacent CRPF camp at Jakuradorh in Jiribam district. However, a senior government official put the toll at 11. Police said purported photographs of the six missing persons in captivity of militants doing the rounds on social media could not be confirmed and the rescue operations were on to trace them. (PTI)

Governor interacts with

depends on the police officers, they should be very sensible and diligent in carrying out their duties," Acharya added. The Governor also expressed his expectations from the officers, encouraging them to work sincerely and contribute to the progress of the society.

Trillions of dollars needed to

forms of finance be made a reality," the coalition added, calling for simplified and faster processes to approve and disburse climate funds. The world should rapidly transition away from fossil fuels, triple renewables, double energy efficiency and cut fossil fuel subsidies, it said.

"We are halfway through the critical decade, and we must all - particularly the G20 - reflect these commitments in 1.5 degrees Celsius, align NDCs (nationally determined contributions) that are economy-wide, cover all sectors and gases, and have absolute reduction targets," the coalition said.

Jennifer Morgan, state secretary and special envoy for International Climate Action, Germany, said: "We have also seen through the European Union how taking climate action goes hand in hand with our own economic prosperity. The European Union reduced emissions 8.3 per cent last year; as a whole we have reduced our emissions by 37 per cent, with an increase of 68 per cent in our GDP." (PTI)

DEO oversees preparedness for by-elections in Dholai

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 13: As by-elections unfold across Assam's five constituencies, including the 11-Dholai (SC) constituency of Cachar district, the district election officer (DEO) of Cachar, Mridul Yadav, spearheaded a comprehensive review to ensure an organised and secure voting process. In a hands-on approach, DEO Yadav visited various polling stations across the constituency on Wednesday, assessing security protocols and the operational setup at each location to uphold a peaceful and seamless election day. During his visit, DEO Yadav expressed confidence in the arrangements made by the Cachar district administration, lauding the diligent efforts of election officials and ground teams. "Ensuring a smooth and safe voting process is our utmost priority," DEO Yadav stated, adding that extensive coordination between the administration and security personnel would maintain public trust and support transparent election conduct. The proactive efforts of Cachar's Election Office reflect a steadfast commitment to fostering a reliable and voter-friendly environment, encouraging high voter turnout and promoting democratic values within the Dholai constituency. This initiative reinforces the administration's dedication to a fair electoral process, further bolstering public confidence in the system.

Tezpur ABSU installs new leadership in annual session



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 13: The annual delegate session of the Tezpur unit ABSU was held at the Old Baan Theater premises here with a day-long program on Tuesday. The session was presided over by the president of the committee, Rwn Narzary, and conducted by secretary Mandip Goyari.

Among others, the special annual delegate session was attended by Sonitpur district ABSU general secretary Enosh Mochahary, deputy speaker Adim Swrgiary, education secretary Rijay Basumatary, one of the four secretaries of the District Committee ABSU, Rupjyoti Boro, along with special guest Dr Lakhiram Narzary from Tezpur College's Boro department, and all the office bearers of the Tezpur Unit ABSU. Following the ABSU's constitutional protocol, in the presence of the guests, the old committee was dissolved and a new committee was formed, with Buhmsa Basumatary (Tezpur College) as president and Swrangsa Basumatary (Darrang College) as general secretary.

Later, district ABSU general secretary Enosh Mochahary acknowledged the old body for their dedicated service to the organisation during their tenure amidst their busy study schedules. While giving best wishes to the new body, Mochahary urged them to work selflessly for the Boro nation, striving to preserve their ethnic identity, reminding them that art, culture, language, literature, heritage, and proper education reflect the true identity of a nation. Underscoring Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma's ideology and his lifelong dedication to the welfare and upliftment of the marginalised Boro community, he also encouraged the new body to engage in selfless service to the nation. "If you give time to the nation for its good cause, time will give you recognition, and the nation will always remember you," he said, adding that ABSU is a disciplined organisation and all ABSU members should maintain the same.

Other members, along with Dr Lakhiram Narzary from Tezpur College, also spoke a few words to motivate the new body's members to work for the organisation while staying on the right track. At the end, the old body officially handed over the charge to the new body, and the new body was administered the oath to carry out their duties with responsibility and discipline.

Jorhat DC forms task force for fire safety audit

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Nov 13: The Jorhat district commissioner, Jay Shivani, has constituted a 15-member inter-departmental task force to conduct a fire safety audit in all commercial establishments, businesses, shops, shopping malls, markets, market complexes, hospitals, nursing homes, cinema halls, multiplexes, godowns, and residential buildings.

The order issued on November 13 appointed Kritarth Neog, branch officer, District Disaster Management Authority, Jorhat, as the chairman of the task force. The order stated that the task force will submit its findings, with proposals for short- and long-term mitigation and corrective measures to minimise fire hazards in Jorhat town and its peripheral areas, to the DC, who is the chairman of DDMA, Jorhat, by December 20 this year.

The move comes in the wake of a devastating fire near Bhogdoi Masjid on AT Road on the night of November 1, in which one person lost his life and several shops were gutted.

This incident was the fourth major fire in Jorhat town in recent years.

Peaceful polls in Sidli LAC, clashes mar Samaguri by-election as voter turnout soars

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 13: The fate of three candidates in the 31 No Sidli constituency by-election has been sealed in EVMs, with a 71.50 percent voter turnout recorded by 5:00 pm on Wednesday.

The by-election in the Sidli constituency of Chirang district proceeded smoothly, with over 71.50 percent voter participation across the constituency. Polling was conducted in 273 stations from 7:00 am, under tight security. A healthy atmosphere prevailed as voters queued in long lines to exercise their democratic rights from early morning.

UPPL candidate Nirmal Kumar Brahma, backed by the NDA alliance, cast his vote with family members at Bhawanipur LP School polling station in the morning. Kokrajhar Lok Sabha MP, Joyanta Basumatary, also cast his vote at the Thangabari LP School polling station in Sidli LAC, accompanied by his family.

Notably, three candidates contested the Sidli LAC by-election: UPPL candidate Nir-

mal Kumar Brahma (NDA-backed), Sanjib Wary of the Congress, and Suddha Kumar Basumatary of the BPF party. The by-election became necessary after MLA Joyanta Basumatary resigned upon being elected as an MP in the Lok Sabha during the last parliamentary elections held in June.

A triangular contest emerged across Sidli constituency, with a congenial environment overall. "The by-election atmosphere felt festive, with voters eagerly coming out in the morning to elect their representative," commented a senior citizen in Sidli LAC, adding that voters expressed happiness over the peaceful conclusion of the polling.

Nirmal Kumar Brahma expressed confidence, stating that the UPPL candidate has significant support in Sidli LAC and anticipates a favorable outcome. He remarked that people across communities have shown strong support for the NDA-backed UPPL candidate. He further asserted that the influence of the Opposition BPF party has diminished, with citi-



zens showing less regard for BPF and Congress candidates. Brahma added that the BPF party is becoming increasingly irrelevant among the masses.

Pramod Boro, chief executive member of the Bodoland Territorial Region and UPPL president, reported a positive response for the Sidli LAC candidate. He confirmed that the by-election proceeded peacefully across the constituency and predicted that the UPPL candidate would win by a margin of over sixty thousand votes. Boro extended his gratitude to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal, state minister Ashok Singhal, and Assam BJP president Bhabesh Kalita,

alongside other NDA leaders, for their dedicated campaign efforts.

CEM Boro confidently stated that all NDA-supported candidates across the five LACs, including Sidli, are poised for victory in Assam.

"As the bypolls for the 31 No Sidli (ST) LAC conclude, I express my heartfelt gratitude to our Karmayogi CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal, state minister Ashok Singhal, BJP state president Bhabesh Kalita, and AGP president Atul Boro for their inspirational leadership of our NDA alliance. With the blessings of Sidli's people and under the CM's masterful stewardship, our UPPL+BJP+AGP

Alliance is certain to emerge as the undisputed victor in the by-polls," Boro declared.

Our Nagaon correspondent adds: Amidst scattered clashes between supporters of the ruling BJP and Opposition Congress at several polling stations, over 78.1 percent of electors cast their votes in the Samaguri assembly by-election by 5:00 pm on Wednesday. It is expected that voter turnout will exceed 80 percent, as many electors are still waiting in line at several polling stations, sources added.

According to sources, a series of incidents, including scuffles between supporters of the ruling saffron party and the opposition Congress, disrupted the smooth conduct of the by-polls at several polling stations. Polling officials were forced to deploy additional security forces to bring the situation under control.

Sources claimed that some Congress workers allegedly intercepted BJP candidate Diplu Ranjan Sarma at No 2 Khalihamari polling station, creating a ruckus and preventing him from entering the station. Sub-

sequently, on-duty security personnel brought the situation under control by detaining one person connected with the incident. Similarly, other scattered incidents occurred at the Pub Salpara polling station, prompting polling officials to halt the voting process. It was reported that Congress MP Rakibul Hussain rushed to the Salpara polling station, and upon his arrival, some individuals went on a rampage, shouting slogans against him and restricting his movement.

Later, seeing the situation, Hussain decided to leave. Subsequently, at the same location, irate locals damaged a vehicle belonging to a scribe from Lahorighat in Morigaon district. It was reported that the scribe had been campaigning in favour of Congress candidate Tanzil Hussain for over a week while staying in the constituency.

Additionally, a scuffle between Congress and BJP workers took place at the Gerakutaoni polling station, which was also brought under control by security forces, sources added.

Cachar College hosts district-wide rally to fight drug abuse

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 13: In a powerful display of unity against drug abuse, Cachar College in Silchar hosted a district-level awareness program on Wednesday, bringing together community leaders, educators, students, and citizens. The event, organised in partnership with the Cachar district administration and various NGOs, highlighted the urgent need to combat drug misuse and foster a healthier society.

Prominent speakers, including Dr Ratnadeep Bose, a neurosurgeon at SMC Silchar; Samsuddin, vice principal of Cachar College; Samim Ahmed, CDPO and representative of the District Social Welfare Office; and Soumitra Shankar Chakraborty, president of the NGO Thousand Sayantans, delivered impactful addresses on the devastating effects of substance abuse. Each speaker emphasised the



importance of collective action, preventive measures, and widespread education to tackle the growing drug problem.

A pivotal moment of the event was the community pledge under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, India's national anti-drug campaign, symbolising a shared commitment to a drug-free soci-

ety.

As part of broader efforts, the Cachar district administration has taken active steps in recent years through workshops, school programs, and social media campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of addiction. Collaborative efforts with local law enforcement have also targeted drug trafficking,

adding another layer of community safety.

Participants left the event united in purpose, inspired by the program's messages, and ready to support anti-drug initiatives within their circles. The gathering concluded with the national anthem, leaving a lasting sense of hope and resolve for a healthier, drug-free Cachar.

Sonitpur KVK completes 15-day training for agricultural dealers



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 13: Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sonitpur, successfully completed a 15-day training programme for agricultural input dealers, which began on October 29 and concluded on Tuesday, November 12.

The training was jointly organised by Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, and the District Agriculture Office, Sonitpur. Over these 15 days, the dealers were trained in various agricultural aspects, such as suitable cropping systems for existing agro-ecological

conditions, macro and micro-nutrient deficiencies in soil, their symptoms, and management approaches.

Topics also covered different types of fertilisers and their application methods, classifications of pesticides, principles and practices of integrated nutrient management, food adulteration, stress management, and more.

Other subjects included types of farm machinery, components, repair, and maintenance of farm implements and machinery, as well as rural credit, microfinance, crop insurance, etc. In the valedictory session, Dr Angana Sharma, senior scientist & head of KVK, Sonitpur, congratulated the participants and encouraged them to share their experiences with farmers. She expressed gratitude to the Department of Agriculture, the organisers of the training programme, and all the resource persons who delivered lectures.

Pranjal Sarma, DAO, Sonitpur, congratulated the participants on successfully completing the training and wished them well, hoping the knowledge gained would be useful in the near future.

The valedictory session was anchored by Dr Namita Dutta, course director of the training, and concluded with the distribution of certificates to the dealers.

KAAC distributes land pattas in Dongkamukam

HT Correspondent

DONGKAMUKAM, Nov 13: On the second day of the free land patta distribution program by the Land & Revenue Department of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), land pattas were distributed on Wednesday at Dongkamukam under the No 111 Rongkhang Legislative Assembly segment in West Karbi Anglong.

While distributing the land pattas to eligible beneficiaries, the chief executive member (CEM) of KAAC, Tuliram Rongkhang, sharply criticised the Opposition All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHL) for accusing the KAAC of distributing duplicate land pattas.

Rongkhang stated, "The land pattas we distributed are genuine, each with a dag number. Every patta bears the signature of the concerned ARO. The APHL is simply misleading the masses with false information to distract them from the truth."

Regarding the issue of an Au-

tonomous State, the CEM expressed his strong support, saying, "As a son of this land, I feel it should be implemented. This issue is the top priority of the present KAAC, and I urge everyone to support it."

On the matter of employment within the KAAC, the CEM stated, "So far, 11,000 vacant posts have been filled during my tenure as CEM of KAAC. Another 500 vacant posts will be filled within a few days."

The program also included addresses by MP Amarsing Tisso and MLA Rupsing Teron. Earlier, Howraghat MLA Dhorsing Rongkhang delivered the welcome address. The event saw the presence of the Karbi traditional king, Ramsing Rongkhang.

Chairman of KAAC, Raju Tisso, executive members (EMs) of KAAC, members of the Autonomous Council (MACs), and the board chairman of the district commissioner (DC) of West Karbi Anglong, Sarangapani Sharma, also attended the program.

Dokmoka police seize 75 cartons of illicit liquor

HT Correspondent

HOWRAGHAT, Nov 13: Seventy-five cartons of Meghalaya-made foreign liquor were seized from a truck (bearing Regd No NL 07A-A2397) traveling from Meghalaya to Imphal at the Dokmoka checkpoint by Dokmoka police personnel around 1:30 pm on Wednesday in Karbi Anglong district. The illegal cartons of foreign liquor were concealed inside fertiliser sacks. The truck driver, Bikram Roy, and his associate, Michlai, had cleverly hidden the consignment in the sacks, according to police. The liquor was seized during a routine check conducted by the Dokmoka police, led by officer-in-charge of Dokmoka Police Station Ritupal Senchwa.

Indian Army enhances digital literacy in Tinsukia with upgraded IT lab

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 13: In a significant initiative to promote digital literacy and empower rural youth, the Indian Army's Spear Corps has upgraded the IT lab at Mamorani Prathmik Vidyalaya, a rural school in the Tinsukia district. The initiative marks a crucial step towards bridging the digital divide in rural areas. The upgraded lab, equipped with modern computers, will provide students with access to quality digital education. Taken under Operation Sadbhavna, the project aims to enhance digital literacy among rural students. It not only fosters skill development for future employment opportunities but also promotes inclusive growth and empowerment. The children were elated to witness digital advancements in their remote village, long marred by decades of insurgency. The principal expressed heartfelt gratitude for this generous contribution by the Indian Army. The Indian Army's Spear Corps has been actively engaged in various civic action projects in Tinsukia district, focusing on education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. This initiative is part of the Indian Army's ongoing efforts to promote digital literacy and skill development in rural areas.

OBITUARY



Deven Majhi (76), a fourth-grade employee of Hem Chandra Borgohain Model English High School residing in Demow, passed away on Tuesday night due to a pressure stroke. Deven Majhi was affectionately known as 'Uncle' and 'Kokai' at the school. The staff of Hem Chandra Borgohain Model English High School paid their last respects to Deven Majhi and expressed their deepest condolences. He will be greatly missed by everyone at the school.

9th Prof Sarat Mahanta Memorial Lecture explores science, faith & legacy

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 13: The 9th Prof Sarat Mahanta Memorial Lecture, organised jointly by the family of the professor and the Sivasagar Press Club in MC Bezbaruah Hall, Sivasagar University, was delivered on Wednesday by Dr Jiten Hazarika, vice-chancellor of Dibrugarh University and Sivasagar University. Dr Hazarika highlighted that Prof Sarat Mahanta was a journalist associated with 'The Assam Tribune', a prestigious English daily in Northeast India. Speaking on science and religion, Dr Hazarika remarked that religious practices like Suryanamaskar have a scientific basis. He emphasised that doubt fuels scientific inquiry, with the null hypothesis, inherent in every inquisitive mind, serving as the soul of scientific discovery. Methodical analysis and synthesis of ideas are essential for reaching conclusions. Today, only 0.001 percent of the state's population identify as atheists, while nearly all people are believers in God. Faith in God, he noted, instills confidence in



believers. Dr Hazarika also referenced a 1971 study by two scientists, H Benson and RK Wakish of Boston University, who researched the daily worship practices of Hindus in West Bengal and concluded that such practices increase positive chemicals in the body

and mind of worshippers. He suggested that for the advancement of science and technology, beliefs and a religious inclination are beneficial. While technology is indispensable for human survival, one must also have faith in a power beyond the reach of ordinary human beings, he added.

Earlier, Mina Mahanta, wife of Sarat Mahanta, lit the ceremonial lamp, while the satradhikar of Ujjainil Satra, Lakhikanta Mahanta, inaugurated the event with a brief speech. Dr Sabyasachi Mahanta, principal of Gargaon College, delivered the welcome speech. Dr Prafulla Chandra Kalita, registrar of Sivasagar College, praised the state government's Matri Pitri Vandana program and encouraged students to think of their parents' faces before leaving home each day. The son of Prof Sarat Mahanta, Dr Partha Sarathi Mahanta, IGP of Assam Police; his wife Indrani Baruah, DIG of Assam Police; Subhrajyoti Bora, SP of Sivasagar; Samiran Bora, DDC of Sivasagar; and several other dignitaries attended the function.

Dr Upasana Mahanta, dean of OP Jindal University, donated funds for an annual award in memory of her father, Sarat Mahanta. The award was presented to Anuradha Dutta, the highest marks holder from Rangpur Girls' High School, during the event.

Biker attacked by pillion rider in Jorhat

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Nov 13: In a shocking incident on Tuesday night, Prasentji Baruah, 40, narrowly survived a throat-slashing attack by a pillion rider he had offered a lift to in Solmara, under Pulibor Police Station. The accused, identified as Mohen Nayak from Meleng, allegedly attacked Baruah from behind with a sickle after traveling a short distance.

Baruah's cries for help alerted nearby locals, who quickly intervened, detaining Nayak until police arrived. The victim is now receiving treatment at Jorhat Medical College and Hospital (JMCH). Police have registered Pulibor PS Case No 155/24 under Sections 118(2)/109 of the BNS, and a full investigation is underway.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

To say 'I love you' one must first be able to say the 'I.'
-Ayn Rand

Partial twist to 'bulldozer justice'

A Bench of the Supreme Court of India has bulldozed the 'bulldozer justice' on November 13 last, but partially, since it does make officials accountable for the damage and the cost for restoration would be recovered from their salary, but the power drunk politicians would still remain untamed in absence of any order of making them also accountable on whose orders such 'bulldozer justice' is carried out. Nevertheless, the order and the guideline are welcome, which may rein in 'bulldozer justice' up to a great extent. The order was reserved on October 1, 2024, and the bench had conveyed its intention to lay down a pan India guideline while hearing the petitions filed before the Supreme Court in 2022 which was related to the demolition drive scheduled for April, 2022 in Delhi's Jahangirpuri following a communal violence during the Hanuman Jayanti procession. The drive was ultimately stayed but petitioners prayed for "declaration that authorities cannot resort to bulldozer action as a form of punishment." Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind and various other petitioners had sought directions to stop the trend of "bulldozer justice". The term 'bulldozer justice' first gained prominence in India around 2017, largely associated with the policies of Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath whose administration employed bulldozers to demolish properties linked to individuals accused of serious crimes or communal violence.

In the last 7 years, the bulldozer has become a symbolic tool for crime control, and to control the offenders, especially on communal basis against Muslims bypassing due process and legal protection available to the citizens under the Constitution of India. The Supreme Court bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Vishwanath while pronouncing this judgment said that the executive cannot declare a person guilty, as this process is the fundamental aspect of the judicial review. Only on the basis of the accusations, if the executive demolishes the property/properties of such an accused person without following the due process of law, it would strike at the basic principle of rule of law and is not permissible. The court made it clear that the executive cannot become a judge and decide that a person accused is guilty and, therefore, punish him by demolishing his residential/commercial property/properties. Such an act of the executive would be transgressing its limits.

As per the direction laid by the court, the affected party needs time even after demolition order is passed, first to go for appeal, and secondly, to vacate. As per the guidelines, no demolition should be carried out without prior show-cause notice giving time for 15 days or the period provided in the particular laws. The returnable time will start from the service of the notice. Violation of the directions would lead to the initiation of contempt proceedings in addition to prosecution. In case of violation the officers responsible will be held liable for restitution of the demolished property at their personal cost in addition to payment of damages. Violation of the directions would lead to the initiation of contempt proceedings in addition to prosecution. In case of violation the officers responsible will be held liable for restitution of the demolished property at their personal cost in addition to payment of damages.

Children's Day: A celebration of potential

November 14th stands as a significant day of celebration in India, not just as an observance of a date in the calendar, but as a powerful acknowledgment of the hopes, dreams, and future that children embody. Children's Day, celebrated on this day every year, has become an emblem of hope, resilience, and the recognition of children's fundamental rights. The occasion holds special significance, particularly because it coincides with the birth anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, who is remembered for his deep affection for children and his belief in their transformative potential for the country's progress.

Nehru's vision, encapsulated in his words, "The children of today will make the India of tomorrow. The way we bring them up will determine the future of the country," resonates deeply on Children's Day. This day is not just about playful events and celebrations but serves as a solemn reminder of the challenges that still surround children across the globe. In India, the observance of Children's Day is not simply a festive occasion but a call to action - to invest in education, to ensure proper healthcare, to protect against abuse and exploitation, and to create a society where every child can thrive irrespective of their background or socio-economic status.

The day's significance lies in its dual purpose: to celebrate the progress made toward bettering the lives of children and to reflect on the gaps that remain. While much has been accomplished in terms of children's rights, the reality is that millions of children around the world continue to face adversity - whether it's the consequences of poverty, lack of access to education, or even more complex issues like child labor and trafficking. In this context, Children's Day is both a celebration and a call for reflection.

At its core, Children's Day is a recognition of children as individuals with distinct personalities, talents, and potentials. Nehru's vision for a child-centric society was grounded in his belief that the young generation should be afforded every opportunity to flourish. His acknowledgment of children as the nation's most precious resource is a perspective that



has informed much of the developmental policy-making in India. However, the path to ensuring a society that truly nurtures children is far from straightforward. Acknowledging children's rights, particularly in a nation as diverse and populous as India, presents unique challenges. Social, economic, and political factors intersect in complex ways that influence children's lives and futures.

One of the key dimensions of Children's Day is the focus on education. Nehru was a passionate advocate for universal education, believing that only through a robust educational system could the children of India rise above the constraints imposed by their circumstances. The push for compulsory primary education became one of his flagship initiatives. Over the decades, education has continued to be central to discussions surrounding children's welfare in India. The Right to Education Act (RTE) passed in 2009, for example, marked a significant step in ensuring that every child in India has access to free and quality education. However, the implementation of such laws is where challenges persist. Though the number of children attending schools has risen significantly, factors such as the quality of education, infrastructure, teacher training, and the educational divide between urban and rural areas remain major obstacles.

While education is often the most visible aspect of a child's development, Children's Day should also emphasize the importance of health and nutrition. For many children, particularly in marginalized communities, access to basic healthcare and proper nutrition is a luxury. India has made strides in improving healthcare for children,

with immunization programs reducing the incidence of deadly diseases like polio and measles. However, India still accounts for a significant proportion of the world's undernourished children. The Global Hunger Index ranks India among countries with a severe hunger situation, and malnutrition is a silent crisis that afflicts millions of children. On Children's Day, it becomes important to remind ourselves of the link between nutrition, cognitive development, and educational outcomes. A child who is malnourished is less likely to perform well in school, which impacts their overall life trajectory.

Another crucial aspect of Children's Day is the celebration of children's rights and protection from exploitation. In India, child labor remains a persistent issue, despite legal frameworks that prohibit it. There are an estimated 10 million child laborers in the country, many of whom are forced to work in hazardous conditions. Similarly, child marriage, child trafficking, and other forms of abuse continue to plague large segments of the population. On Children's Day, we are reminded of the urgency of enforcing laws that protect children from such exploitation and creating awareness around the issue. Children should be seen and treated not as commodities or tools for economic production but as individuals with intrinsic value and rights.

The ongoing challenges faced by children in the 21st century are not only rooted in poverty and exploitation but also in the rapidly

changing social and technological landscape. In an age where children have greater access to digital technology, there are new risks to their well-being. The internet has brought a wealth of knowledge, but it also exposes children to the dangers of cyberbullying, online exploitation, and the unhealthy impact of social media. On Children's Day, it is important to consider these new challenges and how society, including governments, schools, and parents, can create a safer environment for children in the digital space. The intersection of digital technology and childhood has the potential to either enrich or hinder a child's development, depending on how it is navigated.

On a more positive note, Children's Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the immense creativity and potential that children represent. Across the country, events such as school celebrations, cultural programs, and community outreach initiatives highlight the talents of young people. Children are often the best storytellers, artists, performers, and dreamers, with boundless imagination and energy. Children's Day is a reminder that fostering an environment where children are encouraged to explore their passions and talents is not just a benefit to the child but to society at large. The young minds of today will ultimately shape the future, and empowering them is an investment in a better tomorrow.

To realize Nehru's vision of a society where every child is afforded the opportunity to thrive, we must also think about the ways in which society itself is structured. Social disparities, caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, and regional disparities all continue to shape children's lives and futures in India. Children from marginalized communities often face multiple layers of discrimination that can severely impact their development. Ensuring equality of opportunity is not just about laws and policies; it is about creating a culture where every child, regardless of their background, is empowered to reach their full potential.

It is also essential to acknowledge the role of families and communities in nurturing children. While the government has an irreplaceable role in ensuring the welfare of children, the power of supportive, loving, and well-equipped families and communities cannot be overstated. Communities can provide a safety net for children, offering mentorship, guidance, and opportunities to children who may lack resources at home. Parents, in turn, must be empowered with the knowledge and resources to provide for their children's needs in both material and emotional terms.

Thus, Children's Day is not only an occasion to celebrate but also to engage in introspection and action. While the day may feature the usual festivities, such as school programs, plays, and songs, it is crucial that the broader conversation around children's rights, education, health, and protection be brought to the forefront. The day should challenge us all to ask what more can be done, both on an individual and collective level, to ensure that children are given the best possible start in life.

On Children's Day, we must recognize that every child, regardless of their background, has the potential to change the world. The true success of any nation is not just in its infrastructure, economy, or military power but in how it nurtures and supports its children. The celebration of Children's Day should, therefore, be a call to action - a reminder that the children of today are the future of tomorrow, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure they grow up in a world that allows them to flourish to their fullest potential.

As we celebrate Children's Day, we must remember that while it is a day to celebrate, it is also a day to advocate for change. The future that awaits children is one that we, as a society, must actively shape. It is a future where children are not just passive recipients of aid but active participants in creating a better world for all. And for that to happen, every child, regardless of their circumstances, must be given the resources, opportunities, and love they need to succeed. *(The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-Magazine SAMPRO-TIK who can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)*

World Diabetes Day

Women, wellness, and diabetes - How diabetes impacts women differently

By: Dr Geeta Shroff

Diabetes, a metabolic disorder characterized by high blood sugar levels, has become an alarming public health concern globally, especially for women. With November 14th marking World Diabetes Day 2024, this is an opportune time to discuss the impact of diabetes on women's health and explore effective ways to manage and mitigate its effects. Not only does diabetes impact women differently from men, but the complex interplay of hormonal changes, pregnancy-related challenges, and gender-specific risks can make diabetes management particularly challenging for women.

Unique challenges faced by diabetic women
For women, diabetes presents specific risks that can have significant health consequences throughout their lives. The effects of diabetes in women are often compounded by hormonal fluctuations during menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause. Some of the unique risks women face at each phase are as follows -

1. Reproductive health and menstrual cycle - High blood sugar levels can impact a woman's menstrual cycle, leading to irregularities, heavier or lighter periods, and, in some cases, early menopause. Women with diabetes are also at a greater risk of developing polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which is linked to insulin resistance and can further complicate glucose management. Additionally, diabetes can increase the likelihood of developing infections such as yeast infections and urinary tract infections, which can be particularly uncomfortable and challenging to manage.

2. Gestational diabetes - Gestational diabetes, a condition where blood sugar levels become elevated during pregnancy, can affect any woman regardless of whether she had diabetes before pregnancy. This condition puts both mother and baby at risk, as uncontrolled blood sugar can lead to complications like preeclampsia, high blood pressure, and an increased likelihood of caesarean delivery. Furthermore, gestational diabetes increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in the future, posing a long-term health concern for women.

3. Heart health - Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of mortality in women with diabetes. Women with diabetes are more likely than men to develop heart disease, partly due to hormonal factors and partly because symptoms can present differently in women. Diabetes increases the risk of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, all of which are significant risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

4. Mental health - The psychosocial impact of diabetes can be particularly challenging for women. Studies show that women with diabetes

have a higher incidence of depression and anxiety compared to their male counterparts.

Effective management strategies for women
Managing diabetes in women requires a multifaceted approach that considers lifestyle adjustments, medical care, and emotional well-being. Here are some effective strategies that can help women manage diabetes and improve their quality of life.

1. Regular monitoring and checkups - Blood glucose monitoring is critical for managing diabetes, particularly around the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and menopause. Women should regularly check their blood sugar levels and discuss any changes with their healthcare provider to ensure that they are on an appropriate treatment plan. Regular screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, and other cardiovascular risk factors are equally important.

2. Balanced nutrition - A diet rich in fibre, lean proteins, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates is beneficial in stabilizing blood sugar levels. Women should also consider incorporating foods high in antioxidants, which can help mitigate some of the inflammatory effects of high blood sugar.

3. Physical activity - Regular exercise not only helps in controlling blood glucose levels but also aids in maintaining a healthy weight and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. Exercise has also been shown to alleviate some symptoms of depression and anxiety, making it a beneficial practice for overall well-being.

4. Mental health support - Since women with diabetes are more prone to depression and anxiety, seeking mental health support is essential. Engaging in stress-reducing activities such as yoga, meditation, or counselling can make a significant difference in managing the emotional burden of diabetes.

5. Hormonal health awareness - Understanding how hormonal changes impact blood sugar levels is essential for women with diabetes. Women experiencing menopause may find that their blood glucose levels fluctuate more than usual, which can necessitate changes in medication or lifestyle adjustments.

Technological advancements in diabetes management, such as continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), insulin pumps, and smartphone apps, are making it easier for women to monitor their blood glucose levels and take appropriate actions in real time. For women, managing diabetes is not just about controlling blood sugar - it's about addressing a spectrum of health needs that span hormonal, cardiovascular, and mental well-being. By focusing on holistic health, personalized care, and emotional support, we can help women lead healthier, more fulfilling lives despite the challenges posed by diabetes. *(The author is the Director, NuBella Centre for Women's Health, New Delhi)*

The significance of Children's Day

By: Satvabrat Borah

Children's Day is a special occasion celebrated in many countries around the world, dedicated to honoring and appreciating children. It is a day that emphasizes the importance of children in society and recognizes their role in shaping the future. In India, Children's Day is celebrated on November 14 each year to mark the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. He was known for his deep affection and love for children, and he believed that children were the real strength of a nation. His vision was to nurture and educate children so they could contribute to the country's progress.

To express his affection, children would fondly call him "Chacha Nehru." This term of endearment has become a significant part of Children's Day celebrations, reflecting how much he valued and respected young minds.

On Children's Day, people around the country celebrate the joy and innocence of children. Schools, communities, and families all come together to honor children through a variety of activities.

Many schools organize special events, such as cultural programs, sports competitions, and creative workshops, where students can showcase their talents and participate in fun activities. Teachers and school staff often plan these events, sometimes even performing for the children to make them feel special. These celebrations bring joy to children, encouraging them to cherish their childhood and recognize their unique role in the world.

The essence of Children's Day goes beyond just a day of fun and play. It also highlights the importance of providing children with love, care, and proper education. Many events organized on this day focus on raising awareness about the rights of children. It is an opportunity for society to reflect on the challenges faced by children, especially those who are disadvantaged or deprived of basic needs.

Issues like child labor, child abuse, lack of education, and poverty are often discussed on Children's Day to emphasize the importance of safeguarding the well-being and future of every child. This day serves as a reminder that every child deserves a

chance to grow in a safe and nurturing environment where they can realize their potential.

Children's Day in India is especially significant because of Pandit Nehru's contributions to the field of education and his belief in the potential of young minds. He advocated for the establishment of educational institutions and promoted science and technology to advance the country's development.

Nehru's vision was not just to prepare children for jobs but to inspire them to think critically, contribute positively, and become responsible citizens. For him, children represented hope and aspiration. He believed that they had the ability to change society and the world with their ideas, enthusiasm, and hard work. As a result, Children's Day is a celebration of this hope and a way to encourage children to dream big.

On this day, parents, teachers, and other adults are also reminded of their responsibility toward the younger generation. They are encouraged to support children in their learning and development, providing them with the love, guidance, and encouragement they need to grow into confident individuals.

Children look up to adults as their role models, and this day is a reminder to adults to lead by example. When children see kindness, respect, and hard work in those around them, they are more likely to adopt these values. Thus, Children's Day is also a day of reflection for adults to consider how they can positively influence and support children.

In India, Children's Day celebrations have grown over the years, with various government and non-government organizations also contributing to the festivities. They often organize events aimed at spreading awareness about children's rights, health, and education.

Campaigns and workshops on subjects like health, nutrition, and mental well-being are also common, helping parents and guardians understand how to best support children in their overall development. Such initiatives make Children's Day more than just a celebration; it becomes an opportunity for society to commit to protecting and empowering children.

Children's Day also has a global significance, as it echoes the val-

ues of Universal Children's Day, celebrated internationally on November 20. The United Nations established Universal Children's Day to promote international togetherness and awareness among children worldwide.

By celebrating Children's Day, India aligns with this global vision, emphasizing that every child, no matter where they are born or what their background is, deserves respect, love, and an opportunity to thrive.

In doing so, the country reaffirms its commitment to creating a better world for future generations, where children are cherished, protected, and educated.

Many people use this day to donate to causes that support children's welfare. Individuals and organizations may provide resources for underprivileged children, such as books, clothing, or educational tools, to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn and grow. This spirit of giving on Children's Day reflects a collective desire to create a more equal society where all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have the resources they need to succeed.

Additionally, Children's Day celebrations can also serve as an opportunity for children to express themselves freely. They get a platform to showcase their talents, creativity, and ideas.

Events such as art competitions, essay writing, music, and dance performances encourage them to explore their potential and be proud of their abilities. This day empowers children to believe in themselves and gives them the confidence to express who they are. It creates a positive environment where children feel valued and appreciated, which can have a lasting impact on their self-esteem and personal growth.

Another important aspect of Children's Day is its message about the significance of education. Education is not only a fundamental right of every child but also a tool that can empower them to overcome challenges and shape their future.

Nehru believed that education was the key to freedom, not just political freedom but also personal freedom that allows individuals to pursue their dreams.

By investing in education, we invest in a brighter future for children and, by extension, for society as a whole. Children's Day thus re-

enforces the idea that every child should have access to quality education, so they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

In celebrating Children's Day, we also acknowledge that children are the foundation of a nation. They represent the future, and how we treat and nurture them today will determine the kind of world they will inherit. Children are like seeds that need to be nurtured with love, care, and proper guidance to blossom into strong, capable, and responsible individuals.

By honoring them on this special day, we commit ourselves to creating an environment where they can flourish. We recognize that children are full of dreams and aspirations, and it is our duty to encourage and support them in pursuing these dreams.

Children's Day reminds us of the importance of play and happiness in childhood. It is easy to get caught up in the pressures of academics and achievements, but Children's Day brings a moment of joy and lightheartedness. It emphasizes that childhood should be a time of happiness, learning, and exploration.

Children learn best through play and creativity, and celebrating this aspect of childhood is essential for their overall well-being. On this day, children are given the freedom to enjoy themselves, to laugh, play, and create memories that they will cherish for a lifetime.

In conclusion, Children's Day is much more than a day of celebration; it is a reflection of our values, our commitment to the future, and our dedication to the welfare of children. It is a reminder of the power and potential that every child holds and a call to action for society to support, protect, and nurture them. By honoring children, we honor the spirit of hope, joy, and endless possibilities that they bring into the world.

Every year, as we celebrate Children's Day, we are reminded of our responsibility to create a society where children can grow up happy, healthy, educated, and confident. Children's Day is a tribute to the innocence, wonder, and dreams of every child, a celebration of their unique role in shaping the world, and a reaffirmation of our commitment to ensuring that they have the tools, support, and love they need to build a bright future.

High and dry? AI and the fight against desertification

By: Anirban Sarma

With global temperatures rising steadily, and human populations expanding relentlessly, large swathes of the planet are becoming vulnerable to desertification or the “permanent degradation of land that was once arable”. According to National Geographic, over 2 billion people live on drylands prone to desertification, and the progressive degradation of these lands could displace 50 million people by 2030.

The growing pace of degradation has begun to alarm experts. Recent data released by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) indicates that during the period 2015–19, around 402 million hectares of land were degraded, averaging 100 million hectares a year, and impacting 1.3 billion people. The stakes are high. Unless 1.5 billion hectares of land are restored by 2030 it may not be possible to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world, feels the UNCCD.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is proving to be a valuable ally in the fight against desertification. As we observe World Environment Day 2024 on the theme ‘Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience’, it is worth taking a closer look at the role AI is playing, and the challenges we must address as we develop new AI-based solutions.

Some transformative AI solutions

AI is being used in a variety of ways to support efforts to combat desertification. In August 2023, for instance, the arid Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched a large-scale counter-desertification programme under which AI algorithms are analysing satellite images to monitor changes in land use, vegetation cover, and soil moisture levels. The deployment of AI is helping detect and assess desertification trends in vulnerable areas, and supporting decisions about actions to be taken such as improving water management, planting trees and shrubs, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

Drones equipped with AI-powered sensors help capture high-resolution data from remote or inaccessible regions, providing insights into soil and vegetation conditions, and allowing us to devise tailored mitigation strategies. In the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and Australia, AI-guided drones are being used to plant trees in de-

graded areas or to enable reforestation projects—in what has come to be called “aerial drone seeding”—ensuring optimal planting patterns, and tracking tree growth over time.

Predictive modelling is yet another area where AI has found widespread use. AI models predict future climate patterns and extreme weather events that could contribute to desertification. They also predict which areas are potentially at high risk of degradation by analysing historical data, land use patterns, and environmental factors.

Microsoft’s “AI for Earth” initiative, for example, encourages a broad spectrum of AI use cases to accelerate the preservation of the environment, including efforts to fight desertification. In southeast Spain, stakeholders are participating in “AI for Earth” by integrating machine learning tools with geospatial data analytics and machine vision techniques to build predictive models of the demand and contributions of water in local agricultural regions.

Challenges to AI deployment

While AI holds out much promise for combating desertification, several factors could hinder its deployment. Desertification often affects relatively remote or underdeveloped regions where data collection practices are rudimentary, and data is sparse or simply does not exist. To some extent, this may be seen as part of the broader data divide between countries of the Global South and those of the North, where some of the former “lack access to even basic digital infrastructure, making it difficult to capture data that might benefit them”.

The paucity of data—including, in this case, datasets of aerial images—and the difficulty of crafting AI solutions are also often linked to skill gaps. Quite simply, AI-related technical expertise is likely to be lacking in the regions most severely affected by desertification.

Securing funding and investment for long-term AI projects can be difficult; and the high costs associated with developing and deploying AI solutions could act as a major hurdle in economically disadvantaged areas. Moreover, environmental variability could itself sometimes become a stumbling block.

Desertification is influenced by a complex interplay of fac-

tors that can on occasion be difficult to model accurately with AI. Climatic instability can alter conditions unpredictably, complicating AI predictions and interventions.

Finally, navigating the regulatory landscape to implement AI technologies can be tough, especially in countries with stringent approaches to AI governance. The management and governance of environmental data present their own challenges. As studies of environmental data value chains in Europe and Central Asia have shown, shared environmental information systems expand access to relevant data, but data harmonization—in terms of collection methods, the nature and categories of data, and the legislation that allows data sharing—continue to be a persistent problem.

Towards a green and resilient planet

The fight against desertification is at a critical juncture and 2030 could signal a tipping point, but the potential of AI offers hope. AI is shaping our ability to understand, predict, and mitigate the impacts of desertification with unprecedented precision and efficiency. Whether in North America or China, Ghana or Israel, AI-powered tools and analysis are helping us monitor land degradation in real time, execute targeted reforestation projects, and craft sustainable land management practices.

Despite the challenges—from data scarcity and insufficient capacities to funding constraints and regulatory hurdles—AI’s role in fighting desertification is poised to grow. A particular push is needed to make larger volumes of relevant environmental data available. Open, public datasets like the Aerial Image Dataset (AID), which bring together diverse images from different countries and regions, are an asset for AI developers; and more datasets of this kind ought to be built collaboratively.

Moreover, while cross-border data-sharing continues to be a thorny issue, there have been calls within groups like the G20 to facilitate the sharing of certain classes of development data which have implications for regional policymaking, or for evolving tech-based solutions to transnational challenges. Desertification is precisely such a challenge, and a corpus of relevant multi-country environmental data could be very useful.

The celebration of World Environment Day is, thus, among other things, an occasion to remind ourselves of the transformative power of AI to help restore vital natural ecosystems. And it is a moment for us to reflect on how technology might best be harnessed to build a greener and more resilient planet. (Courtesy: ORF)

Climate change and neglect put butterflies on the brink of extinction in South Asia

By: Hailey Smalley

In the dark undergrowth of mangrove forests, an anthology of color stirs. Flickers of turquoise rise like exhalations from the brackish marshlands, and flashes of sunset orange spark alive in the shadows.

The Sundarbans mangrove forest in Bangladesh and India is largely known as one of the last remaining habitats for the Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), but the coastal groves also thrum with a wealth of smaller animals, including 37 known species of butterfly. The small stature of these butterflies belies their importance; they pollinate flowering plants and nourish the birds that flit through the canopy, ultimately supporting the health of the entire forest ecosystem.

But butterflies in the Sundarbans and throughout South Asia are at increasing risk of extinction, mimicking a global trend that some experts have nicknamed “the insect apocalypse”. By some estimates, 250,000–500,000 insect species have gone extinct in the past 150 years, and many more are now on the brink of survival. Climate change and urban development form the largest risks, along with the minimal legal protections and large-scale conservation initiatives focused on butterflies and other insects. “If my government is not aware, [butterfly species] will be lost. It will be coming in probably 10 years because climate change is thriving,” said Monwar Hossain, a professor and lepidopterist at Jahangirnagar University in Bangladesh.

The unique beauty and vibrancy of Bangladesh’s butterflies first attracted Hossain’s attention nearly three decades ago. Over his career, Hossain has observed the climate crisis unfold through record-breaking heat waves, severe cyclones and accelerating sea level rise, and his research often focuses on the unique ways these changes impact Bangladesh’s 400+ endemic butterfly species.

Insects, including butterflies, are cold-blooded, so they are unable to adjust to changes in temperature as easily as mammals and birds. This puts them at special risk during short-term weather events like heat waves as well as from changes to long-term temperature trends.

Many insects are also unable to migrate long distances to escape changing climate patterns or storms. The reliance of pollinators like butterflies on flowering plants adds an extra dimension to their vulnerability, as even small changes in the flowering season can spell starvation for the unlucky nectar gatherers.

Despite these risks, Bangladesh currently has few protections for butterflies, such as protected areas or bans on collecting and trading specimens.



Hossain contrasted this deficit with the international attention and surplus of funding dedicated to large mammals, such as tigers.

“Every animal has its own right to survive, so I don’t want to compare the butterfly, but in my country’s context, millions and millions of dollars [are used] for the tiger,” Hossain said. “Sometimes we say to the government, why not include the butterfly?”

A 2021 study determined less than 2% of the ranges of Bangladeshi butterflies were included in protected areas. The study’s author, Shawan Chowdhury, was far from surprised by the results. A Bangladeshi native, Chowdhury has witnessed the entomological oversights of conservation and development decisions in South Asia firsthand.

“Nothing is actually happening with insect conservation in Bangladesh,” Chowdhury said.

Part of the issue, according to Chowdhury, is a lack of prior research. Animal conservation is typically predicated by years, if not decades, of careful documentation and monitoring. Before politicians write laws to protect animals, scientists are tasked with providing evidence that shows if and what kinds of protections the animals need.

Recent years have seen a few promising additions to South Asia’s collection of entomological research. The International Union for Conservation of Nature included butterflies for the first time in its most recent Bangladesh report, thanks in large part to Hossain, who authored the butterfly section of the report. Chowdhury has also contributed several scientific articles, including a four-year observational study on butterflies in Bangladesh’s capital city of Dhaka. But the entomology community is still playing catch-up.

Chowdhury pointed out that naturalists have surveyed birds for centuries; scientists can now use these historical accounts to estimate how populations have changed over time. For insects, particularly those in South Asia, “there is no account”. Making an

accurate account from scratch takes years of consistent observation, which can be both time- and labor-intensive.

Nitin Ravikanthachari observed a similar problem in his home city of Bengaluru, India. “You can literally count the number of people [in India] studying butterflies on one hand,” he said.

Ravikanthachari spent much of his adolescence prowling the gardens and parks of Bengaluru, camera in hand, and even after beginning a university degree in biology, he often met up with fellow photographers to walk the city and photograph butterflies. As his interest in lepidoptery grew, Ravikanthachari realised how little scientific attention had been dedicated to the subject, and he decided he wanted “to do something more concrete” to address this gap and call attention to the importance of butterflies.

In 2012, Ravikanthachari and three other amateur lepidopterists founded the Bangalore Butterfly Club (BBC). Rather than relying on large institutions and universities to generate information about their city’s butterflies, the BBC started conducting their own research walks to count the number and species of butterflies in the city. Over time, they could use this data to establish trends and gauge the health of butterfly populations.

The initiative was massively successful. To date, the BBC has catalogued more than 170 species of butterflies in Bengaluru, including 14 formerly unknown species. More than 400 members attend research walks, educational events and an annual butterfly festival hosted by the group. Ravikanthachari even rediscovered a species thought to be extinct after a 120-year absence from scientific records.

Ravikanthachari said they are now trying to export the BBC’s success to other cities in India, and Chowdhury is hopeful a similar model could prove useful in Bangladesh, especially in heavily urbanised areas where development pressures catalyze existing risks related to climate change. “Population is actually a

power, but we are not using that,” Chowdhury said.

He pointed to apps like iNaturalist as a way to not only provide more opportunities for sightings to be recorded and to build a species database, but also to educate the public on the importance of butterflies and other insects. Hossain has also integrated community education and citizen science into his research.

His library of scientific studies is supplemented by brochures and children’s books, and his lab began hosting an annual butterfly fair with performances, competitions and educational activities in 2010. The Butterfly Park and Research Centre, opened in 2015, not only breeds butterflies for research purposes, but also functions as a public garden on the Jahangirnagar University campus. Through these opportunities to interact with and learn about butterflies, Hossain said he sees more and more young people becoming interested in the environment and conservation. “Once they see the butterfly, the climate change, the forest, they get it,” Hossain said.

Ultimately, he hopes the growing community of citizen scientists, environmental advocates and butterfly enthusiasts will translate into more scientific research and legislation about butterflies. The more people who become interested in butterflies, he explained, the more opportunities there are to continue the work he started 28 years ago.

“I’m just a worker. I’m a worker,” Hossain said. “I think that life is very short, so every [person] does some significant work in the world, for the nature, for his life or other things.”

Whether it be the students in his lab, lawmakers in Bangladesh’s Parliament or young children visiting the Butterfly Park and Research Centre for the first time, Hossain is hopeful that the next generation will learn from his own experiences and choose to dedicate some of their life and work to researching and protecting South Asia’s butterflies. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Deaths, destruction on the rise due to extreme weather events: Grim statistics in India Climate Report 2024

By: Aathira Perinchery

More than 3,200 people dead. As much as 3.2 million hectares of crops damaged, around 2.3 lakh houses and buildings destroyed, and more than 9,400 livestock dead: all due to extreme weather events that occurred on 255 of the 274 days of the first nine months of this year across India.

These are some of the alarming statistics published in the latest India Climate Report 2024, launched virtually on November 8 by the Centre for Science and Environment and its fortnightly publication, Down to Earth.

This year, India witnessed the highest number of extreme weather events, when compared to the past two years during which CSE and DTE have been publishing the India Climate Reports, which detail the number of such events based on data including daily reports released by the India Meteorological Department.

For instance, the India Climate Report 2023 reported extreme weather events on 235 of the 273 days in the first nine months of 2023; 2,923 people died that year, and the events damaged croplands spanning 1.84 million hectares. Hence, the frequency and impacts of extreme weather events are increasing with every year, the 2024 India Climate Report

noted.

Tracking extreme weather events

Greenhouse gases emitted due to the use of fossil fuels warm up the world, climate is changing in many regions. Many places are far hotter than they used to be; many others witness more heavy rainfall than usual. These climate extremes are often marked by severe impacts on people and the environment, and are called extreme weather events. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines extreme weather events as those that are rare at a particular place and time of year.

India too witnesses its share of extreme weather events. These range from intense rainfall to heatwaves. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) classifies lightning and thunderstorms, heavy to very heavy, and extremely heavy rainfall, landslides and floods, coldwaves, heatwaves, cyclones, snowfall, dust and sandstorms, squalls, hailstorms and gales as extreme weather events.

Researchers at the Centre for Science and Environment and its publication Down to Earth have been compiling extreme weather events across India for the past three years to make sense of patterns and trends. For this, they bank on daily and monthly climate reports re-

leased by the IMD, data recorded by the Disaster Management Division (DMD) of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, and media reports (to track events during the pre-monsoon period, from March to May, and the losses that occurred during this time including crop area affected).

More extreme events, deaths, losses this year

They found that India faced extreme weather events on 93% of the days in the first nine months of this year (from January 1 to September 30, 2024). This translates to extreme events occurring on 255 out of a total 274 days. These events—ranging from lightning and storms to heavy rain, floods, landslides and heat waves—claimed the lives of 3,238 people during this time. The events also affected 3.2 million hectares of crops, destroyed 2,35,862 houses and buildings, and killed 9,457 livestock across the country.

In 2024, extreme events occurred over 35 of all 36 states and union territories in India. This year, 27 states and UTs recorded an increase in the number of days that they experienced extreme weather events when compared to the last two years.

Karnataka, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh experienced 40 or more additional days of extreme weather events this year. Kerala

recorded the highest number of deaths caused due to extreme events (550), followed by Madhya Pradesh (353 deaths) and Assam (256 deaths).

The most number of houses were damaged (85,806) in Andhra Pradesh, and the largest crop area that was affected was in Maharashtra.

India experienced heatwaves on 77 of 274 days during the nine months and 210 people died due to these high temperatures across the country. During the monsoon season—from June to September—India witnessed extreme events on all days, and these were spread across 35 states and UTs.

Heavy rains, floods and landslides occurred on all 122 days during this period; lightning and storms followed next, occurring on 103 days during this period. Among states, Assam was the worst-hit during this season, as it witnessed extreme weather events on 111 days. Totally, 2,716 people died due to extreme events during the monsoon season across the country, and 3.04 million ha of crops were damaged.

The year also witnessed several climate records being breached across the country. January 2024 was India’s ninth driest since 1901. In February, the country recorded its second-highest minimum temperature in 123 years. India recorded the highest minimum temperatures

in July, August and September, the highest since 1901. East and Northeast India recorded its 12th driest July in 123 years.

This year, the IMD began releasing data on warm nights, a phenomenon when minimum night temperatures remain unusually high instead of dipping: when the maximum temperature has reached 40°C and the minimum temperature is 4.5°C to 6.4°C above normal. This is particularly damaging for people’s health, as the human body does not get time to cool down even on warm days.

Between March and June 2024, 17 states and Union Territories recorded warm-night events. Five states and UTs—Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh—experienced unusually high night temperatures during mid-June. Of these, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Haryana each recorded four consecutive “severe warm nights” from June 15 to June 18, a new climate extreme.

The need for more comprehensive data

However, there is a data concern: though the IMD has begun releasing data on warm nights, its definition for this phenomenon is “difficult to follow as it does not provide an absolute temperature threshold” unlike what a lot of other countries do, the India Climate Report 2024 noted. It is also difficult to assess losses and damages caused

by extreme weather events due to lack of comprehensive data provided by the DMD as it has also stopped providing cumulative data since 2024.

Such “...incomplete data collection on event-specific losses, particularly public property and crop damage” could therefore mean that many of the figures in the report could well be an underestimate, the India Climate Report 2024 noted.

Moreover, the increase in the frequency and impact of extreme weather events demands that more comprehensive data be made available, the report pointed out. For instance, the number of days that India has witnessed extreme weather events has steadily risen from 2022 to 2024. In 2022, it was 86% of the days in the first nine months; this increased to 88% in 2023 and is now 93% in 2024. The human and economic losses have also increased: 3,238 people died in 2024 when compared to 2,755 in 2022, which amounts to an 18% spike in just three years, the report said.

Such “grim news” is coming in at a time when three things are happening, said Sunita Narain, CSE director general and editor of Down To Earth, at the virtual launch of the report on November 8.

One is the news of just a few days ago that Donald Trump, a “climate skeptic” has come

back to power; the second is that we are at a “time of desperation” when we are close to breaching the guard rail of limiting warming to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels; and third, that the impacts of climate change are no longer “a boardroom issue” and one that is “hitting the poorest of the poor”, Narain said.

“These record-breaking statistics reflect climate change’s impact, where events that used to occur once every century are now happening every five years or even less,” Narain said in a press release. “This frequency is overwhelming the most vulnerable populations, who lack the resources to adapt to this relentless cycle of loss and damage.”

Many of the impacts of extreme weather events are also due to “bad development” apart from their increased frequencies, Narain said at the virtual launch.

“So if Kerala had the worst landslides possible, it was also because Kerala, in many parts of the Western Ghats, is still building stone quarries and still doing (sic) development as if there is no tomorrow. It is the same with the Himalayas, the same with the city of Delhi. If we have floods in Delhi, it is not only because we have high rainfall in Delhi, it is because we have destroyed our lakes, ponds and drains in our cities.” (Courtesy: The Wire)

At UN climate talks, nations big and small get chance to bear witness to climate change

BAKU (AZERBAIJAN), Nov 13: When more than two dozen world leaders deliver remarks at the United Nations' annual climate conference on Wednesday, many are likely to detail their nations' firsthand experience with the catastrophic weather that has come with climate change.

That could include Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose nation has seen deadly flooding this year from monsoon rains that scientists say have be-

come heavier with climate change. Just two years ago, more than 1,700 people died in widespread flooding. Pakistan has also suffered from dangerous heat, with thousands of people hospitalised with heatstroke this spring as temperatures soared to 47 degrees Celsius.

Also on the list of speakers Wednesday is Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Edward Davis. Like many other countries in the Global South, the Bahamas has piled up debt from warming-con-

nected weather disasters it did little to cause, including Hurricanes Dorian in 2019 and Matthew in 2016. Leaders have been seeking help and money from the Global North and oil companies.

Greece's prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis is also on the list. Along with the rest of southern Europe, his nation this summer was hammered by successive heat waves after three years of below-average rainfall. In Greece, the misery included water shortages,

dried-up lakes and the death of wild horses. Leaders from Italy, Tuvalu, Russia, Morocco, Congo, and the secretary of state of the Holy See — the government of the Catholic Church — are among others scheduled to speak.

Plenty of big names and powerful countries are noticeably absent from COP29 this year. That includes the 13 largest carbon dioxide-polluting countries — a group responsible for more than 70 per cent of the heat-trapping gases

emitted last year. The world's biggest polluters and strongest economies — China and the United States — didn't send their No. 1s. Neither did India and Indonesia. But UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer was there, and he announced an 81 per cent emissions reduction target on 1990 levels by 2035, in line with the Paris Agreement goal to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times. That's up from the 78 per cent the UK had already

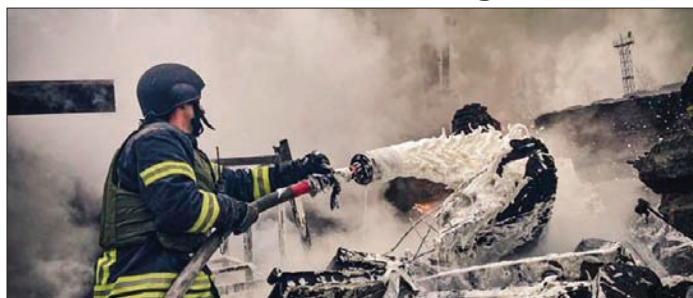
pledged. The main focus of this year's talks is climate finance — wealthier nations compensating poor countries for damages from climate change's weather extremes, helping them pay to transition their economies away from fossil fuels and helping them with adaptation.

Wednesday's agenda also includes an update on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, an idea modeled on predecessor treaty movements that sought to build international support for controls on

nuclear weapons, plastic pollution and chemical weapons. Supporters say the treaty could help stop the expansion of climate-causing fossil fuel production, create a plan to fairly phase out oil, gas and coal and accelerate the transition to renewable energy. The idea has been endorsed by countries and groups including Fiji, Colombia, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Indigenous nations in Peru, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Parliament. (AP)

Blinken says the Biden administration is determined in its final months to help Ukraine keep fighting its war with Russia next year

Russia launches first missile attack on Kyiv in months as North Korean troops fight Ukraine in Kursk



KYIV, Nov 13: Russia attacked the Ukrainian capital Kyiv with a sophisticated combination of missiles and drones for the first time in 73 days on Wednesday, authorities reported, as the Pentagon said most of the North Korean troops sent to help Moscow's war effort are fighting to drive Ukraine's army off Russian soil in the Kursk border region.

Air raid warnings blared for hours as Russia targeted eight regions of Ukraine, firing six ballistic and cruise missiles and 90 drones, the Ukrainian air force said.

Air defences downed four missiles and 37 drones, and another 47 drones were stopped by electronic jamming, the statement said. The damage was being assessed.

The air assault came as most of the more than 10,000 North Korean troops sent by Pyongyang to

counteroffensive in Kursk, according to the Institute for the Study of War think tank, though the timescale of the operation is not known.

Russia's plans in Kursk and Ukraine's efforts to hold back a Russian onslaught in the eastern Donetsk region coincide with political uncertainty over how a US administration under Donald Trump will change Washington's policy on the war. US military aid is vital for Ukraine, but Trump has signalled he doesn't want to keep giving tens of billions of dollars to Kyiv.

President Joe Biden intends to bolster US military support to Ukraine in the final months of his administration, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday. The US will "continue to shore up everything we're doing for Ukraine to make sure that it can effectively defend itself against this Russian aggression," Blinken told reporters at NATO headquarters, before planned meetings with allied envoys and Ukrainian officials.

Blinken warned that North Korea's decision to send its troops into combat operations alongside Russian forces "demands and will get a firm response." He didn't elaborate. (AP)

Kyiv officials say Russia has deployed around 50,000 troops to Kursk in a bid to dislodge the Ukrainians.

Russia has in recent months been assembling forces for a

help Moscow in the war are engaged in combat in Russia's Kursk border region, according to the Pentagon. A Ukrainian army incursion into Kursk three months ago has succeeded in holding a broad area of land and has embarrassed the Kremlin.

Russia's military has trained the North Korean soldiers in artillery, drone skills and basic infantry operations, including trench clearing. Pentagon deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel told a briefing on Tuesday. The cooperation faces challenges, according to the Pentagon, including how to achieve military interoperability and overcoming the language barrier.

Kyiv officials say Russia has deployed around 50,000 troops to Kursk in a bid to dislodge the Ukrainians.

Russia has in recent months been assembling forces for a

Diminished Biden heads to APEC summit in Peru, overshadowed by China's Xi

LIMA (PERU), Nov 13: If things had gone differently last week, U.S. President Joe Biden could have arrived at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Peru on Thursday projecting confidence and pledging his successor's cooperation with eager Latin American partners. No longer. Just as in 2016, the last time that Peru's capital Lima hosted APEC, Donald Trump's election victory has pulled the rug out from under a lame-duck Democrat at the high-profile summit attended by over a dozen world leaders.

The renewed prospect of Trump's "America First" doctrine hampers Biden's ability to reinforce the United States' profile on his first presidential trip to South America, experts say, leaving China and its leader, Xi Jinping, to grab the limelight in America's proverbial backyard.

President Xi's first order of business in Peru is inaugurating a \$1.3 billion megaproject that will put China's regional influence on stark display. Total investment is expected to top \$3.5 billion over the next decade.

"This isn't the way the U.S. had hoped to participate in the summit," said Margaret Myers, the director of the China and Latin America program at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington policy group. "All eyes are going to be on the port, what Xi says about it and how he articulates relations across the Pacific."

With the U.S. seemingly headed back toward isolationism under Trump, "China will be seen as the alternative," Myers added. Sitting 60 kilometers (37 miles) northeast of Lima, the Chancay megaproject — once a serene fishing village — is perhaps the clearest sign of Latin America's reorientation. The Chinese shipping and logistics giant Cosco holds a 60% stake in the project it developed with Peruvian partner, Volcan.

"With this port, we're looking at the entire Pacific coast, from the United States and Canada all the way to Chile," Peruvian Foreign Minister Elmer Schialer told The Associated Press in his office on Monday. "The shipping business is being transformed."

Peruvian Economy Minister José Arista said in June during a visit to China that the country's neighbors —

Brazil, Colombia, Chile — are "making constant trips to and from to see how they can modify their supply chain to use this port," which will cut shipping time to Beijing by 10 days.

China's trade with the region ballooned 35-fold from 2000 to 2022, reaching nearly \$500 billion, according to data from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Most of the region's exports came from South America, and were concentrated in five products: soybeans, copper and iron ore, oil and copper cathodes.

At the same time, China's diplomatic engagement in the region has become more effective, with Xi visiting 11 Latin American countries since becoming president, according to Xinhua, China's main state news agency. Brazil, host of the G20 summit, and Peru will bestow the rare honour of a full state visit to Xi this month, but not to Biden. The misguided notion that Latin America must choose between its two largest trading partners is "a strategic defeat" for the US, said Eric Farnsworth, vice president at the Washington-based Council of the Americas.

"The idea that China is somehow a better partner is increasingly being heard around the region and I think Xi wants to solidify that and amplify that," Farnsworth said.

Roughly a decade after China poured billions of dollars into building power plants, roads, airports and other infrastructure that saddled some developing countries with unserviceable debt, few expect Beijing to direct more massive loans to Latin America through its Belt and Road Initiative. But deeper cooperation on other infrastructure is possible, particularly renewable energy and telecommunications, said the Boston University bulletin.

The U.S. has appealed to Latin American governments to reject telecoms investment, particularly opposing Huawei, the Chinese tech giant that it argues could open the door to Chinese government spying. Similarly, U.S. officials have raised concerns over the Chancay port's possible dual-use by Beijing's navy in the Pacific — a prospect dismissed by Chinese officials. (AP)



Sri Lanka set for parliamentary election, all arrangements in place

COLOMBO, Nov 13: Sri Lanka is set to hold its parliamentary election on Thursday with all arrangements in place to ensure a fair and transparent process, a top election commission official has said. Voting will take place at over 13,314 polling stations across the country, from 7 am to 4 pm local time on Thursday.

Director General of the Elections Commission Saman Sri Ratnayaka on Tuesday said that all ballot boxes and other equipment needed at the polling stations would be dispatched on Wednesday.

"The polling station officials will carry out rehearsals from 7 am on Wednesday," Ratnayaka said. Over 17 million voters from the island's 21 million population are eligible to vote. 225 members would be elected from voting based on proportional representation.

The western province district of Gampaha would elect the highest number of Members of Parliament — 19 with the capital district of Colombo from the same province having 18 MPs elected.

The eastern province district of Trincomalee will elect the lowest number — just 4 MPs. Nearly 90,000 security personnel from the police and the military would be deployed to provide security at the election. There will also be mobile police patrols, the police spokesman Nihal Thaldawa said. The election would be the first major test of the popularity of the ruling party, National

People's Power-led by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

Having failed to secure 50 per cent of the vote at the September 21 presidential election, Dissanayake was pleading for a stronger Parliament with well over the simple majority of 113 seats in order to implement his anti-corruption accountability reformist programme.

Ranil Wickremesinghe, the outgoing president who lost to Dissanayake in last month's presidential election, is not contesting a parliamentary election for the first time since 1977.

The Rajapaksa brothers — Mahinda, Gotabaya, Chamal and Basil — will not contest the parliamentary election after decades-long representation. Scores of ministers and deputies from the past regime have opted out of the race.

As many as 196 members are to be elected from the 22 districts based on the proportional representation system while 29 would be elected from the cumulative votes polled national list to provide a 225-member Parliament for a five-year term.

Political parties and independent groups file lists of candidates for each district. Seats are allocated proportionately according to votes polled.

Individual MPs get elected based on the preferential votes cast in their favour. Each voter is entitled to mark three individual preferences. (PTI)

Pak court acquits Imran Khan, his close aides in Sec 144 violation case

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: In a relief to Imran Khan, a Pakistani court on Wednesday acquitted the former prime minister and his close aides in a case involving Section 144 violations.

A district and sessions court in Islamabad dismissed the charges, acquitting Khan, Sheikh Rashid, Asad Qaiser, Saifullah Niazi, Sadaqat Abbasi, Faisal Javed, and Ali Nawaz. Sheikh Rashid, the head of the Awami Muslim League, was appointed Interior Minister during the Khan-led government.

The charges, which also included breaches of the Amplifier Act and other regulations, were dismissed by Judicial Magistrate Yasir Mahmood. The case was filed on August 20, 2022, at Islamabad's Aabpara police station, alleging violations of public order during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party-led demonstrations.

The dismissal of the case against Khan comes as a kind of relief for someone who has been incarcerated since August last year.

Dozens of cases have been registered against him since the dismissal of his government in April 2022. (PTI)

Elon Musk, Vivek Ramaswamy to lead Department of Government Efficiency: Trump

WASHINGTON, Nov 13: US President-elect Donald Trump has announced that Tesla owner Elon Musk and Indian American entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy will lead the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, aimed at improving governance and curbing wasteful expenditures.

Trump has also given them a deadline of July 4, 2026, the 250th Anniversary of The Declaration of Independence.

"I am pleased to announce that the Great Elon Musk, working in conjunction with American Patriot Vivek Ramaswamy, will lead the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)," Trump announced late on Tuesday.

Ramaswamy, 37, is the first Indian American to have been tapped by Trump into his administration beginning January 20 next year. His parents migrated to the US from Kerala and worked at a General Electric plant in Ohio.

"I look forward to Elon and Vivek making changes to the federal bureaucracy with an eye on efficiency and, at the same time, making life better for all Americans."

Importantly, we will drive out the massive waste and fraud which exists throughout our annual USD 6.5 trillion of government spending," said the president-elect.

"Together, these two wonderful Amer-



icans will pave the way for my administration to dismantle government bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure federal agencies — essential to the 'Save America' movement," he said.

The US President-elect said this will become, potentially, 'The Manhattan Project' of the current time.

The Manhattan Project was a massive top-secret government project that resulted in the atomic bomb that ended World War II.

According to the US Department of Energy website, "At its peak, the project employed 1,30,000 workers and, by the end of the war, had spent USD 2.2 billion." Asserting that the Republican politicians have dreamed about the objectives of DOGE for a very long time, Trump said the Department of Govern-

ment Efficiency will provide advice and guidance from outside of government, and will partner with the White House and Office of Management and Budget "to drive large-scale structural reform, and create an entrepreneurial approach to the government never seen before."

"We will not go gently," @elonmusk," Ramaswamy took to X soon after the announcement.

Reacting to a post on X about his appointment, Ramaswamy said in another post on X, "DOGE will soon begin crowdsourcing examples of government waste, fraud, & abuse. Americans voted for drastic government reforms & they deserve to be part of fixing it."

Musk, who had supported Trump through his presidential campaign, too was upbeat about the appointment.

"This will send shock waves through the system, and anyone involved in government waste, which is a lot of people!" stated Musk, as per the statement issued by Trump.

The president-elect also announced that the duo's work will conclude "no later than July 4, 2026," adding that a smaller government, with more efficiency and less bureaucracy, "will be the perfect gift to America on the 250th Anniversary of The Declaration of Independence."

"I am confident they will succeed!" Trump declared. (PTI)

British author Samantha Harvey wins Booker Prize for 'beautiful' space tale

LONDON, Nov 13: British author Samantha Harvey has won the 2024 Booker Prize for her "ambitious and beautiful" "Orbital," which becomes the first novel set in space to win the GBP 50,000 literary prize selected from a historic shortlist that was dominated by women this year.

"Orbital," the biggest-selling book on the shortlist in the UK, takes place over a single day in the life of six astronauts and cosmonauts aboard the International Space Station who observe 16 sunrises and sunsets on Earth spinning past continents and cycling past seasons.

It was named the winner at a ceremony on Old Billingsgate in the City of London on Tuesday evening after the judges described it as a compact yet beautifully expansive novel which

invites readers to observe Earth's splendour whilst reflecting on the individual and collective value of every human life.

"Originally thought, 'Why on earth would anybody want to hear from a woman at her desk in Wiltshire writing about space, imagining what it's like being in space when people have actually been there,'" said Harvey, who dedicated her award to everybody who "speaks for and not against the Earth".

"I thought of it as space pastoral — a kind of nature writing about the beauty of space," she said.

At just 136 pages long, the winning title is the second-shortest book to win the prize and covers the briefest time frame of any book on the shortlist, taking place over just 24 hours.

"Samantha Harvey has written

a novel propelled by the beauty of 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets. Everyone and no one is the subject, as six astronauts in the International Space Station circle the Earth observing the passages of weather across the fragility of borders and time zones.

With her language of lyricism and acuity, Harvey makes our world strange and new for us," said artist-author Edmund de Waal, chair of the 2024 Booker judges.

"All year we have celebrated fiction that inhabits ideas rather than declaiming on issues, not finding answers but changing the question of what we wanted to explore. Our unanimity about 'Orbital' recognises its beauty and ambition. It reflects Harvey's extraordinary intensity of attention to the precious and precarious world we share," he said.

The judging panel included award-winning British Indian musician Nitin Sawhney, novelist Sara Collins, fiction editor of 'The Guardian' newspaper Justine Jordan and Chinese American

writer and professor Yiyun Li. The female-dominated shortlist this year included American author Rachel Kushner for the spy thriller 'Creation Lake', Canadian Anne Michaels for her familial tale 'Held', Australian Charlotte Wood for her philosophical 'Stone Yard Devotional' and Yael van der Wouden, the first Dutch author to be shortlisted, for her debut novel 'The Safekeep'.

American writer Percival Everett was the only male among this year's finalists announced in London this week for his Mark Twain ode 'James'. Each of the shortlisted authors will receive GBP 2,500 and a bespoke bound edition of their book.

As the winner, Harvey can expect instant international recognition, a dramatic increase in global sales and a career trans-

formed overnight. The Booker Prize 2023 was won by Paul Lynch with 'Prophet Song', which saw a 1,500 per cent increase in sales in the week after its win. In the year since, sales of the English-language edition of his book have increased by more than half a million copies, with sales across all formats now totalling more than 560,000 worldwide.

The Booker Prize trophy, presented to Harvey, was originally designed by children's author and illustrator Jan Pienkowski in 1969 and was reinstated in 2022. A life-sized replica of the trophy named Iris, after Booker winner Iris Murdoch, was displayed for the first time at the Booker Prize 2024 ceremony and will be moved to Waterstones bookstore at Piccadilly in central London. (PTI)

Indonesia's volcanic eruption grounds international flights on tourist island of Bali

Indonesia's volcanic eruption grounds international flights on tourist island of Bali

DENPASAR (INDONESIA), Nov 13: Several international airlines canceled flights to and from Indonesia's tourist island of Bali on Wednesday as an ongoing volcanic eruption left travelers stranded at airports. Tourists told The Associated Press that they have been stuck at Bali's airport since Tuesday after their flights were suddenly canceled.

"The airline did not provide accommodation, leaving us stranded at this airport," said Charlie Austin from Perth, Australia, who was on vacation in Bali with his family.

Another Australian tourist, Issabella Butler, opted to find another airline that could fly her home.

"The important thing is that we have to be able to get out of here," she said. Media reports said that thousands of people were stranded at airports in Indonesia and Australia, but an exact number wasn't given. Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki volcano on the remote island of Flores in East Nusa Tenggara province spewed towering columns of hot ash high into the air since its initial huge eruption on November 4 killed nine people and injured dozens of others.

The 1,584-metre (5,197-foot) volcano shot up ash at least 17 times on Tuesday, with the largest column recorded at 9 kilometres high, the Centre for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation said in a statement. (AP)

Jyotiraditya Scindia likely to visit Tripura today



AGARTALA, Nov 13: Union minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia is scheduled to visit Tripura on Thursday to attend the Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas programme, a senior official said.

The Union minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) is likely to be present at the programme to be held at Rabindra Bhavan here on Friday.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha and Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma will also be present, the Director of the Tribal Welfare Department, Subhashish Das, told PTI.

"The chief minister will inaugurate the state-level observance of Janajatiya Gaurav Diwas at Rabindra Bhavan on November 15 in the presence of Union Minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia, Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma, Forest Minister Animesh Debbarma, Cooperative Minister Sukla Charan Noatia and Brijesh Pandey," he said.

The secretary of the Tribal Welfare Department would also be present there, Das said.

Cultural programmes and a tribal food festival have been lined up to celebrate the 149th birth anniversary of Birsu Munda which is being observed as Janajatiya Gaurav Diwas across the nation, he said.

He said the Union minister would also hold a review meeting with the chief minister on November 15 to check the development projects undertaken by the DoNER in the northeastern state. (PTI)

Sanjengpara polling station has recorded the highest number of voter turnout at 95.60 percent

Meghalaya's Gambegre by poll records 90.84% voter turnout

SHILLONG, Nov 13: The poll percentage for today's bye-election to the Gambegre Assembly seat of Meghalaya was recorded at 90.84 per cent till 6 pm, chief electoral officer Dr BDR Tiwari said this evening.

"Polling to the Gambegre bye-election was successfully and peacefully conducted," he told reporters.

The polling percentage was at 90 percent during the last 2023 Assembly polls.

He said 33,088 voters which include 16207 women and 16881 men have exercised their franchise during the bye-election held in 51 polling stations. Polling began at 7 am and ended at 6 pm.

There were 32 out of 54 home voting and 3 service voters. Sanjengpara polling station has



recorded the highest number of voter turnout at 95.60 percent. The CEO informed that during the mock poll in the morning one VVPAT was replaced and after the start of actual poll 3 BUs, 3 CUs

and 6 VVPATs were replaced in five polling stations.

There are six candidates contesting the bye-election which include Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma's wife, Dr Mehtab Chandee A Sangma as the candidate of the ruling National People's Party (NPP), opposition parties - Jingjang M Marak of the Indian National Congress and Sadhiarani Sangma of the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), and Bernard N Marak of the BJP.

The two independent candidates in the fray are Sengkrabir M Marak and Jerry A Sangma.

The bye-election was necessitated following the resignation of Congress' leader Saleng A Sangma after being elected as new Tura MP. (NNN)

Nagaland Literature Festival observed in Kohima

HT Correspondent

DIMPUR, Nov 13: Nagaland Literature Festival 2024, organised by Writers Collective Kohima, was observed under the theme "Amplifying Our Indigenous Voices" at the Capital Cultural Hall complex in Kohima on Wednesday. In his address, former Nagaland chief minister Dr Shurhozelie Liezietsu, who was the special guest of the programme, said education reached the Naga people very late. He said the first American Baptist Missionary Rev Clark in 1872 and the first formal school founded by his wife Mary Mead Clark in 1878 spread education in the Naga-inhabited areas.

Liezietsu said: "The journey of our people in attaining education was very slow due to various reasons."

He also shared past instances where the Naga people faced serious challenges and disadvantages in the field of literature. He highlighted that during the Japanese invasion in World War II, Kohima was reduced to ashes and the little literature confined to mission centres was completely destroyed.

Again during the Indo-Naga war in the 50s, the few literatures that people possessed were once again destroyed, Liezietsu added. He also noted despite slow spread of education and the disadvantages the Nagas might have faced in the past, the progress made by the younger Naga generation is really laudable, as they made rapid stride in learning to catch up with the modern world.

Speaking on the theme "Amplifying Our Indigenous Voices", Liezietsu exhorted all to amplify "our voices" through the writing of books, poems, narratives, epic, and dramatic, as literature is a form of human expression that reflects the intention of the author and also explore ways to promote various voices. He said it also provides a platform for the Naga writers, poets, artists and storytellers to share their works and experiences for preservation and promotion of Naga languages and stories.

"Naga writing and literature are at a very crucial and exciting juncture as we are in the process of learning to reclaim our narrative and find authentic voices," Liezietsu added.

BSF destroyed illegal cannabis cultivation in joint operation

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 13: Border Security Force deployed in Tripura along with Tripura Police have destroyed 65000 matured cannabis plants in Gilamura village of Sonamura Sub-division of Sepahijala district. In a press statement BSF said that after getting specific information about illegal cultivation of Ganja plants in the forest area of village Gilamura a joint operation was launched by BSF with Tripura police and forest officials. "In the joint operation approx 65000 matured plants cultivated in 10 hectares of land spread on five different plots were destroyed by cutting uprooting and burning.

YMA demands compensation for relatives of those killed in Jiribam gunfight

AIZAWL, Nov 13: The Young Mizo Association (YMA) on Wednesday urged the Centre to provide compensation to the relatives of those killed in a gunfight with security forces in Manipur's Jiribam district recently.

The Manipur Police said 10 suspected militants were killed in a fierce gunfight with security forces on Monday after insurgents in camouflage uniforms, armed with sophisticated weapons, fired indiscriminately at the Borobekra police station and an adjacent CRPF camp at Jakuradhor in Jiribam district.

The meeting of the central co-ordination committee (CCC) of the YMA, the largest and most influential civil society organisation in the state, vehemently condemned the killing of a 31-year-old woman on November 7 by "Meitei miscreants" and 10 "village volunteers" belonging to Hmar-Mizo tribes by security forces on November 11.

They also urged the Union government to investigate the two incidents and ensure justice for the victims. They urged the Centre to resolve the ongoing ethnic strife in the neighbouring state at the earliest.

One person injured in the gunfight was brought to Mizoram for treatment on Tuesday.

A Hmar woman was also killed and at least 17 houses in Zairawn village near Jiribam town was torched on November 7.

Hmar civil society organisations and various Kuki bodies alleged that the woman was shot at, raped and tortured before being burnt alive.

Earlier, various political parties and organisations in Mizoram, including ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) strongly criticised the killing of the woman.

The state's apex student body, Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), described the incident as "inhuman and uncivilised".

Opposition party Mizo National Front (MNF) alleged that the CRPF personnel, who were supposed to be neutral forces, acted in a "partisan manner".

Meanwhile, a Hmar leader said that post-mortem examination of six of the 10 deceased has been done in Assam's Silchar on Tuesday and autopsy of four others were pending.

The bodies will be sent to Manipur's Churachandpur via Mizoram once the autopsy is completed, he said.

Central YMA will organise a reception of the 10 bodies in Aizawl, CYMA general secretary Mal-sawmliana said. (PTI)



Tripura BJP MLA celebrates birthday by adopting Royal Bengal Tiger

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 13: In a unique act of environmental stewardship, Tripura BJP MLA Sushanta Deb celebrated his birthday by adopting a Royal Bengal Tiger named Shera at Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary & Zoo. Shera, who arrived at the zoo seven months ago from North Bengal, will now be under Deb's care for the next three months, during which he will sponsor all expenses for food, medicine, and other essentials for the majestic big cat.

Speaking about his gesture, Deb reflected on his lifelong passion for social work. "Since childhood, I've wanted to contribute to society. While people often focus on helping each other, animals also need care and compassion. To preserve environmental balance, we must show love to animals as well. That's why I chose to mark my birthday here at Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary & Zoo," Deb shared.

Zoo director Biswajit Das, explaining the zoo's animal adoption scheme, mentioned that caring for Shera costs around ₹ 7.70 lakh annually. "Our animal adoption program began five years ago, and while the MLA initially faced some administrative challenges, we ultimately received approval from the PCCF and Chief Wildlife Warden. An estimated ₹ 2 lakh will cover Shera's needs for the next three months," Das noted, encouraging more people to adopt animals as a way to support the zoo's mission.

This adoption initiative highlights MLA Deb's dedication not only to public service but to wildlife conservation, urging the community to join in creating a balanced and compassionate environment for all beings.



Arunachal Pradesh has vast potential to boost inland fisheries: Union minister

ITANAGAR, Nov 13: Union minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh on Wednesday emphasised the significant potential for the fisheries sector to flourish in Arunachal Pradesh, provided that available resources are properly utilised.

The minister, who is on a three-day visit to the state since Monday, reviewed various sectors under his ministry, noting that Arunachal Pradesh holds vast potential for inland water fish production. Addressing a press conference at the civil secretariat here, Singh, the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, said India's fish production has grown substantially over the past decade under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "Prior to 2014, India's annual fish production was estimated at 96 lakh tonne. However, after Modi took office, the country's production has risen to 176 lakh tonne annually, with 132 lakh tonne from inland fisheries," Singh said.

He highlighted that with Arunachal's numerous ponds and water bodies across villages, the state could become a notable producer of inland water fish.

"If these water bodies are developed and utilised effectively, Arunachal Pradesh has the potential to become not only self-sufficient in fish production but also an exporter," Singh said. The minister explained that the prime minister has instructed all cabinet ministers to visit northeastern states to identify the region's potential

and focus on developmental initiatives.

"The Modi government is committed to making the Northeast and Arunachal Pradesh self-reliant by understanding regional challenges and allocating development projects", he stated. Singh added that several central schemes related to fisheries, such as the Fishery Infrastructure Development Fund and Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kishan Samridhi Yojana, could be leveraged by Arunachal Pradesh to boost infrastructure and productivity.

"The state should adopt modern technology and diversify fish species, aiming to increase fish production from the current 10,000 tonne to 30,000 tonne", he suggested. The minister further assured that his ministry would promptly approve any proposals submitted by the state government for fisheries sector development, though he noted that implementation remains the state's responsibility.

"During my review meeting, I observed the government's sincerity in this regard," he added. Singh said that the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed innovative research in fisheries that Arunachal could adopt to enhance production. The Union minister informed that he has advised the state government to select officials for training at the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA) in Odisha. This training would focus on technology transfer and enable multi-layer fish farming techniques. (PTI)

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF WORKS KAAC::SECRETARIAT DIPHU-782460 No. KAAC/W-1043/CDF/2024-25/314 Dtd.08/11/2024. EXTENSION NOTICE It is for general information to all the concerned that Tender Notice issued vide Memo. No. KAAC/W-1043/CDF/2024-25/259, Dtd- 07/10/2024 under Constituency Development Fund (CDF), for Construction of Hongpharla, Open Stage, Waiting shed, RRC/RWS and MI Scheme etc. in 16 (Sixteen) different Constituencies of Karbi Anglong has been extended upto 25th November 2024 4:00P.M and will be opened on the same date, place in presence of the tenderers or their authorised agencies if any. Sd/- Executive Engineer (Works), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council DIPHU

2 Welsh artists to perform at Hornbill Festival 2024

Gareth Bonello performs under the moniker of The Gentle Good and is known for his enchanting melodies



HT Correspondent

DIMPUR, Nov 13: Two Welsh artists are set to perform at the upcoming Hornbill Festival at Naga Heritage Village at Kisama, 10 km from the state capital Kohima, in December.

Folk singer-songwriters Gareth Bonello and Mari Mathias have been chosen to play to crowds at the festival.

The 10-day festival from December 1, nicknamed the "Festival of Festivals", is celebrating its 25th year and attracts visitors from all over the world. It is India's largest celebration of tribal heritage with visitors immersed in the rich traditions, music, and folklore of the region.

Mari Mathias performs in the Welsh language, bringing her own contemporary approach to traditional folk melodies. She will

be performing two solo sets as well as singing alongside Indian musician Seyievnuo Chuzho, writing a Welsh verse to one of her songs as part of the performance.

Gareth Bonello performs under the moniker of The Gentle Good and is known for his enchanting melodies and intricate acoustic guitar arrangements. Gareth is returning to Hornbill after performing in 2013.

During his visit, Gareth will also record new music with his partners from the Khasi-Cymru Collective, creating new music and poetry in Khasi and Welsh languages.

This year, Wales has been made a designated partner of Nagaland's Hornbill festival marking the end of Wales in India 2024, a year-long series of celebrations and events to strengthen ties between the two countries.

The partnership was announced during a recent visit to Wales by Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Ruo in recognition of the joint efforts by the British Council, the British Deputy High Commission in Kolkata, the Welsh Government and Wales Arts International.

As part of the Year of Wales in India, the British Council and Wales, Arts International has invested in five projects through a dedicated culture fund. These projects will focus on deepening existing cultural relationships between artists from Wales and India, including those from Nagaland and the northeast, in the next six months.

France Ambassador visits Himalayan Zoological Park in Sikkim



GANGTOK, Nov 13: The Ambassador of France to India, Thierry Mathou visited the Himalayan Zoological Park in Sikkim's Bulbulaya area on Wednesday.

Secretary cum PCCF of Forest and Environment department Pradeep Kumar and other officials welcomed Mathou and the French delegation and told them about ongoing projects and initiatives such as 'My Child from the Wild'.

'My Child from the Wild' is an animal adoption programme initiated by the Himalayan Zoological Park, aiming to involve people in forest conservation.

The France Consul General office in Kolkata expressed a strong interest in contributing to Red Panda conservation efforts which will be facilitated through the 'My Child from the Wild' programme at the park.

The Ambassador of France to India is on a visit to Sikkim from November 10 to 13. (PTI)

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Tender Amount (in Rs.) including GST LWC & Agency charges, Earnest Money (in Rs.) (ST, SC, OBC-1% & GEN-2%), Cost of Tender Papers (in Rs.), Time of Completion in day. Includes details for restoration of dig pits for laying of optical fiber cable.

Detail N.I.T. may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent up to 12.00 Noon on all working days from 18/11/2024 to 19/11/2024 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of Bank Draft/ Demand Draft, duly pledged to the Executive Engineer, PWD Mushalpur (R&B) Division, Mushalpur, Baksa. Payable at Kokrajhar, SBI main Branch.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Mushalpur PWD (R&B) Division, Mushalpur

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/863

Voter turnout in Wayanad LS constituency by-election drops

WAYANAD/THRISSUR (KERALA), Nov 13: The Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency, where Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra made her electoral debut, saw a voter turnout of around 65 per cent during the by-poll on Wednesday.

This was a decline from the close to 74 per cent turnout recorded in the polls held in April, when her brother and senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi contested from the hill constituency.

It was over 80 per cent when Rahul contested the polls from the hill constituency in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

When polling started at 7 am, it progressed briskly, raising hopes among the political parties that the voter turnout would surpass the previous one. However, those hopes faded as the turnout crossed the 50 per cent mark after eight hours of polling.

The figures released by the poll panel after the conclusion of voting at 6 pm put the turnout at 64.69 per cent.

These figures are not final as many voters are still queued outside polling stations in the LS con-



stituency, the Election Commission (EC) said.

The Congress-led UDF dismissed concerns that the reduced voter turnout would adversely affect the margin they expected for Priyanka.

According to Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, V D Satheesan, the lower turnout is due to the lack of enthusiasm among voters in areas dominated by the CPI(M)-led LDF.

On the other hand, the LDF and BJP-led NDA rejected the UDF claim and contended that the reduction in voter turnout was due to people not turning up to vote in areas dominated by the Congress

and its allies.

Meanwhile, in the Chelakkara assembly constituency in Thrissur district where the bypoll was held, recorded 72.54 per cent voter turnout.

According to EC officials, the number may go up after all the voters waiting in queues cast their votes.

The election process, held amidst tight security arrangements, was primarily incident-free except for electronic voting machine (EVM) breakdowns reported in some booths of Wayanad and Chelakkara.

The EVM breakdowns were reportedly quickly addressed by the

election officials.

Emotional scenes were witnessed at the polling stations set up for the survivors of the landslides, which hit the hill district in July this year, to cast their votes in the bypoll for the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency when they saw their neighbours and close friends after a long time since the disaster.

A special free vehicle service has been provided for landslide survivors to reach the polling stations from the various places they are temporarily residing at.

People arrived early in the morning at the 1,354 polling booths in the hill constituency of Wayanad where there are over 14 lakh registered voters, according to the EC figures.

It was a holiday in Wayanad LS and Chelakkara assembly constituencies on account of the by-polls.

The Wayanad constituency comprises seven assembly segments of Mananthavady (ST), Sulthan Bathery (ST), and Kalpetta in Wayanad district; Thiruvambady in Kozhikode district; and Eranad, Nilambur, and Wandoor in Malappuram district. (PTI)

65 pc voter turnout registered in 43 assembly seats till 5pm

RANCHI, Nov 13: A voter turnout of 64.86 per cent was recorded in the 43 assembly constituencies in Jharkhand where polling was held in the first phase on Wednesday, officials said.

Lohardaga district topped the list with 73.21 per cent polling while Hazaribag district recorded the lowest at 59.13, officials said and added that polling continued till 5 pm. The poll percentage in other districts were Seraikela-Kharsawan (72.19), Gumla (69.01), Simdega (68.66), Khunti (68.36), Garhwa (67.35), Latehar (67.16), West Singhbhum (66.87), Ramgarh (66.32), East Singhbhum (64.87), Chatra (63.26), Palamu (62.62), Koderma (62), Ranchi (60.49) and Hazaribag (59.13). Former CM Champai Soren and ex-MP Geeta Kora were among the 683 candidates in fray in the first phase.

"Today is the first round of voting in Jharkhand assembly elections. I urge all voters to vote with full enthusiasm in this festival of democracy. On this occasion, my heartfelt congratulations to all my young friends who are going to vote for the first time! Remember - first vote, then refreshment!" Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote on X. Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar cast his vote at the

ATI polling booth in Ranchi.

"Today is the first phase of voting for the Jharkhand Assembly elections. I urge all voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Remember, first vote and then refreshment!" Gangwar said.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren sought people's support in the elections. In a post on X, he said, "If you like our work, please support us. I promise that I will do 10 years of work in the next 5 years so that no one can stop our pace of progress."

While the JMM-led coalition is seeking to retain power riding on its welfare schemes, including Maiyan Samman Yojna, the BJP has been campaigning with its aggressive Hindutva agenda, infiltration and alleged corruption by the current dispensation.

During the day, Odisha Governor Raghuraj Das, state Health Minister Banna Gupta, former chief minister Champai Soren and JD(U) candidate from Jharkhand West seat, Saryu Roy, were among those who cast their votes in the first phase of assembly elections.

Top BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and BJP chief JP Nadda held several rallies where

they attacked the JMM-led coalition over alleged corruption and infiltration.

INDIA bloc leaders including Congress' Rahul Gandhi, its president Mallikarjun Kharge, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and his wife and legislator Kalpana Soren highlighted welfare schemes and accused the BJP-led Centre of unleashing all the central agencies, including ED, CBI and I-T, against opposition leaders.

In all, 1.37 crore voters are eligible to participate in the first phase of voting. A total of 683 candidates — 609 men, 73 women and one third-gender candidate — are competing for 43 seats. These seats are divided into 17 general, 20 scheduled tribe, and 6 scheduled caste constituencies.

To facilitate the voting process, 15,344 polling stations have been set up, with 1,152 managed entirely by women and 24 booths specifically manned by specially abled people, according to Chief Electoral Officer K. Ravi Kumar.

Since the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, authorities have seized illegal materials and cash worth ₹ 208.78 crore. Additionally, 58 cases have been registered for violations, with the maximum 29 in Garhwa district. (PTI)

Cong 'shehzada' conspiring to scrap reservations, alleges PM Modi

SARATH (JHARKHAND), Nov 13: In an apparent dig at Rahul Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday accused the Congress 'shehzada' of conspiring to scrap reservations for people belonging to SC, ST and OBC communities in an attempt to "weaken" them. He also alleged that the ruling JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand "helped infiltrators become permanent citizens" of the state.

"This is a deep-rooted conspiracy that will change Jharkhand's identity," the PM said while addressing a BJP rally in Deoghar.

Promising to thwart such attempts, including that of weakening SC, ST and OBC communities, Modi exuded confidence that the BJP-led NDA was going to form government in Jharkhand and he would come to attend the oath ceremony.

"Congress has dangerous intentions. Congress' 'shehzada' is conspiring to scrap reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. The prince's father had declared reservation as slavery, bonded labour but he was later defeated in elections. His father had issued advertisements to remove reservations... We will thwart any such conspiracy," Modi said, referring to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his father and former PM Rajiv Gandhi without naming them.

PM Modi claimed infiltration was a major concern in Jharkhand due to which "tribal population in Santhal Pargana has reduced to half and if the trend remains unchecked it will change the identity of the state".

"The JMM-led coalition government in Jharkhand allowed infiltrators to become permanent citizens here... It is playing with the security of Jharkhand's 'beti, maati, roti'," he alleged.

Exuding confidence of a spectacular win in the assembly elections, the prime minister said those making calculations, permutations and combinations in air-conditioned rooms should see the massive crowd that has been attending rallies. (PTI)

Will ban flight of projects from Maharashtra to Gujarat if elected: Uddhav; slams Shah

KANKAVLI (MAHARASHTRA), Nov 13: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday hit out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the flight of industrial projects from Maharashtra to Gujarat and asked him to clarify his vision of development.

Thackeray reiterated the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s opposition to a refinery project at Barsu in the Konkan region over the potential risk it poses to ecology. "Amit Shah has accused me of stalling development projects during my tenure as the chief minister in the MVA government. What is

Shah's definition of development? I stayed flight of projects from Maharashtra to Gujarat. In future I will ban the movement of projects (if voted to power)," Thackeray said.

He addressed a rally for the November 20 assembly elections at Kankavli in the coastal Sindhudurg district, the home ground of his bete noire and BJP MP Narayan Rane.

Thackeray alleged that the BJP didn't even spare a submarine project which was supposed to be set up in Maharashtra.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) chief framed the forthcoming polls as a

battle between "Maharashtra premi and Maharashtra drohi" (between those who love the state and the traitors).

Thackeray said he was hurt by Shiv Sena (UBT)'s defeat in the Konkan region in the Lok Sabha polls. Narayan Rane wrested the Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg constituency from Shiv Sena (UBT) in the recent elections.

"A person who can finish off Shiv Sena is yet to be born," Thackeray said while accusing the BJP of pulling out all the stops to finish him off politically. (PTI)

No Muslim quota even if your 4th generation comes: Amit Shah to Rahul Gandhi

DHULE, Nov 13: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi should remember that even if his "fourth generation were to come", Muslims won't get reservations meant for SCs, STs and OBCs.

"A few days ago, Ulemas met the president of Congress party and said that Muslims should be given reservation," Shah said, addressing a rally for the November 20 Maharashtra assembly elections.

"If reservation has to be given to Muslims, then reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs will have to be cut. Rahul Baba, not only you but even if your four generations were to come, they cannot cut the quota meant for SCs, STs and OBCs and give it to Muslims," Shah said. Shah also said Article 370 won't be restored, come what may. "Even if Indira Gandhi were to return from heaven, Article 370 won't be restored," Shah said. On Congress leader Sushilkumar Shinde's statement that he was scared during his visit to Srinagar's Lal Chowk when he was the Union home minister, Shah said, "Shinde ji, go to Kashmir now along with your grandkids, no harm will come to you."

"During 10 years of the Sonia-Manmohan regime, terrorists used to come freely from Pakistan and trigger bomb blasts here," Shah said. Describing the opposition's Maha Vikas Aghadi grouping in Maharashtra as Aurangzeb Fan Club, Shah said the BJP-led Mahayuti

alliance abides by the ideals of Shivaji Maharaj and Veer Savarkar. "This MVA alliance only wants to appease and Uddhav ji has forgotten the principles of Balasaheb Thackeray for the sake of power," Shah said.

"Uddhav Babu, you are sitting with those who opposed renaming Aurangabad as Sambhajanagar, who opposed the construction of Ram temple, who opposed the abolition of triple talaq, who opposed the abolition of Article 370, who opposed the surgical strikes and who call Hindus terrorists," Shah said.

"I have travelled all over Maharashtra and can say with confidence that Mahayuti will sweep the November 20 assembly polls," he said.

"The 'ladi behnas' (women) of Maharashtra are with the lotus flower and the BJP," Shah said. The Mahayuti will form the next government in Maharashtra with the highest ever number of seats, he added.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders are opposing all the communities, Shah said. "They gave a statement against (Hindu seer) Ramgiri Maharaj. They caused riots in Sindhkeda and they are promoting such people who are not good for Maharashtra and the country," he added. "People in this country are troubled by the Waqf law. Recently, the Waqf Board in Karnataka decided that entire villages are Waqf property. 400-year-old temples, farmers' land and people's houses became Waqf property. (PTI)

Uddhav's convoy stopped at Maharashtra-Goa border checkpoint

MUMBAI, Nov 13: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray's convoy was stopped at a checkpoint on the Maharashtra-Goa border in Sindhudurg district on Wednesday. The incident was reported days after bags of the former Maharashtra chief minister were checked by poll officials in Yavatmal district ahead of a poll rally, prompting him to raise allegations of selective targeting. On Wednesday, Thackeray and his son Tejas were on a campaign tour in the coastal Konkan region. Visuals show Thackeray's carcade being stopped at the Inshuli check post when it was entering Maharashtra from Goa, leaving him infuriated. Check-post personnel allowed the convoy to proceed after realising that Thackeray was travelling in one of the cars. Thackeray then proceeded towards Sawantwadi in Sindhudurg district to address a campaign rally. Earlier this week, bags carried by Thackeray were frisked by poll officials after the helicopter carrying him landed at a helipad for a rally in Yavatmal district in east Maharashtra. Thackeray had recorded the video of the frisking of bags and angrily dared officials to check the luggage of PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah during poll campaigning. (PTI)

Those claiming Hindus in danger denying reservation to Marathas: Manoj Jarange Patil

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJI NAGAR (MAHA), Nov 13: Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange Patil has said those who claim Hindus are in danger and seek their unity are responsible for denying reservation to Marathas, as he claimed that voters are ready to hand over a drubbing to the BJP-led ruling coalition in the Maharashtra assembly polls.

In his most explicit attack on the 'Mahayuti' government, he said interest of every section of society has suffered on its watch, asserting that Marathas will show their might in the polls.

In an interview to PTI, the 42-year-old activist, who has rallied a large section of Marathas in support of his demand for OBC quota for them, alleged that those who claim to work for Hindu unity have used his community to target Muslims but ignored its genuine demands.

"If you claim Hindus are in danger, then what about Marathas? Can't you see their children's troubles? If you say Hindus are in trouble, then it is also your responsibility to ensure the welfare of Marathas. A Hindu opposes us when we demand reservation, but when they have to target Muslims, they need Marathas to run after them with sticks," he said.

He was reacting to the BJP's slogans such as "batengein to katengein" and "ek hain to safe hain". Who will cut Hindus, he asked, noting that Marathas are the biggest Hindu caste in the state.

"We will settle our issues among ourselves. We follow the Hindutva of Chhatrapati (Shivaji). We will look after ourselves, you mind your own business," he added.

In his statements ahead of the November 20 polls, Patil has refrained from directly naming any party but the common belief among his supporters is that he is against the incumbent, especially the BJP.

In his comments, he gave clear indications of his view.

"The Maratha community understands very well whom to defeat. They understood it during the Lok Sabha polls, and they have understood it now. There is no confusion," he said.

"Those who have been against reservation, Marathas will defeat them 100 per cent. They will not



be spared," he said, accusing the state government of denying the community quota.

The BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP alliance had suffered a big defeat in the state during the Lok Sabha polls, as the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi of the Congress-Shiv Sena (UBT)-NCP(SP) won 30 of its 48 seats against the ruling bloc's 17.

Asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pitch to voters to re-elect the ruling alliance for development in Maharashtra, he said sarcastically that every section of society is so happy that Modi should dub the ruling dispensation as not double-engine but "triple-engine government".

After all every field is irrigated and no farmer has debt, he said wryly.

Farmers need better rates for their crops and want to be free of debt but this government denies them their due, he alleged.

"Marathas want reservation for a better future for their children. Dhangars want reservation, there are micro-OBC communities who also want reservations for a better future for their children. Everyone is angry.

Situation is very bad. People will teach them a lesson and inflict a drubbing in the polls," he said.

Be it Muslims, Dalits or traders, the government has harmed everyone's interests, he said.

Amid the view that the BJP is working to rally the support of OBCs to negate the impact of any likely Maratha consolidation, Patil made it clear that his primary objective is to get reservation for Marathas, stressing that they had received quota benefits almost 150 years back but were later not included in the OBC segment.

Asked if his stir has divided society and can result in a counter-polarisation of OBCs, he said there will be no such impact.

He said Marathas and OBCs are living together in villages and there is no disharmony. "There is no chance of it either in the future. The OBCs understand that the poor and backward Marathas should get reservation. There are a handful of people who spread such misgiving. They will be taught a lesson in these elections."

Having brought the issue of Maratha quota to the

fore, he said he will launch a "collective fast unto death" to push for its implementation after a new government comes in. He claimed it will be the biggest collective fast the country has ever seen.

He asserted that no alliance can come to power without support from Marathas, who form around 28 per cent of the state's population.

Patil also accused BJP leader and deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis of harming the interests of Marathas, claiming he is running the affairs of the government and not Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

"In the government, everything is in the hands of Fadnis and not others. He takes decisions. He is the one who formed the government by breaking parties and getting necessary numbers," he said.

Asked about Modi's appeal for the return of 'Mahayuti' government, Patil used sarcasm to make points about farmers allegedly not getting adequate price for their produce.

He said wryly, "Cotton is being bought at Rs 15,000 a quintal, wheat is being sold at Rs 26,000 a quintal, Soybean is getting Rs 36,000, onions are also getting a good rate. The farmers are very happy. Every field is irrigated, so much so that water is flowing across every bund."

He continued, "All farmers are moving around wearing ironed clothes and sunglasses. Nobody will blame him (Modi), he is a very noble man."

Asked why he withdrew his decision to field candidates in the polls, he said he wanted to focus on reservation for Marathas and not politics, and rejected the allegation that he did so due to the MVA's influence to rule out a split in the community's votes.

"What is big deal? We are social activists, new to politics. We could not get equations right. We did not have the experience. I decided to keep away from politics to ensure there is no division in the community for my political benefit. I took the right decision at the right time. Reservation is important and not politics," he said.

Asked about his views on Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray, Ajit Pawar and Shinde, he said no one helped Marathas on the issue of reservation. (PTI)

RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION WORKS

Tender No. RE-NMP-TNDR-ENGW/299RT1; Dated: 07-11-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Name of work : At Chaparmukh: Construction of boundary wall of staff quarters and approach road of SSP (Jakhlabandha, Puranigudam, Amoni, Tarabari, Bataradrawa and Senchoa) with all other ancillary works in Lumding Division of N.F. Railway in connection with Railway Electrification work. Advertised Value: ₹ 84,84,237,871/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 1,69,700/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 12:00 hrs. on 28-11-2024. For details please visit in website www.reps.gov.in

CEE-IICON, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Construction Organisation
Serving Customers With A Smile

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR PROVIDING PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

E-Tender Notice No. CON/2024/NOV/04 Date: 07-11-2024. Open tender through E-Tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed contractors (s)/firm(s) for the following works: Tender No. CE/CON/DMV/PMS/2024/04/RT-1. Name of work: Request for Proposal (RFP) for appointment of Authority Engineer for providing project management services for Redevelopment of Dimapur Railway Station through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract. Tender Value: ₹6,79,21,036.14/-; Earnest Money: ₹4,89,600/-; Date & Time of Closing of Tender: 14.30 hrs. of 12-12-2024 & opening at 15.30 hrs. of 12-12-2024. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available in website www.reps.gov.in
Chief Engineer/CON/9

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
(Construction Organisation)
Serving Customers With A Smile

'EQUALITY ENSHRINED IN ARTICLE 14 IS A CONCEPT CLOTHED IN POSITIVITY'

Compassionate appointment not vested right: SC

Compassionate appointment provided to bail out a family from financial difficulty

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Compassionate appointment is not a vested right for getting a government job as it is not a condition of service of an employee who dies in harness, the Supreme Court held on Wednesday while declining the plea of a man whose police constable father died on duty in 1997, when the petitioner was seven years of age.

A bench comprising Justices Abhay S Oka, Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Augustine George Masih said no direction can be issued asking the State to perpetuate any illegality in favour of a person or a group of individuals contrary to the policy concerned.

Writing the judgment for the bench, Justice Masih said compassionate appointments are intended to address urgent financial distress at the time of a family member's death and do not constitute a vested right that can be claimed after the lapse of a long period of time.

"As regards the compassionate appointment being sought to be claimed as a vested right for appointment, suffice it to say that the said right is not a condition of service of an employee who dies in harness, which must be given to the dependent without any kind of scrutiny or undertaking a process of selection.

"It is an appointment which is given on proper and strict scrutiny



of the various parameters as laid down with an intention to help a family out of a sudden pecuniary financial destitution to help it get out of the emerging urgent situation where the sole bread earner has expired, leaving it helpless and maybe, penniless," the judgment said.

It said compassionate appointment is, therefore, provided to bail out a family of a deceased employee facing extreme financial

difficulty. "This shall in any case be subject to the claimant fulfilling the requirements as laid down in the policy, instructions or rules for such a compassionate appointment," it said.

The very idea of equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution is a concept clothed in positivity based on law and it can be invoked to enforce a claim having the sanctity of law, it said.

Petitioner Tinku's father, constable Jai Prakash, died alongside an officer while on duty in 1997.

At the time, Tinku was only seven years old, and his mother, who was illiterate, could not apply for an appointment on compassionate grounds for herself.

Instead, she requested that her son's name be entered in the "Minors' Register", with the understanding that he might be considered for a post upon reach-

ing adulthood.

In 1998, the Haryana Director General of Police issued instructions for Tinku's name to be recorded, suggesting a future possibility for employment. However, by the time Tinku applied for a post in 2008, after reaching the age of majority, 11 years had passed since his father's death.

Authorities rejected his application on the grounds that Haryana's 1999 instructions had introduced a three-year limit for such claims following an employee's death.

A single-judge bench as well as a division bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court rejected his plea.

The top court upheld the decision, concurring with previous rulings of the high court that the compassionate appointment policy is meant to address immediate financial needs and cannot be invoked as a guaranteed right after a significant delay.

While denying the petitioner's claim for appointment, the court provided a potential relief to his family, allowing his mother to submit a representation to the competent authority for a lump-sum ex-gratia payment.

The court instructed that the request be considered within six weeks, adding that if compensation is delayed further, interest will apply from the date of the request. (PTI)

Delhi court to decide whether Engineer Rashid's case be transferred to MP/MLA court



NEW DELHI, Nov 13: A Delhi court is likely to consider on November 20 whether the alleged terror funding case against jailed Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid to be transferred to the designated MP/MLA court.

Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit Singh had noted that the case could go to a special court meant to try lawmakers, now that Rashid is an MP. On Wednesday, he adjourned the matter after the National Investigation Agency (NIA) sought time to argue the matter. The judge, who had earlier reserved the bail order in the case, had underscored he would first consider the issue of jurisdiction and whether or not to transfer the case to a special court.

The judge had posted the order on bail for on November 19. "Since we are considering the jurisdiction issue whether the matter will be heard by this court or the designated MP/MLA court of National Investigation Agency (NIA), keep it (bail order) post that," the court had said.

Rashid had surrendered before the Tihar jail authorities on October 28, after the completion of his interim bail period.

On September 10, the court had granted interim bail to Sheikh Abdul Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, to enable him to campaign for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections and deferred the order on his regular bail plea.

Rashid's interim bail was later extended till October 28 on the ground of his father's poor health and after the NIA did not oppose the plea on verifying documents.

The newly elected MP has been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019 after the NIA arrested him under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in the 2017 terror funding case.

Elections to the 90-member JK Assembly were held in three phases between September 18 and October 1. The National Conference-Congress alliance was declared winners with 48 seats on the day of results on October 8. (PTI)

Railways reminds safety staff to attend signal failures by issuing proper memo

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: The South Eastern Railway (SER) has issued a circular asking the Signal and Telecom (S&T) Department to attend signal failures by taking failure memo and disconnection memo after it came to light in the Nalpur train derailment case that the signal failure was being attended without following due procedure.

"It is reiterated that signal failures should be attended by taking proper failure memo and disconnection memo only," a circular, dated November 11 and issued by principal chief signal and telecommunication engineer of the SER, said.

"After rectification and thorough testing, it should be reconnected by the proper reconnection memos as per the standard formats," it added.

The circular, addressed to senior divisional signal and telecom engineers of Kharagpur, Adra, Chakradharpur and Ranchi rail divisions, has directed them to counsel all maintenance staff to ensure compliance.

Railway sources said the need to issue such a reminder arose due to the recent Secunderabad-Shalimar Express train derailment on November 9 at Nalpur station near Howrah in West Bengal.

Nalpur comes under the Kharagpur rail division of the SER zone.

"Two serious issues came to light during the investigation of the case. First, the Station Master of Nalpur asked the technician to attend sig-

nal failure without bringing it in the record book, which is a violation of railway safety norms," a railway source said.

A signal staff said according to the norm, the station master should have issued a failure memo to the S&T Department and entered this failure in its entry register. The preliminary investigation revealed that he did not follow this procedure.

Even the S&T Department should have served a disconnection memo to the station master, which means that no train will be operated from the particular signal till a reconnection memo is issued after rectifying the fault. However, the probe showed that the S&T Department also did not do that.

"The second serious issue came to light when, while rectifying the failure in the relay room, the technician's lower body part hit a switch, also called a 'latch gear', by mistake and changed the direction of the interlocking point on some other line when Secunderabad-Shalimar express was crossing it, thus causing derailment," the source added.

Safety officials say that the Railways has taken both the issues seriously and tried to address them by taking adequate measures.

"It has reminded safety staff to follow due procedure in case of signal failure. At the same time, the Railway Board has asked all the zones and divisions to start a safety drive to fix loose mechanical parts of the signalling system," a railway official said. (PTI)

Delhi Police orders checking of hotels to find criminals

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: In the wake of rising incidents of firing by criminals to demand extortion money and due to gang rivalries, the Delhi Police has issued directions to local police to start checking hotels and guest houses for suspicious persons and verifying local outlaws. Delhi has witnessed several cases of contract killing and shooting outside showrooms and businessmen houses by outlaws at the behest of jailed or foreign-based criminals, according to police sources.

The police headquarters has issued directions to the local police to start checking guest houses and hotels to verify the credentials of the guests staying in their properties. The police have also started verifying local criminals, bad characters (BCs) and juveniles staying in their areas.

"We have started checking hotels and guest houses and also keeping an eye on the activities of criminals out on bail and those having previous criminal records. The juveniles are also being verified," a deputy commissioner of police (DCP), who did not wish to be named, told PTI. (PTI)

No criminal conspiracy by ICICI Bank officials in NDTV loan repayment at reduced rates: CBI

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: There was no collusion, criminal conspiracy or abuse of position by officials of ICICI Bank in accepting repayment of a loan at a reduced rate of interest from promoters of NDTV Prannoy Roy and Radhika Roy, the CBI has concluded in its closure report in the 2017 case. The CBI FIR registered on the basis of a complaint from Sanjay Dutt of Quantum Securities Ltd had alleged that ICICI Bank had sanctioned a loan of ₹ 375 crore in 2008 against the entire 61 per cent shareholding of the promoters as collateral.

The bank had allegedly accepted the repayment of the loan by reducing the interest rate from 19 per cent per annum to 9.5 per cent causing a wrongful loss of ₹ 48 crore to the bank and corresponding gain to the promoters, it had said.

The central investigation agency after nearly seven years of probe came to the conclusion that the reduction of the rate of interest from 19 per cent to 9.5 per cent as approved on August 5, 2009 was based on various factors - borrowers' inability to pay, weak financial performance of NDTV, timely payments in the past, volatile share price, etc, officials in the know of the development said. The CBI, which filed its closure report last month, also said that the reduction of the rate of



interest for NDTV was not a "one-off incident". The repayment of the loan at the reduced interest was "higher than average cost of funds", they said.

The central probe agency also found a forensic audit of the case conducted by Pramod Kumar and Associates which termed the repayment to be a "normal business transaction and closure of loan" with no violation of the Banking Regulation Act. In 2022, the Adani Group acquired a controlling stake in NDTV, purchasing shares from the Roys at a premium of nearly 17 per cent over the price paid to minority shareholders.

The CBI found no merit in the allegation that the loan proposal of RRPR, promoter of NDTV, was accorded a BB

rating yet it was sanctioned and disbursed, they said.

The agency has said that loan proposals worth ₹ 8400 crore having BB rating were sanctioned by ICICI Bank in 2008-09 and 2009-10 which shows that the sanction of loan to RRPR was "not an isolated case" and the bank had been sanctioning loans to such companies, officials said.

NDTV promoters had taken the loan from ICICI Bank to foreclose the liability to India Bulls on a personal guarantee of Prannoy Roy and Radhika Roy and a "contractual comfort of shares" of NDTV under NDU-POA (Non-Disposal Undertakings-Power of Attorney) in favour of ICICI Bank for financial and projected operations of the channel.

The CBI found that the proposal noted dated October 10, 2008, mentioned that NDTV's share value accepted by ICICI Bank was ₹ 535 crore which was 1.42 times the loan amount of ₹ 375 crore.

The agency found that the volatile share price of NDTV and the six-month average price of share value pegged contractual comfort to be ₹ 1555 crore which was beyond the "threshold limit of 30 per cent of paid-up capital of the company" as per the Banking Regulations Act. (PTI)

Delhi govt launches winter action plan for homeless

Tents, rescue teams, and shelters to aid 2,000 more people

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: The Delhi government has rolled out a winter action plan for the homeless as part of which 200-250 pagoda tents with a capacity to accommodate around 2,000 people will be set up and 16 rescue teams will be formed. The

Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) currently operates 197 shelters for the homeless across the city with a total capacity of 7,092 people, according to officials. As part of the winter action plan, the government will set up an addi-

tional 200 to 250 waterproof and fire-retardant pagoda tents which will accommodate around 2,000 more homeless individuals. These tents will be set up in areas with high concentrations of homeless people.

An official said the government has allocated ₹ 3 crore for the implementation of the plan from November 15 this year to March 15, 2025 to provide shelter to the homeless and ensure their comfort. Sixteen rescue teams will be formed in collaboration with Social Mobilisation Agencies and NGOs. These teams will operate between 10 pm and 4 am every day, rescuing homeless individuals found sleeping in open spaces or on roadsides, the plan stated.

Each team will be equipped with a vehicle, a driver and two attendants. They will transport the rescued individuals to nearby shelters or hospitals if needed, it stated.

According to the plan, a monitoring system will oversee the implementation at multiple levels. The Joint Apex Advisory Committee (JAAC) led by the DUSIB CEO will coordinate efforts among various departments, including the health department, municipal corporations and police. A centralised control room will coordinate the rescue operations, handle information through a dedicated helpline, mobile app and other sources, the plan stated. (PTI)

No SLRC-G-IV/Assam/Advertisement for Analogous Posts-IV/2023-24/01/110

NOTICE

This is for information of all the candidates who had appeared in the Assam Direct Recruitment Examination held on 27th October, 2024, for Class IV posts [HSLC or equivalent examination passed, HSLC or equivalent examination passed along with ITI Pass (Paper-I) & Read up to Class VIII (Paper-II)] . that an Online Portal will be made live from 15th November, 2024 at 11:30 A.M to 28th November, 2024, the link of which will be available in the websites of Assam State School Education Board (erstwhile SEBA) i.e www.site.sebaonline.org and Govt. of Assam (www.assam.gov.in). This Portal will facilitate the interested candidates to raise their objection against the Answer Key of any question on payment of Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five Hundred only) per question. Objection must be supplemented with proper justification and any objection without justification will be treated as null and void. If the justification for challenging a particular Answer key is found valid by the expert Committee constituted to examine the challenges, then the amount of Rs. 500/- will be refunded to the source from where the amount was paid. All the Objections shall be placed before a Committee of Academic Experts and the decision of this Committee shall be final and no further communication shall be entertained. The login credentials will be—

User name - Candidate's Application ID
Password - Candidate's own Password

Further this is to inform that the softcopies of all 6 sets of Question paper are already available on the website of Assam State School Education Board (erstwhile SEBA) i.e www.site.sebaonline.org. The answer keys of these 6 sets will also be made available in the same website on 15th November, 2024 at 06:00 A.M.

Janasanyog/DF8717/24/14-Nov-24

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

ENGAGEMENT UNDER SAMAGRA SHIKSHA, ASSAM

SSA-15015/73/2024/Esst/1/786820/2024

The Samagra Shiksha, Axom invites online applications from Indian Citizens (as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India) for the under mentioned positions under Samagra Shiksha Axom on contractual basis. The online applications will be received from 14.11.2024 to 29.11.2024. The posts are temporary in nature and the selected candidates will be initially engaged for a period of 11 (eleven) months only. The contractual engagement will neither be regularized under Samagra Shiksha Axom nor will be absorbed under any job/programme of Government of Assam in future and no person (s) so engaged shall have any right (s) to claim for permanent abortion in any post (s) in the government or in the Samagra Shiksha, Assam. The nos. of posts may be increased or decreased.

Age for categories of post : The candidate should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 62 years of age as on 01-01-2024. The age limit of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the Matriculation/HSLC Admit Card or Pass Certificate issued by a recognized Board/ Council and no other document shall be accepted in lieu of the mentioned documents.

Name of the Post	Essential Qualification and Experience	Pay in Pay Band in Rs.	Grade Pay in Rs.	No. of Post	Place
Electronic Data Processor	Graduate with minimum 1 year Diploma in Computer Application / DTP from reputed institutions or Diploma in Computer Application from ITI or 3 years diploma from Polytechnic Applicant should have 1 year work experience.	14000/-	8000/-	06	District Mission Offices

N.B.-

- The link of the recruitment portal will be available in the Samagra Shiksha website <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>
- Read the User Guidelines carefully which is available on the recruitment portal on how to submit the online application form.
- Claims for any correction will not be entertained after submitting the online registration and online application.
- Before filling the on-line application, applicant has to go through the User Guidelines for online registration and online application.
- Candidate must upload the supporting document of educational qualification, experience and others through portal.
- Only eligible candidates will have to appear in test/interview, the exact date of which will be communicated separately.
- A candidate must be in good mental and bodily health and free from any physical defect likely to interfere with the efficient discharge of his/her duties.
- The exact date & time of the Test/ Interview will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates separately.
- Marking pattern will be on General Awareness, Personality & Aptitude, Subject matter in relevant field, Relevant Experience, etc. for the post. The applicant has to obtain minimum 50% of the total marks on the above in the interview and only then the candidates will be short-listed.
- The office will not be responsible for any non submission of online application due to any error or other problem.
- The decision of the Selection Committee in all aspects and all respects pertaining to the application and its acceptance or rejection as the case may be, conduct of test and at all consequent stages concluding in the selection or otherwise of any candidate shall be final in all respects and binding on all concerned. The Mission also reserves its right to alter and modify time and conditions laid down in the notification for conducting the various stages up to selection or withdraw the Notification at any time, duly intimating details thereof to all concerned, as warranted by any unforeseen circumstances arising during the course of this process, or as deemed necessary by the Mission at any stage.



Janasanyog/DF/1383/24/14-Nov-24

Sd/-Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Vicky Kaushal to star in Maddock Films' movie 'Mahavatar'



NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Actor Vicky Kaushal will headline "Mahavatar", an upcoming mythological film from "Stree 2" director Amar Kaushik, the makers announced on Wednesday.

The film, which hails from producer Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films, will feature Kaushal as Chiranjeevi Parashurama, the "eternal warrior of dharma".

It will be released in theatres on Christmas 2026. Maddock unveiled the project on its social media handles along with a first look poster of Kaushal.

"Dinesh Vijan brings to life the story of the eternal warrior of dharma!

Vicky Kaushal stars as Chiranjeevi Parashurama in #Mahavatar, directed by Amar Kaushik. Coming to cinemas - Christmas 2026!" the studio posted on Instagram.

Kaushal is also starring in the lead role in Maddock's upcoming period movie "Chhaava".

Set to be released on December 6, the film will see Kaushal playing the role of Maratha emperor Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj.

The upcoming film, also starring Rashmika Mandanna and Akshaye Khanna, is directed by Laxman Utekar and produced by Vijan. (PTI)

'Bandish Bandits' season two to premiere on Prime Video in December



NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Musical series "Bandish Bandits" will return with its second season on Prime Video on December 13, the streaming service announced on Wednesday.

Created by Amritpal Singh Bindra and Anand Tiwari, the romantic drama show features actors Ritwik Bhowmik and Shreya Chaudhry as Radhe and Tamanna, two musicians who come from different worlds of music.

"The new season of this beloved musical drama continues its journey, artfully blending the intricate ragas, talas, and bandishes of Indian classical music with the bold, electrifying beats of modern rock and pop, as our leads - Radhe and Tamanna, now face off against each other in the quest for acceptance and glory," the streamer said in a press release.

"The narrative delves deeper into family legacy bringing in themes of individuality, empowerment, and the balance between old and new to the forefront, as each character discovers and embraces their true self," it added.

The first season of "Bandish Bandits" was released in August 2020 and also starred veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah.

The sophomore chapter has been directed by Tiwari and who has co-written the series alongside Atmika Didwania and Karan Singh Tyagi.

Returning members for season two include Sheeba Chaddha, Atul Kulkarni, Rajesh Tailang and Kunaal Roy Kapur. They are joined by newcomers -- Divya Dutta, Rohan Gurbaxani, Yashaswini Dayama, Aaliyah Qureshi and Saurabh Nayyar.

Bindra, who also serves as a producer of the series, said the new season will bring in bigger conflicts as the stakes get higher and the tension between Radhe and Tamanna reaches a dramatic crescendo.

"The universal love and appreciation garnered by season one has validated the faith and work the cast and crew and the incredibly supportive team at Prime Video put behind the show, and we cannot wait for December 13 as we bring the newest season to audiences in India and across the world," he added.

Nikhil Madhok, Head of Originals, Prime Video India, expressed confidence that season two of "Bandish Bandits" will receive the same kind of love and acclaim as the first season did.

"At Prime Video, we take pride in bringing stories and narratives that are not only culturally relevant, but also showcase the rich tapestry of traditions we celebrate in India. 'Bandish Bandits' has been one such gem in our diverse list of originals," he said.

"With the sophomore season of Bandish Bandits, we've pushed the boundaries with the music and the story, diving into themes of legacy, identity and ambition," he added. "Bandish Bandits" is a Leo Media Collective Private Limited production. (PTI)

Disha Patani says she's 'fascinated' by Japanese anime

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Actor Disha Patani, who is set to make her Tamil cinema debut with "Kanguva", has opened up about her love for Japanese anime and Korean culture.

Anyone who follows the actor on social media has often seen her post reels of a weekend binge-watch session of anime (Japanese style of film and television animation) and work out to songs by Kai of Korean pop band EXO. While the "emotional connection" in anime fascinates her, Patani believes content coming out of South Korea draws a lot from Bollywood.

"I have grown up watching anime as a kid and 'DragonBallZ' and all these. I'm fascinated by anime. The storyline they have, I don't know if you can capture that in a film the way they emote, the kind of stories they have, whichever genre you enjoy. The emotional connection is unreal in most of the anime," the 32-year-old actor told PTI. "Korea is great when it comes to filmmaking, series, and romance. I feel a lot of it is taken from Bollywood when you watch it. I love their music, fashion, culture and everything about it," she added.

Patani, who recently starred in a pivotal role in the superhit Telugu film "Kalki 2898 AD", said she often ends up doing "less work" than she thinks she should.

"I really need to love something to do it or until I'm super happy. It's intuitive and if I don't get that feeling I can't do it. I wait for that feeling. (PTI)



'Laapataa Ladies' makers share poster with English title ahead of film's Oscar campaign



NEW DELHI, Nov 13: The makers of "Laapataa Ladies", India's official entry to Oscars 2025, have unveiled a new poster of the film with its English title "Lost Ladies" as the movie begins its campaign for the upcoming awards ceremony in Los Angeles.

Directed by Kiran Rao, the Hindi movie was picked to represent India at Oscars in September. Rao also produced the film via Kindling Pictures with former husband Aamir Khan and his banner AKPPL and Jyoti Deshpande of Jio Studios. A light-hearted satire on patriarchy, "Laapataa Ladies" follows the story of two brides called Phool and Jaya in rural India in 2001 who accidentally get swapped during a train journey. It stars Nitanshi Goel and Pratibha Ranta in the lead. Aamir Khan Productions shared the poster on its official X page on Tuesday.

"Official poster alert! Presenting the official poster for #LostLadies—a glimpse into the wild, heartfelt journey of Phool and Jaya! #LaapataaLadies," the banner wrote in the caption. Earlier, Gujarati film "Chhello Show", which was chosen as India's official entry for Oscars 2023, was titled "Last Film Show" in English. (PTI)

Coldplay adds fourth Indian show in Ahmedabad citing 'incredible fan demand'

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Rock band Coldplay and online ticket platform BookMyShow on Wednesday announced a fourth show in Ahmedabad as part of the band's "Music Of The Spheres World Tour 2025" citing "incredible fan demand".

The new announcement comes following a controversy over reports of black marketing of tickets after they were sold out within minutes.

The fourth show will be held at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium on January 25, 2025, and the tickets will be available on BookMyShow. In September, Coldplay announced two shows on January 18 and 19, 2025, at the DY Patil Sports Stadium. The music group added a third concert on January 21 at the same venue on popular demand.

The British band, led by vocalist Chris Martin, posted on their official X page about the new concert in India. The tickets for the new show

will go on sale on November 16 at 12pm. "2025 AHMEDABAD DATE ANNOUNCED...The band will play their biggest ever show, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on 25 January, 2025. #MusicOfTheSpheresWorldTour," the band posted on X. According to a press release by the ticketing platform, the multiple Grammy-award winning band will perform for a potential audience of 100,000 fans, making it "the biggest stadium show of their career".

"The only way to better serve the record-breaking demand for Coldplay's Music Of The Spheres World Tour in India has been to secure the country's largest venue, making it possible to host Coldplay for their biggest-ever stadium audience globally. Bringing another show to life took immense effort from our teams and partners alike and we are thrilled for the chance to make this happen for Coldplay's fans," Anil Makhija,

COO - Live Entertainment and Venues, BookMyShow, said in a statement. The Enforcement Directorate began a probe in the alleged illegal sale of tickets of concerts of 'Coldplay' and Diljit Dosanjh after these events were sold out in just minutes on online ticketing platforms, including Zomato Live.

Many of them then landed on unauthorised platforms where they were being sold at exorbitant prices.

In a press release issued on Wednesday, BookMyShow said to ensure a level playing field for all fans, the ticket booking process will feature a virtual queue with a waiting room, where fans will be allocated queue positions through an Automated Queue Randomisation System, when the sale goes live.

"Music Of The Spheres World Tour in India" is produced and promoted by BookMyShow Live, the live entertainment experiential division of

BookMyShow and Live Nation, the global promoter of the tour.

Jared Braverman, SVP of Global Touring, Live Nation Entertainment, shared, "Over 20 years into their touring career, Coldplay continues to push boundaries in both scale and reach. Performing in Ahmedabad, their largest single stadium show to date, showcases their unwavering commitment to connecting with fans worldwide." Dhanraj Nathwani, President, Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA), said, "This historic Coldplay concert in Ahmedabad not only positions our city on the global entertainment map but also reflects the vibrancy and modern infrastructure of Gujarat... We are also excited to partner with BookMyShow Live, a company that has consistently brought the best of global entertainment to India, and Live Nation, making this a truly momentous occasion for Gujarat." (PTI)



Sinner beats Fritz again in rematch of US Open final



TURIN (ITALY), Nov 13: The soccer-like "Ole" chants. The vast array of fans dressed in his theme color of orange. The banners and signs — one of which declared, "Sinner for president." Late in the second set of his victory over Taylor Fritz at the ATP Finals on Tuesday, Jannik Sinner used all the adulation in his home country to his advantage. When the top-ranked player produced a backhand passing shot up the line while on the run, he held his finger up to his ear to

encourage the crowd to cheer louder. "I read a little bit where he was playing and I just tried to pass him somehow because if not, it would have been a very easy volley for him," Sinner said. "The crowd is helping me a lot. This is a very special occasion for me. I've always liked playing at home. If you like the fans and the people supporting you, it's a big help," Sinner added.

Sinner made it two wins in two matches before his home fans at the finals, beating Fritz 6-4, 6-4

in a rematch of the U.S. Open final that the Italian also won in straight sets.

Sinner turned up his intensity when it mattered most. He survived a marathon service game midway through the first set then broke his American opponent with a huge forehand up the line on his first set point.

During and after the match, the crowd inside Inalpi arena chanted, "Ole, Ole, Ole: Sinner, Sinner." Sinner saved the only break point that he faced and

nearly matched Fritz with six aces to the American's seven.

But Fritz tested Sinner over two close sets and thought his performance was a step up from the U.S. Open final.

"There's a lot of positives I can take out of it," Fritz said. "For all of the match, I didn't feel overwhelmed. I felt like I was right there." Sinner, who beat Alex de Minaur in his opening match at the season-ending event for the top eight players, improved to 23-1 in his last five tournaments.

Earlier, Daniil Medvedev moved back into contention with a 6-2, 6-4 victory over De Minaur following a temper tantrum in his previous match.

Medvedev didn't face a single break point and was generally much sharper than in his straight-set loss to Fritz on Sunday — during which he smashed his racket and lost his cool twice.

Sinner leads the group while Fritz and Medvedev are next with one win each. De Minaur, who is making his debut at finals, lost both of his opening matches.

The top two finishers from each round-robin group advance to the semifinals.

On Thursday, Medvedev faces Sinner and De Minaur plays Fritz in the final matches of the group. In the other group on Monday, Alexander Zverev and Casper Ruud beat Andrey Rublev and Carlos Alcaraz, respectively.

Sinner is playing at home for the first time since it was announced before his U.S. Open title that he tested positive in two separate drug tests this year.

A decision to clear Sinner of wrongdoing was appealed by the World Anti-Doping Agency in September. A final ruling in the case is expected early next year.

When his match was over, Medvedev closed his eyes and held his fingers to his ears. Then he wrote on a camera lens, "Block the noise."

"I went into this match also blocking the noise even from myself," Medvedev said. "No like tantrums and stuff. Just block the noise. And I really didn't care what was happening on the court. I just tried to play and it was a good feeling." (AP)

FIFA workshop essential for strengthening our governance framework: AIFF secretary general

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: All India Football Federation (AIFF) secretary general, Anilkumar, who attended the FIFA Financial Governance Workshop in Sri Lanka recently, said such events would go a long way in improving and strengthening the financial management of the member associations.

The workshop was held in Colombo on November 6 and 7, with the participation of general secretaries and finance directors from the member associations of India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

"Attending the FIFA Financial Governance Workshop has been an invaluable experience. The insights shared on transparency, accountability and best practices in financial management are essential for strengthening our governance framework," said Anilkumar.

FIFA's commitment to develop football around the world depends on sound financial management to ensure that member associations get the best value for money for the funding distributed through the FIFA Forward programme.

As part of its effort to ensure this happens, FIFA has been holding regular workshops around the world to enhance financial governance and capacity development within the MAs.

The event was held under the

banner of the newly established FIFA Campus, which serves as the central football learning hub for all FIFA capacity development and education initiatives for member associations.

Starting with a presentation of the Financial Governance Guide, the workshop included discussion, group work and case sessions on topics such as conflict of interest, planning and budgeting and procurement process, as well as the importance of having adequate supporting documentation.

The sessions emphasised the importance of accountability, transparency, and responsible financial management within the context of the FIFA Forward programme.

The FIFA Forward programme was introduced in 2016 to provide funding for tailor-made projects in each of the 211 FIFA member associations.

In the first two cycles, between 2016 and 2022, more than USD 2.8 billion was committed to a diverse array of projects to provide football infrastructure and competitions, and to promote and advance women's football.

The four-year cycle of FIFA Forward 3.0, from 2023 to 2026, represents an increase in football development investment of almost 30% and is a direct consequence of the reinforced governance and financial situation of the new FIFA since 2016. (PTI)

Lomror, Sharma tons power Rajasthan to 362/4 against Uttarakhand

DEHRADUN, Nov 13: Middle-order batters Mahipal Lomror and Kartik Sharma struck unbeaten hundreds, punctuating their knocks with 11 sixes to power Rajasthan to 362 for four against hosts Uttarakhand on the first day of their Group B Ranji Trophy match here on Wednesday. Invited to bat, Rajasthan were off to a steady start but soon found themselves in trouble after sipping to 188 for four in the second session.

Having seen three batters walk back to the dressing room after getting their eye in, Lomror stitched an excellent partnership of 174 runs for the fifth wicket to steer the visiting side to a comfortable position.

Among the batters to have failed on the day was Rajasthan skipper Deepak Hooda (10 off 29 balls), who was caught behind off the bowling of Deepak Dhapola, signaling the arrival of Sharma into the crease.

Uttarakhand did not taste any success thereafter as Rajasthan completely dominated the final session of play with the duo of Lomror and Sharma in total control of the proceedings in the elite

group game.

At the close of play, Lomror was batting on 141 off 189 balls while Sharma was going strong on 113 off 114 deliveries, having scored at almost run-a-ball.

During his stay in the middle, Lomror found the fence 14 times and cleared it on five occasions, while Sharma entertained those present at the ground by smashing 11 fours and six sixes.

Earlier in the day, Uttarakhand's decision to field first did not bring them great returns as Rajasthan reached 100 for the loss of just one wicket in Abhijeet Tomar (20).

Ram Chouhan (29) fell with the score reading 106 but still the visitors did not have enough reasons to worry.

However, losing two more wickets, including that of their skipper, with the team score yet to cross 200, put Rajasthan in a spot of bother. In between, Zubair Ali made 26 in 40 balls, getting dismissed after settling down. That's when Sharma joined Lomror in the middle, and the two first steadied the ship and then placed their team ahead with their dominant batting display. (PTI)

After hosting World Cup, Qatar praised by UN rights body for labor law reforms

GENEVA, Nov 13: Qatar was praised at the United Nations' top human rights body on Tuesday for improving labor laws before the 2022 World Cup, though it was urged to fully abolish its employment system for migrant workers.

Qatar returned to the Human Rights Council in Geneva for its five-yearly review for the first time since the soccer tournament that needed hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to build stadiums and other essential projects. Soccer governing body FIFA is set to confirm Saudi Arabia in December as host of the 2034 World Cup — setting up another decade of scrutiny on how human rights are respected while preparing for more teams playing more games in more stadiums. In Qatar, better labor law protections have been passed in recent years relating to a minimum wage, freedom to change employers and combating forced labor and trafficking, according to the emirate's senior diplomat in Geneva.

Qatar "highly appreciated" the contribution of migrant workers who are "true partners," said



Hend Abdulrahman Al Muftah, its permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, in translated comments.

Qatar was urged — or "recommended," in the formal diplomatic language of the UN rights body — by French delegate Claire Thuaudet to "pursue the implementation of the labor laws" linked to the 2022 World Cup. Sierra Leone said Qatar should "consider abolishing all vestiges" of the labor law system known as kafala.

"We commend Qatar for its notable reforms in labor migrant legislation," the Netherlands delegation said. "These are significant but more effective enforcement and implementations are needed." Qatar also was asked to abolish the death penalty by states including Brazil, Ireland, Italy and New Zealand, and decriminalize consenting same-sex relations by Brazil, Mexico and Spain.

Anticipating criticism of Qatar's record on women's rights,

Al Muftah said Qatar now had 120 women in diplomatic roles after the number was just three several years ago.

Sweden later recommended Qatar review its laws relating to women's rights in divorce, custody of children and inheritance while Iceland called for abolition of the male guardianship system. Iceland also urged decriminalizing abortion and ensure access to reproductive health services without needing the permission of a male guardian or showing a marriage certificate.

Qatar's delegation pointed to the country rising from outside the top 100 to now rank No. 84 in the global index of press freedom. Top-ranked Norway said Qatar should ensure "civil society, human rights defenders and journalists can operate freely without fear of reprisals."

Qatar is widely expected to be a strong contender in bidding to host the 2036 Olympics, and concluded its presentation Tuesday with sports ministry official Nasser Ali Al-Khater hailing sports as "an important platform to enhance cooperation between peoples." (AP)

Jharkhand crawl to 136 for 3 vs Delhi on a curtailed Day 1

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Opener Sharandeep Singh scored a dogged unbeaten 64 as Jharkhand batters were painstakingly slow in their approach reaching 136 for 3 on a weather-curtailed opening day of the Ranji Trophy group D fixture against Delhi here on Wednesday. Having lost to Chattisgarh in the last game, Delhi in their final home game of the season made wholesale changes under new skipper Ayush Badoni.

The three pacers — Money Grewal (1/43 in 14 overs), Simarjeet Singh (1/16 in 14 overs) and left-armers Siddhant Sharma (1/32 in 14 overs) — were primarily used by Badoni keeping the conditions in mind.

Sharandeep, who hit nine boundaries was ready to dead bat most deliveries and leave a lot during his undefeated 183-ball innings. He added 93 for the third wicket with southpaw Utkarsh Singh (46 off 86 balls) before Siddhant dismissed the latter towards late afternoon.

The match also saw Simarjeet making a comeback to the playing eleven after missing out on last three matches and he kept things tight at one end.

Jharkhand started on a cautious note adding 24 in almost an hour's play before young Money had Nazim Siddique edge one to former skipper Himmat Singh in the slip cordon. Simarjeet was rewarded when he breached Aryaman Sen's defence but Sharandeep and Utkarsh showed good defensive technique during the day. Few of the boundaries were streaky and came behind the square along with a few crisp on-drives. The spinners got to bowl only 13 overs between them and they didn't look very penetrative on the day.

Brief Scores

In Delhi: Jharkhand 1st Innings 136/3 in 55 overs (Sharandeep Singh 64 batting, Simarjeet Singh 1/16) vs Delhi.

In Ahmedabad: Railways 1st Innings 229 in 80.2 overs (Mohd Saif 60, Ajith Ram 4/44) vs Tamil Nadu. In Chandigarh: Saurashtra 1st Innings 299/2 in 79 overs (Harvik Desai 99, Chirag Jani 153) vs Chandigarh. In Raipur: Assam 1st Innings 264 for 6 in 87 overs (Denish Das 104, Parvez Musaraf 42) vs Chattisgarh. (PTI)

Watching Dravid, Williamson I realised I have certain gifts I can use to succeed in T20s: KL Rahul

MUMBAI, Nov 13: India batter KL Rahul revealed he "tried really hard" to prove big-hitting prowess early in his career but watching the legendary Rahul Dravid and Kane Williamson stay true to their natural game and succeed in white-ball formats changed his perspective and helped him evolve as a player.

One of the most stylish batters, Rahul admitted that in his younger days he often tried to be something he was not.

"I think I grew as an individual and as a player. As a youngster, I tried really hard to be someone I wasn't, trying to hit big sixes to prove I could," Rahul said in an exclusive interview on Star Sports.

"It just wasn't coming naturally. What changed for me was watching Rahul Dravid in one of the IPL seasons around 2011 or 2012. He stayed true to his technique, and he was one of the best batsmen. Seeing him do well in one-day and T20 cricket

without changing his game changed something in me," he added.

The 32-year-old, who played 53 Tests, 77 ODIs, and 72 T20s for India, had spent time in the same dressing room with Williamson, one of the best batters in contemporary cricket, during his time at Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Observing both Williamson and Dravid, Rahul realised that he could succeed in T20 cricket by staying true to his natural game. "I also spent time with Kane Williamson at SRH. He didn't get many chances, but he'd still go back and play amazing white-ball innings for New Zealand.

"Watching Dravid and Williamson, I realized I didn't need to try so hard. I had certain gifts I could use in T20 cricket to find success."

Rahul began his IPL career at RCB in 2013, he spent two seasons at SRH before returning to the Bengaluru franchise in



2016, where he played with the likes of Virat Kohli and AB De Villiers, which boosted his confidence.

"Once I embraced that mindset, things clicked for me. In the 2016 IPL, I had Virat and AB's guidance—the best T20 players around. Just talking to them at training about my game made a difference. Once the performances started coming, the confidence followed."

In the 2018 season, Rahul scored a 14-ball fifty for Punjab Kings (then Kings XI Punjab), who had shelled out Rs 11 crore for him.

"I had just debuted in T20s for India and scored that 100 in Miami against the West Indies, so I had some recent T20 runs and confidence behind me. It was a new franchise, and I was excited, especially after the high price tag they paid, which I had

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n't expected."

Rahul said he played freely in the 2018 season, which turned out to be his best T20 year.

"That season came with pressure, being a new team and all, but my mind was clear at that time. I was confident in my game, knew what I had to do, and kept it simple. 2018 was probably the best T20 year for me. "Expectations were mostly from Kings XI Punjab due to the high price tag, but beyond

that, I was free to play my game, without feeling like I had to take responsibility. That allowed me to play with freedom, and while it was a great year personally, as a team, we struggled."

Rahul, who led Lucknow Super Giants since its inception, was released by the franchise. He is expected to invoke a bidding war at the mega auction in Riyadh on November 24 and 25. (PTI)



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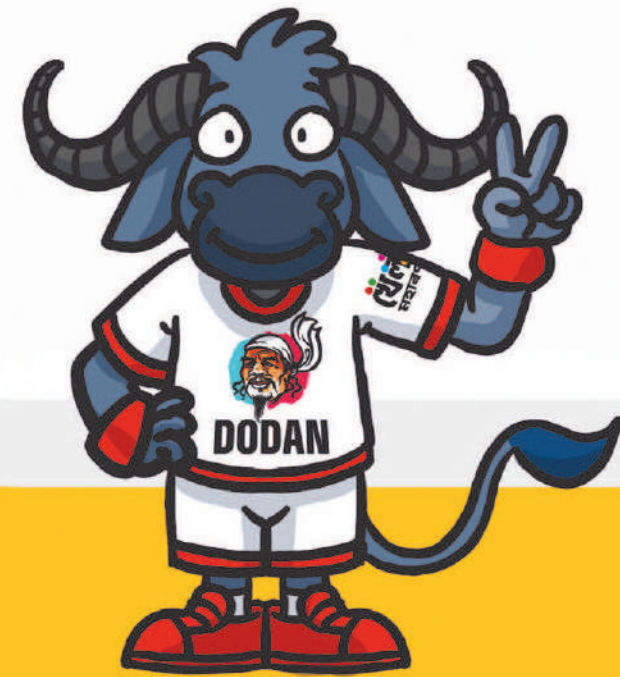
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Registrations for the GP / ULB / WARD / VCDC / MAC Level Competition will continue till the midnight of 22 November 2024

